

Everybody Knows

From the song by Leonard Cohen

Everybody knows that the dice are loaded
Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed
Everybody knows the war is over
Everybody knows the good guys lost
Everybody knows the fight was fixed
The poor stay poor, the rich get rich
That's how it goes.
Everybody knows.

In her column in the December Bulletin, Karen Walker - Relearning Bridge - talks about opener's rebids, and those things that **Everybody Knows**, but from the words of another great song, It Ain't Necessarily So.

Four Things Everybody Knows

Don't raise responder's major unless you have four cards.

Many hands are simply hard to bid. But when you have three cards in partner's major, shortness in a side suit, and no other good bid, a three-card raise is often the answer. Karen points out that playing in a four-three fit is not always bad, and often you find a five-three fit that you might have missed.

Rebid your five-card minor to confirm it is a "real" suit.

While sometimes you have to rebid a five-card minor, out of desperation, usually rebidding your minor promises six cards.

K 10 K J 5 7 5 3 A Q 7 5 4 You open 1 club and partner bids one spade. Rebid 1 NT, not two clubs.

K 10 4 K J 5 2 3 A Q 7 5 4 Same auction. Bid two spades. Your singleton is worth extra tricks in spades, and partner might have a five-card suit or longer. You cannot bid hearts; that is a reverse, and you are too weak. There is no purpose to bidding two clubs. As Goldilocks would have said, two spades is just right.

Always show a four-card major if you can do so at the one level.

This is one of the first things that you learn in bridge 101, beginning bridge. But it is not always true. There is one glaring exception. When you open a minor, and have 18/19 HCP, and a balanced hand, your second bid should be two no trump. You can uncover your four-card major fit with check back Stayman.

A K 10 4 Q 9 5 A Q K J 7 5 You open 1 club and partner bids one heart, bid two no trump.

Karen goes on to say that with a 4/3/3/3 hand and a minimum, some players skip over the spade suit. K Q 9 8 8 4 3 Q 6 4 A Q 5. If you opened once club and partner bid one diamond or one heart, you might bid 1 NT, and conceal the spade suit. My regular partner Harry Gellis and I experimented with this for a year or two and gave it up, missing too many 4/4 spade fits, and losing a roughing trick in the other hand for a bad score. Sometimes it works, and you get 120 instead of 110, for a top, or sometimes it fails and they get five tricks in a side suit before you get in.

Don't rebid one no trump without stoppers in the unbid suits.

This one is the most misused of all. All that a one no trump rebid promises is a balanced hand, no voids or singletons, and it denies a four card fit with partner.

A K J 7 4 3 K 8 6 5 4 Q 7 You open I diamond and partner bids one heart. Clearly 1 no trump is the perfect rebid. Diamonds are too weak to rebid, and this is not a good hand for a three card raise.

Same Auction - Even with

A K 6 J 7 4 K Q 6 5 4 10 7 Karen would rebid - and so would I - one no trump. She says the breaking point between a no trump rebid and a three card raise is 10 x. If you have the ten, she says bid one no trump, if your card is the 9 or less, consider a three card raise, unless your partnership is really hung up on the need for a four card suit. This last piece of advice is not something that Everybody Knows, so it must be very good advice; even though I have never seen it put this way anywhere else.

If you don't read Karen's column every month, you should start doing so. She debunks all of the myths. She will get you to think differently about your bidding. I will continue to bring some of her information to these lessons, until, of course, **EVERYBODY KNOWS.**