

## LIBRARY CORNER

### **Advanced Bridge Bidding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Max Hardy (2002)

This book was published the year of the author's death along with *Standard Bridge Bidding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. The bridge world lost both a great bridge player and a great teacher when it lost Mr. Hardy. He was born to parents who were career musicians, and he himself received a Master's Degree in Music Theory before embarking on a career as an opera singer. At some point, he began playing bridge, and his focus shifted to the game. He earned over 100 regional bridge titles during his bridge career, and he authored 13 books on the game. Hardy was one of the first to promote the 2-over1 forcing to game system, as well as 5-card majors and forcing notrump bids. Information on specialized bidding such as the XYZ Convention, Smolen transfers, gambling three notrump bids, and Lebensohl bids are included in the book along with a host of other bidding conventions. The table of contents covers 4½ pages! If you want to take your game to the next level, then this is the book for you.



## ALERT!!

A publication of ACBL Unit 206

December 2021



Editor: Sandy Cervantes

Features Editor: Cheryl Whitfield

### A message from the president...

The holidays are nearly here, and I hope everyone has made great strides in their holiday shopping. I'm looking forward to our December holiday/annual meeting party on Saturday, December 11. We had a great turnout for our November party, and the food was amazing. I hope we have an even better turnout at our December party. I look forward to seeing lots of you there.



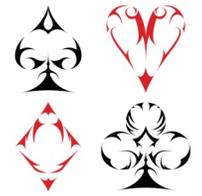
Many of you have enjoyed the lessons offered at the bridge center, and I want to thank all of those who have attended, taught, organized or directed any of these classes. We have both some old and some new classes coming up in January. Be sure to look at Michael Holmes' article for more information. Thanks, Mike, for being our education chair. Please let Mike know what type of lessons or suggested topics you might enjoy, and he will try to accommodate your wishes in future classes.

Of special note is a new game starting in January on Thursdays at noon. It will offer master points, but only 12 boards will be played. This game is being organized for novices with fewer than 99 points. We hope to bring back some of our players in this group. We have missed you.

I am occasionally going to announce someone as the volunteer of the month. The volunteer of the month is Bert Shramko. Bert Shramko has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help schedule directors, find new directors, and deal with a multitude of related issues. He has spent countless hours meeting, emailing and discussing director issues with not only the directors, but with me and many of you (and I'm certain Sue, too). He not only set up the mentor/mentee games online, but he is still involved in these games. Please thank Bert for all he does.

*Iris*

# So, Your Opponents Make a Skip Bid...



## Now What?

When a player makes a bid that skips a level of bidding, it is called (not surprisingly) a skip bid. Jump overcalls are skip bids as are double raises and splinter bids. There are times when skip bids can have a negative effect on the opponents' tempo. Look at this auction as an example:

Partner	RHO	You
1♥	3♠	?

Holding a bad hand, you are probably tempted to just pass without even thinking, but if your hand has value, you may need time to decide what to do. If after further thought, you do decide to pass, your hesitation will convey unauthorized information to your partner by letting him know that you considered raising his bid. Now, depending on whether you acted quickly or slowly, partner might decide to make another bid.

It is for this reason that in duplicate bridge, you are required to wait 10 seconds after your right-hand opponent makes a skip bid. That means even if you have only 2 points in your hand, you must wait the required 10 seconds. This is done to prevent the unlawful conveyance of information.

At one time, the ACBL required players to first display the stop card from their bidding boxes and say "skip bid" to warn the opposition. This practice has been discontinued, presumably because it was used inconsistently and caused a fair amount of confusion.

## Do's and Don't's

1. When your RHO has made a skip bid, count 10 seconds off in your head, not out loud.
2. Similarly, you are expected to give the semblance of studying your hand during those 10 seconds.

Not all skip bids require a 10-second pause — 1NT (P) 3NT is a skip bid, but does not require a pause. However, as with all preemptive bids, if right-hand opponent opens 2H, you are required to wait 10 seconds before you bid.

Many thanks go to [bridgebum.com](http://bridgebum.com) for the information contained in this article.



## FAIRYLAND BRIDGE NEWS



Fairyland Bridge Club will host their annual meeting and holiday party on Thursday, December 2, at the Walden Club located at 633 Chestnut Street. A delicious buffet lunch will be served, and to celebrate the holiday season, wine tickets can be purchased. House wines will be available at \$5.00 per glass. If you are planning to attend, parking is available at the Republic lot for \$10/day. You are encouraged to carpool if possible. Many thanks go out to Stephanie Felker for procuring this fabulous venue. It is important to arrive by 10:00 a.m. as we will begin the game promptly at 10:30 a.m.

Membership dues for 2022 are due at the holiday party, but game fees are waived for those members attending. Members not present for the party must pay their dues the next time they attend a Fairyland game. Please do not mail in your dues.

The Fairyland Bridge Club welcomes all to join us. Guests automatically become members after three visits.



Wow and double WOW! Just take a look at that table. If you weren't able to come to our special pair's game in November, this photo gives you only the smallest idea of what you missed: delicious food, great comradery and a really fun and competitive afternoon game. Betsy Caldwell and Anne Donnovin decorated the table with the most wonderful seasonal theme. A splendid array of beautiful gold, red, orange and rust colored fall leaf garlands ran down the center of the table and were complemented by pumpkins and candles. Rounding out our main course of scrumptious fried chicken were the mouth-watering sides and desserts provided by the players. Don't forget that all special games offer extra points, but the cost is the same as our

regular club games. At the November 14 game, we had over ten tables, and eleven pairs were awarded points with first overall (Susan and Earl Rothberger) winning 2.45 points. The top winners were:

#### North/South

- 1st—Susan and Earl Rothberger
- 2nd—Cheryl Whitfield and Sue Shramko
- 3rd—Donna and Doug Cart

#### East/West

- 1st—Ken Thompson and Joe Viola
- 2nd—Susie Crouch and Bob Chapman
- 3rd—Nancy Fletcher and Kathy Ellis

Make sure you don't miss out on this month's fun. Plan to play in our next special game on Saturday, December 11.



## Hardy, Har, Har

The scores were posted and after another dismal result, a less-than-stellar bridge player decided the time was right to explain to his regular partner how he was trying to improve his game: "I just don't get it because every night when I go to bed I spend time reviewing the mistakes I made in the game."

"Ah hah!" said his partner.  
"Now I understand.  
You're not sleeping!"



## HATS OFF TO...



Our tummies thank Betsy Caldwell and Anne Donnovin for taking charge of the food at our November special game. The fried chicken was delicious and the table was beautiful. Hats off, ladies! Thanks to all who brought their delicious appetizers, sides and desserts.

Also, we are truly grateful to Unit 206's newest director, Mary Wyatt, for taking on this often thankless responsibility. She not only is a new director, but is a relatively new transplant to our area of the world. Mary has a beautiful smile and so far displays tons of patience, both of which surely will be tested to their limits by our shenanigans!

## EDUCATION NEWS

You still have time to sign up for the following special classes to be offered at the Chattanooga Bridge Club. You can contact Mike Holmes at [mdholmes8@yahoo.com](mailto:mdholmes8@yahoo.com) or 303.928.9187 if you need more information.

Bridge Basics II is for students new to bridge or someone coming back to the game. It is taught by Mike Holmes and will start on January 8, 2022. This course will give students an understanding of competitive bidding, including 3-level preemptive bids, 2-level preemptive bids, overcalls and advances, and takeout doubles and advances. Students will be coached on basic defense strategy and play-of-the-hand techniques. Classes begin at 9:30 a.m. and finish at 11:30. The cost for this 8-week course is \$60.00.

Janie Hunt, Suzy Bryant, and Dan Chandler are continuing their 2/1 classes and duplicate play on Sundays from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The cost is \$6.00 per game. Students are coached on the 2/1 bidding system and appropriate conventions related to this system. Students may suggest conventions of interest or indicate a desire for additional practice. Within the process of learning the 2/1 bidding system, students are coached on basic play-of-the-hand techniques and defense.

Play-of-the-Hand lessons will be offered by Teresa Moore. These lessons are for students who have some bridge experience and would like to improve their declarer play. Also starting on Saturday, January 8, 2022, this eight-week class will be taught from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Students will learn how to make a plan to facilitate playing a bridge hand, as well as learning how to promote tricks, develop entries, manage the trump suit, and finesse. In addition, Teresa will focus on timing and, if and when appropriate, combining these various alternatives. The cost is \$60.00.



## Come and Celebrate New Year's Eve

There's no better way to say good-bye to this less-than-ideal year than with a fun and challenging game of bridge. If you doubt the veracity of that statement, we merely say, "Don't knock it 'til you've tried it," and you can do just that by joining us at the CBC on Friday, December 31st at 6:00 p.m. to share food, fellowship and fun. Players are asked to bring a heavy hors d'oeuvre to share. A pair's game will start at 6:30 and should end with plenty of time for you to get to wherever you may choose to wave good-bye to 2021 and say hello to 2022.



What's the snowman's favorite song?  
"Freeze a Jolly Good Fellow"

Which famous playwright was terrified of Christmas?  
Noel Coward

What do Baroque musicians do if they don't like their Christmas presents?  
They hand them Bach.



# Unit 206 Annual Meeting and Elections



Make sure to mark your calendars now for **Saturday, December 11**, to avoid any conflict. We expect to see you at 11:30 at the CBC for Unit 206's annual meeting to celebrate the holiday season and vote for your unit board representatives. The unit will provide the ham main course, and each player is asked to bring an appetizer, side dish or dessert to share. Spouses and/or significant others are invited to enjoy the meal (\$3.00 charge). This is a wonderful way for them to meet and put faces to your bridge friends. After lunch, we will have a short business meeting including election of officers. A special pair's game will follow, and extra points will be awarded. Can you believe that you get all this for just \$6.00! It's the best holiday deal around.



## MANNERS ARE IMPORTANT!



### Respect The Time of Others

- ◆ We recommend that you arrive at least 15 minutes before starting time.
- ◆ Watch the timer and be considerate of others; move when the round is called. Don't move early or late; move only after the round is called.
- ◆ Have a completed Convention Card (both you and your partner).
- ◆ Make your opening lead or table the dummy before you enter the contract in your private score sheets or the BridgeMates. Remember the opening lead is to be led face down to allow for questions!
- ◆ Bid and play in a timely manner.
- ◆ When moving to a new table, be certain that you are at the correct table with the correct opponents.
- ◆ Also check to see that Bridgemates and Place Card agree.



### Make Sure to Mark Your Calendar

- Thursday, December 2  
Fairyland Christmas Party,  
Annual Meeting and Game
- Saturday, December 11  
Chattanooga Bridge Center Christmas  
Party, Annual Meeting and Game
- Monday, December 13  
Online Mentor/Mentee Game
- Friday, December 17  
Face-to-face Mentor/Mentee Game
- Monday, December 27  
Online Mentor/Mentee Game
- Friday, December 31  
New Year's Eve Celebration and Game

### Online Mentor/ Mentee Game

Don't forget to sign up for the Online Mentor/Mentee game. This game is on BBO at 7:00 p.m. every second and fourth Monday (12/13 and 12/27). The dividing line between a mentor and mentee is 500 points. Everyone has fun at these games, and first place is always up for grabs. The games offer a great opportunity to play with someone other than your regular partners. Players will be matched early enough so that each partnership can develop a convention card. If you would like to play, either as a mentor or mentee, email **Bert Shramko** at [stdoms48@gmail.com](mailto:stdoms48@gmail.com).



# We Need You!



Every month the Chattanooga Bridge Club has a special game for its members to enjoy a delicious meal and earn extra points. Turnout has been great, and everyone leaves happy and full. But, all this fun doesn't come without effort, and we need help hosting these events. Just like Betsy Caldwell and Anne Donnovin did in November and Sandy Cervantes and Cheryl Whitfield are doing this month, we need you to take a turn. It's not as daunting as you may think—just ask one of the ladies who has volunteered. It really can be fun. You can do it on your own or just like you do when you come to play, grab a partner and decide which month you would like to host. Figure out what entree you will serve as well as the beverages. Turn in those receipts and you will be reimbursed. Make a poster detailing the event, and a request for additional sides and desserts. (Poster board and markers are available at the club.) Set the table and clean up afterwards. There will be many of us to help clean up, and the cleaning lady will be scheduled to come after the game for a more thorough cleaning. That's it! **Gentlemen please take note**—this is not a single sex volunteer effort—men are more than welcome to host a special game and show their team spirit! We invite any members who haven't participated to put their skin in the game so the ones that regularly volunteer can take a break. Anyone up to the job? A sign-up sheet with the date of each month's special game will be posted at the CBC or email Leigh Broadway at [lhbway@pm.me](mailto:lhbway@pm.me) to let her know you would just "love" to volunteer.

Please update your address book with Leigh's new email address: [lhbway@pm.me](mailto:lhbway@pm.me)



## FF2F

# Friday Face-to-Face



Our November 19th Friday Face-to-Face Mentor/Mentee game was a great success. We had 12 full tables, and everyone enjoyed having a chance to play with a new partner. Come join us December 17th for another fun-filled afternoon. Mentors and Mentees alike need to let Sue Shramko know if they would like to participate. You can call or text Sue at 423.304.7017 or sign up at the CBC.

November winners were:

### North/South

1st-**Susan Rothberger/Myra Tatum**  
2nd-**Sue Shramko/Gene Kleiman**  
3rd-**John Felker/Stewart Lawwill**

### East/West

1st-**Bruce Antman/Jim Lafavor**  
2nd-**Stephanie Felker/Mary Robertson**  
3rd-**Marilyn Shelton/Harold Peterson**

## BRIDGE TIP FOR DECEMBER



Never surrender control of a suit without a good reason for doing so.

Louis Watson

## BRIDGE ETIQUETTE

It's important to remember the sage advice you learned in Kindergarten: "Always be neighborly." After North passes the BridgeMate to West for approval, please take the time to pass it back to North to make it easier for him or her to enter the next score.



# Do you know... Odd/Even Discards?



Odd/Even Discards are also known as Roman discards and are a type of signal for attitude and suit preference. The first discard by defenders has the following meanings:

- Discarding an **odd** spot card, in other words a 3, 5, 7 or 9, shows a **preference** for this suit.
- Discarding a **high even** card **discourages** that suit and shows a **preference for the higher side suit**.
- A **low even** spot card also **discourages** that suit, but asks for the **lower of the two remaining suits**.

For example, the opponents are playing trump (clubs), and you discard the ♠ 3. Discarding an odd spade encourages partner to lead this suit. On the other hand, if your holding in spades were AKT82, you could choose to discard the ♥ 8 to signal the same lead.

Some players like odd/even discards for their efficiency and specificity. In other words, you can send a clear message to partner as to what suit you want without wasting a valuable spot card. For example, in a 3NT contract, you are sitting behind dummy who has the ♠ Q J 9, and you hold ♠ A K T 8 7. You would prefer not to waste the ♠ 8 by discarding it to signal partner, so when the opponents are playing clubs, you discard the ♥ 10 to signal. Partner now knows that by discarding an even card, you do not want hearts. And because the spot is high, your suit preference is spades. Hopefully you can take 5 tricks in spades and set the contract.

However, the disadvantage to this system is that you may not hold the necessary odd or even spot cards to signal correctly. Take a look at the following hand. In this example, hearts are trump, and you hold the following cards:

♠ A K 8 6 2  
♥ 5  
♦ 9 7 5 3  
♣ 9 7 3



Declarer plays trump, and you follow suit. When declarer plays a second round of trump, you must decide what to discard. You would like to encourage your partner to play hearts. However, playing odd/even discards, an even card discourages (look at your spade holding), and an odd card encourages (look at the clubs and diamonds). Playing standard discards, it would be easy to signal partner with the ♠ 8; if you play upside/down signals, the ♠ 2 would encourage. But, with the holding above, if you play odd/even discards, you are in a fix as to what to discard.

As with all things bridge, odd/even discards have both advantages and disadvantages. All experienced players have developed their preferences over time, and it is always beneficial to ask them what they play and why.

## Cleveland Club News



Linda Burns is happy to report that the Cleveland Senior Center has reopened its doors, and the Cleveland Bridge Club is back playing on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. (Note: There will be no game on December 21st.) Players are asked to arrive by 12:45. The Senior Center is located at 230 Urbane Road NE in Cleveland, and the Center asks that masks be worn if not prohibitive to your health. New players are always welcome, but you need to confirm that you plan to play by texting Linda at 423.284.3446 or Teresa Moore at 423.321.2778. It is important to know who is coming so that players can be notified in the event the Center should close unexpectedly.

## BREAKING NEWS



# News Flash — Calling all 99ers

The Chattanooga Bridge Club is announcing a new limited game on Thursdays just for players with 99 master points or fewer. Make sure you mark your calendar as the first game is scheduled for January 6, 2022, at 12 noon. We will have a 30-minute lesson followed by a 12-15-hand sanctioned game. If you are interested, all you need to enjoy this fun is a partner and \$5.00. Actually, we can help you with the partner portion as ambassadors will be available, so in reality all you need is the \$5.00.

Are you looking for gold or silver points? Or, maybe you'd just like to have some fun.



Well, look no further. Next month, January 6-9, 2023, Pigeon Forge will host two separate tournaments:

Non-Life Master Regional Tournament  
Winterfest Sectional Tournament

Gold points will be awarded at the NLM tournament. This is a great and less expensive way for NLMs to earn their necessary colored points. You can review the tournament flyer on the [acbl.org](http://acbl.org) website. Hotel reservations should be made by December 6 to qualify for the discounted "bridge" rate.

Please check the District 7 Website ([www.district7bridge.org](http://www.district7bridge.org)) for COVID changes or updates.

## How would you answer the question...

### "To me bridge is \_\_\_\_\_?"



We put Anne Donnovin on the spot this month and asked her to answer our question for the December newsletter. When queried, "To me bridge is \_\_\_\_\_?", Anne was quick to reply, "a wonderful challenge for my mind and memory."

# Get to Know Bucky and Frank Hughes



## Bucky Hughes

### **Did you yourself grow up in a family that played bridge?**

Twenty (20) years before everybody had a television, an adequate game of bridge was expected of couples that moved in society. My parents' social circle frequently included another couple for dinner and then a game of bridge. (Of course there was a live-in maid to wash the dishes and tend to getting children to bed.) My grandmother and her siblings all played. My cousins and I watched from the corners frequently. This was in the 1930's. I recall sitting on the floor of the screen porch on rainy afternoons in the 1940's playing bridge with my cousins. I played through high school and in college, even trying to start a bridge club at college. I had discovered Goren rather than Culbertson. I dare say my enthusiasm exceeded my competence. My late husband Nat and I played during our courtship.

### **Do you find it helped that your husband and you shared a common interest in the game?**

Nat's interest in the game exceeded mine, but we began to read bridge manuals. We played duplicate bridge once on base at Lejeune Military base, with such embarrassing results that we returned to the books. Other duties also intervened, what with deployment and such. When Nat completed his service, he entered the University of North Carolina to attain his Ph.D. in history, then on to boarding school at Webb in Bell Buckle, TN; and then St. Mary's Episcopal School, all of which kept us too busy to play bridge.

### **Weren't you and Nat founding members of the Chattanooga Bridge Club?**

No, the club was well established, playing regularly at the Patten Hotel. I know that Dan and Reba Jernigan and the McKenzies were playing then. Mrs. McKenzie (mother of Jim and David, both of whom played here) told me that at that time points were subtracted if you did not win!

What Nat and I were involved in was building the first club-owned building. When we returned to Chattanooga, games were held on Frazier Ave between the taco restaurant and the gas station with entry by the alley. The next locale was on Brainerd Road just east of the McCallie tunnel, then onto just off Ringgold Road. When the lease ran out, we were informed that the space was no longer available. I think it had something to do with something remodeling the building.

Nat used his skills to encourage members to contribute to our down payment and talked the bank into extending us credit for the mortgage. Kyle Weems served to keep us legal and managed to get us tax-free status. Mary Goodwin and I designed and worked with the contractor to actually get the building built. Our contribution ended with the bathroom hall—the extra room came later. But that is another story and not mine to tell.



Bucky, Frank and Nat Hughes pictured at our first ever 2009 "Battle of the Sexes." Bucky's team (Linda Smith, Joyce Feher, Angie Cowart and Bucky) won 1st place.

### **Can you tell members of the club who may not know, and there are many of us, what it took to establish the Chattanooga Bridge**

#### **Center on Dayton Boulevard**

There was the usual folderol of meetings associated with raising money, locating the land, raising the building. Many meetings, much discussion, some disagreement of need. You name it, we probably went through it. There is a plaque at the Bridge Center that lists all those contributing to the funds for the building on Dayton Boulevard, the one we play in today.

### **Have you taken lessons, or are you a self-taught bridge player? If you took lessons, where did you take those?**

Yes, I took lessons! I attended classes here with friends who studied together. We had a ball. It is more fun if you can share.

### **What advice can you give to novice players?**

Learn to count cards played as soon as you can, and then learn to place cards from the bidding. Too bad I started too late. Insufficient brain function these days!

### **How has the game changed since you first began playing?**

I would say that just lately it has become more fashionable.

## Get To Know (continued)

### Personal Information

#### **Are you a native Chattanooga? If not, what brought you here?**

I was born and grew up here. I spent 4 years away at college, and then married in my first year back home. Nat and I returned here in 1973 to work at GPS until his retirement. Nat came from Memphis, but his Mother's family has roots in Trenton, Georgia. Both of us have deep Tennessee roots.

#### **You and your husband had three sons. Did you teach all three of them to play bridge?**

No I didn't. It is easier to pick up the game from observation than sit down and learn rules. Television has filled time available to children, not to mention organized sports.

#### **Before the pandemic, how often did you play in any bridge tournaments?**

While my original buddies were around, rather often, but it was slow slogging. Nat decided I needed to be a life master and he and some of his buddies played with me until I won the points. At some point, Frank decided I needed to become a Bronze Life Master, so he and the "grannies" pushed me through to that marker. Thank goodness, he agrees that I don't need further goals concerning bridge. I'm already playing over my head.

### Frank Hughes (Bucky's son)

#### **Did you play bridge with your parents and/or brothers as you were growing up?**

No, I do not remember much about bridge when I was a kid, except hearing about the money my grandmother played with her friends.

I did not attempt to play bridge until after my active service in the Marine Corps in my mid 20's. One memory from that time was my father taking me to my first tournament in East Ridge at a hotel. One particular hand I can never forget. Dad called the director on me when I opened 3 spades. He did this after the hand was played and I made 4. He told the director that I mis-bid, and the director replied there was no rule against a DUMB bid. *I did not play again for twenty years.*

#### **If they played bridge, did either of your brothers become interested in playing duplicate bridge?**

My brother played with me once at the Bridge Center, and it ended similarly to my previous endeavor with my father. I opened and he passed—holding 20 points. I called him a name I can't say here, and he was finished playing bridge!

#### **Have you taught any of your own children to play the game? If so, have they become regular duplicate bridge players?**

Kelsey, knows how to play but has not had time to play. Mary really is not competitive and is not interested. Nathan would be good at it, but I have not been able to crack that egg.

#### **Did you play bridge in college? In the military?**

I played some at college, but it was usually assisted by beer and the quality of the game was seriously in question.

#### **What advice can you give novice duplicate bridge players?**

Borrow a system that your mentors use and stick with it. Do not get discouraged if you are beaten terribly and often. That is how you learn. Form a team and travel, and you will have fun. Our team was Frank & the Grannies (Sandy, Janie, and Cheryl). My job was to drive them everywhere and to listen to Sandy tell me what I was supposed to do without me complaining.

#### **Is there any other wisdom regarding the game that you would like to share with our members?**

Don't dive into this game unless you have time to give to learning it, or you will only get frustrated.



The Grannies: Sandy Cervantes, Janie Hunt and Cheryl Whitfield also pictured at the "Battle of the Sexes."



## And the winners are...

Congratulations to Unit 206's very own **Roger Briley** and **Tom Trivers** on placing first in the **District 7 Flight B North American Pairs Finals**. This year the finals were held online on November 20. Next stop for the partnership is the Spring 2022 NABC to be held in Reno, Nevada.



# One Last Thing...

By John Friedl



Here's an interesting hand that was played in an online game not long ago.

Dealer: North  
Vul: None

North  
♠KJ765  
♥AK  
♦J2  
♣JT72

West  
♠QT43  
♥7  
♦QT97653  
♣A

East  
♠A98  
♥98654  
♦AK84  
♣5

South  
♠2  
♥QJT32  
♦  
♣KQ98643

## Bidding:

North	East	South	West
1S	P	1NT	3D
P	P	4C	P
5C	5D	P	P
X	P	P	P

Followers of the Law of Total Tricks will note that both sides have an 11-card fit in a minor suit. The auction was perhaps a bit aggressive, but not so much given that neither side was vulnerable. North had a sound 1-Spade opening bid, East passed (the five card Heart suit wasn't worth bidding at the two-level and the singleton Club cautioned against a takeout double). South made a standard forcing 1 No Trump response and West weighed in with a preemptive bid of 3 Diamonds, which was passed around to South. Looking at a decent seven-card Club suit, South ventured a 4-Club bid which North raised to game, liking his four card support with two honors in Clubs. East then dove into the auction with a raise to 5 Diamonds and North doubled for penalty to end the auction.

It's hard to find fault with any of the bidding. East could have raised his partner's preempt to 5 Diamonds right away, upgrading his hand for the ace of Spades in the opponents' first-bid suit, the ace-king fourth in Diamonds and a singleton Club. But the initial pass was reasonable. South chose to show his seven-card Club suit rather than the decent holding in Hearts, West had said all he could say with his first bid and North liked his Heart holding and Club support. North's penalty double was not unreasonable, not wanting to sell out to a game that the opponents did not bid freely on their own, and thinking he had two sure Heart tricks and could count on partner for a third somewhere else.

In the play of the hand, it's easy to see that East-West had eleven tricks no matter what the defense could do. North could lead either a Heart or a Club, West would pull trump when he gained the lead, and the play of the Spade suit was simple given the fact that North had bid Spades, promising a five-card suit. A low Spade from West toward the dummy, covering any card that North played, assured that only one trick would be lost in the suit. All told West would take two Spades, seven Diamonds, one Club and one Spade ruff (or three Spades, not needing the ruff) for eleven tricks. Five Diamonds doubled making five not vulnerable scored 550.

Note that North-South can also take 11 tricks in Clubs, losing only the two black aces. So whether East thought he was sacrificing by bidding 5 Diamonds, or he thought his side could take 11 tricks, the bid was a success.

Should North have bid 6 Clubs instead of doubling 5 Diamonds? In hindsight, yes, but it's hard to say on this auction because it looks like East's 5 Diamond bid is a sacrifice and North-South should be able to find 3 tricks to set the contract. Six Clubs doubled down one would have been minus 100 rather than minus 550.

## *One Last Thing* continued

In my opinion, the takeaway from this hand is that when you are in a competitive auction and you reach the level you think you can make, you need to be prepared to double the opponents if they bid what looks like a sacrifice to keep you from earning the game bonus, or to push you one level higher into a contract you can't make. If the opponents do not bid the game freely on their own, but only after your side has reached a game contract, that's usually a good sign that they can't take all their tricks and you will set them. That's when a double is called for.

But, you might ask, on this hand that backfired - doesn't that mean you should only double when you are certain you will set their contract? The answer, simply stated, is that if your opponents never make a doubled contract then you aren't doubling often enough. If they make ten or even twenty percent of their doubled contracts, the extra points you will gain from doubling will far outweigh the penalty you suffer when they make the doubled contract. And letting them off with a sacrifice when your side is making a game at the other tables will result in a bottom board, and the only hope is that your double will earn back some of the matchpoints you would otherwise lose.



*The gift of love, the gift of peace,  
the gift of happiness,*

*We wish these all for you.*

*Maybe more important  
this year,*

*We hope all your contracts come true!*

