

TABLE TALK November 2021



Reopening Day Soon!

The club will reopen as soon as Auckland moves to the red traffic-light setting: the first session will be on Friday 3 December. Sessions will be held under the government guidelines on indoor events: with one-metre spacing and up to 100 vaccinated members. Vaccination certificates will be a requirement. There will also be no visitors; hand sanitising will be required; and QR tracking and mask wearing highly recommended.

The committee were, however, concerned about those members who for various reasons cannot return to the clubrooms, and will do their best to provide solutions in the new year.

AGM Format In Person And Online

The committee plans to hold December's AGM at the club, with the format conforming to government regulations of up to 100 vaccinated people indoors with one-metre spacing. Google Meet, which is similar to Zoom, will also be available to members to attend from home. The AGM will be held on Sunday 5 December at 5.30pm. Details on how to attend online will be emailed shortly.

Two More Committee Members Needed

Two important club positions are still to be filled for next year. We need a new:

- ◆ Club captain
- ◆ Tournament secretary.

If you could be interested but need more information about what a position entails, please do contact president Caroline Griffin, who will be happy to help; or contact the current incumbents, Belinda Summerville and Maria Casci.

New Friday Partnership Secretary

Maggie Urlich has kindly offered to be the new partnership secretary for Friday bridge. She is taking over from Pam Lorimer, who has moved out of Pukekohe to be closer to family.

Looking Forward To 2022

With all of us looking forward to, hopefully, a year of normal bridge in 2022, we probably don't need any urging to pay our subs promptly. But as club finances are stretched because of hugely reduced play this year, early payment of subscriptions will be especially appreciated. So put the club on your Christmas present list and send your 2022 subscription.

Our invoices and booklets will be posted out this year (they will not be available at the AGM). The sub is only \$60 if you pay by 31 January; and the club's banking details are on the invoice.

Novices – Next Year Will Be Better!

by John Fergusson

What a terrible year to try to learn bridge! So **thank you** if you got to some classes, attended supervised play, or struggled online (which just isn't the same – bridge is a social game!). Let us trust next year will be different. Our current plans are:

- ◆ Bridge lessons begin again on **Thursday 17th February, 2022**
- ◆ The cost remains \$60, including a year's membership
- ◆ The first two sessions are free, so people can try before committing
- ◆ **If you paid for classes this year, next year's lessons (and membership) will be free of charge**
- ◆ Supervised play will begin again on the same date.

Further details will follow. If you enjoy learning online, I recommend the UK site, No Fear Bridge, www.nofearbridge.co.uk; get the BriJ app for your phone; and check out the NZ Bridge videos, www.nzbridge.co.nz/teaching-materials. Have a great summer, and hope to see you next year.

Dargaville Bridge Members Self-Isolate

NZ Bridge reported last week that a member of the Dargaville Bridge Club was admitted to hospital with Covid, and that all affected members of the club were in self-isolation.



RealBridge at Auckland Bridge Club

Bridge news in the lockdowns is all about online play, and the latest provider of choice is realbridge.online.

The Auckland Bridge Club shifted its play to that website in early October and the club is now running several online sessions per week, ranging from two slots for novices – with supervised play – up to the Akarana Swiss Pairs on Wednesday evenings for advanced players. There is also social bridge, where you can book a table with three of your friends and play online, pretty much any time of the day, with no time pressure, and no director.

Non-members are very welcome to play at their sessions, although there is a slight bit of work to do first, as you must have a Hello Club account with money in it so they can take out the \$5 table money per session. Instructions on how to set up an account, with the playing schedule and other information, are at www.akbc.co.nz/realbridge.

You can also kibitz, which could be particularly useful at the moment for beginners and improvers to refresh memories after such a long interval without bridge; and intermediate-plus players are likely to enjoy observing the Akarana nights. Kibitzing is free: kibitz.realbridge.online, and enter your name. For those who don't know what kibitzing is, see below.

Kibitzing

Perhaps the only upside to the bridge lockdown has been the ability to kibitz high-level bridge being played online. With online kibitzing, you look over the shoulders of top players and see how they bid and play their hands.

Originally from the German kiebitzen, to spy or to look on at cards, kibitzing is Yiddish. (Not to be confused with kibbutz, an Israeli collective settlement.)

Even if you're very non-tech-y, it is easy to do at RealBridge. Just go to kibitz.realbridge.online, write your name in the box (you don't need to register or have a user name), click on whatever session you're interested in (the sessions that are live are yellow) and you're there. Decide which partnership or foursome you want to observe, click on their table number, and watch the experts grapple with the same problems we wrestle with!

Back in the day (ie, early August ...) Friday players had a live kibitzer learning from watching Carol De Luca. Live kibitzers observe from behind a player, poker-faced of course.

Auckland Northland Win The Inter-Provincial Teams

Reigning champions Auckland Northland won the Inter-Provincial Teams trophy, in a tournament played online over this last weekend from Friday evening (the results were still to be confirmed by the scorers of the event when this newsletter was sent out). Representatives from the seven bridge regions competed in Open, Seniors, Women and Intermediate teams. This year the youth category (under 30s) was reintroduced, with four regions competing in this division.

Grant Jarvis from our club was in the Seniors team which came first in their section, only losing twice in the 12 matches. Richard Solomon played for Waikato Bays Open, which came second in their section after Wellington.

Franklin Players At Other Online Tournaments

The annual nationwide pairs event, the Babich NZ Wide Pairs, took place this month partly at bridge tables and partly online for the first time, with level-3-lockdown partnerships playing online via nearby clubs. Some of our members took part in the 750-pair event, which draw about 84% of 2020 numbers, so Covid had a big impact on the tournament which raises money for the New Zealand Bridge Foundation.

The top Franklin partnership was Lynne Geursen and Grant Jarvis in 41st place. (News of Grant's resignation in the latest committee minutes was also news to him. Happily, he is – after four decades – still a member at Franklin.) Other members who played were Carol De Luca; Prem Soundra; Margaret Wilson; Jennifer Colgan combining with former member Julie Quilty; and Caroline and Kevin Griffin.

Over Labour Weekend a high-powered teams tournament – the 10A Waikato Bays Provincial Teams, with grandmasters galore – attracted 54 teams, from Invercargill to Keri Keri as well as from Australia. It took place online as a trial on Realbridge, with NZ Bridge evaluating it to see if further masterpointed online tournaments could be held in future.

Top Franklin player was Grant Jarvis, and other Frankliners were Richard Solomon (still on our books then after his move to Te Aroha), Carol De Luca, Sue Spencer, Bev Henton, and David Spencer.

And further congratulations to Grant Jarvis who has been selected for one of the two Senior teams to contest the Tri Series – New Zealand, Australia and Indonesia – in mid December. The event will be played online via RealBridge.

Thames Festival Cancelled – Maybe Online?

The early January Thames Festival has been cancelled in its usual format but may go ahead online. Organised by Waikato Bays Regional Committee, the weekend event has 3A and 5A competitions. Entries are still being accepted on the NZ Bridge website, and organisers are hoping the tournament will go ahead on RealBridge.

Bridge Boards At Home

While the club is closed and not using the boards, members can borrow board sets along with hand records to play bridge at home with friends. Neil Miller is running this and he can be contacted to make arrangements for their collection and return.

If You're On Facebook

Still with bridge online, if you're on Facebook you might be interested in adding KiwiBridge to your groups. (Put their name in the search box and the page will come up.) There are random contributions ranging from interesting hands to topics of interest to silly jokes.

A current posting attracting comments is on clicking problems when playing online at realbridge, and reclicks, which will be of interest to online players of any level. The main post (several comments on it can be read online) is:

“Thoughts on this: you are playing on Real Bridge. Your rho (not screen mate) has made a couple of random bids because of misclicks for which you have given undos. Then comes an auction where said opp makes a bid which buys

the contract. You lead a card. Dummy tracks. RHO asks for undo. You can't click undo any more. Should you call the director and ask them to undo?"



South of the Border

Four members get a newsletter mention simply for sitting at a bridge table! They are living or spending the lockdown outside the Auckland boundary and so have been lucky to be able to play live bridge. Having finally been allowed to do his household move through the police cordon, Richard Solomon, who has now resigned from Franklin, is playing at Te Aroha Bridge Club.

Maggie Urlich is lockdowning in Hahei at her former home, now holiday house – in fact, she has been there since before the lockdown – with her daughter and her four grandchildren here from Dubai. Maggie has recently been playing at Tairua, a community bridge club, as has Peter McNeil – they are pictured there, Peter left and Maggie in blue at the next table. And Peter has also been playing since September with Wendy Morris at the affiliated Waihi Bridge Club.

National Congress – at last?

Time to make your bookings for the 2021 National Bridge congress – to be held in 2022!

It is scheduled for mid-February, with much crossing of fingers that it can go ahead safely within any government guidelines at that time. Postponed after the original programme could not be played because of Covid, the new dates are Thursday 10 February to Thursday 17 February, at first-time venue Bay Park in Mt Maunganui.

The congress is not just for the top guns. There are Restricted Open and Senior events in Swiss pairs and teams.

And the weekend days feature events for Intermediates and Juniors: the NZ Intermediate Swiss Pairs are on Saturday 12th; the NZ Intermediate Pairs are on Sunday 13th; and the NZ Junior Pairs are also on Sunday 13th. On Monday 14 February the NZ Intermediate Teams and the NZ Senior Teams are held. Juniors can also enter the Intermediate Teams and the Intermediate Swiss Pairs and there will be special prizes for Junior pairs and teams taking part in those two events.

Novices are catered for too: on Saturday afternoon there is a one-session Novice Pairs. You are eligible to compete if you are:

- ◆ A Junior player who started playing in 2019 or more recently or
- ◆ A player of Unranked or Novice ranking as at 1st January 2021.

So if you're getting pretty good at this game, find another novice and enter.

When booking accommodation, check refund policies in case of the congress's cancellation or a Covid shutdown, either of which could still happen.

Further information is at www.nzbridge.co.nz/summary-of-events-1 and you can book online; or contact Richard Solomon, who can even organise you a partner or teammates! Phone 027 245 5418 or email rksolomon@xtra.co.nz.

Free Luxury Stay For Fun Congresser



Are you fun, outgoing, communicative, and planning to play the whole bridge congress next February? If so, you could get free accommodation!

An innovative partnership between NZ Bridge and BOP Regional Tourism and TECT has produced a competition to find a host and their bridge friends to live free in a three-bedroom beach house at Mt Maunganui – pictured – while they

host bridge events there, report on congress people and happenings, and do posts of themselves and friends enjoying the beach, the patio ... and of course the bridge congress. If this is you, enter the competition by 15th December: full details at NZ Bridge – Congress – top item in the dropdown menu.

Bridge and Pre-empting can be tough!

by Richard Solomon

If ever you thought bidding was easy (OK, I know that is a stupid statement!), then try this little bidding problem. It really happened!

		♠ 5		
		♥ A Q 9 7 6 5 3		
		♦ 9 3		
		♣ K 9 4		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
	3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠	
Pass	?			

There is no obvious answer. Your partner knows you have seven hearts already but no other bid non-heart bid really appeals. Perhaps 4H is the best answer, though often when you have pre-empted and you do not like partner's suit, you should bid 3NT ... and trust your partner has a diamond hold.

Had you bid 4H, your partner would hopefully bid 4S and you can pass that. Had you bid 3NT, your partner may pass. Both 4S and 3NT are interesting contracts, 4H much less so unless you are East! Take a look.

North Deals	♠ 5		
N-S Vul	♥ A Q 9 7 6 5 3		
	♦ 9 3		
	♣ K 9 4		
♠ 10 8 2		♠ K 6 3	
♥ J		♥ K 10 8 4 2	
♦ A K 8 7 4 2		♦ J 6	
♣ 7 5 3		♣ Q 8 6	
	♠ A Q J 9 7 4		
	♥ —		
	♦ Q 10 5		
	♣ A J 10 2		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	?		

Against 3NT by North, East could/should lead a minor. A club lead will be very friendly for the declarer. Say, though, that East started with DJ. Declarer will

cover with DQ and if West inserts a higher honour, then the contract will make. Although West cannot be sure (they cannot see D9), they may have to give North a trick before they can run five more diamond tricks. So, West should play low at trick 1.

If they can play a low but encouraging diamond at trick 1, North must lose either a heart or a spade trick to East. When East wins the lead, they can play their second diamond and then West scores five diamond tricks to beat 3NT by two tricks.

Interestingly, the only game that North-South can always make is 4S. With South declarer, West will start with two top diamonds. The best defence is for West to continue with a third small diamond because East can tell their partner they have only two diamonds (low like as they play D6 then DJ). Can you see what South must not do even if they think East could use a trump to win the trick?

They must discard a heart and save that vitally important trump for later. If East chooses to ruff (and discarding does not help them), two bad things will happen to East. Firstly, whichever suit they return will help the declarer. If East returns a club, they play low to dummy's C9 and then play that vital trump, finessing and soon get very good news when they lay down the ace (the fall of SK is the other bad thing that will happen to East). Back to CK and the queen will soon appear to give a relieved South 10 tricks.

A heart switch would not have helped East, putting declarer where they want to be, in dummy.

So, a tough hand to bid for North-South, a tough hand for the defence if they are defending 3NT and tough for any declarer in 4S.

Good fun of course, especially if you get a positive score. Pre-emptors are meant to make life difficult for the opposition and not for your own side!

Any contributions to the newsletter, please email Wendy Morris, wmnzuk@gmail.com.