



[www.gbu.co.za](http://www.gbu.co.za)

# THE BRIDGE BULLETIN

Volume 5, number 6  
August 2020  
Publisher: Gauteng Bridge Union  
Editor: Stephen Rosenberg  
[stephen@valuersinc.co.za](mailto:stephen@valuersinc.co.za)

## FROM THE CHAIR

The Medwin and Berkowitz Teams' Challenge was held over four sessions during the first weekend in July. As there is no live bridge happening in bridge clubs anywhere at the moment in South Africa it was agreed that this event, which is used as a qualifier for the Teams to represent Gauteng in the National Event (which itself has been held as an online event the last 2 years) should be staged online as well. The GBU is grateful to Robert Stephens for setting it up and organising it throughout the whole four sessions. This was no mean feat as some teams changed their players from one match to another, but Robert managed it all, calmly and capably.



Sharon Lang and Roz Bernstein

The format was different this year due to its being held online. The Medwin event attracted only 4 teams and they played a round-robin and then on the last session a head-to-head between first and second. The Bernstein team (Roz Bernstein, Sharon Lang, Jenny Gautschi, Peta Balderson, Chris Child and Desiree Pieters) was in first place after the round robin was completed, only just pipping the Apteker team, but was unable to win the



Desiree Pieters and Chris Child

head-to-head which resulted in an overall win for the Apteker team of four Aptekers – Alon, Jude, Noah and Aras with Craig Gower and Hennie Fick. Congratulations to this all male team who will represent Gauteng in the National Medwin event.

The Berkowitz tourney attracted an 8-team entry, so a total round robin was played. In the end it was the Berman team that emerged victorious with 102.51 points. Congratulations to Allan and Louise Berman, Roy and Ella Danilowitz, and Sharon Taitz and Jenny Mattison. Good Luck to you in the National Event! The runners-up (Lex Van Vught, Joy Rothenberg, Sam Trocki, and Ian Katz) were unlucky to be in this position as they won all their matches but could only amass 91.33 points, about 11 IMPs behind the winners.

I played in the event myself and found it to be a thoroughly enjoyable experience. All our opponents were pleasant to play against. On a personal level I found the 7-spade slam (which is not makeable) and the 6-heart slam (which is but I didn't see the correct line of play) were two expensive mistakes on my part which cost huge swings! Oh la la! As a last comment I would like to say the entry was disappointing and as I know many bridge players prefer teams (the purist form of the game some say) to pairs, I hope that if the GBU holds a similar event in the future more players will participate. (See also page 8. Ed.)

Yours in Bridge,

*Deirdre Ingersent*

# FROM THE EDITOR



**Stephen Rosenberg**

Well, it's now the umpteenth week of (an admittedly somewhat relaxed) National Lockdown. When do you think that "live" bridge will recommence? Even if it did, I know of many players, especially those like me who are past their first flush of youth, who would be reluctant to play in a large tournament until an affordable and easily accessible vaccine for Covid-19 is available. And no, the anti-malarials being touted by some buffoon or another will just not cut it! But yes, many of us have filled in a lot of time playing online bridge. Thanks to all those who have facilitated this. I've also gloried in "live" ballet, opera and theatre available on You Tube and other platforms. Netflix is ok, but I still prefer the drama and detective programmes I've recorded off the Multichoice (mainly BBC) channels. There are also great documentaries to be found on the History and Curiosity Stream channels. So, have I been bored? Of course, now and then. But BBO, my Kindle and my TV, as well as the company of my lovely wife Brenda, have certainly eased the pain. And, oh yes, I've really enjoyed online shopping – everything from groceries to cosmetics to clothing to bedlinen! Stay well, stay warm and stay safe.

*Stephen Rosenberg*



**Brenda Rosenberg**



And 25 million Sikhs are still wondering who the hell Soshal Distan Singh is, and just how did he get so famous, so fast!



## MAKING SIX

by Richard Pavlicek

You are sitting South, holding this lovely hand:

♠ AQ8...♥ AKQJT...♦ AT64...♣ A.

You are non-vulnerable versus vulnerable and reach a contract of 6♥ after the bidding sequence shown on the left. You get a lead of the ♣K; and dummy goes down:

♠ 765...♥ 98765...♦ KQ3...♣ T3.

You play the ♣3 from dummy and East follows with the ♣5. You win the ♣A, cash the ♥A-K-Q and the ♦K.

West	North	East	South
			2♣
P	2♦	P	2♥
P	3♥	P	6♥
P	P	P	

What next? Do you finesse the ♠Q? Win the ♦Q and then finesse the ♦T? Ruff the ♣T and then win the ♦Q and finesse the ♦T? Or even ruff the ♣T and then win the ♦Q and Ace? Or some other play altogether? **Have a go at it yourself, and then compare your solution with Richard's Results on page 10.**

**About the author.** See page 5.



# THE BRIDGE LOUNGE

## A MATTER OF SAFETY

by Jeff Sapire

Many contracts that one plays in have choices in the play. But one of the first issues to consider is the matter of safety.

Dir. N Vul. None	♠ AJ84 ♥ AK2 ♦ 6 ♣ A8753		
♠ QT5 ♥ 5 ♦ K843 ♣ QT962		♠ K962 ♥ 764 ♦ QT952 ♣ 4	
	♠ 73 ♥ QJT983 ♦ AJ7 ♣ KJ		
West	North	East	South
	1♣	P	1♥
P	1♠	P	2♦*
P	3♥	P	4NT
P	5♣	P	5NT
P	6♥	P	P
P			

Opening lead by West: ♦3

diamond, you must then cash dummy's remaining high trump, followed by the ♣A and a club ruff in hand in order to draw the trumps. The trouble here is that East has a singleton club and will ruff the ♣A, after which you will eventually lose a spade.

The correct line is to ruff the first diamond high, cross to the ♣K and ruff the last diamond high again. Then you can come off the table with the ♥2 and draw the trumps, losing just the one spade.

It's not a particularly difficult hand – so long as you think about it. Those solid hearts, the QJT983 are the key to the winning line. If you had say, QT8432 you could not afford the luxury of trumping high twice.

This was a good auction by NS. 2♦ was the ever-useful fourth suit forcing (game forcing and asking opener to describe their hand). Usually it's used to find out if opener has a stopper in the 4<sup>th</sup> suit for NT purposes, but it can also be employed when responder wants to find out more about opener's shape and strength.

In this sequence, North's delayed jump to 3♥ showed a better hand with three trumps, and a three-suited hand with a shortage in diamonds. After that, South used Keycard Blackwood to find four key cards opposite (three aces and the trump king). He asked for kings, over which North bid 6♥, to deny any.

It's easy to make a hash of a hand like this, and then complain afterwards about the bad breaks. With ten top tricks all that has to be done is to ruff two diamonds in dummy.

But it's getting back to hand twice that needs to be dealt with. If you win the ♦A and ruff a diamond low, then play a club to the king to ruff your last

### About the Author

**Jeff Sapire**, a top-class bridge-player in his own right, has represented South Africa. He teaches all levels – beginner, intermediate and advanced. To find out more about his well-structured and informative lessons, contact him on [jeffshirl@telkomsa.net](mailto:jeffshirl@telkomsa.net), or 'phone him on 011 486 1495 or 082 551 2526.



# HANDLING HIGHLY UNUSUAL HANDS

by Ana Roth

I had made a passing remark in a previous article on the highly distributional hands the computer dealt us in the match against Japan. We lost heavily on this particular board because both our pairs did not know how to appreciate the freakish nature of the hand and just did not bid their hands nearly enough.

Dir. E Vul. E/W	♠ KT8 ♥ T8752 ♦ AQ2 ♣ 76	
♠ 3 ♥ J9643 ♦ 654 ♣ AJ98		♠ Q76542 ♥ A ♦ --- ♣ QT5432
	♠ AJ9 ♥ KQ ♦ KJT9873 ♣ K	

In our table the Japanese East found an opening bid of one spade on his Q-high 6-carder, obviously their style on highly distributional hands. South overcalled with two diamonds on his big hand which I raised when West made a negative double. Despite his weak hand, East bid his club suit at the four level and was raised to game when South competed with 4♦. Unbelievably South meekly gave up and



Grant Baze

preferred to take his chances in defending against the club game. I myself would have bid on. No way will I allow the opponents to buy the hand when my 7-card suit had been freely raised by partner. Of course 5 clubs made with an overtrick whereas it would take double dummy defence (heart lead, club back for a heart ruff) to set five diamonds.

At the other table, our pair was completely outbid in this hand. Our East player passed, not surprisingly, and made a feeble overcall of one spade when South opened a diamond and got a one heart response. South rebid 3NT which is universally played as a complete shutout bid, usually based on a long minor suit. And again surprisingly, East passed this out. This is really very bad judgment. You have a fantastic two-suiter, one of which has not been bid yet, a void and a singleton on the side suits, and you know LHO is bidding a notrump game on long diamonds. The bid of 4♣ at this point simply stands out, despite a passing partner, despite the unfavourable vulnerability, despite having only 8 high card points. How I wish I had told this teammate about the advice Grant Baze (one of the top experts in the USA) gave me about 6-6 and 7-6 hands before this deal came up. Grant said that whether you are playing match points, imps, rubber bridge, vulnerable, not vulnerable, opposite a weak or strong partner, just keep bidding your two suiter until your partner doubles.

This hand only proves how accurate this piece of advice is. EW may only have a combined total of 14 high card points, yet they have a cold slam in clubs whereas NS's par for the hand, on their 26-point collection, is to take a sacrifice at 6 diamonds for two down. We lost a double game swing on this hand, 14 imps away, when who knows that may have happened if our South in the Open Room had bid on to five diamonds while our East in the Closed Room had reopened with four clubs. It stands to reason West may have doubled 5♦ and led his singleton spade, allowing the contract to make easily while our West in the Closed Room would have continued on to five clubs on his excellent support and spade shortness.



## About the author.

Ana Roth is an Argentine international bridge player and frequent reporter on the game. Her articles appear mainly in Spanish in the publications of the *Confederacion Sudamericana de Bridge*

# THE PAVLICEK PAGE

## NO. 4 - TWO MAJORS



I was East on this deal from an online team game in December. After arriving at a routine 3NT contract, it was annoying to hear South compete to 4♥. My partner passed this around (implying only two hearts) and I doubled. Perhaps I should have gambled on 4 NT, but my three-card heart length suggested defending — plus, South was known to be a wild bidder.

Dir: West	♠ 8 6 4		
Vul: None	♥ A 7		
	♦ T 7 3		
	♣ Q 9 8 5 2		
♠ J 7 5	N W E S	♠ A 3	
♥ K 4		♥ 6 5 2	
♦ A K J 2		♦ Q 9 8 6 4	
♣ A T 6 3		♣ K J 4	
	♠ K Q T 9 2		
	♥ Q J T 9 8 3		
	♦ 5		
	♣ 7		

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1NT	P	3NT	4♥
P	P	X	P
P	P		

My partner led the ♦K and continued the suit, as South carefully ruffed with the *eight*. The ♥3 was then led to the *seven* (West might have played the king to block the extra entry, but this is a tough play that could backfire). Declarer next led a spade to the king as I ducked, then a heart back to dummy, felling the king. A second spade

went to my blank ace. It was obvious now to lead a club, and West took the ace. After a brief consideration, my partner realized I couldn't have a singleton club (that would give me four spades, and I would have used Stayman) so he led his last spade which I ruffed. Whew! That was close.

Did you spot declarer's subtle error? At trick two he should have *discarded his club* instead of ruffing. The rest of the play would go the same, but the difference is that I would have no way to get West on lead to get the spade ruff. (Declarer could also succeed by leading spades just once from dummy then ducking to my blank ace, but this has a double-dummy tinge.)

Curiously, the only defence that always beats 4♥ is a *spade* lead to the ace and a spade back.

Now declarer can't stop the ruff because he has no entry to his hand to draw the last trump.



### About the author.

**Richard Pavlicek** (born 1945) is an American bridge player, teacher, and writer from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, United States. In 1966 he started to play in bridge tournaments in his spare time. Since then he has won over 400 events and accumulated more than 6,000 master-points. He is a Grand Life Master of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) and World International Master of the World Bridge Federation (WBF). His latest North American win was in 2004 when he and his son Rich became the first father-son partnership to win the Life Master Open Pairs. Pavlicek has written numerous bridge textbooks and lesson materials.

## OVERHEARD AT THE BRIDGE TABLE

*"That's unfair; we were having such a good time bidding, and then East suddenly turned round and doubled!"*

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

## 'LANDY'

researched and edited by Stephen Rosenberg

Landy, named after its inventor Alvin Landy, is the first of several conventional defences created to compete against an opponent's 1NT opening. Landy is a 2♣ overcall of the opponents' 1NT opening to show at least four cards in each of the major suits; all other bids are natural. Requirements for the overcall vary from partnership to partnership: some require 5-5, some 5-4, and yet others only 4-4 (provided the overall strength is sufficient). The partner can take a preference to either major or make a non-forcing bid of a suit; 2NT is used as a forcing query.



Alvin Landy

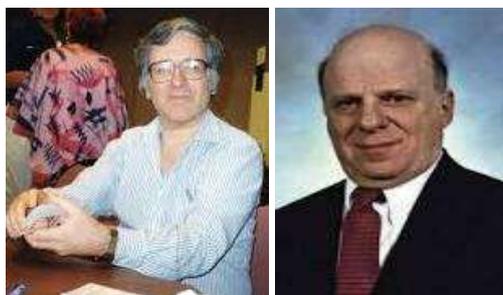
West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	2♣		

An extension was proposed by Ira Rubin in 1947 using 2♣ as a takeout request after a response or rebid of 1NT after a suit opening. It implies more distribution and less strength than a double. It also applies in the pass out seat. Based on his initial inability to overcall the 1♦ opening directly, the bid of 2♣ by North shows five or more clubs and exactly four hearts. Similar uses were developed later by others.

Various additional modifications to Landy have appeared over years, by various authors. The original Landy convention is deemed obsolete amongst tournament players today in favour of more advanced conventions. It is still very popular at club level.

A particular popular modification in the Netherlands is Multi-Landy, a combination of Landy, the Multi 2 diamonds convention and the Muiderberg convention. In this modification, the 2♣ overcall is the same as in Landy, the 2♦ overcall shows a 6-card major suit, and 2♥ or 2♠ overcall shows five cards in that major suit and at least four cards in a minor suit.

A variant developed by Kit Woolsey and Steve Robinson uses the same responses as Multi-Landy above but also includes a pinpoint double. A double would show a 4-card major and a 5-card or longer minor, a constructive 6-card or longer single-suited minor, or a hand of 19 high card points or more. After 2♣, advancer would bid 2♦ to show equal length in the majors and ask over-caller to bid their better suit. After 2♦, advancer would respond 2♥ to ask over-caller to pass or correct. Advancer would bid 2♠ showing non-forcing values in spades but invitational values for hearts. Advancer would bid 2NT with a forcing hand asking for further description of over-caller's hand or 3♦ with invitational values in both majors. 3♥ or 4♥ are pass or correct at that level.



Kit Woolsey

Steve Robinson



Two elderly ladies have been playing bridge together for many, many decades. One day at their regular duplicate game, one of them says: "Now dear, I know we have played together for many years, so please do not be upset, but could you please remind me of your name? I just can't bring it to mind!" The other lady glares at her for a moment, then replies: "How soon do you need to know?"

# SVEN WRITES

The third in a series of articles highlighting modern bidding, play and defence by Sven-Åke Bjerregaard

## THE TAKE-OUT DOUBLE



One of the most used conventions in bridge is the takeout double. As with other conventions you should obey strict rules on how to use it:

\* You should have tolerance for all side suits, at least 3 cards in any unbid suit, not just “the other major”;

\* If you Double and then bid voluntarily, you promise at least 17 points. That is why it’s important to be able to pass the suit that partner bids.

For example, they open 1♦ and you hold AJxx/KQxxx/xx/Kx; **don’t** double because if partner bids 2♣ and you then bid 2♥ you promise 17+ points; just overcall 1♥. If you don’t have an acceptable distribution for a take-out double, just pass and hope you can come back into the bidding later. For example, you hold x/Axxx/AKxx/Axxx, your Right-Hand Opponent opens 1♥. You can’t double because you cannot stand a spade bid from partner. Just pass and if the bidding continues (1♥) – (1♠) – P- (1NT),

now you can double because this means a take-out of spades.

If you make a take-out double and partner bids a suit without jumping, don’t raise him just because you have 4-card support; he is expecting you to hold at least 16 points if you make a voluntary raise. For example, you hold KQxx/KQJxx/xx/Axx. Right-Hand Opponent opens 1♦, you double, next passes and you partner bids 1♥. **Do not raise him!** You don’t have anything more than you have already showed, but if you hold AKxx/AQxx/x/Kxxx, raise him to 2♥. If you raise to 3♥ you should have about 19 points; partner has not promised more than 0 points! This also means that if your partner holds about 10 points and 4 hearts of any strength, he should bid 2♥; if he has 5 hearts, 8 points are enough. This should be a general rule even if they open on the 2 or 3 level. The argument “I had a good hand” will not please me or your partner!

I also recommend you use Lebensohl if they open a weak 2 and your partner doubles. If they open 2S, partner doubles and next hand passes, you could be weak, invitational, or strong. If you bid a suit on the 3-level it shows invitational values. If you are weak, you bid 2NT (Lebensohl) which must be alerted. The doubler should now bid 3♣ unless he has 17+ points, in which case you can pass or convert to diamonds or hearts, which partner must pass. How to bid when you are strong? Ask your local Pro!

**The delayed take-out.** Let’s say you hold Kxxx/x/Axx/AKJxx and your RHO opens 1♦. You can’t double because you can’t tolerate a heart bid from partner. Just bid 2♣. If they bid 2♥, you can make a delayed take-out.. Don’t bid 2♠; partner may have a real good penalty pass over 2♥.

**The take-out when partner opens and they overcall.** Let’s say your partner opens and they overcall. Now a take-out should show a genuine interest in an unbid major. If you bid a major you should have five. For example, you have xxx/KQxxx/Kxx/Jx. Your partner opens 1♣, they overcall 1♠. Now you should double, “promising” four hearts. If you bid 2♥ which should be forcing, you will end up too high. If you double and later bid 2♥ you now promise five hearts but too weak to bid it over 1♠. Some advice on when to bid when partner opens and they overcall; do **not** do it on a weak hand. If you are going to win the contract, opener will be strong and will find a bid. My experience is that players overbid weak hands frequently. For example, your partner opens 1♣ (2 or more); they overcall 1♦ and you hold 9x/J543/7654/AJx. At a table where this happened, one player opted to bid and the pair ended in 2♣ X on a 4-3 fit going down 2.

When opponents open on high level you do not double just because you have a lot of points. You should have an agreement with your partner if he “must” bid or if he can pass. If your agreement is that ‘the double is a take-out, ‘please bid’ then you must pass on strong balanced hands. For example, I recently made a terrible mistake! I held Kxx/AKxx/Axx/Axx and my Right-Hand Opponent opened 4♥ in the first seat, green against red. The rule that you have 3 cards in all other suits is in place and I had a lot of points. I doubled and partner bid 4♠. Now what? I’ll let you guess the outcome.

# BY THE NUMBERS

The third in a series of five instructive articles by Mel Colchamiro

## "THE RULE OF 9"

*"Do you convert Partner's Take-Out Double to a Penalty by passing, rather than opting to bid onward? If the number of cards you hold in the Opponent's suit, added to the number of honours you hold in that suit (including the 10), plus the level of the contract equals 9 or more, "pass," if fewer than 9, bid something."*

Examples, where you are South on each occasion:

1. West North East South

1♣ X P ?

Your Hand: 86, K73, 42, KJT874 (6 + 3 + 1 = 10) so Pass  
863, Q732, 842, KJT (3 + 2 + 1 = 6) so bid 1♥

2. West North East South

3♥ X P ?

Your Hand: 76, QJ75, K863, 865 (4 + 2 + 3 = 9) so Pass  
K642, J853, KQ6, 65 (4 + 1 + 3 = 8) so bid 3♠

3. West North East South

1NT P 2♥ P

2S X P ?

Your Hand: AQT65, 8, J743, 842 (5 + 3 + 2 = 10) so Pass  
AQ, 87, QJ8743, 842 (2 + 2 + 2 = 6) so bid 3♦

4. West North East South

P 1♣ 2♠ P

P X P ?

Your Hand: AT972, 3, QJ953, Q5 (5 + 2 + 2 = 9) so Pass

### About the author.

Mel Colchamiro describes himself as a professional teacher, player, writer, author of best-selling "How You Can Play Bridge Like an Expert (without having to be one)" and of ACBL Bulletin column "Claim with Colchamiro."; ACBL Bulletin panellist "It's Your Call."; proud 80% game winner in Nov. 2009 – 42% in afternoon, 38% at night!



# CONGRATULATIONS



to our Gauteng "Boy Band" of Alon, Aras, Jude and Noah Apteker who, together with Craig Gower and Hennie Fick triumphed top of the four teams that entered the Medwin Section of the virtual Inter Provincial Teams. And equally to Allan and Louise Berman, Ella and Roy Danilowitz for taking second place in the seven-team Berkowitz section. You all did yourselves and Gauteng proud!

# The New York Times

## COMING CLOSE

### MY LAST COLUMN

by Phillip Alder, May 1, 2015

As a player, I won several junior titles and the English national team championship, the Crockford's Cup. But sadly I have not won a national title in the United States, getting close three times. I do have a few interesting deals. The one in the diagram occurred many years ago at the Beverly Bridge Club in Manhattan.

Dir. S Vul. NS	♠ AKJT4 ♥ 93 ♦ QJ9 ♣ 985	
♠ 976 ♥ --- ♦ K642 ♣ KJT762		♠ 85 ♥ T8652 ♦ A8753 ♣ 4
	♠ Q32 ♥ AKQJ74 ♦ T ♣ AQ3	

West	North	East	South
			1♥
2NT	3♥	5♦	6♥
P	P	P	

West made a non-standard Unusual No-trump overcall with 4-6, not 5-5, distribution. Then, against my six-heart contract, he led the diamond deuce. East won with his ace and shifted to the club four. How did I continue?

I judged that if West had a spade void, he would have led a high diamond as a suit-preference signal. So I became worried that the trumps were breaking badly. I won with my club ace, played a

spade to dummy's ace and led the heart nine. East, thinking that it could not hurt, covered with his ten. I won with my ace and noted West's discard. I returned to dummy with a spade to the ten, played a heart to my seven, drew trumps and ran the spades. Plus 1,430 was a cold top.

If East had played low smoothly under the heart nine, I would have put up my ace and gone down like everyone else. When you have a card surrounded like that, it will almost always be wrong to cover.

Now we bring down the curtain on this column after 80 years, but my syndicated column will continue.

I would like to thank my editors; the players who sent me deals; the hundreds who wrote to me (I will answer all of you); the thousands who wrote to the paper asking for the column to continue, which has been so heartening to me; and Alan Truscott, without whom none of this would have happened.

#### About the author.

Phillip Alder was a columnist for The New York Times and a syndicated columnist for 22 years with United Feature Syndicate. His bridge column appeared in over 200 papers worldwide. He has also helped to produce the Daily Bulletins at various WBF Championships and is a member of the WBF Youth Committee. Alder is the Associate Editor of The Bridge World magazine.



After losing a bridge game, the wife glared at her husband and said, "I had four Aces and three Kings. What in the world did you bid six No-Trump on?" He replied, "Two Queens, three Jacks and four Scotches!"



## RICHARD'S RESULTS

Chances are certainly good, but only one plan will ensure success. Draw trumps, three rounds if necessary, then cross to the  $\heartsuit K$  and ruff the remaining club. Next cross to the  $\heartsuit Q$  and lead dummy's last diamond; then, if East shows out, win the Ace and lead the  $\heartsuit T$  to West, *pitching a spade* from dummy! If East follows to dummy's last diamond, *finesse the Ten*; either it will win, or it will lose to West's  $\heartsuit J$ -x-x. In either scenario, if West gets the lead he is end-played, forced to lead

a spade into you're a-Q or give you a ruff-and-discard. West held  $\spadesuit K942$  ...  $\heartsuit 4$ ...  $\diamondsuit 75$ ...  $\clubsuit KQ8762$ . Six hearts made!

# THE GREAT LADIES

## 2. HELEN SOBEL

Helen Sobel Smith was born Helen Martin in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Cornelius and Ethel Martin (*née* Murphy). Her father, whose own father had emigrated from England, was working as a machinist when Helen was born in 1909, joining a 5-year-old sister, Dorothy.

Helen was a chorus girl in her youth. At age 16, she was already performing with the Marx Brothers in shows including *The Cocoanuts* and *Animal Crackers*. She only knew how to play Pinochle and Casino until another chorus girl taught her bridge: she took to the game like a duck to water. From that moment on, there was no doubt about her future.

She started earning a reputation in the mid-1930s, winning her first national championship in 1934. After a brief marriage to a Jack White that ended in 1930, she married bridge player Alexander M. Sobel (1901–1972), a former vaudeville performer who found better work in the Depression as a tournament director. Though she and Sobel eventually divorced in 1945, she achieved most of her success under the name Helen Sobel. Sobel and Sally Young won the annual North American women pairs championship (now Whitehead Women's Pairs) in 1938 and again in 1939. That year Young became the first woman to achieve the rank of ACBL Life Master; Sobel became the second in 1941. From 1943 to 1946, Sobel teamed with Young, Emily Folline, and Margaret Wagar to win the women teams four years in a row. She married Stanley Smith in 1966 and retired for two years. She died in a Detroit hospital at the age of 60 after a long battle with cancer. The monthly ACBL *Bulletin* remembered her as a player "*without a peer among women and very few peers among men. Helen played like a man, it was true. But she also played like a lady.*"

Sobel Smith was inducted into the ACBL Hall of Fame in 1995, when the League established that honour by adding eight names to a list of nine whom *The Bridge World* had recognized in the 1960s. She was then the only woman among the 17. Her Hall of Fame citation paraphrases and quotes *The Bridge World* editor and publisher Edgar Kaplan: "*Helen's style was frisky and aggressive – so aggressive that some of her male partners were intimidated. These guys felt they were playing in the Mixed Pairs and they were the girl.*" "*In my lifetime*", the citation also quotes Kaplan, "*she is the only woman bridge player who was considered the best player in the world. She knows how to play a hand.*"

Perhaps the apocryphal anecdote that best defines her is this one. Once Helen Sobel wearied of a female kibitzer who was all but sitting in partner Charles Goren's lap. When the woman asked Sobel, in the middle of a hand, '*How does it feel to play with an expert?*' the best female player in bridge pointed to Goren and said: '*I don't know. Ask him.*'



# The Guardian

## THE MOTHER OF ALL CATASTROPHES

The deal that set at least two new world records

by Zia Mahmood, 27/10/2011

The Netherlands ladies' team overcame a large deficit against the US and progressed to the semi-finals of the World Championships. But whether the Dutch win or lose that match, whether they take the gold medal in front of their home supporters or not, the most famous deal of the tournament was a moment they will want to forget but will never be allowed to do so.

There was no hint of impending disaster when the Dutch held the East-West cards in their match against Morocco. North-South sacrificed in four spades over East-West's four hearts – that contract was destined to fail, so East-West and the spectators were happy with plus 500 when four spades doubled went three down. At the other table, though, the auction was truly surreal.

Dir. S Vul. EW	♠ QT98643 ♥ 9 ♦ Q75 ♣ 73	
♠ AK ♥ 763 ♦ K9862 ♣ T95		♠ J2 ♥ AKT842 ♦ AT3 ♣ 64
	♠ 75 ♥ QJ5 ♦ J4 ♣ AKQJ82	

West	North	East	South
			
			1NT <sup>1</sup>
P	2♥ <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>3</sup>	P
P	XX <sup>4</sup>	P	3♣ <sup>5</sup>
P	3♥ <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>6</sup>	P
p	XX <sup>4</sup>	P	3NT <sup>5</sup>
P	4♥ <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>6</sup>	P
P	XX <sup>7</sup>	P	P <sup>5</sup>
P			

And here's what all those bids meant:

(1) A "strong" no trump in the modern fashion (2)

I have spades (3) I have hearts (4) I want you to play the hand – please bid spades (5) Shan't! (6) I still have hearts (7) For the last time – will you please bid spades?

This deal set at least two new world records. The penalty from four hearts redoubled was 3400 when the contract went six down, the largest recorded in world championship play. Moreover, North in effect made six consecutive calls that were transfers to spades, something no one has ever seen in any bridge tournament, whether a world championship or not. The swing to Morocco was 21 IMPs, which must have been a bit of a disappointment to the Dutch East-West.

### About the Author.

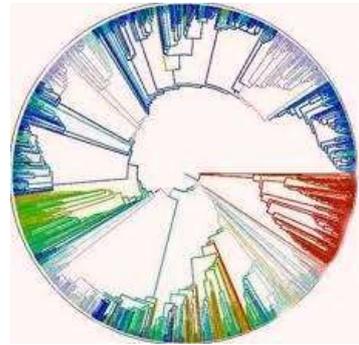


**Mir Zia Mahmood** (born 7 January 1940) is a Pakistani-American bridge player. He is a World Bridge Federation and ACBL Grand Life Master and reached his highest ranking in April 2011 as the 10th-ranked World Grand Master. Zia was born in Karachi. He was educated in England and qualified as a Chartered Accountant. He spent three years running a family business in Pakistan and also spent eighteen months in Abu Dhabi developing business interests. He is married to Lady Emma, his wife since February 2001. She is the daughter of Neil Primrose, 7th Earl of Rosebery. They have two sons: Zain and Rafi.

# THE CIRCLE OF LIFE. 2.

by Sarita Mathur, during lockdown, 3 May 2020

The Circle of Life Is never ending,  
It has no sharp turns  
Smoothly secure within itself  
Like the Sun shining bright ,  
During the Day and disappearing into the night  
Our earthly bodies are on this plane,  
Our Mother Earth  
Only to go into the Light  
Until our Soul takes birth again .  
So live and enjoy this Earthly Home  
We do not live once but again and again.



## About the author.

**Sarita Mathur** is a Durban-based bridge player and established author, having already had books of her poetry published. She writes in the well-established free verse format that dates back to the early Greek poets. The critique on Amazon of her most recent book "Once Again Love – Reconnecting with the Heart" includes the following: "*author Sarita Mathur introduces readers to the joy of a life filled with love through a whimsical mixture of poetry and prose, at times heart-breaking.*"

# IT'S ONLY A GAME

by Charles Schulz



## About the Author.

**Charles M. Schulz** (1922-2000), American, was a very keen bridge player and as the creator of "Peanuts" and its many off shoots, was the most influential cartoonist of his era.





# THE PERFECT PARTNERSHIP

by David Bird

On the last round of the evening, Brother Richard and the elderly Brother Sextus arrived at the Abbot's table. "It must be a strange experience for you, playing against so many men" observed Brother Sextus, wincing somewhat as he lowered himself into the East seat. "What do you mean?" queried the Mother Superior. "What difference would that make?" Brother Sextus was silent for a moment. He could hardly say that men were the better bridge players. Everyone knew they were; but he could hardly express such an opinion, not in these absurd days of political correctness. "Shall we play the board?" continued the Reverend Mother. She had been unimpressed by the standard of the monasterial game and was looking forward to her return to St Hilda's. The convent game was so much more enjoyable. The board before them, and the bidding are shown on the right.



Brother Sextus

Brother Richard started with his two top hearts and continued with a third round, Brother Sextus ruffing dummy's queen.

Most players would have over-ruffed and then sat back, planning how to continue. This was not the Mother Superior's way! She had two potential losers in the minor suits. How could these be reduced to just one? East presumably held the ♣K and the ♣Q,, otherwise West would have been too strong for a weak two opening. If East also held five diamonds, a straightforward simple squeeze against him should be possible. Still, thought the Mother Superior in her superior feminine way, she would need to give up one further trick to rectify the count. Otherwise East would have a spare card in the end-position.

Brother Sextus could hardly believe it when the

Dir. S Vul. EW	♠ AJ42 ♥ Q73 ♦ A76 ♣ 864		
♠ 8 ♥ AKJ954 ♦ J8 ♣ T752		♠ 65 ♥ T6 ♦ QT942 ♣ KQ93	
	♠ KQT973 ♥ 82 ♦ K53 ♣ AJ		
West	North	East	South
Brother Richard	The Abbot	Brother Sextus	Mother Superior
2♥	P	P	2♣
P	4♣	P	P
P			

Dir. S Vul. EW	♠ --- ♥ --- ♦ A76 ♣ 8	
♠ --- ♥ --- ♦ J8 ♣ T7		♠ --- ♥ --- ♦ QT9 ♣ Q
	♠ 9 ♥ --- ♦ K5 ♣ J	

Mother Superior discarded the ♦3 allowing his ♠5 to win the trick. She could have over-ruffed! A man would never make such a careless mistake, not even a moderate player such as himself. He switched to the ♣K, declarer winning with the Ace.

With the key move behind her, the remainder of the play was easy! She drew trumps and ran her remaining trumps reaching the diagrammed 4-card end-position on the left.



Mother Superior

When the ♠9 was led, dummy parting with the ♠8, Brother Sextus had no good discard in the East seat. He decided to throw the ♠Q, and the Mother Superior then faced her ♣J, claiming the remaining tricks! *"Beautifully played"* observed the Abbot, reaching for the travelling scoresheet. *"Yes, the game has been made at only one other table. Discarding the diamond was essential."*

*"There was no other chance"* replied the Mother Superior. *"You would have found the same play"*. The Abbot nodded his agreement. Mind you, a wooden performer such as Brother Xavier would almost certainly have gone down one. It was a pity that the Mother Superior couldn't magically be transformed into a monk here at St Titus. What a



Father Abbot

fine partnership they would make together!



**About the Author.**

**David Lyster Bird**, (born 29 March 1946), is a British bridge writer with more than 130 bridge books to his name. He was born in London and is bridge correspondent for the *Mail on Sunday* and the *London Evening Standard*. He contributes regularly to many magazines, including *Bridge Plus*, *English Bridge*, *Bridge Magazine* and the *ACBL Bridge Bulletin*. He has been a co-author of books with some of the world's leading players or writers, including Terence Reese, Ron Klinger, Geir Helgemo, Tony Forrester, Omar Sharif, Martin Hoffman and Barbara Seagram. His series of

humorous bridge stories featuring the monks of the St Titus monastery has run continuously in *Bridge Magazine* for 30 years; many of them have subsequently been collected in book form.

# R. I. P. GILL BROWN

I was absolutely devastated to receive the news of Gill's sudden passing. Such a vibrant lady, full of life and with a huge love of bridge and her beloved Northern Bridge Club in Blairgowrie. I got to know Gill as a regular at our Bridge@Orchards Saturday afternoons, often playing in partnership with Deen Wheeler, and quite a formidable partnership they made in a strong A-section. Gill was always prepared to use her years of experience playing, tournament directing and running clubs to give help and advice to those, including me, who needed it. I, and the whole bridge



Gill Brown as we all remember her!



Gill in Tournament Director mode at her Northern Bridge Club

community, will miss

her. Our deepest and most heartfelt condolences go to her devoted husband, Bert. Gill touched the lives of many bridge players as she had run the bridge at Orchards (the old SAWBA club) and latterly the large, flourishing Northern Bridge Club. She had her own style – firm, with just a touch of the school-ma'am about it; but always warm, loving, caring and compassionate. At Northern, not a birthday went by, nor any other important occasion, without a Gill Brown-party to celebrate it. R I P Gill Brown, one of a kind!

Stephen Rosenberg

# BE CAREFUL WHOM YOU FOOL

by John Swanson

Partner opens 2♦ Flannery (4 spades, 5 hearts, 11-16 HCP) and you're holding this hand:

♠ T97, ♥ 962, ♦ K432, ♣ AK9.

You decide to settle for a quiet 2♥ bid, apprehensive about missing a game after everyone passes.

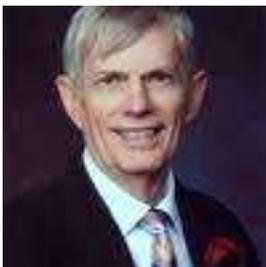
♠ Q632 ♥ AKJ87 ♦ 8 ♣ QJT		
♠ AK4 ♥ Q ♦ J96 ♣ 865432		♠ J85 ♥ T543 ♦ AQT75 ♣ 7
	♠ T97 ♥ 962 ♦ K432 ♣ AK9	

You win the lead of a low club in dummy and cash a top heart, felling the queen from West. You try another high trump to find out if West is pulling your leg while you're pulling trump. The club discard confirms the heart situation and even eight tricks are not certain. If you take another round of trumps now, East may get in and play a fourth round making it unlikely that you will ever enjoy a spade trick. Winning one spade finesse isn't going to be any help and suspecting club ruffs just over the horizon, you try a low spade to your ten. East has no particular reason to go in with the jack, so his partner is forced to win the trick. West decides to play "fool 'em" and conceals the king, winning the ace. The club return is ruffed and East, a thinking player, does some calculations. He knows that you did not try for game, yet hold seven points in clubs and, evidently, the king of spades. The defence is clear. Since

you cannot hold any other high honours, he leads a diamond to his partner's presumed king for another ruff. But, oops, the diamond king appears out of your hand. Now a heart to dummy picks up the last trump. You have been fooled also, so instead of leading towards the spade queen you lead another low spade from dummy to insure a trick in the suit. East, not yet recovered from the diamond king showing up in the wrong hand, fails to adjust his count of the high cards, and plays the spade eight. The nine forces out the other top spade and the defence has no more tricks. You have missed a game after all!

## About the author.

John C. Swanson, Jr. (born 1937) is an American bridge player living in Lancaster, California. Swanson has won 1 Bermuda Bowl, and 5 North American Bridge Championships.



*The two main differences between bridge and real life are: first, In bridge, the difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits; and second, the difference between a mad psycho serial-killer and a bridge partner is that you can reason with the serial killer."*



# A SUBTLE FORM OF RESTRICTED CHOICE

by Thomas Andrews

(Thomas Andrews is a good American club player and an informed and enthusiastic writer on our game; he writes mainly for Beginner to Intermediate players. Ed)

Dir. S Vul. EW	♠ KT9 ♥ K98 ♦ K862 ♣ QT9	
♠ 732 ♥ 62 ♦ A73 ♣ J8742		♠ QJ84 ♥ AT74 ♦ JT94 ♣ 6
	♠ A65 ♥ QJ53 ♦ Q5 ♣ AK53	

Against South's 3NT, West led the ♠7 which went to the Ten, Jack and Ace. Declarer then led a heart to the King and Ace, and East exited with the ♦J. This was ducked all round! East then continued with a low diamond through declarer's Queen, taken by West's Ace. West continued with his third and last diamond, won in dummy, declarer pitching a spade from hand. Declarer then cashed his two heart winners and three rounds of clubs, leading to this 4-card end position:

	♠ KT ♥ --- ♦ 8 ♣ 9	
♠ 32 ♥ --- ♦ --- ♣ J8		♠ Q8 ♥ T ♦ 9 ♣ ---
	♠ 6 ♥ 3 ♦ --- ♣ K5	

Declarer had found nothing breaking. Still, when he now led the ♣K, he squeezed East in three suits! If he parts with a spade, declarer collects two spade tricks. If he parts with a diamond, dummy's ♦8 makes. And if he parts with a heart, declarer makes his 3! This is a triple squeeze, even though the count had not been rectified.

However, and sadly, our declarer decided that West had led his ♠7 from a doubleton; so when East parted with a spade, declarer led his last heart which he hoped would force East to lead a spade into the K-T. As the cards lay, East gratefully took the ♥T and cashed his ♦9 for the setting trick. Might West's spade lead be from a doubleton? It certainly might, but West is known to have started with only two hearts. If he held two small each in hearts and spades, and he chose to lead a major, at least 50% of the time he would lead a heart. But with three spades and two hearts, he will almost always choose the spade. I don't know why, but that's the way it is. Keep a lookout, and you will see it is so.

This is a subtle form of restricted choice, and I think it leads to the conclusion that West is more likely to have started with three spades. Incidentally, the spade lead was the only one with a chance to set this contract. All other leads hand declarer his ninth trick and the contract.

(The **principle of restricted choice** states that the play of a particular card decreases the probability its player holds any equivalent card. For example, South leads a low spade, West plays a low one, North plays the queen, and East wins with the king. The ace and king are equivalent cards; East's play of the king decreases the probability East holds the ace – and increases the probability West holds the ace. Jeff Rubens in 1964 stated the principle thus: “The play of a card which may have been selected as a choice of equal plays increases the chance that the player started with a holding in which his choice was restricted.” Ed.)