

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

**Te Aroha News February 2026**



10<sup>th</sup> February saw Henk formerly turn 90. Remember, we had an advance celebration at the club last month. So, on the actual day, Henk's family put on a nice afternoon tea at a church hall in town. There was a good spread of local bridge players there including many members of the Kalma family.



Henk came to bridge in the early 1980's and in 1982 was the club's Most Improved Player. The following year, he was elected to the Committee and 1987 moved an important Committee change, that "the Committee should no longer consist of 4 men and 4 women but of 8 people."

In 1993, the AGM paid Henk this special tribute: "A special thanks to Henk for organising a new door and gate, mowing lawns and proving a most valuable Club and Committee Member."



*All three of his children paid tribute to their father at the birthday celebration. Here they all are, Robert, Colin and Christine, along with Henk.*

He became Club President in 1997 and between 2010 and 2013 was Club Treasurer. Along with Hermanna, he became a Club Life Member in 2023 . He still comes regularly to the Club and plays a pretty good game. All at the Club trust that will remain the case for a good while yet. Happy Birthday to Henk, a really lovely loyal and hard-working Club Member.

### **Rapid Runners**

It is high time in the Club Newsletter that we acknowledged some of the achievements of the children of Club players. Potentially, this area has nurtured two extremely promising young athletes in Annalies Kalma (daughter of Guy and his wife, Liz) and Fletcher Van Heuven (son of Rochelle and husband Honk).

Both started their athletic careers in and around Te Aroha and have gone on to be accepted in US universities. 19 year Fletcher is in his first year at Elkins, a

small town in West Virginia, while 22 year old Annalies is in her fourth and final year at University of Nevada in Reno, Nevada.

Running is in their blood and they love the sport. They are and have put in the hard yards needed to be good, potentially very good at it. Here for instance are Annaliese's achievements:

**Women's Indoor 400 metres** : 51.81 seconds fastest by NZ female athlete and a record she keeps breaking

**Women's Indoor 200 metres** : 23.35 seconds

**Women 400 metres all time:** second fastest NZ outdoor 400 metre record

Annalies provided the following information about her career so far:

" I started running in primary school at the Te Aroha Athletics Club once a week after school and started training with Kelly Diprose around 12 – 13. My biggest achievements at school was winning the NZ Open Women's 400 title at Nationals in year 12 and placing 2nd at the Australian Secondary School Nationals in the 400 at 16.

I have attended the University of Nevada for three and a half years and am currently a senior with one semester left there. I have been studying Geography and Environmental Science.

My main distances are the 400m and the 200m. The 200m hurts less than the 400m but the 400 gets me the most excited and is still my favourite. I also really enjoy the 4x400m or 4x100m relays as it's fun racing with your friends and teammates.

My best achievements have been breaking the NZ Indoor records for the 400m and the 200m. In July 2025 I also was selected for the NZ team to compete at the World University Games in Germany which was an awesome experience. Last year, I qualified individually for the NCAA Division I Regional meet for the 400m in College Station, Texas. In my first year in the USA, our Nevada 4x400m team qualified for NCAA Division I Nationals where we placed 18th in the country.

My main aim is to break the NZ outdoor 400m record which is 51.60s, set in 1980. Other than that, I just want to get as fast as I can this season and see what comes from it!

One amusing story is last year at our conference championship meet, I was fighting for third in the 400 and dipped over the line a little too much and fell flat on my face! I managed to get the bronze though so it was worth the fall!”



*Annaliese in full flow*

Annaliese Kalma is currently on a record-breaking streak.

Recently, in the space of two days, the former Ange Russek-coached speedster claimed two New Zealand indoor records, continuing her impressive progression on the international stage.

Now competing for the University of Nevada in the NCAA Division I system, Annalies set a 200m personal best (“PB”) of 23.35 seconds, breaking Kim Robertson’s 41-year-old national record set at the 1985 World Indoor Championships. She followed that with a 400m PB of 51.81, improving on her own record set in Reno just two months previously.

Proud moments for Te Aroha Athletics Club, St Peter’s School and coach Ange Russek, who helped nurture Annalise through her formative years—building both a love for the sport and a strong competitive drive.



If Guy happens to be missing from Bridge for a few weeks, there is a big chance that he and Liz will be following their daughter racing in the USA and elsewhere.

Below is the link to the very recent 200 metre race when she broke the NZ Indoor 200 metres record. It is a very short video you can “cut and paste into your browser”.

<https://youtu.be/Bmm7pTtRqHY>

*Meanwhile, Fletcher reflects on his running career and his aims:*

“I started athletics in Te Aroha when I was about 3 but I didn’t start training until I was 10 or 11, then only really began taking it seriously at 15. My best achievements at home were coming 4th at nationals a few times but I never quite got onto the podium.

I am now at Davis & Elkins College in West Virginia, and it is my first year here. I came over in August and I’m studying Sport Management. It is a small college, less than 700 students, in a small West Virginia town called Elkins, population less than 7000. Ironically, I share a room in the halls with a fellow Kiwi runner from Napier. It has been tough adjusting to the climate as we have had 2 months of minus temperatures, lots and lots of snow. The treadmill has become my best friend in these months. We have 3 running seasons in the States, cross country, indoor track and outdoor track.

My favourite distance is 800m (PB 1.52.57) but I get thrown in anything from 400m to 10km cross country

I do not have any NZ records, but I broke 2 records at Matamata College. Although my best running achievements would be becoming the first freshman (first year student) to represent my college in the US at NCAA cross country nationals in Kenosha, Wisconsin. I also paced Sam Ruthe to his Under 18 world record 1km (2:17.8) early this year at Tauranga. I only did half of the race, but it was an honour to help him out and be a part of it.



*Sam Ruthe and Fletcher*

My most recent race was definitely a success winning the 800m at the Mountain East Conference. It was such an annoying race with people getting pushed around everywhere. I managed to stay out of trouble and stay patient and eventually kick home. My original plan was to take the lead with 200-300 to go because I didn't think I would have the best kick, I didn't end up having a choice with the way it played out but I'm happy with how it went and how good I felt. Now indoor season is finished and the outdoor season starts in 4 weeks. We still have to train on the treadmills though because there has been a downpour of snow the past couple of days which sucks.



My long term goal is to go pro in running but I have got a long way to go to achieve that. I want to be able to run competitively for as long as I can.

When I first started athletics, they used to give out tickets at the end of the race for 1st-4th, and everyone else behind that got a smiley face. I was not very good so I got a smiley face every time, and then my first ever time getting a placing, I cried because it was not a smiley face.

Dad says I got my running genes from him but anyone who knows Honk will know that is hard to believe.

Mum has created a Facebook group where I post about my journey called Fletchers USA diary where you can follow me and my adventures along the way."

Two young athletes with plenty of potential.

Meanwhile, Victor can claim family sporting achievement, too, with a cousin winning two speed skating medals for Netherlands at the recent Winter Olympics. Here is Jutta Leerdam, centre, celebrating a silver medal. She won gold in another event.



*And what about Tim?*

**Silver for Tim**



In bridge terms, Tim has a few years to go to compete in Masters (i.e. Seniors) competitions. (It will cost you a few glasses of Chardonnay for me to reveal how many years!)

However, when it comes to the New Zealand Masters Games, held in Dunedin in early February, he is able to compete.... and he competed very well. He won silver in both the Pairs and Fours competitions. Above he is pictured with his Pairs partner, Paul Williams with one of the event organisers between them. In the Teams, his Te Aroha team were very very close to taking Gold.

Where to from here for "bowler Tim"? The Commonwealth Games was on the agenda (maybe) had the event been in Australia but with these games now in Scotland, we will see him, most weeks, competing on Tuesday nights in Whitaker Street with cards rather than bowls in hand.

### **Back to Bridge!**

Just in case you have forgotten, this publication is about the bridge club. So, back to Bridge! The first Tuesday event of the year was the Three Week Individual which was a close run competition. Victor can count himself rather unlucky that with a 3-night average of 64.39%, he only finished second off scratch. I managed to stay just under one per cent ahead of him.

On Handicap, the winner was Rochelle, half a per cent ahead of Victor.

### **In March.... and April**

One date for your diary is Sunday March 1<sup>st</sup> which is **Domain Day** in town. The bridge club will have a stall where for 4 hours (10 am until 2pm), we will be demonstrating what fun our game is and hopefully attract new members.

We need a few of you to come along and play either from 10 until midday or from midday until 2.

The weather will be dry (special order has been made!) and it should be a pleasant way to spend a couple of hours. If you can make it, please let me know in advance.

If you just happen to be around the Domain that morning, just pop in to say hello. It always looks good to have plenty of interest at a stand.

**and Beginners Lessons start on... Thursday March 26<sup>th</sup> at the club...7.00pm**

Do encourage friends and relatives to come along. WoM is a great way to get new members. (Word of Mouth..if you wondered). Cost only 40.00 for 10 lessons including the first year subscription.

Badger those you know to give bridge a go. If you know anyone who is interested, please let Charlotte or myself know.

**For those who want to improve**

I am going to run 3 Wednesday night sessions at the Te Aroha Club for those of you who want to improve your game a little. They will be play sessions (around 15-20 boards over 3 hours with some instruction points along the way).

First such evening is **Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7.00pm.**

If you would like to come, please let me know in advance. You will need a partner and I can do a bit of matching if you do not have one.

This is primarily aimed at Junior and Intermediate players but everyone could benefit.

Cost is \$5.00 per player (going to the club) and pairs from neighbouring clubs will be invited too.

The other scheduled nights are June 9<sup>th</sup> and September 16<sup>th</sup>.

## Wisdom of Solomon



### Small risk to help partner

A question for you. Would you take a bid at this point? 2NT showed game values and at least 4 spades.

♠ 4

♥ A J 7 4 3 2

♦ Q 7 2

♣ 10 9 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
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		1 ♠	Pass
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2 NT	?		
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You might think it dangerous entering this auction at the 3 level though it is not as dangerous as you might think. Your opponents have a spade fit and are heading to game. 3H here is unlikely to make but it could well score less for East- West than making game in spades. They might even have a slam to make.

The really good reason to bid is that your partner will be on lead and you can guide them into probably making a good lead by bidding now. Ross McIntyre did bid 3H and our opponents did bid on slam..6S. Who knows what I would have led had Ross not bid..maybe a safe trump. Look at the 4 hands below. If I had not led a heart at trick 1, H6, the slam would have made.

East Deals ♠ 4  
 Both Vul  
 ♥ A J 7 4 3 2  
 ♦ Q 7 2  
 ♣ 10 9 5

♠ Q 8 6 5	N W   E S	♠ A K J 9 7 3
♥ Q 10 8		♥ 5
♦ 10 3		♦ A 9 6
♣ A Q J 4		♣ 8 7 3

♠ 10 2  
 ♥ K 9 6  
 ♦ K J 8 5 4  
 ♣ K 6 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♠	Pass
2 NT	?		

On any other lead, declarer can win, draw trumps and if a club had not been led, take a successful club finesse. Back to the East hand with a trump and repeat the finesse. Another trump to the East hand and another club. The losing heart in the East hand can be discarded on the 13<sup>th</sup> club. All declarer would lose is a diamond.

Not so after a heart lead from South. Declarer would have to lose a diamond. If you can, help your partner in the bidding with a lead suggestion. As in this case, it can be extremely important to get off to the right lead.

That's all for now. There's plenty of bridge at the club and elsewhere in March.

Oh...and remember to encourage potential new members to the club.

*Richard*