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Bridge column by Tanna Hirsch

30<sup>th</sup> Maech 2011

Dealer : East Vul : Both	NORTH ♠ K Q 8 ♥ J 9 3 ♦ Q 8 ♣ A 8 6 5 2	
WEST ♠ J 10 2 ♥ K 7 ♦ 10 9 7 4 2 ♣ J 9 4		EAST ♠ 9 6 5 3 ♥ Q 10 8 6 5 ♦ A K ♣ K 3
	SOUTH ♠ A 7 4 ♥ A 4 2 ♦ J 6 5 3 ♣ Q 10 7	

South	West	North	East
--	--	--	1 Heart
Pass	Pass	2 Club	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	All Pass

Opening lead: King of ♥

Being dealt too many high cards can sometimes be as bad as holding too few! However, there is a cure for the former condition — divest yourself of any unnecessary encumbrance at the first opportunity.

We do not approve of West's pass of partner's opening bid. With five points, including the king in partner's suit and all those 10s and 9s, surely worth an extra point or so, the hand merits a response of one no trump. That would have kept North-South out of the auction, and East-West would have avoided defending a game that should have been made.

West led the king of hearts, taken with the ace. Declarer led a club to the ace, and East realized that the king of clubs was no asset. West was not likely to have much more in the way of high card points and, if declarer could set up the club suit without allowing West to gain the lead, the contract would probably be made easily.

As is often the case, once the problem is recognized, the solution becomes self-evident. East jettisoned the king of clubs under the ace! Now there was no way for declarer to come to more than seven tricks without the club suit. There was also no way to set up clubs without allowing West to gain the lead with the jack of clubs.

Of course, declarer could have done better. West, who passed, could not hold another king, so South should have crossed to the table with a high spade to lead a club toward the queen. If East ducks, declarer's best chance is to rise with the queen. When that wins, a club can be ducked safely into the East hand. (03/30/11)

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