Southern California **Bridge News**

Volume 61, #9 October 2024 Published by ALACBU

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by John Jones

Mitch Dunitz and Tom Lill Win Goodwill Awards



One of the more pleasurable tasks I get to do as president is to nominate individuals for our district's ACBL Goodwill Award. Last year I nominated Bob Shore and Kim Wang. This year I am nominating Mitch Dunitz and Tom Lill. This year was easier in one significant aspect. Last year I only had a partial list of previous D23 Goodwill Award winners. This year I had an entire list of all previous winners. The award was first given in 1957. (see the list of previous winners elsewhere in this newsletter). The maximum number of nominees per district each year is two. When I looked at the previous winners and noticed who was missing, I noticed two glaring omissions: Mitch and Tom. Both of these fine gentlemen have made huge contributions to bridge. Mitch has funded a project of getting bridge taught in colleges. He has also served on the ACBL's Ethical Oversight Committee. He has raised a significant amount of money for various bridge causes. He further behaves well at the table, complimenting opponents on good play and ethics. Tom Lill is the current D23 Newsletter editor (what you are reading). He does a great job as editor and does so without accepting pay for what he does (the board voted him a salary, he declines the money). He is president of his Unit. He is also the director of games in the Inland Empire. He does a great job of running the La Fetra Bridge Club. He is a pleasure to play against at the table! I selected these two excellent candidates because they both should have been given the award a long time ago. However, one of the nice things about our district is all of the great volunteers that we have. I actually made a list of about a dozen people who could have been given the Goodwill Award. It's nice to have wonderful people around our

PRESIDENT continued on page2

Regional Director's Report

by David Lodge

The System Worked!



When I joined the national Board of Directors at the beginning of 2019, Jay Whipple, the incoming board president asked me what committees I was interested in working on. I shared with Jay that my experience was in accounting, finance and business. I said I had been a successful entrepreneur and suggested that given my experience, I would be more useful as someone looking at the big picture and not someone who was interested in some of the minutiae. So what committee did Jay assign me to? Bridge. No committee involves more details than Bridge. At my first committee meeting in Memphis at the 2019 Spring NABC, almost ½ of the 25 board members were present. We sat through a 3 hour meeting with 13 items on the agenda. Most of them dealt with insignificant changes that involved fractions of a Masterpoint. Tedious and boring. The next day, at the general meeting involving all 25 members, we went through the same 13 issues. Here I was, an active board meeting for less than 2 days, and I was already disenchanted. It was then that I decided that I would become an advocate for offloading some off the tactical duties of the board to some other group. After it had

DIRECTOR continued on page3

Inside This Issue

Rank Changes ..... page 8
The Teacher's Corner ..... page 4
Puzzle Page ..... page 10
Hybrid Game Announcement ..... page 9
The Goodwill Committee ..... page 5
North American Pairs ..... page 10
Around the Units ..... page 11
Problem Solvers' Panel ..... page 15

PRESIDENT continued from page 1
bridge district.

On January 12, we will be testing a new bridge format. The format is a hybrid game that combines both online play with the club. To play you will bring a laptop or similar device to a participating local club. Currently the local clubs that are signed up include: Pasadena BC, Long Beach BC, South Bay BC in Lomita and the 750 Bridge Club in Woodland Hills. There will be no masterpoints awarded at this trial event. Players can win a free game or lesson from one of the several top LA players who have volunteered their time. The game will be played on RealBridge (a competitor of BBO). See the flyer in this newsletter.

Penny and Gino Barbieri both passed away recently. Their services were on October 4. Penny was one of the great volunteers for D23. She and her friend and frequent partner Betty Jackson worked all the regional tournaments D23 had for several years. They worked as tournament committee representatives, hospitality chairs, partnership chairs, award chairs, and in more other capacities that I could list. They essentially did everything except work as the Director, and they probably could have done that too. If a job needed to be done, they did it. Gino worked behind the scenes helping Penny. He would do things like run out to purchase something we had run out of. How great a volunteer was Penny? Penny (along with Betty) was awarded the District's Goodwill Award in 2014.

Did I say Penny would do almost anything for us? Here is one Penny contribution. My sister, Judy Fox, called me several years ago and asked for my help selecting an activity for her after school Yorbita Elementary Gifted Program (4th through 6th graders) in the Rowland School District. This was a reasonable request given that I had previously been gifted coordinator at a school I taught at. After suggesting several ideas that were rebuffed for one reason or another (we've done that recently, it will overshoot my budget, the sessions will last too long, etc.), I suggested teaching the students bridge. My sister said she didn't have enough knowledge to teach bridge (which was mostly true). I promised that I would get her free supplies from the ACBL, and get someone nearby to actually do the bridge teaching. Penny was the volunteer I talked into the teaching. Penny was wonderful working with the elementary students. My sister and the students were all complimentary of Penny and her teaching. The only mishap I heard of was a girl who cried after her king was ruffed by a little trump ("But it's a king!").

How great a volunteer was Penny? She (along with Betty Jackson) received the district's Goodwill Award in 2014. This is a very exclusive award. It has been given out since 1957, and since then only a few more than 100 players have earned that distinction. Thank you for your awesome service, Penny!

I got to know Gino when I entered a Knockout event several years ago. This was supposed to be a bracketed event, so that the top teams played each other, and the lower ranked teams were in their own brackets. Unfortunately, there weren't enough teams entered for even two brackets. Thus, the directors did the only thing possible and combined all the teams into one bracket. As luck would have it, Gino's team, with the lowest combined masterpoints, drew my team with the most combined masterpoints. Yes, there would be handicaps, in this case it was the ACBL maximum, which was something like 44 IMPs over 24 boards, but my team was quite strong. I was partnering Internet star Mike Pudlin, and at the other table I had Leo Bell and Marshall Miles, fresh off their world championship win in Istanbul. A friend of Gino's noticed their unlucky draw and was attempting to talk Gino out of playing at all, telling him that we were too good and they would get destroyed. He further implied we would be mean, and Gino's team should just withdraw. I didn't know Gino very well, but I knew Penny pretty well. I asked Penny if Gino could be talked into playing. She said yes, go talk to him. I told Gino to come play at my table that we would have fun. Gino agreed and off to the table we went. While the directors prepared everything we exchanged bad jokes, and by the time the director put the boards on the table to begin play, we were all laughing and had made new friends. About the second board, Gino bid to 4♥. I could say he bid aggressively, but the journalistic truth is that he overbid like a loon! I made my opening lead, and it was apparent the lie of the cards was favorable enough that Gino had a chance. We took the first three tricks and Mike was on lead. Mike thought for a while and made a terrific play. Mike gave a ruff sluff. This tangled an already difficult hand. Gino was going to need to take the ruff in the long hand (generally not best, but necessary on this occasion), take three finesses in the right order while pulling trumps as he went back and forth to the dummy. When I saw Mike's terrific defensive play, I thought to myself, this guy doesn't have much experience, I bet he is going down. Luckily for me, there was no open betting window. Gino thought for a couple of minutes and proceeded to play the hand perfectly, scoring his contract. I said "well played, but that's enough out of you." Gino laughed and wrote 620 on his scoresheet. A

few hands later Gino again bid to an iffy game, and again made it. The bottom line is that Gino's squad played quite well and we didn't come close to overcoming the handicap. Gino was in the semi-finals, again drawing a tough team. Having made friends with Gino, I checked on his team after that match. Sure enough, Gino's gang had taken down another big team. I checked on him after the final, in which Gino again had to play a top team. This time Gino's squad failed to bring home the bacon, but they had made it close. This was likely Gino's finest moment at the bridge table, finishing second in such a tough event. Thereafter, Gino and I were very friendly and I found him to be quite fun to be around.

If anyone wants to be in on the planning for the planning of the 2025 Long Beach Regional, please contact me via email president@d23acbl.org We are looking for a site for the 2026 summer regional. It doesn't have to be Long Beach. We also need a site for the 2028 regional. That will likely have to move off of our normal first week in July date due to the Olympics. Ideas?

I'm also looking for ideas about where and when to run a GNT sectional to support D23 GNT teams going to the summer nationals.

The next ALACBU meeting will be Sunday, November 10. The meeting will be live at Long Beach Bridge Center, and online. D23 Secretary Lillian Slater will send out announcements to unit representatives.

DIRECTOR continued from page 1

been concluded that the board would reduce in size from 25 to 13, Kevin Lane, the D23 District Representative, authored a motion, which passed, to create a new Masterpoint Committee that would be partially independent of the board. Masterpoint decisions which were deemed material would still require the approval of the board. Minor changes could be made by the committee without board approval. Like many laws of our land, we did not define what would be major vs minor. All of which leads us to 3 actions which took place recently that required the board to meet to decide if any of the issues were material. The 3 items are:1) changing the award structure for 2 session team events so that all members of 5 and six person teams receive the full award if they play at least ½ of the boards; 2) allowing limited tables count toward the table count in the Masterpoint formula for Fast Pairs as well as the regular "slow" pair competition; 3) modifying the formula for online regional mid-flight pairs so that if there is no top flight scheduled or a top flight is scheduled but doesn't make, the impact on the mid-flight will not be as significantly reduced as is now the case. So which of any of the 3 proposals do you think are major? None of them? All of them? One or two of them? I think they are all minor in the following sense. We've established a committee of experts to deal with these kind of issues; top players, ACBL seasoned top-level tournament directors, and regional tournament managers. These people are close to the problems created by inconsistencies and unintended consequences. The board should let them make the decisions. There is no necessity for the board to review any of the committee's actions unless there is a possibility of a significant negative financial impact. Otherwise, we're allowing the same unnecessary detail to work its way back into the work load of the BOD, diminishing the time they have to deal with the important strategic issues.

Unfortunately, I'll miss the fabulous Ventura regional but hope to see you at the extraordinary Palm Springs regional.

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. . . . . John Jones
Contributing Editor. . . . . John Jones

Copy deadlines: the 10th of the month. Opinions expressed in the Southern California Bridge News are those of the authors and do not 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.

The Teacher's Corner

Case for The Defense
by Daniel Oakes

As threatened errrr promised, this will be the first of a multi-part series on that most vexing aspect of bridge; defense. So let's dive in with that building block – communication. Defense is harder than declarer play for one main reason; declarer can see (and direct!) all of the partnership aspects, but as a defender, you only get to see half of the cards and make half of the decisions. The only way to consistently overcome this obstacle is to exchange information with partner.

The key to effective signaling is threefold: 1) What do we need to say to partner? 2) How do we say it? 3) What is partner trying to tell us? There are three main messages to communicate, and they generally follow a hierarchy. In order of importance, they are 1) Attitude (usually pertaining to whether we "like" a suit or not, but there is a number of specific nuances we'll examine), 2) Count (whether we have an odd or even number of cards in a specific suit), and 3) Suit Preference (whether we prefer the higher-ranking or lower-ranking of two suits).

What I mean by hierarchy is that, other things being equal, first we let our partner know our attitude; when our attitude is known or irrelevant, then we signal count, and when count is known or irrelevant, we get to suit preference. This is the general order of things, but there are, as always, exceptions. For a quick illustration of the three types of signals, let's assume that we're going to signal from a suit of K82.

Playing standard signals, to signal attitude, we play a high card to encourage and a low card to discourage, so to encourage, we would play the 8 (let's not throw away the king without a *really* good reason), and to discourage, we would play the 2. Playing upside down signals, it would be the opposite, but rather than run through every example twice, I'm going to assume standard carding throughout this series. If you already play upside down signals, or plan on starting (there is some theoretical reason to do so), go ahead and make the appropriate mental reversals.

To signal count, we first play a low card to show an odd number of cards in a suit, and a high card to show an even number of cards in a suit. So with the K82, if we wanted to show count, we would play the 2. If instead we had the K642, we would play the 6, following the principle that you signal with the "loudest" card you can afford. If instead we played the 4 followed by the 2, partner would, similarly, know that we had an even number of cards in the suit, but the problem is, partner might have to make a critical decision before we had a chance to play the 2, and it would be harder to read the 4. Remember, partner can't see our cards; he might think we're showing an odd number, from K64.

By the way, even playing upside down signals, it's typical expert practice to signal *standard* "remaining count," if you've already played a card in the suit, for instance, to show attitude. So for example, let's say you start with K852 in a suit that declarer leads at trick 2. Playing upside down carding, you'd play the 2 to show an even number of cards in the suit (usually, when declarer leads a suit, our first card is a count card). But if *partner* led the suit and we played the 8 as an attitude card, then the second time the suit was played, we would play the 2 from K52 – we switch to standard "present count." Ok, *now* I'll stick to using standard signals.

Going back to our K82 suit, let's say partner is expecting our card to show suit preference between clubs (a "low" ranking suit) and hearts (a "higher" ranking suit). We would play the 2 (the small card) to show preference for clubs, and the 8 (the high card) to show preference for hearts.

Most players start playing attitude signals fairly early on, and many don't move beyond that, and that's a mistake. But attitude signals are fairly easy – if you have something good in a suit, you play a high card, and if you don't, you play a low card. Although that often helps, it's an oversimplification that is often incorrect. More importantly, count and suit preference signals, used correctly, are extremely useful and shouldn't be neglected. But they're harder to incorporate. It can be difficult for novice or intermediate players to see how to use count signals, and if both partners aren't clear on which signals apply, one partner may play a 2 intending it as a count or attitude signal ("I don't like this suit" or "I have an odd number of cards in this suit"), and partner may think it's a suit preference signal ("I like clubs"). But practice and communication with regular partners (or pickup partners who will read this series!) can reduce the risks.

I used to take playing lessons from a regular player at the Bridge Center of North Orange County (later renamed the Anaheim Bridge Club) from Judy Pede, an excellent teacher who eventually moved to northern California. When we started playing, she told me that we would signal attitude when we were first to lead a suit, and count when declarer was first to lead a suit. So I would dutifully signal as instructed, but while it was easy for me to make use of her attitude signals, I wasn't getting much value from the count signals. No doubt *she* was making good use of the count signals I was giving, but on my end, it just wasn't clicking. Until it did. I remember the hand, or at least the key moment. I had something like Qxx in one suit, and a winner in another suit, and I had to lead one of the two suits. Dummy was void in the suit I had a winner in, and had the ace and a couple of smaller cards in the other suit.

I knew that leading away from Qxx could blow a trick if partner had, say, Jxx (if you don't know this, grab a deck of cards and give North A9x and South K10x, and give E/W Qxx and Jxx, and play through three tricks with one hand leading, then another, then another, then the fourth. You should find that when E/W lead the suit, N/S get all three tricks, but when N/S lead the suit, as long as the defense plays second hand low, they'll get a trick).

On the other hand, if declarer was also void in the suit dummy was void in, then leading that suit could blow a trick by giving declarer a ruff & sluff. What to do?! Then I remembered Judy's count card in the suit dummy was void in, and that allowed me to realize that declarer still had a card left in that suit. So I played my winner, and declarer followed suit then ruffed in dummy. Later, I got a trick with my queen in the *other* suit, which I wouldn't have gotten if I'd led it.

The moral of the story is, if you're not already doing so, start signaling count with your partner when declarer breaks new suits, even if you don't see the benefit. Pay attention to the cards partner plays, and try to work out why they can matter. With effort and focus, eventually you'll get that "Ah ha!" moment.

There's a lot more to come, but if you can't wait until next month, you can do a YouTube search for "Dan Oakes case for the defense" and find a number of recordings I did for BBO's (Bridge Base Online) Intermediate Advanced Club. They'll make more sense if you take them in order; the first was recorded on January 14, 2022.

The District 23 ACBL Goodwill Committee

by John Jones

Following is a list of all the "Goodwill Committee" appointments in our District. Each year, the Unit President nominates, at his/her discretion, two members who have provided outstanding service to our bridge community.

*Deceased

It is quite likely that many of those appointed prior to 1985, but not so marked, are deceased. If you have any knowledge about those members no longer with us, please get in touch! (Apparently, such information was not relayed to the ACBL in those cases.)

1957
*Mrs. Arnold Kauder
*Barry J. Crane

1958
*Helen Cale, Glendale, CA
*Robert Hawk, Pasadena, CA

1959
*Augusta Oppenheim, Los Angeles, CA
*Milton Vernoff, Los Angeles, CA

1960
*Mrs. Lewis Mathe, Los Angeles, CA
*Ralph Kempner, Santa Monica, CA

1961
*Mrs. Morris Portugal, Los Angeles, CA
*Morris Portugal, Los Angeles, CA

1962
*Mrs. Kelsey Petterson, Bellflower, CA
*Kelsey Petterson, Bellflower, CA

1963
*Bessie Stanley, Pacific Pal., CA
*G.J. Sandusky, Los Angeles, CA

1964
*Mrs. Mark Layton, Sherman Oaks, CA
*Mark Layton, Sherman Oaks, CA

1965
*Eileen Weingart, Claremont, CA
*Martin Kivel, Pasadena, CA

1966
*Mabs Askew, Downey, CA
*Lewis Mathe, Los Angeles, CA

1967
*Irene Andersen, Los Angeles, CA
*Jules Farell, Beverly Hills, CA

1968
*Mrs. Paul Wayte, Whittier, CA
*Paul Wayte, Whittier, CA

1969
Bonnie Sakamoto, Los Angeles, CA
Robert Landy, Los Angeles, CA

1970
*Mrs. Guin Womack, Los Alamitos, CA
*Dr. Victor Mastron, Lynwood, CA

1971
*Sylvia M. Roos, N. Hollywood, CA
Roxy R. Violin, Culver City, CA

1972
*Mrs. Herbert S. Nusbaum, Los Angeles, CA
*Tom Stoddard, Los Angeles, CA

1973
*Dorothy Bare, Los Angeles, CA
*Donald D. Lundgren, San Gabriel, CA

1974
Jeanne Trefzger, Arcadia, CA
*R.W. Goode, Los Angeles, CA

1975
Mrs. H.B. Pearson, La Canada, CA
*Herbert S. Nusbaum, Los Angeles, CA

1976
*Mrs. N.E. Hargrove, Canoga Park, CA
*Eilif Andersen, Los Angeles, CA

1977
*Mrs. Fred A. Maier, Santa Monica, CA
Fred A. Maier, Santa Monica, CA

1978
*Lilyan Eisenstein, Beverly Hills, CA
*Robert Eisenstein, Beverly Hills, CA

1979
*Mrs. Melrose Colvin, Los Angeles, CA
*Mel Morris, San Juan Capistrano, CA

1980
*Donald L. Bond, Lancaster, CA
Beverly Bond, Lancaster, CA

1981
Mrs. E. Paulsen, Culver City, CA
*H.V. Peterson, Los Angeles, CA

1982
*Mrs. Esther Stephenson, Los Angeles, CA
*Gerald Bare, Pacific Palisades, CA

1983
*David Watkins, Long Beach, CA
Sharon David, N. Hollywood, CA
*Mrs. Les Cohen, Los Angeles, CA
*N. Jay Brown, Los Angeles, CA

1984
*Cecil Cook, Long Beach, CA
Goldie Jacobson, Beverly Hills, CA

1985
*Mrs. Hermine Baron, Los Angeles, CA
Stanford Holzberg, North Ridge, CA

1986
*Kenneth Platt, Los Angeles, CA
Mrs. Pat McCabe, Whittier, CA

1987
Mrs. Woody Kaiser, Sherman Oaks, CA
*Jerry Katz, Los Angeles, CA

1988
*Arthur C. Peterson, Los Angeles, CA
*Marian Beerman, Arcadia, CA
*Woody Kaiser, Sherman Oaks, CA

1989
Mrs. Barry Stultz, Beverly Hills, CA
Phyllis Fein, Marina Del Ray, CA

1990
Lois Violin, Tarzana, CA
*Trudi (Mayer) Nugit, Bel Air, CA
Marshall Kuschner, Los Angeles, CA
*James Thornbrough, Norwalk, CA

1991
*Mrs. Pat A. Abbey, La Canada, CA
*Maida Maynard, Los Angeles, CA
*Alan LeBendig, Culver City, CA
Rhoda Walsh, Encino, CA

1992
*Verna Baccus, Los Alamitos, CA
Beverly Cook, Long Beach, CA
Leonard Holtz, Los Angeles, CA
Anna Wittes, Claremont, CA

1993
*Virginia Wittich, Walnut, CA
Jean Mladick, Los Angeles, CA
*Bernie Mateer, Los Angeles, CA
*Lyle Peake, Culver City, CA

1994
*Janet Coussens, Lancaster, CA
*Paula Oliver, La Crescenta, CA
*Sue Mischick, Torrance, CA
*Vance I. Moran, Agoura Hills, CA

1995
*Louise Sklar, Northridge, CA
Steve Wood, La Habra, CA
*Christine Frumen, Long Beach, CA
John Swanson, Mission Viejo, CA

1996
Paul Larson, Laguna Hills, CA
*Sam Haveson, Los Angeles, CA

1997
Suzanne Trull, Los Angeles, CA
Patricia Spain, Los Angeles, CA
*Edwin B. Kantar, Santa Monica, CA

1998
*Jay Brown, Northridge, CA
Roger Clough, Culver City, CA
John Killian, Sunset Beach, CA
*Louise Reich, Pasadena, CA
Peter Benjamin, Culver City, CA

1999
Susan Hurlbert, Simi Valley, CA
*Marge Kroch, Los Angeles, CA
Karen Alpert, Glendale, CA
*Raymond Mack, Redondo Beach, CA

2000
Carl Dahl, Northridge, CA
Ronald Oest, Lancaster, CA
Barbara Dicker, Long Beach, CA
*Peter Szecsi, Pasadena, CA

2001
*Michael Hollomon, Los Angeles, CA
*Sally Oliker, Sherman Oaks, CA
*Gabriela Jackson, San Pedro, CA
*Morris Lorber, Torrance, CA

2002
Gloria Brown-Cook, Gardena, CA
Dick Jones, Rancho Palos Verde, CA
Jeri Berger, Los Angels, CA
Jolyn Loomis, Pasadena, CA

2003
Dorothy Newland, Lancaster, CA
Steven Rowe, Long Beach, CA
Janet Wickersham, Sierra Madre, CA
Freddie Straus, Encino, CA

2004
Dorothy Laird, Torrance, CA
*Jan Nathan, Manhattan Beach, CA
*Marie Dahl, Northridge, CA
Margaret Mataga, Glendale, CA

2005 VACANT

2006
Marlene Warren-Gasper, Lancaster CA
Barbara McKissick, Chatsworth CA
*Merlin Hansen, Huntington Beach CA
Karen Byrd, Los Angeles CA

2007
Nancy Heck, Los Angeles CA
Michael Marcucci, San Gabriel CA
*William Wickham, Los Angeles CA
Kathy Pinsky, Valenica CA

2008
Eugene White, Jr., Playa del Rey CA
Sheryl Kohlhoff, Rancho Palos Verde CA

2009
Howard Einberg, Los Angeles CA
William Schreiber, Van Nuys CA

2010
Ellen Anten, Encino CA
Mike Savage, Signal Hill CA

2011
Roy Wilson, West Covina CA

2012
Kevin Lane, Long Beach CA
Rebecca Clough, Culver City CA

2013
John Jones, Santa Fe Springs, CA
Leo Bell, Long Beach, CA

2014
Betty Jackson, Seal Beach CA
*Penny Barbieri, San Dimas CA

2015
Stephanie Young, Los Angeles CA
Jill Meyers, Santa Monica CA

2016
Gerri Soffa Carlson, Rancho Palo Vls CA
Adam Barron, Los Angeles CA

2017
Om Chokriwala, Sherman Oaks CA

2018 VACANT

2019 VACANT

2020 VACANT

2021 VACANT

2022
Carol Frank, Burbank CA
Jeffrey Goldsmith*, Tujunga CA (deceased before appointment took effect)

2023
Ruth Baker, Valencia CA
Marcia Fisher, Los Angeles CA

2024
Kim Wang, Torrance CA
Robert Shore, Los Angeles CA

Additional members
*Helen Cale, Glendale CA
*Louise Freed, Las Angeles CA
*Peggy Hawthorne, Tarazana CA
*Mabs Jepsen, Bellflower CA
Morris Jones, Monrovia CA
*Marcie Landry-Evans, Lakewood CA
*Syd Levey, Valley Village CA
*Eugenie Mathe, Van Nuys CA
Barbara McKissick, Chatsworth, CA
*Dale Nelson, Seal Beach CA
*Ruth Novak, Woodland Hills CA
E D Reiter, Glendale CA
*Jane Smith, Pacific Plsd CA
Lois Violin, Woodland Hills CA

District 23 Rank Changes September 2024

Junior Master
Brad Abajian
John A. Clark
Frank Dunst
Olivia Esquibel
Loren Giorgio
David Harmon
Velios Kodomichalos
Leonard Lee
Thomas J. Liautaud
Barbara Luzzatto
Nancy Myers
John Reid
Glenn T. Rogers
Del Stewart
Colleen H. Sullivan
Wendy L. Weber

Club Master
Mavis Baynard
Eileen Cluge

Club Master
Jerry J. Jameson
Mariann Lord
Dunst Moyna
Patricia H. Smith

Sectional Master
Roaling Chang
George E. Chilko
Bradley Gallop
Susan Morishita
Jessie Ornelas
Daniel Robinson

Regional Master
Jane Barna
Frank Greco
Ming Hu
Jack L. Rainsberry
Arthur Weinstein

NABC Master
James R. Heltsley
Yongkang Huang

Life Master
Nathan Gittleman

Bronze Life Master
Susan L. Frank
Nathan Gittleman

Silver Life Master
Caroline C. Vincent

Ruby Life Master
John Vacca
John Van Egmond

Diamond Life Master
Junko Hemus

SAVE THE DATE: JANUARY 12 (SUNDAY) 1 PM

Play the New (experimental) online face-to-face format

- A face-to-face feel in an online format
- Audio and Video to/from partner and opponents
- Headphones required for audio

Participating Bridge Clubs

- Pasadena Bridge Club
- Long Beach Bridge Center
- South Bay Bridge Club
- 750 Bridge Club

Win a bridge date with one of Southern California's best players: Ifti Baqai, Mitch Dunitz, Ellis Feigenbaum, John Jones, Alex Kolesnik, Hemant Lall, Marjorie Michelin, Jill Myers, Walt Schafer. (No masterpoints awarded.)

Anyone Can Win

Four winners of the open event and four winners of the limited event will be awarded an online session with an expert bridge player. Two other players will also be awarded an online session based on a random draw.

How it works

The event will be played at multiple clubs but online on **RealBridge**. Both partners must be resident at a participating club, but not necessarily the same club.

You must bring a computer or tablet with at least 4 hours of battery life. The clubs will have some limited plug in ability but don't count on it.

If your device needs to be plugged in you must make a reservation for it at the club you are playing at.

The event will be stratified.

About RealBridge

Launched in 2020, RealBridge closely replicates the face-to-face environment with built-in audio and video.

The USBF JLALL and Reynolds Teams Matches are held using RealBridge.



Please note: This is not an ACBL event.

The Puzzle Page

Bridge Jeopardy
by John Jones

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

And the answer is …

$100 – Having zero cards in a suit.

$200 – Red paint on the inside of a tray indicates situation in which game and slam bonuses are increased, but penalties are increased too.

$300 – The slang single word used to name the city the 2024 ACBL Fall Nationals will be held at.

$400 – In team games the IMP difference in each match is converted to this form of scoring to compare team results and determine winners.

$500 – The unblock of a winner opposite a threat prior to reaching a position that effects a squeeze.

(Solution to Bridge Jeopardy is on page 14. No peeking!)

NAP District Final October 27
Reserve your seat soon!
by Morris Jones

The District Final for the North American Pairs will be held at the Pasadena Bridge Club, 649 N Fair Oaks Ave. #201, Pasadena.

The event is a two-session matchpoint game. The first session begins at 10:00 AM, and start time for the second will be announced. The goal is to allow an hour lunch break between sessions, with games finished by about 6:30 PM.

The flighting will be determined by the director-in-charge (Brandon Shuemaker), but most likely we will have three separate sections so the individual flights will be competing only with their peers.

Card fees will be $18 per player per session, or $72 per pair.

Information about the North American Pairs, including the national and local Conditions of Contest, can be found on the NAP information page at https://nap.bridgemojo.com. There you'll find a link to make your reservation request.

Remember that if you and your partner advance to play in the national NAP tournament in Memphis, you will have to play with your partner from the district final! You might feel like it's hopeless to win, but every year we have surprise qualifiers to the nationals. If a pair can not play in Memphis, the next pair in order of finish will be invited to take their place.

☺☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺☺ ☺ ☺

Submitted by John Jones



☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺☺ ☺ ☺

Around the Units in District 23



Pomona – Covina
by Tom Lill
www.acblunit551.org

La Fetra Games: Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:45
Individual: November 2, 10 a.m., Upland
Club Championships: October 15, 18
November 12, 15
Club Appreciation Games: October 8, 11, 22, 25
Unit Game: October 19, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
November 16, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

In the September Individual, there wasn't any winner … because not enough players showed up to hold a game. Sad. I guess everyone was at the Riverside, or perhaps the Beverly Hills, Sectional that day. Ah, well.

In a closely contested September Unit Game, Peter Kavounas – Patrick Finley captured the top spot with 59.52%. Gary Atwell – Stephen Andersen took second. Next we find Steve Mancini – Helen Wang. And that's IT, because we had only four tables. It's hardly worth holding a game, with that level of participation. In fact, this calendar year, we've reached at least six tables – the break-even point, financially – only once. And we're by *far* the cheapest Unit game around – still a major bargain, at $7, including snacks and hand records. Cheaper than most Club-level games! Spread the word, friends!

We also have elections coming up for our Board of Directors. However, we couldn't even prepare for this in September, since we couldn't raise a quorum to hold our monthly meeting. Anyone out there interested in helping to keep the Unit alive? It's not a tremendous amount of work, being a Board member. Please consider joining us!

Also at our next Board meeting, we'll be deciding what to do for our Christmas party – assuming we have one. The past two years, we've had a five-table game, not *too* bad, considering. If we can hope for that many, it's worth doing. (Of course, anything worth doing, is worth overdoing!) Why not drop in and let your voice be heard.

There were two rank advancements this month: Dan Robinson is now a Sectional Master, and Art Weinstein is a Regional Master. Congratulations to both of you.

Quite a few people broke the magic 65% mark last month. In fact *most* of the winners did that! In order, we have Caryn Mason – Patrick Finley with an astounding 73.96%; Ramona Hernandez – Nona Stokes, 69.12%; Caryn and Patrick again, 69.00%; Fredy Minter – Roger Boyar, 67.71%; Steve Andersen – Gary Atwell, 66.15%; Caryn and Patrick *again*, 65.28%. That last effort was only good for second place that session, go figure! Other winners last month: Bill Papa, Peter Kavounas, Tim and Eileen Finlay, Vaughn Inman, and Yours Truly.

Here's a hand that came up last month that will frustrate you to no end. Well, it did *me*. You are North, both sides are red, and you find yourself looking at this semi-balanced collection:

♠ 108762 ♥ none ♦ AKJ982 ♣ 97.

Your partner deal, and passes. Your LHO opens 1♥ (big surprise!). And you do … what?

We did not have a method to show this type of hand, short of a 1♠ overcall followed by a diamond bid. And I don't like overcalling a suit that I don't really want partner to lead, especially from something like Kx(xx). But I have fair playing strength. I chose to overcall 3♦, and that became the final contract. The opening lead was the ♠9, and I caught this dummy:

♠ AQ543 ♥ K73 ♦ 1053 ♣ J5.

Well, it seems to be good news/bad news. We have a 10-card spade fit! And the opponents have a 10 card heart fit. (Not to mention a 9 card club fit, but I wouldn't *think* of mentioning *that*.)

Looks like a piece of cake, right? It quickly turned into upside-down cake. I played the ♠A, figuring the lead was a singleton and didn't want to give East a ruff. Surprise! *West* ruffed the ♠A, led a small club to East's ace, who cashed the ♠K, gave West

another ruff, and then West's ♣K completed my ruin. One down, -100. Mumble mumble mumble.

When the final results were in, it turned out to be a top board for us! No idea what the other auctions were, but the final contracts were:

4♥ W, +1	-650
5♥ E, =	-650
5♥X E, =	-850
3♦N, -1	-100

The full deal:

North
♠ 10 8 7 6 2
♥ none
♦ A K J 9 8 2
♣ 9 7

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

South
♠ A Q 5 4 3
♥ K 7 3
♦ 10 5 3
♣ J 5

Strange that West did not compete in hearts, with a known 10-card fit. East has a little extra, but if West is broke, he could get badly hurt. Although a balancing double seems indicated. And how East found the lead of the ♠9 from ♠KJ9, I do not know. Especially after partner had opened 1♥! I guess it was a logical lead, but … sheeesh!

Quote for the month: "Comedians and politicians each tell the audience what it wants to hear. The difference is that the audience laughs at the comedian and the politician laughs at the audience." (Alexis A. Gilliand)



Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley
by Beth Morrin

Our Face-to-Face game is being held at the Newhall Community Center in Santa Clarita at 10:00 a.m. on Fridays. The game is free but reservations are required as our space is limited.

For more information, please contact Ruth Baker (rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net) or Paula Olivares (paula@pacbell.net)

Beginning Bridge Lessons:

Ruth Baker has started a new beginning bridge class at the Newhall Community Center on Wednesdays from 10:00 until 12:00. New students are welcome to join the class. The classes run through November and hopefully we will have a limited MP game on Wednesday starting in December or January.

Face-to-Face Schedule (no entry fee; reservation required)

Oct. 11	Unit Game
Oct. 18	Club Appreciation
Oct. 25	Unit Game
Nov. 1	Club Appreciation

Winners of the Friday F2F game:

Sept. 13
N/S Donna Davidson – Bill Langlois 63.69%
E/W Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky 62.20%

Sept. 20
N/S David Khalieque – John Langer 67.86%
E/W Carole Provost – George MacDonald 61.01%

Sept 27
N/S Harry Randhawa – Alan Nueman 60.60%
E/W Carol Trenda – Gary Trenda 62.35%

Oct. 4
N/S Donna Davidson – Bill Langlois 64.36%
E/W Bernard Seal – Ruth Baker 59.12%

Virtual Game Schedule

Monday:	12:15 PM	Open game
Tuesday:	6:15 PM	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+%):

Sun. Sept. 8
Carolyn Cohen – Cathryn Martin 65.28%

Tues. Sept 10
Jin Hu – Zachary Madden 72.22%

Mon. Sept. 16
Donna Davidson – Bill Langlois 65.28%

Tues. Sept. 24
Helen Wang – Kiran Kumar 65.28%

Thurs. Oct. 3
Hailong Yu – Robot 65.28%

Mon. Oct. 7
Gerard Geremia – Rae Murbach 65.28%

Next Board Meeting: TBA

Pasadena – San Gabriel

by Morris "Mojo" Jones

bridgemojo.com



On September 29 the unit hosted an "Over/Under" game, randomly pairing experienced players with newer players. This is always a popular event! We had 24 "under" players sign up, and a full 12 tables playing.

On September 29 the unit hosted an "Over/Under" game, randomly pairing experienced players with newer players. This is always a popular event! We had 24 "under" players sign up, and a full 12 tables playing.

On the face of it, it seemed like a great success. Players were laughing and conversing and generally appeared to be having a good time. There was applause at the end of the game.

Unfortunately, these games turn out to be mine fields. For the newer players, it can feel like you can do nothing right. The experienced players simply can't resist pointing out everything the newer players do wrong. Even worse, two experienced players could get into a bickering match at the table, creating a horrible example in front of the new players. It can truly be an exercise in humiliation!

While most of the newer players are able to shake off such a gauntlet, it's quite likely that bridge lost new players as a result of their experience at this game.

You might suggest that this was caused by inadequate screening, or orientation of the experienced players, but the entire organization put lots of effort into giving instruction to the experienced players, with the goal of preventing that from happening. It didn't make any difference. It's not something we will do again, unless we can find a better way!

Winners at the Pasadena Unit Game:

Sunday Sept 15, 11 tables:
N/S: Paul Nason, Diana Borgatti
E/W: George Wang, Shiu-Ming Huang

Sunday Oct 6, 14 tables:
N/S Carolyn Cohen, Stephen Licker
E/W Thompson Jin, Shiu-Ming Huang

Unit games will be held every first and third Sunday of each month. For November those dates are the 3rd and 17th. To make reservations for a unit game, contact Miriam Harrington at (626) 232-0558 or miratpf@aol.com.

In December we'll hold a unit game on December 1, and December 15 will be the unit Holiday Party held at the Arcadia Community Center. The unit is planning a fabulous buffet, and it should be a great party! Save the date for now. The party will be $30 per player (same as last year), and you'll be able to buy tickets at the Pasadena Bridge Club using cash, check, or credit cards, until December 8.

Congratulations to players achieving new ranks in the ACBL!

Junior Master
Robert Hunt
Club Master
Anne Buettner

Sectional Master
Carol Maffin

Regional Master
Liza Billington

Ruby Life Master
Diane Gulbrandsen

Sapphire Life Master
Joan Mesias



Long Beach
by Lillian Slater

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

Sorry, nothing from Long Beach this month.

Downey-Whittier
by Daniel Oakes

September 4th was the first of three International Fund Games in the month and was won convincingly by Jack Rainsberry and Bill Skupen with a 65.97% score, good for 2.81 masterpoints. Mike Ventri and Steve Hough were 2nd with 59.72%, and Bob and Linda Krause were 1st in B.

On September 11th, Mike Ventri and Dan Oakes took the monthly Unit Championship and 3 masterpoints with 64.58%, ahead of John Dobson and Barbara Horn's 61.81%, good for 1st in B and 2nd overall, as well as 2.25 masterpoints. John Petrie and Sankar Reddy finished 3rd, and Bob and Linda Krause were 1st in C.

September 18th was another International Fund Game, and Petrie and Reddy were 1st E/W and 1st overall with 63% (2.78 masterpoints awarded). Ventri and Hough were 1st N/S, just half a matchpoint ahead of the Krauses for 2nd overall. Kiran Kumar and Avice Osmundson were 2nd E/W.

Finally, on September 25th, the club hosted its third International Fund Game, won by Kiran Kumar and Id Patel for a whopping 3.29 masterpoints. Kent and Liz Burrell finished 2nd overall and 1st B for 2.46 masterpoints, ahead of Jon Yinger and Alan Flower, who finished 3rd. Anita Frost and Jim Gorin were 2nd in B.

Mike Ventri was the month's masterpoint leader, scooping up 8.41 points, ahead of Petrie and Reddy (5.69) and Hough (5.41). Also scoring over 3.5 masterpoints on the month (in a maximum of just four games) were Kiran Kumar, Id Patel, and the pairs of Rainsberry/Skupen and Bob & Linda Krause. The reason I include the masterpoint awards in each game recap is to let people who haven't played Downey-Whittier know – we're giving away A LOT of points in a very friendly game. Come join us Wednesdays at 10:00!

In other news (and I'm going to borrow this from October, because it happened the day before September goes to press, and I don't want to forget it), I had one of the strangest trips to the bridge club that I can remember. Two very unusual things happened. The first is, I was dealt not one but two Yarboroughs (no card higher than a 9). The odds on getting dealt a Yarborough on a single hand are more than 1,825-1 against. Getting one over the course of a session is less than a 2% occurrence, and the chance of getting more than one in a session is thousands to one against. And that's not the strangest thing that happened.

Playing with Mike Ventri, I was dummy as Mike declared 3♣. After some back and forth, everyone was out of trump, and the opponents took the 11th and 12th tricks. At that point, Mike had eight tricks in the bag, but was out of high cards…but who needs high cards? His LHO lead the 3 of spades at trick 13. Mike pitched a red card from dummy, Mike's RHO followed with the 5 of spades, and Mike won the trick with the 6 of spades. I've been playing duplicate bridge for a little over 35 years, and I'm pretty sure I've never seen a declarer fulfill his contract by winning trick 13 in a side suit with a 6…*with both opponents following*. Truly a strange day at the table!

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

$100 – What is a void?

$200 – What is vulnerable?

$300 - What is Vegas?

$400 – What are Victory Points?

$500 – What is Vienna coup?

Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Mark Bartusek, Jordan Chodorow, Kitty Cooper, Ellis Feigenbaum, Lynne Feldman, Alex Kolesnik, 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.

This column is dedicated to the memory of my friends Geno and Penny Barbieri. Penny passed away on August 28, and Geno passed away on September 21. Both of them promoted bridge, worked very hard on making things go smoothly, and were tremendous assets at local regionals.

1

Matchpoints
N-S Vul

South	West	North	East
1♣	pass	1NT*	pass
???			

* 6 to 10 HCP

You, South, hold: ♠ A94 ♥ AQ104 ♦ 10 ♣ KQ842

What call do you make?

First, a demerit for myself. I was given this hand without knowing the range for the response. I knew I needed to include the HCP range, so I did. I put the 1NT bid at a standard 6 to 10 HCP. There are two problems with my action. 1) I made the problem worse – it's a better problem if the range is 8 – 10 and aggressive action is more likely to be necessary. 2) 8 – 10 may not be the Standard American range, but it is the expert range. Just look at the number of comments I got from the panel stating they prefer 8 – 10 as the range.

I'll start with the passers.

Roeder: Pass. In a millisecond.

Shuster: Pass. I'd make a move at IMP scoring, but at MPs, I expect a decent score here.

Wittes: Pass. Playing 1NT shows 6 to 10 over 1♣, pass is probably correct. However, with most of my partners, I play 1NT over 1♦ shows 6 to 10, but 1NT over 1♣ is a little more constructive, showing 8-10. With that provision, I would bid 2NT over 1NT.

Kolesnik: I would pass 1NT. It is possible that partner has the right cards to make 3NT a good spot, but we will often get overboard if I bid 2NT. It is matchpoints, so going low is not always a bad thing.

The next group of bidders doesn't try for game, but changes the strain. This ensures that they won't play 1NT off the entire diamond suit. The subtle part of the bid is that it allows partner to raise to 3♣, or make some other try for game (2♥, 2♠, 2NT).

Cooper: 2♣. I don't like to pass with a distributional hand. Partner's club fit would be the key to making a game and then he might raise.

Mealymouth: 2♣. I'll try 2♣ despite the bid being less than game-invitational, just in case partner bids again voluntarily, e.g. raises to 3♣. Not quite strong enough for a game-invitational rebid, as a good 8 HCP might induce responder to accept game. But 2♥ would be my choice if playing 1NT as 8 to 10 HCP---not that 8-10 HCP is a better range than 6-10 HCP in general.

Feigenbaum: 2♣. I don't like the 6 to 10 range over 1♣, the range is too wide. The fact that partner did not bid a diamond, and has denied a 4-card major, leads me to believe that we have a club fit and are more likely to

make 110 or 130 in clubs than 120 in NT. If partner indeed has 3=3=5=2 with 10 HCP, then they should have bid a diamond first and not jammed up the auction.

Michelin: 2♣. If partner had five or six diamonds and a bad hand, they would bid 1♦. If they had a bad hand with three diamonds and longer clubs and didn't want NT played from their side, they would bid 1♦ first. If they have the 10 HCP hand and decent diamonds, I might be cold for game. I assume they are denying a 4-card major. I am taking the low road and bidding 2♣. If partner bids 3♣ or 2NT now with fitting clubs and a max, I will bid 3NT or cuebid my hearts.

Those trying for game have a choice of actions: 2♥ or 2NT. No panelist actually selected 2NT, but it got mentioned.

Bartusek: 2♥. If I were stronger, I'd splinter with 3♦, but this way we can still get out in 3♣ when partner is weak. A 2♥ call also allows us to play an excellent 4♥ Moysian (4-3) fit if appropriate (e.g. opposite ♠Jxx ♥KJx ♦xxx ♣Axxx). We might also have either a 3NT or a 5♣game available depending upon partner's assets. If partner makes a game-forcing bid then I have an easy 3♠ bid to pattern out.

Feldman: 2♥. I can describe nine of my cards very closely, but partner is likely to have a one-suiter in diamonds.

Chodorow: 2♥. My second choice is 2NT. I deeply dislike 1NT over 1♣ showing 6-10. With 6-7, I would bid a temporizing 1♦. (I might also bid it with more if my hand lacked the tenaces to justify declaring notrump from the weak hand.) Given the actual agreement (undoubtedly coupled with inverted minors, whereby partner can't make a simple club raise), there is a reasonable chance partner is weak in diamonds, and we might belong in hearts or clubs (at a partscore or game level) rather than notrump. Still, it's eminently reasonable to make a value raise to 2NT. Aside: If it weren't illegal, a 1NT opening would be okay by me. *Oddly, the ACBL allows opening 1NT with a singleton ace, king, or queen, but does not allow opening 1NT with a singleton jack or ten. Of all the difficult hands there are to bid, I believe that singleton jacks are the toughest of the singletons. Stiff kings, queens, jacks, and tens all are great cards to have in the declaring hand. Other bridge jurisdictions allow any singleton if it is a constructive action.*

2

Matchpoints
Both Vul

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	1♦	pass
1♥	1♠	2♥	???

You, South, hold: ♠ 108742 ♥ void ♦ QJ72 ♣ K652

What call do you make?

We have uncovered a big spade fit. How much can we make? How much do they make? How subtle should we be?

Wittes: 2♠: I don't want to push them into 4♥ by bidding 3♠. If I bid 2♠, they might now be content to play in 3♥. I expect them to have a 9 or 10 card fit, especially with my passed-hand partner bidding 1♠. Despite my 5-card support, vulnerability suggests a lack of aggressiveness on my part.

Mealymouth: 2♠. Gently, gently! Just enough to show partner that I have spades with him. My diamonds may have little value on offense but take tricks on defense, so I resist any impulse towards a "premature" save.

Feigenbaum: 3♥.

Roeder: 3♠. If partner does have heart defense, 4♠ might be a phantom. With your diamond defense, 4♠ is too unilateral despite partner being a passed hand.

Feldman: 3♠.

Michelin: 4♠. This looks like it could be a double game swing. Otherwise, whose hand is it?!! I want to bid 3♥ showing a limit raise; however if the opponents bid 4♥ and I now bid 4♠ (maybe sacrificing) partner might take me for a better hand. I am too good for 3♠, so I am going to bid 4♠ to show better than that. I am not good enough for a 4♥ splinter bid but that may be the winning call. My hand just improved a whole lot, but still not enough to force to game without allowing partner to make a final decision.

Shuster: 4♠. Partner rates to have something like: ♠AKxxx ♥Qxxx ♦xx ♣xx and game will depend on the club ace being with the opening bidder. No invitation is sufficient, since partner won't be able to evaluate his hand accurately - for example, AKxxx Qxxx xxx x makes a bad game. How could partner know that 3=1 in the minors is bad and 2=2 is good?

Chodorow: 4♠.

Kolesnik: 4♠. I would bid 4♠. Partner may have a perfecto where 4♠ is cold, maybe they have a 4♥ game. I'll let the opponents make the last guess.

Bartusek: 4♠. Obviously this could be seriously wrong depending upon partner's heart holding, but the Law of Total Tricks (LOTT) and my void strongly argue for taking the plunge and letting the chips fall where they may. The alternative is 3♠ and letting partner decide what to do over 4♥.

Cooper: 4♠. Might make, will certainly make them guess.

I have a rule that I preach in situations like this: "Never be the last guesser". I've been told that this suggestion has been made in print by Kit Woolsey. So I decide how high I am willing to bid considering all plausible auctions. Then I bid as high as I can. Thus, I would bid 4♠ here. I don't want the opponents to be able to get to 4♥. 4♠ might even be a lucky make here.

3

IMPs
N-S Vul

West	North	East	South
3♣	3♦	pass	???

You, South, hold: ♠ AK74 ♥ A1084 ♦ 42 ♣ 1064

What call do you make?

This problem is a real guess. Pass, 3♥, 3♠, 3NT, 4♣, and 4♦ are all possible calls.

Wittes: 3♥. Toughest problem of this set. If partner has six diamonds and a 4-card major, that gives us the best chance of getting to 4 of a major. If partner has no fit and no 4-card major, but a club stopper, they should bid 3NT.

Feigenbaum: 3♥. If I was playing with a partner on the same page, this is the kind of situation where bidding spades first could pay off; but this is certainly not something I want to try on an unsuspecting partner.

Bartusek: 3♠. An impossible problem that I've never encountered or discussed with partners. I suppose the alternative is cue-bidding 4♣ and hoping that partner is on the same wavelength (it does happen occasionally). My spades are good enough that a Moysian 4-3 fit might be playable. This also doesn't bypass 3NT if partner wishes to bid it.

Cooper: 3♠. Maybe partner can bid 3NT now. If he raises, the 4 - 3 or 4 - 2 might fetch. 4♣ would be slammish for Ds which is my 2nd choice.

The argument that Kitty makes for her 3♠ bid is rather compelling. If partner has QJ or even Qx in spades, 4♠ might be a great spot.

Of 4♣ versus 4♦, which of them turns 4M into a cuebid versus a natural (4-card) suit? I think 4♣ turns 4M into a cuebid and 4♦ allows 4M to be natural, but some panelists disagree.

Chodorow: 4♣. I hope to hear 4M.

Michelin: 4♣. Another hand where my partner and teammates are waiting for me to make the winning call. Pass could be right but I have too much to pass and only have two diamonds, so I will be guessing what to do when I bid 4♣ and partner doesn't just sign off in 4♦. If partner bids a major, he may have four or may just be cue bidding. I hope partner bids 4♦ so I can pass but I am still bidding 4♣.

Feldman: 4♣.

Roeder: 4♦. Brutality! Partner could easily have a 4-card major.

Mealymouth: 4♦. An invitational bid to give North a chance. On a good day, he may have a good hand with a decent four-card major and bid it to offer a choice of games. I'll be charmed to let him play there.

Kolesnik: 4♦. Too much to pass, but not clear what to bid. I will raise to 4♦ and hope partner bids 4M.

Lastly a panelist who has noticed what white versus red first seat 3♣ bids look like these days! I like his bid!

Shuster: 3NT. The favorable preemptor will probably try a sneak attack, but I expect our side to have at least one legitimate club stopper or for the suit to be blocked.

4

Matchpoints
N-S Vul

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♣	2♠	Pass
???			

You, South, hold: ♠ A ♥ KQ94 ♦ A872 ♣ 8542

What call do you make?

Ugh! No call is even close. Which lie is best? Passing a forcing bid? That is ultra risky! 2NT with 8xxx as a stopper? - Yuk! 3♣? That is game forcing! 3♦? That's rebidding a mediocre 4-card suit! 3♥? That forces to game, implying extras we don't have! 3♠? Raising on a singleton (even a great one!) might not work so well.

Chodorow: Pass. Just another example of the problems you can give opponents by overcalling their 1♦ with 2♣. Aside: I used to open 1♦ with 4-4 minors, but I've come around to 1♣, primarily because 1♦ too often forces partner to wrong-side 1NT from the weak hand.

Feldman: 2NT. Maybe clubs will block or partner will bid something I can raise or pass.

Wittes: 3♣. Looking for 3NT. If partner bids 3♠, I will raise.

Kolesnik: 3♣. What else? The cuebid in these forcing auctions just means that I don't know what to do.

Feigenbaum: 3♥. 2♠ was forcing one round. If partner shows a 6-card suit, I will raise to game. They may have a heart fit with me or be able to bid 3NT themselves. I certainly don't like 2NT; it looks far too optimistic for my taste.

Michelin: 3♥. Partner made a forcing call. He should not play me for having extras if I bid 3♥. If I had spades I would have raised; if I had club cards I would have bid NT. If partner had a bad hand with spades, he could have made a negative double followed by spades. I am bidding 3♥; perhaps he can bid NT if it is right.

Bartusek: 3♥. The alternative seems to be an ambiguous 3♣ cuebid, but either bid will create doubt as to whether we're in a game-forcing auction or not. I figure that I might as well accurately describe my heart holding in case partner wants to play another Moysian fit like in problems #1 and #3. I would think that Alphonse "Sonny" Moyse would love this problem set?!?!

Shuster: 3♥. Should this show extras? I'd still take a 3♠ continuation from partner as non-forcing. I would have opened 1♣, planning on a 1NT rebid over 1♠. I really dislike 1♦ on this pattern.

Kitty expresses my thoughts on this problem (although not my awful 2NT bid).

Cooper: 3♥. With no conviction! Impossible problem!

Roeder: 3♠. Another horror. If partner has an understanding nature, I would consider a non-systemic pass.

Mealymouth: 2NT. Time to channel two old friends, alas no longer with us:

Are you ready to hand your hand to the kibitzer and rush to the bathroom? Well, Mealy decided to channel the old great partnership of Eddie Kantar and Marshall Miles. He got this:

Marshall: 2NT. Any holding in a suit is a stopper if they don't lead it. West will surely read me for a singleton ♣K because it's me, but this time it will be East who has the singleton king and Eddie's ♣T93 will turn my lovely ♣8 into a stopper.

Eddie: Yes, but why didn't you open 1♥ like a normal human being and avoid the problem?

Marshall: What, me normal?

How can I argue with my two old friends, even if I had to channel them myself?

5

IMPs
None Vul

North	East	South	West
2♣	pass	2♦*	pass
4♠	pass	???	

You, South, hold: ♠ J ♥ A98432 ♦ Q ♣ K874

* Waiting; denies a 5-card suit with 2 of the top 3 honors. You do not play Namyats

What call do you make?

Lastly, the only real hand where I know the companion hand and the result. The possibilities here include: Pass, a 5♥ cuebid slam try, 4NT Keycard, and bashing 6♠.

Chodorow: Pass. Who sent for me?

Shuster: Pass. First off, you shouldn't make positives willy-nilly on any hand with KQxxx. My current agreement set defines a positive as "A hand with a 6-card suit that deems slam to be probable even without a fit." No reference to suit quality at all and no 5-card suits allowed. Partner's sequence shows something like eight solid and an ace. I don't like having that in 2♣, but that is what people do. That might produce 12 tricks, but might also only produce 10. We have no safety higher, so I'm done.

Michelin: Pass. For me, the 4♠ bid shows zero interest in slam unless partner has quick tricks. 2♠ would be forcing. For me, a bid of 3♠ would set trump and partner is required to bid his aces up the line. Using this treatment, if partner has no ace but owns a king or more, partner bids 3NT showing a king (4♣ asks which king). The immediate 4♠ bid should show 8 1/2 -9 tricks if spades are trump but not a lot of defense. If partner held ♠AKQxxxxx ♥void ♦Axxx ♣7, my hand would be useless. Even though he can get to dummy with the ♠J and pitch a loser on the ♥A, the hand is not slam worthy. If the hand makes slam, then my partner didn't bid it correctly, so I'll blame him! He asked no questions, so I am passing.

Kolesnik: Pass. Partner should have eight solid spades and an outside ace. I could easily have 3 tricks for partner, but not a sure thing. I'll pass.

Wittes: 4NT. With all of my regular partners, I play step responses, so I would have shown 3 controls over 2♣, and slam will be easy, possibly a grand. Over this auction, I will bid Keycard and hope for the best.

Roeder: 4NT. Partner should not have an absolute rock crusher. Otherwise, why preempt the auction? A direct 6♠ is fine but I suppose 4NT causes no huge harm. The lack of Namyats is a system flaw. Opening 2♣ with marginal values is an intelligence flaw. I would have bid 2♥ over 2♣. The "2 of top 3" honor requirement should be relaxed when your suit is six cards or longer.

Feigenbaum: 4NT. 4♠ in this auction for me is pretty specific - showing 9.5/10 quicks in spades. Unless partner has exactly the right cards I am not interested. Are these the right cards? They might be worth a try but it could also be spectacularly bad.

Bartusek: 4NT. We can stop at the 5-level if partner doesn't have enough key-cards, but this seems right based upon all my 1st and 2nd round controls.

Feldman: 4NT. Tough set of problems.

Mealymouth: 6♠. God help me! Of course, I would have responded a natural positive 2♥ with any partner wise enough to play with me. Hearts are tender, and must be protected against the spade bid from partner that is almost surely coming. If partner wanted to set spades as trump and ask me to show individual aces and kings, he had a way to do it: with a jump to 3♠. Somebody wrote a Bridge World article showing exactly how that works a decade or so ago. This may be a "Don't tell them anything to keep everyone guessing" double-jump, so I'll cooperate with a guess of my own. The contract may hinge on the opening lead. But my 6♠ may work equally well if partner's double-jump was a jack-ask bid. Yes, partner, I have the jack of trumps!

Two panelists mentioned the treatment of playing 2♣ – 2♦ – 3♥ or 3♠ as showing a solid suit, setting trumps and asking partner for specific aces or kings. That treatment has been expert practice since the 1970s, but another treatment is getting significant expert use for that auction. The 3♥ or 3♠ rebid is being used as showing exactly 4 cards in that major and long, strong diamonds.

Cooper: 6♠. Although partner is showing just an 8.5 trick hand, when I have an ace and a king opposite a 2♣ opener we are playing in slam. Teach her to bid this way!

This was a real hand. Alan Flower held it in the tough Wednesday night team game at South Bay Bridge Club. Alan thought briefly, but long enough that it was clear he had a slam try. Alan passed. His partner held ♠AKQTxxxx ♥void ♦A98x ♣Q. I was the opening leader and failed to find the opening trump lead so the hand made 11 tricks. I like a 5♥ cuebid here. On the actual hand partner won't like having a void opposite an ace, and will signoff in 5♠. But a minor suit cuebid would get partner to bid 6♠.