

Victorian Bridge Association Bulletin

October 2011

Editor: Bill Jacobs

PROMOTING YOUR BRIDGE CLUB

The leisure market can be a crowded place. Getting fresh blood into bridge clubs is hard work. One marketing activity that can help is to have an article published in the local paper about the bridge club.

Recently two affiliated bridge clubs have organized articles in their local newspapers to good effect.

The Moonee Valley Weekly ran an article "Former champs on deck as club grows" detailing former elite sportsmen who are now regular players at the Moonee Valley Bridge Club. They included an Opals basketballer, Australian all-star baseballer and a Sri Lankan test-cricketer.

The Bairnsdale Advertiser printed an article "You're never too young" featuring 11 year old Seth Ngapare playing at the same club that recently celebrated the 100th birthday of one of its members.

Moonee Valley Bridge club reported that the key to getting the article published was twofold. First the club had an attractive story – suggested by a member – which was to promote the fact that several regular players were ex sporting stars. This provided a "hook" to entice coverage by the local news.

Secondly, a club member already had links to the local news media through his affiliation with the local athletics club.

Using a "hook" to entice a reporter to give your club some coverage is a well-known ploy. Other hooks that could be considered to entice coverage of your club are family affiliations within the club, eg grandparents playing with grandchildren, disabled members, and so on.

Bairnsdale's hook was the disparate ages of competitors in this sport. There are few activities where an 11 year-old can sensibly compete with a centenarian!

STAN KLOFA – 2011, A GREAT YEAR! Phillip Fent

As our Vice President Stan approaches Gold Grand Master and his dotage, it must be said that 2011 has been a great year for him bridge wise.

January found him playing in Canberra with Charlie Schwabegger (who also made Gold GM his year) made the finals in both the Seniors and the Open, with our President Jeannette as a team mate.

Playing with Alex Czapnic at the Gold Coast, his team played against the Australian Team in the final round, and he came second in the pairs.

Last week he won the Coffs Harbour Super Congress Open Teams playing with Phill Fent, and teammates (pictured) Bob Gallus and Rob Stewart (who came 2nd in the Datums – Phill and Stan coming 11th). This is the biggest cash competition in Australia with over \$3,000 for first place.



Congratulations, Stan!

Tasmanian Nationals

Just completed, congratulations to Bob Gallus and Stephen Weisz, who won the Roger Penny Senior Swiss Pairs. 2nd place when to perennials Gary Ridgway and Arthur Robbins.

PET PEEVES
Bill Jacobs

I'm in a bad mood this month, so this peeve is designed to apply to practically everyone. It's a double whammy:

Playing the Latest Gadgets
and
Not Playing the Latest Gadgets

Bidding conventions come into vogue all the time. If you are the sort of player who likes to enthusiastically embrace the latest gadget, you are falling foul of the first of these peeves. It makes me grumpy because you are not properly analysing whether the gadget is any good. You are like Toad of Toad Hall, obsessed with the latest craze.

The second peeve is worse. If you have stubbornly played precisely the same system for the last 10 years, then you are missing out on one of the great pleasures of the game: that of system development. Your bridge, and results, will stagnate.

The only way out is to try the latest gadgets then discard the ones that you don't like.

Here are some gadgets, many of which are worth trying, and then maybe discarding:

- Minorwood
- Negative Free Bids
- Ultra short 1♣ openings¹
- Multi 2♦
- Muppet Stayman
- Attitude leads
- Bergen Raises
- EBAT²

All these conventions have a significant downside, and I am not talking about the risk of forgetting them. That downside is always present when you try something new, but should not be allowed to get in the way of progress.

Take Negative Free Bids. You hold:

♠ xx ♥ K109xxx ♦ Qx ♣ xxx

¹ See "System Musings"

² EBAT = Every Bid A Transfer. When in doubt, it's a transfer. For example, 1♠ (D'ble) 2♥ shows some sort of spade raise.

Partner opens 1♦ and RHO overcalls 2♣.

Using standard methods you are stuck. A 2♥ bid would show much more strength than you have, but you cannot make a negative double lest partner gets too enthusiastic in spades.

But with Negative Free Bids, you can bid 2♥ natural and non-forcing. Perfect!

However there's a clear downside to Negative Free Bids: it is that you have to pack most of your good hands into the negative double. It's hard to articulate what can go wrong here, except by principle: should your LHO innocently raise to 3♣, you probably won't be able to effectively describe your hand.

So many if not most expert partnerships stay clear of Negative Free Bids. Actually the EBAT nuts reckon they have a solution: they bid 2♦ over 2♣, transferring to hearts. Can you see what downside *they* encounter?

What about Muppet Stayman? We've described this convention in the past: it's like Puppet Stayman over 2NT (a 3♣ response asks for 4 or 5 card majors), but opener then bids as follows:

3♦ shows at least one 4 card major
3♥ no 4 or 5 card major
3♠ 5 spades
3NT 5 hearts

Over 3♥, responder bids 3♠ to puppet to 3NT, or 3NT to show 5 spades and 4 hearts. This clever device allows responder to show the difficult 5 spade + 4 heart hand, and also ensures that the strong hand always ends up as declarer.

So where's the downside of Muppet Stayman? It's this auction:

2NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	D'ble!

Suddenly, an opponent has been given the opportunity to make a lead-directing double of 3♠, an option that is not available playing simple Stayman or ordinary Puppet Stayman.

So there are pros and cons to Muppet Stayman, just like any convention. I play it myself, but I'm not that enthusiastic about it.

One last one: Minorwood. This is a bid of 4 of your agreed minor to ask for aces. (See September 2010 for Jill Magee's article on Minorwood). This seems to be gaining popularity at the VBA.

I've only played it for one session myself, partnering Jenny Thompson when my regular partner was unavailable. Once was enough. And what do you know, it came up. I showed club support with 4♣ in some unremarkable auction. She bid something, so did I ... anyway, as I put down dummy in 6♣, it suddenly dawned on me: "was my 4♣ Minorwood?" I asked. "Yes", she said, smiling sweetly. We only went down 1.

My gripe with Minorwood is that it often combines a fit-establishing bid with Blackwood, and that might not be appropriate. For example, consider this auction:

1♦ 1♠
3♦ 4♦

I am reliably informed that 4♦ is Minorwood. But what if responder has:

♠ AKxxx ♥ xx ♦ Qxx ♣ Kxx

This is not a hand for Blackwood, with the two baby hearts. I want to set diamonds as trumps, and then have a cue-bidding auction, or let partner take over to ask for key-cards. With Minorwood, I don't seem to have this option. Perhaps some Minorwood convert could explain how to bid that hand.

RECENT MASTER PROMOTIONS

Club Master	Corey Rose Olive Teelow
Local Master	Judith Ben-Meir
**Local Master	Peter Buchan
*State Master	Genie Harband Philip Knightley
National Master	Flossie Aizen
*National Master	Betty Rosenberg
Gold Life Master	Helen Stewart
Grand Master	Erica Linton

SETTING TRICK - PROBLEMS

Problem 1:

Dealer: N ♠ AK987
Vul: E/W ♥ QJ8
 ♦ 53
 ♣ 852

♠ Q42
♥ 974
♦ AKQ10
♣ A63

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♠*	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* fit-showing

You start with two top diamonds and partner follows ♦2 then ♦6, declarer ♦4, ♦8. You decide that maybe South started with only two so a switch is indicated. To what?

Problem 2:

Dealer: W ♠ 93
Vul: All ♥ J53
 ♦ K10764
 ♣ QJ3

 ♠ Q1087
 ♥ 97
 ♦ A9
 ♣ A10874

West	North	East	South
2♥*	Pass	2♠	2NT
Pass	3NT	All pass	

* spades and hearts, 4+/4+, 6-9 HCP

Partner leads ♠2 and declarer plays ♠A on your ♠Q. You duck his ♦Q, but are forced to win ♦J (partner played ♦2 then 3♦, showing odd). How are you going to defend?

Solutions on page 8.

Kooyong Swiss Pairs Congress

Sunday 13th November, 10 a.m.
Gourmet lunch. Cash prizes. Red points.

No on-line entry available

Contact: leeron.branicki@gmail.com

SYSTEM MUSINGS

Bill Jacobs

In July, I introduced the Fantunes system that Ben Thompson and I have been playing for the last couple of years. A comparison between Fantunes and Standard was summarized in this table:

Fantunes opening	# deals	Averageimps per deal for Fantunes
1♣	300	-0.9
1♦	123	+1.4
1♥/♠	282	+0.3
1NT	398	+0.7
2♣♦♥♠	313	+2.5
Pass	43	-5.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>1459</i>	<i>+0.5</i>

This month, we look at this part of the table:

1♣	300	-0.9
1♦	123	+1.4

To recap, the Fantunes 1♣ opening shows a balanced hand, 15+ points, or an unbalanced hand (14+) with clubs.

The 1♦ opening shows diamonds: normally at least a 5-card suit, but also 4441 shape with a singleton club.

To make sense of the comparison, you have to know what sort of Standard we were employing. Our Standard 1♣ showed at least 3 clubs, but was usually 4+: the 3-card club opening only required if we were 4333 with a major 4-carder or 4423. Our Standard 1♦ was usually at least a 4-card suit, unless we had exactly 4432 shape.

Do you get the sense of what has happened here? The more natural the opening bid, the better it fares. Our Fantunes 1♣ opening is an absolute stinker. We have no idea whether it is long in clubs or short. If left to our own devices, we can usually find out, but 1♣ is the least preemptive of all opening bids, and it often attracts an overcall.

Even the mildest of interference can wreak havoc. If the opponents can get it up to the 2-level by the time it comes back to opener, there's a good chance that opener won't be able to clarify the nature of his hand. We have lost 270 imps from our 1♣ opening,

mainly due to the ambiguity of the bid in a competitive auction.

On the positive side, our 1♦ opening, though less frequent, does better. In Standard, it shows a 4-card suit, occasionally 3. In Fantunes, it shows a 5-card suit, occasionally 4. There's a big difference.

Having 1♦ show lots of diamonds is nice – no doubt about it. Ishmael del Monte is Australia's top player: he likes the concept so much that his 1♣ openings (playing Standard) show only at least a singleton club. So *his* 1♦ opening unambiguously shows a 5+ card suit.

You have to respect Ish's opinion here, but I believe that his ultra-short 1♣ opening is a big problem. My advice to anyone who plays against him is to get in there with an overcall at all costs. And within that sentence lies probably the biggest "musing" of all.

... to be continued

RECENT RESULTS

VBA Open Pairs

Championship

- 1 B. Tencer – G. Gaspar
- 2 E. Caplan – J. Thompson
- 3 W. Jacobs – B. Thompson

Plate

- 1 R. Gallus – S. Weisz
- 2 P. Knightley – D. Middleton
- 3 C. Hughes – K. Bechet

Consolation

- 1 M. Allison – H. Stewart
- 2 N. McManamny – A. Jez
- 3 G. Pick – S. Pick

Restricted

- 1 R. Fordon – V. Zhang
- 2 L. Kinc – W. Mroz
- 3 T. Blizzard – J. Allard

Team of Four Combo

- 1 N. Ewart, B. Howe, T. Strong, J. Magee
- 2 M. Chrapot, M. Tencer, H. de Jong, S. Arber
- 3 S. Weisz, R. Stewart, R. Gallus, S. Klofa

PANACHE - XV
Ben Thompson

Matchpoints is a great form of the game. Let's look at rising young players Nathan Howard and Ben Kingham pulling off one of the classic matchpoint plays – the **magic double**.

Dealer: N	♠ J1083				
Vul: All	♥ 1083				
	♦ 1065				
	♣ A32				
♠ K642		♠ A95			
♥ AQ4		♥ 76			
♦ 743		♦ AQ98			
♣ J85		♣ KQ76			
	♠ Q7				
	♥ KJ952				
	♦ KJ2				
	♣ 1094				

West	North	East	South
Ben	Me	Nathan	Bill
	Pass	1♣	1♥
D'ble	2♥	D'ble	All pass

The master plan with the *magic double* is to *double* your vulnerable opponents and collect the *magic* 200. In the matchpoint partscore battle, 200 is a huge result, beating all the partscores.

Let's look first at the key decision – Ben passing Nate's takeout double of 2♥. Mentally cover the other hands, and put yourself in his shoes. Pard shouldn't have four spades (he should just bid them). Nate also shouldn't have some rocket 18 count angling for 3NT (he should just cue 3♥). Looks like it's probably a partscore hand.

Next question – are we going to beat 2♥? Very likely – you expect to take two heart tricks, and the spade king is a likely third. And Nate actually doubled 2♥, so he doesn't have some embarrassing ordurate object (which is always a live possibility with the young guys).

"Magic" thinks Ben and passes. Would you (or Ben) pass 2♥ doubled at imps? Maybe, but it's dangerous. Give declarer a sixth heart and unluckily put the ♥K in the North hand, and it doesn't look so sweet. At pairs it's worth the risk, because the +200 top is

much more likely than the -670 bottom. At imps, the extra imps from +200 are negligible but the loss from -670 is huge.

I can live without rehashing the play to minus 500, but Ben did make one nifty play that's worth mentioning. When he won his spade king early, he switched smoothly to a low heart away from the ace-queen. What's up with that? Defending doubled partscores, you often want to get rid of the oppos' trumps early because scoring ruffs is usually the way they sneak extra tricks and maybe the contract. Low was neat because it left Nate a heart to play through Bill when he got in, so they could eat as many of our trumps as possible. Ouch.

So what on God's Green Earth were Bill and I doing in this auction? Unsuccessfully trying to apply a bit of pressure! For example, with my 2♥, I was hoping to jockey them into a 4-3 spade fit. If I pass, they'll have no problem doing the right thing. If I bid, it's quite common to see people lose faith in their heart stopper, or just be uncertain about how many spades each other have. And we were slightly unlucky – 3NT might have been making, and then -500 would have been a good score.

Expert aside: A common human failing is to internalise the credit and externalise the blame. That is, anything that goes right is my brilliant plan, whereas anything that goes wrong is the fickle finger of fate. When you pooch a board like this, force yourself to consider what **you** could have done differently. I deliberately stepped out and got pinged because Ben and Nate have developed their judgement in this area. Note to self – be tighter in competitive bidding against these guys.

The takeaway

Try out the **magic double** at matchpoints for fun and profit. When you get a bad score, your **first** question should be "what did I do wrong" (and definitely not "what did partner do wrong").

VBA Annual General Meeting
 Tuesday 6th December.
 More details to follow in November bulletin

INTERVIEW WITH KIM FRAZER

Kim is a keen bridge player, a member of the Moonee Valley Bridge Club who is also active in bridge administration. She will be convening the 2012 Victor Champion Cup.

Her talents extend beyond bridge ... she is a world-class shooter, and won Commonwealth Games gold medals in three consecutive games: 1994, 1998 and 2002.



How did you first get involved with shooting?

I took up shooting at university. It was something I'd always wanted to try and I made friends with a number of other new "shooters" at MURC (Melbourne University Rifle Club). In the early days it was more of a social thing – we used to go shooting on Saturday afternoons and then out to somewhere in Carlton in the evening. It was great fun. I was hopeless at shooting in the beginning, but after a short while it "clicked" and the rest is history!

And what about bridge?

I started playing with friends at lunchtimes. I was new to bridge, so just played the basic stuff: open with 13 points and bid NT with a balanced hand. I can't even remember playing any kind of Ace ask, but suspect we might have played Blackwood. I started work the following year and apart from the odd game, bridge took a 25 year hiatus. In mid 2005, I contacted the local bridge club about joining and after reading an old book on bridge, started playing the game that has replaced shooting as my new passion.

Tell us a bit about the Commonwealth Gold Medals you won, in 1994, 1998 and 2002.

Shooting events are nearly always closely fought affairs with medals being decided by 1 or 2 points. The first two medals were won in

pairs events – both by a margin of just 2 points, whilst 2002 was an individual event medal won on a countback. In 1994, our medal was one of the first decided at the Games with the presentation made by Prince Phillip. Heading into 2002, I had had a fabulous training spell in Ruhpolding, Germany, and headed into the Games with good confidence. I was one of the last to finish in what were very windy and difficult conditions. I remember finishing my match and looking back at my friends in the crowd to see them all smiling with thumbs up and knew without checking the scoring display I'd won!

How did you manage the stress of those competitions?

I used to get really nervous in matches, which can be a good thing, but not if your heart rate is so high the rifle won't sit still.

I spent a lot of time during my shooting career working on mental management to deal with stressful situations. The Victorian Institute of Sport were an enormous help in providing sports psychologists available to work with their scholarship program athletes. I used autogenic training which is a relaxation technique that uses key words and a familiar image; I can still relax and drop my pulse rate in a few seconds by visualising my familiar image!

In addition to acquiring a "mental toolbox" to deal with the rigours of international competition, in my view gaining strong technical skills is a key factor in dealing with competition stress, as any minor technical flaws are completely exposed when one applies the stress of competition.

Did you have sleep issues leading up to, and during, major shooting events? If so, how did you deal with them?

I'm a great sleeper, but athlete's villages are incredibly noisy places as athletes are often competing very early or late into the night. In Canada, the lawn bowling ladies were often up at 5.30 am and the corridors echoed with their voices, so getting one's normal amount of sleep is often a challenge. To help with the nights when my mind was racing, I used autogenic training and once relaxed I could then mentally rehearse my upcoming

competition. I used to find I would get to about shot number 5 of 60 before I fell asleep – they do say watching shooting is like watching the grass grow!

How did you interact with team-mates, in terms of encouraging, supporting or arguing with them?

When travelling to an event, the shooting team travels as a team with all the people shooting different events travelling and staying together, however, interaction is often difficult because there are age and social differences and often past history can get in the way of team harmony.

At times there was a lot of friction, particularly with the stress of competition, and the length of time away – some trips were 6 weeks long. Nevertheless, when someone’s equipment failed, one of the team was always there to provide a replacement part. There is no easy answer here, but the team coaches and manager play a key role in setting the tone and interaction for the team.

Do you see parallels in your preparation for major shooting events to how a bridge player might prepare for major bridge events?

Absolutely. In any sport if I may call bridge that, there is a **preparation** phase, a **training** phase and a **competition** phase. In shooting the preparation phase was where one analysed what was needed to improve, changed things, bought new equipment, tested ammunition and worked on physical fitness and mental management (these two continue through all phases). In this phase, one also planned the year for competitions, what aspects needed improvement and so on.

In the training phase, one worked on technical aspects of performance. This was the time to consolidate and build confidence, and resolve issues. One might also attend some minor competitions in this phase. In the final two weeks before major competitions, the training load was intensified, and for major international events, training was usually done as a group overseas.

The competition phase was all about performances. No equipment/technique

changes, but more about achieving the goals one has set.

In bridge, there are periods in the annual calendar which could be allocated to a preparation phase. After analysis of results a pair may consider their partnership would benefit from adding a particular convention(s) say. Or maybe even switching the basic system e.g. from Acol to 2/1. So the pair studies the changes and perhaps practises a little using a computer program or by talking together about how the convention will be used, and what will happen with interference, and so on.

The pair then moves to a training phase where they practise this in minor events against other players and if they agree it is working from examining the results, they include it in their repertoire or decide against it. There must be a point, a cut-off date, at which you say “this is my system”, and this is what is used as you move into the final days of the training phase during which there is some intensive training.

In competition some goals are important. We all want to win, but other goals can be useful such as a % score goal for a tournament or a goal around “avoidable errors” might be a meaningful way to measure performance in bridge.

THE TWELFTH TRICK

Dealer: W ♠ 105
 Vul: N/S ♥ K54
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ KJ10652

♠ AKQJ7
 ♥ 98
 ♦ K842
 ♣ AQ

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

West cashes ♥A and follows with ♥J: East follows low, queen – phew, dodged a bullet there. It should now be plain sailing, no? Turn the page to find out.

THE TWELFTH TRICK Bill Jacobs

Dealer: S	♠ 105		
Vul: All	♥ K54		
IMPs	♦ AQ		
	♣ KJ10652		
♠ -		♠ 986432	
♥ AJ10763		♥ Q2	
♦ J1063		♦ 975	
♣ 1084		♣ 43	
	♠ AKQJ7		
	♥ 98		
	♦ K842		
	♣ AQ		

Almost anyone could make this if both follow to a round of trumps. So the most cautious of declarers would set their mind to making it if East has all 6 spades. In that case, the only way 6♠ can be made is if you ruff a diamond with dummy's ♠10.

So at trick 3, make the key play: a *low* spade to your ace. If all follow, return to dummy's ♠10. If all follow to that, ruff a heart and claim. If West shows out on the second trump, come back to ♦K and claim.

If West has a spade void, then you will need East to follow to two rounds of each minor. Cash ♣AQ then ♦AQ, leaving yourself in dummy. Now play ♣K.

If East follows or discards, discard a diamond, ruff a club (overruffing East), ruff your last diamond, then play a club to make the rest of your trumps.

If East ruffs ♣K, overruff, cash ♦K, then ruff your last diamond for the same effect.

And you thought the hand was a claimer after trick 2!

COMING UP AT THE VBA ... VICTORIAN INDIVIDUAL

Date: Wednesday 19th October

Why you should play: Surely this is the quickest way to get on a VBA Honour Board!!

Defending champ: Kevin Sertori

SETTING TRICK – SOLUTIONS Ian McCance

Problem 1

Dealer: N	♠ AK987		
Vul: E/W	♥ QJ8		
	♦ 53		
	♣ 852		
♠ Q42		♠ 1065	
♥ 974		♥ 103	
♦ AKQ10		♦ J9762	
♣ A63		♣ KJ10	
	♠ J3		
	♥ AK652		
	♦ 84		
	♣ Q974		

The points to note are 1) You will have to assume declarer has only about 10 HCP, else this will make. 2) declarer doesn't have 3 spades, else would have passed. If he has one spade and 6 hearts or 2 spades and 5 hearts he can trump spades good and come to 9 tricks. 3) Partner will need to hold cards in clubs - ♥K would be useless.

So a switch to a club is unlikely to cost. Which club? A low club will bring 3 more tricks as long as partner rises ♣K!

Problem 2

Dealer: W	♠ 93		
Vul: All	♥ J53		
	♦ K10764		
	♣ QJ3		
♠ J652		♠ Q1087	
♥ KQ1064		♥ 97	
♦ 532		♦ A9	
♣ 6		♣ A10874	
	♠ AK4		
	♥ A82		
	♦ QJ8		
	♣ K952		

If you return a spade now and declarer has ♠K you may get only two tricks in spades and your two aces. It must be safe to return a heart - if partner does have ♠K you still have time when you win ♣A to play ♠10 to pick up ♠J with declarer.

If partner wins the heart trick, your ♥9 will warn him to switch back to spades.