NORTHERN LIGHTS

Selections from CANADIAN MASTERPOINT bridge magazine

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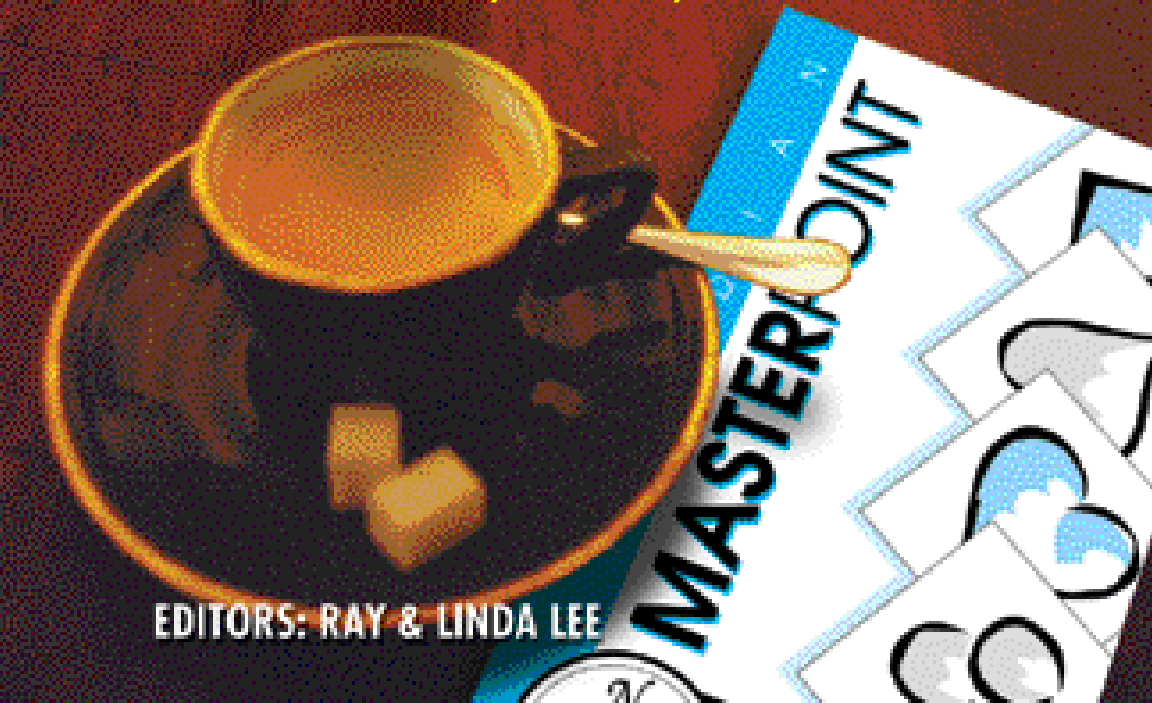

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Introduction

Canadian Master Point magazine was born in 1991 and was laid to rest with much regret (to make way for Master Point Press and a new focus on book publishing) in 1997. After every issue the editors would pronounce, 'This is the best issue ever' — and it was. In those years, we published several hundred pages full of original material, much of which was far too good to be lost and forgotten. Hence this book.

Canadian Master Point was born because we believed that Canadians should have a forum to share their bridge adventures and ideas; but while we always had a Canadian focus, we soon had an international set of writers. Contributions came from as far away as India and as close as the Toronto area, and everywhere in between. Certainly the reason that the magazine existed at all was the result of our volunteer team starting with our Editorial Board. The founding members included Shelagh Paulsson and Maureen Culp, and later members at various times were John Gowdy, Diane Bryan, Patti Lee, and Ron Bishop.

The magazine was a labor of love (which being translated, means that none of us ever got paid for what we were doing). This included our writers, many of them professionals, who nevertheless entered into the spirit of the thing and made their work available to us *gratis*. Without their work we wouldn't have had a magazine at all, and without the support of our advertisers and sponsors we wouldn't have been able to pay our printing bills. We were also lucky enough to receive unsolicited donations from individuals and bridge associations who simply loved the magazine. From a small start, we expanded to an estimated readership of more than 5000 across Canada, and even had subscribers as far away as Australia.

The magazine covered a wide range of subjects. There were puzzles and games, book reviews, editorials, letters to the editor, technical articles, humor, interesting bridge stories and hands and always something for beginners. In selecting the material for this book we tried to pick material from most categories and from a wide variety of authors. Our goal was that not only would the collection be representative of our best material, but it would also have enough in it for everyone to find lots that they wanted to read.

If you don't play your bridge in Canada, you're going to come across some unfamiliar names in these pages. But perhaps this will simply provide an even better adventure. We enjoyed doing this book, because we got to read all the magazines again, revisit our own favorite pieces, and relive for a little while the fun that we had putting the magazine together. We hope you have just as good a time.

Ray & Linda Lee
Toronto, October 2003

THE PLAY'S THE THING

Ah, declarer play, the one aspect of the game where we're completely on our own, to rise or fall by our own efforts. If only we were as good at it as we all imagine we are.

No Beer for Me

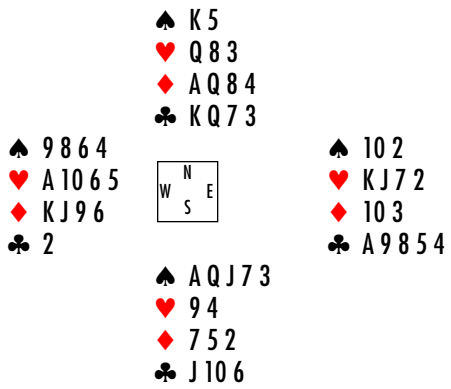
J O H N G O W D Y

Canadian international John Gowdy has spent many years coaching and mentoring junior players. This article came about through his experience as non-playing captain of a Canadian Junior team at the World Championships. If you've never heard of the beer card, here's an explanation. It's a neat device that gives you something to play for on those oh, so boring hands where the result is certain from a fairly early stage.

The 1991 NEC World Junior Championships produced a number of positives, not the least of which to these old bones was the invention of the 'beer card'. This was a fascinating way that the North American juniors found to liven up otherwise dull deals during practice sessions, and as a by-product to increase the attention paid to defense and declarer play.

The 'beer card' is the seven of diamonds (an arbitrary card), and it works as follows. If, while successfully declaring a non-diamond contract, you can win the last trick with the seven of diamonds, then your partner owes you a beer. However, if in an attempt to 'beer' your partner you drop a trick, you owe your partner two beers. Similarly while defending, if you can beat a contract and score the seven of diamonds at Trick 13, the same applies. You can, of course, substitute for beer the beverage of your choice, be it Scotch or coffee.

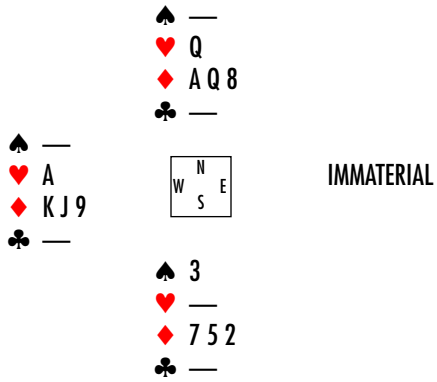
The concept is simple — in practice it can be a little more difficult. Let me give you a hand from a Regional Open Pairs.



West	*North*	*East*	*South*
pass	1♣	pass	1♠
dbl	redbl	2♥	2♠
all pass			

West leads his stiff club to the ace, and East returns the nine of clubs (suit preference for hearts), which West ruffs. A small heart comes back to the jack, another club ruff, a heart to the king, and we have arrived at this position as East leads another club:

The hand should by now be an open book. You must ruff high now, and draw three rounds of trumps, throwing a diamond from dummy. Now the last trump squeezes West in the red suits in this ending:



But wait! Does the layout look as it is here, or did you throw away dummy's eight of diamonds, and keep the four? If not, when you cash your last trump, West throws his nine of diamonds, while you dispose of the now worthless queen of hearts; you take the marked diamond finesse, but you are stuck in dummy! You make your contract, sure, but your last trick is not the very valuable seven of diamonds, but the worthless eight!

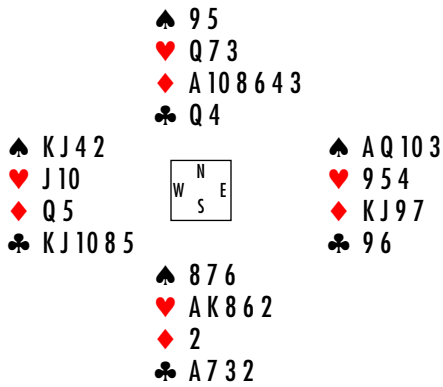
As you've probably guessed by now, I missed this play at the table, and had to suffer an agonizing dinner as partner Geoff Hampson got to tell everyone about my heavy-handed declarer play.

Encounters with the ♥7

MICHAEL SCHOENBORN

Michael Schoenborn ('The Shoe') is perhaps the epitome of S.J. Simon's Unlucky Expert, although arguably much more imaginative than that particular character. A talented bridge player, his career has been bedeviled by ill-health, ill-luck, and the vagaries of chance. Michael is also a fine writer, as you will discover in this book, and one day perhaps, we'll persuade him to let us publish a collection of his work. The Shoe has an immense natural ability for this game. Blessed with great imagination and flair, he is also possessed of extraordinary technical skill and card sense. Add that to a prodigious memory for hands, and a fascination with esoteric endings, and you'll see why the next piece is so typical of his writing.

It has always been one of the most fascinating aspects of bridge that you can play for a lifetime and still encounter brand-new situations. That was the case as the card gods readied themselves to eliminate my team from a CNTC in Vancouver; we were to finish seventh overall, one place lower than we had finished in the Bermuda Bowl a year earlier. Perhaps because we refused to believe in our demise and continued to wrestle with our fate, those same exasperating gods threw us a couple of hands to smile about. This was the first:



You are South (me), and get to open a Roman two-bid showing hearts and clubs; this improves Harmon Edgar's two queens and his three-card fit for your heart suit (known to be at least five), so he makes a game try, and you reach the rather dizzy heights of a three hearts contract. Duncan Phillips finds the lead of the ten of hearts, Bill Crissey (East) looks at the dummy, Harmon leaves to have a smoke, and the kibitzer moves in to turn the cards. After you

finish berating the kibitzer for the lousy dummy, you have to figure out how to make this hand.

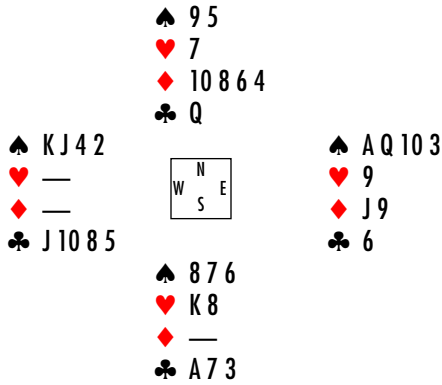
Superficially, it looks as though you're going to need to find the club king on the left, and still ruff a club in dummy (i.e. a 4-3 club split, or short clubs with short hearts), plus, of course, a favorable trump break. All that comes to about a 20% chance, and normally your analysis would stop here, but this is the CNTC, so you take the extra fifteen seconds to see how you are going to execute all this. Something like this:

You will win the opening trump lead and play a low club towards the queen; LHO will rise with his presumed king and return a trump, which you will win in dummy with the queen. After you cash the club queen, the only way back to your hand will be via the ace of diamonds and a ruff. Then you trump your low club with dummy's last heart and return with another diamond ruff. You can't afford any loser-on-loser plays because the opponents will probably be able to ruff out your ace of clubs, or maneuver an uppercut in spades. In short, the lofty 20% chance you gave yourself is further diminished by the need to find either the third heart or the short diamonds on your right, or a 3-3 diamond split. The club ruff in dummy is a one-in-six shot at best.

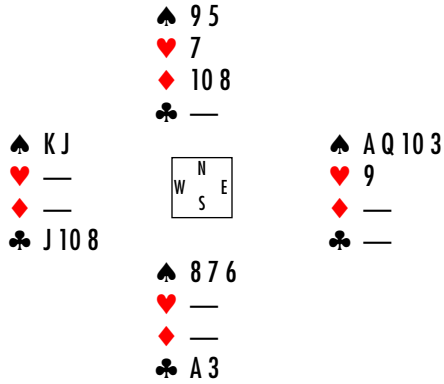
You know you are being unlucky in an event when you can analyze as beautifully as this, but your four-to-one shot finishes up the track. On the other hand, you can try for 3-3 diamonds, 3-2 hearts, and the club king on the left, a theoretical one-in-eight shot that seems more probable after the trump lead, and has some chances even against less favorable splits. Also, if it works you make an overtrick!

As you can see from the diagram above, the seven-to-one shot looks as though it, too, will run up the track, as diamonds are 4-2, so you are probably wondering for whose benefit I am going through this analysis. Meanwhile, back at the hand…

I won the opening lead with the ace of hearts, and led a diamond to the ace, followed by a diamond ruff. A low club produced the king on my left, followed by the jack of hearts, which was won in dummy with the queen. Suddenly, the hand was almost in a position to claim, as Duncan would never have led the heart ten from J-10-9. The position now was:



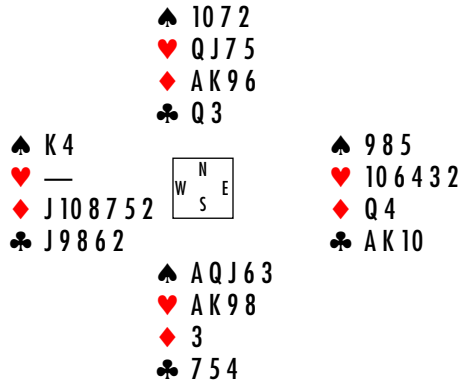
Do you see what has happened? The seven of hearts has become a very important card, as long as you do not become fixated on a 3-3 diamond split. Trump a diamond with the eight of hearts, then travel back to the club queen and ruff another diamond with the heart king! This sets up the diamonds, and also RHO's nine of hearts. When you continue with the ace of clubs, pitching a spade, this is the situation:



On the lead of the ace of clubs, Bill can't afford to trump, because that sets up the seven of hearts as an entry for the two good diamonds. A sort of trump winkle, as he has to pitch a spade. You didn't come all the way to Vancouver to miss a loser-on-loser play, and, needing only one more trick, you continue with the three of clubs to Duncan's ten, pitching dummy's remaining spade. Duncan has one more club to cash, but after dummy has thrown one of the good diamonds on it, it's finally time for spades in the two-card ending. Bill is known to be out of diamonds and clubs, so his last two cards are the nine of hearts and a spade: dummy can ruff the spade at Trick 12 in complete safety.

Is this a 'trump winkle'? Who knows? Who cares? It probably won't happen again in your lifetime. Partners, by the way, went for –100 in three spades, so +140 was worth a 1-IMP swing. 'How could we not bid on?' they asked. 'Three hearts was cold.'

Late in the event, we were matched against a team that was destined to beat us into the semifinal. We were 50 VPs behind them, and for practical purposes needed a blitz. This was the first board:

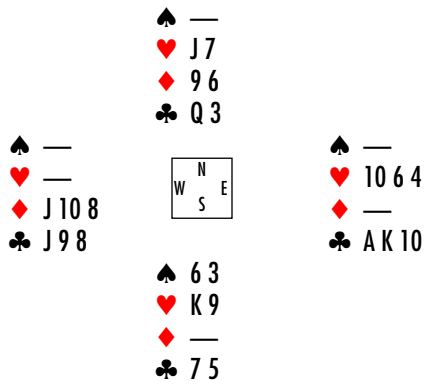


West	*North*	*East*	*South*
LHO[1]	Harmon	George	Shoe[2]
			1♥[3]
pass	2NT[4]	pass	3♣[5]
pass	4♥[6]	pass	pass[7]
pass			

1. Name withheld to protect the guilty
2. Equally guilty
3. Canapé style, 11-16 HCP
4. Forcing heart raise
5. Exactly four hearts, longer suit somewhere
6. Minimum, no slam interest
7. Disciplined pass

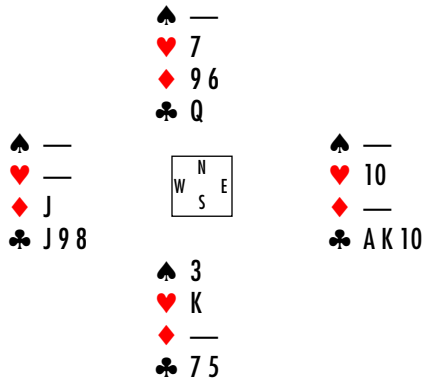
On the lead of a small diamond, I won the first trick in dummy, and thought it would be a good idea to take the spade finesse right away, my queen losing to the king. On the next diamond, I again opted for the mundane play, rising with dummy's other winner and pitching a small club. Now, after a heart to the ace (LHO showing out), I was in a position to claim by cashing two high spades (RHO showing in) and then ruffing back and forth in spades and diamonds, using high trumps from dummy for my good spades. In all, I would take two high spades, two high diamonds, two high spade ruffs, and four trumps in my hand. But... I didn't come all the way to the CNTC finals in Vancouver just to play George Holland, who had five hearts, to hold three of the missing five spades, even if that was the actual situation. I had a chance, after all, to execute a variation of the 'cigarette lighter coup' from *Bridge in the Menagerie*. I cashed the ace of spades, noting with satisfaction that LHO could not give any kind of count, having had to play the king last time. Then over to dummy with the queen of hearts, to bamboozle George with the ten of spades...

Not only was George not bamboozled, but he proceeded to show me the error of my ways by defending correctly. This was now the position, with the lead in my hand after overtaking the spade:



As I led the fourth spade, LHO pitched a diamond, and dummy released the ♣3 while George ruffed and returned a trump. I played the nine, and LHO thought I couldn't afford to overtake with the jack in dummy, so he pitched another diamond. One misdefense to one misplay, and suddenly we have returned to that place we had never been...

Overtaking the nine of hearts with the jack produces this ending:



Now do you recognize it? Trump a diamond with the heart king, as George pitches a club. The heart ten is set up for the defenders, but so is the nine of diamonds in dummy. Dummy's last club goes on the good spade, and George can't ruff as dummy's seven of hearts becomes the entry to the good diamond. He has no choice but to pitch a club, but he still has one club left in the two card ending, so dummy's heart seven scores the tenth trick by ruffing a club at Trick 12!

The hand was always cold, you say? I had to be one of the worst to try the ‘cigarette lighter coup’ on the wrong hand, you say? Surely you didn't expect two hands from a player on the seventh-place team, both about the seven of hearts, both to be flawlessly brilliant? Where would be the justice in that? This was definitely an event where we had to settle for average, so one of our worst hands back-to-back with one of our best was about par for the course.

The Road Not Taken

J O H N C U N N I N G H A M

John Cunningham is an expert bridge player whose very talent makes it hard for him to keep partners – a unique and incredibly imaginative approach to the game. John is well-known by Toronto players never to open a four-card major – he doesn't believe in them; five, yes, three, yes, but never four. A superb card player, he's not above pointing a wry finger at his own foibles, as you can see from the following:

With apologies to the memory of Robert Frost.

The accomplished card player very often is able to form an accurate picture of the opposing hands as the play evolves, so that what would be a guess for some can become a sure thing for the expert. Witness this hand from a recent Club Sectional tournament. Playing matchpoints, with no one vulnerable, I hold:

♠ A 8 7 2 ♥ 7 5 4 ♦ 6 3 ♣ A Q 9 4

RHO commences with a nebulous one diamond. I pass, LHO raises, and partner doubles. It's clear that I have a good hand for this auction, so rather than bidding three spades I choose to cuebid three diamonds with the intention of correcting a minimum heart bid to spades. Sure enough, that's what happens, and I'm left to play three spades.

A diamond is led to this disappointing dummy:

♠ 9 6 5 3
♥ A 10 9 2
♦ A K
♣ 7 5 3

N
W E
S

♠ A 8 7 2
♥ 7 5 4
♦ 6 3
♣ A Q 9 4

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1♦	pass
2♦	dbl	pass	3♦
pass	3♥	pass	3♠
all pass			

We have lots of tricks on defense, so I'm going to have to make this contract to get any matchpoints. How in the world can I avoid five losers? There may be a chance of an elimination: I can try for the hand with the long spade to have three hearts and short clubs. For this to work the club finesse must be right, the hearts 3-3, and the spades 3-2.

I lead a spade from dummy, East plays the ten, and I let this hold. He plugs away with diamonds, which doesn't hurt me. After a spade to the queen, ace, jack, and a heart to the nine and queen, East gets around to clubs, and my queen holds. Now if West has a hand like

♠ K J x ♥ J x x ♦ J x x x x ♣ x x

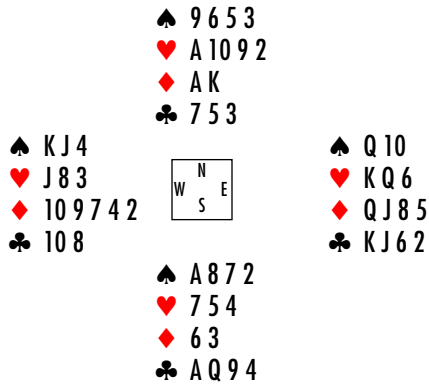
I can make this contract.

I continue with a heart to the ace and I'm at the crossroads. If East has the king of hearts, I must continue hearts, win the club return, and exit a spade in the hope of endplaying West. If West has it, I must first remove his hoped-for one remaining club since otherwise when I put him in he will cash the spade king and get out with a club. Of course, I expect to guess the position correctly, based on the bidding and play so far. Of course.

Well... sometimes not.

At this point, though, I realize that I have just taken a sure thing (given the position of the cards so far) and turned it into an expert guess! This particular crossroads could have been avoided altogether: all I had to do was play a heart to the ten instead of cashing the ace. If the heart ten wins I am home. If it loses, East is in and cannot get to West to cash the spade king; I win the return, complete the elimination and put East away with a spade.

The full deal was:



The moral: it's bad enough that the opponents are always looking to make you guess, without imposing a guess upon yourself.

Would You Rather be Lucky or Good?

F R E D G I T E L M A N

As the old aphorism has it, 'it's smarter to be lucky than it's lucky to be smart'. The Spingold match that your editors lost ten years ago by bidding a 90% slam that went down still hurts a lot. But perhaps those are just the ones we remember, while we forget the 10% slams that somehow come home! Like Fred Gitelman, however, we are prepared to soldier on believing that in the long run, making the right bids and plays will pay off.

If you want to learn to win at bridge, you must also learn to lose. Bridge is a probabilistic game: no matter how well you play the game, the odds will eventually catch up with you.

Suppose you and your partner bid a good slam not reached by the other team. Trumps are 4-0, however, and you lose 13 IMPs instead of gaining 13. You lose the match. Unlucky for you: 90% of the time you would have won the match, but today is in that other 10%. Is virtue its own reward? What is more important to you, bidding to the right contract or winning the match?

The following hand from the fourth quarter of a Spingold match from the Summer Nationals provoked these questions:

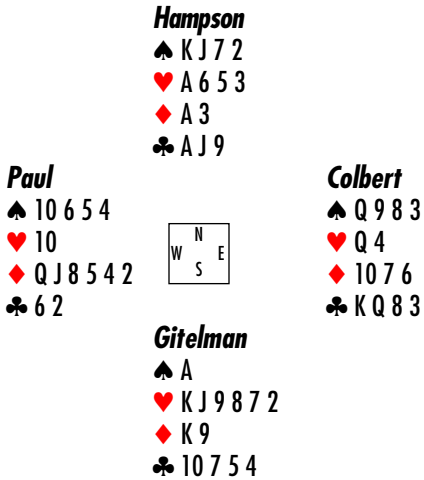
Fred		***Sheri***
♠ x x		♠ A J 9 8 7 6
♥ A K J	W N E S	♥ x
♦ Q x x x x		♦ A K x x
♣ A J x		♣ Q x

1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣
2♦	2♥
2♠	2NT
3♥	3♠
4♣	4♦
5♦	6♦

The 1NT rebid showed 15-17, and Sheri's next five bids were relays, asking me more about my hand. I showed 2-3-5-3 distribution, 5 controls (A=2, K=1) and the ♥K and no other kings. Sheri knew that I had the other two aces and either the ♠Q or the ♦Q to make up 15 points, so 6♦ had to be an excellent contract. Trumps were 4-0, however, and the slam failed. We lost the match by 11 IMPs; had the slam made we would have won the match, as the other team bid to 4♠ on these cards.

Bob Hamman is perhaps the greatest player in the game today (he is certainly the greatest winner). After the match we had the opportunity to ask him over a (stiff) drink if he would have rather bid 6♦ and lost or not bid 6♦ and won. 'A good slam is a slam that makes,' said Hamman. 'Winning is all that matters'.

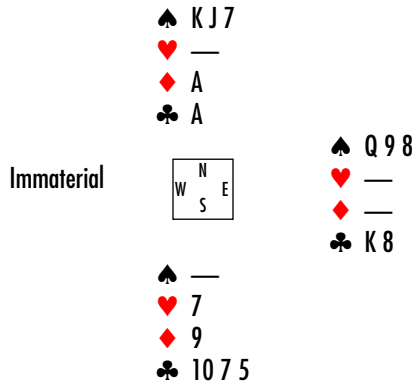
At first glance, this point of view seems philosophically unappealing, but it is very practical. Sometimes you will be lucky, sometimes you will be unlucky; it all evens out in the long run. If you want to be a winner, you had better start thinking like Hamman. Do not dwell on results like the one I am about to dwell on.



This hand is from the second-last match of the round-robin of the 1993 CNTC Finals. My team was desperately fighting to hold on to a qualifying position while the opponents (Team Cafferata) were in a more comfortable position. We lost the match handily, failed to qualify, and the Cafferata team went on to win the event. The above hand was critical in our loss.

Geoff and I arrived in 6♥, a difficult slam to reach, and one that was not bid at the other table. If Mary Paul had led a pedestrian ♦Q the slam is practically a claim: win the ♦A, draw trumps, cash the ♦K and ♠A, and duck a club to RHO. RHO is endplayed, forced to give up a trick in spades or clubs or to yield a ruff and discard.

Our auction, however, revealed that a diamond lead was unlikely to help so Mary turned her attention to clubs. Imagine for a moment that Mary had led a pedestrian ♣6. I might have concluded that both club honors were offside and played as follows: duck the first trick to Dave, win the diamond or spade return in my hand and play all but one of my trumps:



On a diamond to the ♦A, Dave is trump-squeezed. A spade discard would allow me to ruff out the ♠Q using the ♣A as a re-entry. A club discard would allow me to cash the ♣A and claim without even needing the ♠K.

Well, Mary Paul is no pedestrian (and she is certainly not immaterial regardless of what the above diagram claims). Mary and Dave systemically lead low from worthless doubletons, and third and fifth from honors. Mary's ♣2 lead gave me no reason to think that she could not have a club honor, so I finessed at Trick 1 and, after drawing trumps and testing spades, finessed again later. Down one.

It didn't matter that we reached a better contract than the opponents on this deal. We were both good teams; either one of us could have won on a given day. This was their day.

My last sad story is the saddest of all. This hand was the very last deal in the 1993 Maccabiah Games for Team Canada (Fred Gitelman-Geoff Hampson, George Mittelman-Robert Lebi, Irving Litvack-Joey Silver). Canada had done very well in the round-robin and faced the home team Israelis in a 48-board semifinal. Canada started with a 17-IMP carryover. We added 2 more in the first sixteen boards, but lost 31 back in the next sixteen to trail by 12 IMPs with sixteen boards to play. The match ended in a dead tie; there would be an eight-board playoff to decide the winner.

The first five boards were flat. On the sixth board, Israel bid aggressively to a vulnerable 3NT, found a miraculous lie of the cards (playing for Israel seems to have its advantages) and made it. Robert and George properly played in a partscore and we lost 13 IMPs. On the seventh board, the Israelis overbid to another vulnerable game. There was no miracle this time: the contract went down two, and our team won 8 IMPs back when Geoff and I stopped in a partscore. We trailed by 5 IMPs going into the last board.

Fred		***Geoff***
♠ K x x x		♠ Q J x
♥ K	N W E S	♥ Q 9 x x
♦ A K Q x x x		♦ x x x
♣ K J		♣ x x x

1♦	1♥
1♠	2♦
3NT	

Our bidding was very aggressive and 3NT is a ridiculous contract. We needed to bid game, however, to have a chance to win the match (1♦ was passed out at the other table and Israel scored +130). If I made 3NT we would win the match and if I went down we would lose.

I was favored with the ♥2 lead (attitude) around to my ♥K. Six rounds of diamonds followed. LHO discarded a small heart, the ♥J, a spade and a club. RHO discarded a small heart, the ♥10, and two spades. I continued a spade, LHO followed and RHO won; a low club was returned. Do you play the ♣K or ♣J?

I had the good fortune to be in this position. I knew that if I guessed right we would win and if I guessed wrong we would lose. How absurd, I thought, that our ultimate fate in this event should come down to a guess at Trick 9 of the last board!

Was it a guess? It appeared that LHO had begun with four or five hearts to the ace-jack. If he had five hearts and the ♣A he would certainly have over-called 1♥. Thus, if LHO had five hearts it is right to play the ♣K. Unfortunately, I thought of what seemed a stronger reason for playing the ♣J: clubs were the unbid suit and seemed like the obvious suit for the defense to lead on our auction (in fact the contract would have no play on a club lead). The only reason I could think of for LHO not to have led a club was that he had the ♣A: he was afraid of giving me my ninth trick since I was marked with the ♣K.

So I played the ♣J, lost to the ♣Q and lost the match. LHO started with four clubs to the queen-ten and five hearts to the ace-jack. I don't know about you, but I would have led a club from that hand.

I guess the lesson of all of this is that whoever wins any given bridge tournament is not necessarily the one who plays ‘best’ on some absolute scale. The luck of the cards often contributes as much towards who will win as does the skill of the participants. Be grateful for your luck when you get it, but do not get too depressed when you don't. Luck does eventually even out.

The nature of bridge is that everybody always has a chance to win. The better you play, the more often it will happen to you.

Guessing the Trumps

RON BISHOP

In the fifties, a number of books were written to explain duplicate bridge to those who had grown up playing the money game. Perhaps now, it's time to do the opposite. For those who have never played rubber bridge, there are some major differences from the duplicate version. With ever-changing partnerships and systems that are kept simple, partner management is a critical skill; sometimes it seems as though there are three opponents!

Life at the rubber bridge table is, indeed, a much different game! The nature of the game — four Chicago-style deals with one partner before cutting again, the conversion of partscores, scoring for 'honors', changing vulnerability, and the degree to which psychology is paramount — makes the rubber bridge table an unfamiliar and uncomfortable environment for many tournament bridge players. That's not to say that I am an expert on the rubber bridge scene — I'm quite the opposite: a relative novice interloper from duplicate bridge. But I do enjoy rubber bridge — the style of play, the infinite variety of characters one meets, the test of one's 'table feel', the somewhat standardized (??) bidding with few specialized conventions, and the opportunity to put more than your master-point record on the line with each successive hand.

The characters of the rubber bridge world are at the same time its most interesting and its most frustrating aspect. In any club, you'll meet the greats of the game, the used-to-be-greats, the hope-to-be-greats, and the never-have-been-any-good-at-alls. You will learn to recognize the chronic overbidders, the sacrificers-at-all-costs, the hand hogs, and those who only raise your suit as a last resort. You'll see bullies, cowards, idiot-savants, plain idiots, partner-berators, and self-flagellators; all inhabit the rubber bridge zoo, just as they do any arena in life. You quickly realize that your results have as much to do with the characters in your game as with the actual cards that are in play. A recent example comes to mind, involving some of the most interesting characters in our club.

You are playing for a reasonable stake: enough to reward a good session but not be too onerous in an unlucky one. (Note that rubber bridge players never have bad sessions, only sessions in which they were unlucky or didn't hold the cards.) Your partner is an okay player, at times a bit of a 'growler', who has a tendency to overbid slightly and gets annoyed when he is not getting his fair share of the cards. His booming outbursts at partners who have done moronic things are legendary. He might be a little out of his depth on this occasion, but enjoys the company and the competition.

Your opponents are quite good players. LHO is one of the aforementioned idiot-savants, an absent-minded professor who can show real flashes of brilliance but occasionally has to be brought back to the table (sometimes physically). He truly enjoys playing the game, and is a friendly sort, although a chain smoker without equal. RHO is one of the club's psychologists; he knows the characters in the club and in this game probably better than anyone, and enjoys manipulating people into uncomfortable contracts almost as much as making a slam himself. Sometimes we won't see him for a week, and then he'll play for an entire day. I've named him 'the Caretaker', since he always seems to be in control, even when he's losing.

And you; you're just plain old you. You, unfortunately, have to be there.

After a few uneventful rubbers (no one's bid a grand slam or gone more than four down doubled), you get this collection on the last hand of a pivot (both vulnerable with neither side having a partscore):

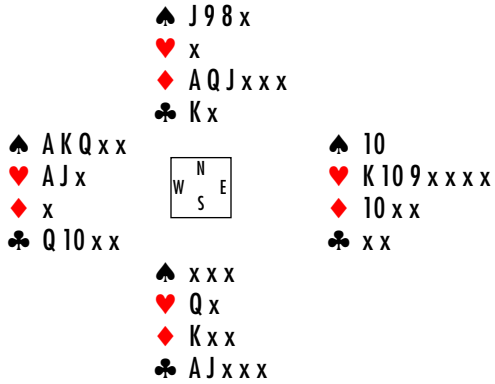
♠ x x x ♥ Q x ♦ K x x ♣ A J x x x

The auction starts 3♥ on your right, and, after you pass, LHO bids 4♥. Partner thinks for a short time, bids 4♠, and everyone passes. Good, you think to yourself; it looks like 4♥ had a good shot, and partner will be happy with a moderate dummy — some trumps, a possibly useful king, and a side suit headed by the ace. Looks like a good time to give your hand to the kibitzer and go get a coffee.

Returning to the table, you see the other players cutting for the next rubber. Must have been a claimer. 'How did we do?' you ask, for practice.

'Not so well,' grumbles partner. 'I had to guess the trumps.'

A quick glance at the scoresheet gives you a shock: -800! Quickly, you point out that it wasn't doubled, but everyone confirms that the score is correct.



Partner had won the opening diamond lead on the table and played a spade to the nine and the ten. RHO was still slightly in the dark, and returned a deceptive low club which went small, ten, king. Partner, hoping to salvage something, led a heart to set up a ruff. RHO played the king, small from

dummy, and LHO unblocked the jack. Now came a diamond ruff, after which LHO drew trumps and the defense claimed.

It first appears that partner's statement about having to guess the trumps was correct (he guessed wrong — we should have been in diamonds), but further analysis shows that three rounds of spades (on which East throws clubs) against 5♦ doubled would have led to the same 800. So the end result (with opponents cold for a vulnerable heart game) is that partner's flight of fancy has cost only an extra point or two. No reason to get uptight or upset: just be aware that your partner on the next rubber will be either the madman who made a vulnerable preempt on king-empty seventh or the go-for-the-throat defender who ducked the A-K-Q of trumps.

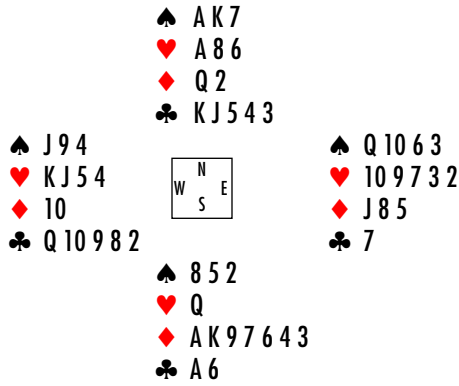
So onward, ever higher (or lower), remembering that your most important pieces of equipment at the rubber bridge table are your ever-present parachute, a pillow for rough landings, and a hide as thick and tough as a rhino's.

A Grand Squeeze

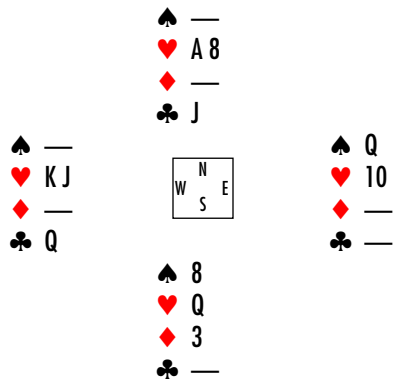
RAY LEE

The books tell you not to spend too much time studying esoteric squeezes and endings, since they don't come up very often. Of course, when they do, it helps to know something about them…

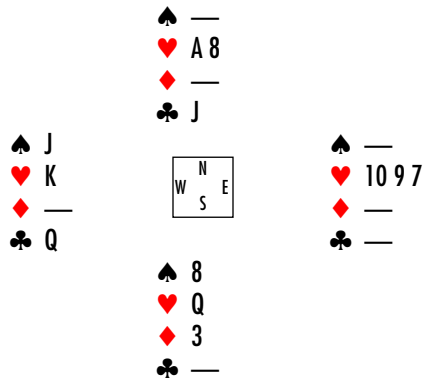
The semifinal of the Blue Ribbon Pairs at the Atlanta Fall Nationals was just over, but David Lindop didn't seem very interested in the scores (although he should have been — he was the only resident Canadian to make the final cut). No, David was much more interested in showing me this hand from the session, which he, along with many others, had played in 7♦.



David got a trump lead. He won in dummy with the ♦Q and continued with the ♦A and ♦K, pitching dummy's small spade while West shed two hearts. Declarer has twelve top tricks, so if clubs are 4-2 or better the hand is easy. He duly played the ace and king of clubs, intending to ruff out the suit for trick thirteen, and got the bad news about the 5-1 break. There was a fall-back, however: cash the top spades, ruff a club back to hand, and run all the diamonds, hoping to execute a double squeeze. The end position as he played the last diamond would be:

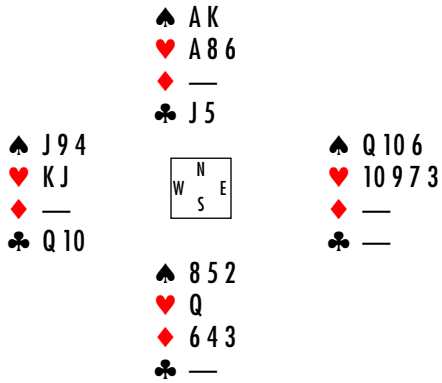


On the last diamond, West must throw a heart to keep the ♣Q, and dummy pitches the now superfluous ♣J. East, who now has to guard both spades and hearts, is toast. This squeeze will always work when East starts with any five spades (or exactly ♠QJ109, since South has the ♠8, which West cannot beat). Unfortunately, as we can see, neither of these distributions occurred in the actual layout. West, defending well, threw away his hearts on the run of the trumps to hold on to the ♠J, and East was therefore able to keep hearts. The actual ending thus arrived at was:



On the last diamond, West could safely let go the ♥K, while East came under no pressure at all.

So is 7♦ unmakable (if we ignore the mundane, 50%, club finesse)? Not at all, as David's partner Haig Tchamitch was quick to point out when the hand was over. It is, in fact, an example of an unusual compound squeeze called a 'clash squeeze'. The key to this is not to cash the ♠AK, but to run the diamonds first, as West will come under impossible pressure in three suits. The critical moment is the following:



On the next diamond, West cannot throw a club, as there are still lots of entries to cross to dummy, ruff a club, and return to cash the established ♣J. A spade discard, however, sets up the double squeeze position shown earlier: South cashes the top spades, ruffs a club back to hand, and plays off the last diamond to execute it. So West must perforce stiff his ♥K while dummy still can afford a heart pitch.

However, on the next diamond, West is out of options. A black-suit discard still has the same dire consequences as before, but his last heart is the king. If West lets that go, declarer ditches a club from dummy, cashes the ♥Q, and crosses on a spade to enjoy the ♥A and collect thirteen tricks.

A beautiful ending, and one that will work any time West has the ♥K, regardless of how many spades East started with — a 50% line, therefore, just like the mundane club finesse! *A priori*, the double squeeze is about 38% (a little more once you know West has two more minor-suit cards than East). So is it right to play for the clash squeeze to have worked? It will certainly get you a write-up in the *Daily Bulletin*! Perhaps the best practical line (especially if your auction did not reveal declarer's singleton heart) is to run the first five rounds of diamonds, and see whether West has the intestinal fortitude to pitch down to his hypothetical singleton ♥K in order to hold ♠J-9-4. Then play off the ♠AK, and play for the double squeeze either to have worked, or to be working now after a slight misdefense.

After all, if West's that good, he deserves all the matchpoints he's going to get on this board.

Join the Club

ROSELYN TEUKOLSKY

Ever since 'that book' (more on this later), Roselyn Teukolsky has been the guru of bridge relationships. Here she reflects that hell hath no fury like an endplayed spouse.

I've noticed a funny phenomenon since I started writing about the joys of bridge with my husband. Typically, it goes something like this. A few weeks ago, a couple came to our table during a matchpoint event and the woman recognized me. She then glared at my husband and said 'Is that him?' Smiling sweetly, I nodded 'Yes'.

'This is the woman who wrote that book,' she explained to her partner, upon which he cast an empathizing look at my partner and said, 'You poor guy, how can you stand it?'

Stand what? I wondered. Playing with me, or the notoriety? (Actually, my husband handles the new-found notoriety with good-natured humor.)

The interesting phenomenon is how the men and women belong to two distinct clubs. It's as if there were a universal sorority of wives and girlfriends out there, all saddled with chauvinistic, arrogant, lesson-giving male partners. Not one woman has said to me, 'Too bad you have this problem. My husband, on the other hand, is the sweetest, nicest, ...'

Then there's the Men's Club. Not surprisingly, the guys overwhelmingly side with my husband, and make nice sympathetic clucking noises at him. Ah, the brotherhood of Man.

Anyway, after the above pleasantries, we actually got down to some bridge. The first hand was one of those little partscore blossoms that often waste their sweetness on the desert air. I held:

♠ J 10 ♥ A Q 7 2 ♦ A 8 3 2 ♣ Q 6 2

and, in first seat, at favorable vulnerability, I opened 1♦. The bidding was over quickly:

West	*Me*	*East*	*South*
	1♦	pass	1♠
dbl	pass	2♥	2♠
all pass			

When I hold bland hands like this, we tend to have harmonious auctions, so I settled back comfortably and relaxed. The ♠9 was led, and this is what my husband had to work with:

Me
♠ J 10
♥ A Q 7 2
♦ A 8 3 2
♣ Q 6 2

South
♠ A 7 6 5 4 3
♥ 6
♦ Q 7 6
♣ K 7 3

The first trick went ♠9, ♠J, ♠Q, ♠A. South then successfully finessed the ♥Q, and led the ♦2 from the board. It went ♦4, ♦7, ♦9. West furrowed his brow and continued with the ♠8. East won her king, and thought a long while before leading the ♣4, which declarer ran to the ♣Q. Declarer now played the ♥A, ditching a club, ruffed a heart to his hand, and ran his trumps. Here was the four-card ending:

Me
♠ —
♥ 7
♦ A 8 3
♣ —

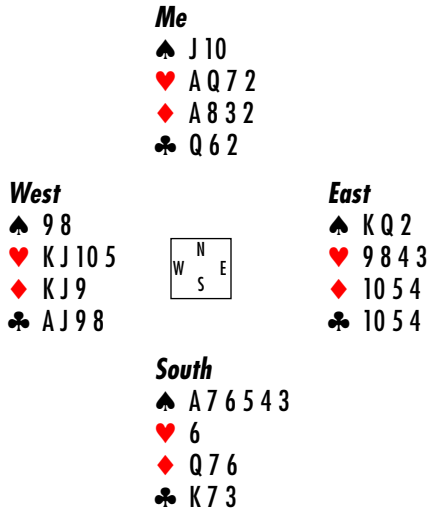
West
♠ —
♥ —
♦ K J
♣ A J

East
♠ —
♥ 9
♦ 10
♣ 10 5

South
♠ 5
♥ —
♦ Q 6
♣ K

On the ♠5, West was forced to let go of the ♣J, upon which my partner got a predatory gleam in his eye and threw West in with the ♣A, thus endplaying him in diamonds. It seems that my partner had just executed a neat little squeeze without the count.

Here were the original hands:



West did not appreciate the neat end-position.

'I'll be so happy when one of these days you learn how to get me off an endplay,' he remarked to his partner in the not-so-sweet tone with which I am well familiar. (I, for once, kept my mouth shut and happily scored up the +170.)

'All you needed to do here,' West continued, 'was to play back a diamond when you were in with the king of spades, and that would have broken up the squeeze. Obvious.'

'Excuse me, but your double showed clubs and hearts, so forgive me for playing back your suit,' she retorted, rolling her eyes at me in a gesture of sisterly bonding.

Should East have played back a diamond? At the time she was in, she knew that her partner had no points in spades, four points in hearts, and either the king or queen of diamonds, or both (if South had had both the ♦K and ♦Q, he would not have played a low diamond to the seven). Here are some possibilities:

- If South held ♦Kxx and ♣Kxx then East's return would be irrelevant: South would have two club pitches (on the ♥A and fourth diamond) and would lose only one club.

- If South held ♦Kxx and ♣Axx then East's return would be irrelevant because South would have the rest of the tricks (same two club pitches).

- If South held ♦Qxx and ♣Axx then on a club return South could rise with the ace and execute the same squeeze that he did. On a diamond return, South could win the ♦A, cash the ♥A pitching his last *diamond*, ruff a heart to his hand, and eventually play up to the ♣Q, making four again.

- If South held ♣Kxx and neither the king nor queen of diamonds, then East's play would be irrelevant: South will lose a diamond and a club.

- If South held ♣Axx and neither the king nor queen of diamonds, then again, no matter which minor East returns, South must lose two tricks. A diamond return ruins the timing for South. If he ducks, West can thwart him by returning a diamond, the last entry to dummy. This prevents South from enjoying the fourth diamond, since East still has a trump! On a club return South can win his ace and run his trumps as before, but this time the squeeze doesn't work. West can pitch down to the ♦KQ and ♣K (assuming South keeps the ♣Q and ♦Ax in dummy), and must make a diamond and a club. Thus again, East's play is irrelevant!

- If South held ♦Qxx and ♣Kxx (the actual case), then a diamond return would be necessary to break up the squeeze; and West would make two more tricks, a club and a diamond.

- If South held ♦Kxx and neither the ace nor king of clubs, then a *club* return is crucial to avoid two club pitches. This case, however, is unlikely, since West failed to lead a club, and, when he was in with the ♦9, failed to cash his clubs.

Since the last two cases are the only cases where East's return makes a difference, and since the last case is less likely than the actual holding, on balance it seems that East should, in fact, have led a diamond. So, in a sense, West was right. But it was neither obvious nor easy, so his comment, if any, should have been ‘Sweetheart, you had a tough play to make!’, not the instant-analysis, injured-virility remark that he actually used.

Oh, well; join the club.

The Mini Notrump — Friend or Foe?

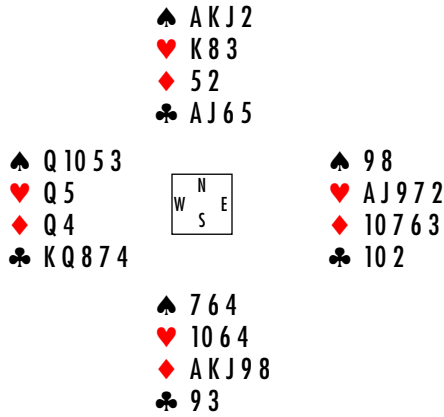
LINDA LEE

The super-aggressive amongst us have embraced the 10-12 notrump as a fearsome offensive weapon. But as this article points out, it can be something of a double-edged sword, especially if you end up defending the hand.

More and more players are using a 10-12 notrump range, which can be a pretty effective weapon at matchpoints, especially non-vulnerable versus vulnerable. It is typical of today's aggressive style of bidding, which is intended to get in the opponents' way as much as possible. After all, most of us have bidding methods that are much more sophisticated in uncontested auctions than they are once the opposition has opened the bidding.

Matchpoints being a game of calculated risks, we can probably assume that the mini notrump will become more popular, rather than less. You need to develop appropriate bidding methods to compete over it, but it will undoubtedly make your auctions more awkward. In counterbalance, it is important to use the information it can give you as declarer.

When your opponent has opened 1NT you know he has no fewer than 10 HCP (note that it is illegal for him to shade this by even one point) and no more than 12 or 13 (if they shade upwards on occasion). As well, you can also deduce that he is unlikely to have a balanced hand in this point range when he fails to open 1NT (although this is a bit less reliable). Consider this hand from the ACBL *Bulletin* in which Steve Weinstein got a great result after starting the proceedings with 1NT (10-12). Yet it could, and should, have been a bottom if North had drawn the proper inferences from the auction.



West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Weinstein		Stewart	
1NT[1]	dbl[2]	2♦[3]	dbl[2]
redbl[4]	pass	2♥	pass
pass	2NT	pass	3NT

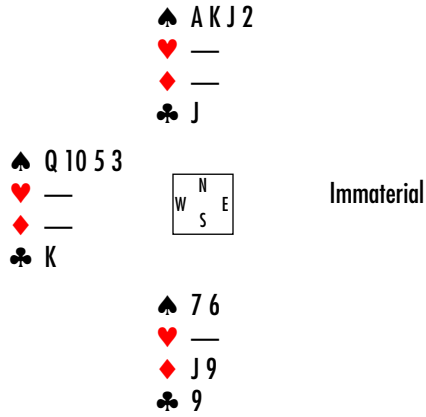
1. 10-12
2. Showing values
3. Runout showing diamonds and a major
4. Bid your major

The opening lead of the ♥2 was an attitude lead; it went to the queen and the king. Declarer led a diamond to the eight and Weinstein made the spectacular play of ducking this. Needless to say declarer repeated the diamond finesse and managed to go two down for a near bottom. Nice play by Steve — but it should never have happened.

From the opening lead and play to the first trick East (Stewart) was marked with the ♥AJ (unless they lead the two as an attitude lead from the Jxxxx!). Weinstein is therefore known to have every other high card including the ♦Q to reach the total of 10+ points. West is known to have exactly two diamonds (East showed at least four, and West opened 1NT) leaving East with four, and clearly West has either two or three hearts. If West has two hearts, as is the case, the hand is now cold.

The winning play at Trick 2 is to lead out another heart. On the lie of the cards, East must now either cash his four heart tricks or strand them. If he cashes them and exits with a club (as good as any) we lead a diamond to the ace and cash the top three diamonds, dropping the known Q-x. Since West is unlikely on the auction to have six clubs, East has at least two clubs and therefore at most three spades. On the run of the diamonds, then, West is going to be squeezed in spades and clubs since East cannot have enough length in spades to guard that suit.

This is the ending as we lead the ♦J:



If West throws his ♣K, we throw a spade. We take the spade finesse, and the North hand is high. If he pitches a spade, we throw a club, and our spades will be all good after one finesse.

Suppose East doesn't cash his hearts when he's in at Trick 2? We can duck a diamond to the queen; if West ducks this trick we shall cash the ace and king next, since we have the advantage of 'knowing' his holding exactly! Later we'll take the marked spade finesse and lead up to the ♣J, scoring three spades, a heart, three diamonds and two clubs to come to our nine tricks. Note that without the mini notrump bid we would never have played the hand this way, and it is extremely unlikely that we would have made it.

Another interesting aspect of the mini notrump is that it often interferes in the auction in such a way that the opponents are pushed to bid more. On this hand, if North had been allowed to open the bidding in the normal manner, they might well have stopped in a partscore with only 8 points opposite a 16-point strong notrump. But it was almost impossible to do so in this auction because North's 2NT bid is less well-defined than a standard notrump overcall and South has no way to invite – he must decide right there either to pass or bid game on his 8 points.

In practice, most of us will take the more aggressive action in this type of situation. But this is not altogether bad for North-South since the auction has so effectively located the cards for them: many high cards figure to be onside, the concentration of high cards in one hand makes squeezes likely, and finally the auction suggests that most suits are more or less splitting. All of these factors favor being more aggressive, and on this hand, the aggressive action should have produced a fine result.

This is not to suggest that the mini notrump is not a powerful weapon, but it does have its 'dark side'.

Desperate Times

F. GODED

'Never give up' is a theme that came up in many of the declarer play articles we published, but nowhere was it better put than in this one. This article is reprinted, by permission, from the Boletin *of the* Asociacion de Bridge del Centro *in Spain. Errors should be attributed to our translation, rather than to the author.*

Quite often we find ourselves faced with contracts that are apparently hopeless from Trick 1, or in bidding or defensive situations where the prospects of a favorable outcome seem slim. But it is in just such circumstances that a winning player shows his or her mettle.

We all know players of merely average technical ability who can suddenly shine in adversity, proving able to turn the situation around to their own advantage. These players demonstrate a different kind of ability: they refuse to give up when all seems hopeless, and often find a way to profit from some psychological element of the situation.

Is this a skill worth acquiring? The following four problems come from recent tournaments and you can draw your own conclusions...

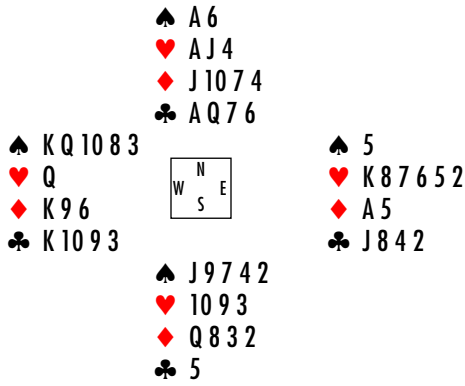
Suppose you are dealt:

♠ J 9 7 4 2 ♥ 10 9 3 ♦ Q 8 3 2 ♣ 5

With your side vulnerable at matchpoints, your partner opens 1NT (15-17). RHO overcalls 2♥, and in an excess of enthusiasm you decide to compete with 2♠. LHO doubles, partner passes, and RHO thinks for a long time. What are you going to do next?

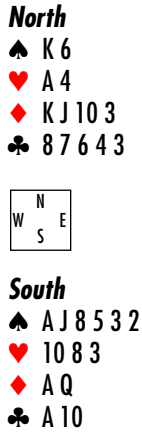
You are clearly headed for a zero here. If East doesn't bid now, you are going to play 2♠ doubled, and probably go down a lot. But do you have to resign yourself to this? Certainly not: if East finally passes, adopt an active approach — redouble, and try to find another contract. Your partner will rescue, and you will give East a second opportunity to make a mistake by bidding.

Here is the whole hand:



Giving up 500 or more in 2♠ will be at best a tie for bottom. By redoubling we risk giving up even more, for a certain zero, but on this hand rescuing the contract to 3♦ or even collecting a plus by defending 3♥ will give us an excellent score.

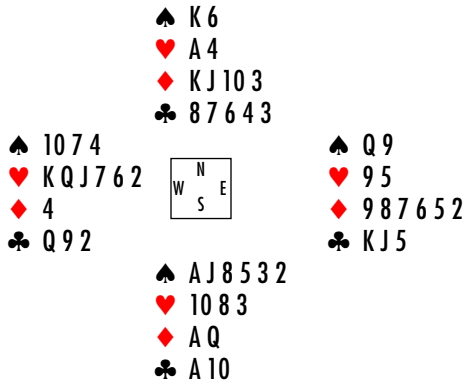
Now let's look at a play situation. Often there are card combinations that allow us to offer the enemy an alternative route to apparent success. It doesn't matter if he always follows it — it is enough that sometimes he will.



West opens 2♥ (weak) and you are playing 4♠ at matchpoints. West leads the ♥K: how would you plan the play? The obvious line seems to be to draw trumps and use the diamonds to discard a club: on a good day we might even make six. We duck the ♥K, win the second heart, and play the ♠K intending to play another spade; surprisingly, we see the ♠Q appear on our right. Now what?

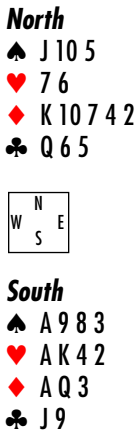
If West started with four spades, we shall lose a trick in that suit, but now we don't necessarily have to lose a heart. We'll surely get a good score for eleven tricks, so we should play a diamond to the ace in hand, ruff a heart, and play the ♦K. If West has a 4-6-2-1 hand we can discard a club on the ♦J and make an overtrick.

OK, so we return to hand with the ♦A and ruff the third heart. Unfortunately East overruffs with the ♠9 and plays a diamond: West ruffs this and our castle in the air has collapsed like the house of cards that it is.



Twelve tricks were in the bag as the cards lay, but we didn't know that. East's largesse in giving up the useless ♠Q gave us an apparent opportunity to make eleven tricks, but in fact reduced us to an ignominious nine.

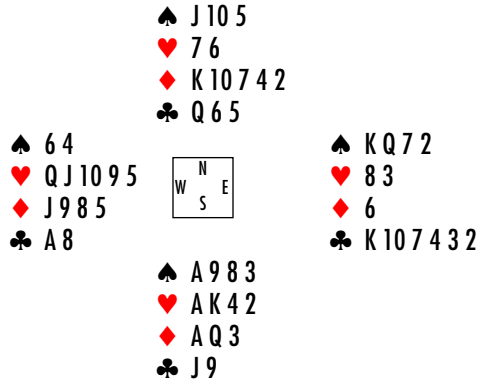
The picture we have to create for our opponents is that of trouble brewing when in fact cards are favorable, or that of everything working well when the hand actually lies badly. Another opportunity of a similar nature presented itself in the recent Spanish women's teams championship.



South opened 1♦, West overcalled 1♥, and North raised to 2♦. South then ended the auction with a rebid of 3NT. West led the ♥Q. How would you play the hand?

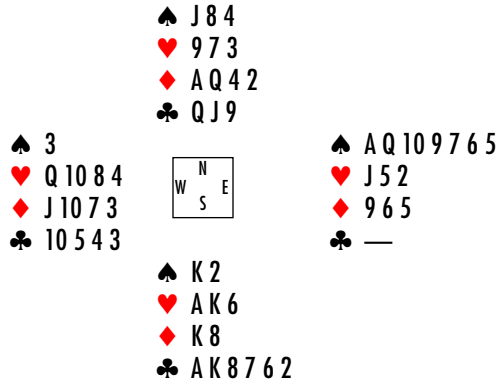
If the diamonds are behaving, you have eight top tricks. The ninth can come from spades, where you'll need to find split honors, or East with both honors. However, since you lack sufficient entries to the dummy for two spade finesses, it looks as though East will have to have both the high spades.

OK. So you duck the first heart, win the second and play the ace and queen of diamonds. Everyone follows, but under the queen, the jack appears on your left. Eureka! You overtake with the ♦K, for now you have two diamond entries to dummy for spade plays, and will only need East to hold one of the spade honors. Unfortunately, on this second diamond trick East discards a club!



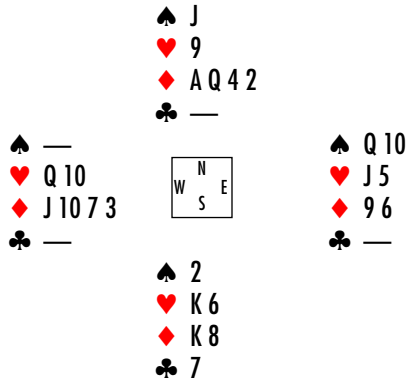
Giving up the ♦J was a no-cost play. West knew that South had exactly three diamonds, and that East would show out on the next trick. So the ♦J was a decoy, played in the hope that declarer, assuming it was a doubleton, would make an error. As a result, South threw away two tricks chasing the possibility of an extra chance for her contract, and went down in an easy game.

There are plenty of opportunities for declarer to make similar plays. I learned a lot from this hand was played in a 1970s world championship, and later written up by Ron Klinger.



East opened 3♠ and South ended up playing 6♣. Yes, I know that 6NT is a better contract, but your job is to try to make the club slam after West leads the ♠3. If you just let nature take its course, you will certainly go down. When East wins the ♠A he will be able to count to thirteen and work out to give his partner a ruff. So what are you going to do?

Without batting an eyelid, South played the ♠K under the ace! East, naturally, concluded that the king was singleton (South's spot card fortunately was the ♠2, which helped the illusion along), and switched to the ♥2. South won the ♥A and proceeded to play off all his trumps, reaching this position:



On the ♣7, West had to discard a heart, leaving control of the suit in the hands of his partner. Now declarer discarded the useless ♠J and played off the top diamonds. On the third round East was forced to pitch the ♠Q, and declarer added insult to his opponent's injury by taking the twelfth trick with the ♠2.

I hope that, besides showing you some ingenious plays, I've started you thinking about taking advantage of your own opportunities. Remember, never give up!

Mood Swings

'TRENT VALLEY'

From time to time, we received unsolicited articles from an anonymous reader in the Trent Valley area east of Toronto. We thought they were great, and used several of them, but we never did find out who the author actually was. We do know he or she could write well, and brought a wry sense of humor to this game that we all take much too seriously (at least some of the time).

One of the really interesting things about this game that we all love is the roller-coaster ride our emotions can go through in a single evening, nay even on a single hand.

Just last Tuesday, I decided to take a short break from marking exam papers. We were in the middle of that heat wave; you remember, the one that made us all wish for January's blizzard again. I stopped in at the club. After all, a basement location had to be more comfortable than my third floor garret and a handful of cards had to be more interesting than a deskful of essays. Let me say as well that there is absolutely no truth in the foul story that I could not find a partner and that I was there just to haunt all the people who had turned me down. Why, when I looked around the room, at every table I saw someone I had played with once.

Just as I was about to leave, to return to my students' brilliant essays, I was asked to fill in for one hand for someone who had to run an errand. My new victim and I quickly agreed that we would play 'Standard' for this hand, whatever that means any more. I picked up

♠ K 9 2 ♥ 8 7 4 2 ♦ A Q 10 8 4 ♣ Q

and heard my partner in fourth seat, red against white, open 1♣. Having already passed, I tried 1♦. I, of course, wanted partner to bid hearts, but no such luck: she rebid 2♣. Now, what does this mean in 'Standard'? Minimum values, no four-card major.

What do I do now? 'Pass' can't be all bad on this misfit, but we are playing matchpoints. Besides, this will probably be the only hand I get to play tonight, and possibly for the week. My ♣Q ought to be good for something, and they can't run more than nine hearts through me, so I try 2NT. Not pretty, but I've seen worse. Partner now finds another card and bids 3NT. A passed hand opposite a minimum opener; this should be cute.

The opening lead is a spade. Partner tables her hand and an apology for bidding 3NT at the same time. I see:

North
♠ A
♥ K J 10
♦ K 9 3
♣ K J 9 6 5 4

South
♠ K 9 2
♥ 8 7 4 2
♦ A Q 10 8 4
♣ Q

If I can get two clubs, I have nine tricks if the diamonds behave. But I don't seem to have enough quick entries to dummy. Will leading the ♣K help? Only if the ♣10 is doubleton. Too bad the card partner found wasn't the ♣10. As soon as they take the ♣A, my spade stopper will be knocked out. Should I just take my eight tricks and give up? Maybe someone will take my ♣Q at Trick 2? No such luck; now I'm in my hand.

Aha! I've seen this before. I do have the ♦9 over there; I can finesse against the ♦J and get the entry I need. Maybe I should cash the ♦Q first, and keep some sort of fluidity. This is easy and fun.

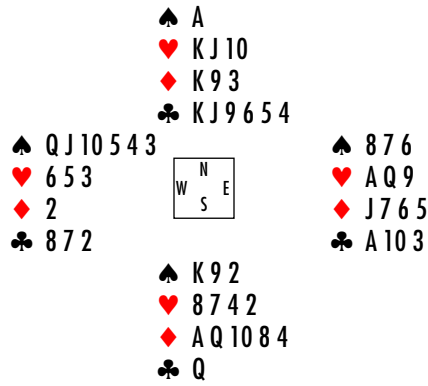
Crash! On the second diamond, LHO shows out. Back to the drawing board. Win the ♦K, play the ♣K. If someone ducks this, I'm still home free. Damn — there's the ♣A. Of course, a spade comes back. I duck, and pitch a club from dummy. Another spade — I have to win and pitch another of those nice clubs.

Again, I can make eight tricks. Is it time to give up yet? One last chance. If the spades are 6-3, and the ♥A is with the short spades, I still have a shot. I lead a small heart: when LHO doesn't win the ♥A, I figure he doesn't have it. I try the ♥J; when I open my eyes, RHO has played the ♥Q. Now I wait. Back comes… a diamond! Yes! I take the marked finesse, carefully winning the ♦10, not the ♦9, cash the ♦A, and lead another heart, avoiding the trap of squeezing dummy. RHO wins the ♥A and concedes: just in.

At this point, the player returns from his errand and reclaims his seat. I can honestly say I've played every hand to the max: in fact, the recap later shows we have a clear top on this board. I've had a 100% game, but the partnership is even more short-lived than some of mine.

See what I mean by the roller-coaster?

(Full deal on the next page.)


♠ A
♥ K J 10
♦ K 9 3
♣ K J 9 6 5 4
♠ Q J 10 5 4 3
♥ 6 5 3
♦ 2
♣ 8 7 2
N
W E
S
♠ 8 7 6
♥ A Q 9
♦ J 7 6 5
♣ A 10 3
♠ K 9 2
♥ 8 7 4 2
♦ A Q 10 8 4
♣ Q

Spot the Defense

RON BISHOP

Nobody works harder at the game than Ron Bishop ('the Cleric'). He's a good teacher and a fine player, although sometimes he can outthink himself. But the dance of the pasteboard fascinates him, and we're sure his favorite book is Right through the Pack *by Robert Darvas. Read on, and see if you don't agree.*

OK, readers, this is a quiz. Let me set the scene. It is early in the second half of an IMP match against a good team, and you are leading by a small margin. As South, you pick up the following inauspicious collection:

♠ 6 4 2 ♥ Q 8 5 4 2 ♦ 10 4 ♣ 9 6 3

The auction proceeds around you in the following manner:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		2♣[1]	pass
2♦[2]	3♦	3♠	pass
4♠	pass	4NT	pass
5♣[3]	pass	6♠	all pass

1. Artificial, forcing.
2. Waiting.
3. 1 Keycard.

You lead the ten of diamonds, as partner requested, and the dummy greets you:

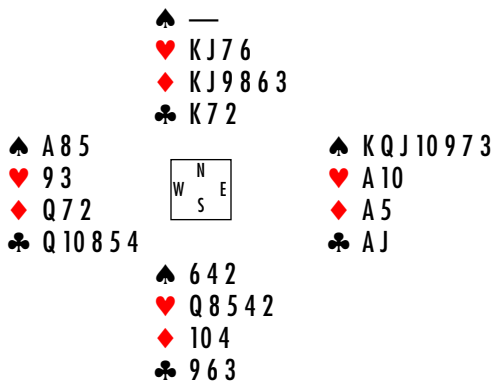
West
♠ A 8 5
♥ 9 3
♦ Q 7 2
♣ Q 10 8 5 4

South
♠ 6 4 2
♥ Q 8 5 4 2
♦ 10 4
♣ 9 6 3

The first trick goes to the ten, queen, king, and ace. Declarer leads the trump jack to the ace (partner contributing a small red card), plays a club to the jack, cashes the ace of clubs (no king appears from partner), and leads a small spade to the dummy as you follow...

Wait a minute — isn't this supposed to be a quiz? Where's the problem? I know what you're thinking; this must be all about that seemingly inconsequential red card that partner played on the first round of trumps. No, that's not the question at all. The whole question is really about spades!

What were your spade spots? For all those who don't remember, this hand was over long ago. Those who played 'highest' at Trick 2, to send whatever message they use the trump spots to convey, can also call it a day. Those who are still jealously guarding the trump six at the end of Trick 5 are also destined to be haunted by this hand, for declarer is now well on the way to making seven.



The actual layout was as shown. With two red suit losers that can only go on clubs, declarer needs three dummy entries to establish and then enjoy his side suit. The spade spots are critical: if declarer leads the three, South must insert the six; if the seven is led, the defender must play low, preserving the six. In either case, East is robbed of a vital entry, and goes down.

And to think you only count points for high cards!

The Intra-Finesse

D A V I D L I N D O P

David Lindop has been married for many years to master teacher and author Audrey Grant. However, he's an international-class player in his own right, and also no slouch at explaining complex concepts, as this next piece demonstrates.

Early in our bridge-playing days, the importance of playing in an 8-card or longer trump suit, especially when the suit is divided 4-4 between the two hands, is something we all come across. Sooner or later, we end up playing in a trump suit that looks something like this:

Dummy
A 7 4 3

Declarer
Q 6 5 2

If we can only afford to lose one trick in the suit, we apply the basic principle of the finesse: lead toward the card which we hope will win a trick — toward the queen in this example. Usually, the ace is played first, in case there is a singleton king lurking about, but we are hoping that RHO has the king three times or doubleton. We can also duck the second round if RHO plays low, hoping LHO has king doubleton. How are we to know that this is the case? Usually, the bidding gives an indication and, perhaps, the way the opponents play their cards.

In the above layout, it does us no good to lead the queen on the first round of the suit, since we are missing the jack, ten, nine, and eight. And however good we are at guessing, we have no hope of losing only one trick if the layout is:

Dummy
A 7 4 3

LHO
K J 9

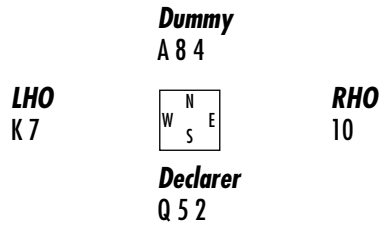
RHO
10 8

Declarer
Q 6 5 2

If we give ourselves the eight and nine, however, the situation becomes more interesting:

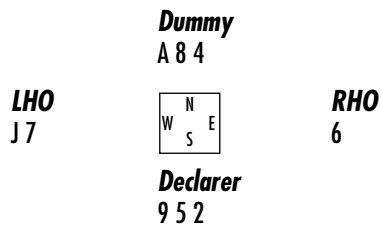
It still does no good to lead the ace and then low toward the queen. Our LHO will win two tricks with the king and jack. Nor does it help to lead the queen, since LHO will cover with the king and we will eventually lose a trick to the ten and one to the jack.

Suppose, however, we lead a low card from dummy toward our hand, before taking the ace; RHO contributes the six and we play the nine from our hand. LHO wins the first trick with the jack and the layout now looks like this:



When we regain the lead, we are now in a position to lead the queen from our hand. If LHO does not cover, the queen will win the trick and we will take all three remaining tricks. If the queen is covered with the king, we win dummy's ace, pinning the ten and establishing the all-important eight.

It would be of no avail for RHO to rise with the ten on the first round of the suit, as we would cover with the queen to force LHO to win with the king. The remaining cards would now look like this:



When we regain the lead, we can lead toward the dummy, planning to take a finesse against LHO's jack.

The above method of playing this suit combination is termed an intra-finesse. As we have seen, it is rather complex, even when we can see all the missing cards. It is even more difficult to execute at the table. You need to recognize the potential for an intra-finesse in the heat of battle and must be

fairly certain of the lie of the missing cards. Otherwise, you'll be asking yourself why you didn't merely take a simple finesse!

I used to think that the intra-finesse was one of those rare textbook situations that only came up when the Hideous Hog was playing against Papa the Greek in *Bridge in the Menagerie*, or the Abbot encountered Brother Xavier in one of David Bird's articles. However, a couple of hands in the past year have changed my mind. The first came up when I was playing in the 1990 Master Mixed Board-a-Match final (one of my favorite forms of the game). The auction proceeded:

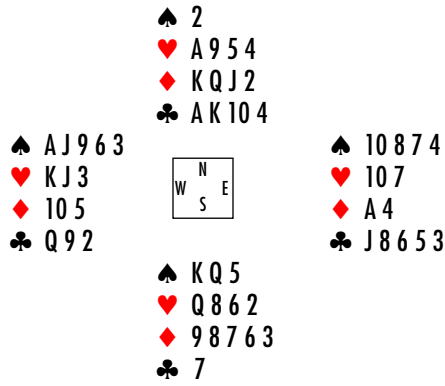
West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			(me)
			pass
1♠	dbl	2♠	3♥
pass	4♥	all pass	

The opening lead was the ace of spades and this is what I saw:

♠ 2
♥ A 9 5 4
♦ K Q J 2
♣ A K 10 4

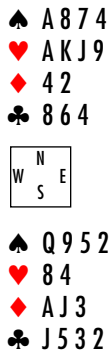
♠ K Q 5
♥ Q 8 6 2
♦ 9 8 7 6 3
♣ 7

As usual, I had bid too much but partner certainly had her values. The opening lead had not done me any damage and I won the shift of the two of clubs with dummy's king. With sure spade and diamond losers, I could afford only one loser in the trump suit. There was that magic combination! I led the four of hearts from dummy and the seven appeared on my right. I inserted the eight and LHO won the jack. Another club was led and I trumped with the two of hearts and led the queen of hearts from my hand. Bingo! This was the complete hand:



Notice how there was a lot of information to help me find the right play on this hand. LHO had opened the bidding and shown up with only the ace of spades so far. LHO must hold either the king of hearts or the ace of diamonds to have an opening bid. When the four of hearts was led from dummy, RHO might have played the king, and was also unlikely to have played the seven from a holding of J-7-3 or 10-7-3. I had to assume the missing diamonds were divided 2-2, otherwise one of the opponents could probably get a ruff. Spades were likely divided 5-4, since they were bid and raised. With five spades and two diamonds, it was not unreasonable to assume LHO had exactly 5-3-2-3 shape. Of course, it turned out to be 5-2-2-4... well, that's another story.

A few months later, in the round-robin final of the Canadian National Team Championship, I was playing with Ed Bridson and the following hand came up:

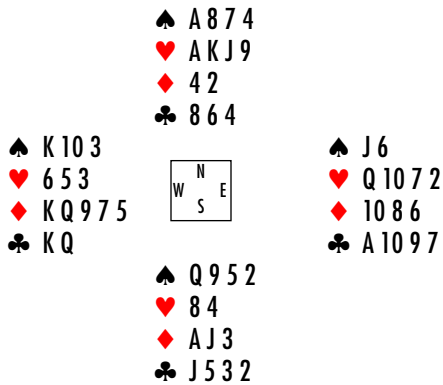


West	*North* (Ed)	*East*	*South* (Me)
			pass
1♦	dbl	pass	1♠
pass	pass	2♦	2♠
all pass			

I guess if you're going to rebid a suit of Q-9-5-2 it's best to know about

intra-finesses. West led the king of diamonds and I let this win the trick — the old Bath Coup. Sometimes opponents get their signals upside-down (even in a Canadian championship!) and I was hoping for a diamond continuation so that I could discard one of dummy's club losers. West carefully switched to the king of clubs, however, and continued with the queen when East encouraged. Now West switched to the three of hearts and I was at the crossroads. With a diamond and three clubs to lose, I had to hold the spade losers to one.

Once again, there was a lot of information. Why had West not played a third club? Presumably, because he held only the doubleton K-Q and East started with four to the ace. If East held both the ace of clubs and king of spades, he might have raised to two diamonds immediately over the double. So it looked as though West held the king of spades. Here we go again. Win the heart lead with dummy's king and lead the four of spades. When the six appeared from East, I played the nine and West won the ten. Another heart was led. I won dummy's ace of hearts, led a diamond to my ace and played the queen of spades. This was the complete hand:



West ducked the queen of spades, but another spade drew the remaining trump and I was able to lead the last club from dummy toward the jack of clubs for my eighth trick.

So there you go. The intra-finesse actually does come up at the table. I'm certainly looking for further opportunities to try it out. How about you?

There is a postscript to this article, too. Shortly after its publication, we received the following letter from a reader:

'I was playing in a club game recently against one of your editors. The contract was two spades and my trump suit was Q-9-3-2 opposite A-8-6-5. Recognizing the combination from David Lindop's article, I played small to the nine, losing to a singleton jack. After a couple of nasty ruff-sluffs from the defense, I lost control of the hand and went two down in a contract I would always have made had it not been for your publication.

'Now I know why you give your magazine away.'

IMPROVING YOUR BRIDGE

This section is dedicated to those readers who have enough humility to want to become better players, and enough capacity for hard work that they might actually succeed.

Expert Errors

FRED GITELMAN

Playing bridge like an expert isn't about executing backwash squeezes and brilliant coups — at least, most of the time. It's about concentration, hard work, and most of all, avoiding the errors to which lesser mortals are prone. Even the top players make mistakes, though — which is the point of this article — it's just that they're different from the ones that lesser players make. Fred recalls one time approaching Michael Rosenberg, whom he had just watched make a play that had not turned out well, and asking him why he had made the error. Michael smiled at him. 'Don't you get it yet, Fred?' he asked. 'Nobody's any good at this game; it's just that the top players are less bad than the rest.'

Most bridge articles are about brilliant bids or plays by brilliant players. Believe it or not, these brilliant players also make their fair share of terrible bids and plays. This article presents three bridge problems, one each concerning bidding, play, and defense. The hands all come from the 1992 Fall Nationals in Orlando, and in each case a famous player made a horrible error. I shall try to analyze how such good players can play so badly.

1. Bidding

You hold:

♠ J 3 ♥ J 6 2 ♦ 4 3 ♣ A K Q 7 5 2

You are one of Canada's top players, playing in the finals of the Life Masters' Pairs. You open one notrump (11-14) in first seat at favorable vulnerability. I happen to think that this is a terrible bid, but suppose that is what you decide to do. LHO doubles (penalty) and partner bids two clubs showing clubs and hearts. RHO skips the bidding all the way to six diamonds. Quick, your ten seconds are up... what's your bid?

This is not a problem: do not even think about bidding seven clubs! The famous player holding this hand did so, partner had nothing, and the result was –1700. Six diamonds was cold, but so was six spades, so defending six diamonds would be only slightly below average. Bidding seven clubs was good for a complete zero. Although this result should not be too surprising, it has little to do with why you should pass. This is an example of one of the main sources of expert error: *the breaking of partnership discipline*.

Your one notrump opening was a deliberate distortion of your hand, a tactical action that is acceptable at pairs as you only have your partner to answer

to. Once you open one notrump, however, you must stick with it. Your partner has told you he does not want to play in one notrump doubled and that he has some clubs and hearts; he has not invited you to sacrifice at the seven-level. After you take a shot and open one notrump, you must remain consistent and continue to treat the hand like a notrump opening. This means that you have limited your hand and transferred the captaincy to your partner. You must stick by that decision.

It does not matter whether seven clubs goes for 1700 or 1100. If you make bids because 'it could be right' or because 'you felt like it' and break discipline in the process, your partnership is doomed. Your partner will not trust you. He will not enjoy playing with you. And unless your table presence is as good as Zia's (and he also has his share of silly results), your results will be terrible.

2. Defense

You hold:

♠ A Q x ♥ K Q J 9 2 ♦ Q J x x ♣ A

It's the LM Pairs again, and you and your partner are one of the top pairs in the history of bridge. Nobody is vulnerable. Your RHO opens an 11-14 notrump (these weak notrumps sure come up a lot!), you double for penalties, and LHO passes. RHO alerts this pass and explains it as forcing a redouble, either for penalties or to show a one-suited hand. Partner passes, and RHO duly redoubles. You and LHO pass, and partner runs to two clubs. This is doubled by RHO and you run to two hearts. LHO bids two spades, ending the auction.

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
LHO	*Partner*	*RHO*	*You*
		1NT	dbl
pass	pass	redbl	pass
pass	2♣	dbl	2♥
2♠	all pass		

Partner leads the ♥3, and dummy tables:

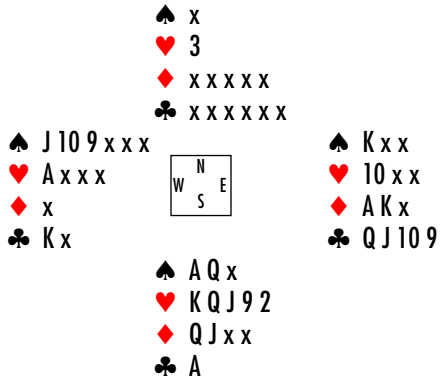
♠ K x x
♥ 10 x x
♦ A K x
♣ Q J 10 9

♠ A Q x
♥ K Q J 9 2
♦ Q J x x
♣ A

Your ♥9 forces the ♥A, and declarer cashes the top diamonds, discarding a heart. Dummy's third diamond is ruffed by declarer and the ♠J is passed to your queen. You cash a top heart on which partner discards. How do you continue?

The great player holding this hand made another common expert error: *trying to get into the Daily Bulletin instead of counting to thirteen.* He cashed the ♣A and played a low heart for partner to ruff. Partner would know to give him a club ruff, and the trump ace would provide the setting trick. Brilliant defense!

Unfortunately, this was the complete deal:



Partner did not have a trump left and the 'brilliant' play resulted in declarer's making an overtrick. While –110 would have been below average, –140 was a zero. Yes, partner and LHO bid their hands poorly and declarer probably misplayed the hand, but the 'brilliant' defense was truly horrible.

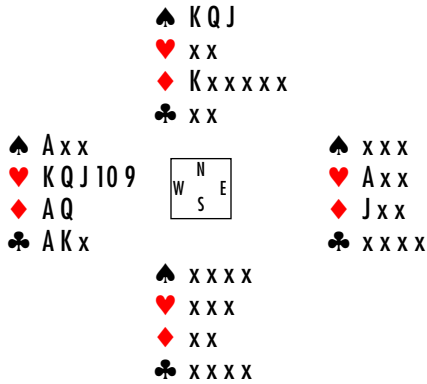
How could this have been avoided? At the time of the problem, you know that partner is either 1-1-5-6 or 2-1-5-5. If partner has 1-1-5-6 (more likely as partner ran to two clubs, not two diamonds), the underlead in hearts will be disastrous. If partner has 2-1-5-5, the underlead is not necessary. Your partner is a very good player: he is supposed to be able to count the hand too. After cashing the ♣A, lead a top heart: if partner has a trump left, he will have no trouble ruffing your trick and giving you a club ruff. Let your partner get in the Daily Bulletin.

3. Declarer Play

You are in four hearts as West on this next hand. A spade is led. What is your best line of play to make ten tricks?

This is a hand from my *Bridge Master* declarer play computer program. Not, in fact, a very difficult hand, one that is intended for intermediate players. However, many of the experts who tried this problem at our booth in Orlando went down. The reason was the most common source of expert error: *playing too quickly*.

A novice might make the mistake of using the ♥A to take the diamond finesse. They would make the contract whenever RHO held the ♦K. An easy improvement is to draw two rounds of trumps and play the ♦A and ♦Q. The ♦J will provide trick number ten. This looks so obvious that many experts stopped thinking at this point. A good habit to get into, before embarking on any line of play, is to ask yourself: what could go wrong?



The answer is not too difficult. On the above layout, LHO will win the ♦K and play another diamond, and RHO will ruff out the ♦J leaving the contract with no hope. The solution is also not difficult. After drawing only one round of trumps, lead the ♦Q without cashing the ♦A. The defense will win and cash two spade tricks, but declarer is in control. Declarer will be able to unblock the ♦A and draw trumps, ending in the dummy. The ♦J can then be used to discard declarer's club loser.

Even the best players in the world occasionally make careless errors. If you are aspiring to expert status, beware the pitfalls I have described. You will always make mistakes, but if you can remember to:

1) Always maintain partnership discipline

2) Try to be sensible, not brilliant

3) Take your time, ask yourself: what could go wrong?

you will find your mistakes fewer and further between.

The Art of Lying Low

RAY JOTCHAM

Toronto's Ray Jotcham is a much-feared opponent, not least owing to his unflappability and tendency to lurk in the bushes where others would rush into the auction. We can attest to this personally, as his first anecdote reveals.

The 1996 Toronto Regional is now history, and unlike last year, I don't have a bushel of personal brilliancies to show. However, there were some places where lessons could be learned.

A point that I continually try to impress on my students is that one shouldn't enter auctions where one has little hope of buying the contract, and where making a bid can give away vital information about the distribution. Many years ago, playing against one of the editors of this magazine, I held an eight-card heart suit headed by the jack, and stayed silent throughout the auction. The opponents reached 6♣, against which I led my suit; dummy came down with the AQ, and declarer finessed, losing to partner's king. Partner now returned a diamond, my singleton. Declarer won this, and attempted to cross to dummy using the 'safe' heart entry — partner ruffed, and gave me a diamond ruff, and declarer had just gone two down in a cold slam.

Now cometh the lesson. Be very careful in the use of the Unusual Notrump overcall. My first example hand features Canadian international Gloria Silverman as declarer in 7♠ on the following auction:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♣	pass	2♠
2NT[1]	3♠	pass	4NT
pass	5♦	pass	7♠
all pass			

1. At least 5-5 in the red suits.

I may have the end of the auction wrong, but the final contract and declarer's play are both accurate.

North
♠ Q J 5 3
♥ 9 6 4
♦ A
♣ K Q 6 5 4

South
♠ A K 10 4
♥ A 10 7
♦ K 9 6
♣ A 10 2

The ♥K was led: Gloria won the ace and drew trumps, noting that West followed twice. Since the auction had marked him with at least ten red cards, the club suit had become an open book. Declarer accordingly played a club to the king, and confidently finessed the club ten on her way to thirteen tricks.

At my table, after a Schenken 2♣ opening and a 2♦ response, my 2♥ overcall set up the defense without giving away too much information about the distribution. The offense lost its way, ending up in 6NT: now on a heart lead, the hand was doomed when declarer misguessed the club suit. An example of a gift in exchange for a very simple offering!

A second example arose in the Swiss Teams. Peter Grover (formerly of Ottawa) and Roni Gitchel of Pittsburgh, were my teammates, and they are not exactly known for sitting on their cards.

North
♠ A 5 3
♥ Q 9 5 2
♦ A 2
♣ A 10 9 7

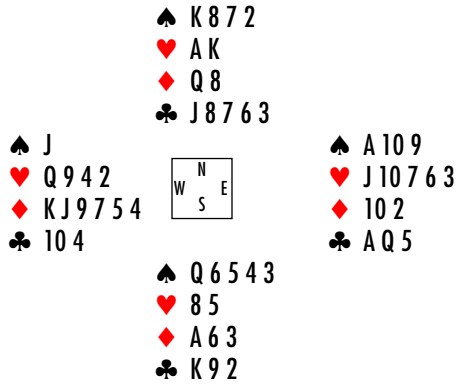
South
♠ J 4
♥ A J 8 7 6
♦ K J 10 9
♣ J 8

On this hand, after Peter had opened 1♥ as South, West again chimed in with an Unusual 2NT overcall, after which our heroes drove to a heart slam without further interruption. Peter won the ♣K lead, unblocking the jack. Now he led the ♥Q, covered by the king and the ace. The ♦J was run through

West, followed by the ♦A. Now came a heart to the eight, West showing out, the last trump was drawn, and the ♣Q forced out: claiming twelve tricks. Notice Peter was able to play the hand as though he could see all the cards: the Unusual Notrump claims another unusual result.

At the other table, a pass by South led to an opening 1♣ bid from North. Now a preemptive 2♠ from yours truly led to the best lead, and also to a favorable line of play: declarer, fearing a trump promotion, played a heart to the ace early in the hand. Now ten tricks was the best he could do.

Against Vince Oddy and Nader Hanna, I failed to open a weak 2♦ (on a five-card suit!), and on a non-diamond lead Vince had the timing to make eleven tricks in 3NT. On the next board, Vince joked 'I'm not making that mistake — 2♦!'. After two passes, I bid 2♠; partner Gail raised to 3♠, and I was faced with making nine tricks.



Vince's heart lead unfortunately gave little away. I won in dummy and led a low spade on which Nader played the ten. When Vince's jack fell under the queen, I had a fairly good picture of the distribution. A low diamond from my hand was won by Vince with the king, who exited with another heart. I cashed the ♦Q, and played a spade: Nader won, cashed the ♠A, and looked gloomily at the dummy. Obviously he had no diamonds left, and a heart would present me with a ruff-sluff.

Eventually, he cashed the ♣A and led a low club: having no choice, I ducked this in hand, and when Vince could produce only the ♣10, claimed my contract. The position that had really worried me was the one where Vince had started with a doubleton ♣Q, and Nader would lead a low club through. I could endplay Vince by rising with the king and exiting a club, but only if he were sleepy enough not to drop his queen under my king, or if he held exactly ♣Q10. Since neither possibility seemed to hold out much hope of success, I was planning to rely on Nader's holding the queen.

Here, the weak two-bid gave away too much information: without it, I might have played another spade early before stripping the hand, and made only eight tricks. The moral seems to be: make weak bids only if you have defensive values outside your suit or suits. (Why do I write articles like this? They make my life at the table so much more difficult...)

Colbert's Rules

MIKE CAFFERATA

Mike Cafferata is a high school teacher away from the bridge table, which in some ways explains the next two articles. He has also won the Canadian National Teams Championship, and played in world competition, so his advice is worth listening to. And while we're not as certain about Colbert's Rules 3 and 5, we believe that everyone should follow Rules 1, 2 and 4 without exception.

Many players in Toronto will remember Dave Colbert, my partner for many years before he stopped playing to raise a family. He has recently returned to bridge, and seeing him again reminded me of the rules he made us play by all those years ago.

Colbert's Rules:

1. *Never bid a grand slam unless you can count thirteen tricks.*
2. *Stretch to respond to partner's one club or one diamond opening.*
3. *Leading from three small is gold.*
4. *Look for excuses to bid, not excuses not to bid.*
5. *Try to lead a major against the auction 1NT-3NT.*

Rule 1: Never bid a grand slam unless you can count 13 tricks.

Well, I broke this rule five times in four days. The first time was with an expert partner; we had never played together before, but we had discussed one sequence in such detail that I felt on really firm ground. I held

♠ A x x ♥ A 10 x x ♦ K x x ♣ A x x

and the auction proceeded:

Partner	*Me*
1♥	2NT[1]
3♥[2]	4NT
5♠[3]	5NT
6♥	???

1. Jacoby 2NT.
2. Strong hand (15-17).
3. 2 key cards plus queen of trumps.

The best call now is probably six spades, looking for more queens, but you can't put that kind of pressure on partner; in addition, there were aggressive opponents at the other table (notice all the great reasons to break the Rule). Seven hearts, I bid. One down. Push. Lose match by 13. Sorry, partner. Sorry, Dave, how soon one forgets.

A night later, with a slightly more familiar partner, I held:

♠ A K Q x x ♥ K 9 ♦ A x ♣ K Q x x

The auction proceeded

Me	*Partner*
2NT	3♦[1]
3♥	4♣[2]
4♦	4♠
6♣	6♥
???	

1. Transfer.
2. I thought this was a suit, but partner meant it as a cuebid.

What could I do? Those hearts must be great and partner didn't cuebid six diamonds showing a wasted king. Seven hearts. One down. Lose 13. Lose match by 15. Sorry, partners. Sorry, Dave, how soon we forget.

The next night with the same partner I held

♠ — ♥ K 10 x x x ♦ A Q J 10 x ♣ x x x

and the auction proceeded

West	*North (Me)*	*East*	*South*
1♣	2NT[1]	3♠	4♥
4♠	5♦	6♠	pass
pass	7♥	dbl	all pass

1. Always two good suits.

Minus 800. Push. Won match big-time anyway, but six spades was one down on a diamond ruff. Will I ever find an exception to the Rule?

Finally, two nights later, success! Playing with Mike Kenny (we've adopted many of Dave's rules, including Rule 1), I held the following:

♠ K x x x ♥ x x x ♦ x ♣ A Q x x x

LHO opened one diamond, partner overcalled one spade, and who would think this hand would end up in a grand slam?

West	North (Mike)	East	South (Me)
1♦	1♠	2♥	4♣[1]
5♣	pass	5♦	pass
6♦	pass	pass	6♠
pass	pass	dbl	pass
7♦	7♠	dbl	all pass

1. Fit jump.

Only 800. Okay, so a club lead beats seven diamonds, but who's going to find it from Mike's hand:

♠ Q J 10 x x ♥ x x ♦ x ♣ K J x x x

Later the same night I got to overcall a two club opener with

♠ x x x ♥ Q 10 x x ♦ K Q J x x ♣ x

West	North (Me)	East	South
2♣	2♦	2♠	4♥
4♠	5♥	6♠	7♦
dbl			

Well, almost right. Minus 1400 with a heart ruff. Lose one instead of win one, as partners were in clubs not spades. It would seem that you do better when you bid grand slams that you know you can't make than when you think they do make. I guess Dave is still right.

Two other grand slams come to mind. One was with Mike Kenny when we had a slightly pushy auction (no real overbids) and reached seven spades. LHO couldn't restrain herself with two aces and doubled. RHO giggled as she was going to double with her ace too. Isn't Keycard Blackwood fun?

The other was in Biarritz with Dave. I held

♠ K Q x x x x ♥ A Q J 10 x ♦ — ♣ A x

The auction was

Me	Dave
1♠	2♠
3♥	4♥
5NT[1]	6♣[2]
7♥	

1 GSF in spades.
2. A or K of spades.

As long as Dave had fewer than four clubs I could throw them all away on my spades. Making seven, for 333 matchpoints on a 339 top.

Rule 2. Stretch to respond to partner's one club or one diamond opening.

This really translates into ‘almost never pass even when you have no points’. Two great examples come to mind. Dave held

♠ Q x x x x ♥ x x ♦ x x x x ♣ x x

and heard me open one club. We have found that on this type of hand responding and even hearing partner rebid the dreaded two notrump was better than playing one club, as two notrump usually went down fewer tricks. On this hand Dave heard me raise to two spades. Figuring that if he passed, the opponents would balance into three or four hearts and make it, Dave bid a confident four spades, reckoning that no one would double. Three down for minus 150 into 420 at the other table.

The best example of stretching to bid occurred when I was playing with Mike Kenny. Mike held

♠ Q x x x ♥ x x x ♦ x x x x ♣ x x

Hearing me open one club, he of course responded one spade. The auction proceeded very quickly: five notrump, six diamonds (queen of trumps, but no extra length), six spades.

At the other table, poor Steve Mackay was playing with a partner who didn't know the Rule and passed one club. When the dummy came down, Steve looked over to see who was playing against his partners and commented ‘Uh, oh, we just lost a grand slam swing!’ His hand and mine was

♠ A K x x x ♥ A K ♦ — ♣ A K J x x x

Note the discipline on my part in not breaking the Prime Directive by bidding the grand. However, I confess that if he'd shown extra trump length I would have, hoping he didn't have three clubs.

Sorry, Dave.

Colbert's Rules — Part 2

MIKE CAFFERATA

Readers of my first article will recall Colbert's First Rule (never bid a grand slam unless you can count thirteen tricks). They will also recall that it seemed to be more honored in the breach than the observance. Some offenders were happy with their results, and some were sorry.

1) In an early round of the Canadian National Team Championship, a previous event winner held something like

♠ A K Q x x x x ♥ K ♦ A x x x ♣ x

and heard his partner open four notrump, showing a solid 9-card minor with no side controls. He calmly bid seven clubs, hoping that the person on lead didn't have the heart ace or would choose not to lead a heart.

Result: the bad news was that the ace of hearts was cashed at Trick 1; the good news was that partners collected 1400 against seven notrump!

2) Now a much smoother auction. I held

♠ A K x x ♥ x ♦ K J x x ♣ K x x x

and the auction with Steve Mackay proceeded:

Steve	*Me*
1♥	1♠
3♦	4NT
5♦	5♥
6♥	7♦

Five hearts asked for the diamond queen, and six hearts showed it, along with the king of hearts. I could count thousands of tricks (well, I didn't exactly know what they were, but partner sounded 5-5 and even 5-4 would be okay if they didn't lead a trump as we could probably cash side cards and crossruff the last six or seven tricks...).

Whoops! Partner held

♠ Q 10 x ♥ A K Q x x x ♦ A Q 10 ♣ A

but with diamonds 4-2 and Steve timing it perfectly, a club ruff was our thirteenth trick.

3) Neither vulnerable, you hold

♠ — ♥ K Q x x x x ♦ x ♣ 10 9 x x x x

and the auction proceeds:

West	*North*	*East*	*South (You)*
	1♣	1♠	3♥
4♣	dbl	4♠	5♣
5♠	pass	pass	6♣
pass	pass	6♠	?

Three hearts showed at least 5-5 and a limit raise in clubs. What do you do now? How many of those passes were forcing? Well, in my last article you may have noticed that the best grand slam results came from bidding grands that you knew you couldn't make. Right again, as six spades is cold, and seven clubs is only down three.

4) You are on lead against seven spades holding

♠ Q ♥ Q x x x ♦ x x x ♣ Q x x x x

after the following auction:

LHO	*RHO*
	1♠
3♠	4NT
5♦	5NT
6♦	7♠

Colbert's Third Rule says that leading from three small is gold, but partner had two chances to double for a diamond lead, and every suit looks dangerous. They could have asked about the queen of spades but didn't, so the fit must be 6-4 or even 7-4, making the queen of spades the obvious safe lead.

NOT! Their spade suit was A-K-10-8-x opposite x-x-x, and I had just picked up partner's J9xx. They had obviously not heard about the First Rule (why am I the only one who gets punished, though?).

Finally, two examples of the Second Rule (look for excuses to bid, not excuses not to bid).

On the first hand, Mike Kenny held

♠ Q 10 9 ♥ x x x ♦ A x x ♣ x x x x

and heard the auction proceed to him one diamond, one heart, pass, so he gave a courtesy raise to two hearts. Partner then bid two spades (help-suit game try, showing some values in spades). Many players would look at a hand like this and say 'I only have six points, I'm 4-3-3-3, and I have lousy hearts; I'll sign off right here'. The correct thinking is what Mike did: 'I've got great help for spades even opposite Kxx or Axx, I've got an ace, and partner didn't enquire

whether I had a minimum, or how good my hearts were — this is worth four hearts.'

This contract made an overtrick opposite partner's

♠ K J x x ♥ A Q J x x ♦ K x ♣ K x

since, as the auction suggested, the ace of clubs and the king of hearts were both onside.

Now you are Sylvia Cann, and you open one club holding:

♠ — ♥ K x x x ♦ A x x ♣ A 10 x x x x

West	*North* (Sylvia)	*East*	*South* (me)
	1♣	pass	1♥
2♠	3♥	pass	3♠
dbl	pass	pass	4♣
pass	4♦	pass	4♠
pass	6♥	all pass	

First notice the raise to three hearts. Sure, it's a stretch, but look for excuses to bid: 1) only 11 HCP but a useful void; 2) four trumps and a six-card side suit; 3) all prime cards (aces and kings). The pass of three spades doubled showed slam interest, and my failure to redouble denied first-round control of spades; four diamonds was a cuebid, and four spades showed second-round control. Again, I am sure she could have found some excuse not to bid at this point, but, no doubt finding a card on the floor, she leapt to slam. I held

♠ K x x ♥ Q J 10 x x x ♦ x ♣ K Q x

— we were cold for slam on 11 opposite 11!

Bidding for the Lead

JOHN GOWDY & GEORGE MITTELMAN

Toronto's George Mittelman has three world championship medals in his trophy case so far, two of them gold. John Gowdy, too, is no stranger to top-flight bridge. Sometime in 1996, Gowdy and Mittelman embarked on the ambitious project of writing a book about expert-level thinking at bridge. Too ambitious, as it turned out, and the initial momentum eventually died out as other demands on their time became too onerous. What did get committed to paper is the following, a brilliant article that gives us a tantalizing glimpse of the book that might have been.

Without a doubt the opening lead is the single most important event in the defense of a bridge hand. After Trick1, the hand often either has no play or can't be beaten. The lead, to a large extent, has set the tempo and the direction for the defenders and too often we are forced to decide what it is to be with insufficient information.

During the auction, a partnership should be going out of its way to set up the defense. Once we have determined that the hand belongs to them or to no one (it is not ours, at least on present information), we must anticipate the final contract and try to make partner's life easy.

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	2♥	3♠	4♣
4♠	pass	pass	5♥
pass	pass	5♠	all pass

For example, after this auction, without partner's lead-directing 4♣, we probably would have led our own suit, perhaps giving declarer an easy time. If partner had simply raised hearts without thinking about the possible final contract, perhaps we would have lost a game swing. A partnership's ability to work together, armed with system and theory, can often make the difference between victory and defeat.

Most defensive bidding conventions revolve around the double, either of an artificial bid during the auction or used at its conclusion requesting that a specific suit be led. The Lightner Slam Double is the best known (and possibly the earliest) defensive bid; it was devised by Theodore Lightner, in 1929. An 'out of the blue' double by the hand not on lead is conventional, and excludes the lead of a trump, a suit bid by the defenders, or the unbid suit. The player who doubles expects to ruff the opening lead or to win two top tricks in the suit led.

Some players have a very rigid agreement that this bid calls for the lead of dummy's first-bid suit whether natural or artificial. Other partnerships call for a more liberal application — an unusual lead is called for and leader is requested to solve the puzzle. Our suggestion is that casual (and, in fact, most) partnerships would do well with the rigid interpretation. It does not allow for errors of judgment and, while not as effective in a perfect world, it will allow the partnership to beat some contracts 100% of the time and reduce the stress of the occasional wrong lead. At the highest level, we would expect the partnership to be flexible, with the leader able to get it right most of the time.

But remember, there is a downside to doubling on a void — the bidding side is now alerted and may run to notrump and play the suit double dummy. If partner is likely to lead the suit you want him to anyway, then it is better not to double for the lead if you suspect that the opponents have someplace else to run.

North	*South*
1♠	3♠
4♦	4♠
6♠	

A Lightner double could also work on a hand where the declarer has been bidding for the defense's ears all along. For example, in the above auction, a double by West calls for a diamond lead. Perhaps we are playing against a deceptive player and the cuebid was designed to put the defense off a diamond lead.

We believe that, in most cases, a double of a freely-bid game calls for the suit bid by the defense. In some cases a double may be a simple expression of doubt. For example, in almost all cases when we double a game bid in competition (not freely bid) our double has no lead overtones:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♥	1♠	2♥	3♣
3♥	3♠	4♥	4♠
dbl			

In this type of auction, the opening leader should treat the double as a penalty double.

A double of a notrump game in which the defending side has been silent normally asks for the lead of the first suit bid by dummy (analogous to a Lightner double). This should include artificial suits such as Stayman 2♣ as well as naturally-bid suits. When the opponents have not bid any suits, the double asks for the lead of your shortest suit (you are trying to find partner's running suit). Some partnerships have conventional agreements that a double in this case always asks for a specific agreed suit, such as hearts. We recommend you use the former treatment, which will be more useful in the long run.

When your side has entered the auction, however, the rules become more complex. For example, you have opened the bidding and your partner subsequently doubles 3NT.

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	dbl	pass	2NT
pass	3NT	dbl	all pass

The double here is unambiguous: it says 'lead a spade'. Any attempt to shop around could be wrong.

An exception is this case:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♥	1NT	pass	3NT
dbl	all pass		

Since we opened the bidding one heart (as opposed to making an overcall) and have not had a chance to show a second suit, the double should call for the lead of a lower suit. Our hand might be

♠ J x ♥ Q x x x x ♦ A K Q x x ♣ x

However, in the same auction if we had opened 1♣, the double would still have asked for a club lead, since if we had a substantial second suit of equal or better length we would have opened it (unless you open 1♣ with 5-5 in the blacks).

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♥	1♠	2♦	pass
2NT	pass	3♥	pass
4♥	pass	pass	dbl
all pass			

Here, notrump has been bid by the hand sitting over us, and partner is doubling. He suggests a heart trick or two, but warns us to beware of a spade start. We conclude that, in general terms, against notrump the double always says 'lead our suit'; against a trump contract it also suggests the lead of our bid suit, except when a stopper has been shown behind the bidder.

Most doubles in the middle of an auction are not lead-directing, but simply indicate a desire to compete. However, there are some exceptions, which occur in situations where we are unlikely to wish to compete or where a double is not the best way to enter the auction for competitive purposes. For example, when they splinter:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	pass	4♣	?

we think that here most of the time a double is a wasted call if it just shows

the splinter suit. We do recommend, however, that at favorable vulnerability, you keep this double to show length in the splinter suit and suggest a possible save.

At other vulnerabilities, while we agree that this double is lead-directing, it does not make sense for the double to ask for the lead of a club. The double has two possible meanings: lead the higher-ranking suit or lead the lower-ranking suit. Somewhat arbitrarily, we prefer the agreement that the double asks for the lead of the lower unbid suit, or at least that we have values in that suit. Note that the failure to double does not, however, show values in the higher-ranking suit, so the negative inference gained is at best marginal.

Suppose the opponents have bid a suit and responder has made a Bergen limit raise. If you are a passed hand, your desire to compete is unlikely to be great after a opening bid and a limit raise showing at least 9 HCP (give or take a few).

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		pass	pass
pass	1♠	pass	3♦
dbl			

In this case, it makes sense for the double to be lead-directing, asking for a diamond lead. However, if you are not a passed hand, then we have a different situation.

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	pass	3♣	dbl

South is not a passed hand and 3♣ shows marginal values (6-8 HCP) so this may still be our hand, and even game our way is not out of the question. Therefore this double is for takeout (of spades). The double is takeout unless the doubler is a passed hand.

What if the opponents use Drury?

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
pass	pass	1♠	pass
2♣	dbl		

Our recommendation is that the double is best played for takeout when the opening bid was made in third chair. Your desire to compete with pure shape and points is of more value here than being able to ask to have clubs led. Remember, although partner passed 1♠, he may have an awkward hand to bid over it and he could still have the values for a solid partscore after our takeout double.

If the opening 1♠ bid was made in fourth chair, then we are both passed hands. In this case, you should decide if you would prefer to play the double as takeout or lead-directing since it is an even proposition. Possibly your opening bid style, aggressive or sound, will make a determination about which you choose. Remember, if they land in 2♠ after Drury you can still reopen

with a double to contest the partscore. Our recommendation is that when playing in a casual partnership, for simplicity, the double should always be for takeout.

What if the opponents open 1NT and then use Stayman? Again, you must consider whether you are likely to wish to compete. For example, if you are a passed hand the double should always be lead-directing. If the opponents bid game-forcing Stayman, again the double should be lead-directing. However, we suggest that the double of non-forcing Stayman over a weak notrump by an unpassed hand should not be lead-directing but should show a good hand and a desire to compete. You and your partner should decide how you wish to handle the double of non-game-forcing Stayman over a strong notrump; we suggest using this double as lead-directing. The same rules also apply to doubles of Jacoby transfers.

At matchpoints, you can be very liberal in doubling these bids, as the opening lead can often make the difference between a top and a bottom. For example, at matchpoints, it is okay to double Stayman 2♣ with K-Q-10-9 of clubs and out. IMPs can change your attitude; however, the upside of the lead-director is still very strong and helping partner is very rewarding to both your score and your peace of mind.

Almost all players play that the double of a response to Blackwood is lead-directing, and so it should be. The usefulness of such a double is to prevent them from bidding and making a slam that they would make without a specific lead. Without the double partner will be more inclined to make a natural lead and in picking his lead will use the negative inference that you did not double the Blackwood response when you had the chance.

What does it mean when you double a cuebid? For example, you open or overcall, and then later you have the chance to act directly over a cuebid of your suit:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	2♥	pass	2♠
?			

We suggest the following treatment. Pass should show values in your own suit and a real desire to have it led. Conversely, double should deny any real suit interest and suggest that partner look to another suit for potential tricks. The reason that we use this approach is that we are more likely to want our suit led, and when we double, we give the opponents extra bidding room. The opponents can now redouble to show something in our suit, and they have extra space to show a control or a notrump stopper. If we pass the cuebid, they must decide where to play the hand, and from which side, without the extra room.

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♣	1♦	pass	3♣
dbl			

A double here makes it much easier for them to play 3NT from the right side; however, our pass (showing that we like clubs) makes it tougher.

Some conventions which are primarily used for constructive bidding are also important in directing the lead. One such convention is the Rosenkranz redouble of a negative double, which shows a high card (ace or king) in the suit overcalled but without sufficient length to raise. With

♠ K x ♥ x x x ♦ Q 10 x x ♣ K x x x

you would redouble a negative double of partner's spade overcall in this auction:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♥	1♠	dbl	redbl

This would allow partner with ♠AJ109x to lead the ♠J, which will allow the defense to capture the queen anywhere, or to underlead ♠Axxxx with confidence.

Another way to get partner off to a good start is by making a lead-directing opening bid in third chair. If the auction has gone:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
pass	pass	pass	1♠
pass	3♠	all pass	

you have a blind opening lead, but if partner had introduced a lead-directing third chair bid of 1♦ your lead problem would be greatly reduced.

Opening in third chair with poor values and a good suit is, admittedly, not everyone's cup of tea. However, opponents with values will still bid their hands. Your purpose should be twofold: to make their life difficult by opening the bidding and to help the defense in the event that you won't be able to buy the hand. Third chair openings with soft values should always be made in the knowledge that it may not be your hand. Therefore, opening bad suits will often lead to poor results. You should go out of your way to select a strong suit as an opening bid when you have a minimum hand, sometimes even opening a shorter suit in preference to a longer suit, or opening a strong four-card major even when playing a five-card major system.

Think how you would feel if partner opened 1♣ in third chair and you were holding

♠ K 10 x ♥ x x x ♦ x x x x x ♣ K x

against this auction:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
pass	pass	1♣	1♠
pass	3♠	pass	4♠

You lead the ♣K, only to find partner opened the wrong suit with

♠ x x ♥ A K J 10 ♦ K x x ♣ x x x x

When we overcall, we may have a poor suit or a poor hand, but never both. If we have a good hand, we have expectations of playing the final contract and so our suit quality at the top end is not of major importance. So, with

♠ J x x x x x ♥ A x ♦ K Q x ♣ A x

you would overcall 1♠. However, with fewer high card points the likelihood of declaring the hand diminishes, and with a poor suit you should repress the natural desire to get involved. By the same token, an overcall at the one level with A-K-Q-x and out is recommended. Partner will get off to the right lead, and let's dare them to try 3NT.

More and more we see this kind of action at the two-level, too. In years past, a 2♣ overcall with A-K-J-10-x and little else would have been laughed at. But this kind of bid can make life difficult for the opponents' constructive bidding and can help the defense immeasurably. This type of bidding does come with a price, of course. Partner will play you for more values and may press to a no-play game, or a nasty opponent may simply double and collect a very large number. In addition, if this is your style, it must be explained to the opponents, so the possibility of a large number increases. However, it is not easy to make a low-level penalty double without good trumps, so it is quite hard to get you when your suit is very good.

There are other opportunities to make lead-directing bids that occur from time to time. Suppose the auction goes:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	dbl	2NT[1]	?

1. Limit raise.

and you hold

♠ x x ♥ J x x x x ♦ x x x ♣ A K x

Maybe you can buy the hand in 3♥, but this is very unlikely. Do you want a heart lead? No, you would much prefer a club lead. Then why not try 3♣? If necessary you can always convert to hearts, but the chance to get a club lead will pay off often enough to offset the occasional poor result. Besides, you'll enjoy the warm feeling of a great defensive bid and good result often enough to make up for the occasional accident.

The situation is different, though, over a forcing raise.

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♠	dbl	2NT[1]	?

1. Forcing raise.

♠ x ♥ J x x x x x x ♦ x x ♣ A K x

Here, bidding 3♣ makes good sense while bidding 3♥ is asking for trouble.

If you often use these bids, remember to alert them as possibly lead-directing and showing a short suit.

Here is another interesting chance to help the defense:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1♣	2♠[1]	4NT	?

1. Preemptive.

♠ x x x x ♥ A Q x x ♦ x x x ♣ x x

Bid 5♥ here rather than 5♠. If they go on to slam, partner will know what to do.

Suppose the auction goes

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	2♠[1]	dbl	?

1. Weak.

and you hold either of these hands:

♠ — ♥ A x ♦ Q J 10 x x x x ♣ x x x x

♠ x x x ♥ x ♦ A K J ♣ x x x x x x

On both hands, we would bid 3♦. In the first case, we fear a penalty pass; on the second hand, we want a diamond lead. Try this idea: play 2NT in this sequence as artificial — partner is requested to bid 3♣, which you can pass or correct to your own suit. This allows the direct bid of a new suit to be lead-directing with a raise of opener's suit.

Finally, on rare occasions, you may wish to make a deceptive lead-directing bid. Your hope is to encourage the opponents to run from a makable contract into one that can be defeated, or alternatively to suggest to declarer a line of play which will fail. For example, a defender might make a Lightner double without a void, hoping that his opponents will run to a different and possibly unmakable slam. For the sake of partnership confidence, this should be the exception, not the rule! Pick your spots carefully, and, if your ploy fails, take full responsibility.

It Can Drive You Crazy

ANDY STARK

Teachers love analogies, and it's easy to tell that the author of this piece is a professional teacher. He's also a pretty good bridge player.

Playing bridge has a lot in common with driving a car; in fact the analogy is so good that it's a little scary. Think about it: in driving you can have an accident, get caught speeding, or simply have a wheel fall off. At the bridge table you can have a bidding accident, bid too high and get doubled, or simply have a wheel fall off (I told you it was scary!).

Sometimes our thought processes, like our vehicles, seem to run out of gas, or perhaps we lose our way. Usually we can attempt to place the blame on our map-reading navigator (I mean partner), but sometimes we are clearly at fault for going down the wrong road. A good example was this hand that came up recently in a sectional Swiss in Brantford:

♠ A K J 8 ♥ A 7 6 4 ♦ K ♣ A K 10 8

Holding this fine collection as dealer, you decide to rev up the proceedings by opening 2NT. If anyone asks you later why you selected a notrump call holding a singleton, tell them you had a club mixed in with your diamonds. If they don't buy that, tell them it must have been a heart mixed in there with your red king. They'll buy that one; everyone buys that one.

You've heard of defensive driving, of course. Well, this is defensive bridge. You see, with some partners you not only have to defend roughly half the contracts, you have to defend all of your auctions and actions. Those partners, like certain car models, do not last long.

All right, back to the hand at hand: partner responds with a Puppet 3♣, and you respond 3♦, denying a 5-card major, but promising at least one 4-card major. Partner bids 4♦, showing at least four cards in each major suit, and you arrive at your first fork in the road. Which way do you go — hearts or spades? Let's say you choose the spades route, which at least looks like a paved road, while opting for hearts looks suspiciously like you might need four-wheel drive and good suspension.

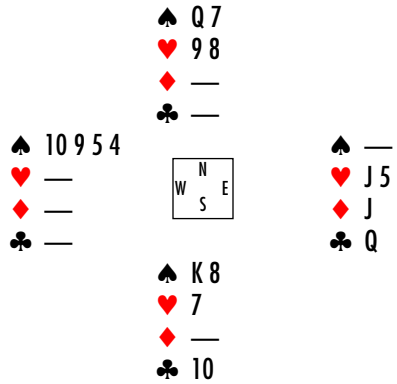
After you bid 4♠, partner checks for controls and, as fast as you can get to the end of your driveway, there you are in 6♠. The lead is the ♥10, and this is what appears in front of you:

North
♠ Q 7 6 3
♥ Q 9 8 3
♦ A Q 9 5
♣ 2

South
♠ A K J 8
♥ A 7 6 4
♦ K
♣ A K 10 8

You win the first trick by playing the ace on the king, which had covered the queen which had covered the ten. The cover play — nice start. Then you cash the ace of trumps for a little look-see, only to discover that LHO has all five missing trumps. This is like checking your blind spot and having someone in the car beside you show you their middle finger. Nice feeling, eh?

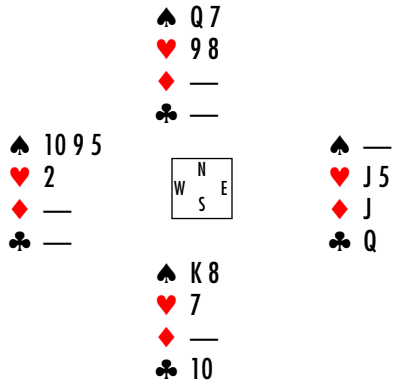
So much for spades as the better trump suit. Oh well, you're not down yet, and just think: if you were in six hearts you would have gone down on a spade lead. The key now is not to give up just because you appear to have blown a tire... keep truckin'. You might find a way to limp home provided you don't throw in the towel and call the Automobile Association, which, sadly, is what I did. Try this: cash the ♦K, then cash the ♣AK and ruff a club with the ♠6 while LHO follows to all three rounds. Now cash the ♦AQ throwing hearts from your hand: LHO follows to all three diamond plays. Now ruff the ♦9 in hand with the jack of trumps, and let's say LHO pitches her last heart, coming down to four trumps. Here is the four-card ending:



Now play the ♣10, and watch LHO choose her poison. Ruffing in with the ♠4 or ♠5 allows you to score the ♠7, and you have two more tricks com-

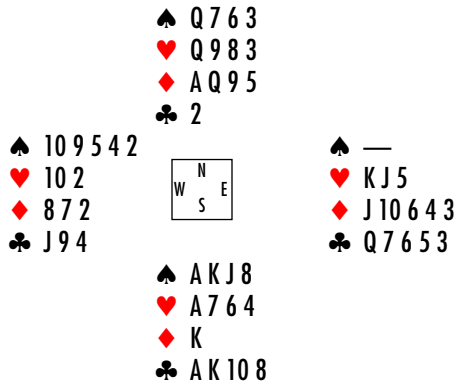
ing by power. But if she ruffs in with the ♠9 or ♠10, you overruff with the ♠Q and exit a heart to LHO, who is endplayed in trumps. Neat, eh?

So I went down in a cold contract, right? Well, not actually. Let's go back to the point where you play a diamond from the board and ruff with the ♠J. LHO has a chance now to make a spectacular defensive play — something akin to choosing the lane that actually moves during rush hour. Instead of pitching her last heart, she underruffs! Here is the four-card ending after this:



Now what can you do? Nothing — her lane change just cut you off. If you lead the ♣10 now, LHO trumps in with the ♠9, and you overruff as before. But now East wins a heart lead from dummy, and West still scores a trump trick. The road is blocked, once West underruffs on the diamond trick.

This hand actually turned out to be a push, but it provided an opportunity for the declarer at each table to shine. This was the complete deal:



At the other table our opponents reached 6♥ from the North side, and having avoided the spade ruffs, declarer had to play the trumps for one loser. Can you see how to do this as the cards lie?

The answer is to intra-finesse: start with a low heart and play the nine when West follows small. Later run the queen through East, pinning West's doubleton ten. Ah, the intra-finesse — it's like sneaking off with your parents' car. Great when you get away with it, but hell to pay when you don't.

BRIDGE THEORY

There are those of us who will always be compulsive analysts and technicians. Not for us the lucky win from a defensive error or a poor contract that just happens to make; no, we strive for the purity of knowing that even if we lost, we did so making the mathematically correct play.

Playing The Odds

R A Y L E E

Numbers have always been one of Ray's fascinations, and there are plenty of numbers to think about at the bridge table. This compulsion to analyze everything to find the theoretically optimum line of play must come from having been an expert chess player before giving up the game to play bridge instead.

In all but the simplest situations, I believe it is nearly impossible to calculate the odds on alternative lines of play while actually at the table. I well remember some years ago staring at A-K-7-x-x opposite 10-9-x as my trump suit in a grand slam (never mind how we got there), trying to figure out whether to double hook and try to pin the doubleton eight offside or to play for Q-J doubleton by cashing the ace and king (if you're interested, it turns out the odds are exactly equal!). More complex situations defy accurate analysis.

And there is another factor. 'Bridge is a timed event', as we are so often reminded. At matchpoints, or even at Swiss IMPs, we have little time to make critical decisions, or to indulge in the kind of lengthy dissection of alternatives that is possible after the game. As a result, many difficult plays have to be made on 'gut feel' — the situation is too complex for accurate analysis in the time available.

A case in point is the following problem in declarer play that cropped up in a CNTC qualifying match about a year ago.

North
♠ 8 4
♥ A K 6 2
♦ 5 2
♣ A J 7 6 3

South
♠ Q 10 2
♥ J 10 3
♦ A K Q 9
♣ Q 4 2

South deals, opens one diamond, and plays in three notrump after an uninterrupted auction. The defense begins with a low spade to the king, a spade through to the ace-jack (on which a club is thrown from dummy), and the fourth round of spades is played. Assuming East is going to follow to this

trick, what do you pitch from dummy and from your hand to give yourself the best chance of making the contract? Before reading on, take sixty seconds or so to make your decision.

At the table, the two declarers made different decisions. David Lindop threw a heart from each hand; Mark Liberman threw a club from dummy and a diamond from hand. Post-mortem analysis suggested a club from each hand might be best. It seemed to me that the right line of play is by no means obvious, and it is an interesting problem to analyze the relative merits of all three.

Even with computer assistance, this is by no means an easy task. With spades four-four, we simplified the analysis somewhat by assuming that West had no five-card suit, with the possible exception of diamonds. We also analyzed the hand *in vitro* as it were, ignoring the question of what card West actually leads to Trick 5, and what that does to the odds on various distributions and to declarer's entries. This is a reasonable approach, since declarer's moment of truth occurs at Trick 4, before he knows what LHO is going to do at Trick 5!

1: a heart from each hand.

South intends to finesse the club jack and cash the ace. If the king does not fall doubleton, then he needs the heart queen onside and the jack-ten of diamonds to drop in three rounds.

2: a club from dummy and a diamond from hand.

Now South intends to run the jack of hearts, followed by the ten if the jack holds. If the finesse works, he cashes out the hearts and diamonds, then takes a club finesse. This line wins a) if West has Q-x-x of hearts, and the club king; b) if West has Q-x-x-x of hearts and the club king (West is squeezed); c) if West has Q or Q-x of hearts, and has the king of clubs singleton or doubleton.

3: a club from each hand.

South will take the heart finesse, and try for a 3-3 heart break; if this works, he will cash three diamonds, looking for the jack, ten to drop for nine tricks. If this doesn't happen, he falls back on the club finesse (superior to playing East for the club king and trying for a squeeze). If the hearts don't break, then again three rounds of diamonds are played, followed by a club finesse; the winning positions involve West holding the club king, and either the jack, ten of diamonds coming down, or a club-diamond squeeze.

So you know what you need for all three lines, if not the exact odds. Do you want to change your mind about what to pitch at Trick 4? One last chance!

Before getting to the actual percentages for each line, let me digress to the results of a straw poll conducted among local experts. Counting the original declarers who voted in the most practical possible way, the results were:

Line 1:	*(heart, heart)*	*3*
Line 2:	*(club, diamond)*	*2*
Line 3:	*(club, club)*	*10*
Others:	*(all inferior)*	*7*

The actual odds? Line 2 turns out to offer a 17.1% chance of success, with Line 3 not too far behind at 16.2%. Line 1, curiously enough, is significantly inferior at 12.0%.

At the table, by the way, virtue was rewarded. Liberman, who selected Line 2, made the hand for a useful 13 IMP swing.

We analyzed only the three lines described above, and made no claim to have exhausted the possibilities. We also invited enterprising readers to add to the discussion, and received the following letter.

My attention was recently drawn to your column 'Playing the Odds' in the November 1992 CMP. I doubt that you've been inundated with letters (numbers seem to scare most people) so maybe you'll find a comment or two of interest.

I think someone who was assiduous enough (I'm not) could train themselves to work out most single suit probabilities at the bridge table. A-K-7-x-x opposite 10-9-x is an easy one because there are two specific 3-2 breaks that favour the drop (Q-J stiff in either hand) and two that favor the smother (8-x on the right, and there are two x's out), and all specific 3-2 breaks are equally likely, so the two chances are exactly equal.

On the other hand, working out the probabilities for an entire hand is an intractable problem — even when you're not under pressure — and tedious at best. I think the way to deal with it is to evaluate little pieces of the problem and then try to weigh the pieces in your mind.

The pitch from dummy at Trick 4 is tough. Making a trick in time with the ♥2 requires the hearts to be 3-3 with the queen onside, which is about an 18% shot. Making a trick in time with the ♣6 requires that the king be onside doubleton, which is about a 14% shot. That suggests pitching a club rather than a heart.

Once you've decided that, it looks to me as if you should pitch the ♥3 from hand. It seems of little value because if you play hearts ahead of clubs, then if West covers the jack to block the suit it does no harm anyway. You can always pitch the ♦9 later on the third heart, so keeping it now gives you more chances.

What in fact is the defense going to lead to Trick 5? If East wins the fourth spade, he may not help you but can hardly hurt you. But if West is on lead at Trick 5, he improves your chances if he leads either minor. If he leads clubs from his king he gives you three tricks, and if he leads a diamond he improves your chances because one of them will have to play the jack or ten. I suppose that if West leads a club he's unlikely to have the king, so you can rise and try your luck with both red suits. This is where the cover of the first heart from declarer hurts — and I wonder how likely that is?

Suppose West leads a heart — you duck in dummy (if they don't you lead the ♥10 immediately you get in; if it holds, you switch to a club, and if the ♥10 is covered, you return to the jack and play a club) and if you win the heart in hand you finesse the ♣J, and cash the ♣A. If the king drops you have your ninth trick, and if not, you cash the top hearts pitching the ♣Q. If they break, you again have your ninth trick, and finally you run the diamonds to see if the jack and ten come down. (Making three tricks in clubs is about a 16% shot, because the stiff king with LHO is enough.) There are some squeeze possibilities here too: if West has four diamonds, K-x-x of clubs, and ♥Q-x, declarer throws the ♣Q on the third heart, and West can't guard both minor suits.

That seems to me like a lot of chances, and that it was worthwhile to preserve both the fourth heart and the ♦9. At any rate, it proves someone read your article, and did a little thinking about it! However, if you can assess the probabilities that they'll make various leads to the fifth trick and all the rest of the stuff, you're a better man than I am — or at least a lot more industrious!

Chuck Galloway

Newtonian Leads — A corollary to the Law of Total Tricks

A L L A N F A L K

Allan Falk is a Michigan expert whose books include Team Trial, Spingold Challenge, *and (our own favorite)* Bridge Toolkit. *He has (so far) won the Blue Ribbon Pairs twice.*

Let's start by treating this as a quiz. What do you lead, and just as important, why do you lead it in each case?

1) This was the first hand out of the box in our Grand National Teams District Final. Sitting West, I held

♠ Q 6 ♥ K 9 7 4 2 ♦ 10 4 3 ♣ K Q 10

This was the bidding:

Neither vulnerable

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♦[1]	dbl	1♠
3♥	3♠	pass	4♠
dbl	all pass		

1. 8-12 HCP.

Partner is a sound bidder with Roth-Stone tendencies.

2) This deal is from the round robin of the Open team competition of the 1993 European Championships, featuring eventual champions Poland against Denmark. You, West, hold the following hand:

♠ K J 10 ♥ J 7 6 2 ♦ A J 9 8 3 ♣ 3

The auction is:

Both vulnerable

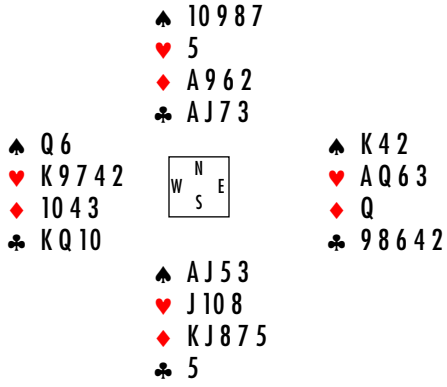
West	*North*	*East*	*South*
pass	pass	pass	1♣
1♦	1♥	2♠[1]	3♦
3♠	5♣	pass	6♣
all pass			

1. Guarantees a diamond fit.

On Problem 1, I doubled, assuming that the opponents had simply got carried away with themselves, or alternatively that partner would have something distributionally unusual that would prompt him to pull to 5♥. So I led the ♣K, expecting down one on a bad day.

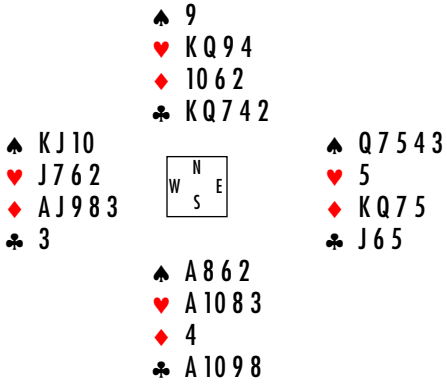
Had I bothered to give the matter the thought that it deserved, I should have reasoned as follows: they have only an eight-card spade fit, and not more than twenty high-card points. They must not only have distributional justification for this game venture, but if, as experts, they are applying the Law of Total Tricks, they must have two singletons between them plus a two-suited fit. Hence, they must have a diamond fit and, since partner's takeout double is known to be flawed (with only three spades), and without compensating high-card strength, he must have a singleton diamond. A minimal takeout double of 1♦ with ♠ xxx would be pretty flippant, so East must hold ♠ Axx or ♠ Kxx. As long as he also holds a round ace, we can always beat 4♠ if I lead a diamond.

As you can see from the diagram below, after a club lead we never recovered. Now, on past performance, I never expected East to hold so little in the way of high cards, but anything extra would have been a real bonus for the defense. Had East passed 1♦, we would never have entered the auction, and there would have been no clue to the killing diamond lead.



Notice a significant feature about the hand, namely that the defense had some semblance of trump control. It would be too dangerous, without at least inferential trump control, to lead declarer's secondary suit, as he might win, draw trumps, run his side suit discarding losers, and claim, when you had enough fast tricks in your suits to set him off the top (or when you needed the tempo to set up your own tricks).

On the second problem, you are aware that your side has a two-suited fit, and so the opponents probably have the equivalent. Surely each opponent has a singleton or void to be in a slam with not much more than half the high cards and missing at least one ace. As your heart holding will probably reveal itself eventually (partner will be known to have nine cards in the pointed suits, plus your side's trump length), and is easily finessable, picture the play: declarer needs ruffs in dummy, and hand entries. If you lead a pointed suit, declarer can use hearts once for transportation purposes, and can even give up the lead before drawing trumps and running hearts. However, if you lead a heart, declarer is going to have to draw trumps before giving up the lead, or else your partner will get a ruff.



Ron Andersen, writing this hand up in a report for the ACBL *Bulletin*, was not critical of the defenders' failure to find the defense: 'A heart lead would probably defeat the slam, but West had no reason to lead anything but a spade.' Declarer won the ♠A, conceded a diamond, crossruffed for a while, drew trumps, and then, with an accurate count, took the winning view in hearts to land his contract. But not against you!

And now to explain the title of this article. Back in the seventeenth century, Newton's Third Law of Motion stated that 'for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction'. In bridge, too, for every advance in bidding science, there is a corresponding opportunity for defenders to learn and profit. As the Law of Total Tricks gains currency in helping us all to bid our cards to the hilt, alert defenders will have opportunities to draw inferences that can illuminate their path and guide them to the killing defense.

Restricted Choice – Fact or Fiction?

ERIC SUTHERLAND

At one stage, CMP became involved in a correspondence between two of our readers regarding the validity of the Principle of Restricted Choice. Briefly, we can state the 'con' argument as 'the cards have no memory'; in other words, if the a priori odds favor playing for a 2-2 split, then the fact that East has dropped one of the missing honors doesn't change anything. The 'pro' argument involves probability theory. The mathematics of all this can get pretty complex, so eventually we appealed to the Faculty of Mathematics at the University of Waterloo for some help. After further correspondence, we received the following article from Eric Sutherland, a UW undergraduate at the time as well as a Canadian Junior bridge international.

We have all come across the situation where we have to play the following suit for no losers:

A 10 5 4

K 9 8 7 2

Barging ahead, we lead the two to the ace, and the queen drops on our left. We then lead the ten from the dummy, RHO follows with the six (after playing the three on the first round), and we are at the crossroads: do we finesse or play for the drop, and how do we know what to do?

The principle involved in this type of situation is called the Law of Restricted Choice. There is a lot of dissent about this Law, because it seems to defy logic. After all, what happened to 'eight ever, nine never'? Why would the probabilities suddenly change in the middle of the hand?

The reason why Restricted Choice works is this: if LHO had the doubleton queen, jack to begin with, then he had a choice of cards to play on the first round, because the queen and the jack are equals. If he had the singleton queen or jack, then his choice of what to play is 'restricted' to that queen or jack.

Let's look at some percentages. First, assume that with Q-J doubleton, LHO will play each card 50% of the time at random. Since the probability of his holding Q-J doubleton is 6.78% (2-2 break is 40.7%, with 6 combinations), LHO will play an honor from Q-J doubleton about 3.39% of the time. The probability that LHO has a singleton honor is about 6.22% (3-1 break is 49.74% with 8 combinations). As a result, the finesse on the second round rates to win about twice as often as it loses (6.22 to 3.39).

Sounds simple? Well, let's throw a little kink into the works. Let's suppose that you are playing against opponents whom you know from experience would never play the queen from Q-J doubleton, or even people who play the jack from this holding by agreement (I've seen it!). Now let's examine the odds. If LHO plays the queen, he must have a singleton, so it is definitely right to finesse, but if he plays the jack, he could have either a singleton jack (6.22% of the time) or a Q-J doubleton (6.78% of the time, since they would never play the queen); in this case it is right, albeit by a very small margin, to play for the drop. Similarly, if you are playing against someone whom you know always falsecards, and would never play the jack from Q-J doubleton, the same holds: finesse if you see the jack, and go up if the queen is played.

A word of warning, though: be very sure of your opponents. If you do choose to play for the drop in these situations, then you are going against the field, and single-handedly creating a potential swing that your partner or teammates may have to pay for later.

The moral of the story? Make yourself familiar with the usefulness of Restricted Choice, as it crops up in different situations. On defense, play your queens and jacks randomly; when on play, know your opponents; but above all, play for the 2-1 odds. You don't get those odds in real life... or do you?

Remember the TV show 'Let's Make a Deal'? Monty Hall tells you that there is a fabulous prize behind one of Doors 1, 2, and 3, but there are 'zonks' behind the other two. You choose Door 1, and Monty opens Door 3 to show you a giant rocking horse. He then asks you if you want to switch your choice to Door 2. Do you switch or not? This problem has caused more heated arguments than you can imagine.

Bridge players should have no difficulty recognizing another Restricted Choice situation here! Switch to Door 2, and your odds of winning are 2-1, not 50-50. Let's say that Door 1 was the right door — then Monty could have chosen to show you Door 2 or Door 3, with equal probability. However, if Door 1 was wrong and Door 2 was right, Monty was forced to choose Door 3, since Door 2 has the prize behind it. Because he is forced to pick Door 3 when Door 2 has the prize, and only picks Door 3 half the time when Door 1 has the prize, Door 2 has a better shot at making you a winner.

*Restricted Choice – Fact or Fiction?

G E O R G E S H A W

Our impassioned correspondents weren't going to leave it there, however. Shortly after Eric's piece appeared, we received the next salvo in the battle.

**The Case Against...*

Most of our so-called reasoning consists in finding arguments for going on believing as we already do. James Robinson.

Over the years, bridge players have developed a number of rules of thumb relating to situations that arise at the table where probability analysis is required. Among these are old standards such as 'eight ever, nine never' and 'odd suits break even and even suits break odd'. These old bromides are useful because they eliminate the necessity of complex calculation and they have sound mathematical reasoning behind them. A would-be addition to this arsenal of useful gadgets is the Principle of Restricted Choice.

This subject has been a matter of vigorous debate among bridge players for at least forty years. It has been both endorsed and rejected by players at all levels of the game, and there does not seem to be a dominant consensus. This fact, in itself, is fascinating, because the subject is 'clearly' a matter of probability analysis and should therefore be straightforward to clarify. Right? Apparently not — at least not to the satisfaction of many of us. The purpose of this article, however, is not to disprove RC, but rather to focus on some of the reasons why it has not been unanimously accepted.

Eric Sutherland's article was a good presentation of the standard argument used by Restricted Choicers, and the holding used to illustrate that article is probably the most commonly used example of an RC situation:

A 10 5 4

K 9 8 7 2

(We, too, shall be using only this specific example in our analysis, but the principles are applicable to any of the myriad of other holdings used in RC arguments.)

The ace is played, RHO plays a spot card, and an honor drops on declarer's left. The ten is now led, RHO plays the other spot card, and the question is — finesse or drop? Note that, of the sixteen combinations of the four outstanding cards in the suit, only holdings of singleton Q, singleton J, or doubleton Q-J with LHO offer declarer any choice of plays after the ace has been

played on the first round. Let us not lose sight of declarer's objective now, which is to determine which play offers the higher probability of success. Of course, this determination should be made at the Moment of Decision — after RHO has played to the second round. RC answers the question through probability analysis of the pertinent *a priori* distributions; there are other methods that approach the objective from a different direction, but more on that later.

RC claims that the finesse has a 2:1 advantage, and part of the reasoning is based on the assumption that a player holding doubleton Q-J will play a card from this holding at random. I take exception to that assumption: most, if not all, players will try to play the card which they think is most likely to fool declarer into taking a finesse. While I suspect that most players have a bias, and that their play is not random, I shall not speculate on whether the majority tend to play the higher or the lower card, and I have seen no data on this subject. In any event, it is a mathematical no-no to use conventional probability calculations on a non-random system unless the degree of bias is known and can be factored into the equation.

Another solution to declarer's dilemma might be to ask 'What is the probability that LHO originally held a doubleton honor, given that we have seen him play one?' The answer to this question would, of course, indicate the better play. Mr. Sutherland points out (correctly) that the singleton honors each occur with LHO 6.22% of the time, while the doubleton honor occurs with LHO 6.78% of the time. It can be argued that when the first-round honor was played, one of the singleton honor holdings was eliminated, and therefore the doubleton honor combination is now slightly favored (6.78 out of (6.78+6.22), or 52%). The pro-RC voices will point out that the 6.78 should be halved because LHO would have a choice of plays. If this is so, however, then whenever LHO holds a doubleton honor (6.78% of the time), regardless of which card he plays on the first round, declarer must infer a probability of 3.39% for the doubleton — which makes no sense.

There is another method — completely different, equally valid, and more direct — that can be used to arrive at a decision. Instead of focusing on the *a priori* distributions that LHO might hold, declarer calculates the probability of LHO's ability to follow suit to the second trick through a device called Vacant Places analysis ('VP'). This is a standard tool used in probability analysis, and since it has been well described in the literature (see, for example, *Bridge Odds for Practical Players* by Kelsey and Glauert) I shall not describe it in detail here. Suffice it to say that one variation is based on the relative number of vacant places in the opponents' hands after accounting for the location of known cards in a critical suit. Applied to our Moment of Decision, the probability of the outstanding card being with LHO is 12/23, or 52% (12 of his 'spaces' are unknown, as opposed to 11 of RHO's). Once again, the drop is favored, and the numerical result is the same. (In fairness, I must report that some writers who support RC accept the validity of VP analysis, but only if the probability is halved. However, I find this condition difficult to accept because VP analysis is based entirely on the number of vacant spaces, not on the value of individual cards.)

A curious bit of reasoning occurs in the Kelsey and Glauert book, when they suggest checking RC situations by VP analysis. If the hand playing an honor on the first round has greater than twice as many vacant places as the hand playing low cards, they recommend playing for the drop; otherwise, they like the finesse. Presumably, they feel that this is appropriate because a VP ratio of more than 2:1 would offset the alleged 2:1 advantage that RC gives the finesse. In suggesting this, of course, they are giving the two methods of analysis equal validity, which suggests to me that the drop must be the better play whenever VP so indicates.

A much more complex point that also bears on this situation is raised in *Mathematical Theory of Bridge* by Borel and Cheron. They point out that before the first lead, the 3-1 and 1-3 splits occur 49.7% of the time (6.22% for singleton Q with LHO, 6.22% singleton J) and the 2-2 split occurs 40.7% of the time (6.78% for the doubleton Q-J with LHO). After the first round in which both opponents follow, they concern themselves with how the remaining two cards are divided. The probabilities are calculated as 52% (1-1) and 48% (2-0), the same odds produced by VP. Since this appears to contradict the *a priori* odds in this *a posteriori* situation, they then state that this would only be true if the opponents' hands were reshuffled and dealt again after the first round. This is tantamount to saying that after the first two cards played have been observed, the remaining cards are not in random order. But if a deck is shuffled sufficiently to put it in random order, and one card — or any number for that matter — is revealed, are not the rest still random? The same surely applies when cards are played randomly from a hand.

If the above discussion has appeared to the reader to show bias, then it is time to try to inject some balance. Despite the anomalies in the literature, RC must have some merit if for no other reason than that a number of intelligent and skilled bridge players swear by it. It appears to be sound mathematically, although it should be noted that the differences of opinion are in the area of logic, not mathematics; the arithmetic is pretty straightforward, and not an issue. It is probable that, at the Moment of Decision, looking forward rather than back is more appropriate. However, logic and arithmetic aside, 2:1 odds are pretty compelling, and one feels intuitively that if the decision were that one-sided, the issue would have been resolved by empirical observation at the table long ago.

Restricted Choice, fact or fiction? You have to play the hand — you decide!

Restricted Choice — pshaw, not again!

C H U C K G A L L O W A Y

George Shaw's piece naturally resulted in an impassioned response from a man whose distinguished career in the insurance industry certainly made him someone worth listening to on the mathematics of probability. By the way, Chuck Galloway and George Shaw are good friends and frequent bridge partners, despite their difference of opinion over RC.

The first English-language article about 'Restricted Choice' ('RC') appeared in the May 1937 *Bridge World* magazine; it was by M. Pierre Bellanger, a French mathematician and bridge authority. There have been many expositions of the principle since then, with Eric Sutherland's article qualifying as one of the best: it was a model of brevity and clarity, and commented appropriately on the assumption of random play in the standard model. In contrast, I am not aware of any serious attempt to discredit the principle since a 1942 article in *Bridge World*.

George Shaw's attempt to cast doubt on RC fails because he ignores an important principle of probability: it is necessary to take into account all the information available, not just the part that fits your preferred method of calculation.

One way to choose between alternative results obtained by different methodologies is to demonstrate that one leads to anomalies, and must therefore be incorrect. Let us apply this test to Mr. Shaw's reasoning.

Consider the standard scenario:

A 10 5 4

K 9 8 7 2

You play the ace from dummy, and the two from hand.

Case 1) On your left sits Mr. Fish, a beginner who plays by a few simple rules; when following suit to a trick he cannot win, he plays his lowest card. If he plays the queen under our ace, we know he does not have the jack, so the finesse is now 100%, while playing for the drop is 0%.

Case 2) Now suppose your LHO is Mr. Eel, who has played some bridge and thinks it is smart to falsecard; he always plays the higher of touching honors when following suit. Since he has one more empty space in his hand than RHO, the probability that he has the jack when he plays the queen turns out to be 52%, Mr. Shaw's number. The finesse is now a 48% chance.

Case 3) If Mr. Shark, who is an expert player and follows randomly to your ace from queen-jack doubleton, sits on your left, Mr. Shaw would have us believe that the probability for the finesse is exactly the same 48% as if Mr. Eel sat there.

Now reverse the situation and have the player on your left play the jack on the first trick. Now when Mr. Eel is on the left the finesse is 100%, and, by Mr. Shaw's method, the probability of the finesse succeeding if Mr. Shark is on our left is the same as for Mr. Fish.

But surely it is obvious that if Mr. Shark plays sometimes like Mr. Fish and sometimes like Mr. Eel, then the chances of success for the finesse when he is on your left lie somewhere between 48% and 100%. Since Mr. Shaw feels that the probability is always 48%, it is quite clear that his method gives an irrational result.

Another way to demonstrate the fallacy is to consider a contest between two players: Mr. Shaw and Mr. Sutherland. They agree in advance that with K9872 opposite A1054 in dummy they will cash the ace and play as follows: if two spots appear, or an honor falls on the right, they will play low to the king next; if any honor appears on the left, Mr. Shaw will still lead to the king next, but Mr. Sutherland will take the hook.

We could construct a table showing every possible holding for LHO, but there are, as usual, only three cases where anything will be different in terms of the results the two players will achieve: singleton queen or jack with LHO, and doubleton queen-jack with LHO. Let us consider how many losers each player has in each of these cases:

LHO	*Frequency*	*Shaw*	*Sutherland*
Q	6.2174%	1	0
J	6.2174%	1	0
QJ	6.7826%	0	1

Mr. Sutherland is the clear winner, by 12.43 to 6.8 (about 1.8 to 1).

Mr. Shaw also refers to some ideas from *Bridge Odds for Practical Players* and *Mathematical Theory of Bridge*. In both cases he is, in my view, wrong, but a detailed explanation involves a level of technicality that is beyond the scope of this article. However, his final remark regarding the apparent lack of empirical confirmation of a theoretical 2:1 proposition is worthy of comment.

Do you know anyone who keeps sufficiently detailed and accurate records and has played enough hands to form a valid sample? I don't. When you consider how selective human memory is, how it is affected by personal biases, and how people forget their failures and remember their triumphs, it is clear that this matter won't be decided empirically. Not only that, but players often misapply valid principles and then lose faith in them because of their lack of success or because they do not appreciate that the percentage play will fail a significant part of the time.

The principle of restricted choice is valid when properly applied. The calculation of probabilities by the 'vacant spaces' principle is also valid when properly applied. The test of a method is whether it produces anomalous results or reproduces valid results produced by another method. Mr. Shaw's arguments fail both these tests.

George Shaw wrote to us in response to this:

The proposed contest uses mathematical input to deal with a purely mathematical subject, i.e. distributional probabilities. However, the analysis is flawed by an obvious error in logic: the frequencies quoted are correct for the a priori combinations. With the play of each card, the probabilities change, of course, but the relative probability of any combination of holdings remains constant as long as those holdings remain possible.

The singleton honor holdings are approximately twice as likely as the doubleton honor holding in the beginning, but the instant LHO drops his honor on the first round, one of the singleton holdings drops from further consideration. At the moment of decision, there are only two distributions to consider. Needless to say, the odds differ from Mr. Galloway's calculation, which is based on three possible distributions.

And the final word went to Mr. Galloway:

George's first paragraph is correct, but his second is erroneous. The crucial point of the traditional explanation of restricted choice is that when a player plays the Q or J from a holding of Q-J stiff, those hands where he would have followed with the other honor are now irrelevant, and only those (half in the standard model) where he would follow with the honor he actually played should be compared with those where he has that honor stiff.

While the principle of 'restricted choice' may seem surprising at first, it seems to me that anyone who approached this point with an open mind should be able to accept that hands where the player would have played the other honor should now be excluded from the calculation.

More Restricted Choices

ERIC SUTHERLAND

So, fact or fiction? Those of us who are mathematically inclined like to encourage the unbelievers; after all, we are pretty sure we have a 2:1 edge when we play against them. This whole thing did get Eric's mind working, however (when he wasn't calculating derivatives for the TD Bank), and eventually he put together a follow-up piece. A word of warning: if you still don't believe in the Law of Restricted Choice, do not read on; this is not for you. However, it is gratifying to note that this article and its forerunners are referenced in an article on Restricted Choice and related problems in the March 1995 College Mathematics Journal.

A couple of months ago, I was talking casually about a hand to a friend, and he asked me whether or not Restricted Choice applied to situations where you were missing more than four cards in a suit. And if so, how did it change the probability of playing for the drop when you were missing J10xxxx versus when you were missing Jxxxxx?

I didn't know the answer for certain, so I put pen to paper and did some calculations, and I found some of the results somewhat surprising.

1) Missing QJxxx

Dummy
A 10 5 4

You
K 9 8 7

Suppose when you lead the ace from dummy, your LHO follows with the jack. You now lead the ten, and RHO plays small smoothly. What's your next move? Assuming that this is the only suit in which you have a problem (meaning that if LHO played the J from Q-J-x and you finesse, it doesn't matter), we can calculate the winning play.

Assume that with Q-J doubleton, LHO will play either card 50% of the time. The chance of our opponent holding Q-J doubleton is 3.39% (the percentage of a 3-2 break with LHO having the doubleton is 33.9%, with 10 combinations) so, LHO will play the queen (or jack) from Q-J about 1.70% of the time. Our LHO will have a singleton queen (or jack) about 2.83% of the time (the percentage of a 4-1 break with LHO holding the singleton is 14.1% with

5 combinations). If we finesse here, we rate to win 5 times for every 3 times that we will lose (2.83 to 1.70).

2) Missing QJxxxx

Dummy
A 10 7 4

You
K 9 8

Once again, let us assume that this is the only suit of importance in the hand. You play the king from your hand, and your RHO drops the jack. You now play the 9, which is covered by a low card. What next?

Let's look at some more numbers, again allowing our RHO to play the queen or jack with equal probability if those are his only cards. A Q-J doubleton will occur 1.61% of the time (the percentage of a 4-2 break with RHO holding the doubleton is 24.2% with 15 combinations). However, a stiff jack (or queen) will be seen 1.21% of the time (a 5-1 break with RHO having a singleton is 7.27% with 6 combinations). So, the winning play is still the finesse by a margin of about 3:2 (you win 3 times for every 2 times you lose).

3) Missing J10xxxx

This is a situation that is much more frequent than the others that we have so far discussed. A typical layout would be:

Dummy
A Q 9 4

You
K 8 7

We play the seven to the ace, and the four to the king. On the first round, both opponents follow small, but on the second round, our RHO pops up with the ten. We lead the eight from our hand, only to be met with the six. Whom do we play for the remaining card in the suit?

This situation is very similar to the classic holding where we are missing the QJxx. Although it is better to play for the drop when we are not missing the ten, the probabilities shift when the opponents have it, because of the Law of Restricted Choice. Our RHO will have the 10-x (or J-x) in 4 of the 15 combinations, or 6.46% of the time. On the other hand, RHO will have the J-10-x in 4 of the 20 combinations, or 7.11% of the time (the percentage of a 3-3 break is 35.5% with 20 combinations). Making our usual assumption about RHO's likely play from equal cards, finessing is once again the winning play by about 2:1.

Refining the Law of Total Tricks

CHUCK MESSINGER

For a while in the 1990s, Larry Cohen's To Bid or Not to Bid *was something of a bible for improving bridge players, and indeed, it's still required reading. Now we all know about the LAW, and tend to concentrate on explaining the times when it doesn't work out quite right, as opposed to being surprised when it does. Larry's second book,* Following the LAW, *talked about making adjustments to your trick expectations based on various factors; this article suggests another such modification. Swedish international Anders Wirgren discussed similar ideas in a* Bridge World *article that appeared in 2003.*

The basic Law of Total Tricks states that, when the points are roughly evenly divided between opposing sides, each side will take approximately as many tricks in a trump contract as they have cards in their longest suit fit. More accurately, if you add together the number of cards in both sides' longest suit fits, you get the total tricks available on the deal. For example, if you have nine trumps and they have eight trumps there are seventeen total tricks.

Armed with this information you are able to calculate the expectation of success for your various actions. With nine trumps you can normally bid to the three-level if you have to. However, you wouldn't push to the four-level because if they can take nine tricks you would only be able to take eight tricks, while if you can actually take ten tricks they can only take seven tricks and you could double them at the three-level for down two. With this knowledge as background, how would you bid the following hands as North?

Hand 1: Both vulnerable

♠ K Q J x x x ♥ J x ♦ x x ♣ K Q x

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1♠	2♥	2♠
3♥	?		

Hand 2: Neither vulnerable

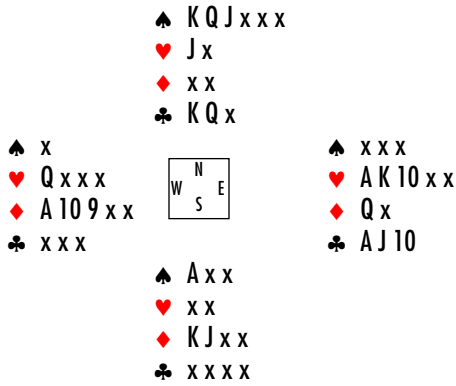
♠ K J x x x ♥ x x x ♦ K Q x x ♣ x

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	pass	pass	1♦
1♥	1♠	3♣[1]	3♠
4♥	4♠	5♥	pass
pass	?		

1. Fit-showing.

On the first hand your side likely has nine trumps and half the points in the deck. The opponents probably also have nine trumps, so there should be eighteen total tricks. If the opposition can take exactly nine tricks, then you should be able to as well. With this in mind, you decide to bid 3♠, but the opponents bid on to 4♥. Now what?

Well, it turns out that at this point your cheapest action is to sacrifice in 4♠, as game in hearts in cold. The full hand is:



Since your opponents are also aware of the LAW, it seems likely that if you had decided to pass 3♥ they might well have done so, too. What went wrong?

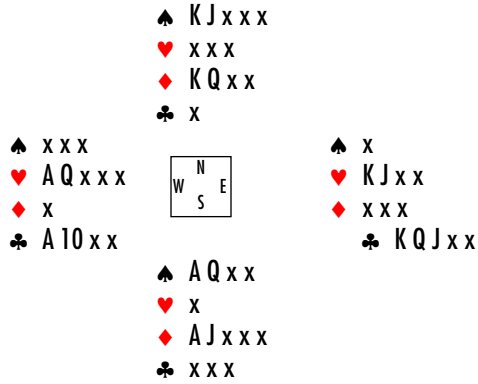
At first sight, this result looks like bad luck. There are eighteen trumps between the two sides, the points are exactly evenly divided, yet East-West can make ten tricks and North-South only eight.

No, this wasn't bad luck; it was bad bidding on North's part. In his analysis of the LAW in *To Bid or Not to Bid*, Larry Cohen points out that sometimes just counting trumps doesn't work: there are other factors that have to be taken into consideration. In this case, while the points are evenly divided, the controls aren't.

In this context, controls are aces and kings. There are twelve controls in the deck (counting them as Ace=2, King=1) so six controls is average for a side. My research has shown that controls are worth as much as trumps. When you are making a total tricks competitive decision, you should add one trick for each control over six and subtract one trick for each control under six. On the above hand, you have nine trumps and five controls for eight tricks. They have nine trumps and seven controls for ten tricks.

How do you estimate the number of controls your side is holding? There are three controls for every ten points, so an opening bid should include at least three controls and usually has four or more. You can figure a simple raise or response as two controls and a limit raise for three. South on this hand actually has one more control than might be expected; however, the North hand has only two controls, which is very low for an opening bid. This should alert you to the dangers of bidding on.

Besides high card controls there are also distributional controls. With sufficient trumps, a working singleton is worth one control and a working void is worth two controls. A 4-3-3-3 hand should be treated as minus one control. Only count these shape controls for offensive purposes. An understanding of these distributional controls brings us to the second hand.



Larry Cohen writes that it is rarely correct to bid on once the opponents are at the five-level. Usually, with eighteen trumps between the two sides, one of two things will happen: either it is their hand, but your save will be too costly, or it is your hand, and your best plus is to double them. But this isn't the case here, and that is due to the influence of distributional controls.

Here, 5♠ makes for North-South, and so does 5♥ for East-West. Each side has no wastage, a double fit, six high card controls, two shape controls, and nine trumps. Those nine trumps along with two more controls than six equals eleven tricks. It should not be hard for North to make the decision to bid 5♠: North has two high card controls, one shape control, five trumps, and a very high expectancy of four high card controls, one shape control, and four trumps from partner. Note that if everyone were 5-4-2-2, with no distributional controls, there would be the eighteen total tricks, nine a side, that we would expect from the basic LAW.

Adding controls to your evaluation as a plus-minus factor along with suit quality, degree of fit, and duplication of values will make the Law of Total Tricks more accurate than simply counting the lengths of your and their longest suits. Even thus refined, the Law is still an estimate, but it remains one of the most accurate tools for decision-making in competitive and constructive bidding. Use it and your bidding judgment will improve.

A Suitable Study

FRED GITELMAN

It probably shouldn't come as a big surprise that computer expert Fred Gitelman is also fascinated by numbers and probability. His first software package, Bridge Base, *was a powerful but hard-to-use tool which could analyze probabilities and play single suit combinations. Hence, we suppose, this article.*

A hand came up in the recent Macallan Tournament in London (formerly the *Sunday Times* Pairs) that interested me. At three of the eight tables the contract was 6♠. In order to make the slam, it was necessary to play this trump suit:

10 4 3 2

A Q 8 5

for one loser. The three declarers were Americans Bob Hamman and Jeff Meckstroth, and Paul Chemla from France, certainly three of the very best players in the world.

Chemla, playing against George Mittelman and myself, finessed the queen on the first round. This lost to George's king. Next he cashed the ace, dropping my jack and was able to use the ten to draw George's last trump. The entire layout was:

10 4 3 2

K 9 6  J 7

A Q 8 5

Hamman played low to his eight on the first round and had to lose two trump tricks. Meckstroth started with dummy's ten. When the famous player holding J-7 made the mistake of not covering, the defense was held to one trump trick and Meckstroth made his slam. I thought it highly unusual that three players of this caliber would all play the same suit combination in different ways.

My first bridge mentor was the late Ted Horning. Many years ago, Ted suggested that it would be highly beneficial for me to study the vast tables of suit combinations in *The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge*. However, I was disappointed to find out that I was no better at studying long boring bridge

tables than I was at studying long boring university textbooks. The fact that there were so many combinations made this task very painful. The fact that very few bridge hands contain 'pure problems', the way the Encyclopedia presents them, made it difficult to reinforce what I was trying to learn. I gave up trying to memorize suit combinations and decided to teach myself how to figure out these problems at the table.

As the deal from London illustrates, not even the very best players in the world 'know' how to play every suit combination. What they do have is the capacity to work out a reasonably good (if not the theoretically 'best') line of play.

It is not very difficult to figure out how to play some suit combinations. Here is the general approach:

Step 1: Think of all 'reasonable' lines of play.

Step 2: Figure out which line of play will work the greatest percentage of the time.

The word 'percentage' might scare you, but in fact many of these problems can be solved without any mathematical calculation. For example, suppose you need four tricks from:

♠ 2

♠ A J 10 5 4 3

Here are some 'reasonable' lines of play:

1) Cash the ace and lead the jack next. This play will work whenever the suit is 3-3 or either opponent has K-Q doubleton.

2) Lead low to the jack and later cash the ace. This play will work whenever the suit is 3-3, either defender has K-Q doubleton, or RHO has honor doubleton. This is clearly better than line 1.

3) Cash the ace and lead low next. This play will work whenever the suit is 3-3, either defender has K-Q doubleton, or either defender has honor doubleton. This is best of all.

The presence of the eight changes everything (and makes the computation more difficult):

♠ 2

♠ A J 10 8 4 3

Since all reasonable lines of play pick up all 3-3 breaks and both doubleton K-Qs, I shall simplify this calculation by not mentioning these layouts. Here are some reasonable plays:

1) Cash the ace and lead the jack next. In addition to the layouts just mentioned, this also picks up nine doubleton or honor-nine doubleton in either hand.

2) Lead low to the jack and cash the ace next. This also picks up both nine doubletons and all honor-nine doubletons. It gains over line 1 in that it picks up honor doubleton in RHO's hand: line 2 is thus better than line 1.

3) Cash the ace and lead low next. Once again you will pick up all honor-nine doubletons, but this time you lose to both nine doubletons that line 2 picks up. You still pick up honor doubleton with RHO (as you did with line 2) and also pick up honor doubleton with LHO (which line 2 loses to).

Thus, in order to choose between lines 2 and 3 you have to answer this question: What is more likely, that either defender started with nine doubleton or that LHO started with honor-small doubleton? If the former is true, line 2 is better. If the latter is true, line 3 is better. Perhaps the simplest way to answer this question is to list all of the relevant holdings in which lines 2 and 3 gain against each other:

Line 2 gains:		Line 3 gains:	
95	KQ76	Q5	K976
96	KQ75	Q6	K975
97	KQ65	Q7	K965
KQ76	95	K5	Q976
KQ75	96	K6	Q975
KQ65	97	K7	Q965

Each line gains against the other on six layouts. Since all of these layouts are equally likely, lines 2 and 3 have equal chances of success. Both are better than line 1 but neither is as good as:

4) Lead low to the eight, and cash the ace next. Line 4 works whenever line 3 does. It gains over line 3 when RHO has nine doubleton or K-Q-9-x. Simple logic tells us that since line 4 is better than line 3 and line 3 is equal to line 2, line 4 is also better than line 2. Line 4 is the correct line.

I have shown this suit combination to various international stars, none of whom 'knew' the right answer. They were all surprised when I told them it was right to play low to the eight. For some reason this play does not look 'intuitive'.

Here is another combination with a non-intuitive answer. You need four tricks from:

A 2

Q 10 9 8 7

Here are three reasonable lines:

1) Cash the ace and lead the two: if RHO follows small, play the ten. The critical winning case is when LHO has K-x-x.

2) Cash the ace and lead the two: if RHO follows small, play the queen. This play works when LHO has J-x-x or J-x; it is thus better than line 1. Most experts would play this suit combination this way, and they would succeed almost 39% of the time.

3) The 'right' answer is very non-intuitive: start by leading the queen and passing it if LHO does not cover. This loses to K-J-x with RHO (which lines 1 and 2 pick up) but wins when LHO has K-J-x. These combinations cancel out. Line 3 picks up J-x in either hand (like line 2) but also picks up K-x with LHO. Line 3 will succeed over 44% of the time.

The calculations involved in solving some suit combination problems (like the one from London) are too difficult for all but the very best players to solve at the table. Most of those who have the capacity to solve this problem would not bother going to the trouble. This is largely a matter of practicality — in a bridge tournament you have limited amounts of time and concentration. Finding a line of play that is 5% better than the 'normal-looking play' will only make a difference in one such hand in 20. On the other 19 hands your play will not matter and your calculations will leave you with less time and mental energy for the 'easy hands' (yes, I have been told some bridge hands are easy).

Another downside in trying to figure out every suit combination at the table is that sometimes there is no answer. Suppose you need five tricks from:

—

A Q 10 8 7 6 5

Here are the reasonable lines:

1) Lead the ace followed by the queen. This loses to king doubleton in either hand which lines 2 and 3 pick up.

2) Lead the ace followed by the ten. This loses to jack doubleton in either hand which lines 1 and 3 pick up.

3) Lead the ace followed by a small card. This loses to nine doubleton in either hand which lines 1 and 2 pick up.

Since king doubleton, jack doubleton, and nine doubleton are all equally likely, lines 1, 2 and 3 are all equally likely to succeed. Wouldn't you feel silly spending five minutes figuring this out at the table only to discover that you would have to rely on your table presence instead of your brilliant technique?

Back to London, where your trump suit in 6♠ is:

10 4 3 2

A Q 8 5

My computer tells me that none of Hamman, Meckstroth, or Chemla played the suit correctly. It says that you should cash the ace first, then lead low towards the queen and guess whether or not to duck. (I am not completely confident the computer is correct and have not checked out the calculations myself.)

The computer also says that Hamman's play was the best of the three; he was the only declarer to go down. Meckstroth made the technically worst play but was able to capitalize on an error by the defense. Defensive errors are impossible to factor into the play of suit combinations, and Meckstroth may be the best player in the world at inducing his opponents to make mistakes. In terms of winning bridge, this quality is far more important than perfect technique.

I started this article by claiming that it was not practical to memorize tables of suit combinations. I have tried to demonstrate that it is not practical (in most cases) to figure out these problems at the table. In retrospect, then, I think my old mentor was after something else besides my actually memorizing every suit combination. Ted wanted me to see the entire scope of what plays were possible in a single suit. By reading these tables (and by doing formal analysis) players can learn some very sound general principles even if they are only able to memorize a small percentage of the thousands of combinations.

When players like Hamman, Meckstroth and Chemla each play the same trump suit differently, it illustrates that perfect suit combination play is not a critical factor in winning bridge. The second-best play usually gets the job done. Your bridge goals should not include perfection – that is impractical. Rather, they should be to avoid completely ridiculous plays and to be aware of some of the 'non-intuitive' plays. Studying suit combinations (either through tables or through formal analysis) can help you achieve these goals.

BRIDGE HUMOR

Considering how serious a pastime bridge is for many of us, it is perhaps surprising that it is the basis for a substantial amount of humorous writing — sometimes from the most unlikely authors.

Special Alert

LINDA LEE

It is years now since the Bridge powers-that-be started messing with the Alert system, and turned something that was inherently fairly simple into something that no-one understood any more. This piece was written in 1997, but the situation has if anything become worse since then (at least in North America). In the words of the song, 'When will they ever learn…?' By the way, just to show that the problem isn't confined to North America, this article was reprinted in Australian Bridge *magazine.*

Everyone move over one place,' said the March Hare.'Hurry up and sit down, dear, the round has started,' the Mad Hatter called over to Alice.

Alice sat down opposite the Dormouse, who was looking very nervous, and picked up her cards.

This hand seemed to be a balanced 15-17, so she took a sip of tea and opened 1NT.

The March Hare passed and then had to shake the Dormouse, whose head had fallen on the table while he 'rested' between bids.

'Two diamonds,' burped the sleepy creature.

Oh dear, oh dear, thought Alice, I am pretty sure that's no longer an alert, but I do think it's one of those new 'announced bids'.

'That,' said Alice out loud, 'is a transfer.'

'I didn't want to know that!' exclaimed the Hatter.

'Is not, is not,' said the Dormouse, who was busy cleaning the duplicate board by dipping it in the teapot, but as usual, he was completely ignored.

'Well, well,' said the March Hare, 'tell me more.'

'It's a Jacoby transfer, showing at least five hearts and asking me to bid two hearts.'

'So he's bidding diamonds when he really has hearts,' said the March Hare. 'Well, you better mean what you say, since your partner doesn't say what he means.'

'Double!' he continued.

'Alert!' said the Hatter.

'Please explain,' asked the Dormouse.

'It's not your turn,' Alice pointed out. 'Please explain,' she said, turning to the Hatter.

'It's for penalties, shows diamonds, and is probably lead-directing.'

'That's not an alert,' said Alice indignantly.

'Yes, it is,' said the Hatter.

'No, it's not,' said the Hare.

'Whose side are you on, anyway?' the Hatter demanded, accusingly.

'The side of the law,' said the Hare, with great firmness.

'Oh, let's get on with it,' said Alice. 'I pass.'

'Special alert, special alert,' cried the Dormouse, who was now busy buttering his cards.

'How can that be a special alert? In fact, I don't think it's an alert at all. Let's call the director,' suggested the Hare.

'Pass,' said the Hatter, with a glare at his partner, who knew he had better not complain again.

'Pass,' said the Dormouse, without looking at his cards.

'We play upside-down signals of course, reverse suit preference, inverted remainder count and upside-down even-odd discards,' announced the Hatter, as the Hare made the opening lead.

'No, no, you're supposed to pre-alert carding before the auction,' said the Hare.

'You don't have to alert carding at all any more,' said Alice, 'but what are upside-down even-odd discards?'

'None of your business, you're the dummy!'

'Pre-alert, pre-alert,' said the Dormouse, absent-mindedly dropping his hand on the table. It seemed to consist mostly of diamonds…

'Surely we're entitled to protection here,' snarled the Hatter. 'Director!'

'Oh, this is ridiculous. I don't think I'll ever play this silly game again,' said Alice, and tossed her cards in the general direction of the ACBL Board of Directors, whose members were too preoccupied to notice.

Wild and Crazy Hands

FRED GITELMAN

These conversations never actually happened — but they could have. The odds quoted are real and the deals (along with many more equally unusual ones) were played in the 1994 Canadian Invitational Pairs (this was an international charity Calcutta held a number of times in the 1990s in Toronto). Fred strongly believes that computer-generated hands conform to the expected statistical distribution, so the events that he describes are either a statistical anomaly or the result of a programming error. We're reminded of the joke about the first commercial flight on a completely computer-controlled plane. As the aircraft rolls into position for takeoff, the prerecorded announcement assures the passengers that 'Nothing can go wrong… go wrong… go wrong…'

Scene 1: March 1993 at the Regal Bridge Club, Toronto.

Dramatis personae:

Irving Litvack: proprietor of the Regal and organizer of the Canadian Invitational Pairs

John Gowdy: a well-known local bridge player and philosopher

JG: I must say, Irving, you did a first class job organizing the event; if it hadn't been for the poor play of my partner, Fred Gitelman, I would have really enjoyed the weekend. I do think there is a problem with the form of scoring, however.

IL: I'm glad you enjoyed playing, John, but I don't understand what could possibly be wrong with the scoring system. IMP Pairs scoring is used in all of the big invitational pairs events, from the Macallan in London to the Cavendish Pairs in New York. Even the ACBL now has a nationally-rated IMP Pairs event.

JG: In some ways IMP Pairs is just like matchpoints: in both scoring methods you compare your results with all of the pairs that hold your cards. In match-points, though, the most you can win or lose is 1 point, and top on a board is the number of pairs that play any given hand minus one. In order to win a comparison you simply have to beat another pair's score. It doesn't matter if you beat the other pair by 10 points or 1000 points — all

you can get from any given comparison is one matchpoint, so every deal is equally important.

The same is not true in IMP Pairs, since now your results are IMPed against all the other pairs holding your cards. In a quality field, most deals are relatively flat and do not count for much, but every once in a while a deal comes up (typically in the slam range) in which there are many possible results, each of which yields a vastly different IMP score. It is as if you were playing matchpoints and all of a sudden the director announced: 'For this board only, top will be 300 instead of 12'.

IL: What's your point?

JG: It's very much the luck of the draw which pairs you play against on these key deals. If you happen to play a top partnership on a difficult slam deal, and they do the right thing, there is nothing you can do — you just have to accept your loss. The same can happen at matchpoints, but you can get it back with an extra overtrick on the next hand. Not so at IMP Pairs, so being at the right table at the right time becomes very important.

IL: OK, but what can we do?

JG: As I see it, the only solution is to make all of the boards equally important: we either remove the exciting deals from the event or remove the boring deals. I suggest that we program the computer to generate as many slam hands and wild distributional hands as possible; the players will have more fun that way.

IL: All right, you've convinced me; next year's hands will be as exciting as possible, although we should throw in the occasional flat board so that the players don't work out what we've done. Let's keep this conversation to ourselves, though... and I'll try to find you a better partner for next year's event.

Scene 2: Approximately one year later at the Regal

Dramatis Personae:

Geoff Hampson: Canada's brightest young star.
Irving Litvack

GH: Another great event, Irving. If it wasn't for the pathetic play of my partner, Fred Gitelman, I would have thoroughly enjoyed myself. I have never seen so many exciting hands.

IL: I am glad you enjoyed playing, Geoff. Don't be too depressed by the results — you did manage to beat all of the South American pairs — but I didn't notice the hands being any more exciting than usual.

GH: You mean to tell me that you played in the event and you didn't notice how many unusual distributional hands there were?

IL: (starting to get uptight) Nope.

GH: All right, let's start with the hand with nine solid spades:

♠ A K Q J x x x x x ♥ A ♦ x x ♣ x

IL: Now that you mention it, I did hold that hand. It went 2♥ (weak) on my left, and 2NT from my partner, Roy Hughes.

GH: The auction started the same way at our table — luckily, Fred and I have methods here. I was able to bid 4♥ as a transfer to spades followed by 4NT, Roman Keycard Blackwood. When Fred showed two aces I bid 7NT, trusting him to be able to find a thirteenth trick. I am sure the bidding made Fred nervous, but he quickly claimed as he held:

♠ x ♥ K J x ♦ A Q x x x ♣ A J x x

IL: Roy and I reached the same contract through a delicate cuebidding auction. I was surprised to see that we won a sizable number of IMPs on what seemed like a flat board.

GH: I have never been dealt a nine-card suit except in your ghoulie games — in fact, Fred tells me that the odds against it are more than 25,000 to 1. If this had been the only unusual hand, I might not have noticed, but there were also a large number of eight-card suits around, and Fred's computer says that the odds of being dealt an eight-card suit are about 200 to 1. In the 116 hands that we played, Fred and I were dealt five eight-card suits.

IL: So how many other nine-card suits were you dealt?

GH: None, but I think you're avoiding the issue. I thought that this hand was an interesting bidding problem:

♠ J 9 x ♥ x ♦ x ♣ A K 10 9 x x x x

Nobody was vulnerable and your LHO opens 1♦. Partner bids 2♦, Michaels, and RHO leaps to 5♦. What do you bid?

IL: I think eight-card suits are intended to be trumps. I would bid 6♣.

GH: Suppose you pass and your partner reopens with 5♥, presumably showing a huge hand with longer hearts than spades. What now?

IL: How can I not bid a slam?

GH: Well, your partner didn't promise a diamond void but you certainly have a very good hand considering your partner bid all the way to the five-level himself. Suppose you bid 6♠. It goes pass, pass, double. LHO leads a club (the double was Lightner) and dummy tables:

♠ A K x x x ♥ A K J 10 x x ♦ — ♣ Q x

Yes, 7♣ is laydown but you are trying to make 6♠. RHO ruffs the club and returns a diamond, putting you in dummy: to make the hand you have to guess spades, since RHO started with 2-3-8-0 distribution (yes, another eight-card suit) with the doubleton ♠10. Fred bid only 5♠ over 5♥ so he wasn't put to the test in slam, but the way things were going for us, I doubt he would have got it right.

Speaking of 6-5 hands, the odds of being dealt one are about 75 to 1, yet Fred and I held no less than twelve 6-5 hands in the 116 boards that we played. Rather against the odds wouldn't you say?

IL: (trying to avoid the question) I heard that you bid and made 7♥ on one of the other 6-5 hands.

GH: Fred actually did well on that hand:

♠ x
♥ A K Q x x x
♦ x
♣ A K J x x

N
W E
S

♠ A x x
♥ x x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ 10 9

Fred played 7♥ from the short side after a weak notrump opening and a transfer auction. A spade was led to the ace and Fred cashed two rounds of trumps. RHO began with three trumps and Fred was at the crossroads:

he could either draw the last trump and rely on the club finesse or try to ruff out the ♣Q. What would you do?

IL: I would think about it for a long time.

GH: That goes without saying. Fred thought about it for a long time as well, but eventually he opted to finesse in clubs. This turned out to be necessary as LHO had four clubs to the queen (computer analysis later suggested that Fred's line was superior by about 6%).

IL: (still trying to avoid the issue) What happened to you with:

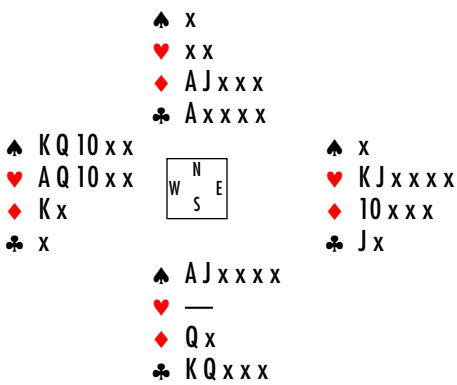
♠ — ♥ A K Q x x ♦ x x ♣ A K Q x x x

GH: Fred held that hand, and he opened 1♣ as is his style (Meckstroth thought it was right to open 2♣, but Hamman also opened 1♣); it went 1♠, pass, pass back to him. Having never had this sort of problem before, Fred made up what he thought was a simple solution — bid what you think you can make. He bid 4♥, trying to convey that he could make either 4♥ or 5♣ in his own hand. I did not quite get the message as I passed with:

♠ Q 9 8 x x ♥ J x x ♦ A x x ♣ x x

You can see that 6♣ just requires a 3-2 club break and 6♥ is even better. In 6♥ you can sometimes succeed when clubs are 4-1 by drawing two rounds of trumps and starting clubs: if the player with a singleton club has only two hearts, you can score a club ruff in the dummy. Fortunately for us, LHO had a singleton club and three hearts so slam had no play. Hamman suggested that you should reopen by cuebidding 2♠ and then bid 4♥ at your next opportunity.

IL: One of our better results happened on a 6-5 hand:



South opened 2♣ on his 6-5, showing clubs and a major. Roy overcalled 2♠ and North cuebid 3♠. South, with several spade stoppers, bid 3NT; Roy led the ♥A and we took the first six tricks. North-South are cold for 6♣, of course.

GH: Of course. Unfortunately we got to 7♣. Fred opened 1♠ as South and Gord Chapman, West, overcalled 2♥; I was North and made a negative double. John Sabino, East, now made the excellent bid of 5♥, Fred bid 6♣, and I raised him to 7♣.

IL: You didn't give him much slack.

GH: True, but we were well out of the overall by this point, and the only hope we had to make any money was to win a session award. This was one of the first boards of the last session and I judged that although bidding seven might be a bit of a stretch, we really needed to create some action if we were to win the session.

Fred ruffed the opening heart lead (first hurdle) and thought for some time; he didn't look very happy. Eventually he played a diamond to the jack, which held. At this point Fred sat up in his chair: this was just the kind of break we needed and it seemed like he thought he was making the hand. Unfortunately, the 5-1 spade break and 4-2 diamond break combined to make the hand unmanageable and 7♣ had to go one down. At least we won some IMPs due to the result at your table.

IL: That's a very sad story. I'll try to find you a better partner for next year's event.

GH: That shouldn't be too difficult. Maybe you can find a more normal set of hand records too.

IL: *(philosophically)* So what is normal, anyway? I remember Eric Murray saying to me once...

A Guess for the Pro

JOHN GOWDY

John Gowdy comes from a bridge family – his Uncle Bruce was at one time the youngest Life Master, and Bruce's career includes North American titles and world championship medals. John himself is a former Canadian champion, and has played in world competition. Despite his credentials, and the fact that he takes the game very seriously, John continues to insist that bridge should be fun. Read this next piece, and you'll see what we mean.

Bridge books tell you that there is no such thing as a blind guess. Let's say you are missing a queen and have a two-way guess: the bidding, play, distribution of points, and even tempo will at some point give you a clue as to which way to go.

In the finals of the National Open Pairs event, Geoff Hampson had a guess of a different sort. We got to three notrump on the auction one heart — two notrump (Jacoby) — three no trump (15-17, no shortness), on the hand below.

♠ A K 10
♥ A K 10 3 2
♦ Q 10 4
♣ 5 3

♠ Q J 5
♥ Q J 6 4
♦ A J 9
♣ A 10 2

The king of clubs was led, everyone playing small, followed by the jack of clubs on which RHO played the nine, and Geoff the ace.

He now played the queen of hearts, and LHO showed out, pitching the eight of diamonds. On the jack of hearts, LHO played the two of diamonds, completing a high-low which ostensibly showed the king — but would he really be telling the truth?

Geoff continued with the ace and king of spades, RHO showing out on the second round. The distribution was becoming clearer, but who had the king of diamonds? If RHO has it, then six hearts is cold; however, you can still beat all the pairs in a heart game by taking the hook and making twelve tricks in notrump. If LHO has it, you will beat the pairs going down in a heart slam, but lose to the four heart bidders unless you can find a way to make five notrump.

What clues were there? The opponents were both men, apparently in their early fifties, dressed in jacket and tie, and looking fairly bored by Geoff's play problem. They were not seeded, and both were unknown to Geoff.

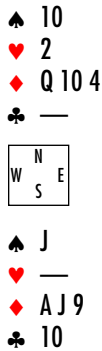
He picked up their convention card, and noticed that one player was ***** (*Censored to avoid lawsuits. Ed.*) — a top US pro with about 15,000 master points — while the other was a customer whose name meant nothing to either of us. Great, but who was the customer and who was the pro?

I suppose that Geoff could have asked, or tried 'Hi, I'm Geoff Hampson, and you are...?' But that could be embarrassing to everyone, so he was stuck. If the pro was on his left, he was going to play RHO for the diamond king, but if he was on his right, then he would play the customer to be honest and have that card.

Geoff read the convention card from top to bottom, slowly, both sides, but nobody cracked. So he started again. Halfway through, his RHO took a bedraggled, beaten-up convention card out of his breast pocket, threw it on the table, and snarled 'You got a problem, son?'

Geoff looked up, smiled, and said 'No thank you, sir, I think I've got what I need.'

He proceeded to run off his heart winners, coming to this position



and on the last heart pitched a diamond. LHO, who had started with six spades, parted with all but one of them on the hearts. Geoff decided to play LHO to have started life with

♠ x x x x x x ♥ — ♦ K 8 x x ♣ K Q J

He came to hand with a spade, and exited with a club to endplay the customer and make eleven tricks for a clear top. After they had left, Geoff looked up and said 'I was on a guess for the pro, and I got it right!'

Rabbit Bridge

MICHAEL SCHOENBORN

The Shoe, despite his claims to be a Victor Mollo character, is in our view closer to the incarnation of S.J. Simon's 'Unlucky Expert'. On his one appearance in the Bermuda Bowl, he was robbed of a medal by a scoring error, in one of the most controversial incidents in the history of the event. While this article was written with tongue firmly planted in cheek, it actually has a very serious teaching point to impart.

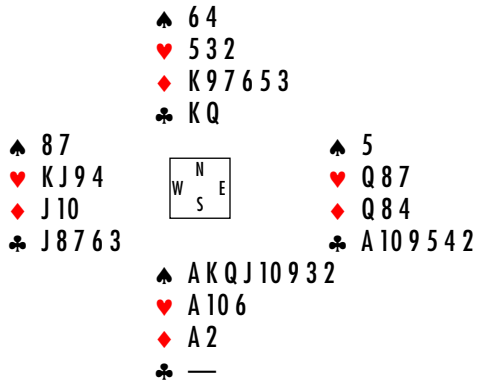
Ever since Victor Mollo's *Bridge in the Menagerie*, we have been encouraged to play bridge like animals — the Hideous Hog, the Rueful Rabbit, or Molly the Mule. This concept always came naturally to me, and even though I am only a Shoe, many of my partners have told me that I am indeed an animal, intending (I am sure) to praise me in the highest degree.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Zia's great bridge book *(Bridge My Way*) exhorts us to play like tigers. It was the pleasure of our team (Harmon Edgar, Stephen Cooper, and Jordan Cohen) to meet Zia's team in the second round of the Spingold last July. It was sadder to discover that as an animal I have begun to have an uncanny (or is it 'unconey'?) resemblance to the Rueful Rabbit, although my plays, unhappily, are not as effective as his.

The Rabbit, you may recall, produced some astoundingly good results against his expert opponent, the Hideous Hog, by playing on the simple assumption that what was good for the Hog had to be bad for the Rabbit. If this were the BOLS Bridge Tip competition, we could easily parlay this precept into a winning entry — based not on complexity, but on simplicity and effectiveness. The tip would read as follows: *never defend on the basis that your expert opponent has mispulled his card*. We shall call this 'The Rabbit's Rule'.

Now we are not talking about anything so complicated as a wrong card: experts make mistakes like anybody else. However, experts do not win on such a regular basis by doing anything so stupid as mispulling their cards.

An example of the Rule in action springs immediately to mind, taken from Phillip Alder's column; however, he borrowed it from another writer, whose name I apologize for forgetting.



South	*North*
2♣	2♦[1]
2♠	3♦[2]
5NT[3]	6♦
6♠	

1. Waiting.
2. Values.
3. Grand Slam Force.

You know that South has a partial diamond fit with one high diamond honor and first-round control of all other suits. The spades are obviously self-sufficient. Into this auction you lead the eight of spades (tigers would have led a heart, but you are only a rabbit).

Declarer wins the spade ten and immediately plays off three rounds of diamonds, ruffing the third with the three; Alder notes that you must decline to overruff, to deny declarer the dummy entry with the spade six. He wonders if you would have found such a defense, but stops short of telling you how.

Now that you know the Rabbit's Rule, you know you certainly would have found the defense. What's going on here? Why didn't declarer draw trumps before setting up the diamonds? Why didn't he ruff with one of his four or five high trumps? The answer is, either declarer mispulled, or he has no dummy entry. Overruffing assumes declarer to have mispulled not once, but twice: first when he failed to draw trumps, and then when he ruffed low! Failing to overruff seems hard to rationalize, unless you know the Rabbit's Rule.

Blessed with all this technical knowledge, I was playing the first quarter of our Spingold match against Zia's teammates, Fred Stewart and Steve Weinstein. I held:

♠ 9 7 3 ♥ A J 10 9 4 ♦ K 8 2 ♣ A 2

The auction went as follows:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Shoe	Stewart	Harmon	Weinstein
		1♦[1]	2♣
2♥	pass	3♥[2]	3♠
pass[3]	4♣	pass	4♠
?			

1. Could be canapé (shorter of two suits) or a hand with a club suit.
2. Shows exactly 3 hearts.
3. Forcing.

Weinstein obviously held at least five spades and six clubs, but Harmon had only three hearts, so there was nothing for it but to double. After an opening diamond lead, this was the dummy:

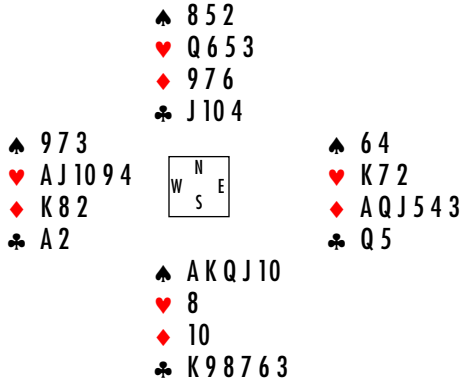
North
♠ 8 5 2
♥ Q 6 5 3
♦ 9 7 6
♣ J 10 4

West
♠ 9 7 3
♥ A J 10 9 4
♦ K 8 2
♣ A 2

Harmon won the opening lead with the ace and continued the queen of diamonds. As declarer pitched a heart, I overtook to unblock the suit, and continued a third diamond, which was ruffed with the spade ten. Weinstein unhesitatingly led the king of clubs, and I analyzed as follows:

Harmon was known to be 2-3-6-2. The relevant holdings were K-x of spades or Q-x of clubs. It seemed less likely that declarer had bid this strongly with a club suit that was missing the AQJ10, and if Harmon had K-x of spades, I had to duck to deny declarer a dummy entry for the spade finesse. And so I ducked.

The flaw in this reasoning is that it ignores the Rabbit's Rule. If declarer needed a dummy entry, he had four low clubs he could have led towards the J-10-x. So if declarer needs a dummy entry, you are playing him to have mispulled when he led the club king. This was the whole hand:



As you can see, after the club duck, Weinstein was away to the races. He unblocked the high club from dummy (a necessary play — note how he does not mispull any cards), then crashed the defense's club honors together, unblocking again from dummy. When spades split, he had ten tricks.

This result was even more tragic since partners had defended four hearts for minus 420. The debate is still on as to whether we can do better than four down if I just grab the ace of clubs and continue with the jack of hearts. The loss of 23 IMP's was a heavy price to pay for ignoring the Rabbit's Rule.

Bridge in the Village

FRED GITELMAN

If you didn't know Fred Gitelman well, you would probably think that he's a rather introspective computer nerd, who also happens to play bridge better than most other people in the world. However, there are other aspects to his personality, including a lively sense of humor, which is evident in this next piece. This story is loosely based on the The Prisoner*, a 1967 British television series starring Patrick McGoohan. If you're not familiar with this cult classic, we don't have enough room to explain it to you here. If you are, you don't need an explanation.*

The last thing he remembered was the gas... That night he had resigned his executive position with the World Bridge Federation, fed up with the bureaucracy and corruption. He was at his apartment, packing some important files, and preparing to start a new life. As he was about to leave, his apartment began to fill up with gas. The drug worked quickly. As his consciousness faded, he knew that they would never let him quit.

He awoke as South. He was in a large room with a single card table in the middle. Spotlights and cameras were everywhere. His partner was a man he had never seen before. His left hand opponent was a midget dressed in a butler suit. His right hand opponent was not human. It looked like a large white balloon, perhaps six feet in diameter. The balloon's shape was shifting and it was emitting unpleasant gurgling noises.

His partner said, 'You'll have to excuse Rover, he's excited: we almost never have a fourth for bridge'.

'Where am I?' asked the Prisoner.

'In the Village Bridge Club.'

'Who are you?'

'The new Number Two.'

'Who is Number One?'

'You are Number Six.'

'I am not a number, I am a free man.'

Everyone seemed to think this was very funny. Slightly bewildered, Number Six noticed that a bridge hand had been dealt to him. His hand was:

♠ A K 6 ♥ A K 3 2 ♦ K J ♣ Q 8 5 4

Apparently the auction had already begun as each of the other players had a card from a bidding box on the table. The midget on his left had dealt. It was his turn to bid.

Midget	*No.2*	*Rover*	*No.6*
2♦	pass	3♦	?

Number Six looked around the table for the opponents' convention card. There was none to be found.

'What do you want?' asked Number Two.

'Information,' replied Number Six.

'You won't get any here.'

'Whose side are you on?'

'That would be telling.'

Number Six was certainly not going to let this antagonistic partner play the hand so a takeout double was out. He tried three notrump. The midget passed and his partner raised to six notrump. Rover doubled, Number Six passed, and the Midget also doubled. Number Two quickly waived any penalty that this inadmissible double might have brought forth with a prompt redouble. Getting into the spirit of Village bridge, Number Six also redoubled and all passed. The midget led the seven of hearts.

♠ Q 9 8 2
♥ Q 6 5 4
♦ 2
♣ A 10 7 3

N
W E
S

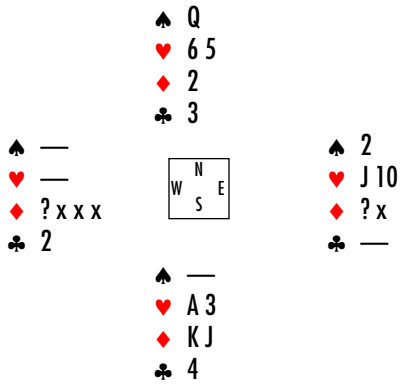
♠ A K 6
♥ A K 3 2
♦ K J
♣ Q 8 5 4

Dummy was a disappointment (to say the least). Number Six was furious. By hook or by crook he would make this hand, but there was some serious work to do. He won the lead in hand and decided to assume that the two diamond opening had been a weak two-bid. To begin with, four club tricks would be necessary. This would be possible only if Rover held a singleton jack of clubs.

Number Six tried the club queen covered by the king and the ace. Rover followed with the jack, giving the contract some hope. The queen of hearts was cashed to probe the distribution in that suit. When the midget, on his left, discarded a diamond it appeared that he had begun with 2-1-6-4 distribution. Four tricks were required from spades. Number Six could either play West for jack, ten doubleton or seven doubleton of spades. As there are three seven doubletons and only one jack, ten doubleton, Number Six played the spade nine from the dummy, covered with the ten and won in the closed hand.

The club eight was covered by the nine and won with the ten as Rover discarded a diamond. The eight of spades was covered, and when Number Six

won, the midget followed with the seven. Number Six cashed the six of spades as the midget discarded another diamond. The five of clubs was played, covered by the six and won with the seven, Rover pitching a diamond.



Number Six paused to reflect. The spade queen would take care of his heart loser, but he would still have to guess the diamonds. As both opponents had doubled, there was little clue as to the location of the missing diamond honors. Then he saw the light: on the queen of spades he discarded the four of clubs, and on the play of the club three, Rover was squeezed. Forced to keep both of his hearts, Rover discarded down to a singleton diamond as Number Six pitched the heart three. It was no longer necessary to guess diamonds; when Number Six led the diamond two and Rover produced the queen, Number Six covered with the king and knew he was home.

But he was not home, he was in the Village; the midget proceeded to take his ace and lay down another queen of diamonds!

'Two down,' chortled Number Two. 'Welcome to the Village, Number Six.'

Bridge in Wonderland

RAY LEE

Yes, we know that bridge wasn't invented until long after Lewis Carroll created his immortal characters. But on the other hand, have you played any competitive bridge recently? Somehow, Mr. Carroll knew the inhabitants of our local bridge scene all too well.

As Alice walked into the Bridge Club that night, she was a little startled to see a Cheshire Cat at a central table, selling entries. The Cat grinned when it saw Alice. It looked good-natured, she thought; still, it had very long claws and a great many teeth, and looked as though it would be directing the game, so she felt that it ought to be treated with respect.

'Would you tell me, please, which game I should play in tonight?' she asked it, politely.

'That depends a good deal on how many master points you have and what kind you want to win. We have gold points, red points, silver points, black points, and, these days, even pink points and gray points,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care about master points...' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't much matter which game you play in,' said the Cat.

'So long as I get a decent game,' Alice added as an explanation.

'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only ask enough people.'

Alice felt that this could not be denied, so she tried another question. 'What sort of people play here?'

'Over there,' the Cat said, waving its northerly paw around, 'you see a Hatter and in that direction,' waving the other paw, 'you can see a March Hare. Both of them are looking for partners; ask whichever one you like, they're both mad.'

'But I don't want a partner who's mad,' Alice remarked.

'Oh, you can't help that,' said the Cat, 'we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad.'

'How do you know I'm mad?' said Alice.

'You must be,' said the Cat, 'or you wouldn't have come here. This is, after all, a Bridge Club.'

Alice didn't think that proved it at all; however, she went on, 'And how do you know that everyone's mad?'

'In most sports you get mad at the opponents. At bridge you usually get mad at your partner.'

'I call it analyzing the hand,' said Alice.

'Call it what you like,' said the Cat. 'Are you going to play or not?'

'I'd like to very much,' said Alice, 'but I still have to find a partner.'

‘Better hurry up, it’s almost game time,’ said the Cat, and vanished. Alice was a little surprised at this, but while she was still looking at the place it had been, it suddenly appeared again.

‘Why not try the Dormouse over there — he usually comes without a partner,’ suggested the Cat; and this time it vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin, which remained some time after the rest of it had gone.

‘Well, I’ve often seen a director without a sense of humor,’ thought Alice, ‘but a sense of humor without a director! It’s the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life.’

The players seemed to be finding their places for the game, so Alice decided to follow the Cat’s advice. The Dormouse proved to be an amiable soul, who, while reluctant to be parted from the tray of complimentary tea and cookies, agreed happily enough to play with Alice.

A straightforward convention card will be best, she thought. ‘Can we keep it simple?’ she asked, as they sat down.

‘Oh, let’s just play my usual card,’ said the Dormouse.

‘That sounds fine,’ said Alice, glancing at her partner's convention card and noting with relief that there appeared to be very little writing on it. The fewer conventions, the better, she thought, taking the first hand out of the board. It was

♠ J 10 9 ♥ — ♦ A K Q J 10 ♣ A K Q J 10

Their opponents were two fat little men, apparently identical twins, who despite the fact that the game had not yet begun were staring belligerently at one another. One fat twin opened one spade, and a long pause ensued.

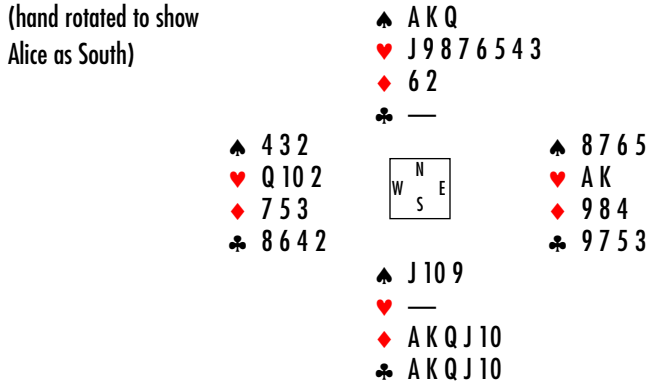
‘The Dormouse is asleep again,’ said LHO, pouring some hot tea on to its nose. ‘You’re going to have to watch that.’

The Dormouse shook its head impatiently, and said, without opening its eyes or, apparently, looking at its hand, ‘Three spades.’ RHO passed.

Here was an ethical problem of the first magnitude for Alice. Clearly, the Dormouse must think she had opened one spade, but she could not take advantage of this knowledge. But what could the present auction mean in reality? Given Alice’s minor suit holdings, it could not announce a solid minor and ask for a spade stopper (but perhaps in this club it announced a spade stopper and asked for a solid minor... no, that way madness certainly lay). There was only one logical possibility — the Dormouse was exposing a spade psyche. How to proceed? Blackwood was useless, with a void, and the real problem was trump quality... aha! ‘Five spades,’ she announced.

The Dormouse actually picked up its cards this time, and, clearly pleased by what it discovered, raised to seven spades. RHO doubled loudly, everyone passed, and LHO tabled a small heart. ‘Director,’ called Alice, indicating the lead out of turn to the Cheshire Cat, which materialized at her elbow in response to the call. The Cat ran through the options, of which there seemed to be even more than Alice was used to encountering, and watched the play to Trick 1 before vanishing again, tail first.

The Dormouse had elected to accept the lead and have Alice play the hand, turning its attention happily back to the refreshments. While the dummy was not quite what she expected, the hand proved easy enough.



Ruffing the opening lead in hand, Alice cashed three diamonds and four clubs, and claimed the rest on a high cross-ruff. The Tweedle brothers were unlikely to get many matchpoints for this board, she thought.

'Why didn't you lead a trump?' hissed Dum.

'I always lead hearts against slams,' retorted Dee. 'You know that.'

'I like things that begin with an 'S',' mused the Dormouse, which had returned in time to score up 2470, and who apparently saw nothing odd about the contract. 'Slams, and Stayman, and splinters, and squeezes, and striped-tailed apes… did you ever see a picture of a striped-tailed ape?'

'Really, now you ask me,' said Alice, very much confused, 'I don't think....'

'Then you shouldn't talk,' said Dum, who was clearly greatly disgruntled by the result of the hand. This piece of rudeness was more than Alice could bear; she got up in great disgust, and moved to the next table, where the Dormouse quickly joined her. It had secured a fresh cup of tea and more cookies, and its little head soon settled to the table top. The Hatter and the March Hare, the North-South pair, began to use it as a cushion, resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head about the deal they had just played.

'You should learn not to talk about hands until after the game,' Alice said with some severity. 'We have to play that board later.'

The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this, but all he said was 'One notrump'.

'Two hearts,' said the Dormouse.

'Alert!' said the March Hare. Alice looked startled.

'What does that mean?' asked the Hatter

'I believe I can guess that,' Alice replied.

'Do you mean you can answer it?' enquired the Hare.

'Exactly so,' said Alice.

'Then you should say what you mean,' the March Hare went on.

'I do,' Alice hastily replied. 'At least, I mean what I say — that's the same thing, you know.'

'Not the same thing a bit!' said the Hatter. 'Why, you might as well say that "Two clubs is for majors" is the same thing as "Two of a major is for clubs"!'

'You might as well say,' added the Dormouse, 'that "I sleep during play" is the same as "I play during sleep"!'

'It is the same thing with you,' said the Hatter, and here the conversation stopped. The Hare passed, and Alice was left to contemplate her own call.

'Bid more spades,' the Hatter said to Alice, very earnestly.

'No one's bid them yet,' Alice replied in an offended tone, 'so I can't bid more.'

'You mean you can't bid less,' said the Hatter. 'It's very easy to bid more than nothing.'

'Nobody asked your opinion,' said Alice. The whole situation was getting stranger by the second. 'Why did you alert my partner's bid?' she asked the Hare.

'Because we are supposed to alert all undisclosed understandings,' he replied.

'But it was my partner's bid,' protested Alice.

'I know that,' said the Hare. 'But I still know something about it that you don't.'

'Perhaps you should explain.'

The Hare leaned closer and lowered his voice, out of courtesy to the Dormouse who was just dozing off again. 'He really likes to be dummy, so he never bids his own suits. He either raises his partner or uses transfers, so when he bids two hearts like that, he's showing spades. That's why my partner suggested you should bid more spades.'

Alice did not quite know what to say to this, so she quickly bid four spades, to cover her embarrassment at having been so rude when these nice opponents had only been trying to help her. The Hare promptly doubled.

'As I said,' remarked the Hatter, a few minutes later, writing 1100 on the score slip, 'It's very easy to get less than nothing on some hands.'

Alice escaped as quickly as possible to the next table, where an odd-looking couple awaited her arrival. Both were dressed in red and white, the large red-haired lady quite overpowering her furtive-looking partner.

'Who is this, Knave?' said the woman to her partner, who only bobbed his head and smiled in reply.

'Idiot!' said the red-head, tossing her head impatiently. She glared at Alice. 'Can you follow suit?' she bellowed.

'Yes,' shouted Alice. 'Shhhh!' warned the Cheshire Cat, its grin appearing briefly above the table. 'Even you, your Majesty,' he nodded to the red-head before disappearing.

'Come on then,' roared the Queen of Hearts (for Alice realized that this was indeed her right-hand opponent), and Alice picked up her cards.

♠ A Q J x ♥ K Q x x x ♦ A 10 x x ♣ —

'One heart,' she bid. The Knave passed, taking the opportunity to relieve the Dormouse of several of its cookies, and the Dormouse bid two clubs.

Alice paused to consider. If the Dormouse was true to form, this would show a diamond suit, but it was looking fairly alert for once. She decided to temporize with two diamonds. The Dormouse reached for a cookie, to its astonishment finding the plate empty, and, obviously startled, bid four notrump.

Even in this game, Alice was sure this was some kind of Blackwood, and equally sure the Dormouse had a diamond suit. How could she show two aces and a useful void? She wasn't sure, and the five-level was not the place to have a bidding misunderstanding. Simpler to count it as an ace, which it might as well be, after all. 'Five spades,' she bid.

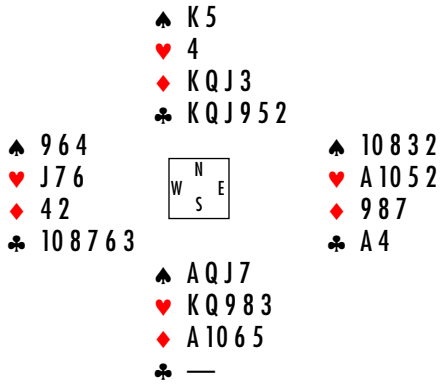
'Six diamonds,' said the Dormouse happily, casting around for fresh tea.

There was a pause on the right. 'Double,' said the Queen, loudly.

Oh dear, thought Alice, she's got a trump stack. But it's up to partner to decide, I suppose. 'Pass,' she said aloud.

'Pass,' said the Dormouse, whose attention was now firmly fixed on protecting a new plate of cookies from the marauding Knave.

A club was led, and the layout was as follows:



There was little to the play. The first club went to the king and the ace, and Alice ruffed low. A spade to the king, and a club ruff, high, the ten of diamonds, and then two more rounds of diamonds disposed of the opposing trumps. The queen and jack of clubs allowed Alice to throw her two losing hearts, and now a heart off dummy established her twelfth trick.

'Director,' screamed the Queen.

'How can I help you?' murmured the Cat, appearing at her side.

'First she shows three aces when she has two, then when I double, obviously because I can ruff clubs, why doesn't her partner run to six notrump, which I can beat? How did he know she was lying about her aces?'

'But your Majesty,' the Cat replied, 'the other explanation is that they simply don't know what they're doing, and so unfortunately could not fall into

your brilliant trap. I happen to know that they have never played together before. I'm afraid you have to accept the score.'

'Oh, no I don't,' the Queen announced, grimly. 'I want a committee.'

The Cat seemed to fade briefly, but quickly recovered. 'Certainly, Ma'am,' it replied, 'I shall arrange it.'

The remainder of the game was free of incident, but at the end the committee was duly assembled. Alice was shocked to find that it consisted of one person — the King of Hearts.

'Read the accusation!' he began.

The Queen stood. 'This person and Dormouse clearly had unauthorized information. I have never seen anything quite so blatant.'

'Yes, yes, dear,' said the King soothingly. 'You may well be right; we shall have to refer this to, er..., what do they call it now…? Oh yes, the Ethical Oversight Committee.'

'I can't stand a cheat,' said the Queen. 'Throw her out of the club.'

'Well, I'll consider my verdict,' said the King.

'Not yet, not yet,' muttered the Cheshire Cat, 'You have to hear the evidence first.'

'Oh, very well,' agreed the King reluctantly. 'If we have to. Who's the first witness?'

'I am,' said the Queen. 'She cheated. Out with her.'

'Excuse me,' said Alice, 'That isn't evidence, it's merely an accusation.'

'It seems pretty good evidence to me,' protested the King, as his spouse patted his shoulder approvingly.

'Out with her. She cheated!' repeated the Queen.

'I didn't!' Alice interrupted in a great hurry.

'You did!' said the Queen.

'I deny it!' said Alice

'She denies it,' said the King. 'Perhaps we should leave out that part; we wouldn't want to get sued,' he added in a loud whisper.

'The Dormouse cheated, too,' the Queen went on. The Dormouse denied nothing, being fast asleep.

'What did the Dormouse do?' asked the King.

'I can't remember,' said Alice.

'That's very important,' the King said, writing it down. 'I'll consider my verdict,' he said.

'No, no!' said the Queen. 'Sentence first, verdict afterwards.'

'Stuff and nonsense,' said Alice loudly. 'The idea of having the sentence first!'

'Hold your tongue,' said the Queen, turning purple. 'I suppose this is what I get for playing in Flight B. Out with her!'

'Guilty. You are barred from playing with the Dormouse for a week!' said the King, smiling at his wife and moving towards the exit.

'What do I care?' asked Alice. 'It's only a card game!'

At this the whole deck rose up into the air, and came flying down upon

her; she gave a little scream, half of fright and half of anger, and tried to beat them off, and found herself lying on the lawn, brushing away some dead leaves that had fluttered down on her face.

'Come inside, Alice,' came the call from the house. 'You've been snoozing out there long enough. We need a fourth...'

There is No Justice

'TRENT VALLEY'

In our family, when the children were small, one of the few inflexible rules was that anyone using the line 'It's not fair' in an argument was immediately judged to have lost. Which in itself may not have been fair, but in our view it was just, and it certainly cut short a lot of arguments.

As soon as I heard that plaintive cry, I knew there was a bridge player with a hand just around the corner, but I was more than a little surprised when I stepped around the corner and saw the Malcontent sitting by himself and declaiming into his tray of beer.

'I thought for sure that you would be playing tonight. Didn't your two-game suspension end today?'

'There is no justice! I played this afternoon and that so-and-so of a Director suspended me again! This time it wasn't even my fault!

'Just look at this hand. How would you like your chances as West in 3NT after a club lead?'

West		*East*
♠ J 9 8 7	N W E S	♠ A K 5
♥ 6 5 4		♥ A 10 9 8 7
♦ Q 9 7 6		♦ K J 8
♣ K 3		♣ A 2

'My chances are not very good are they? Of course, the field is going to be in 4♥. I guess I need the diamonds to behave to get any tricks. Do I have any choice?'

'There is no justice! Think about what you can do with the spades.'

'Well, I suppose if the spade queen is doubleton and in the North hand I might get four tricks in spades or three if South has a doubleton...'

'There is no justice! You need the diamonds, for sure. You win the club with the ace and start on diamonds. They let you win the first two and now you have to decide what to do next. I, of course, get it right and play another diamond; both opponents follow. The clubs are cleared and you cash the last diamond. Your play.'

'Who played what on the diamond?'

'There is no justice! This is where all the trouble really started. Both of them threw spades!'

'This is trouble? Surely this suggests queen-fourth in the North hand? Your only play is to try to pin the ten. Lead the jack and hope...'

'There is no justice! Of course I led the jack. Not only that, but it was

covered and the ten fell. Now I made four notrump. There is no justice!'

'I don't understand why you are so upset! You've just made an overtrick in about an 8% game. Since people in 4♥ have to lose two hearts and a diamond, you probably have a top board...'

'There is no justice! Of course, I have a top board. In fact, since the hearts are KQJx offside and the ten of spades was always doubleton, I always had a top board on the hand. But my opponents started blaming each other for letting me make an 'impossible' contract. One accused the other of holding up in diamonds too long. The other complained about a pitch from the doubleton ten. This got so loud and heated that the director came to the table. There is no justice!'

'But you weren't involved in the argument, were you? Why should you object to her coming over?'

'Since she was at the table anyway, she decided to look at my hand. She said that it was impossible to get me any more partners as long as I refused to support partner's major with three small, and she was suspending me for another three games!'

Maybe there is justice after all.

3 Minutes to Winning Bridge

MICHAEL SCHOENBORN

The Shoe, aside from bridge ability and a good sense of humor, is also possessed of a prodigious memory. He apologizes to readers as he knows one or two of the spot cards in these deals are not quite right – but most of them are (and after all, it all took place over thirty years ago). And he swears that everything described here really happened.

When my friend, Roy, died many years ago at the tender age of thirty, he never knew that he was the holder of a duplicate bridge record that is unlikely ever to be broken. After all, while Roy was an avid sailor and a sometime euchre player, bridge was not usually listed among his interests.

On the night of the big record, John Cunningham and I were playing in the jackpot duplicate game of the Men's Smoker on Toronto Island — a three-and-a-half table Howell being played at the Algonquin Island clubhouse. All around us were darts, euchre, poker, and beer drinking, but we were principally interested in the $14 jackpot available for winning the bridge game. In those days, $14 was pretty good money for a couple of university students.

The trouble was that, what with all the noise and the intricacies of a 3½-table game (especially the time it took to get people to come back from their bye), the game was running very late. Finally, John had to leave to catch the last ferry back to Toronto with three rounds of three boards still to be played. Luckily the first of these rounds was our bye, so I had time to scour the other entertainments for a substitute.

Alas, there were no bridge players to be had, and it took a beer to pry Roy, warned by his euchre experiences, away from his darts game. That left me fifteen minutes to teach Roy how to play bridge. To make best use of the time, I boiled the lesson down to three minutes, and repeated it five times. In case anybody ever needs it, here it is — the Shoe's Three-Minute Comprehensive Bridge Course:

1. *You take tricks just like in euchre, only there are no 'bowers'.*
2. *Before you take tricks, you bid; to know what to bid, you add up your points (A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1).*
3. *The bidding starts with the dealer. If you bid before your partner, or after your partner passes, bid as follows:*

   a) less than 13 points = pass

   b) 13 points = bid one of your best suit and never bid again

   UNLESS

   c) 19 points = bid one of your best suit and bid your next-best suit next time
4. *If the opponents start the bidding, just pass. If partner starts the bidding, bid as follows:*

   a) 6 points = bid your best suit, and do not bid again

   UNLESS

   b) 12 points = bid your best suit and bid again
5. *When the tricks start, never lead unless you personally won the last trick, or someone tells you to lead.*
6. *Always lead the first suit bid by partner.*
7. *If partner has not bid a suit, lead fourth highest from your longest and strongest suit.*

Armed with these precepts, and another beer, we sat down to play. The first hand started 1♠ on my right. I had a balanced nothing and it looked as if I would be on lead so I passed. This was a mistake, as dummy-to-be passed and Roy couldn't balance (see Rule 4 above). We defended weirdly but were able to hold it to two, and –110 was dead average as the other two pairs played four hearts making and four hearts down one, both our way. This taught me that I had to overcall more, especially as Roy couldn't raise (Rule 4 again).

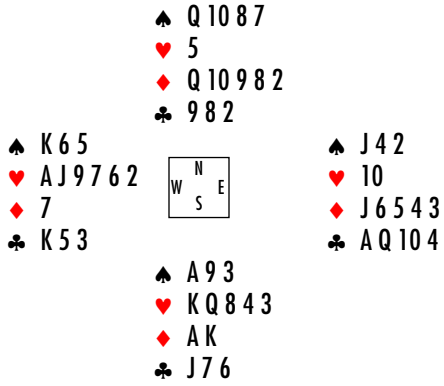
On the next hand, my LHO opened 1NT. Roy looked puzzled, because I hadn't told him about notrump. Now, as long as he realized that 1NT was a bid, he was barred from the auction again! However, I was beginning to feel that Rule 4 might need some refinement. My hand was

♠ J 4 2 ♥ 10 ♦ J 6 5 4 3 ♣ A Q 10 4

Roy and RHO both passed, and I balanced 2♦. The notrump bidder bid a smooth 2♥. Roy had to pass (Rule 4), and RHO did the same (he's probably playing Rule 4 as well) and it was back to me. Too bad, as I realized the folly of not knowing my own system. Roy didn't know about preference, but even if he did, he would be barred by Rule 4. What was worse, Rule 6 was going to get Roy off to a diamond lead. I should have

bid 2♣ last time, but it was too late to correct that now so I balanced 3♦! The notrump bidder carried on smoothly to 3♥ and everyone passed just as if nothing had happened!

Roy had forgotten Rule 6, and led the ♠K, which appeared to signal a euchre-style attempt to win the trick with his highest card. This was the whole hand:



It was obvious when dummy came down that this was not their best spot, and while dummy was berating declarer for opening notrump and then not once but twice failing to pass it around to him so he could destroy the walls, windows, and light fixtures with a double, I explained to Roy about penalty doubles and how, even if they bid first, he could double if he had six cards in their suit. Roy looked at the back of the cards to see if they were transparent. Later in the hand we had to explain to Roy how the last suit named had become trumps, so that when he threw away the small heart on the ♦K it had actually won the trick. Four down was +400, and as no-one in the field bid and made a game our way, that was both of the matchpoints.

The third hand was a no-brainer for none of the obvious reasons. Roy opened 1♦ — his best suit — with 13+ HCP (Rule 3b). I held

♠ A Q ♥ 10 x x x ♦ x ♣ K Q J 9 x x

This was easy. Roy wasn't about to bid again unless he had 19 HCP (Rule 3c), so sensitive exploratory auctions were out. We might miss a 4-4 heart fit, but so what? I bid the 'automatic' 3NT. No risk of missing a slam because with 19+, Roy was going to show his second suit and we could reach 6♣ (or 6♥ or 6NT). Roy passed, the opening lead was a spade, and he had:

♠ K 9 x ♥ A x x x x ♦ A K ♣ 10 x x

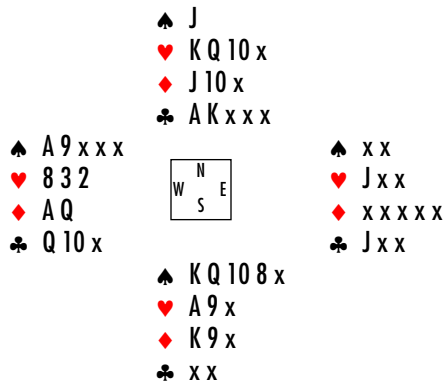
It turned out we had missed the five-four heart fit, and we certainly differed in our interpretation of what suit was 'best'... No matter, we took the obvious eleven tricks in notrump without the heart suit's contributing. The 3-1 heart split was overkill, as the other two declarers scored only +420. Another top board.

We finished early and had time for a couple of beers each before we moved for the final round. At this stage, the spot cards were getting kind of blurry and difficult to remember, but I held something like

♠ A 9 x x x ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ A Q ♣ Q 10 x

I opened 1♠, despite the tactical superiority of opening 1♣ to let partner show his best suit at the one-level. LHO doubled, Roy passed (less than 6 HCP guaranteed — Rule 4), and RHO took a very long time to bid 2NT. LHO bid 3♣ and RHO bid a very final-sounding 3NT, folded up his cards, and stared at his partner until he passed.

I inferred that he had spade stoppers to spare, and led the passive ♥2. The effect was magic (or maybe it was just the beer):

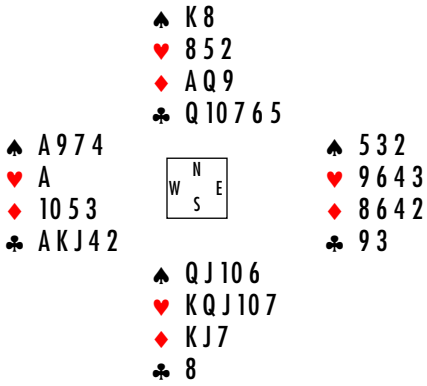


Declarer played low from dummy and only began to wonder about hand entries after Roy produced the jack. The next chance was lost when a low spade to the jack held the trick. Declarer now played on diamonds and the end result was 3NT, just in. Sure enough, both the other guys could take ten tricks on this hand, so we scored another perfect 'two'.

On the second-last hand, my LHO opened 1♥, barring Roy from the auction (Rule 4). I suspected he had something, though, as I held

♠ 5 3 2 ♥ 9 6 4 3 ♦ 8 6 4 2 ♣ 9 3

The opponents produced an auction that left me sure that our run of tops was over: 1♥ - 2♣; 2♥ - 3♥; 4♥. I ran for a pair of Scotches for Roy and me instead of beer. When I returned, Roy had led the ♣4, and the whole hand turned out to be:



This was the deadly fourth highest from Roy's longest and strongest suit (Rule 7). I consulted my handy rule of eleven to discover that declarer had one club bigger than the four, and that it had better be the eight. I carefully explained Rule 7 to declarer — Roy does not lead from shortness, and leads fourth highest from anything. By way of clarification, I mentioned that had Roy led the ♣10, he would have shown exactly 100 honors — no more, no less.

Declarer, however, could not overcome his own ingrained assumptions. Consulting his own handy rule of eleven, he concluded that I had one club higher than the four, and that it must be the ace (unless Roy was being really dastardly and underleading the ace, but then I still must have the king). On this reasoning, a low club from dummy seemed more than sufficient, and I won the nine. A club return tapped declarer, and he went down one. Not surprisingly, other defenders with Roy's hand were unable to escape the endplay and set up the tap on declarer after leading a high club to Trick 1.

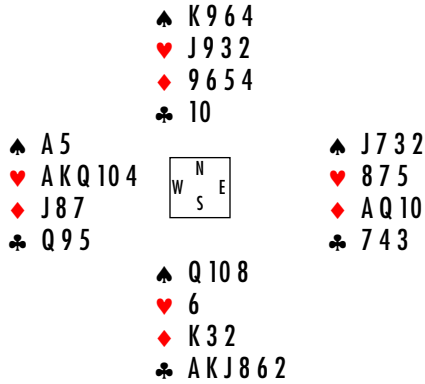
Our run of top boards had survived to the last hand, but I realized that Roy had not. It was clear that the Scotch was taking over, as he looked very confused before opening, as dealer, 3♦. I took no inference from this hesitation, as the possibilities were infinite. My hand was:

♠ K 9 6 4 ♥ J 9 3 2 ♦ 9 6 5 4 ♣ 10

I was pretty sure Roy had at least 13 points for his opening bid (Rule 3), and, as I advised the opponents, I was definitely sure that Roy had never heard of a preempt. The opponents were skeptical; how would a guy know how many points he had but never have heard of a preempt? They sneered as I explained Rule 3 and told them that preempts wouldn't come until the next Smoker.

RHO bid 3♥, and I was goaded into a double that no sober player would have considered. Roy seemed to have a problem, perhaps because no-one had explained that 'double' was a bid, and not just a description of the state of my vision at the time. Finally he bid 3♠, which ended the auction.

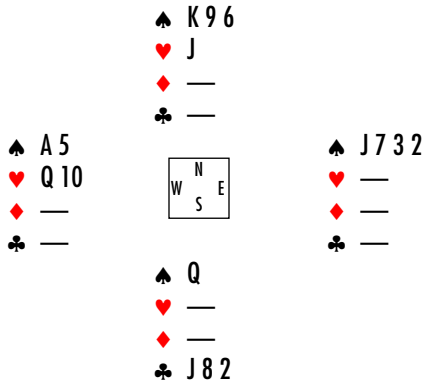
One of the advantages of Smokers was that you were permitted to wander around to the other side of the table to watch your partner play the hand. This was the scene of the crime:



Roy had remembered about the 13 points, but not about his best suit, so he thought it would be best to show his 3-card diamond suit. Then, apparently, when I doubled, he didn't know if he was 'responding'. If he was, then Rule 4b applied (12 points or more) and he had to bid again. On that basis, he showed his 3-card spade suit as well.

LHO led the ♥A, and as Roy hadn't shown any sign of life five minutes later, the opponents began to implore me to play the hand. I told them that that would be cheating, as I had seen their hands. (Besides, I couldn't see how to make 3♠, while 3♥ would easily have gone one down.) As a compromise, I agreed to tell Roy which hand should play next, and the first trick was ultimately completed the same day as the opening lead.

Roy chose to trump the heart continuation (Trick 1), and I advised him that he must now lead from the closed hand. Roy produced the ♣6, LHO made the 'automatic' duck, and the ♣10 won in dummy (Trick 2). I told Roy to lead from the dummy, and he asked me to keep quiet; he had the idea now — it was just the same as euchre only there were no 'bowers'. Roy led a diamond down, won by RHO with the ♦A. The sneaky ♦10 was returned, and Roy won the ♦K (Trick 3). There followed in rapid succession the high clubs, pitching the remaining diamonds from dummy, a diamond ruff and a heart ruff (Tricks 4, 5, 6, and 7). That left:



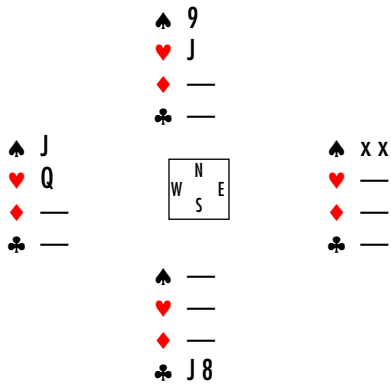
Roy suddenly became focused, seemingly performing some complex mental calculation. Finally, he led one of his good clubs and trumped with dummy's ♠K. One heart ruff later, he had his nine tricks. That was another top, as 1NT and 3♣ had each gone down our way, but Roy didn't notice — he was busy explaining the hand to LHO.

'You see, you had to have 13 points. The ♥AKQ made nine plus the ♦J and ♣Q made twelve. What I didn't know was whether you had the ♠A or the ♠J. I just knew you had to have one of them.

'That's when it hit me — if I trumped the club with the ♠9 and your partner had the ♠J, he would overtrump and lead a spade to your ace. Then your high heart would win a trick and I'd go bait.

'But if I trumped with the ♠K, even if your partner overtrumped with the ace, I could win the next trick with the ♠Q and I would still get a second trick because this is what's left...'

And just like the Hideous Hog, he took a napkin and drew out:



'Now when I lead a club, you have to throw away one of your winners and I make a trick with the ♠9. So it wasn't a guess at all — trumping with the ♠K made a sure nine tricks as long as you had the thirteen points for your heart bid...'

So it was that Roy learned to play bridge in only three minutes. Obviously, I can't claim all the credit for his success, as he had considerable talent of his own. He never again played duplicate in his short lifetime, so that I presume his record of 11 out of a possible 12 matchpoints will stand unchallenged as the best lifetime matchpoint average: 91.7%.

When you consider that almost the entire heavenly host died before bridge was invented, there seems little doubt that Roy has them all playing at a decent level by now, doubtless following the Shoe's Three-Minute Comprehensive Bridge Course.

The Significant-Other Dilemma

ROSELYN TEUKOLSKY

Roselyn Teukolsky is the author of How to Play Bridge with your Spouse — and Survive, *a book that should be required reading for any bridge partnership, not just married couples. She is a regular contributor to the ACBL* Bulletin *and to* Bridge Today.

It was never part of my Life Plan to have a bridge partnership with my husband. What happened was this: he was a bridge player, I was a bridge player, we got married, and there we were.

Suddenly there were all these advantages. For one thing, I had a built-in partner. No more foraging for three bodies — all I needed for a social game was another couple. How wonderful it seemed to have automatic company on the long rides to bridge tournaments, plus the added bonus of a built-in escort in the parking garage after the game. You get the idea. This was not a partnership made in heaven; it was forged on the anvil of convenience.

What then is my dilemma? Well, believe me, the convenient set-up costs me plenty. For one thing, I receive enough bridge lessons to educate an army. For another, I endure endless hostility because my husband believes that the errors I make are deliberate attempts to upset him. 'You don't really believe that was the right play?' he says, incredulous. I have to live in terror of making independent bridge decisions. If I overbid, it's to spite him. If I don't lead his suit I'm a feminist. If I take a phantom save, or do something imaginative that doesn't work, the entire Women's Movement gets reviled. And heaven forbid I should commit the ultimate sin of allowing him to be endplayed. The marriage rocks on its foundation. Hell hath no fury like a man who gets endplayed by his wife.

So why do I put up with this? Because he often — but not as often as he would like to think — plays well. Take this hand from a recent Regional Open Pairs. Both sides were vulnerable. He was West, and held

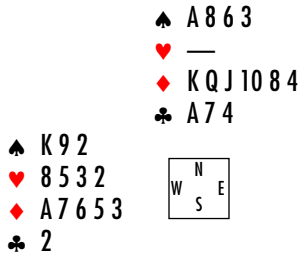
♠ K92 ♥ 8532 ♦ A7653 ♣ 2

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1♥	pass	2♦[1]	pass
3♣	pass	3♦	pass
4♣	pass	6♣	all pass

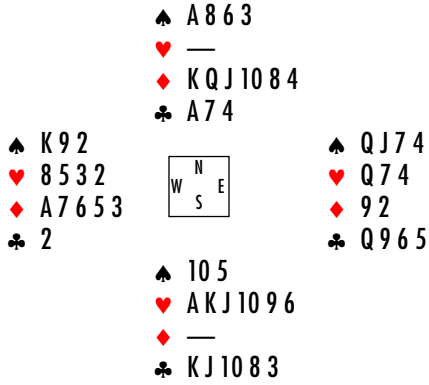
1. Game force.

My partner led the ♠2 and a reasonable dummy appeared:



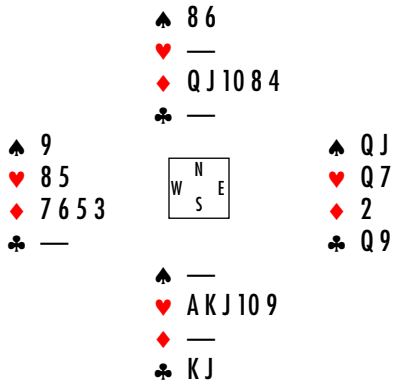
South cogitated for a good three minutes before playing the ♠A. I played the ♠4 (encouraging) and declarer followed with the ♠5. Now South called for the ♦K from dummy, I followed with the ♦9, South pitched the ♠10, and West was in with the ♦A. Take a minute to consider what you would play at this juncture.

No, my intrepid husband did not play the 'obvious' ♠K. He shot back the ♥2, right into the teeth of South's heart suit! Here were the hands:



As you can see, the heart play set up South's heart suit for him, and probably gave him a moment of hope as he entered dummy with the ♣A and took a club finesse. When clubs didn't break, the contract was doomed. There was no entry back to dummy for a second finesse. Nor was there any possibility of ruffing a heart to dummy and trying for a trump coup, because at the time West returned a heart, South had not yet shortened his trumps to East's length. Try it. It won't work.

Now go back and look at what happens if West returns a spade instead of a heart. He, in effect, forces South to make his contract! South must ruff the spade in his hand (thereby shortening his trumps to East's length), and when he gets the bad news about the 4-1 trump break, he can ruff a heart back to dummy and trump-coup East! Here is the situation, with the lead in dummy, after South ruffs a heart with dummy's last trump:



On the run of the diamonds, whenever East ruffs in, South can overruff, draw the last trump and the hearts will be good. If East refuses to ruff, South can pick up East's trumps at Trick 12.

After this hand, while North was berating his partner for not ruffing the heart and playing for a trump coup, I took a minute to let the effect of my partner's breathtaking play sink in. 'How in the world did you know to return a heart?' I asked him.

'Well, the bidding and play suggested that declarer's shape was 2-6-0-5,' he replied, 'And I knew something that South didn't — namely, that the trumps weren't breaking. I was also pretty sure that South's trumps weren't solid, because if they were, there wouldn't be much to the play of the hand. Yet South tanked for ages on the first trick.

'I decided that the best hope for us was that you held Qxxx of trumps, in which case I'd better not help set up a trump coup situation for South. I knew that he was out of spades by now so a spade play could only help him shorten his trumps. A diamond would have given him the extra entry to ruff a spade himself. Which left a heart. Hey, look, it's an easy game if you just think about it!'

So I ask you: Would you play with him?

Guessing with Finesse

J O H N G O W D Y

Some years ago, we were playing a team game in a Regional in Florida against an obnoxious woman pro and her client. With the match feeling to be about even, we arrived in a pushy grand slam missing the queen of trumps on an eight-card fit. Which opponent should we play for it, with no clues from the bidding or play to help? We knew the answer, since we'd already read the following article.

Volumes have been written about the subtle clues that can assist a careful declarer to find a missing honor. Counting points and distribution is helpful; stripping the hand and making the defense play the critical suit for you is always good. But sometimes that isn't possible, and the information you need just isn't available – you've got a pure guess.

That's where I come in. I take the pain out of the guess. In no way can I increase your percentage of success – it will remain around 50%; however, the pleasure you derive will increase dramatically. The game will become more fun even if your results stay about the same.

Let's look at the classic case. You are playing a grand slam, and your trump suit is A-J-9-8 opposite K-10-7-6. You have lots of tricks outside trumps, and the only problem is the missing queen.

Your RHO is a great hairy beast. He slams his cards on the table when he wins a trick. He giggles and gloats over every good result. He is the most unpleasant individual in this or any club.

Your LHO is a sweet middle-aged woman. A good player herself, she is happy to play with anyone who asks her. Always gracious in defeat or victory, her biggest effort at the table is directed at making sure that everyone has an enjoyable time.

Now – to whom do you want to lose this finesse? To the great oaf who will pounce on it, drool, and gloat for the rest of the evening, or to the lady who will win it quietly and almost apologetically? This is not a close decision. You take the finesse through the person you don't like. If everyone did it, then the beast, having not scored a trick in months, might even stop playing bridge!

That scenario is obvious, of course, but not all that common. However, other chances do present themselves, and you have to consult your own preferences and experience – tailor your queen guesses to your lifestyle!

Personally, I always take the finesse through the male in a mixed partnership. The woman likely hasn't had a pleasant day, and winning the queen may perk her up. Conversely, why make his day any better? My ex-partners know

that they are unlikely to score the setting trick against me, if I can help it.

Also, my personal list excludes anyone with a toupee, leisure suit or excessive body odor, as well as anyone from New York.

If you try this, you may not score any better, but this I guarantee – you will enjoy your winning finesses more than ever, and the pain of your losing ones will be dulled with the assurance that at least you took the right line.

The Truly Explosive vs the Merely Unpleasant

ROSELYN TEUKOLSKY

Roselyn Teukolsky will probably always be known as the expert on playing bridge with your spouse. Read this piece, and you'll understand why her book made Marriage *magazine's Recommended list in 2003.*

Playing high-level matchpoints with the love of your life is at best a dicey prospect: not even in Spring will a young man's fancy turn to thoughts of love if things are going badly at the bridge table. However, after many years of experience I've learned to distinguish the situations that are Truly Explosive (TE) from those that are Merely Unpleasant (MU).

Some examples:

- I go down in a hand that I should have played more carefully and he says 'It was cold'. MU: when he's right, there's no sense in making a federal case out of it.

- I go down in a hand that could have been made with an obscure line of play that no bridge player in the world would have taken, and he says 'That was cold'. TE: I don't need to take this garbage and I fight back.

- I make a dramatic opening lead that hands declarer the contract and my partner tells me after the hand that on any other lead... MU: I should have stifled my creativity and made the normal lead with the rest of the field.

- I don't lead his suit and it's wrong. TE: okay, okay. Part of my job as a wife is to make him happy, so when he bids a suit, I should lead it. Period.

- He makes an error and feels the need to justify his play. MU: of course it's never an error, it's always a 'wrong view'.

- I explain to him why his reasoning is wrong. TE: the hostility escalates. I should learn to keep my mouth shut.

- The opponents make a brilliant play that works against me, and he feels the need to lecture me on why I shouldn't have fallen for it. MU: of course he would never fall for such a transparent ploy.

- He makes a brilliant play and it fools me too. TE: the cardinal sin.

You get the idea.

Here are two hands that came up during a hot and heavy matchpoints event. I was South and held

♠ — ♥ K J 10 7 ♦ A K J 8 2 ♣ K J 7 5

The bidding:

West	*North*	*East*	*Me*
			1♦
pass	2♠	pass	3♣
3♥	4♠[1]	pass	6NT
all pass			

1. Solid suit and just one outside ace or king.

The opening lead was the ♠10.

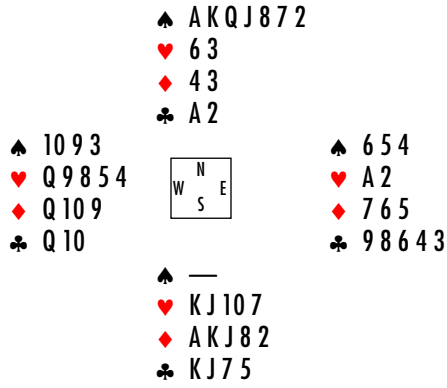
♠ A K Q J 8 7 2
♥ 6 3
♦ 4 3
♣ A 2

N
W E
S

♠ —
♥ K J 10 7
♦ A K J 8 2
♣ K J 7 5

When I saw the dummy I had one of those warm conjugal moments: he actually had the hand he had promised. So there I was, with eleven tricks, several chances for a twelfth, and many opportunities to go down. How would you play this hand?

What I did was to play a heart off the board at Trick 2. East nonchalantly played the deuce, and I was faced with a guess. I crossed my fingers and put in the ten. Wrong — for these were the hands:



'That was cold,' my husband said. 'You needed to play the king of hearts.'

I glared at him. 'Oh really?' I replied. 'I didn't notice.'

'You should have known to play the king,' he persevered. 'West heard your explanation that there were going to be about eight tricks in dummy alone, so there was too much danger that you might take thirteen tricks. This is matchpoints, remember. If he had had the ace of hearts he would have led it. Once he didn't lead it he obviously didn't have it.'

He's right of course. This is an example of merely unpleasant.

Another round, another hand.

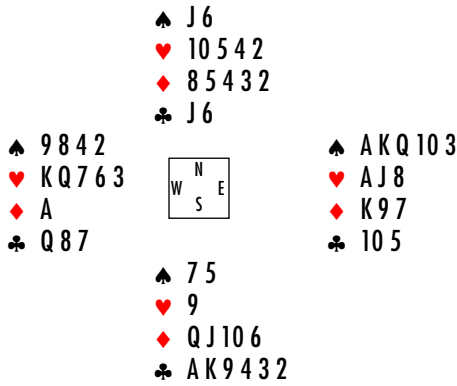
♠ 7 5 ♥ 9 ♦ Q J 10 6 ♣ A K 9 4 3 2

At favorable vulnerability, in first seat, I opened 3♣. The bidding proceeded as follows:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			3♣
pass	4♣	4♠	pass
4NT	pass	5♣	pass
6♠	all pass		

The five club bid was explained as showing zero or three key cards. What opening lead would you make with my hand?

I agonized. Was a club lead really right on this auction? My partner had supported my clubs, and West probably had some length in clubs for his six spade bid. Finally I decided that a diamond looked more promising, so I led the ♦Q. Wrong again:



These are the cold hard facts: My partner made a brilliant bid of 4♣, probably the only bid to cause the opponents to go wrong. West couldn't believe that his partner might have two club losers on this auction, when he himself was looking at three clubs. Trouble is, I too got taken in by the four club bid. I let my partner down. I made all these marriage vows, and still I let him down. The dust from the explosion following this hand has yet to settle.

It's tough to play bridge with significant loved ones: they always take it so personally.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Bridge has always attracted (or created, perhaps?) great characters, and travel to bridge tournaments has taken us to some strange and interesting places. Come and visit some of them with us.

Why Do We Do It? Bridge and the Principle of Variable-Ratio reinforcement

MARILYN WHITE

John Gowdy penned an editorial in the January 1995 CMP which talked about people's motivations for playing competitive bridge. It certainly struck a chord with many of our readers. The author of this response was a professor of Liberal Arts and Science at George Brown College in Toronto, and her article was subsequently reprinted in a university psychology textbook.

The January *Canadian Master Point* arrived just about the time that I was lecturing on behavioristic theory to my Nursing classes, and I was struck by what a brilliant idea it would be to use John Gowdy's question 'Why do we do it?' as a discussion topic, to see whether my students had grasped and could apply (I'm such a dreamer) the principles with which we had been working.

My students were not familiar with the game of bridge, so I explained briefly what competitive bridge was about (winning); I referred to the article that appeared a couple of years ago (I believe in the Toronto Star) that pointed out that the level of individual stress in a room full of tournament bridge players was roughly equivalent to, and possibly higher than, that of a neurosurgeon about to start on a difficult operation; and I read John's poignant questions aloud:

'Why do we suffer through the losses and the pain, and the sometimes unpleasant opponents or partners...?'

How that moved me! What memories were roused! Bottom boards, hurt feelings, insults received, drained self-esteem... Voice faltering with emotion, I summarized briefly John's experiences at 'a very important tournament' where a mixed crowd of Americans and Canadians twice broke out singing 'O Canada' when he and his team entered a bar, once when they had won, and once when they had lost.

My groundwork complete, I stood back and waited for eager replies to my reiterated question, 'So, why do they do it?'

My students appeared to have reached a level of boredom unusual even for them, but I persisted: 'Come on. This is so easy. Pretend it's an exam question: apply the principle of classical conditioning to explain why this person continues to play competitive bridge'.

At last a hand went up. 'Maybe because the playing of bridge has become associated with feelings of warmth and belonging?'

'Yes!' I cried, delightedly. 'And what would have been the original unconditioned stimulus?'

'The anthem sung by the crowd?'

'Wonderful!' More people were getting interested now. 'And what was the unconditioned response?'

'The good feelings?'

'Yes! And... who can finish it?'

'How about this, Miss? Bridge, originally a neutral stimulus, became associated by repeated pairings with strong positive emotions, and thus became in itself the conditioned stimulus, which had the power to elicit the positive feelings, which have now become conditioned responses!' The student finished on a note of triumph, which indeed we all shared; but I was hungry for more.

'Excellent.' I responded briskly. 'And let's remind ourselves that a classically conditioned response is a powerful, automatic, and permanent piece of learning... Now, are we saying that, for this gentleman, bridge will always be a preferred pastime?'

Long pause.

'No,' the blonde girl in the corner finally ventured. 'If he never ever at any time again had another positive experience, then the original learning would weaken and extinguish over time, and bridge would again become either a neutral or perhaps even a negative pastime, and he would give it up.'

'That's right. That would be the principle of extinction. Good. But what would happen if, after a long string of negative experiences, he should win even one game again?'

'Then the whole original learning would be back, due to the principle of spontaneous recovery!'

Ah, it's moments like this that make life worthwhile...

'Okay, that's really good. Now let's ask ourselves why lesser mortals than Mr. Gowdy, who have never had the powerful aphrodisiac of public applause associated with the game of bridge, continue to play in spite of multitudinous horrible experiences. What, in fact, is Thorndike's Law of Effect?'

Hands shot up. 'That's the law that states that behaviors followed by positive outcomes are strengthened, whereas behaviors followed by negative outcomes are weakened.'

'Exactly. As we know, B.F. Skinner expanded on Thorndike's ideas in the theory of Operant Conditioning, which holds that reinforcement of a behavior increases the probability that the behavior will be repeated, and punishment decreases that probability.' I took a deep breath. 'Now, what I want somebody to do is to explain why a person, such as a bridge player, would continue an activity that is expensive, time-consuming, frustrating, and often painful, in the face of repeated losses. We're talking about your average, everyday player.'

Long silence.

'But, Miss,' (I love that form of address) 'wouldn't operant conditioning theory predict that a behavior that is punished that badly tends to decrease? Wouldn't the person just, like, quit playing?'

'One would certainly think so,' I responded. 'But simple observation at any bridge club would prove this not to be the case. These places are full of players whose behavior is repeatedly 'punished', so to speak, yet they show up week after week.'

I saw that this was going nowhere. 'Let me jog your memory,' I said, smiling (can't anyone remember anything?). 'In real life, do you get reinforced every time you perform a behavior? Do you get praised every time you make your bed, or brush your teeth, or eat your veggies? Does a golfer win every tournament? Does a chess player win every match? Of course not... What happens is that we get partial, or intermittent reinforcement; and schedules of intermittent reinforcement are simply rules that determine when a response will be reinforced. Does that ring any bells?'

Silence.

'Remember when I said that intermittent schedules are very important in maintaining a learned behavior, and that there was one type of schedule that was incredibly powerful for this?'

'Oh, Miss, I remember. You told us about that guy playing the slot machine that was rigged to pay off after every twentieth play. But the player wouldn't know when the payoff would be — it might be twice in a row, and then not until 58 plays later, but it would average out to every twenty plays.

'That's called a variable ratio schedule, and you said it was more powerful in maintaining behavior than the other kind, the fixed ratio (where you know the machine would pay off after every twenty plays exactly).'

'You've got it. The thing is, when you have learned to expect a reinforcement, and you do not know when that reinforcement is coming, then you'll keep trying practically forever. The big win could be just around the corner. It could be next time. It could be now.'

I looked benignly at the class. Had they learned anything?

'I want you all to write a short essay for next week on some behavior you have learned through operant conditioning, and discuss the reinforcement schedule that you think maintains it. That's it for now; it's my bridge night, and I'm feeling lucky!'

A Glimpse into Bridge History

TOM DAWSON

Tom Dawson has for years been a collector of bridge books, magazines and memorabilia, and he owns one of the world's few complete sets of The Bridge World, *from the first issue to the present day. He and his wife, Judy, are experts on antique playing cards, which they also collect. Who better to give us some historical perspective on our favorite game?*

The first contract bridge world championship was held in July, 1933, so that 1993 seems an appropriate year to give readers a small insight into the world of bridge as it was then. Contract bridge, as we know it today, was still in its infancy and while the theory of play was well understood by the good players, bidding theory was much less developed. On the other hand egos were as well developed then as now, and one of the largest belonged to Ely Culbertson.

It is from Culbertson's book, *First Contract Bridge World Championship*, and the August and September issues of *The Bridge World* (a Culbertson publication at that time) that I have gleaned the material for this article. The dust jacket for the book, which was published soon after the completion of the championship, modestly describes the contents as '300 hands — bidding and play — with comments by ELY CULBERTSON, World Champion Player — Captain of the Victorious American Team.'

The championship was noteworthy for several reasons. It was the first 'official' world championship (played for the International Schwab Trophy); it was the first match in Europe to put bridge on the map as a popular spectacle (it was played in the ritzy Palm Court at Selfridges); it was the first to allow thousands of spectators (24,000 over the six days) to view the match on an electric screen ('the birth of a phenomenon' per Hubert Phillips, Editor of the *British Bridge World*); and it was the forerunner of what Culbertson and Phillips described as 'matches to be staged in Vienna or Mexico City or Shanghai, because bridge is one of the strongest intellectual ties between nation and nation'.

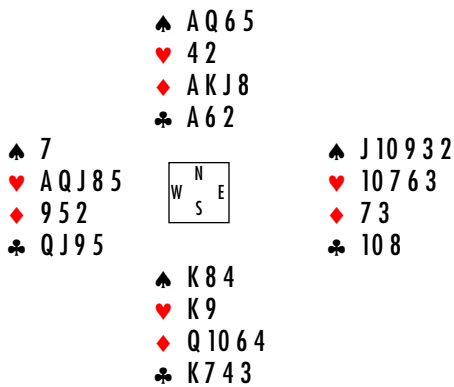
The protagonists were chosen by selection committees in both countries. For the Americans, Culbertson, his wife Josephine (described as 'beyond question the greatest woman player in the world' — indeed, many students of the early years of bridge believe she was far superior to Ely as a player), Theodore Lightner, and Michael Gottlieb. The British selected Lt. Col. Beasley (Captain), Lady Rhodes, Sir Guy Domville, G. Mathieson, George Morris and P.V. Tabbush. Both teams played the Culbertson (Approach-Forcing) System but Culbertson maintained that the British did not use all aspects of it, and especially the Four-Five Notrump Convention, a factor that

caused them to miss many makable slams and to bid many they could not bring in. He acknowledged that if they had, the final score would have been much closer. This view was also widely held by the British team and the British press in the post mortems that followed the match.

The match itself consisted of 300 hands over six days, with total points scored determining the winner (IMPs had not been invented). It was not a see-saw match. The Americans won 320 points on Hand 1 by making 4♠ at one table and only going down one in 5♣ doubled at the other when Ely and Lightner (Culbertson played most boards with Lightner and the balance with Gottlieb) found the save. But on Hand 2 the British made 6♦ vulnerable while Josephine and Gottlieb (despite the vaunted 4-5NT convention) got to 7♦ doubled missing an ace! This put the Brits 1,250 ahead and they held on to the lead until Hand 154. From that point on, though, it was all America as they gradually pulled away to win by 11,110 points.

The hands in many cases prove the point that bidding skills were at that time rudimentary but that the standard of card play was quite high. For example, on Hand 1, the American declarer with 4-4-4-1 distribution made 4♠ by playing trumps for one loser with Q-10-6-3 opposite K-9-8-5-4 by finessing against the jack because 'with a 4-4-4-1 'monster' it is better to expect a 3-1 distribution of opposing trumps'. The explanation goes on to describe 4-4-4-1 holdings as 'a symptom of cancerous growth around the table which generally presages distributional storms'... Further sentences extol the Culbertson Law of Symmetry 'which attempts to correct the fleshless abstract figures of the Theory of Probabilities because of imperfect shuffles and the artificial formation of suit patterns due to the necessity of following to suits led'.

Hand 23. Dealer South, Both vulnerable

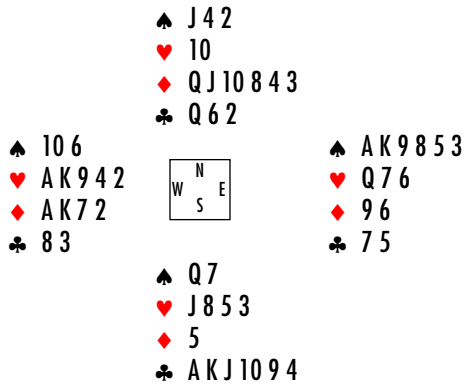


On Hand 23 the British bidding proceeded

North	*South*
1♦	2NT
3♠	4♠
4NT	pass

Culbertson described the 4♠ bid as bad and the 4NT bid as a brilliant rescue bid. West did well not to hand declarer his tenth trick by leading the ♥Q. Instead he tried the ♣Q, but Col. Beasley won in dummy, cashed four diamonds, three spades and the ♣K, and then led a small club, endplaying West.

Hand 57. Dealer South, Both vulnerable

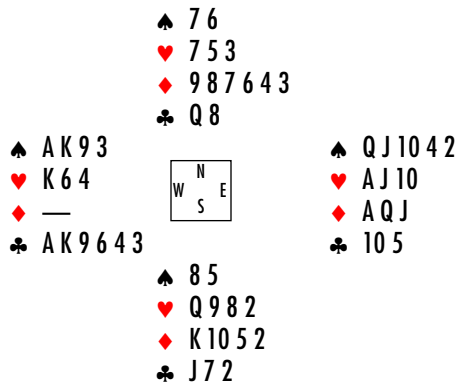


West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1♣
dbl	pass	2♠	pass
3♥	pass	4♥	all pass

This hand provoked some interesting comments by Culbertson. He described the hand as 'a successful operation but the patient dies' and went on to describe the bidding as 'perfect, for obviously only a beginner would think of playing the hand at 4♠'. *(A cold contract as the cards lie, and arguably at least as good as 4♥. Ed.)*

Against 4♥, however, two rounds of clubs were followed by the ♦5. Culbertson won the ace, cashed two high spades and ruffed one in hand. He then tried the ♦K but Domville was awake and refused to ruff. The next diamond was ruffed with the seven, but overruffed with the eight and a trump return set the contract one trick.

Hand 189. Dealer North, E-W vulnerable



Hand 189 is of historical interest. For the British, Domville and Morris bid

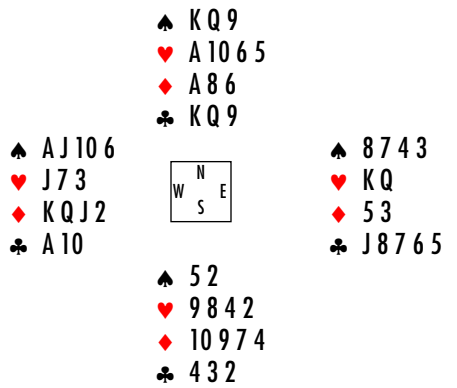
East	*West*
1♠	3♣
3NT	6♠

Lightner and Culbertson used the 4-5 Notrump convention for the first time in the match and the first time in major competition. Their bidding:

East	*West*
1♠	3♣
3♠	4NT
5NT	7♠

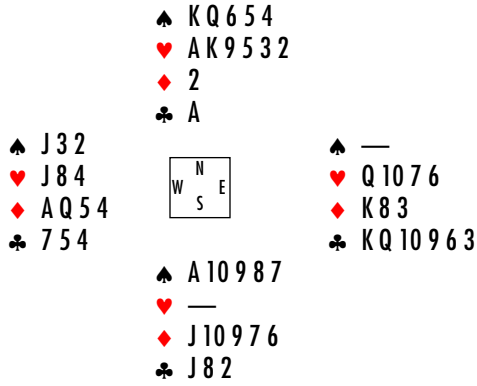
The 4NT bid showed either three aces or two aces and the king of a naturally bid suit and the 5NT response promised two aces or one ace and the kings of all previously bid suits. Culbertson (West) bid the cold grand slam with ‘utmost confidence’ after Lightner's response showed two aces.

Hand 240. Dealer East, Both vulnerable



Hand 240 has some interesting aspects. At Table 1, Culbertson opened 1♠ as West in third position, as apparently he considered the hand too strong for a 1NT opener (2½ to 3 honor tricks). Col. Beasley overcalled 1NT, ending the auction, and made six tricks after a spade lead. Morris, the British West, also opened 1♠ and Josephine chose to double. Gottlieb bid 2♦ (was he better to pass?), North rebid 2NT and West doubled when this came around to him. North ran to 3♦ and West had no trouble doubling this to close the auction. This resulted in four undertricks (1400 points at that time); a large swing, mainly caused by the different treatment of the North hand after the 1♠ opener.

Hand 290. Dealer East, Both vulnerable



While bidding theory may not have been well developed, neither side had any difficulty in getting to the 22-HCP slam on Hand 290.

The bidding at Table 1, with Beasley and Mrs. Rhodes North-South went as follows. North opened 1♥ in fourth position and after South's 1♠ response, bid 4♣ (was this perhaps the first recorded splinter?). East came in with 5♣ and North bid 6♠ when this was passed back to him. Culbertson (West) doubled, trying to induce a mistake like a 'rescue' to 7♥, but North shipped it back. That was +1970 in 1933 scoring (no insult bonus). The Americans bid 1♥ - 1♠; 4NT (the nuclear weapon — showing two aces and at least one king in a bid suit) - 5♠ (one ace) and North naturally went on to 6♠. The British earned a much-needed swing of 540 points, but it was too little, too late.

Nights of Old

DAVID SILVER

David Silver is the author of three volumes of humorous bridge stories, many of which take place in a fictional community college. The fact that he is a retired professor from an Ontario community college is, of course, pure coincidence. His many fans will be interested to know how he got involved with bridge in the first place. This piece is not fiction (although parts of it certainly seem like they might be), but it describes a world that is hard to find today. We think the denizens of TGR's in London, England will recognize it, though, and we're sure there still are other clubs around the world that resemble the old St. Clair.

It was a dark and stormy Saturday morning at the cottage, and my friend Jack Palmer suggested that we head back to town and go to the bridge club. 'What's bridge?' I asked innocently, and he said he'd teach me how to play on the drive down. We played all afternoon and I won eighteen dollars, big money in 1956. I have often wondered what my life would have been like had I lost heavily that Saturday afternoon. Different, certainly, but on the other hand I would never have encountered the eccentric and wonderful people that I was to meet at the St. Clair Bridge Club.

In those days, the St. Clair Bridge Club was actually located on St. Clair Avenue in Toronto. It was in a huge, Victorian, three-story mansion, opposite the park. Presiding, singly or in tandem, were the owners: Shorty Sheardown and Helen Pritchard. They lived in apartments on the upper level. We played in what used to be a living room, dining room, and library. The rooms were huge and there were quiet corners for serious rubber bridge. There were a couple of private rooms upstairs for 'special' games, but they were rarely used. I never made it upstairs.

I began by playing in the 'tenth' game, for a tenth of a cent a point, or ten cents a hundred. I quickly became more proficient than the regulars and I soon had a steady, albeit small, income. I began to get to know some of the other players, especially those who were there as often as me. For example, in the alcove, surrounded by lead glass windows, was the 'warriors' game. The average age was eighty-five and their table talk consisted entirely of anecdotal reminiscences of 'the war'— not the Great War, but the Boer War. No children were allowed in that game; it was tough bridge played by tough men.

One day, as I was pondering how to make three notrump doubled on three points opposite twelve, there was an uncharacteristic commotion from the warriors. The Major and 'Shack' (John Shackleton, nephew of the Arctic explorer) were waging a bitter campaign against the two younger players.

Voices rose as the Major had apparently just brought home a doubled contract which, he pointed out, could easily have been beaten if LHO had cashed out. Venerable oaths were exchanged and the rubber finally continued.

There was a cease-fire at all the other tables as we awaited Armageddon. 'Four spades,' began the opening barrage from RHO. 'Double!' bellowed the Major. 'Redouble' from LHO, presumably in possession of heavy artillery. 'Pass' from Shack, leaving tactical decisions to his superior officer. The other two combatants passed and the final contract became four spades redoubled. The Major charged into the fray and led the ace of diamonds, the dummy was deployed, and declarer studied the terrain. After a few minutes of contemplation, declarer carefully put his cards on the table and dropped dead.

The ambulance arrived quite quickly, but there was nothing to do but to carry the casualty from the field of battle under a flag of truce. Shack, meanwhile, had picked up the dead man's hand. He studied it, looked at the dummy, and then turned to the Major. 'You idiot,' he hissed. 'He was going to make an overtrick.' The game never continued. The players dispersed to other tables and, eventually, just faded away.

In the twilight world of the St. Clair, I quickly realized that Sammy Kehela was the king. No one disputed his superiority over mere mortals. Even Bruce Gowdy deferred to him. Don Cowan, Bruce Elliott, even Shorty himself, would seek Sammy's opinion on play or bidding, or ask him to adjudicate a dispute. Everyone had a question or a hand for Sammy. In those pre-computer days, Sammy was the ultimate central processor. Even I, addicted as I was, would rather kibitz Sammy than play.

I have never, before or since, met any genuine expert as generous as Sammy Kehela. He always responded to a sincere interest in the game, even from an ignorant beginner. There was a strict protocol enforced at Sammy's table: you had to be silent and unobtrusive. However, questions were permitted after the game, or when Sammy was sitting out during a five-player rubber. No bridge question was too trivial to be considered, no player too inexpert to be answered.

Bridge was to Sammy what art was to Rembrandt. He teased me a lot, but ruffled feelings were a small price to pay for a chance to sit at the feet of genius. I began to wonder whether I could actually get to play with the great man. I could never afford to play at his table, but perhaps he could be cajoled into a duplicate game? However, Sammy, although easily accessible at the rubber bridge table to anyone with a surfeit of money, never played duplicate with anyone but his familiars.

I had still not worked up the courage to ask him for a game when one evening I saw him sit down with a quite ordinary player. They won. A few weeks later, there he was again, playing with a lady who could barely follow suit. They won. Emboldened, the next day I asked Sammy for a duplicate game, any evening he was available. 'I will play with you when the time comes,' he said enigmatically and would not discuss it any further. Perplexed by this Delphic statement, I asked Eric Murray to interpret the message. He did.

My father used to say that an ordinary man got to ride in a Cadillac twice: once when he got married, and again when he got buried. Apparently, ordinary bridge players got a game with Sammy only once, just before leaving this vale of tears. Sammy Kehela was bridge's version of Charon the Boatman: if a member of the St. Clair Bridge Club was known to be dying, a duplicate game with Sammy was arranged.

I kibitzed another 'goodbye' game a few months later where the 'dear departee' was constantly giving Sammy lessons on dummy play and advice on bidding. Shorty leaned over and whispered, 'That guy better pray that his doctor hasn't made a mistake.' So, a game with Sammy was to die for. I thought about it...

While, technically, Kehela was one of the world's great players, an expert's expert, the best rubber bridge player I ever met was Donny Da Costa — no contest! Donny had the best-developed table presence of any player that ever held a card. He could sense when the opponents had good or bad hands, he exploited their weaknesses, technical and psychological, and he nearly always won. Diminutive, clever, and charming, Donny was always welcomed into any game. Tightwads gladly handed over their money to him at the end of a session.

One evening I was Donny's partner and on my right was 'The Crane'. The Crane was an extremely tall man, with a long, skinny neck, who was reputed to have better eyesight than Ted Williams. All his finesses worked, while his opponents' card distribution was an open book to him, literally. Donny dealt, and the Crane quickly propelled himself to seven spades. I was looking at queen third of spades, but I kept my hand close to my chest and led a card. The dummy appeared with the A-J-10-9 of spades!

An ice age passed. Empires rose and fell, stars glowed in the sky, faded, and disappeared, and the Crane sat there, swiveling. His head rotated on the end of his neck like the lens in a U-boat's periscope. Finally, I broke under the pressure and lit my pipe. The Crane, after a swift glance at my cards, relaxed and played the king out of his hand. Donny and I followed low. Cursing myself for my carelessness, I played low again as the Crane confidently finessed dummy's jack of trumps — and Donny scooped in the trick with the queen of spades!

The Crane spluttered, turned beet-red and asked to see the trick again. Donny complied as the Crane groped for words, but there really wasn't anything he could say. I quickly threw my hand in and started dealing. Donny, of course, had slipped in a rigged hand to teach the Crane a lesson. There were two queens of trumps extant, so that even the Crane couldn't guess which way to finesse.

The club was full of weird and wonderful characters. Most of them are just vague shadows in the recesses of my memory, but a few were so flamboyant that it seems I was just at the table with them last week. There was Imre, who would swear you to secrecy and then confide that he was a count with an ancestral estate in Hungary. He was always petitioning the Western govern-

ments to invade Eastern Europe and restore the Hungarian aristocracy. He had taken to me because, he claimed, I was the only Canadian he had met who understood why a landlocked country would have had an admiral for its President. Our friendship finally faltered when I carelessly observed that the Hungarian aristocracy must have greatly outnumbered the peasants and the bourgeoisie, judging from the number of expatriates sitting in cafes in Yorkville bemoaning the loss of their properties.

Cass Olsen was another type unique to that time and place. 'Raise with three, *yump* with four', he would instruct his partners. Cass had been a Polish fighter pilot when Hitler invaded in 1939; he flew his plane to France and eventually joined 'the few' in the Battle of Britain. I recall on one occasion, a mutual friend was complaining of not being able to get a visa for a relative in Germany. Cass put his hand down on the table, crossed the room and picked up the telephone and called Ottawa. He asked for Mr. Macdonald, at that time the Minister of Defense, and was put through immediately! A few minutes later, a call came for the friend and a senior civil servant took the details and assured the grateful man that all would be ready in a few days. The friend sat down, thanked Cass, and then doubled him in four spades and set him three, at two cents a point.

Then there were the ghoulie players, the 'children of the night' as Donny used to call them. Ghoulie, as it was then played, was a wild and exciting variant of rubber bridge. Reduced to its basics, it went as follows: a hand was dealt normally, except that the person to the left of the opening bidder (it was mandatory to open with thirteen high card points) had to overcall four notrump or higher, regardless of his point count. The last person to bid could choose any of the other three players to be dummy. The chosen person could accept or reject, letting his own fortunes ride with declarer or not. If the opening bidder was chosen and did not have thirteen points, the chooser could elect to play the hand or throw it in. Thrown-in or passed-out hands were not shuffled, but simply redealt in bunches of three. The resulting hands, mostly wildly distributional, were called 'ghoulies'.

If you want to hone your dummy play, try a few years of being in the hot seat to opener's left, usually playing four notrump doubled with two or three points opposite thirteen. Duplicate players carry diagrammed hands to show their friends how they made an impossible overtrick. We would challenge fellow ghouls to figure out how we played a hand for only four down, when we were clearly down six off the top!

Psyching was also an art form, for robbing the other ghouls was almost as important as making contracts. In ghoulie, as in other forms of the game, the spade suit was paramount, so you usually bid spades at the first opportunity, especially if you were void. But the essential quality for a successful ghoul was stamina, since the games often went on for sixty to seventy hours straight, usually from Friday night to Monday or Tuesday morning. Early one such Monday morning I held:

♠ — ♥ A ♦ A ♣ A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 3

Percy Goldenberg, opposite, opened six spades (vulnerable) and Nick Trainor, on my right, raised to seven spades. I bid seven notrump and chose Percy.

'I'm psychic,' said Percy and started to throw the hand in.

'I'll play anyway,' I retorted, since I had figured out that a solid spade suit can't add up to thirteen points (you couldn't count distributional points).

'I reject,' bellowed Percy.

'Double,' said Harold on my left. 'Redouble,' said I, and Harold led the deuce of spades. Percy put down seven hearts headed by the queen and six diamonds to the jack. He smiled expectantly.

Harold had found himself on lead against seven notrump redoubled (vulnerable) holding thirteen spades! But alas, Harold was no longer a young man (he was the same age then as I am now), and he had gone three days and nights without sleep. Upon examination, the card on the table turned out to be the deuce of clubs. Harold had led what he thought was his thirteenth best spade, a rather expensive gesture as Percy pointed out at the top of his lungs. This was a swing of several hundred (1959) dollars, because a rejected declarer paid, or collected from, all the others including the fifth player sitting out that hand.

It was a real estate boom that finally closed the club. Situated, as it was, on an enormous lot on St. Clair Avenue, the property simply became too valuable to remain in private hands. After the sale, Helen retired, while Shorty reopened the club in new premises above a furniture store.

Most of the members did not migrate to the new location, though. I guess most of the older ones lived nearby and car ownership was not as nearly universal as it is now. The night before the move, I sat drinking with Shorty and Donny as they reminisced about the old (pre-young David) days. Compared to those two, I was an abstainer, and I very quickly became maudlin and my eyes filled with tears. 'Oh, don't be an idiot,' said Shorty in his fatherly way. 'You'll make new friends and we'll all enjoy the next few years as much as we have the past ten.' I did, and we did. But that's another story.

Portrait of an Institution

RAY LEE

Kate Buckman's Bridge Studio in Toronto was, and is, one of the great bridge clubs of North America. It is also an illustration of the truism that a bridge club is made or broken by the personality of its owner.

The recent passing of Toronto's Kate Buckman, at the age of 94 after several years of ill-health, set me thinking about the lady I had known, and her influence on me and on the rest of Toronto's bridge community in the 60s and 70s.

Kate had introduced duplicate bridge to Vancouver in the post-war years, and opened her Toronto premises in 1959. By the time I arrived in Toronto, ten years later, there was only one major duplicate club in the city: Kate Buckman's Bridge Studio, known to everyone as just 'Kate's'. It was called 'Kate's' for simplicity, and because in every meaningful way, the club reflected its owner, the redoubtable Kate Buckman whose personal management of the operation made it what it was. It had become the largest bridge club in Canada, and the third-largest in North America, averaging three hundred tables a week, and introducing almost a thousand students to the game each year. The major competition, the venerable St. Clair, catered only to rubber bridge and an IMP league. For matchpoint players, there was only one choice.

But it was an easy and pleasant choice, for 'Kate's' truly was a 'club', a place to meet your friends and a place to feel at home, whether or not you actually wanted to play bridge that afternoon or evening (although there would usually be some gentle persuasion applied to get you involved). As a newcomer to Toronto (and Canada), I found it especially welcoming. Hanka (Kate's able assistant) found me another expatriate, Brian, who could play the Acol system that was all I knew at the time; Brian traveled on business a fair amount, but when he was in town, I could expect a call from Hanka to round me up for a game that night.

But I quickly became friendly with a group of players around my own age who, some more than others, seemed practically to live at 'Kate's'. Some of them have drifted away from the game over the years, but most of them still play bridge, and I still regard many of them as friends. People would drop in and out of the club during the afternoon, and a group would usually gather between five and six o'clock, whether or not they intended to play bridge that night. The surroundings were congenial, and depending on your mood, you could play cards, or just hang out in the comfortable lounge, swapping bridge stories with whomever happened to drop by.

If you wished, you could even have dinner at the club (the kitchen was presided over by a man with the unlikely name of Cary Grant). A few tables

at one end would be transformed with tablecloths, red linen napkins, and glistening silverware, and a fine three-course meal was available. For most of my crowd, however, the preferred spot was Fran's, around the corner. It was cheap, cheerful, licensed, open 24 hours, and had a plentiful supply of paper napkins on which you could write out hands and auctions. I'm not sure I ever saw it earlier than 1 A.M., our usual time to head over after the game for post-mortems.

It was at Kate's that I met my future wife — she was running the bridge school, and I became, for a short time, one of her staff. But we were not the only couple whose partnership, founded at 'Kate's', came to extend beyond the bridge table.

This was an atmosphere in which young players could not help but grow and develop their game; there was consistent high-level competition, and top stars like Murray, Elliott, Kehela, and Gowdy were often there to play. It was at 'Kate's' that short-lived conventions such as 'Knapik over Notrumps' were first tried, alongside such longer-lasting innovations as 'Guoba rescues'. Anything went, and you might encounter pairs playing Blue Team Club, Precision, Acol, EHAA, or even No-Peek during the course of an evening.

The games were a good size, and frequent special prize events added to the good-natured competition (I well remember the first Midnight Game, which followed after the regular duplicate and ended with a breakfast buffet!). This was in the days before computer scoring, of course, so someone had installed a huge whiteboard on one side of the playing area, which you could watch as the scores were entered and boards matchpointed at the end of the game (which was why we rarely got to Fran's before 1 A.M.!). Sometimes other groups would continue through the night – rubber bridge, or gin and other quasi-legal 'short-cards' games. These were the players who never showed up until midnight, but who might, on occasion, still be there at noon the next day.

And over it all presided Kate herself, regal and firm, making sure that everything was exactly as she wanted it, and that her club was always a place where people wanted to come and spend their time. The club ran into some financial difficulties in the early 70s, and there were several ownership changes, but eventually Kate re-established control. However, I started a new job in late 1973, and the first time I went out of town on business, fire destroyed the old building that housed the bridge club (for some reason I have always felt a vague sense of responsibility for the disaster). The club reopened in another location, but the old 'Kate's' atmosphere was gone, and a period of decline followed that lasted well past the point where Kate Buckman's growing ill-health would not allow her to continue to play an active role. Happily, today, under the energetic ownership of Barbara Seagram and Alex Kornel, 'Kate's' has once again become the preeminent club in central Toronto,

Kate Buckman was named winner of the Edwin A. Wetzlar Memorial Award and an Honorary Member of the ACBL for lifetime services to bridge

in 1973, the first Canadian to be so honored. She is remembered in Toronto through the Kate Buckman Award, given annually to the Toronto-area person adjudged to have contributed most to people's enjoyment of bridge; she was, naturally, the first recipient.

There could be no more fitting memorial to a great lady.

Shorty Remembered

BRUCE GOWDY

'Shorty' Sheardown is one of the legends of Canadian bridge, one of a small group of players who put Canada on the world bridge map for the first time, about fifty years ago. He was Canada's first Life Master, a member of the first team to win back-to-back Spingolds (in 1964 and 1965, the only four-man team ever to do it), and the winner of more tournaments than most of us will ever play in. Bruce Gowdy was a long-time friend and teammate, and also a losing finalist to Sheardown's team in the 1964 Spingold.

On September 13th, 1993, in his 82nd year, Percy E. 'Shorty' Sheardown moved peacefully for the last round. 'Canada's Mr. Bridge', as he was undisputedly and affectionately known to all bridge players of his time, became the Dominion's first Life Master soon after his return from overseas service in World War II.

A one-time Classics student who could read Greek and Latin or sing German folk songs for pleasure, Shorty played bridge professionally and operated the original St. Clair Bridge Club almost continuously after leaving the University of Toronto. He always had time for a game with anyone: expert, novice, or one of his adoring LOL's. These latter loved him so much that he could freely sacrifice, undoubled, at any time! It was quite common to look at the travelling slip at the old Toronto Whist Club and see twelve scores of +650 N-S and one of –300 E-W — Shorty down six, undoubled (usually versus Mrs. Doolittle, a dear 90-year-old with at least four cigarettes going at once, who had an unbelievable passion for Shorty).

Shorty was a great teacher, and many of the top players in the 40s and 50s (Murray, Drury, Elliott, Kehela, Gowdy, and Da Costa, among others) can attribute their world-class skill levels in major part to Shorty's tutelage. He had amazing feel for the table, never thinking just of his own thirteen cards, but always mentally placing, usually correctly, the whole fifty-two around the table. The accuracy of his declarer play and defense was eerie, and often left opponents wishing there had been a skip in the movement!

His philosophy was simple: 'good players strive to analyze all the factors, and then play for the best result possible, not the best possible result'. I recall one hand from a 1949 tournament in Detroit where Shorty was on lead holding

♠ x x x ♥ A Q x ♦ x x x x ♣ x x x

against the auction 1NT - 3NT. What else would he finger but the ♥A? Maybe you'll hit partner's suit, and, if not, it may not cost a trick; also, it gives you a chance to look at dummy.

On this particular occasion, dummy had ♥J10x, declarer ♥xx, and yours truly ♥K98xx. Declarer did not think –50 was a good result (since they held the remaining 31 points) and he summoned the director, claiming that we must have had inside knowledge. After all, how could anyone make such a lead? The late Russell Baldwin gave one of his classic rulings: if declarer and his partner wished to kibitz us for the remaining rounds, he would be glad to find a substitute pair!

Journalist Peter Gzowski, in an interview published in Maclean's magazine 35 years ago, asked Shorty 'What is the fascination of this game-that-is-a-passion that drives people in pitting brains against brains?' Shorty's reply was that it was the competition: 'It's like a beauty contest; if you lose at poker or gin rummy, you can shrug it off on bad hands, but not in duplicate bridge. If you lose, you lose.'

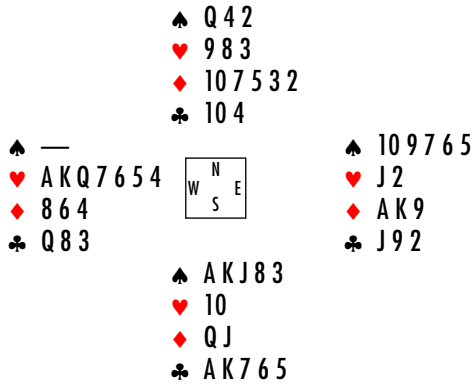
In 1987 Shorty was amongst the group given the special ACBL 50th Anniversary Honorees Award, a fitting tribute to one of the greatest players the game has known. He will be missed, but never forgotten.

A Double-Edged Sword

RAY LEE

I well remember starting to play bridge in Toronto in the late 60s, and getting to know Shorty Sheardown. I quickly noticed, watching the regulars at the St. Clair Club, that this quiet man was accorded a respect by the rest of the players that matched and sometimes even bettered that given to the legendary Kehela. I soon found out why.

One of the local bridge aphorisms then current was 'never double Shorty', and I saw a graphic example of the accuracy of this from the kibitzer's seat one day in 1971. Playing in an early round of the CBF Team Trials that year in Toronto, Shorty sat South on the following layout against George Sereny (West) and Al Lando (East), with Dr. Ron Forbes as his partner.



With North-South vulnerable, West opened 4♥, and after two passes, Shorty ventured 4♠. After two more passes, East doubled.

The opening lead was the ♥A, and Shorty ruffed the heart continuation. He laid down the ♠A, found out the bad news in trumps, and played the ♦Q, East winning the ace.

A trump shift at this point would defeat the hand, but this is not easy to see, and Lando actually returned a club, which was won by the ace. The ♦J went to the ace, and another club came back to the king. Shorty now ruffed a club low in dummy, and cashed the ♦10, pitching a club from his hand.

The play to this point had consumed at most thirty seconds, and the hand was over in another fifteen or so. Another high diamond was led, East perforce ruffing with the nine, and South overruffing. The last club was ruffed with the ♠Q, East ignominiously underruffing, and now the lead from the dummy completed the trump coup for ten tricks.

Lando turned me for sympathy: 'I really thought I had enough to double,' he remarked, ruefully.

You did, I thought, but not enough to double Shorty.

Excerpts from the Rutherford Files

BRIAN LIVINGSTON

Eric Rutherford Murray, attorney, raconteur, and bridge player extraordinaire, is one of the great personalities of world bridge, let alone Canada. Observed joining in the singing of another country's national anthem at the world championships, he commented that he had been to the event and lost so many times, he knew the words to all the anthems! His incredible record for Canada in national and international competition is only matched by that of his long-time partner, Sammy Kehela. Eric also has a wickedly dry sense of humor; it is not often someone can turn the tables on him, but Brian Livingston does exactly that in this piece.

Bridge,' said a sage, 'is a comfort in old age, but it helps it arrive quicker.' You can age in a lot of ways with this game. There are three well-known ways: IMPs (or teams), duplicate, and rubber bridge. There are others less well known, such as ghoulie and speed, variants that as their names imply seem more suited to necrophiliacs and substance abusers.

In spirit, rubber bridge is closest to the IMP form of scoring: the emphasis is on making contracts, and overtricks are of little concern unless they make the bidding look bad. But rubber bridge does have aspects unknown to other forms of the game: partscores for one, partnerships for another.

Unlike duplicate, rubber bridge is not a 'timed event'. I personally hate schedules, and my game starts when I get there and ends when I leave. In a typical session, it isn't hard to play fifty or sixty hands instead of a meager twenty-six. If you really want to, you can play seventy-two hours straight — even allowing for bathroom breaks, that's a lot of bridge.

Partnerships are another matter. In other forms of the game you play with one partner and two opponents; here, you play three opponents, one of whom is occasionally (and supposedly) on your side. There are opportunities here for hustlers to deliberately 'throw' a partner early in the game, and then sit back and 'collect' for the rest of the session. Of course, this is frowned upon, but nevertheless... So in addition to LHO and RHO, you have to keep a close eye on OHO (opposite hand opponent). He may have no deliberate malice for you in mind, but if his nature is to lose nineteen contracts in the auction, so that he can steal the twentieth, you had better be prepared to adjust your bidding style.

One of the really attractive things about rubber bridge at my club is that there are always a number of good players about; you too can have a world-class partner for the same card fee as everyone else at the table. These gentlemen display outstanding comportment, and only a cynic would interpret the

grunts, snorts, and occasional loud asides as anything other than the pleasant greetings they are intended to be.

The rubber bridge games I frequent are all played for a stake, and while this varies from game to game, the rule of thumb is that a vulnerable small slam bid and made will put gas in your Mustang for about six weeks. On the evening in question, a certain cigar-smoking attorney known sometimes as Mr. Rutherford, or simply as 'Murphy', has cut into the game, and you hold:

♠ K x x ♥ A x x ♦ x x ♣ A K Q x x

Simple enough, until partner opens the bidding 1♣. What do you bid: 3NT? 1♦? What if partner has a singleton diamond — will your system keep you out of 3NT when you are cold for 6♣?

But it's rubber bridge. No problem — jumps by responder are forcing, so 3♣ is clear, indeed even clearer because it was discussed two hands ago and you know that partner knows it is forcing. Now when his lordship bids 3NT there is little doubt that it is the right spot.

A few hands of no significance later, the opponents are analyzing their defense to a partscore, with occasional interjections from Himself. Eventually, they discover what the winning line should have been and turn to Mr. R. with an air of triumph. He is clearly heard to state 'I have nothing to say,' an event of such historic significance that I immediately summon the director, and other games around us pause momentarily in acknowledgment.

Let me now, however, switch to the past tense to get this next hand as far behind me as possible. Rutherford opened 1♠, RHO doubled, and I passed. LHO bid 1NT, and when this came back to me I competed with 2♠. This may well qualify as the worst bid I have ever made (and all my ex-partners will assure you that this is quite a statement). The result (–300 or whatever) in no way reflected the true gravity of the crime, and I refuse to reveal the entire situation or even the hand.

So on the next hand, when we had a tortured auction to arrive at 3NT, I knew that I had to make it. It wasn't until dummy appeared, though, that I had any concerns. Mine was a good hand for the auction, but the hand turned out to be badly blocked, and the lead destroyed my communications. However, with a few breaks it came home. 'Well done, I thought you were going down,' boomed the voice from across the table. I reached for my cards, wondering whether I had just been insulted.

Revenge was yet to be mine, and once more I faced death, holding:

♠ — ♥ A K x x ♦ A K x x ♣ A K Q x x

While admitting that it is rare to get such hands playing for money, I have to say that when I publish my collection of 'Hands from Hell', two very similar to this will figure prominently.

The auction was simple. Partner preempted with 4♠ in a vain attempt to keep me out, so I raised him to six on my void (first- and second-round controls, after all). Yes, I know all about 4NT and more notrump (how solid is

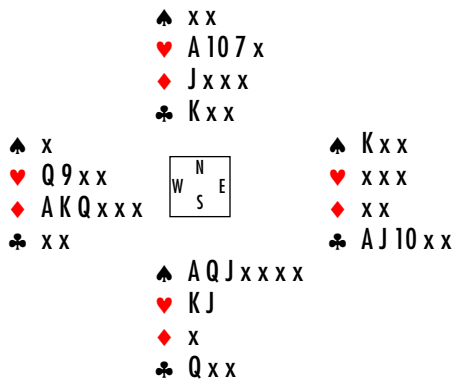
your solid suit, partner?). Take a hike; partner already thinks he has a solid suit! Taken somewhat aback (about three feet from the sound of his chair), partner passed.

He actually had a perfect hand — eight spades to the KQJ10. However, this allowed the defense to beat him by leading a singleton heart and obtaining a ruff when the leader's partner got in with the ace of trumps. Now, in theory, Mr. R. could have made this hand by playing off two top clubs and discarding his last heart before returning to hand to play spades. However, if the opening lead were not in fact a singleton, he might just have set up an uppercut and created a way to go down in a hand that was always cold; he preferred, like any good player, to let the opponents beat him legitimately if they could.

Nevertheless, I got what I wanted. He had to apologize because he could have made it, and we scored +50 to boot (–50 for one down plus 100 for honors). Tactically and strategically, my position for the next hand was unassailable.

I had learned already that a good way to prevent bidding misunderstandings is to open 4♠, so I did this on the next hand, still facing the esteemed counselor. My LHO (for the moment) had played internationally, while RHO was a rising young bridge professional.

Neither vulnerable



Against 4♠, West led the ♦K, and when this held he continued with the ace after some thought.This brought another diamond from East, a spade from me, and a reaction from West. How odd, I thought; this hand seems to hinge on picking up the trumps, but the more I think about it, the more certain I am that RHO has long spades, and almost certainly the ♣A as well. If only the hearts weren't blocked, I might have the entries to pick up spades... This looks like one of those hands where Da Costa's Maxim applies: 'It's hard to defend against a madman.'

Reasoning that the loss of an extra heart trick would cost little, I led the ♥J at Trick 3, with the confident air of someone bent on a successful finesse; West covered. Winning the ace, I continued with a spade, and when the ♠Q

won the trick I was home. The ♠A was followed by the ♥K, and the Great One fixed RHO with a steely gaze. I led the ♣Q, and sat back. RHO gave this some thought (as well he might) and then ducked resignedly. Thrown in with a spade now, he was endplayed in clubs, or had to lead a heart to dummy's ten.

RHO had some choice words for his OHO while we were scoring up the game, but refusing to cover the heart is hardly clear at Trick 3. The real error was West's give-away of the diamond holding and the implication that I was unlikely to have a legitimate play for the hand. My subterfuge in hearts was unlikely to cost, but stood to gain a lot.

But the best part wasn't the profit. The thing I remember best was that for once, Mr. Rutherford truly had nothing to say.

Haig's Blue Ribbon

RAY LEE

Can bridge ever be a true spectator sport? There are times when we think so. Perhaps we'll never quite rival the World Cup or the Stanley Cup final, but bridge can certainly do better than it has up to now. We've been to more than one Vugraph session where the crowd were cheering almost every card – the France-Germany Venice Cup final in Paris, in November 2000, felt like being in a football stadium. The Canadian win in the IOC Teams at Salt Lake City in February, 2002 generated similar excitement among those of us who were there to see it. Read the next piece, and make up your own mind: will you ever see something like this in the sports section?

It was the stuff of story books, a Hollywood ending, as the enthralled VuGraph audience watched Toronto's Haig Tchamitch storm from behind to win North America's premier pairs event, the Blue Ribbon, on the very last board. Let me set the scene.

A field of 302 pairs started the event on Tuesday afternoon, and most of the Canadian entries fell by the wayside at the first cut, after two sessions. Only 120 pairs played on Day 2, and the only Canadians left in serious contention were Tchamitch, playing with pickup partner Adam Wildavsky of Jackson Heights, NY, Geoff Hampson, playing with Mark Molson, and Det Ladewig and Les Amoils, who had had a fine second session. By the second evening, though, the event was down to 52 pairs; Hampson-Molson were 11th, Tchamitch-Wildavsky 29th, and everyone else had been eliminated.

The first final session saw Tchamitch-Wildavsky climb to 12th, two and a half boards out of first, while Hampson-Molson dropped out of contention; leading the field were Brat Packers Brad Moss and Ravindra Murthy, definitely the crowd favorites as the VuGraph show started that evening. The format was to be a crowd-pleaser — every pair played the same boards simultaneously, so that scores could be posted (for the audience, not the players) after each round; and every round, a key match-up was brought to the VuGraph screen.

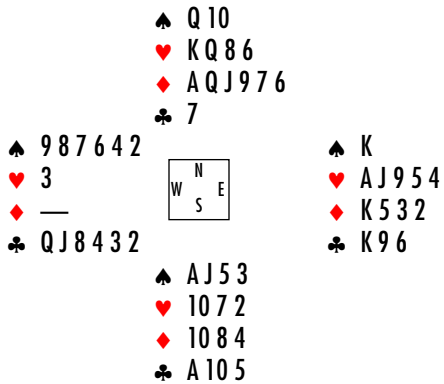
The small Canadian contingent in the audience was rooting for Haig, of course, although it certainly seemed that the deficit was going to be tough to make up, especially with eleven pairs to overtake. It was going to take a big game, and all the top pairs beating up on each other to produce the desired result. The commentators were only mentioning the top pairs, of course, so it was some time before the Canadians got any news.

Moss and Murthy struggled early, getting some good results but being unable to escape a few bad ones too. Nevertheless, they retained the lead, as all the leading pairs ran into even more trouble. The first hint of what was in

store came after round three, when Haig had moved up to seventh, with the rest of the leader board essentially unchanged. By the sixth round Tchamitch-Wildavsky had moved up to third, only one board back of Moss-Murthy. Clearly Haig was having one of 'those' games — but could he sustain it against a world-class field?

In round seven Murthy-Moss were on VuGraph again. The audience gasped as Murthy-Moss bid a slam off two cashable aces in Round 7 — surely this would cost them big-time! But no, somehow this was only an average minus, and while Haig closed the gap somewhat, it still stood at more than half a board, and he was still in third place. Round 9 saw Haig and Adam on VuGraph for the first time ('Who are these guys?' muttered Dave Berkowitz plaintively from the commentary team), and picking up more ground as opponents Mike Passell and Gene Freed stopped in a cautious one notrump on Board 17, and made three — the field bid the game, and 22½ matchpoints out of 25 moved Haig into first place with a 2-point lead!

On Board 20 the audience watched as Matt Granovetter misguessed a jack in a partscore, an event that caused a 17-matchpoint swing and moved his opponents, Allan Hawkins and Jim Foster, into second place, 5 points behind Haig. The leaders were back on VuGraph for Round 11, and faced Canada's 1992 nemesis pair, Brazilians Gabriel Chagas and Marcelo Branco. Board 21 unfolded as follows:



(N-S vulnerable)

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Branco	Wildavsky	Chagas	Tchamitch
	1♦	1♥	dbl
1♠	2♦	pass	3♦
4♣ (!)	pass	pass	dbl
all pass			

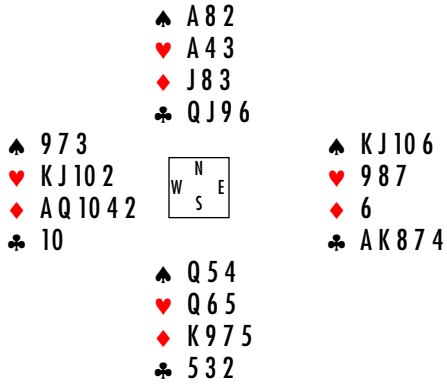
Plus 100 N-S was worth only 8½; had Wildavsky chosen to bid four diamonds, they would have made +130 for 17 matchpoints.

The second board of the set produced no better a result, as Chagas-Branco

bought the hand for two spades; this contract just made, but many North-South pairs received a plus playing in three diamonds or defending a higher-level spade contract. Only 7½ for this one, and Moss-Murthy were back in front again by half a board with just four boards to go.

The next two boards looked innocuous, but the leaders stumbled badly, and going into the last round Tchamitch-Wildavsky had reestablished a lead of 11 matchpoints. Moss and Murthy returned to the VuGraph screen, and, as fate would have it, their opponents were to be Hampson and Molson. After six sessions, the event was going to be decided on two partscore hands, and Geoff and Mark would have the opportunity to do their compatriot a big favor.

On the first hand, Murthy landed in three hearts, a contract that looked headed for down one at least; Molson slipped in a tricky defense, however, and Murthy chalked up +170 — which had to be a huge score. Not knowing how Haig had done on this hand, the audience awaited the last board with the feeling that the event was in the balance.



West	*East*
Hampson	Molson
	1♣
1♦	1♠
1NT	pass

Perhaps sensing a misfit, Hampson rebid a conservative one notrump, and the Canadian cheering section smelt blood — Geoff on play against the leaders in one notrump had to be about as good as it could get! The defense got off to a poor start when Murthy led the six of clubs, which Geoff ran to his ten. A spade went to the jack and the queen, and a small diamond came through, the ten losing to the jack. The eight of diamonds was continued, to the king and ace, and Geoff led another spade. The timing of the defense was getting increasingly difficult, and it was amusing to listen to the VuGraph analysts trying to choose the best line and predict the likely result. The smart Canadian money was on Hampson.

Murthy hopped up with the spade ace, and led back the club nine, in an

at-tempt to disrupt communications. Geoff won the ace, led a heart to the jack, which was allowed to hold, cashed two spades, and led another heart to his ten. The analysts tried to decide whether it was right to duck the ace or take it, but by now it didn't matter; all roads led to nine tricks, and the crowd knew that –150 could not be good for the Americans.

Meanwhile, Haig and Adam were defending three notrump on the same cards, and doing somewhat better. Wildavsky led the diamond three to Haig's king and declarer's ace. Now a spade went to the jack and the queen, while Wildavsky played the eight, a reverse Smith echo suggesting that a diamond continuation would not produce tricks. Not wanting to break a new suit, however, Haig continued with the nine of diamonds, giving the appearance of having started with three.

Declarer won the queen of diamonds, and played another spade to dummy's king. Now he ran the seven of hearts, and when it held continued a heart to the ten. This too won the trick, so declarer now played another spade. Wildavsky won his ace, cashed the jack of diamonds and the ace of hearts, and got out with the club queen to ensure down one, 22 matchpoints, and the Blue Ribbon Pairs title.

In the playing room a throng surrounded the winners, but they were soon whisked off to the Press Room. It was not until the next day that Haig was prepared to talk about the final session. He had no remarkable hands to talk about; 'We got a lot of gifts' was his only comment. Maybe so, but when you score 67.9% against a field of this caliber, under enormous pressure, it takes more than gifts; it takes good play, and consistent good judgment, and above all, it takes discipline.

Close, But No Cigar...

F R E D G I T E L M A N

Now recognized as one of North America's (and indeed the world's) best players, Fred Gitelman has collected medals and championships in many WBF and National competitions. However, when CMP was founded, he was just another promising young player, hoping to make a living out of bridge and bridge software. Fred was one of the magazine's staunchest supporters; no issue ever appeared without an article from him in it. This was one of his earliest pieces, an account of his first experience of the big time that is a remarkably powerful account of the 'agony of defeat'. It was reprinted in the official program for the World Junior Teams Championship in 1997 .

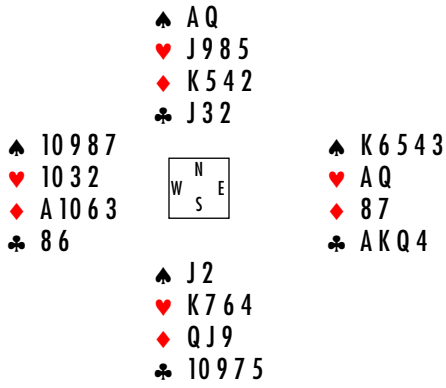
Last August (1991), in Ann Arbor, Michigan, a Canadian team came closer than any other Canadian team before to winning a World Championship. All right, it was a Junior World Championship. Mark Caplan-Eric Sutherland and Geoff Hampson-Fred Gitelman (all of the Toronto area), and Bronia Gmach-Mike Roberts made up the Canadian Junior team. ('Junior' in bridge means 26 and under.) John Carruthers (certainly a junior in spirit) was our non-playing captain.

Twelve teams from all over the world would play a complete round-robin; the four teams with the highest victory point total would advance to the semi-finals where a mini-knockout would decide the winner. Most people favored the three strong European teams, especially since previous North American showings in this event had been extremely poor. We, however, were quietly confident.

Canada won the round-robin while Australia and the two American teams tied for the next three positions. The conditions of contest dictated that we would play the Australians. Canada won 144-91 (the match was actually close most of the way). USA-II slaughtered the favored USA-I team 211-70. It would be Canada and USA-II for the gold medal. (A triumph for the ACBL's Junior Program!) We would enjoy a 7-IMP carryover and play six segments of sixteen boards.

It was to be a close match. The score remained unchanged after the first segment, and USA-II won an IMP in the second segment (Canada now led by 6). The Americans led by 11 IMPs after segment three and by 36 after segment four. Caplan-Sutherland were heroic in the fifth segment to bring us back to within 5 IMPs with 16 boards to go.

In the last session, Geoff and I would face Platnick and Diamond on VuGraph while Bronia and Mike would play Zuckerberg and Katz in the closed room. This was really intense. The first board of the last segment:



West	*North*	*East*	*South*
Diamond	Fred	Platnick	Geoff
	1NT	dbl	2♣
pass	pass	dbl	all pass

My 1NT was 11-14 (I had a minimum), while Geoff's two clubs showed clubs and another suit. Our advanced rescue methods had found the trump suit with the best spot cards! Diamond led a trump. Platnick won this and switched to a diamond. Diamond won the ace and continued the suit. Geoff won and played another trump to Platnick, who now cashed the ace, and exited with his last club. West pitched a heart and a diamond, while Geoff carefully discarded the heart eight from dummy on the fourth round of trumps.

Now Geoff overtook his diamond queen with dummy's king and cashed the long diamond, pitching a spade from his hand. He continued his unblocking by leading the heart nine from the dummy. East won the heart ace and got out the heart queen. Geoff won the king, unblocking the jack, and claimed; +180 while East-West were cold for four spades! 12 IMPs to Canada — we had pulled ahead again. By the way, the defense on this hand was not at all indicative of the level of play in this tournament (especially by Platnick-Diamond).

We scored a partscore on the next board and won a surprise 10 IMPs when Zuckerberg and Katz got too high and went down three vulnerable. We were winning by 17. On the next board I held:

♠ J 10 4 3 ♥ 7 6 5 2 ♦ J 10 7 4 2 ♣ —

The vulnerability was favorable and I was in third seat after two passes. Anyone who knows me at all knows that I would never consider passing with this hand — it was a question of what to open. I eventually decided on two diamonds (Multi, a bad weak two-bid in one of the majors). This could have been dangerous (if they started doubling I would eventually bid three clubs and then redouble for rescue to ensure our best trump fit). As it happened, Platnick and Diamond had a laydown slam and could not cope with the Multi.

They played in 3NT and made six; this looked like a sure vulnerable slam swing. Alas, Bronia and Mike, given a free run, also played 3NT. At this point in our room, however, there was no doubt in my mind that we would win.

But as it turned out, that moment was as close as we got, as close as a Canadian team has ever come to winning a World Championship. The rest of the boards were filled with swings. The Americans played better and they also got the better of the luck. Coming out of the VuGraph room I still thought that we had won, but the faces of our teammates and the supporters who had come to watch us play told another story (they already knew the results). We had lost by 36 IMPs after being up by 17 with twelve boards to play!

Having come so close to the thrill of victory, we were now living the agony of defeat. I have been asked by several people to write an account of this event. Sitting down and doing it has been difficult as the pain has been great; I can still only talk about three of the hands. Some people say that bridge is not a sport, that it lacks the emotion and drama and character that sports evoke. They are wrong.

Ethical, Misguided or Just Plain Stupid?

ROSELYN TEUKOLSKY

Varying from her usual topic of spousal interaction at the bridge table, Ms. Teukolsky here addresses a very important issue. In competition, how far should one ignore the rules 'to be nice'? What responsibility does one have to one's teammates, or in pairs, to the rest of the field, to enforce the letter of the law? What if, like her partner here, you just don't want to win that way?

I would bet that there isn't a bridge freak among us who hasn't had that special experience of landing in a grand slam off three keycards. Here is a true story of how this happened to us, and the drama that followed.

Roman Keycard Blackwood is often an excursion into Lion Country. The hand I describe came up soon after we decided to play Eddie Kantar's treatment in its entirety. (No, Eddie, I'm not blaming you.)

We found ourselves in one of those interesting hybrid events, a Stratified Swiss. In an early match we came up against a Flight C team, who regarded us (and all the Flight A teams, I am sure) with undisguised abject terror. Their entire body language told us that we had already won the match, and this was before a single card had been dealt.

The first six boards were actually quite uneventful at our table, and it seemed to me that the match would probably be decided at our teammates' table. Then, on the final board, with nobody vulnerable, I heard my partner open 1♠. Here is the hand I was looking at:

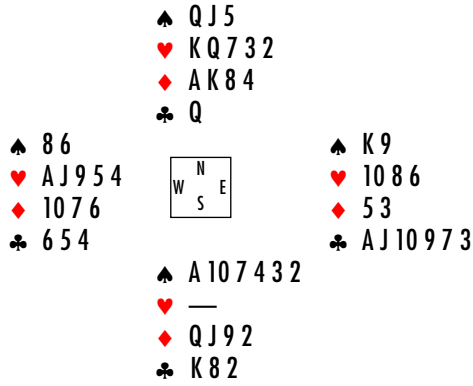
♠ Q J 5 ♥ K Q 7 3 2 ♦ A K 8 4 ♣ Q

Visions of sugar plums danced in my head, and the bidding frolicked along as follows:

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1♠
pass	2♥[1]	pass	2♠
pass	4NT	pass	5♣[2]
pass	5NT	pass	6♣[3]
pass	7♠[4]	all pass	

1. 2/1 game force.
2. 1 or 4 keycards.
3. ♣K.
4. This should be a laydown. I can count 14 tricks off the top. (Don't ask me why I didn't bid 7NT!).

During the auction, both ladies quizzed us minutely on the meaning of the bids. There was much unhappy peering at our convention cards. They squirmed in their seats. Perhaps this should have tipped me off that our explanation of the bids was not consistent with the aces they had in view. When my partner responded 5♣, however, I could not conceive of an opening hand for him that had only one keycard! I had no doubt that he held four. Wrong again.



The lady on my partner's left pursed her lips, sat up straight, shrugged her shoulders, and placed the ♥A on the table.

'Great,' my partner said when he saw the dummy. 'Just terrific.'

He ruffed the opening heart lead, went to dummy with the ♦A and succeeded in drawing trumps with no losers. Despite his irritation with me, he had not failed to notice that he now had a play for this silly hand: if the hearts broke 4-4 he could pitch away all those clubs. As you can see, this was not destined to happen, but a funny thing happened on the way to disaster. South cashed the ♥K, everyone following, and then he called for the ♥Q. His right hand opponent, instead of following suit with the ♥10, dropped the ♣7 onto the table!

'Oops, excuse me — I have a heart,' she then said, apologetically.

'Pick it up and play what you like,' my partner said immediately, almost reflexively. He then proceeded to go one down in this abortive slam.

I am certain that the ladies are to this day unaware that at the point the ♣7 hit the table, my partner had the slam made. According to the laws, the ♣7 should have become a penalty card. Declarer could have called for the ♣Q, forcing East to play the ♣7 (the first legal opportunity to play it), and thus would have won the trick. The club loser would have evaporated. South would have made the slam, and we would have won the match; as it was, we lost by 6 IMPs. While our opponents boogied in the aisles, our teammates gave us a lesson on how to use Blackwood.

Later, at dinner, during the post-mortems that we all love so well, I casually remarked that my partner could have made the slam.

'Nonsense,' said the Expert on our team, 'it has no play.'

When I shared with them how it had had a play at our table, they were absolutely and incredulously speechless.

'You allowed her to what?' they eventually stammered.

This is how my partner explained it. 'After the lady led the ♥A, there was actually a legitimate play for this ridiculous contract. If the hearts had broken 4-4, I would have wrapped it up, swallowed my embarrassment and gone onto the next match. But I couldn't stomach winning a match against novices on a technicality, after we 'experts' had got to an absurd contract using 'scientific' methods.'

The story of this hand made the rounds. Here are some of the comments that were relayed to my partner.

- You are amazingly ethical. You should get the prize for Active Ethics.

- You are amazingly unethical. Rules are rules, and when some people choose to ignore them, it spoils the game for everyone.

- God, you're dumb.

Then there was the comment that was made to me. 'You need to get yourself another partner. How can you play with someone who doesn't want to win?'

What do you think?

BRIDGE PUZZLES

Erwin Brecher's **Hocus Pocus** books have proved that bridge players have a strong interest in logic problems and other kinds of puzzles. Here are some of the best puzzles that appeared in CMP. Enjoy!

Bridge Puzzle

P I P E G

This brilliant puzzle originally appeared in the British publication The Listener, *and is reproduced here by permission.*

The solution appears on page 183.

.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
S													
H													
D													
C													

In the completed diagram, the row S contains the spades held by West, North, East, and South in that order. The cards in each suit held by each player are arranged in descending order. The rows H, D, and C contain the cards of the other suits, similarly arranged.

In the Description of Play that follows, a reference such as 2S-D, must first be replaced by the appropriate word suggested by the context. Suppose the word were HELD. By giving to this word numerical values for its letters (A=1, B=2 .... Z=26), HELD adds up to 29. Hence the first three numbers in column 2 would add up to 29. Across references are given as (for example) H6-9.

The cards 2-10 have their numerical values; J=14, Q=16, K=18, and A=20.

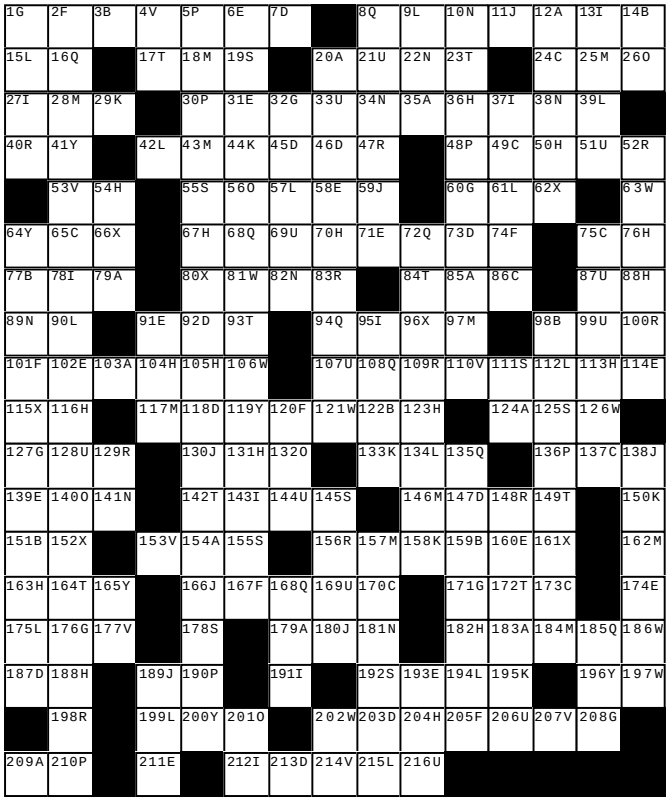
Description of Play

In this bridge 2S-C, West 5S-C and passes and so does North. East, holding good H9-13 in each of the S1-7 suits, bids 12S-C Spade. South bids Two Diamonds and West passes. North raises his partner's D5-7 to Three Diamonds, East passes, South bids Five Diamonds and 13S-C of the others passes. West leads the king of spades, which wins the trick. He then leads the two and the S8-12 is taken by South who ruffs with the six. If the trumps are divided 2-1 the contract is 6S-C, so South leads the ace to 3S-C how the trumps lie. East does 9S-C follow and discards the six of clubs. South now leads the three of clubs to C3-5 North's two top clubs and returns to his hand with a trump 4S-C from dummy. South then leads another club, ruffs it in dummy, gets back to his C8-10 with a heart lead S3-7 to the ace and leads his last club to 10S-C it in dummy. The lead is now from the C4-6 and dummy 11S-C no trumps left. A heart is led, East plays the king which 1S-C him the trick, South playing his last heart — the four. East leads the queen of spades, South ruffs with the queen and sees that he will be 7S-C down, West having the jack of trumps to make.

South D11-12 not allow for a 3-0 D4-13 of trumps. He should have 8S-C North's top clubs before leading a trump, then with his three top trumps he could draw all West's trumps and still have the nine left on the table. He then D2-6 lose only one heart and so would make his contract.

Falsecards

'GRIFFIN'



The solution appears on page 184

A. Duplicate score
_____
20 124 103 35 154 12 209 85 183 179 79

B. Repeat
_____
14 159 122 151 77 3 98

C. Approaches quietly (2 words)
_____
49 137 170 65 24 86 173 75

D. Play hideously? (3 words)
_____
147 118 46 7 213 73 92 187 203 45

E. Larceny by declarer (2 words)
_____
31 160 58 71 91 114 211 139 102 193 6 174

F. One of two
_____
120 2 205 167 101 7

G. Cold _____
32 176 171 208 60 1 127

H. McKenny signals
_____
70 36 105 182 163 54 131 88 76 188 104 204 50 113 123 67 11

I. Representative _____
191 13 212 95 37 143 27 78

J. Mini-preempt (2 words) _____
166 11 138 59 130 180 189

K. Hand hog's partner _____
195 150 158 133 44 29

L. Short-suit calls (2 words)
_____
215 9 112 175 194 39 57 15 61 42 134 90 199

M. Stationary pair (2 words, hyphenated)
_____
28 25 43 146 117 184 162 157 97 18

N. Accepts irregularity _____
10 181 89 38 82 141 34 22

O. Put forth effort _____
132 201 140 56 26

P. Discourage (2 words) _____
190 48 136 5 210 30

Q. Understanding _____
108 135 72 8 68 94 168 16 185

R. ACBL rank (2 words) _____
109 40 100 148 83 198 156 129 47 52

S. Care for (2 words) _____
145 19 155 178 192 55 111 125

T. Precious denture _____
93 149 164 23 172 142 17 84

U. Table talker _____
69 21 99 107 144 216 87 128 51 33 206 169

V. Item no longer seen on bridge tables _____
53 110 4 153 214 207 177

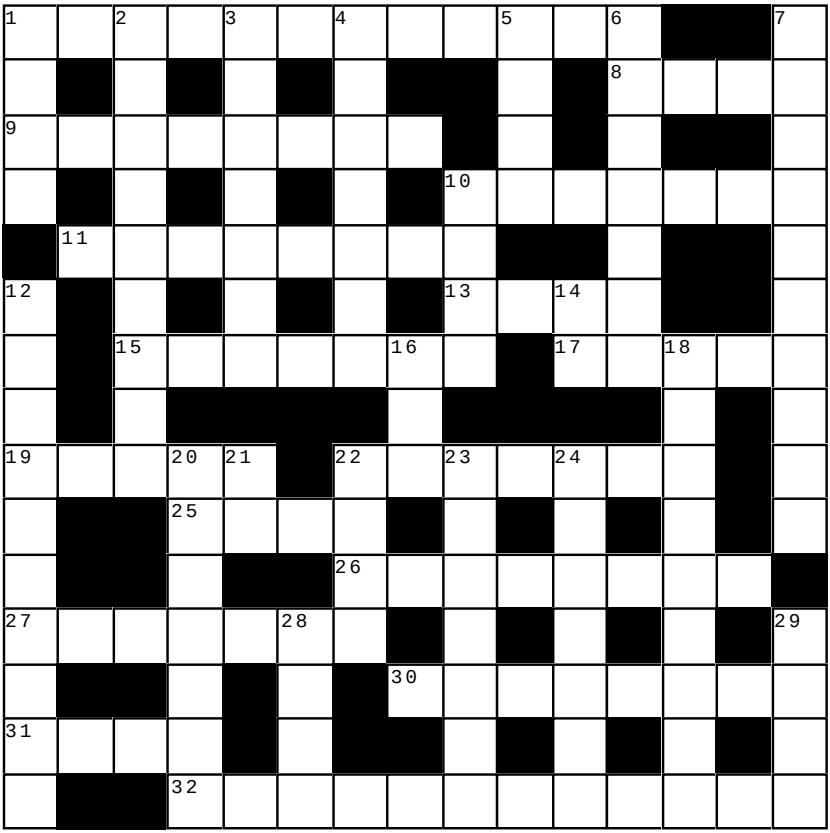
W. Critic _____
197 126 121 202 106 63 186 81

X. Possibly killing? _____
115 161 80 62 66 96 152

Y. Follow suit (2 words) _____
165 64 196 119 200 41

Old Masters

' G R I F F I N '



The four theme answers are the names of four of the first 25 Life Masters. The unchecked letters in the theme words can be arranged to form the phrase ACBL VOLLEY HAS BRASHNESS.

The solution appears on page 185.

ACROSS

1 *Theme.*
8 Sounds like British river will seep through. (4)
9 Costume for the whole cast. (8)
10 Squeeze squeezes correct nuance. (7)
11 Like Kelsey, describes play traditionally left unnamed. (8)
13 Useless as a card can be on defense, unless you need a discard. (4)

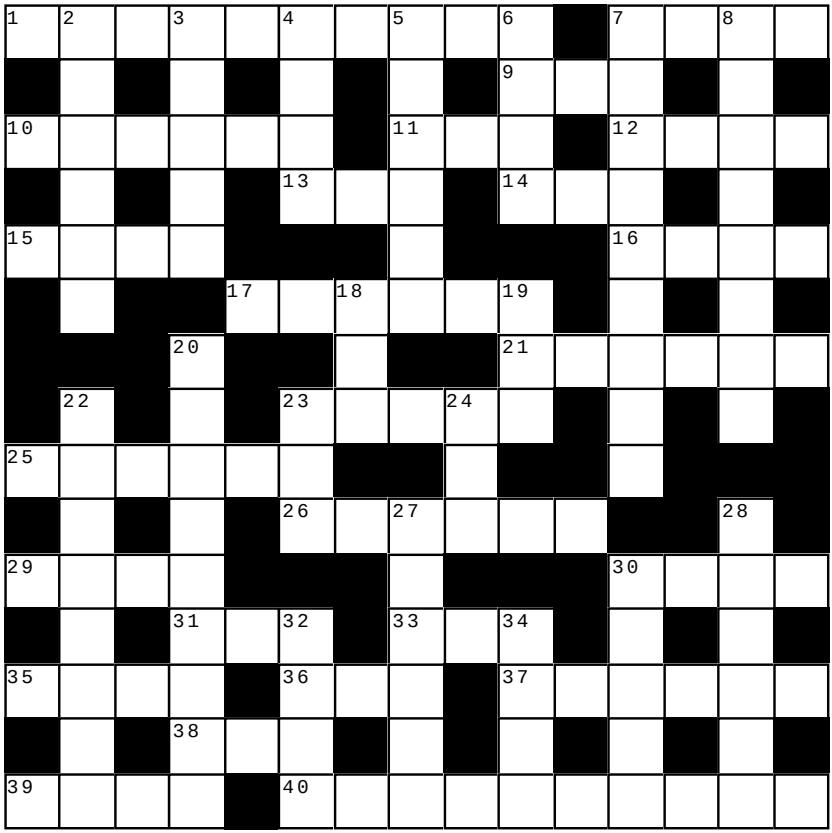
15 What the careful accountant did when uncertain about the bottom line? (5, 2)
17 It takes a long time to become an inspiration for love poetry. (5)
19 In backwards finesse, it's a kind of... finesse. (5)
22 Derives, taking the twos out of the deck, we hear. (7)
25 Used to be held in the Convention Center. (4)
26 Declared but managed to avoid swearing. (8)
27 Disturbed, bothered, and teased. (7)
30 The sun moves in, it's almost complete — but it's not naughty. (7)
31 Party animal drops big money — but shows control. (4)
32 *Theme.*

DOWN

1 Start the bidding with no interference. (4)
2 Scientific method — from B.C.? (4, 5)
3 Bid notrump, for example? Stopper has a hard time. (7)
4 Sounding as frozen as eels can be. (7)
5 Ended a trick too far. (4)
6 Junior monarch is less experienced. (7)
7 *Theme*.
10 Political post for a sadist? (7)
12 *Theme.*
14 Article in French. (2)
16 Practice a form of worship. (3)
18 Upstart forewarns — pay the price! (6, 3)
20 Machine in charge is mechanical. (7)
21 Article in English. (2)
22 Jerry and the band (thank you). (4)
23 Did we hear them remove the obstacle? Not declarer! (7)
24 Can signaling cause an auto crash? Just a minor one. (7)
28 Sounds like a crazy system only Mr. Ed would use! (4)
29 Plot found back in the canal — Panama? (4)

Fill in The Blanks

' G R I F F I N '



THEME: The four unclued words have something in common, which is left to the solver to discern. The eight unchecked letters in the theme words may be rearranged to form the phrase VIP NOT IN.

The solution appears on page 185.

ACROSS

1 Persian poet? Quiet — it's not fair to a star player! (4, 6)
7 Rules? South follows the code. (4)
9 (with 14 ac.) I cover, I hear — that's right. (6)
10 Bid like royalty? (6)
11 Take advantage of practice. (3)
12 First to play? Not even close. (4)

13 When West goes, there's a layer left behind. (3)
14 see 9 across.
15 Get out of bed with the queen, maybe? (4)
16 Throw can be won or lost — it's arguable. (4)
17 Gives us airs out in the country. (6)
21 Get Sid out and about — after all, it's a small apartment. (6)
23 Thrills coming from your foot. (5)
25 Squeeze crustacean out of its shell? (6)
26 Can you be this blind with Juniors? (6)
29 East sat in the wrong direction — and we got letters! (4)
30 *Theme word.*
31 Perhaps the only place you can drink and drive. (3)
33 Posed test initially. (3)
35 Take the plunge at the right colors. (4)
36 There's always regret in true romances. (3)
37 Al's bid is confusing — like his one-liners. (2, 4)
38 Reggie's best innings start his batting achievement. (3)
39 Regretful miss is too confused without a ring. (4)
40 *Theme word.*

DOWN

2 Like a bad suit — but could be several of them. (6)
3 Show support for partner's improved income. (5)
4 *Theme word.*
5 Bullets usually last for two or three deals. (6)
6 A touch of experience. (4)
7 Doubtless defenders wouldn't do this. (4, 5)
8 Without honor; even your lawyer wouldn't recommend continuing this. (4, 4)
18 The Polish winter sports team? (3)
19 The French ace is sitting South, the fool! (3)
20 Idle cards held by French East? On the contrary, they'll play for several tricks. (9)
22 Princess gets tough on her area. (8)
23 *Theme word.*
24 Christopher's stuff when he was small? (3)
27 Hidden, like Pratchett's alma mater. (6)
28 Cry like a baby over a little mistake. (6)
30 Break apart a small bottle. (5)
32 In the corner, I caught a glimpse of Mr. Kokish. (4)
34 The end of the story, we hear. (4)

Hearts — A Logic Puzzle

Six men and their wives gathered for an evening's rubber bridge at the Jones's. The initial setup involved three tables arranged in a row from East to West, and after the cuts for partners and seats there were (as it happened) two men and two women at each table. No man played at the same table as his wife, but Mr. and Mrs. Smith sat facing one another, and so did Mr. and Mrs. Brown. In the play of the first hand of the evening, the hearts held by Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones, Mr. Green, and Mr. White were 10,8,2; Q,5,2; Q,J,10,9,7,6; and A,K,9,8,3 respectively, while Mrs. Thomas held six hearts.

One woman at each table was dummy, and sat facing North. The play, apart from Mrs. White who almost revoked on the second round of hearts, was good. Mrs. White's excuse was that her attention had been distracted by her partner's having just requested a review of the auction. Mrs. Green's partner made a grand slam in hearts.

How were the players seated at each table?

The solution appears on page 186.

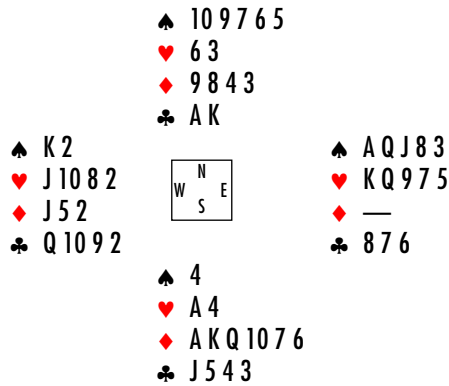
To Puzzle

Solution to Bridge Puzzle

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
S	K	2	10	9	7	6	5	A	Q	J	8	3	4
H	J	10	8	2	6	3	K	Q	9	7	5	A	4
D	J	5	2	9	8	4	3	A	K	Q	10	7	6
C	Q	10	9	2	A	K	8	7	6	J	5	4	3

The missing words are: hand (27), deals (41), cards (45), major (57), one (34), bid (15), each (17), trick (61), safe (31), see (29), not (49), cash (31), lead (22), hand (27), up (37), ruff (51), table (40), has (28), gives (62), one (34), did (17), division (101), played (63), need (28).

The hand diagram:



To Puzzle

Solution — Falsecards

Without exception, the most potent falsecards at bridge occur at trick one when declarer plays from his hand. The most effective falsecards, however, are not the big brazen ones; they are the subtle ones where you play a two instead of a four or a six instead of a three.

Michael Lawrence: Falsecards

A. Matchpoints
B. Iterate
C. Creeps up
D. Hog the hand
E. Alcatraz Coup
F. Either
G. Laydown
H. Lavinthal discards
I. Attorney
J. Weak two
K. Rabbit
L. Exclusion bids
M. North-South
N. Condones
O. Exert
P. Fob off
Q. Agreement
R. Life master
S. See after
T. Eyetooth
U. Coffeehouser
V. Ashtray
W. Reviewer
X. Defense
Y. Show in

Crossword Solutions

Old Masters

To Puzzle

O	S	W	A	L	D	J	A	C	O	B	Y	■	■	H
P	■	E	■	I	■	E	■	■	V	■	O	O	Z	E
E	N	S	E	M	B	L	E	■	E	■	U	■	■	L
N	■	T	■	I	■	L	■	W	R	I	N	K	L	E
■	S	C	O	T	T	I	S	H	■	■	G	■	■	N
A	■	O	■	E	■	E	■	I	D	L	E	■	■	S
L	■	A	D	D	E	D	U	P	■	E	R	A	T	O
V	■	S	■	■	■	■	S	■	■	■	■	N	■	B
I	N	T	R	A	■	D	E	D	U	C	E	S	■	E
N	■	■	O	N	C	E	■	E	■	A	■	W	■	L
L	■	■	B	■	■	A	F	F	I	R	M	E	D	■
A	N	N	O	Y	E	D	■	E	■	D	■	R	■	P
N	■	■	T	■	H	■	U	N	S	I	N	F	U	L
D	O	P	I	■	A	■	■	S	■	N	■	O	■	A
Y	■	■	C	H	A	R	L	E	S	G	O	R	E	N

Fill in the Blanks

To Puzzle

O	M	A	R	S	H	A	R	I	F	■	L	A	W	S
■	I	■	A	■	I	■	O	■	E	Y	E	■	E	■
A	S	K	I	N	G	■	U	S	E	■	A	W	A	Y
■	F	■	S	■	H	E	N	■	L	I	D	■	K	■
R	I	S	E	■	■	■	D	■	■	■	T	O	S	S
■	T	■	■	R	U	S	S	I	A	■	R	■	U	■
■	■	■	J	■	■	K	■	■	S	T	U	D	I	O
■	D	■	O	■	K	I	C	K	S	■	M	■	T	■
W	I	N	K	L	E	■	■	I	■	■	P	■	■	■
■	S	■	E	■	Y	O	U	T	H	S	■	■	B	■
E	T	A	S	■	■	■	N	■	■	■	S	P	O	T
■	R	■	T	E	E	■	S	A	T	■	P	■	O	■
D	I	V	E	■	R	U	E	■	A	D	L	I	B	S
■	C	■	R	B	I	■	E	■	L	■	I	■	O	■
O	T	I	S	■	C	O	N	V	E	N	T	I	O	N

All four theme words make a common phrase with the word ‘card’.

To Puzzle

Solution — Hearts

1. From the heart holdings, it can be seen that:

   W played at the same table as B, T, or J

   S played at the same table as B or T

   J played at the same table as B, T, or W

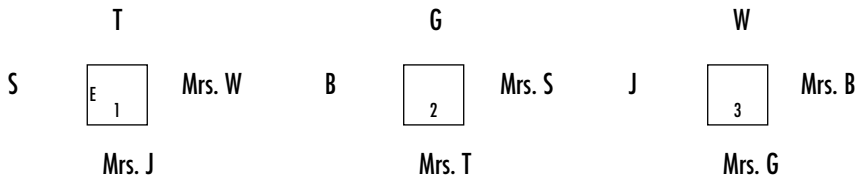
   G played at the same table as B or T

   Hence W and J played at the same table.

2. Since dummy cannot revoke, and cannot ask for a review of the auction, Mrs. W was a defender, and sat E-W. As we know that Mrs. S and Mrs. B also sat E-W (they were facing their husbands), it follows that Mrs. G, Mrs. T, and Mrs. J had the South (dummy) seats. In order for there to be only two women at each table, B and S (E-W, facing their wives) have to be at different tables. Hence S and T played at one table, and B and G at the other.

3. Mrs. T has too many hearts to be at the table with J and W, and did not play with her husband, so she must have played at a table with B and G. Their fourth could not have been Mrs. W, who had at least two hearts, while G and Mrs. T had six each; so the fourth at this table has to have been Mrs. S. The other foursomes were therefore a) S, T, Mrs. J, Mrs. W, and b) J, W, Mrs. B, Mrs. G.

4 As Mrs. G's partner made a grand slam in hearts, her partner must have been W, and J must have been on his right for the trump queen to be onside. Thus the seating was as follows:



GENERAL INTEREST

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- Solve bridge-related puzzles

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RAY & LINDA LEE were the founders and publishers of *Canadian Master Point*, which was Canada's national bridge magazine in the 1990s. Both have had long careers as bridge journalists, and their work has been published in magazines throughout the bridge world as well as in tournament Daily Bulletins at world and national championships.

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