

Correspondence received

Dear Sir

The greed and inconsideration of the club's committee knows no bounds. At a time when they are raking in the shekels hand over fist they evidently wish to screw the ordinary membership to an even greater degree by a totally unjustifiable hike in bar prices. Don't they realise that the very best players in the club don't come to play cards - they come for the cheap drinks. My numerous friends in the club (*he means the Ferret; Ed.*) urge all members to boycott the bar from now on, and to speak in slighting terms of the committee members responsible for this reprehensible new policy.

The Weasel

More Bumper stickers

I.R.D.: We've got what it takes to take what you've got!

We are born naked, wet, and hungry. Then things get worse.

WANTED: Meaningful overnight relationship.

So you're a feminist...Isn't that cute.

Beauty is in the eye of the beer holder.

Eschew obfuscation.

Fairy tales: horror stories for children to get them used to reality.

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News Letter 2006

Taieri Bridge Club

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The Club Bar

One of the pleasant things about our bridge games is the opportunity to relax afterwards and make use of the club's bar. Bar prices have not changed for some time and we now find it necessary to raise prices slightly. One of the reasons for this is that the bar has various hidden costs that we have to pay from time to time. We have to renew our Liquor Licence every three years and this costs a whopping \$766; we also have to place some required advertisements (cost \$255), and pay the Manager's Licence (cost \$132). Altogether this represent nearly one year of bar profits. While we run the bar to provide a service to members and not to just make profits, we have to be sure that we keep up with costs.

Whilst we know that most members will sympathise with these reasons there has been at least one irate member who wrote mildly disagreeing with the committee's decision (see letter on page 8).

From our foreign correspondent

Tamsin and I have now spent close to a month in the UK. She will be back in Mosgiel before you read this while I fend for myself for three months until she rejoins me. We have both very much enjoyed the height of summer in St Andrews. Whilst most of Britain has suffered extremely hot and humid weather our little Scottish town has remained comfortable because of sea breezes and the sea mist they call the haar. Because we are so far north the days are long and the nights short.

I am living in the centre of the town within 5 minutes walk of its beautiful ruined castle and cathedral, spectacular beach walks, and quaint old pubs. The ancient university buildings dominate the town and, although the undergraduates have fled for the summer and been replaced by tourists, it is hard not to be aware of the university's historical presence.

There is a town bridge club but it does not meet in the summer months so that remains for me to report on in due course. However, there is another club, the Ladies Bridge Club. During the summer the good ladies invite gentlemen to play at their club, although their standards of gentility cannot be too high because I have played there completely

all the missing black suit honours. She must hold a hand something like

♠ A K x; ♥ K Q J T x x x; ♦ void; ♣ A K Q

and *with that layout you might make the contract!*

You win the opening lead in dummy and play the Q♠.

South has to cover and you ruff.

Now comes a most remarkable finesse. You play the 3♦ and, when North follows with the 2♦ you play the 4♦ in dummy! This gives you a crucial entry to ruff another spade, return to dummy with the K♦ (so drawing the last trump) and then play three established spades discarding your losing clubs from your hand.

No doubt South will berate her partner for not leading a black card but, of course, North was only leading her partner's suit. So the lead can hardly be called a mistake. But actually North *did* make a defensive error. Did you spot it?

When declarer plays the 3♦ North must play the Q♦ not the 2♦. This robs declarer of the extra entry to establish spades. Still, I imagine that most of us will never have the chance to take a finesse quite as deep as this one!

A very deep finesse

My remarkable hand this month begins with a bidding decision. Suppose you (West) hold
♠ 5; ♥ void; ♦ A J T 9 8 7 6 5 3; ♣ J 6 4
While you are still gazing at those lovely diamonds the dealer (South) opens the bidding with 6♥!
Assuming they are vulnerable and you are not, what should you do?

Well, it looks as though South is confident of making 6♥ and so you decide to sacrifice in 7♦. You expect to be doubled and go down 4 or 5 tricks which will not cost more than 1100 (compared to 1430 for the making 6♥) so this is a clearcut sacrifice. South doubles in a loud voice. North leads a heart and this is what you see.

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

On a black suit lead you would have had 4 quick losers so the heart lead is a reprieve. Do you have any chance at all of making your contract?

Yes, there is a chance. South opened 6♥ missing the A♥ and so is surely void in diamonds and holds

unchallenged.

Tamsin and I managed one game there before she returned home. Acol is the main bidding system but there are some differences from New Zealand bridge: bidding boxes are used, the scoring is done by North, and all artificial bids have to be alerted *even Stayman!*

By a combination of luck and divine intervention we managed to achieve 2nd place in our direction. When I returned the next week (after Tamsin had left) I was presented with our prize:- 60 pence each! I am ashamed to admit that, in her absence, I have squandered my wife's vast prize money in an orgy of profligate spending.

The Ladies Bridge Club is not affiliated to the Scottish Bridge Union (which regulates the game in Scotland, organises tournaments, and awards masterpoints). So, as one might expect, their duplicate bridge is played without benefit of pre-dealt hands, scoring on the night, and (very sadly) no bar. Like many bridge clubs around the world they have very few youngish players. However, they are a very friendly bunch with some good players and always welcome their frequent visitors who have come to St Andrews to play golf.

Voluptua's great unblock

For once Voluptua Stitts was not partnering her boy-friend Randy Hardwick. So when she came to Randy's table her competitive spirit came to the fore and she was very much on her mettle. Sorting her hand she found

♠ 8; ♥ A; ♦ 9 8 5 4 3 2; ♣ K Q J T 9

Randy was North and opened the bidding with 1♥.

Voluptua's partner was her aunt Frieda who made a Michaels cue bid of 2♥ showing spades and a minor.

Gordon (South) leapt to 4♥ which was a pre-emptive bid with excellent heart support. It was now Voluptua's first opportunity to bid and the level was already rather high. Which minor suit did Frieda have? Eventually she decided on bidding 5♦ thinking that she could correct to 6♣ if Frieda converted to spades. To her immense surprise, Frieda bid 7♦!!

Since Voluptua's hand was a good deal better than she had already advertised she was quietly confident that she would make the contract easily. But then came a fly in the ointment -- Randy bid 7♥, an obvious sacrifice.

This was just the irritating sort of thing that her boy-friend was inclined to do. She would not let him get away with it, so looking at her A♥ she firmly bid 7NT. Randy, holding

♠ K Q T 4; ♥ K Q T 9 7 4; ♦ void; ♣ 7 3 2

doubled looking rather smug. This had been the auction:

North	East	South	West
1♥	2♥	4♥	5♦
Pass	7♦	Pass	Pass
7♥	Pass	Pass	7NT
Dbl	Pass	Pass	Pass

Randy led K♥ and Voluptua gazed hopefully at Frieda's dummy.

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

Oh dear! There seemed no way to make the contract because her magnificent clubs were blocked - and Randy was looking so supercilious. Drat him!

Suddenly the solution came to her, and she turned to Randy with a sweet and pitying smile. On the first trick she unblocked by discarding the A♣. Then she played off the K, Q, J, T, 9 of clubs discarding her top 5 diamond honours from dummy. This left her with 6 diamond winners in her own hand, plus the 8♠ which was taken care of by dummy's Ace. The look on Randy's face would be remembered for a very long time.