



The Future Life Master



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A Parallel Universe



I was an attorney in my workaday life. I went through law school never participating in the ongoing bridge games in the law school cafeteria, married an attorney, had two children who were attorneys-in-waiting, and made friends mostly with attorneys.

by Margaret Bennett Seven years ago a co-worker talked me into taking a bridge class at the University of Texas student union, where we learned the basics of bridge and our one convention—Stayman, of course. We played a few times at the “old” Bridge Center of Austin, and actually did pretty well, but more because we spent most of our waking hours in each other’s company and could intuit what cards our partner had than because we were decent bridge players. My partner then had a baby, and my bridge-playing days were pretty much over.

Two years ago I retired from my state job on a Monday. I thought I would take the mandatory 30 days off, rest a little, accomplish a few projects I’d been putting off for years, and then perhaps return to work part time. My cousin Barbara invited me to play with her in the next day’s Tuesday Bridge Plus game at the “new” bridge center, because her regular partner was not available.

I was a little nervous, but when I showed up that morning the director, Laura, greeted me so warmly and made me feel so welcome that my fears dissipated. I enjoyed the lesson, which was short enough to accommodate my attention span, and loved the reinforcement provided by the teaching boards scattered through the hands we played. I had a ball playing the game and meeting the other players in the room. Before I realized what was happening to me, I was smitten. In fact, I was so far gone that I returned, week after week, playing with different partners provided by the director. I’ve taken additional lessons

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Taking the Next Step

At some point the evolution of each player’s bridge game will reach a decision-making situation...if and when to move from limited to open games. For some, the idea of entering higher level competition is overwhelming. Others thrive on the very thought of competing with more seasoned players. In between are those sitting on the fence...unsure of which way their personal scale will balance? Whichever category you fall within, there are conceptual challenges to learn/understand/overcome in limited games to prepare your game for the next level.

Several years ago Larry Cohen, bridge expert/teacher/author, wrote an article entitled Tell, Don’t Ask. He identified three situations inexperienced players should examine as their game evolves. More specifically...all three focus on the phrase “**silence is golden**,” resisting the temptation to ask the meaning of a bid by opponents. Especially...frivolous asking! Stated differently...**do not ask the meaning of a bid unless the information is vital to you**. The following are his examples...rewritten in this writer’s expression.

There are countless auctions where you and your partner are passing throughout. Opponents are looking for game or perhaps a slam. As they bid, **they alert**. Why ask the meaning of the alert unless vital? When you ask...have a reason to ask. If your opponents are unsure as to what a bid meant, you have succeeded in clarifying the meaning of their bid for them by letting them verbalize. Consider the bidding...

Opener	Responder
1D	1H
3H	3S*

(alerted by opponents and you are next to bid holding)...♠ 10 9 3 2 ♥ Q 2 ♦ 6 5 4 ♣ 8 6 4 3...why should you care what the 3S bid alerted means?

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Parallel Universe (con't)

and now play several times a week and in all the tournaments I can.

Bridge has become the center of my new universe. I've met so many interesting people, most of whom are not attorneys, and experienced the joy of having so many "bridge friends" become just plain "friends." Of course I've never gone back to work or tackled those projects. I don't have time! Too many potential partners to play with, too many conventions to learn, too many hands to play. I try to explain to the uninitiated why bridge is so compelling to me, and all I can say is it's like a microcosm of life. We're trying to win, of course, but to win at the same time we are communicating in our common language of bidding, being supportive of our partners, and getting to know our opponents. After all, today's opponent may be tomorrow's partner! I'm so grateful to all the teachers, directors, mentors, and to my new friends for this wonderful universe of bridge.



Limited Game Schedule

Limited games are those games in which players holding more than a certain number of masterpoints may not play. You are welcome to play in all games throughout the Unit, however these games cater specifically to the newer player:

Sunday, 1:30 pm * BCA (0-50 points) Supervised play. You may come without a partner.

Monday, 11:30 am* BCA (One Life Master per pair max.) You may come without a partner.

Tuesday, 10:30 am* BCA (0-200 points) You may come without a partner.

Wednesday, 11:30 am BCA (0-500 points)

New! Wednesday, 7:00 pm* BCA (0-50 points) Supervised play. You may come without a partner.

Thursday, 11:30 am BCA (0-750 points)

Saturday, 1:30 * pm BCA (0-500 points)

* Free pre-game mini-lesson

Practice sessions are held every **Wednesday**, 6:15 - 8:15 PM at Randall's Coffee Shop in Westlake and every other **Thursday** at the Austin Ridge Bible Church in Westlake. Contact Sally Sekac at 512-373 8160 for more details.

Taking the Next Step (con't)

Is the meaning vital to your hand? Wait until the auction is over. Then, you can get all the explanations you want. Asking at the time of the alert inevitably helps opponents bypass a misunderstanding if it was about to happen.

Another untimely action/inexperience is seen in this auction...

You	Opponent	Partner	Opponent
2H	Double	Pass	3H

You Double*...you open the bidding with a preempt and later double opponent's cue-bid of your suit. **Not silence...not so golden!** Opponents are not about to play in 3H doubled. By doubling you provide them with flexibility... they may redouble to show heart controls or pass the double around to the other opponent for descriptive-action. Your partner knows you have hearts. Why double? You give them options they do not have if you sit there (silently) and pass.



Perhaps the ultimate sign of inexperience can be seen in this hand...

♠ A 6 3 ♥ K 8 ♦ A K J 8 7 5 3 ♣ 4...

You are contemplating this hand and your rebid when right hand opponent (RHO) opens 1♦ in front of you. Did you gasp or were you poker-faced? A seasoned/experienced player would pass in tempo. There is nothing else to do. Presumably you cannot bid diamonds now because...

Taking the Next Step (con't)

- 2♦ is Michaels for the majors
- 3♦ is either pre-emptive in Standard American (this hand is not weak), **or**
- 3♦ asks partner (by agreement) for a diamond stopper for playing 3NT.

When you huddle, then start asking questions such as what 1♦ shows and how many diamonds (minimum) does this bid promise, you are exposing your hand/problem. It is far better to pass smoothly and overcall diamonds at your next opportunity.

Bridge is an activity requiring extensive development. Like all games it should be fun. While this is true, there are pained moments within...why didn't I do this or do that rather than...? These feelings are both natural and common...regardless the level of bridge ability. The important thing is to learn sound techniques and strive to implement them when the occasion arises. There will always be exceptions to rules, but in the long run consistency serves best. Make the most of your development/seasoning in the limited games as you contemplate taking the next step into the open games. **Article by Tom Clark**

Our Newest Players

Allow me to introduce you to some new bridge players at Cedar Creek Elementary School in Westlake, Austin, Texas.

Each month in a newsletter to bridge teachers, the ACBL encourages readers to participate in a program to teach bridge to children. Using material from the ACBL, I forwarded information via email to over a dozen schools in the Westlake area. No response! In January, 2011 I devoted a day to visiting these schools in person. Unfortunately, I was not able to get past the volunteer mothers in the front office.

When I was scheduling bridge lessons with the Adult Education Department in Westlake I asked for help. A young lady in the office was familiar with bridge because she is a Great-Niece of Michael Cappelletti. She was thrilled that I knew of her Great-Uncle and suggested she would intervene and pass on the material to the Director of After-School Activities.

Nothing happened for more than a month and I thought the project had no future. Then I received an email informing me Cedar Creek Elementary School would like to start a Pilot Program to teach children how to play bridge.

The ACBL provides material to teach children "Mini-Bridge". The game is the same, but the bidding is eliminated. The children in the program were eager and excited to discover the game of bridge and they learned very quickly. The fourth and fifth graders progressed so well, I was able to teach them some of the bidding. They compared this to "estimating," something they were learning in math class!



This group of children will probably not impact our generation of bridge players, but I am sure some of the children will play bridge in high school or college and join the ACBL. Young children don't consider bridge as something played by "old people" and they learn it is a thought provoking, competitive game. The children go home and ask their parents to play bridge with them. Parents can read the instructions for the "Mini-Bridge" game I send home and they can participate in the game with their children.

Can we hope this may lead to some of the parents deciding to learn to play bridge themselves? **Article by Sally Sekac**

Two over One in a Nutshell

An introduction to the bidding system that many experts prefer.

Classes start **Thursday, June 23**, 7:00-9:00 pm and **Saturday, June 24**, 10:00 to noon, BCA. (Attend one or the other.) Four week course, \$60 tuition includes text by Grant and Rodwell. Instructor, Laura Delfeld. Register on-line at bridgecenteraustin.com or call 300.2743.

