

The CHAT group got a lot of press this week. I thought the Post Bulletin did a good job and captured the gist of what CHAT is. More than a few people have talked to me about the article. Several liked the picture of the back of my head. One of my outside friends told me that the article made duplicate bridge sound less intimidating to her. Good! That's what we wanted to do.

One of the callers had tried to get into Layne's Community Ed class, but it was full. So she came to the club Monday and kibitzed (next to Pat). It helped her find out if she was prepared for CHAT. She is. We will be seeing more of her soon.

Group discussion, after a hand has been played, is happening regularly. It works! Insights to better bidding and play pop up from the players and the mentors.

**Here are some recent discussions that I have observed.**

**Bids that limit your hand are very helpful** and give partner valuable information that helps you get to the right contract. For instance:

- 1D – P – 1NT
- 1S – 2H – 2S
- Any NoTrump Opener
- 1H – P – 3H ... and many others

**Not watching for partner's first discard** caused problems a few times. It is so basic, yet we miss it at times. Pay attention. It improves partnership harmony.

**Choosing NT or a suit contract?**

1NT – P – 2D – P

2H – P – 3NT

Your hand is somewhat flat with a 5 card heart suit. After the 1NT opener, you transfer partner to hearts. You have 11 points and want to be in game. You don't know if partner has more than 2 hearts so you bid 3NT. Partner needs to make the decision whether to play 3NT or bid 4 Hearts.

**Reaching the right contract.**

At one table, 3S was bid, making 4. Most of the field bid 3S as well. We walked through the bidding and play and I complemented them on reaching the right contract. They weren't satisfied with that comment. One pair got to 4 spades. "Why didn't we?"

I looked up on the website and found out that Grant was Declarer. I told the table to move on to the next hand. Grant plays aggressively and it works for him. Some people live on the edge. Be wary of opponents that wear cowboy boots.

Grant probably:

- overbid and got lucky. (I'm going with this one.)
- had a convention that you don't use. (he is never short on conventions)
- found information in the bidding that you missed. (again, no luck involved)
- forgot that he was playing bridge and thought he was in a poker game.
- was "pushed" into 4S by competitive opponents (who now regret the push)
- bid aggressively, took some risk and played the hand well.

(This is likely to be the correct answer)

I've played with Grant for a long time. He has to use the back side of his convention card to cover all his conventions. Conventions like **Kokish, Rubinsohl, and AWABAF**. I have studied Kokish for hours. It has only come up once and I screwed it up that time. Even so, it has been a great source of entertainment when having a beer with bridge friends. It was worth the time.

Oh, you might be wondering about **AWABAF**. This one is self-explanatory: "ALL Wild Ass Bids Are Forcing". You need this if you are playing with Grant.

We now have you hooked on bridge. This cannot be reversed (you're welcome). There is no **BPA** -Bridge Players Anonymous. You are not "normal" anymore. I want to give you some advice that might help you appear to be more normal to your family and your friends. I hope it isn't too late. Here it is:

Don't strew the house with Bridge Bulletins, Bridge Books and Convention Cards. Keep them out of most of the bathrooms. If that isn't workable for you then at least limit the number you have on tables and stands in your house. No more than 3 bulletins in a stack, and you might want to put your Bible on top of the stack. That lets them know you do read other things. You have to make sure that a guest has something else to read when they have to use your bathroom.

*Arne Fockler*