



THE KIBITZER

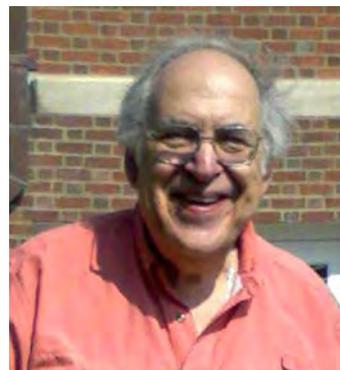
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Gratuitous Bidding

by Harold Feldheim



Preemptive bidding is a complex and stylistic business. Some players believe in the intrinsic soundness of preempts while others view preempts as completely unilateral bids designed to disrupt enemy communication. In the medieval days of competitive bridge, this latter style was the vogue and could lead to different results. This latter style *eclectic preempt* could either provide critical interference with the opponents communication or could be “nailed” for some huge penalty. Another possible path, (a variation of a successful preempt), can drive the opponents to a serendipitous contract which they’d never reach on their own steam, but being there, they must then find a way to make it.

The following hand, from the 1954 national mixed pair championships, was executed by Charles Solomon, a well-known gentleman player of the time. (He was ACBL Life Master #16. – Ed.) And from personal experience, I can testify that he was just as good as all this.

Dealer: West

Vulnerability: North/South

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|
| | North | | East |
| | ♠ A 5 4 | | ♠ K Q J 8 3 |
| | ♥ 2 | | ♥ 7 6 4 |
| | ♦ A K 9 8 7 5 4 | | ♦ 6 3 2 |
| | ♣ J 5 | | ♣ 4 3 |
| West | | South | |
| ♠ 9 | | ♠ 10 7 6 2 | |
| ♥ 9 5 3 | | ♥ A K Q J 10 8 | |
| ♦ Q J 10 | | ♦ - - - | |
| ♣ A 10 9 8 7 6 | | ♣ K Q 2 | |

| | | | |
|-------|----------|-------|------|
| South | West | North | East |
| - | 3♣ | 3♦ | 3♠ |
| 5♥ | Pass | 6♦ | Pass |
| 6♥ | All Pass | | |

The Bidding: West’s 3♣ opening was a bit *outré* by modern standards, but in the ‘50s, favorable vulnerability was an excuse for many auctioneering excesses. After North’s 3♦, a pass by East would have elicited 3♥ (forcing) from South and the final contract would have no doubt been 4♥. But East’s somewhat irresponsible 3♠ put South in a quandary. He felt his hand was too good to bid a mere 4♥ but had no conventional way to describe it (a cue bid would denote diamond support). He settled on jumping to 5♥ asking his partner (Peggy Solomon) to *do something intelligent*. She quite reasonably rebid her seven card diamond suit, corrected to 6♥ by Charlie, ending the auction.

The Play: West led his singleton spade. Against any other lead (except for the ♣A followed by a spade switch), the contract would be easy. After drawing trump he’d be able to establish dummy’s diamonds with one ruff and reenter dummy with the ♠A. However, the spade lead was most inconvenient. If the auction was believable, the lead looked very much like a singleton, forcing declarer to rise with the Ace. Now, even if he could establish dummy’s diamonds, he had no clear entry back to enjoy them.

Prospects looked grim. And yet, based on the bidding there is a first-rate try to make the slam. Do you see it? Give yourself a moment.

The bidding suggested a possible lie of the cards and indeed this would be the only distribution with which the hand could be made. Winning the ♠A, declarer played ♦AK, discarding the ♣K and ♣Q! He then led another diamond from dummy trumping with the ♥A. When the diamond suit split 3-3, he was home free. After drawing trump, he administered the *coup de grâce* by

leading his remaining club toward the dummy. Because of Mr. Solomon’s farseeing club discards, West was checkmated. If he played the Ace, he had nothing but clubs and would have to lead to the dummy. And of course, if he ducked, the ♠J provided the necessary entry to enjoy the now established diamonds. We freely admit that this slam was significantly anti-percentage (starting with 36% for the 3 – 3 split). But true experts are those who, when lady luck chooses to smile on them, can capitalize.



MILESTONES AND CONGRATULATIONS

New Life Masters

- Kris Freres
- Garson Heller Jr.
- Susan Nix
- Mario Sa Couto
- Jackie Scott
- Dorothea Sullivan

Gold Life Master (2500 MP's)

- Virginia Naugler
- Nancy Starr

Silver Life Master (1000 MP's)

- Jill Fouad
- Peter Katz
- Carl Palmer
- Edgar Ramspeck
- Barbara Thompson

Bronze Life Master (500 MP's)

- Renee Janow

From the CBA President

The article below is a reprint (with permission) from the *Daily Bulletin* distributed at the recent National Tournament in Phoenix. The article explains the terms used to describe the events and the awards that we all encounter at all tournaments. I hope you find it useful.

Esther Watstein
President, CBA

Tournament Terminology 101

If you're confused by the terms used to describe the different types of bridge events played at clubs and tournaments, you're not alone. Here's a list of common bridge events with explanations.

Knockout Teams: an event in which a team (of four, five or six players, with four playing at a time) plays another team. The losers are eliminated or "knocked out" while the winners play other winners until only one winning team remains. The length of a KO match may vary from a single session to a full day (the Vanderbilt and Spingold) to a multi-day event (the Bermuda Bowl).

Bracketed Knockout Teams: a KO event in which teams are divided into groups, usually of 8, 16 or 32 teams, based on their masterpoint holdings. The top group (Bracket I) and all other groups compete in a separate event with their own set of winners.

Compact Knockout Teams: a shorter version of Bracketed KO teams.

Swiss Teams: an event in which a team (of four, five or six players, with four playing at a time) plays other teams in seven-, eight- or nine-board matches. Team A sits North-South at Table 1 and East-West at Table 2 while Team B sits East-West at Table 1 and North-South at Table 2. The results are compared and scored by International Match Points (IMPs). Pairings for the first round are random. Pairings for succeeding rounds are determined by a team's win-loss record or Victory Point total.

International Match Points (IMPs): the most common method of scoring Swiss Team matches. Scoring example: if Team A scores plus 620 for bidding and making 4♠ on a particular deal and Team B scores only plus 170 (they didn't bid the game), the difference is 450, which converts to 10 IMPs. The IMP chart is shown on the inside of your

convention card.

Victory Points (VPs): a method of scoring Swiss Team matches. After the scores are compared and converted to IMPs, the IMP total is converted to Victory Points. A team's VP total may be used to determine its next opponents and its final standing.

Side Game Series: a series of single-session pair games that pay red points. These series include at least three sessions and may have as many as six. You may play in as many sessions as you like, but only pairs who play in at least two sessions are eligible for overall gold points. Your best two sessions are used for determining overall winners.

Flighted pairs: When flighting is used, the field is divided by expertise or experience or both into several separate games. Flight A ("unlimited masterpoints") will be open to all players while the remaining flights will be limited. Flight B might be 0-500 MPs or 0-1000 MPs while Flight C might be 0-300 or 0-500. Each flight is scored individually, and masterpoint awards are made for each flight. The masterpoint holdings of the players determine their flight. If one player is quite expert while his partner is new to the game, the pair must compete in Flight A.

In flighted events, you may play up but not down. That means you may play in Flight A or Flight B even if your masterpoint holding qualifies you for Flight C. Conversely, you may not play in Flight B or Flight C if you are a Flight A player.

Stratified Pairs: The idea is to compete against everyone but to be ranked only with your peers. Each pair is assigned a stratum or "strat" based on the masterpoint holding of the partner with more masterpoints.

Example: A = 1000+ masterpoints; B = 300-1000; C = 0-300.

Thus, the most experienced players are placed in Strat A, intermediate players in Strat B and less experienced players in Strat C. Masterpoints are awarded for placings in all strats but gold points are awarded only in A and B. The game proceeds normally; the difference comes when the scores are tabulated and ranked. In a three-strat game, the scores are ranked three times. The first ranking is done as in a regular open game. These

are the Strat A results. If a B or C pair does well in this ranking, they receive full credit for that performance. It is not all that uncommon for a Strat C pair to place first overall, and they receive the full masterpoint award for that game. **Note:** A pair is eligible for only one set of masterpoint awards and automatically receives the highest award.

The second ranking compares the scores of only the B and C pairs: The scores of the Strat A pairs are eliminated. Once again, if a C pair does well, they receive points for their finishing position in the Strat B results.

The third and final ranking compares the scores of only the C pairs: All the scores of the Strat A and B pairs are eliminated.

Strati-Flighted Pairs: The top group plays in a game of their own -- Flight A. The rest of the field is divided into strats and plays as in a regular stratified pairs. There can even be stratification within Flight A. Flight A may be listed as 3000+ MPs while Flight X may be listed as 0-3000 MPs.

Masterpoints: the unit which measures bridge achievement in competition. Masterpoints are awarded at ACBL clubs and tournaments in amounts proportional to the size and classification of the event and the rating of the club or tournament.

Black points: awarded at club games. Some special club games award red, gold or silver points.

Red points: awarded for section placements at regional tournaments and NABCs. Also awarded at clubs for special events such as the qualifying rounds of the North American Open Pairs and the Grand National Teams.

Silver points: awarded for sectional firsts and overall placing at sectional tournaments. Also awarded at Sectional Tournaments at Clubs (StaC).

Gold points: awarded for section firsts and overall placing in regionally rated events that have no upper masterpoint restrictions. One gold point is awarded to section winners in the annual ACBL Instant Matchpoint Game in sections of seven or more tables.

In addition, new players may now win gold points in their own NABC events:

continued on next page



Alert! We Play Flannery Two Diamonds

by Gloria Sieron

Flannery describes a hand with five hearts, four spades and 11-15 High Card Points. It was developed by William Flannery when he found this pattern difficult to communicate in the Standard American five-card major style of bidding most of us favor.

As with most conventions, there are numerous variations of Flannery. Make sure you and your partner are playing the same version! You should also be sure you understand the meanings of the various responses and continuation after a Flannery bid as well as how you will handle interference by the opponents.

North/South were playing Flannery when this hand came up.

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| | North | | East |
| | ♠ Q 10 7 4 | | ♠ A 9 5 |
| | ♥ A J 9 8 2 | | ♥ K 10 |
| | ♦ - - - | | ♦ A J 10 9 7 3 |
| | ♣ K Q 6 5 | | ♣ 7 3 |
| West | | South | |
| ♠ 8 6 3 | | ♠ K J 2 | |
| ♥ Q 5 4 3 | | ♥ 7 6 | |
| ♦ K Q 5 2 | | ♦ 8 6 4 | |
| ♣ J 10 | | ♣ A 9 8 4 2 | |

With South as Dealer, the bidding was Pass, Pass. North opened the auction with the Flannery Two Diamond bid. South says "Alert" at this point and explains the bid only if asked by the opponent. East now overcalls 2♦ with a bid of 3♦.

South has only two hearts, only three spades and only eight points. Not enough to participate at the three level. West passes and North chose to pass.

But should North reopen the bidding with double? With a void in the opponents suit, North holds a five-loser hand, enough to compete at the three level. If East had opened 3♦ in first position and it was passed around to North, wouldn't North reopen with a double? Perhaps South might leave the double in with a strong diamond holding. North/South can make game in clubs and three-level partials in either major.

(North has a clear re-opening double. This is hardly a minimum Flannery hand! I'm not sure where the bidding will go from there, but even a 4♣ contract is likely to be a better result than letting the opponents play 3♦. - Ed.)



From the President *continued*

1.50 gold in the National 199er Pairs at the Summer NABC and 1.00 gold in the National 99er Pairs at the Fall NABC (the remainder of the award is in red points).

A major source of gold points is the bracketed knockout teams. The overall awards for the top brackets are all gold while the lower brackets may receive a percentage of gold points and the remainder in red points.

Platinum points: awarded for NABC+ events. Gold points are also awarded for sectional firsts and overall placing in regional events of two or more sessions that have a masterpoint limit of 750 or more points.

Barry Crane Top 500 race: This trophy is presented to the ACBL player who wins the most masterpoints during a calendar year.

Mini-McKenney races: In 1974 the ACBL Board of Directors voted to recognize masterpoint achievements among player below the rank of Life Master. The Bridge Bulletin recognizes

leaders ACBL-wide. At the unit level, winners in each category receive recognition and special medallions. created in 1984 to recognize achievement at the club level. Winners are recognized at the unit level as well as ACBL-wide.

Points won only at the club level (excluding the North American Open Pairs, the Grand National Teams and Sectional Tournaments at Clubs) are counted in these races.

Masterpoint races: ACBL recognizes the players who win the most masterpoints in their categories during the calendar year. The categories include Life Master, Bronze LM, Silver LM, Gold LM, Diamond LM, Emerald LM, Platinum LM, Grand LM, Youth, Junior, Sectional (points won only at sectional tournaments during the year), Senior, Online and Richmond Trophy.

These are the various categories and the requirements for each category at the beginning of a calendar year:

- 0-5 masterpoints
- 5-20 points

- 20-50 points
- 50-100 points
- 100-200 points
- 200-300 points
- 300-500 points
- 500-1000 points
- 1000-2500 points
- 2500-5000 points
- 5000-7500 points
- 7500-10,000 points

10,000 or more points Youth: age 19 and younger Junior: age 25 and younger

Sectional: points won only at sectional tournaments

Senior: 55+ years, points won only in Senior events

Online: points won in online (computer) play

Richmond Trophy: awarded to the Canadian Bridge Federation member who wins the most points in a calendar year.

Thank you to the ACBL Bulletin for allowing us to reprint this article from the *Phoenix Daily Bulletin*.



Six Four, Bid More

by Geoff Brod



It's Monday morning and once more you find yourself at the local duplicate game. Things have been sort of up and down all morning, but on balance you've picked up more than you've lost. Towards the end of the session, you pick up at all red:

♠K108542 ♥--- ♦764 ♣K1075

The bidding goes 1NT (15-17) by RHO. Over to you. What's your call?

You should bid. In general intervention, over a strong NT should be viewed as trying to make life difficult for the opponents. Most of the time you will not have a game so your efforts should be focused on competing for the part score and disrupting the opponent's auction. In contrast to bidding at the two level on a non-jump basis over an opening bid of one in a suit where you should have something that looks like an opening bid, the rules for competing over their strong NT are far more liberal. Here anytime you have decent distribution and a couple of cards you should strain to get into the auction. In particular while a two level overcall of a strong NT can be a good hand (almost no one plays penalty doubles of strong NTs anymore) it can also be well under opening bid strength. Many times, as here, it can simply look like a weak jump overcall of an opening one bid.

Bidding on this hand has a lot going for it. For openers you could be cold for 4♠ if you catch partner with support and a good mesh (more on this later). Secondly it disrupts the opponent's auction and forces them to deal with intervention. This will almost invariably create problems for which they will be less well prepared. You have the shape, a couple of good looking cards in your two long suits, a void and a partner who knows you like to bid in this situation. Do it.

Unaccountably you have a fit of conservatism and pass (partner will not let this go unnoted when you discuss the hands later).

The auction continues with you and partner silent:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-----------------|----------|
| South | West | North | East |
| 1NT | Pass | 2♦ ¹ | Pass |
| 3♥ | Pass | 4♦ | Pass |
| 4♠ | Pass | 4NT | Pass |
| 5♠ | Pass | 6NT | All Pass |

¹ Transfer to hearts

It's your lead. Of course you ask a couple of questions about what's going on. 3♥ was a super-accept showing extras and

a good hand for hearts probably with 4-card support. 4♦ however was somewhat confused. In theory it should say I'm glad you have a good hand for hearts and I'm interested in slam and I have a diamond control. In actuality it turns out that your LHO didn't think that hearts were agreed and was showing a second suit. 4♠ was described as a cue bid, 4NT was keycard and 5♠ showed two keycards and the ♥Q. Over 5♠ your LHO seemed somewhat puzzled and finally bid 6NT. In light of the misunderstanding that has been revealed by your questions, it is apparent that dummy is going to hit with five hearts and a diamond suit of either four or five cards.

There are two strong indications that you should lead a club. First is the 4♠ spade cue bid. It means that partner will not have the Ace and that the best you can hope for there is the Queen. Second, over 3♥, LHO bid 4♦. Admittedly, while it turns out that this was not the cue bid it probably should have been, it does suggest that a club might be good for your side. This is, after all, an auction where the opponents could be off a cashing AK in a suit and if that is the case the likely suspect is clubs.

Unaccountably you, fearful of leading into the strong NT from either of your kings, lead a diamond (yes, partner will speak to you later about this). The dummy hits:

♠ 3
♥ A J 10 8 4
♦ A Q 10 8 3
♣ 8 2

♠ K 10 8 5 4 2
♥ ---
♦ 7 6 4
♣ K 10 7 5

The play goes quickly. Declarer wins the diamond lead cheaply in hand and rattles off five heart tricks. Partner follows four times before finally discarding the ♣6. Now this is something of an advanced concept but it's important and has application in a wide variety of situations. Partner's count in the heart suit is totally irrelevant here so his heart cards should be suit preference. If all his heart plays are up the line he has something good in clubs. If, on the other hand, he starts with his highest heart and follows down the line then he has something good in spades. Something other than a straight up or down would suggest indecision or no preference. Here pard makes it easy for you by playing

all four of his hearts up the line strongly suggesting clubs. Note that declarer has made it easy for the defense by winning the diamond lead cheaply in hand thus taking diamonds out of any suit preference consideration.

Now declarer takes his remaining four diamonds as partner completes an echo in clubs. Nothing could be clearer. In the 3-card ending you grimly hang on to the ♠K10 and the ♣K. With a resigned air declarer finesses the ♠Q losing to your King. You lead your club to partner's Ace and he cashes another club for down two.

Let's change your hand slightly and give you the ♣A in lieu of the King. Still you lead a diamond. The three-card ending will look like this with your hand yet to discard:

| | | |
|--------|-------|-------|
| ♠ K 10 | ♠ 3 | ♠ 9 |
| ♥ --- | ♥ --- | ♥ --- |
| ♦ --- | ♦ --- | ♦ --- |
| ♣ A 10 | ♣ 8 2 | ♣ K J |
| | ♠ A Q | |
| | ♥ --- | |
| | ♦ --- | |
| | ♣ Q | |

Do you see what will happen if you pitch the ♣10 and declarer can somehow read the position? He will lead a club to his Queen and you will have to lead into his spade tenace, making 6NT. If you are playing against a declarer capable of making this play you will have to be on your toes. When the last diamond is led from dummy you must discard the ♣A and retain the ♣10. This shouldn't be that tough. After all partner has given you emphatic suit preference for clubs by his heart plays as well as a positive echo in clubs.

Partner held ♠J97 ♥9532 ♦9 ♣AJ643. On the lie of the cards you are cold for 4♠ holding a mere 12 HCP between the two hands. Were you to get there the opponents would probably take the push to their making 5♥. But, then if you judge well, you can take a save in 5♠. And, if they bid any higher, you have a chance to go plus.





Back from Hiatus

by Brett Adler

You may have been relieved to see my articles missing from the last couple of *Kibitzers*, and the main reason is that I haven't been playing much bridge. I'm hoping to play more bridge in 2014, but I did find a couple of interesting hands recently worth sharing:

Playing two-over-one, you hold:

♠ K 4
♥ K Q J 8
♦ Q 5
♣ 9 8 6 5 2

Your partner, opens 1♠ and you respond 1NT (forcing). Partner rebids 3♥ which is forcing to game, but doesn't guarantee more than a four card heart suit. What would you bid?

When I was at the table, 4♥ was bid and I think this is too conservative. Partner has forced to game and you have fantastic holdings in both of his suits. To bid 4♥ is a signoff (which you would bid with a minimal hand and soft values in the minors).

I think 5♥ is reasonable which in this context should invite slam and shows good hearts, and I also think 6♥ or even 7♥ are reasonable bids. If you decide to bid 4NT which is Roman Keycard for hearts, partner would bid 6♣ which shows an odd number of key cards (presumably three or he wouldn't have a 3♥ rebid), and a club void. Having this information, would you now bid the small slam or the grand?

If you want to be super scientific, you could follow up partner's 6♣ bid with a bid of 6♦ to ask partner if he has something extra in diamonds such as the King, (in which case you can confidently bid a grand slam in hearts). However, if you and partner aren't on the same page, I'd be nervous about this in case partner passes your 6♦ inquiry.

For the record the other hand was:

♠ A Q J 10 9 8
♥ A 5 4 2
♦ A 8 6
♣ - - -

There are six spade tricks, four hearts and one diamond for a total of 11 tricks. Ruffing two clubs in declarer's hand (a dummy reversal), easily has all 13 tricks.

Another recent hand involved counting versus watching the opponent's carding, and I'll present this as a single dummy problem.

♠ Q J 4
♥ Q 9 7 5 3
♦ 8 2
♣ K J 8

Opposite:

♠ 10 9 5 2
♥ A 2
♦ A K Q 4
♣ Q 7 6

You are playing in 3NT (South), and receive the ♦3 lead after an uncontested auction. Opponents were playing natural carding and natural count, so at trick one I decided that West had four diamonds and East had three (the ♦3 had been led and it looks like 4th best as I can see the ♦2).

After winning ♦K, I continued by playing a low spade towards dummy and East topped my ♠Q with the ♠A to return a diamond which I won with the Ace. I played another spade towards the ♠J, and West won the ♠K to play a third diamond. I now cashed my two spade winners as I had unblocked dummy's ♠J on West's ♠K, and East pitched two clubs.

Next I decided to guarantee at least eight tricks by chasing out the ♣A, and when I led a club to North's ♣K, West pitched the ♥4 and East won the Ace and returned a club.

I have seen that West has four spades, a club void, and presumably four diamonds, so he must have a 4-5-4-0 shape, whilst East must therefore have a 2-1-3-7 shape. The key question is, who has the ♥K?

I cash my last club in the South hand, and I'm now down to:

| | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| ♠ --- | ♥ Q97 | ♠ --- |
| ♥ ?? | ♦ --- | ♥ ? |
| ♦ 10 | ♣ --- | ♦ --- |
| ♣ --- | ♣ --- | ♣ 109 |
| ♠ --- | ♥ A2 | ♠ --- |
| ♥ --- | ♦ 4 | ♥ --- |
| ♦ --- | ♣ --- | ♦ --- |
| ♣ --- | ♣ --- | ♣ --- |

If East has a singleton ♥K, I can make the balance of the tricks by cashing the Ace. If West has the King, I can play my last diamond to his ten, and he will be end played to lead away from the King. This is where I had to start reviewing the whole hand as, if I just looked at the heart suit in isolation, West had five chances to hold the King whereas East only had one chance.

After thinking a while I got it right and cashed the Ace (asking East politely to play his King which he did, but then he clutched his cards closer to his chest as I claimed ten tricks and all the match points). My logic was that West's first discard had been a low heart (discouraging), and when East had won the ♣A, he hadn't returned a heart which would have been logical if he had any singleton heart which wasn't the King.

If I had been wrong and the distributions originally were West with a 4-6-3-0 and East with a 2-0-4-7, playing the Ace and my small heart towards the Queen would still guarantee me nine tricks, (West would win the King, but would then have to lead a heart to the Queen at trick thirteen).

It is a while since my last article so I'll sneak in one more story:

Playing a Saturday afternoon club game you hear the opponent on your left open 1♣, and the opponent on your right respond 2NT. The opponent on your left then jumps to 6NT, which ends the auction.

It doesn't matter what you lead because the declarer has an Ace to lose and seems to take about five finesses which all work so they wrap up 12 tricks for all the match points. "Why did you jump to 6NT" I asked dummy at the end of the hand as he only had 13 points opposite declarer's 12 points. Even weeks later I am still chuckling at the response:

"My partner opened 2NT and with 13 points I had to bid a small slam!"

It took a while for him to realize that he had opened the bidding himself and the 2NT from partner was a response showing 11-12 points and not a 2NT opener showing 20-21 points. Oh well, bridge is like that some days.



Can't Cost Method – Chapter 38

by John Stiefel



In this deal from a recent National Open Pairs, South found three “can’t cost” plays to bring home a game contract for a fine match-point score.

Dealer: South

Vulnerability: East/West

The North hand (dummy) was

♠ A J 6 5
♥ 9 8 7 6
♦ J
♣ A J 9 4

The South hand was

♠ Q 9 8 4 2
♥ A 5 3
♦ A K 7
♣ 7 6

| | | | |
|-------|----------|-------|------|
| South | West | North | East |
| 1♠ | Dbl | 4♦ | Dbl |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

Opening Lead: ♦10

A few notes about the bidding. North’s 4♦ splinter bid was a “classic;” i.e. 4-card trump support, shortness in diamonds and 10-13 high-card points (with a singleton) or 8-11 (with a void). East’s double presumably asked for a diamond lead, as the vulnerability seemed to rule out competing to an 11-trick contract when North/South were showing game-going values based on high cards. South’s “immediate return to suit” was the weakest bid he could make, and that was appropriate given his duplication of values in diamonds.

At any rate, West’s ♦10 lead was covered by dummy’s Jack, East’s Queen and Declarer’s Ace.

Faced with four possible losers, a trump, two hearts and a club, declarer gave a lot of thought to his play at trick 2. He finally decided that West might have the trump King for his vulnerable takeout double, so he led the ♠2 at trick 2 to West’s 10, North’s Jack and East’s King. Back came the ♥K and South made his first “Can’t Cost” play by ducking. West encouraged with the two (upside down

attitude) and East continued with the ♥4, South’s Ace winning trick 4 and West following with the 10.

South ruffed his ♦7 in dummy at trick 5 and then drew the remaining trumps in two rounds, East following suit and West discarding a club and a diamond.

South now led a fourth round of trump and the ♦K (“Can’t Cost”) to tricks 8 and 9, West discarding another club on the trump and following to the ♦K and East playing diamonds to both of these tricks. This was the position after nine tricks were played:

| | | | |
|---------|---------|----------|--|
| | North | | |
| | ♠ - - - | | |
| | ♥ 9 8 | | |
| | ♦ - - - | | |
| | ♣ A J | | |
| West | | East | |
| ♠ - - - | | ♠ - - - | |
| ♥ Q J | | ♥ - - - | |
| ♦ - - - | | ♦ 8 | |
| ♣ K Q | | ♣ 10 8 5 | |
| | South | | |
| | ♠ 4 | | |
| | ♥ 5 | | |
| | ♦ - - - | | |
| | ♣ 7 6 | | |

It looked like South might be down at this point, but look what happened when South led his ♠4 to trick 10 (his third “Can’t Cost” play). West was stuck for a discard! Discarding a club honor would set up dummy’s Jack of Clubs for the 10th trick, so he discarded the ♥J. That was no better, however, because South countered by discarding dummy’s ♣J and leading his ♥5 to set up dummy’s ♥9 for the 10th trick.

Note that South would go down if he led a heart or club to trick 10 before leading his last trump.

A couple more observations.

- Note that West’s vulnerable takeout double was based on ♠10 ♥QJ102 ♦10943 ♣KQ108. I think this is too light, even at match-points and, at the table, it helped steer South to the winning line of play.

- I also don’t approve of East’s double of North’s splinter 4♦ bid holding ♠K72 ♥K4 ♦Q8652 ♣532. (Have you discussed with your partner what a double of a splinter bid means? Are you just suggesting a lead, or do you want your partner to consider a sacrifice?) The bid makes no sense as a suggestion of a sacrifice (at unfavorable vulnerability when opponents have most of the high cards) and it also makes no sense to suggest a diamond lead instead of a heart. (Note that, without the double, West was likely to have led the ♥Q, which would have set the contract. Careful defense is required. East has play the ♥K, continue hearts when South ducks and then, upon winning the ♠K, shift to a **club**. Otherwise, South can reach the same 4-card ending described above.)
- South might have led a club at trick 2 toward his AJ, as North’s takeout double, light as it was, would seem to suggest possession of both the ♣K and ♣Q. The problem with this play, however, is that South is pretty much committed to ducking if West plays an honor (planning to finesse on the second round of the suit), but an expert West might play the King or Queen from a holding like K10x, K10xx, Q10x or Q10xx, and this would not work out well for South.
- “Deep thought” people will recognize this position as a “squeeze without the count” or, as written in the Clyde Love book on squeezes, a “delayed duck” squeeze. Unlike most simple or double squeezes, which operate when declarer has one loser, the “delayed duck” squeeze operates when declarer has two losers (as here). Then one trick is lost after the squeeze operates.



Wee Burn News



Betty McCoy, 100 years

Pictured is Betty McCoy at her 100th birthday party which she celebrated on November 2, 2013. She has been a member of the Wee Burn Duplicate Bridge Club in Darien since its inception in 1965. The ACBL lists her as a "Bronze (not Life) Master" for the masterpoints she has accumulated. Still a good player and a worthy opponent we wish her continued success.

The following players did well in the Fall Series:

1. Janet Soskin–Sue Kipp
2. Penny Glassmeyer–Susan Mayo
3. Linda Cleveland–Karen Barrett
4. Mary Beach–Ann Towne
- 5/6. Mary Richardson–Betty Hodgman
Kathie Rowland–Audrey Cadwallader

Twenty one tables were in attendance for our December Charity Game. Overall winners were Kathie Rowland, and Audrey Cadwallader.

Twelve tables participated in the December Swiss Team event which was won by Linda Cleveland, Karen Barrett, Susan Mayo, and Doug Thompson.

Darien Country Club

The Country Club of Darien's fall series winners are:

1. Meredith Dunne–Joan Bergen
2. Ann Piper–Sue Kipp
3. Rhea Bischoff–Liliana Geldmacher

Woodway DBC

Winners of the Fall Series are:

1. Karren Barrett–Susan Mayo
2. Betty Hodgman–Linda Cleveland
3. Martha Hathaway–Mollie Morgan
4. Janet Soskin–Mary Richardson

Club Championship winners are Karen Barrett and Susan Mayo

Karen and Susan also had two great games:

- Oct. 30th 73.51%
- Dec. 11th 73.15%

Bridge Forum (Hamden)

For the first time, Louise Wood swept Player-of-the-Year for both Tuesday and Friday.

TUESDAY

Three players had their consistency scores lowered because they played less often than the once-monthly minimum divisor. Had they all played one more time, Brian Lewis would have been Player-of-the-Year ahead of Louise. Fredda Kelly, Rita Brieger and Harold Miller finished third through fifth; the late Robert Klopp was thirteenth. Rita and Harold were also the top pair by a wide margin over Brian Lewis-Bill Reich, with Hill Auerbach-Tracy Selmon third. Linda Bradford-Hara Dobyms, in ninth place, were the top women's pair.

Van Dyke Cup: In an unusually up-to-form competition, no non-Life Master made it into the top ten. We were then treated to an excellent battle in the final between Louise Wood, Jon Ingersoll and Rita Brieger. Halfway through the final game, Jon led Louise by 1.17 matchpoints and Rita by 1.33 on a 5 top. Louise entered the last round with the lead and posted a solid finish. Opposing Jon, Rita needed 16 of 20 matchpoints for the round and got them when Harold put her into a shaky slam that found a good layout and Jon went down in a slam Louise missed. This was Rita's first cup win.

FRIDAY

With two weeks to go, Louise Wood or Stan Augenstein were going to be Player-of-the-Year. Louise closed well while the Augensteins had to console themselves with a record-setting year as leading pair, more than doubling the score of Rita Brieger-Aniko Richheimer, who pipped Harold Miller-Burt Saxon for second. Marie Strickland was half of three pairs in the top fifteen: eleventh with Joe Pagerino, twelfth with Phoebe Edwards and fourteenth with Barbara Sloan.

Reynolds Cup: Twelve years ago, Norma Augenstein almost won this cup, but couldn't quite overcome a huge carryover lead. This year, she had the big lead after the Augensteins had a big month in October, and was never threatened by Carl Yohans, who finished third behind Stan.

TUESDAY/FRIDAY COMBINED

Overall Player-of-the-Year: Louise Wood was able to reclaim the title from Harold Miller by staying in the top ten all autumn. Rita Brieger reduced Louise's lead by two-thirds and finished second, just holding off Harold Miller. Vera Wardlaw had a strong autumn to finish fourth, while Fredda Kelly passed Bob Hawes for fifth place on the last game of the year.

Memory Bowl: Rita Brieger built up a good lead early, with Harold Miller moving into second late in November. Their scores stayed flat in December, but nobody caught them. Vera Wardlaw and Larry Stern were within reach, but didn't close well, while Hara Dobyms moved up from 18th to third.

FINAL YEARLY STATISTICS

Success rate for: small slams, 68.20%; grand slams, 60.91%; doubles, 72.65%; redoubles, 40%.

Harold Miller-Rita Brieger bid and made five grand slams, while the Augensteins, the Selmons, Breta Adams-Karlene Wood and George Levinson-Lucy Lacava bid and made three. Harold had seven grand slams total. The late Robert Klopp bid and made six with four different partners.

We had 169 pass-outs, on which fourth hand scored 50.37%. George Levinson traded the grand slam title for the pass-out title, with Joe Pagerino second and Vera Wardlaw third.

George Levinson defeated Karlene Wood 50.82%-45.72% in the Slam Challenge, tabulating their scores on boards with which anyone with their cards bid slam

Rosemarie Tilney became our first official Bad Card Holder, averaging only 9.94 HCP per hand for the year after a bad run of cards in summer.

Fifteen players played at least once a month without ever having a late board. Simon Rich set a new record in this category, playing 51 times. Rick Hall and Jean Pyne tied for second at 31.

MEMORY BOWL HAND

The 2013 Champion's Honoree for the Memory Bowl was BERNIE LIPMAN. If it were possible to select the recipients of one's errors, almost anyone making a catastrophic revoke would choose to do so against Bernie. Bernie began playing with Herman Jacobs because their wives, Muriel and Estelle, were a regular partnership. Bernie then went on to long-running Friday partnerships with Marcel Bratu and Roz Straus and his most successful partnership on Tuesday with Helen Molloy.

While Bernie was Muriel's least favorite opponent due to his getting too many undeserved top boards against her, Muriel got a proper revenge. Bernie's best game ever was a score of 70% exactly with Roz – a game won by Muriel with a score of 75%. As an example of Bernie in action, he once confounded a pair from Yale (who were later on opposing teams in the ACBL Collegiate Championship finals) by raising Roz's 1♠ opening bid to 5♠, after which both opponents spent the next three minutes thinking of possible ingenious meanings the sequence might have had and suspecting that their questions were being dodged while Bernie and Roz could hardly make sense of what was being asked.

In memory of the hand on which Bernie and Helen got a top board when Bernie was the only player in the room to bid 6♠ because he held six-card support to the Ace (which turned out to be the ♣A), I present a slight variation of a hand that was actually played last year in Cromwell:

IN MEMORIAM

Connecticut residents as listed in the
ACBL Bridge Bulletin

Audrey Bell, Darien, CT
Robert L. Klopp, New Haven, CT

Dealer: South
Vulnerability: Both

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| | North | | East |
| | ♠ A 7 4 3 | | ♠ 10 9 |
| | ♥ A Q J 5 | | ♥ 8 4 |
| | ♦ K 10 5 2 | | ♦ J 9 6 3 |
| | ♣ A | | ♣ K Q 8 6 4 |
| West | | South | |
| ♠ 8 6 2 | | ♠ K Q J 5 | |
| ♥ K 6 3 | | ♥ (A) 10 9 7 2 | |
| ♦ 8 | | ♦ Q 7 4 | |
| ♣ J 9 7 5 3 2 | | ♣ 10 | |

| South | West | North | East |
|-------|------|-------|----------|
| 1♥ | Pass | 2NT | Pass |
| 3♠ | Pass | 4♣ | Pass |
| 4♦ | Pass | 7♥ | All Pass |

Called upon to fill in for one of Muriel's friends, Bernie had gotten through about half the game without any convention other than Stayman being bid by his side. An old hand at playing with people whose bidding he didn't understand, Bernie always agreed to play whatever he was asked, much as Mary Rose Rutledge in the novel *Tickets to the Devil* agreed to play the Hoffmeister NoTrump. When any misunderstanding came up, Bernie just said that Muriel played that particular convention differently.

Picking up and miss-sorting the South hand, Bernie was thankful that he'd been dealer. He'd agreed to play Flannery, which he could remember as having something to do with holding five hearts and four spades, but he never bid any of those conventions himself if he had the hand. Relieved, he opened 1♥ only to see his partner's forcing raise hit the table.

Having played against Fredda Kelly two days before, Bernie's head was full of Fredda's system, having heard her lecture her partner for five minutes about opener's first rebid showing a side suit with one loser. Bernie remembered that Fredda had been asked what she did with a hand with two suits with one loser and she hadn't answered. Given a choice between spades and clubs, Bernie decided he'd rather bid KQJx than a singleton, just in case his partner didn't take him back into hearts. North, encouraged, advanced with 4♣.

After careful consideration, Bernie decided that 4♣ was not Gerber. It must be a cue bid. He thought he remembered that he was supposed to bid an outside Ace, only he didn't have one. If he bid 4♥, would his partner take that as showing the Ace? He looked at the ♥A, only to discover that it was really a diamond. That solved his problem! Bernie bid 4♦ with enthusiasm. North had not been entirely sure Bernie's 3♠ had shown a singleton, but his 4♦ seemed to confirm that he knew what he was doing, and at worst 7♥ would need a finesse.

West led the ♦8, seemingly pressing the card into the table with his thumb in a way that reminded Bernie of something. Maybe the eight was a false spot lead. It gave him a free chance to finesse the ten, and Bernie took his chance, winning the Ace when East covered. He didn't much like having to take a trump finesse, but there was no way to avoid it. The ten and Jack of hearts took the next two tricks, and the Ace brought down West's King, North managing not to look too shocked. Then Bernie took the next four tricks with spades from the top down as he tried to recall why the opening lead was familiar.

It was when West discarded a club on the last spade that Bernie remembered a story about a time when Sue Feldheim had been declaring against Bill Dyckes. Bill, playing with a stranger, had pressed his opening lead into the table with his thumb with considerable emphasis, whereupon Sue had thoughtfully turned to her RHO and explained that that meant the lead was a singleton. Wanting to see if the old story was really true, Bernie tested the theory by leading a low diamond. When West discarded, he won in dummy and then, seeing East's six-spot on the next trick, made the contract via the marked finesse of the ♦7.

West apologized for being unable to force himself to lead a trump or at least a spade. Bernie thought about saying that Bill Dyckes always said it was mandatory to lead a singleton against a suit contract, but decided it would seem too much like gloating.

– Rick Townsend



RESULTS



UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIP

October 31, 2013

FLIGHT A EVENT LEADERS

- 1 **Donna Feir–Beverly Saunders**
- 2 Nancy Bartone–Susan Seckinger
- 3 Charles Halpin–Terry Fidler
- 4 Ann Cady–Irene Santa
- 5 Linda Cleveland–Karen Barrett
- 6 Franklin Merblum–Simon Kantor

FLIGHT B EVENT LEADERS

- 1 **Kathie Rowland–Susan Schroeder**
- 2 Margaret Molwitz–Rodney Aspinwall
- 3 Larry Levy–Loretta Levy
- 4 Kelia Bailey–Dorothy Baker
- 5 Joan Hoben–Elouise Spelbrink
- 6 Judith McGrath–Barbara Henningson

FLIGHT C EVENT LEADERS

- 1 **Larry Levy–Loretta Levy**
- 2 Kelia Bailey–Dorothy Baker
- 3 Judith McGrath–Barbara Henningson
- 4 Donald Kimsey–Duncan Harris
- 5 Susan Nix–Janet McClutchy
- 6 David Mordy–Joe Holmes

UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIP

September 25, 2012

FLIGHT A EVENT LEADERS

- 1 **Richard Blair–Connie Graham**
- 2 Robert Klopp–Barbara Henningson
- 3 Laurie Robbins–Reginald Harvey
- 4 Howard Zusman–Allan Wolf
- 5 Lesley Meyers–Susan Pflederer
- 6 Lee Getz–Nusrat Rizvi
- 7 Eric Vogel–Irene Rivers

FLIGHT B EVENT LEADERS

- 1 **Robert Klopp–Barbara Henningson**
- 2 Lee Getz–Nusrat Rizvi
- 3 Eric Vogel–Irene Rivers
- 4 Richard Fronapfel–Susan Fronapfel
- 5 Roger Crean–Sandra Gould
- 6 Bob Meisel–Judy Williams

FLIGHT C EVENT LEADERS

- 1 **Eric Vogel–Irene Rivers**
- 2 Richard Fronapfel–Susan Fronapfel
- 3 Peter Carroll–Mark Moskovitz
- 4 Nancy Ramseyer–John O'Shea
- 5 Sherri Mehler–Carten–Diana Genung
- 6 Mary Murphy–Patricia Schackner

UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIP

Tuesday Evening January 7, 2014

FLIGHT A EVENT LEADERS

- 1 **Harold Feldheim–Joan Martin**
- 2 Peter Katz–Michael Wavada
- 3 Jonathan Ingersoll–Robert Hawes
- 4 Linda Starr–J Michael Carmiggelt
- 5 Helen Pawlowski–Susan Seckinger
- 6 Jeff Horowitz–Kevin Hart

FLIGHT B EVENT LEADERS

- 1 **Peter Katz–Michael Wavada**
- 2 Jonathan Ingersoll–Robert Hawes
- 3 Douglas Deacon–Paul Tungatt
- 4 Richard Hall–Simon Rich
- 5 Jeffrey Blum–Chet Latin

FLIGHT C EVENT LEADERS

- 1 **Richard Hall–Simon Rich**
- 2 Susan Glasspiegel–Victor Greenberg
- 3 Haroula Dobyns–Linda Bradford
- 4 Patricia Rogers–Donna Hersch

Due to space limitations, the results of the Jeff Feldman Sectional could not be included.
You can find them on the CBA website: <http://www.ctbridge.org>

NEWTOWN CLUB ORGANIZES TO CARRY ON 70-YEAR TRADITION OF COMPETITIVE BRIDGE

With the retirement of club director and manager Ed Finlay, the Newtown Bridge Club has organized as a member-owned, member-run club to continue the 70-year tradition of competitive duplicate bridge in the Newtown area.

The Newtown Bridge Club originated as the Danbury and Candlewood Bridge Clubs in the 1940s. Games were held in the former Hotel Green in downtown Danbury on Monday and Friday evenings. Morris Feinson, long ranked as a top Connecticut player and a regular at the Newtown Bridge Club, played his first game at the Danbury Club at the Hotel Green in 1948 when he returned home from college.

After moving from the Hotel Green, the club played for over 40 years in the VFW hall in Danbury. Two of the directors during this period, Nancy Bentley and Ruth Didkowsky, often compete at Newtown club games. Many players from the Ridgefield Bridge Club, which was active during the 1970s and 1980s, frequented the Danbury games

and continue to play at the Newtown club. Mr. Finlay, who took over the club in 2005, moved the games to the Hawleyville Fire Station in 2008 and gave the club its current name.

“The Newtown Bridge Club inherited a legacy of being a friendly place to learn and play bridge,” said Carl Palmer, president of the club’s new board of directors. “We’re committed to offering competitive bridge games for players who enjoy the game, from novice to expert.” After researching options about how to continue as an active bridge club, the organizing committee decided a member-owned nonprofit club, similar to the Hartford Bridge Club, recently honored as the oldest continuously operating bridge club in North America, would be the club’s best path forward for maintaining a long-term robust center of bridge activity.

The club’s games are attended by players from Newtown, Danbury, Brookfield, Southbury, Ridgefield, Redding, other local towns and the surrounding

Litchfield, New Haven and Putnam (NY) counties. Players from across the country find the club on the internet and frequently join games while visiting the area.

Newtown Bridge Club hosts games on Tuesdays at 10 AM and 7 PM and on Wednesdays at 10 AM at the Hawleyville Fire Station, 34 Hawleyville Road, Newtown. All bridge players are welcome.

For more information, visit www.newtownbridge.org or contact the club manager at director@newtownbridge.org or (203) 733-8525.

The Newtown Bridge Club is affiliated with the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL). The ACBL’s 166,000 members come together for more than 2.5 million tables of play each year at 3,200 clubs and 1,100 tournaments throughout North America.

Bridge at the Lunatic Fringe— #24: Game Tries—Help Suit? Short Suit?

by Alan Wolf



After an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠, and a simple raise to two of the major, a number of different methods are possible for making a game try intended to help responder assess whether his limited values (5-10 points) fit well with opener's hand. If responder judges that his cards fit well, he goes on to the major suit game; otherwise he declines the invitation and signs off at the 3-level.

The most popular method is to play "help suit" game tries, whereby opener's bid of a new suit is typically a three card or longer suit with significant gaps. A typical hand for making such a game try would be ♠AQJxx ♥AK ♦Qxxx ♣xx. After bidding of 1♠ - 2♠, opener bids 3♦, a help suit game try. Responder, even with a minimum initial raise, say ♠Kxx ♥xx ♦KJxx ♣xxxx, knows that all of his cards are working, and goes on to game.

For some time, Short Suit game tries were in vogue, whereby opener's bid of a new suit was a short suit (usually a singleton). Responder now evaluated his hand knowing that the Ace of opener's short suit was likely valuable, but that other high cards were not useful. After bidding of 1♠ - 2♠, opener would make a short suit game try of 3♦ with a hand such as ♠AQJxx ♥Kxxx ♦x ♣KJx. Responder could then go on to game with a holding such as ♠Kxx ♥Qx ♦xxx ♣Qxxxx, knowing that there were no wasted values in diamonds.

Which of these methods is superior? That's very hard to say; but there is a structure that supports both styles of game try: "Two-way game tries." I'll conclude this article describing that structure, which admittedly is a bit tricky, and therefore only suitable for well-established partnerships.

First, I would like to expand on the criteria for responder's evaluation of his hand following a help suit game try or a Short Suit game try. **In general, to make a positive evaluation, you need at least two working values.** Following a Help Suit game try, solid working values are the A, K and Q of the trump suit and the Help Suit, and the Aces of the other two suits. Kings of the other two suits are good too, but these should not be counted at full value.

Other factors to consider when making a close decision on accepting the game try include possession of the J or 10 of the trump suit or Help Suit, or having extra length (four or more) in either of these suits. Shortness in the help suit may also be of value, especially with four or more trumps.

The important concept here is that a Help Suit game try asks not only about the Help suit, but also about trump honors, and Aces and Kings in the other two suits.

Consider a holding of ♠Kx ♥QJxxx ♦xx ♣AKQJ. It may seem unorthodox to make a Help Suit game try in clubs, since partner cannot possibly have any help in that suit. Yet it is a standout call, since partner will only be able to accept the invitation with a holding that includes a couple of top honors in the other three suits.

Evaluating a response to a Short Suit game try is similar, but in this case only value the Ace of the short suit, but count the A, K and Q of the other three suits as good working values.

Two-way Game Tries

Here is the structure that allows you to have the best of both worlds... help suit AND short suit game tries.

The basic mechanism is that an immediate suit bid is a short-suit game try, but to make a help suit game try, you must start with a relay, initiated by making the next available bid. But there are some glitches, all designed to make sure you can stop at the 3-level.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Opener | Responder |
| 1♥ | 2♥ |
| 2♠ | 2NT |
| 2♠ says I want to make a help suit game try. 2NT forced | |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Opener | Responder |
| 1♠ | 2♠ |
| 2NT | 3♣ |
| 2NT says I want to make a help suit game try. 3♣ forced. | |

After this relay, opener bids his help suit, but to avoid going past three of the major, note the following exceptions:

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Opener | Responder |
| 1♥ | 2♥ |
| 2♠ | 2NT |
| 3♥ | |
| My help suit is Spades | |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Opener | Responder |
| 1♠ | 2♠ |
| 2NT | 3♣ |
| 3♠ | |
| My help suit is Clubs | |

One more glitch, on the Short Suit Game try:

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| Opener | Responder |
| 1♠ | 2♠ |

Opener now simply bids his short suit, 3♣, 3♦ or 3♥.

But:

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| Opener | Responder |
| 1♥ | 2♥ |

3♣ and 3♦ are short suit game tries; 2NT is short suit in spades.

Opener couldn't bid 2♠, as that initiates the Help Suit relay.





A Hard Column to Write

by Burt Saxon

This is a hard column for me to write. It is not about Alzheimer's and it is not about dementia. It is about the inevitable slight decline in thinking and memory skills that almost every bridge player will face at some point.

I have played bridge off and on for close to fifty years. If someone asked me to describe how I play, I would respond; "A little above average, but I do declare hands pretty well." This is not unusual for a bridge column player. A bridge column player is someone who plays infrequently but reads the bridge column pretty much every day. In bridge column fantasy land, the reader is almost always South, which means almost always the declarer. Thus it is logical for bridge column players to be better at declarer play than at bidding or defense.

So that is why I am a bit upset. The last five times I have played duplicate, I have mis-declared at least one hand. Yesterday, at a sectional tournament in Livingston, NJ, I botched two hands in the first session. Here they are.

Partner's Hand:

♠x ♥Kx ♦109xx ♣KJxxxx

My Hand:

♠AQ10xx ♥A10x ♦KJ ♣AQx

I opened 2NT and my partner Steve Emerson bid 3NT. As a twice a year partnership, we try to describe our hands as precisely as possible as early as possible. So the contract is reasonable. The opening heart lead seems normal.

My thinking process started. I decided 3NT was preferable to the other possible contracts of 5♣ or 6♣. This might be true, but wasting my mental energy on 6♣ is almost irrelevant on this hand. All I need to remember is that making an overtrick in 3NT will score better than making an overtrick in 5♣. Then I fell in love with the ♥10. Why? The card is almost a red herring. West probably did not lead low from a heart holding headed by the QJ. Finally I failed to plan properly.

In other words my thinking process was

muddled. A much better approach would have been to simply determine how best to make the most tricks in 3NT.

I immediately played low on the opening lead. The Jack appeared from East and I already had started to lose my best chance for a top score. I played the ♥A, became flustered, and decided to run the clubs and see what happened. Nothing good happened. The opponents made lots of discards and so did I. I threw three spades and a heart. Now I had really messed up. If I took the spade finesse and it lost, a heart could come back and one or two more hearts could be cashed if West had the ♦A. So I just played the ♠A and received 4 of a possible 26 match points.

I should have taken the opening lead with the ♥K on the board and then taken the spade finesse. As John Stiefel would say, "Can't cost." In fact the spade finesse would have won. Then I could play the ♣A and, if both opponents follow, play the ♣Q to the King and play low to the ♦K. That too would have worked. Now I could make eleven tricks - six clubs, two spades, two hearts, and a diamond. That is a lot better than nine tricks. If the spade finesse had lost and a heart came back, I could still cash out for nine tricks. If the spade finesse had won and the ♦K had lost to the Ace, I was still going to make at least four- five if the opponents decided to cash the queen of diamonds before knocking out my last heart stopper.

The other hand I mis-declared was a four spade contract:

Partner's Hand:

♠Jxx ♥Ajxxx ♦Kxx ♣xx

My Hand:

♠AKQxx ♥--- ♦J10xx ♣Axxx

With the opponents passing throughout, I opened 1♠, partner bid 2♠ and I bid 4♠. A diamond is led to the Queen. The Ace is cashed, a diamond is ruffed by West, and the ♥K is led. I play the Ace and pitch a club. I then drew two rounds of trump. Not swift. That guarantees defeat. Here I need to try for "The Only

Chance." I should draw one round of trump. Now I should lead the ♦J, hoping West is out of trumps. He was. I can have pitched my club loser. Now it goes ♣A, club ruff low, heart ruff, club ruff with the Jack, heart ruff, draw two rounds of trump, and score up a fine board. Just like the previous hand, I was able to figure this out on the train from Grand Central to Milford, but not at the table.

Admitting one's memory and thinking skills are slipping is not fun, not fun at all. Quite frankly, I am sure I would have done well with both these hands ten or twenty years ago. I am even pretty sure I would have done well five years ago. But there are some solutions. First of all, I can start playing bridge more often. That works for me and could even work for my wife. Second, I can start playing in only senior events at tournaments. I have mixed feelings here, but am starting to realize that part of my problem is I now think more slowly. Senior games allow just a bit more time and that could help me. Third, I can scale down my expectations. At my age, the difference between a 52% game and a 55% game is hardly going to change my life. Fourth, I can rationalize that while my bridge skills are declining, they are not declining nearly as much as my tennis skills. Fifth, I can realize that I am older and wiser, in general more creative, more spiritual, and more patient in every area of life except bridge.

But there is a more immediate solution to my problem and perhaps to yours as well: Don't use age as an excuse.

Just review the bidding, analyze the opening lead, take a few seconds to develop a plan, play at a reasonable rate of speed, and don't browbeat yourself. We older players might also want to drink extra coffee near the end of each session to wake up our tired brains.

Most important, we need to enjoy the game because without it, our thinking and memory skills would be far worse than they are now.



Volunteers Needed!

The 2014 Fall North American Bridge Championship will be held in Providence, RI from November 27 – December 7, 2014. The NABC Host Committee is working very hard to make this event a great success. You will find that Providence is a terrific place with all the amenities of a major city but still having the charm and friendly atmosphere of a small town. The Providence NABC will be an affordable event to attend with bridge rates as low as \$103.

All of the bridge events will be held at the RI Convention Center. In addition to the many great bridge events, there will be a Waterfire on Saturday, November 29. Waterfire is Providence's signature event and a must see for all visitors.

Please go to our website, www.provnabc.org, which has much more information about the upcoming tournament. It takes many people to organize and run an NABC. If you would like to help by volunteering even for a few hours or a few days, please contact a member of the NABC committee or send an email to Brenda@ProvNABC.Org.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2014 Fall NABC in Providence.

2014 CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

| | | |
|-------|--------------|--|
| 6 | Thurs. (Day) | Unit-wide Championship, Local clubs |
| 12-17 | Wed.-Mon. | New England KO Team Regional, Cromwell, CT |
| 24 | Mon. (Eve) | Local (Split) Championship, Local clubs |
| 25 | Tues. (Day) | Unit-wide Championship, Local clubs |

MARCH

| | | |
|-------|--------------|--|
| 1-2 | Sat.-Sun. | District 25 GNT Finals, Sturbridge, MA |
| 3 | Mon. (Aft) | ACBL-wide Senior Game, Local Clubs |
| 7-9 | Fri.-Sun. | Connecticut Winter Sectional, Hamden, CT |
| 10-16 | Mon.-Sun. | STaC with North Jersey (U106), Local Clubs |
| 13 | Thurs. (Aft) | ACBL Int'l Fund Game #1, Local clubs |
| 20-30 | Thurs.-Sun. | Spring Nationals, Dallas, TX |

APRIL

| | | |
|----|--------------|--|
| 3 | Thurs. (Day) | Unit-wide Championship, Local clubs |
| 8 | Tues. (Aft) | ACBL-wide Charity Game #1, Local Clubs |
| 25 | Fri. (Day) | Unit-wide Championship, Local clubs |

APRIL-MAY

| | | |
|------|----------|---|
| 30-4 | Wed-Sun. | New England Senior Regional, North Falmouth, MA |
|------|----------|---|

MAY

| | | |
|-------|------------|--|
| 7 | Wed. (Day) | Unit-wide Championship, Local clubs |
| 14 | Wed. (Aft) | ACBL Int'l Fund Game #2, Local clubs |
| 16-18 | Fri.-Sun. | Connecticut Spring Sectional, Guilford, CT |
| 21-26 | Wed.-Mon. | New York City Regional, New York, NY |

JUNE

| | | |
|-------|------------|--|
| 2 | Mon. (Eve) | Local (Split) Championship, Local clubs |
| 6 | Fri. (Eve) | Worldwide Bridge Contest #1, Local clubs |
| 7 | Sat. (Aft) | Worldwide Bridge Contest #2, Local clubs |
| 9-15 | Mon-Sun | STaC with North Jersey (U106), Local clubs |
| 17-22 | Tues.-Sun. | New England Summer Regional, Nashua, NH |

Due to space limitations, the full 2014 tournament calendar could not be included. You can find it on the CBA website: <http://www.ctbridge.org>

THE KIBITZER

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All comments, news, items related to the bridge world and of interest to our readers are welcome. Please send all items for the next Kibitzer by April 15, 2014.

Editor: Tom Proulx
34 Saint Mary's Lane
Norwalk, CT 06851

Phone: 203-847-2426
Email: twproulx@optonline.net

You can see The Kibitzer in blazing color at the CT bridge site: <http://www.ctbridge.org>

If you would like to receive The Kibitzer via e-mail, let us know. Email Tom Proulx at twproulx@optonline.net

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| | StaC Coordinator | (203) 929-6595 | dwstiegler@comcast.net |
| Leonard Russman | Unit Recorder | (203) 245-6850 | lbrussman@sbcglobal.net |
| David Keller | Webmaster | (203) 375-2840 | david.keller@janusystems.com |
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