

LIBRARY CORNER

Over My Shoulder Jerry Helms & Tom Trautmann

The authors of this book play in the Charlotte (NC) Bridge Association where Jerry Helms, a well-known professional player and teacher, is a member. The goal of the book is to take advantage of Mr. Helms's bridge playing and teaching skills in answering questions presented to him with the aim of improving the games of intermediate and advanced-intermediate players. The introductory note clearly states that the book assumes the reader has knowledge of common conventions such as Stayman, Puppet Stayman, inverted minors, and new minor forcing. At the beginning of the book the authors provide a bidding quiz. They provide the locations of the answers within the pages of the book. This might be useful as a pretest of sorts, followed by a re-taking of the test once the reader has read through the book. Trautmann presents a situation/question that Helms then answers, answers that include useful insights that the reader can apply when playing the game. Along with the useful suggestion for improving one's game comes a good dose of humor that makes this book an enjoyable as well as instructive read.



ALERT!!

A publication of ACBL Unit 206

April, 2022



Editor: Sandy Cervantes

Features Editor: Cheryl Whitfield

A message from the president...

Here is an overview of the highlights of your board's actions so far this year:



Approved a contract to coat the roof with a guarantee-this will eliminate the few leaks that we have had and add years to the life of our roof

Determined that we need at least 165 tables a month (both online and face-to-face) to break even

Scheduled fall and spring tournaments

Formed a new committee with the task of strengthening our club – especially in the area of participation

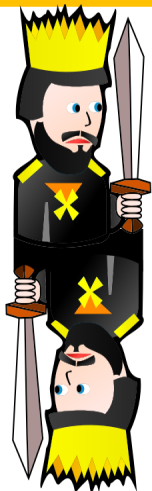
Decided that the club will reduce the quantity of snacks while having the club pay directly for these snacks

Approved new software for our Website which should improve both it's look and content accuracy

Had the Bridgemates cleaned

If you have any ideas, suggestions or even complaints, please bring them to my attention and I will add to the agenda for our April meeting.

Iris



A Smidgen of Smiths

Strip and Endplay

Also known as a "throw-in" play, the "strip and endplay" forces your opponent to lead a card that is not good for their side or to give you a ruff-sluff. Typically, you are in a suit contract and need to take a finesse or need an ace in front of your king. It takes some planning, so study your dummy BEFORE making the first play. This hand is a perfect example:

♠AQ10
♥J85432
♦105
♣64

♠52
♥9
♦KQ9832
♣AJ73

♠J9874
♥107
♦764
♣Q102

♠K63
♥AKQ6
♦AJ
♣K985

You arrive in 4♥ after South opens 2NT, North bids 4♦ (Texas Transfer) and South bids 4♥. At first glance, you see you will lose one diamond and one or two clubs, depending on who holds the A♣. But wait! If West has the Q♦, and it looks like it because they led the K♦, you could make life very uncomfortable for them. Watch what happens:

West leads the K♦. After South wins the A♦, they should draw 2 rounds of hearts.

Play 3 spades, eliminating spades.

Play Jack♦.

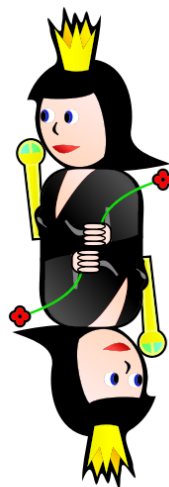
Sorry West, you now are officially endplayed!

West now has a choice of leading another diamond, in which case you pitch a club from dummy and trump in your hand (ruff-sluff). Or they can lead (or underlead) the A♣, which will allow you to win the K♣. You make 5H. Well done.

If you carelessly draw trumps and simply lead a club towards your king, hoping the A♣ is on your right, the opponents will win 2 club tricks and a diamond. You only make 4H.

Start looking for endplay situations. They come up more than you think.

Linda and Ron Smith



FAIRYLAND BRIDGE CLUB

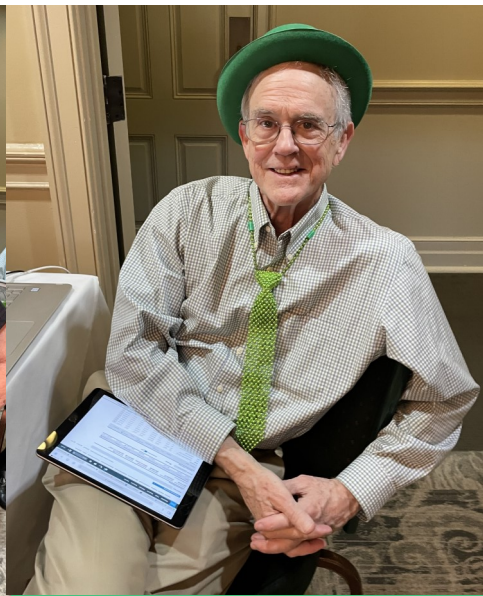
No one was pinched at the Fairyland Saint Patrick's Day party although I question some people's idea of green. Best dressed definitely went to Sharon Lewis with her shamrock leggings and twinkly headband. Irish stew and corned beef and cabbage were highlights on the menu.

Hmmm...wonder what April will bring besides spring showers? Maybe the Easter bunny?

Y'all join us. We meet at 10:15 at Mountain City Club. Free parking, good food and fun friends. Oh, and we also play bridge.

Suzy

Pictured clockwise from right: Sharon Lewis; our Leprechaun Director, Dan Chandler; and, two sparkly Shenanigans Coordinators, Suzy Bryant and Susie Crouch.



Hardy, Har, Har

It's important to have a sense of humor in bridge. Even bridge experts know how to lighten the atmosphere:

"Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make them all yourself."

Alfred Sheinwold

HATS OFF TO...



This month it is easy to know to whom we should tip our hat — all those involved in our recent Spring sectional. Chair Richard Spangler was wonderful heading up the tournament and staying cool and calm under very challenging circumstances. Jan Alexander was great coordinating our snacks and drinks. Mary Robertson matched up those looking for partners, and Teresa Moore filled in ably when our tournament director's flight got cancelled. Margie Moses and her trusty pick-up provided table transportation. We were lucky to have two alert and "cute-as-can-be caddies. Countless others hefted tables, organized chairs, loaded up leftovers and were happy to fill in wherever and whenever necessary. Thanks everyone.

KNOW THE RULES!

We are starting a new column this month — "Know the Rules." This column will try to edify and simplify the sometimes confusing ACBL rules related to alerting and announcing bids. Tyler Smith and Marilyn Shelton are collaborating on this column and would welcome any suggestions or questions you might have.

Alert!

Mid-pandemic, at the start of 2021, ACBL updated the alert procedures. We are here to help guide you through any changes! We'll start off with the most common--transfer and relay responses to 1NT.

Playing basic Jacoby Transfers over 1NT, if your partner bids 2D, you announce "Hearts." If your partner bids 2H, you announce "Spades." Note that you are not saying "Alert" (or "Transfer," as you previously did). Instead, you are merely naming the suit into which you are transferring.

If you play that a 2S response to a 1NT opening is a "relay" to 3C, but partner may correct to 3 diamonds to show her suit, you should say "Alert," because this is not a normal one-suited transfer. If asked to explain, saying something such as, "Partner is asking me to bid clubs, and then she may further describe her hand," would suffice.



Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, April 3

Special Pair's Game *Cancelled*

Monday, April 11

Online Mentor/Mentee Game, 7 p.m.

Friday, April 15

Face-to-Face Mentor/Mentee Game,
12 Noon, CBC

Monday, April 25

Online Mentor/Mentee Game, 7 p.m.



Put Your Thinking Cap On

Thanks to Richard Pavlicek again for this bridge head-scratcher.

The answer is at the bottom, but try not to peek. See if you can come up with the answer on your own.

Most people are aware that 3NT is the most common contract reached. What would you guess are the next 5 most common contracts? And, what is the least common contract of all?



The most common contracts in order: 3NT, 4♥, 4♠, 2♥, 2♠, 1NT. Most people wrongly guess one of the grand slams as the least common contract. Think about it — when was the last time you played 5NT?

Answer:



We have two tournaments coming up later this year:

August 26-28
September 30-October 2

NLM (under 500 points) Sectional
Open Sectional

Richard Spangler is the overall Tournament Captain, but it would be great to have some help with these competitions. For each of these events, we need a Tournament Chair to oversee the tournament (with Richard's guidance), a Partnership Chair to help players find a partner, and a Food Chair to coordinate both snacks and meals. Please reach out to Richard if you are interested or would like to learn more. Contact him at raspagler58@gmail.com.



Bridge Tip for April

TIP!

Don't just close your eyes and bid RKC or Blackwood — give cuebidding a try!

Marty Bergen

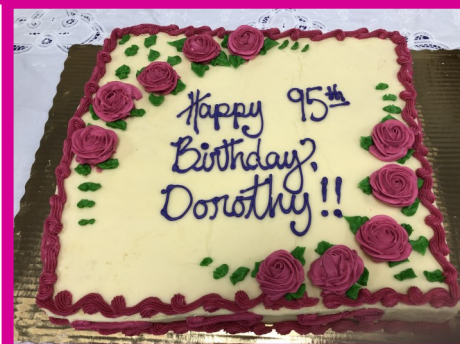


Chattanooga Spring Sectional Tournament Update

Thanks to everyone who participated in the March 2022 Sectional Tournament held at the East Ridge Community Center! We had almost 80 tables during the tournament despite the threat of ice and snow on Saturday. People came from as far as Florence, Alabama to the area outside Atlanta. In addition, it was great to see everyone from the Chattanooga area! Special KUDOS go to Teresa Moore, who at the last minute had to fill in as the Director on Friday because of plane and travel issues for the Tournament Director coming in from Wilmington, North Carolina. Also, thanks to the many volunteers who helped to make the tournament a success.

Another Nonagenarian... Dorothy Seeber turns 95!!

On Friday, March 25, the Chattanooga Bridge Center was ready to celebrate Dorothy Seeber's 95th birthday. A beautiful cake, snacks, flowers and a balloon were on the head table just waiting for our lovely birthday girl to arrive. Unfortunately, Dorothy had a medical situation and phoned early Friday morning concerned not that she was in the hospital, but rather that she would have to cancel playing! As the saying goes, "A cake waits for no one." So in true celebratory fashion and with very warm wishes to Dorothy, the players devoured her beautiful cake—but not until after we sang a very spirited rendition of "Happy Birthday to You," which we recorded and emailed to Dorothy so she could share in the fun.



Online Mentor/Mentee Game



Looking for fun in all the wrong places? We've got the answer to your problem. Why not try our online Mentor/Mentee games this month. The dates are April 11 and April 25, at 7:00 pm on BBO. Everyone has a great time, and you can never predict the winners. If you are interested and would like to play, either as a mentor or mentee, send an email to **Bert Shramko** at stdoms48@gmail.com.



FF2F Friday Face-to-Face Mentor/Mentee Game



Mark your calendar now so you won't miss our April game on the 15th at 12 noon. Remember—the game is always the 3rd Friday of the month. Text or call Sue Shramko at 404.304.7017 if you are interested.

March winners were:

North/South

1st-Linda Metz/Bucky Hughes
2nd-Sue Shramko/Nancy Hayes
3rd-Gary Higbee/Ron Boyers

East/West

1st-Earl Rothberger/Stewart Lawwill
2nd-Marty Hershey/Joyce Boatwright
3rd-Donna Cart/John Hubbard



45th Annual World Team Championships

The world bridge championships started this past week in Italy, and there are four team championships being played: the Bermuda Bowl, Venice Cup (women), d'Orsi Cup (seniors-60 and older), and the Wuhan Cup (mixed). There are 24 teams in each category, and the USA has two teams in each competition. There are 23 round robin games, and the top 8 will move on to the quarterfinals which begin Monday, April 4. At the time this newsletter goes out, in the Bermuda Bowl, Switzerland is leading with USA 2 in 2nd place and USA 1 in 8th. In the Venice Cup, Poland is on top, USA 2 is in 8th place and USA 1 is in 11th. USA 1 is leading the d'Orsi Cup and USA 2 is in 8th place. In the Wuhan Cup, France is in 1st place, USA 1 in 4th and USA 2 is in 15th. The USA definitely has a chance to move on in each category.

You can watch matches on BBO Vugraph. It's interesting to see how the table is divided by a screen to prevent any extraneous communication. It's also interesting to see how even the pros can make poor choices.

If you do watch, you may want to keep it private so that your children/grandchildren don't look at you in wonder thinking "it's time to get a life!"

How would you answer the question... "To me bridge is _____."

This month we put pressure on Janie Hunt to give us an answer to our monthly question, and she came up with this gem:

"To me bridge is a confidence builder. I've come a long way from sitting in the parking lot praying that I wouldn't get a hand with enough points to bid. Now I want slam points in every hand, and I have wonderful partners with whom to enjoy the game. It is also fun to watch all the amazing talents among our members, volunteering to do what they do so well and encouraging each other."



BRIDGE ETIQUETTE



Remember it is important to shuffle your hand a little before placing your cards back in the board. This is done so that no inference can be made from the order of the cards. It is

especially important if the board is passed out.



Cleveland Bridge Club News

The Cleveland Bridge Club would like to invite any and all players to come and play in Cleveland on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. You are asked to arrive early so the game can start on time. The venue is the Bradley/Cleveland Senior Center on Urbane Road. Please confirm that you plan to play by texting Polly Sullivan at 423.715.0986 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.



Do you know.... What's Smolen?

Smolen is a convention used by a responder with a game forcing hand to answer his partner's notrump opening bid, natural notrump overcall or double of a notrump opening (if you play systems are on). The bid's purpose is to identify 4/4 or 5/3 major suit fits while guaranteeing that the notrump bidder be declarer. Here are two examples of hands that responder could have to use

Smolen:

Hand 1

♠KJ98
♥AKT98
♦94
♣82

Hand 2

♠KQ986
♥QJ76
♦A
♣532

After opener bids 1NT, responder should start with bidding Stayman. If opener shows a 4-card major, the bidding is easy—just raise to game in that major. However, if opener responds by bidding 2♦ denying a major, there still is the possibility of a major suit game in responder's 5-card major. To investigate, responder jumps to the 3 level in his 4-card suit. Doing so tells opener that responder is 4/5 or 5/4 in the majors, and lets opener decide where to place the contract. By bidding his 4-card major (knowing that there is no fit), he ensures that opener remains declarer.

Let's say opener has this hand and responder has Hand 1 above:

♠AQT3
♥Q6
♦AKT7
♣QT5

Opener
1NT
2♠

Responder
2♣
4♠

Easy peasy! Wouldn't it be nice if they were all like this? Let's change a few cards though. Opener has the same point count, but different distribution (responder still has Hand 1). The bidding starts off the same, but changes midcourse when opener denies a 4-card major:

♠AQT
♥Q76
♦AKT7
♣QT5

Opener
1NT
2♦
4♥

Responder
2♣
3♠*

If responder holds Hand 2, on this auction, instead of jumping to 3S, he would jump to 3H (his 4-card major) and opener would then bid 4S ensuring that the contract is right-sided. *Alertable

To the Victors go the Spoils (or in this case, the points)

District 7 held their Royal Stac games March 21-27, 2022. All points awarded were equally divided by color: 1/4 gold, 1/4 silver, 1/4 red, and 1/4 black. Club results were compiled with district results and extra points were awarded to top District 7 winners. Here are the top point winners for Unit 206:

Tom Trivers/Claude Walker	11.24
Polly Sullivan/Ann Arnwine	7.01
Myra Reneau/John Friedl	6.32



One Last Thing...

By John Friedl



This month we'll take a look at the question: "Is it forcing?" This can be a vexing issue for newer players, or when you are playing with a new partner and the two of you haven't yet ironed out all of the details of your bidding agreements. Your partner makes a bid and you're not quite sure whether her bid is forcing, or just invitational, or maybe even sign-off. You don't have much extra, so it's important to know whether she expects you to bid again or if you can pass.

A complete treatment of the subject of forcing bids would fill up a thick book, so let's look at some of the more common examples in this brief article.

We'll start with a basic axiom: a bid by a Responder (the partner of the opening bidder) is forcing if the Responder has not passed or otherwise limited her hand. For example, you are the dealer and you open the bidding with 1 Club. Partner responds 1 Heart. What does she have? It could be anything from 5 points and 4 hearts to 20 points and 6 or more hearts. Unless your agreement is that a jump shift by Responder is strong, a bid of 1 Heart describes this entire range of values and distribution, and you cannot pass until you find out more.

On the other hand, if Responder makes a bid that shows a limit to her hand, that bid is not forcing. If you open with 1 Club and she bids 1 NT (6-10 points, balanced, no 4-card major) or 2 NT (11-12, balanced, no 4-card major), those bids are not forcing. If you are playing that a jump shift shows a weak hand with a long suit, then that bid is not forcing. A response of 2 Spades to your 1 Club opening bid typically shows a 6-card spade suit and a hand with around 4-7 points, and Responder would be happy to see you pass.

Next, any bid that is artificial and conventional should obviously be forcing. I still remember the time my partner opened 1 NT and I made a Texas Transfer bid of 4 Diamonds, which she passed. I had 6 hearts and 10 points and a singleton diamond, and my partner had 16 points and 4 hearts but only 2 diamonds. Our opponents were savvy enough not to double the 4 Diamond contract, which I played with a 3-card fit in our trump suit. The message here is that it is important – let's say, critically important – that you memorize every convention on your card and know what each of the bids means.

Likewise, any artificial bid, even if not part of a bidding convention, must be forcing. This would include bids like a cue bid of a suit that an opponent has bid, or a bid showing an ace or a king after you and partner have agreed upon a trump suit. Here's an example: partner opens the bidding with 1 Spade, you make a limit raise jump to 3 Spades, showing 10-12 points and 4 or more spades. Partner now bids 3 NT. What does that mean? He can't want to play 3 NT if we have a 9-card fit in spades. No, of course not – it means he is interested in slam and wants to find out if you have an ace you can show him, so treat 3 NT as absolutely forcing and if you have the ace of clubs bid 4 Clubs. If you have the ace of diamonds (but not the ace of clubs) bid 4 Diamonds, and so on. With no outside ace, bid 4 Spades. But whatever you do, don't pass 3 NT.

One Last Thing...continued

I can't possibly address all of the different types of forcing bids, but here's one more that will come up fairly often. If you are playing 2/1 game forcing, or if you are in any other game forcing auction (e.g., partner bids Jacoby 2NT in response to your opening bid of one of a major), any bid by either you or your partner short of game is absolutely forcing – that's what game forcing means.

For example, you open 1 Spade, LHO passes and partner responds 2 Clubs (game forcing). Now your RHO bids 2 Diamonds. Anything you bid that is short of game is forcing on partner – and that includes a Pass! Consider what you would do if you had a hand with 5 spades, 4 diamonds including KJ98, and 16 high card points. If you and your partner are playing Support Doubles, you can't double because that would not be for penalty – it would promise exactly 3 clubs. If you're not playing Support Doubles, partner might take your double of 2 Diamonds as showing interest in hearts as an alternative to spades. But if you put down the Pass card, partner is now forced to bid something. Perhaps he will figure out that you'd like him to make a reopening double so that you can pass and convert it to a penalty double. But it's important to recognize that in this situation even a Pass is forcing.

One last thought: If you're not sure if a bid by partner is forcing, the safest thing is usually to assume it is, especially if partner has not limited her hand by a previous bid or pass. Whenever this situation comes up, be sure after the hand is over and you have a moment between rounds that you and your partner review the auction and come to an agreement about whether the bid in question was intended to be forcing. Those discussions are important to the development of a solid partnership.

Thanks to Sandy, our wonderful Newsletter editor, for suggesting this topic.

