

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

May 2011

Editor: Bill Jacobs

VBA COUNCIL NEWS

VBA Survey

Many thanks to those who filled in and returned the recent survey ... there were over 100 responses, which is very gratifying.

The surveys are currently being collated and analysed, and we expect the results to be published in the next edition of the bulletin.

Bridge and Brains

Bridge players across Australia will be participating in the annual Bridge for Brain Research Challenge throughout the first week in May to support research into Alzheimer's disease and other dementias at Neuroscience Research Australia.

Neuroscience Research Australia is the nation's leading independent research institute dedicated to diseases and disorders of the brain.

The VBA will be participating on Thursday May 5th at 7:15 pm at the VBA clubrooms in Murrumbena.

Please come along to support this worthwhile event.

Admitting a regional team into the 2011 Victorian Pennant Final

It was decided that for 2011, one regional team be admitted to the round of 6 for the Pennant State Final to be held on the 19th and 20th of November.

The selection process will require input from the regional clubs.

This information has already been disseminated informally through e-mail to all regional areas.

The following will apply:

- All members of the eligible team must reside outside a radius of 70km from the Melbourne GPO.
- If required, proof of residence must be shown.

Some possibilities for the format of the selection event are:

- A weekend inter-regional teams event to provide one winning team, or
- A teams event within each region to provide one winner from each region, followed by a play-off to provide one overall winner.

Vale John Selwyn

John Selwyn passed away on Friday 1st April, aged 89.

John had a very successful career as a bridge player joining the VBA in 1970. He won the Victorian Pennant Teams in 1975, 1976, 1978, 1980 and 1983. He also played on the Victorian Open Team in 1974 and 1980.

John was married to Dziunia for 65 years and had 2 daughters, 9 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

Our thoughts are with his family at this time.



Autumn Series 2011

BEGINNER'S BRIDGE LESSONS

at the VBA, 131 Poath Road, Murrumbena

When? Thursdays 7.30 pm-9.30 pm commencing 12th May
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



PET PEEVES
Bill Jacobs

We all have them – those minor annoyances that particularly get on our nerves. For example, an opponent who continually jiggles his legs will drive me spare.

I have plenty of technique-specific peeves as well – an opponent, or worse partner, who makes a certain type of bid or play that I think is particularly unwise, although he (and perhaps the broader bridge community) doesn't realise it.

So it's time to get some of them off my chest, starting with:

The Pass or Correct Peeve

So many people play the Multi these days that this sort of decision is quite common. You pick up:

♠ x ♥ KQ10x ♦ Axxx ♣ 10xxx

Partner opens 2♦, a weak two in a major or maybe a strong hand such as 20-22 balanced. Next hand passes, and it's your bid.

Here's the Peeve: a 2♠ response.

Everyone seems to bid 2♠ on the theory that if partner has a weak two in spades, 2♠ is where you want to play (and with the superior player declaring!), and if he has a weak two in hearts, then you belong higher in hearts.

Four times out of five, partner has a weak two in spades, and the 2♠ bid actually serves two purposes:

- 1) stops the opponents from bidding hearts
- 2) stops the opponents from leading hearts

Neither of these work to your advantage. They simply warn the opponents off, when you actually want them to enter the auction and save you from your 2♠ contract.

On the fifth occasion, when partner has a weak two in hearts, your opponents are going to get together and bid game in spades whatever you do here. You're dreaming if

you think a 2♠ bid is somehow going to psyche them out of discovering their huge spade fit.

You should respond 2♥ and let nature take its course. Usually partner will convert to 2♠, and the opponents will have no clue to the nature of your hand, and are much more likely to do the wrong thing.

The only time you should respond 2♠ with short spades and long hearts is if the heart length is weak (eg four small) or you are so strong that you are making 4♥ should partner have a weak two in hearts.

Here's a deal from the recent Victorian Open Team Playoff to illustrate the point:

Dealer: W	♠ K10954	
Vul: nil	♥ 5	
	♦ K97	
	♣ A963	
♠ A62		♠ J87
♥ J2		♥ AQ973
♦ A853		♦ J2
♣ Q1074		♣ KJ2
	♠ Q3	
	♥ K10864	
	♦ Q1064	
	♣ 85	

West	North	East	South
1NT ¹	2♦ ²	D'ble ³	2♠ ⁴
Pass	Pass	Pass!	

- 1 11-14
- 2 Multi-Landy: one major suit
- 3 Values
- 4 The dreaded pass-or-correct

Multi-Landy is a strong method over opposing 1NT openings - it has much to recommend it:

- 2♣ both majors
- 2♦ one major
- 2♥/♠ that major and a minor
- 2NT both minors

The big advantage of Multi-Landy over Cappalletti is that after 2♣, partner can toss the ball back to you with 2♦, asking you to bid your longer major. That's not possible after the Cappalletti 2♦ bid showing both majors. Cappalletti is another pet peeve of mine!

But I digress. East doubled 2♦ to show some cards, and South bid 2♠, indicating his liking for hearts (as if partner would have hearts on this auction!). This rode back to East, Ben Thompson, who found that surprising pass with 12 points opposite his partner's notrump opener. But he knew LHO had hearts sitting over him, and his spades were poor, so the best chance of a plus was right there in 2♠.

And so it proved, with 2♠ sliding a couple off, and E/W cold for about 1♣.

Now suppose South had simply bid 2♥, waiting for his partner to bid the inevitable 2♠. Now East really has to bid – for all he knows, his partner could have three or four hearts and a doubleton spade. And E/W end up minus, maybe a substantial minus, when they could have gone plus.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

THE TWELFTH TRICK

Dealer: S ♠ 1043
 Vul: N/S ♥ KQ86
 IMPs ♦ 542
 ♣ 976

♠ AKQJ7
 ♥ -
 ♦ AK873
 ♣ AK5

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

* agree?

West leads ♦9. East follows with the ♦6. Plan the play.

Solution on page 7.

Trivial Pursuit

Which is larger?

- The number of possible bridge deals (all four hands), or
- The number of possible bridge auctions

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: E ♠ J53
 Vul: nil ♥ J107543
 ♦ AKJ10
 ♣ -

♠ K10
 ♥ K5
 ♦ Q643
 ♣ J8542

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	5♦	All Pass	

Partner leads ♣10, dummy's ♠3 is discarded and declarer wins ♣A. Now comes ♥Q, (partner even) and you take that.

What do you do now?

Problem 2:

Dealer: S ♠ A7654
 Vul: E/W ♥ Q10
 ♦ 10
 ♣ KJ973

♠ KJ
 ♥ A9753
 ♦ 7654
 ♣ 84

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT ¹
Pass	2♣ ²	Pass	2♦
Pass	3♣ ³	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

- 1 Minimum opening
- 2 Puppet to 2♦
- 3 Invitational with clubs

Partner leads ♦Q to declarer's ♦A. Declarer starts on clubs, ♣Q then ♣10 hold the next tricks and partner discards ♥8 on the next card, ♣A. Before you take a discard you should consider your defence.

What is your plan?

Solutions on page 7.

PANACHE - XII
Ben Thompson

Sometimes the trickiest thing you can do is to be honest. Try this exhibit from the recent Open Interstate Butler qualifying event.

Dealer: N	♠ 87632		
Vul: E/W	♥ A8		
	♦ A1053		
	♣ AQ		
♠ KJ104		♠ AQ	
♥ J10943		♥ 75	
♦ J98		♦ 762	
♣ 10		♣ K98763	
	♠ 95		
	♥ KQ62		
	♦ KQ4		
	♣ J542		

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

Not the most inspiring spade suit to open, but sometimes that's all they deal you. Thank you partner for navigating to notrumps.

What's our best play for 3NT on the obvious ♥J lead? There are two main lines. The direct line is a combination line - ♣K outside gets us up to 8, and then either short ♣K or the diamond suit playing for 4 tricks will get us home.

What's the danger? Well, if the club finesse loses, they may be able to cash up 4 spade tricks. And the danger layout is actually there. We have 9 tricks (3 hearts, 4 diamonds and 2 clubs) but they get to cash their 5 before we can get to our 9.

What we want to do is try to deflect the defence from the spade switch (if the club finesse loses). Strangely, the way to do that is to win the opening heart lead with the nakedly honest queen.

Let's think a few tricks ahead. We're taking the club finesse into East. What's the one card he knows for sure that we have? That's right, the ♥Q. If we win the opening lead with the king, he knows the heart suit is too slow (we still have two stoppers), so the spade switch should be obvious.

In the same vein, if we win the opening lead with the ace in dummy, East should know that we have KQ left in our hand ... and find the spade switch. How? He already knows we have the heart queen. If we don't have the king, absolutely guaranteed we would run the opening lead to hand. So we have to have the king as well to jump the ace.

When we run the lead around to our queen, East doesn't know who has the king. He might hope West led from KJ10xx(x) and can somehow get in. East should know West cannot really have both an entry and good hearts so he should find the spade switch anyway, but if you give people a bit of rope, sometimes they grab it. Winning the queen is an example of playing the card you're known to hold.

Expert aside: The other main line is to play on spades. That works directly if spades are 3-3, and on this hand has the side benefit of cutting the defensive communication before they're in a position to cash out. If they cash their 4 spade tricks, we don't need the club finesse any more. And if they don't cash their spade tricks when we've played two rounds, we can make 3NT by switching to the club finesse. Now East doesn't have any spades left to cash his partner's other two spade tricks. Curiously, the only lead to shoot 3NT is the singleton club. 3NT from North is cold.

The takeaway

Sometimes your best falsecard is the true card, particularly when the true card is a card that you are known to hold.



AFFILIATED CLUB NEWS

It usually takes a few weeks at least before a new bridge player can claim part of a green point in club competition. But **Lakes Entrance** player, Julie Ingram, fresh out of lessons, bucked the trend by playing in a heat of the Grand National Pairs on 5th April at Lakes Entrance Bridge Club, finishing first East/West and bagging Gold Points at her first outing. Well done to Julie and partner, Lyn Woods.

The 2011 **Donald Bridge Congress** saw players from Waverley, Mildura, Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Warrnambool, Horsham, St Arnaud and Ocean Grove join players from Donald for two days of competition bridge play. On Saturday, Eric Ramshaw, the tournament's Director of nine years, organised the nine teams of four, to find the winning team - Dot and Geoff Read, Terry Johnston and Shannon Irwin from Geelong.

Players from across the state stayed in a wide variety of accommodations overnight, and were joined by another 26 players who had had an early morning drive to arrive in Donald by 10 am, Sunday. The pairs event was won by Yvonne Sleeman and Helen Porter from Geelong (N/S) and Pat Dungey and Barbara Hyyette from Bending (E/W).

Fabulous catering was provided over the week-end by the Donald Golf Club ladies and also the Ukraine Education Fund. This country catering is a real attraction for those who come to the Congress.

Dr Eric Ramshaw is a very experienced Director of tournaments, and he has mentored the Donald Bridge Club over the past ten years. He assisted the club to organise the Pairs tournament for many years, helping us to then advance to a two-day congress, for the last few years. Eric gave the club some warning several years ago that he would eventually need to give up directing our tournament, and that time has now come. The Donald Club has been lucky to secure the services of Graham Hill, from Waverley, to direct the tournament in 2012. Graham, like Eric, believes in helping small clubs to hold these events and keeping the costs low, to encourage the players to travel the long distances, book accommodation and come to spend their dollars in the country!



The Donald Bridge Club is at an exciting new stage in its maturity as a regional bridge club – and we thank Eric Ramshaw very much for setting us on this path ten years ago.

COMING UP AT THE VBA ... VICTORIAN MIXED TEAMS

Dates: Wednesdays, May 11, 18, 25, June 1

Format: 8 Swiss rounds of 14 board matches, dependent on entries. For each session, the team must be mixed in gender.

Defending Champs:

Miriam Tencer, Sam Arber, Michael Chrapot, Len Meyer

MORE MEMORIES OF THE THWAITES

We received the following interesting reminiscence of the era from Peter Wilkinson:

When I came to Victoria in 1953 I was introduced through Mrs Hider Smith (mother of a workmate) to the VBA and joined one of Mrs Thwaites' beginners classes towards the middle of a course. Her lectures were always a source of merriment (behind her back) for her habit of illustrating some basic point with a rather sophisticated example from interstate or other competition. As I had progressed through rummy, euchre, poker and hearts, I could pick up the basics, but for those not used to a handful of cards it was a trial.

After returning from overseas in 1957 the VBA was still a pleasant place to play. Jack Thwaites had died, but Mrs Thwaites was the matriarch and the face of the VBA. She was a tough, but not a miserable opponent, able to make a point about one's play without being condescending and I was always fond of her.

Later on when she had her stroke she had difficulty holding up her cards and had occasional mechanical lapses, but was still able to mostly play a reasonable hand.

I had never played in the Mixed so I asked her to be my partner in her last entry. The outstanding impression which I still have was how everybody treated her with courtesy, ever so gently asking her to hold her hand up when necessary, and not ruthlessly applying the rules literally, and never condescendingly. Such was the high regard which everybody in the club held her. There has been no successor.

THE PLUS 230 DILEMMA Bill Jacobs

"Don't open 2♣ with a strong two-suiter" would be a rule-of-thumb taught in an intermediate bridge class.

The reason is sound: by the time the strong hand has had a chance to show the two suits, the auction could be at a dizzyingly high level.

Here are some hands from high-level events where the theory was put to the test. What do you open on each of these?

1. ♠ - ♥ AKQ632 ♦ AQ10862 ♣ A
2. ♠ - ♥ AKJ92 ♦ A94 ♣ AKQ42
3. ♠ 4 ♥ AKQ65 ♦ 53 ♣ AKQJ8

Decide before reading on.

Hand 1 was dealt in the 2009 Senior Camrose Teams event in Britain. In terms of playing strength, it's one of the stronger hands I have ever seen.

However, one player who held it stuck to his principles – he opened 1♥ ... and played right there, the combined hands being:

♠ -	♠ KJ9
♥ AKQ632	♥ 1084
♦ AQ10863	♦ 974
♣ A	♣ 9642

The result: an embarrassing 5 overtricks for +230 when diamonds behaved. At the other table, 2♣ was opened and slam was easily reached when responder admitted to having some hearts.

At least responder's diamonds and spades were not switched! Still, the hand shows that there must be limits to a 1-level opening.

Hand 2 was from the final of the 2008 World Mind Sports games (the Olympiad), between Italy and England.

♠ -	♠ J832
♥ AKJ92	♥ 8654
♦ A94	♦ K87
♣ AKQ42	♣ 96

Both players opened 1♥, and partner raised to 2♥, so at least +230 was avoided. Each then tried a 3♠ splinter bid.

For England, Justin Hackett signed off with 4♥ over 3♠ and there they played. The overly strong 1-level opening had backfired again, as responder couldn't visualize that his cards would be enough for slam.

However for Italy, Fulvio Fantoni cue-bid 4♦ on his 4-count, and Claudio Nunes bid the good slam – making an overtrick when hearts broke 2-2. The Italians were assisted by their unique system, because 1♥ was *natural, forcing and unlimited*.

I was so impressed with this Italian auction that I took up their system. It required only an 18 month wait for the payoff:

♠ 4	♠ AK986
♥ AKQ65	♥ 84
♦ 53	♦ J94
♣ AKQJ8	♣ 1054

This was from the recent Australian Playoffs. My partner Ben Thompson was able to open 1♥, natural and forcing.

Our auction slowly unraveled our suits and high cards, and we subsided in a safe 4♥.

At the other table, opener didn't want to risk the dreaded +230, so opened 2♣. Responder gave a positive response with 2♠. By the time they finished bidding, they were in 5♥ and at the mercy of a 3-3 heart break.

The moral? Don't open 2♣ with a strong two-suiter ... unless it is too strong.

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Graduate Master	Peter Robert
Club Master	Margaret Krauze Gilbert Riley
*Local Master	Helen Evans Enza Gorges Eva Telman Stan Woolf
**Local Master	Les Ajzner
Regional Master	Jeff Batten

National Master	Herman Louie
*National Master	Dianna Middleton Simone Shwartz
Bronze Life Master	Bertha Dembo
Silver Life Master	Ian Webb
Grand Master	Robert Ellery Andrew Hegedus

SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1

	♠ J53	
	♥ J107543	
	♦ AKJ10	
	♣ -	
♠ Q986		♠ K10
♥ A982		♥ K5
♦ -		♦ Q643
♣ Q10976		♣ J8542
	♠ A742	
	♥ Q	
	♦ 98752	
	♣ AK3	

Declarer must have ♣K (he can't have ♣Q unless he has ♣AKQ), and also ♠A else why not another quick discard, so there will be no tricks in spades. Some sort of cross-ruff is looming: you will need to return a trump to defeat this ambitious contract, taking two trumps for one. Then you must interrupt the cross-trumping by playing ♦Q on the FOURTH round of hearts to lead another trump. Declarer can't quite get home.

Problem 2

Dealer: N	♠ A7654	
Vul: E/W	♥ Q10	
	♦ 10	
	♣ KJ973	
♠ Q98		♠ KJ
♥ KJ8		♥ A9753
♦ QJ932		♦ 7654
♣ 65		♣ 84
	♠ 1032	
	♥ 642	
	♦ AK8	
	♣ AQ102	

While it is gratifying to find yourself in possession of four cards in partner's suit this

should not deflect you from a defender's principal focus. (1) declarer's points. You have already found 13 so not many more (2) declarer's tricks. I make it 8. Where is his 9th? Answer: nowhere as long as you don't throw valuable cards away. You must transfer the defence's attention from diamonds to hearts, where you already know partner has ♥K. Partner will almost certainly have started with 3 hearts, and that ♥8 suggests that he might well have ♥J as well.

Get rid of those diamonds and wait to get in with ♠K.

THE TWELFTH TRICK
Bill Jacobs

	♠ 1043	
	♥ KQ86	
	♦ 542	
	♣ 976	
♠ 86		♠ 952
♥ J97432		♥ A105
♦ 9		♦ QJ106
♣ QJ42		♣ 1083
	♠ AKQJ7	
	♥ -	
	♦ AK873	
	♣ AK5	

Things look grim. There is an inescapable diamond loser, and to rid yourself of your club loser, you will need to establish one of dummy's hearts, with only one entry.

What is the diamond position anyway? It rather seems that the ♦9 is a singleton. That's good news, believe it or not, as it means that one defender will need to follow suit as you try to trump a diamond in dummy to gain an extra entry.

The key play is to let the ♦9 win. Then win the continuation, for example a club, go to dummy's ♠10 and play a top heart. Assuming that is covered and ruffed, then play one more top trump, and then the diamonds from the top, hoping that West has no more trumps. Bingo!

If you win trick 1, you will not be able to manage the trump suit: either you will concede a ruff, or allow East to draw dummy's last trump.

**CASES FOR ACES – X
THE GERBER CONVENTION
Bill Jacobs**

American John Gerber (1906-1981) invented this one. It's a bid of 4♣ to ask for aces in certain auctions: typically after notrumps has been bid, and no suit is yet agreed.



The most common auctions for Gerber are:

1NT - 4♣ and
2NT - 4♣

but with agreement it can be played in countless other situations as well, for example:

1♠ - 2♥ - 2NT - 4♣

The main value of the Gerber convention is that it frees up 4NT for another more important usage, namely a quantitative invitation to slam. Suppose partner opens 1NT (15-17 points), and you have one of these two hands:

- 1) ♠ x ♥ x ♦ KQJx ♣ AKQxxxx
- 2) Qxx ♥ KJx ♦ AQx ♣ AJxx

On hand 1), you simply want to know how many aces partner has, and you will bid to game, small slam or grand slam as a result.

Hand 2) is harder: there's no known scientific way to bid such a hand – the optimum contract might well depend on such intangibles as a stray 10 or 9. But if partner has a maximum hand for his 1NT, you rate to make 6NT, otherwise you should stay in game. You need to consult partner.

So use a Gerber 4♣ on hand 1) and reserve 4NT for hand 2), asking partner whether he is minimum or maximum.

I like the Gerber convention, but there are two gotchas. First, is there a followup king ask, and if so, what should it be? The literature suggests 5♣ asks for kings, but that seems wrong to me, because now hand 1) is ruined, should partner give you one ace.

Personally, my view is that if you need to ask for kings, then you shouldn't have used Gerber in the first place. Anyway, agree the matter with your partner.

The second gotcha is to decide what auctions it applies to. This can be trickier than you think. For example if you agree that

1♠ - 2♥ - 2NT - 4♣

will be Gerber, what about:

1♠ - 2♣ - 2NT - 4♣

You need firm rules, and it can be devilishly difficult to make them unambiguous.

Let's consider this month's trivia question: which is the greater – the number of deals or the number of auctions? The answer is a little surprising: there are vastly more auctions than 4-hand layouts – it's not even close.¹ And this trivia carries a real punch: trying to handle all the possible permutations of an auction can be a daunting task, for example deciding whether a 4♣ bid should be Gerber or have some other meaning.

My advice is to use Gerber over 1NT and 2NT *openings* and leave it at that.

RECENT RESULTS

Victorian Open Team Playoff

- 1 J. Ebery, L. Gold, W. Jacobs, B. Thompson, S Hinge, P. Hollands
- 2 J. Magee, T. Strong, B. Wein, D. Morgan, I. McCance, G. Kilvington

VBA Anzac Congress

Swiss Pairs

- 1 K. Pearson – R. Greenfield
- 2 H. Louie – C. Louie
- 3 A. Hegedus – A. Mill

Swiss Teams

- =1 I. Del Monte, A. Bach, L. Henbest, P. Gardiner
=1 C. Hagan, L. Szabo, A. Kaszubski, C. Arul
3 M. Allison, B. A'Beckett, H. Stewart, A. Murray

¹ 53,644,737,765,488,792,839,237,440,000 deals;
128,745,650,347,030,683,120,231,926,111,609,371,363,
122,697,557 auctions