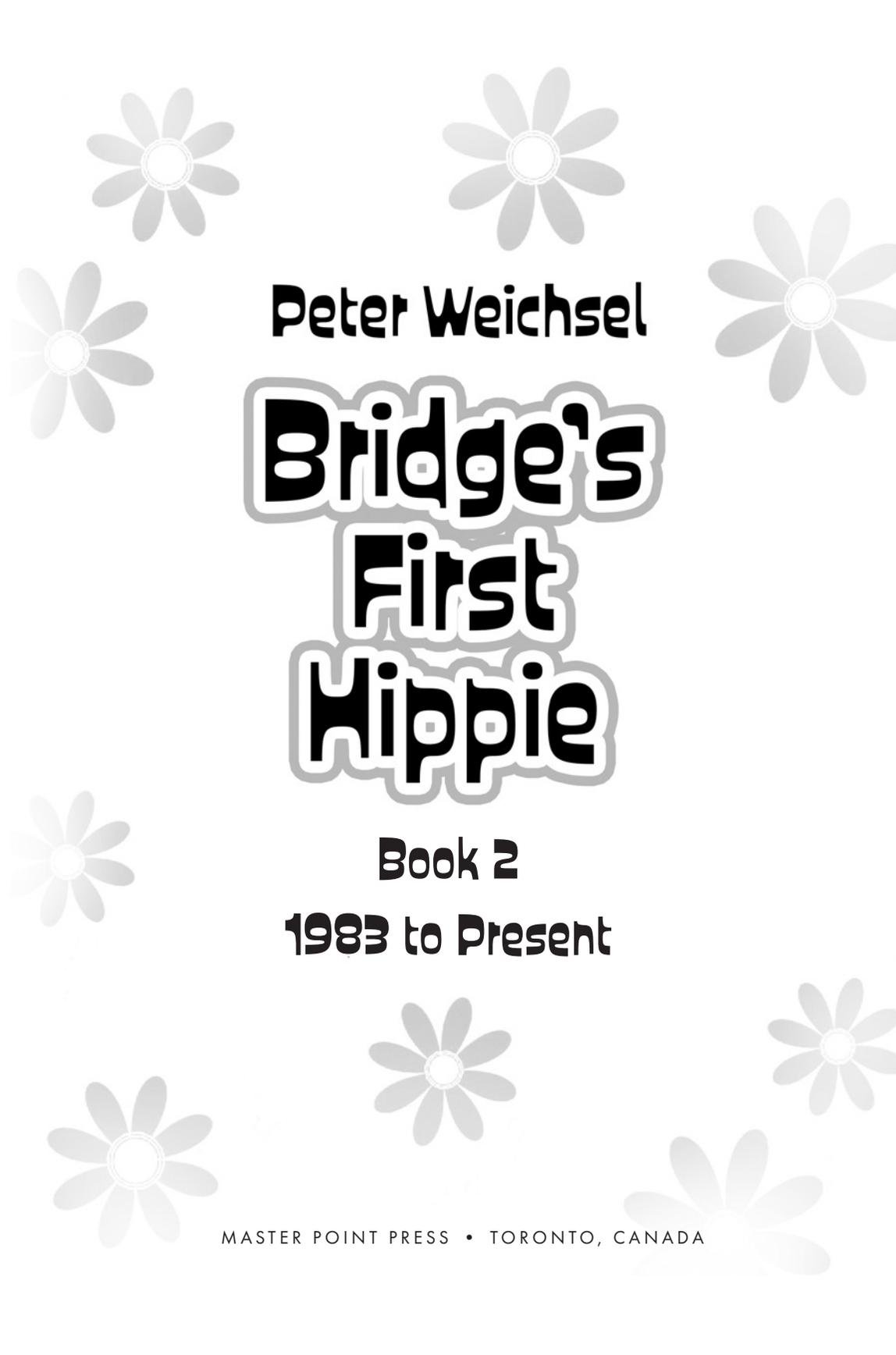


Peter Weichsel

# Bridge's First Hippie

Book 2  
1983 to Present

The background of the cover is white and features several stylized, light gray flowers scattered across the page. Each flower has eight petals and a central circle with a smaller inner circle. The flowers are positioned at various angles and sizes, creating a decorative pattern.

**Peter Weichsel**

**Bridge's  
First  
Hippie**

**Book 2**

**1983 to Present**

MASTER POINT PRESS • TORONTO, CANADA

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# Author's Foreword

If you're reading this, I hope you read Book 1, as I would refer you to that foreword. I would only add that once again I want to thank *The Bridge World* and editor Jeff Rubens for their terrific coverage of all the main events. I also want to recognize, in particular, Edgar Kaplan, for injecting his infectious humor into many of his tournament analyses.

Hope you enjoy the second forty years.



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# Prologue

As my readers will recall, Book 1 ended with my career reaching the zenith to that point — the Bermuda Bowl, the crown jewel of bridge. Held in Stockholm in '83, I was part of the US Aces/Aces/Dallas Aces — a last appearance for this team, as its creator and sponsor, Ira Corn, had passed away before we won the longest and most exciting Bermuda Bowl ever held. Alan Sontag and I were also a lame-duck pair, as we were heading off in different directions.

That left me to travel down many paths for the rest of my bridge career and personal life. Book 2 chronicles those paths, which were quite a ride in so many ways.



*Peter Weichsel, 2023*

# Chapter 1

## 'She's the One' — *Bruce Springsteen, '75*

After finally winning the Bermuda Bowl at the end of 1983, it was time to return home and take stock.

Marcia and I were growing closer and closer despite our relationship being a cross-country one. I brought her and her two boys down to Miami for a week's vacation. I got to know Craig and Reed better, having only spent a little time with them in Portland. Marcia would come to almost every Nationals, as well. Our relationship was getting very serious and I was really in love.

At about this time I was spending most of my time at Aventura in North Miami Beach. However, during the few months that the weather in New York was ideal, late spring and early fall, I would commute to New York, where I had kept my rent-controlled apartment, and hang out at the Mayfair. One Sunday night, I was flying home out of the Miami airport. It was the last flight, and the airport was very quiet. As I went through security, such as it was back then, there was a fellow right behind me that had an incredible likeness to Mick Jagger. But he was alone; that couldn't possibly be him, as he was sure to have an entourage accompanying him. However, the likeness was remarkable. I thought the only way to be sure was to get him to talk. His strong English accent would give him away. He did seem quite out of it, as well.

I dawdled about for a few moments until he came through security. He was obviously totally ripped. I went up to him and asked him if he was okay, and would he like me to help him to his gate? There were pretty much only two flights left, both to New York: one to LaGuardia, which I was on, and one to JFK right next door. He mumbled something, mostly incoherently, but I did get out of it "JFK", in what sounded British to me. I said, "I'm Peter, and I'll help you get to your gate". "Right, I'm Mick," he said, in an unquestionable London accent.

We stumbled along and I deposited him at the gate to the flight to JFK. There it was, Mick Jagger all by his lonesome wandering around the Miami airport.

Bridge-wise, now that my mission with Alan was complete, it was time to turn my attention back to my next partnership with Mike Lawrence. We had very little time before the Reisinger to form our system. He was very familiar with strong-club systems from being on the Aces and I had been playing Pre-

cision for thirteen years, of course. But the time squeeze convinced us that in order to develop a useful strong-club system, we would need more time. So, we developed our version of standard methods. We hit it off instantly and were doing quite well in the team events — but not great. We were happy with the methods we were playing and decided to stick with them. These methods would continue into my next partnership with Bobby Levin, who had no interest in learning strong-club methods.

Mike and I agreed we would play the national pairs games, as well, since neither of us were hired for them. Incredibly, Mike had never won a national pairs game. Surprising; but he had been hampered by playing with clients a good amount of the time. So, we started our pair adventures at the 1983 Fall Nationals in Miami in the Blue Ribbon Pairs. It was homecoming for me, to have the Nationals at the Americana Hotel, where I had played so many Southeastern Regionals. It was five miles from my apartment. We had been doing extraordinarily well and when it was over, we knew we had a good chance of having won it. We waited for the scores to come out and, despite having a very good score, we lost the event to Larry Cohen and Marty Bergen by a half a matchpoint. They were a great matchpoint pair and they proved it once again here.

On to the Reisinger, for which we had added Billy Eisenberg and Eddie Kantar in place of Lipsitz-Silverman. Billy and Eddie had a long string of successes and we were the favored team in the event. Another team of particular interest were my nemeses, Kaplan-Kay, along with Bill Root and Richard Pavlicek, both from Miami. They were defending and added the great Oswald Jacoby — he was retiring and they wanted to give him one last chance for glory. They were the sentimental favorite because of that. Of course, Ozzie (as he was commonly known) invented the Jacoby Transfer that became invaluable over notrump openings. Over time, the idea of transfers has become a mainstay of practical bidding.

On Day One, we had two monster sessions — I believe we won more than forty boards out of fifty-two, which gave us a comfortable lead. There was a partial carryover, so our lead was condensed. On Day Two, we had two more huge games and we were way ahead of anybody. However, the maximum carryover into the final day was four boards. So, I believe we had a two-and-a-half-board lead over second and more over everybody else. Well, not surprisingly, we came back to earth in the finals. It was a rough day but our carryover was keeping us in the lead. The Kaplan team had made a run and were right on our heels and it came down to the last board. Mike and I had a good result on it and if we won the board, we won the event. If we halved the board, we would tie for first, which would satisfy so many people who were rooting for Ozzie. Of course, if we lost the board (doubtful), we would be second. Finally, Billy and Eddie came to compare

and Eddie was visibly disturbed. He was extremely apologetic and explained that he had revoked on the last hand. We lost the board and the event.

Our adventures as a pair improved from there. In the Spring '84 Nationals in San Antonio, we won the four-session pairs event comfortably, a first for Mike. On to Washington DC for the Summer Nationals, the site of the Edith Rosenkranz kidnapping. We played in the six-session Life Master Pairs. Turnabout is fair play; we won the event by half a matchpoint over Sontag and Steve Sion of Cokin-Sion fame. Of course, they had been convicted of cheating (see Chapter 18). Why Sion was allowed to play and why on earth Alan would be playing with him was a mystery to me; but it gave me great pleasure to beat them by a measly half a point. I can imagine the pain they endured thinking about the myriad ways they should have won the event. That was three national pairs events: second, first, first. Unfortunately, the knockouts didn't go as well and we didn't get far in either. The Eisenberg-Kantar experiment was not proving a success. What to do?



*Peter and Marcia, 1984*

In the summer of '84, a strong team of Americans was invited to play in South Africa in their national tournament (to be held in Swaziland, now Eswatini) and some other arranged events. At the time, South Africa was banned from participating in any international bridge tournaments because of their apartheid policies. They had, however, staged events like this one as their only way to compete with international experts. When Marcia confirmed that she could go, I convinced Mike that it would be great fun and educational. Great; he would go, along with B.J. Becker, Edith Kemp (now Freilich), Billy Eisenberg and their significant others. I'm sure Billy had a partner but who is not coming to mind just now.

It's 8,000 miles from JFK to Tambo Airport in Johannesburg, South Africa and our plane had to make a stop in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean to refuel. That was the eeriest place I had ever been to. It was a tiny island with a big runway and an office where you could get a snack and coffee, etc. There was nothing else at all. It was insanely windy; those of us who did disembark were getting pushed toward that office. I felt like I was on another planet.

Arriving in Johannesburg, we were warmly greeted by the hosts. They had planned an incredible trip throughout their country, culminating in Swaziland, which was high up in the mountains, landlocked within the RSA. The plan included lots of bridge, which was of a bit of a concern, primarily because B.J. was getting on age-wise and we weren't sure how much he could endure. After a relaxing night, we played in a local event for a couple of days. From there, we headed off to Kruger National Park, their national wildlife refuge park with incredible numbers of animals. We tried to count them but we stopped after about 2,000,000 impala. There were wildebeests and hyenas but the animals of choice to view were elephants, giraffes and especially lions. We spent a few nights in huts in the park and finally encountered two prides of lions. We also visited their cheetah farm, where that cool picture of Marcia and me was taken.

We went on to Durban, a very large city on the Indian Ocean. It's the third most populous city in RSA, behind Johannesburg and Cape Town. We had a very short stay and then flew to Port Elizabeth, now named Gqeberha, on the southern tip of South Africa, where the Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean converge. It is a beautiful city with tons of beaches and spectacular views. Here, we were to stay with various families and play some bridge. The Joburgs told us how warm and friendly the Port Elizabethans were. However, they mentioned a 'Mitzi', who was quite garrulous. For those of you who don't know him, Michael is not particularly sociable, and he was praying on the flight over that she would not be his host.

When we arrived, they greeted us at the airport and introduced us to some of the hosts. "Marcia, you and Peter will be staying with a lovely couple with two well-behaved sons. Michael, you'll be staying with Mitzi." Well, he turned visibly pale and wandered off, mumbling something, as he almost walked into a wall. Marcia and I were struggling to not laugh out loud. However, they had been told that we wanted to play lots of bridge and they had organized a three-day marathon. None of us wanted to hear that but that's what we did. We played non-stop bridge for three days. I felt bad for B.J. since it was very tiring for him.

Finally, we flew to Swaziland for the real bridge. We had to board these small planes, which was a bit rough for Marcia, as her back had been giving her trouble from all the bus rides. Swaziland was incredible, at about 4,000 ft. altitude; the air was sweet and the heat was dry. We were treated like

royalty there and the bridge was good. They had one very good pair: Neville Eber and his partner, Brian Mervis. We spent a week there and I noticed B.J. nodding out at the pool quite regularly during our time off. We flew back to Johannesburg and then back home. The entire excursion had caused Marcia a lot of pain and discomfort. Her back had deteriorated considerably and it was determined that she needed another laminectomy and a two-level spinal fusion. Then, I made one of the biggest changes of my life: I moved out to Portland for the time being to take care of her. We were getting closer and closer and the time had finally arrived. We were getting married and we set a date of December 6. It would just be a family affair, with her parents and her children attending. The move was a major culture shock for me: I had become very used to the decadent, sports betting, partying lifestyle of North Miami Beach. But my course was clear — I was going to be a family man. On December 6, I gave up all drugs, our sports betting empire (much to Jason's chagrin) and my two apartments, and moved to Portland.

I hoped my stay in Portland wouldn't be for long. The plan was to take the family and head south to the LA area and find a house in one of the beach towns. The only fear was that Marcia's ex-husband would attempt to keep us in Oregon. We hired psychologists, who interviewed the boys, now eleven and eight, and determined that it would be a good move for them. After a few months of planning and extrication, we packed up our cars (I had had my 500SL shipped out to Portland). We got stuck in Ashland, not far from the California border, because of a winter storm. The mountains were pretty much impassable because of the heavy snow. So we spent the night in Ashland, which is a very artsy town. We looked around the town the next day, which was very cool. Ultimately, we arrived in Westwood in LA. Billy Eisenberg was living there with his girlfriend and they invited us all to stay with them until we figured out where we were headed. We were like nomads. We did rent an apartment across the street in the interim.

I went driving around the beach towns for weeks, looking for a house that would be suitable; with little success. Marcia decided to visit a good friend of hers in Encinitas, in north San Diego county. She told her of our plight and they decided to explore Encinitas. Within ten minutes, she saw a house that she decided was our new home. It was a cute 2,000 square-foot corner house that had a gorgeous backyard with tall palm trees and an Italian-tiled gazebo with a jacuzzi. It had beautiful, well-tended gardens front and back. And it was less than half the price of the homes I had been looking at. That was that: we were home. In those days, Encinitas was idyllic, with zero traffic and almost no traffic lights; there was one mall. Now, there is a traffic light on almost every corner and a mall on every block. It has tripled in population, there's lots of traffic and it's virtually unrecognizable from the peaceful town we moved into in '85. We lived there for twenty-five years. The schools were great, the kids adjusted super well and we were happy.

# Chapter 2

## 'Changes' — *David Bowie*, '71

In the meantime, there was still my bridge career. Billy and Eddie hadn't worked out; so who better than to replace them with than the obvious: Meckwell. We started in the '84 Reisinger, where we finished a respectable fifth, then on to Montreal for the '85 Vanderbilt. Mike and I rested on our laurels and didn't play the pairs game. We were the #2 seed in the Vanderbilt, behind (who else?) Kaplan-Kay and Pavlicek-Root.

There weren't enough teams for a full round of sixty-four on Day One, so there were three- and four-way matches to reduce the field to thirty-two. That was particularly annoying for the strong Rosenkranz team (Wold, Andersen-Baze, Bergen-Cohen), who lost to quite a good Canadian team on the first day. Day Two saw the departure of an even better team, Funk (Lair, Goldman-Soloway, Passell-Hamilton) by 2 IMPs. On Day Three, it was the #5 seed, Lewis (Crossley, Martel-Stansby, Petersen-Kerri Shuman), who failed to make it.

The quarterfinals saw some very good matches. The #8 seed, Ouimet (Chazen-J. Jacoby and my boys Hamman-Wolff) took care of Kaplan. The #6 seed, Bramley-Bluhm and Katz-Milt Rosenberg, beat the #3 seed, Robinson-Boyd, Manfield-Woolsey. In the other top-half match, Crane (Sanders, Chorush-Nail, Morse-Sutherlin) crushed Pomylkaski, that good Canadian team. We had a tough match against Russell (Solodar, Berkowitz-Lilie, B. Cohen-Levin) but prevailed by 27. Bobby Levin was to become my partner and Bluhm-Bramley were to become teammates. Professional bridge is truly musical chairs.

So, the semifinals were Ouimet vs. Crane and us vs. Bramley. The Ouimet-Crane match was filled with huge swings, mostly going to Crane; they were up 20 after three boards and up 48 at the quarter. They had built the lead to 76 when a 15-IMP disaster befell them but finished up 61 at the half, 117-56. 173 IMPs on thirty-two boards, almost 5-1/2 IMPs per board; that's a lot of scoring. The third quarter saw swings back and forth, Crane gaining 3 more IMPs to lead 150-86. Ouimet rallied in the fourth quarter but ultimately lost by 36 in a high scoring affair, 174-138.

The seating for Set One in our match was a concern to me. Mike and I were out and, yes, I'm a slow player but I was worried that Rubin-Becker vs. Bluhm-Bramley might create a time issue; and boy, did it ever. Agreed, there were a number of very complicated play hands; but they exceeded the grace period with three boards to go. I suspect the time bandits were watch-

ing this very closely. There were swings back and forth and before the last three hands were played, after the time had expired, the match was even. But those last three hands had two slam swings. First, Bluhm-Bramley had a RKCB mix-up and bid a slam off two aces, +11 IMPs; then:

♠ K Q 8 5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">             N W     E S           </div>	♠ A 9 6
♥ 7		♥ A 9 4
♦ A 5 3		♦ Q J 7 6
♣ A Q J 10 7		♣ K 8 4

West	North	East	South
<i>Meckstroth</i>		<i>Rodwell</i>	
1 ♣	pass	2 ♥ <sup>1</sup>	dbl
3 ♣	pass	3 ♦	pass
3 ♠	pass	3NT	pass
4 ♣ <sup>2</sup>	pass	4 ♥ <sup>3</sup>	pass
5 ♦ <sup>4</sup>	pass	5 ♥ <sup>5</sup>	pass
6 ♣	all pass		

1. 14+, bal.
2. Keycard.
3. Zero or three.
4. Asks for kings.
5. Zero.

West	North	East	South
<i>Bluhm</i>		<i>Bramley</i>	
1 ♣	pass	1 ♦	pass
1 ♠	pass	2 ♥ <sup>1</sup>	dbl
3 ♦	pass	3NT	all pass

1. FSF.

6♣ is not quite cold but it is a very good contract. You have three chances: the ♦K inside (in front of the QJ), 3-3 diamonds or 3-3 spades. I'm surprised that both responders bid 3NT, especially Bramley (who is a very careful bidder) after Bluhm voluntarily bid 3♦ over the double. Meckstroth continued over 3NT because he did know his partner had 14+ and the 3♦ bid had to be helpful. Nothing worked in diamonds but the spades were 3-3: +10 IMPs. So, we were ahead 51-31 after one quarter.

Early in the second quarter, there was a good play hand:

♠ A Q 8 6 3 ♥ K ♦ K 10 7 6 4 ♣ K 5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;">                     N                      W     E                      S                 </div>	♠ J 5 2 ♥ A Q 7 4 2 ♦ Q 9 ♣ 9 8 4
---	--	--

You get the ♥J lead against 4♠; how should you proceed? You can rise ace and discard a club on the ♥Q and hope that things don't get out of control. Or you can win the ♥K and lead a diamond and hope both aces aren't wrong for you. You should be in pretty good shape, especially if the ♦Q wins. So, up or down, Mr. Brown? In case it helps, Bluhm went with the former and Lawrence went with the latter. Both aces were wrong and other things were favorable; 13 IMPs back to Bramley. But then we went on a run. Mike and I bid a good game, Meckwell bid a not-so-good game which made, a few partscore pick-ups and, all of a sudden, we were up 50.

And then the tide turned. Meckstroth preempted twice when he shouldn't have. He went for a number on one of those boards and didn't save on the other when his partner cooperated; he did have extra defense for his preempt, however, so saving was debatable (but right). Finally, you hold:

♠ Q 10 7   ♥ 10 9   ♦ K 8 6   ♣ A 10 9 6 2

in second seat at favorable colors. LHO opens 1♥ in third and his partner responds 2♣ (Drury); do you double or not? Meckstroth passed and 4♥ made easily. Rosenberg doubled and Katz saved over 4♥, -300 and 8 more IMPs for Bramley. At the half, the score was back to where it started, 96-75. Easy come, easy go!

The third set went on a roller coaster. There were swings both ways and they had the lead until the last board of the set, when Becker-Rubin defended a vulnerable game properly while Lawrence was allowed to make it at the other table. We had the lead, 128-122, heading into the final quarter.

Mike and I were out for the last set and we immediately lost the lead on a hand where Katz-Rosenberg bid and made a vulnerable game that I was told was less than 2%. Then, we got a bit of luck back on a curious hand:

E-W vul.

♠ A  
♥ J 9 8 6 3  
♦ A K J 9 7 6  
♣ 10

♠ K Q J 4 3  
♥ 10 7 5 4 2  
♦ —  
♣ K 9 2



♠ 7 6 5 2  
♥ A  
♦ 10 8 4 2  
♣ J 6 5 3

♠ 10 9 8  
♥ K Q  
♦ Q 5 3  
♣ A Q 8 7 4

West	North	East	South
<i>Bluhm</i>	<i>Meckstroth</i>	<i>Bramley</i>	<i>Rodwell</i>
			1♦ <sup>1</sup>
1♠	2♦ <sup>2</sup>	3♠	pass
4♠	5♦	dbl	all pass

1. Precision.
2. 2/1.

West	North	East	South
<i>Becker</i>	<i>Rosenberg</i>	<i>Rubin</i>	<i>Katz</i>
			1♣
1♠	2♦	2♠	3♦
3♠	4♠	pass	5♣
pass	5♦	pass	6♦
all pass			

To start off, both Wests overcalled 1♠ with what looks like a Michaels bid to me; yes, the spades are good and the hearts are weak; but you do have five of them. That certainly kept the bad heart break unknown. I'm pretty sure that Katz-Rosenberg wouldn't have bid a slam that was doomed by the bad break if a Michaels bid had been employed. Also, similarly to an earlier hand, Bluhm-Bramley doubled a game where their opponents didn't double one level higher. It looks like the double was the winner.

The play in 5♦ started with the ♠Q lead — Rusinow or tactical? Declarer won with the ace, then played the ace of trumps and a heart. Now, Bramley, in with the ace, had a choice and he opted for a second trump. Rodwell pulled the trumps, cashed the high heart, ruffed a spade and had the ♥J98, conceding one to the ♥10, for his eleventh trick and still had a trump to get back to the good heart, +550. If Bramley continues spades instead, Rodwell is an entry short and the 4-0 diamond break dooms the hand. +100 would

have pushed the hand as 6♦ went down two; but instead, a 12-IMP loss and we were back in front.

Then, another lead problem; this one is a very large swing. You hold

♠ K 9 6 ♥ A 8 ♦ Q 5 4 3 2 ♣ A 6 5

both vulnerable. RHO opens 1♥, you double, LHO bids 2NT (limit raise). Then, 3♠ by partner and 4♥ on your right ends the auction. What's your lead? Of course you led a diamond to partner's ace to get a spade back and defeat the hand. Oh, actually, you led a spade because partner summoned up a 3♠ bid. Who is to blame? Not you — your partner bid 3♠; if he hadn't, you would have led a diamond. You still would have survived if Bramley had kept his doubling shoes on, as Rodwell's 4♠ doubled would have gone for at least 800 and even possibly 1100. Seemingly gun-shy from previous doubles not working out, he let this one go after his bold 4♥ bid got Rodwell to jump into the pool, shall we say.

Rodwell's not one for low roads. He subsequently held

♠ K J 7 ♥ Q J ♦ K Q 7 6 5 ♣ Q 10 5

After opening (okay), he freely bid and then accepted an invitation to game. Not surprisingly, -200 and 7 IMPs when Katz didn't compete and scored +110 when his partner made 2♠. Far be it for me to criticize; they've won I don't know how many world championships, and too many national championships to count, with that same style.

We did get those 7 IMPs right back when a Flannery auction by Bluhm-Bramley kept them out of game, while a 1♥ opening and a raise induced a takeout double, making it easier to get to game and guess spades with KJ10x facing xx. Things were looking pretty good: we were up 24 with just a few boards to go. But this match was never, ever going to be easy. We lost 7 IMPs when Rubin made one trick fewer than Bramley in 2♠ doubled.

Then, the luck factor struck again. This is a very difficult hand since you have great values but they are very misfitting:

♠ — ♥ A Q 7 ♦ A Q J 9 5 4 ♣ A 10 9 5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">                     N                      W     E                      S                 </div>	♠ A K 7 4 2 ♥ K J 5 2 ♦ 2 ♣ Q 8 7
---	---	--

West	North	East	South
<i>Bluhm</i>		<i>Bramley</i>	
1♦	dbl	1♠	pass
2♣	dbl	2♥*	pass
3♦	dbl	3NT	pass
4♥	all pass		

Nothing was terrible and Bramley took 11 tricks, +450. Becker-Rubin started with a strong club, a control response and then a bunch of relays and responses eventually showing responder's shape and strength. Great; except they were past 3NT and 4♥, so Becker settled for 5♦, which looks quite good. Unfortunately, the ♦K10xx were offside and the club lead was from nothing, so he had to go down; 11 more IMPs away and we were ahead by only 6. After a good save picked up 3 IMPs, we were up 9 going into the last hand.

### Great Minds Think Alike

Why couldn't we have a nice flat board to end the match? Actually, we did; except for that subtitle:

N-S vul.  ♠ 5 3 2 ♥ 10 7 ♦ Q 3 2 ♣ J 9 6 5 2	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">                     N                      W     E                      S                 </div>	♠ A J 8 7 ♥ A Q 9 ♦ 10 7 4 ♣ A K 7  ♠ K 10 9 6 ♥ 3 2 ♦ J 9 8 6 5 ♣ Q 3  ♠ Q 4 ♥ K J 8 6 5 4 ♦ A K ♣ 10 8 4
---	---	---

West	North	East	South
Meckstroth	Bramley	Rodwell	Bluhm
			1♥
pass	2NT*	3♠!	4♥?
all pass			
Rosenberg	Rubin	Katz	Becker
			1♥
pass	2♣ <sup>1</sup>	2♠!	pass
pass	3NT	all pass	

1. GF relay.

Thanks to that archaic, arcane scoring system for doubled undertricks, the game was different back then. In Book 1, I discussed a hand that I thought might have been the impetus to correct the mistake; but I'm thinking perhaps this one may have been the hand to spur the powers that be to amend the rules. If you were confident the vulnerable opponents were going to bid a slam, you had carte blanche to interfere. Now back to this hand. Katz, knowing that a three-step or higher interference breaks the relay that he feared, cautiously (!) bid 2♠. I say "cautiously" only in context. I'm not sure why they couldn't find their way to slam anyway. Playing four-card majors, it seems pretty clear to me to bid 3♥, in which case I can't imagine that they wouldn't have got to a slam. Or if Rubin had stopped off to double 2♠, that looks like down six for +1100 at least. That would protect against 1430/1440 at the other table, as that would be only an 8-IMP loss. Win by 1! Nothing better than that.

At the other table, Rodwell's 3♠ bid is startling — or should I say hyper-aggressive? — but I don't see why that should have stopped them. Bluhm's 4♥ bid is mystifying. Perhaps he was expecting a save and was trying to protect the ♠Q. That put a lot of pressure on Bramley to bid. Nowadays, his hand would pass to deny any control in spades, while a 5♣ bid to promise both a spade control and a club control would surely have got them to the slam. I can't help thinking that last-board pressure increased the tension and affected the mindset of a couple of players. My special thanks to Rodwell for his hyper-aggression; and on to the final, which would be starting without the typical good night's sleep, as we didn't finish until the wee hours.

Now back to the aforementioned time bandits. There was a disciplinary committee the following morning to address what was considered egregiously slow play in that first quarter. They felt the burden rested on our two pairs. Ultimately, the committee ruled that should any of those players repeat their offenses, they would be suspended from the '86 Vanderbilt. That ought to light a fire under their derrières.

A brief introduction to our opponents in the final for the sake of my younger readers. Barry Crane was arguably the greatest matchpoint player of all time. However, in 1951, under his birth name, Barry Cohen, he reached the finals of the Vanderbilt with Manny Hochfeld, one of Chicago's best, and a somewhat obscure mixed team and lost to a powerhouse team: B.J. Becker, Crawford, Rapee and Stayman. This was the same Johnny Crawford who won seven Vanderbilts from 1950-'60 and was the best bridge/backgammon player on the planet. He was one of my heroes and was the suavest (yes, it's a word) guy I ever met. So, Crane wasn't just a one-trick pony. His teammates were tough opponents too. Tommy Sanders was a Spingold winner and perhaps the Mid South's best player. Bobby Nail, one of the Texas old guard, had overcome a serious congenital deformity, beaten his life expectancy by forty years and had become one of Southwest's greatest players. Ira Chorush was one of the younger Texas stars and Dan Morse-John Sutherlin were a top pair. Dan, also a Spingold winner, is still competing into his mid eighties today and recently earned the right to represent the USA in the 2023 Senior Bowl in Salsomaggiore, Italy. John, a long-time cancer patient, also outlived his prognosis by some fifteen years.

Mike and I found ourselves in the starting line-up for a change, as Meckwell wanted to get their sleepy time. The match started off very well. We picked up small swings on most of the first number of hands, and then came this. You hold

♠ Q 7   ♥ A 8   ♦ A K 8 6   ♣ A K 7 6 4

You open 2NT, partner bids 3♦, transfer, and over 3♥, he bids 4♦. How to proceed? The scientist in me thinks 5♣ would be the way to go but Morse took the working man's route and bid 6♦. Spade control anybody? Well, he bought a club void and would be home free without a spade lead. Fortunately, I was on lead with

♠ J 10 9 6 4 2   ♥ K Q   ♦ 7 3   ♣ Q 5 3

and either I was tempted by that spade sequence or perhaps that CLAS (Club Leads Against Slams) theory hadn't been that ingrained in me at that time. I led the ♠J, Mike won his ace and we had a sure heart trick for down one. We were ahead by 32 halfway through the set and ended the quarter up 64-19.

The second quarter didn't go much better for our opponents and at the half, the score was 105-35. Our team had performed at a high level, giving up just over 1 IMP per board, which is excellent. It would be a burdensome road for a comeback. Alas, the third quarter had too many flat hands for them. In fact, in an attempt to manufacture some swings, Morse-Sutherlin got frisky over a Becker-Rubin strong club and went for 1100 against a partscore: +14 IMPs. There were only a couple of other swings, for and against, and the three-quarter score was 147-57. Retrieving 90 IMPs in sixteen boards is virtually impossible. I'm guessing concessions were still not employed at that time, or I believe Crane would have graciously conceded. At any rate, the play was quite brisk and, of course, a bit nutty. The final outcome was Rodwell 198-88.

Our team had waited till the final to produce our best bridge. The Crane team had performed extremely well, beating a number of excellent teams to this point. Admittedly, their performance tailed off in the final, but I don't believe anybody would have beaten us that last day. The Crane team had a lot to be proud of. Tragically, Barry himself would be found dead, just three-and-a-half months later, murdered in his own home.

## The Next Forty Years...

Peter Weichsel has won five world bridge championships, including two coveted Bermuda Bowls, and twenty-seven North American titles. He became a member of the Bridge Hall of Fame in 2004. He has been part of great teams (C.C. Wei's Precision Team in the 1970s, and the Aces later on), and has won everything it is possible to win in the game. But that's just his bridge career. This fascinating autobiography tells the story of the man behind those accomplishments.

This is the second volume in a two-part autobiography (Book 1 was published in 2023). Book 2 covers the forty years from the author's first Bermuda Bowl win in 1983 to the 2023 World Championships in Marrakesh. Peter's regular partners during this period have included Bobby Levin, Mike Lawrence, Alan Sontag (again) and most recently, Bob Hamman. The chapter on cheating at bridge, at the very top levels, will be of particular interest in view of the upheaval in the world game that this problem continues to cause.

