Greetings, Bridge Friends.

For well over 20 years, I have been contributing articles to Table Talk. These articles have contained many instructive or entertaining hands. I present here 11 of my favorites.

All of these hands have come up in actual play. None of them are contrived. None come from bridge literature. Interesting hands do come up in actual play. The challenge is to recognize them.

I have wanted to produce a compendium like this for quite a while. The cost of paper distribution proved a sticking point. We have now gone to electronic distribution of Table Talk for about 40% of our membership. I am sending this to my Table Talk email distribution list as a bonus for signing up.

I hope you enjoy reading about these hands as much as I do presenting them. If you enjoy these, I have about a dozen additional hands for a future offering.

#### **RUFF** and **RUFF**

The hand was played in Burlington as part of the June 1997 Worldwide Instant Matchpoint Contest.

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable
S
9753
H
A8
D
KJ5
C
10752

1.

West		East	
S	A108	$\overline{S}$ KQ	)
Н	KQ952	H J64	13
D	A76	D 984	43
C	96	C K8	3

 South
 J642

 H
 107

 D
 Q102

 C
 AQJ4

The bidding went:	West	North	East P	South P
	1H	P	2H	P
	P	2S	3H	3S
	All Pass			

I was West. Partner's opening lead was a low heart and my queen fell to declarer's ace. Declarer led a low spade which partner won, continuing with a heart. I won and led a low diamond to declarer's king. Declarer led another low spade. Partner won the queen and continued a diamond to my ace. I led another diamond to dummy's queen. Declarer led the spade jack from dummy to my ace.

To this point, declarer has lost 5 tricks and must avoid a club loser to avert down 2 and the dreaded minus 200. We have reached the following end position with the lead in the West hand.

Dealer: East	<u>North</u>	<u>1</u>
Both Vulnerable	S	9
	H	Void
	D	Void
	C	10752

West		<u>East</u>	
S		S	
Н	952	Н	J6
D		D	
C	96	C	K83

<b>South</b>	
$\overline{S}$	6
Н	
D	
C	AQJ4

West led the 9 of hearts and, all of a sudden, declarer had a serious problem. Obviously, declarer had to ruff in hand to avoid being trapped in the dummy. What was declarer to discard from dummy? A low club would lead to being trapped after the club finesse. Declarer discarded the jack of clubs, but that didn't work either. Declarer then led the 10 of clubs, but East covered with the king and declarer wound up losing a trick to the 8 of clubs. The only way declarer can avoid a club loser is to save all of dummy's clubs. Therefore, the winning play is a ruff and ruff. **Declarer must trump the 9 of hearts in both hands.** 

### 2. Not So Fast

The hand below comes from a Burlington sectional. You arrive in a somewhat aggressive contract of 4 spades. The defense starts by leading 3 rounds of clubs. You ruff the third round in your hand. Since you have a definite diamond loser, it looks like you'll need the spade finesse to bring home the contract. You lead the queen of spades and let it ride. East follows with a small spade. You continue with the jack of spades. West follows small, but East shows out. West has the protected king of spades. It looks like you'll have to lose a spade and a diamond. West says, "down 1?". Your response should be, in the words of Lee Corso, "Not so fast, my friend." Can you see how to bring home your 4 spade contract despite the four apparent losers?

<b>North</b>	
S	A32
Н	A65
D	9862
C	J62

West		<b>East</b>	
S	K654	$\overline{S}$	7
Н	742	Н	J1098
D	543	D	QJ10
C	AK3	C	Q1074

South	
S	QJ1098
Н	KQ3
D	AK7
C	95

You can make this hand if the side suit distribution is right. Simply cash all your side suit winners and exit with your last diamond. This will put East on lead in the following end position.

<b>North</b>	
S	A
Н	
D	9
C	

West		<b>East</b>	
S	K6	$\overline{S}$	
Н		Н	J
D		D	
C		C	10

South	
S	109
Н	
D	
C	

Whatever East leads, you will trump with one of your honors, West is fixed. If he over ruffs, you will win the trump ace and your other honor will take the last trick. If West

under ruffs, you will pitch dummy's 9 of diamonds and dummy's ace of spades will take the last trick. A seemingly impregnable trump trick has bitten the dust.

I wish I could say that I played this hand correctly at the table. The truth is that I found the correct line in post mortem analysis. Regrettably my post mortems usually follow a mortem.

By the way, if you don't know who Lee Corso is, don't worry. That simply means that you don't waste as much time as I do watching college football.

# 3. Crazy Eights

Some sessions of bridge don't go very well. The opponents are lucky or your partner is even worse than usual. Hard as it may be to believe, you play somewhat less than perfectly. At times like this one has to derive small pleasure from the joy of bridge artistry. Consider the following hand from the second session of the Marilyn Hacker Memorial Pairs.

<b>North</b>	
S	Q84
Н	874
D	A853
C	K83

West		<u>East</u>	
S	10932	$\overline{S}$	KJ65
Н	Q962	Н	103
D	1074	D	QJ2
C	94	C	Q762

<b>South</b>	
S	A7
Н	AKJ5
D	K96
C	AJ105

I ask you to note the most important feature of this deal. The North hand has all four 8s. I was South and became declarer in 3NT on the partnership auction 2NT – 3NT. The opening lead was a somewhat strange 10 of diamonds.

I won the ace in dummy and played a low club to the jack. Now I got the inspiration to try for a trick with my queen of spades. I led a low spade to dummy's queen and East's king.

East was also inspired. He returned the queen of diamonds. I won the king in hand and continued with the 9 of diamonds to East's jack. East now returned a spade. I won with the ace and, concluding that West probably had 4 hearts, I cashed the ace and king of hearts and led my low club to dummy's king. All of this led to the following end position

<b>North</b>	
S	8
Н	8
D	8
C	8

West		<u>East</u>
S	109	$\overline{S}$ J6
Н	Q9	Н
D		D
C		C Q7

<b>South</b>	
S	
H	J5
D	
C	AJ

Dummy was a joy to behold. How often does one achieve 4 of a kind? Reluctantly, I broke the spell. I cashed the 8 of diamonds, throwing a heart and took the club finesse. When I cashed the club ace, West, who was also having a bad day, threw the queen of hearts -- making 5.

# Carnage in Springfield

In the curiosity department is the following hand from a team game at the recent Springfield regional.

North	
S	Axx
Н	XX
D	KJxxxx
C	Ax

Wes	<u>st</u>	East
~	XXX	$\overline{S}$ Jxx
Н	J10x	H AKxxx
D	XX	D Qx
C	KJ9xx	C xxx

<b>South</b>	
S	<b>KQxx</b>
Н	Qxx
D	Axx
C	Q10x

The auction proceeded

4.

North	East	South	West
1D	1H	D	RD
2D	P	2S	P
3H	P	3NT	All pass

The redouble was alerted as a reverse Rosenkranz redouble, showing the values for a 2 heart bid with none of the top 3 honors. This made my queen of hearts look good and I felt fairly comfortable bidding 3NT. West led the jack of hearts which East ducked to preserve communications. I now took 6 diamond tricks, 4 spade tricks, 1 club trick, 1 heart trick and a partridge in a pear tree - making 6 for + 690.

Little did I imagine the carnage that took place at my teammates' table. I don't know the auction, but North became declarer in 3NT. East led a low heart and declarer decided not to put up dummy's queen. The defense now took 5 heart tricks before East shifted to a low club. West covered dummy's 10 with the jack and declarer won the ace. Declarer, for some reason barely fathomable, led a diamond to the ace and took the diamond finesse on

the way back. East won the queen and continued clubs. The defense took in total 5 heart tricks, 4 club tricks, 1 diamond trick and, of course, the partridge in the pear tree. Our teammates were + 600 for a gain of 1,290 on what looked like a fairly innocuous hand.

No one I spoke to was able to beat the record of taking 9 tricks more than the other table in the same contract (assuming one ignores minor difference of playing from the opposite side of the table).

#### 5. SMUGGLER'S NOTCH

Here is a hand from the Swiss Teams at the July 1990 Sectional at Smuggler's Notch. Marilyn and I were defending against 3NT. The auction was straightforward 1N—3N. I led a low heart from the West hand

North	
S	4
Н	J74
D	AQJ104
C	Q1094

West		<u>East</u>
S	K82	S J9763
Н	Q862	Н А93
D	86	D 752
C	A872	C J5

<b>South</b>	
S	AQ105
H	K105
D	K93
C	K63

Marilyn won the A of hearts and returned the 9. Declarer ducked. I won the Q and returned a heart to establish my last heart. Declarer led the king of diamonds and a low diamond to the queen. We have reached an important crossroads. What are we going to discard on the next three diamond winners?

The obvious choice of two low clubs and one low spade will not lead to success. The key to this hand is the jack of clubs. You have no chance unless partner has it. Declarer has given you a clue that partner does have that card. If declarer had it, he would have set up 3 club winners by leading the King of clubs at trick 4.

Declarer has 8 easy tricks, 5 in diamonds and 1 in each other suit. After running diamonds, he will lead a club to the king. If you have discarded two low clubs and one low spade, your final five cards will be S K8 H Q C A8. You will win the ace of clubs, cash your good heart and lead your last club hoping that declarer will misguess.

That shouldn't happen. Declarer knows that your opening lead was a heart from 4 to the queen. He certainly will not credit you with the jack of clubs in addition to the 4 you have already played. Partner's jack will be a dead duck.

I decided to create the illusion that I had the jack of clubs and partner the ace. I discarded one club and 2 spades. When declarer led a low club to the king, I ducked. Declarer continued with a club to the 10. Partner won the jack and returned a spade. I held my breath as I had foolishly held onto my good heart and bared my king of spades. Fortunately, declarer finessed and I had the rest of the tricks with my ace of clubs and my good heart. Down 2. At the other table, the opening lead was club and our teammates had no trouble wrapping up 10 tricks.

# 6. Simply Amazing

Here is a hand from the Swiss Team game at one of our sectional tournaments in the mid 1990s.

As North in first chair I held

I eschewed the possible weak 2 spade bid, because I didn't have two of the top three honors and also because I had 3 outside honor cards. For better or worse, I passed.

The whole auction was	North	West	South	East
	P	1D	P	1S
	P	3D	P	4C
	P	4D	P	6D
	DBL	all pass		

My final double was obviously very speculative, but I have learned that it is some times worth taking a gamble to improve your chances of setting a slam and I did want a spade lead. Most experienced players consider a double of a slam contract to be a Lightner

double (invented by Theodore Lightner, one of the stars of the very early days of contract bridge). A Lightner double asks partner to make an unusual lead and generally asks partner to find your void or to lead dummy's first bid suit. Michael Arnowitt, my partner, thought a bit, concluded that I didn't have a void and dutifully produced the K of spades as his opening lead. The entire layout was

North	
S	K
Н	Kxxxx
D	9xxx
C	XXX

West		<b>East</b>	
S	X	$\overline{S}$	QJxxx
Н	J10xx	Н	Ax
D	AKQ10xx	D	X
C	Kx	C	<b>AQxxx</b>

<b>South</b>	
S	A1098xx
Н	Qx
D	Jx
C	Jxx

I had to hope declarer had the one spade not in plain view. I played my ace on Michael's king and returned a spade. Now we had a trump trick by brute force and declarer had to go down. The opponents, to say the least, were not pleased.

### 7. Men Walk on Moon

Swiss team events, now Sunday fixtures at sectional and regional tournaments, replaced board-a-match teams in about 1970. I played in one of the earliest Swiss teams on July 19 and 20, 1969 in New York City. The event was held over 2 days and consisted of 8 matches of 14 boards each. In the first round, we played the team of B.J. Becker and I had the pleasure of playing 14 boards against one of the all time greats.

On Monday morning one of my friends called to tell me that Alan Truscott's New York Times morning bridge column featured a hand I had played against Mr. Becker. I was not identified by name and the point of the article was to highlight B.J.'s brilliant defense. Still I had never had a hand published and I decided to put away a copy of the paper. Bad luck, I was too late. There was not a copy to be found. A historic event had happened the

day before. The headline was "Men Walk on Moon." Lots of people wanted the paper as a collectible.

Fast forward about 20 years. Barnes and Noble had on sale reprints of newspapers with famous headlines. One of those papers was the July 21, 1969 New York Times. The whole paper had been faithfully reproduced and there on page 32 was my bridge hand. \$9.95 was a small price to pay. I was South; Mr. Becker was East.

North	
$\overline{S}$	
Н	J765
D	Q1064
C	Q8652

West		East	
S	K62	$\overline{S}$	10974
Н		Н	AK3
D	K9752	D	AJ3
C	KJ1094	C	A73

South	
S	AQJ853
Н	Q109842
D	8
C	

Neither side vulnerable. The bidding was

West	North	East	South
P	P	1N	2S
3C	P	P	4H
P	P	D	all pass

Mr. Becker won the diamond jack and decided not to draw 3 rounds of trump. As the cards lay, this would have guaranteed a 1 trick set. Alan Truscott concluded for obscure reasons that Becker's actual defense was superior. At any rate, BJ returned a low diamond which I trumped in hand. I cashed the spade ace and won the next 3 tricks by ruffing in the black suits. Since this established spades, I decided to try trumps. East put up his heart king and returned his remaining low club. I ruffed the club and cashed the spade queen, leaving this position with the trick score 7-2 in favor of declarer.

North	
S	
Н	J
D	Q
C	Q8

West	<u>.</u>	East
S		<u>S</u>
Н		H A3
D	K9	D A
$\mathbf{C}$	KJ	C A

<b>South</b>	
S	J8
Н	Q10
D	
C	

As you can see east still has left most of his opening 1NT bid. At this point, I decided to ruff my J of spades with dummy's J of hearts. If Mr. Becker over-ruffs, I make the hand. Instead he discarded the ace of diamonds. He played the ace of clubs to the next trick and managed to win the last 2 tricks with the A3 of hearts – down 1. The point of the article was that, if you save your aces, you may earn the pleasure of throwing them away.

## 8. Say What??

In the second round of a Saratoga regional bracket 1 KO teams, our team played a team consisting of a client and 3 young phenoms. For those of you not that familiar with the tournament bridge scene, a "client" is someone who pays professional players to play with him or on his team. Usually the client is someone of lesser skill, although not necessarily a weak player. I use the term "young phenom" to describe one of the relatively new, very successful tournament players under the age of 30. In the hand below, our opponents were the client and one of the young phenoms, a player in his mid 20s who has already accumulated over 5,000 master points (makes me aware how little I have actually accomplished).

We were vulnerable against nonvulnerable opponents. I was West in 4th chair with

The bidding	North (client)	East	South (phenom)	West
_	3C	P	4S	Dbl
	P	P	5C	5S
	P	6S	all nass	

South's 4 spade bid was a bit of a shock. It seemed obvious to me that south didn't really have spades and that his 4S bid was a psyche. I was somewhat surprised that it wasn't obvious to everyone to whom I subsequently showed the hand. I guess that's why people make these bids. After my double, South was forced to go back to clubs. I believe my 5 spade was more or less automatic. Just because the opponents have psyched doesn't mean that you're entitled to make a contract at the 5 level. Still you really have no choice. You can't let them steal. The complete hand was

North	
S	7
Н	1075
D	1065
C	KJ10876

West		<b>East</b>	
S	AKQJ95	$\overline{S}$	86432
Н	J4	Н	AQ2
D	KQ43	D	A7
C	2	C	A43

South	
S	10
Н	K9863
D	J982
C	Q95

The opening lead was a club. As you can see, 6 spades is an easy contract. At both tables, declarer ended the hand quickly by taking the losing heart finesse (+ 1,430 at both tables). I believe it will occur to some of you that it is possible to make the overtrick on a different line of play.

Let's try the following sequence of plays: Win the A of clubs and ruff a club in hand with a high spade. Draw one round of trump and lead a diamond to the ace. Now ruff another club in hand. Now lead your remaining trumps. Just before you lead your last trump, the remaining cards are

<b>North</b>	
S	
Н	1075
D	106
C	K

West				East	
S	5			S	86
Н	J4			Н	AQ2
D	KQ4			D	7
C				C	
		Soutl	h		
		S			
		H	K9		
		D	J982		
		$\boldsymbol{C}$			

As you can see, the final spade lead ends the hand. South cannot part with a diamond, since that will give you an additional diamond trick. He also can't part with a heart. Ordinarily, I wouldn't necessarily favor the squeeze line of play over the simple heart finesse. I believe, however, that North's opening preempt makes the squeeze the better line of play.

## 9. The Cuckoo Coup

Resourceful declarer and defender play lends itself to a number of coups. There is a Bath coup, a Deschapelles coup, a devil's coup and even an Alcatraz coup. Now we have a new one, the "cuckoo coup," that I thought briefly of naming as the "Rosenfield coup" in honor of the elderly couple who unintentionally executed this marvel.

On the last Friday of March, the Fort Myers, Florida bridge club threw a party in honor of the many snowbirds who would be departing within the following month. Bridge followed lunch. Our first round opponents were an elderly couple who were a bit slow finishing lunch. We started the first board a bit behind the rest of the field. The husband of this couple suffered from Parkinson's disease. He was sharp mentally, but very slow physically. Here was the hand of affliction. The husband was South; I was East.

North	
S	53
Н	K10
D	AQJ752
C	A65

Wes	<u>st</u>		<b>East</b>
S	J1064	S	972
Н	742	Н	AJ865
D	963	D	4
C	Q103	C	J752

South	
S	AKQ8
Н	Q93
D	K108
C	K98

Here is the auction. No, the final bid is not a typo.

North	East	South	West
1D	P	1S	P
3D!!	P	4NT	P
5S	P	7NT!!!	All Pass

North was responding to Roman Keycard Blackwood and showed 2 aces with the queen of diamonds. South had normal Blackwood on his brain and thought partner had 3 aces. I didn't double the final contract, since that would call for the lead of diamonds, dummy's first bid suit. I hoped partner would somehow find a heart lead, but partner, trying for the safest lead against a grand slam, led a diamond anyway.

In any event, declarer has only eleven tricks outside of hearts, so my ace of hearts looks safe. Hah!! To quote Hamlet, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio." This hand shows that, after 40+ years of bridge, I still have a lot to learn.

Declarer won the opening lead in dummy and for some reason led a club to his hand. He then led a diamond to dummy and said, "Run the diamonds." I must say that I don't like instructions like that. I like declarer to name a specific card to each trick. I certainly didn't want to say anything. I was full from a good lunch and we were outsiders in a local club. Better to just keep my mouth shut. In any event, dummy started running the diamonds.

Declarer, as I have said, suffered from Parkinson's disease and was slow in playing cards from his hand. After each diamond lead from dummy, the dummy would say, "Hurry up and play a card," or "You have to play a card, daddy." At this point, all eyes shifted involuntarily to declarer and we would watch as he fumbled a card out of his hand.

After finishing the diamonds, declarer led a spade to his hand and led his top spades. At the conclusion of his top spades, we arrived at the following end position

North North	
S	
H	K
D	
C	A6

West	
S	J
Н	
D	
C	Q

East	
S	
Н	Α
D	
C	J

South	
S	8
H	
D	
$\mathbf{C}$	9

At this point declarer stated, "How come, I have only 2 cards and dummy has 3?" Dummy said. "You have to throw a card from dummy." Declarer selected the king of hearts and took the last 2 tricks with the A and 6 of clubs, making 7. At this point, we belatedly called the director, who essentially said, "too bad."

OK What happened here? With all of the unintentional misdirection on the run of the diamond suit, dummy managed to play one of the diamonds twice, thereby taking seven diamond tricks instead of 6. Even so, the resulting squeeze would not have worked, because I discarded after dummy. I could throw my ace of hearts after dummy threw the king. With the actual line of play and sequence of events, dummy actually got to discard after I did, instead of before.

This hand has a few other interesting features. Those of you familiar with squeeze play know that you generally need to be within one trick of your contract to effect a squeeze. Declarers frequently "rectify the count" by losing some tricks early to get within one trick. We have just learned how to rectify the count in 7NT. If you can't lose a loser, I suppose an acceptable, even better, substitute is to create an additional winner. The seventh diamond trick rectified the count by raising declarer's trick total from 11 to 12.

One last, interesting, but silly point. How does one score +1,550? This is a bit of a puzzler, but you will eventually figure out 3NT doubled, vulnerable, making 7. That is not, however, the answer I have in mind. How about 7NT, non-vulnerable, with an overtrick? If, in the end position, declarer had kept all three cards in dummy, he could have won trick 12 with the ace of clubs and trick 13 with dummy's small club. That would have exhausted the defenders' cards, allowing dummy to win trick 14 with the king of hearts -- 7NT with an overtrick.

#### 10. Curiouser and Curiouser

How often have you made a preemptive bid and wound up trumping that same suit by the end of the hand? This last defensive hand, from a club game at the Burlington Bridge Academy, is more of a curiosity than anything else. Neither declarer nor the defenders covered themselves with glory. I held the west hand. Right hand opponent opened 1 heart. I entered the festivities with 3 spades. Left hand opponent bid 4 clubs. Partner passed and opener bid 4 diamonds. Lefty raised to 5 diamonds, concluding the auction. I led the king of spades.

		S H D C	xx x AJ85 KQxxxx		
S H D C	KQJxxxx Q 432 xx			S H D C	x K109xxx 76 AJ9x
		S H D C	A10x AJxxx KQ109 10		

Declarer won the spade ace and cashed the heart ace. Declarer followed this with a club to the king and partner's ace. Partner returned the 10 of hearts, on which declarer played low. I ditched a club and declarer ruffed in dummy. Declarer now embarked on a six trick cross ruff, ruffing clubs in hand and hearts in the dummy. Since I had only spades and trumps, I ditched a spade every time, so that at the end of all this, I was out of spades.

At trick 11, declarer led a spade from dummy, partner dumped his last heart, declarer followed suit and I got to trump my original 7 card suit. This was our second trick. Declarer also lost the last trick for down 1. Strange hand!

#### 11. The Grand Salami

Grand slams bid and made are relatively rare. If you bid a grand slam and make it, you expect a good match-point score. If you make a doubled grand slam, you expect to get a top. That's, of course, unless you have the misfortune of doing it in the Friday night game in Montpelier. Mike Bell and Herb Franzen made 7NT doubled for +1,790 and didn't get a top. The top went to Tom Smith and me for 6NT redoubled with an overtrick for +1,860. Here's the hand

<b>North</b>	
S	AKx
Н	XX
D	AKxxx
C	Qxx

South	
S	J
Н	AKQxxxx
D	X
C	Axxx

At my table, Tom opened 1NT and I bid 4C asking for aces. Tom showed 2 aces and subsequently 2 kings. Able to count 12 tricks, I had to decide between 6NT and 7NT. I took the conservative view and was very much surprised to hear a double from right hand opponent. I redoubled (about the only time in my life I have ever done that) and 6NT redoubled became the final contract. The opponents saved the wrong card at the end, so Tom made trick 13 with a low diamond spot.

For Mike and Herb, the bidding went about the same, but the long heart suit decided to gamble 7NT. After all, where there are 12 cold tricks, there are frequently 13. Right hand opponent doubled to end the bidding. Once again the opponents saved the wrong card and Mike and Herb scored up 1,790.

Some people might find it odd that the redoubled small slam with an overtrick actually scores better than the doubled grand slam. Let's do some arithmetic The actual hand was non-vulnerable, but I have provided the vulnerable comparison as well.

	NON-VUL		VUL	
	XX Small Slam	X Grand Slam	XX Small Slam	X Grand Slam
Basic Tricks	760	440	760	440
Game Bonus	300	300	500	500
Slam Bonus	500	1,000	750	1,500
Overtrick	200		400	
Insult Bonus	100	50	100	50
Total	1,860	1,790	2,510	2,490

As you can see, redoubled overtricks are very expensive.

The redoubled small slam wins at both vulnerabilities, but, vulnerable, by a little bit less. It is interesting to note that, about 10 or 15 years ago, the ACBL made a scoring change by increasing the redoubled insult bonus from 50 to 100, a change that certainly seemed to be of little consequence. Look at the vulnerable scoring comparison. Change the 100 insult bonus to 50 and, vulnerable at least, the grand slam would be the winner.

By the way, I think the doublers are out of their minds (my real thoughts are unprintable). Do you have to double just because you have all 10 missing points? The potential profit is small. The potential cost is large. You may actually cost yourself the contract by giving an intelligent declarer a clue to the lie of the cards. The opponents may be wrong to bid their slam, but they are usually not insane. Learn to be content with a small profit.