



# Peninsula News and Views

*Newsletter of the Peninsula Bridge Club*

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT Alan Davies

Greetings to all. Another year comes to an end. Our members continue to compete well in various events. To find out more, go to our website [www.peninsulabridgeclub.org.au](http://www.peninsulabridgeclub.org.au) and you will find the details in results/other results. The profile of the Club within the Sydney bridge community is growing as a result.

As well as seeking to improve the skills of our members through our programme of workshops, it is also important to us that we provide an environment for our regular players who like to play a more social style of bridge. Hopefully we achieve that.

By the time you read this, all our major competitions for 2013 will have been completed. It is pleasing to see new names appearing on the Club's honour board.

The Club Committee has decided to increase table money in 2014 to \$5 for members and \$10 for visitors. Annual fees will remain unchanged at \$40. The additional monies raised will be used, amongst other things, to upgrade the hot water supply in the kitchen, which has been an ongoing problem when we have a large number of tables in play. The increased cost our table money compares very reasonably with our competitors on the Northern beaches.

I hope you enjoy the festive season. I wish you and your bridge well in 2014.

## Director's Corner

Law 20F of the Laws of Duplicate Bridge deals with the right to seek explanations of calls. In summary, a player may request an explanation of the opponents' prior auction only when it is that player's turn to call. After the final pass and throughout the play period a player may request an explanation of the opposing auction, only when it is that player's turn to play. In these circumstances a player may ask concerning a single call, but does so at the risk of passing unauthorised information to his/her partner. If the Director is of the view that this has occurred, an adjusted score will be made against the offending pair.

For example, if a player asks whether an unalerted call is natural, their partner may infer that the player is holding that suit. If that suit is led to the advantage of the enquiring pair an adjusted score may be awarded.



It's not everyday that Peninsular Bridge Club is able to announce that one of our members has become an author, but today is that day. Betty Postle has written the "Alzheimer's Caregivers book"

This book deals with some of the questions caregivers may have:

How do I cope with problems like wandering or aggression?

What activities are best for my loved one?

Why do I feel like someone has died?

Where can I find help?

How do I find respite care?

Betty and her daughter Lesley have created an internet resource called [www.griefandsympathy.com](http://www.griefandsympathy.com). Inevitably everybody suffers from grief, this site provides information to help people through difficult times—well done Betty.

## Improve Your Bridge with a New Teaching tool — Nick Fahrer

Some of the more experienced club members will remember a little bridge gadget called AutoBridge. Invented in the 1930s, AutoBridge was a bridge teaching tool that used specially constructed lesson hands that you could play. If you did not follow the recommended auction or line of play, AutoBridge would correct you. Hands came in themed sets and the accompanying booklet discussed what the tricks and the traps on the hand were. In its day, AutoBridge was a revolutionary and very effective learning method.

This concept has recently been transported to the internet, with a new range of products from Vu-Bridge, the brainchild of Didier Levy, a French bridge player and software developer. Vu-Bridge offers a whole suite of free and subscription based products that already has thousands of users around Australia and the rest of the world.

The flagship product is a twice-monthly subscription-based newsletter called V-Green, each containing about 20 new hands in themed series, like "How to Plan Your Play as Declarer" or "Hands on Defense". V-Green is ideal for intermediate-level players wanting to improve their skill-base.

A range of Vu-Bridge PlayBooks is also available – these are essentially computerised versions of existing texts, but already authors such as Larry Cohen, Eddie Kantar, David Bird and Tim Bourke are on board.

Aside from these paid services, Vu-Bridge also offers its suite of software free of charge to teachers, clubs, in fact anyone. Teachers can prepare lessons for their students to play in class or revise later on at home on their computers. Bridge Clubs and bridge bloggers can publish interesting hands on their websites for members and readers to play interactively. Bridge journalists can report hands from major events and simply provide their readers with a link for them to try the hand themselves. Bridge authors can create their own internet based books that make their texts come alive through hands their readers can play.

And Vu-Bridge can be a portable product too. It's not just for PCs and Macs – Vu-Bridge will work on any internet enabled device like an iPad or other tablet. You can even play Vu-Bridge on your smart phone.

Vu-Bridge is an amazing service that has been developed to make learning and improving your bridge game fun. It will reinforce what you are learning in your classes as well as introducing, teaching and re-inforcing new ideas. Have fun playing rather than reading!

Try some sample Vu-Bridge hands here [http://bit.ly/TBS-VU\\_](http://bit.ly/TBS-VU_)

Board # 3  
Dealer: North  
Vulnerable: All  
**You are: South**  
Contract: 3 NoTrumps  
By South

Auction Results

West	North	East	South
-	1♦	P	1NT
P	3NT	P	P
P			

Replay Show 4 Hands  
Return ☒ Auto Next trick

Dealer: North

Claim!

Read the comment, then click "OK" to continue...

Comment: There is no advantage in winning the first heart trick. Duck instead and some Wests would be nervous of continuing hearts in case you started with ♥J-x-x. In that case a heart continuation would give you two tricks in the suit.

OK

### SPECIAL OFFER FOR PENINSULA BRIDGE CLUB MEMBERS

**Thanks to the Bridge Shop 182 Penshurst St, Willoughby NSW 2068 (02) 9967 0644**

Subscribe to V-Green before Dec 31 via this link <http://bit.ly/PENIN2210> and you'll get a bonus 2 months extra on your subscription, courtesy of the Bridge Shop 182 Penshurst St, Willoughby NSW 2068 (02) 9967 0644

**Please use the coupon code PENIN2210 at checkout.**

## The Mathematical Advantage of Aggressive Bidding Copyright © 2011 by Rich Waugh

No matter what bidding system you use, or how good you are, there arise some hands that offer a 50/50 chance of making game. Rather than agonize over each one as it occurs (and risk guessing wrong more often than not) it would seem to be a distinct advantage to take a consistent stand on whether or not to bid all close games. The question of which course to take can be answered by analysing the mathematics of scoring.

For example, assume two hands where the odds of making game are exactly 50%. To simplify the discussion, let us further assume that the choice lies between passing three spades and bidding on to four (game). The first hand makes four; the second makes three (or goes down one, if you bid four).

Using duplicate values for part score (50 points), non-vulnerable game (300) and vulnerable game (500), we can easily construct a table for the relative value of bidding game vs. part score at various vulnerability conditions.

### Stopping in Part Score (Any Vulnerability)

Bid	Made	Score
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3	4	170
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3	3	140
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310pts

At any vulnerability, if you stop in part score on both hands, the score for the two hands totals is 310 points (140 + 170). If we compare this total to the score you would obtain by bidding game on both hands, we can derive odds for bidding game:

- Not Vulnerable - Bidding game on both hands results in a net score of 370 points (420-50), 60 points more than the part scores. Thus, the odds in favor of bidding game are 370 to 310, or a little over 54%.
- Vulnerable - When vulnerable, the odds are even better for the aggressive pair. Now, bidding game both times nets 520 points (620-100) and yields a net gain of 210 points! The odds for bidding the game increase to 520 to 310, or almost 63%!

Of course, this table does not take into account unfavorable factors which may cause the contract to be set more than one trick or doubled which change the odds somewhat, but it is clear that, mathematically at least, it pays to bid aggressively.

## The Cost of Passing

It is often said by those of a cautious mind that the winners of matches are those who make fewer mistakes. What, however, is a mistake? Is it a reasonable play that happens to result in a bad score? No. Bridge is a game of probabilities, so playing with the odds doesn't always win. Often those who win in a long match are those who employ cost-effective bidding methods.

It can be costly to pass. There is a tendency among commentators to overemphasize the risk that comes from the possibility that those who open light will be penalized. Take an example from the finals of the 2007 Spingold with Russia-Poland versus the USA. The opening bid was light by most standards and one British commentator on BBO was moved to ask if anyone could explain the rationale behind it. ...A question that might have been better asked is this: what is the cost of passing with a hand that could be opened? One cost is self-inflicted: after passing in first or second seat, the passing player finds that in a constructive auction without interference he has been unable to express the full value of his 11 HCP. The temptation is to bid too high even if the value of the hand has not substantially increased. S. J. Simon, a writer with a high degree of insight into a bridge player's psychology, noted this tendency and formulated the Principle of the Lesser Risk: there is less risk in opening the bidding light than in passing and overbidding later. This is true of any system.

### Bridge Probability and Information" by Robert MacKinnon

Bidding is the life blood of bridge and the overall conclusion of many leading bridge thinkers is that bridge is a bidder's game. Getting your shot in as early as possible is likelier to lead to a positive outcome for you in the long run than allowing your opponents to have all the bidding space just because they might have better cards.

Chris Martle, USA champion seconds this opinion: "*Light openings do have their advantages. You get in the first shot and you take away bidding space from the opponents*".

Eric Rodwell another USA champion states: "*The range I prefer is starting at 11, with hand evaluation always being relevant. Plenty of 10 counts, some 9 counts and maybe even some 8 counts would qualify if they have enough playing potential.*

*However I don't think opening a hand like Jx Axxxx Kxxx Qx with 1♥ is winning bridge*

*Opening light, though not too light, has advantages at all forms of the game, in the sense you are announcing certain minimal values and something about your shape. You're just positioning yourself well, primarily for a competitive auction."*

I think Rodwell is right on the money with his observations. When my partner and I experimented with opening with 10/11 pts without any shape, it only aided the opposition. We found it discouraged people from bidding risky games, helped them with finesses and generally assisted them in finding their best part score...oh cruel fortuna!



## **Sarah Young one of the young Turks of Peninsula bares her soul to the News**

### **Who taught you to play bridge?**

My dad first taught me bridge when I was young. We lived in England and would go on camping holidays to southern Europe. He taught himself so that he could teach the 3 children a simplified version. I remember always getting great cards which he would play and together, we would beat my older brothers. It probably gave me an early love of the game and a strong desire to win!

More recently, after a 40 year break, Cath Whiddon taught me in the beginner lessons and now is continuing to help us move onto improver lessons- she has been an amazing help from the very beginning. Thank you Cath!

### **How often do you play a week?**

I try to play 2-3 times a week at the club and I also play a lot online, practicing through Vu-Bridge. I'm looking forward to going away this month for my first competition outside of the club – destination Woy Woy!

### **What is a favourite contract would like to tell us about?**

Recently I have to admit to stumbling into 7 diamonds, purely by pursuing a Blackwood King ask and realising I was beyond the point of no return.....making the contract really made up for the mistake.

### **Do you have any tricks for maintaining your concentration?**

I love the fact that whilst playing bridge, I am totally focussed on the hand. I find this a wonderful combination of concentration as well as relaxation, because there is just not room for any thoughts about anything else other than the game at hand.

### **If you could change anything about bridge, what would it be?**

If it was just starting out as a new game, I'd be proposing that both North-South and East-West move after each round, purely from an WH&S (*work, health and safety ..ed*) point of view!

### **What characteristics make for a good partner?**

I play with several people who are all wonderful in that they want the game to be enjoyable as well having an interest in getting better as a partnership. A sense of humour is essential, especially when I am over enthusiastic about the possibility of a slam!

### **Who is your fantasy bridge partner?**

Mmmm...interesting concept! Not sure where to go with that one...a mind reader would be useful but it would take away all the challenge so maybe I'll stick with non fantasy options.

### **Have you made many friends through playing bridge?**

I am enjoying the social side of bridge. Everyone has been so welcoming and I find it inspirational to meet so many older players who still love life and the game! I feel very fortunate to have started playing at the same time as a really great group of other new players. It is giving us the opportunity to learn together and create a lovely social network at the same time.

### **Do you have a favourite bridge book?**

Yes – one that is a favourite of my dad's....."The Principles Of Card Play' by Paul Marston

### **What advice would you give a new player?**

Go to lots of lessons and keep practicing because it is such fun to play!

## **A word from your Editor**

Dear readers, I hope you have enjoyed my first year as Editor, I have tried to put in lots of bridge articles, probably at the expense of material dealing with the social aspects of the club. If anyone would like to redress this possible imbalance I would welcome any contributions from a would be "Social Editor". I get lots of suggestions and a few big tips, all of which are gratefully received although not always implemented. I hope you all have a relaxing festive season and I am looking forward to a quality year of bridge with you all in 2014

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