

My body as a car

If my body was a car, this is the time I would be thinking about trading it in for a newer model. I've got bumps and dents and scratches in my finish and my paint job is getting a little dull, but that's not the worst of it. My fenders are too wide to be considered stylish. Once as sleek as a little MG, they now look more like an old Buick. My seat cushions have split ends at the seams. My seats are sagging. Seatbelts? I gave up all belts when Krispy Kremes opened a shop in my neighbourhood.

Airbags? Forget it. The only bags I have these days are under my eyes. Not counting the saddlebags, of course. I have soooo many miles on my odometer. Sure, I've been many places and seen many things, but when's the last time an appraiser factored the experiences against depreciation? My headlights are out of focus and it's especially hard to see things close. My traction is not as graceful as it once was. I slip and slide and skid and bump into things even in the best of weather. My whitewalls are stained with varicose veins. It takes me hours to reach my maximum speed. My fuel rate burns inefficiently.

But here's the worst of it.... Almost every time I sneeze, cough or splutter.... either my radiator leaks or my exhaust backfires!!

News Letter 2006

Taieri Bridge Club

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Alerting procedures

At the beginning of the year the NZCBA issued a new set of alerting rules. Their intent was to simplify these rules, but many players have been left rather puzzled. At Taieri we take a fairly relaxed approach to these things but, nevertheless, you should try to fulfil your alerting responsibilities. A new aspect of the alerting procedure is *pre-alerts*: each new pair of opponents should be briefly advised of any unusual things in your system. Examples: "Acol with a mouldy 2D", "Precision with a multi and 14-16 no trump", "Goren with 5 card majors and strong no trump".

The alerts during the auction are almost as they were before except that there are some bids which no longer should be alerted: cue bids, bids at the four level, all doubles, and a strong 2C opening with 2D response. Finally, at the end of the auction (if your side is declaring) you should advise your opponents of any unusual bids that have not yet been alerted.

Timaru Congress report

In two pages only I cannot give you a comprehensive roundup of the South Canterbury Congress last month that Tamsin and I attended. It was very well run and we both had a good time. One incident made me reflect on how easily a player can get a reputation for being rude. We were playing teams and our teammates had been rather reluctant to play against one particular pair of our opposing team; so Tamsin and I played against them. We soon understood our teammates reservations. One of the two ladies (I'll call her Mrs Kipper, not her real name, from a large conurbation north of Timaru) made a comment during the bidding that I felt was improper; so, as politely as possible, I summoned the director. Well! Mrs Snapper was scathing of my action leaving me in doubt what she thought of that; and afterwards the director privately apologised to me on her behalf. The Slapper lady is apparently well known for regularly trying to intimidate opponents. Whether she is aware of the low regard in which she is held I do not know, but I think it is such a sad thing to have that sort of reputation. On to the bridge. The most amazing hand of the tournament was

♠ A K Q x x x x ; ♥ void; ♦ K J x x x x; ♣ void
which was held by my righthand opponent. She was

My resourceful partner (East - hands rotated) made a good decision on board 9.

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

With West as dealer the bidding began

1NT	2♣
2♠	3♦
3NT	4♠

Her decision to play in our 4-3 spade fit because of the ruffing value in clubs gave us a much more comfortable contract than 3NT to play. These 4-3 fits are called Moysean after a US bridge player called Alphonse Moyse who espoused 4 card major openings and raising partner's major opening with 3 card support.

Pergola

Members cannot fail to have noticed the new pergola that has been erected just outside the front door. The pergola was planned, built, and installed by Alec Ansett and Frank Gradon who gave their time unstintingly. It honours the memory of Beryl Bishop who had long wanted such an addition to the club premises.

Hospice Charity tournament

We had a very successful tournament on 26 March to raise money for the Hospice. The top score was 64% by John and Blanche Wolken. There were twenty-five and a half tables, comfortably filling the room. As ever, many members worked hard behind the scenes to ensure the tournament ran smoothly.

We were also blessed with a very interesting set of hands. On board 20 West (dealer) and East held

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

As you can see, both 6♠ and 6♣ are rock solid contracts but neither slam is easy to bid. Presumably West will open 1♣ but how does East respond? If ever there was a hand for playing jump shifts as game forcing with slam aspirations, this hand must be it. But West will not feel so good about her hand - it seems like a misfit - so will continue with 3♦. East can now show club support with 4♣ (not an Ace ask!) and West will certainly continue to 5♣. It is now very hard for East to bid 6♣ since she does not know whether there are two heart losers.

presented with a truly difficult decision when her partner opened the bidding with 4♥! What would you do? I confess that I have no useful advice to offer.

In the course of 137 boards we only managed to bid one slam. This was it:

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

1NT ¹	2♥ ²
3♠ ³	4♣ ⁴
4♦ ⁵	4NT ⁶
5♠ ⁷	6♠ ⁸

1. 12-14 HCP
2. Please transfer to spades
3. I have 4 spades and a maximum
4. Cue bid, showing A♣
5. Cue bid showing A♦
6. Roman keycard Blackwood
7. I have two key cards and the trump queen
8. Good luck partner.

As you can see, the play the was elementary.

Minnie van Driver's first game

Miss Wilhemina van Driver made her first nervous entrance at the Taieri bridge club in the new year of 2006. I don't mean that she was nervous because it was her first time; her entrances everywhere were nervous and this was just the first one at the bridge club. Minnie (as her friends called her) was highly strung, of a delicate disposition, inclined to swoon at the merest hint of excitement, but fairly well-preserved for one in late middle age. Her dear Mama had just passed away and, for the first time in her life, Minnie was a free agent. She wasn't sure whether she liked this new freedom though; it would be so much more comfortable to sit at home and read her beloved Jane Austen. Still, Reginald, her nephew, had insisted that she "get out" a bit and see the world. He had taught her the rudiments of bridge, and arranged her membership of the club; but, sadly, Reginald was on business in Auckland and couldn't accompany his Aunt to her first evening at the club. However, he had arranged a partner for Minnie, one Sinclair Whitlands, and Minnie now looked myopically around hoping to find this Mr Whitlands whom she had never met. She almost jumped out of her skin when a loud voice behind her bade her welcome. "Good evening, exotic flower of Taieri, I'm Sinclair, your partner

for the evening". Minnie had never been addressed in such colourful terms in her entire life, and she wondered briefly whether she had come in error to a gigolo training school. She stammered her response and waited with trepidation on Mr Whitland's next utterance. "Tender lady, fear not the foes within" (Sinclair nodded his head in the direction of the playing area) "be of good heart and let valour triumph".

As this was her first acquaintance with Sinclair she did not realise that he always spoke as though declaiming heroic epics. She therefore became even more alarmed, and her alarm verged on panic when Sinclair took her firmly by the arm and led her to Table 3. Trembling she collapsed into the chair, reached into her handbag for her smelling salts, and applied their vapours with the most delicate of white lace handkerchiefs.

Mercifully the first round was a bye and Minnie managed to regain enough composure to agree a simple version of Acol with Sinclair (well, simple for him, seemingly of byzantine complexity to her). As their first opponents sat down to play Minnie's apprehension was still very acute. She did not know what to make of her partner's unconscious impersonation of a chevalier of the Arthurian Round Table. Would this be a disaster of gargantuan proportion, or merely another unhappy episode to haunt her nights of introspection?