

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

August 2011

Editor: Bill Jacobs

HALF TIME AT THE ANC

As we go to print, the Melbourne ANC is into its second week. A final wrapup will have to wait until next month, but the Interstate Teams competition has been concluded, with two fine wins for Victoria.

Our Youth team was: Pascale Gardiner, Max Henbest, Justin Howard, Liam Milne, Jamie Thompson, Michael Whibley, captained by Grant Kilvington.

They were clearly the class team of the event, chock full of players who have won nationally and internationally at this level. And so it proved, as they finished 290imps ahead of second in the round-robin, and then defeated ACT by 93imps in the 40-board final.



Victoria's winning Youth team: Max Henbest, Jamie Thompson, Nathan Howard (standing in for Liam Milne), Pascale Gardiner, Michael Whibley and Justin Howard

Our Open team was: Jamie Ebery, Leigh Gold, Simon Hinge, Peter Hollands, Bill Jacobs, Ben Thompson, captained by Ian McCance.

We had a tougher time of it than the youngsters. We had to fight hard to qualify for the final behind a rampant ACT team, although the margin to third was comfortable in the end. The final was a completely different story, with Victoria wiping out the carryover deficit in the first set of 10 boards,

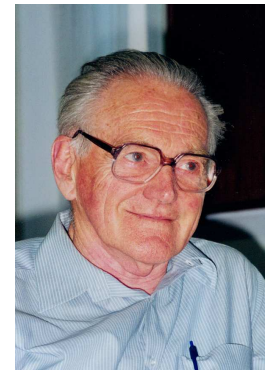
then steamrolling the opposition with an extraordinary 81-2 third set. That was the match, and ACT eventually conceded with 10 boards still to play.



Victoria's winning Open team: Bill Jacobs, Leigh Gold, Ben Thompson, Simon Hinge, Jamie Ebery, Peter Hollands

At 23, Peter Hollands is perhaps the youngest Victorian ANC Open winner: maybe an historian can check this.

I don't know whether our NPC, Ian McCance (pictured, right), is the oldest winner, but it's worth noting his overall record. He first represented the state in 1956, and 2011 was his 20th time, 17 of them as a player, three as an NPC.



So Ian has been a state representative in each of *seven* consecutive decades! In total, he has five wins and four runners-up: a wonderful record, only just surpassed by Victor Champion himself.

The Victorian Women's team fought hard to finish in fourth place. The Seniors team struggled throughout, eventually finishing 6th place.

The Welcome Swiss Pairs was won by Helen and Robert Milward, from Neil Ewart – Blaine Howe and Phyllis Moritz – Len Meyer.

PET PEEVES
Bill Jacobs

This month's peeve is behavioural rather than technical. In a nutshell, it is:

The Premature Post-Mortem Peeve

It goes like this. The deal has just finished, and one player starts having a go at their partner, putting him or her on trial for the crime of Murder of a Bridge Hand.

Their partner usually pleads Not Guilty, and counter-sues, and they go at it hammer and tongs for a while, whilst the score is entered and the next board retrieved.

I like to listen to these post-mortems and silently sit in judgment. Often it's hard to decide who is right and who is wrong, because of a fundamental truth: what happens on a bridge deal tends to be more complicated than you first believe. You can't easily come to an instant decision on who is to blame for a muffed auction or defence.

You be the judge on this post-mortem from the Fred Altman Swiss Pairs:

Dealer: W		♠ 9654			
Vul: Both		♥ K76			
		♦ AK4			
		♣ A92			
♠ AQJ3				♠ K872	
♥ AJ543				♥ Q982	
♦ -				♦ Q86	
♣ K754				♣ Q8	
		♠ 10			
		♥ 10			
		♦ J1097532			
		♣ J1063			

West	North	East	South
1♥	D'ble	3♥*	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	5♦
Pass	Pass	D'ble	All pass

* preemptive

West led ♥A, East played the ♥2 (reverse count). West continued hearts – declarer pitched a losing spade and went just down 1.

East led the post-mortem charge. "Why didn't you switch to a spade? It was so obvious!"

Fair point or not? (My opinion later.)

30 years ago, there was more basis for these instant post-mortems, because the hand is fresh in your mind and would then disappear forever. But nowadays there are hand records: both hard-copy and on the internet: there's no tearing hurry to review what went wrong.

Post mortems are an essential part of the game: they can be an excellent driver for improvement, but they can also be destructive. The key is to not rush into them.

What's more, we have so many ways to communicate these days. Beyond just meeting over coffee, the old-fashioned phone call still works, or there is email, or texting, or blogging. I suppose you could even tweet your post-mortems, although the 140 character limit might get in the way.

You will find considered after-the-game post-mortems more valuable than instant at-the-table post-mortems.

It's not easy to stop yourself post-morteming at the table, but you should try. Whatever you do, stay away from two particularly virulent forms of the disease.

The first is pre-morteming: a post-mortem conducted when dummy is laid down. Dummy comes down, the contract is wrong, and both declarer and dummy start "discussing" it ("discussing" is the polite term for what sometimes goes on). Pre-morteming is unethical, because it distracts the defenders, who still have a role to play.

The second is dummy post-morteming the declarer play. Talk about pointless! Yes, yes, partner doesn't play the cards as well as you do, but there's nothing you can do about it. Don't fall into the trap of one emotive pair many years ago, who conducted the following post-mortem:

Dummy: "You misplayed that."
Declarer: "No I didn't."
Dummy: "Yes you did."
Declarer: "No I didn't."
Dummy: "Look, I'll tell you. Now, what was your hand?"

As for the 5♦ contract, I'd say that West probably should have switched to a spade, although it could be very costly if South has ♠K.

The real solution is for East to have played a suit-preference card at trick one, ♥9, or even better ♥Q: encouraging a spade switch (the high suit). The heart suit is clear to the defence: declarer has either a singleton or void. So a suit-preference card could be useful.

This is where a properly conducted post-mortem can be so valuable. If the pair could sit down after the match, emotions will have cooled, and they can have a worthwhile discussion on suit-preferencing, and when it should be applied.

Basically the post-mortem, like revenge, is a dish best served cold.



RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Club Master	Michelle Adorjan Robyn Rubenstein Ming Zhang
Local Master	Kerri King David Slee
*Local Master	Eduardo Weisinger
Regional Master	Martin Simons
*Regional Master	Freda Hirsh Luba Puterman
State Master	Matti Shub Dubravka Zev
*State Master	Kathryn Attwood
National Master	Alklmini Segal
*National Master	Frances Engelman
Life Master	Irene Hamilton
Bronze Life Master	Robyn O'Dell
Silver Life Master	Serhat Ozenir Mark Weinberg
Gold Life Master	Ben Kingham Edna Matheson
Silver Grand Master	Sara Tishler
Gold Grand Master	Bill Jacobs

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: S ♠ J1085
 Vul: E/W ♥ AK96
 ♦ QJ
 ♣ 1085

♠ KQ64
 ♥ J2
 ♦ K109
 ♣ KJ76

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

* 13-15 HCP

Partner leads ♥4, won in dummy. Then ♦Q, which you might as well cover so you do, ♦A (partner ♦ *small*). Now declarer plays to ♦J, partner completing an *even* signal. Declarer plays ♠5 and you bravely follow low and declarer wins ♠A (partner *odd*). South advances another diamond and ruffs with ♥6. He then cashes ♥K and plays back to ♣A (partner *odd*). A fourth diamond emerges, partner's ♦8 and this is ruffed with ♥9. Now dummy's ♠J and you can win this and plan your next move, which is?

Problem 2:

Dealer: E ♠ QJ
 Vul: N/S ♥ AKJ876
 ♦ KJ54
 ♣ 8

♠ 54
 ♥ Q1043
 ♦ A1082
 ♣ 753

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♣	1♥	Pass	1♠
2♣	2♦	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All pass	

Partner leads ♣A then ♣K. This is trumped in dummy and ♠Q wins the next trick. Now come ♥A and ♥K, declarer discarding ♣10. Then he plays ♦K and it's up to you.

Solutions on page 7.

MYSTERIES OF DEFENCE
Bill Jacobs

Partner leads a low card to 3NT, and this is what you see:

	<i>Dummy</i>	
<i>Partner</i>	xx	<i>You</i>
Low card		AQx

Which card do you play, and why?



Some winning defensive strategies don't come naturally: they need to be learned. There are four ways to learn a defensive play. You can:

- Experience it
- Be taught it
- Hear about it
- Read about it

Experience is the best teacher. If I miss a defensive play, and it results in a beatable contract being made, the bad experience imprints itself on my mind, and there's a good chance I won't miss it next time. I find the same applies to system: the best way to learn a particular part of a system is to forget it and suffer the consequences. You are much less likely to forget the next time it comes up.

Here's a defensive play that happened to crop up twice in quick succession. The first was in the recent Victor Champion Cup / Charlie Snashall Restricted teams - match 2, board 15:

Dir: S	♠ A53	
Vul: N/S	♥ 102	
	♦ KJ106	
	♣ AJ107	
♠ 7		♠ KJ962
♥ J8763		♥ AQ4
♦ Q2		♦ 983
♣ 98653		♣ Q2
	♠ Q1084	
	♥ K95	
	♦ A754	
	♣ K4	

West leads ♥6 to 3NT, and East faces the problem given at the start of this article.

Thanks to bridgemate, we can see what happened. This situation occurred 24 times across the two events: 3NT by South on a low heart lead. 3NT was made 16 times and defeated 8 times. Let's help East defeat the contract.

If West has ♥K, it doesn't matter what you do. You will take your ace and queen in some order, and play a third heart. The defence will be looking good.

But if declarer has ♥K, it's harder. If you win your ♥A at trick 1, declarer can hold up the hearts to the third round, nullifying the heart suit. Since East has 12 points, it's unlikely that West has an entry: on normal play, declarer will develop the minors for at least 9 tricks.

East should play ♥Q at trick 1. Declarer is forced to win the first trick ... after all, if West has something like ♥AJxxx, then it would be suicidal to duck. Now, unless declarer is a really good guesser, 3NT will fail, as you will get in at some point, and be able to play ace and another heart to run partner's suit.

Playing the queen in this situation is something that has to be learned. You can't be expected to work it out at the table (and if you do, it might take so long that declarer will realize what you are up to, and duck the queen).

I wonder if any of those Easts that unsuccessfully played the heart ace at the VCC were also East on this deal from the first night of the Rothfield teams:

Dir: E	♠ AJ103	
Vul: N/S	♥ 4	
	♦ Q108542	
	♣ 102	
♠ K4		♠ 97652
♥ Q10832		♥ 97
♦ 7		♦ KJ9
♣ J8754		♣ AQ6
	♠ Q8	
	♥ AKJ65	
	♦ A63	
	♣ K93	

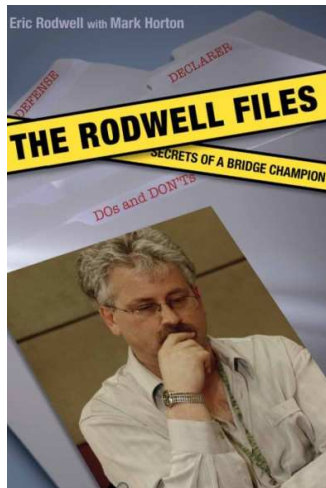
Here South opens 1♥ and ends up in 3NT. West leads ♣5. It's just about an identical situation and East should play the queen.

Once again, if East plays ace then queen, declarer can hold up until the third round, and lose his diamond tricks to East in peace.

Can this queen play ever be wrong? Maybe: suppose partner is the one with the entry. He may not visualize you having the ace, and therefore be reluctant to continue the suit. So the queen play works best when you expect to be the one getting in.

Learning by experience is great, but you can't control it. Alternatives are to take lessons, or to learn from talking about hands - see the article on post-mortems, for example.

One thing you can control is your reading. This article might be a start, but nothing beats a good book. One of the best recent ones is Eric Rodwell's "The Rodwell Files - Secrets of a Bridge Champion". This monster book (400 pages) is all about card-play: declarer play and defence, and it describes hundreds of useful plays, techniques and strategies, not all of which you will have seen before.



Sure enough, the setup described in this article is there, on page 268, under the title "tempting declarer to win and leave open communications".

Spring Series 2011
BEGINNER'S BRIDGE LESSONS
at the VBA, 131 Poath Road, Murrumbena

When? Thursdays 7.30 pm-9.30 pm commencing 1st September
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 ♠ 5
 Vul: N/S ♥ 7642
 IMPs ♦ AKJ109
 ♣ Q94

♠ AKQJ642
 ♥ AK
 ♦ 642
 ♣ 7

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

West leads ♠9. East follows. Plan the play.
 Solution on page 7.

AFFILIATED CLUB NEWS

August Congresses

As usual, there is wall-to-wall congress bridge to be played this month:

The **Knox Bridge Club** congress takes place on August 6-7, at the Bayswater Senior Citizens Centre (cnr Scoresby Rd and Mountain Hwy, Bayswater). There are Open and Restricted Pairs and Teams events.

Contact Clare Stratton on 9725 9806 for more details.

The **Kew Festival** is on the weekend of August 13-14, at the Melbourne Contract Bridge Centre clubrooms, 30 Cotham Rd Kew.

Ring Ian Mansell on 9853 1449 for all the details.

The **Yarrowonga Bridge Club** congress runs from August 19 to August 21 at the Yarrowonga & Border Golf Club, Gulai Rd, Mulwala.

Jan and Tom Hackett have all the details on 5744 1017 or hackett5@bigpond.net.au.

ONE PERCENTERS
Bill Jacobs

A term from Australian Rules football, a one-percenter is that little extra effort – a spoil, smother or chase – that can occasionally make a big difference to the outcome.

One-percenters abound in bridge as well: mainly in the card-play, also occasionally in the bidding. Here is an example given to me by Kim Frazer, from an event at the Moonee Valley Bridge Club:

Dir: S	♠ A764
Vul: E/W	♥ KQJ2
	♦ AJ107
	♣ 6
	♠ KQ8
	♥ A9863
	♦ 52
	♣ A73

Kim and her partner had a small bidding misunderstanding and landed in 7♥. The ♣K was led.

Can you find the one-percenter?

You will ruff your losing clubs in dummy, and hope that spades are 3-3 so you can get rid of your losing diamond. That's about 36%, too many for a one-percenter.

What about a squeeze? For example, if West has ♦KQ and 4 spades, she can be squeezed when you run your trumps. That possibility is about 3-4%: still too likely!

The true one-percenter is to squeeze **East**. Here was the actual layout at the table:

	♠ A764	
	♥ KQJ2	
	♦ AJ107	
	♣ 6	
♠ 109		♠ J532
♥ 754		♥ 10
♦ 4		♦ KQ9863
♣ KQ108542		♣ J9
	♠ KQ8	
	♥ A9863	
	♦ 52	
	♣ A73	

The winning and correct line is to ruff your losing clubs, *cash* ♠A, and draw trumps, to reach this 3-card ending

	♠ A7	
	♥ -	
	♦ J	
	♣ -	
♠ -		♠ J5
♥ -		♥ -
♦ -		♦ K
♣ Q108		♣ -
	♠ 8	
	♥ 3	
	♦ 5	
	♣ -	

South leads the last trump, discarding ♦J, and East is squeezed. Declarer needs only to count, so that if East discards ♦K, the ♦5 is known to be high.

Now *that's* a one-percenter – probably a lot less actually, as it needs West to have a singleton diamond (or ♦43 doubleton). The technical name for the play is a Vienna Coup: clearing a top card in one hand, so that a small card in the other hand can act as a threat.

The winning play is worth knowing, and is actually the correct way to play the more likely squeeze on West (holding ♦KQ and four spades), because it takes all the guesswork out of the play.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

Norma Borin
Forthcoming celebration at the VBA

Norma Borin passed away last December and left a small legacy to be enjoyed by all bridge players who knew and loved her.



Watch this space for more details in the September Bulletin and on the VBA website.

Date: Sunday 2nd October

SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS
Ian McCance

Problem 1

Dealer: S	♠ J1085	
Vul: E/W	♥ AK96	
	♦ QJ	
	♣ 1085	
♠ 972		♠ KQ64
♥ 1074		♥ J2
♦ 8743		♦ K109
♣ Q92		♣ KJ76
	♠ A4	
	♥ Q853	
	♦ A652	
	♣ A83	

You have the likely hand-patterns, partner 3343 and declarer 2443. Declarer has played three aces so there is room for one queen but not both. If it's ♣Q he's likely to make it, and in any case would probably have finessed in clubs. So assume partner has ♣Q and declarer ♥Q. You must ensure that you are on lead after the third club and can lead a fourth to promote partner's hypothetical ♥10. Consequently your next card must be ♣J. It would be wrong to play ♣K and expect partner to unblock.

Problem 2

Dealer: E	♠ QJ	
Vul: N/S	♥ AKJ876	
	♦ KJ54	
	♣ 8	
♠ 10973		♠ 54
♥ 95		♥ Q1043
♦ 3		♦ A1082
♣ AKQJ96		♣ 753
	♠ AK862	
	♥ 2	
	♦ Q976	
	♣ 1042	

You should have been thinking deeply about diamonds. Declarer raised diamonds and has shown up with four cards in the round suits, so four diamonds almost for sure. Partner did NOT lead or switch to a diamond, and from his tap at trick 2 is quite likely to have promoted a trump trick in his own hand. What you mustn't do is pause for thought - follow a low diamond smoothly and hope declarer doesn't pick that you have four.

THE TWELFTH TRICK
Bill Jacobs

Dealer: S	♠ 5	
Vul: N/S	♥ 7642	
IMPs	♦ AKJ109	
	♣ Q94	
♠ 98		♠ 1073
♥ J953		♥ Q108
♦ 75		♦ Q83
♣ AJ853		♣ K1062
	♠ AKQJ642	
	♥ AK	
	♦ 642	
	♣ 7	

You really really want the diamond finesse to work. So find out by playing a diamond to the jack at trick 2. If East wins, maybe he cannot know for sure whether to play back a heart or a club (see diagram).

If East wins a singleton ♦Q, you will be very sad, but you cannot afford to cash one top diamond first to protect against this. You would have to return to your hand with a heart, and this gives away the position.

Give yourself extra credit for leading the diamond *six* at trick 2, which will make West's spot card look high ... preventing a suit preference signal for clubs.



RECENT RESULTS

Rothfield Swiss Teams

- 1 S. Arber, H. de Jong, T. Chira, D. Hohor
- 2 J. Ebery, L. Gold, S. Hinge, W. Jacobs, B. Thompson, P. Hollands
- 3 S. Klofa, J. Collins, P. Fent, S. Tishler

VBA GNRP Heat

- 1 R. Gordon – V. Zhang
- 2 P. Brown – H. Brown
- 3 T. Blizzard – J. Allard

Fred Hapgood Swiss Pairs

- 1 A. Hegedus – A. Mill
- 2 M. Tencer – M. Chrapot
- 3 A. Segal – R. Kaplan

UNIFORM RULES

A few years ago, this bulletin editorialized against the purchasing of team uniforms for representative teams. It was seen as a significant and fairly pointless expense for the VBA and other state associations.

In 2011, the VBA provided an engraved pen for each of its representatives. This seemed an appropriate gesture: not too costly, but useful – and after all written bidding was in use, so a pen could be regarded as valid sporting equipment!

A few other state reps sported uniforms such as jackets, but generally state uniforms are not in vogue, and a good thing too.

But ...

The regulations for the upcoming WBF World Championships include the following:

8. Dress Code

NBOs are asked to take note of the recognition of Bridge as a Sport by the IOC and requests that players should, at all times, be dressed appropriately:

...

8.1.2 *Playing rooms*

Everyone entering the playing rooms is obliged to wear the official identification badge provided by the organization. In case of loss the organisation will provide a duplicate badge at a cost of €5.00

8.2

All players, captains and coaches of participating teams are required to wear T-shirts, polo shirts, shirts or blouses that are of the same colour and contain the Federation's logo. Team members must be supplied with sufficient changes of clothing to ensure that they look smart and presentable at all times. If sweaters, cardigans and sweatshirts are used they must be of the same colour and carry the Federation's logo. All players are expected to be respectably dressed and are also required to follow the instructions given by the TD. Any player, captain or coach not respecting the dress code into the playing area will receive a warning on the first occasion and a subsequent breach will result in that team being fined 2 VP, plus a fine of €100. This penalty is mandatory. Failure to pay the fine will result in that person being prohibited from entering the playing area.

In its futile attempts to have bridge recognized as an Olympic sport, the WBF has imposed a foolish and expensive requirement for all participating countries.

This regulation has resulted in plenty of discussion on various blog sites. Perhaps the response that best agrees with the editorial department of this bulletin came from world champion Geoff Hampson:

I don't think this is an issue of cost, it is an issue of freedom. Players on a bridge team don't need uniforms to avoid passing tricks to the wrong team. They don't need equipment to protect themselves. They need to be comfortable enough to bring all of their mental forces to bear on the bridge challenges confronting them. Each player will do this differently. Expecting some minimum level of presentation and cleanliness is reasonable but forcing uniforms will prove damaging to the level of play. Where is the benefit? Team jackets should be the limit and they need not be worn except during ceremonies.

VBA Survey Results

We recently promised to publish the results of the recent survey of the members conducted by the VBA. Apologies for the delay, but you can expect to see them in next month's bulletin!

COMING UP AT THE VBA ... VICTORIAN OPEN / RESTRICTED PAIRS

Dates: Wednesdays August 10, 17, 24, 31, September 7, 14

Format: Victoria's premier matchpoint event: a 3 week qualifying followed by a 3 week (barometer) final.

Defending champs: Leigh Gold, Peter Hollands

Vu-Graph quotes from Edgar Kaplan

"When partner asks for help in a side suit and you respond positively with three small, it is an insult to your partner. And if he's well-built and hefty, it is a poor idea to insult him."

"No swing on a board that was touch and go at both tables. It touched and went."