

He is one of Michigan's finest

THE BRIDGE CROWD



WOODY BOYD

God gave each and every one of us a brain to think with. I know of no other practical use it has to a bridge player.

Recently, I was challenged by one of our fine players from Plymouth, who asked, "How can you write about so many bridge players of considerably less celebrity and disregard one of Michigan's finest?" The fact is I haven't. Phil Leon of Grosse Pointe Shores is certainly one of our stars, and while his enviable bridge resume hasn't appeared in this paper's pages, it has in some of my other columns on the east side.

Today I will correct that unintentional oversight and pay tribute to him. I like what I originally wrote in my previous chronicles, so with only a modicum of editing I'll pick up from that.

In 40-odd years of first-class play, he has gathered thousands of master points and most of them against the metal of national and regional competition where the mix of participants is majestic and gifts consisting of tricks are few. We club players really have a difficult time appreciating how severe tournament play is, but once you've done it against their likes, you're wiser and totally beholden.

Phil is a quiet partner and player and "them kind" are particularly dangerous. He's there for one specific reason — to beat you — and he does it more often than most. His favorite partners through these years of victories accumulated are more often than not pedestaled on bridge's hall-of-fame stage. I consider him a sneek, and I say that with respect and total reverence.

When you see him coming, press the danger button and flashing lights that dance through your forewarned mulla. He is so laid back and unobtrusive your danger brain-cells just don't get turned on until it's too late. He quietly slips into his seat, pays his graciousness and then proceeds to effectively slay you before you know what's happened.

Recently he did that to this columnist, and as disappointed as I was with my faltering technique, I had to give him his just due. Sitting at my left defending this declarer's no-trump game, he gave me a peek at the possibility of making a dozen, and that was my undoing. Once you perceive three over tricks, it takes a disciplined mind to remember your first responsibility is only nine.

Phil assisted me in my play by ducking a club finesse in rhythm which led me to believe I could achieve a more handsome result. So when I tried it again, snipping my communication from dummy to hand, he won, closing the door on my dream, and I ended taking only eight.

In January at an MBA Sectional, Phil made a play that Alan Truscott of the New York Times would have commended in caps.

Among 34 tables playing four hearts, all but one were successful. Phil contrived a defense that was singular, significant and superb. Witness his exceptional performance.

E	S	Phil	W
-	1♥	-	2♥
-	2A	-	4♥
Passed out			
N/S Vulnerable.			
▲ AQ2	P	N	▲ 763
▲ 532	H	N	▲ 7
▲ 10 9 7 2	L	E	▲ KQ3
▲ K75	I	S	▲ J 10 9 8 3 2
			▲ K J 9 4
			▲ A K J 9 8
			▲ A J
			▲ 8 4

Phil led + 10

Declarer won East's diamond queen and played three rounds of trumps ending in dummy. The trick 5, he led dummy's spade eight to Phil's ace! Yes, Phil's ace! Phil got out with his club seven, and declarer cooed as he could see 10 tricks. He, therefore, won the club ace. Why gamble a second 50-50 finesse when he had found the spade lady on side? He would repeat the spade finesse and pitch dummy's club queen on his fourth spade. Such was not to be, for an amazed declarer watched in horror his second spade play won by Phil's queen followed by the club king and East's diamond king. Down one in an ice-cold contract because of Phil's ingenious defense. Be very careful of these quiet, gracious players, especially if they're named Phil Leon.

The July 15 column was cut due to a mechanical error. Here is the missing copy: The problem is to dump the spade loser and also succeed with the trump finesse as there are only two entries to dummy and one has already been expended. The losing play is the trump nine at trick (3), which a good defender will cover recognizing declarer's problem. The only way the hand can be made is to play the heart king or 10 at trick (3). East will cover, but South can get back to dummy with the club jack at trick (4). At (5), he plays the remaining high heart, pitching his second spade. In spite of what mother taught, you must wait till trick (6) to play trumps. Then and only then is it right to play the diamond nine, which Zeko's partner did in the actual play.

Woody Boyd teaches local bridge classes and is a life master. He lives in Bloomfield Township. To leave a message for Boyd, from a Touch-Tone phone, call 953-2047, Ext. 1853.

Dr. Joyce Brothers to speak at seminar

The Institute of Single Jewish Mothers welcomes mothers to its first event workshop "Putting the Pieces Together" 6-9 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 3, at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus. The program is designed to acquaint single mothers with resources available to them in the local Jewish community.

free event, call 354-1050.

The keynote speaker, psychologist Dr. Joyce Brothers, will present her program on "Unlocking Your Hidden Powers." She will highlight topics to aid single parents or families of single parents in putting their own lives in order, as well as the lives of their children after suffering the difficulties of a loss.

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Sharon Gioia, director of Etiquette and Style Inc. of West

Bloomfield, will teach students social graces in a one-day program designed to build character and self-confidence.

"A Day of Etiquette and Style" will be held Saturday, Aug. 7, at the Ritz-Carlton, Dearborn, for boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 13½.

Price for the day is \$125 per child; each additional child from the same family is \$75. For reservations or additional information, call the Ritz-Carlton at 441-2000, Ext. 436.

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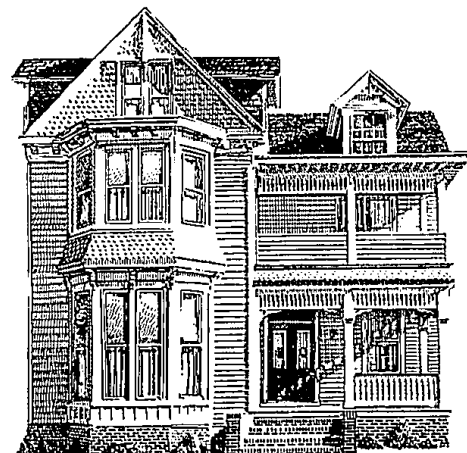
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