Southern California **Bridge News**

Volume 61, #4 April 2024 Published by ALACBU

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by John Jones

GNT and July Regional Upcoming



D23 GNTs will be held on Saturday April 13 and Sunday April 14 at the Long Beach Bridge Center, 4782 Pacific Coast Highway, Long Beach (562)-498-8113. Contact GNT coordinator Walt Schafer via email at walt_schafer2000@yahoo.com or at 847-744-4426.

Our July regional will be from Monday July 1 through Sunday July 7 at the Long Beach Hilton. For more information contact Peter Benjamin at **ahoneydo@aol.com** or Margie Michelin at michelinonbridge@aol.com.

Donations for event naming have ended. However, you can make general donations for the regional. Many players have already done so. Thank you!! For details contact Laura Gastelum at lauralgastelum@gmail.com.

The Louisville national and the San Diego Regional have come and gone. Both tournaments experienced a greater table count than had been expected. There are nearby regionals in California that are coming up in other districts D21 has a regional from May 27 through June 2 in Sacramento. I will be there.

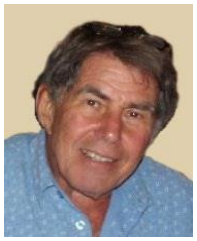
I will again warn of online cheating. The EDGAR program is now fully functional. EDGAR uses statistics to determine if online players are cheating. Be careful, according to members of the ACBL Board of Regents, the penalties for cheating are going to get stiffer.

Rita Vanlierop, our new webmaster, has reestablished our website. She has also established new email addresses for all the district officers. Mine

PRESIDENT continued on page2

Regional Director's Report

by David Lodge



The ACBL BOD and management are determined to wipe out online bridge cheating.

"EDGAR" -, Everyone Deserves a Game Above Reproach, is the clever acronym and the name of a Computer-Based Cheating Detection (CBCD) program, that was formally put into service by the ACBL on February 1. EDGAR is used only to detect online cheating. Through both a process of selecting certain groups of players and looking at random players, EDGAR had, as of the April 13th, 7,224 players. Of this number 2,488 were reviewed pursuant to a request based on their status in the league and 4,736 were chosen randomly. EDGAR looks at a wide range of indicators and gives a score to all players screened. It identifies all players above a certain score as "Red", (Cheating beyond a Reasonable doubt), "Green", (not cheating) and Yellow (Needing Further Review).

Those 2,488 requested are due to what have been termed "aggravating factors". The aggravating factors that caused certain players be screened include, previous discipline for ethical violations, and members in position(s) of authority or honor; BOD, all ACBL employees, Advisory Council, volunteers in committees such as Charity, Competition and

DIRECTOR continued on page2

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PRESIDENT continued from page 1
is president@d23acbl.org.

Exit, stage left!

DIRECTOR continued from page 1
Conventions, Goodwill, Hall of Fame, etc. Additionally, all district and unit officers have or will be screened.

Out of the first 6 runs between January 31st and March 7th, the screening of the 7,224 players confirmed that 96 were Red Tagged, one of which came from the requested group (after the BOD meeting at which these statistics were revealed, the 1 individual identified Red among the 96, has been penalized and has resigned from the position of honor). Players in this group have MPs ranging from less than 300 to over 10,000. Of the 96, 32 have been afforded Negotiated Resolutions (NR), gone to FAST TRACK DISCIPLINE (FTD), or sent to arbitration through the independent Institute for Bridge Arbitration (IAB), while the remaining 64 are being processed. How the determination of what process the player goes through is dependent primarily on the number of masterpoints held (if a pair is identified, the rules get applied to both players based on the masterpoints held by the member with the most. Partnerships where both players have fewer than 300 MPs will be given warnings (if no aggravating factors exist). Partnerships where both players are under 2,500 MPs are eligible for FTD (if no aggravating factors exist). Partnerships where one or both players have 2,500 or more MPs are not eligible for FTD. They are still allowed to come to an agreement with the ACBL, accept their discipline through a Negotiated Resolution (think plea bargain), or if the parties are unable to come to a resolution, their case will be sent to the IAB. Any player, including someone who has entered into a NR, may appeal the decision to the final arbiter, the IAB. There is a charge of $900 to file a case with the IAB. That fee is paid by the party filing the case. If a player files and prevails, the ACBL will undoubtedly reimburse the filing fee. No determination has yet been made as to whether the ACBL will demand reimbursement in instances where they prevail.

A look at the MP distribution of the first 40 players identified as Red:

No Players In Range	Range of MP
2	0-299
4	300-599
13	600-1499
8	1,500-2,499
8	2,500-4,999
4	5,000-9,999
1	10,000+

The experts have consistently suggested that the number of online cheaters range from 1%-2%. The ACBL has approximately 60% of its members (78,000+/-) playing online, we're looking at several hundred online cheaters. These people have to be eliminated from the ACBL online awarding games. So pass this around. If you're cheating online, and you're doing it enough times to create an adequate sample size, you will be caught. Your suspension will go from anywhere between 90 days and several years and in extreme situations, e.g., repeat offenses, you will be expelled. We've seen the future and we know that the ACBL will be holding NABCs, Regionals, Silver Linings and special games online. Players paying to participate in the events are entitled to know that their competitors have been shown to possess the highest level of integrity. It's a lofty goal but we're going to get there. PS., if you see something untoward while playing online, take the trouble to file a player memo. They're very important.

DISTRICT 23

Grand National Teams Finals

April 13th and 14th 2024

Long Beach Bridge Club 4782 Pacific Coast Hwy sanction #



Swiss Qualifying

Saturday, April 13 @ 10 am
and
Saturday, April 13 @ 3 pm

Knock Out Finals

Sunday, April 14 @ 10 am
and
Sunday, April 14 , @ 3 pm

National Finals will be held Wed., July 17-20 during the Summer Nationals in Toronto, Canada. $17.50 per team member per session. Pre-registration by April 7 required. Teams play 2-4 sessions. If winners do not attend finals, second place finishers will have the right to attend.

Point Limits and Conventions

Points as of September 2023

Championship: Unlimited, Open + chart
Flight A : 0-6000, Open chart
Flight B : 0-2500, Basic + chart
Flight C : Non-LM < 500, Basic chart

Maximum Masterpoint Awards

May be less, depending on game size

Championship Flight: 48.00 Gold
Flight A : 40.00 Gold
Flight B : 33.50 Gold
Flight C : 20.00, 50% Gold, 50% Red

Event chair

Walt Schafer • District 23 GNT Coordinator
email: walt_schafer2000@yahoo.com
cell: 847-744-4426 text preferred



Conditions of Contest may be found at:
http://www.bridgewebs.com/acbl23



The Puzzle Page

Bridge Jeopardy
by John Jones

Category: Starting with Q (each term begins with the letter Q)

And the answer is …

$100 – The card worth 2 points in the 1-2-3-4 High Card Point counting.

$200 – A type of raise which asks partner to bid more with maximum values (such as 4NT over an opening 1NT).

$300 – A combination of words, this term which refers to either a queen or a jack.

$400 – A session(s) preliminary to the final session(s).

$500 – A trick that been played to and turned over.

Play or Defend?
by John Jones

North
♠ 9 7 5
♥ K 5
♦ Q J 9 6
♣ A K 6 2

West
♠ Q 10 3
♥ 7 2
♦ 10 8 7 3 2
♣ 9 7 4

East
♠ J 6 4
♥ A Q 3
♦ A 4
♣ Q 10 8 5 3

South
♠ A K 8 2
♥ J 10 9 8 6 4
♦ K 5
♣ J

Contract = 4♥

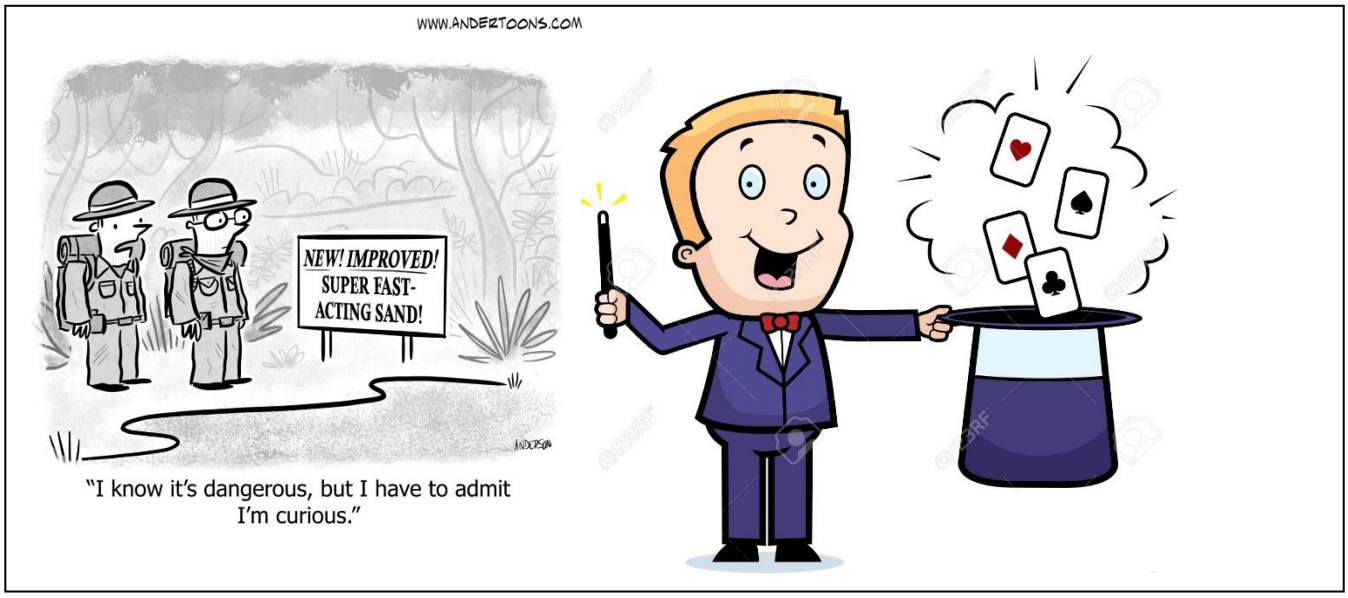
Opening Lead = ♦3

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

(Solutions to these puzzles are on page 5. No peeking!)

April Rebus
by John Jones

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



Solution to "Play or Defend?"

Answer: Defend. Win the ♦A at trick 1. Declarer can unblock the ♦K intending to finesse the ♦9 later, but it is not enough. At trick 2, East makes the crucial play, shifting to the ♣Q and smothering declarer's ♣J. Note that declarer is short of dummy entries. The defense can later play a diamond, severing communications between declarer and dummy.

Thanks to Julian Pottage for this problem.

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

$100 – What is a Queen?

$200 – What is Quantitative?

$300 – What is a Quack?

$400 – What is Qualifying?

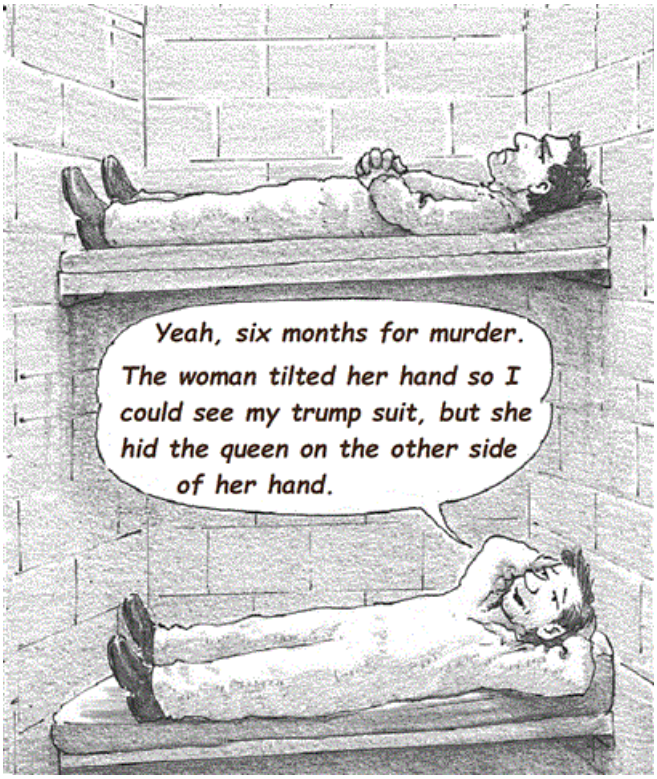
$500 – What is a Quitted Trick?

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Submitted by John Jones



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Rebus

Quick Tricks

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

District 23 Rank ChangesFebruary 2023

Junior Master
Barbara Ann Glicksman
Leslie Klein
Jadzia Lordeon
Robert C. Miller
Amy Muscoplat
Fred Register

Club Master
Joel W. Athey
Benjamin A. Boye
Salina Lo
Patricia Mitchell
Carol Williams

Sectional Master
Clementina Fleshler
Ubaldo Marson

Regional Master
Elaine L. Bock
Robert S. Jennings
Peter Kavounas

Bronze Life Master
Nancy A. Toussaint

Silver Life Master
Ramani Ravikandan

Ruby Life Master
S. K. Leech

Around the Units in District 23



Pomona – Covina by Tom Lill

www.acblunit551.org

La Fetra Games: Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:45
Individual: April 13, 10 a.m., Ontario
May 4, 10 a.m., TBD
Unit Game: April 20, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

We must start of with some sad news. Long time attendee at La Fetra, Paul Chrisney, passed away on the evening of March 24, from chronic liver failure. Paul would have been the first – maybe the second – to admit he wasn't the strongest player at the club, but his enthusiasm for the game was undiminished by that minor problem. As of this writing, services are still being arranged; get in touch with one of your Board members to find out the details. I'll send out a Bridge Alert when details are known, of course.

Most of you know already, but the Arcadia Bridge Center is closing down. Mojo is going to pick up some of the slack, but any players who live closer to Glendora than to Pasadena and want to join us will be more than welcome.

We will be presenting the 2023 Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney awards during our April Unit game. If you will be receiving one of these awards, you will have been notified by the time this issue of the SCBN goes to press. Ahem.

The March Individual was captured by Julianne Curry, with 67.71%. In second we find Clinton Lew; Art Weinstein tied Roger Boyar for third; then Nancy Stebbins, Karen McCarthy, Thomas Cusack, and Kiran Kumar.

In the March Unit Game, somehow Judy Mogharbel dragged Yours Truly into the top spot, with a 59.26% game. Obviously, the game was pretty competitive! In second were Vic Sartor – Bill Papa, followed by Fredy Minter – Amr Elghamry, then Mary Ann Wotring – Steve Mancini and Stephen Andersen – Peter Kavounas.

There were two rank advancements this month. Benjamin Boye has moved up to Club Master, and Peter Kavounas is now a Regional Master.

There were only two "big games" last month. With the increased attendance lately, the games seem to be much more competitive. Anyway, the top game, 68.23%, was turned in by Caryn Mason – Mary Ann Wotring. The other was a 66.15% effort by Fredy and Lulu Minter. Others turning in a first place performance: Steve Andersen, Roger Boyar, Vic Sartor, Eddie Rose, Gary Atwell, Steve Mancini, and Bill Papa.

While there were a number of – ahem – interesting hands last month, I didn't really note any of them down. (It was *that* kind of month, unfortunately.)

So here's a few oddities from the past. Exhibit #1:

	♠ J 9 ♥ K 9 8 6 4 3 ♦ Q 10 7 5 ♣ 7	
♠ A K Q 6 5 ♥ none ♦ A K 8 6 3 2 ♣ 9 4		♠ 10 7 3 2 ♥ Q J 5 ♦ none ♣ A K 10 5 3 2
	♠ 8 4 ♥ A 10 7 2 ♦ J 9 4 ♣ Q J 8 6	

At my table (I was East) it went 1♠ – 2♣; 3♦ – 4♠. We were not playing splinters, nor was 2♣ game forcing. IMO, West needs to open 1♦, LHO will probably bid 1♥, East should double, West bids 3♠ and East-West will almost certainly get to slam. But everyone was in 4♠. Twelve tricks are easy on a "Declarer Reversal." Go figure.

Exhibit #2:

	♠ K ♥ A Q 10 9 ♦ 8 7 ♣ A K Q 7 5 4	
♠ 8 5 ♥ K J 5 4 ♦ K 10 4 2 ♣ J 10 9		♠ J 10 9 7 3 ♥ 8 7 ♦ A Q 6 ♣ 8 6
	♠ A Q 6 4 2 ♥ 6 3 2 ♦ J 9 5 3 ♣ 3	

The results were +230 (once) and three +130s. Meanwhile it's easy to make all 13 tricks in hearts. Weird.

The +230 was turned in at my table – I was East, of course. The auction was … well let's be polite and say it was not best. North opened 1♣, South called 1♠, and North reversed into 2♥. Pass, pass, pass! Aie, Chihuahua! South was an expert-level player, he just decided to "take a view," and of course my side took gas because of it. Go figure. It would not have been so painful, had North-South gotten to the slam or even to game, given the sub-optimal results at the other tables.

Wouldn't 2♠ be forcing? Or, if not, then maybe Ingberman (a.k.a. a version of Lebensohl) be useful here? Arrgh, is all I can say.

Quote for the month: "I am mortified to be told that, in the United States of America, the sale of a book can become a subject of inquiry, and of criminal inquiry too." (Thomas Jefferson)



Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley
by Beth Morrin

Our Annual Meeting and Unit 556 Board Election will be held on Saturday, April 6th at the Newhall Community Center.

Space is limited – please contact Ruth Baker for reservations (rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net).

There will be a Royal StaC (Gold, Red, Silver points) game on Friday, May 10th at the Newhall Community Center. Reservations are required.

Winners of the Saturday F2F game:

Mar. 2

N/S	Aggi Oschin – Beth Morrin	62.63%
E/W	Jan Ladd – Roy Ladd	67.06%

Winners of the Friday F2F game:

Mar. 8

N/S	Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky	59.52%
E/W	Tomoko Stock – Paula Olivares	65.77%

Mar. 15

N/S	Jerrod Mason – David Khalieque	65.48%
E/W	Harry Randhawa – Alan Nueman	64.08%

Mar. 22*

N/S	Donna Davidson – Bill Langlois	65.16%
E/W	Carly Hall– Harris Hall	62.07%

*District 22-23 StaC 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. ACBL has increased the minimum entry fee to $5. Virtual games are now available to all BBO players. Invite your favorite partner to play with you in one of our games.

Big Virtual Club Games (65+%):

Mon. Feb. 26
Gerard Geremia – Rae Murbach 69.91%

Tues. Feb. 27
Donna Davidson – Bill Langlois 41.67%

Mon. Mar. 4
Avice Osmundson – Kiran Kumar 65.74%

Thurs. Mar.7
Carolyn Cohen – Dominique Moore 69.21%

Sun. Mar. 10
Amr Elghamry – Gerard Geremia 69.44%

Thurs. Mar. 14
Mira Rowe – Ron Oest 67.36%

Sun. Mar. 21
Rand Pinsky – Robot 67.59%

Sun. Mar. 24
Bud Kalafian – Steve Licker 71.18%

Congratulations to the winners of the 2023 Helen Shanbrom Ace of Clubs Awards:

0-5	Kathy Howell
5-20	Saime Parikh
20-50	Steve Cormier
50-100	Jerrod Mason
100-200	Tom Beggane
200-300	Alan Nueman
300-500	David Khalieque
500-1000	John Langer
1000-1500	Ruth Baker
1500-2500	Kathy Swaine
2500-3500	Donna Davidson
3500-5000	Rand Pinsk
7500-10,000	Bill Langlois

Congratulations to the winners of the 2017 Mini-McKenney Awards:

0-5	Kathy Howell
5-20	Saime Parikh
20-50	Steve Cormier
50-100	Jerrod Mason
100-200	Joshua Kuschner
200-300	Alan Nueman
300-500	David Khalieque
500-1000	John Langer
1000-1500	Ruth Baker
1500-2500	Kathy Swaine
2500-3500	Donna Davidson
3500-5000	Rand Pinsky
7500-10,000	Bill Langlois

Pasadena – San Gabriel
by Morris "Mojo" Jones

bridgemojo.com



It was an eventful March! The big news was that the Arcadia Bridge Club is closing after 55 years of dedication to bridge. I know it's especially disappointing for players to our east out I-210. Besides the games at the Pasadena Bridge Club (Fair Oaks & Orange Grove) there are two morning games in Glendora. (See Tom Lill's column elsewhere here!).

April will be a transition month, with Diane continuing to hold games on Friday and Saturday. The Pasadena Bridge Club has started up games on Monday and Tuesday, with plans to open Friday and Saturday games in May.

Our twice-monthly Unit Games will be held at the Pasadena Bridge Club. For months through June, at least, games will be on the first and third Sunday afternoons at 12:30. Unit games this month are April 7 and 21. Make your reservations with Miriam Harrington, (626) 232-0558 or miratpf@aol.com.

Winners for March Unit Games:

- March 3 (15 tables!) N/S: Jeanette Deverian - Joan Mesias, E/W Paul Nason - Elliott Mazur
- March 17 (10.5 tables) N/S: Paul Nason - Diana Borgatti, E/W George Wang - Frank Shih

Congratulations to new rank changes for March:

- Junior Masters: Leslie Klein, Fred Register
- Regional Master: Robert Jennings
- Ruby Life Master: S K Leech



Long Beach
by Lillian Slater

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

Sorry, nothing from Long Beach again this month.

Coffee with John Jones

The South Bay Bridge Club is hosting a series of question-and-answer sessions with John Jones beginning Monday April 15th. The sessions will be on Mondays from 10:15 to 12:00 noon and last 4 weeks, through May 6. Cost will be $15 per session.

The sessions are intended for everyone from advanced beginners.

These sessions are for the audience to ask questions of John on hands, plays and general bridge. He will answer the question and then write up the question and the answers to be handed out the next week.

Bring your questions and develop a deeper understanding and enjoyment of bridge.

The South Bay Bridge Club
24100 Narbonne Ave, Unit 105
Lomita, CA 90717

Inquiries and questions:
SouthBayBridgeClub@gmail.com
Coffee with JJ

Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Wafik Abdou, Mark Bartusek, David Grainger, Roger Lee, Daniel Korbel, Mister Mealymouth, 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
None Vul

North	East	South	West
1♠	X	XX	2♥
pass	pass	???	

You, South, hold: ♠ K4 ♥ K94 ♦ KJ8742 ♣ Q10

What call do you make?

Using standard bidding, the redouble to show 10+ HCP looks automatic. A 2♦ would be non-forcing in standard methods. However, there are alternate treatments. A scheme I developed a long time ago (maybe I was the original inventor, maybe someone developed it first) but it is now commonplace to use transfers after takeout doubles of opening bids of 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠. On the actual hand some panelists referred to the possibility of transferring to 2♦ instead of redoubling. On the actual sequence, we could bid 3♦ (forcing), 2NT, 2♠ (which would show three spades in some partnerships) or double for penalties. All four possibilities got some love from the panelists.

Abdou: Double. Take the money, partner passed to show a real opener so a trump lead will devastate declarer.

Grainger: 2♠. I don't want to drive this too high unless partner wants to keep going.

Shuster: 2NT. Redouble was optimistic, with the ability to double only diamonds and a hand with a story of its own to tell We're a long way from 5♦D or 4♠ with this many losers, so 3♦ is too much. Instead, I'll limit the hand at 2NT, taking aim at the most likely game. If partner has only one heart, he'll have a suit to bid over 2NT; if not, then hearts rate to be 4-4.

Korbel: 2NT. I don't want to force to game. My second choice is 2♠. I would probably have just transferred to diamonds and continued with 2♠ or 2NT, anticipating this kind of problem.

Mealymouth: 3♦. This noses out 2NT by a smidgeon and double by a skosh. When in doubt, bid your best suit. Promiscuous redoubles often lead to problems. I'd rather have bid an invitational 3♦ (as available in most of my partnerships), reserving redouble for two kinds of hands: game forces, and hands with good prospects of nailing the runout for an ample penalty.

Roeder: 3♦. Will partner take this as forcing? (*Yes, redoubling and bidding a new suit is forcing).* If your partnerships play transfers over the double (a good treatment), a better approach would be an initial call of 2♣ then followed up with 2NT. As it is, I am fine if partner passes 3♦. The lack of an ace suggests caution.

Bartusek: 3♦. I think it is too risky trying to penalize them with only honor third of hearts, no aces, and a hidden 6-bagger (although it might be right). Additionally, +100 or +300 won't compensate us sufficiently for a NV game at matchpoints. The only alternative appears to be 3♦, which should be forcing. We'll end up in either 3NT, 4♠, or 5♦.

Lee: 3♦. This could get us too high, but it's my only option at this point.

Wittes: 3♦. This should be forcing for at least one round and is the best description of my hand.

2

IMPs
N-S Vul

East	South	West	North
4♥	???		

You, South, hold: ♠ AKQJ974 ♥ void ♦ A4 ♣ AQ94

What call do you make?

What a hand! How do we make progress here? Do we try to elicit partner's help or just bid what we think we can make? Some go low.

Roeder: 4♠. Does 5-level security exist? Nope.

Some go medium hoping partner will bid a slam.

Grainger: 5♠. Never discussed this call, but partner should work out to go with a couple of cards. Yeah, you'll miss the ♣K and a couple of spade slams, but there are a lot of worse hands you can catch. Double is far too likely to end the auction.

Korbel: 5♠. I guess I could do more or do less. But who knows what partner has? I may get to a decent slam as partner knows I must have an absolute duke to risk going past 4♠.

Some just bid 6♠ and don't worry about it.

Lee: 6♠. I've learned not to lose too much sleep over hands like this.

Mealymouth: 6♠. Wasn't this the deal where South had ♣KT832 and East, who was void, nailed me with a Lightner Double? (Isn't it about time the ACBL banned Lightner Doubles along with the Kaplan Inversion?) Two of my favorite conventions!

Shuster: 6♠. We can make slam opposite as little as Jxxxx in clubs on a heart lead, so I think I should bid it. I have sympathy for taking the low(er) road of 5♠. Anyone who doubles must have been a graduate of Torquemada's school of partnership bidding.

Abdou: 6♠. Very tough! 4♠ seems pusillanimous and anything else will confuse partner! I'm not smart enough to distort my shape and find 7♣!

Bartusek: 6♠. Partner could have a king, but even Jxxxx or 10xxxxx of clubs and out might be enough with a heart lead. I had initially considered 5♠, but partner probably won't go with just a single minor suit king. Note that, in certain competitive auctions the general concept is to bid assuming the balance of the HCPs to be evenly split between the other two hands.

And one panelist encourages partner to bid a grand with the right hand.

Wittes: 5♥. I certainly don't want partner passing any double at this vulnerability. There's no way partner can ever imagine that if they hold the two minor suit kings, we probably make a grand. At least 5♥ followed by 6♠ is a little more forward going than simply bidding 6♠.

3

IMPs
Both Vul

North	East	South	West
1♠	pass	1NT*	pass
2♥	pass	???	

* Forcing

You, South, hold: ♠ A ♥ K74 ♦ KJ7642 ♣ 942

What call do you make?

Again, there is a possibility of the auction going differently to this point. Some of the panelists employ Invitational Jump Shifts (IJS) over 1♥ or 1♠ openings. Using an IJS on a suit with no texture is not to my taste, but several panelists mentioned it. Given that we are at this point of the hand, we could pass, correct to diamonds (not showing much in values), try 2NT or raise to 3♥ (partner will expect a fourth heart). Again, the panel went in every possible direction.

Bartusek: Pass. Least of evils. 3♥ is a very close second choice vulnerable at IMPs, but I fear that the KJ is wasted opposite a stiff. 2NT without a club stopper seems way too risky. In a similar problem in the 2016 March Bridge World's MSC problem #A panelists held ♠K ♥K9x ♦Axxxx ♣98xx (a better fitting hand). This resulted in 15 panelists passing while 9 panelists tried 3♥ (but that was NV at matchpoints). In this world of lighter opening bids (especially with the majors), one has to tread more cautiously with likely misfits. Note that passing would be clearer if we were playing invitational 5-5 jump shifts by opener in combination with an opener rebid of 2NT (or 3♣) to create a game-forcing auction.

Mealymouth: 3♦. As in #1, what I should have bid initially. Might I also have ♠2 ♥74 ♦KJ97642 ♣Q42 for this sequence? Sure, and poor partner won't know that I have something better. That's precisely why I should have bid 3♦ earlier, so partner will know which range of strength I have. If you teach 2/1 GF, you must teach how to respond with tweeners. The hands that used to qualify for 1♠ 2♦ 2♥ 3♦ are now too weak. Why not bid Weak Jump Shifts at the three-level? Because opener doesn't always rebid 2♥; sometimes he bids 2♣ with a 5=3=2=3 minimum and now we can get out in 2♦ rather than 3♦.

Wittes: 3♦. This hand is very close to bidding 2♦ directly over 1♠ rather than 1NT, but once I have bid 1NT, 3♦, though top-heavy, seems right.

Lee: 2NT. Not much choice here, though I would've strongly preferred to start with a diamond invite.

Korbel: 2NT. Why didn't I just jump to 3♦ invitational the first time? At this point I'm pretty boxed. Let's try 2NT; partner can shape out over this and we will avoid 3NT if he has a small singleton club.

Roeder: 2NT. Playing Downward Invitational Jump Shifts, I might have chanced an immediate 3♦ (flawed due to suit quality). Now, a 3♦ could be made on a much weaker hand.

Shuster: 3♥. I'd just pass at MPs, but I can't let a potential red game go at IMP scoring opposite the wide range of a standard 2♥ call. The only alternative is 2NT, but when partner passes, it rates to be less safe than 3♥. After all, if partner has fitting diamond honors, then we're going to be wide open in clubs. And if partner doesn't fit diamonds, where are 9 tricks coming from? In my own pet methods, minor suit 2/1's go through 2♣ while 2♦ shows any hand with invitational values. It is useful to get invitational hands out of the 1NT response.

Abdou: 3♥. The best lie! Maybe partner is 5-5 or even a good 6-4 and will do something intelligent.

Grainger: 3♥ and hope for the best. This is a very awkward hand.

4

IMPs
Neither Vul

North	East	South	West
3♦	pass	???	

You, South, hold: ♠ 94 ♥ K764 ♦ AK42 ♣ K94

What call do you make?

We have a big diamond fit and have got by one opponent. How do we make life difficult for West?

Korbel: 4♦. I don't think I can unilaterally bid 5♦. We might even defeat 4♠, or they may not end up there. Or, we may go for too big a number.

Wittes: 5♦. They probably have a big spade fit, and are likely to make 4♠, but lacking high cards, may have a tough time coming in at the 5 level at equal vulnerability. I could bid 4♦ and hope we buy it, but now I would be forced to bid 5♦ anyway if they bid 4♠.

Abdou: 5♦. This could be wrong but they get the last guess.

Bartusek: 5♦. Considering how many diamonds we have it's surprising that we got past East, but it won't be passed out by West. I don't want to let the opponents find 4♠, and 5♦ could very easily shut West out. Let the opponents make the final guess, and it'll be difficult for them to penalize us holding so few diamonds.

Grainger: 5♦. 3NT as a bluff could take 7-8 tricks… but is more likely to end up with one or two. A quick, confident 5♦ might shut them out.

Lee: 3NT. This seems like a good time to semi-psyche.

Roeder: 3NT. This has two ways to win. The most likely way: you blow them out of a making 4♠. Plus, you have not gone down in 3NT yet.

Shuster: 3NT. I want to get over 3♠. The hand has enough high-card strength that LHO might not be able to bid 4♠. On a great day, I might even make it, but somehow I feel like it will be another "routine" push at -450.

Mealymouth: 3NT. Opponents' preempts are like mosquitos, but this opponent stings like a bee. I expect to win 2 IMPs in 3NT when the opening leader has ♣AQxxx or ♥AQxxx and leads fourth highest. That'll give me eight tricks when North at the other table goes down two in 3♦. I can win even more IMPs when some diamond raise at the other table goads my teammates into an unbeatable 4♠.

5

IMPs
N-S Vul.

North	East	South	West
1♣	3♠	X	4♠
5♣	pass	???	

You, South, hold: ♠ 654 ♥ AK94 ♦ AQ97 ♣ A8

What call do you make?

First, an apology about this problem. I sent it out with 14 cards. A couple of the panelists caught that the hand had too many cards, but most did not. The extra card was the ♦3. First, we will hear from the panelist who presented the problem and faced it (online).

Shuster: 6♣. Perhaps 5NT should show both red aces and a try for seven, but does it also show the club ace? I don't think partner will correctly guess when to bid a grand, so if we're going to get to a grand, we need to do so ourselves. That ties into how much of a force the negative double creates - my preference is that a negative double at 3♠ or higher creates a forcing auction, but that is not a standard agreement. So, what kind of hand might partner have to bid 5♣ here? Even if we have no spade or club losers, slam might still need the diamond hook: ♠A ♥xxx ♦xx ♣KQJTxxx. Even adding the ♥Q doesn't make it cold. It kind of needs either the ♦K or both the ♥Q and ♦J. I think I'd rather try to win the match on the other boards and not risk a grand down one. At the table, I was North and held the diamond king, so 7 was easy. My partner tried 5NT but I chickened out and signed off in 6♣, not wanting to bid a grand off the trump ace. Both players had close decisions and went low and missed the grand. Such is life.

Bartusek: 6♣. I don't see how an ambiguous 5NT or 5♠ will get partner to cooperate successfully. Given the vulnerability and perhaps aggressive opponents I don't think I can assume that partner has a void in spades. I'll settle for the assured small slam.

Lee: 6♣. 5♥ should be a cuebid here but I'm not smart enough to trot that out undiscussed.

Roeder: 6♣. If 5NT is correctly interpreted as "pick a slam", such bid is not a cure all. If partner is 1=4=2=6, he may bid 6♥ when 6♣ is best. Bidding 5NT will sometimes be the winner when 6♦ is the only making slam. Is that possibility worth the risk? I cautiously opine, "no."

Wittes: 6♣. Partner rates to have a spade void, and if so, 6♣ is likely to be an underbid, but at this vulnerability, all kinds of operations are possible by the opponents.

Some (like Shuster's partner who tried 5NT) try for a grand slam!

Abdou: 5♠. Bluhmer?! 5♠? I got all working cards partner! *Yes, Lou Bluhm would enjoy being quoted and would probably make just the bid you did. Thanks for reminding us of the great bidder and great man!*

Grainger: 5♦. If partner bids 5♠, bid 7♣ otherwise, settle for 6. *Shuster asked several experts about this hand and some thought that 5♦ was not a cuebid, but a correction of the suggested club strain. I disagree and think 5♦ is a cuebid. When partner freely bids a vulnerable 5♣ knowing that I could be void, he/she doesn't need much help in the suit.*

And some think they have heard enough and judge bidding the grand to be odds on.

Mealymouth: 7♣. I think I can avoid any troubles because I expect the opponents to concede "all" 13 tricks as soon as North ruffs the spade lead at trick one. They'll see only 13 cards in dummy after I turn the trick. The problem did not specify the level through which "Negative Doubles" apply. Bridge World Standard uses 3♠ as the upper limit (and I use it with some partners), but some (e.g. ACBL Yellow Card adherents) play them only through 2♠ and others make the Mitsubishi (not to be confused with Missouri) Compromise of playing them through 3♦. We may sneer at Charlie Goren's methods today, but let's give him credit even when we disagree: he sure knew how to keep things simple, didn't he? *Mealy is apparently at the Fun Table. Experts play negative doubles through about 5♦, and cooperative (values) doubles higher than that.*

Korbel: 7♣. Wow do I have a lot. Could we really have a loser anywhere? Could partner hold ♠x ♥Qxx ♦Kx ♣KQJTxxx? I can't believe it. I don't do this often but I'm going for it. I would try 5♦ if I was sure it was a cuebid for clubs, but I am not certain of that and would prefer not to play there.