Southern California **Bridge News**

Volume 60, #10 October 2023 Published by ALACBU

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*by John Jones*

### July Regional, Sectionals, Volunteers Needed



The reports on our July Long Beach Regional are essentially in. Our tournament manager, Peter Benjamin, and treasurer, Stan Holzberg, have worked hard to resolve issues with the Long Beach Hilton from the July Regional. Thank you, gentlemen!

The Treasurer's financial summary from the July 3 – July 9 regional looks like:

| | |
|---|---|
| Income: | |
| Card Fees | $53,355 |
| Card Fee Contributions | $11,160 |
| Food Reimbursement | $ 3,952 |
| Session Naming Donations | $ 8,350 |
| Merchandise Sale | $ 40 |
| **Total Income** | **$76,857** |
| Expenses: | |
| Advertising | $ 277 |
| Room Charges | $ 3,640 |
| Caddy Expense | $ 2423 |
| Directors' Expenses | $ 7,065 |
| Directors' Fees | $11,258 |
| Food Charges/Room Rental | $28,454 |
| Hand Duplication | $ 1,734 |
| Miscellaneous | $ 1,400 |
| Prizes | $ 4,531 |
| Sanction Fee | $ 4,744 |
| Table and Supply Storage | $ 548 |
| Tournament Manger | $ 800 |
| **Total Expenses** | **$66,874** |
| **Net Income** | **$9,983** |

The profit from the regional is significantly due to two factors: donations from event naming rights and

PRESIDENT continued on page2

### Regional Director's Report

*by David Lodge*



The United States Bridge Federation oversees the competitions to select the Junior players to represent the US in international play. The USBF also undertakes to send the qualified players/teams to the Bi-annual world competition. As part of this huge undertaking, the USBF operates an Online Training Program (OTP) under the leadership of Region 11's Alex Kolesnik. A few days ago, in my capacity as the Chair of the Finance Committee on the ACBL national BOD, I was forwarded the USBF Junior Program Annual Report authored by Joe Stokes, USBF Junior Program Coordinator. The reason the report was sent to me is that the USBF is requesting an increase in the annual ACBL donation from $50,000 to $65,000. This request will be discussed by the Finance Committee and will be subject to the approval or denial by the BOD at its next F2F meeting in Atlanta in November. Alex currently has 129 young players meeting virtually on a weekly basis. They are helped by 38 volunteer mentors. In December, 2022, the Junior US Bridge Championships were held in Atlanta. Six teams qualified for the World Youth Bridge Team Championships in Veldhoven, Netherlands. Joe explained that the $100,000 received from the ACBL every two years is inadequate to cover from the ACBL every two years is inadequate to cover the travel expenses. This year, the organization spent

DIRECTOR continued on page 2

## Inside This Issue

Better Bridge Accreditation ……. page 3
Puzzle Page ……..…….…… page 4
Rank Changes ……..…….. page 3
Around the Units ……..…….…… page 6
Problem Solvers' Panel …….. page 10

PRESIDENT continued from page 1
the Ed Davis Day contributions.

I wish give a monster shout out to Carolyn Byrnes and Margie Michelin for their fundraising efforts in the session naming area! I have the following individuals and groups as making naming donations:

Agile Bridge Club, Ifti Baqui, Bass Family Trust, Sid Brownstein, Lebel Bruckner, Carolyn Byrnes, Danielle Dina, Downey-Whittier Unit, Mitch Dunitz, Marcus Evans, Ellis Feigenbaum, Laura Gastelum, Jeanne Bings-Helmer, Fran Israel, B. Jehawk, James Kohlhoff, Jo Melis, Margorie Michelin, Jill Meyers, Old Masters Products, Ramani Ravikandan, RBA Wealth Management, RM Business Management, and Albert Stock Trust. If I have missed someone please accept my apologies and contact me.

The donations made for Ed Davis Day were extremely generous. I don't have a complete breakdown of who donated how much (and I won't ask for one because I believe that the donators wanted to help honor Ed rather than receive credit for themselves). In my estimation Ed Davis Day was the most memorable occurance of any of our previous regionals! Having Jamie (Ed's wife) show up with the rest of the family and all those fabulous pictures was sensational!

I will sign the contract for the 2025 regional next week. Carolyn Hannas has agreed to assist Peter Benjamin as Tournament Manager during the 2024 regional. She will take over as Tournament Manager thereafter. Thank you, Peter, for years of awesome service! Regionals for 2026 and 2028 will need to be held at some location other than the Long Beach Hilton. There is a major convention conflicting in 2026, and in 2028 the Olympics are in Long Beach.

The D23 physical supplies (bridge boxes, stations, unused convention cards, etc.) are now being stored at the Long Beach Bridge Club. Thank you to Chuck Laine and the Long Beach Bridge Club Board.

Thank you to the Glendale Unit and the Valley Unit for running sectionals last month! The Long Beach Unit will be hosting a sectional on Nov 4 and 5. Please contact Lillian Slater at lilliands@gmail.com for more info. It is every unit's responsibility to hold at least one sectional each year. Get those silver points!

Also, it's not our district, but it's close, so don't forget the Ventura Regional October 23 – 29.

Finally, please contact me if you are willing to volunteer for any committee or position. My previous requests have received multiple requests for some positions, but none for most of them. My email is johndjones44@yahoo.com.

DIRECTOR continued from page 1
$137,000, to send 6 teams to the competition. He also explained that the money received from the ACBL is the organization's only continuing reliable source of funds. All other funding comes from donations. If you feel so inclined, let me know how you feel about this issue. Additionally, you might talk to Alex or get in touch with the USBF to learn more about their mission and to see if there's an opportunity to get involved, either as a player or volunteer.

Although attendance at tournaments is still far below pre-pandemic levels, table counts are going up.

| TABLES (Thousands) | 2023 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| NABC (2 tournaments to date) | 15.4 | 13.2 |
| Regionals | 7.5 | 5.2 |
| Sectionals & STACs | 9.5 | 8.2 |

Membership continues to drop but the rate of loss is dramatically down from the prior 2 years. We've lost 1,405 members through 8 months this year vs. 8,417 and 6,440 lost respectively for the 8 month periods in 2021 and 2022. The staff at HQ continues to turn in impressive results of the initiative to recover lapsed members through outreach programs and incentives. So far this year, 5,404 members previously listed as lapsed (they get listed such when they fail to pay their dues) were recovered.

On a personal note, I reached out to a person who had been an infrequent but favorite partner prior to the pandemic. We've made dates to play some in the upcoming Ventura regional and some at the NABC in Atlanta in November. This led to us spending quite a lot of time going over our card, playing a little online, and coming to agreements about treatments and style- e.g. do we both agree about what a "disciplined" weak 2 opening bid looks like vulnerable in 1st and 2nd seat; how undisciplined can one be in non-vulnerable situations. It's been a real pleasure to spend this concentrated time. It also resurrected my desire to pour through my bridge library and refresh my memory. If you already have a serious partnership or are trying to create one, I strongly recommend devoting some

dedicated time away from the table to thoroughly discuss your partnership understandings.

Ventura starts on October 23. I hope to see you there. It's a great tournament in a great town.

## District 23 Rank Changes August 2023

**Junior Master**
David M. Anthopoulos
Maureen A. Lapoint
Robert M. Lea
Salina Lo
David Nott
Marvin Rapaport
Stephen Reiss

**Club Master**
Barbara A. Barschak
Lee Hanson
Robert S. Jennings
Jerrod Mason
Jesse Ornelas
Adair Paul
Jenni H. Pham
Charlotte K. Reith
Linda Stagen

**Sectional Master**
Marty Foster
Marla Horn
Patricia Luehrs
Judy K. Martin
Charlotte A. Roush
Justin M. Ryan
Sharon Vaughn

**Regional Master**
Lynn Harvey
John Hugunin
Doreen Lewin
Richard E. Parker
Shameem Rahimtoola
Rollin Ransom
Janet M. Warner

**NABC Master**
Stephen E. Andersen
Nina Huang
Elaine Robinson
Rajath Shourie
Greg Stewart

**Advanced NABC Master**
Jeffrey D. Goldberg

**Life Master**
Arthur D. Vatz

**Bronze Life Master**
Prasad Upasani

**Silver Life Master**
Carol L. Decordova
Sadika Elewy

AUDREY GRANT'S LATEST METHODS FOR TEACHING
IN PERSON OR ONLINE!

**Better Bridge Teacher Accreditation**



**December 21-22, 2023**

Pasadena Bridge Club
Morris "Mojo" Jones, Managing Director
https://pasadenabridgeclub.com
(626) 247-4457

ABA and ACBL Teacher Certification Program

# The Puzzle Page

## Bridge Jeopardy
*by John Jones*

**Category: Starting with J (each term begins with the letter J)**

**And the answer is …**

$100 – Oswald, James or Mary Zita, the last name associated with transfer responses over a NT opening. Also, the convention in which a 2NT response to a 1♥ or 1♠ opening shows a game forcing hands with at least 4 trumps.

$200 – A player who is under 26 years of age.

$300 – A bid which is made at a higher level than at the lowest level at which the suit could legally be bid.

$400 – The first name of Eli Culbertson's wife. She is given credit for promoting 5NT bids as Grand Slam Force.

$500 – Discarding a high card in a suit to keep a lower card in suit.

(Solutions to these puzzles are on page 6. No peeking!)

## Play or Defend?
*by John Jones*

North
♠ A K 10 8 4
♥ A 9 6 5 4
♦ A 9
♣ Q

| West | East |
|---|---|
| ♠ J 6 | ♠ Q 7 6 3 |
| ♥ K Q J 10 8 3 2 | ♥ void |
| ♦ K 8 2 | ♦ J 10 6 5 4 |
| ♣ 8 | ♣ 7 4 3 2 |

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

Contract = 6♣

Opening Lead = ♥K

All players can see all the cards. Do you play or defend?

## October Rebus

Well, can *you* figure out what this says?



## Solution to "Play or Defend?"

Answer: defend. Declarer goes down without complication if he rises with dummy's ♥A at T1. East ruffs and returns a diamond. There is no late entry to dummy to enjoy any set up spades. The fun begins if declarer finds a duck. If the ♥K wins T1, declarer can also duck a heart continuation, pull trumps, cash the top spades and take a ruffing finesse in spades. Declarer makes on this line. If West wins the opening lead and shifts to a diamond (either K or low), declarer has 12 tricks. A spade shift or trump shift results in declarer being able to take a ruffing finesse and having a diamond to return to dummy. So how does the defense prevail? East needs to ruff T1 whether declarer contributes the ♥A or plays low. A diamond shift prevents an entry to the spade suit following a ruffing finesse.

## "Rebus"

"Jacoby 2NT"

Have a good bridge rebus? Send it to johndjones44@yahoo.com

## Bridge Jeopardy Questions

$100 – Who is Jacoby?

$200 – Who is a junior?

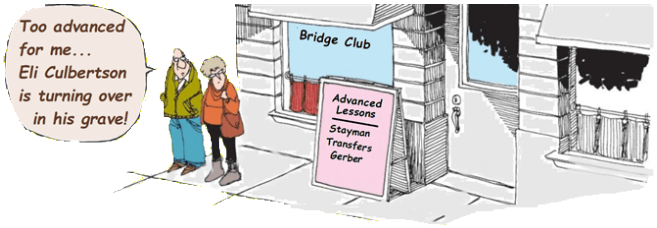
$300 – What is a jump bid?

$400 – Who is Joesphine?

$500 – What is jettison?

☺☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺☺ ☺ ☺

*Submitted by John Jones*




☺☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺☺ ☺ ☺

Southern California Bridge News
Published monthly by ALACBU, Inc.
1800 Avenue of the Stars, 12th Floor,
Los Angeles, CA 90067
Phone: 310-440-4100
email newsletter@acblunit551.org
Editor/Designer. . . . . Tom Lill
Managing Editor. . . . . Bob Shore
Contributing Editor. . . . . .John Jones

Copy deadlines: the 23rd of the preceding month. Opinions expressedin the Southern California Bridge News are those of the authors and donot necessarily reflect those of ALACBU, Inc., The Bridge News or the Editor. The Bridge News reserves the right to reject material it considers to be in poor taste or deems otherwise unsuitable for publication.

# Around the Units in District 23



## Pomona – Covina by Tom Lill

www.acblunit551.org

**Individual**: October 7, 10 a.m., Ontario
November 4, 10 a.m., Upland
**Unit Game**: October 21, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
**Unit Board Meeting**: 10:15 a.m. before the game
**Club Championships**: October 10, 13
**Club Appreciation Games:** October 17, 20

The September game at the Friendship center went well, so we will be moving our monthly Unit game there on a monthly basis.

The September Individual was captured by Linda Tessier, with 67.05%. Tied for second were Kiran Kumar and Kitty moon, with Clinton Lew tying Tom Cusack for fourth place.

In the September Unit Game, Steve Mancini - Richard Parker won with 65.29%. Bill Papa – Vic Sartor took second, Gail Leroy - Stephen Dorse third, Thomas Cusack - Kitty Moon fourth, and Tim and Eileen Finlay fifth.

We have two promotions to announce this month. Richard Parker has advance to Regional Master, and Steve Andersen is now an NABC Master. Congratulations to you both!

The "big game" list for September can only be described as insane. (See also: weird, bizarre, crazy, unbelievable, etc.) The top game was turned in by Fredy and Lulu Minter, 76.17%. Unfortunately for them, we had only 4½ tables for that game, so they don't get their names into the ACBL Bulletin. (You need at least five full tables.) Next we have a *tie* at 72.92%, the Minters tying with Steve Andersen – Gary Atwell. Then we have Bill Papa – Vic Sartor at 67.78%. Now we find Gary and Steve again. The next three big games were all turned in by the Minters: 66.8%, 66.43%, 66.2%. Bill and Vic turned in a 65.97% effort only to finish *second*. Go figure. Finally, Gary and Steve turned in a 65.19% effort to just sneak into the list (hey, break up the Yankees) at 66.92%. The only winners not topping 65% were Vic Sartor – Mary Ann Wotring

Here are a couple of hands I might have used last month, had I not been off galivanting in Niagara Falls (ok, ok, get that "slowly I turn" out of your system NOW).

E-W vulnerable, South is the dealer. You, West, hold

♠ AKQ65 ♥ none ♦ AK8632 ♣ 94.

The opponents are silent for a change. You open 1♠ … or do you? With 5-6 shape and 16 HCP, all in your long suits, don't you have enough to reverse? Well, *I* think so. And I am *sure* Eddie Kantar would have agreed. If you open 1♦, partner bids 1♠, and after you settle your tongue back where it belongs, you are off to the races. It turns out that partner has

♠ 10743 ♥ QJ5 ♦ void ♣ AK10532

and 13 tricks roll in. Can you see how to get to the 26 HCP – actually, since the ♥QJ5 are wasted, it's effectively a 23 point deal – grand slam?

Unfortunately, our West (no names please) opened 1♠, I called 2♣ (not game forcing), the rebid was 3♦, and that pretty much made my red suit holdings suspect, so I bid 4♠. +710. At all four tables, *no one* bid even the small slam, and one declarer (no names) even contrived to lose a trick. How would *you* get there?

Our other deal comes straight from the Chamber of Horrors. This crime was perpetrated by two Very Good Players (they each play in Flight A no matter whom they partner). So it is included here not to shame them, but to give the rest of us hope: even our betters can have massive brain lapses. Both sides are vulnerable, South deals, and East-West remain silent. I'll give you both hands:

(N) ♠ K ♥ AQ109 ♦ 87 ♣ AKQ754.

(S) ♠ AQ642 ♥ 632 ♦ J953 ♣ 3.

The auction went 1♣ – 1♠; 2♥ – PASS!

I'm not sure what South was thinking, (s)he (no names!) knows all about reverses and forcing bids. The result was one of the more embarrassing bridge scores, +230.

And what was this pair's matchpoint score on this truly fine result? You guessed it: they scored a cold top, as *everyone else* was in a club partscore, +130. No justice for E-W! (Yes, I was one of the victims of this travesty. Are you surprised? I'm thinking of changing my name to "Karapet Djoulikyan.")

Quote for the month: "Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't." (Erica Jong)



## Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley
### by Beth Morrin

Unit 556's Virtual and Face-to-Face games are going well. Again, if interested in playing on Friday, please contact Ruth Baker (rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net) as space is limited.

**Meet one of the new members of the Board of Directors for Unit 556:**

I'm Harkirat (Harry) Randhawa, and I'd like to share my life's journey with you. I'm married with three wonderful children and I also have grandchildren who bring immense joy to my life. When I'm not spending time with my family, I have a few hobbies that keep me busy.

One of my great passions is playing bridge. I'm proud to say that I'm just 0.8 gold points away from achieving the prestigious title of a Life Master.

Another one of my favorite pastimes is gardening. There's something incredibly fulfilling about tending to plants, watching them grow, and nurturing a beautiful garden. It's a peaceful and therapeutic activity that allows me to connect with nature.

I also make it a point to hit the gym regularly. Staying active and maintaining my health has always been important to me. It not only keeps me fit, but also provides me with a sense of vitality that I cherish.

I was born into a farming family, and my early years were marked by adversity. Despite facing challenges, I pursued my education with unwavering determination.

From a beginning in a village school with minimal resources to making a significant move during the partition of India in 1947, my family and I faced many trials. I went on to pursue a degree in Physics in India and later ventured to the United States to continue my education in engineering. Working tirelessly to support my studies, I juggled multiple jobs and strived to excel academically. My journey eventually led me to a career in the aerospace industry, where I worked on projects like the F4 airplane and the Saturn V rocket. Along the way, I faced unique challenges, but I persevered and made the most of every opportunity that came my way. One of the unexpected joys in my life has been discovering the game of bridge. It started as a casual card game during my free time, but it quickly evolved into a passionate pursuit. Bridge has not only provided me with hours of enjoyment but has also introduced me to a wonderful group of friends.

**Winners of the Friday F2F game:**

Sept. 1
First Carol Trenda – Gary Trenda 63.53%
Second Harry Randhawa – Alan Nueman 62.67%
Sept. 8
N/S Susan Strassner – Mark Brifman 59.17%
E/W Tomoko Stock – Paula Olivares 64.58%
Sept. 15*
First David Khalieque – Harry Randhawa 57.81%
Second Sara Seeley – Paula Olivares 56.25%
Sept. 22
N/S David Khalieque – Jerrod Mason 61.67%
E/W Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky 60.42%
Alan Nueman – Harry Randhawa 60.42%
*The Unit's special "4 is Enough" game

**Virtual Game Schedule**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Monday: | 12:15 PM | Open game |
| Tuesday: | 6:15 PM | Open game |
| Thursday: | 10:15 AM | Open game |
| Sunday: | 12:30 PM | Open game |

**Contact our club manager at virtualclub@bridgemojo.com for reservations. Our regular games cost $4 (unless it is a special game series).**

**Big Virtual Club Games (65+%):**

Thurs. Aug. 24
Carolyn Cohen – Dominique Moore 67.46%
Carol Ashbacher – Robot 65.87%

Sun. Aug. 27
Jianfeng Luo – Xiaowen Li 67.78%

Tues. Aug. 28
Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom 69.05%

Mon. Sept. 4
Carolyn Cohen – Diana Borgatti 69.26%

Tues. Sept. 5
Helen Wang – Lulu Minter 66.67%

Thurs. Sept. 7
Carolyn Cohen – Dominique Moore 65.87%
Genise Hasan – Gregory Vernon 65.48%

Sun. Sept. 10
Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom 72.62%
Avice Osmundson – Kiran Kumar 65.62%

Tues. Sept. 12
Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky 66.20%

Thurs. Sept. 14
Helen Wang – Ronald McEwan 67.06

Tues. Sept. 19
Amr Elghamry – Dominique Moore 68.98%
Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky 65.37%

Thurs. Sept. 21
Pat Larin – David White 67.46%

Next Board Meeting: TBA

# Downey – Whittier
## by Liz Burrell

Liz Burrell, 562-972-2913
lizburrell7@gmail.com
Downey-Whittier BC

[*Editor's note: I received the following Word from Liz, paraphrasing it somewhat:*]

The Herculean effort to keep the Downey Club viable has exhausted both of us (*herself, and Kent*). I've decided it's necessary for me to let go of some responsibilities.

So I will no longer be club manager at Downey, and Kent will no longer be Board president. We will be submitting our resignations to the Board as soon as possible.

[*Editor's note: so, this will be Liz's final column. Hopefully, someone will take over in Downey, and find a few minutes each month to write up the news.*]

# Pasadena – San Gabriel
## by Morris "Mojo" Jones

bridgemojo.com



Two great Unit Games last month:

Sunday Sept. 3 we had 10-1/2 tables, winners each way:

N/S: Joan Mesias, Jeanette Deverian
E/W: Richard Parker, Caryn Mason

Congratulations to Richard and Caryn on their big win from the C flight, over a strong field!

On Sunday Sept. 17 we had 7 tables, winners each way:

N/S: Lisa Walker, Roy Wilson
E/W: Amr Elghamry, Dominique Moore

The October Unit Games are shifted by a week because of a conflict with the North American Pairs District Final, being held on October 1. Plan to play on Sunday, October 8 and 22 at 12:30 PM. The Oct. 8 game will be at the Pasadena Bridge Club, and the Oct. 22 game at the Arcadia Bridge Center. As always, reservations are strongly advised! Contact Miriam Harrington at (626) 232-0558 or miratpf@aol.com to reserve your seat.!

At every unit game we make an effort to balance the field between N-S and E-W, but it becomes increasingly difficult to do so! At one game a few weeks ago I went into the session expecting six Flight A teams needing a N/S seat, and only one willing to play E/W. Fortunately I had two additional Flight A pairs arrive willing to play E/W that helped out the game a little bit.

Please, if you're able to move from table to table, consider playing E/W more often. I'll continue to make an effort to have the stratification more or less equivalent in each direction.

Congratulations to our members climbing the ACBL ranks:

New Club Masters: Robert Jennings, Charlotte Reith
New Sectional Master: Patricia Luehrs
New NABC Master: Nina Huang
New Bronze Life Master: Parsad Upasani
New Silver Life Master: Sadika Elewy



# Long Beach
## by Lillian Slater

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

*Sorry, nothing from Long Beach again this month.*

# Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

John Jones is moderator. Mark Bartusek, Paul Boudreau, Jordan Chodorow, Ellis Feigenbaum, Ross Grabel, Mister Mealymouth, Margie Michelin, Rick Roeder, Mike Shuster, and Jon Wittes are panelists.

*As always, panelists are playing 5-card majors, 15 - 17 NT, and 2/1 GF. Beyond that, except where indicated, panelists may use any reasonable methods.*

1

Matchpoints
Both Vul

| North | East | South | West |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♥ | double | redouble* | pass |
| pass | 1♠ | ??? | |

* = 10+ HCP

You, South, hold: ♠ 10764 ♥ 3 ♦ AJ95 ♣ AQ83

What call do you make?

*The redouble is the old-fashioned 10+ HCP without a fit. Transfers over their takeout doubles are getting popular, but aren't being used here. The redouble establishes that this is our hand and passes are forcing. A few decades ago, bidding 1♥ or 1♠ instead of redoubling would have been non-forcing. That isn't the case today. Thus, redoubling and then doubling shows spades but not a monster stack (see Margie's comment). With all that in mind, what is the best action here: Pass, double or the slightly off-shape 1NT?*

**Wittes**: 1NT. I'm not crazy about this bid, and 10xxx is not a great stopper, but I've already shown 10+ HCPs, and this looks like the best description of my hand.

**Chodorow**: Pass. I have given a perfect description of my hand. My template is 4=1=4=4 with a hand approximately this good. No need for me to double here with not even one spade trick.

**Michelin**: Double. If I had good long spades, I would have bid them at the appropriate level to start with. Partner may be expecting better spades but here I am lacking enough in the spade suit to bid 3NT. I don't have a fit with partner. If partner has an honor or two in the spade suit, he may convert it to 3NT if he feels that is our best spot.

**Mealymouth**: Double. It's a misfit, and the best place to play a misfit is on defense *Amen Brother Mealy!* Game our way is far from certain. If I don't double, partner will think I have fewer than four spades.

**Shuster**: Double. I expect a large positive score with game uncertain.

**Bartusek**: Double. Sure, I wish that I had better spades, but this is extremely likely to get the magic +200 at matchpoints when we have no game our way. Partner is barred from passing without at least a doubleton spade since it is at the 1-level. My second choice of pass will cause partner to either bid a 4-card minor or 1NT, but what will partner do with some 2=5=3=3 distribution when we belong in 1NT? Additionally, I don't want partner rebidding a 6-card heart suit. Finally, if we do have a 3NT game then we might get +800 on this auction.

**Boudreau**: Double. In spite of weak spades, my LHO denies four so they rate to be in trouble. Pass is a close second choice.

**Feigenbaum**: Double. Interesting hand, double is probably the most flexible option here. It is not necessarily penalty, it is just do something intelligent please partner, which may include sitting.

**Grabel**: Double: while no guarantee of success, LHO is almost certainly 5-3-3-2 or 6-3-2-2 with long hearts. I suspect 1♠ doubled will get removed to 1NT. The alternative to double would be 1NT. If partner sits, we should collect a number.

*Our last panelist not only gives his preferred bid (mine too), but also his preferred opening lead (I'm in agreement again).*

**Roeder**: Double. Lead a trump and embrace the joy of matchpoints.

# 2

Matchpoints
None Vul

| West | North | East | South |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♦ | double | 1♥ | ??? |

You, South, hold: ♠ 8752 ♥ KQ1085 ♦ QJ3 ♣ 7

What call do you make?

*Partner either has support for the unbid suits with at least close to an opening bid, or she has a hand too good to overcall (about 19 HCP by my standards). Thus, it is quite likely that East has four (maybe five) hearts and our hearts are much better. The other alternative is that East has psyched and has something like two or three small hearts with a big diamond fit in reserve. Regardless of which hand East has, we want to get our hearts into play. The question here is what 2♥ shows. Is it some good hand? Is it about 7 to 10 HCP with five hearts? Let's hear from the panelists who play that 2♥ shows the hand we have.*

**Bartusek**: 2♥. Systemically shows specifically five hearts and 6-9. Why confuse the auction with a double that generally shows only four hearts? Obviously, they won't stay in 1♥, so let's show our hand immediately. Bidding right now might also preempt the opponents from finding their club fit.

**Shuster**: 2♥. Double would be unlikely to end the auction while failing to either limit my hand or show the fifth heart.

*The rest of the panel makes a penalty double.*

**Mealymouth**: Double. So, what if East is psyching and will run to 2♦? This is the only way we can find our heart fit if he is: by smoking him out. *If Brownsfield Station were on this panel they might say - now don't fill me up with your rules, because everybody knows that smoking ain't allowed in bridge (much to the chagrin of the Italian Blue Team with their smoke signals).*

**Boudreau**: Double. I have enough to expose a possible psyche.

**Roeder**: Double. Must show hearts or you are easy prey for psyches.

**Michelin**: Double. I would DOUBLE, this is PENALTY!

**Chodorow**: Double. We have established in previous PSPs that this double is penalty, theoretically exposing a psych, and I have a good Rule of 9 penalty double (1 level + 5 trumps + 3 trump honors). If they escape to 2♣ or 2♦, I can come back in with 2♠ and will have given a perfect description of my hand.

**Grabel**: Double. This shows hearts and leaves room to bid spades over a 2♣ rebid although 2♥ may play better.

**Wittes**: Double. I don't expect the auction to end there, but I have five good hearts, and they could even be psyching. If they escape to clubs or diamonds, I'll have to decide whether to bid hearts or spades.

**Feigenbaum**: Double: Once again double presents the most flexible option. Yes, the opponents may have psyched, and double is the only way to expose it. Partner may have spades or a big hand, let's see what action partner or opponents take before we commit ourselves to anything.

# 3

Matchpoints
Both Vul

| North | East | South | West |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♦ | 1♠ | pass | 2♣ |
| pass | 2♠ | double | 3♣ |
| pass | pass | ??? | |

You, South, hold: ♠ AJ986 ♥ AQ94 ♦ 54 ♣ 102

What call do you make?

*We trapped-passed after the 1♠ overcall and then got our penalty double in. The opponents have found a better spot. Partner may have passed back to me just to see if I could double again. Double now should be penalties. They have run from a penalty double; thus, doubles of their runout should also be penalties (not takeout or Do Something Intelligent). Should partner's pass be forcing? Several panelists think it is non-forcing.*

**Shuster**: Pass. I think people are going to go minus on our cards, possibly -200, so I'm disinclined to double here. At this point, it is fair to say I regret my first-round pass.

**Grabel**: Pass. I have a feeling that we may have heart fit but such is life.

**Mealymouth**: Pass. Yes, I have 2.5 Honor Tricks, but +100 against 3♣ (if we beat it) may be enough for most of the matchpoints. I must admit I'd have Sputnik'd *(doubled – Sputnik is the original name for what later became negative doubles, although they weren't nearly as well defined initially)* but it's too late to seek a heart fit now, and I hate low-level doubles without much in trumps. I've seen too many trump-poor penalty doubles fail, and -110 against 3♣ may be a good matchpoint score on a flukish deal.

*Assuming we want to bid, 3♥ looks like a possible candidate. Partner knows I choose to pass 1♠ and not make a negative double.*

**Chodorow**: 3♥. My delayed double told partner that I chose to treat this hand as a penalty double of 1♠, which is reasonable with these spots behind the overcaller, even though the hand does not satisfy the Rule of 9. Partner does not have even a cooperative penalty double of clubs or great diamonds and is short in spades, yet opened one of a minor as dealer, which for me is a solid citizen. What's left? I can't have much better hearts or a much better hand.

**Wittes**: 3♥. It's our hand, but where? 'I certainly don't want to defend 3♣, when they probably have an 8 or 9 card fit. Partner didn't rebid diamonds at any point, so I'll take a chance that partner has at least three hearts.

**Feigenbaum**: 3♥. Partner knows I have a trap pass of spades, we might be cold for 4♥ or 3NT, but I don't think I can risk doubling for takeout *(I think it is penalty)*. Partner would have doubled 3♣ themselves. Partner doesn't have six diamonds or a chunky five-card suit, we must have a fit somewhere. Let's find out.

**Michelin**: 3♥. Partner should know I was sitting for a reopening double of spades the first time. I could have made a negative double to start with but I have such strength in spades. Partner did not rebid his diamonds or double 3♣ for penalty so now I am going to bid 3♥. He must have hearts, or he can bid 3NT if he thinks it's right.

**Bartusek**: Double. I object to the initial pass. I would have made a negative double! I find that it is not generally practical attempting to penalize the opponents at the one level unless we are certain that we don't have a nice fit in another suit. We could have game in hearts but be unable to find the fit after my initial pass. I'm probably stuck making a DSI double to show values *(unfortunately I don't think it is DSI – they have run from a penalty double and partner will pass your double nearly 100% of the time).*

*Again, Rick's viewpoint comes closest to mine, double for penalties. We aren't on opening lead, but dummy rates to have some trumps and maybe a ruffing value, so again we are rooting for a trump lead.*

**Roeder**: Double. A math problem. If we can make a part score, must try for +200.

**Boudreau**: Double. I am unsure what partner would need to double 3♣ after seeing my double of 2♠. It's only MP and I must do something. 3♥ is too unilateral with just four.

# 4

IMPs
Both Vul

| North | East | South | West |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♣ | pass | 1♦ | pass |
| 1♠ | pass | ??? | |

You, South, hold: ♠ K5 ♥ Q64 ♦ KJ96543 ♣ K

What call do you make?

*This problem involves several variables. Are we forcing to game or merely inviting? What strain is best? What are our methods – are we using XYZ or Fourth Suit Forcing (4SF)? The entire panel decided to suggest diamonds as the best strain.*

*I'll start with those inviting (some are using XYZ, others 4SF).*

**Mealymouth**: 3♦. The value bid. I don't see how anything fancier would help.

**Shuster**: 3♦, invitational with long diamonds. Or is that too simple?

**Bartusek**: 3♦. Slightly conservative, but unless we have a diamond fit, we probably don't have game. I don't want to bid 4SF with this possible misfit.

**Boudreau**: invitational 3♦. Using whatever agreements exist - 3♦/1♠ or XYZ 3♦ after 2♣ relay to 2♦. Going low since 1♠ over 1♦ denies a flat 1NT rebid and is likely short in diamonds.

**Wittes**: 2♣, if playing XYZ. Over 2♦ I would bid 3♦. I have enough high cards to almost force game, but I don't have a big fit for either of partner's suits and my hand probably won't play great opposite a singleton diamond. If partner has honor doubleton of diamonds, I would expect him to bid 3NT.

*These panelists are using their methods to game force.*

**Grabel**: 2♦ game forcing, followed by 3♦ *(using XYZ)*. My first thought was to invite but the seventh diamond makes it just too good.

**Michelin**: 3♦. I play XYZ with most of my partners. 3♦ by me is game forcing not invitational *(some XYZ proponents, such as Kit Woolsey, play direct jumps as slammish)*. If partner bids 3♥ I will bid 3NT. If he bids 4♦ its Minorwood. If 3♦ shows slam interest, I would have to bid 4th suit, 2♥ and then bid my diamonds.

**Feigenbaum**: 2♥. I have no aces and horrible cards, but I do have an opening hand of sorts, I think I bid 2♥ as 4SF.

**Roeder**: 2♥. If playing XYZ (as we all should), I would bid a game forcing 2♦. I have too much stuff to make an invitational bid. Next round might be a problem.

**Chodorow**: 2♥. My hand is clearly game forcing with kings in both black suits.

*Despite being vulnerable at IMPs, I'm with the invitational crowd.*

5

Matchpoints
N-S Vul.

| South | West | North | East |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♦ | 1♥ | double* | pass |
| ??? | | | |

* Normally exactly four spades

You, South, hold: ♠ AJ4 ♥ Q8 ♦ AKQ93 ♣ Q83

What call do you make?

*This headache of a problem comes from a reader, Cathy Martin of Pasadena. The possibilities include bidding some number of NT (1NT would be a big, big underbid), cuebidding 2♥ (generally played as game forcing), bidding 3♦ (treating the diamonds as a six-bagger), or trying to slip a 2♠ or 2♣ rebid in. All answers have significant defects (thanks Cathy)!*

*I'll start with a panelist who sounds like he was listening to the Lovin Spoonful's "Did You Ever Have to Make Up Your Mind" as he debated with himself.*

**Shuster**: 2♥. So, you saved the best for last. I waffled interminably between 2♥ (which implies 18-19 without a stopper) and 2NT.

2♥ is a scalpel, keeping 2♠, 3♣ and 3♦ in play as possible contracts while still giving us a chance to get to NT - and maybe even from my side if partner works out to bid 3♥ when holding Ax(x) or Kxx in hearts.

2NT is a rock. A blunt, brave semi-bluff. Maybe they won't lead a heart when they're running. Maybe it's positionally right.

In the end, I figured, "Good old rock, nothing beats that." *Well, paper beats rock, but rock beats scissors.* Well, unless they know you always pick rock. I should pick rock.

*Mike included this link (I believe our first ever Youtube link):*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0SoKWLkmLU

But I don't. I bid 2♥. The problem is that I thought too long about it, and LHO will know my 2NT bid is flawed. So, I'll bid 2♥. Now if my partner figures out the "Careful" continuation of 3♥ with one of those heart holdings after my slow 2♥ - do the opponents have a case for the director? I think so.

**Chodorow**: 2♥. When you have extra values and don't know what to do, depending on the auction, it's double or cue. 2NT, though somewhat unilateral at this juncture, is my second choice.

**Feigenbaum**: 2♥. Again, there is something to be said for opening a 16-18 NT. I am never going to get this hand off my chest and everything else is an underbid or a distortion of shape and strength.

**Grabel**: 2♥. If partner shows a heart stopper, I will wish that I had bid 2NT. Over 3♣ I will try 3♠ to suggest playing in a 4-3 spade fit.

**Michelin**: 2♥. I would cue bid 2♥ to start. I have a big hand, with no clear direction. Partner may have stoppers in hearts and 3NT may be our best spot.I may end up playing a 4-3 spade fit or a minor, depending on partner's bid over my cue bid.

*One panelist tries to get by with 2♠ (2♣ is another "just get me by this round bid").*

**Boudreau**: 2♠. Pessimistic but pard would have bid 1NT with e.g. Qxxx=KTx=xx=Kxxx so I will look for the Moysian instead of making the macho 2NT call. Good partners will not jump to 4♠ over 2♠ if 3NT is still a possible strain. I would cuebid 2♥ if we were at IMPS or if 2♠ was a Law-bid, i.e., just confirming four spades but a minimum.

**Wittes**: 3NT. I won't like it if they start leading hearts from the top, but hearts weren't raised, and if they lead low from AKxxx(x) or partner has as little as Jxx of hearts, 3NT should have a good play.

**Roeder**: 2NT. Example #9,999 (*that's way too many teardrops or examples)* of straining to play from Qx side.

**Bartusek**: 2NT. Tough problem. 2NT comes closest to describing my hand. Marshall Miles would bid 2NT in a shot and not even consider any other action. The only other option seems to be a nebulous cuebid which might work out, but it is an overbid being game-forcing

and it severely complicates the auction. Remember that matchpoint scoring often rewards aggressive 3NT contracts. Several of these problems illustrate that a simple auction will often work out better than generating complicated and confusing sequences.

**Mealymouth**: 2NT without any sweat. I expect West to duck the opening heart lead to my ♥Q. I wonder if Marshall would have bid the same with a singleton ♥Q. Thanks to those two svelte queens, one of them short, I rate this hand as only a maximum 17-pointer and would have opened 1NT, but that's water under the bridge.

*Marshall Miles (the former editor of this column) ALWAYS bid NT when he had a stiff king or a doubleton queen in the opponent's suit. Furthermore, he bid NT in complete tempo like it was as simple as answering Stayman. And it almost always worked for him. A few years back I was answering problems from John Swanson's D22 bidding panel (which no longer exists). There was a problem which included a stiff king in the opponent's suit. Many panelists answered 3NT. Leo Bell answered 3NT, and commented "I'll take the over on the number of panelists who mention Marshall Miles in their answer". Sure enough, Eddie Kantar and I were both on the panel also. Both of us bid 3NT and both of us had referenced Marshall.*

*I sent Leo the column. He laughed. Leo also likes 2NT here. Yep! The Marshall Plan! RIP Marshall!!!*