

Julie retires in September

Regrettably we need to advise we have received notice from Julie Atkinson of her intention to retire following the AGM in September. Over the coming months we will be working with Julie to ensure we have a smooth transition to a new Manager/Secretary.

We will be arranging a suitable time to recognize and celebrate the time, effort and value that Julie has made to and for the Club. More detail will follow in due course.

Julie is very excited that she will now have lot more time to do and focus on things she has been unable to do, such as playing bridge. Undoubtedly we will see Julie at the Club on a very regular basis.

Braille cards

We're delighted to let you know that we have been allocated \$557 through *Good in the Hood* promotion at Z Remuera which is an enormous help towards replacing the current Braille cards. We need two sets of 28 decks and they cost about \$25 per deck. And thanks also to Jan Ashwell for organising this on behalf of the Club.

Coming events

9 May 8B Pairs sponsored by Hedgerow 9:45

HEDGEROW

18-19 May North Island Teams 15A 10:00

Queen's Birthday Congress: Junior, Intermediate, 'Just Open' and Open

A series of special events run over three days from Sat 1 June through to Mon 3 June. All players at all standards are very welcome, as always. The website www.akbc.co.nz has online registration forms.

The Club is especially keen to encourage less confident players to attend and enjoy excellent days of bridge. There are additional prizes for Best Junior and Best Intermediate pairs, so fame and fortune beckons for all entrants at all levels.

For those wishing to attend all three days of the Queen's Birthday Congress, special prices are \$60 for Junior and Intermediate players and \$80 for Open players.

On each day players are encouraged to have refreshments, socialise and enjoy a complimentary snack after play ends. Prize giving generally takes place 30 minutes from the end of play.

Pre-entry is required to Saturday and Sunday events, but not for the Monday Walk in Pairs.

Sat 1 Jun	<i>Intermediate/Junior Pairs 8B</i> 9:30 am two sessions start finishing late afternoon \$25 per Junior and Intermediate player pre-entry required. Prizes for top three pairs in each grade- Entry numbers permitting.
Sat 1 Jun	<i>Just Open Pairs 8B</i> 9:30 am two sessions start finishing late afternoon. A "Just Open" player is one with less than 75A points and less than 120 rating points. \$25 player pre-entry required. All players are welcome but prizes are only allocated to Intermediate/Junior or Just Open players.
Sat 1 Jun	<i>Open Pairs 10A</i> 9:30 am start three sessions finishing early evening \$35 per player pre-entry required.
Sun 2 Jun	<i>Congress Teams 10A</i> 9:30 am start finishing early evening, pre-entry required. Up to six players per team, entry price per team is \$240 for the two days, and Intermediate/Junior/just Open teams \$100 per team. The following day has the Open Teams plate and finals. Those not qualifying are able to attend the West End Walk in pairs (see below). There are special prizes for the top performing non-Open teams.
Mon 3 Jun	<i>West End Walk in Pairs 3A</i> 9:30 am start pre-entry not required, finishing late afternoon. Pre-entry is NOT required. Those playing in the teams event from the previous day may attend free of charge, those coming along on the day \$25.

Recent tournament results

Mar 30 Intermediate 5B 3rd Glynis McNicoll and Robin Hardley, Open 3A 3rd Patrick Carter
Apr 1 Walk in Pairs 1st Nola Clark and Russell Watt, 2nd Peter Bach and 3rd Anne Gelb and Pennie McRobie.
Apr 6 Hibiscus 3A 2nd Christine Wilson and Neil Stuckey
Anzac Salver 8B: 2nd Peter Bach

1NT/1C announced nationwide

We have been announcing 1NT openings at our Club for a while, and this is now a nationwide regulation. In addition we must announce 1C which for natural players by simply saying: '2 plus' or '3 plus' or '4 plus' to indicate what the minimum length of the club suit is.

A few of our members play Precision based systems where 1C has nothing at all to do with clubs and just shows a good hand should say. They should say:

'Strong 16+' or 'Strong 15+' to tell the opponents that it just shows a point count and what the minimum number of points is.

If you don't hear an announcement about 1C or 1NT opens from your opponents, then regardless of whether you are interested in bidding please gently remind them what they are supposed to pre-announce.

Fundraiser 26 May

Sunday 26 May 1:00 pm kickoff, loads of fun with an individual scramble, delicious snacks provided, bar and EFTPOS available, silent auction items, loads of prizes for all sorts of things ...



Since this is an individual event, enter as yourself either at the Club Office by emailing the Club Office. We also need, due to the special fun scramble format, a clear idea of numbers (and of course for catering).

Christine learned bridge at the Waitemata Club in 1982, and was hooked from the start! She joined our Club in 1991 and has been closely involved ever since, these days teaching but in the past as a Committee member and rep player.

She says "since I started teaching beginners in 2001 it is a huge thrill to walk into the bridge club and see people I have taught playing, and an even bigger thrill to see them do well".

It was always her ambition to play for New Zealand, and she's had a few cracks at qualifying but it is not until this year that she's made selection, along with her bridge partner

Neil Stuckey, to represent her country in both Hong Kong in June and Bali in September.

"It is a huge thrill and I am most appreciative of all the good wishes I have had from members of the Auckland Club. My current learners class is soooooo excited - they want to come and watch", added Christine.

Outside of bridge, she finds time to be a legal secretary for a boutique CBD law firm and has negotiated every second Friday off (now isn't that convenient - there is Friday bridge at the Club).

Questionnaire summary

The Committee wishes to thank the 400 members who have taken the time to respond and help plan the future of our Club.

What are the things you most enjoy about your Club?

The highlights were the positive words repeated again and again by respondents including *friendship, friends, friendliness, friendly, the people, convivial, fellowship, and pleasant company*. Snippets which stood out for their simplicity were:-

- *Camaraderie - we are one big family and support one another, and the challenge of the game*
- *One happy contented member, the director and the pleasant company*
- *The nice people I have met. The range of evenings. The high standard of play.*
- *I love playing bridge!*
- *The game, the people (don't know which order)*
- *The people and lovely building and grounds, and the way it is run. And of course the bridge*
- *Making new friends, club social activities and parties*
- *I love playing bridge and enjoy the friendship*

And Patrick Carter's directing skills and the Club organisation and staff were also highly and consistently praised: examples are

- *Friendship. Well run (great director). Very well organised sessions*

- *Meeting all your friends and playing good competitive game. Also having the best director*

Other highlights were several respondents who liked meeting *fiends (sic)* at the Club, and some wanted music, others the status quo.

Would you be interested in attending periodic Bridge lessons, using an active playing format rather than classroom lecture style?

Lessons	Number	Percent
Unlikely	103	29%
Refresher	68	19%
Up skill	37	11%
Up skill Advanced	105	30%
Advanced	37	11%
Totals	350	100%

Over 70% of respondents expressed interest bridge lessons from refreshers through to advanced and this is clearly an area where the Club could do more.

Would you be interested in the Club organising extra activities, possibly in the upstairs bridge room, running for an hour or so first thing in the morning?

Aerobics	18
Pilates	26
Dancing	14
Music choir book club	17
Maybe	3
Other	6
No	234

There was limited support for activities other than bridge: the Committee is keen to have the premises used more fully, particularly the upstairs room.

Would you use table service during Bridge, if offered, for refreshments and snacks? The Club is considering the purchase of a commercial espresso coffee machine. Would you pay for quality coffee?

Table service	Count	%
Yes	35	10%
From time to time	54	15%
Possibly	63	18%
No	203	57%
Total	355	100%

Espresso	Count	%
Yes	76	21%
From time to time	69	19%
Possibly	51	14%
No	160	45%
Total	356	100%

Roughly equal number of respondents showed interest in espresso and / or some form of table service, balanced by others who were not so keen. If the Club does invest in improved coffee and beverage facilities then table service will be required in order to spread the demand over a few hours rather than be compressed into small breaks in play. Many respondents also wanted refreshments or snacks before and/or after play, perhaps on a *bring a plate* basis. There seem to be two groups of members in this discussion: those wanting no change, and those wanting more choice, more flexibility and more out of their Club.

If you could make two improvements to the Club today, what would they be?

When we looked at areas members considered needing improvement, a large number said *I have no ideas, I don't know or no change needed*. Many ladies suggested improvements to their rest rooms, and one bloke let the side down by requesting hand dryers in the rest rooms. There were several gripes about parking, and suggestions to reserve spaces for those with extra needs. A common request for *more parking* would seem hard to satisfy: perhaps more car sharing and more use of buses are options for some members. Other items included extractor fans to reduce kitchen smells, improvements to the Standby service (guaranteed partner), more active facilitation to help find partners, better sound system, green tea, better teabags, poker lessons, more water glasses, cleaner glasses and cups, better quality fruit juices at the Bar, better welcoming, better red wine, etc.. But the most common and overwhelming request was for improved air conditioning and ventilation.

On the timing of sessions, there are a range of views. One group is happy and wants no change. Another wants to re-introduce

refreshment breaks into all sessions, including evenings, to encourage social interactions. Some want to remove the lunch break in daytime play, or shorten the lunch break, while others want a longer lunch break. Similarly, some want more time to play each hand, while others want to faster play! However there seems to be a demand from some members for more variety: for example to start some morning sessions earlier to free up time later in the day, and to start some evening sessions earlier. And some want more sessions, and weekend options. The underlying issue seems to be a very diverse membership with all kinds of demands on their time and perhaps the Club needs to accommodate better the requirements of modern lifestyles. And there was a counterbalancing theme for *no change*.

However all it is not rosy. These quotes make their points succinctly:-

- *People rabbiting on about previous hands*
- *Most people like to play with the same partners year after year and are reluctant to play with partners who are not the grade they are*
- *Rude behaviour and etiquette of some members*
- *To become more user friendly and welcoming, particularly of new members*
- *Encourage members to interact with new members and not take social bridge as a life and death experience*
- *It should look after existing members*
- *Be much stronger in clarifying the etiquette and rules*
- *Some dragons act and behave aggressively: it is often very unpleasant*
- *Less talking by players during notices*
- *Experienced players being more polite to beginners*
- *I don't know how to find partners and create an atmosphere which is more enjoyable*
- *The club needs to be seen as a friendly club so that new members don't feel intimidated by staff and fellow players*
- *Insist dummy puts down cards first before writing details on their sheet*
- *Transition from learners to full participation too big a step for beginners - difficult to play with open players*
- *Integrate new players into sessions*
- *New players are put off by the manner of some of the players*
- *Be friendlier! Make allowances for new players*
- *Be less intimidating to new members*
- *Be more friendly and welcoming. For nervous new comers and visitors it can be very scary*
- *I don't know people well enough to approach them to partner me. While I really appreciate the 'swinger' system, it would be nice to have some regular partners. I wondered about giving my details to the next learners' intake?*
- *We must constantly emphasise that members need to treat others with respect*
- *Welcome new players. People to explain rules kindly.*

On the subject of new members, many said that the route is through additional lessons and making sure newer players were integrated into the Club, perhaps through a mentoring system. Many suggested local advertising, leaflet drops, even radio advertising, and renewed efforts at schools and universities. The latter two avenues have proved singularly unsuccessful in recent years. For Club promotion, one member thought the answer is to *advertise my presence*: another thinks offering *massages* is the answer. And some good news for those of our members in the legal profession: the suggested new espresso machine *will require a trained barrister (sic)*. Finally, one member particularly enjoys *his golf* at the Club.

One theme in many of the responses is a wish for more social time. Perhaps the Club needs to consider many of the changes in society --- varied work patterns, different family circumstances, pressure on fixed incomes, etc --- and offer a more varied set of Bridge options including all of today's bridge offerings but to add more social formats, along with choices of start and end times.

Perhaps one member sums it all up with *keep pushing good manners and friendliness.*

What are the odds?

Benito Garozzo, multiple times world bridge champion, was asked why he took a finesse one way and not 'the other way'. He replied that the odds were better 'his way': and indeed the probability was 50.3% in his favour, enough over a long playing career to make him a winner.

In general suits with an ODD number of missing cards divide EVENLY (so with 5 missing cards assume 3-2 rather than 4-1 or 5-0): suits with an EVEN number of missing cards break ODDLY.

Missing cards in suit	Split	Probability
2	1-1	52.0%
	2-0	48.0%
3	2-1	78.0%
	3-0	22.0%
4	3-1	49.7%
	2-2	40.7%
	4-0	9.6%
5	3-2	67.8%
	4-1	28.3%
	5-0	3.9%
6	4-2	48.5%
	3-3	35.5%
	5-1	14.5%
	6-0	1.5%

Who am I?

Last monthly newsletter included two short biographies and asked you to guess their identities. We need suggestions for more Mystery members: give the Committee your suggestions, if you'd like the articles to continue.

Mystery Member #3 is Setsuko Lichtnecker, and here she at four years old (don't you just love the ribbon!).



And Mystery Member #4 is Anisia Shami, a regular skilled player and always giving of her time to others.

National bridge congress

NZ Bridge has the details of the 28th National Bridge Congress at the Kingsgate Hotel, Hamilton from 28 Sep to 5 Oct 2013 --- see <http://www.nzbridgecongress.co.nz/>

Kidney Kids Kan Tabs

You may have noticed bags of aluminium wine bottle and can tabs on top of the Bar bridge downstairs. These have been collected by many members including your Club's President for Kan Tabs for Kidney Kids project.

Over 45,000 kg of aluminium have been recycled to date, raising \$100,000. The funds raised support children with kidney disease. To help out, just drop your bottle tops and can tabs on Bar fridge.

New website content

Interesting hands, updated when something catches the Director's eye, and the Diamond Jubilee 1931-1991: a short history of the club compiled and written by member Marie Rice.