

# GETAWAYS: 'Sisters by birth, friends by choice'

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## Sisters and best friends

Mary Mueller's best friends are her actual sisters, and the six of them, ranging in age from 41-69, for the past 15 years or so, have been spending time together every summer or fall in one of the towns in which they live and taking a bigger vacation together every four or five years, such as San Francisco or Seattle.

They most often take a "four- to five-day weekend," which is sometimes as simple as getting a hotel room and playing cards, shopping and attending a dinner the-

ater in Sioux Falls, S.D. "The past couple of years we have been staying in Sioux Falls and doing things there, as our mother is still living and we include her in our outings."

A family of 12 children, the women are also close to their brothers and try to spend one day with them when they're in Sioux Falls.

"My oldest sister was married and had a child when the youngest one was born," Mueller said, "so she did not really get to know her until we started doing this sister's weekend. ... We are sisters by birth, friends by choice."



Submitted photos

From left are Brigitte Center of San Francisco; Antje Meisner of Madison Lake; Hope Pordy of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Maureen Farnsworth of St. Peter; Tamara Grenier of Boston; and Diane Dusini of Portland, Maine, in Nosara, Costa Rica.

## Finding new friends

Traveling can also lead to new friendships. Six years ago, Antje Meisner of Madison Lake and her best friend, Maureen Farnsworth, of St. Peter went to a women's camp in Mexico to learn how to surf, and their annual girls' trips have been happening ever since. There they met three other women "and immediately clicked,

... (and) as we have traveled, we've picked up some more friends," hailing from San Francisco, Boston, Brooklyn, Albany, N.Y., and Portland, Maine.

"It's difficult to articulate how much fun we have and how much we all laugh. It also amazes me that we

somehow manage to make all our busy schedules work to get together," Meisner said. "We already have our trip for 2009 planned and booked. We do a far-flung surf trip once a year and then spend a weekend on Nantucket together."

The dynamic of a girls' trip is different and amazing, she said. It's all about connecting with other women.

"It's about letting your hair down and laughing," she said. "Plus I only have to worry about myself. No wondering if my kids packed enough underwear. I can go and relax knowing that my husband is at home holding down the fort."

# Pros know when to duck a trick

"The combat deepens. On, ye brave, Who rush to glory or the grave!"

— Thomas Campbell

Knowing when to duck and when to win a trick is difficult to learn. Generally, beginners are all too quick to snatch



**BOBBY WOLFF**  
The Aces on Bridge

tricks offered them. Experience eventually teaches them when to refuse some of these opportunities. Would you have

defended correctly in today's deal?

Against four spades, a diamond lead would have left declarer without recourse, but West chose the passive club lead. Declarer won in hand with the ace and played a spade to dummy's king. East played the ...?

If you played the ace, you would have soon conceded 420. Suppose you return a diamond. Declarer wins in the dummy and finesses in spades. He then crosses to dummy by overtaking his club queen with the king, and finesses in spades again. He can now draw trumps and run the clubs.

Look at what happens if East ducks the spade king. Declarer immediately finesses in spades, but now has a problem crossing back to dummy.

Suppose he follows the same line by overtaking the club queen with the king and leading another spade. East wins (though ducking again works just as well) and plays a diamond. Declarer now can't get back to hand to draw trumps.

Alternatively, declarer may choose to go to dummy with a diamond himself.

Now, when he plays a spade, East goes in with the ace and continues diamonds. As dummy is out of trumps, continued diamond plays will promote a second trump trick for East.

<b>NORTH</b>		06-13-A
♠	K 7 3	
♥	Q 9 8	
♦	A 10	
♣	K J 6 5 3	
<b>WEST</b>		
♠	—	
♥	A J 6 5 3	
♦	K 9 8 6 2	
♣	9 7 2	
<b>EAST</b>		
♠	A 10 6 5 2	
♥	10 2	
♦	Q J 5 4	
♣	10 8	
<b>SOUTH</b>		
♠	Q J 9 8 4	
♥	K 7 4	
♦	7 3	
♣	A Q 4	

Vulnerable: East-West  
Dealer: South

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

Opening lead: Club two

## BID WITH THE ACES

South holds:

♠	Q J 9 8 4
♥	K 7 4
♦	7 3
♣	A Q 4

South West North East  
? ? ? 1 NT

**ANSWER:** I cannot say that it will never work to overcall in the direct seat with this pattern, but it is against the odds. To make two spades, you probably need partner to hold enough high cards that you would have set one no-trump. You also have the advantage of the lead against their contract, so I would recommend passing. In balancing seat it is more tempting to bid.

If you would like to contact Bobby Wolff, e-mail him at [bobbywolff@mindspring.com](mailto:bobbywolff@mindspring.com).



From top left are Anita Morris, Mary Mueller and Georgiana Donahue. From bottom left are Karen Anderson, Cheryl Barenklau and Eileen Muellenberg.

# CATS: It becomes personal when dinner is your pet

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after her three-legged gray cat went missing: Balls of Zeus' gray fur and cat bones were licked clean. Reischmann found a similar scene a few weeks ago after Rufus, a long-haired marmalade cat, disappeared. The cats are two of five Reischmann lost in the past year and a half.

"I still am haunted about it," she said. "I think, 'That's nature,' but when they're your pets, it becomes a little

more personal."

Owners can help protect their pets from facing the same fate with a few precautions, Sillars said. Coyotes are typically more active at dawn and dusk, so pets should be kept inside especially at those times. Dog owners should walk their small canines with a leash and during daylight.

If people see a coyote while with their pets, they should pick up their furry loved ones and walk in the opposite direction, Sillars

said. It's unlikely for coyotes to attack humans because they prefer smaller meals, but humans won't stop the wildlife from coming after Fido or Fluffy.

With development forcing wildlife to adapt to humans, people will have to adjust to the nature that surrounds them, Sillars said.

"People are going to have to learn to change their behaviors," she said.

This is an issue residents in neighboring Leesburg, Fla., had to face in recent

years as dozens of cats disappeared, resident Gretchen Summers said. Though the 52-year-old cat lover understands how the natural world works, she wishes it didn't happen at the expense of her beloved cat, Penny. Summers last saw her 16-year-old pet in July when the cat insisted on staying outside one night.

"It's sort of a Catch-22," she said. "We're causing them to lose their hunting ground. I feel for the coyotes losing their homes. But, of course, there's no replacing our cat."

# Sister fears teen may suffer from eating disorder

**DEAR ABBY:** My younger sister "Marni" is 15 and paranoid about her weight because when she was younger she was teased about being fat.

From what I have learned on the Internet, she may suffer from anorexia.

Marni barely eats most of the time, but occasionally she'll stuff herself and then get rid of it by throwing up in the bathroom. She has also started taking laxatives. We share a room, so I see her without her clothes on, and her body is wasting away. It's not obvious when she's dressed, but when she's undressed she's literally skin and bones.

Marni says she's "fine" and will stop her behavior "once she gets her weight down," even though she's already much too thin. She won't let me say anything to Mom, who doesn't seem to realize what's going on. What should I do? I know she needs help. — **Anxious in Lexington, Ky.**

**DEAR ANXIOUS:** Marni is NOT fine. You should tell your mother immediately what she has been doing because her life could depend on it. Her distorted body image is not her fault. She needs professional help and should be seen by your family physician immediately.

Throwing up after meals and taking laxatives are symptoms of a severe, life-threatening eating disorder. As you probably learned online, anorexia has the highest mortality rate of any mental illness.

Nearly 10 million women and 1 million men suffer from an eating disorder. The National Eating Disorders Association has many thousands of members and offers programs and information to support

individuals, families and friends who have been affected by eating disorders. Its Information and Referral Helpline ((800) 931-2237) and Web site ([www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org)) offer the latest information available on recognizing the early warning signs and getting quality treatment and support.

Eating disorders are treatable if caught in time, and recovery is possible. Marni is fortunate to have a loving sister who cares about her welfare, and I'm glad you wrote.

**DEAR ABBY:** My daughter is 20 and finishing her second year of college. She lived in a dorm the first year and now shares an apartment in another city. When she comes home for the weekend, do I have the right to expect her to follow a few rules while she's under my roof? She thinks she should be able to do whatever she wants since she is 20 and living independently while at college.

I think she should show us respect by abiding by her curfew (2 a.m.) and not spending the night with her boyfriend. I am tired of lying awake waiting to hear her come in so I'll know she's safe. What she does at school is different because I'm not so tuned in to her comings and goings, but when she's here, I worry. Am I asking too much,

or is she being inconsiderate? — **Exhausted and Frustrated, Hamilton, Ohio**

**DEAR E AND F:** I think we both know the answer to that question. If your daughter were as mature as she thinks she is, she would understand that it's a parent's job to worry. She'd have more sensitivity and respect for your feelings, and be less centered on herself.

*Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren. Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*



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