Southern California **Bridge News**

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*by John Jones*



I'm in Memphis for the nationals, and having computer difficulty. Thus, I will keep this report short.

The 2025 D23 GNT will be will be Saturday May 3 and Sunday 4. There will be 4 brackets. We don't have the final certification yet, but will soon. Walt Schafer is our GNT Coordinator. He will be assisted by Jeff Grotenhuis. Brandon Sheumaker will be the director and the site will be the Long Beach Bridge Club. Save those dates!

We will likely have a D23 meeting during that event. Unit representatives will hear from D23 Secretary Lillian Slater when the meeting is established.

I promised a financial report on the fundraising for the bridge playing LA Fire victims in this issue. However, all the fundraising money isn't in yet. I've tried to get all the funds in, including driving to players who had collected cash donations. We appreciate all the donations! If you know of bridge players who lost their homes or were evacuated, please contact me via email at president@d23acbl.org .

Plans for a rescheduled Hybrid bridge game (bring your own laptop and play at a local club) have been revived. Event coordinator Tom Reynolds has relocated to a new temporary location while his fire destroyed home is rebuilt. He is focused on a rescheduled Hybrid event. Stay tuned.

Our district STAC games will return this March. These games will be D23 only this year. Thank you to Ruth Baker for her work as our district STAC coordinator.

## Regional Director's Report

*by David Lodge*



We're off to Memphis for National Board of Directors meetings in connection with the spring NABC. Our initial informal get together is on Sunday night, the 9th, and our meetings start in earnest on Monday, the 10th. Because of the Connections production demands, that means that you'll have to wait until the April issue to get the highlights of our Memphis meeting. In my article last month, I talked about the tournament task force and had hoped to bring you meaningful info in this article, but anything important won't start getting addressed until next week. By the way, Memphis is a great town, so if any of you carefree empty nesters who are into last minute travel decisions, Come on Down. I guarantee that the town, the eateries, the attractions and the bridge will not disappoint.

The BOD focuses on a number of high-level issues which include our relationships with both face-to-face clubs and virtual clubs, membership growth, ACBL operations, our relationships with online providers, etc. An area that is minor in most respects but important due to monetary commitments, is our relationship with the World Bridge Federation. The WBF exists solely to run the international competitions. It gets its money from each of the 8 zones. Why am I

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bringing this up now? Because the big cheeses of the WBF will be in Memphis. On their agenda is effectively one item; that is to raise the dues by 20%! What is the definition of Dues? It is currently $1 per active member per year. But apparently, there is no definition of what an active player means. So, Europe and North America pay what looks to be an appropriate amount, based on their membership. For 2024, Europe paid $268,597 and North America paid $120,942. And while we really don't have any data about the size of the China's competitive bridge population, the zone in which they are a part of, "Asia & the Middle East," that zone paid $6,023. Therefore, of the many issues of our relationship with the WBF, one of them is how to determine the base line for the imposition of dues and how do we ensure that all zones are adhering to the correct reporting basis. But potentially, an even larger issue is what benefit does the WBF bring to the average member of District 22, or for that matter, the 127,000 members of the ACBL. If I had to guess, and I do have to guess because we have no statistics, how many of our players are impacted by anything on Bridge's world stage? I'd guess generously, not more than 2%. These are typically top-level players, maybe pros, maybe sponsors or maybe just great players that want to compete for a world title. If we can identify these individuals, and pay dues based on this number, wouldn't it be a better method of allocating WBF dues among the 8 Zones?

So off to Memphis and if I don't see you there, let's see each other at our upcoming, terrific San Diego Regional at the Marriott in Del Mar.

## FYI Part 5
## Bridge Lore
## *by Bob Gruber*





As previously noted in this series of articles, many bridge movements—how the players and boards move during the game—are eponymous. Howell movements are named for their creator Edwin Cull Howell. Mitchell movements, however, are another matter. No one is credited with creating the basic Mitchell movement, but like Howell movements, these arose from Whist and were described by John T. Mitchell in his book titled *Duplicate Whist*. So, best guess is he got the credit for the movement by virtue of writing it up.

If true, that situation is similar to Sam Stayman being credited with creation of the Stayman Bidding Convention. But it just isn't so. Jack Marx, a Brit, came up with the idea in 1939, but neglected to publish it until 1946 after WW II. In the meantime, George Rapée, a regular partner of Stayman, came up with the same concept in 1944, and urged the better-known Stayman to publish it, which happened in 1945, beating Marx by a year. Sam Stayman is now enshrined in bridge lore for a convention—the Stayman Convention—he never conceived of.

Probably all of you know what a yarborough is—a hand with no card higher than a 9. But you may have forgotten the details of its origin. In the days of whist, in the 19th century, the second Earl of Yarborough offered to bet anyone 1000-1 that they would not be dealt a hand in which all the cards were lower than a 10. Turns out, the Earl knew what he was doing—the true odds are about 1826 to 1! If Paul Harvey were still with us, he'd say, "Now you know the rest of the story."

Dipping a little more into history, it seems that whist evolved into bridge with the introduction of the auction concept at the end of the 19th century. Around 1925, Harold Vanderbilt refined scoring by introducing the idea of "vulnerability" and increasing the bonus for bidding and making all but one trick and an even bigger bonus for bidding and making all the tricks. These changes basically brought the game to the present-day format of contract bridge.

By the way, there is no definitive answer as to the origin of the term bridge, but one theory is that it

derived from "Russian Whist" which was also known as "Biritch." Speaking of which, most of us probably have heard that President Eisenhower was an avid bridge player. No doubt he wasn't the first President to have an acquaintance with the game, but if we count "Biritch," then the first was none other than the Father of the Country, George Washington, who was known to enjoy a game of "Biritch."

Ely Culbertson, a shameless self-promoter and showman, popularized bridge in the 1930s. There's a story that in a team match, his wife, Josephine, called him aside to point out that the opponents were cheating. "I know," he replied, "but I can make better use of the information than they can." A cute story, but to the chagrin of male chauvinists everywhere, it may be apocryphal in light of the thought among many modern experts that Josephine was actually the better player!

My editor tells me that's a good note to end on, and since I always follow her sage advice, that's a wrap for this article.

## FYI Part 6
## Basics of Revoke Rulings
## *by Bob Gruber*

The general principles and practical aspects listed below underlie the revoke (failing to follow suit when possible) and revoke-related rulings a director makes.

- Restoring equity, not punishment, is the underlying principle of the laws of duplicate bridge. However, infractions are not ignored.
- A potential revoke becomes an established revoke when the revoker or his partner contributes to the next trick, usually by leading to it or playing to it, but also when making a claim or concession.
- Once a revoke is established, the revoke trick stands as played (except for trick 12).
  - Correcting a revoke at trick 12 restores equity for tricks 12 & 13 and there are no subsequent tricks to be affected. Also, punishing the offender is not a major goal.
- The director does not make a ruling on rectification for a revoke until play is over because until that time she cannot know the full extent of the damage, if any, to the non-offending side.
- Tricks to legitimately transfer are only the revoke trick and tricks subsequent to the revoke. The non-offenders were not damaged on prior tricks, so there is no transfer of any of those tricks.
  - If the revoking side did not win the revoke trick or any subsequent trick, there are no tricks to transfer.

For each revoke, the most common factor in determining the number of tricks to transfer from the revoking side to the non-revoking side is: specifically, who won the revoke trick.

| Revoke Trick Winner | # Tricks the Revoking Side Won ***after*** the Revoke: | |
|---|---|---|
| | **0** | **1 or more** |
| | # Tricks Transferred from the revoking side to the non-revoking side: | |
| Revoker | 1 | 2 |
| Revoker's Partner | 1 | 1 |
| Non-Offender | 0 | 1 |

Note that a 2-trick transfer occurs only when

- it is the revoker himself (not his partner) who won the revoke trick, and the revoking side won 1 or more subsequent tricks
  - If the revoker's partner won the revoke trick, the non-offenders were not damaged on that trick, but subsequent tricks may (or may not) be affected by the revoke. Rather than have the director review all the subsequent tricks, which may take considerable time, and then make a ruling based on judgement, the long-standing 1-trick transfer was retained to expedite matters.

There are many other situations involving revokes, including the Director assigning an adjusted score, but these are the more common situations and give insight into the Director's considerations in making a ruling.

# The Teacher's Corner

## Case for The Defense
*by Daniel F. Oakes*

Over the past few months in this series, I've covered signals – how and when to give them. Today, we'll move on to formulating a plan (as well as some occasional additional signaling ideas). I'd like to start by giving you a fundamental general truth that will serve you well if you frequently remember it, but it comes with a disclaimer – again, it's a *general* truth. It's not 100% literally true, but it's still an extremely useful key to defending the vast majority of hands well against most declarers, especially when it comes to formulating a plan. Let's put the shoe on the other foot, first: Let's say you're in a 4♠ contract, and you have a club loser. Your clubs are AKx. What might you do with that x?

There are two "bread and butter" answers to that question. They're not the only answers (which is why that general truth I haven't shared yet isn't a 100% truth), but they're the two answers that occur most of the time in the real world: Perhaps you'll ruff it in dummy, or perhaps you'll pitch it on one of dummy's winners. Most of the time, that's what we try to do with our losers – ruff them or pitch them. What happens most of the time if you can't ruff it or pitch it? Answer: you lose it. I mean, they're called *losers* for a reason. So here's that general truth: if declarer can't ruff or pitch losers, they're going to be lost. There are exceptions (again, it's not a 100% rule), most of which I (jokingly) call magic – maybe there will be a squeeze, or an endplay, or something of that nature. Don't worry about that for now. If you really focus on the ruffed/pitched/lost trichotomy, you'll be ahead of the vast majority of defenders at your local club (or tournament, for that matter).

Much of defense comes from thwarting declarer's plan, and to guide you, you have not only the auction (the defenders may not have bid, but declarer always did) and more importantly, the dummy. Think about the hands you declare; most of the time, your plan involves dummy's assets and how you might be able to use them. Does dummy have a long, strong suit? There's a good chance you'll want to set it up for pitches. Is dummy short in a suit in which you have losers? You'll probably try to ruff one or two of them before you draw trump.

A long time ago, in a great book (Complete Defense Bridge Play), Eddie Kantar categorized dummy types to discuss the typical ways of handling them when on defense. One dummy type has a long, useful suit. For instance, let's say you have the following auction (as declarer): 1♠ - 2♥; 2♠ - 4♠. Dummy is going to come down with five hearts; if they're fairly strong, declarer's plan might likely be to set them up, draw trump (or vice versa), and pitch as many minor suit losers as possible on dummy's good hearts. That may not be possible if the hearts split badly, or if dummy has a lousy suit, but that's one common way the hand might go. If you're on defense and dummy's hearts are KQJxx and you have three small, the plan is probably going to work. What should the defense do in this situation? You're probably going to want to aggressively try to set up and cash tricks to beat declarer to the punch. There's no point trying to patiently set up late tricks in the minors; once the trump and drawn and the ♥A is knocked out, the party's over.

I have to add, I'm oversimplifying here. For instance, you might be able to thwart this plan by focusing on declarer's entries. If declarer has good hearts that can't be reached, you're safe. Let me say up front, I'll oversimplify a fair bit here, when we're not actually looking at specific hands. The details of a hand matter, but let's start with the basics.

Another dummy type primarily provides ruffing values. This is fairly self-explanatory; if dummy is weak and doesn't have a side suit, but has shortness somewhere, there's a good chance that what the defenders should be doing is playing trump at every opportunity.

What if the dummy is both flat and weak? Let's go back to ruffed/pitched/lost. If declarer's losers can't be ruffed or pitched, sooner or later they'll be lost. Which means that unlike the situation where dummy has a long side suit, this is the case where you *don't* want to take chances. When you get in, exit as safely as possible – if declarer has losers, you're going to get them sooner or later. Patience.

Let's look at two different hands you might have, facing the same auction and dummy. Declarer is on your left, so partner is on lead. Let's say we're

playing a team game, where setting the contract is critical. Auction (opponents silent): 1♠ - 1NT; 2♠ - 3♠; 4♠ - pass. Partner leads the ♥3 (fourth best), and dummy hits with:

(North)
♠Q7
♥74
♦8632
♣AKJ94

(West) (East (you))
♠T93
♥3 ♥A85
♦JT5
♣8763

You win the ♥A; what do you do at trick two?

Same auction, same dummy, same lead, but now your hand is: ♠T93 ♥A85 ♦JT5 ♣QT83. Same question, too.

Solutions: variation 1 - What will declarer do with his losers? Looking at AKJxx in dummy, he'll probably want to pitch them on clubs. You have four small clubs, so you know that plan will work; either declarer has the ♣Q, or it's onside in partner's hand. You've got to get tricks set up and cashed before it's too late. Switch to the ♦J and hope for the best. If partner has the AQ behind declarer's K (and the ♥K), declarer is going down. Or if partner has the K behind the ace and a trump trick (and again, the ♥K), again declarer is going down. If you return a heart to partner's K, partner can't attack diamonds from his side; declarer is going to draw trump and run the clubs.

What about Variation 2, where the 76 of clubs have been replaced by the QT? Now declarer has 2 club tricks, not 5. Declarer can't pitch a bunch of losers. And if he also can't ruff them, he's going to lose them. Don't panic; just return a trump. What if declarer wins and plays a second heart to partner's king? Should partner, looking at those scary clubs, make a risky diamond lead away from the king? No! When you returned a trump, you let partner know that you weren't worried about dummy's clubs. If partner trusts you, a second trump will hit the table, and you'll get all the red suit tricks you're entitled to.

## District 23 Rank Changes February 2025

**Junior Master**
Marva Baumgart
Lura Breen
Sally S. Fasteau
Marcia Le Beau
Paul McNamara
Louis N. Sterling
Joyce Woodman

**Club Master**
Brian M. Burdiak
Daniel J. Collins
Debra Collins
Linda L. Johnson
Thomas J. Liautaud
John J. Markovich
Barbara Way

**Sectional Master**
Marilyn L. Gelfand
Margit Hillebrand
Chris Sun

**Regional Master**
Patrick G. Finley
Juliet Green

**NABC Master**
Toban Toban

**Advanced NABC Master**
Giacomo Beretta
Robert S. Jennings
Alan Nueman

**Bronze Life Master**
Stan Snyder

**Silver Life Master**
Nancie R. Barrier
Aaron B. Craig

**Ruby Life Master**
Evan M. Krantz

**Gold Life Master**
Mike Welsh

**Emerald Life Master**
Joan M. Rubin

# New Life Masters in District 23
*submitted by Mike Marcucci*



Arthur Vatz – Aug 23
Unit 562



Teresa Thurman – May 24
Unit 559



Elliott Mazur – Jul 24
Unit 559



Glen Musicer – Jan 25
Unit 568

# The Pasadena Bridge Club

## Welcomes

## Robert Todd



## SUNDAY, MARCH 30

**9AM**

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Is it static or is it dynamic! What factors and or inferences affect your decision? We will examine how to interpret partner's contribution to the auction in order to make the best possible rebid.

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PasadenaBridgeClub.com

Robert is a professional Bridge player and teacher from Tallahassee, FL who teaches seminars and workshops all over the country, as well as hosts cruises and plays at the highest levels around the world.

AdvinBridge.com

# The Puzzle Page

## Bridge Jeopardy
*by John Jones*

**Category: Who's Who in Bridge**

**And the answer is …**

$100 – This person sits opposite you and needs your cooperation.

$200 – The player who places their hand face up on the table.

$300 – You call this person if there is an irregularity.

$400 – The player who asks information from partner such as Stayman or Blackwood, and then is in charge of placing the contract for his/her side.

$500 – This player (by compass position) normally plays hands in newspaper columns.

(Solutions to Bridge Jeopardy is on page 11. No peeking!)

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*Submitted by Tom Lill*

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# Around the Units in District 23



## Pomona – Covina by Tom Lill

www.acblunit551.org

**La Fetra Games:** Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:45
**Individual**: April 6, 10 a.m., Ontario
**Club Championships**: March 15, 28, La Fetra
**Unit Game**: March 15, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
**Unit Team Game**: March 22, **10:00 a.m.**, Ontario – advance registration REQUIRED by March 15
**Unit Board Meeting**: 10:15 a.m. before the game

The team game last month was a success, so we're going to try again. This time, it's a two-session game – well run a true Swiss if we have as many as 9 teams, otherwise a round-robin. We'll also start an hour earlier, so we can all get home while it is still light. Well, for me that's not much of a problem … also, we go to DST by then, so it's light an hour later.

Please note, I had originally scheduled Club Championships March 18 and 21, but it seems the ACBL is offering 1/3 gold points for club games that week. Not sure it will actually happen; seems mysterious. So I've postponed the Championships a week. If the gold doesn't appear, I'll revert to the original schedule.

We already reported on the February Unit game. Once again, the vagaries of the calendar allow us to report March's game. Fredy and Lulu Minter outpaced the field with 67.67%. Your Director and Richard Parker, were next, followed by Kitty Moon – David Ochroch, Peter Kavounas – Judy Brown, Stephen Andersen - Gary Atwell, and Roger Boyar – Serene Mougharbel.

Peter Kavounas repeated as winner in the March Individual, with a 60.23% game. Actually, it was a tie with Kitty Moon, but hey, a win is a win. Roger Boyar was third, Steve Andersen fourth, and newcomer Serena Mougharbel came in fifth. Serena is still in high school but shows great promise if she sticks with the game.

There were two promotions in February. Joyce Woodman is now a Junior Master. Patrick Finley is now a Regional Master. Congratulations, and keep up the good play.

A feature I used to include here, but somehow got lost along the way, is a listing of the top masterpoint gatherers at our club. I prepared the report for January … and promptly went brain-dead and omitted it! So here are the January AND February masterpoint leaders:

JANUARY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 6.66 | Vic Sartor |
| 2 | 6.15 | Fredy Minter |
| 3 | 5.56 | Mary Ann Wotring |
| 4 | 4.77 | Caryn Mason |
| 5 | 3.97 | Patrick Finley |

35 players won a total of 71.04 masterpoints in January.

FEBRUARY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 7.19 | Patrick Finley |
| 1 | 7.19 | Caryn Mason |
| 3 | 6.73 | Fredy Minter |
| 3 | 6.73 | Lulu Minter |
| 5 | 6.20 | Mary Ann Wotring |

31 players won a total of 87.43 masterpoints in February.

Here, for your amusement, is a *wild* hand that came up in our monthly Individual. I had a second one in mind … but Mr. Jones decided to use it in the PSP. Read it, you'll enjoy. (I note that at least a few of the experts made the same opening bid that I did!!!)

You are South. Both sides are vulnerable. East deals, and opens 1♠. Here's your hand:

♠ none ♥ A J 10 7 3 2 ♦ A K J 10 2 ♣ 9 4

The hand is really not quite right for a Michaels cue-bid, so 2♥ it is. LHO (there they are *again*) goes 3♥ (limit raise+, at least 3 spades), and RHO goes 4♠. How about 5♦? LHO doubles, North corrects to 5♥, but RHO goes to 5♠. See next page for the entire deal:

5♠ must go one down on the 4-0 trump break. (Unless, that is, East peeks at the defenders' hands.) Pity poor West! She was licking her chops, hoping to defend a doubled red suit contract, but East's shape argued for declaring. Go figure!

North
♠ J 10 6 3
♥ 5 4
♦ 9 5
♣ K Q 10 7 5

West
♠ A 9 2
♥ K Q 9 8 6
♦ Q 8 6 4 3
♣ none

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

South
♠ none
♥ A J 10 7 3 2
♦ A K J 10 2
♣ 9 4

**Quote for the month:** "If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there." (Lewis Carroll)

TRIVIA TIME: last month, we asked you what Groucho Marx's actual first name was. The answer is "Julius."



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

*Sorry, nothing from Unit 556 this month.*

## Pasadena – San Gabriel
### by Morris "Mojo" Jones
bridgemojo.com



*Sorry, nothing from Unit 559 this month.*



## Long Beach
### by Lillian Slater

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

*Sorry, nothing from Long Beach this month.*

## Downey-Whittier
### by Daniel F. Oakes

If you're into interesting (and helpful!) bridge books, Zia Mahmood has a new one. I'm only a third of the way through "Bridge: A Love Story," but it's proving to be just as entertaining as "Bridge My Way," a classic from the early 90s. Zia has won just about everything you can win in bridge, has played at or near the top for decades, and has led a fascinating life both at and away from the bridge table. Highly recommended! Here's a fun hand from the final 16 boards of the 2009 Bermuda Bowl. You hold: ♠Q752 ♥----- ♦KJ432 ♣KQJ3, and this is the auction (you're in second seat):

(1♥) – X – (2NT*) – 4♠

(5♥) – 5♠ – (6♦*) – X

(6♥) – P – (P) – X

(All Pass)

So to recap, you make a takeout double of one heart; your left hand opponent bids Jacoby 2NT, showing a strong heart raise with at least 4 trump. Partner jams the auction up to 4 spades, which must be mostly distributional (everyone else seems to have an opening hand). You throw in a 5 spade bid, with your heart void, then your left-hand opponent bids 6 diamonds, a cuebid, which partner doubles. Then partner doubles again, when the opponents land in 6 hearts. Notice anything unusual?

Partner's double of 6 diamonds was ostensibly lead-directing. But the double of 6 hearts was also lead directing – a Lightner double, traditionally asking for an unusual lead. After a double of 6 diamonds, it would be "usual" to lead a diamond – the suit that partner doubled. Does the double of 6 hearts cancel that? Why would partner make a lead-directing double, then cancel it one round later? Is it just a power double, expecting

the contract to go down a couple of tricks, wanting to get 300 instead of 100? What the heck is partner doing?

Oh yeah…you're Bob Hamman and your partner is Zia, known for exceptionally …uhhh… "creative" plays at the table. And you also have a perfectly natural club lead, with KQJx. There are 10 or 11 boards left in the world championship, and you've spend the last 45 minutes or so giving back a little bid of a 40-IMP lead. The difference between setting a beatable slam and allowing it to make could be about half of your lead. So is it the king of clubs, a diamond, or something else?! I'll give you the rest of the story after I tell you who did what in February at Downey-Whittier.

On February 5th, the club ran an Education Foundation game, and Kiran Kumar and Avice Osmundson led the way with a 63.89% game, more than a board clear of the field. Mike Ventri and Steve Hough were 2nd, while Bob and Linda Krause were 2nd B.

On February 12, Ventri and Hough improved to 66.67% game, but were still (barely) the bridesmaids; this time, it was John Petrie and Sankar Reddy, who terrorized the club in January (see last month's column) turning in a 67.36% performance, pipping the unlucky Ventri/Hough tandem by half a matchpoint. Jack Rainsberry and Bill Skupen were 1st B and 3rd overall, while Neil Rhodes and Raj Ramchandani were 1st C.

Kiran Kumar returned to the winner's circle on February 19th, playing with John Jones. The Krauses were 1st B and 2nd overall, while Ventri slid down into bronze medal territory, clearly punishment for taking on an inferior partner (your correspondent!). Anita Frost and Jim Gorin were 1st in C.

The February 26th game was hotly contested, with four pairs in the high-50s to low-60s. Oakes and Ventri were 1st with a 61.94% game, followed closely by Rainsberry & Skupen. Shelby Oakes and Ruth Salibury were 3rd, and Gabby Sill and Steve Hough were rather unlucky that their 57.77% game was only good for 4th, less than a board behind the winners. OK, back to the world championship! Did you select your lead?

One thing that's refreshing about Zia is that he doesn't always make himself the hero of his own stories. Maybe Bob Hamman thought the Lightner double canceled the earlier request for a diamond, or maybe he just didn't know what the heck Zia was doing and figured he had an obvious and good natural lead of his own. At any rate, he led the king of clubs and the slam made. Zia had a diamond void and the ace of trump, and had Hamman led the previously directed diamond, declarer would have been down at trick 2.

Zia took a bathroom break to get his head together, while Hamman (noted for his superhuman focus and concentration) remained at the table and didn't say a word about his partner's doubles, and when Zia returned, they finished the set and won the world championship. In fact, at the other table, Zia's Italian counterpart made the same two doubles, got the same club lead, and there was no swing on the board. I shared this with a regular partner of mine, who found it crazy and interesting, and said he would have led a club, taking the Lightner double to cancel the earlier double; then he called over another partner of his, who also said he would have led a club. There's a lesson to be learned here, but it doesn't come from Zia, my partner, his partner, or me – it comes from Hamman.

The lesson is this – in a team game, you don't know what's happening at the other table. You might *think* you do, and you might be right, but you don't *know.* I've seen a lot of matches lost when a partner, a teammate, or an opponent was upset about a board or bid a 10% slam trying to get back IMPs lost on a hand…only to find out that the board they thought was a disaster turned out to be a push, and the real disaster was the half-cocked attempt to recover what was never lost in the first place. Hamman would have led a diamond without question had Zia not doubled the final contract, and the ambiguous second double could have cost 16 IMPs and blown much of a lead in the world championship match, but he didn't complain, didn't get upset with partner…he just stayed focused, played another ten boards of solid bridge, and won yet another Bermuda Bowl. The only board that matters is the one you can do something about – the one you're playing. Forget about the last one until the session is over. Best tip I'll ever give you!

## Bridge Jeopardy Questions

$100 – Who is partner??

$200 – Who is dummy?

$300 – Who is the director?

$400 – Who is the captain?

$500 – Who is South?

# Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Wafik Abdou, Mark Bartusek, Sid Brownstein, David Chechelashvili, Ellis Feigenbaum, Jill Meyers, Mister Mealymouth, Margie Michelin, Rick Roeder, Mike Shuster, and Jon Wittes are panelists.

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

**1**

Matchpoints
None Vul

| North | East | South | West |
|---|---|---|---|
| pass | pass | ??? | |

You, South, hold: ♠ Q ♥ J ♦ 762 ♣ AKJ98765

What call do you make?

*This hand has lots of possibilities: 1♣, 3♣, 3NT, 4♣ or 5♣. I'll start with those who make my bid - 5♣.*

**Meyers**: 5♣. We are not vulnerable and I don't have anything in the majors, let them guess.

**Mealymouth**: 5♣. Let them guess at the 5-level. They'll guess right too often at the 4-level.

**Wittes**: 5♣. 4♣ might be more reasonable, but that rates to make it easy for them to bid 4 of a major. 5♣ might get them to bid 5 of a major, which might prove to be more of a problem, especially if they're only on an eight-card fit.

**Shuster**: 5♣. Admittedly, this could backfire.

*Next, we will listen to those who sort their hand with the ♠Q with their clubs!*

**Abdou**: 3NT. Gambling. I will tell pard had the ♠Q in with my clubs! This is the most practical call.

**Bartusek**: 3NT. I must preempt with this hand, but 4♣ or 5♣ just doesn't seem right. I don't want to miss 3NT when it's making, so I'll slightly revamp my definition of a Gambling 3NT for this occasion. Seems like the best description of my hand. At least we will avoid 3NT if partner is void in my suit!! Finally, aren't you supposed to play No-Trump from the side that has the hidden (and unexpected) queens and jacks?

**Michelin**: 3NT. I am bidding 3NT even in third seat. This should show long decent minor because I don't use 3NT to show balanced big hands. I am sure they have amajor suit fit, let them find it at the 4-level and 3NT might be the last makable spot for our side.

*Finally, let's hear from the 1♣ bidders.*

**Roeder**: 1♣. A 5♣ opener would be more attractive if you were in first seat. Given that one of the bad guys has passed, the need to preempt has decreased.

**Feigenbaum**: 1♣. Can I play precision for this hand only? *I think he would like to open a Precision 2♣ bid.* Failing that, it's probably a tossup between opening a flawed 3NT and a mundane 1♣. I probably opt for 1♣ as 4♣ would be Namyats for me, and a direct 5♣ is too rich for my blood.

**Brownstein**: 1♣.

**Chechelashvili**: 1♣. I don't want to push them to a low point, potentially making major game (by bidding 3♣ or 4♣), as my ♠Q and ♥J are risky holdings.

*This hand was sent to me by my wonderful editor, Tom Lill. This hand occurred in Tom's monthly Individual game. On the actual hand, Tom chose a 1♣ opening bid. LHO, with a good hand, overcalled 1♥. Partner freely offered 1NT with ♠Kx ♥QTxx ♦QJTxxx ♣x. Tom raised to 3NT. Partner received a heart lead, and with clubs breaking 2 – 2, 3NT rolled home.*

# 2

Matchpoints
None Vul

| West | North | East | South |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pass | pass | 1♣ | pass |
| 1♥ | pass | pass | ??? |

You, South, hold: ♠ Q1097 ♥ J1083 ♦ 1072 ♣ AK

What call do you make?

*This hand was sent to me by Canadian friend Bill Treble. He got the hand from his friend Jerry Howarth. Bill gave the hand to his email panel that voted twice for Pass, twice for double, and three times for 1♠. Our panel discussed those options, plus another possible choice, 1NT.*

**Abdou**: 1NT. I'm not getting rich defending 1♥.

**Bartusek**: 1NT. My initial thought was to double, but if partner doesn't have spades what will partner do? I really don't want partner bidding 2♦ when my hand is so No-Trump oriented. It should be safe to bid 1NT when the points appear to be about evenly divided. Additionally, West probably won't double since East was a 3rd seat opener (but at least I'm not vulnerable).

*The first 1♠ bidder makes an outstanding point. The light takeout doublers solved their problem already by doubling 1♣ when they had a chance. This style doesn't appeal to everyone, but I like it and it has the effect of helping with competing and opening leads also. Now, 1♠ is about the only bid that might push the opponents to bid 2♥.*

**Wittes**: 1♠. On the actual hand, I would clearly double directly over 1♣. *A good point! We are minimum for a takeout double, but involving partner immediately avoids this guess.* Once I didn't double, 1♠ seems like the best action in the subsequent auction.

**Michelin**: 1♠. I could bid 1NT. The opponents have at least a 4-3 heart fit, and I think my partner might have four spades. So I'm betwixt and between. I am bidding 1♠.

**Roeder**: 1♠. Matchpoints is so perverted! If partner has only two hearts, this could play well. If you push the bad guys to 2♥, you have done your job.

**Chechelashvili**: 1♠. Partner has two hearts, so I hope she has at least three spades.

**Feigenbaum**: 1♠. I'm not letting this one go at 1♥. Normally when I balance the opponents end up in game that they otherwise were never reaching, but that's a bit unlikely here, so I probably bid 1♠. I don't want partner thinking I am sitting on a club stack.

*Finally, those who agree with my opinion.*

**Mealymouth**: Pass. Balanced Hands Defend! *Amen brother!* They may have us outpointed 23-17 while we can have them outpointed at most 21-19. Why should we play in a 4-2 fit and get a 4-3 split when we can let them play in a 4-3 fit and get a 4-2 split, especially when 80% of my high-card strength is in their suits? To those who say, "We mustn't sell out to them below [name of bid here]," I reply, "We don't even know if they're in their best fit. They might belong in diamonds, for example. Is West one of the herd of players who think 1♣ is Stayman and will respond one heart on four to the umpty with six diamonds to 150 honors?"

**Meyers**: Pass. Partner had two chances to bid and did not, why do I want to get involved?

**Shuster**: Pass. I don't hate my hand for hearts. I'd like a little more offense for 1NT, which seems like a gamble on not getting doubled.

**Brownstein**: Pass.

| 3<br>IMPs<br>None Vul | West | North | East | South |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | pass | pass | 1♣ | ??? |

You, South, hold: ♠ A763 ♥ K ♦ A5 ♣ AKJ1087

What call do you make?

*We have a nice 19HCP hand and my RHO picks off our long suit. What now? Most panelists either doubled or passed for now.*

**Chechelashvili**: Double. I'm planning to rebid 2NT after partner's 1♥. I hope partner will not pull 3NT to 4♥ with just five hearts.

**Shuster**: Double. Maybe we'll find spades and there is plenty of room to avoid declaring in hearts. Passing doesn't work for me.

**Bartusek**: Double. This hand is definitely worth rebidding No-Trump on the next round after partner bids hearts. If I pass now, I won't be able to catch up later.

**Feigenbaum**: Double. The first thing I do is look at the opponent's convention card and find out if clubs could be short. Then, I have a very easy 2♣ natural bid (*might you be a tad heavy for a natural 2♣ bid in your methods?)*. Failing that, double and await eventualities. Hand is slightly too good for a trap pass at these colors.

**Michelin**: Pass. I must be blind and blonde! I don't see anything other than pass for the moment.

**Roeder**: Pass. If it goes all pass, game is far from assured.

**Abdou**: Pass. I will get a chance later, if not 50 a trick vs a possible NV game may not be a Greek tragedy.

**Meyers**: Pass. I suspect I will have time to bid later.

**Mealymouth**: Pass. Let them get into trouble on what may be a misfit deal. I reserve the option of bidding clubs later, when partner won't think I'm showing both majors.

*Two panelists made bids that this hand might be a little understrength for.*

**Brownstein**: 1NT.

*1NT might work, but it is a little strong for a 15 – 18 NT overcall. I also fear partner transferring into hearts.*

**Wittes**: 3♣. I'm a little too good for this bid. A gambling 3NT bid could work. If the opponents compete to 3♦ or 3♥, I will bid 3♠.

*3♣ might work too, but the two most common treatments are preemptive and asking for a stopper. Perhaps Jon has a different treatment in mind, or maybe he is setting a trap if the opponents bid too much.*

# 4

Matchpoints
None Vul

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

You, South, hold: ♠ AK107 ♥ void ♦ QJ8764 ♣ AK9

What call do you make?

*Here we have a constructive bidding problem. There are three approaches here. We can raise clubs (possibly jumping), rebid diamonds, or introduce spades. I'll start with the club bidders.*

**Brownstein**: 3♣.

**Feigenbaum**: 3♣. I'll start with 3♣, let partner know we have club support, and see where it takes us. Partner doesn't need a monster for 6♣ or 7♣ to be making, so slow is more than likely the best way to go and will keep 3NT in the frame if that is the right place to be.

**Wittes**: 4♥ (Exclusion). If partner has the A or K of diamonds, slam should be a good proposition.

*Now for the spade bidders.*

**Shuster**: 2♠. This is a matter of partnership agreements. For me, 2♣ can harbor a major, so I need to make sure we don't miss spades.

**Bartusek**: 2♠. If I were playing Kokish then I'd be required to rebid 2♦. *Eric Kokish's methods in this situation are: 2♦ = any hand with 5+ diamonds, 2♥ = 4=4=4=1 distribution, 2♠ = artificial good raise of clubs, 2NT = natural, 3♣ = minimum raise of clubs, 3♦ = 6+ diamonds with extras, 3♥ or 3♠ are splinters. They are pretty good methods. Mark and I play a souped-up version of these methods.* Playing standard expert methods, it seems better to bid 2♠ now showing 4-5 with at least modest extras. This will allow me to bid 3♣ on the third round after partner's practically guaranteed 2NT rebid. If partner doesn't bid 2NT then I will have learned a lot about partner's hand and where his strength lies. Additionally, if the auction went 1♦-2♣-2♦-2♥ then my 2♠ bid would be ambiguous and lead to a much more confusing auction!

**Meyers**: 2♠. I will bid clubs my next opportunity. It is tempting to splinter (*some partnerships would play splinter raising a minor immediately would show four-card support)* and bid 3♥ but I think it best to show my shape.

**Mealymouth**: 2♠. I do not subscribe to the theory that this reverse should be made with anything less than the values (at least five diamonds, four spades, and 16 or so HCP) it would require if 2♣ were merely a one-round force. Even in game-forcing auctions it's very useful for opener to show extras promptly and pave the road to slam. I do subscribe to Al Roth's theory that a 2♦ rebid by opener here simply denies extra values without promising diamond length. At least that's what Al Roth Jr. told me his daddy said.

**Michelin**: 2♠. I am bidding 2♠. I do like to support with support however if I raise to 3♣ and partner bids 3NT I will not want to pass, I will see how things transpire and start with 2♠.

*Finally, those that rebid 2♦. That would be my approach, going as slowly as possible to learn about partner's hand.*

**Roeder**: 2♦. Automatic. Go slow on this complicated hand. Plenty of time to support clubs later.

**Abdou**: 2♦. For me 2♠ denies five diamonds. I will bid 2♠ over 2♥ then bid clubs to complete the picture. Over 2NT I will bid 4♥ and partner will know it is shortness with three clubs and long diamonds (with 4♣ I would have raised or splintered directly). *Great point!*

**Chechelashvili**: 2♦. I will first show five diamonds and see where it leads us. I can always show my good club fit later, by patterning out.

5

Matchpoints
None Vul

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

You, South, hold: ♠ A85 ♥ 4 ♦ AKJ3 ♣ A8752

What call do you make?

*This didn't turn out to be a great problem. With only one dissenter, the panel was nearly unanimous on bidding 2♦ to probe for the best contract.*

**Bartusek**: 2♦. I can't think of another bid with this hand. I will follow this up with 3♠ patterning out. Partner didn't make a negative double so the opponents possess a lot of hearts. After I describe my hand partner will be able to place the final contract.

**Roeder**: 2♦. I've got to get partner involved as No Trump or either minor could be best. No reason to rush to No Trump as your RHO may easily lead a heart given the combined spade length of you and partner have.

**Wittes**: 2♦. This seems like the best forward going bid at this time. If partner has a weak heart holding, a minor suit game might be right. If partner rebids no trump, I will raise to game.

**Shuster**: 2♦. We're heading towards game or slam in a minor. I'm not playing NT stacked in spades with the opponents holding 9+ hearts.

**Abdou**: 2♦. I'm still looking for best game. The opponents have nine hearts, so NT may not be the strain. ♠KJx ♥xxx ♦Qxxxx ♣Kx is an easy slam. Take the ♦Q away and it's still a reasonable slam or an easy game! Even if partner is stacked in the majors, 3NT may still fail because of a lack of a source of tricks ♠KTxx ♥KQx ♦xxxx ♣xx!

**Chechelashvili**: 2♦. They have at least a nine-card fit, so it is likely they will lead a heart. It's better to bid slowly and naturally to discover the right spot 2NT, 3NT, some number of clubs or diamonds.

**Meyers**: 2♦. I have enough to reverse, plus partner did not make a negative double. So, I suspect unless partner is hiding four hearts that she has a minor fit somewhere.

**Mealymouth**: 2♦. Another strength-showing reverse. We may belong in five of a minor even at matchpoints. I won't raise to any number of notrumps. My cardiologist warned me against risking a heart attack and told me United Healthcare won't cover my medical bills if bid 3NT here.

**Feigenbaum**: 2♦. Get the quarter out again from the first hand. I might have opened 1♦ on this hand, but as I did not, then I am likely to be bidding 2♦ now. If partner corrects to clubs or raises diamonds, I'll bid spades to pattern out, and partner can now elect to bid 3NT or look for slam.

**Michelin**: 2♦. I will bid 2♦.

**Brownstein**: 3NT.