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## Newsletter: January 2024

### Are you keeping your New Year's Resolutions?

Here's a New Year resolution that you might want to keep and renew every year: choose a couple of your best-est non-bridge friends and introduce them to us. That's a gift that will keep on giving - to you, your friends and everyone at CCBC.

And there's another reason why your friends will be grateful that you have introduced them to the game played by 200 MILLION people in the world! including such luminaries as Peanuts' *Snoopy*, Martina Navratilova, Bill Gates, Mahatma Gandhi and James Bond.

It's BRAIN FOOD!

"Bridge players plan ahead, they use working memory, they deal with sequencing, initiation and numerous other high order functions with which the dorsolateral cortex is involved." Biologist Marian Cleeves Diamond said this in 2000, at the same time as a University of California, Berkeley, brain researcher was showing a link between bridge play and a boosted immune system.

Another study by a former board member of the American Contract Bridge League Educational Foundation showed that **students** who played bridge scored higher on standardised tests than those who didn't play bridge.

Warren Buffet, although not a scientist, speaks from experience: "It's the best exercise there is for the brain".

### To be sure you have "a full deck" later in life...

...keep playing bridge. Karen Walker, a United States bridge teacher of nearly 50 years experience, specialises in teaching adult beginners, is active in the ACBL and a prolific writer. She has generously invited us to access her entire bridge lexicon. This is extracted from her "Why Play Bridge" article and reinforces the benefits that we all enjoy with bridge, whilst providing plenty of reasons for sharing those pleasures with our friends.

**Bridge can be a lifelong pursuit**, this is not a game for those who demand instant gratification. Learning to play well takes time and effort, and the game is impossible to master. But that's precisely why bridge is so popular, and why it's called "the game for a lifetime". No matter how many years you play, you'll always find new challenges, and the learning process will never end. Bridge also caters to all physical conditions and disabilities, so players can actively pursue their pastime throughout their entire lives.

**Bridge will never bore you.** The game can be exciting, challenging, frustrating and humbling, but it will never be boring. There are more than 750 trillion possible hands, so

you'll see something new every time you play. It's actually a fast-paced game, too. Each hand takes just five to ten minutes to play before you move on to the next deal and a new challenge.

**Bridge stimulates the brain.** Bridge is one of the best ways to practice the "use it or lose it" advice for maintaining mental sharpness in older age. Research has shown that regular bridge playing improves reasoning skills and long- and short-term memory. You'll feel the neurones firing not only while you play, but long after. Many players say that hours after a bridge game, they still feel mentally alert and energised, similar to the "high" that long-distance runners experience after a race.

**Bridge exercises both sides of your brain.** Bridge is one of the few games that stimulates both the left and right sides of your brain. Every time you play, you use -- and improve -- your skills in communication, logic, math, memory, visualisation and psychology. It's a unique type of mental workout that is both relaxing and invigorating, and that can't be duplicated by other leisure or work-related activities.

**Bridge can improve your physical health.** Research has shown that a game of bridge can even boost your immune system. By stimulating the brain cortex, bridge-playing activity produces higher numbers of the white blood cells that fight disease. Other studies have found that people who play bridge regularly are 26 times less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease.

**Bridge is social.** A game of bridge involves communication and cooperation with your partner and interaction with your opponents. There's a special camaraderie among bridge players that develops from the social setting and the game's emphasis on teamwork, ethics and sportsmanship. And if you play duplicate bridge, you can find new friends and partners at more than 3300 bridge clubs throughout North America alone.

**Bridge is a bargain.** All you need for a bridge game is a deck of cards and three other people. You don't have to leave your home, and if you have a computer, you don't even need the cards or the people. You can play and practice on your own with bridge software, or you can join in live games with thousands of players from around the world at one of the free online bridge clubs. You can also enter games at your local duplicate club, where you'll enjoy a three-hour session of bridge for less than the cost of a movie.

**Bridge is fun.** Of all the reasons to learn the game, the most important is that it's just fun to play. It offers the suspense of poker, the cerebral qualities of chess and the excitement of athletic sports, all in a sociable setting where you're a participant, not just a spectator. Every session allows you to test yourself and experience the feeling of accomplishment when you find a successful bid or play.

That's what keeps people coming back to the bridge table, and it's why bridge will always be the world's most popular card game.

© Karen Walker.

# The Tweenies who played between Christmas



and  
New Year



## WHAT ARE YOU DOING NEXT MONDAY MORNING?

How about starting the week off with a relaxed and enjoyable game of bridge? Your friends will be pleased to see you, you'll start the week with a smile and all will be well with the world. We'd love to see you at the table. You might even grow some new neural pathways. Since every bridge game presents you with a different set of mental challenges, every game is an exercise in improving your brain. New pathways are created by participating in new activities and developing new behaviours and, as you know, there's no shortage of new mental problems with bridge. Take that brain of yours for a run around the block with us.



The Club sends a special "THANK YOU" to Dorothy Rosewell for her generous donation of books for our library.



## All of these hands have points to open. But one should not be opened. Which one?

### Opening Bids

Playing Standard American it is normal to open one Club or one Diamond when you have at least 3 cards in the suit and 12-19 High Card Points (HCPs). It is also normal to open one Heart or one Spade with at least 5 cards in the suit and 12-19 HCPs.

There is one exception to the above. Imagine you are the opening bidder, and you pick up one of the following hands:

- |            |            |           |           |            |
|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 1. S. K743 | 2. S. K987 | 3. S. AK9 | 4. S. J54 | 5. S. AQ83 |
| H. QT5     | H. AJ643   | H. J876   | H. AJ97   | H. A985    |
| D. AQ986   | D. K8      | D. K9652  | D. KQ763  | D. Q654    |
| C. 7       | C. 2       | C. 6      | C. 8      | C. 7       |

When you do not have 12 or more HCPs you can consider the Rule of 20 to help you decide whether to open the bidding.

**The Rule of 20** is “add the number of cards in your two longest suits to the number of HCPs”.

If the answer is 20 or more, you may open the bidding. So, on Board 1 you may open 1D, on Board 2 you may open 1H, on Board 3 you may open 1D, and the same on Board 4.

Board 5 is a problem hand. Yes, you have 12 HCPs, **BUT 4441 hands are very often difficult to bid**. Imagine that you decide to open Board 5 1D and your partner responds 2C. 2C is forcing and you must respond. You have no rebid that correctly describes your hand. Personally, I would not open the bidding on Board 5.

***IMPORTANT. You should use the Rule of 20 in the first, second, and third seats. You should NOT use it in the fourth seat. In a future article I shall discuss fourth.***

When you open 1NT you are telling your partner that you have a balanced hand and either 15-17 or 15-18 HCPs.

The definition of a balanced hand is that “it does not have a singleton or void and has no more than one doubleton”.

Therefore, there are only three shapes of hand that qualify for a **1NT opening – 4333, 4432, and 5332**.

Note that the definition does NOT state that you can take a trick in every suit, although that may well be desirable.

However, if you choose to bid something other than 1NT when you have 15-17 HCPs and a balanced hand, BUT you have 3 small cards in one suit, you are (a) misleading your partner, and (b) not opening 1NT as often as you should.

Brian Richardson. 2023 Tel. 0456663761. Email: [brideljd@gmail.com](mailto:brideljd@gmail.com)

## Congratulations to our December Promotions

Lyn and Don Paton became Graduate Masters;  
Lyn Dulin, Wiesla Rynkiewicz and Paula Threlfo became Club Masters;  
Lawrie Ransom reached Local Master status;  
Lucy d'Ambrosio became a Bronze Local Master;  
Kerrie Ransom achieved the rank of Silver Local Master;  
Phil Thomas was promoted to State Master and  
Alison Heathcote received the mantle of National Master.

## Congratulations Jan Perring and Peter Collett



## FOR CCBC's BEST RESULTS IN THE AUSTRALIA-WIDE PAIRS!

Look out for full details on Lessons and Events in Kerrie 's weekly emails. This month complete information is not available at time of Newsletter publication.

## INTRODUCTION TO SUPERVISED PLAY: THE BRIDGE BETWEEN LESSONS AND PLAYING IN A DUPLICATE GAME

Our new year will start with this new Lesson programme - starting as each intake of new students completes John's first course, Brian Richardson will continue with the group with a series of four lessons designed to prepare new players for life in one of the many games the Central Coast Bridge Club runs.

The first three sessions will involve four prepared hands for discussion and play. The first session will have four hands focusing on bidding and playing in a NoTrump contract. The second session will focus on bidding and playing in a Major suit contract. The third session will focus on bidding and playing in a Minor suit contract. The fourth session will NOT have any prepared hands. The hands will be dealt at the table and bidding and play will commence. In this session Brian can be called to the table to help with bidding and/or play.

*Hopefully with the joint efforts of John and Brian, followed by the welcoming environment provided by Club members, an increasing number of students will continue their progress to becoming competent successful Bridge players.*

### DID YOU KNOW?

A SHOT OF WHISKEY - In the old west a .45 cartridge for a six-gun cost 12 cents, so did a glass of whiskey. If a cowhand was low on cash, he would often give the bartender a cartridge in exchange for a drink. This became known as a "shot" of whiskey.

BUYING THE FARM - This is synonymous with dying. During WW1 soldiers were given life insurance policies worth \$5,000. This was about the price of an average farm so if you died you "bought the farm" for your survivors.

IRON CLAD CONTRACT - This came about from the ironclad ships of the Civil War. It meant something so strong it could not be broken.

RIFF RAFF - The Mississippi River was the main way of travelling from north to south. Riverboats carried passengers and freight but they were expensive so most people used rafts. Everything had the right of way over rafts which were considered cheap. The steering oar on the rafts was called a "riff" and this transposed into riff-raff, meaning low class.

COBWEB - The Old English word for "spider" was "cob".

SHIP STATE ROOMS - Travelling by steamboat was considered the height of comfort. Passenger cabins on the boats were not numbered. Instead they were

## TEMPO.

### DO YOU KNOW THE BRIDGE MEANING?

The WBF defines tempo as the speed with which a bid or play is made. The best advice is "Always try to bid and play in an even tempo".

The WBF also uses the term "break in tempo" (BIT) as a longer-than-usual pause preceding an action.

Occasions will undoubtedly occur when a player hesitates before bidding - this may give unauthorised information to both partner and opponents.

Difficult bidding decisions take time and it is certainly your right to break a tempo if required. A hesitation to bid is not illegal, what IS illegal is taking advantage of the hesitation. A hesitation then a pass puts your partner between a rock and a hard place. The partner of the hesitator must be careful not to be influenced in any way by the break in tempo and should bid his hand as if the hesitation had not occurred.

Put simply - do not play too fast or too slow, but try to maintain a consistent tempo. Don't pass too slowly or double too quickly. And - of course - body language is not permitted.

The standard time for a board to be played is 6 minutes.

Matt Raj Mal

## AND....DID YOU KNOW?

If you arrive late to the game, the Director of the Session has the right to refuse you permission to play. Imagine how your partner would feel about that! IF you are running late (and if you're not a constant offender) you should call the Club as soon as you become aware and as close as possible to 30 minutes before the session is due to start. This will allow the Director time to decide which movement the computer should be set up for.

If you are looking for a partner, you should call before leaving home and let the Director know.

## YOUR NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

YOU'LL BE PLEASED TO KNOW THAT IN ORDER TO SAVE YOU TIME  
YOUR NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR YOU!

Place your hand on your bridgemate (no! the machine, not your partner) and swear:

I will be seated at the table 10 minutes before the session starts

I will not be in the kitchen making a cup of something

I will not still be discussing the last hand at the next table

I will greet people with a smile and I will thank them for the game

I will put my cup in the dishwasher, not leave it on the bench

**I will remember I made these commitments.**



Thank you for your support last year and welcome to 2024, which will be the year the club starts putting on weight. We have plans. We have the most agreeable and interesting club members. And we are the best little bridge club this side of the black stump.

We look forward to a wonderful year.

The Moving Finger