

I hope you all enjoy these two presentations from Malcolm Saunders at Malcolm Allan's farewell bridge session.

ODE TO THE GURU

Why does The Guru condemn our play?
Why must our errors be on display?
Why are we made to feel so low?
Why are our brains so laughably slow?

Why are we called incompetent?
Why does he inspire incontinence?
Why must we always take the rap?
Why are our ideas scorned as crap?

Why does The Guru rant and rave?
Why do we feel just like a knave?
Why do we always fail the test?
Why are we always less than best?

Why is The Guru so very blunt?
Whenever a contract we attempt to punt?
Why does The Guru go on to flail?
Whenever our efforts result in fail?

Why does The Guru treat us thus?
Why does he endlessly fret and fuss?
Why does he always criticise our bid?
Why does he constantly blow his lid?

But why does The Guru want to leave?
Might there be a "just reprieve"?
Why does The Guru end his days
Having us partners no more to faze?

Why does The Guru flee from here
Going away so far not near
How might we ever cope
Without being told "What a dope!"

How in future will we learn?
For his advice we might yearn
How can the club be the same
When all that's left is a name?

A farewell tribute to The Guru (31 January 2026)

We are here to farewell The Guru, so we might as well learn why he's called that. This moniker or nickname was got up by the late Dr William Renton-Power (or WRP), another long-term Bridge partner of mine and, of course, a former president of this club. I can't remember exactly when WRP came up with this name, but I can remember where he did. It must have been 25-30 years ago on an occasion when I was playing with WRP at Table 5 – Webmaster Goddard's table – when WRP first used the expression. Since then, all I've done is help popularise it.

But The Guru has had other lesser-known names. I distinctly remember at a major Bridge event here many years ago Clive Tait, another former president of the club, dubbing him Rockhampton's "Mr Bridge".

Then there was Wendy O'Brien, one of The Guru's several female partners over the decades and, I think, at one time secretary of this club. I can't remember who it was – she or me – but we used to call The Guru "The Great Communicator" (or TGC for short).

And then there were variations of the theme. Given The Guru's near-constant success at club sessions, special events, and congresses over fifty years – and of course Bridge Base Online – another member and I have taken to calling him The Mighty Guru (or just TMG). Is the moniker deserved? No question about it! Apart from his near-consistent success at the tables, The Guru has been, from the very beginning of his connection with the Rockhampton club, its "Bridge intellectual". Many members confronted with a Bridge problem have gone to him rather than consulted a book. Why spend time looking it up when The Guru will give you the answer in a matter of seconds?

Moreover, The Guru's reputation as the club's "go to" person extends far beyond Rockhampton and Central Queensland. When partnering The Guru at congresses and other major events in Brisbane and Townsville in the nineties and noughties, I was several times impressed by how far his fame has stretched.

The membership of any Bridge club anywhere is never static. People are coming and going all the time. Consequently, only the very few who've been in the Rockhampton club for many years could truly appreciate how much service The Guru has given it as teacher, director, president, committee member, consultant, and benefactor (Just recall the extraordinary amount of wine he has supplied the club!).

You aren't asked to agree with everything I've said here, but it would be hard to deny that, with The Guru gone, ordinary sessions especially, will be noticeably different. They won't just be quieter; they'll also be less interesting.

Just think about all the entertainment The Guru, with Mr Cupples as his sidekick, has provided us around the air-conditioning controls. Think about all the people, when their concentration has flagged during a session, who've relied on The Guru to restore them to a state of optimal tension, sometimes even red alert. Think about the interest, even the sense of excitement, The Guru has aroused in us on each of the several occasions he's been suspended from the club!

Seriously though, the role he has played in the club over the last half-century (1975-2025) will soon become apparent. There's an expression we are all familiar with "You never appreciate something until it's gone". The expression's been around for so long that Artificial Intelligence describes it as "a timeless observation" whose origin is impossible to trace. In years to come, we may well say that of the matchless and inimitable Guru

