

BRIDGE TE AROHA: lovely place, lovely game ♠♥♦♣

April 2022



Well, we are not yet back to normal but we are heading in the right direction. Orange rather than red and no need including at our club to have a vaccine pass. It's nice we can all play together.

It is also good to see we are trying with a Thursday evening session, a very casual session for those who would like a game. It may turn out to be a good place to “blood” our learners as they compete their lessons. First Thursday was 14th April. I was there with the Learners on 21st April and both Anna and I agreed there was a nice atmosphere and interaction between the two groups.

I also intend to write up a deal each Wednesday morning after I have played in a Tuesday session and send out by email to members, one with some interesting learning point. I started on 13th April though for some, the four hands were missing. I will hopefully have corrected that problem by now.

Watch out for more information about our big annual tournament, Spa Town Teams, which is scheduled for Saturday June 25th. We anticipate there will be a Restricted as well as an Open section and the committee's aim is that many of our club players will be taking part. Keep the date free and we will give you more information in May....and we will be knocking on your “door” to get a good number of local teams. No excuses for not playing. 😊

So, to our main feature this month:

HERMANNA: a special birthday: a special lady

Now, if you played a game five times every week plus the occasional tournament at weekends, then that game has just got to be very important in your life. That would certainly be true when referring to the game of Bridge in the life of Hermanna Hemmes.

Yet, as well as Bridge being important to Hermanna, Hermanna has for very many years been important to Bridge with particular reference to Te Aroha and Matamata Bridge Clubs, not just for her own contribution but the contribution made by her family, the Kalma's.

Hermanna just loves the game. There was disappointment written all over her face when she told me during a chat with her the day before that there was no bridge at the club the following day because it was Good Friday! I was engaging Hermanna and Henk in conversation because a rather important birthday of hers is very imminent. Now, I know better than to reveal a lady's age (once bitten...and very badly so, I am very very shy!) but if Hermanna scored her new age in any Pairs session, she would be very happy. Oh, much less than 90 I should add!)

I wanted to find out about how Hermanna got into Bridge and what her roles had been for her two bridge clubs. So, with some help from her bridge-playing children (naturally, they all play!), this is her story.

She came to New Zealand, initially to the Cambridge area, in 1965, from Friesland, and has not strayed too far ever since. However, bridge entered her life first of all in 1988 when she went back visiting family in Friesland. She was greeted by her father who told her she should learn the game. However, it was not until 1991 that she went along to the Te Aroha club for lessons. There were only two learners at the club that year, Malcolm Kirkby and Hermanna. 100% retention...that's excellent!

In those days, Hermanna described Te Aroha as a very competitive club while there was a more relaxed atmosphere at her other club, Matamata. Back then, there were two evening sessions at the Te Aroha Club, Tuesdays and Thursdays but numbers were on the decline and there soon was just the one night. Hermanna did not play that much then but the partnership steward phoned

her to see if she would come to the club to play with Henk who needed a partner: quite a good idea!

She herself soon became the partnership steward and a very active one too. She encouraged the likes of Laurie, Ross Stewart, Joan Derby-Smith and George Sherrell to come and play at the club. Anna commented that in its darkest low membership and table number days, the club would have folded but for the enthusiasm of the partnership steward, Hermanna. A few such new players made a big difference to a very small club...and of course, other than George, they are still active members.

In 2009, Hermanna became President of the Matamata Club, a position she held for three years. For several years, Hermanna organised a New Year's Eve individual at the club. When the club were a couple short for a teams competition, Hermanna came to the rescue by roping in Guy and Anna. Guy had learnt the basics a few years before while Anna was not just thrown into the deep end of playing but was the hastily appointed scorer. The club had its own bridgemates. She knew little about playing and even less about scoring!



Success at the bridge table for Anna and Hermanna

Anna was to take over from her mother as partnership steward at Te Aroha. Meanwhile, one of the even younger generation, Jacob, learnt the game at the age of 12 and a few years later, Jacob's father, Foster, learnt the game too.

So, we had Hermanna, her husband Henk, her three children, Anna, Guy and Foster, her nephew Jacob, and her sister Jel By de Ly (a former Katikati player) all playing. Meanwhile, Hermanna's other 2 sisters played in Friesland. Hermanna and Henk play affably together though she told the story of how at her sisters' club in the Netherlands, there were two wives who played together as did their husbands. Apparently, the wives' partnership has lasted 52 years but the two men's partnership lasted just one week! No further words need be said.

In a rare moment away from the bridge table



Hermann and Henk play both together and apart. Although they met at the Te Aroha Club, they knew each other elsewhere both from Henk's Power Board job and in his later retirement years as a postman, including delivery to the Kalma household! Henk came from Holland in 1955 and joined the Te Aroha club in 1981, now the club's oldest member. He became the club's vice-President and when the President, Barry Jones, moved on, Henk became President. His granddaughter, Ashleigh, is one of the club's youngest. He and Hermann married in 2008.



Hermann and Guy, Foster and Anna at the table

Bridge was also a vehicle for holidays for Henk and Hermann like at the Chateau on a bridge holiday organised by Johnny Lenart or on a number of bridge cruises.

Hermann's commitment to the club was also shown more recently when the building of the new toilets meant no bridge could be played in the clubrooms for a while. You do not need two guesses to know in whose house the Friday daytime bridge was played.

We now have a thriving club in Te Aroha but for a few years, it looked like there would be no bridge club here. The club's survival was in no small way down to Hermann and in later years to Anna. Have a neat birthday, Hermann.



Farm Talk.

Now, I am the first to admit that I know very little about farming, which is a drawback when one lives in Te Aroha. However, I do have a farmer as my bridge partner and therefore get a little bit up to speed....thanks, Anna.

However, farming news today is all about Tyrel Glass, one of this club's younger players. Tyrel and a fellow PHD student from Massey University, Baden Parr, have won the Earth category of a global competition run by Microsoft, winning \$10,000 for the young inventors.

They have developed a smart ear tag called ProTag which tracks the activity of a cow by clipping on to the animal's ear. It monitors the animal's health, grazing and breeding habits and is used to predict if the animal might develop an illness. Farmers can thus use preventative health measures to reduce vet fees, increase productivity and animal welfare.

Last year, the device made the finals of Microsoft's global competition, the Imagine Cup, beating lots of challengers in the Asia Pacific finals and then made a world top 12 shortlist before winning the Earth category. This competition brought together student innovators tackling social issues with technology. Microsoft have won the competition for 19 years.

"Mastitis, lameness (leg and foot pain) and reproduction issues are the main ailments facing dairy cattle. Protag can pave the way for more sustainable farming and improved animal welfare."

Oh, and Tyrel plays pretty good bridge too. Bail up Tyrel if you want to know more though maybe not while he is declaring a difficult contract! See, now I know just a little more about farming and the bridge players involved in the industry.

Together we go: Together we do not!



That's Anna Kalma and I. We are regular bridge partners and we both go to New Zealand Bridge Board Meetings, Anna as a Board Member, while I am a full-time employee of New Zealand Bridge. So, since we both fly from Hamilton Airport, we booked our tickets together to go to a 2-day Board Meeting in Wellington recently.

With the meeting starting at 9.30am, it's an early start to catch the 6.30am plane. I was on the road by 4.50 am from Te Aroha but I had enough time as I had already checked in.



Fast forward to 5.10am and the text I got from Anna. She had tested positive that morning for omicron and very sensibly would not be coming to Wellington. She had cancelled her tickets.


Fast forward to 5.20 am and a second text came through. "May have cancelled your ticket as well."

Fast forward....very fast forward to the airport. No leisurely breakfast in the Koru Lounge as planned.... But panic decisions to make to decide whether to buy a replacement ticket. Naturally, "may" had turned to reality! Oh, and Anna had very considerably cancelled my return ticket, too!

Well, it cost a little extra in the pocket and a lot of extra stress but I made it to Wellington in time. "Sticking Together" or "thinking too quickly". You choose.

No worries, though, the very techno savvy Anna was able to attend the



meeting by Zoom with just a modicum of  on her face. Obviously, checking -in is no guarantee of flying when travelling with Anna. In case you are concerned, our next couple of tournaments are on-line and involve no travelling. Perhaps I should just cancel Anna's ticket in case!

Jigsaws

It's not only bridge hands that need puzzle you at the Te Aroha Bridge Club. We now have a jigsaw puzzle library. You may have seen Charlotte's notice about this. Bring some of your own puzzles in and help yourself to a jigsaw or Wasjig that is there.

Beginners Sessions

We have now had 3 Monday night lessons and for a variety of reasons, we are switching to Thursday nights. We will be teaching out front while the casual new Thursday session is in the main room. This will give the beginners a chance to see the real game in action and hopefully slip in to a Thursday session at the end of their course. The exact number attending the beginners' sessions is a little unclear..between a pessimistic 4 and an optimistic 7.. but what does seem certain is they are enjoying learning...and the club should get some enthusiastic new members from these sessions. Thanks Anna, Rochelle and Tim for your support.

"The Bigger Boo Boo"

So, the bridge article today may not improve your bridge. It did improve one aspect of my game, however: that of thanking partner for dummy through very gritted teeth! (*Anna, you are safe..since you were not at the table!*)

Which of the following incidents do you think got the worse result? In case you wonder, they both refer to a board played at our club on Tuesday April 12th. I am only going to show you one hand, initially.

Exhibit 1:

North Deals	N W E S
N-S Vul	
♠ 10 3	
♥ A K 4	
♦ A K Q J 10 5	
♣ Q 2	

North opened 1H and our South a pretty decent hand. He passed the time of day with 2D which produced 2H from his partner, the opponents being respectfully silent. South could contain himself no more and launched into Key Card Blackwood. The reply of 5D showed just 1 key card and if South was going to bid a slam, he should really have bid it straightaway, like 6H, but he asked for kings with 5NT. Playing Pairs, if his partner had the 2 missing kings, then 6NT might be a better spot, though even in that case, 6H might be better if SK say was not backed up by the queen.

Alas, South is still waiting for the reply to 5NT!

North	South
1H	2D
2H	4NT
5D	5NT

Pass! The exhibit 1 sequence. Opening lead, SQ.

Exhibit 2

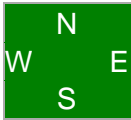
Jumping for "Joy"

Let's see the bidding at a second table. Again, it started with 1H-2D but North came up with 3C. Now that should not be a minimum opener and so South had no qualms about using 4NT for key cards. 5D came the reply which showed 0 or 3 key cards, with the last bid suit, clubs, as trumps. A non-minimum opener just had to have 3. So, South chose 7NT, expecting to claim at trick 1.

North looked a little sheepish as she put down her dummy following West's low spade lead and the sight of dummy did not, in the sense the phrase means,

make South jump for joy! She, Joy, though, was putting her cards, spreading the spades out as widely as she could!

Which South, then recorded the better score?

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

The sad tale was that 7NT failed by 7 tricks, 5NT by just 5! Great lead, Hanna and ...and you may ask how North could have 0 or 3 and 1 key card in the same hand. Ask Joy! She was first to point out that there were 18 tricks (by taking the club finesse, 13 if you do not!) available on the lead of any other suit and if East revoked on a spade lead, the contract would still have made.

I had only comforting words between very gritted teeth and the knowledge that our opponents proceeded to bid a making 7NT a couple of boards later. They then held a combined 37 hcp between their two hands. My fault, obviously, as we only held 34!

In case you are wondering, Joy to my partner. Other than counting key cards, she played extremely well.

Just a final note about Hermanna. On the most recent Tuesday night, one of the worst boards we suffered was when our opponents bid to 3NT making an overtrick. It will come as no surprise to anyone at the club that the declarer was Hermanna. Have a happy birthday.

Until May... Richard Solomon

