



The Kibitzer

Fall 2021 | Volume 68, Number 3

Kibitzer Interview with Bart Bramley



At first glance of the cover, were you thinking, “Hey, where’s Paul Simon?” But that is not a pic of Art; it is a work of art. What a great shot (taken in 1990) of **Bart Bramley**! Even greater is his bridge resume. You’ll have to google him to view all his bridge accomplishments, but I can tell you this: he’s won 17 North American Championships! And he’s come second too many times to mention.

Bart’s a fabulous interview. We conducted it through email as Bart resides in Dallas. I sent him a few questions, he answered them all, and we were done. I dotted a couple *i*’s and crossed a *t*, and the interview was ready to roll. Bart does a lot of writing for the Bridge World as he’s a Director of the Master Solver’s Club. I think every bridge player of every skill level will learn a trick or two from Bart as he shares what he’s learned after 60+ years of playing. Enjoy!

There’s no face-to-face tournament bridge being planned in Ontario through the fall, so you’ll have to continue playing online and at your Club (if it’s open). Sometime around late May I decided to take a break; I don’t even play against the BBO robots anymore. As Bart reveals, from experience, it’s good to take a break and discover other interests and hobbies. However, channeling Arnold Schwarzenegger, “I’ll be back.”

Speaking of being back, our regular contributors are back! **John Rayner** has more on cuebids, this time after our side locates a minor suit fit. **David Colbert** continues his series *Bridge by the Numbers*. **Robert Griffiths** writes a weekly column for his gang out in the Kitchener-Waterloo area and graciously copies me. So, I have plenty of RG material to share. **David Turner** has a cool declarer play hand—be sure to test yourself before reading on. And **Janet Galbraith**, all the way from Calgary, is back with more bridge history, this time with a brief biography on Charles Goren.

Ray Jotcham shares his well-reasoned critiques on various conventions. The connected theme is for readers to be aware of the *Hidden Costs*. And **Bruce Liberman** is back as well with an interesting slam bidding idea—you ought to discuss it with your favourite partner. **Albena Vassileva** is this issue’s *Canadian Junior* columnist, and all the way from the Land Down Under we have **Lauren Travis** writing about bridge-playing acrobats.

Keith Balcombe interviewed yours truly last winter for inclusion in the Durham Newsletter. But that issue was never published so the interview is being resurrected. Here’s why: Unit 166 bestowed upon me the **Kate Buckman Award** for 2020, so instead of interviewing myself (how droll), I’m able to rely on our intrepid reporter / interviewer extraordinaire, Keith, to help continue the Kib tradition of interviewing the KB winner.

We mourn the passing of two beautiful souls—**Susan Cooper** and **Shirley Wright**. Both were friends of mine. Susie was an active participant in our annual Masters Golf Pool. For years she included her nephew Jake. We’ll keep Susie’s spot, now Jake’s, for as long as he wants it. I’ll miss Susie’s laugh (an all-out chuckle) and her storytelling and charm. Shirley was a bridge playing ninja—quiet and unassuming but along with her bridge/ life partner **Bob Pezzack**, could *getcha* at any time. Shirley had a soft voice and a big heart, and she was always, *always* pleasant at the table. Thank you to the **Cooper-Levy family**, **Jonathan Steinberg**, **Ranald Davidson**, and **Emilio Paesano** (Shirley’s grandson) for remembering Susie and Shirley.

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Contents

Editor's Note.....	2	ARTICLES THIS ISSUE:	
Unit 166	4	Bart Bramley:What I Have Learned.....	8
Unit 238	5	KB Interviews the KB Award Winner	17
Unit 246	5	CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:	
Unit 249	6	Robert Griffiths	22
Unit 255	7	David Turner.....	24
Kibitzer Information.....	7	Bruce Liberman	25
In Memoriam.....	31	Ray Jotcham.....	26
		John Rayner	29
ADVERTISERS THIS ISSUE:		Lauren Travis.....	34
Barbados tournament	3	Janet Galbraith.....	36
		David Ellis.....	38
		David Colbert.....	40
		Albena Vassileva	42

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To view the following reports and meeting minutes, please click on unit166.ca then click on the appropriate link in the left column.

- August 29, 2020 Board of Director Minutes
- January 4, 2020 AGM Minutes
- Engagement Letter (PDF format) + Financial Statements for FYE2020 (excel format)

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Saturday Sept. 11, 2021 at 9:00 am via video conference.

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The Kibitzer is published to promote bridge and to inform members of ACBL Units 166, 238, 246, 249 and 255 about tournaments and special events, as well as to entertain with deals and articles of interest. It is also a forum for the exchange of information and opinion among the members. Opinions expressed in articles or letters to the Editor are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Unit Boards of Directors or the Editor. The Kibitzer reserves the right to edit or exclude submitted material.



Bart Bramley: What I Have Learned

Kib: It's not often the Kib sits down with a 17-time North American champion, so we're thrilled to have this opportunity, Bart. Let's start at the beginning—how old were you when you were first introduced to bridge? What were the circumstances? And is there something you learned early on that you still abide by today?

BB: I was 5 when I saw my father playing with three other men in the living room. I had no idea what they were doing, except that it used cards. Nevertheless, I had an overwhelming feeling of "When I get older, I want to do THAT!" And I've never lost that feeling. I was insta-hooked.

Over the next few years my father taught me about the game. I don't remember specific lessons, but I know they took hold, since I was already hooked beyond repair when my father died - I was 10. We would play occasionally with my mother and whatever fourth we could find. My mother was an unwilling participant at the time, but much later (after she retired) she took up the game with a vengeance and became just as hooked as I am. She also taught me lots of other card games, as well as Scrabble and other word games. My family was into games of all kinds.

My father had a small but impressive bridge library. Besides the usual Goren "bibles," his whole collection consisted of 1) *Why You Lose at Bridge*, by S.J. Simon, the first bridge book I ever read, and the greatest bridge book of all time. I started at the top. 2) *Reese on Play*, by Terence Reese, one of his masterpieces. It was way over my head, but I still marveled at "how did he know to do that?" 3) *Stayman on Bidding*, by Sam Stayman. He had his own point-count, which added an extra half-point for aces and tens. I don't remember anything else from that book, but I learned right away that the standard point-count undervalued aces and tens. 4) *The 1953 World Championship Book*, a dry account of bidding and play on a large selection of swing hands, with no analysis. It

was the U.S. against Sweden. I remember that Sweden had Anulf and Lilliehook, and also Kock and Werner, who I later learned invented the SOS redouble. I was fascinated by that book, which must have been a very unusual purchase.



Bart at US Team Trials 10 years ago

Why You Lose was a great book for me when I was 7 or 8, since it has all the "comic characters" (Mr. Smug, the Unlucky Expert, Futile Willie, and especially Mrs. Guggenheim), each with their own drawings. The chapter called "The Logic of Luck" has stuck with me forever. In it, Simon recommends riding your hot streaks and quitting when you're cold, valuable advice not only in bridge but in all walks of life. I definitely applied it when I was an options trader, with consistently good outcomes. I quote this book all the time: "One or two things got to be right," (Mr. Smug) and "Some situations are too grim for words," (after Mrs. Guggenheim

and the Unlucky Expert have just gone for 3400 in a redoubled cuebid), and many more.

Kib: What is something that took a long time for you to learn? (Eg. When missing the queen and four others, I'm still trying to drop an offside queen instead of finessing for it.)

BB: When I was young, I read that experts don't count points but evaluate in other ways. I scoffed at that – how could you evaluate without “points”? Many years later (decades, actually), when I had finally become a decent player, I realized that the early advice was right. Without even knowing that it was happening, I was evaluating hands by “feel” instead of by a rigid counting method. Sure, we all still count points constantly, but that's just part of the picture; at least as often I “take a snapshot” at the beginning and check the points later. I still don't know when I “crossed over” – it happened subconsciously. For this I was a slow learner.

Another lesson I learn again and again is not to save against three notrump. Give me some shape and a big fit and I keep on saving in four spades over three notrump. And time and again I go down when they were going down. Occasionally I get it right, but the temptation is still there. The only time to bid is when you think you might make yours. That's pretty good advice in all sacrifice situations.

I habitually have to retrain myself to bid “slower.” I'm a big believer in getting to the final contract as quickly as possible, which is certainly one of the goals of good bidding. But too often I place the contract “now,” when I could have reached a better contract by using an extra round or two of bidding. There are many situations where “information leakage” is not as important as the chance of reaching a better contract. This applies most strongly in slam auctions. Blasting to game is still a good strategy; blasting to slam less so.

In many other situations I was a quick learner. Some lessons were so painful that I never forgot. For example, in one of my first duplicates I was paired up with an old guy named Bob Young. At his first turn he overcalled 4NT over 3♠ (or maybe 4♠). I had two aces, so I bid 5♥. He raised to 6♥. I had a stiff heart, so I got nervous that maybe 4NT hadn't asked for aces. I corrected to 7♣. Angrily he went back to 7♥. He had ten solid hearts and three stiffs! That lesson stuck.

Kib: You've partnered quite a few world class players. When you recall your partnerships with them, can you attribute learning something specific from each partner?

BB: I have been lucky to play with many great players. Not coincidentally, they all became close friends. The first was my college mentor, Ken Lebensold. We overlapped for three years; he completed his doctorate, and I got my bachelor's degree. (But he's only one year older than I am.) About the same time that I met Ken, I had reached the conclusion that I should devote some energy to bidding. Until then I had avoided learning much about bidding, which I thought was just something that got in the way until we could play the cards. Luckily, Ken was already a complete player and an accomplished bidder. Two basic concepts that I learned from him were to have an internally cohesive system, and that SHAPE MATTERS. Also, as soon as I started thinking about bidding, I discovered that it was fun! Not as much fun as play, but close... Ken was the first person who ever told me I might become a good player – from the master's lips! Until then I was just trying to get better, but it had never dawned on me that I might get REALLY good. Unfortunately for the world of bridge, Ken has many other interests, so he has not played for about 35 years.



Bart and his first partner Ken Lebensold, taken in 2017

My first truly great partner was Lou Bluhm. We played from 1984-1990, when Lou died of pancreatic cancer. He was 50. He was totally unflappable, steady as a rock. He showed me what a serious system looked like. Until then my partnerships didn't have notes, or they were just a few pages – most of what I played was simple enough to keep

in my head. Lou had 75 pages of notes. And I hated most of it, but since he had done the work, I figured I ought to learn it. Eventually we found a middle ground where he simplified a lot of agreements at my request (meta-rules instead of perfection-seeking small differences), and I agreed to consider all of his new ideas, which were constant and usually quite good.

I have no doubt that if Lou had survived, our partnership would now be regarded as one of the greatest of all time.



Lou Bluhm

My next great partner was Hugh Ross, but we were not a great partnership. We had become friends when Hugh was captain of my team the only time I played in the Bermuda Bowl, in 1991 (Yokohama). He had won the Bermuda Bowl several times in the preceding decade, playing with Peter Pender, who died around the same time as Lou Bluhm. We played for a few years starting in 1992. Even though we both tried hard to make it work, somehow, we didn't mesh. However, we did become lifelong friends.

In 1995 I got fixed up with Sidney Lazard (by John Sutherlin), and we played regularly until around 2008. Sidney was the greatest man I've ever known, and not just in bridge. He taught me many things. I'll stick to bridge items here. One was the importance of voids. Until then I thought voids were like singletons, but a little better. Sidney insisted they were a LOT better, and he was right. For example, over Jacoby 2NT (strong major raise), many people show shortness at the 3-level and a strong second suit at the 4-level. Sidney played that the 4-level showed a void, which he considered much more important than a side suit. Another was to shave a point when opening at favorable. I was aware of that in general, but he was my first partner that made it systemic. Sidney had a reputation as a wild man, but he was a devoted "bridge scientist" at heart. However, his wildness was uncanny. He didn't take as many shots as most people thought, but his percentage of success was phenomenal. My greatest thrill in bridge was winning the Blue Ribbon Pairs with Sidney in 2002, when he had just turned 72. We played

great throughout the event and drove from behind at the very end to win.



Bart and Sidney celebrating their 2002 Blue Ribbon Pairs victory

Another great partner was Lew Stansby. We had been friends for decades when we won the Senior World Championship together in 2007 (Shanghai), but we didn't become regular partners until a few years later. The greatest lesson I learned from Lew was about composure. In Shanghai, during the round-robin, my screenmate accused Lew of coffeehousing him when Lew was declarer. I became incensed and made a stink about the accusation. Eventually a director was needed to calm things down. Afterwards Lew told me never to do that again, because it would only upset him. As luck would have it, we drew the same team in the quarterfinal of the knockout stage. Early in the match a different player on the team (from a different partnership) accused us of hosing him on defense (he had gone down in a trivial contract). I remained stoic as the opponent had his say with the director, who gave him nothing. We blew out that team and I learned a good lesson.



Lew Stansby

My current partner is Kit Woolsey, with whom I have played regularly since 2017, though we have been friends for almost

50 years. I have adopted many aspects of “Kit Standard,” such as very loose weak two-bids, and suit preference at trick one against suit contracts, both of which seem to work out far better than I had previously thought. Kit and I have been teammates off and on since the ‘70s, and we both love to go over the hands in detail; if you like doing that, it’s even better to have a partner to do it with.



Kit Woolsey

Bob Hamman is another player I’ve known for almost 50 years. We first played together in the Open Swiss Teams on the final weekend of the 1990 Nationals (Fort Worth). And we won the event. (Both Bob and I have multiple National wins with first-time partners.) We didn’t play together again until 2003, when I moved to Dallas to work for Bob at his company, SCA Promotions, where I am still working. (Thanks, Bob! The company has nothing to do with bridge, though many bridge players have been involved over the years.) Since then, we have played together many times, including a couple of stretches of a year or two. Despite his persona as a no-nonsense, down-the-middle player, I learned that he is actually a mad scientist. He has never met a convention that he couldn’t improve. Eventually I had to put my foot down to prevent the system from changing every time we played. And I know that’s OK, because Bob can still win with anyone, any time, playing any system. He has a legendary reputation for his powers of concentration and “compartmentalization,” and it is well-deserved.



Bob Hamman

Those are the biggies, but I have had success with many other occasional partners over the years, too numerous to mention.

Kib: What one or two suit combinations do you find to be the most fascinating? Is there a story behind executing them at the table – maybe generating a swing?

BB: One of my favorites is a 9-card fit missing the ace and queen. The percentage play is to finesse against the queen. If the suit is 2-2 it’s a guess; if it’s 3-1 finessing against the queen is better (loses to stiff queen, gains against the other three singletons), and if it’s 4-0 finessing against the queen is also better. However, all my life I’ve been looking for excuses to go up with the king, and I’ve found a few. One of them appears in Eric Rodwell’s book “The Rodwell Files.” I opened a weak two-bid, and it went all pass. Shockingly, the dummy had three small opposite my KJ10xxx, instead of the usual 4441 with queens and jacks. LHO led a side suit to RHO’s ace. He shifted to another side suit to LHO’s ace and they continued to dummy’s king. At this point, with an auction consisting of one bid, and three tricks played, I had enough information to deduce that RHO had ace-doubleton of trumps, which was correct.

On another occasion I declared 4♠ on the partnership auction 1♠ - 2♣, 4♠. After the lead I drew trumps (we had all the top trumps) and had to pick up a side suit of KJ10xx in hand opposite dummy’s four small, for one loser. I deduced that LHO would certainly have led a singleton, except possibly stiff queen, and he might also have led from ace-doubleton. Therefore, if the suit was 2-2, LHO was more likely to have queen-doubleton. I confidently led low to the king, winning as expected, and led another, splitting the suit as expected. However, LEFTY won the ace! He had made the expert duck from ace-doubleton! This was in a regional KO final that we won by 8 imps.

In a related situation, I was once in 6NT at rubber bridge, needing one trick from a suit in which dummy had two small and I had KJxx in hand. I won the opening lead in dummy and led to my king at trick two. LHO (a great player) ducked the ace, and I claimed.

Another combination that I learned while in college was AQxx opposite KJxx. One of my college friends, who was a better player than I was at the time, showed me that there is a right way to play this suit, and not just to keep the opponents in the dark about what your honors are.

Say you are running this suit at notrump. Play the ace and king (assume both follow), then lead the jack. If the next player shows out, let the jack hold before leading the fourth round. If the next player follows, overtake with the queen to lead the fourth round. This way, one opponent must discard twice before his partner discards once. Sound technique. Situations like this come up constantly.

Here's one more in the category of "plays that seem to make no difference." Say your trumps are AKJ9xxx in hand opposite a void. On the ace-king both opponents play small cards. Play the JACK next. YOU know that your play doesn't matter – either the suit is 3-3 or it isn't, but the opponents don't know that. If an opponent has two small trumps, he won't know how many tricks his side has until later; keep him in the dark as long as possible. Play the same way with AKJ10xxx, or with AKJ10xxxx, or with AKJ9xx. One or both opponents will not know for sure what's happening. Contrast this with the effect of playing any other card but the jack.

Kib: Years ago, I recall you telling me between quarters of a Vanderbilt match that you won imps on a board by playing a normal 5-level sacrifice contract (doubled at both tables) by gaining one more trick than your counterpart. (You won 5 or 7 imps.) I forget the details of the deal, but I saw how enthused you were because you made a play that the other declarer did not. What part(s) of the game give you the most joy?

BB: Subtle inferences. They come in many forms. One example is "restricted choice" about the opening lead suit. Suppose the opening lead is in a suit in which you are solid, and further suppose that you have a two-way guess for a queen in another suit. Play the opening leader for the queen, because if he did NOT have it, he might have led THAT suit instead of the one he did lead – we already know that he chose a suit in which he had nothing.

Most of the great plays I've made are things that I had seen before and remembered when the time came. However, a few times in my life I've made a play that I had never seen before. Those were special. One was a triple holdup in 3NT; with AKQx opposite two small I ducked the first trick, necessary to kill the suit when it was 5-2 and opening leader had two of the three cards I had to knock out, but RHO had the other one, which was the FIRST card I had to knock out. Paul Soloway won the first trick at the other table in a knockout match and went down. (This deal

appears in the Granovetters' book *Tops and Bottoms*.) I've talked to other people who claim they've seen a triple holdup, or they've done it themselves, but I don't believe them. The only time I've ever seen it, ever, was when I did it myself.

Bart Bramley's Triple Hold-up

(excerpted from the Granovetter's book, *Tops and Bottoms*)

♠ 10 6	♠ Q 7 5 4	
♥ J 9 8 5 4	♥ 6 2	
♦ Q 6	♦ 7 5 3 2	
♣ K J 7 2	♣ Q 10 5	
		♠ J 9 8 2
		♥ 10 7
		♦ A 9 8 4
		♣ 9 6 3
	♠ A K 3	
	♥ A K Q 3	
	♦ K J 10	
	♣ A 8 4	

"On this hand from a Boston KO in 1981, West leads the ♥5 versus 3NT...Bart Bramley gave the hold-up play a new dimension...Bart applied some grammar school arithmetic to a new concept: If there were five hearts on his left, then there were only two on his right. After two rounds of the suit East will have no more. The first round of hearts is ducked. The second round is won in hand. The only way for the defense to beat the contract is if the opening leader has all three entries.

"On winning the second round of hearts, Bart led the diamond king to East's ace. Having no more hearts to return, East led back a diamond. West won the queen, knocked out a second heart honor, but was forced to concede nine tricks when Bart led a club up to dummy's queen.

"At the other table, declarer did not hold-up at trick one. He won the first trick and also played the diamond king. East won the ace and led back a heart driving out a second honor. West still had two entries, and declarer had only one heart stopper left. The contract went down one.

"Pamela: 'Bart's duck was a super safety play. He didn't have to guess.'"

Kib: I did it once, but I pulled the wrong card and ducked accidentally. What is a tactic (perhaps little known) you have learned (and don't mind sharing) re: 1) Matchpoints, 2) Imps, and 3) Board-a-Match?

BB: My little secrets apply equally to all forms of scoring. I'm a huge fan of takeout doubles with any 12-count that has at least three cards in all of the unbid suits (except 4333 with four of the opening suit), and with other imperfect shapes that have four of any unbid majors. Many players agree with me here, but there are also many who don't. My theory is that the safest time to get in with hands like that is immediately, before the bad guys have exchanged information. I'd rather double 1♠ with a 3=4=3=3 12-count than pass and see it go 2♠ back to me, or INT-pass-2 something. By doubling immediately, partner can get in there with a 5-card suit and a few cards. If I wait, I have no assurance that partner will have what I need. Even if you're in trouble they will have a hard time nailing you. Lots of ways to win.

Apparently, I've learned how to play matchpoints over the years. Most of my greatest matchpoint results are from the latter half of my career. But I'm not aware of doing anything consciously different. I must have picked up something by osmosis along the way.

Kib: Is there something you recall learning from a top player from another country? For example, do the Europeans do something different (better?) than us North Americans?

BB: Europeans use a lot more card-showing doubles than we do, to show extra values and a wide range of hand types. I first learned about card-showing doubles more than 50 years ago, and we thought they were hot stuff until we kept having accidents when partner never knew what we had. I still haven't solved that issue, but the Europeans seem like they have.

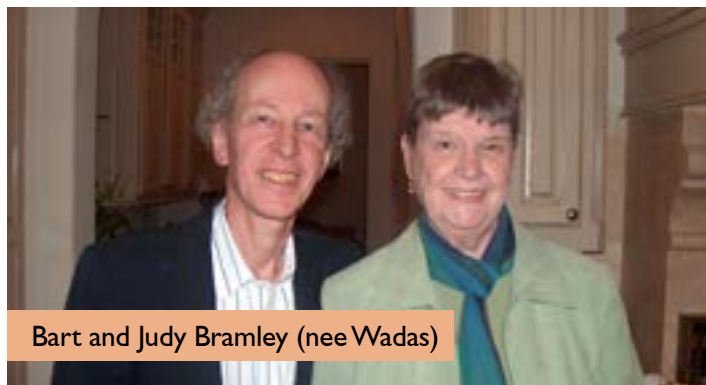
Europeans, and especially Italians, like to lead honors against notrump even without supporting texture, like from Qjxx or even KQxx, where we usually lead small. It works for them, enough so that I will do it myself sometimes.

P.O. Sundelin taught me to lead second-and-fourth through declarer in the middle of the hand. He swears by it, and I think that most Europeans agree with him, but that style has never caught on much over here.

Generally speaking, players everywhere know things that are worth learning. That's true not just in bridge, but in everything we do. I assume that everyone I meet knows something I don't know, and I WANT TO LEARN IT.

Kib: Can you imagine your life without bridge in it? Re: the passion and devotion, is there something else that could have possibly taken its place?

BB: I don't have to imagine it – I tried it once. In 1982, when I was 34, I took a year off from bridge. Or tried to. At the time, I estimated that I had been playing in tournaments at least 50 days a year for half my life, and thinking, talking or reading about bridge for other big chunks of time when I wasn't actually playing. A few years earlier I had scoped out the Nationals schedule well into the future, and I decided that 1982 was the year to miss: Niagara Falls, Albuquerque, and Minneapolis. (In contrast, 1981 was a keeper: Detroit, (much better than expected), Boston and San Francisco. And I had my best finishes ever, up to that time, in all three big team events – semifinals of the Vandy, finals of the Spingold, final day of the Reisinger. I stuck to my guns through Niagara Falls, which by all accounts was one of the worst Nationals of all time. I then caved and played the Cavendish Pairs in New York in May. I was living in Connecticut, so the travel was easy, and we finished in the money. My partner at the time, Rich Friesner, routinely played no bridge between big events, and I discovered that I could do that, too, and still play well. Later, we got an offer we couldn't refuse for the Spingold, so I ended up in Albuquerque but played only the Spingold. We got another offer for the Reisinger, so I played the final weekend in Minneapolis. By October I knew that I couldn't give it up, so Judy and I played in the Grand National Pairs (as the North American Pairs was known then) for New England, since the prize was an expense-paid trip to Honolulu in March of 1983. We crushed the field and won the trip.



Bart and Judy Bramley (nee Wadas)



Richard Bramley, Bart's brother, introduced Bart at the Hall of Fame banquet in 2019

In all I played about twelve days of bridge that year, played well, and found out that I couldn't live without it. However, in 1982 I had huge amounts of extra time, and I loved it. I took piano lessons, something I had wanted to do for a long time. Judy and I took golf lessons in the spring. I had played some golf since I was a teenager, but this was the most I had ever played, by far. As luck would have it, there was a recession that year and I got laid off from my job as a contract programmer. I was out of work from July to November, so I played lots of golf, practiced the piano, and enjoyed the most beautiful autumn I have ever seen. Later, piano went by the wayside, never to resume, but not because I started playing more bridge. Rather, my new job, starting in November, required a commute of 90 miles each way, every day, so I

had no more time to practice. My year "off" from bridge was fantastic, and I'm glad I found out what it was like, but in 1983 I was happy to be back, and I've never left since.

Regarding doing things with passion: I have many interests in my life, not just bridge, and I'm passionate about all of them. These include music (rock-and-roll and blues mostly, especially the Grateful Dead), sports (I follow everything, especially baseball and my beloved Yankees), games of many kinds (trivia, word games, map games) and driving (I ENJOYED that 90-mile commute).

Kib: If you could go back in time and whisper something to young Bart, what would that be? What would you tell yourself to do more of? Less of? Keep on doing?

BB: The usual: Stop and smell the roses.

Kib: I feel I have to ask you about the hot topic these days: online cheating. Are you surprised at the number of confessions and folks getting caught cheating since we went to online play in the past year?

BB: Yes and no. In retrospect, we should have recognized the inevitability of some people caving in to the temptation to "improve" their game in what must have seemed like an "invisible" way, but which turned out to be highly visible. I'm sure there were elements of "nobody is getting hurt here, so it's OK" and "everybody's doing it" and "it's just practice" and a few other rationalizations. But I was definitely surprised at the identity of many of those who got caught, players I had considered above reproach. And that's a shame, because you can't put that genie back in the bottle. Even if amnesty is granted, it's a black mark that can never be erased.

Kib: Have your views changed towards how best to deal with cheats? If so, how? What do you think is a suitable punishment?

BB: Yes. I was always a hard-liner when it came to cheating. My view was, "How dare you sully our game like this. If you think this is an acceptable way to play a game, go find a different game. You are beneath contempt. Go away and don't come back; don't even think about it." And I still feel this way about the greatest cheats in bridge history.

BART TRIVIA

Bart has grown a beard every 5 years since 1977, the year he started going out with Judy.

Any picture of Bart with a beard is from a year that ends in “2” or “7”.

Look for another BB beard next year.

But somehow the online cheats are different, and I’m still trying to understand how. I think it has to do with the degree of difficulty. The famous collusive cheating pairs had to work really hard at it, in designing a cheating method and then executing it. It did not “just happen.” That’s what makes their cheating so repulsive. In contrast, online cheating is so easy that “anybody” can do it. And they did.

The circumstances under which the online cheating occurred were so unusual that I now think we should give everyone a “Get Out of Jail Free” card for whatever they did in the spring of 2020. After that, the word was out, so the usual harsher rules would apply again for any cheating after, say, July 2020. If you couldn’t wise up after that first wave came crashing down, then there’s no hope for you.

Kib: In the time period between (say) 2002 and 2015, if and when you played against a pair who were thought to be cheating but whose cheating methods were not known (I’m thinking Fantunes, Fisher-Schwartz, etc.) what did you do? How did you approach those matches? Did it put you off your game?

BB: Yes, it does put you off your game. I always played as hard as I could, and I tried to be on the lookout for anything suspicious. However, cheating methods are not part of my skill set, and neither is detecting cheating. I would look for unusual gestures or noises, or abnormal actions that worked, but good cheats are usually not giving the show away.

On a few occasions I was teamed up with a pair that was suspect. (Other people had made the arrangements.) Anyone who says that it should be easy to spot your teammates cheating has no idea what they are talking about. For starters, they’re at the other table, so you can’t see them in action. OK, so their results must be “funny.” No, actually

they’re not. When you have good teammates, you expect them to have good results, so it’s not surprising when they do. The worst I could say about one pair was that they didn’t like to talk about the hands afterwards. (Of course, there are plenty of honest pairs that don’t like to talk about the hands either.) However, when I pressed them, they **COULDN’T REMEMBER** what they had done on the boards we had just played, which I thought was more telling than any specific action they took.

Kib: One way you have given back to the game is by serving on committees. You have played for as long as you have. You have played at a world class level and met players from the club level to world class. What have you learned about bridge players in general?

BB: Bridge players are the greatest group of people I have ever met. (Well, maybe except for Deadheads, and Yankee fans, and...) Any group of people will include a cross-section of humanity. Bridge players are smarter than most people, as we might expect from people who aspire to play a hard game well. And they include many who are brilliant at things other than bridge. I enjoy picking the brains of people who are really good at what they do, whatever that might be.

Bridge has allowed me to meet people from all over the country, and from all over the world, and to travel to more places than I ever imagined. It’s a gift that keeps on giving. I learn something new every time I play. I’ll never be “played out.”

My father knew it, and I know it.

Kib: Thanks, Bart!



Bart's work picture from 1977

Two LOL Auctions with Bart

If I were to reflect on my all-time top ten bridge highlights, one of them would be the time I got to play with Bart as a partner. It was set up through a mutual friend, Nancy Reynolds (then Nancy Craig); Bart and I played a one-day Swiss at the Cincinnati NABC in the spring of 2000. The team consisted of us, Bart's wife Judy, plus Nancy, and one or two others. It was one of those teams where partnerships shift—a fun day all around. I got to play with Bart for two matches. While I don't recall the hands, I do remember two odd auctions—you might even say they were LOL auctions, and by LOL, I mean both 'laugh-out-loud' and 'little-old-lady.' Oh and 'lots of love' because who doesn't love an auction where your judgment is vindicated?

In one of our first boards ever Bart opened 1♣. I responded 1♦ and he rebid 1♠. I then bid 2♥, fourth suit forcing. So far, so normal, yes? Now here comes the funny part: we now bid clubs twice each until we ended at the 6-level. Bart bid 3♣, I bid 4♣, Bart bid 5♣, and I bid 6♣. In baseball parlance that's back-to-back-to-back-to-back jacks. At the break we told Howard Weinstein this auction and he laughed out loud. (See? I told you it was an LOL auction.) He asked to see the hands and so I wrote them down on a napkin or something. Howard looked the hands over and then said, "Actually, the auction makes a lot of sense." Here were the two hands:

Bart	Andy
♠ A 7 5 3	♠ 8 2
♥ 5 4	♥ A K 9 3
♦ Q 7	♦ A K 6 2
♣ A J 9 8 4	♣ K 10 2

At the other table 6♣ went down when declarer lost the unavoidable spade and a club because declarer took a losing finesse for the ♣Q. At our table, Bart embarked on a plan to not have to guess the location of the club queen. He ducked a spade early and proceeded to ruff the heck out of everything. Eventually someone ruffed in front of Bart, he overruffed, and later dropped the club queen. It was fun to watch, reminiscent of the Devil's Coup, and we won a bunch of imps.

Before sitting down to fill out our convention card Bart taught me a trick: fill it out backwards—that is, start with carding and end with your notrump structure. This way, you talk about carding and not fall into the trap of extensively discussing follow-ups to, say, INT-3♥ which will never come up. Carding, however, is guaranteed to come up. Eventually we arrived at the 2♦ opening bid box. Bart told me he loved Flannery. We kept the follow-ups simple, but he liked a response bid of 3♦ to be natural and invitational. Done. Sure enough, right on cue, the following auction ensued:

Bart	Andy
2♦	3♦
4♦	5♦
Pass	

Notice anything peculiar? Like the previous match, we had another four-peat, this time in diamonds: 2♦ showed 11-15 points with four spades and five hearts, 3♦ was natural and invitational, 4♦ was a "You don't invite me—I invite you," and 5♦ was an acceptance. We won imps because the handhog at the other table didn't think he needed a club stopper; Judy led a club and put paid to 3NT. Bart scored up eleven tricks in diamonds and I had a front row seat.

Other than 1♠-2♠, 3♠-4♠ it's rare in bridge to see the same strain bid four times in a row. Although once I was at the table when my opponents had this auction: 1♣-1♦, 2NT-3NT, 4NT-6NT, 7NT. That's a five-peat! I doubled on principle. Before leading, my partner, playing in her first game ever, at a Sectional no less, asked, "Is it my lead?" And then she proceeded to cash an ace. Down 2. Doubled. But I digress...

Whenever I try to explain bridge to my non-bridge friends I use a tennis analogy. I say, "Imagine we play doubles. You get Rafa and I get Roger."

Upon reflection, playing with Bart really did feel like I was playing with Roger Federer: for his skill set, ethics, and comportment. And, we had a laugh (out loud no less) over two auctions.



KB Interviews the KB Award Winner

By Keith Balcombe

Kib: *Well, this is different. I'm going to introduce Keith Balcombe and then he's going to interview me. Hey, we live in strange and unprecedented times—so why not? Perhaps you've heard of Keith or seen his photo for winning an Oshawa Sectional event or perhaps you recall one of Canada's greatest achievements in the bridge world: a team from Canada won the 2002 IOC Grand Prix in Salt Lake City. Keith was a key member of that team; it was the equivalent of winning an Olympic medal, back when the organizers shopped the idea around that a mindsport such as bridge could be deemed a sport and possibly included in the Olympic Games. (It is not, sadly.) Keith is a great teammate and partner, loves to give back to the game, and was editor of the Durham Newsletter.*

Of note, our interview, conducted last winter, was going to appear in the Durham Newsletter but then the Newsletter shut down temporarily. Around that time, David Ellis of the Unit 166 Board of Directors contacted me to tell me some interesting news...

Keith: Andy Stark is a dad, a husband, and a bridge professional. It can be hard to combine all those. Let's find out how he does it. Thank you for agreeing to do this, Andy. First of all, congrats on winning the Kate Buckman Award! We will start by talking about growing up, then ease into playing bridge, your family life and your other bridge achievements. Can you please tell us a little about growing up?

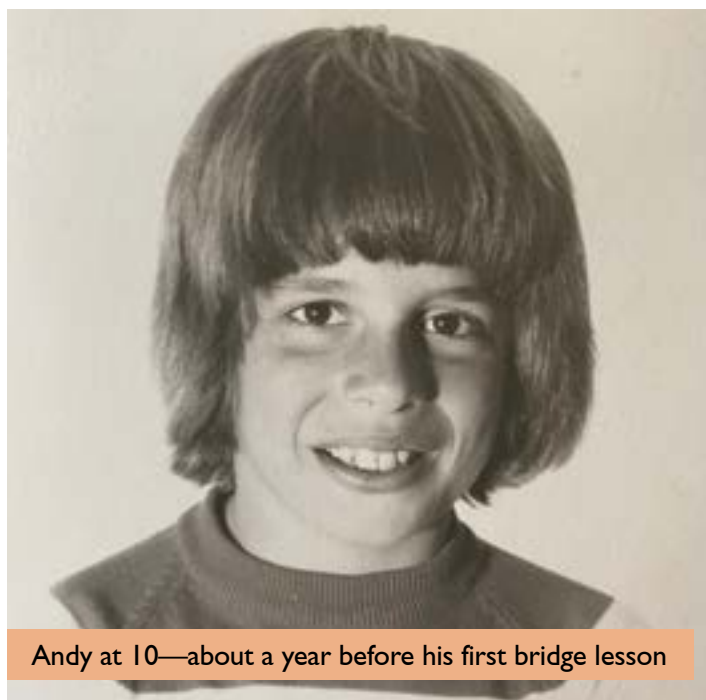
Andy: I was born in Montreal, but my family moved to Mississauga in the mid-60s, so I had a suburban upbringing. Great for street hockey and watching open fields become malls and housing developments. I used to play organized soccer and baseball, then in high school I played varsity volleyball and curling.

Keith: What happened after you graduated from high school?

Andy: I went to Western in London, ON. I had no idea what to focus on so took General Arts. A mistake probably since I bombed out after the second year. I took a year off to work at the Keg, then went back to Western and got a B.A. in English Lit. with a minor in Film.

Keith: Because of COVID, we are likely more interested in Netflix and movies. Could you please clarify what film means: appreciation of films or making them or both?

Andy: More the appreciation of films. As if studying a work of literature, we would study a film based on its lighting, use of colour, costumes, the director's mise en scène, etc. I was seeing up to 7 films per week in and out of school. Good times: just like binge watching on Netflix.



Andy at 10—about a year before his first bridge lesson

Keith: How and when did you learn to play bridge? What are your first bridge memories?

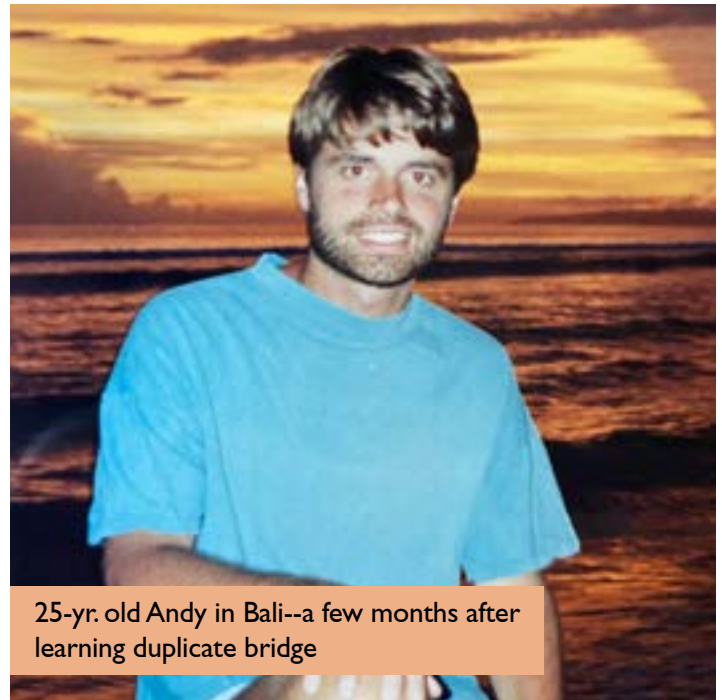
Andy: I recall bridge games at the family cottage near Owen Sound. And my mom had a group of ladies over twice per year or so. Or sometimes my folks would have a two-table couples' game. Lots of smoke and booze! Once I stood behind my mom when she opened 1♥. I whispered loud enough for everyone to hear, "But Mom, you have five hearts." I got my first bridge lesson at 11, filling in while my grandparents visited. Then at 16 or so my dad and I went out to the Del Gagan game at Huron Park. I still have the slip that shows I earned 0.16 of a masterpoint.

Keith: Great memories. People don't learn bridge that way anymore. When did you start taking bridge "seriously"?

Andy: Some would say never (haha), but when I fell, I fell hard. Luckily it was after graduating from university. I was home for the summer and spied a copy of 'The Joy of Bridge' by Audrey Grant and Eric Rodwell. My folks were taking lessons with John Rayner. I said, "But you already know how to play." "Yes, but we felt rusty; plus, we want to try duplicate." I read the first four chapters one day and the remaining four chapters the next day. I said, "Okay, I'm ready to play now."

Keith: Tell us about life after Western. Where did you go and what path did your life take?

Andy: I immediately saved up for a trip to Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand with my then girlfriend. My money ran out after five months but what an amazing experience. Upon returning I worked as a teaching assistant in Peel Board. Then, after being rejected by teacher's colleges I applied to a Radio Broadcasting program at Humber College. I interned at CFNY, did summer promotions and giveaways, and then in the winter called in to air the ski reports (including a few from John Rayner's club). That career took me to Yellowknife where I was a sportscaster at the local AM station. Since the bridge population in the Blade was all of one table, I read a ton and began a subscription to the Bridge World. I also took up curling again. I can say that I beat Kevin Koe. Mind you, he was 18 at the time; but we all knew he was an amazing curler headed for greatness. My team and I were one win away from qualifying for the Brier that winter.



25-yr. old Andy in Bali--a few months after learning duplicate bridge

Keith: Wow. The Brier! Were you still playing bridge then?

Andy: Yes, but barely. I think I played four times in two years in Yellowknife (*oh for the internet and BBO – KB*). However, it was during my first summer there that I came home and played in the NABC in Toronto. It was 1992. I needed 35 gold points or so to achieve Life Master. Bev Ross and I played in a one-day Regional event. We had a 54% game in the afternoon and a 70% game at night to win by a board. That got me all the golds I needed and then some: one of the highlights of my bridge career for sure.

Keith: Tell us about how you met your wonderful wife.

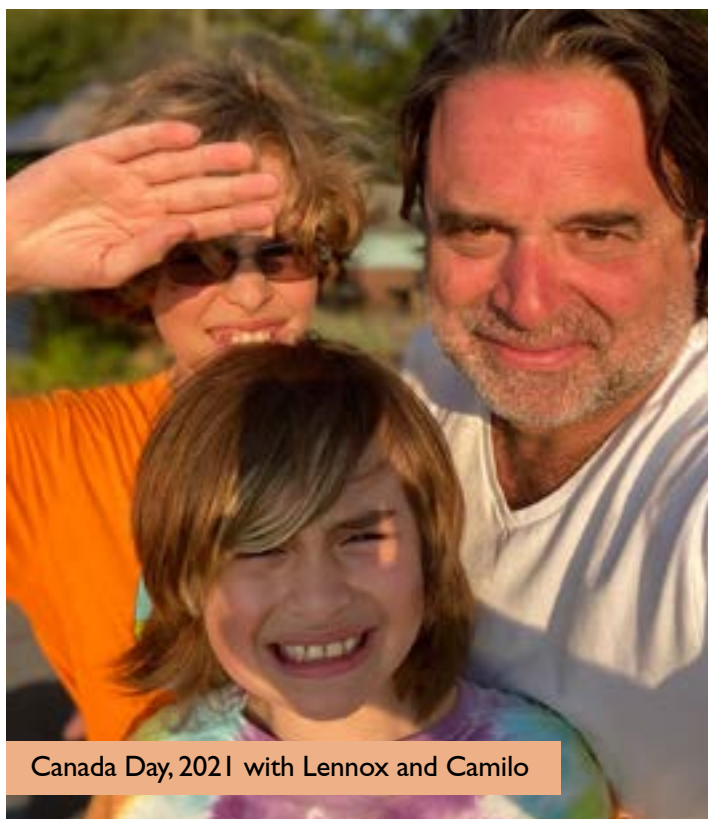
Andy: So, fast forward to 1995. I had to go back to school to upgrade and get the grades I needed for teacher's college. I did that at St. FX in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. There was not much work for an English teacher in Ontario, so in 1996 I applied to an American School in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Taught for three years, came home for two, (finishing second both years in the Richmond Trophy race), then back to Ecuador again, this time to Quito and another American School, again to teach English Literature. One day I walked into a bookstore and there she was! Sylvia and I got married about nine months after we met. No, she does not play bridge, not yet. She says she'll take it up in her retirement.

Keith: Why did you end up coming back to chilly Ontario?

Andy: I missed home and Sylvia knew she would have better opportunities here. One of her first jobs at George Brown College was working in the mail room. She is now the Senior Manager, Divisional Operations and Strategic Initiatives in Community Services and Health Sciences. (Not sure her business card is big enough to fit all that in!)

Keith: What do Andy and Sylvia do during their “spare” time, especially during Lockdown?

Andy: Try to keep sane. Go on walks, keep our boys, Lennox, (12) and Camilo, (8) engaged. For an excursion a couple weeks ago, the boys and I drove to Shelburne just to eat lunch at Superburger. It was worth it.



Canada Day, 2021 with Lennox and Camilo

Keith: Who are some of your bridge partners? Who was your first serious partner?

Andy: Back in the day Barbara Sims. In Ecuador, Jorge Baquerizo. I first played seriously (CNTCs) with John Ross,

and then later with Martin Hunter, Eiji Kujirai, John Rayner, Eric Shepherd, and Nick Stock. In the last two Canadian Mixed, I've played with Kathy Adachi and Katie Thorpe. This year in the Canadian Mixed I partnered one of Canada's top juniors, Alben Vassileva. Coincidentally, she is the Canadian Junior columnist in this issue.

Keith: How long have you been editing The Ontario Kibitzer? How does an issue come together?

Andy: John Carruthers retired as Kibitzer editor in 2014 and (luckily for me) suggested to the Unit 166 Board that they hire me. Thank you, JC! This issue means I've been editor for 7 full years. So far, every issue of the Kibitzer has come together like every project, every essay, every assignment I've ever done in my life: at the last minute. Can't help it—it's the way I roll. But with the new larger format I have asked some players to write a regular column. Also, I am now planning months in advance what the cover story will be. For example, the previous issue's cover story was on the Dirty Dozen – 12 bridge playing friends – and was months in the planning. It was all about 12 amazing women from Mississauga (and environs) who came together through bridge and developed a strong bond of friendship through the ups and downs of life, death, marathon bridge games at the cottage, wine, walks, gourmet meals, love and laughter. I think their story is a lot of bridge player's stories, especially those trying to balance work/life/bridge. This issue was really exciting as I first emailed Bart Bramley way back in February. You can tell he's a writer for the depth of details he put in to answering all the questions.

Keith: Sounds like fun; I can definitely relate. What are the rewards and challenges you experience as editor?

Andy: I'm trying to cater to all levels of experience and abilities. So, we have a section for newer players and a section for advancing players. And then the articles are for everyone, really, as we focus on people's stories and their profiles. I've borrowed a feature idea from Esquire magazine by having bridge players share with us a few bridge related things they have learned. That's the thing about our game—we are always learning or at least we should be. I'm never short of material and super excited about the new larger format. Too bad it is not printed for everyone anymore, but that was 'cost prohibitive,' as we say nowadays.

Keith: When did you start teaching bridge? Do you consider yourself a bridge professional?

Andy: Yes, I am a bridge professional, not so much as a player, but as a teacher. I teach the wonderful ladies at the York Club and Decadent Club and have taught and will teach again at Thornhill Club. I started when Rayner sponsored me to take a bridge teaching course with Audrey Grant back in the early 90s. I have taught bridge in Yellowknife and Ecuador. I still have the boards that the Mississauga-Oakville Bridge club gifted me at my going-away party in 1992.



1997 Ecuadorian Team Champs: Susie, Jorge, Andy and Elsitá

Keith: Please share some of your bridge stories.

Andy: I inherited a chunk of change when my grandmother died in 1999, so decided to blow it on bridge and I played all year in 2000, travelling to all 3 NABCs and numerous Regionals. The highlight was probably teaming up with John

Duquette, Doug Heron, and Bob Gwartzman in the North American Open Swiss. On day 3, after the first three rounds, all wins, we were playing the leaders! What a feeling to be on a roll against top competition. We had beaten Benito Garozzo's team. Duquette and I bid a grand on a finesse for the trump king. It was onside. We lost the 4th match but won a few more matches to finish 4th overall.

In 2006, I teamed with Daniel Korbel, Doug Baxter, Danny Miles and David Grainger (lots of D's there!) to win the Flight 'A' GNTs in Chicago. Came down to the last hand, a Grand Slam that was bid and made at both tables. (Grainger said I made the scarier opening lead.)

But here's a little-known story that is kind of cool: I don't know of anyone else who has done this. Roy Dalton and I, while playing with Jonathan Steinberg and Bert Eccles in a Montreal Regional, won a Swiss match with 14 plus scores! *That was 7 plus scores on 7 boards for each pair!* I guess that is a world record that can be matched but never broken.

Keith: What is your very favourite bridge memory?

Andy: It will be when I win a Canadian title, but for now it will have to be winning 4 Ecuadorian National tournaments. I wasn't planning to look for the bridge game down there, but it found me. So, I started going out to the club. I met Jorge Baquerizo, and he asked me to team with him and two ladies. Well, we were solid from the get-go and so were Susie and Elsitá. We beat Team Quito who were surprised we played so well. The best tourney ever (EVER!) was at a yacht club on the Pacific Ocean. It was a matchpoint event played in an open-air events room. So, we were outdoors but with a roof over our heads. The air was warm with a cool breeze coming in over the Pacific. There were 7 tables so for each round we played a Howell and faced every other pair. The scoring was tight. After the first round we were in second place, down by one matchpoint. After round two, second place, now down by 6 mps. In the third round we took the lead by a half matchpoint. After round 4, still in the lead but by one mp. And then after the final round, we hung on and won by 24 mps. For this interview I had to look up the scores; I had forgotten the tight race. What I do recall, as if a year ago or so, was the atmosphere.



1998 Ecuadorian national bridge event at the yacht club:
Pedro Jose Rubira, Jorge, Mariquita Baquerizo, Andy

Ostensibly we played outdoors, but at room temperature. In Canada it is almost impossible to hold a bridge tourney outdoors. But imagine if we did hold one. That's why I say 'almost' impossible. I think it should happen ... somehow, some way.

Keith: Sounds like a great memory! Any last thoughts?

Andy: Occasionally I'll exchange an email with someone (in the know) who also writes about bridge, Paul Thurston for example. We'll agree that it's a labour of love. Since discovering our wonderful game I've built up a library of bridge books. My favourites are the ones who write economically and with humour. There are some British writers who fit that description but also the American Eddie Kantar. With each and every issue of the Kibitzer I try to accomplish one goal—make it educational and entertaining. As a friend of mine put in his BBO profile: "If

it's no fun, why bother?" I'd like to thank the Unit 166 Board for their recognition of these efforts. We have a wonderful community of bridge players in Ontario and I feel I'm just getting started telling some of their stories. For the next issue I'd like to learn how bridge helped new Canadians settle in to their new home country.

Keith: Thanks for doing this interview. Please come out to play at the Durham Bridge Club soon.

Andy: No, Keith, thank you!

Keith: Thank you.

Andy: You're Balcombe.



For Newer Players

By Robert Griffiths

You Should Not Want a Ruff

West dealt and opened 1♦ and North overcalled 2♣. East considered a preemptive jump to 3♦ but chose to pass.

Although the QJ of diamonds might amount to nothing, South, just a little embarrassed by his suit, tried 2♥. When North raised to 3♥, South bid 4♥, hoping that North's hearts were a little meatier than his own. 4♥ was passed out.

Board 24
West Deals
None Vul

	♠ 8 6 4	
	♥ A K J	
	♦ 10 8	
	♣ K J 8 7 2	
♠ 10		♠ Q J 9 7 3
♥ Q 10 6 3		♥ 9
♦ A K 4 2		♦ 9 7 6 5 3
♣ Q 10 9 3		♣ 6 4
	♠ A K 5 2	
	♥ 8 7 5 4 2	
	♦ Q J	
	♣ A 5	

On lead, West played the ♠10 and from here it was plain sailing for South. He won the spade lead, played a heart to dummy's jack then cashed the ♥K, learning that West had a heart trick.

To make his contract, South needed a friendly lie in the club suit. He found it, playing a club to his ace and another back to dummy's jack. One of his diamonds was pitched on the ♣K; he ruffed dummy's fourth club then used the ♥A as an entry to cash the fifth club, throwing his second diamond,

All he lost were 2 spades and a heart, making 4♥.

West's defence here was gentle. He has a strong trump holding and should be making sure of his outside tricks rather than leading short suits.

If the defence starts with two rounds of diamonds, West can now simply lead a third diamond, giving declarer a ruff/sluff that declarer doesn't want. Ruffing in the dummy will ensure that West sets the contract with 2 heart tricks while ruffing in his hand will lead to declarer losing control of the hearts. West will have as many hearts as South and West's will be bigger.

A Queen For The Taking

This was a flat board from a small pair game; at every table South played in 4♥, making 5.

At every table, West opened 1♠,

North doubled and, after East's pass, South drove to 4♥, usually with a simple jump.

And showing our lack of diversity, every West led a spade, either the queen or a small one.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

	♠ A 8	
	♥ A K 6 5	
	♦ 5 4 3	
	♣ K 9 5 3	
♠ Q J 6 5 4 3		♠ 10 7 2
♥ 8		♥ 4 3
♦ A Q 6 2		♦ K J 10 9 8
♣ Q 7		♣ 10 4 2
	♠ K 9	
	♥ Q J 10 9 7 2	
	♦ 7	
	♣ A J 8 6	

The contract was safe. South could win 6 heart tricks, 2 spades and 2 clubs. The question is whether declarer will make 2, 3 or 4 club tricks.

What are the clues South has based on the bidding and early play? West opened the bidding and East couldn't find a response after North's takeout double. West led a spade from a topless suit.

There are only 15 HCPs among the 2

defenders and, for his bid, West ought to have 11 or more of them. Is it likely that West has both the ace and king of diamonds? It is very unlikely. Almost every defender would lead from an AK combination rather than a QJ combination. And if West doesn't have both the ace and king, then East has one of them. And if East has a top diamond, (say the king) is he likely to have the ♣Q as well? That would give East 5 HCPs and West only 10. Yes, it is possible--opponents have been known to make misleading bids or even psychic bids--but it is extremely likely that West has the ♣Q.

If South is convinced that West is the likely possessor of the club queen, declarer has 2 options to capture it. The easy way is to play the ace and king of clubs, hoping the queen falls. The slightly messier way is to lead from hand the ♣J on the first club play, playing low if West doesn't cover and winning the dummy's king if the queen is covered. Then, after winning dummy's king, declarer can lead a low club from the board towards his 8, playing East for the 10.

As the cards lay, either of the above methods brings the entire club suit home for 12 tricks which on this hand, on this day, would be a top board. In this game, every South declarer simply finessed East for the queen of clubs, making 11 tricks to make the board totally flat.

The Not-a-Penalty-Double Makes for a Big Penalty

North had a very nice 19-point hand and opened 1♣. East passed and South eked out a 1♠ bid. West's 2♦ overcall is normal and now North is getting good feelings about the hand. He likes the spade fit; he likes that the opponents are bidding his short suit.

He shows his enthusiasm with a 3♦ bid, which is a cue bid raise of spades, is absolutely forcing, and asks for more info from South.

Board 12
North Deals
NS Vul

	♠ K 10 7 2	
	♥ A 4	
	♦ A	
	♣ A K J 7 4 2	
♠ A 3		♠ 6 5 4
♥ Q 5 3		♥ J 9 8 7 2
♦ K Q J 9 8		♦ 10 6 4 3 2
♣ Q 9 8		♣ —
	♠ Q J 9 8	
	♥ K 10 6	
	♦ 5 4	
	♣ 10 6 5 3	

South shudders but is momentarily saved when East, who can also see that this could be a big hand for NS tries to get in their way with a jump to 5♦.

South and West pass and North considers. South has promised only 4 spades and 6 HCPs but North reasons that the opponents have made it clear that South will have no wasted values in diamonds. Since his partner's cards should be in the majors, he thinks that contracting for 12 tricks is reasonable, so he bids 6♠.

Against a passive defence, 6♠ will make. The only loser for NS is the ♠A. But East, with the weakest hand at the table, has a secret weapon. He doubles 6♠.

This double is called a Lightner Double--it is not a penalty double. When playing Lightner Doubles, a double of the opponent's slam by the player not on lead asks partner for an unusual lead. It says first to avoid leading any suits bid by the doubler's side and suggests that a ruff is available in a side suit, usually one bid by the opponents. In this case clubs is the obvious option.

A club lead would normally be the last thing that West would consider, but trusting his partner, he leads the ♣8. East gets his ruff at trick one and another after West wins the ♠A. Down 2 doubled is a top board for EW.

More information about Lightner Doubles can be found here:

https://www.bridgebum.com/lightner_double.php



For Advancing Players

By David Turner

Here is a hand from this year's CNTC Open Teams where it's easy to go set if you're not careful. Suppose you bid beautifully (as usual) to 6NT. Make your plan on the ♠9 lead, which you run to your king:

♠ 8 7 6
 ♥ A Q 2
 ♦ Q 6 5
 ♣ 9 7 6 5

♠ A K J 10
 ♥ K J
 ♦ A 4 3
 ♣ A K Q 2

Top Trick Count: 9. You have three clubs, three hearts, one diamond,

and two spades. It looks like a club break and finding the ♠Q inside is the best chance to come to 12 tricks, but entries are a problem: if the ♠Q is inside 4th or 5th you'll need two entries to dummy, and right now you only have one: the ♥A. But if clubs break that will give you the second entry you need. If not, you can hope to find the ♦K inside for the second entry and a 12th trick with the ♦Q instead.

So, after winning the ♥K in hand, you cash two high clubs, to which both opponents follow; the 4th club is now an entry. Looks good now: two more rounds of clubs, ending in dummy, spade finesse wins, ♥AQ pitching a

diamond, second spade finesse wins: 12 tricks! Okay?

Well, here's where the little extra care comes in: there were indeed 5 spades on your right, but with 3 spades in dummy and two entries, you can afford to cash the ♠A (just in case) before crossing on the 4th club. In real life the ♠A drops the offside stiff queen, and you can claim 12 tricks. Did you think of it?

Note that if you had only a doubleton spade in dummy, you would need both of them to take finesses, so you couldn't afford to play the ♠A first.

Correspondence

Hi Andy,

Great article on the gals (The Dirty Dozen, Summer 2021 issue). I started playing at the same time they did, and we played every week at Huron Park. After the game we would go to Carol Ann's or Ginger's house and discuss the game and drink till 1 or 2. We had good times and I became good friends with them all. Sallie Caty, Barbara, and Sharon and I played together until 1996. Unfortunately, we kind of drifted apart. I moved to the States; except for the occasional game over the last 20 years I hadn't seen them much. Sallie and I played on OKBridge for quite a few years in the early 2000s. Last time I saw them was at Sallie's funeral.

The picture of us in the article was at the Boston Summer Nationals in 1990. We took a day off and went to Cape Cod where the picture was taken.

Thanks for the great memories.

-Rod Jansen



What is the Meaning of 6♦?

By Bruce Liberman

You are in third seat, with nobody vulnerable. You and partner play a strong club system. You hold:

♠ Q 10 9 8 5
♥ A 9 2
♦ J 4
♣ 10 8 7

Here is your uncontested auction—see notes below. Although you may not be familiar with the system, the 6♦ bid is a bridge bid and not part of the system. See if you can decipher the meaning of 6♦ and make the best bid at your final turn.

Partner	You
1♣	1♥
2♥	2♠
3♦	3♥
3♠	4♥
4NT	5♣
6♦	?

Bidding notes:

1♣ is strong (18+), artificial (any shape), forcing

1♥ shows 5-8 HCP, any shape

2♥ is natural, 5+

2♠ is natural, 5+ (although I think the best bid is 3♥ to show immediate support)

3♦ is natural as we have not yet agreed on a suit

3♠ shows first round control in spades
4NT is RKC

5♥ shows 1 or 4 keycards

6♦ is the point of this article— what is the meaning of 6♦ and what is your call?

Answer: Several experts believe 6♦ here is an offer for partner to pick a slam. But a superior agreement is to play this bid as an invitation to a grand slam. Specifically, it asks partner to focus in on their diamond holding. This asking bid comes in this very sequence: after a response to 4NT showing some number of keycards. Notice we are still below 6 of our agreed trump fit, in this case hearts.

The usual responses are as follows:

With no third-round control, i.e. 3 quick losers, bid 6♥

With a singleton or doubleton diamond, bid 7♥

With the ♦Q, bid 6NT

Partner's hand was

♠ A K
♥ K Q J 10 8 4
♦ A K 9 7 6
♣ —

When your hand could not control bid 4♣, partner knew the keycard must be the ♥A after partner bid 4NT to ask for keycards. That is not your concern at the time of your final turn, you just need to realize you have a doubleton diamond, so bid 7♥.

Congratulations if you bid the excellent grand slam—one you would not want to be in if your diamonds were ♦J84 or ♦432, as those are three quick losers.





Hidden Costs

By Ray Jotcham

We are all familiar with hidden costs. If we buy a new car, the minute we drive it off the lot it loses at least 10% of its value. We are willing to accept this as a fact of life. When deciding to use a bridge convention, we lose the ability to use that call in its natural sense. The trade-off may be negligible and one we are willing to make. As an example, the Stayman convention takes the natural 2♣ call over INT, a call of little consequence, and replaces it with a call that opens up a panorama of possibilities. This is a valuable tool which costs virtually nothing to use. With other conventions, the cost may not be so little.

The hand that gave rise to this article arose in a match during the round-robin phase of the 2020 Canadian Seniors' Championship. Opener held:

♠ A J 8 Vul. vs non-vul.
 ♥ 5 2
 ♦ K Q J 10
 ♣ A K Q 5

A fine 20-count that most people would open 2NT; he could not as his partnership played 2NT as showing both minors. To my way of thinking, this particular agreement puts an extraordinary amount of pressure on the partnership to show specific notrump ranges above 20 HCP: however that is neither here nor there. He had to open 2♣, which allowed me to show both majors at the 2-level. Partner had a strong holding in hearts, and we could save at the 5-level and still show a profit against 3NT making with an overtrick at the other table. Who would have thought that a natural 2NT opening was a super-sound preempt against the majors!!!!

Another convention that can have undesired consequences is the Jacoby 2NT response to a major suit opening. A corollary of the convention is the 3NT response to show 3-card support and 13-15 HCPs. What sometimes occurs is that opener simply rebids 4H or 4S, and a good slam in a side 4-4 fit is missed. As an example:

♠ Q x x ♠ A K x x x
 ♥ A x x ♥ x x
 ♦ K Q x x ♦ A J x x
 ♣ A x x ♣ x x

Neither hand is a monster, but I would think that looking at the cards, one would want to be in 6♦ nine days a week! (On a round suit lead, duck the first round and ruff the third round and claim the slam unless spades break badly.) Give opener the spade jack and a singleton, and a grand slam in diamonds should be bid. Notice that only eleven tricks are available in spades or notrump.

In my partnerships, I don't use Jacoby 2NT, preferring to use 2NT in its natural sense to show 13 or more HCP with no

upper limit. This allows us to find minor-suit fits (if they exist) without getting beyond the game level in notrump.

Let's look at Jacoby transfers. This is a wonderful convention allowing responder to show a long suit and make the notrump opener the declarer. What could be finer? Well.... if the responder is strong and balanced with 2-4-3-4 distribution, he is forced to bid 2♣. If partner bids 2♥, everything is nice and rosy. What if he bids 2♦ or 2♠? Do you have any way of finding a 4-4 club fit if it exists? What if responder is 4-4 in the minors? How does he find a 4-4 fit?

Let's look at some sample hands:

♠ K x	♠ A x	
♥ x x x	♥ A x x x	
♦ K Q J x	♦ A x x x	
♣ K Q J x	♣ A x x	11 tricks are the limit in notrump or diamonds.

♠ K x	♠ A x x	
♥ x x x	♥ A x x x	
♦ K Q J x	♦ A x x x	12 tricks are available in diamonds
♣ K Q J x	♣ A x	

♠ K x	♠ A x x x	
♥ x x x	♥ A x x	
♦ K Q J x	♦ A x x x	13 tricks may be available in diamonds
♣ K Q J x	♣ A x	

♠ K x	♠ A x x	
♥ x x x	♥ A x x	
♦ K Q J x	♦ A x x x x	12 tricks in notrump, but 13 tricks in diamonds!
♣ K Q J x	♣ A x	

As we can see, West has the same hand in all cases, but the number of tricks available ranges from eleven to thirteen! None of these hands can be adequately bid using Jacoby transfers, demonstrating that there can be a hidden cost to their use. In general, unless responder has a minor suit of 5 or more cards or a major-minor 5-4 hand, minor suit slams are notoriously difficult to bid using Jacoby transfers. Playing matchpoints, it is usually sound practice to bid with the field and hope to make up points in the play of the hand. Playing IMPs, however, bidding and making a minor-suit slam after partner's INT opening may be the difference between winning by an IMP or losing by ten.

Why play Jacoby transfers? The goal is to keep the strong hand hidden. Why do I not play Jacoby transfers? Keeping the strong hand hidden is not as important to me as getting to the optimal contract available. That is why I play 2-way Stayman in my partnerships. Besides half the time the crucial card is onside anyway, so it doesn't make any difference who plays the hand!

Consider the following auction: 1♣ P 2♥

Traditionally, this showed a strong hand with good hearts and strong slam interest. It didn't come up very often, and sometimes made it difficult to stop below the slam level if the values weren't there.

Then somebody noted that in terms of frequency, the strong hands were much less frequent than a weak 2-bid type of hand, and came up with the idea that the 2♥ bid should show a weak 2-bid in hearts. Bye, bye constructive bidding! The suits got weaker and weaker, and the penalties got bigger and bigger!.

Another group decided that using 2♥ to show 5+spades and 4+ hearts with 5-8 HCP (Reverse Flannery) allowed a good description of the hand with some follow-up bids to ask for distributional features (2NT being the usual follow-up). However, being familiar with the convention, I noted that intervening with a call of 2NT or higher (if my hand warranted the interference) put an end to any further description (2NT showed an overcall in the unbid minor with a moderate suit while three of the unbid suit showed a strong suit and a good hand with interest in 3NT). Why not use the opponents' methods to allow you to differentiate the strength of your overcalls--a hidden cost of Reverse Flannery! The same is true, if a little more dangerous, against 2♠ showing the same distribution, but with 9-11 HCP.

Still another group plays the 2♥ response to show a balanced 11-12 HCP. This at least has the merit of limiting the hand in range and shape.

However, consider the following hands after partner opens 1♣:

♠ x x	♠ A x	♠ x x	♠ A x x
♥ A K Q J x x x x	♥ A K Q J x x x	♥ A K Q x x	♥ A K x x x
♦ x x	♦ K x x	♦ x x	♦ K Q x
♣ x	♣ x	♣ K Q x x	♣ K x

The first hand has eight winners, but little slam interest unless partner has a big hand. How do you show that? The second hand has 8½ winners and strong slam interest. How do you differentiate this hand from the first? The third hand has a strong club fit and some interest in a club slam. How do you show it? The fourth hand has strong interest in a notrump slam. How do you show it? It is on hands of these types that the traditional strong jump shift to 2♥ wins out.

With the first hand, your second bid is 4♥, leaving the rest up to partner. With the second hand, your rebid is 3♥, inviting cue-bidding. With the third hand, you show club support (What a concept!), and with the last hand you bid notrump. The jump shift shows either (A) a self-sufficient suit, (B) a big fit in partner's suit, or (C) a big notrump type with five hearts. By the way, these are called Soloway Jump Shifts in modern parlance, but they have been a part of the ACOL system since the 1940s.

Ron Klinger wrote two books about KERI, a system of responses to 1NT that is extremely powerful, but definitely not for casual partnerships. One of the notable parts of the convention is using a jump to the three-level to deny a five-card major and show a singleton in the next higher suit with game-going values. With no wastage in the short suit (ace or small cards), opener bids the short suit and the suction continues. With a double stopper, opener suggests 3NT by bidding it. With any other holding, he starts showing suits. Over opener's bid of his shortness, responder can bid 3NT with the singleton king, which with partner's ace provides a second stopper. Both partners can provide input to the final decision. With small cards opposite responder's singleton, slams based on the "thirty-point deck" are bid more easily.

Some people liked this idea, but were unwilling to exert the effort to learn all of KERI. But they thought that the principle of showing a singleton in a major with game values had merit. Ergo a jump to 3♥ or 3♠ showed a singleton in that suit, three cards in the other major, and 5-4 in the minors. What a concept! Opener with a double stopper could bid 3NT, try for a Moysian with a strong 4-card major, or look for a minor. What could be finer? Well if responder has the singleton king, 3NT could be a good contract if opener has Qjx or Axx in the short suit. KERI at least gives you a chance to arrive in 3NT. However the hidden cost arises when responder has a major suit singleton and four cards in the other major. Now presumably he must use Stayman to show his hand. If opener bids his shortness, responder has no idea if opener has a stopper at all or a double stopper. Guesswork in the auction is not good because you can guess wrong half the time (in my case, probably 75% of the time).

If you are going to use the convention, I suggest that you not limit the unbid major to 3-card length, but play that it could show three or four cards. This will allow you to show 4-4-4-1 hands as well as 4-1-5-3 and 3-1-5-4 shapes, further allowing

you to avoid getting to silly 3NT contracts or unmakeable 5-level contracts.

What if your opponent opens with the dreaded “multi 2♦”? A veil of secrecy has been draped over the table, with only the opening bidder knowing what’s going on. Can we use the uncertainty to our advantage? Matt and Pam Granovetter, in their book *Bridge Conventions in Depth* describe such a method.

Double - I have a strong overcall in one (or both) majors - If they land in a major and I double that, they are in trouble because that’s MY suit. If I don’t double, do something sensible.

2♥ - I have an intermediate jump overcall in clubs (good suit, something outside as well) This is where the hidden cost comes in: if I simply overcall 3♣, I am showing less game interest because my suit isn’t as strong. Moreover, unless my LHO has support for both majors, he may be out of the auction (e.g. with 4 spades and one heart, he may be reluctant to bid, thereby missing a 6-4 spade fit.

2♠ - I have an intermediate jump overcall in diamonds.

Pass, then double - I have a normal takeout double of whatever major they’ve settled in.

Pass, then bid other major - I have values, and suit length, but not a good enough suit to have shown a strong overcall.

Experience has shown this to be a superior method of competing against Multi, as we have never had a bad result using it, and several big pickups as a result. Aah, the hidden cost of using Multi; it allows the opponents to better describe THEIR HANDS!



The Bridge Teacher

By John Rayner

Modern uses of the cue bid raise: when we have a minor suit fit

We continue our look at how using the cue bid of the opponents’ suit can be an aid to our side in the bidding. In this issue we are going to examine the cue bid to either “show” or to “ask” for a stopper in the opponents’ suit(s).

When our side has a minor suit fit and we have interest in reaching game, most further bidding by our side is geared to exploring whether or not 3NT is a viable contract. The direct minor suit raise by Responder means it is highly unlikely we have no major suit fit. Let’s first look at an uncontested auction:

Opener	Responder
1♦	2♦ (6-10 with diamond support)
???	

Say Opener has ♠43 ♥AK3 ♦AK10654 ♣Q3. In an effort to reach 3NT, Opener bids 2♥, showing a stopper in hearts and in effect asking partner to bid NT with a stopper in spades. If Responder now bids 2NT, Opener raises to 3NT.

If Responder is not able to bid NT, our side will play in some number of diamonds. In these kinds of auctions, we tend not to be overly worried about a stopper in an unbid minor.

When the opponents have bid one suit:

If the opponents have bid, things change a little. We now have available, as an additional tool and when appropriate, the cue bid of the opponents' suit.

Opener	Intruder	Responder	Advancer
1♣	1♠	2♣	2♠
??			

Opener has ♠109 K Q ♦A32 ♣AKJ432 and would like to be in 3NT if Responder has a spade stopper. Opener cue bids Intruder's suit by bidding 3♠, asking Responder to bid 3NT if holding a stopper in spades. The principle here is that if the opponents have bid one suit, the cue bid of that suit is asking for a stopper in their suit. In bridge parlance this is sometimes referred to as a "western cue bid," but the terminology is not important.

Similarly...

Opener	Intruder	Responder	Advancer
1♥	2♦	Pass	3♦
Pass	???		

If Intruder now cue bids 3♥, that would again be a western cue bid asking Advancer for a stopper in hearts. Our side will play in 3NT or some number of diamonds.

When the opponents have bid two suits:

Opener	Intruder	Responder	Advancer
1♣	1♦	1♥	2♦
Pass	???		

Now our side has two possible cue bids available: 2♥ and 3♣. In this scenario Intruder's cue bid "shows" a stopper in that suit and is asking for a stopper from Advancer in the opponents' other suit. This stopper showing cue bid is

sometimes referred to as an "eastern cue bid," but again the terminology is not important. The principle, however, is important: *when the opponents have bid two suits a cue bid shows a stopper in that suit* and, logically, is asking partner for a stopper in their other suit.

Some further points for consideration...

Opener	Intruder
1♥/3♠	3♥/3♠

These jump cue bids of Opener's major suit opening are rare calls indeed, but they are universally played by experienced players as western cue bids asking Advancer to bid 3NT with a stopper in the Opener's major. Intruder will typically have a strong trick-taking hand with a long minor such as ♠A5 ♥75 ♦AKQ75 4 ♣A6 after a 1♥ opening. With the same hand after a 1♠ opening, the practical call is simply 3NT. Sure, the opponents might be able to defeat you with hearts, but let's not live in such a dark world.

Lastly...

Opener	Intruder
1♣/3♦	3♣/3♦

These jump cue bids of Opener's minor are not western cue bids. Instead, they are best played as pre-emptive natural overcalls. After a 1♣ opening, bid 3♣ with:

♠43 ♥8 ♦J43 ♣KQJ9654

As always, make life difficult for your opponents! See you next time.

John has put his on-line teaching on hold for the summer. Each week he sends out to his students a bridge quiz accompanied by his suggested answers. If you would like to receive these weekly quizzes just let him know by e-mailing

johnraynerbridge.com

John anticipates resuming on-line lessons in the fall.



In Memoriam



Shirley was the youngest of eight children to Paul Bedard and Emma Bedard (née Denomme). She was the much loved aunt to her many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews. Imagine Goderich during the 1950's, and you can see Shirley in her poodle skirt, bobby socks, and saddle shoes rockin' around the clock.

After raising her family in Toronto with so much love, support, and guidance, Shirley found a fulfilling career in library sciences with the Toronto District School Board. With equal determination and focus, Shirley began her passionate pursuit to become a life master in the competitive world of duplicate bridge. Most recently, Shirley was recognized as a Gold Life Master by the American Contract Bridge League. Her "wing-man" throughout this journey was her cherished Bob.

Shirley will always be remembered by her family and friends as kind, gentle, respectful, and accepting. She has bestowed this legacy upon her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to honour and to continue.

A Funeral Mass was held at All Saints Parish (1415 Royal York Road) at 10:00 am on August 7, 2021, and was followed by a Reception at St. George's Golf and Country Club (1668 Islington Avenue). Donations may be made to the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in lieu of flowers, using <https://www.imakeanonline donation.org/ssvp-national/IMD/>, or by emailing e.paesano@gmail.com for assistance.

Shirley Wright

Shirley Anne Wright (née Bedard) passed away peacefully at the Palliative Care Unit within Baycrest Hospital on June 25, 2021. Beloved partner to the love of her life, Bob Pezzack. Devoted mother to Kathryn (Paul), Richelle (Ermanno), and Christopher (Darcy). Adored grandmother to Emilio (Francis), Oriana (Christopher), Marion, Emma, Jesse, and Solange. Cherished "GiGi" to her great-grandchildren Luciano and Romeo. Loved dearly by Shirley's family in and around Goderich, Ontario, the Pezzack family, and Shirley's many friends.

For Shirley

After achieving Gold Life Master status, Shirley was determined to help Bob get his GLM as well. Through the pandemic, they were playing 14 games a week. In early August, while playing with Gary Westfall, Bob achieved his and Shirley's goal.

~Denise Donovan

In Memoriam



more than the hands themselves, though like most of us, she could post-mortem them for hours. She loved the social element and the camaraderie, and, even as illness and the pandemic limited her function and mobility, she could always find the energy to watch and play online. Despite poor health in her last few months, Susie started teaching bridge in the building in which she lived, and she took pride in watching everyone there learn the ropes.

Gone far too young and a tremendous loss to our bridge community.

~The Cooper/Levy family



Susie, Susie's mom Evelyn, and sister Karen

Memories of Susan Cooper

The game of bridge lost one of its “lifers” when Susie Cooper passed away on July 6, 2021, after a long battle with cancer. She was 57.

Susie came from a bridge family. Her father, the late Stephen Cooper, and mother, Evelyn, introduced her to the game at a young age when she worked as a caddie at local duplicates and tournaments. Soon thereafter, she learned the basics and was playing ever since, eventually becoming a regular on the travelling tournament circuit. In the early years of her tournament travels, she would venture off to tournaments with her sister Karen, Mark and David Caplan, and Fred Gitelman. They would mix up the partnerships. The irony is that the Cooper sisters and Caplan brothers tried to figure out how to avoid playing with Fred because they thought he wasn't very good—nice foresight!

Over the years, Susie was a ubiquitous presence in the GTA bridge scene, a regular at tournaments, a volunteer at the annual Toronto Regional and anytime Toronto hosted the Nationals. She was a member of the CBF board right up until her death. For Susie, bridge was about so much

I have known the Cooper/Levy family since I moved to Toronto in 1982—a long time. Susie and I have been friends and bridge partners since the 80s. I have a fond memory of Susie and I winning the prestigious Peterborough Sectional Open Pairs in 1988.

My sister Ivy reminded me that I won some baseball ticket lottery and in 1992 or 1993 went to a Jays World Series game with Susie, Ivy, and a fourth person, whom we can't remember! Susie and I were dinner and theatre companions as we attended several Mirvish theatre productions. She would tell me, “Hey I'm single—I'm available at the last minute.”

Susie was a Special Education teacher, specializing in working with autistic children. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer (almost four years ago) she had to take time off. As a result, our club games at Hazel's became more frequent. A little over a year after the first diagnosis she returned to work for less than two weeks when it was discovered her cancer had metastasized.

Susie was always cheerful and optimistic despite her illness. Once the pandemic hit, we continued to play online although her most regular partner was Zelig Rubinstein. Late last spring she was hospitalized with a staph infection. After three weeks, the treatment appeared to be successful but then she developed pneumonia and died within a few days.

Susie was the Hospitality Co-Chair during the 2017 Toronto CNTC. Then last fall she was appointed to replace Nader Hanna as the CBF Zone III Board member. She was thrilled to be doing so. She was looking forward to being well enough to travel once the pandemic ended.

~Jonathan Steinberg



Susie and Jonathan

Our relationship started off quite poorly in San Francisco when we ended up playing on the same knockout team in a random event. My partner and I had a couple of disasters, and I did not react all that well—to the disgust of Susie. Maybe that is the way all great relationships start off?

Fast forward to the Toronto January Sectional at the Royal York a few years later. Someone paired us up to fill an evening pair game. We did well and got to talk about some of the hands, in particular a hand where I did not give Susie

a ruff. I was a little more diplomatic in the discussion and we discussed how other cards played in our defence would help partner realize that partner had led a singleton ace.

We continued to talk, and Susie agreed to drop me off in North York on her way home. I shoehorned myself into her small black sports car and off we went. We were still talking about the hand when Susie made a quick left turn down University going the wrong way on a one-way section of the road. As luck would have it a police car greeted us and ushered us to the side of the road.

Susie gathered her licence and insurance, rolled down her window and presented everything to the officer. The policeman asked, "Have we been out drinking?" Susie replied, "No, Officer, we were playing at a bridge tournament." The Officer said, "Well it seems like you may have been distracted; what was the problem?" Without hesitation, Susie said, "Well, I led the ace of clubs and switched to a high heart against 4♠ doubled." Susie explained the entire hand to the Officer in minute detail. The policeman thought for a second, gave Susie her papers back, and said, "Thank you for helping me understand my grandparents better. Please be more careful on your way home and pay more attention to the road."

Susie, you left us far too early. Love you forever and always.

~Ranald Davidson



Susie and Ranald

All photos courtesy of Jonathan Steinberg



Grand Slams & Other Myths

By Lauren Travis

Jake Randell and Marty Schreiber are not your average bridge players. Google them and you'll find they're co-founders of an award-winning acrobatics company, Gravity & Other Myths, and have toured the world performing their shows for the past eight years. Due to the pandemic, they have settled back in Adelaide for a while, and they've become familiar faces at their local bridge club.

Walking into SA Bridge Association in January, the director told me in hushed tones, "Those two young guys over there are acrobats!" I recognised them both – and not just from going to four of their shows over the last few years. When I worked at the club years ago, Jake and his father would play Monday nights when he was in town. Going back a little further, one of the last times I saw Marty was in 2008, when our Year 12 Maths teacher convinced him to do backflips off a desk in our final lesson.

When we sat down together after a Monday morning bridge session, they both looked a little disappointed, having "only" scored 51%. While I don't think that's a bad effort, it does pale in comparison to Jake's 70% in a weekend congress the previous day!

Jake actually learnt bridge around the same time as me, in Year 8, from David Lusk "in the little back room" at Unley. His family learnt together, his mum giving up early, and he played for a while before prioritising his thrice-weekly circus training. Although he played a bit with his dad about five years ago, he really got back into the game through Funbridge, playing online to pass his spare time on tour. Jake managed to convince his fellow acrobats to play; he wrote some basic notes for them then got them turning cards straight away. Marty was his most enthusiastic student and agreed to play in a club, and

they've started to bring some others on board. They're realistic about their aspirations, knowing they won't be lighting up the world stage in this particular arena. Jake hopes to be like today's opponents, enjoying multiple games a week in his retirement.

So how does a full-time acrobat fit a hobby like bridge into their schedule? They train in long blocks a couple of days a week, leaving plenty of time for hobbies on other days. Jake observed that, like acrobatics, bridge is one of those activities where you don't notice the time passing, and a session goes by in a flash. When they're actually performing, it's usually at night, conveniently allowing them to play bridge during the day.

It's not often you get the opportunity to grill a couple of world-famous acrobats, so I took the chance to find out more about Gravity & Other Myths. How did they go from Cirkidz to world tours? A group of young Cirkidz acrobats formed Gravity & Other Myths in 2009 and toured Australia for a couple of years. Marty tells me that an international tour was the ultimate dream, so in 2013 the company headed overseas with 'A Simple Space' (my personal favourite), as a "last hurrah". While there, they met an agent, and later got a call telling them they'd landed a ten-month international tour. The acrobats quit their jobs, dropped out of university, and the rest is history. Gravity & Other Myths is now comprised of 30 acrobats and has travelled the world consistently from that first tour until 2020 when they returned to Australia.

Their most recent show, 'The Pulse', was conceived in 2020 during the pandemic. It premiered at the 2021 Adelaide Festival to rave reviews, and at the time of writing was about to run for a second season in Adelaide in late July. Currently, Gravity & Other Myths plan to take 'The Pulse' to Europe and North America later this

Lauren Travis was a member of Australia’s most recent women’s team which was unable to contest any international competitions. With partner Sophie Ashton, she won every Australian women’s competition held in the 2020 cycle. Lauren also represented Australia in under 20, under 25 and girls categories between 2009 and 2014, collecting two Asia Pacific gold medals and two WBF silvers along the way. At age 21 she took a hiatus from international bridge to focus on university and now works as a primary school teacher in Adelaide.

year before returning to Adelaide for the Fringe/Festival season in 2022. I strongly recommend going to see any of their work, as long as you’re not opposed to a few heart-stopping moments.

I suspect we’ll see a lot more of Jake and Marty at bridge clubs, both in Adelaide and around the world. They definitely find bridge addictive. It fits into their nerdy interests – they also regularly play board games and D&D – and Marty is clearly convinced it’s the king of card games, comparing it favourably to others like 500. And when I asked Jake for any parting words, he had one thing to say: “We need more young people in bridge.” Let’s do it.

For more information about Gravity & Other Myths, go to <https://www.gravityandothermyths.com.au/>



Bridge-playing acrobats Marty and Jake



Bridge History

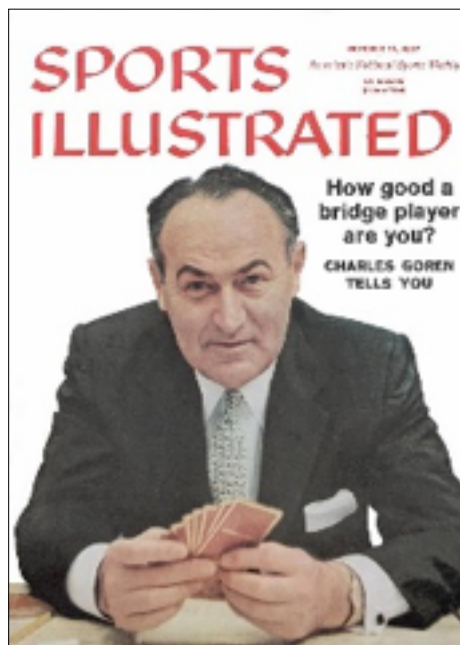
By Janet Galbraith

Mr. Bridge Charles Goren (1901–1991)

Goren was born in Philadelphia, PA, to Russian Jewish immigrants. He has a Canadian connection in that he attended McGill University, graduating with a master's law degree in 1923. McGill later awarded him an honorary doctorate of law in 1973. It was at McGill that he took up auction bridge, and after being teased by a woman about his weak bridge playing ability, Goren threw himself into learning as much as he could about the game. While practicing law back in Philadelphia, his bridge playing talent and enthusiasm caught the attention of Milton Work, a successful writer and lecturer on auction bridge from the same area. Work hired Goren to help with his writing, and Goren eventually began to ghost write Work's material. In 1928, Work popularized the 4-3-2-1 point count system. When he died in 1934, Goren began his own writing career, including writing "Winning Bridge Made Easy" in 1936. The success of the book led him to give up his law career. His breakthrough as a player came in 1937 when he was part of a Philadelphia team that won the National Board-a-Match Teams (now Reisinger).

"Play your partner's game, especially if you know more about bridge than he does."

He became a popular lecturer and instructor, and in 1944 began writing a daily newspaper column, taking over from Ely Culbertson at the Chicago Tribune. The column was eventually syndicated in over 300 papers. One of his bridge partners was Omar Sharif, who had written some of the forwards in Goren's books, and in 1974 took over Goren's newspaper column. Goren also had a weekly column in Sports Illustrated, extraordinarily "fulfilling" his childhood dream of becoming a "sportswriter."



A sports fan, Goren frequently joined Los Angeles Dodgers manager Walter Alston and players for some pregame bridge in the Dodger dugout.

Goren also hosted the television show "Championship Bridge with Charles Goren" from 1959-1964. The show featured prominent players and occasional celebrities (Chico Marx for one) playing in a living room setting, with Goren providing analysis of the bidding (think early VuGraph). Many of these episodes can still be found on YouTube.

"Many a brilliant coup has been born of adversity sired by some previous atrocity in the bidding."

Three of Goren's books became standard teaching texts: "Contract Bridge Complete" (1942, now in its 12th edition), "Contract Bridge in a Nutshell" (1946) and "Point Count Bidding" (1949) all contributed to make his methods, soon called Standard American, the most widely played system in the history of bridge. Goren took Work's counting approach and added distributional points (void = 3, singleton = 2 and doubleton = 1) to the system. This approach displaced Ely Culbertson's "honour tricks" system as the preferred method of hand evaluation, and enabled novice

players to bid more successfully. In 1985, the 10th edition of "Contract Bridge Complete" replaced Goren's four-card major bidding system with the five-card major system preferred then by experts. This concession to changing times kept his name in the mainstream of bridge theory. He was a prolific writer, with close to 40 books to his credit that have sold over 10 million copies. In the 1970s he wrote two books on the Precision System and also authored books on other games, including Canasta and Backgammon.



Despite his success away from the table, he remained devoted to tournament play. Goren was a dominant figure in championship bridge from the late 1930s through to the early 1960s, winning the first Bermuda Bowl in 1950 and placing second in 1956 and 1957. He also won 34 national championships, including the Reisinger title eight times, the Spingold five times, and the Vanderbilt twice. His name is synonymous with the game, earning him the nickname "Mr. Bridge," and his global importance was recognized when he appeared on the cover of Time Magazine in 1958.

That same year he appeared on the quiz show "You Bet Your Life." Of note, Goren considered himself to be an amateur player, and was known to give away his bridge winnings to charity.

"A fellow had made a bad bid and gone for 1400. 'I'm sorry,' he said to his partner, 'I had a card misplaced.' Asked his partner innocently, 'Only one card?'"

Goren's most successful partnership was with Helen Sobel Smith, but Mr. Bridge also played with other famous folks, like Dwight Eisenhower, Nelson Rockefeller, and Humphrey Bogart.



He was inducted into the ACBL Hall of Fame in 1964.

After suffering a stroke, Goren retired from competition in 1966, living in Miami Beach. Goren never married, saying that no woman could put up with his tournament travel. He moved to Encino, California in 1971, living his remaining 19 years with his nephew, before dying of a heart attack soon after his 90th birthday.

"You should play the game for fun. The instant you find yourself playing the game for any other reason, you should rack it up and go on to something else – court tennis, maybe, or old maid. Anything but bridge."





Your Side Opens 1NT Now What?

By David Ellis

Do you have more than three criteria to use Stayman? #3
(Note: not Garbage Stayman—that's a partnership agreement.) List your criteria for using Stayman.

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

What is the meaning of 3♥?

You can use Stayman when the following criteria is met. You have: #4

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

What is the meaning of 3♦?

1. at least one 4-card major
2. 8+ HCPs
3. Shortness (at least one doubleton)

You know the 1NT opener holds: #5

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

What is the meaning of 3♠?

1. a balanced hand (4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2)
Distribution is important
2. 15-17 HCPs
3. Usually
 - a. with a singleton A, K, or Q and no doubletons with 15-17 HCPs you can open 1NT (as per ACBL rules)
 - b. with a semi-balanced hand (2-2-4-5), and at least a Q in both doubletons, you can open 1NT

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

What is the meaning of 3♥?

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

What is the meaning of 3♥?

Try this quiz. Answers at the end of this article.

#1 South West North East
1NT Pass 2♣ Pass
2♦ 2♥
What is the meaning of 2♥?

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥			

2NT = 8-9 HCPs, Balanced
Not a 4-way transfer
Not a relay to diamonds

What is the meaning of 3♥?

#2 South West North East
1NT Pass 2♦ Pass
2♥ 2♠
What is the meaning of 2♠?

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

What is the meaning of 4♣?

#10	South	West	North	East
	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
	2♥	Pass	3NT	Pass
	4♠			

What is the meaning of 4♠?

Answers:

1. 8-9 HCPs with 5 hearts + 4 spades
2. 8-9 HCPs with 5 spades + 5 hearts
Transfer + bid other major shows 5-5,
(Stayman always promises a 4-card major)
Opener to select what suit to play in
3. 10+ HCPs with 5 spades + 5 hearts
Transfer + bid other major
Opener to select game in hearts or spades
4. Slam try in diamonds with 16+ HCPs
5. Baze Convention showing slam intentions in hearts
Bid 3 of other major = 16+ HCPs and agrees partner's major, here hearts
Control bid, then 4NT is Keycard asking
6. Slam intentions in hearts (Baze Convention)
Bid 3 of other major = 16+ HCP with 4 spades
Control bid, then 4NT is Keycard asking
7. With Total Points (TP = HCPs + distribution)
With 10+ you would make a Texas Transfer
With TP = 8-9, with 6 hearts, you bid as above.
Repeat bid your transfer

8. South hand means he has 5 hearts; for example: ♠K7 ♥AQ843 ♦QJ8 ♣A107
If partner has 3♥'s, he will bid 4♥, if he has two or fewer, he will bid 3NT.
This is based on the concept that it is safer to play a hand in a trump suit contract than in NT because you can control the hand better with a trump suit.

9. Partnership Agreement – can be a splinter bid in clubs, or it can be Roman Key Card Gerber Agrees hearts as trumps
If a Splinter = 13 HCPs with void or singleton in clubs
If RKC Gerber, here are the responses:
4♦ = 1 or 4 keycards
4♥ = 0 or 3 keycards
4♠ = 2 keycards without the Q
4NT = 2 keycards with the Q

Then, Responder's bid of 5♣ = K ask

10. South is 4-4 in the majors
North denied hearts, therefore has 4 spades
*Stayman always promises a 4-card major

North American Pairs District Finals are coming up!
For the latest info please visit www.unit166.ca



Bridge by the Numbers

By David Colbert

Starting with 15

I have written my personal number guidelines on hands containing up to 14 points in the two previous issues of the Kibitzer. I will now look at bigger numbers.

15 HCPs - is the number that echoes in my head when I am thinking of making a try for game after partner raises. Eg. 1♠-2♠, ? I try to use a new suit to help partner. I have ♠AJ875 ♥A4 ♦K632 ♣K2 and will bid 3♦ next. If she has a minimum raise, she goes back to 3♠. A maximum raise, she bids game. A medium? She should check for something helpful in diamonds to mesh with mine.

16 points - is a significant number to lean on. If I open 1♦ and it goes 1♦-1♥, the number 16 tells me whether to jump to 3♦ next, assuming I have 6 of them in a good suit. 16 high card points. Length and shortage points don't count since we are generally - I hope - heading for 3NT where a singleton is not an asset. So, ♠83 ♥K7 ♦AQJ1074 ♣AQ3 is a 3♦ rebid. I can go up to 18 points for this bid, but not 19. Too strong. That becomes a 3NT bid: too good for 3 of my minor. I can have an unstopped suit. Maybe

♠K4 ♥J6 ♦AKQ1054 ♣AQ3.
Oh, the 16-point guideline is no good if I have a 7-card suit. With a good 7-card suit I can go down to 14 points with, say ♠Q4 ♥A4 ♦AKJ10543 ♣108 because I almost have 8 tricks in my own hand. An AK 7th suit is not to be treated lightly.

16 points is enough to reverse: 1♣-1♠, 2♥ is a reverse and I need 16 because partner's simple preference takes us to the 3-level. The reverse here shows longer clubs than hearts.

16 is also the number needed to raise 1NT to 4NT as a slam invite. 16+17 = 33. I have found that bidding 6NT with 32 total points in two balanced hands is usually a bad gamble. Going down in marginal slams does not pay. Since partner may get excited with 16 points for his opener, I would need to have a 5-card suit or a couple of tens in my 16-point jump to 4NT. And with a 4-3-3-3 shaped 16-count like: ♠KQ6 ♥KJ53 ♦AQ3 ♣J76 I feel that bidding 3NT (sigh) is enough. Hint: When partner opens 1NT, don't bother with Stayman if you are 4-3-3-3 and have 12 or more points!

The hardest slams to bid are those with suit bids when both players have about 16 points. So, I suggest

that if you are already in a game forcing auction, an unnecessary jump in NT can show this. The main cases are after a 2/1 bid or after 4th suit forcing has been bid. Example: I have ♠KJ732 ♥J5 ♦AQ10 ♣KQ9 and partner opens 1♥. It goes, 1♥-1♠, 2♣-2♦, 2♥-?

I have used 4th suit forcing to game with 2♦ and partner has bid 2♥. I could raise to 3♥ but he may not have 6 of them. Therefore, I will jump to 3NT to show my 16- or 17-point hand, and it's a natural bid.

The same "unnecessary jump" is the auction 1♥-2♦, 2♠-3NT. If we're playing 2/1, we are already forced to game; why am I jumping? To save time? No. I have a natural bid in notrump and more points than partner expects: 16 or 17. Maybe my hand is ♠J7 ♥Q6 ♦AKJ54 ♣AJ108

16 dummy points is my base guide also for a jump raise to three of a major. With ♠K985 ♥7 ♦AQ1053 ♣A76 I have 13 (+3 for the singleton) which is 16 dummy points after 1♦-1♠, and so I would jump to 3♠, which shows about 16 to 18 points.

17 points is my lowest number to jump rebid 2NT (not 18) but only when I have a suit of 5 cards

headed by the AK. Like
 ♠K108 ♥A4 ♦AK1074 ♣QJ5 .
 This is too good to open 1NT. I
 plan to open 1♦ and jump to 2NT
 over a major response by partner.
 This is because an AKxxx suit is
 worth more than 7 points: it often
 produces 4 tricks, and you only need
 9 tricks total.

18 points is enough in general for
 1♥-2♥, 4♥. 18 + 6 = 24 and we have
 a fit. With 6 hearts I can do this on
 about 16 points.

18 is the key number also for making
 a jump shift like 1♥-1♠, 3♣. This is
 game forcing and if partner has 6
 points, we may struggle but bidding
 2♣ is too likely to get passed.

Also, if partner opens you can make
 a strong jump shift with 18 and a

5-card or longer suit. We both know
 then that there might be a slam. 1♦-
 2♠ should be 18+ with 5 or more
 spades.

19 points – I guess you can open
 2NT with 19 and a 6-card suit.

Continuing to go up, I find that
 23 combined points is enough for
 game if someone has a good 6-card
 suit and there isn't a misfit. With
 ♠Q105 ♥10654 ♦J8 ♣A92 after
 1♦-1♥, 3♦ ... I will try 3NT. 16+7
 =23

24 - If you know you and partner
 have at least 24, bid game.

A 25% game contract is pretty
 good: the chance of two cards being
 onside for me.

30 points is often enough when
 counting points needed to bid slam
 in a suit with a 9- card trump fit.

33 - if you and partner have 33, you
 can't be missing 2 aces. Try it.

A 37% chance to make contract
 is high enough to bid a vulnerable
 game at teams, believe it or not. This
 rates to win 10 imps (we bid game,
 they didn't) against losing 6 imps (we
 lost 100, they got 140). For a non-
 vulnerable game, we are justified
 bidding it with about a 45% chance
 of success to make.

32 – My friend Ellen had 32 points
 last week. Balanced. 2♣-2♦, 5NT-?
 I think this sequence shows 30-32
 points. You can discuss with your
 partner what 6♣ then shows!

Gowdy-Hampson set a world record

I called Geoff Hampson to thank him for the kind words he said last issue. He reminded me that we hold a bridge record for the worst trump fit ever.

I opened 1NT. LHO bid 2♣ and Geoff bid 2♥. All pass. As RHO was about to lead, I said, "We should play system on over 2♣ and that Double is Stayman."

Geoff laughed and said, "We do. This is a 3-zero fit."

"Not that good," I said, as I put down 4144 with the stiff ♥K.

Yes, we played the 1-zero fit. I'm sure no one has ever played a zero-zero fit as trumps, so we must have the record!

~John Gowdy



Canadian Juniors

By Albena Vassileva

After over a year of online bridge, almost every single hand I play reminds me of something that's come up while tournaments were in-person. Playing the CWTC on BBO – with my partner Olivia – two years in a row, I had quite a few doubled contracts come up. There was one particular doubled contract I made which reminded me of a hand we played during the days of in-person bridge, at the 2018 World Youth bridge Team Championship in Suzhou, China.

At some point during our round-robin match against the Netherlands, I picked up the following hand:

♠ K J 8 5 3 2
♥ 5 3 2
♦ K 6
♣ 6 2

I was West, dealer at favourable vulnerability, and I thought to myself how perfect of a weak 2♠ opening this is. I place the 2♠ bid on the board, and it gets sent under the screen. It came back with a Pass by North and 2NT – Ogust – by East, my partner Olivia. South passed, and I chose to bid 3♣ – weak hand, weak suit. I figured this bid was good enough to describe my hand: I have the ♠K, only one of the top three spade honours, and there is nothing too special about my 7 points made up of two kings and a jack.

The board came back with another Pass by North, and 3NT by partner. South passed, I passed, and later the board surprisingly comes back with a Double by North and a Redouble by partner. South alerted the Double as requesting a heart lead and thinks for quite a few minutes. During that time, I decided a pass was my best option. Since partner parked us in 3NT, I figured running to 4♠ couldn't possibly be a better place to be. Even if the doubled contract was scary, especially looking at my three small hearts. South passed and I passed. So, 3NT redoubled it is.

Here is a recap of the auction:

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	2NT*	Pass
3♣**	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Dbl***	Rdbl	Pass
Pass	Pass		

* Ogust

** Weak hand, weak suit

*** Asking for a heart lead

Following this auction, I excuse myself for a restroom break after placing the dummy. I was too nervous to watch the play of the hand, wondering to myself if my opening and Ogust description described my hand as well as I thought.

Upon returning, I noticed the play was over and everyone at the table appeared to be quiet. The mood made me worry, and I wondered what the result was. I asked Olivia. She said, "Plus 4." I asked if she was joking and she said she was not.

Here is the full hand:

♠ 9 6 4	
♥ K Q J 10 8 7	
♦ 8	
♣ 8 5 4	
♠ K J 8 5 3 2	♠ A
♥ 5 3 2	♥ A 4
♦ K 6	♦ A J 10
♣ 6 2	♣ A K Q J 10 9 3
♠ Q 10 7	
♥ 9 6	
♦ Q 9 7 5 4 3 2	
♣ 7	

Albena Vassileva recently finished her first year at the University of British Columbia, studying in the Bachelor of International Economics program. Having been passionate about bridge for almost 10 years now, Albena has been a member of the Canadian U-16 and U-21 national teams since 2016. Her accomplishments include a 1st place finish at the 2020 U-21 trials, three 2nd place finishes at the YNABC, and bronze at the 2020 CWTC. Outside of bridge, Albena enjoys her current work as a research assistant at UBC.

With the requested heart lead from South and a squeeze, 13 tricks are easily taken.

Now, there are a few important lessons I reflected on after this match was over. They are relatively simple ones, but important considerations, nonetheless.

The first reflection pertains to Ogust. The other table's East-West pair happened to be in a slam. Which – as was brought up by Olivia following the round – brings up the question of what sequence of bidding would have followed if I bid my Ogust response differently. If I had signalled a stronger hand than the weak one I valued it as, we could have moved forward with further descriptive bids and eventually found a slam. Does it deserve to be considered a stronger hand? The ♠K and ♠J don't qualify as your traditional strong suit, with only one of them being a top 3 honour. So, for the valuing of the hand strength, do those 7 points count as a stronger hand when considering it's white vs. red? Or when considering that point for the ♠J is also an asset to the hand? At the end of the day, in this context I chose to value this as a weak hand with a weak suit. I still stand by that judgment. Considering it all, I still don't think it's that special of a hand to be considered strong in either area. My partner had another opinion, and others may have their own. That's all part of bridge! But talking about those concerns lets you have things in mind when making other bids in the future. It's important to discuss these things post-mortem to be able to smooth things out and have valuable discussions.

Continuing on this note ... North's double is also important to look at. Even if your partnership might not have the particular agreement the opponents do, it's still important to think about how you would've bid in that situation. You have a solid sequence missing the ace in hearts. But would you have doubled? How confident are you in the ability for that request of a heart lead to result in setting the opponents? How might you be able to get back into your hand to cash your hearts later on, when you have nothing to get back into your hand in the other suits? It's also important to have

these types of reflections in mind – regarding the opponent's actions – for the future.

All things considered this hand produced not only a good story but valuable lessons as well. Hopefully when in-person bridge opens up again there will be many more of these to come. Although I don't have to hope much, because there's always something exciting going on when junior bridge is involved.



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