

NEW PLYMOUTH BRIDGE CLUB NEWSLETTER

April 2023



Slow Play – an alternative view

*Slow play by our opponents – never by ourselves! - can be annoying or frustrating. The following article - **Bridge Fear** by Maryellen Harper looks at this in a different way. We also need to keep in mind that new/junior players will often experience fear as a common feeling when at the table*

I used to play bridge with a woman who played so slowly, I found it difficult to play with her. It wasn't just playing the hand. It was bidding, it was leading after the dummy went down, it was deciding to draw trumps or not draw trumps. It was everything. It was brutal to be in dummy when she was declarer. If she had 10 trumps and the opponents led a suit we were void in, she would hem and haw, "should I trump this Ace, or hang on to these trumps?" It seemed like every decision was a debate, a delay. I wanted to scream, "Trump that Ace!" when it was so obvious that was the correct move to make. I found it hard to sit quietly in dummy.

When I would play with that partner, I would tell myself things like, "be patient, be kind" or "you're slow sometimes too, give her time." However, by the fourth or fifth hand, my self-talk turned into, "this is ridiculous" or worst yet, "OMG! Will you just pick a card and play!" I was often frustrated and irritated.

Then one day, she couldn't play, and I was paired with a very experienced player. He was the director of another bridge club and had been playing bridge for over 40 years. I knew he was a great bridge player, and I was somewhat intimidated. Almost from hand one, I struggled. At one point I found myself in a strange bidding sequence that I most certainly didn't intend or understand. Then our opponents doubled. And we were vulnerable. I believe we ended up in a 6NT doubled, vulnerable contract with me as the declarer. With shaking hands and a racing heart, I played that hand. I played incredibly slowly. I was the worst version of a slow player. Shuffling and reshuffling my cards. Touching one card, then pulling back and moving another card in my hand. Shifting my position back and forth in my chair. Then, after a particularly bad move, making groaning noises when the opponents took the lead. The opponents should have called the director on me as I was breaking every bridge rule I knew. Playing super slow, touching, and retouching my cards, groaning as I played, etc. I realized that I was terrified. I couldn't think straight, my mouth was dry, I couldn't seem to breathe normally, and I felt lightheaded. I think I was having a bridge panic attack.

After it was all over and I was safe at home, all I could think about was my slow bridge partner. I behaved very much like she does. Could she be afraid, and that's why she plays so slowly and hesitates before each move? It was a true lightbulb moment for me. What if my partner is just as afraid of playing each hand as I was when I played that horrible 6nt contract? What if all her hesitation and slowness is just bridge fear?

It's terrible to feel afraid. Fear is debilitating and truly a horrible feeling when playing a game you love. I know for me, I can't play at my best when I'm terrified of making a mistake, or looking foolish, or failing my contract, or disappointing my partner, etc. So, what can we do when that horrible emotion overtakes us?

There are a few things I try to do when gripped by fear while playing:

- Take deep breaths and try to calm my breathing.
- Remind myself I'm truly doing my best and forgive myself for the mistakes I'm making.
- Remind myself this is a game and I'm over exaggerating my emotions.
- Tell myself everyone has been where I am at some point while playing.

For those of us who may not feel the fear I'm referring to but may witness this in another player, simply acknowledging and understanding the situation for what it is, is half the battle. I'm sure there are many people who play slowly for different reasons. However, once you identify fear as the reason for extreme slowness or hesitation, encouragement is always helpful. Reinforcing positive plays and making supportive comments may help. Letting the fearful player know they're ok and you've been where they are.

(Thanks to Deane Skelton for forwarding this article)

Taranaki Congress 11-13 March

A very successful Congress was held over Taranaki Anniversary weekend. The Congress events were well supported by both local members and good numbers of players from various clubs around New Zealand. The Open Teams event had 20 teams entered, and 34 pairs in the CD Marion Hill Open Main Centre Pairs. A particularly pleasing aspect was the excellent number of entries for both the Intermediate/Junior Teams and Pairs events. In previous years the Congress has often struggled to attract entries to these events.

As usual, the weekend was well organised and enjoyed by the players. Congratulations to the organising committee.

New Plymouth club members place getters included Pam Livingston a member of the winning Open Pairs Team, Sandra Calvert and Colin Carryer 5th Marion Hill Open Pairs, Christine Burton and John Warner 2nd Swiss Pairs, Deane Skelton and John Warner 1st Intermediate Junior Pairs, Lindy Macdiamid and Gabrielle Masters 2nd Intermediate Junior Pairs. Below are NP place getters in the Intermediate Junior Teams



Taranaki Congress Intermediate/Junior Teams
2nd Walt Crawshaw, Patricia Chivers, Judith Schumacher, Liz Crawshaw
3rd Annette Weaver, Sherre Robertson, Audrey Young, Jan Hawkins



70 Percent Club

Date	Pair	Score
27 Jan 2023	Catherine Gabites & Campbell Priest	73.88
31 Jan 2023	David O'Shaughnessy & Sarah Green	72.53
05 Feb 2023	Lyn Muller & Maggie Garnham	71.05
06 April 2023	Gallia Therin & Gaylene Phillips	70.83

The Ten Commandments of Bridge

1. Do not pull partner's high-level penalty double – ever!
2. Do not double opponents' part score contract without four certain trump tricks.
3. If you double the opponents' game contract, make sure you make the killing lead.
4. If your partner makes a low-level double and you are uncertain if it is for penalty, takeout or reopening.....bid again.
5. Do not miss cold games and do not sacrifice against a game that can't make.
6. Do not bid 10% slams, and do not bid 7NT missing an Ace.
7. Do not make vulnerable overcalls on K 10 x x x and do not rebid your K x x x x three times.
8. Do not go on a drinking binge between sessions.
9. Do not lead out of turn.
10. Do not revoke

Being better at the table - Part two

This is the second part discussing mannerisms, manners or actions at the table which from time to time annoy or distress our opponents or partners. As we go into the new playing year it is timely to remind ourselves of these.

Hogging the bridgemate: The best way for the EW player to accept a result is to leave the Bridgemate on the table as they press the Accept button. That way, all four players can see the following screen showing the other results. Some EW players hold the Bridgemate up in such a way that no-one else can see the screen as they press Accept, and leave it there as they look at the other results before placing it back on the table.

Announcing the board result at the table: Many members do not want all the results read out. As well as creating problems when it's overheard at the next table, there are times when the opponents know they got a bad result and don't want to know the gory details. Best advice – look at the result if you want, but say nothing – if the others want to know, they can look too.

General rudeness and impoliteness: This is something close to the hearts of many players. Members comment how rude it is when pairs continue their post mortem of the previous hand and completely disregard the incoming players as they take their seats. Opponents arguing with their partner is something else people hate and this can be unpleasant for others at the table. However look at this philosophically - partnership disharmony can only worsen their results and improve your score, so best advice is to disregard it and look forward to some good boards coming your way!

Congratulating partner: The bridge etiquette books tell us it's polite to say "Well played, partner" after your partner makes a contract as declarer. Some will disagree. There are times when a partnership has mis-defended and it's only because of this that the contract makes. It's twisting the knife somewhat when an opponent congratulates their partner for their brilliant declarer play when it was not their good play but the defender's bad play that let the contract make. Sometimes it is best to refrain from commenting on the "brilliance" of your partner's declarer play.

Wanted! A volunteer to mow the club's lawns

Club member Campbell Priest is relinquishing responsibility for mowing the club's lawns. Campbell has been carrying out this task for the past 7 years and has decided that it is time for another member to take over from him. The club wishes to thank Campbell for his efforts.

Is there a club member or members who are willing to look after the club's lawns? If you are interested please contact Deane Skelton. Details of the role can be provided by Campbell.

Heard at the Bridge Table

There is more to life than Bridge, but not much more.

Too bad partner. It was an unlucky grand slam you bid. The ace of trumps was on the wrong side.

"The difference between an excellent bridge player and an incompetent bridge player is that excellence has its limits."

Count your losers and count your winners. If the total doesn't come to 13, count your cards.

Recent Club Results

Monday

Nae Nae Pairs

1st Karin Champion & Jill Johnson
2nd Anne Fitzgibbons & Gabrielle Masters

Yvonne Scott Pairs

1st Judy Jefferies & Rebeca Owen
2nd Marilyn & Graham Hill

Tuesday

Vogeltown Pairs

1st Neil Murdock & Jude Hanson
2nd Lindy Macdiamid & Raewyn McLean

Nicholsons Pairs

1st Sarah Green & Jude Hanson
2nd Russell Wilson & David O'Shaughnessy

Wednesday

Omata Road Pairs

1st Sheree Robbertsen & Tony Wey
2nd Jill Johnson & Diane Hill

TSB Pairs

1st Rick Derham & Lisa Miller
2nd Moya Lewis & Michael Muller

Thursday

Rock Gas Pairs

1st Kumar Gunatunga & Brian Rowland
2nd Sheree Robbertsen & Janine Fenelon

New Partnership Pairs

1st Brian Rowland & Michael Muller
2nd June Lees & Leanne Young

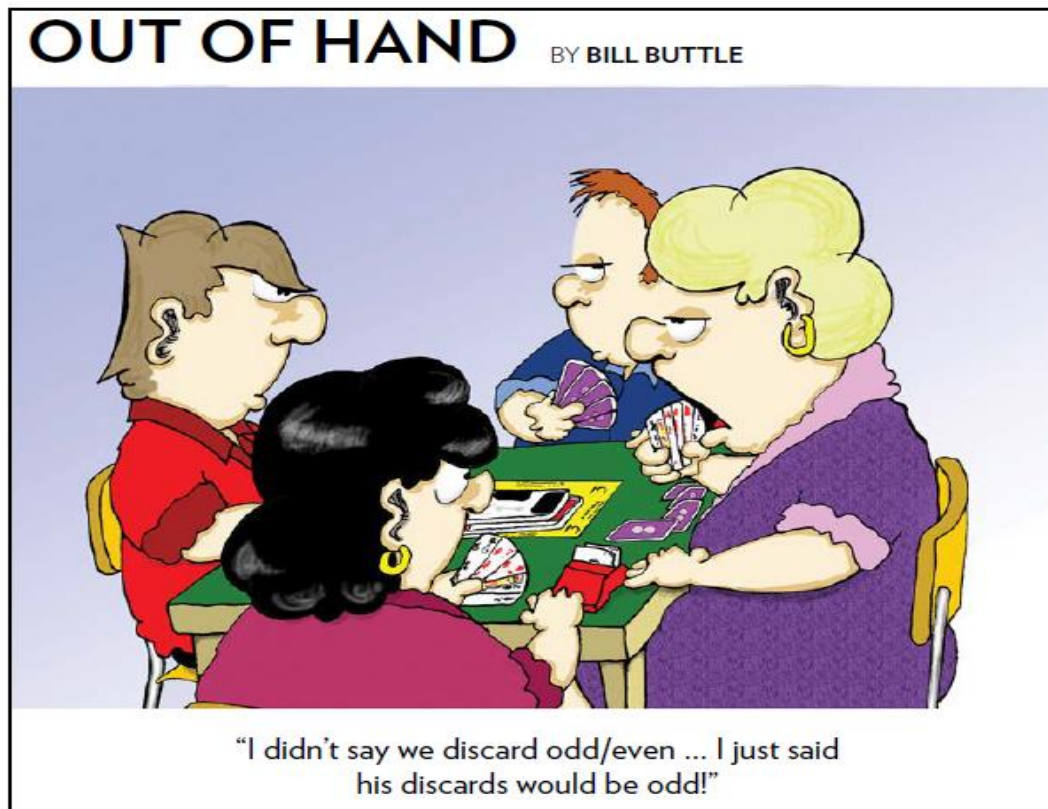
Friday

Dreamers Pairs

1st Carolyn O'Sullivan & Karin Lilley
2nd Andrew Freyne & Gallia Therin


Strength & Balance Made Easy Pairs

1st Kevin Turner & Neil Murdoch
2nd Jim Sutherland & Karin Champion



Bridge Hand: Looking ahead

(From The Brisbane Bridge Centre Newsletter)

North Deals Both Vul	♠ K 10 5 2 ♥ A Q ♦ K 8 3 ♣ Q 7 4 2		
♠ 7 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ A Q 10 7 5 2 ♣ A J 8		♠ 8 6 ♥ K 10 7 6 3 ♦ J ♣ K 10 9 6 3	
	♠ A Q J 9 4 3 ♥ J 8 4 ♦ 9 6 4 ♣ 5		

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	2 ♦
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	All Pass		

Play shouldn't start when the auction ends; as the bidding unfolds good players will place cards around the table and visualize how the play might go. Thus North felt it reasonable to bid game on the grounds that the bidding suggested his ♦K was well placed. Sadly declarer South did not draw similar sagacious conclusions from the bidding.

On the opening lead of the ♥9 declarer finessed with the ♥Q. East won with the King and promptly returned the ♦J. West took the Ace and returned the ♦10 allowing East to ruff dummy's King. East then switched to a Club and West won the Ace and cashed the ♦Q. Down two.

South cannot win more than two heart tricks in any event, but the consequences of losing a finesse on the first trick are clear; West has most likely got a six card Diamond suit for his overcall. South should take the ♥A at the first trick, draw trumps and give up a Heart to the King. If the defenders force out dummy's ♦K, South gets to his hand with a trump and throws one of dummy's Diamonds on the ♥J. A Diamond ruff in dummy is declarer's 10th trick.

Moral: Listen to the bidding.