

# bridge *Canada*



Photo: CNTC A Gold Medalists Danny Miles, Darren Wolpert, David Sabourin, Shan Huang, Daniel Korbel, Jeff Smith

## **2015 CANADIAN BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS**

STORIES AND PHOTOS IN THIS ISSUE.

Photo Credit: Michael Yuen

## **THE CANADIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION**

The mission of the Canadian Bridge Federation is to promote bridge within Canada and protect and advance the national interests of Canadian bridge, including the selection and support of Canadian bridge teams and players for international bridge competition.



## FEATURES

- 03. Editor's Comments
- 05. President's Message
- 06. Hall of Fame Night
- 09. Slammin' in Montreal
- 14. 2015 COPC
- 17. CNTC Quiz
- 18. My CNTC Diary, Part I
- 41. Meet Nick L'ecuyer

## COLUMNS

- 31. The Expert Spot
- 33. LOL Egads in Evenrude, Part III
- 37. What Went Wrong?
- 45. IBPA Files
- 46. LOL One for the Good Guys
- 46. Solutions
- 48. Calendar of events

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## MEMBERSHIP

Bridge Canada is now available to members only.

If you know of anyone who wishes to become a member of the Canadian Bridge Federation please share with them these options:

1. Be sure to include CBF dues with your ACBL dues.
2. Visit [cbf.ca](http://cbf.ca) and click **Join The CBF**
3. Email [info@cbf.ca](mailto:info@cbf.ca) for more information

NOTE: Membership dues are waived for Canadian players under 25 years of age. Junior players can join the CBF by sending their information to [info@cbf.ca](mailto:info@cbf.ca).

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## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

### 2015 Canadian Bridge Championships

Our coverage of the CBCs start in this issue, with the focus on the CNTC As. I hope CBF members appreciate this jam-packed issue, about double of previous Bridge Canada's. More CBC articles will appear in the October 1st Issue.

Congratulations to the winners. To all others I have offered my own true-life story in the Expert Spot entitled 'Fate and the Bridge Gods', as a way to ease your pain and realize fate sometimes brings sun, but sometimes rain.

### Humorous Contributions to Bridge Canada

I encourage all readers to email me any of your funny bridge stories (we all have them!). A \$50 honorarium will be given to the authors of all such anecdotes used in future Bridge Canada issues. In keeping with the theme, this issue's humour arose in the CNTC As from a few years back.

Neil Kimelman  
Bridge Canada Managing Editor  
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*PHOTO: Kathie Macnab Zone 1 Director and Neil Kimelman at recent CBF Directors' Meetings.*



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

For the last few years one of the CBF Board of Directors' main concerns has been the low percentage of Canadian ACBL members who are also CBF members (<40%). Accordingly, in order to increase membership, the CBF strategy has been to focus on appealing to a wider segment of the Canadian bridge population by targeting more of our offerings to the average bridge player.

Consistent with this strategy, one of the initiatives undertaken in 2014 was to revamp the content of the Bridge Canada magazine to include educational articles, humor, and other items of general interest. Starting this year we have also increased the magazine frequency from 3 to 6 issues annually and, as a membership benefit, made it only available to CBF members.

Continuing with our strategy, we are pursuing several new initiatives in 2015, most notably:

### ONLINE CHAMPIONSHIPS

A new Canadian Online Team Championship (Open, B, C and Women divisions) will be introduced later this year. Participation will be restricted to CBF members. The prize for each player on the winning team will be a paid entry to the corresponding national championship at the Canadian Bridge Championships (CBC), or a lesser cash amount. Team entry fees will be \$100 for A, \$75 for B, \$50 for C and \$75 for Women. Additionally we'll have a 299er division (\$20 team entry) and the winners will receive a trophy. Registration for these events will be available through the CBF website.

### MORE REGIONAL EVENTS AT THE CBCS

In 2015 we added a regionally rated B/C pair's event to the CBC schedule. Additional regionally rated events are being considered for future CBCs, in order to make our premier Bridge Tournament attractive to players who do not wish to play in the national championship events.

### EVENTS FOR NEWER PLAYERS, WITH THE FOCUS ON INSTRUCTION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

We are exploring the possibility of organizing CBF branded, non-sanctioned, events that have more social and instructional focus, and which would appeal to novice and intermediate players.

As we approach the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the CBF, I am confident that, with your support, the CBF will resume its growth so that we can all feel optimistic about the future of our national bridge organization and the growth of Bridge in Canada, for generations to come.

*PHOTO: Joey Silver, Nader Hanna, John Carruthers during the 2015 Hall of Fame Night. See page 6*

# bridge Canada

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## HALL OF FAME NIGHT

### Retek and Litvack honoured. Graves and Carruthers inducted.

After four days of hotly contested preliminary qualifying matches in the CNTC-A event and three days in the CNTC-B, a standing room only crowd gathered for the 2015 Canadian Bridge Federation Hall of Fame Induction ceremony.

## SPECIAL AWARDS

### IRVING LITVACK

After CBF President Nader Hanna welcomed the attendees, Montreal Bridge League President Jean La Traverse and Joey Silver combined to present Toronto's Irving Litvack with an award commemorating the Montreal-Toronto Inter-City Matches. This competition is believed to be the longest-standing such rivalry in ACBL-land, perhaps in the entire world and Irving Litvack has been an organizer, supporter and occasional competitor since the event's inception.

### GEORGE RETEK

Next up, President Hanna presented Montreal's George Retek with the first-ever CBF Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of over forty years of outstanding service to Canadian, North American and International bridge.

## HIGHLIGHTS

OF GEORGE RETEK'S ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER

Served on the ACBL Board of Directors,  
1979-2012

Served as ACBL President, 2002

Elected to the World Bridge Federation's  
Executive Council, 1989 and served many  
terms as the WBF's Treasurer.

Instrumental in bringing the WBF's World  
Championships to Montreal in 2002.

Acclaimed to the WBF's Committee of  
Honour (a rare honour indeed as only 27  
individuals have ever been so recognized).

# HALL OF FAME NIGHT

## HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Victoria's Jim McAvoy was next at the speaker's dais as he introduced 2015 Hall of Fame Inductee Allan Graves. Jim did a great job in helping those present get a true sense of Allan Graves, both the person and the player.

## ALLAN GRAVES

Now a Vermont resident, Graves grew up in Vancouver B.C. where he started playing social bridge at about age 12 and duplicate at 15. Excellence and achievement were the hallmarks of Allan's early introduction to bridge as he attracted the notice of the Province's better players and soon became Canada's youngest Life Master at the age of 19. At 25, Allan qualified to represent Canada at the 1974 World Pairs

Olympiad in Las Palmas and hasn't looked back since. Other career highlights:

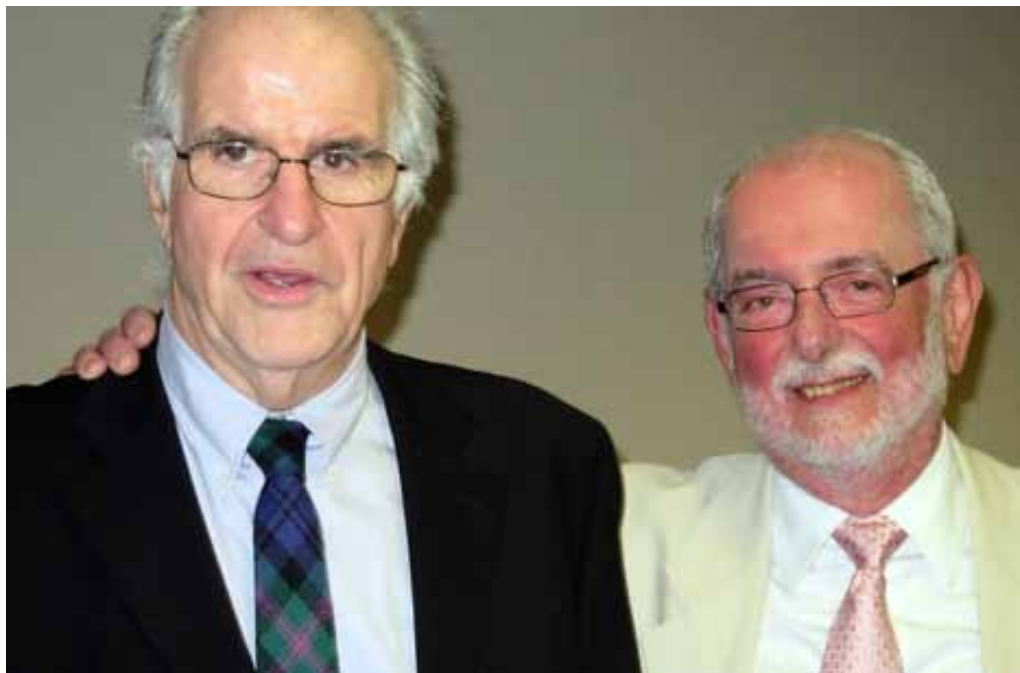
Allan has competed in 17 CNTC's and may have the best "batting average" of any single player:

Gold: 7 times.

Silver: 2 times.

Bronze: 4 times.

He also has placed 2nd in one Canadian Senior Teams Championship.



In recent years, Allan has competed primarily in the U.S.A. Where his run of successes has not abated.

Alan won the U.S. Senior Trials and played in the World Senior Bowl in Bali in 2013.

Ran up an incredible "Triple Crown" as his team won three major championships in consecutive ACBL Nationals: The 2014 Spingold, 2014 Reisinger and 2015 Jacoby Open Swiss to go with three previous NABC titles.

## THE EAGLE: BRIDGING DIFFERENT WORLDS

The HOF award presented to Allan carried the native totem of the eagle, symbolic of being capable of bridging different worlds (Allan's current team is comprised of his American partner, two Norwegians and two Israelis!), great perception (Allan is currently involved in a multi-dimensional project designed to perpetuate and enhance our game's future) and courage, all traits that have deservedly brought Allan to the CBF's Hall of Fame.

# HALL OF FAME NIGHT

## JOHN CARRUTHERS

And, of course, no gathering of bridge players would be complete without at least one Director, call so when Emcee Paul Thurston called "Director, please!" Karl Hicks, resplendent in his blue-trimmed tuxedo, answered the call.

No ruling though, just a compelling and often humorous introduction of his first bridge partner, 2015 Inductee John Carruthers. The pair met at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick in the 60's and have remained friends – but attendees will never look at a friend's dog quite the same way after Karl's reminiscences!

Next the inimitable Joey Silver who presented his long-time partner Carruthers as the second Inductee to be honoured. (Note: while Carruthers was very pleased to have Silver do the presentation he had asked Charter HOF Member Eric Murray if he might consider travelling to Montreal to do the presentation. Murray's (typically witty) reply: "How do I arrange to get removed from this HOF?"

John (J.C.) Carruthers is truly the Renaissance man of Canadian Bridge.

## RAVEN: A SYMBOL OF CREATION AND KNOWLEDGE

The totem chosen for John Carruthers's HOF Award was the Raven, a symbol of Creation and Knowledge. The giver of light to the (bridge) world. A seeker of answers (check out his IBPA editorials!).

## THE PLAYER

His record as a player all by itself would warrant HOF inclusion:

- > Four-time winner of the Open CNTC.
- > Three-time winner of the CSTC (increased to four a few days later with his team's dramatic 1-IMP victory in the 2015 final).
- > Fourteen times he has represented Canada as a player in World events.
- > Three North American Nationals' victories Won the 2000 Forbo Invitational in the Netherlands as well as the 2001 International Invitational in the Netherlands.

## THE WRITER AND EDITOR

J.C. has unparalleled contributions to World and Canadian Bridge as an Author/Editor:

- > Editor of the Ontario Kibitzer for 16 years.
- > Editor of countless Tournament bulletins in such far-flung outposts as Bermuda, Argentina and Australia.
- > Currently serving as the Editor of the International Bridge Press Association's monthly publication.
- > Contributing writer of portions of the WBF's annual World Championship Book.

## THE ADMINISTRATOR

Not to mention countless contributions as an administrator/organizer:

- > Non-playing captain of 10 Canadian teams competing in World Championships – Open (1), Women (2) and Junior's (7).
- > Multiple terms on the ACBL Hall of Fame Committee.
- > Two terms as CBF HOF Committee Chair. Multiple years on the Ontario Unit 166 Board and the CBF Board.
- > Chair of the 1997 World Junior Championships in Hamilton



# SLAMMIN' in Montreal

By Paul Thurston



While there certainly was lots of slammin', some adventures more successful than others, there was absolutely no slummin' going on during Bridge Week 2015 in Montreal: the venue was superb!

Thanks to organizers Jean Castonguay and Andre Chartrand, the CBF's premier event was held in downtown Montreal at the McGill Summer Residence. McGill is surrounded by picturesque Mont Royal, historic neighbourhoods, and enough dining choices to satisfy any palate and pocketbook. Well done!

At the tables, large quantities of IMPs changed hands as a result of slam decisions in the bidding and, less frequently, in the play. Seems Canadian experts can take their tricks when they're in the right contract but getting there can be a challenge! We'll take a look at some of those action deals but generally from a somewhat narrow perspective: I was quite occupied with partner Keith Balcombe and great teammates (Bob Todd-Doug Fisher and Brad Bart-Neil Kimelman) trying to win the event (not this time, semi-final losers to eventual Gold Medalist MILES) so my roving-reporter role wasn't full-fledged roving.

During our almost-but-not-quite fourth-quarter rally versus MILES, there were several double-digit swings in the slam zone.

First up: An unsuccessful grand slam by David Sabourin-Shan Huang, that nonetheless showcased Huang's tremendous declarer skills (positions in all deals rotated for your reading convenience).

♠	Q 8	♠	J 10 7 3 2
♥	K 8 7 6	♥	J 9 3
♦	A 8 2	♦	Q 4
♣	K Q 9 2	♣	8 7 5
♠	K 9 6 5 4	♠	A
♥	10	♥	A Q 5 4 2
♦	K 9 7 6 5 3	♦	J 10
♣	5	♣	A J 10 4 3

Obviously, reaching 7♥ was a bit of a stretch but South cashed his heart and club winners to reach this ending with one last club to be cashed:

♠	Q 8
♥	-
♦	A 8
♣	-
♠	A
♥	-
♦	J 10
♣	3

When the last club was cashed in the South

# SLAMMIN' in Montreal

hand, and North let go of the small diamond, a criss-cross squeeze would have been operable whenever one defender had started with the guarded ♠K and the defense's only diamond guard (♦KQ any number of times or any 7+ cards in ♦'s). Declarer would need to read the ending correctly – cashing the ♠A if the ♠K had been unguarded or crossing to the ♦ ace and back to the ♠A if the defense's diamond guard had been abandoned – but this is one declarer who would have read the ending correctly! As it went, West clung to ♠Kx and discarded five small diamonds and East held on to ♦Qx so the grand had to go down for 14 IMPs to TODD when our North-South was less ambitious and played in 6♥.

There was one making grand slam in the set of fifteen deals and Keith Balcombe orchestrated the auction to a successful conclusion:

Dealer South. Both Vul.

♠ A K J 9 5 ♥ A K Q 10 3 ♦ 7 ♣ 8 4	♠ Q 3 2 ♥ 8 ♦ 10 5 4 3 2 ♣ Q 6 3 2
♠ 10 8 7 6 ♥ 6 5 ♦ Q J 9 ♣ K J 7 5	♠ 4 ♥ J 9 7 4 2 ♦ A K 8 6 ♣ A 10 9

West	North	East	South
-	-	-	1♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♦
Pass	7♥	All pass	

Over North's Jacoby 2NT (game-forcing raise of hearts), South's rebid showed spade shortness. That eliminated major-suit losers from the deal's potential so Balcombe's next stop was Blackwood. While ace-asking isn't always recommended when holding xx in an unbid suit, South's opening bid values had to be somewhere and they sure weren't in the majors!

Two aces and more Blackwood to find out that South had specifically the ♦K (either minor-suit monarch would do!) and North could confidently bid the grand as he could envision perfectly how the play would go: win the opening lead, draw trumps, set up spades by ruffing and an early claim. Exactly! And 13 more IMPs to add to the rally when a slight mix-up at the other table saw MILES' North-South stop at the six-level.

And another fine effort from Balcombe for 10 more IMPs:

Dealer South. E/W Vul.

♠ A K 6 3 ♥ 10 8 7 4 ♦ J 10 5 2 ♣ J	♠ Q 8 5 2 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ 6 ♣ Q 9 6 5 2
♠ 10 7 ♥ J 9 8 5 2 ♦ 7 4 3 ♣ 8 7 3	♠ J 9 4 ♥ A ♦ A K Q 9 8 ♣ A K 10 4

West	North	East	South
			1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	5♣
Pass	6♦	All Pass	

Key call in the auction: 4♦ to show great support in the context of South's game-forcing jump shift rebid. Whatever South was looking for with the slam-probe rebid of 5♣, Balcombe figured the ♠AK and club shortness had to be extremely valuable. Right. The play was over quickly as

# SLAMMIN' in Montreal

declarer won the diamond lead, cashed the ♣A and ruffed a club high. A diamond to hand for another high club ruff, then heart to the Ace to draw the last trump and claim twelve tricks when the ♠Q didn't fall in two rounds.

Sadly, we ran out of slam chances and missed a game that Korbel-Wolpert bid and made (you'll read about that in the October Bridge Canada article by Keith). So MILES won the match and the final that followed – more on that to follow.

While a relatively new partnership, Les Amoils-George Mittelman impressed with this successful slam auction during TODD versus HANNA in the quarterfinals:

Dealer West. Both Vul.

<p>♠ -</p> <p>♥ A K 10 7 5 3</p> <p>♦ A 9</p> <p>♣ A 7 4 3 2</p>	<p>♠ J 8 4 3 2</p> <p>♥ 9 6</p> <p>♦ 10</p> <p>♣ Q J 10 8 5</p>
<p>♠ A K Q 10 9 6</p> <p>♥ J 4 2</p> <p>♦ K 7</p> <p>♣ K 9</p>	<p>♠ 7 5</p> <p>♥ Q 8</p> <p>♦ Q J 8 6 5 4 3 2</p> <p>♣ 6</p>

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♥	4♠	Pass
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♦
Pass	5♠	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

After North had shown both of his suits and South introduced diamonds at the five-level, from Amoil's (North) perspective the basis for that introduction

may have been a bit murky – a really long diamond suit and no interest in clubs or hearts? Diamond values on the way back to 5♥? Or maybe an advance cuebid in support of a just-found club fit? Whatever South was intending, North had a great hand in context and Amoils picked the perfect call to smoke out his partner at the six-level as five spades covered all bases.

Mittelman ruffed his two spade losers in dummy to bring home his slam without difficulty and gain a huge 15 IMPs for HANNA when TODD's pair played in a less successful contract.

As we've all experienced from both sides of the equation, slam-bidding in contested auctions can be a bit hit-and-miss. Here's a miss that perhaps deserved a better fate:

Dealer: West; Vul: N-S

<p>♠ 4</p> <p>♥ A 10</p> <p>♦ K J 8 6 3</p> <p>♣ Q J 8 7 5</p>	<p>♠ K Q J 10</p> <p>♥ 5 4 3</p> <p>♦ Q 7 5 4 2</p> <p>♣ 4</p>
<p>♠ A 9 8 7 6 3 2</p> <p>♥ Q 7</p> <p>♦ A 9</p> <p>♣ 9 3</p>	<p>♠ 5</p> <p>♥ K J 9 8 6 2</p> <p>♦ 10</p> <p>♣ A K 10 6 2</p>

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	4♠	4 NT
Pass	5 NT	Pass	6♣
All Pass			

The auction started off on a fast systemic note for East-West as 2♠ showed 6 or 7 spades in an intermediate hand (10-14 HCP). East milked the favourable vulnerability and his great fit by jumping to game (due to go down one). But South wasn't going quietly (who can blame him?) as he showed a promising two-suiter with his competitive 4NT.

# SLAMMIN' in Montreal

In that context, the hitherto silent North had a great hand with a guaranteed fit for one of his five-card suits, and he had enough high-card assets to make slam very likely. 5NT asked for suits up the line and the club fit was found, sadly just one level too high to cope with West's two aces!

Another slam misadventure of a different sort occurred during the Open Teams final with MILES facing off versus hometown favourite L'ECUYER.

♠	A K Q 10 9 2		
♥	J 10 4		
♦	8		
♣	10 7 2		
♠	J 7 6 5	♠	8
♥	5 3	♥	A 9 8 7 6 2
♦	7 6 2	♦	J 10 4
♣	J 5 4 3	♣	K 9 6
	♠ 4 3		
	♥ K Q		
	♦ A K Q 9 5 3		
	♣ A Q 6		

The auctions started identically with East opening a weak 2♥ and South overcalling the 3NT he thought he might make. Methods differed from that start but the North's essentially judged their hand worth a slam drive and both chose notrump just in case a defensive heart ruff might be in the offing against a spade slam.

The opening lead at both tables was a heart to the Ace and East shifted to a club. The location of the ♣K was basically irrelevant to the contract's chances for success so the declarers rose with the ace. As for those chances, if either of North's spades or South's diamonds could be brought in for six tricks, that would yield twelve in all.

The layout actually offers declarer a chance to show off what he knows about "successive chances": you should first test the suit that offers no choice in how it might be played (here diamonds) reserving the suit with options (spades where you might play from the top down or, if given enough distributional clues, take a second-round finesse for the Jack. After the club shift, declarer could cash his high heart, cross to a high spade to cash dummy's heart trick and then try to run diamonds with the spade suit in reserve.

Tragically for the L'ECUYER declarer that's exactly how the play started but on dummy's third heart, a cow flew by the window to interrupt South's focus and he actually pitched a small diamond. So that when the spade finesse was eschewed and the Jack didn't fall, there was no secondary chance as the contract-fulfilling trick had actually been discarded.

MORAL: keep potential winners (the diamond) and discard sure losers (a club).

For sure, the one slam deal everyone was talking about was this layout, the very last deal played in the Canadian Senior Team Championship:

Dealer South. N/S Vul.

	♠	A 8		♠	10 7 6
	♥	A 9 8 2		♥	J 6 5
	♦	A K J 7		♦	10 9 5 4 2
	♣	Q J 7		♣	10 4
♠	J 9 4 2		♠	K Q 5 3	
♥	K Q 10 7		♥	4 3	
♦	3		♦	Q 8 6	
♣	9 8 6 5		♣	A K 3 2	

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 ♣
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	6 ♣
Pass	7 ♣	All Pass	

# SLAMMIN' in Montreal

The final segment had started with HEINO leading CARRUTHERS by a sizeable margin, (still in double digits when the last three boards were played) but the lead had been whittled down to "only" 11 IMPs with this deal to be played at one table. But there didn't seem to be any hope for CARRUTHERS as HEINO's North-South had bid to six notrump and taken their twelve tricks with no ghost of a chance for a thirteenth, at least not in notrump.

Except Marty Kirr (North) at the other table may have sensed his team might still be trailing and he orchestrated a brilliant auction to an unexpected destination. North's fourth-suit game forcing bid of 2♥ extracted news of three-card diamond support and his heart cuebid elicited news of a spade concentration from his partner, Katie Thorpe.

Keycard Blackwood came next: 5♣ showed one Keycard for diamonds, 5♥ asked for the ♦Q and 6♣ said, "Yes I have it, and I also have the club King".

Thus they arrived in 7♣, with only the play left to determine which squad would represent Canada in the D'Orsi Senior Bowl in Chennai, India this fall. Once she got over the shock of the unexpected twist the auction had taken to land her in 7♣. Thorpe won the ♥A to cash dummy's two trump honours. Ace and a spade to hand to ruff a small spade in dummy, diamond to the Queen to extract the last trumps and the grand was home. For, you guessed it, exactly 12 IMPs to CARRUTHERS and a one IMP victory in the 2015 CSTC. That's drama! West will be lamenting not leading a killing diamond for 12 months, until next year's Canadian Bridge Championship.

Thank you Montreal, Thank you CBF and Thank you to all competitors – it was a thrilling and entirely enjoyable Bridge Week (well, except for our final placing!) and I look forward to seeing you all in 2016 in Toronto.



CSTC GOLD: John Carruthers -Michael Roche - John Rayner - Joey Silver - Katie Thorpe - Martin Kirr

# 2015 CANADIAN OPEN PAIRS

## JACOB AND CZYZOWICZ WIN EASILY

by Neil Kimelman

Dan Jacob and Jurek Czyzowicz combined the top four board carryover from the two-session qualifying, with a huge 2nd final session to cruise to victory. Second was Brad Bart and myself. Third was Bill Koski and Martin Hunter.

### TWO-SESSION QUALIFYING

After one session Winnipegger's Marielle Brentnall and Ray Hornby were just ahead of Dan and Jurek (66.48% vs 64.18%). In the evening the eventual winners played consistent to be the top qualifier, followed by Koski and Hunter.

### TWO-SESSION FINAL

Kimelman and Bart, one of the bottom qualifiers, were tops in the 1st final session with a 62% game, overcoming 1 ½ of their 3 board deficit going in, to put themselves into contention and third overall. Sitting in second were Lino D'Souza and Terrence Rego.

Jurek and Dan left little doubt as to the top pair over the two days with a huge 65% game, while Kimelman-Bart and Koski-Hunter could only manage approximately 56% evening results. D'Souza and Rego scored average in the evening



Above: COPC Gold: Jurek Czyzowicz - Dan Jacob. PHOTOS: Michael Yuen

session, to fall to 5th. The best evening game (you are most welcome Andre and Charles) went to the eventual 4th place finisher, Andre Chartrand and Charles Martineau.

When asked to provide some hands, the victors were hard pressed to identify suitable deals, but did provide the following ones from the 2nd final session (see next page):

Below: COPC Silver: Neil Kimelman - Brad Bart (Angela Fenton Presenting). Bronze: William Koski - Martin Hunter



# 2015 CANADIAN OPEN PAIRS ... Continued

Board 4. Dealer West. Both Vul.

<p>♠ J 7 3 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ Q J 7 ♣ A J 7 6</p> <p>♠ void ♥ Q 10 7 6 3 ♦ K 10 9 2 ♣ Q 10 8 3</p> <p>♠ 9 5 4 2 ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ 8 4 3 ♣ 9 2</p>	<p>♠ A K Q 10 8 6 ♥ A ♦ A 6 5 ♣ K 5 4</p>
--	---

West	North	East	South
	Jurek		Dan
Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♥	Pass	3NT	All Pass

South lead ♦4 (2nd from a bad holding), 9, J, A. Now declarer played three rounds of spades feeling the Jack. The dummy discards, were two hearts and one club, while Dan followed with 5, 4, 2 (reverse Smith) and Jurek played up the line indicating that he liked the lead. Declarer now played a diamond to the 10 losing to the Q and a heart was returned. Best the declarer can do now is to take 10 tricks for a very bad board. 12 1/2 to NS and only 1/2 for EW (13 top).

Board 11. Dealer South. None Vul.

<p>♠ 8 4 ♥ K 9 ♦ A 9 5 4 ♣ A 9 6 5 2</p> <p>♠ J 10 6 3 ♥ 8 5 ♦ 8 7 6 ♣ Q J 7 4</p> <p>♠ K Q 5 2 ♥ A Q ♦ K Q J 3 2 ♣ K 10</p>	<p>♠ A 9 7 ♥ J 10 7 6 4 3 2 ♦ 10 ♣ 8 3</p>
--	--

West	North	East	South
	Jurek		Dan
-	-	-	2NT
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

In their system, 4♠ showed a hand with 2-2-(5-4) either way, and in principle, concentration in the long suits. Over 4♠, 4NT would show no interest while 5♣ or 5♦ would be an offer to play. 5♥ would have been six Key Card Blackwood (four aces and two minor suit kings). They can also show 5-4 or 5-5 hands in the minors going through a 3♠ relay. Getting there was most of it. With diamonds 3-1 and the ♠A onside, there was not much to the hand. In spite of the fact that 6NT is makeable, (West, holding four spades and four clubs with the ♠A in partner's hand, will be squeezed on the run of the diamonds). The board was worth 10 1/2 matchpoints.

## RUNNER-UPS

Brad and my first final session had a lot to do with our 2nd place finish. Two hands from this session stand out for us. First a defensive problem. As South you hear a lot of bidding on the hand:

<p>♠ 5 3 ♥ J 9 7 4 ♦ 9 ♣ K Q J 8 5 2</p>	<p>♠ A Q 9 6 4 ♥ A 10 5 2 ♦ J 8 7 ♣ 6</p>
--	---

West	North	East	South
			1♠
2♣	2♦	2♠	3♦
Pass	Pass	3NT	All Pass

I led the ♦7. It went to the King and the Ace. Declarer crosses to a club and plays a heart to the 6, 8, and your 10. Now what?

# 2015 CANADIAN OPEN PAIRS ... Continued

On board 13 we arrived at 6♦ on the following cards:

♠ A K 2  
♥ A 6  
♦ 7 6 5 4 2  
♣ A 10 6

♠ 9 6  
♥ Q 10  
♦ A K 10 8 3  
♣ K 8 7 3

West	North	East	South
-	1♦	P	2♥ <sup>1</sup>
3♦ <sup>2</sup>	4♥ <sup>3</sup>	P	5♣
P	6♦	All pass	

- 1 Game forcing diamond raise (usually five), no shortness
- 2 Majors
- 3 Key Card Ask

The good news is that we got to a fair slam (on the bidding), that will elude the strong no-trumpers (we were the only pair in it). The bad news is we wrong sided the contract. The full deal:

♠ A K 2	
♥ A 6	
♦ 7 6 5 4 2	
♣ A 10 6	
♠ Q 8 5 4 3	♠ J 10 7
♥ K J 7 5 4	♥ 9 8 3 2
♦ Q	♦ J 9
♣ J 5	♣ Q 9 4 2
♠ 9 6	
♥ Q 10	
♦ A K 10 8 3	
♣ K 8 7 3	

Brad got a spade lead. He won, pulled trump, noting the stiff Queen with West. He then played the ♣3 to the 5, 6 and 9. This picks up all doubleton clubs with West including the 9, J, or Q (A club to the 10 would work equally as well). East shifted to a heart,

but it was too late. Brad cashed the ♣A, noting the fall of the J, and finessed against the ♣Q for a heart pitch and his contract.

Back to the defensive problem, I returned a heart. The full deal:

♠ A K 2		
♥ A 6		
♦ 7 6 5 4 2		
♣ A 10 6		
♠ Q 8 5 4 3		♠ J 10 7
♥ K J 7 5 4		♥ 9 8 3 2
♦ Q		♦ J 9
♣ J 5		♣ Q 9 4 2
♠ 9 6		
♥ Q 10		
♦ A K 10 8 3		
♣ K 8 7 3		

Brad won the ♥Q, led the ♠J, K, A, 3. A heart to the King for another spade meant down three for 11 1/2 out of 13 instead of 5 1/2 for +50.

## HALL OF FAME NOMINATION PROCESS

A frequently asked question is how does someone get nominated and chosen for the CBF HOF? A candidate must be 60 years or over or deceased. Anyone may nominate an eligible candidate for consideration by sending a brief resume to the HOF Chair (Paul Thurston; tweedguy@gmail.com), the nomination is circulated to voting members during the summer and a short list is prepared and voted on in the fall.





# CNTC QUIZ

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

These problems happened in the Montreal 2015 CNTC and the problems (and sometimes even the solutions) are discussed in the article CNTC Diary on page - this issue.

## Problem 1

Board 17. IMPs. None Vul. As West you hold  
 ♠ A Q 9 8 4 2 ♥ K J 8 5 ♦ 10 4 ♣ 3. The bidding:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♥	2NT <sup>1</sup>
4♣ <sup>2</sup>	5♦	Pass <sup>3</sup>	6♦
?			

- 1 Clubs and Diamonds
- 2 Splinter, game forcing, 4+ hearts
- 3 Forcing

What do YOU bid?

## Problem 2

Board 15. IMPs. N/S Vul. Contract: 4♠

♠ K Q 10 8  
 ♥ 10 8 7  
 ♦ Q 7 2  
 ♣ A J 4

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

West	North	East	South
		1♦	1♠
Pass	3♦ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

- 1 Limit Raise with 4+ spades

How do YOU play after 9♦ opening lead?

## Problem 3

Vul vs not, as South you hold:

♠ 9 7 6 4 3 ♥ - ♦ 9 ♣ A 8 7 6 5 4 2. The bidding:

West	North	East	South
4♥	Pass	Pass	?

What would YOU bid?

## Problem 4

Vul vs not, you hold as South:

♠ 4 ♥ A 10 ♦ K J 8 6 3 ♣ Q J 8 7 5. The bidding:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♠	4NT	Pass	?

What would YOU bid?

## Problem 5

Vul vs not, you hold as South:

♠ 8 5 3 ♥ 10 6 4 2 ♦ J 9 6 2 ♣ K 6. The bidding:

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	?

What would YOU bid?

# MY CNTC DIARY

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

## PART I “What Could Have Been”

For the next couple of Bridge Canada issues, I will share my personal experience from the recently concluded Canadian 2015 Bridge Championships in Montreal. It was an interesting and enjoyable week, the highlight of the CBF calendar with an exciting finish for my squad, the Bob Todd team.

*Photographs courtesy of Michael Yuen, Vancouver B.C.*



# INTRODUCTION

## Ladies and Gentlemen, start your engines

The Canadian Bridge Federation runs its Canadian Bridge Championship (often called Bridge Week) rotated among various locations around the country. This year it was in downtown Montreal on the McGill campus. The premier event during Bridge Week is the Canadian National Team Championship, Flight A (CNTC A). This year the winners play off against Mexico (Canada has only lost once) to earn a coveted spot in the prestigious Bermuda Bowl at the September World Championships in Chennai, India.

The format of the CNTC is a round robin over 4 days (12 board matches for the 19 teams, 216 total boards per team). The net IMP difference for each match is converted to a sliding 20 Victory Point scale. The top 8 teams qualify for the all-day quarterfinals. QF winners play in the all-day semi-final and those winners in the two-day final; all of the SF and final hands are shown on BBO. It's a long and grueling event so almost every team had 6 players.

Screens across the table were in use throughout the event. In a photo on the following page, teammates Neil Kimelman (2nd left) and Brad Bart (right) play against youngsters and professionals David Sabourin (left) and Shan Huang (blue shirt). Notice the bidding tray which houses the board and will be used to transport the bids from one side of the screen to the other side. In the right photo, your author waits for his screen mate and opponent to bid after his partner rebid 2♣.

I played with Paul Thurston (Wellington ON) on a mostly Winnipeg team: Bob Todd-Doug Fisher & Neil Kimelman-Brad Bart (Brad lives in Burnaby B.C.). The long CNTC event really requires many hours of partnership experience and preparation. Paul and I started playing in late 2014. We had practiced frequently on BBO, especially in the weeks just prior to the Event. Our teammates had done similarly plus Neil and Brad played

# MY CNTC DIARY ... Continued

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

in a Quebec City Regional just prior to the CNTCs, winning multiple events.

For myself, I had not played in the CNTC since 2010. My poor play in the two day final that year contributed significantly to our team's loss to the powerful Gartaganis team. I had not played very much since then as the specter of letting my teammates down always loomed. I was a little nervous as the time to go to Montreal closed in. Paul and I had not done particularly well at our last tournament practice. Alas, I travelled to Montreal with a bad cold which continued during the CNTCs.

Paul and I play a form of Swedish Club (1♣ is forcing, either natural, unlimited or balanced) with a wrinkle. 2♦ and 2♥ openings show a six card suiter or longer, with hearts or spades respectively, and 10-14 HCPs. 2♠ is a normal weak two.

## ROUNDROBIN: DAY ONE

### Early Adversity

Our first match was against Jonathan Steinberg's Toronto team, including my friends and former partners John Duquette and Dave Colbert. Paul and I sat out. Our teammates played very well and we won by 23 IMPs (converted to 16.18 Victory Points).

Our second encounter was against the only all ladies team in the event, the Nisbet team. Paul and I played against Susie Cooper and Ina Demme, with Susie on my side of the screen. On our **very first CNTC hand**, Susie made a very interesting rebid which caused me a problem:

---

PHOTO: Teammates Neil Kimelman (2nd left) and Brad Bart (right) play against youngsters and professionals David Sabourin (left) and Shan Huang (blue shirt).

Board 17. IMPs. None Vul. As West you hold  
♠ A Q 9 8 4 2 ♥ K J 8 5 ♦ 10 4 ♣ 3. The bidding:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♥	2NT <sup>1</sup>
4♣ <sup>2</sup>	5♦	Pass <sup>3</sup>	6♦
?			

- 1 Clubs and Diamonds
- 2 Splinter, game forcing, 4+ hearts
- 3 Forcing

Paul's Pass of 5♦ was most likely a forcing me to bid something. His hand probably featured shortness in diamonds. Susie and I studied the bids on the bidding tray that had been passed to us. Since I had no HCPs in diamonds, I was planning to rebid 5♥. To me, this bid was pretty clear.

However, Susie raised to 6♦!! So I went into the long study, mostly thinking oh \*\*\*\* why did she do that? OK, if Paul is void in diamonds with his HCPs in the majors, then he has ♠K and a strong heart suit, so we only lose one club trick. So I passed this 6♦ bid around to Paul and he bid 6♥. In turn, this bid was passed around to Ina, who bid 7♦!! One of us remembered to double. The final auction with the full hand was (continued on next page):

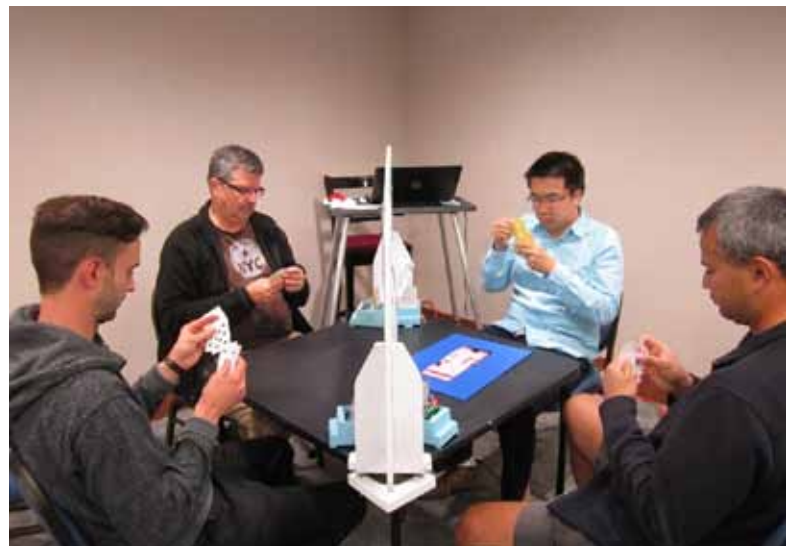




PHOTO: Paul shows his intense concentration

# MY CNTC DIARY

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

Board 18; IMPs, N-S Vul. Contract: 4♠; Lead: 9♦

♠ 9 8 7 6 5  
♥ 7 5 3 2  
♦ Q 3  
♣ A 10

♠ A Q J 4  
♥ 8  
♦ A K 10 5  
♣ K 9 8 5

♠ 10 6 5 3  
♥ 10 9 6  
♦ K Q 8 2  
♣ Q 10

♠ A Q 9 8 4 2  
♥ K J 8 5  
♦ 10 4  
♣ 3

♠ J 7  
♥ A Q 7 4 2  
♦ 5  
♣ K J 8 7 5

♠ K  
♥ 3  
♦ A J 9 6 4 2  
♣ A 9 6 4 2

West	North	East	South
Keith	Ina	Paul	Susie
	Pass	1♥	2NT <sup>1</sup>
4♣ <sup>2</sup>	5♦	Pass <sup>3</sup>	6♦
Pass	Pass	6♥	Pass
Pass	7♦	Dbl	All Pass

What a first hand; Paul and I bid a crazy slam off two aces and a key King only to have the opponents take a phantom sacrifice. Ina lost the obvious 3 tricks, so we were +500. Teammates Brad and Neil were -50 in 5♦, so we won 10 IMPs on that hand.

The very next hand, I was on the hot seat again as Declarer (hands rotated):

West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♦
1♥	Dbl <sup>1</sup>	2♥	4♠
All Pass			
<sup>1</sup> 4+ spades			

A typical CNTC hand – lots of bidding by both sides ending with a high level contract. In the CNTC almost nobody is allowed to play 2♦ or 2♥ unmolested.

Paul's hand so well matched mine, it would be hard to go down. But I did not want to assume anything. Why did Ina lead my suit and not one of her partnership suits? OK, the ♦9 cannot be a singleton or doubleton, as Susie opened 1♣, so she cannot have six card diamond suit. So, the only logical basis that I could determine for that lead is that Ina has a six card suit, trying to give Susie a ruff.

If I finesse for the ♠K and Ina wins her (stiff) King, she can give Susie a ruff, travel to Ina's hand with a heart honour of any size and then Susie overruffs with the ♠10 and I am down one. That gives Ina 3 HCPs with ♠K and maybe 3 or 4 other HCPs. RHO, Susie, would then have ♣QJ and many heart points. That could be the situation, but down one is not happening on my watch. The full deal (continued on next page):

# MY CNTC DIARY

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

♠ 10 3	♠ 9 8 7 6 5	♠ K 2
♥ A J 10 6	♥ 7 5 3 2	♥ K Q 9 4
♦ J 9 8 6 4 2	♦ Q 3	♦ 7
♣ 8	♣ A 10	♣ Q J 7 4 3 2

♠ A Q J 4
♥ 8
♦ A K 10 5
♣ K 9 8 5

I won trick 1 in my hand and I bashed out Ace and another spade to make only 11 tricks. While I could have made 12 tricks with aid of the Spade finesse, I would do the same thing again. The other table did not bid game, so our team gained 6 IMPs.

Later in that match, against 1NT, I ducked the ♣A twice to win the third round. Unfortunately, when I won the third round of clubs with my Ace, I also captured Paul's ♣K, so Susie made 1NT exactly. Nobody said a word (thanks Paul), but I am pretty sure that I turned bright red and slid under the table. That "defense for the offense" cost us 6 IMPs (we lost 3 instead of winning 3).

Neil and Brad bid an unlucky 6♥ which only went down after Diamonds split 6-0 **AND** Declarer did not guess the play. Unlucky! Our team Todd eventually won by 2 IMPs, but a win is a win. Then adversity tested Team Todd.

By now I was feeling quite miserable with my cold and my at-the-table thinking was (charitably) muddled (like against 1NT). On match #3 I tried to get Paul to play all of the hands. He played 3NT magnificently to bring home an unmakeable game. However, the one hand that I did play, I went down 3 in 3NT instead of down 1 (another net loss of 6 IMPs); we lost the match by 11 IMPs. I think that

I dozed off for a few seconds during one of our defenses. Oh boy.

Time to sit out again. Our teammates had a tough time in match #4 against an Ottawa area team (Zaluski) and we lost by 18 IMPs. Uh oh, now we are 10<sup>th</sup>, out of a playoff spot. Uh oh, Bob and Doug are tired so Keith and Paul need to play the last match. No more dozing off!

Our last match of the day was against the professional Miles team (Miles-Smith; Korbel-Wolpert; Huang-Sabourin). This includes Jeff Smith, Paul's former partner. As soon as I sat down (against Jeff and Danny Miles), I can tell that my mind is totally foggy. I gotta shake my head and get on with it – focus one bid and one card at a time. First hand, I am the Dummy – no problem. Paul played 3♣ expertly to make it. On the 2nd hand, the defense was simple for down one. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> hand, I couldn't navigate a play problem:

Board 15; IMPs, N-S Vul. Contract: 4♠; Lead: 9♦

♠ K Q 10 8  
♥ 10 8 7  
♦ Q 7 2  
♣ A J 4

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

West	North	East	South
		1♦	1♠
Pass	3♦ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

<sup>1</sup> Limit Raise with 4+ spades

# MY CNTC DIARY ... Continued

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

We obviously should have been in 3NT, but that is not my concern as Declarer. I gotta make 10 tricks. Let's count tricks: 5S, 0H, 1D, 2C. So I need 2 tricks from the following 3 cards: ♥Q, ♦Q or ♣J. I am missing 15 HCPs, so LHO probably has exactly one of the key missing cards: ♦K or ♣Q, since RHO did not open 1NT. If LHO has one of those cards, probably the ♥AK are onside. I just need to manage the Dummy entries correctly to lead hearts towards my hand twice to score the ♥Q.

Trick 1: try the ♦Q, if it holds, then the hand is simple, lead Hearts from Dummy right away. If the ♦Q is covered with the King, then I draw a trump or two and take the Club finesse, discard a Diamond and then lead Hearts from Dummy. This play plan was not a success.

To make the story brief, the ♦Q was covered by the King in opener's hand AND trumps were 4-0, so the club finesse - Diamond discard plan ran into a ruff. My foggy brain forgot about the heart position (AK with South, the Opener) and I went down 3 - lose 11 IMPs. David Sabourin at the other table did NOT play ♦Q at trick one. He was then in a position to draw trumps BEFORE implementing the Club finesse - Diamond discard plan. The full hand:

♠	K Q 10 8	♠	J 5 4 3
♥	10 8 7	♥	A K 4 2
♦	Q 7 2	♦	K 10 9 5
♣	A J 4	♣	8
♠	--	♠	A 9 7 6 2
♥	J 9 5	♥	Q 6 3
♦	J 9 4	♦	A 6 3
♣	Q 10 9 7 6 3 2	♣	K 5

On the next hand Jeff and Danny defended 3NT perfectly against Paul - lose 13 more IMPs. A few hands later we underbid in a part score battle - losing 7 more IMPs. We recovered a few IMP's when I held: ♠A10942 ♥976 ♦8 ♣KQ63. The bidding proceeded (1♠)-Dbl-(2♠) to me. I reasoned that 5♣ could be "our" spot, so I ventured 3♣. Paul indeed raised to 5♣ with a good hand: ♠- ♥KQ32 ♦KQ962 ♣AJ84. The 5♣ contract was cold and unbid at the other table.

We lost by 7 IMPs. Our team dropped to 11<sup>th</sup> place, about half a match from 8<sup>th</sup> and the final qualifying spot. I dragged my body immediately off to bed. How can I be so sick at a time like this? How can I let my teammates down? Is this 2010 all over again?

## ROUNDROBIN: DAY TWO

### Slam Dunk

I took cold medicine at 5:00 am to avoid a foggy head as Paul and I were scheduled to play the first match against the mostly Ontario Litvack team, yet another former teammate and former partner. I was surprisingly clear headed and ready for action.

Paul and I played N-S against Roy Dalton and Vince Oddy, players who are always pleasant. The slams started quickly on board 2. A 6♠ slam for EW was quite good with ♠AK9xxx opposite ♠10xx and a place to park one diamond loser and maybe a second loser if Hearts ruffed out. However, I had ♠QJxx behind the AK for two sure tricks, so even 5♠ was in jeopardy on a diamond lead. Lose 11 IMPs as Bob and Doug were the only pair in slam.

On the very next board (below), 7♦ was a great but failing contract, with trumps 4-0 offside.

# MY CNTC DIARY ... Continued

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

KEITH

♠ Q 5 2

♥ Q 6 5 4

♦ ---

♣ Q 9 7 5 4 3

♠ K 10 9 6 4 3

♥ J 8

♦ K 8 7 3

♣ K

♠ A 8

♥ A 10 7 2

♦ A Q 10 7 2

♣ A 6

PAUL

♠ J 7

♥ K 9 3

♦ J 9 5 4

♣ J 10 8 2

♠ A K 7 5

♥ Q 8 5 2

♦ A 5 4

♣ Q 3

♠ 8 6 4 3 2

♥ A 10 9 7

♦ 9

♣ J 6 4

♠ Q J

♥ K J 6 4

♦ 10 8 2

♣ 9 7 5 2

♠ 10 9

♥ 3

♦ K Q J 7 6 3

♣ A K 10 8

West	North	East	South
	1NT <sup>1</sup>	Pass	2♦ <sup>2</sup>
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠ <sup>3</sup>	Pass	4♣ <sup>4</sup>
Pass	5♦ <sup>5</sup>	Pass	6♦ <sup>6</sup>
All Pass			

<sup>1</sup> 14-16

<sup>2</sup> Game Forcing Stayman

<sup>3</sup> ♠K or ♠A, denying both the ♥AK

<sup>4</sup> Cue bid

<sup>5</sup> Minimum-ish

<sup>6</sup> Conclusion

Paul's 6♦ was as well judged, as 3♠ and then 5♦ suggested three card support but little heart wastage. Paul played carefully for 12 tricks for a slam swing for the good guys. The whole team played well in this match despite not in great slam luck. We won by 20 IMPs and moved back into playoff contention.

No time to high five as the next match started in less than 5 minutes. Paul and I sat out against French Canadian team Chatagnier. Herve Chatagnier and René Pelletier played double

6♠ is also a good and likely contract after West opens 2♠. Against a 6♠ slam, a heart lead or switch will prevent declarer from discarding a *diamond* on the ♣A (instead of a heart) and only then ruffing out diamonds to establish the long card for a the heart discard. The heart switch is necessary after North ruffs a diamond honour with the ♠Q to knock out the later entry back to the established long diamond. Roy & Vince stopped in 4♠, but teammates bid 6♠, for 13 more IMPs away.

We gained 24 IMPs with good team decisions on game and part score hands. Then another E-W slam, which required the ♦Q to drop missing four cards (it did), duly bid by both E-W pairs. No swing. The final hand of the match featured a slam for Paul and I – finally a slam for us!



LEFT: Teammates Doug Fisher and Bob Todd. Photo: Jonathan Steinberg

# MY CNTC DIARY ... Continued

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

dummy against us, including engineering a slam swing by taking a Club finesse (winning) to discard a diamond loser instead of taking the trump finesse (losing) to make 6♥ We lost the match by 19 IMPs and sunk back into 11<sup>th</sup> place. On the bright side, I had taken some non-drowsy cold meds and I was feeling pretty good and still clear headed.

Match #8 was against Michael Yuen's mostly B.C. team. The match was a dream for us:

- Paul guessed well to make 4♥
- We stayed out of slam missing ♥AK
- Our transfer 2♦ opening showing 6-7 hearts & 10-14 HCP enabled us to play 4♥ from the short side, where it was easy to make.
- Our opponents went down in two games that they should have been made.

Team Todd won by 60 IMPs and leapt into 6<sup>th</sup> place and a playoff spot. We were all pumped, but I needed to sit out as I was sick.

Next up was Gartaganis (Nick & Judy Gartaganis; Campbell-Kuzkin), our teammates for many years, a very tough team. Brad & Neil and Bob & Doug played very well once again for an 11 IMP victory. We moved into 5<sup>th</sup> place.

Our last match of the day was against the cross Canadian team Angus, who had recently done well in the Spring Nationals. The major swing in the match was once again a slam swing when Paul and I barely sniffed at slam, but the Opponents at the other table bid the marginal slam. They found a tempest against them (trumps 4-0, clubs 5-1 with the King offside) for down 2. Late in the match, I misdefended 3NT, allowing Declarer (who read the hand perfectly) to endplay Paul. Grrr – I was mad at myself but Paul calmed me down by acting as if nothing had happened. It was a push board – **thanks team.**

Paul's demeanour helped me forget about my blunder and make a good decision on the next hand. I held:

♠5 4 ♥7 5 2 ♦A J 5 ♣Q J 9 7 2.

Paul opened a non-vul 1NT (14-16). Should I raise or not? I decided to pass. Paul had a maximum with ♣A 10 4 and had to play carefully to make 7 tricks. We won 4 IMPs.

We won the match by 20 IMPs and team Todd climbed in the standings to 4<sup>th</sup> place and about half a match away from 9<sup>th</sup> place, the first place outside of the playoff pool. Quite a difference a day makes. I made only one bonehead play (maybe selective memory). It was time for bed and some cold meds.

## ROUND ROBIN: DAY THREE

### Stability and Slams

I once again took cold medicine at 5:00 am to avoid a foggy head as Paul and I were scheduled to play the first match (match #11) against the Manitoba team captained by Raymond Hornby. I was very congested plus sneezing and coughing (probably not everyone's favourite opponent) but I felt surprisingly good and I was still clear headed. Or so I thought.

Paul and I played well in this match. Paul held this hand: ♠8 3 2 ♥10 7 3 ♦A Q 10 ♣K 8 6 3. I opened 1♦, RHO overcalled 1♥ and Paul correctly chose to bid 2♦ to support the known 4+ suit. I passed 2♦ with: ♠A K 6 5, ♥K 8 6 5, ♦K J 9 2, ♣Q. So we stayed safely at the two level with our 25 HCPs. If I had longer diamonds or better spot cards, I would have made a game try. I made 9 tricks and we won 5 IMPs.



# MY CNTC DIARY ... Continued

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

How do you defend with this hand:

♠A 10 9 4, ♥J 8 4 3, ♦10 5, ♣8 7 4? The auction to 5♣ with me on lead was (Paul and I passed throughout):

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♣	Pass	4♣	Pass
5♣	All Pass		

I led the ♠A which held the trick: ♠A, 2, 3 (attitude from Paul), K. Dummy was:

♠	J 5 2	♠	A 10 9 4
♥	10	♥	J 8 4 3
♦	A J 8 7 6 4 2	♦	10 5
♣	10 9	♣	8 7 4

Now what? It seemed pretty obvious to shift to trumps, which beat the hand. Our teammates played in 3♣ for +130.

How would you bid these hands, starting with West's first bid after a 1♥ overcall of partner's 1♦ opening?

West	East
♠ 10 8 7 3	♠ A Q
♥ A 10 6 4	♥ K
♦ -	♦ K 10 8 5 4
♣ A K 8 5 3	♣ Q J 6 4 2

Our Opponents only got to 5♣. 13 tricks were possible on any lead (♠K onside). 6♣ was bid by Bob & Doug.

We won the match by 33 IMPs and cemented our hold on 4<sup>th</sup> place.

Our next match (match #12) was against L'Ecuyer (L'Ecuyer-Marcinski; Lindop-Baxter; Pollack-Fergani), a mostly Montreal team full of previous Canadian Champions. That team had been in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> for most of the event. The hands were full of action and the swings numerous, including, of course, slam swings with an unusual slam swing and two more normal ones.

Vulnerable against not Zygmunt Marcinki as South held: ♠4 ♥A 10 ♦K J 8 6 3 ♣Q J 8 7 5

The bidding was:

West	North	East	South
Keith	Nick	Paul	Zyg
	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♠	4NT	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

2♥ by Paul showed 6+ spades and 10-14 HCPs. 4NT (by Nick was takeout. Zygmunt reasonably bid 5NT to pick a minor suit slam. The resulting 6♣ was off 2 Aces. Neil & Brad defended 5♠ down 1, so we gained a few IMPs.

A few hands later, Zygmunt extracted some revenge. Paul passed a Negative Double of a 2♣ overcall with: ♠A J 7 4, ♥Q9, ♦K J, ♣A K 8 6 5 (as who would not). Zygmunt played skillfully aided by my low Spade lead and his finesse of the ♣7(!) to make an overtrick for +280 and a loss of 11 IMPs.

The very next hand Nick L'Ecuyer held 30 HCP balanced (that's not a typo folks) and through a mix-up arrived in 7NT, duly doubled by Paul with an Ace on lead. The end result was down 2 for +500 and a big pickup. Two hands later, I had an interesting play problem (hands rotated for convenience).

# MY CNTC DIARY ... Continued

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

♠ K 7 5 4  
♥ K 5 4  
♦ K J 10 5  
♣ J 4

♠ 10 6  
♥ J 10 2  
♦ A Q 5  
♣ A Q 10 7 6

West	North	East	South
Nick	Paul	Zyg	Keith
	1♦	Dbl	Rdbl
Pass	Pass	1♥	3NT <sup>1</sup>
All Pass			

<sup>1</sup>How else could I get to declare 3NT??  
West led the A♥.

After the surprise ♥Ace lead, I had only 6 certain tricks and all seemed to depend on the Club finesse. Nick (West) seemed to be looking to find partner with the heart lead and Zygmunt discouraged to ask for a spade shift through dummy's King. At trick two, Nick shifted to the dreaded ♠Q. I thought: Wait a minute, what's Nick doing with all those HCPs? Does Zygmunt really have the ♥Q and discourage a heart continuation – that seemed unlikely. For sure, East has the ♠A, so I cannot put up the ♠K, or else I lose four spades and one Heart. At trick 3, Nick played the ♠8, so I ducked again as Zygmunt won the ♠J. I was pondering about the location of the ♥Q, when Zygmunt led the ♥8. I put up my Jack which was covered by the Queen. I now had 9 tricks with the aid of the club finesse, and in fact I claimed 10 tricks by squeezing East in the black suits. The full deal:

♠ K 7 5 4  
♥ K 5 4  
♦ K J 10 5  
♣ J 4

♠ Q 8 2  
♥ A Q 3  
♦ 8 7 6 4 3  
♣ 8 3

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

♠ 10 6  
♥ J 10 2  
♦ A Q 5  
♣ A Q 10 7 6

At the other table 3NT was also played by the South hand. West, Brad also led a heart, but he led the ♥Q. Declarer won the ♥K in dummy (Neil giving count). Now declarer played four rounds of clubs putting East in with the King (Neil showed no interest in hearts via Reverse Smith). Declarer pitched two hearts from dummy. Neil now returned the ♥8 and dummy was squeezed! Since he couldn't afford three spade losers he decided he might as well pitch a spade instead of a winning diamond. Brad easily found the ♠Q shift for a well-deserved +200. Very good efforts by both pairs gave our team 13 IMPs.

We handed those IMPs right back by missing a reasonable 6♠:

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

Keith  
♠ A Q J 10 4  
♥ K Q 6 2  
♦ 10  
♣ A K 10

The bidding (Hands rotated):

West	North	East	South
Nick	Paul	Zyg	Keith
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	2♦	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♦ <sup>1</sup>
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

<sup>1</sup>Splinter.

# MY CNTC DIARY

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON



CBF Coordinator Ina Demme (Photo: Jonathan Steinberg)

2♣ was Drury. The ♥A was onside as expected, although the hand has a play even if it's offside. We won the match by 7 IMPs to remain in 4<sup>th</sup> place. Paul and I now had a long break as there was a bye followed by match #14 against the mostly Ontario Hanna team (Hanna-Altay; Mittelman-Amoils; Frukacz-Klimowicz) who were close to team Todd in the standings. Neil & Brad plus Bob & Doug were scheduled to play. We won a low scoring match by 2 IMPs, and remained in 4<sup>th</sup>.

Match #15, the last match of the day, was against the Quebec team Combey, who I did not know. Incredibly, there were another 4(!) possible slam swings in this match. Two hands were a push with a slam missed at both tables and a well-judged sacrifice against a slam. The other two hands swung in our favour. Our Opponents bid a no play slam and a well-judged hand by team Todd. Next:

Paul	Keith
♠ A Q 10 8 7	♠ K 3
♥ A K 10	♥ Q J 9 8 7 6 4
♦ A 7 5	♦ K 2
♣ J 7	♣ Q 2

Paul and I judged to stay in game with these cards. Our auction:

Paul	Keith
	2♦ <sup>1</sup>
2NT	3♥ <sup>2</sup>
3♠ <sup>3</sup>	4♥ <sup>4</sup>
Pass <sup>5</sup>	

<sup>1</sup>6+ hearts, 10-14

<sup>2</sup>Minimum

<sup>3</sup>Cue bid

<sup>4</sup>Not interested

<sup>5</sup>Reluctantly

After a 2♥-6♥ auction, Neil led a club from ♣K x x, so we won 13 IMPs. We won the match by 27 IMPs and remained 4<sup>th</sup>, a full match ahead of 9<sup>th</sup>. It was time for bed and cold meds.

## ROUNDROBIN: DAY FOUR

### Jockeying for Position

I continued to feel better and the bye round on Day Three really helped my fatigue and mental energy. Since I had not played in the CNTC since 2010, I had forgotten that the CNTC is a great experience for players at all levels. It really is the highlight of the bridge year for many Canadian players.

There were the final 4 round robin matches today, but only 3 for us as a Quebec team withdrew due to illness. I did not sleep well, so Paul and I did not play the first match against Chevalier, another Quebec team. Neil & Brad and Bob & Doug continued to play very well and we won by 18 IMPs.

The next round was the bye against the withdrawn team and it was worth 12 Victory Points. So we already had 210 VP's, which was already probably enough to qualify. Better yet, 9<sup>th</sup> place was now more than a full match behind. It would be virtually impossible for that team to pass us. Our goal now was to climb the standings in order to have a choice about our quarterfinal opponents, as the 1<sup>st</sup> place team chooses their quarterfinal

# MY CNTC DIARY ... Continued

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

opponents first from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> place teams, followed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> place team to choose and then the 3<sup>rd</sup> place team. Hence the 4<sup>th</sup> place team has no options and is always stuck with the theoretical strongest opponents.

Match #18 was against Jotcham, a mostly Ontario team. Paul and I played against Bob Kuz and Barry Senensky, who played virtually double dummy. Bob held: ♠- ♥A98 ♦AT97643 ♣AKQ. Barry opened a weak 2♠. Bob asked for shortness and was prepared to pass the likely 3♦ response. But Barry bid 3♥, so Bob instead bid 6♦! That required trumps being 2-2. Bob & Doug were in 6♣, a slightly better contract, which required clubs to split 3-2 and something favourable in diamonds (or possibly no Heart lead or switch). 6♣ also made, so that was a push.

♠ A 6 3 2	♠ Q J 10
♥ K 8 3	♥ J 9 5
♦ 8 7	♦ A J 5 4
♣ A 7 3 2	♣ K Q J

On this hand Bob Kuz found the only play to make 3NT. South led the ♥Q and the King held the trick. After a club to the East hand, the spade finesse lost to North (me) and a low diamond came back. Bob K won the ♦A. However when both Clubs and Spades were blocked and neither suit was 3-3, Bob K could not cash his 9 tricks (to the reader: try it). So Bob K eventually played a Diamond towards the Jack which held! Lose 12 IMPs when Bob & Doug did not bid the 24 HCP game.

What would YOU bid, vul. vs not, with:

♠ 9 7 6 4 3
♥ -
♦ 9
♣ A 8 7 6 5 4 2

It goes (4♥) – Pass – (Pass) to you?

If you venture 4♠, you are down a lot. If you pass, you collect +50. If you bid 5♣, partner raises to 6♣ which is cold. Paul reasonably passed and we lost 2 IMPs. We lost the match by 27 IMPs (only 3 VP's). We were rocked, but still in 4<sup>th</sup> but the gap between us and the 9<sup>th</sup> place team had shrunk to a half match.

The last match was against the mostly East Coast Hicks team. As long as we scored a few VPs, by losing by less than 20 IMPs, we would qualify. Paul and I started well by playing 2♦ for +90 after (1♣)-1NT by Keith-(P)-2♦ by Paul that many people play as a transfer. We believe that responder should be declarer to force opener to lead.

I faced two bidding decisions and went 0 for 2. First, I held, vul. vs not:

♠ Q 10 9 8 2
♥ J
♦ 10 8 4 3 2
♣ Q 4

The bidding was (hands rotated):

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	1♠	Pass
3♣	Dbl	4♣	?

I considered for a while and then passed. LHO bid 5♣ (down 1) and that was that. However, we could make 5♦ as Paul was 3=6=4=0 with the appropriate strength. I should have bid 4♦ over 4♣. Luckily, the result was a push.

# MY CNTC DIARY ... Continued

by Keith Balcombe, Whitby ON

On the second decision I held again vul. vs not:

♠ 8 5 3  
♥ 10 6 4 2  
♦ J 9 6 2  
♣ K 6

The bidding was (hands rotated):

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	?

After long thought about whether to bid 2♠, I passed, and watched Paul make 11 tricks. Partner had 5=2=2=4 shape with 21 HCPs and the hands fit perfectly. Lose 10 IMPs.

We discussed these hands after the match and decided that I should bid on both hands. The moral of this story is that the little hand needs to strain to tell the big hand that there is an 8 or 9 card fit.

Overall, there were good team decisions on many hands and we won by 42 IMPs. We had hoped to sneak into 3<sup>rd</sup> place, but 4<sup>th</sup> was our place in this round robin for the last 2 or 3 days. Both the 2<sup>nd</sup> place team and the 3<sup>rd</sup> place team won handily, so our big win fell just short of catching both teams.

The round robin winners, Miles, got to choose their opponents, followed by L'Ecuyer (second) and Gartaganis (third). That left us to play the aforementioned Hanna team in the day long quarterfinal.

...TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

## TEST YOUR DECEPTIVE PLAY

Contract: 5♣  
Lead: ♠A

♠ Q 7 6  
♥ Q J 4  
♦ 7 6 5 4 2  
♣ Q 8

♠ 9  
♥ 6 2  
♦ A Q  
♣ A K J 10 7 6 5 3

East signals encouragement, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> spade goes to the Q, K and you ruff. Plan the play.

Answer on page 46





# FATE and the BRIDGE GODS

The Canadian Bridge Championships are finished for another year. For the winners, congratulations. For others, well there is always next year. Quite often the margin of victory can be small. One hand, even one play. The 'Bridge Gods' can be cruel. To help alleviate some of the hurt from the 'what could have been', here is a hand I held at a past regional, which indicates I know your pain. It is a true story, where ... well enough talk – let's look at the hand that extracted so much energy and for what?

Playing a Regional Knockouts you pick up an unremarkable hand:  
♠ 9 5 ♥ A K ♦ Q J 10 8 7 ♣ K J 10 8.  
Neither vulnerable, the bidding starts pass 1♥ 1♠ to you. This is the one and only easy call for you on this deal. After your 2♦ bid, LHO tries out 3♣, and it goes 3♦ by pard, pass to you.

Now what?

Well, you are in a game forcing auction. 3♥ seems like the best choice. If North can bid 3♠, showing a stopper, 3NT is indicated. Alternatively, 4♥ seems like it would be a good contract, which you are suggesting. However West disrupts your best laid plans and leaps to 4♠. Partner now tries 5♦, and RHO now competes with 5♠. Whew, a lot of bidding. Let's take a look at the full auction so far:

by Neil Kimelman

THE EXPERT  
*Spot*

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	1♠	2♦
3♣	3♦	Pass	3♥
4♠	5♦	5♠	?

Well we are in a forcing pass auction; that's the good news. The bad news is that your clubs are poorly placed for offense or defence. The only redeeming quality in the hand is the ♥AK doubleton, good whether defending or declaring. This didn't help me a lot. After some squirming around, I passed the decision back to partner – he'll know what to do. Right? Well he decides to bid 6♦ and that goes around to West who smoothly calls 6♠. Pass, pass to you. Haven't you seen this movie already? West obviously has a lot of black cards, probably eleven. If he has a void they may easily take 12 tricks. Taking a deep breath, questioning my own judgement, I bid 7♦! West passes, finally! So we'll will go down a few, 500 or so against 980. This should be okay after all...7♠ says East!! Huh! Well I automatically double, after all I know what to lead, ♥A, right?

Before you decide *your* choice I will put a little more pressure on you; a lead from two suits beats the contract a lead from the other ones and declarer makes. Your choice???

While you are sweating, it occurs to you that this looked like such a normal hand.... Your only consolation is that the South on the opposing team will be subject to the same agony. Not knowing any better I led the ♥A like any other normal person. The full deal:

	♠	void		
	♥	Q J 9 8 7		
	♦	A K 9 6 5		
	♣	9 6 3		
♠	10 8 7 6 4 3		♠	A K Q J 2
♥	void		♥	10 6 5 4 3 2
♦	3 2		♦	4
♣	A Q 7 5 2		♣	4
	♠	9 5		
	♥	A K		
	♦	Q J 10 8 7		
	♣	K J 10 8		

A red suit lead beats the contract, while a black suit allows declarer to come home with the grand. A diamond lead, as it happens, cashes a trick. A heart lead endplays dummy. The only play is a trump, followed by a club finesse, and a club pitching a diamond. Declarer cannot ruff dummy's losers without setting up the ♠9. On a trump lead the play will go:

Trick 1	East wins ♠A
Trick 2	Club finesse
Trick 3	A♣, pitch a diamond
Trick 4	♦ ruff low
Trick 5	♥ ruff
Trick 6	♦ ruff
Trick 7	♥ ruff
Trick 8	♣ ruff
Trick 9	♥ ruff
Trick 10	♣ ruff
Trick 11	♥ ruff
Trick 12	Draw South's last trump with the 10♠
Trick 13	Cash the long club

A club lead, although an unlikely choice, gives declarer an entry for the club finesse, to play similarly as above. So you proudly return to compare results of this tight match, but confident with your +100 on this board will be the difference. You were right:

The bidding at the other table went (honest to goodness):

West	North	East	South
P	P	1♥	2♦
P	4♦	All Pass	

West led the ♣A, club ruff, heart ruff, claim by declarer for +130. You lose this board and the match by the same margin, 1 IMP. Better luck next time.

# CANADIAN BRIDGE HUMOUR

## *Egads in Evinrude Part 3*

By Christopher Rollins



### BRIDGE DAY 9/TRIP DAY 68

On round 3 of the event, I hold:

♠ Q J ♥ K 10 9 x ♦ x x ♣ A Q 10 x x in 4th chair.

LHO open 1♣ and pard overcalls 1♦. Pass to me. Our card says that 1♥ would not be forcing. Whatever. 2NT seems like the value bid. Partner thinks about this and eventually emerges with 3NT. The lead is the 5♥. Dummy hits with:

♠ 10 8  
♥ J 7 3  
♦ K Q 10 8 5  
♣ K 7 4

♠ Q J  
♥ K 10 9 x  
♦ x x  
♣ A Q 10 x x

Wow. Raise to game on a 9-count! "Thanks partner, nice hand." I score the ♥6 in my hand. I make the only reasonable play. Diamond to the king, SPADE to the queen. LHO is running out of suits to try. She settles on a club. I win the 10 and play another diamond. As far as she's concerned, partner has nothing in hearts, nothing in clubs, and I led spades myself. Hmmm. She tries another club, and I'm already seeing my great declarer play in The Globe and Mail column by Paul Thurston. I win the ♣K, and cash the ♦Q, but they don't break.

Not dead yet, I run all clubs but one, leaving:

♠ 10  
♥ J 7  
♦ 10  
♣ -  
  
♠ J  
♥ K 10  
♦ -  
♣ 2

On the last club, LHO pitches the ♠9 and I figure her for the full 18 count. But when I lead the ♠J, she pitches a heart. RHO cashes three winners. Down one.

Partner's post-mortem: "Maybe 3NT was a bit much." :-)

One more hand from this day: I picked up ♠ A 9 ♥ Q x ♦ 9 8 x ♣ A K Q J x x and open 1NT. Partner bids 2♣, and I try 2♦. That's where it all ends. Lovely.

The lead is the ♠8.

Dummy  
♠ J 6 3 2  
♥ J 10 3 2  
♦ K Q 7 5  
♣ 8

Me  
♠ A 9  
♥ Q 4  
♦ 9 8 3  
♣ A K Q J 3 2



I play low and they play the queen and I win. With the ♠10 on my left, I figure I'm in good shape. I return the 9 of spades and LHO . . . the 10??? Ummmm... Jack??????? And East dispatches my weak play with the king. They return the ♠4. Middle-up-down? Do I even care what's on their card? I pitch a heart. LHO ruffs with the deuce! Right you say, low from doubletons. Anyways, they cash the ♥A felling my queen and shift to clubs. I cash two clubs, pitching my last spade and try a diamond to the king. It loses. They try the ♥K, which I ruff. When trumps split, I am making two of a minor. It was a strange way to get an average board - the rest of the field were in 2♣ making. :-) Actually, I lied. One other pair was in 1NT making FOUR. I wonder what their auction was?

## ON THE ROAD

### BRIDGE DAY 17/TRIP DAY 86

Just about ready to go home. The novel is a write off, but I did learn a lot about human nature, and bridge in rural Ontario.

I decided to end my bridge journey in Mesner, about 50 minutes North of Evinrude. As advertised the game is held in the community room next door to the McDonalds. Mesner seems to have it all.

I have arranged to play with Leslie, arranged through the local director. Much like a traditional Indian marriage, they had to sell me on Leslie's virtues sight unseen - she is an intermediate with over 500 masterpoints. And she plays tournaments. And teaches. Great, I say. I wonder what sort of sell job they had to do on her end. :-)

She phoned me in advance of the game and sounded excited to play. She said she didn't play any 2/1, and I said that Standard was fine. She said she probably didn't play all the conventions that I play, but she would "try". I said as long as

we were straight on our defensive signals, we would be fine. OK, but she never knows what to play with doubleton-ten when partner leads the king. "If I play the 10, I worry partner will play me for an honor, but if I play the 2, then partner won't give me a ruff." I tell her to always play the 10, but cough when she has a doubleton. Our first agreement.

We agree to meet a bit before game time to go over a card. She seems eager to impress, so much so that *she* is wanting to play *my* card. I say "no, I'll play your card". A few rounds of this go back and forth, and we are no closer to any resolution.

We start with the majors. 5-card majors in Standard. Check. I ask what's 1♥-3♥? She says she likes to play it as a limit raise. Check. "But you don't need 4, right?" Ummm, I'd prefer 4. "Oh, I always do it with 3." OK, I say, but I remind that in Standard, the usual approach with 3 is to bid your other suit first, . . . "What if I don't have another suit?" If you only have 3-card support, you have to have another suit. "Oh." So you bid your other suit, and then bid 3♥. "What if I don't have 10 points?" Then you don't have a *limit* raise . . . ? "OK. Right. Bid a new suit and then bid 3."

The rest of the discussion goes much more smoothly. I decide to ask a bunch of Yes / No, Do you play X-type questions, to which she usually answers, "Tell me how that goes again?" This is the equivalent of No. We have few conventions on the card, which is a relief - I am playing within her comfort zone rather than the other way around.

The 6th round of the event, I pick up: Q10xxx K9x x AJxx. No one vul. Leslie passes and RHO opens 2♥. Well? Would you or wouldn't you?

Possessed temporarily by the spirit of Donald Parnosse, the Father of Bridge in this area, I venture 2♠. The opposition are terrible, and we are not vul,

and partner is a passed hand, the best conditions for taking some liberties. It goes a confident 4♥ by LHO, and a fast 4♠ by Leslie. This is passed back around to LHO who grumbles that we stole it from them. She passes (remember that nobody doubles in this part of the country). The opening lead is the ♥A, and partner tables a monster fit!

♠ K 9 8 7  
♥ 7  
♦ 7 5 3 2  
♣ K Q 9 8

♠ Q 10 5 3 2  
♥ K 9 6  
♦ 4  
♣ A J 7 3

RHO plays his lowest (remember that nobody signals here). LHO thinks about it and shifts to the ♦Q (RHO, plays the ♦9). LHO then plays ♦A, RHO playing the jack. I ruff. If I pick up trumps I get a top. If I don't, I'll be -50 for 5 matchpoints out of 6. The pressure is on . . . - will come back to this later.

The very next board I fish out ♠ KJxx ♥ xx ♦ J9876 ♣ Jx. Both vul, LHO opens 1♣, pard bids 1♦. RHO bids 2♣. I want to kill their majors, but after that last hand I'm worried that partner would take 3♦ as invitational. I bid only 2♦. LHO bids 3♣. Pard bids 3♦. Isn't it great to own the master suit? RHO bid FOUR CLUBS, and because this is so much fun, I want to bid 4♦. But I think twice, and give it up. Partner leads the ace of hearts:

♠ A Q 6  
♥ J 8 2  
♦ 5 3  
♣ Q 6 4 3 2

♠ K J 7 4  
♥ 10 5  
♦ J 9 8 7 6  
♣ J 5

Strong lead. I play the 10. Partner continues with the king. Declarer thinks and THINKS and follows with the queen. (They confessed after the hand that they had hoped to deflect the defence from playing a 3rd round. Some sharp play!) I ruff the third round and return a diamond. Declarer is in with the ace. Sadness. I hoped that partner would win this trick and lead the 4th heart to destroy declarer's pitch. Then maybe I would score two spades. But now it looks like declarer will draw trumps, pitch a spade on their 4th heart, and take a losing spade hook for -130.

But it doesn't go that way. Declarer cashes two top clubs (partner follows) and leads a spade to the queen and king. I get out a diamond which partner WINS. She returns a spade and when the smoke clears, we are +300.

♠ A Q 6  
♥ J 8 2  
♦ 5 3  
♣ Q 6 4 3 2

♠ 10 3  
♥ A K 6 4 3  
♦ K Q 10 2  
♣ 8 7

♠ K J 7 4  
♥ 10 5  
♦ J 9 8 7 6  
♣ J 5

♠ 9 8 5 2  
♥ Q 9 7  
♦ A 4  
♣ A K 10 9

Partner's post mortem: «Did you see what happened? My 5-card diamond suit turned into a 5-card heart suit . . . RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES.»

My post-mortem: Partner is hilarious. And she wears glasses. Declarer was probably not up to the task, but they could have held it to 2 down. After they clear trumps, they can exit in diamonds (a loser no matter what happens), and we are end-played out of one of our spade tricks.

Round 6, we play an interesting couple of boards. The first one I pick up:

♠K J ♥K x x x x ♦void ♣ K Q 10 8 x x.

First seat favourable, I open 1♥. LHO bids 1♠. Pard bids 2♣. RHO bids 2♦. So, the billion dollar question: What to bid? (I'll come back to this one.)

The other hand was a play problem. I held: Axxxx AQx AKJ 10x. LHO opens 2H. When it gets around to me, I bid 2NT. Pard bids 3C, and I introduce my 5-card suit. She retreats to 3NT. The opening lead was ♣3:

♠ J 10  
♥ 10 7  
♦ Q 9 5 2  
♣ A 9 5 4 2

♠ A 6 5 4 3  
♥ A Q 5  
♦ A K J  
♣ 10 6

Good on them for avoiding a heart lead! I play low from dummy and RHO wins the king. They ponder this for a bit and push a heart through. LHO wins the jack and ponders just as hard. A heart comes back, which is a welcome sight.

I have 1 spade, 2 hearts, 4 diamonds and 1 club. (Maybe I should have cashed out for down 1?) I need one more trick from either clubs or spades. But which suit rated to split 3-3? They led a low club and third hand won the king. And then the hesitation from both sides. Why no club continuation? On the other hand, it looks technically horrible to go after spades. If RHO is awake to the possibility, they can unblock their honor to provide a second entry to the hearts. Unless . . . ? Unless . . . ! Unless I lead twice towards the J10! Then RHO has no chance if the suit is 3-3.

I lead a low spade and LHO jumps in with the queen and clears hearts. I shrug and lead another low

spade. LHO wins the KING and I am down 3 for a lovely score. For THEM.

♠ J 10  
♥ 10 7  
♦ Q 9 5 2  
♣ A 9 5 4 2

♠ K Q  
♥ K J 8 6 3 2  
♦ 7 3  
♣ J 8 3

♠ 9 8 7 2  
♥ 9 4  
♦ 10 8 6 4  
♣ K Q 7

♠ A 6 5 4 3  
♥ A Q 5  
♦ A K J  
♣ 10 6

(The astute reader will note that clubs were 3-3.) OK - back to the first hand:

♠ K 9 8 7  
♥ 7  
♦ 7 5 3 2  
♣ K Q 9 8

♠ Q 10 5 3 2  
♥ K 9 6  
♦ 4  
♣ A J 7 3

After a 2♥ opening by RHO and a raise to 4♥ by LHO, I'm in 4♠. LHO leads the ♥A, then the ♦Q, finally the ♦A, felling RHO's jack. If I find the trumps, then I'm 1 matchpoint richer!

I played LHO for ♦ AKQxx(x). So, I played RHO for the ♠A to make up their weak two. I crossed to dummy and led a spade to my queen. Losing. To the stiff ace. -50. LHO's actual diamond holding: AQ10xx!!!

And now back to the 2-5-0-6 hand. I held ♠ KJ ♥ Kxxxx ♦- ♣ KQ108xx and after opening 1♥, LHO bid spades, pard bid clubs and RHO bid diamonds. What to bid?

I bid 3NT! (I mean . . . Duh. What else could I do?) I felt that 5♣ was a transfer to 5♦, so I thought my best hope to buy the hand was to play undoubled in 3NT, down a bunch. (And by a «bunch», I mean -450. You'll see when you see the layout.)

But, LHO unflinchingly continued with 4♠. Partner came to life with 5♥ now, Pass by RHO. Oh my. I can only pass, and LHO continues with 5♠. Pass-Pass-?

I «reasoned» that partner had yet another 3-card limit raise in hearts. (She did, actually.) I didn't want to play in hearts, and there was some danger that if I bid 6♣, she would correct to 6♥ if we got doubled. But I decided to chance it anyways. SIX CLUBS.

ALL . . . ? . . . Pass?

The play was brisk. RHO led ace of hearts and LHO showed out. She gave her partner a ruff and they cashed the ace of spades (out of position) for 2 down and a top for us. The layout:

♠ K J	
♥ K 7 6 4 3	
♦ -	
♣ K Q 10 8 5 2	
♠ 3	♠ A Q 10 8 7 5 4 2
♥ A J 9 5 2	♥ -
♦ K J 10 8 7 6 2	♦ A 5 4 3
♣ -	♣ 7
♠ 9 6	
♥ Q 10 8	
♦ Q 9	
♣ A J 9 6 4 3	

The post-mortem: Most pairs overcalled 4♠ and played it there, or took the push to 5♠ if North continued. +680 E/W was common, although one made only +650, and someone played in diamonds.

Our guy made a much more thoughtful overcall of 1♠ and was rewarded when partner offered up 2♦. Probably his most practical call was 6♦, but he was blinded by his spade suit.

The play would have been much more interesting had it gone spade-spade-exit. Now declarer can eliminate diamonds and play low to the queen of hearts to hold it to two down.

## EPILOGUE

Time to head home and resume my old life. Although I couldn't write THE great novel, I got to play bridge, the best game, with the most interesting people, wherever you go. Maybe I should write the next, greatest BRIDGE novel. Hmm ...



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# WHAT WENT WRONG?

by Paul Thurston

Here's an innocent looking deal that gave several pairs headaches during Kingston's Winter Sectional



DLR: North VUL: E/W

NORTH

♠ A K 9 6 2

♥ A K 8

♦ Q 6 4

♣ K 6

WEST

♠ 7 3

♥ Q 7 6 4

♦ K 10 9 8 5

♣ 10 8

EAST

♠ J 10 8 5

♥ 9

♦ A J 3

♣ J 9 5 4 3

SOUTH

♠ Q 4

♥ J 10 5 3 2

♦ 7 2

♣ A Q 7 2

West	North	East	South
-	1 ♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

OPENING LEAD: ♦10

Possession of 28 combined high-card points did South no good when West led the ♦10 (top of an interior sequence) and the defenders rattled off the first five tricks for down one.

## WHAT WENT WRONG?

Wild-eyed positivists might chalk the result up to mere bad luck and there is some (mild) justification for doing so. After all, switch the East and West hands and there would be no diamond lead versus 3NT and nine tricks will be easy. And diamonds

might have been 4-4 all along, or both the Ace and King might have been onside, etc, etc. - you've heard these post mortems before, right?

Still, there can be no disputing the fact that 4♥ is a superior game contract and, despite the mildly unfriendly lie, ten tricks would have rolled home with the loss of two diamonds and one heart. Searching for, finding and playing in eight-card major suit fits is considered the holy grail of modern bidding systems. Usually, with justification, the possession of a trump suit affords protection from the opponents' long suit so that contracts, especially games, are more readily makeable.

What Went Wrong here is that North's bulky rebid effectively preempted his side out of their eight-card heart fit: South might have suspected that 4♥ might be an okay contract but he had no comfortable way of finding out.

To be sure, South's collection isn't strong enough for a direct introduction of hearts in immediate response to the opening bid and that holds true whether Standard American or 2/1 is the approach of choice. And when North's system-mandated rebid to show his balanced-hand strength of 18-19 high-card points is 3NT, there was no bidding room left for safe exploration. What we need here is a SYSTEM FIX – get out your repair kits!

If you haven't done so already, consider introducing a rebid of 2NT in a sequence that starts 1♠ or 1♥ – 1NT-? as showing the 18-19 HCP balanced hand. This can apply irrespective of whether the 1NT response shows 6-9 HCP (as in

# WHAT WENT WRONG? ... Continued

classic Standard American) or is a one-round force with 5-12 HCP (as in 2/1).

For the Standard bidders, 1NT usually denies a fit for opener's major where the 2/1 responder might be concealing a 3-card fit in a hand not strong enough for a direct constructive (8-10 HCPs), or a 3-card limit raise hand type with 10-12 HCPs.

In general, the 2NT rebid is best treated as a virtual game force although a responder who has dredged up a response with a real dog (♠ Jx ♥ Qxxx ♦ Jxx ♣ Qxxx) might consider passing when things aren't going well (beware, they might get worse if you do pass and game can be made!).

What you gain from this approach is multi-faceted, but chief among the gains is the reclamation of the three-level for safe exploration of alternate strains. In that vein, let's revisit our problem hand and construct a new auction:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2NT <sup>1</sup>	3♥ <sup>2</sup>
4♥ <sup>3</sup>	Pass

1 18-19 HCPs, balanced.

2 I have 5♥, would you prefer to play in 3NT or 4♥?

3 I have a fit, let's play in hearts.

As for opener's balanced hands with a five card major and 15-17 HCP, these will need to be opened 1NT (if you aren't already doing so) to avoid colliding with potential rebid problems.

For those who play the 1NT response as forcing with the possibility of hidden support for the major, the best way forward after the 2NT rebid is to jump to game (as in Fast arrival) with a weak (6-7 HCP) raise and rebid three of the major with a 3-card limit raise to facilitate possible slam exploration.

## MORE SCIENCE

For the dedicated partnerships who want to get maximum use out of the bidding space made available by the strong 2NT rebid, you can consider adding transfer rebids to Responder's arsenal. Similar to:

Opener	Responder
2NT	3♦ <sup>1</sup>
3♥	3NT <sup>2</sup>

- 1 Transfer
- 2 Pick a game

The same structure can be applied to the 2NT rebid:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT <sup>1</sup>
2NT	3♦ <sup>2</sup>
3♥	3NT <sup>3</sup>

- 1 Forcing
- 2 Transfer
- 3 Pick a game

In both auctions, Responder shows 5+ hearts and is asking opener to choose between no-trump and hearts as the strain in which to play, with opener's number of hearts (2 or 3) being the determining factor.

In the context of adding Transfer Rebids by Responder to our familiar start:

Opener	Responder
1♠	1NT
2NT	3♣ Transfer to diamonds
	3♦ Transfer to hearts
	3♥ Transfer to spades

# WHAT WENT WRONG? ... Continued

3♠ Transfer to 3NT. Minors (Whether a game try, slam try or game force, each partnership can define as they see fit.)

3NT To play!

4♣, 4♦ or 4♥

3 card limit raise of ♠'s with shortness in bid suit.

4♠ Shows a weak spade raise that you still judge worth bidding game.

Here's a couple of examples from recent online practice sessions:

## Opener

♠ A Q 10 x x  
♥ A K x  
♦ K x x  
♣ K x

## Responder

♠ K x x  
♥ x x  
♦ Q x  
♣ A Q x x x x

1♠  
2NT<sup>2</sup>  
3♠<sup>4</sup>  
4NT<sup>6</sup>  
6♠

1NT<sup>1</sup>  
3♥<sup>3</sup>  
4♣<sup>5</sup>  
5♥

- 1 Forcing as in Two-over-One
- 2 18-19 balanced
- 3 Transfer
- 4 Obedience
- 5 The 3-card limit raise type (10-12 HCPs) with good clubs as a possible source of tricks.
- 6 RKC Blackwood for spades based on a filler for clubs and all other side suits controlled.

And another:

## Opener

♠ A K J x x  
♥ Q x x  
♦ A Q x  
♣ K x x

## Responder

♠ x x  
♥ x  
♦ K J 10 x x  
♣ A Q x x x

## Opener

1♠  
2NT<sup>2</sup>  
3NT<sup>4</sup>  
6♣

## Responder

1NT<sup>1</sup>  
3♠<sup>3</sup>  
4♥<sup>5</sup>

- 1 Forcing as in Two-over-One
- 2 18-19 balanced
- 3 Transfer to 3NT
- 4 Obedience
- 5 Heart shortness with both minors, game forcing and slam invitational.
- 6 I fit both minors and have very little wastage in hearts, slam should have a chance.

If you don't currently have a meaning for 3♠ over 2NT (as an opening or rebid), here's the scheme my partner and I use:

3♠ Transfer to 3NT over which responder rebids:

- 4♣ Single suited in clubs, game forcing
- 4♦ Single suited in diamonds, game forcing
- 4♥ or 4♠ Both minors, GF, with shortness in bid major



Paul Thurston (PHOTO: Michael Yu in)

# WHAT WENT WRONG? ... Continued

On the lower end of the adventure scale, we had this success:

## Opener

♠ A Q J x x  
♥ K J x  
♦ A 10  
♣ K x x

## Responder

♠ x  
♥ x x  
♦ Q J x x x x x  
♣ Q x x

1♠  
2NT<sup>2</sup>  
3♦<sup>4</sup>

1NT<sup>1</sup>  
3♣<sup>3</sup>  
Pass<sup>5</sup>

- 1 Forcing as in Two-over-One
- 2 18-19 balanced
- 3 Transfer to 3♦
- 4 Obedience
- 5 We've arrived.

No three level contract is great here but 3♦ at least has some trump-suit protection not available in notrump (imagine if Opener had to rebid 3NT to show his hand over 1NT!)

Meanwhile, back at the ranch we don't like to be wasteful so having dispensed with Opener's jump rebid of 3NT as showing 18-19 HCP balanced, we have assigned a different meaning:

## Opener

1♠  
3NT

## Responder

1NT

Shows a very strong semi-balanced hand (usually 6-3-2-2 shape) with spades acting as a SOURCE of TRICKS (usually no more than one loser) and stoppers in the side suits. For example ♠ AKJ10xx ♥ Kx ♦ Ax ♣ QJx. In this context, Responder is usually expected to choose between opener's major and no-trump as the strain in which to play, keeping in mind that for no-trump there will be a ready-made source of tricks to help fulfill the contract.

Now, if you decide to adopt all or even part of the methods proposed here as a System Fix, there may well be growing pains (Something Will Go Wrong!).

However don't waste those problems – send them to [tweedguy@gmail.com](mailto:tweedguy@gmail.com) and we'll try to figure out WHAT WENT WRONG!





**Editor's note:** For the second issue in a row we look at the 'best-of-the-best' in Canadian bridge players. Like Dan Jacob, Nick is a non-professional, with a fantastic resume at Canadian, ACBL NABC's and World Championships. His record in high level competitions is formidable (see next page).

## When did you first start playing bridge?

I started playing bridge when I was about 7 years old. At family gatherings we would have dinner and then play cards: Social games first that everyone could play but then the kids would go to sleep and I would insist on watching my uncles, parents and grandmother Play Bridge. When someone got tired I got to substitute. I loved it. I have been hooked ever since.

## Who did you play with in the early years of your bridge playing?

My first regular partner was Jeff Blond. We were about the same age and were really good as juniors. We played for Canada in 1993 in Denmark and that was great. Jeff was a class act partner always smiling and very sound/steady. He was also better than me technically so I got to learn from him. We played together for quite some time in the 90s. Another one of my first partners in the 90s was Xavier Combey, one of my best friends. In 1998, Kamel Fergani, a well-established player in Canada, asked me to play with him and that was a great chance for me to finally get on great Canadian teams. Kamel and I had a lot of success together.

## Who did you play with after Jeff?

I played from 1998 to 2006 with Kamel. We won my first CNTC in 2000, and then we won again in 2003. We were playing a system that had about one page of notes]. Simple, yet extremely aggressive bridge, and good judgment were our methods. Kamel was then the most talented bridge



declarer I had ever met. He was truly a magician at times. I would often go out of my way to let him handle these complicated 3NTs and slams. He loved it.

In 2006 we stopped playing together for various reasons. I then played with Zygmunt Marcinski in Canada and quite a few players in the NABCs in the USA. With Zyg we play a very good system that was hard for opponents to play against. Zyg is extremely knowledgeable about different systems, wise and I learned a lot of cool things about bidding from him.

The years 2006 to 2014 were very good for me. I played with a lot of different partners in the USA I got to play with extremely talented players such as Steve Landen, Nik Demirev, Jim Krekorian, and Vincent Demuy to name a few. Demuy and I also won a CNTC together in 2012 and were on fire at the 2012 World Championships held in

# THE L'ECUYER FILE

## CANADIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

### CNTC A

2000	1st
2003	1st
2008	1st
2009	1st
2012	1st

## USA NABCs

1997	National Swiss Teams 2 <sup>nd</sup>
2005	Board a Match 5 <sup>th</sup>
2006	Vanderbilt 5 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>
2006	Fast Pairs 1 <sup>st</sup>
2008	Board a Match 9 <sup>th</sup>
2009	IMP Pairs 1 <sup>st</sup>
2009	Wehrner Pairs 1 <sup>st</sup>
2010	Silidor Open Pairs 1 <sup>st</sup>
2010	Platinum Pairs 5 <sup>th</sup>
2011	Fast Pairs 3 <sup>rd</sup>
2013	Platinum Pairs 7 <sup>th</sup>
2014	Nat'l Swiss Teams 3 <sup>rd</sup>
2015	Nat'l Swiss Teams 4 <sup>th</sup>

Plus other top 20 finishes.

## INTERNATIONAL PLAYING FOR CANADA

1993:	World Junior Championship in Aarhus, Denmark
2001:	Polish World Invitational in Warsaw, Poland
2002:	NEC cup (team finished 2nd) in Yokohama, Japan
2003:	BERMUDA BOWL in Monte-Carlo, Monaco
2005:	NEC Cup in Yokohama, Japan
2007:	Yeh Bros Cup in Shenzhen, China
2007:	BERMUDA BOWL in Shanghai, China
2008:	World OLYMPIADS (World Mind Sports Games) in Beijing, China
2009:	Nations Cup in Bonn, Germany
2012:	World OLYMPIADS (World Mind Sports Games) in Lille, France

## OTHER

Won three Bridge World Challenge the Champs competitions in 2007-08.

Lilie. Playing together for Canada, we almost beat Monaco in that epic 2012 playoff match where we were leading after five sets. Tough loss. Demuy is another one of these super good players I had the chance to play with. Surely a big loss for Canada to have him recently take his talent south of the border.

## What were some of your other stand-out performances on the international/ACBL circuits?

Definitively winning four national titles in the USA is great. Coming second in the NEC cup (in Japan) in 2002 was also pretty cool, especially after beating the Swedes in the quarter finals. It is my best set ever where we won 100imps on 20 boards against one of the best pairs in the world!! We used to be so fearless in the days. Winning my first CNTC in 2000 with one of my best friends (Jeff Blond) on the team was also quite a cool thing.

## Who is your current partner?

In Canada, Zygmunt Marcinski. In the USA, it is now Paul Street. Paul and I enjoy playing bridge together. It is relaxed and pleasant while we do well together. We both have a good sense of humor and we like having fun. We hooked up together after meeting each other in the American NABCs. Paul is now a good friend and partner.

## Nick, tell us about your life away from the bridge table.

I am a partner and Business Development Director in a money management firm, Giverny Capital Inc. I love what I do and have made our clients wealthy which is also very enriching for me. Between my work and playing bridge I have met a lot of interesting people.

I also have two wonderful sons: Vincent (20) and Philippe-Antoine (10). Neither of them play bridge yet, but if they want me to I will teach them! The woman in my life is Melanie Aubert. She is a lovely and charming lady. She teaches computers and she also wants nothing to do with bridge - but she deals with my passion for it.

I am very big on sports. I like football, baseball, ski, golf, etc... Having two sons is great to keep me in shape. There is no sport I would not do with them. I am booked to go parachuting with my older son for his birthday this summer!

**Do you have any stories or hands you wish to share?**

Everyone says that 3NT is my favorite contract but recently 6♦ doubled, and even redoubled, is starting to make a push! See for yourself ...

**HAND 1**

At the Providence NABC playing with Paul Street I held ♠ A 9 x x ♥ A Q x x x ♦ 10 9 x ♣ -, and for the first time encountered this score: +1380. Our bidding was (opponents passed throughout):

Partner	Me
1♦	1♥
2♦	2♠
3♦	6♦
Pass	

RHO doubled, I redoubled, and they led the ♣A. Partner's hand ♠ Q x ♥ K x ♦ K Q J x x x ♣ x x x, (diamonds were 2-2 and hearts 3-2). They won the ♦A on the first round of diamonds, so there was no further problem. They could have ducked the ♦A though and partner would have had to guess what to do (would have had to play for the diamonds 2-2 or 3-1 the right was which was unlikely on the bidding). Before you ask, yes a spade lead beats it.

On diamond to the king ducked declarer would now have had to play 3 hearts over- ruffing the 3rd heart etc., and the hand makes. Quite a cute hand.

**HAND 2**

Another hand was from the CANAM in Montreal last year in the semis of a KO and also playing with Paul Street. I held ♠ K x x ♥ A J ♦ A 9 ♣ A Q 10 x x x. The bidding, both vul., was:

Partner	RHO	Me
3♦	3♠	?

I decided to go low and bid 3NT since the player on my right was a fairly sound bidder. This may not be to everyone's liking but I thought this was a sensible bid. To my surprise the bidding was not over. It continued 4♥ on my left P P to me. I now did not dislike my heart holding as much and figured they must be bidding on some shape and surely a 10 card heart fit to I now took a shot at 6♦! The sound bidder on my right showed no respect for that bid (crazy bid let's say) and doubled. These were the 4 hands:

	♠ x x	
	♥ x x	
	♦ Q J 10 8 x x x	
	♣ x x	
♠ Q J x x x		♠ A x x
♥ x x x x		♥ K Q 10 9 x
♦ x x		♦ K x
♣ J x		♣ K x x
	♠ K x x	
	♥ A J	
	♦ A 9	
	♣ A Q 10 x x x	

What do you lead? Unfortunately for the opponents the lead was the... ♠A! (That player was also looking at the diamond King guarded which makes leading the ♠A certainly not criminal), and that was all the declarer needed to gain an entry to finesse the diamond and the club and scored another infrequent number: +1540!

MORAL OF THE STORY: Do not double 6♦? Or is it that 6♦ is now becoming my favorite contract?

**What are your thoughts about the state of Bridge in North America?**

I don't like where it is going. We need young players to pick up the game and enjoy it but no school or government or anyone else seems to care. I even went to my son's school, offering them to give bridge free conferences (I am pretty good and funny giving these conferences) and they turned it down stating "teaching cards is bad – referring to gambling and playing". They just have no idea. Without attracting young players the game will slowly die. Too bad. Really.

**What about the Canadian Bridge Federation. Are we going in the right direction?**

I wish the CBF would be able to access government money, preferably on a permanent basis. Governments funds other Canadians representing Canada in other international competitions, why not bridge? I know they tried once, but I think the CBF should look into this again.

**What about the level of players of Canada compared to the United States, as well as to competitors from other countries?**

We have talent. But few Canadian players can take enough time to form a great team with enough juice to really compete with the best teams. The best teams play all the time. We don't. We can beat good to great teams on any given days but we will always be a long (even a no shot at all) shot to win a world championship. We desperately need a good selected sponsored team that will take the time to become a great team. Six great players, three steady pairs, putting in all their efforts and manners and more importantly playing time to become a great Canadian team.



Nick L'Ecuyer with his 2008 winning CNTC Team: Left to right - Robert Lebi, Kamel Fergani, himself, Marc-Andre Fourcaudot, Dan Jacob, Vincent Demuy (PHOTO Jonathan Steinberg)

# THE 10TH TRICK

## 19TH NEC CUP

Yokohama Feb 11-16, 2014

Barry Rigal, NYC & Rich Colker, Wheaton, MD

This year, invited teams with players from Russia, Netherlands, England, Denmark, China, Australia, New Zealand, Bulgaria, Taiwan, India, the USA and Korea battled 25 Japanese teams for supremacy. The five teams from China made it the largest contingent from one foreign nation ever to compete in an NEC Cup. The event consisted of 12 x 14-board Swiss matches over three days, followed by a knockout.

In the illustrated hand, both Easts led their doubleton diamond and declarer pitched three club losers. East ruffed, then exited with the jack of spades to declarer's ace. Here the two lines of play diverged slightly. In the Closed Room, Tanaka played the eight of spades at trick five, which Chen astutely ducked to prevent dummy's nine from becoming an entry to the diamonds. Next Tanaka led the king of hearts. Cao won and tried to cash the ace of clubs but Tanaka ruffed, ruffed a second heart with dummy's nine of spades, cashed the jack of diamonds, pitching a heart, and led another diamond for down one.

In the Open Room, Chen cashed the king of spades at trick five. When the queen failed to drop, he played along similar lines to Tanaka by leading the king of hearts. Kenji Miyakuni won and played the ace of clubs, ruffed by Shen, who then ruffed a heart, took the jack of diamonds (pitching a heart), and then led a fifth diamond. Ayako Miyakuni could ruff but that was still nine tricks for down one and a delicate push. Sue Picus, playing with Tadashi Yoshida, also played four spades as North on a diamond lead and found a way to come to ten tricks. (Four spades is, in fact, cold on a diamond lead, though not on the lead of a club or the ace of hearts.) Picus won the diamond lead in dummy and continued with top diamonds, pitching her clubs as East ruffed the third round. East then tried the ace of clubs. Picus ruffed and got out with a low heart. East won the heart and continued with clubs as declarer ruffed again, cashed the ace of spades (noting the fall of the jack),



THE IBPA FILES

Board 25. Dealer North. EW Vul.

♠ A K 10 8 4	♠ J 5
♥ K 5 4 3 2	♥ A Q J 10
♦ —	♦ 8 7
♣ J 3 2	♣ A Q 8 7 6
♠ 9 6 2	
♥ 8	
♦ A K Q J 6 4 3	
♣ 10 5	

### Open Room

West	North	East	South
Ayako	M. Shen	Kenji	M. Zhou
—	1♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

### Closed Room

West	North	East	South
Chen	Tanaka	Cao	Naito
—	1♠	2♣	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

ruffed a heart, cashed the jack of diamonds (pitching a heart), then continued diamonds. West could ruff in whenever he wished but Picus could always ruff another heart in dummy for her tenth trick.

**Editor's Note:** On a diamond lead declarer must start off with the three diamonds, with East ruffing the 3<sup>rd</sup> with the 5♠. The best continuation is the ♠J. To make declarer wins, and should play the ♥K, trying to keep East off a lead for 2<sup>nd</sup> spade play. (Here it didn't matter) East wins and can do no better than the A♣. Declarer ruffs, ruffs a heart, cashes a diamond pitching a heart, ruffs a 2<sup>nd</sup> club with the ♠8, and ruffs a 2<sup>nd</sup> heart. At this point declarer has 3 diamond tricks, A♠, 2 heart ruffs and 2 club ruffs in his hand, for a total of 8 tricks. He has ♠K10 remaining. Any lead from dummy will guarantee scoring the ♠ 10 for his 10<sup>th</sup> trick.

## TEST YOUR DECEPTIVE PLAY

Problem on page 24

Contract: 5♣

Lead: ♠A

♠ Q 7 6	
♥ Q J 4	
♦ 7 6 5 4 2	
♣ Q 8	
♠ A 8 5 4	♠ K J 10 3 2
♥ K 8 7 5	♥ A 10 9 4
♦ K 9 8	♦ J 10 3
♣ 9 4	♣ 2
♠ 9	
♥ 6 2	
♦ A Q	
♣ A K J 10 7 6 5 3	

Lead: ♠ A. East signals encouragement, and a 2nd spade goes to the Q, K and you ruff. Things are pretty hopeless. Even with the diamond finesse wins that is only 10 tricks. The only hope is to set up and cash diamonds. That means you need the 9♣ onside and the defence not cashing their hearts. Because of the lack of entries you have to play diamonds from your hand. Lead the Q♦, not the ace. The defence may get complacent, with each defender placing his part with the ♦A. If you get lucky diamonds are 3-3 and the opponents won't shift to hearts.

This hand was played like this by Victor Mollo. When Mollo advanced the ♦Q, West ducked, hoping partner had the ace and would shift to hearts! Now Mollo cashed the A♦ played a club to the eight. Ruffed a diamond setting up the suit, and a club to the Queen pulled the last trump, and his two heart losers went on the two good diamonds. Making six!

In order to be successful at a deceptive declarer maneuver such as this one must:

- Never give away the hopelessness of a contract by verbal or non-verbal behaviour.
- Think quickly how the opponents may be duped, playing for different, plausible holdings.
- Continue to act nonchalant if things start going according to plan.

Next issue: Zia befuddles world class player.



## CANADIAN BRIDGE HUMOUR

### 'ONE FOR THE GOOD GUYS'

Our team was in 2<sup>nd</sup> place going into the penultimate round of the CNTC A, only 1 IMP behind first! This was a surprise to many – I even earned a kibitzer. The player that came and sat on my side of the screen was as well known for his brashness and arrogance, as he was for his bridge skill, qualifying to represent Canada at a number of previous World Championships. I will call him Chip.

On the second board I jumped to a small slam even though it was possible we were off the first two tricks. The bad news was that Chip had the cashable ♦AK. The good news was that he was not on lead. His partner led a spade and we had twelve top tricks.

Slamming his cards down on the table Chip turned to me and yelled: 'I can't believe you can bid like that and be in 2<sup>nd</sup> place'.

After a pause I asked in a very controlled voice, "You guys are in 7<sup>th</sup>, right?"

That shut him up for the rest of the round. My kibitzer looked at me and beamed.

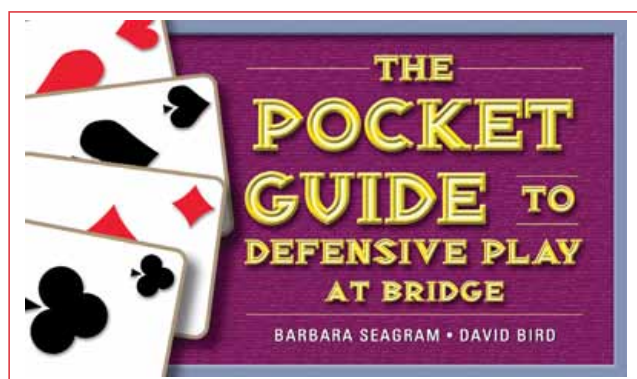
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PS. We won the match by 24 IMPs

# POCKET GUIDES FROM

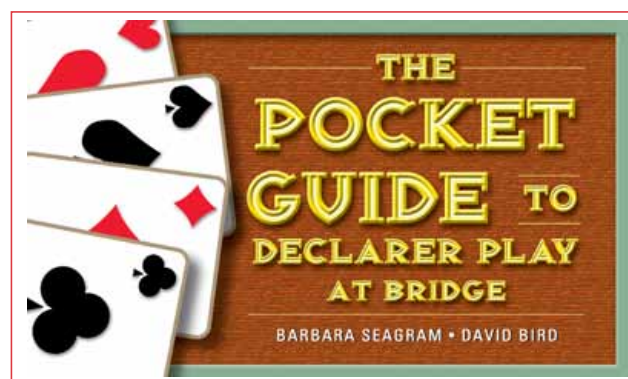


## Master Point Press



### **The Pocket Guide to Defensive Play at Bridge**

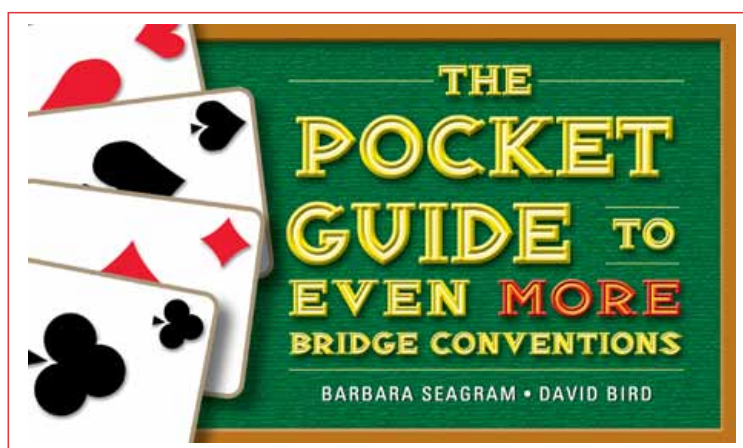
Barbara Seagram & David Bird  
CAN \$9.95



### **The Pocket Guide to Declarer Play at Bridge**

Barbara Seagram & David Bird  
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## **PICK UP THE NEWEST TITLE COMING JULY 2015**



### **The Pocket Guide to Even More Bridge Conventions**

**Barbara Seagram & David Bird**

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# EVENTS & DEADLINES

Canadian Bridge Federation Calendar of Events as of June 2015. For updates see our website [www.cbf.ca](http://www.cbf.ca)

2015

## JULY

- 15 July Wednesday evening  
ACBL-wide International Fund Game #2
- 23 July - 03 Aug  
CBF IF Regional, Kingston, ON

## SEPTEMBER

Club International Fund Games all month

- Club Qualifying games for CNTC and COPC
- 26 Sep - 10 Oct  
World Team Championships Chennai, India.

## OCTOBER

Club Appreciation Games all month

- Club Qualifying games for CNTC and COPC
- 05 Oct Monday - Evening  
Canada wide Olympiad Fund Game
- 22 Oct Thursday - Evening  
Erin Berry Rookie Master Game

## NOVEMBER

- Club Qualifying games for CNTC and COPC
- 30 Nov - Evening  
ACBL wide Charity Game

## DECEMBER

- Club Qualifying games for CNTC and COPC
- 21 Dec - Monday morning  
ACBL-wide International Fund Game #3



## Important Dates

- 2015 CBF International Fund Regional | Kingston, ON | July 28 - August 3 2015
- 2015 World Team Championships | Chennai, India | 26 September - 10 October
- 2016 CBF Canadian Bridge Championships | Toronto ON | 21-28 May 2016