



BALLINA BRIDGE CLUB

Newsletter September 2020

from the President

Chery McCallum



At last I have some good news for you. The Management Committee have almost finalized our Covid-19 Safety Plan and we are looking at, hopefully, opening the Club in mid October, provided there are no further outbreaks that may jeopardize our plans. When we do open, things will be very different and returning Members will be required to adhere to the Covid-19 rules. Our Secretary, Judith, has outlined some of these (see below). Our Covid-19 Safety Plan will be emailed to all Members before the opening of the Club.

Unfortunately, at this stage, we will not be able to hold a Christmas

Party at the Club this year.

We are planning to hold our AGM in late November, depending on further outbreaks, and it will be necessary for our Members to register their intention to attend. The email with details will be sent at a date closer to the AGM.

I'm pleased to see so many Members playing online and I know some of us will still play after the Club has reopened. The Ballina Challenge has been a great success and is into its third session. A huge thank you to those responsible for getting the challenge off the ground and the work on various other platforms in an effort to get a

Ballina only tournament going.

Our Club has lost another Member recently, Jan Holland passed away a couple of weeks ago. She requested no fuss and passed away, peacefully, with her son at her side.

For those who were intending to travel to Tenterfield, their President contacted me last week to let me know that they have cancelled their Congress. Next year it is being held on the 16 & 17 October in the Transport Museum.

Please keep an eye on the light at the end of the tunnel, as it is getting brighter.

REOPENING – Message from the Committee

by Judith Crafti

If your partner/s is not coming back to bridge but you would still like to, register your intent via email to bbclub@internode.on.net and the list will be given to our partner co-ordinators to help you find new partners.

Your Committee has been working on our Covid Plan in preparation for re-opening which we are currently planning for mid-October and further, planning an AGM before the end of November. Please give consideration to joining the Committee if you will be returning as there will be vacancies.

We are wanting to know how many

members intend to return. We realise that some of you may not want to come back to face to face bridge until Covid is in the past.

When the club re-opens it will have to be quite different to what you are used to based on current laws and advice. Some of the changes will be:

- Pre-registration online on our website
- Min 4 tables, max 12 tables
- No guarantee of North/South tables
- Cash free club – Vouchers to be purchased online

- No tea break
- No after bridge refreshments
- All players to contribute to sanitising at end of session
- Kitchen will be closed, so bring water bottle/flask/snacks
- Air conditioner will not be used

We are considering opening for Open Sessions on Monday, Wednesday & Saturday and restricted on Thursdays.

Just before this email was sent we have 60 names of people ready to return in October.



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Play Committee Report - August 2020

Marjorie Askew



News and Updates:

The Ballina Challenge:

Round 2 of the Ballina Challenge was completed and Round 3 is now underway.

Well Done to our Round 2 Winners:

Orange Group:

1st: Winston Guymer & Paul Smith

2nd: Bill Powell & Marjorie Askew

Yellow Group:

1st: Jacquie Williams & Roger Spain

2nd: Deb McLay & Ian Michelson

Green Group:

1st: Heather Whitely & Diane McClintock

2nd: Beth Martin and Phill Robbins

Blue Group:

1st: Cecily Barrack & Kay Pearson

2nd: Ina Buhse & Gail Pick

Winston and Paul were also Round 1 Winners – can they go for the ‘hat-trick’ in Round 3?

Full results can be viewed on the Club website, in the ‘normal’ Results section. Presentations of (modest) prizes will be sometime!

60 players have now competed in the Challenge. In Round 3 we have a mix of regulars, returners and

newcomers. Round 3 concludes on September 14.

Ballina Online Tournament on Real Deal Bridge

As reported in the last newsletter we were invited to take part in Beta testing for this new Australian online platform on Wednesday August 12. So we were their first Virtual Club.

We had chosen RDB, a new Australian platform because their clear intent was to emulate the club environment in an online setting.

10 Ballina pairs logged in enthusiastically, and signs were good as we gathered in the lobby to exchange greetings. Similarly at the end there was a gathering in the lobby as results were announced.

However, between the pleasantries, we had (big) Problems. Compatibility with Macs turned out to be the main contributor and those on Macs kept losing connection; the ‘real chat’ feature also had problems.

Looking back we all had an ‘experience’ and hopefully a bit of Fun!

(RDB quickly arrested the Mac issues, introducing a special App. We continue to monitor

how they’re going and you can check them out at: <https://play.realdealbridge.com/>. If you joined up for our test run you will find you need to re-join as they have upgraded their software.)

Coming Up?

With ‘normal’ (face-to-face) bridge hopefully getting closer, online bridge will continue both for those not comfortable about returning to the Club, and as an extra for others.

Play Committee continues to explore more online options including:

1. A Ballina Tournament on Stepbridge or BBO:

As you probably know Mark Miller has undertaken extensive research into the various platforms – many thanks Mark for all your efforts.

After the ‘hiccup’ with RDB we are keen to have another ‘Go’, so the question now is which platform?

Stepbridge has recently launched Club sessions. They have a strong following amongst Ballina members, and are a not-for-profit Australian organisation.

BBO is the global player, is thus perhaps more familiar to many,

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continued from P2

and their Club sessions are supported by the ABF.

(The \$s for taking part and then coming to the Club are much the same.)

You can help our decision making by letting me know if: You would take part in an online Ballina Tournament and if so your preference for Stepbridge or BBO. (Please email me at: marjorie.askew@gmail.com)

Once we know there is enthusiasm,

we can look to possible session times.

2. A Teams Event on BBO:

We have tested Teams matches on BBO. These go well and replicate the 'real thing'. So maybe a Teams Challenge – or even a Teams of 3 event??

3. Ballina Challenge Round 4:

We'll take a short break when Round 3 concludes, then on to Round 4. The format is a round robin Pairs event, with matches

of 16 boards played on BBO or Stepbridge. Initially pairs are allocated to groups according to masterpoints, then it aims to be performance-based.

We'll keep you posted as plans unfold. There is a Play Committee Meeting on Wed September 9.

Meanwhile if you have any feedback or suggestions please, please call or email me.

Marjorie Askew

Anne Jackson achieves 'Grand' status

Janet Brown

Over thirty years ago, Tom Macdonald found himself working in a High School in Lismore and he wondered if any staff members were interested in learning to play bridge. Gary Lynn, Eric Hurley and Anne Jackson volunteered.... and so began Anne Jackson's illustrious path in bridge.



Anne Jackson teaching bridge

Not only does Anne play bridge, she is much valued and appreciated as a Director, a Teacher, a popular partner and a hard working member of the Ballina Bridge Club. She says she learns the game by watching, asking questions, listening and doing. She has an amazing memory for remembering the conventions and systems she plays with a variety of different partners, and her powers of deduction as defender and declarer must be a legacy from her many years as a Maths teacher.

During this time of Covid 19, she has become a keen player on Stepbridge and finds time to coach some new players. She has also participated in three rounds of the Ballina Challenge.



Photo: Anne Jackson & Janet Brown after winning the Open Pairs Final E at the Gold Coast Congress in 2019

She is to be congratulated on attaining the rank of Grand Master. Well done Anne – and thank you from us all for your services to bridge.



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10 BBC members at Killen Falls

Howard Jeffery

On the very, very windy and cold Sunday, a picnic was organised by Jean Lowe and despite the weather 10 stalwarts turned up. I say "picnic" but it's a generous description.

The plan was to meet in the Lennox Head shelter which has half a dozen tables and have fish and chips - hardly a stable food of picnics. It may have been windy outside but the shelter acted as a vortex and the wind speed doubled through the arches.

Luckily on the non-windy side of the street a table came clear and we headed there to eat and thaw. Next stop was Killen Falls which were flowing and the photo was



Above: Jean Lowe, Howard Jeffery, Jack Pierce doing an ethereal appearance, Jenny Maley, Eileen Pierce, Liz Jeffery, Greg Maley, Terry Lowe, Lesley Burford and Russell Burford.

taken on the lookout overlooking the dam wall. Quite a lot of water was flowing down Emigrant Creek so the dam and the falls were impressive. We got the group photo but Jack had wandered off so he has been patched in, and looks like he's emerging from the trees.

Red points on Fridays and Sundays

The ABF runs Red Point events every Friday at 7.30pm (AEST) and Sunday at 2.30pm (AEST) in 3 skill categories - Open, Restricted (<300MP) and Novice (<100MP).

To join a tournament as a pair, you will need

- \$BB - the cost is BB\$3 or about A\$5.
- To be online with your partner to register
- The registration starts 2 hours before the event

Buy BB\$ top right of screen on BBO (see below)



Go to Virtual Clubs > ABF Australia > then two hours before the event the three tournament options will appear (see below) and you can register with your partner.

Rank

Promotions:

Congratulations to the following members for their achievements:

Anne Jackson:
Grand

Vivian Waddell:
Local



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Online Alerting

Mark Miller



The 2017 Laws for bridge do not cover alerting. This is left to the local Regulating Authority and the states have generally adopted the rules set out in the [ABF Alerting Regulations](#). But the ABF have now released an addendum to cover online tournaments. The Laws and original Regulations apply unless modified by this [addendum](#).

Back in the June 2020 edition of the club newsletter, Paul Smith wrote a great article on alerting in online bridge. This should be read or re-read to gain a full understanding of the addendum.

From the *Australian Bridge Directors Association's* August Bulletin here is a summary of some of the changes in the ABF Online Regulations:

I don't believe we are being advised to explain every call, but certainly where more than one meaning might be expected. Over-alerting is not a problem because partner cannot see the alert though he might get curious about all the long pauses. So, alert:

- opening bids of 1♣ and 1NT, essentially an announcement as in face-to-face
- any call one would alert face-to-face
- any call one would pre-alert

face-to-face even if it's a double, redouble, cue-bid of an opponent's denomination or is above 3NT

- any call for which one would offer an explanation as the declaring side at the end of a face-to-face auction
- any call for which an explanation might avoid an opponent's misunderstanding.

So the original alerting regulations say that cue-bids of the opponents suits, unusual doubles or redoubles and bids at the 4 level need not be alerted BUT the online regulations say they should be so these regulations take precedence.

-	-	-	1♣*
pass	1♦	pass	2♣
pass	3NT	pass	4♣
pass	4NT	pass	5♣
pass	5♥	pass	5NT
pass	pass	pass	

An example from a recent game on Stepbridge might help here. I had 7 clubs headed by AKQ and scattered honours in the other suits to come to a 14 count. I opened 1♣ and alerted it as 3+. The bidding was straightforward until Lorraine bid 3NT - jumping to show 16+ HCP. I then used Gerber to ask for aces but did not alert this. We have

a firm understanding that even though I have bid clubs naturally that my 4♣ bid is still Gerber. But the opponents do not know this so I should have alerted the bid. Likewise Lorraine's answer is dependent upon what is the system for Gerber responses so should have alerted her 4NT response explaining '3 aces'. Similarly the 5♣ and 5♥ bids for Kings should have been alerted. I do not believe that the 3NT bid needed an alert as this should not be misunderstood by the opponents.

Extra time is lost in all the alerting and when you are playing in clocked movements, especially 2-board rounds, you start worrying about being too slow. I wanted to focus on bidding 5NT or 6NT so didn't want the distraction of all the alerting especially when it did not affect what the opponents would bid. But you can also lose time by not alerting and having the director called to your table. Short explanations will not slow you too much and may actually save time so follow the regulations.

Of course if you are just playing a casual game online then alerting can be more relaxed.

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Greeting and Pre-Alerting in Online Bridge Tournaments

Mark Miller

When playing on Stepbridge or in one of the ABF organised tournaments on BBO you will be involved in a session split into usually 8 or 12 rounds. Each time you have a new set of opponents it would be polite to say hello, maybe introduce yourselves and give a quick rundown of your basic system. The sort of thing you should do with face-to-face bridge. This can be time consuming to type into the table chat box and lead to lots of typos when done quickly.

The solution is to prepare something in advance. You can use any program that lets you enter text: e.g. email, wordprocessing or a simple text editor.

Type what you want to say in this program. I used a draft email with something like:

Hi opposition from Mark and Lorraine. SA, 15-18NT, 1C=3+, multi-twos, odd encourage even McKenney

Here SA is an accepted abbreviation for Standard American. Of course much of this is on your system card but why not tell them up front.

Then highlight the text and use the keystroke combination CTRL+c to copy it into the special area of computer memory called the clipboard. This only has to be done once for the session.

Now back in BBO or Stepbridge and at the start of a round click into the chat box, if necessary, and then press CTRL+v to paste the clipboard contents there. Job done in a second and no typos. The same text is still in memory and can be used at the start of every other round with CTRL+v.

If you want to get a bit fancier then Windows 10 has a built in clipboard manager. When activated in Settings it allows you to store multiple items on the clipboard. You can even pin some of these so that they are stored permanently.

Using this you could have a stored greeting but also the explanations for any of your more complex system bids. Rather than CTRL+v, you access the list of stored items with WIN+v and then just click on the item you want pasted into the current location.

There are other free Windows clipboard manager programs that you can download. These have more functionality than what is proposed here. Examples are Ditto, 1Clip, ClipClip and Clipboard Magic. Some of these allow you to assign keyboard shortcuts to your clipboard items.

Android tablets, iPads and Macs all have clipboard functionality. Similar to the above you can download apps that provide more features. Browse the internet to find instructions for these. For example, if you have an iPad then search for 'iPad clipboard'.

From Janet Brown's Bridge tips - **the Unconscious Overbid (UO)**

♠ Q10954 You open 1♠ and partner bids 2♠. You pass with your minimum hand and that ends the auction.

♥ A62

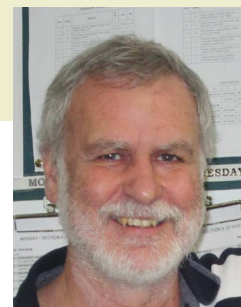
♦ KJ4

♣ Q9

The following day, you hold the same hand – the bidding starts the same way, but your RHO bids 3♣. 1♠ (p) 2♠ (3♣)

Many players will bid 3♠ in this situation, and this is an example of UO. If you intended to pass your partner's bid of 2♠, you must pass now. Your hand has not improved in any way. In fact it is worse. Your ♣ Queen is of dubious value now, and you assigned it 2 points in your initial valuation.

The Power of One - that last pesky trump



Paul Smith

<div> <div>11</div> <div>D</div> </div>		North	
		♠ K64	
		♥ K42	
		♦ 9764	
		♣ A32	
West		East	
♠ 107		♠ QJ5	
♥ J9		♥ 10875	
♦ KJ853		♦ Q10	
♣ KQ106		♣ J854	
	South	4♠ S	
	♠ A9832	Lead - ♣ K	
	♥ AQ63		
	♦ A2		
	♣ 97		

ruffing purposes before drawing trumps (but beware of our homeless friend's tale of woe). Sometimes you should draw all but the last trump. The so-called "Rule of One" says that if there is one trump outstanding and it is the best one then it is probably wise not to use two of your own trumps to draw it.

The rule of One says to consider not using two of your own trumps to draw the defender's last high trump.

With the highest trump outstanding take your Heart tricks. King, then Ace, then Queen. If the Hearts break 4-2, which is the problem situation, then someone may ruff the Queen of Hearts. No problem! The top trump was always going to win - we have budgeted for it. The good thing is that there is still a trump in dummy to cater for your last, small, Heart. In the example, the defender holding the best trump also has the length in Hearts. You can ruff your small Heart in dummy because you did not draw the last trump.

Bottom line - by leaving the best trump outstanding you preserve your own trumps to ruff a loser.

What can go wrong? If you take the two rounds of trumps and are 'scared' that the defenders will ruff your good Heart tricks so you play a minor (I hear that people are 'scared' a lot). If the defender with the last trump gains the lead they will happily draw dummy's last trump. Now your last Heart is definitely a loser and down you go.

Remember that there are few rock solid rules in bridge. The rule of one is really the "strong guidance of one". When should you draw the last trump even if it is the best? Maybe next month ...

There is a story about a social worker finding a homeless person sleeping rough on a park bench. They get talking and the social worker discovers, as is all too common, that the person is well educated and well spoken.

"What twist has your life taken to lead you to this point?"

"It all started with a four Spade hand where I thought I would ruff a Diamond before drawing the trumps ..."

Apocryphal, certainly, but indicative of the importance teachers place on drawing trumps to their students. But is the imperative to draw trumps always true? Of course not. Very few things in bridge are rock solid rules. An Ace is a good lead against 7NT would be one of the few rock solid rules that I can think of.

Sometimes you should never draw trumps. The "cross-ruff" line of play generally does not involve leading trumps. Sometimes you should use the trumps in the short hand for

Suppose you are sitting South playing this hand in a 4♠ contract.

West leads the King of Clubs. What are your prospects? You are going to lose one Spade, one Diamond and one Club with no hope of doing any better. If the Heart suit breaks 3-3 then there are no losers but if it is 4-2 or worse then your fourth Heart will be a loser. To cater for the 4-2 Heart break you could try to ruff a Heart. A little thought reveals that won't work because whoever has the doubleton Heart will ruff your third round.

Drawing trumps won't work because you can't do anything with your last Heart. Not drawing trumps doesn't work because your third Heart will be ruffed. What about drawing most of the trumps?

Win the opening lead and take the Ace and King of trumps. Both defenders follow suit and so one of them has the best trump left (East in our example). To draw the last trump will take two of our trumps.

Musings by BBC members - life during the COVID pandemic

TOGETHER WHEN APART

During the 1980s and 1990s the Ballina Bridge Club built a reputation as “The Friendly Club”. Many people from other clubs in the area would regularly play at Ballina, and the Ballina Congress would attract players from 10 or more different clubs, including from Sydney, regional NSW and Queensland. The Club was regularly congratulated on its hospitality and excellent catering.

The friendliness of the club is evident today in the way people have been supporting each other during this time. Within the spirit of community the following members have generously shared their stories over the past six months.



Rob Eldridge

LIFE WITH COVID

When asked to write this article about how my life has been under Coronavirus restrictions, my first thought was - how boring will that be!!

Now that I have reflected on the last 6 months I can see that the “new normal” hasn’t been so bad after all.

At first the restrictions were a bit tough to handle - remember - only 1 visitor; stay in your postcode and all regular activities cancelled. That is when I put off the cleaner; tried to become a domestic goddess; did big jigsaws; tossed out clothes and everyone else bought toilet paper.

However restrictions eased and now I have been able to resume some of my usual activities - U3A cryptic xwords class, walking groups, exercise class and of course Bridge. (All while obeying social distancing and hygiene rules). While we are all sad that the club is closed I eventually succumbed and enjoy On line bridge and more lately some real games. Just counted up and I have played with or against about 30 of you! I have also enjoyed Canasta and Rummycub with friends. That is lots of fun but often involves eating yummy things (because we all have more time to cook) and drinking bubbles (no reason). Probably explains the COVID kilos I’ve gained.

We are so fortunate to live in an area where we can enjoy the outdoors and where there is minimal risk of infection.

Not everyone is so lucky and I am sad for all the families that have suffered loss or sickness and for those workers who have lost their jobs and face hardship.

I am in awe of the Doctors, Nurses and others who have fronted up every day at their own risk. And who wants to be Prime Minister or Premier of Victoria?

How lucky I now feel that my only complaint is that I can’t see my family. That will happen WHEN Queensland will let me in and I feel that Sydney is safe.

Luckily I have friends - mainly made at the Bridge Club. Thanks and stay well.



Jenny Wardley

Musings by BBC members - life during the COVID pandemic

MY LIFE IN COVID TIMES

When the lockdown was announced in March I despaired. No Ballina Bridge Club, no library, yoga, tai chi - all of the activities I enjoyed suddenly were no more. Initially, I thought this would all be over in a short period of time but this was to change.

Family visited, strangers were kind and life was sort of strange. Slowly I was able to structure my days so that there was something to do and I didn't spend all day in pyjamas.

More of track suit, shorts and dog-walking gear was worn and good clothes, boots etc. have not been worn all winter (at least they'll last longer). I started to play online bridge (a lifesaver) and finally the library organised the pick-up of reserved books (you had to set up a time and wait at the back-door of Lennox Head library and secretively (feeling suspiciously like a criminal) pick up your book from a chair outside the door.

I have also become an avid online shopper - I order then return so often I'm sure the Post Office knows my first name. It's tempting to order online (boredom is a problem too) when it is so simple to return the item if it doesn't suit or fit or you just don't like it. At least Australia Post is benefitting. I wonder if our friendly Queensland Premier realises that a by-product of the closed border is an upturn in post office parcel delivery.

My other activity (apart from reading avidly and walking the dog most days) consisted of buying some new hens - we purchased two Plymouth Rock pullets (and then added a third when one, frightened by a magpie ran away only to return two days later). They are huge birds and the three of them virtually run over the others. clumping around and demanding to be let out - they love to free range but don't wander. They are also extremely curious and amuse by poking their heads into the peg basket and anything else unusual around the place.

Otherwise life has been very quiet. We are marooned in NSW with little choice but to remain. I miss all my friends from bridge and hope all are well and that we will return to bridge sometime soon.

Maureen Baker



The pandemic certainly needs to be respected. These days without a car means I'm walking round Ballina, to keep my larder stocked and my body fit.

Bridge has not been my first choice, and online games without a decent computer too hard. A couple of games based here at home were very pleasant. However having been introduced to the Seniors Bridge Club has re-enthused my bridge. We have only 2 or 3 tables, fairly large tables and well spaced. Hand sanitizer readily available and cards hand shuffled. Lovely afternoon tea is safely spaced, respected by members. The members are very friendly and well practiced players. Plenty of fun, with lots of laughs. I am enjoying the experiences.



Barbara Stephens

Musings by BBC members - life during the COVID pandemic

BRIDGE AND THE VIRUS

I commenced playing bridge in August 1991, at Janet Brown's home in Sandstone Crescent, and continued to play regularly for the last 29 years, playing at all the local clubs as well as the Gold Coast & many other clubs. Bridge has become a large part of my life, enjoying playing 3 or 4 times per week & enjoying the friendly atmosphere of Ballina Bridge Club. I've been privileged to witness the Club grow from a mere 43 members in 1995 to over 300 today, to watch the acquisition of land, the building of the club house, the numerous improvements with the dealing & scoring systems as well the tireless work of the committee & many sub-committee members.



Unfortunately on our last bridge day on March 18th we were informed that the Club would be closing down due to the Corona Virus which was happening in Bridge Clubs & other clubs throughout the country. Bridge clubs pose a very real problem (compared to other clubs), due to the fact that most of us are over 70, we sit close to each other when playing & handle the same cards during play. Beside this we regularly have 18 or more tables which adds to our dilemma.

The question then arose in our club & other similar groups as what can be done. Some club members have formed a group to play in one or another's home while our Club Play Committee Chairman, Marjorie Askew, has organised bridge games on the internet, Janet is giving lessons on the computer & our Head Director, Mark Miller is also arranging play on the internet. Some members are finding other interesting internet bridge programmes, while others are reading up on bridge systems in magazines, books & newspapers. Some Clubs are actually playing in their club rooms. Ian Mansfield, a partner of mine some years ago, rang to say that the Hobart Club is playing with reduced tables but using very strict spacing & hygiene rules, however Ian is playing on the internet in some international competitions.

Of course many of our members are spending their time catching up house maintenance, reading, doing jigsaws & other puzzles as well as family history via My Heredity, Ancestry.com & LDS. Some people are using their isolation time contacting friends & relatives by phone, skype & even letter writing! With bowls, tennis & golf clubs re-opening under varying conditions bridge club members are getting back into more sport or doing more exercise at gyms or just riding or walking.

I have been fortunate in many ways as I have been able to spend more time with my family. Unfortunately, my wife, Joan fell & broke her hip recently which has enabled me to do more cooking, cleaning as well as many of the necessary household jobs. Our children visit us more often than usual, helping in any way they can. The main change has been the sorting of correspondence, clothes as well as unnecessary items while cleaning our cupboards, shelves & rooms. Besides the above I have been able to assist Robert Eldridge with his writing of the Ballina Bridge Club history in which he is doing a sterling job.

Living at Crowley Village, as I'm certain that it would be in similar places, has laid down very strict rules for all sections of the organisation. Originally activities were cancelled (no library, swimming pool, gym, games room, cards, indoor bowls, BBQs, bus trips, Bingo etc). However when one thinks of what's happening in other such places it is quite understandable as there are over 550 residents plus a staff of more than 200.

In finishing I'd like to wish all our Club members my best wishes & look forward to back playing bridge before too long.

■ John Fraser

Musings by BBC members - life during the COVID pandemic



A list of what I'm not doing in Covid times would fill the page and it feels like all this doing nothing is turning the brain to mush. In an attempt to stave off brain rot I play StepBridge a couple times a week and cook a lot. I certainly hope strategy works! I miss seeing all the Ballina Bridge folk and feeling the cards in my hands rather than playing them on a virtual screen. Until we meet next... cheers.

Vivian Waddell

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE

I know there are a lot of readers in the Ballina Bridge Club, and readers who have probably read a lot more than I have, but since someone kindly asked me to write something for the newsletter, I couldn't resist the opportunity of sharing with other reading/non reading members what is probably a great love and comfort to many people at different times and in various stages of their lives. Maybe sharing with you my experience of these recent months might strike a chord with some of you, and who knows, it might even ignite a few literary fires. If reading is not your thing, you are, as they say, excused from reading further, but then again, the curious might be rewarded, since this is not at all a learned article about literature.



One hundred years of solitude! What the? More than 30 years ago, some of you might remember that a Columbian author, Gabriel Garcia Marquez wrote a novel with this title. Now 30 years is almost two generations of literature, perhaps millions of literary works have been written since, and these days probably few people have heard of this writer, but he was a winner of the 1982 Nobel Prize for literature. Indulge me, if I repeat the truism that most literature contains some truths, and that great literature contains great truths. Since March, we have all of course had more time to ourselves, time which maybe was previously partly filled with playing bridge. To my own surprise, I have had more time for quiet reflection, more time for my mind and body to be at rest, and the surprise has been that out of that time have emerged thoughts, ideas and remembrances which I had thought dormant or long forgotten.

This is also not a monologue about the literary merits of what is probably a long forgotten book, but rather about how the ideas of some books lodge in your consciousness, can be there for years, and then at a surprising moment, they reemerge, and their truth and timelessness suddenly hits you. And that to me is the joy of literature, and a pleasant experience from the last 6 months.

One revelation which came to me from this book, and which shows how prescient literature can be, concerns that great *idée fixe* of much serious literature, the duality of life and experience. To cut a long story short, "One Hundred Years ..." is a book of metaphors, one piled on top of another, and once that is taken for

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granted, the magic of the work opens up. For example, the 100 years refers to a long period of time, during which the main character, Colonel Aureliano Buendia, searches for the love of his life (Read: the meaning of life), and finally, at the end of his life is reunited with the love of his life (Read: has confirmed for him the knowledge that life is about people and what we share and have in common). Yes, I know, sounds like a potboiler love story which can be knocked out by any old Danielle Steele or Colleen McCulloch, but let me tell you, that it ain't. To find out why, you will have to read it for yourself.

What I wanted to share with you is what Marquez has this character say at the end of his life, after all he has experienced, when he is an old man, and when he is facing the death of loved ones and his own death. At this point, Colonel Buendia thinks that until now, he did not understand how much he loved his friends, how much he missed them and how much he would have given to be with them at this moment (of crisis – my words). Bing – lightbulb moment. I have no idea how many of us from the bridge club have lost friends or loved ones in the last six months, or have indeed missed the friends we made (and maybe took for granted) until recently, but for me this time has made me realize the importance of friends and loved ones, and how easily or effortlessly those people are removed from our existence, whether by Covid, illness or old age, and I have a new understanding of the shortness of time. When we were young (anything less than 60, now that's showing my age), we thought our lives stretched away into the future endlessly, and then wallop, suddenly the realization dawns that it is all almost over, and you ask yourself: "What was that all about, really?"

Speaking of wallop, to show us that all his metaphors are anchored in reality, and that we shouldn't take ourselves too seriously, Garcia Marquez has Colonel Buendia, in the face of this sadness, resort to alcohol, at which point he then utters the words: "Friends are a bunch of bastards" (on the same page, btw). So there, *in vino veritas*.

Finally, so that we are not too gloomy, let me tell you the story of two single ladies of a certain age, neighbours, let's say Bertha and Matilda. Bertha knocks on Matty's door, Matty answers and breathlessly tells Bertha that a man just knocked on her door and said that if she would show him her breasts, he would give her a bottle of wine. Bertha is understandably shocked, and asks whether she has reported it and which way did he go. Matty points with a bottle of wine in her hand and says: "He went that way". QED, *in vino veritas*.

For more literary trivialities, watch for my next article. Dedicated to the memory of JG.

 Peter Stolz

From Janet Brown's Bridge tips - **RANF** = Raise is Always Non-Forcing.

When you raise partner's pre-emptive bid, all you are doing is furthering the pre-empt, bidding to the level of your trump holding (TNT) and making life difficult for the player in 4th seat who obviously has a good hand. You are not suggesting Game.

If you have a strong hand with prospects of Game you must change suit (forcing) or wheel out an artificial bid of 2NT.

Some play 2NT as the **Ogust Convention** asking for a close definition of points and suit quality. Others play 2NT as a **Feature Ask**. Opener will rebid 3 of his suit with minimum values. With a non-minimum hand he will bid another suit to show an Ace or a King in that suit.

Both methods work well as long as you and your partner are on the same wavelength!

