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Did you know that San Diego, translated from the Latin "Santos Dragoon," means a beautiful city that you should have skipped? I wish I had paid more attention when I took Latin 101 each of six times. What a disaster!

Not San Diego, which was stunning. Not the tournament, which was first-rate and well run. Not the food, which I hear was delicious. Not my wife, Stacy, my new partner, Steve Beatty, or my teammates. They were all wonderful. Nope, it was me. I got sick, couldn't eat, couldn't sleep and was miserable.

But do I have some wonderful stories for you. Although over 10 days I couldn't follow suit or qualify for any event, there were still some great antics. Start with this one: Stacy, who also had a new partner, Disa (last name unknown), did very well with her lovely French and Russian teammates (Daniele and Catherine plus Victoria and Tatiana). They finished sixth in the Women's BAM and 11th in the Open Swiss. Here is Stacy at work (she is South).

<p>♠ 9 8 7 4 2 ♥ Q 5 4 ♦ 8 ♣ J 10 4 2</p>	<p>N W E S</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 5 3 ♥ 6 ♦ 7 3 2 ♣ 8 7 6 5 3</p>	<p>♠ A J 6 ♥ A J 9 8 2 ♦ K 10 9 5 ♣ 9</p>
<p>♠ K ♥ K 10 7 3 ♦ A Q J 6 4 ♣ A K Q</p>			

The bidding went 1♥ by East, double by Stacy (I didn't know what to do, either), 2♥ by West, 2♠ by dummy (no name for obvious reasons), Pass, and Stacy jumped to 3NT. After a heart to the jack and king, our girl banged down the ♠K without a flicker of thought. It went low, low, low. When Stacy played the top two clubs, look at poor East, who has to make a pitch. He innocently pitched a diamond, and now Stacy played ♦A Q. East won and returned a heart, bravely ducked by Stacy. West won the queen and returned one to East's ace. When a heart was continued, Stacy claimed — making four! The French girls came running over to her later and said: "Ow you make four? Et our table, zay are down tree!" To me, this was the highlight of the

event.

In my first and only day of the Blue Ribbon Pairs, I was bored by all my bad results (what's new?) and decided to have some fun with the nice woman on my right. So I took my cards out, looked at them quickly and then put them back in the board. When it was my turn to bid, I placed one hand on my cards and the other on my forehead, closed my eyes and then bid. She, of course, freaked out and asked what I was doing. I told her it was an experiment and that I needed complete quiet so I could really concentrate. By my third bid, she called for a director. Luckily, it was Charlie McCracken. After she explained, Charlie said: "Madam, I assure you, at some point he has seen his cards." I told him I needed total quiet.

Anyway, on the next board, I knew that scenario would not work so this time I took out my hand, took the board in my lap, looked and put the cards back in and then put the board back down. This new gambit had the desired effect as they were still none the wiser. Over the years most people think that I have bid without looking at my cards anyway.

Okay, I will see all of you soon. Keep reading and keep sending those checks. Ciao. □

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