

Nothing wrong with risks backed by logic

Q: I held five clubs to the A-K-J and four hearts to the Q-J. After my partner opened one diamond, I responded two clubs, and when my partner raised to three clubs, I tried three hearts — and played there! Did I do something wrong? And should I have initially responded one heart instead of two clubs? — **Hard-Luck Hannah, Sioux Falls, S.D.**

this partner; but when all logic says a call is forcing and your partner passes, who is to say what you can and cannot risk?



BOBBY WOLFF
The Aces on Bridge

A: You did nothing wrong. New suits by responder are normally 100 percent forcing, and your three-heart bid showed hearts (typically four) and a game-forcing hand looking for no-trump, hearts, or a reversion to clubs. By the way, passing three clubs with your hand would also have been possible. Yes, you risked a bid that could be passed with

Q: One of your auctions got garbled in transmission to our paper, but it raised an interesting side-issue. After opener starts with two clubs and rebids three clubs over a negative, can responder pass with a bust? And if all he has is one queen, with four small trumps and a doubleton, does he raise clubs — and if so to what level? Or is there a second negative? — **Plenty of Nothing, Madison, Wis.**

A: The three-club bid is absolutely forcing to game. After the bidding starts this way, responder's jump to five clubs denies useful val-

ues such as a side-suit king. With more, responder would bid four clubs. Incidentally, some people play a three-diamond negative by responder at his second turn over three clubs. That seems like an excellent idea.

Q: With ♠ Q42 ♥ 94 ♦ Q5 ♠ AQJ782, would you open one heart or one no-trump? What tells you to choose one action over the other? — **Shooting Fish, Jackson, Tenn.**

A: With a good five-carder and a small doubleton, I think the odds favor opening one heart, regardless of where the hand falls in the strong-no-trump range. I'll manufacture a rebid if necessary, but normally it works out fine. Make the heart jack a small one and the club three the jack, and the hand could go either way.

Q: Would you be kind enough to clarify the meaning of the three-heart bid on the following unopposed sequence:

1♣-1♥-2♣-3♦-3♥? Is the last call promising hearts, showing a control, or asking partner to bid three no-trump with a heart stopper? — **Wandering Hans, San Luis Obispo, Calif.**

A: Whenever the auction is below three no-trump, the primary meaning of a call in the fourth suit in this sort of sequence is a probe for three no-trump. So three hearts here would be fourth-suit forcing, asking partner for heart stoppers for three no-trump. If you held J-x-x, that would be enough to bid no-trump — even 10-third might do in a pinch!

If you would like to contact Bobby Wolff, e-mail him at bobbywolff@mindspring.com.

Beneficial niacin can cause severe itching

DEAR DR. GOTT: I read your column often and notice that you mention taking niacin for many things. I started taking one tablet of 250-milligram time-released niacin to see if it would help lower my blood pressure and my cholesterol levels. After taking it for about 30 days, I was feeling great.



DR. GOTT
United Media

However, one day I began having little pricks throughout my body. Thinking something was terribly wrong with me, I looked on the Internet and discovered some diseases with that symptom. I was just about to make an appointment with my doctor when I looked for information on niacin and discovered that one of the side effects is itching. I discontinued it, and my prickly sensations stopped very quickly.

Does this mean I will not ever be able to take niacin again? Are there other forms that might work better? I had renewed energy and really felt great while taking it.

DEAR READER: Niacin (vitamin B-3) has many beneficial properties. It is used to treat dizziness, headaches, circulatory problems, ringing in the ears, Raynaud's syndrome and depression. In addition, it may increase energy, stimulate circulation, maintain normal blood pressure, raise HDL cholesterol levels and lower LDL cholesterol levels. Other uses are for acne, age-related macular degeneration, arthritis, hardening of the arteries, migraines, psoriasis, cataracts and more. It's no wonder you felt good and had renewed energy while taking this supplement.

The prickly sensation that you experienced is a common side effect. Others include flushing of the face, neck and ears, palpitations, liver irritation and abnormal heart rhythms. Flushing and a prickling can occur when the daily dosage is 50 milligram or higher. While the feelings are often annoying, they are essentially harmless. To combat flushing, an aspirin or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) can be taken for the first week or two with any form of niacin, or an antihistamine

can be taken about 15 minutes prior to usage. This supplement should always be taken with food to prevent stomach upset.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture does not strictly regulate herbs and other supplements. Therefore, different forms or brands of niacin might be more appropriate for you.

A low dose of flush-free niacin can be used as a start for your hypertension and feeling of well-being. Unfortunately, perhaps because of the inclusion of the ingredient inositol hexanicotinate, the flush-free form appears to block any cholesterol benefits that might otherwise be realized. Follow the recommended dosage to maintain your nervous and digestive systems, skin health and to support cell growth.

Extended-release niacin may cause less flushing but can have a higher risk of stomach upset and liver irritation. Clotting problems, headache and decreased thyroid function have also been reported by some users. If the ultimate goal is better cholesterol readings, this is the preferred form.

Foods rich in niacin include lamb, poultry, tuna, eggs, peanut butter, avocados, peanuts, figs and wheat germ. The consumption of these foods will work toward lowering total cholesterol levels naturally, can relieve the pain of arthritis, and may rival prescription drugs or over-the-counter supplements. Remember, the benefits of this vitamin (and many others) can be lost through vigorous food processing, when taking sleeping pills or with alcohol consumption.

Vegetarians, vegans or people who drink alcohol in excess should consider taking a niacin supplement, as diets that lack protein are probably niacin deficient, and alcohol inhibits absorption of the vitamin.

To be on the safe side, check with your primary care physician before making the decision to resume your niacin. A simple blood test is all that is necessary to determine the possibility of vitamin B-3 deficiency.

BRIEFS

Benefit planned for Loyola graduate in Red Wing

RED WING — A benefit for Loyola High School graduate Chris Rodgers will be held from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday at the American Legion in Red Wing. Rodgers had surgery to remove several tumor-like masses in his abdomen area. He has been diagnosed with Adenocarcinoma. The benefit will include dinner and a live and silent auction. Donations may also be sent to: Rodgers Family Fund, Red Wing Cred Union, 3303

North Service Drive, Red Wing, MN 55066.

Mankato schools to hold kindergarten round-ups

MANKATO — Mankato Area Public School will hold the following kindergarten round-ups Thursday: 6 p.m. at Eagle Lake Elementary School; 6:30 p.m. at Franklin Elementary School; 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Kennedy Elementary School; and 6 p.m. Washington Elementary School. For more information, call 387-1868.

Rapidan Heritage Society looking for creamery photos

MANKATO — The Rapidan Heritage Society is looking for pictures of the brick Rapidan Creamery, which currently houses The Peddler of Rapidan. The Red Wing Pottery piece chosen for 2008 is to feature the creamery. However, the Heritage Society doesn't have a picture of the building when it was a creamery. All photos submitted will be scanned and returned. For more information, call (507) 278-3535 or (507) 995-1185.

FAMILY: 'The kids grew up so much during that time'

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Mike and Jules upgraded each other to business-class seating for their 20th anniversary present, another good value over so many flights, especially the long ones.

But the trip did start out a bit rocky. "The first night we flew out was when the whole East Coast went dark," he said.

"A journey of 30,000 miles begins with a single canceled flight," notes the headline for that entry into Jules' blog, <http://takethekidswith.com>.

When they finally left, the trip took them first to Belize, where they had traveled many times during the years Jules worked, telecommuting, for a hotel there.

Then the family traveled to Guatemala, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, China (including Tibet), Austria, Greece, Germany and Ireland. Germany was a five-week stay while Mike taught once per week at the university, and a friend of a friend also found him a four-day lecture series in Czech Republic.

Add in quick drives from Germany on weekends to Switzerland to visit Mike's sister, Belgium, France and the Netherlands, and the list is relatively complete (not counting an airport stop in Singapore).

They left June 8, 2007, right after the school year ended. They came back in October.

While they were gone, the kids kept in touch via e-mail, Internet communication programs, such as Skype, and online games such as World of Warcraft, where they could meet friends and talk in real time.

"A lot of Jack's time was spent trying to find free Wi-Fi," Mike said.

Mike and Jules noted how they've always been a pretty close family, but there's nothing like all sharing one car overnight on the train from Tibet, or having sleep-deprivation meltdowns in crowded airports, to test that closeness.

"When you live like that you are absolutely on top of each other all the time," Jules said. "You get sick to death

TIPS: Life 'can be anywhere I want it to be'

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They'll follow you like half a mile up. 'Hey, you buy, you buy.'

Jules: "The bathrooms, in China anyway, are mostly squatters, pretty much everywhere you go ... and there's no toilet paper."

Germany

Mike: "Not a lot of road signs in English. As soon as (we) figured out that 'ausfahrt' wasn't the name of a community, that it's the word 'exit,' that really helped."

Austria

Mike: "The Euro hit 1.50 while we were there. ... Each Coke was \$9. We drank a lot of water."

Tibet

Jules: "We got out of that plane (at 14,500 feet), and everybody was walking very slowly. Anna's and

Mike's lips turned blue. You could tell right away (the altitude was affecting them)."

Anna: "You know how in certain rooms they'd give you a mint on your pillow? Well these had oxygen bottles."

Greece

Anna: "Everywhere you went they'd kiss the top of your head or your cheeks or something like that."

Ireland

Jules: "Musicians apparently just run around with their instruments all over town and just sit down (and jam) where ever."

Lesson learned

Anna: "The biggest thing that this trip has taught me is that the world is a really big place, and my life isn't just centered in Mankato, Minn. It can be anywhere I want it to be."

Zealand in 2002 for 2½ months to visit their former exchange student.

This time, the kids were much more self-reliant, Jules said, so it was fun to be able to expose them to so much of the world, from Shinto shrines to the Parthenon, from 16,500 feet above sea level in Tibet to tropical coral reef scuba dives in Fiji, and from Ireland countryside walks to a bike ride on an ancient wall in Xian, China.

"The kids grew up so much during that time," Jules said.

Travel will always be a part of their lives, whether it be in the U.S. or abroad.

"The thing is, that if you really love to travel, (a trip) doesn't quench your travel bug," she said. "It just feeds it. It just excites it."

The next family vacation might be a road trip in the United States.

"We're going to go to Brainerd," Mike quipped.

"Truthfully," Jules said, "we haven't done much of our own country. The kids have never been to the Black Hills."

Then, of course, there's South America, Africa ...

"The only things left I need to do before I die," Charlie said, "are skydive and visit the Egyptian pyramids."

of each other, but you also have to count on each other." They at least knew a little

bit of what to expect. Their first major international trip as a family was to New



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