

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

November 2009

Editor: Bill Jacobs

NEVER TOO OLD

Although now over a hundred years old, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch is still an avid bridge player. So when she asked Henri de Jong to arrange a game, it seemed appropriate to invite another near centenarian bridge player to join – Ignacy Tyrmand. The other two players did however reduce the average age of this group to a mere 86!

It was a truly uplifting experience and further afternoon games are being planned.



L-R Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, Henri de Jong, Ignacy Tyrmand, Elizabeth Hodgkins



CHANGES IN THE GOVERNANCE OF VICTORIAN BRIDGE

An open letter to all Victorian bridge players, from the VBA and FABCV

For many years the Victorian Bridge Association (VBA) has administered bridge in the state as well as its own, club, affairs. As explained in previous newsletters, times have changed: Victoria now has more than fifty affiliated clubs; also many people play bridge primarily for enjoyment and company in addition to those who play competitive bridge. The result is that the current system of governance is becoming less functional.

After much discussion and collaboration, the VBA and the Federation of Affiliated Bridge Clubs of Victoria (FABCV) have agreed that Victoria's governance needs to be reviewed and redesigned so that all clubs and players are represented.

Accordingly, the VBA and FABCV have established an Interim Committee comprising two people from the VBA, two people from the FABCV, one from each of the Western, Northern, Eastern and Peninsula regions and one person from the for-profit clubs.

The Interim Committee's terms of reference (available on the VBA and FABCV web sites) charge it with creating a blueprint for this reform. The tasks include: developing strategic, communications and financial plans, designing cost efficient administration, building a promotion and teaching plan, developing a constitution for a new organisation (tentatively labelled "Bridge Victoria"), and negotiating transition arrangements with the VBA.

For the next 2-3 years at least, the VBA will remain responsible for "representational bridge": selecting and managing the state teams and running the 2011 Australian National Congress.

We place great emphasis on the Interim Committee seeking opinions from all interested parties and regularly reporting its progress. The committee will visit each of the regions to discuss its work and solicit opinions.

The committee will be required to submit a progress report, including an estimate of the completion date of its work, within three months.

We are hopeful that the longer term effects of changing governance will be, aside from the improved democratisation, to attract more Victorians to the game of bridge.



FOR STARTERS
Bill Jacobs

You pick up a hand which is the epitome of "average":

♠ A98 ♥ J1043 ♦ Q52 ♣ K76

All vulnerable playing imps, partner deals and opens 1♦. Next hand doubles. Your bid?

After partner opens one of a suit, and the next hand doubles, use a redouble to show 10 or more points, with no clear suit to bid, nor primary support for partner. In these circumstances, the opponents may be in trouble – your side might be able to double them for penalties.

Other bids should retain their normal meaning: the redouble is a "free hit".

You should redouble with this hand, as the heart suit is too feeble to bid, and you might as well show your 10 points.

After your redouble, LHO bids 2♣, which is passed back to you:

| | | | |
|-----|---------|-------|---------|
| LHO | Partner | RHO | You |
| | 1♦ | D'ble | Red'ble |
| 2♣ | Pass | Pass | ? |

The key here is that partner's pass of 2♣ is Forcing with a capital F. Partner cannot double 2♣ for penalties, but is waiting to see if *you* can. Remember this important point: unless the opponent's jump the bidding after your redouble, your side must come back into the auction.

You don't have the length and strength in clubs to double 2♣. You should show your diamond support with 2♦, which partner can pass if he likes. But partner doesn't pass – the auction continues:

| | | | |
|------|---------|-------|---------|
| LHO | Partner | RHO | You |
| | 1♦ | D'ble | Red'ble |
| 2♣ | Pass | Pass | 2♦ |
| Pass | 3♣ | Pass | ? |

Partner's bid of the opponent's suit is a cue-bid, not a natural bid. He must have a strong hand, and is asking whether you can provide a club stopper.

You can help with that, so 3NT is your bid. That concludes the auction:

| | | | |
|------|---------|-------|---------|
| LHO | Partner | RHO | You |
| | 1♦ | D'ble | Red'ble |
| 2♣ | Pass | Pass | 2♦ |
| Pass | 3♣ | Pass | 3NT |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

and the ♣10 is led:

♠ KQJ
♥ A72
♦ AK964
♣ J4

♠ A98
♥ J1043
♦ Q52
♣ K76

Partner was quite right to pass 2♣ round to you – if you had the hand to double it, it would have been a bloodbath.

Meanwhile, 3NT looks solid – the only danger would appear to be a poor diamond split. You play low from dummy, and RHO puts in ♣Q. What do you do?

Keep your fingers off the ♣K! If you win the first trick, the clubs are wide open; but if you duck it, you still have a stopper, and the defenders' communications will be disrupted.

RHO continues with ♣A and another club, as you win the king, discarding a heart from dummy. Now what?

The only danger, and it is a real one, is that LHO started with 5 clubs and has a diamond stopper. You have only 8 top tricks, so do need to develop the diamond suit.

The solution is quite simple if you think of it. Cash ♦Q and if RHO follows low, play a diamond intending to insert ♦9. That may lose an unnecessary diamond trick, but it won't lose the contract, because if RHO wins a diamond, and has a club to play, it will

mean the clubs were originally divided 4-4, and the opponents cannot take five tricks. You will end up with four diamonds, three spades, one heart and one club trick for your contract.

This safety play was necessary, as the full deal is:

| | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| | ♠ KQJ | |
| | ♥ A72 | |
| | ♦ AK964 | |
| | ♣ J4 | |
| ♠ 76 | | ♠ 105432 |
| ♥ 96 | | ♥ KQ85 |
| ♦ J1083 | | ♦ 7 |
| ♣ 109853 | | ♣ AQ2 |
| | ♠ A98 | |
| | ♥ J1043 | |
| | ♦ Q52 | |
| | ♣ K76 | |

As it turns out, you get an overtrick – a just reward for careful play.

Points to remember:

- After 1 of a suit, double – redouble shows 10+ points, and promises another bid if the opponents don't jump. Your side should play penalty doubles of opposing bids from that point on. Other responses retain their original meaning.
- Be on the lookout for hold-up plays. Most players know that with this stopper:

xx

Axx

you should usually withhold your ace until the third round, playing notrumps. The holdup in the given deal is more subtle. Notice also the good play of ♣Q by your RHO – trying to tempt you into an error.

- Your LHO was the danger defender, despite his clear weakness. Recognizing this, and playing the diamonds appropriately, requires good mental construction of the opposing hands. That ♦9 was a golden card!

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: N ♠ Q83
 Vul: E/W ♥ A65
 ♦ K98
 ♣ K972

♠ AK107652
 ♥ K3
 ♦ J
 ♣ Q85

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

Partner led ♥Q to ♥A, you unblocking ♥K. Declarer now drew trumps in three rounds and exited with a heart. Partner continues with a third top heart, declarer ruffing. Now comes ♠J, partner's ♠9 (standard count). You win this and?

Problem 2:

Dealer: W ♠ Q
 Vul: nil ♥ K843
 ♦ AKQ10
 ♣ 10752

♠ 10
 ♥ Q97
 ♦ J9764
 ♣ A985

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| Pass | 1♦ | Pass | 1♠ |
| Pass | 1NT | Pass | 4♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

Partner starts with ♣K, and you encourage. Next he plays ♥A, which you discourage, declarer following ♥2. Partner's next card is ♣Q. How will you defend?

Solutions on page 6.

Sydney Spring Nationals

Some interim results:
 Simon Hinge: semi-finalist of the Spring Nationals Open teams, and second place in the Dick Cummings Open Pairs.
 Sara Tishler: third place in the Dick Cummings Open Pairs.

PETIT FOUR

With everyone vulnerable, you hold

♠ 76 ♥ 42 ♦ J1087632 ♣ 63

and hear this auction:

| | | | |
|-----|---------|------|------|
| LHO | Partner | RHO | You |
| | 3♥ | 4♠ | Pass |
| 4NT | Pass | 5♣* | Pass |
| 7♠ | Pass | Pass | Pass |

* 3 key-cards in spades

You lead an obedient ♥4. After declarer has wrapped up 13 tricks in his grand slam, you discover to your chagrin that if you had led *any card other than ♥4*, 7♠ would have failed.

Construct a layout consistent with this.

FOUR BIDDING PROBLEMS

You are South, to bid.

- ♠ AKJ54 ♥ KJ7 ♦ AQ ♣ J92

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | | 1♠ |
| Pass | 2♠ | Pass | ?? |

- ♠ 6 ♥ AQ ♦ Q754 ♣ AKQJ87

N/S vulnerable

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 3♠ | Pass | Pass | ?? |

- ♠ Q2 ♥ K54 ♦ AKJ1062 ♣ AJ

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | | 1♦ |
| 1♠ | 2♦ | Pass | ?? |

- ♠ K62 ♥ A54 ♦ AKQJ ♣ KQJ

Nil vulnerable

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | 3♠ | ?? |

You've been given some nice hands – averaging 19.5 points. More on page 7.

NOTICE OF VICTORIAN BRIDGE ASSOCIATION LTD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Bridge Association Limited will be held at the VBA Clubrooms, 131 Poath Road, Murrumbeena, Victoria, 3163 on Tuesday 1st December 2009 commencing at 6.30 p.m.

All Members Welcome

THE TWELFTH TRICK

IMPs ♠ 42
 Dealer: N ♥ 875
 Vul: Nil ♦ AK9652
 ♣ 76

♠ AQ10
 ♥ AKQJ
 ♦ J43
 ♣ AQJ

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | 3♦ | Pass | 6NT |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |

The lead is ♠9, two, king, ace.

Plan the play. Solution on page 8.

VBA Daytime RED POINT Walk In Pairs in aid of The Butterfly Foundation

Wednesdays 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th November

- No entry fee- \$10 table fee for all - \$1 from each player each week will be donated to the Butterfly Foundation
- 11:00 am start, break for lunch, finish 2:30 – 2:45 pm
- The Bridge Players Cafe will be open for lunch, serving hot and cold food, cakes and drinks

The Butterfly Foundation provides support for Australians who suffer from eating disorders and negative body image issues, and their carers.



Watch this space for the next Wednesday charity.

BOOK REVIEW

This book might set a record for the highest content-to-word ratio in the literature. There are 156 meaty problems in declarer play— no auctions are shown (although you are told if the opponents make a bid), just the final contract. And the solutions don't include full layouts – only an explanation of the correct play.



This is because the problems are sourced from Britain's TV Channel 4 teletext service between 1985 and 1992. Remember teletext? Nor do I, but apparently space was at a premium, hence the abbreviated format.

The deals vary from spectacular to merely interesting. The solutions vary from complex to quite simple – but "simple" doesn't necessarily mean "obvious". Try this:

| | |
|---------|----------|
| ♠ A94 | ♠ K82 |
| ♥ AK3 | ♥ J10 |
| ♦ 82 | ♦ KQ7654 |
| ♣ J8742 | ♣ Q3 |

How should West play 3NT on a low heart lead won by the jack?

I found this problem, like several in the book, deceptively tricky. West cannot afford to cross to hand to play a diamond up, lest he risk setting up a suit for the defence. Nor can he play a top diamond from dummy, lest it is ducked, leaving dummy short of entries.

The correct (but not 100% guaranteed) play is to lead a *small* diamond from dummy at trick 2. This just requires diamonds to break, and the defence unable to take 3 clubs tricks.

Problem Corner retails for \$29.95, and is available from The Bridge Shop (<http://www.bridgeshop.com.au/>).

Highly recommended.

...BJ

VBA officials can also play bridge!

Christine Heesom from the Paynesville Bridge Club notes that it was good to see VBA personnel supporting the Bairnsdale Congress last weekend.

Pictured are the winners of the Open Teams: Stan Klofa (VBA Vice President), Cathie Lachman (VBA General Manager), Simon Hinge (VBA Vice President), Jeannette Collins (VBA President), with Judy Banks, President of Bairnsdale Bridge Club.



Stan, Cathie, Simon, Judy and Jeannette

2009 VBA Summer Congress

Come along to the 2009 Summer Congress

Swiss Pairs on Saturday 5th December

Swiss Teams on Sunday 6th December

Enter online: www.vba.asn.au



Funny Post Mortems

Two experts get to 3NT in a competitive auction. Dummy leaves the table and comes back after the hand to find declarer has gone down. The following conversation ensues:

Dummy: "What happened?"

Declarer: "I misguessed the club queen."

Dummy: "Didn't you play opening bidder for it?"

Declarer: "No, I played you for it, and you didn't have it."

SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Dealer: N | ♠ Q83 | |
| Vul: E/W | ♥ A65 | |
| | ♦ K98 | |
| | ♣ K972 | |
| ♠ 94 | | ♠ AK107652 |
| ♥ QJ10984 | | ♥ K3 |
| ♦ 543 | | ♦ J |
| ♣ J4 | | ♣ Q85 |
| | ♠ J | |
| | ♥ 72 | |
| | ♦ AQ10762 | |
| | ♣ A1073 | |

If partner had led your suit there would be no dilemma, but he didn't. You are looking at only black cards and obviously ♠J was singleton. If you lead ♠A, or for that matter a low spade, it costs a trick. But consider South's hand-shape – 1264 it must be. The defence's clubs are 3-2 so declarer's long club is a winner. Giving up one trick in spades can't cost (it's winner-on-winner), breaking clubs might cost 2 tricks, including the Setting Trick.

[If you did break clubs, it's probably best to switch to ♣Q; declarer might play you for ♣QJx.]

Problem 2

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Dealer: W | ♠ Q | |
| Vul: nil | ♥ K843 | |
| | ♦ AKQ10 | |
| | ♣ 10752 | |
| ♠ 8652 | | ♠ 10 |
| ♥ AJ1065 | | ♥ Q97 |
| ♦ 82 | | ♦ J9764 |
| ♣ KQ | | ♣ A985 |
| | ♠ AKJ9743 | |
| | ♥ 2 | |
| | ♦ 53 | |
| | ♣ J63 | |

Partner hasn't continued clubs at once, but stopped off to show you ♥A. Maybe he is trying to tell you something. What can it be? If you got that far, you overtake ♣Q to play another club.



PETIT FOUR: SOLUTION
Bill Jacobs

| | | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|
| | ♠ 1085432 | |
| | ♥ J10 | |
| | ♦ AQ | |
| | ♣ A102 | |
| ♠ 76 | | ♠ - |
| ♥ 42 | | ♥ KQ98765 |
| ♦ J1087632 | | ♦ K9 |
| ♣ 63 | | ♣ J987 |
| | ♠ AKQJ9 | |
| | ♥ A3 | |
| | ♦ 54 | |
| | ♣ KQ54 | |

Your ♥4 is the setting trick, if you don't squander it at trick 1. If you do, declarer wins ♥A and runs six rounds of spades:

| | | |
|---------|--------|--------|
| | ♠ 2 | |
| | ♥ J | |
| | ♦ AQ | |
| | ♣ A102 | |
| ♠ - | | ♠ - |
| ♥ 2 | | ♥ K |
| ♦ J1087 | | ♦ K9 |
| ♣ 63 | | ♣ J987 |
| | ♠ - | |
| | ♥ 3 | |
| | ♦ 54 | |
| | ♣ KQ54 | |

This is the position when the last spade is played, declarer throwing a diamond. East is squeezed: if he throws a red card, the established red winner in dummy will squeeze him again in clubs and the other red suit.

So East discards a club, and four clubs are cashed. Now *dummy* is squeezed on the last club. If dummy throws a heart, partner does likewise. Unfortunately, declarer's ♥3 is now high – if only you still had that petit four!

Did you know?
All Affiliated Club secretaries receive quarterly reports about the State's finances that can be made available to club members.

BRIDGE APHORISMS – IV
IF 3NT IS A POSSIBLE CONTRACT –
BID IT

This is Hamman’s Law, named after American Bob Hamman. Actually, as Ian McCance points out, Hamman’s original formulation was:

If you have a choice of reasonable bids and one of them is 3NT, then bid it.

Either way, the law tells you to bid 3NT! There are perhaps two main reasons for the law, both obvious in their own way:

1. 3NT is the game contract that requires the fewest tricks.
2. 3NT never goes down on a ruff.

The rule received only moderate support from respondents – 6.3 on the Aphorism Scale. Ben Thompson reckons Hamman coined the law to sucker everyone else into playing silly 3NT contracts against him!

Robert Fruewirth drily suggested that the law works because 3NT contracts are made “more often than one would think.” But then, so too probably are all contracts.

If you are a true devotee of Hamman’s Law, then you will have bid 3NT on each of the problems posed on page 4. They form my attempt at the Outer Limits (or should that be Twilight Zone?) of Hamman’s Law.

1. ♠ AKJ54 ♥ KJ7 ♦ AQ ♣ J92

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|----------|
| West | North | East | South |
| Pass | 2♠ | Pass | 1♠ ?? |

Despite the 5-3 spade fit, this is the sort of layout where 9 tricks are easier than 10. The 10th trick might be available on a ruff by dummy, but your hand makes this improbable.

The main risk of 3NT is the opponents running a suit. That will probably be clubs, but is it likely? And 3NT doesn’t necessarily end the auction – partner can always return to 4♠ with a suitably distributional hand.

2. ♠ 6 ♥ AQ ♦ Q754 ♣ AKQJ87

N/S vulnerable

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 3♠ | Pass | Pass | ?? |

A good partner will provide a spade stopper. It’s quite likely: LHO has pre-empted non-vulnerable, RHO has failed to bid 4♠. If you double 3♠, you risk an unpleasant 4♥ response.

3NT seems a truly bizarre bid with this hand, but I believe if you gave the problem to a group of bona fide experts, that would be their choice.

3. ♠ Q2 ♥ K54 ♦ AKJ1062 ♣ AJ

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|----------|
| West | North | East | South |
| 1♠ | 2♦ | Pass | 1♦ ?? |

Sometimes, a stopper is as strong as it sounds. Maybe LHO will underlead ♠AK. Maybe he will stay off the spades altogether. Maybe he cashes a top one, and then tries to find partner’s entry through your presumed ♠Qxx. Maybe partner delivers ♠Kxx, thereby right-siding 3NT. Or maybe he has ♠Jxx.

All those maybes add up to 3NT. (And of course, maybe they run 5-6 spade tricks against you – but then does any other game make? Fortune favours the brave!)

4. ♠ K62 ♥ A54 ♦ AKQJ ♣ KQJ

Nil vulnerable

| | | | |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| West | North | East | South |
| | | 3♠ | ?? |

If partner was barred from bidding, what do you think your most likely correct contract would be? Right – so bid it. Hey, it’s only 23 points, and whilst a “bad 23” is something of an oxymoron, if it did exist, this might be it.

And anyway, all your alternatives are likely to lead to some dog’s breakfast of an auction that will spiral out of control.

Another way to look at it: divide the outstanding 17 points evenly between the other three players. That does not give your side sufficient points for slam.

THE TWELFTH TRICK Bill Jacobs

| | | |
|-----------|----------|---------|
| IMPs | ♠ 42 | |
| Dealer: N | ♥ 875 | |
| Vul: Nil | ♦ AK9652 | |
| | ♣ 76 | |
| ♠ 9875 | | ♠ KJ63 |
| ♥ 10842 | | ♥ 93 |
| ♦ - | | ♦ Q1087 |
| ♣ 105432 | | ♣ K98 |
| | ♠ AQ10 | |
| | ♥ AKQJ | |
| | ♦ J43 | |
| | ♣ AQJ | |

Cash *three* rounds of hearts and play ♦J. If West follows (with low or queen), duck and claim shortly thereafter.

If West shows out in diamonds, play low from dummy. East must win (otherwise you duck a diamond), and you hope he is endplayed into playing a black suit. Finesse, and use your ♦AK as entries to take two more black suit finesses.

Traps to watch out for:

- Playing a fourth round of hearts will squeeze dummy out of a black card that you may need for finessing.
- Not playing three hearts might give East a safe heart exit.
- Playing a low diamond and inserting the 9 gives East the opportunity to win and play ♦Q. You can still make via a squeeze, but will have to guess East's shape. The recommended line needs no guesswork.
- Similarly, playing a low diamond to the ace, and a low diamond back (unblocking ♦J on ♦Q) will require guesswork later.



SLAM BIDDING MASTERCLASS

@ VBA Clubrooms, 131 Poath Rd, Murrumbidgee

Saturday 12th December 11am - 4:30pm
Learning Session

Sunday 13th December 11am - 3:00pm
Practice Session

INQUIRIES: email: jeffafust@yahoo.com mob: 0403 121648

RECENT RESULTS

Ern Palfreyman Teams

Final

- 1 L. Gold, D. Davis, J. Fust, E. Hardy
- 2 E. Samuel, B. Tencer, M. Tencer, M. Chrapot
- 3 S. Klofa, R. Gallus, J. Collins, H. Blakeman

Plate

- 1 R. Livingston, P. Hill, M. Weinberg, A. Halmos
- 2 C. Hughes, K. Bechet, L. Young, M. Pitt
- 3 S. Tishler, G. Gaspar, J. Fleiszig, G. Fleiszig

Victorian Open Pairs

Final

- 1 B. Howe – N. Ewart
- 2 E. Caplan – J. Alexander
- 3 R. Gallus – D. Beckett

Plate

- 1 H. Snashall – S. Weisz
- 2 S. Gerdan – R. Szabo-Bencze
- 3 G. Chettle – J. Macrae

Consolation

- 1 E. Hardy – C. Brook
- 2 M. Allison – C. Whiddon
- 3 E. Samuel – I. Margitta

GNRP Non-Life Master Pairs

- 1 D. Zec – C. Arul
- 2 C. Whiddon – M. Allison
- 3 D. Sharman – C. Macquarrie

Victorian Individual

- 1 George Gaspar
- 2 Peter Havlicek
- 3 Ann Paul

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Graduate Master | Patricia Douglas Chris Wallace |
| Local Master | Maurice Bolling Sara Levy |
| *Local Master | Elva Jobst |
| **Local Master | Kay Levy |
| Regional Master | Geoff Schroder |
| Silver Life Master | Graham Hill |