Words, vowels, consonants

Most English words have a vowel (q,e,i,o, or u). The only ones that don't require the letter y (apart from a few onomatopoeic words such as "psst" or "shh"). The longest common word without vowels that I know is "rhythms" although there is a much longer archaic word (nevertheless in the OED) "twyndyllyngs" (meaning a twin).

What about words that contain all 5 vowels? The words "facetious" and "abstemious" contain all vowels *in the correct alphabetic order*. The former has 9 letters only. If you don't require that the vowels appear in alphabetic order then shorter words are possible. I know only of two 8 letter examples: "equation" and "dialogue". Does anyone know any shorter ones (in English; since the French words "oiseau" is only 6 letters).

I like the long words "taramasalata" (the only vowel is 'a') and "indivisibility" (the only vowel is 'e'). Can any reader supply me with other long words that contain a single vowel only?

Lawyer Joke

A junior partner in a law firm was sent to a far away country to represent a long-term client accused of robbery. After days of trial, the case was won, the client acquitted and released. Excited about his success, the attorney e-mailed the firm: "Justice prevailed." The senior partner replied in haste, "Appeal immediately."

Newsletter 2007

Taieri Bridge Club
Issue Number 125 May 2007
♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠♣♦♥♠

Club News

Our B-point tournament took place on 21 April and was won by Moss Wylie and Ray Crowe. We had 25 tables, the usual magnificent food, and Maretta Malloch ably directed us. The club made $950 which will help to defray the cost of our new computer (bought in March). Many people contributed to making the tournament successful - thank you to all.

We welcomed a new member Sherryn Wright to the club in April and hope she will enjoy bridge with us for many years.

Norena Howes, one of our longest serving members, passed away recently. She was a tremendous asset to our club, the sweetest of ladies, and we shall all miss her.

Eight ever, nine never - ever?

Jeff Miller of the Otago bridge club is one of the strongest players in New Zealand. He is also an author of some bridge articles that probe deeply into the probabilities favouring one line of play over another. A recent article of his was publicised by Andrew Robson in the London Times and hailed as being an innovative contribution to bridge theory. I can't do justice to all the details behind Jeff's ideas but at least I can give the broad gist.

When playing a suit to best advantage you often have to choose between "playing for the drop" or finessing. There are a lot of rules to guide you in the line most likely to succeed. When missing the queen of a suit one of these rules is "Eight ever, nine never"; this reminds you that if your side holds 8 cards of the suit then finessing is better than playing for the drop, but with 9 cards you are better off playing for the drop.

However, the exact odds in this common situation are quite close. Jeff's article is about how knowing the distribution of *another* suit changes the odds in favour of finessing when holding 9 cards in the key suit.

Suppose you are South, and are declarer, hearts are trumps, and you hold ♥ A K J 3 2 with dummy holding ♥ T 9 8 7. Ordinarily the "eight ever, nine

passed. In defence we collected 5 tricks. I led the K♥, saw my partner's Q♥ fall and then led A♥ (suit preference for a spade return after partner rufed). My partner thoughtfully cashed two top diamonds before giving me a spade ruff.

At the time I hoped that +500 would be a good score since it beat the pairs making 12 tricks in 4♥ for +480. However it was only average because many North-South pairs had bid the slam. At one table, where West also opened 1♣, North chose a very off-shape double. This worked out well because West made a marginal 1♠ call and then South bid 2♦ (showing some decent values since it was a free bid). This was enough for North who bid 6♥ directly.

Viagra Joke

A man goes to his doctor and says. "Doc, I have a problem. My girlfriend is sleeping over this Friday, my ex-wife is sleeping over this Saturday and my wife is coming home Sunday. I need 3 Viagra pills to satisfy all 3 of them. The doctor says "You know 3 Viagra pills 3 nights in a row is dangerous for a man of your age. I will give them to you on the condition that you return to my office on Monday so that I can check you out." The man says "You have a deal Doc." Monday morning the man returns with his arm in a sling. The doctor says "What happened"? The man answered "Nobody Showed UP!"

B point tournament hand

The most extreme hand from a distributional viewpoint in the B point tournament was this one: West dealer, none vulnerable.

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

Looking at just the North-South hands it appears that 6♥ would be an excellent contract (it needs either a 2-2 break in diamonds, a singleton Q♦ in either opposing hand, for East to hold A♣). But how should it be bid?

Hands like this are very difficult to bid precisely. At my table I was North and my right-hand opponent West opened 1♣. Hoping to prevent the opposition from locating a spade fit I bid 4♥ directly. Then East competed with 5♣ and my partner doubled for penalty which I rather timidly

never" rule would cause you to play the Ace and King hoping that the Queen would fall. However, suppose the bidding has been

South	West	North	East
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
3♥	All pass		

Let's imagine that East-West have found an 8-card spade fit. In that case, almost certainly West has 5 spades and East has 3. What that means is that West has 8 non-spades and East has 10 non-spades. As the Q♥ is a non-spade it is more likely to lie in East's hand than in West's hand. So despite the "Nine never" rule it is actually better to finesse.

Although in broad terms this type of deduction has long been known, Jeff's contribution was to give precise guide-lines that could easily be learnt without having to do detailed arithmetic at the table. Jeff's rules apply to lots of situations where you have to decide how to play a suit. In the common one described above the rule is: "if there is a side suit in which one opponent has *two* fewer cards than the other then play that opponent for the missing queen".
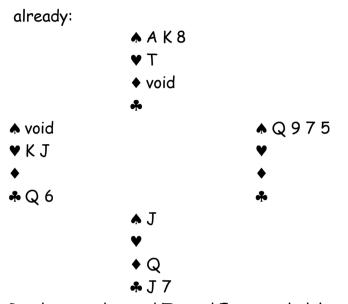
Bumper sticker

So many pedestrians, so little time.

Randy elopes

Voluptua and Randy had done moderately well in the Taieri B point tournament helped somewhat by Randy's play in 6♠ as North on the hand below (hand 11 from the second session). Many other pairs had been in the slam and no others had made it. The unsuccessful pairs were therefore somewhat mystified by Deep Finesse's claim that the contract was makeable and that Randy had made it.

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

Here is how it was done. East led 2♥ (the best lead) which Randy won with the Ace. Then came heart ruff, A♦ (Randy discarding a club), diamond ruff, A♣, diamond ruff, heart ruff, diamond ruff, K♣ to reach this position with 9 tricks taken

already:

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

Randy now advanced T♥ and East was helpless. Either she ruffed with Q♠ in which case Randy would make the last 3 tricks with his top trumps or she underruffed and then Randy would ruff with J♠ and still come to two more tricks with A♠, K♠. Voluptua had observed the play keenly as Randy was so manly when playing a slam contract. She recognised the technique whereby declarer tries to score his own trumps cheaply by ruffing one of dummy's suits as "elopement". Smiling sweetly at her swain she murmured "I love elopements" to which Randy blushed appropriately.

Editor's comment: It is indeed true that many experts at the tournament did not believe Deep Finesse's claim.