

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

August 2006

Editors: Ian McCance & Bill Jacobs

BRIDGE FOR LIFE

In September 2006, the Victorian Bridge Association, in conjunction with *Alzheimer's Australia* will run a fundraiser – **Bridge for Life** – for the whole of the month. Its purpose is to generate support for a healthier ageing Victoria.

All Victorian bridge clubs will be invited to hold one bridge session (at any time in September), donating the entire proceeds to *Alzheimer's Australia*. Every competitor will be entered into a draw for free return air travel to Europe.

The Honourable Steve Bracks, Premier of Victoria, is Patron of Bridge for Life (see statement below). He is joined by the Honourable Sir Zelman Cowan, former Governor-General of Australia, as Co-Patron.

This is the first time that throughout Victoria, bridge players will be participating in a charity event. Not only will monies be raised for a worthwhile cause, but the exposure bridge clubs will get will lift the profile of bridge in Victoria, raise awareness for Alzheimer's and should result in increased memberships of all participating clubs. Furthermore, Alzheimer's Australia will offer speakers to clubs indicating how Alzheimer's disease can be prevented, as well as outlining the available services.

Older bridge players understand the need to keep mentally active to ensure long life and good health. They support Alzheimer's Australia's message "Those who adopt 'brain-healthy' lifestyles have a reduced risk of developing dementia".¹ This message is embraced by all bridge players throughout Victoria.

Team Captains

Some clubs will elect to represent well known professions, such as golfers, academics,

doctors etc. A club that represents a particular profession will enjoy the patronage of prominent leaders in that field, who will be making public statements about matches that will gain press coverage:

Mark Allen	champion golfer
Dick Freadman	academics
Neal Fraser	tennis
Bill Shorten	trade unions
Russell Caplan	business leaders
Kevin Bartlett	football legend
Graham Burrows	doctors
Ronald Merkel	lawyers

Supporters

Professor Graham Burrows OA
Professor Richard Freadman
The Honourable Justice, Ronald Merkel, former judge of the Federal Court
Counsellor Richard Gross, former Mayor of Port Phillip City Council
David Bloom, former Mayor of Glen Eira City Council
Ron Clarke, world champion runner, Mayor of Surfers Paradise

From the Premier

It is my pleasure to provide my support for *Bridge for Life*, a wonderful fundraising effort from the Victorian Bridge Association on behalf of Alzheimer's Australia (Vic). While not every older person will develop Alzheimer's disease in later life, few will be untouched by it – whether as carers, family members or neighbours. In staging this month long event, the Victorian Bridge Association is joining in the challenge against dementia by encouraging the Victorian bridge community to stay mentally and socially alive. I would like to congratulate the Association for their efforts in raising both funds and awareness for the prevention of dementia, and commend Alzheimer's Australia (Vic) for their ongoing commitment to the health and wellbeing of our older Victorians. I wish the Victorian bridge community every success for all future endeavours, and I encourage you all to take up the challenge of maintaining a "brain-healthy" lifestyle.

Yours sincerely,
HON STEVE BRACKS MP, Premier of Victoria

¹ "Follow the **Mind Your Mind** Signposts", *Alzheimer's Australia* 2005

FOR STARTERS
Bill Jacobs

Playing IMP scoring, vulnerable versus not, you deal and see:

♠ J4
♥ A3
♦ A53
♣ AK10875

The bidding proceeds:

You	LHO	Pard	RHO
1♣	1♠	2♦	3♠
?			

What do you bid?

This is a nice hand, in particular, it is rich in aces. When I watched this deal on an Internet Vu-Graph, the choice made was 4♦. This struck me as a straight-forward and sensible way of describing the hand¹ and offering encouragement to partner.

Directly supporting partner's suit, like shopping, never goes out of fashion.

You bid 4♦, and the auction proceeds:

You	LHO	Pard	RHO
1♣	1♠	2♦	3♠
4♦	Pass	5♣	Pass
?			

What now?

Partner has returned the compliment – he has supported you. Now that the club fit has come to light, you might wonder about slam, but you should definitely **pass** 5♣. Partner could have invited slam by cue-bidding 4♠, so for all you know, you are off two fast spade tricks to start with.

A common error to avoid is bidding the same strong hand twice. You are dealt a good

¹ Non-straightforward non-starters would consider the merits of Pass (forcing after partner's 2-over-1 bid?) or Double (asking partner to bid 3NT with a stopper?). In my view, that way madness lies.

hand, bid it strongly, then when partner raises you to game, you still see that strong hand, and "bid it again", by moving on past game. This hand is a case in point.

5♣ is passed out, the spade 10 is led, and you see:

♠ 10	♠ A5 ♥ K9 ♦ J10982 ♣ Q942
	♠ J4 ♥ A3 ♦ A53 ♣ AK10875

How do you play it?

There is a loser in spades, so you have to hold your diamond losers to one, in order to make 5♣. The best way to play the diamonds for one loser is take two finesses in diamonds. You run the ♦J, and if it loses to LHO's king or queen, you later run the ♦10.

That will make the hand whenever RHO has one of the two high outstanding diamonds – which will be the case around 75% of the time.

BUT, that's not the right overall way to play this hand. Better than playing diamonds yourself is to get the opponents to play diamonds for you. You can enlist their help by playing for an elimination.

Win the spade ace, and draw trumps. Cash the two top hearts, and now *exit with your spade loser*, and watch the effect.

The defence wins the spade, and does what? If they play a major, you can ruff in dummy, and discard a diamond from hand, claiming the contract. So they must play diamonds. Suppose RHO wins the spade, and pushes a diamond through. You duck this to LHO, and now he is terminally stuck. A major presents you with the ruff-and-discard, whilst the diamond presents you with the free finesse. He's endplayed.

The full deal:

♠ A5
 ♥ K9
 ♦ J10982
 ♣ Q942
 ♠ K10982
 ♥ J54
 ♦ KQ6
 ♠ J3
 ♠ Q763
 ♥ Q108762
 ♦ 74
 ♣ 6
 ♠ J4
 ♥ A3
 ♦ A53
 ♣ AK10875

With this layout, the bull-at-a-gate approach of taking two diamond finesses yourself would have failed.

Points to remember ...

- When in doubt, support partner's suit.
- Don't bid good hands twice. Look at it this way: once you have shown strength, your hand is now "average" for your bidding to date.
- Often the way to play a hand is to enlist the defenders' help by losing your losers to them. They might be endplayed, as in the above hand, or they might make a mistake. Defenders aren't infallible.

PARTNERSHIP SYSTEM QUIZ

In your favourite partnership, what is the meaning of the last bid in each of these auctions:

- | | | | |
|------|-------|------|------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | 1♠ | 3♦ | 3♥ |
| Pass | 3NT | Pass | 4NT |
- | | | | |
|------|-------|------|--------------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | 1♦ | 2♦* | D'ble |

* 2♦ = majors
- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-----------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | 1♥ | 1♠ |
| 2♥ | 4♥ | D'ble | 4♠ |

See page 4 for more.

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: E ♠ 984
 Vul: Both ♥ Q963
 ♦ 962
 ♣ AK8

♠ A3
 ♥ 852
 ♦ KQ7543
 ♣ 107

	West	North	East	South
			Pass	1NT*
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥
	Pass	Pass	Pass	

* 15-17 HCP

You lead ♦K, which declarer wins, partner playing ♦10 (standard count). Declarer plays ♣2 to ♣A then a heart to ♥A, followed by another club to ♣K; partner has signalled *odd* in clubs. Next comes ♣8, won by partner's ♣Q, declarer following ♣9. Partner returns ♦8, ♦J and your ♦Q. How will you proceed?

Problem 2:

Dealer: E ♠ 106
 Vul: N/S ♥ AK96
 ♦ QJ863
 ♣ J4

♠ K9732
 ♥ 852
 ♦ 74
 ♣ Q97

	West	North	East	South
			Pass	1NT*
	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
	Pass	3NT	All Pass	

* 12-14 HCP

You lead ♠3 to ♠J and ♠Q. Declarer crosses to ♥K, partner signalling *odd*. Next ♣J (partner *odd*) is run to your ♣Q and you continue ♠K, which holds. What next?

Solutions on page 6.

THE PARTNERSHIP BATTLEGROUND – 5
Bill Jacobs

THE SYSTEM

When it all comes down to it, having dealt with so many of the psychological aspects of a bridge partnership, it's really your bidding system that matters.

If you are not on the same system page, then no amount of Keller, affirmations, post-mortem niceties or general partnership compatibility is going to be much use. You might love one another, but the loving will be done in the Consolation.

So let's talk System.

How many possible auctions are there in bridge? It's a very large number, of course – I was surprised how large. The total number of possible bridge auctions is:

$$(4 * (22^{35} - 1) / 3) + 1$$

(The "+ 1" is for Passed Out.)

In decimal, that works out to:

128,745,650,347,030,683,120,231,926,111,609,371,363,122,697,557

You and your partner need to have an agreed meaning for each of the bids in each of those auctions. It's enough to make you very tired.

Of course, the only sensible way to approach such a task is to create some general rules, and that is how bridge systems are constructed. The effectiveness with which you generalise will do much to determine your level of success.

In Alan Sontag's autobiographical book *The Bridge Bum*, he talks about the system he played with Peter Weichsel that gave them much success on the world stage. He noted that their system notes contained lots of agreements and conventions which *had never come up*. What a waste, you would think, but if they *did* come up, they would be ready. Or would they? Would they have passed or failed the memory test?

And you and I are not bridge champions, and we don't do it for a living, like Sontag and

Weichsel. We would generally fail such memory tests.

This is all a convoluted way of coming to my point: the best way to construct your system is to agree a *small* number of rules that apply to a *large* number of auctions. S. J. Simon said it best: you need to play the "best system possible" rather than the "best possible system". Applying a general rule to a particular auction may not be the optimal way to play in that particular situation, but it's the best you can do, without failing a memory test.

In the partnership quiz from page 3, I constructed a few auctions to which a general rule can be applied. In my opinion, you passed the test if you said something like: "our rules mean that this bid means X".

1.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	3♦	3♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4NT

Quick. When is 4NT Blackwood? Many of those 10⁴⁷ auctions contain a 4NT bid – can you tell which are Blackwood and which are not?

Many years ago, Rob van Riel and Grant Kilvington had a partnership, and their rule at one stage was: "4NT is *always* Blackwood". Not the best possible system, they would be the first to agree, but how much value did they get from *never* having a misunderstanding? Substantial value I would say.

Here's a general rule for your consideration: 4NT is Blackwood, except when bid directly after a natural NT bid, in which case it is quantitative – asking partner to bid a slam with the top of the range. So, 1NT-4NT, 1♠-2♣-2NT-4NT, and a few billion others that I don't have to list.

That's still not optimal, but you should be able to pass a memory test. For this particular auction, see "Ask Billian".

2.

West	North	East	South
	1♦	2♦*	D'ble

* 2♦ = majors

Doubles are pests. 90 years ago, when contract bridge was invented, the meaning of the double was clear: "you will not make this". The scoring table supported the notion.

Since then, the good old Penalty Double has been invaded by Takeout Doubles, Negative Doubles, Responsive Doubles, Action Doubles, Support Doubles, Stolen-Bid Doubles, Blame-Transfer Doubles, and Lord knows what else.

It's up to you how many of the these doubles you play, but I do recommend that you have a default agreement of sorts, like "when in doubt, it's takeout", or "when in doubt, it's penalties".

Homer Simpson has it right: "De-Fault: the two sweetest words in the English language".

Here's a general rule for your consideration: Double of a fully artificial bid shows values – our next double will be for takeout. You can apply this rule when an opponents bids a multi, a transfer pre-empt, Michaels, Cappelletti 2♣/2♦, and many many more. How useful is that?

3.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	1♠
2♥	4♥	D'ble	4♠

When North's artificial 4♥ is doubled, South has new options, in particular, pass and redouble. So what does his direct 4♠ mean?

Anything you like, as long as you have an agreement.

Here's a general rule for your consideration: When you have found a fit, and an opponent doubles your artificial bid, a return to your agreed suit is the weakest possible option, redouble shows control in the bid suit, and pass, whilst denying that control, is generally encouraging. Once again, there are several other applications, for example, a double of a response to Blackwood.

My conclusion: *general* system agreements are more useful than *specific* system agreements.

THE TWELFTH TRICK

IMPs ♠ 42
 Dealer: N ♥ K9
 Vul: All ♦ AKQ
 ♣ AKJ1094

♠ AJ
 ♥ A652
 ♦ J8632
 ♣ 52

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

The spade 5 is led to 6NT, East playing the queen.

Your move. Solution on page 6.

RECENT RESULTS

Rothfield Teams

- 1 T. Chira, M. Kaneko, A. Czapnik, M. Woods
- 2 (Open/Women) C. Hughes, R. van Riel, H. Snashall, J. Magee, D. Smart, S. Murray-white
- 3 M. Dilks, D. Morgan, N. Ewart, R. Gallus, C. Snashall, G. Kilvington

VBA GNOT Heat

- 1 J. Magee, T. Strong, B. Kempthorne, A. Kempthorne
- 2 S. Arber, L. Meyer, J. Dunstan, P. Moritz
- 3 A. Samuel, E. Samuel, J. Fust, K. Chan

Stop Press : ANC Butler in Adelaide

Two fine results to report:

Paula Schroor and Rena Kaplan annihilated the field in Stage 3 of the Women's Butler, finishing 21 VPs and 80 imps ahead of second.

And Bob Gallus and Michael Dilks won the Seniors Butler – more narrowly, but a win is a win.

Our congratulations to both pairs!

SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1:

Dealer: E	♠ 984
Vul: Both	♥ Q963
	♦ 962
	♣ AK8
♠ A3	♠ KJ10752
♥ 852	♥ 107
♦ KQ7543	♦ 108
♣ 107	♣ Q53
	♠ Q6
	♥ AKJ4
	♦ AJ
	♣ J9642

Partner will have another trump, and you can use it to kill ♦9. However there is something odd about this hand. Firstly, declarer must hold ♥AK, else why not finesse? If his hand – pattern is 4423, why would he start by clearing clubs? Now that you think about it (always a good idea) declarer has to hold ♣J – so he is off-shape, 2425, and those 2 long clubs will get rid of all but one of dummy’s spades¹. You need 2 tricks in spades, ♠A is a must!

Problem 2:

Dealer: E	♠ 106
Vul: N/S	♥ AK96
	♦ QJ863
	♣ J4
♠ K9732	♠ J84
♥ 852	♥ Q107
♦ 74	♦ AK109
♣ Q97	♣ 653
	♠ AQ5
	♥ J43
	♦ 52
	♣ AK1082

Partner hasn’t covered ♣J, which argues no ♣K, so you have most of declarer’s points. Simple arithmetic says he can’t have ♥Q, so you should play a second heart now, establishing the setting trick.

If you simply clear the spades declarer will be forced to play partner for all the red high cards and could catch him in a strip-squeeze.

¹ Perhaps declarer could have made your life a bit more difficult by dropping the club jack on the third round. *BJ*

THE TWELFTH TRICK
Bill Jacobs

IMPs	♠ 42
Dealer: N	♥ K9
Vul: All	♦ AKQ
	♣ AKJ1094
♠ K985	♠ Q10763
♥ J84	♥ Q1097
♦ 105	♦ 974
♣ Q873	♣ 6
	♠ AJ
	♥ A652
	♦ J8632
	♣ 52

After winning ♠A, count your tricks. 1 spade, 2 hearts and 5 diamonds leaves you looking for 4 club tricks.

The best play in clubs is an immediate finesse, an exact 50-50 shot. Cashing a top club first will pick up singleton queen offside, but fail to deliver four fast club tricks if East has a small singleton (four times more likely than singleton queen, as there are four small singletons possible).

What’s more, you need to take that immediate finesse right now at trick two, because you only have one entry back to hand to repeat it.

Finesse the club and shut your eyes. If East wins the queen, you are down at least 4. But delaying your play by cashing a top club and all your red tricks leaves you down 3 if the club finesse fails, and fails to cater for West having Qxxx in clubs – which will be the case over 10% of the time.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

Modesty

“My partner and I had a misunderstanding. He thought I knew what I was doing.”

“ALERT! My partner’s bid is asking me to further mis-describe my hand.”

“What system do you play?” “We are playing Poorly with Variations.”

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

ASK BILLIAN

"Last Monday in the VBA GNOT heat, I picked up, vul versus not,

♠ K74
♥ AKJ84
♦ 62
♣ KQ3

Playing Victorian Acol, partner opened 1♠, and the next hand bid 3♦ (weak jump). I bid 3♥, and partner bid 3NT. What should I do? I passed eventually, but partner held

♠ AQJ1098
♥ Q
♦ AQJ
♣ J105

and we missed an easy slam, bid at the other table. What went wrong?"

Bill: You had a difficult choice over partner's 3NT. You could just correct to 4♠, but I don't see why that shows the slam try that you want to make. Or you could cue bid 4♦, which will lead to an auction where *neither* of you know what's going on! A simpler alternative is to just raise 3NT to 4NT, which I think should be quantitative (see elsewhere in this Bulletin). And your pass was reasonable also. So many choices, and I sympathise with your dilemma.

But I wonder about your partner's 3NT bid ...

Ian: What are opener's rebid options?

3♠: First of all, is it forcing? I believe it has to be. West's 3♥ is a "high reverse". If it didn't contain game-going values maybe it could have doubled ...

Bill: Hang on a sec - 3♠? Not for me. I *never* want to be playing 3♠ as a final contract with that hand!

Ian: Well, the partnership should have established a general agreement (see Page 5, your Conclusion) that introducing a new suit at the 3-level is game-forcing.

So, despite your interruption, 3♠ is an option – but is it strong or weak? There has to be room for a scrambling rebid of 3♠ with a very

grotty opening 1♠. So can 3♠ be stronger than 4♠? I think yes. Both 3NT and 4♠ are *full-stop* bids, another way of saying fast arrival. That may not be the intention but that is the message.

At the moment 3♠ is my answer – but opener has to make another move if feasible, to clarify strong-not-weak.

3NT: as stated, sounds terminal, no certain club guard. *But* the last chance to introduce no-trump: against that, a very handsome suit.

4♦: don't fancy for many reasons.

4♠: sounds terminal, may be a longer, poorer suit.

Bill: I think opener should jump-rebid 4♠ and hope for the best. Surely it cannot be sensible to jump to 4♠ on a weak suit. Then over 4♠, can responder bid 5♠, asking opener to bid slam with a diamond control?

Ian: Yes, maybe. I must say that 3♦ was a very effective spanner in the works. Who was it that bid 3♦?

Bill: Charlie Snashall. He seems like such a nice chap, but at the bridge table, he's not! His hand was:

♠ 65 ♥ 753 ♦ K109843 ♣ 76

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to the following members who have been recently promoted to a higher grade of Master:

Graduate Master	Richard Feigin Mark Lazarus Geoffrey Stanning Laszlo Sziget
*Local Master	Margot Slonim Rose Stone
**Local Master	Margaret Inglis
*Regional Master	Edna May
National Master	Simone Schwartz

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

VBA NEWS – CATHIE LACHMAN

On Wednesday 19th July following the last round of the Rothfield Teams our ANC representatives were presented with their hand knitted scarves, wished good luck and then had a supper and drinks and chat with other players. Spirits were high and our representatives were full of enthusiasm and hope of doing well in Adelaide.

The photo below shows L-R – Jeremy Goldberg, Laurie Kelso, Ben Kingham, Ivan Hu, Nathan Howard, George Gaspar, Jeremy Rosen, Boris Tencer, Jill Magee, Blaine Howe, Miriam Tencer, Michael Chrapot, Henri de Jong, Chris Hughes, Kitty Muntz, Jeff Fust, Robbie Van Riel.



Many thanks once again to all the members, non-members, friends and family who generously gave their time to knit the scarves.

During the period 17th August to 6th September, whilst I am away the office hours will be 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. daily. Please do not send me e-mail, rather address your correspondence to info@vba.asn.au.

On Tuesday 25th July the VBA conducted a heat of the Australia Wide Novice Pairs – it was well attended and our heat winners scored in excess of 65%. The winners N-S were Jeremy Rosen and Martin Wardle both of whom are representing Victoria at the ANC in the Youth Team. The E-W winners between them have been playing less than 6 months and it was their first and second unsupervised duplicate session respectively. Well done! The best performing VBA members were NS: 2nd - Robin Rawson & Geoff Stanning (60.6%), 3rd Mary Bertuna & Tim Blizard (59.3%). EW 2nd – Myer Janover & Valerie Trice (54.9%), 3rd Elizabeth Williams & Ann Bednarz (54.6%).