



# Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

December 2005

Editors: Ian McCance & Bill Jacobs



## VBA NEWS

Cathie Lachman - Manager

I'd like to bring you up to date with some news and plans at our Club.

### ❖ Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005 commencing at 6.30 p.m. This is your opportunity to take an active role and have your say. A new Council will be elected and you can ask questions. Of course, questions on notice would be appreciated so please submit these at your earliest convenience. If you can't attend the meeting, please let me know and I will record your apology. Don't forget you have an opportunity to vote with your proxy form. Please ensure your form is received at the VBA office by noon on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2005.

### ➤ Skype Me!

If you have skype installed on your computer at home you can now "Skype Me". My address is vbaoffice. This is a fantastic technological leap forward and a way of reducing telephone charges for you and the VBA. Thanks to Blaine Howe for his efforts in making this happen.

### 🌈 A Daytime Red Point Event!

Daytime duplicate players take note. I have scheduled a red point Autumn Pairs event into the 2006 calendar. It's a long overdue initiative and I do hope you will take advantage of it. Yours truly will be the director and I'm looking forward to it.

### ✓ Is your e-mail address correct?

I often receive notices of non delivery of email I send out to members. Please ensure you advise me of a change in your e-mail address changes. In fact anything that changes, for example phone number or postal address. Would you prefer to receive electronic correspondence from me? If so, e-mail me!

My address is: [clachman@vba.asn.au](mailto:clachman@vba.asn.au)

### ▪ 2006 Subscriptions

Members – don't let your subscription lapse! 2006 subscriptions are due and payable as at 7<sup>th</sup> December 2005. Allowing your subscription to lapse means that your ABF membership will lapse and an additional fee imposed by the ABF will be levied should you wish to rejoin.

### ○ Youth Pairs Event

Youth Players! Watch this space. We will be scheduling a 2 week Youth Pairs event early in 2006. This is your opportunity to come along and hang out with your buddies, discuss systems etc. We will be considering your holidays, exam commitments etc. so don't worry. I promise you some exciting hands.

### 🌈 Beginners Lessons

The summer series of beginners' lessons will commence on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2006. Beginners under 30 years of age may attend free of charge. Jeff Fust will be conducting the classes following his very successful stint this year where his students were appreciative of his time and patience on their new learning curve. Encourage all your friends and their children to come along. Cost \$120 for 8 weeks, and excludes the cost of course material. At conclusion of the course, each player will receive 6 free supervised playing vouchers.

### ❖ VBA Summer Congress & Borin Bridge Centre New Year Congress

Two great congresses! Entry forms for both events are available and are shaping up to be good fun! Get your entries in soon.

### ❖ Exhibition at Mind Sports Expo

The VBA is participating in the Mind Sports Expo on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. I have a group of volunteers scheduled for 1.5 hour playing sessions. It's an opportunity to promote bridge and the VBA so if you have time drop in and have a look.

The details are: 10 am to 3 pm each day (3&4 Dec), Bayview Conference Centre, Clayton (Melway 70 D9)

➤ **Christmas Parties**

The daytime Christmas Party will be held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December during the duplicate session. Come along and enjoy some Christmas cheer and yummy food.

The evening Christmas Party will be held at the conclusion of play of week 4 of the Christmas Teams on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December. Let's enjoy a drink and have a sumptuous nibble. Your council members and volunteers will be providing refreshments. I hope to see you all there.

I take this opportunity to wish you all good bridging for the forthcoming year. I look forward to assisting you in 2006 and extend the compliments of the season and happy Chanukah to you and your family and thank you for your support and good wishes since my appointment.

**THE TWELFTH TRICK**

Dealer: S     ♠ J43  
 Vul: N/S    ♥ 932  
                   ♦ AQJ93  
                   ♣ Q5

♠ AKQ10986  
 ♥ AJ6  
 ♦ 7  
 ♣ AK

West	North	East	South
			2♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The lead is the diamond 10. Plan the play.

Solution on Page 6.

♠   ♥   ♦   ♣

**FOR STARTERS ...  
Bill Jacobs**

(This is the first in a new series of articles for players in VBA classes, or having recently completed classes.)

Let's start with a bidding problem. You hold:

♠ KQ98   ♥ 943   ♦ K85   ♣ Q98

Your partner opens 1NT, which you have agreed to play as 15 – 17 points.

What should you bid? Decide for yourself, before reading on.

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You have 10 points, add that to partner's 15-17, and you have 25-27 points between you. When the minimum that you could have is 25 points, then you should dispense with invitations and bid a game.

But which game? The two possibilities are 4♠, if partner happens to have a four-card spade suit with you, or 3NT. You could use Stayman (2♣) to find a 4-4 spade fit, but I recommend that you let your 4-3-3-3 shape guide you into bidding 3NT. With no side shortage, you aren't ruffing anything in 4♠, so this might be a hand where you make the same number of tricks in NT as in a suit; and 9 tricks for game is one fewer than 10!

That's not to say 4♠ might not be the better contract, but experience says to head to 3NT when you have a very flat hand<sup>1</sup>.

You bid 3NT, and now your partner has to play it! Let's switch seats.

♠ KQ98  
 ♥ 943  
 ♦ K85  
 ♣ Q98

♠ 1062  
 ♥ AK  
 ♦ AQJ9  
 ♣ J1042

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

The lead is ♥5. Choose your plan before reading on.

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Seres, Australia's undisputed premier player for a generation, bid 3NT so often that he became known as "Mr 3NT". More recently, American Bob Hamman, for many years regarded as the world's leading player, had the same habit. This led to the creation of "Hamman's Rule" which says: "When 3NT is one of the alternatives, then choose it."

3NT is often a race between the declarer and the defence. As declarer you might have a choice of how to run that race.

Before you play a single card, you should do two calculations in virtually every 3NT contract you reach:

1. Where are my 9 tricks?
2. Can my opponents take 5 tricks before I take 9 tricks?

In this example, you have two hearts and four diamonds = six tricks ... that's easy. To get the remaining three tricks, you can safely set up two tricks in clubs and one in spades. Alternatively, you could hope to make three tricks just with spades.

So there are two possible answers to question 1. Let's look at the two options and answer question 2.

To set up two tricks in clubs and one in spades, you will have to exit three times. The defence will knock out your second heart stopper the first time you exit, and the second time you exit, they will be ready to take at least two heart tricks, ace-king of clubs and ace of spades ... that's their 5 tricks, *before you have 9*.

But if you play on spades, you only have to exit once ... in spades. The opponents can knock out your second heart stopper, but you will have 9 tricks with two hearts, four diamonds and three spades.

Playing on spades does not guarantee the contract, because you risk losing a trick to the spade jack, should the suit be badly placed. But any chance is better than no chance, and playing on clubs virtually gives up the contract.

The full deal:

♠ KQ98	
♥ 943	
♦ K85	
♣ Q98	
♠ J5	♥ A743
♥ Q10752	♥ J86
♦ 1032	♦ 764
♣ K53	♣ A76
♠ 1062	
♥ AK	
♦ AQJ9	
♣ J1042	

*Points to remember:*

- With a dead flat hand, it is often better to head for notrumps rather than a suit.
- In notrump contracts (particularly 3NT), before playing to trick one, count your tricks, and the opponents tricks, and mentally run the race.

♠   ♥   ♦   ♣

### SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

**Problem 1:**

Dealer: W     ♠ 1093  
 Vul: Both    ♥ K854  
                   ♦ AQ  
                   ♣ J952

♠ J652  
 ♥ J7  
 ♦ KJ632  
 ♣ AQ

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	2♦	2♥
Pass	4♥	All pass	

You lead ♦3 and declarer plays dummy's ♦Q. He draws trumps, ♥A, ♥K, partner following ♥6, ♥3, then leads a club, ♣2, ♣4 (natural signals), ♣8 and you win ♣Q. What is your plan?

**Problem 2:**

Dealer: W     ♠ A6  
 Vul: E/W     ♥ KJ3  
                   ♦ J98432  
                   ♣ 32

♠ J109  
 ♥ A872  
 ♦ K  
 ♣ QJ1094

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1NT*
Pass	3NT	All pass	

\* 15-18

Naturally you lead ♣Q, partner following ♣8 (reverse count). Declarer wins ♣A and starts ♥6. Plan your defence (some detail required).

Solutions on page 8.

**BEING GEORGE'S BUTLER**  
**Cathie Lachman**

Recently I had the opportunity to play in the ANC Butler Stage 3 with George Gaspar. Nobody was more surprised than me to have made it that far. George and I paired up on the spur of the moment to play Stage 1 and we made it to Stage 2. We squeaked into Stage 3 and were seeded 9<sup>th</sup>. We both knew that if we finished above our seeding we would be happy. Heck all those luminaries had such big carry forwards, they were untouchable.

George is fearless. He bids very aggressively and plays hard. I'm used to taking the passive role in a bridge partnership particularly as my regular partner Cathy Mill has a "no holds barred" approach to the game.

As the weekend progressed some of George's style started to rub off onto me. We were lying 5<sup>th</sup> coming into the last round and George said before we sat down at the table "let's give it our best shot".

We had a couple of good boards and then our opponents bid a slam – I knew that would be -10 IMPs as it was difficult to bid. And then this board hit the table. George deals and passes as does RHO. I opened 1♥.

I hold:

♠ - ♥ K10643 ♦ AQ652 ♣ K53

LHO bids 1♠, George passes (George never passes!), and RHO bid 4♠. Here I am at the crossroads. Is 4♠ making? Heck is 4♠ pre-emptive? I took inference from George's pass – I know he has nothing (he would have bid!) so I bid 5♦ and it was passed out. The contract sailed 1 off but was worth 8 imps because 4♠ was making.

George held: ♠ 964 ♥ 95 ♦ J10973 ♣ A86

Many have criticized my bid, told me I have no science about me, I am a risk taker; I guess being George's Butler paid dividends so now I am off to polish the bronze. I am very happy to be part of the Butler Team, something I have never achieved.

**THOUGHTS FOR CANBERRA**  
**Bill Jacobs**

Are you playing in the Canberra Summer Nationals in January? And if so, which events? If you happen to be playing both the National Open Teams and one of the Womens or Seniors Teams, you are in for a lot of bridge. On a 4-person team, a minimum of 460 boards, more if you make the finals, or play warm-up events like the Swiss Pairs.

That's a lot of bridge: not surprising, as the Summer Nationals is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest event in the world, in terms of table-sessions.

What do you think will be the most important determinant of your success this year? A few ideas:

- A. Solidity of system agreements with partner.
- B. Performance of your partner and teammates (an excellent copout which I use for most events)
- C. Practice sessions in advance of the tournament

I'm sure it is none of these. The key factor will be:

***your ability to concentrate***

Blaine Howe wrote an article for the VBA Bulletin earlier in the year on this general subject, having just come out of a very successful tournament in Canberra. Four of his pointers were:

- No alcohol
- Sleep
- Diet and exercise
- Drink lots of water

Hear hear. And all of these activities directly relate to your ability to concentrate over long periods. So keep them in mind.

Here are a few more, but these are perhaps a bit harder!

**Put the previous hand out of your mind.**

You have a competitive auction, and the opponents "win" it, declaring and making 4♥ with an overtrick, after you competed in

diamonds. Should you have bid 5♦? How many down does it go? Looks like 2 off at favourable vulnerability, a good save. Or might the opponents have bid 5♥ ... oh, but you can beat 5♥ with a spade lead. No, that's not right, declarer can still make 11 tricks by playing on clubs.

It was an interesting hand.

Meanwhile, you are in 4<sup>th</sup> seat on the next hand, and the bidding has gone:

LHO	Pard	RHO	You
1♥	2♣	Pass	?

You sort your cards and see:

♠ Kx ♥ xxxx ♦ Axxxx ♣ Jx

That looks like a pass, no problems, and LHO passes it out. That's good, you are dummy, you can go back to thinking about the previous hand.

By the way, did you notice any hesitations by the opponents in the bidding? Or did you check the vulnerability? No, too busy thinking about 5♥. Or did you notice that you mis-sorted your hand, and you actually have:

♠ x ♥ xxxx ♦ Axxxx ♣ KJx

"Sorry partner ... I had a card in the wrong place." Partner scowls as he looks at his own hand again:

♠ QJx ♥ Kx ♣ Kx ♣ AQxxxx

Sound familiar? Solution: make a conscious effort to put the previous hand out of your head, *before taking out the cards for the next hand*.

(By the way, if you find a method by which you can achieve this, please let me know, because I sure cannot do it. But if I could ...)

### Keller Convention.

This is the world's most valuable partnership convention, invented by American Adam Wildavsky. It will win you moreimps than all other conventions, combined.

Unfortunately, it's fiendishly difficult to play.

The Keller Convention (named after Helen) is simply stated: you and your partner do not speak. No post-mortems, no comments during the bidding or play, no participation in the opponents' post-mortems, nothing.

What Keller does is free up your mind. You will learn that since you're not allowed to *talk* about the hand just played, it will help to prevent you *thinking* about it. It leaves your brain free to concentrate on the right things.

I have only personally played Keller once, with David Smith in the 1981 NOT in Canberra. We won the event. Some might churlishly argue that this was mainly due to our teammates, including Tim Seres, Dick Cummings and Paul Lavings. They would be only partly right.

Try agreeing with your partner to play Keller for just one session, or one match. It's actually quite fun. And there is a very positive by-product ... when you have a bad board, your opponents won't gain an extra psychological advantage from listening to you "discussing" it.

### Bring a book.

I was watching the Polish National Championships on Bridge Base Vu-Graph. The presentation included a web-cam, so we could watch the players in real-time. One of Poland's top players, Krzysztof Jassem, brought a newspaper to the table, and read it when the hand was on the other side of the screen, also when he was dummy.

Maybe he was posing for the camera, but more likely, this is a tool he uses to keep his mind clear.

Cathy Chua operates similarly. During Stages 2 and 3 of the recent Butler event, she brought a book (not a bridge book!) along, and read it between sessions. Not for her the detailed post-morteming, consulting of the hand record, and working out why Deep Finesse says you can make 3♣.

She won the Butler. I rest my case.

**Beware the Last Hand.**

The events in Canberra involve 20 board matches. When you get to the final hand in a match, your thoughts naturally turn to the score-up ... will this be a win or a loss? Concentration wanes, and if you are not careful, your small win will convert to a small loss through insufficient attention to board 20.

I have seen this phenomenon often in recent VuGraphs. On average, more imps are thrown on the final board of a set than the others (just try to disprove me!) So make a conscious effort to gather your concentration when you get to the final board.



<b>TWELFTH TRICK – SOLUTION</b> <b>Bill Jacobs</b>
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Dealer: S	♠ J43	
Vul: N/S	♥ 932	
	♦ AQJ93	
	♣ Q5	
♠ 72		♠ 5
♥ K1075		♥ Q84
♦ 10		♦ K86542
♣ J9843		♣ 10762
	♠ AKQ10986	
	♥ AJ6	
	♦ 7	
	♣ AK	

This is an easy hand, but you have to make a non-intuitive play. So that makes it quite a hard hand.

At the table, declarer won ♦A and ran ♦Q. East ducked, South discarded a heart loser, and West ruffed. Eventually, declarer had to lose a heart for one down.

The guaranteed winning play is to finesse the diamond queen at trick one, even though you know the finesse will lose. East wins the king, and returns a diamond, but you can just ruff high, draw trumps ending in dummy, and discard the heart losers on good diamonds.

This problem comes from the 2005 Daily Bridge Calendar. The 2006 edition is available now, and as always represents excellent value.

<b>RECENT RESULTS</b>
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**Victorian Open Pairs***Final*

- 1 I. McCance – B. Thompson
- 2 D. Smith – R. van Riel
- 3 C. Snashall – G. Kilvington

*Plate*

- 1 J. Gaspar – C. Hughes
- 2 J. Thompson – J. Collins
- 3 S. Arber – G. Gaspar

*Consolation*

- 1 J. Hare – R. Begg
- 2 I. Webb – P. Kalina
- 3 G. Sandor – M. Tauman

**Victorian Butler Stage 3**

- 1 C. Chua – S. Hinge
- 2 S. Lester – A. Mill
- 3 C. Lachman – G. Gaspar

**Victorian Individual**

- 1 G. Gaspar
- 2 R. Ellery
- 3 M. Chrapot

**VBA Swiss Pairs**

- 1 T. Chira – D. Hohor
- 2 S. Gerdan – J. Selwyn
- 3 J. Fine – L. Fine

<b>BUTLER STAGE 3</b> <b>Bill Jacobs</b>
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Congratulations to the top 3 pairs:

Cathy Chua – Simon Hinge  
 Stephen Lester – Andrew Mill  
 Cathie Lachman – George Gaspar

who now form the Victorian team to contest the Commonwealth Nations Bridge Championship.

Chua and Hinge were well placed throughout, but the other two qualifying pairs had to pull out big wins in the final round to move from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The winners showed good form here:

Dealer: S      ♠ Q  
 Vul: Both    ♥ J8  
                  ♦ KQ109652  
                  ♣ 983

♠ J109873                      ♠ A54  
 ♥ K3                              ♥ A97  
 ♦ 3                                ♦ J87  
 ♣ Q1064                        ♣ K752

                 ♠ K62  
                  ♥ Q106542  
                  ♦ A4  
                  ♣ AJ

West	North	East	South
	Chua		Hinge
			1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
2♠	3♦	3♠	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Not only did East-West fail to bid their lucky 4♠ game, but the lead was a spade, setting up declarer's 9<sup>th</sup> trick.

Meanwhile, full credit to Chua for making a 2-over-1 response with skinny values but a fat suit, and then seeing through with 3♦ when she could have passed. That was enough for Hinge to bid the 22-point game and an 11-imp pickup.

My theory from playing in all three stages of the Butler is that Victorians don't bid enough slams. I tender the following exhibits to the court.

Exhibit A

♠ A95                              ♠ J63  
 ♥ A1093                        ♥ KQJ654  
 ♦ 5                                ♦ AJ86  
 ♣ AKQJ5                        ♣ -

Only three pairs out of six bid this grand slam. Given that there are 16 tricks available, the three failing pairs should stay behind after class for extra bidding practice.

Exhibit B

♠ QJ3                              ♠ A964  
 ♥ AK10987                    ♥ 6432  
 ♦ 1094                        ♦ -  
 ♣ 4                                ♣ AK1075

At equal nil, South deals and opens 3♦ or maybe 4♦. Once again only half the six pairs got to slam.

Over 3♦, West has a normal if minimum overcall of 3♥. It seems to me that East should probe delicately with 6♥. Anything less is pusillanimous.

Exhibit C

Dealer: W      ♠ J10975  
 Vul: nil        ♥ A9742  
                  ♦ 5  
                  ♣ 62

♠ KQ643                        ♠ A8  
 ♥ 83                              ♥ K5  
 ♦ AK987                        ♦ QJ102  
 ♣ 9                                ♣ AK874

                 ♠ 2  
                  ♥ QJ106  
                  ♦ 643  
                  ♣ QJ1053

Only two pairs missed this diamond slam, which admittedly is hard to get to from the safe side of East. But given that the heart ace was onside, the contract always makes.

Or does it? Michael Chrapot declared 6♦ as West, Chris Hughes led ♥A, and switched to ♠J, won by dummy's ace.

What happened next is not in dispute. Declarer called for a spade from dummy, Adam Sarten ruffed this and Chrapot "overruffed" with ♦A. At this point, the director was called.

Declarer explained that he thought he had called for a diamond from dummy, and that was clearly his intention as he played ♦A to the trick. How should the director rule?

You might think it is normal to allow South to correct his revoke, follow suit with a spade and concede one down.

Instead, the director invoked Law 45C which says in part: "*Correction of Inadvertent Designation. A player may, without penalty, change an inadvertent designation if he does so without pause for thought.*"

The matter went to appeal (reasonably so: if Hughes and Sarten had won the appeal, then they would have qualified for the team), but

