

## **From the Director's Desk**

### **When you must ignore your partner!**

Bridge is a partnership game, and much of what we try to do at the Bridge table is communicate with our partner. But sometimes the Law requires us to **ignore** what partner says or does.

Let's start with an obvious example – when partner shows visible signs of displeasure! The opposition wins the auction, you are on lead, and you lead a club. Partner frowns, sighs, wriggles ... You must ignore these signs that partner doesn't like your lead; they constitute "unauthorised information" (and your partner needs to improve his/her table etiquette).

A more complicated scenario can arise in the play of the cards. Let's say that North is declarer, but West makes the opening lead (out of turn) of the Heart Ace. North doesn't accept the lead, and requires East to lead anything but a Heart. In these circumstances, the Ace is no longer a penalty card and West replaces the card in her hand. Now, everyone knows that West holds the Heart Ace, BUT this is "unauthorised information" for her partner. In other words, East must "forget" that her partner holds the Heart Ace.

"unauthorised information" can arise in the bidding as well. A situation that is all too familiar is when partner alerts your bid and then gives an explanation which is different from what you meant– again, ignore your partner. For example, your RH opponent opens 1H and you overcall 2NT, intending to show a weak hand with both minors. Partner is asked for an explanation and states that you have shown a strong hand with a Heart stopper. (Do not flinch!) You must ignore partner's explanation -whether it is right or wrong – and continue according to your original intention. So if partner bids 3C, intending this as Stayman in reply to your presumed strong NT, you must interpret 3C as telling you your partner's preferred minor, and PASS.

Note that if your partner's explanation is correct, and you have made a bid that differs from your partnership agreement (presumably because you have forgotten the system) there is no penalty and no redress for the opposition. But if your partner's explanation is incorrect, you must let the opposition know – at the end of the auction if you end up as declarer, or at the end of the play of the hand if you are a defender. In this case, the Director may well award an adjusted score in favour of the opposition.

Peter Peterson, Tournament Director