

Laws in the state of Alabama (True!)

It is illegal for a driver to be blindfolded while operating a vehicle.

Dominoes may not be played on Sunday.

You may not drive barefooted.

It is illegal to maim oneself to escape duty.

Masks may not be worn in public.

Putting salt on a railroad track may be punishable by death.

Boogers may not be flicked into the wind.

Bear wrestling matches are prohibited.

Men may not spit in front of the opposite sex.

It is illegal to wear a fake moustache that causes laughter in church.

You may not have an ice cream cone in your back pocket at any time.

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Taieri Bridge Club

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World Bridge Olympiad

As I write this the 12th World Bridge Olympiad is underway in Istanbul. Dozens of countries have sent teams (including New Zealand which is competing in the Open Teams competition and in the Women's Teams). Initially the teams are grouped into divisions and play a round-robin within their division. Then the top half of the round-robin table progress to the second stage which is a knock-out. Our Women's Team appeared to be well-placed to qualify for the knock-out but faded at the last moment. Anne-Marie Russell of the Otago club is the only relatively local player competing.

Fun night

The club had another enjoyable fun night of Chinese supper and bridge on the Labour Day Monday. If you haven't been to one of these I can recommend them highly for the best value-for-money-evening around.

Queenstown Congress

The most significant event of the year in the South Island bridge calendar was the Otago-Southland bridge congress held over 4 days of the Labour Day weekend. Several players from Taieri took part in the congress which was held at the Rydges hotel overlooking Lake Wakatipu in Queenstown.

The first event was the Welcome Pairs on Friday evening. You would have had to be fanatical about your bridge to have enjoyed this first event.

Playing conditions were appalling: too crowded, too hot, not enough light, and too noisy. Most of the problems stemmed from the inadequate size of the room. Initially the organisers had been promised an additional room but the hotel reneged on this promise and the organisers were not able to secure substitute space. The room problem stayed with us for the whole congress but the organisers took some measures to cope with the heat and poor lighting; the bridge became more enjoyable as we began to cope with the lack of space.

Players who attend a bridge congress (and there were hundreds of us) are devotees of the game. We had to be because there was a *lot* of cards played. The main pairs event was played on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Mornings? Well, the bridge *did* start at 10.00am - but the pairs continued through

level. The one played most frequently around here is called *Gotcha*. It allows the responder (with a weak hand, trying to rescue) to show various single-suited and two suited hands. So, after 1NT-double responder can bid as follows:

1. Redouble. This shows a single suited hand (5 or more cards in the suit); the opener then bids 2♣ and the responder bids his suit (or passes if it is clubs)
2. 2♣, 2♦, 2♥. These bids all show two suits: the actual suit bid and the suit above it (e.g. 2♦ shows diamonds and hearts); the opener then passes or corrects to the suit they prefer.
3. Pass. This is played as a forcing bid (and must be alerted). The opener must redouble! Now if the responder has fair values he can pass and attempt to play in 1NT redoubled. More often the responder is interested in rescuing and will bid either 2♣ (meaning clubs and hearts) or 2♦ (meaning diamonds and spades). Again the opener then chooses the suit they prefer.

This third option is the hardest to remember because we normally don't think of Pass as being a forcing bid. But it's also one of the most useful since the doubler's partner will not be quite sure whether you intend to play in 1NT redoubled or to rescue. They may panic and rescue you themselves.

Gotcha: when they double your 1NT

The one significant disadvantage of the Acol opening weak no-trump (12-14 HCP) is that the opponents can double you for penalty and you'll be down a bundle. Your partner holding, say, ♠: 8 7 5; ♥: J 8 6 5 4; ♦: K T; ♣: 6 5 4 should certainly try to rescue you by bidding 2♥ (transfers do *not* apply after a double). Possibly this is no better a contract but often it will be because those small hearts have some value in a heart contract. In any case, the opponents may be less willing to double you now because 2♥ doubled is less game; or maybe they will bid themselves and get you off the hook.

But what if your partner has a more balanced hand? If he holds

♠: 8 7 6 5; ♥: J 8 6 5; ♦: K T; ♣: 6 5 4

then perhaps 2♥ will work out brilliantly; equally 2♠ could work out brilliantly. How can you know? You don't want to end in a 4-2 fit when there could be a 4-4 fit available (and there will certainly be some 4-3 fit). In other words you want a rescue system that caters to single-suited and two-suited hands.

Many rescue systems have been proposed to try to identify an acceptable suit contract at the two

until around 2.30pm. If you were really keen you could then play the No-Fear pairs that started after a 20 minute break. Some did, but the majority went off to have lunch, and then either be a tourist or take an afternoon nap. On Saturday I climbed up the very steep Queenstown Hill - and hobbled around for the rest of the weekend apologising to my muscles. The nappers were more sensible because they were better prepared for the main Teams event at 8.00pm. This one went through to around 1.30am. Brave hearts then went off to party.

It was a wonderful opportunity to play against some of the country's top players and most of us had a very good time despite the playing conditions. I'll certainly be back next year even though the event is just three weeks away from the National Congress in Hamilton.

Results? Oh, yes. The top places were taken by non-local competitors with the notable exception of the Intermediate Pairs and Intermediate Teams. Our own Kaye Wilson, playing with Kristen Collins from Otago won the Intermediate Pairs. And to round things off Kaye playing with Tamsin Meaney, Kristen Collins and David Jones won the Intermediate Teams. This was a fantastic performance by Kaye who struggled with migraines during the weekend. Well done, Kaye!

Gordon's grand slam

Freida and Gordon were playing the final board of the evening against the Weasel and Ferret. Their names had been bestowed because both of them were untroubled by consciences, and routinely cheated to improve their chances. Frieda and Gordon had played against them earlier and had done poorly because the Ferret had peered into a carefully placed reflecting window pane and glimpsed Frieda's hand. This time the Weasel sitting West opened 1♥ and Gordon overcalled 2♣ as North.

"Look at that!" exclaimed the Ferret pointing down the room. Frieda and Gordon both looked around and as they did so the Weasel deftly altered the

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

bidding pad so that Gordon's bid read 7♣.

Regaining their attention both Frieda and Gordon saw what had happened but had no evidence.

Despite a call to the director the 7♣ bid had to stand. The Ferret duly doubled 7♣ and lead his J♠ on which the Weasel played the A♠.

Desperate measures were called for and Gordon rose to the occasion. He ruffed the opening lead and quickly turned his card over placing it in the direction that indicated he had *lost* the trick; then he waited as though for West to lead. The Weasel was fooled into believing that he had won the trick and, correctly reasoning that his partner was void in hearts, laid down the A♥.

"Director!" called Gordon. The director ruled that the A♥ was a penalty card that had to be played at the first opportunity.

Now Gordon played three rounds of clubs on the last of which the Weasel was forced to play the A♥. After that Gordon took seven tricks in hearts and with six tricks in clubs wrapped up his grand slam.

News of the remarkable hand soon filtered around the room and Gordon and Frieda found themselves at the centre of a knot of delighted players who had suffered at the hands of the Weasel and Ferret. As for the villains: they slunk away vowing revenge.