

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

February 2011

Editor: Bill Jacobs

We lost two of the VBA's finest members in the December/January period:

WALTER LOWEN 1916-2011

Born Wladislaw Loewenherz in Vienna, Walter Lowen studied medicine in Lvov, Poland, then emigrated to Australia in 1939. On the boat, he met his future wife Sima, and the two enjoyed almost 70 years of marriage.



Sima and Walter joined the VBA in the 1960s and were wonderful contributors to the club over many decades. In the early days, Walter played with Victor Muntz, and represented Victoria on several occasions at the ANC, most notably in 1972, when he won the Open teams event.

Walter was also active in bridge administration, and served four years as President of the VBA, from 1981 to 1984.

As well as being a doctor, radiologist and fine bridge player, Walter was also a gifted sportsman – junior table tennis champion and Poland's representative in the 1935 World Championships in London. He continued with his table tennis in Australia, winning the Australian title in 1948, as well as numerous State titles. He was inducted to the Table Tennis Victoria Hall of Fame and the Maccabi Hall of Fame.

Despite all this, Walter was a shy and modest person. A gracious and generous host, an invitation to Sima and Walter's home for a meal was an occasion not to be missed.

Our thoughts are with Sima, and children Norma, Mark and Richard.

NORMA BORIN 1930-2010

Norma Borin passed away peacefully on Boxing Day.

Norma's long-standing partnership with husband Jim was regarded at the time as the finest husband-wife partnership in the world.



Their successes, and Norma's successes with other partners, are too numerous to list in full. She was a dual winner of the ANC Open teams event. Her most outstanding result, however, was as a member of the Australian Open Team in Rio de Janeiro in 1979, where Australia narrowly missed out on qualifying for the Bermuda Bowl final. The Bridge World magazine calculated datums for the qualifying event: in the list of 18 of the world's finest pairs, Norma and Jim ran third.

In the 70s and 80s, the Borins owned their own bridge club at the ESU in South Yarra. It was a vibrant club, which in many ways became a model for how an affiliated bridge club should be run, with much emphasis on lessons, supervised duplicates and mentoring, in addition to well-organised competitions and congresses – all essential ingredients for the improving player.

The multi-talented Norma would handle the catering at their congresses: on one occasion, whilst she was busy dishing out food onto plates, a player approached and said "can I give you a hand?" "Oh yes, thank-you" said Norma gratefully. "You hold ace-third, five small ..."

ANC PROBLEMS
David Morgan

In July 2010, the Australian National Championships were held in Hobart. Five players – Jill Magee, Ben Kingham, Jeremy Rosen, Justin Stark and Terry Strong – had the pleasing experience of representing Victoria in the Open Teams for the first time. (Terry was not new to this competition, having previously represented Queensland.) By contrast, I was the team veteran – with the grey hair to prove it – having represented Victoria the previous year! (And the ACT in the dim past.)

Try your hand at these problems faced by members of the team.

(Each of the problems has multiple questions. Each question is followed by a line like:

The answer is below the line so work out what you would do before reading on. If you want to avoid seeing the answer, try covering the page with a sheet of paper.)

Problem 1.

You are the dealer at nil vul with:

♠ KQJ82 ♥ 9 ♦ KQT82 ♣ AQ

You open 1♠ and your LHO bids 4♥. Partner and RHO pass and you . . . ?

You should double. This shows a good hand that is short in the opponents' suit. Hands like this are MUCH more common than ones where you want to make a unilateral penalty double of the opponents. At low levels the double suggests support for all the other suits. At high levels you might only have tolerance.

LHO passes and partner bids 4♠. (Note that, without spade support, partner could pass – this doesn't promise trump tricks – or bid 4NT to ask for your longer minor; this 4NT is takeout, not Blackwood! And if partner bids 5♣ you should pass. Partner will usually have a six-card suit: most hands with length in hearts as well would pass; with length in spades as well would bid 4♠; and with length

in diamonds as well would bid 4NT.) RHO passes as do you and LHO doubles to show a good hand for his 4♥ preempt. (This isn't a Lightner double to direct the lead as the doubler is on lead.)

So the auction has been:

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
			1♠
4♥	Pass	Pass	D'ble
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
D'ble	Pass	Pass	Pass

The ♥A is led and you see

♠ 963
♥ 42
♦ A9753
♣ 653

♠ KQJ82
♥ 9
♦ KQ1082
♣ AQ

The ♥A is followed by the ♥K, with RHO showing an odd number. You ruff the second heart and lead the spade queen, which your RHO wins with the ace. He returns the club ten, and you . . . ?

Jeremy Rosen, playing with Ben Kingham, reasoned this way: LHO had to have something outside hearts for his double and that could only be the club king. If he took the finesse and it lost, LHO was likely to return a heart, trying to shorten declarer's trumps. Jeremy would be able to ruff in dummy but then would have to decide whether trumps had split 4-1: with only one trump left in dummy he would have to take a finesse immediately. To avoid being put to that guess he rose with the club ace. Now he could cash the spade king to find out if spades were 3-2 or 4-1. When they were 4-1, he was able to go to dummy with the diamond ace and take the finesse.

But there was one more trap to avoid: what spade did Jeremy play from dummy on the spade king and why?

He needed to play the ♠9 from dummy to unblock the suit. Now the suit was:

♠ - ♠ 6 ♠ 105
 ♠ J8

and he could take the marked finesse. But look what happens if he retains the spade nine in dummy:

♠ - ♠ 9 ♠ 105
 ♠ J8

If RHO doesn't cover the 9 then Jeremy is forced to let it win and then hope he can get back to hand to draw the last trump. If RHO had a singleton diamond then he would get a ruff for the fourth trick for the defence.

Jeremy's reasoning and play were correct: the full deal was

Dealer: S	♠ 963	
Vul: nil	♥ 42	
	♦ A9753	
	♣ 653	
♠ 7		♠ A1054
♥ AKQJ853		♥ 1076
♦ 6		♦ J4
♣ KJ74		♣ 10982
	♠ KQJ82	
	♥ 9	
	♦ KQ1082	
	♣ AQ	

At the other table the auction was different. South opened 1♠ but Justin Stark decided to bid his hand slowly and overcalled 2♥ – he recognized that bidding 4♥ with such hands often acts as a transfer, forcing the opponents into 4♠, and he didn't know what to do over that. North raised to 2♠ and I stretched to bid 3♥ (support with support). Now see how easy the auction is for West: when North bid 4♠ Justin had a clear 5♥ bid. North doubled this to show a good hand but with the ♣Q onside 11 tricks were easy and Victoria picked up 15 IMPs. This helped us to a 56-14 IMPs win and, after Round 1, Victoria was in first place. Stop the event!

Problem 2.

Computers have been programmed to play bridge for more than two decades now but are still not able to play at expert level. However, there are some aspects of the game where they are consistently better than

humans. One of them is opening leads. Computers lead trumps more often than humans¹ and they don't lead their partner's suit as often as humans. (One reason they can safely lead a suit other than partner's is that they don't have to worry about partner's reaction when they do that and it's wrong.) Try your hand at this opening lead problem:

You hold

♠ A85 ♥ J4 ♦ K3 ♣ AQ9832

and open 1♣, which is natural or any balanced hand with 15-20 HCP. (The way Justin and I play it could even be 5332 with five spades, hearts or diamonds.) Your LHO overcalls 2♣ (Michaels) to show at least 5-5 in the majors. Justin passes and RHO bids 4♠. You pass and are wondering what to lead but the auction isn't over! LHO passes and partner bids 4NT. RHO doubles and you ... ?

This 4NT isn't Blackwood either! With a good hand partner would have done something over 2♣. No, this is another 4NT bid for takeout over the opponents four of a major. Our agreement is that 4NT promises hearts if the suit hasn't been bid (I'll explain why in another article). Here the Michaels bidder has promised five of them. So, Justin has to have a hand with lots of minor-suit cards. He isn't sure which is your longer minor (you could have 3-3-5-2) so he's asking you to choose. Your choice is an easy one: you bid 5♣.

But now the auction takes an even more unusual twist. LHO and partner pass but RHO starts to think . . . and eventually emerges with 6♠! Everyone passes this and now you have to lead. What is your choice?

It's always a good idea before leading to try to work out what kind of hand declarer has and how the play might go. In short auctions that can be difficult – that's one of the reasons why, all other things being equal,

¹ David seems to be implying that humans make too few trump opening leads. This will be comprehensively refuted in a future bulletin, once my blood pressure has gone back down ... BJ

you should prefer short to long auctions. Here, however, there are clues.

Why would a good player be happy to play in game but then bid slam? Unless she's suddenly discovered two more aces the only reason can be that the auction has helped her to work out more about her partner's hand. That must mean that she has enough clubs that the bidding (4NT to show clubs and the 5♣ preference) has made her confident that her partner is void. If that's right then where is your second defensive trick coming from? (You know the ace of trumps will cash!)

Justin might have a heart trick (but he probably won't as he'd be less likely to bid 4NT if he did). And, even if he does, it's not running away. But a diamond trick could run away: declarer could draw trumps after forcing out your ace and then cash dummy's hearts to discard a diamond from hand. If that analysis is right, you need to lead a diamond now. If you lead the ♦K all you need partner to hold is the ♦Q. He did show length in diamonds with his 4NT bid; it's not that much to hope that he has the queen.

At the table this would have been a success.

Dealer: S	♠ 9		
Vul: E/W	♥ 83		
	♦ Q109864		
	♣ J1074		
♠ QJ1063		♠ K742	
♥ A109652		♥ KQ7	
♦ J5		♦ A72	
♣ -		♣ K65	
	♠ A85		
	♥ J4		
	♦ K3		
	♣ AQ9832		

But I didn't actually face that problem. Over 6♠ Justin also thought for some time. Eventually he decided to sacrifice, so he bid 6NT (to show longer diamonds than clubs) and I played 7♣ doubled. This went three off for -500. Note that, even though we could have defeated 6♠ if I had led a diamond, minus 500 was a good sacrifice against 4♠! Sure enough, at the other table Ben and Jeremy played 4♠, made 12 tricks (for +680) and so we picked up 5 imps.

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: S ♠ Q75
 Vul: Both ♥ 3
 ♦ KQ752
 ♣ Q543

♠ J6
 ♥ KQ8762
 ♦ AJ4
 ♣ 98

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

You lead a low heart and partner's ♥10 holds the trick, declarer playing ♥4. Next comes ♥J, declarer playing ♥5. Two tricks in hearts and ♦A you can see – where could the other two come from?

Problem 2:

Dealer: S ♠ K1083
 Vul: nil ♥ K98
 ♦ 10
 ♣ KJ1062

♠ AQJ
 ♥ 754
 ♦ AQ86
 ♣ A94

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

* minimum, shapely, not interested in penalties

You decide to lead a trump, and dummy's ♥8 holds trick 1. Now comes ♦10, partner signalling *even* (♦9), declarer low, and it's your play. Solutions on page 8.

VALE – RICHARD KAHN

Richard joined the VBA in 1978 and was Treasurer of the club for a number of years. He had been sick for some time and had developed bone cancer on top of kidney failure which meant he was on dialysis for a lot of the time. He had retired to Yarrowonga some years ago with wife Rita where they were still active bridge players before Richard's illness.

PANACHE - IX
Ben Thompson

Here's a hand full of finessing opportunities from the semi-finals of the 2010 World Open Pairs in Philadelphia.

Dealer: S	♠ AQ86		
Vul: E/W	♥ Q98		
	♦ 7642		
	♣ K4		
♠ 10943		♠ K5	
♥ K		♥ 743	
♦ AQ3		♦ KJ109	
♣ J8532		♣ AQ97	
	♠ J72		
	♥ AJ10652		
	♦ 85		
	♣ 106		

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♥

West leads ♣3, and we have our first decision – king or low? Play the king. People don't underlead their aces very often, but it does happen. Playing low might panic East into flying the ace with ace-jack, but good players almost never have that kind of panic attack.

East cashes his two club winners as you notice West plays the 2. East promptly switches to ♦J. When it holds, he plays the ♦K. West thinks about that for a moment, wins the ace and puts a spade on the table.

Now we have our second decision – ace, queen or low? Why would we consider the queen? Because it's always good to at least consider each of the legal options. For why playing the queen might be good, see the expert aside.

The easiest path to 8 tricks is if both major finesses work. It would be pretty weird if West led away from the long ♠K and gave you a free run around to the jack, but it happens. We play low and East wins his king. 5 tricks in, and we've taken none of them. Nice work.

East decides it's time to play the last suit left and shows us ♥3. Time for our third decision – ace or low?

Now is an excellent time to check back on everything we've been counting. East has turned up with 13 points so far, and looks like he has 4 clubs. West looks to have at least 6 points (♦AQ), and seems to have 5 clubs and at least 3 diamonds (remember his hitch before winning the ♦A?).

Can East have ♥K? Not unless he's asleep. That would give him 16 points and he would have balanced for sure. In fact, he has at least 13 points and didn't balance with a double either. No heart shortage there. That leaves West with the ♥K and not very many of them.

Play the ♥A and smile sweetly as the king drops.

Time to 'fess up. We don't play weak twos, so I opened 3♥. I got out for 1 off dropping the ♥K, scoring 65%. By the way, have you spotted the defensive mistake? East revealed far too much of his hand before the critical decision point arrived. He should have switched a heart early and put me to the guess before I knew so much about the hand.

Expert aside: A good defender isn't switching away from the long ♠K here. If he has the ♠K, it is very likely ♠Kx only and he's trying to deflect you from the spade finesse. You could then afford to win the ♠Q on the spade switch and take the heart finesse. Even if he does strangely have ♠K long, you could still ruff a diamond later and play a squeeze.

The takeaway

In placing an honour card, ask yourself what people might have done differently if they had had that card.



Summer Series 2011

BEGINNER'S BRIDGE LESSONS

at the VBA, 131 Poath Road, Murrumbidgee

When?	Thursdays 7.30 pm-9.30 pm commencing 10 th February
Cost?	\$128 for 8 weeks (registration only) or \$20 pay as you learn Students \$10 per lesson and under 30s \$15 per lesson Excludes price of text book. Cost \$22.
Course Content:	Introduction to bridge, bidding, play, defence, progression to supervised play classes - receive 4 free supervised play vouchers at the end of the 8 week course. Valued at \$28 (night) or \$32 (day)
Teacher:	Valerie Daly
Phone:	9530-9006
	E-Mail: clachman@vba.asn.au



THE TWELFTH TRICK

Dealer: S ♠ 7542
 Vul: Both ♥ QJ106
 IMPs ♦ AJ
 ♣ A72

♠ 9
 ♥ AK9843
 ♦ 65
 ♣ KQ93

West	North	East	South
			1♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West leads ♠K to your aggressive 6♥. He continues with a second spade to East's ace.

Plan the play. Solution on page 8.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Graduate Master	Paul Hobson Gilbert Riley
Club Master	Chris Wallace Jill Stone
Local Master	John Allard Tony Housepeters John Merkrebs John Rich
*Local Master	Peter Buchan Barbara Jacob Geoffrey Standing
**Local Master	Anna Geppaart Mary Hanrahan Dubravka Zec
Regional Master	Marcel Dayan Jerzy Cholewka Ray Gilmour Better Tiltscher
State Master	Kathryn Attwood Paul Kron Anna Levin John Spender Elizabeth Williams
*State Master	Margaret J Inglis Lucy Henbest

National Master	Every Hechtman Maxim Henbest
*National Master	Ivan Margitta
Bronze Life Master	Serhat Ozenir
Gold Life Master	Penny Corrigan
Grand Master	Thea Cowie

RECENT RESULTS

VBA Mixed Pairs

- 1 M. Chrapot – M. Tencer
- 2 C. Louie – H. Louie
- 3 H. Wilk – E. Hechtman

VBA Unmixed Pairs

- 1 S. Klofa – R. Stewart
- 2 B. Howe – S. Weisz
- 3 H. De Jong – P. Fent

Christmas Teams

- 1 P. Hollands, L. Gold, W. Jacobs, J. Thompson,
B. Thompson
- 2 N. Ewart, B. Howe, B. Kingham, J. Rosen,
T. Chira, D. Hohor
- 3 R. Van Riel, I. McCance, F. Beale,
G. Kilvington, S. Hinge, S. Henbest

VBA Summer Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 H. Louie – C. Louie
- 2 S. Hinge – J. Collins
- 3 A. Mill – A. Hegedus

Swiss Teams

- 1 J. Magee, T. Strong, B. Howe, N. Ewart
- 2 J. Thompson, D. Thompson, B. Thompson,
J. Thompson (!)
- 3 L. Gold, E. Hardy, K. Bechet, C. Hughes

VALE – JOYCE NICHOLSON

Joyce Nicholson, author, publisher, feminist and mother passed away in January, aged 91. Joyce was a benefactor and former member of the VBA. As most members will know, the back room of the VBA clubrooms is the "Joyce Nicholson Room" in recognition of her generous support when the VBA moved to Murrumbena in 2003.

Joyce had not played bridge for some years but will be fondly remembered by us all as a gentlewoman and fine card player.

COMING UP AT THE VBA ... RAMSDEN HANDICAP

Dates: Mondays, February 7th, 14th, 21st

Format: Swiss pairs (9x9 board rounds) with scoring by IMPs. Each pair is allocated a handicap, with the difference being the IMP start in the match for the lower ranked pair.

The handicaps are based on the relative performance by the player/pair in Monday night events over the last 6 months. If Laurie gets the handicapping right, everyone will tie for first place. We'll see.

Defending Champs: Erica Windmiller and Jenny Savage

Who was Mr Ramsden? This is somewhat lost in the mists of time. We believe he was an enthusiastic player and benefactor of the VBA in the 1940s. If anyone knows more, let us know!

VALE – JOHN FINE

John passed away peacefully in Melbourne with his family by his side in October 2010 after a short illness. It was discovered after his last visit to the Gold Coast that he had a malignant melanoma on his liver.

John was a regular Melbourne and Gold Coast player and was passionate about his bridge.

Like many Jewish Polish migrants John had a very interesting story to tell. He was a victim of the Holocaust during the 2nd world war and was one of the few fortunate ones to escape Auschwitz; that was at the expense of losing his entire family. He fled to Germany until 1948 when he migrated to Australia, locating in Melbourne. He took up an apprenticeship as a jeweller and became very successful in his trade. Lucy, John's wife, always wears exquisite accessories.

Lucy came to Australia a year earlier with her parents and they ran a boarding house for Jewish immigrants, this just happened to be where John got his lucky break – they met and the rest is history: 60 years married, 3 children and 9 grandchildren who adored them.

John was an avid Essendon supporter and a passionate bridge player. He will be missed by all who knew him.

(Reproduced from the Gold Coast Bridge Club Newsletter by Tony Berger)

SUMMER FESTIVAL

Here is a summary of some excellent Victorian results from the recent Summer Festival of Bridge in Canberra:

Australian Youth Teams Championship

1st: Michael Whibley, Max Henbest, Justin Howard
2nd: Lucy Henbest

Australian National Youth Selection (U26)

1st: Max Henbest - Justin Howard
2nd: Michael Whibley – Liam Milne
3rd: Nathan Howard – Alex Lockwood

Australian National Youth Selection (U21)

1st: Jamie Thompson



Australian Youth team qualifiers: Jamie Thompson, Max Henbest and Justin Howard

Grand National Pairs

2nd: Christine Louie – Herman Louie

National Flighted Swiss Pairs

1st: Andrew Hegedus, Andrew Mill

National Women's Teams

1st: Eva Caplan, Rena Kaplan, Jenny Thompson
2nd: Felicity Beale, Diana Smart

South West Pacific Teams

1st: Simon Hinge, Bill Jacobs, Ben Thompson

National Open Teams – Round of 20

Henry Sawicki, Rae Frenkel, Jenny Thompson, Eva Caplan, Grant Kilvington, Simon Henbest, Jeannette Collins, Stan Klofa, Charlie Schwabegger, Helen Snashall

National Open Teams – Round of 12

Sara Tishler, Felicity Beale, Rob van Riel

National Open Teams – Quarter Finals

Simon Hinge, Bill Jacobs, Ben Thompson

National Open Teams – Semi Finals

Serhat Ozenir

THE TWELFTH TRICK
Bill Jacobs

	♠ 7542	
	♥ QJ106	
	♦ AJ	
	♣ A72	
♠ KQ108		♠ AJ63
♥ 52		♥ 7
♦ 108742		♦ KQ93
♣ 64		♣ J1085
	♠ 9	
	♥ AK9843	
	♦ 65	
	♣ KQ93	

The simple line is to draw trumps and hope that you can discard a diamond from dummy on your long club. Note that should West drop the ten or jack of clubs on the second round of that suit, Restricted Choice principles indicate that you should finesse on the third round.

Today, simple isn't good enough. You should play a dummy reversal that doesn't directly gain a trick but enables a squeeze.

Draw trumps ending in dummy, ruff a third spade high and cross to the club ace (just in case West is void in clubs!). Ruff the last spade high, leaving North with one more trump than South. Now cash a top club and play a diamond to the ace leaving:

	♠ -	
	♥ QJ	
	♦ J	
	♣ 7	
♠ -		♠ -
♥ -		♥ -
♦ 10874		♦ KQ
♣ -		♣ J10
	♠ -	
	♥ 4	
	♦ 6	
	♣ Q9	

Two more rounds of trumps squashes East. It will squash any defender that controls both minor suits.

If nothing exciting happens, you can take your club play for the contract. This line might result in a second undertrick if you are unlucky, but it's worthwhile nevertheless.

SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1

	♠ Q75	
	♥ 3	
	♦ KQ752	
	♣ Q543	
♠ J6		♠ A109843
♥ KQ8762		♥ J10
♦ AJ4		♦ 963
♣ 98		♣ J10
	♠ K2	
	♥ A954	
	♦ 108	
	♣ AK762	

You know where ♥9 is and you have only one entry. So the answer is "not from hearts": it's time for a shift. Overtake and lead ♠J; if you're lucky this will be the layout and you will come to two spades (minimum) two hearts and your ♦A.

(If declarer covers ♠J with ♠Q, partner must encourage and you will need to trust him to have started with ace-sixth.)

Problem 2

Dealer: S		
Vul: nil	♠ K1083	
	♥ K98	
	♦ 10	
	♣ KJ1062	
♠ AQJ		♠ 9642
♥ 754		♥ 62
♦ AQ86		♦ 92
♣ A94		♣ Q8753
	♠ 75	
	♥ AQJ103	
	♦ KJ7543	
	♣ -	

This is a monumental ask. Declarer apparently has 6 diamonds so you must hope he only has 5 hearts. If you leave him stranded in dummy he lacks sufficient passage to hand to both develop diamonds and draw trumps.

Top prize for ducking!

