

# Table Talk

Otago Bridge Club: March 2008

Welcome to a new format for *Table Talk*. We hope that you enjoy the new features, and apologize for the late arrival of the first issue!

## President's Message

Welcome back to bridge in 2008. As I write this the year is just getting underway, but it was good to see so many happy players. Do not forget anyone can play in the Qualifying Club Pairs on Thursday night, with partners from any division, and if you do not want to play in the top two sections after the qualifying rounds, just let the playing committee know. Also anyone may play on a Wednesday, but the Wednesday Reserved Room is reserved for players from Junior, Intermediate and Senior Reserve only. Naturally so early in the year the numbers were not great in the Open Room the first weeks, but I am sure they will look up. A good chance to play with friends from other divisions, or with someone who could not fit in to your programme otherwise! Please support your convenors and volunteer for some of those tasks that make the divisions run smoothly. If everyone take one turn on the bar or tidying up the tables after play, the work can be spread.

**Bidding Pads** If you would like to buy a bidding pad for bridge at home please see Martijn, Pat or Lindsay. They cost \$ 2.

### Programme book amendments:

Senior Division Partners Person is now Marlene Duncan: 453 4738.

Junior Convenor is Karen Logan: 474 9465.

The Ina Anderson Tournament, for members of Junior, Intermediate and Senior reserve Divisions only will be on Sunday 20 July, not 13 July.

## Dear Miss Bridget

*My partners are always telling me to use the "Stop" card. But no one seems to know why or how to use it. And sometimes it seems that players put it on the table, then snatch it away immediately. What's the story really?*

Confused in the Cargill Room

Dear confused,

I don't blame you – it seems that hardly anyone understands either the "how" or the "why" of the Stop card. Let's start with how the card is supposed to be used. **Whenever** a player is about to make a skip bid (such as an opening 3♦ preempt, a jump shift over partner's opening, or even a raise of 1NT to 3NT) he is supposed to place the Stop card on the table. After writing his bid down, he should leave the stop card on the table for (approximately) 10 seconds. During this time, the next player to act is expected to look attentive, but not impatient, and under no circumstances to take any action until the card is removed. Thereafter, the auction proceeds normally. During the period that the stop card is on the table, the next player to act may ask questions about the auction, and in fact should do so, rather than waiting until it is removed. If questions are asked, the stop card should be left out for a reasonable length of time after they have been answered.

So that's the how – the stop card (unsurprisingly) stops the auction when there has been a jump bid (except for questions). What about the why? Bidding is all about communicating with your partner. But the rules of bridge say that the only allowed forms of communication are through the bids you make – there is supposed to be no extra information based on, for example, the time it takes you to bid. Jump bids often put pressure on you that prevent you from making a decision "in tempo". For instance, over a 3♦ preempt, partner might be much more likely to raise a 3♠ overcall to 4♠, if you've made it happily and quickly, and less likely to do so if you've done it slowly and with an anguished expression. The stop card is

meant to protect your partner from this kind of dilemma by artificially restricting the tempo of your overcall. In some situations it is the partner of the player who made the jump bid who might be expected to need some extra time to think – and that’s part of the reason why you are not allowed to “jump the gun” and act before the stop card is removed, even if you intend to pass.

Having said all that, there are some circumstances where the stop card isn’t really necessary. You pass, the next player opens 1NT, your partner passes, and your right hand opponent raises to 3NT. Now, there is essentially no hand you can have here that might want to take action at this point *and everyone knows this*. Nor is the original opener going to need any time to think. So, in such circumstances, experienced players will sometimes omit the stop card, or just flash it briefly. But, no one can criticize you if you always use the stop card properly.

## The classics, translated

### **Original:**

*’Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.*

### **Translation:**

Go ahead, bid that slam, you know you want to.

## The Night Sky

David Green is about to emerge from hibernation. As many members will know, David has been researching, writing and publishing a book which will soon be going to print. Titled *The Night Sky: memory, myth & heritage at the card table*, it focuses on the heritage of the Otago Bridge Club. David stresses this is not just another history. The book’s main aim is to capture in word images the legacy left by pioneers, leading players, personalities & distinguished members both at and away from the table from two distinct periods of the Club’s heritage: Early years, 1936-60 and Boom years, 1961-86. Some of the Club’s

heritage is characterised through themes rather than in a particular era, so there are chapters on: *Ladies, women & GAD* (work that one out!), *Office bearers & volunteers*, *Education and youth*, and *Partnerships & systems*.

No bridge book would be complete without a dedicated chapter on bridge hands. The final chapter of *The Night Sky* is titled *Bridge - the pursuit of idealism*, and here David gives us an insight into his bridge mind including a whole suit of hands, mostly played at the Club by leading players, which illustrate styles of thinking & strategy, paradox & unseen beauty.

The book is profusely illustrated, mostly in colour. There are 250 images accompanying the text and a further 114 of former and current members of the OBC arranged in photo galleries of the Boom years and Global era. There is also a database of those members who have won a major title at the Club or in its local tournaments and details of office bearers in an appendix as well as images of Club memorabilia.

Draft proofs of *The Night Sky* should be ready in April. Interested parties should contact David concerning availability and pricing.

## Double Dummy

The analyses of Deep Finesse (DF), provided in those little boxes that appear in the top right hand corner of the hand records, can provide much food for thought. Usually I can see the reason for DF’s pronouncements, but hand number 4 in the first night of this year’s Championship Pairs was a tough nut.

Dealer: W	♠ T64	Vul: Both
	♥ J876	
	♦ 63	
	♣ QT65	
♠ QJ972		♠ AK83
♥ 953		♥ AKT
♦ T7		♦ KQ95
♣ AJ3		♣ K2
	♠ 5	
	♥ Q42	
	♦ AJ842	
	♣ 9874	

My partner Chris Ackerley played the hand as West in 5♠ and became very ruminative at its conclusion. He made 11 tricks but clearly felt that there were chances to make more. My reassuring comments that “all the critical cards were in the wrong hands, there was no clever squeeze position, it would soon be tea-time ...” failed to console him so I looked to DF for an authoritative counsel. To my surprise DF declared that indeed only 11 tricks were available with West as declarer but that 12 tricks could be made by East.

Realising that my first reaction of “Oh, yes, well East is a better player” probably was inaccurate on a number of counts I then spent a considerable time working out the DF line and getting helpful ideas from patient experts. You might like to try it before reading on. Remember DF assumes that every player knows all the hands and plays perfectly. The problem of course is to avoid losing both a diamond and a heart.

Let’s assume that South leads a club (no other lead is better). Declarer plays three rounds of clubs, ruffing the third and then one round of trumps (essentially to remove a trump exit card from South’s hand). Now he plays ♦K and this is where things get interesting.

If South takes this trick what can he lead? A club would be ruffed in dummy as declarer discarded his losing heart. A diamond gives up a trick in that suit for an eventual heart discard. A heart?

Ah, a heart! Which heart? Not ♥Q, for that exposes North to a finesse in hearts later on. So how about a low heart? This forces the ♥J from North and now South is ripe to be squeezed in hearts and diamonds. East now plays off the major suit winners and comes down to this ending with declarer about to sound the last trump:

Dealer: W	♠ void	Vul: Both
	♥ 87	
	♦ ?	
	♣ ?	
♠ 2		♠ void
♥ 9		♥ T
♦ T		♦ Q9
♣ void		♣ void
	♠ void	
	♥ Q	
	♦ J8	
	♣ void	

On the last spade dummy discards ♥T and South must prepare to meet his doom.

So all that drama just means that South cannot afford to take the ♦K and must duck it. But then declarer draws two more rounds of trumps and plays ♦T which South must take with ♦J. At this point dummy holds ♦Q9 and South’s highest diamonds are ♦A8. Declarer can now win the return and, using the heart entries to dummy, take a ruffing finesse in diamonds against South and enter dummy to play an established diamond if South has played his ♦A.

A final word: if West is declarer all this fine work is impossible on the initial lead of a diamond because South can safely take his ♦A and exit with a black card. A heart lead also messes up the timing sufficiently to defeat the slam.

*Mike Atkinson*

## Telephone number changes

Adams, Noeline	455 2645
Crawford, Allan and Pauline	456 2936
Douglas, Rosalie	488 3555
Evans, Reuben	021 648 067
Gill , Murray and Sonia	453 3397
Martin , Alison	476 1345
O'Neil, Mary	474 0914
Quennell, Janette	473 9966
Radford, Phil	455 4000
Spain, Paul	471 0753
West, Lindsay	027 202 4749

## Groaners

**Q:** Why won't careless declarers ever be resurrected?

**A:** Because they always miss the last trump.

**Q:** What do you say to someone who never fulfills your expectations?

**A:** "Thank you partner".

## Festival Pairs

The Festival Pairs tournament on February 9th attracted a field of 44 pairs. Daphne Randle and Peter Hall won the event with a sparkling 65.7% average over two sessions. Joanne Simpson and Murat Genc (59.1%) placed third, while Nina Hewitt and Dennis McCaughan (58.6%) were fourth.

## South Island Teams

On March 2 and March 3, the 15A point South Island Teams tournament was held at the Otago Bridge club. Sixteen teams took part, and started with six rounds of 12 board Swiss matches. After this, pools of 4 teams were formed to play off in a knockout fashion. The event was won by the Gregory team from Timaru, but two teams with local representation placed second (**P. Freeland**, M. Perley, A. Schwartz, M. Albert) and third (**A. Russell**, J. Simpson, R. Simpson, M. Genc, D. Eidler).

## Lost (and found?)

On the Friday of the last week of bridge, a lady's black cardigan was put on the sofa in the foyer to be picked up by its owner, after having been previously taken by mistake and returned. Unfortunately, it was taken by mistake again! So, when you next go to your jersey drawer and find an alien black cardigan there (it has pockets, or a pocket) please bring it to the club and give it to Martijn or Lindsay so that it can end its wandering ways.

## Help!

We welcome your input for *Table Talk*. Please feel free to suggest interesting hands for *Double Dummy*, ask Miss Bridget questions of bridge etiquette, or consult with Professor Oddsfellow about those annoying mathematical problems. Or, provide your own material or anecdotes (so long as they are printable!) Please send submissions to Michael Albert ([malbert@cs.otago.ac.nz](mailto:malbert@cs.otago.ac.nz)).