Southern California **Bridge News**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Jordan Chodorow



As your President, I am here to serve you. If I can do anything to enhance your enjoyment of our great game, please let me know at President@D23ACBL.org.

The North American Pairs is (along with the Grand National Teams) one of two annual "grass roots" tournaments held by the ACBL. It begins at the club level each year in June, July and August. Players who qualified (earned a "Q") are invited to compete in the District final.

Our D23 Final will take place on Sunday, October 26, 2025. It will be a two-session event, with high finishers earning the right to represent D23 at the Spring NABC in St. Louis. Top finishers may receive partial reimbursement for their travel to Missouri.

There are four flights. The Open (or "Championship") Flight has no upper masterpoint level, and winning at the NABC qualifies you for Grand Life Master status. Flight A is restricted to players with no more than 6,000 masterpoints; Flight B (which Harvey Katz and I won in 2003), 3,000; and Flight C, 750.

The masterpoint awards at the D23 final are always big and tasty, and they're half-red, half-black. The NAP flyer is available on our website: http://www.D23ACBL.org.

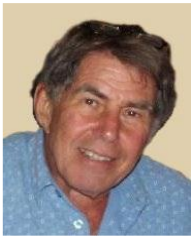
To play in the D23 final at the Pasadena Bridge Club, register by October 20 by contacting Jeff Grotenhuis, D23 NAP Chairman, at jeffgro@gmail.com or 310-600-4275 with your and your partner's names, ACBL numbers, email addresses, flight and any seating preference. Good luck to all!

I had a nice time at the recent D22 Regional at

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Regional Director's Report

by David Lodge



The D22 Labor Day regional in Orange County was just held and if you didn't attend, you missed a great tournament. The Marriott is one of the nicest venues in the rotation. The weather was great! There are plenty of terrific restaurants around the area. And the bridge was terrific. My partner and I scored 80% on my last day of pairs (of course that was the total of both sessions, which points out that every card is crucial in pairs). Put it on your calendar for next year. You won't be disappointed.

Management of the ACBL has been asked by several club owners to allow players who have been found to have been cheating online, to play face to face (f2f), while still serving out their time of suspension from playing online. A poll was sent out to all clubs earlier this year inquiring about the position of the club owners/managers about this topic. Opinions were split as to whether someone should be allowed to play f2f. After some consideration, the league has allowed f2f play by those still under suspension under the following circumstances: 1) allowing f2f play is at the discretion of the club owner/manager; 2) the player will not earn

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the Irvine Marriott. It was great to see so many D23 (and D22) friends. Congratulations to all D23'ers who found success at the table!

And huge congratulations to local hero Finn Kolesnik and his USA1 teammates for winning the Bermuda Bowl! I know Sharon and Alex are rightfully proud. A great moment for their family and for all of D23!

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any masterpoints; 3) the player is barred from playing with the partner with whom they were found cheating. Let your club manager know how you feel about this issue.

"Don't Shoot the Messenger" is a phrase that dates to Plutarch and Sophocles and was used several times by Shakespeare. What's the context? In my April D22 Connections article earlier this year, I talked about a presentation I made at the spring ACBL BOD meeting in Memphis. The presentation involved tournament director staffing at regional tournaments. At that time, I wrote: "I had the somewhat uncomfortable task of sharing my thoughts about how tournament sponsors (in our case, District 22), feel about how the ACBL goes about staffing our regionals. I say uncomfortable because there were 4 high level national tournament directors in the room including McKensie Myers, the head TD for the league. I started my presentation by acknowledging the dedication, well intentioned and hard work performed by all our tournament directors and that in fact many districts/units have an excellent working relationship with the DIC's (Director in Charge). That having been said, sponsors are frustrated by what they see as waste in costs related to staffing: not enough collaboration; the DIC employing in some cases friends, but in many cases taking the easy way out and using TDs known to be reliable in spite of their territorial (travel) implications; holding to a premise that we need to overstaff in the beginning to prevent any unforeseen glitch and thereby provide an exceptional product for players and that we can adjust and send TDs home if they prove unnecessary-this is a luxury that in time of contraction may not be affordable-the end result of overstaffing is unnecessary TD sessions and excessive travel, hotel and per-diem costs; the unwillingness to promote and use qualified local Tournament Associates (TAs)". After my presentation, Bronia Jenkins, our Executive Director, acknowledged that my approach to soften what may have been perceived as criticism by starting off with compliments about the staff was an excellent strategy. Well, apparently, I should have been a lot more effusive, because I have learned that the directors were extremely upset with what I said. So rather than Shooting the Messenger, why doesn't the TD staff convince the tournament managers that their concerns are unfounded. The single metric that has been used to try to gather data and manage costs at tournaments re: TD cost's is "tables per director". I've suggested that under ideal conditions, the ratio of table to directors should be 20 to 1. Irvine provided a nice test laboratory in this regard. All the play took place in one large room with excellent acoustics. However, there were 5 directors for 80 tables, a 16 to one ratio. Were that many directors necessary? What would have been the impact with one less? At times when we're all fat, dumb and happy, and our regional tournaments are making lots of money, we might be allowed the mindset of it's ok if we overspend a little if the result is a better experience for our players. While that is an admirable objective, an overriding one must be financial viability, or we'll have no tournaments at all.

Make sure you have plans to attend district 22's next fabulous regional in Ventura.

FYI Part 17
Last Round Scoring
by Bob Gruber



"We got 2 out of 2 cold tops on the last round. How come our percentage didn't go up more? We were at 66.3% going into the last round. I thought we'd make it to 70%. Instead, we only went up to 68.1%! How can that be?"

Ever had those thoughts yourself? Are you still wondering: "How can that be?" If so, let's assume a section of 13 full tables to see if we can shed some light on this mystery.

Weighting of the Last Round

First off, the last round is normally only 1 of 9 or 1 of 13 rounds. In the former case, the last round is 1/9 (= 11.11%) of the total boards played. That means a tad under 89% of your score has already been "mostly" determined. We say "mostly" because, as the next section discusses, all boards are still in play and there may be some adjustments to your percentage on those boards.

In the latter case, the last round is even less significant. It is 1/13 (= 7.69%) of the total boards played. Now, more than 92% of your score has already been "mostly" determined. The final 7.69% will not result in a giant change in your final score, several percent maximum.

If you're not mathematically inclined (and probably even if you are), the prior two paragraphs with fractions and percentages don't lend themselves to creating a clarifying picture in your mind. Another approach may be better.

Picture this: in a 9-round game, you're playing the final 3 boards, each with a top of 8. That means 24 matchpoints are up for grabs. The prior 24 boards put 192 matchpoints up for grabs. 192 matchpoints "mostly" set—remember, those boards are still in play—24 matchpoints still to go.

For a 13-round game, you're playing 2 boards with a top of 12 each, so again, 24 matchpoints are up for grabs. But this time, the prior 24 boards put 288 matchpoints up for grabs. Clearly, the last 2 boards won't have that great an effect on your percentage.

All Boards Are in Play

Players are well aware that the last round is some fraction of their total score. A more easily overlooked factor is that in a Mitchell movement all prior boards are in play in the last round (with a few exceptions, e.g., games with a ½ table or a relay/bye stand). So, it is very possible that your percent on each of the other boards will adjust. That adjustment may be up or down depending upon how the final pairs do on those boards. Whether you're playing 9 rounds of 3 boards each or 13 rounds of 2 boards each, 24 boards will be in play at the other tables.

From your perspective, on each of those 24 boards at the other tables, 1 additional matchpoint is at stake. If the players with your cards beat your score, you earn 0 additional matchpoints. If they tie your score, you get an additional ½ matchpoint. If your score is better than theirs, you earn a full additional matchpoint. Bottom line, 24 matchpoints are yours for the taking (or losing) at your table and 24 matchpoints are out of your hands at the other tables. You could have a perfect last round, and in the very unlikely event that your scores on all the prior boards were bested at all the other tables in play, you'll have a 50% final round showing. You won all 24 matchpoints at your table, but won 0 of the additional 24 matchpoints at all the other tables; 24 matchpoints out of a possible 48 matchpoints is 50%.

The major point here is that only half the matchpoints being contested on the final round are at your table. The other half are at the other tables in play, where you have no control over the results.

A Specific Example

It's now time to put the prior 2 sections together in a specific example. Our example will be a 13-round game of 26 boards, each with a 12 top. However, after 12 of the 13 rounds, the top at that point is 11. To simplify the math, let's say you've averaged exactly 7 matchpoints per board for those 1st 24 boards. Let's further say you get 2 cold tops on your last 2 boards. How does this scenario play out for your round 12 and round 13 percentages?

Your percentage through round 12 will be fixed, but we can figure round 13's percentage in various ways, including the 3 scenarios below:

a) Assume you earned 0 additional matchpoints (0%) on the other 24 boards in play,
b) Assume your percentage on the other 24 boards in play remained the same,
c) Assume you earned 24 additional matchpoints (100%) on the other 24 boards in play.

After round 12 your percentage was:

$$\frac{7 \times 24}{11 \times 24} \times 100 = (168 \div 264) \times 100 = 63.63\%.$$

Bearing in mind that you had 168 matchpoints (mp) going into round 13 and that you earned 24 matchpoints at your table on the last 2 boards, we compute the post round 13 results as follows:

a) Additional 0.0% (0.0 mp) at other tables: (168 + 24 + 00) ÷ (12 x 26) = 61.54%,
b) Same % at other tables: (63.63% x (24/26)) + (63% x (2/26)) = 58.74% + 4.89% = 63.63%,
c) Additional 100% (24 mp) at other tables: (168 + 24 + 24) ÷ (12 x 26) = 69.23%.

These percentages may be easier to see in tabular form. To recap, you completed round 12 winning 63.63% of the available matchpoints. In round 13, you scored all 24 available matchpoints at your table. The additional matchpoints you won at the other 12 tables varied according to the table below:

% of matchpoints won at other tables in play	game % after round 13	Differential in your game percentage
0	61.54	-2.09
63.63	63.63	+0.00
100	69.23	+5.60

Our example shows when you enter the last round with a high percentage, even if you win all the matchpoints at your table, your game can still go down by over 2%! Zounds! Even if you're lucky enough to win all 48 available matchpoints, your game only goes up 5.6% and you fall short of 70%.

It's a tough game, all right.

FYI Part 18
Charles Goren
Mostly from Wikipedia
by Bob Gruber

Charles Goren, the leading American bridge personality in the 1950s and 1960s, was born March 4, 1901 in Philadelphia to Russian Jewish immigrants. While earning a law degree at McGill University in Canada, a girlfriend laughed at his inept play at bridge, motivating him to immerse himself in a study of existing bridge materials. After graduation, he practiced law for 13 years in Philadelphia.

However, the growing fame of Ely Culbertson in the 1930s prompted Goren to abandon his original career to pursue bridge competitions. He soon attracted the attention of Milton Work, who hired him to help write bridge articles and columns. Work was one of many strong bridge players based in Philadelphia and by 1928 he had popularized the 4–3–2–1 point count system for evaluating balanced hands (now sometimes called the Work count).

As a player Goren's "breakthrough" was the 1937 Board-a-Match Teams championship (now called The Reisinger National Bridge Championship) which he won with three other Philadelphia players. That year he won the first of his 8 McKenney Trophies.

Goren dominated the competitive bridge circuit in the US in the 1940's and into the 1950's, ultimately becoming a world champion at the Bermuda Bowl in 1950. He became widely known as "Mr. Bridge." Goren remained a competitive player until about 1962 after which he focused on writing and teaching bridge. His longest partnership was with Helen Sobel, but he also famously partnered actor Omar Sharif.

After Work died in 1934, Goren began his own bridge writing career and published the first of his many books on playing bridge, *Winning Bridge Made Easy*, in 1936. Drawing on his experience with Work's system, Goren quickly became popular as an instructor and lecturer. He improved Work's point count, adding various distributional features. This may well have improved the bidding of intermediate players and beginners almost immediately.

His books have sold millions of copies (especially *Winning Bridge Made Easy* and *Contract Bridge Complete*); by 1958 his daily bridge column was appearing in 194 American newspapers. He also had a monthly column in *McCall's* and a weekly column in *Sports Illustrated*.

Goren's success as a player and a writer, brought a resurgence to bridge's popularity. He appeared on the Groucho Marx radio and television game show You Bet Your Life in March 1958. And then got his own television program, *Championship Bridge with Charles Goren*, which was broadcast from 1959 to 1964 on the ABC network. It featured numerous appearances by top players and segments with celebrity guests such as Chico Marx, Alfred Drake, and Forest Evashevski, among others. He also appeared on the television game show What's My Line in December 1961.

Goren died on April 3, 1991, in Encino, California, at the age of 90. While few players play "Goren" today, the point-count approach he popularized remains the foundation for most bidding systems. He was also an early supporter of the Precision bidding system.

The Puzzle Page

Bridge Jeopardy
by John Jones

Category: My Favorite Bridge Authors

And the answer is …

$100 – This Los Angeles area writer authored many bridge books including *Introduction to Defender's Play*, *Bridge For Dummies, and Bridge Humor*.

$200 – This former Dallas Ace wrote several great bridge books including *How to Read Your Opponent's Cards: The Bridge Experts' Way to Locate Missing High Cards.*

$300 – This author wrote *Bridge in the Menagerie*, featuring fictional animals who played bridge, including the Rueful Rabbit and the Hideous Hog.

$400 – This former partner of mine wrote several bridge books including his 1957 book How to Win at Duplicate Bridge, which discussed matchpoint tactics, hand evaluation, and very importantly, using low-level doubles as not for penalties.

$500 – This bridge author has written several serious books including Winning Notrump Leads. But my favorites are fictional books involving a pompous, cranky abbot: The Abbot, The Parrott and the Bermuda Bowl, The Abbot's Return to Earth, and The Abbot's Senior Moment.

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District 23 Unit Presidents

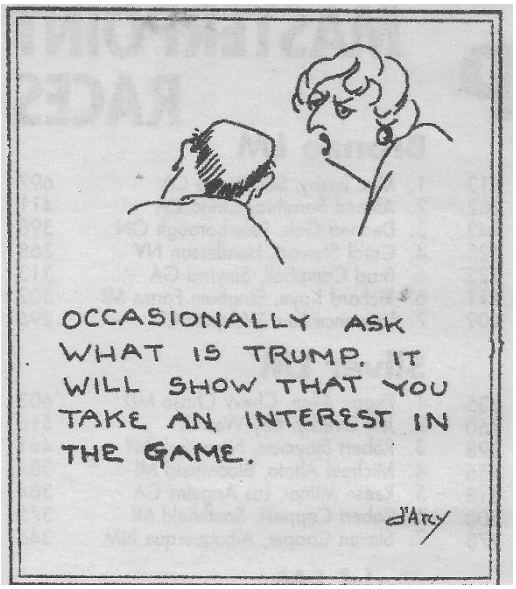
The Presidents of our nine Units in District 23 do a lot to make *your* bridge experience better. They seldom get any thanks or even recognition. To help redress that imbalance, here is a list of the current incumbent Unit Presidents:

Unit	President
551 – Pomona – Covina	Tom Lill
553 – Glendale-Verdugo	Adam Barron
556 – Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley	Paula Olivares
557 – Long Beach	Leo Dittemore
559 – Pasadena – San Gabriel	Lisa Walker
561 – San Fernando	Joan Rubin
562 – West Los Angeles	Jordan Chodorow
564 – Downey-Whittier	Kent Burrell
568 – Torrance-South Bay	Carol Decordova

* Kent has resigned, but the election to replace him has not yet been held

(Solutions to Bridge Jeopardy are on page 8. 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: October 11, 10:00 a.m., Ontario
STaC: October 7, 10, La Fetra
Club Championships: October 14, 17, La Fetra
Club Appreciation Games: October 7, 10, 21, 24
Unit Pairs Game: September 20, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
October 18, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

In the August Unit Game, Fredy and Lulu Minter took top honors with 63.85%. Next in line we find Kitty Moon – Steven Tinling, Steve Andersen – Gary Atwell, Tim and Eileen Finlay, Peter Kavounas - Richard Parker, and Gloria Harrison – Nony Bernal.

In the September Individual, Judy Mogharbel won with a 65.63% effort. Finishing second was Rosalie Roberts, followed by Peter Kavounas, Tom Cusack, Yours Truly, and Gloria Harrison and Dan Robinson.

Thanks again to Patrick Finley, for collating the masterpoint statistics for August. At La Fetra:

1	13.30	Fredy Minter
2	12.04	Lulu Minter
3	9.96	Caryn Mason
4	8.23	Patrick Finley
5	7.45	Vic Sartor
6	7.44	Gary Atwell
7	7.36	Nona Stokes
7	7.36	Ramona Hernandez
9	6.14	David Raymond
10	5.80	Steve Andersen

And at the Claremont Bridge Club:

1	2.84	Patrick Finley
2	1.70	Patrick Rogers
3	1.32	David Ochroch
4	1.30	Wendy Wanderman
4	1.30	Rose Roberts

At La Fetra, there were quite a few games over the 65% benchmark. Most of them barely cleared the bar, but hey, you don't get style points in this game. The top game was posted by Fredy and Lulu Minter: 70.31. Next was a 68.17% game by Caryn Mason – Patrick Finley, a 67.71% game by Vic Sartor and Caryn – which placed them 2nd that day! Then three by the Minters: 67.70%, 65.97%, and 65.63%. Finally we have Clint Lew – Linda Tessier at 65.42%, and Ramona Hernandez – Nona Stokes at 65.10%. A few others topped the leader board without clearing the bar: David Raymond, Helen Wang, and Mary Ann Wotring.

Over in Claremont, there were three big games: a 72.22% whopper by Patrick Finley – Patrick Rogers; 68.75% by Tom Cusack – Allen Guest; and 65.97 by Kitty Moon – Dave Ochroch.

A dozen of our members brought home an impressive 117.19 masterpoints from the Irvine Regional. The lion's share of those were pulled in by Clint Lew (33.48) and – Judy Mogharbel (21.79). Yours Truly gathered in 12.48, and Tim and Eileen Finlay rounded out the top five with 10.73 each. The best overall event performance was pulled in by a team including Clint Lew, Judy Mogharbel, Yours Truly, and a ringer from 559. In spite of my presence, we took top honors in bracket 3 of the Sunday Teams. We *almost* won our bracket on Saturday, finishing in fourth – only 4 victory points from the top. How frustrating!. One or two boards would have turned the tide. But we had some good luck on Sunday, so OK. More about that in our "hand of the week!"

Other impressive finishes were turned in by our rising star, Cici Mougharbel, who finished 4th in B in the Monday Gold Rush, and then 2nd in the charity pairs that evening. She also finished first in C in the Tuesday Open Pairs. Bring on the gold! A team including Clint, Caryn Mason, and Steve Anderson took third in the Tuesday bracketed teams (bracket 2), bumped down from 2nd by an unfortunate and somewhat doubtful

procedure penalty. Tim and Eileen Finlay took 2nd in the Tuesday-Wednesday mini-Soloway KO.

We had three promotions last month. Dan Rovinson has advanced to Regional Master. Richard Parker and Duane "Woody" Woodman are now Advanced NABC Masters. Congratulations, all!

For our hand-of-the-month, I'm going to give you the final board of my team's effort in the Sunday Teams at Irvine. You are South, no one vulnerable, and find yourself holding this impressive hand:

♠ A K x x ♥ 7 2 ♦ A K Q x x ♣ A Q

Unexpectedly, partner, the dealer, opens 2♥. Well! I hope you would have visions of sugar plums, since I did. I asked about a side feature with 2NT, and got a 3♥ response. Oh well, no ♣K. I have controls up the yin-yang outside of the trump suit, so let's not fool around with Blackwood. Let's make a final effort with 5♥, asking about trump quality. AQJxxx should give 6♥ a play, so let's go for the brass ring! Partner duly called 6♥.

The opening lead was a trump, ♥7 from the table, ♥Q by third hand, and when partner ducked, I looked around for the aspirin. Good trumps and she *ducks*?

It turned out to be a not-so-high percentage slam. Here was her hand:

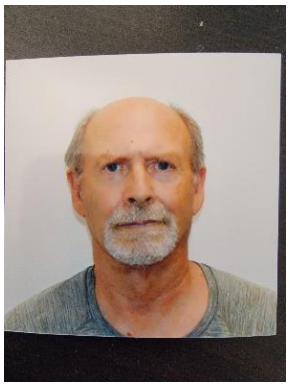
♠ 8 6 5 ♥ A J 8 6 5 4 ♦ J 9 6 3 ♣ void

Not a textbook 2♥ opening by most people over the age of 25! Partner must have hired RR's Guardian Angel, because she found her LHO with ♥KQ10 and the slam rolled home for an 11 IMP gain! Good thing that was the last board of the day!

If my calculations are correct, then the chances of that specific trump holding are (⅗ x ½ x ⅓) x (½ x 34%) (roughly). Around 1.7%! Eeek! Of course, ♥KQx (any of the three small cards) in RHO's hand will also allow the slam to come home, so it's a 5.1% contract. Well, after all the bad luck we ran into the day before, I guess maybe we got paid back a bit!

If you'd like to see how I arrived at that calculation, see after Hand 5 of the Problem Solver's Panel. I could be wrong! It does happen.

Quote for the month: "Confession is good for the soul only in the sense that a tweed coat is good for dandruff." (Peter de Vries)



Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley

by Don Dachner

The Santa Clarita Bridge Club has weekly games at the Newhall Community Center in Newhall every Friday at 10:00. It's a 24 board open game.

We also have a 12 board game every Wednesday at the same location and time which is for the beginner crowd. You can take back your bid, for example, or ask any question you want about what's happening. There are mentors at all the tables to help out.

Also, on Wednesdays at 9:30, there is a half hour lesson. This week 2♣ and 2NT openings and responses were presented.

All games are free.

Here are the August game results.

8/2	
NS Bill Langlois/Donna Davidson	68%
EW Harry Randhawa/Alan Nueman	63%
8/9	
NS David Khalieque/Alan Nueman	59%
EW Hani Abraham/May Abagi	63%
8/15	
NS John Langer/David Khalieque	60%
EW Hani Abraham/May Abagi	65%
8/22	
NS Carole Provost/George MacDonald	63%
EW Ted Maki/Beth Morrin	62%
8/29	
NS Susan Strasser/Mark Brifman	57%
EW Harry Randhawa/Alan Nueman	57%

And this is from Bill Langlois.

In this, my last Jim Linhart story, I was his partner in a matchpoint event.

Last month I noted that Jim, who did not deliberately look at opponents' cards, usually warned opponents to hold their cards back because he was very

tall. He made an exception this time because his LHO was a known cheater. Twice I served on committees involving her use of Hesitation Blackwood.*

As Jim and I passed throughout, the opponents bid their way to an invitational 3 hearts. Out of the blue Jim doubled. I only had four points, the guarded K and J of clubs, but they took two tricks. Added to the four Jim took, the contract was down two.

When Jim and I had a moment to ourselves, the following conversation occurred:

"Jim, how could you double three hearts?"

"You want 300, don't you?"

"If I don't have the KJ of clubs over declarer's AQ, we won't get 300. We might not even get a plus score."

"I know."

"How could you know I had that holding?"

"It wasn't on my left, it wasn't on my right, and I didn't have it, so you must have had it."

---

*After getting your Blackwood response, partner hesitates for some time, then signs off at five. The message is clear: only one key card is missing, but partner's slam try was thin. If you have extra values and correct to six, that's Hesitation Blackwood, quite illegal and experienced opponents will always report it.



Long Beach
by Leo Dittemore

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

Bridge is more than a game of cards—it's a test of intellect, partnership, and above all, integrity. While strategy and skill are essential, the ethical dimension of Bridge is what truly distinguishes a great player from a merely good one. In a game where communication is strictly regulated and trust is paramount, ethics form the backbone of fair play.

At its core, Bridge is a partnership game. Success depends not only on individual brilliance but also on mutual understanding and cooperation. This dynamic makes ethical behavior crucial. Players must adhere to both the letter and the spirit of the rules. Our clubs' Zero Tolerance Policy emphasizes that players should maintain a courteous attitude at all times and avoid any behavior that might create an unpleasant atmosphere. This includes refraining from gloating, criticizing a partner, or showing frustration.

One of the most delicate ethical areas in Bridge involves unauthorized information (UI) – Law #16. Because Bridge is a game of incomplete information, players must avoid giving or acting on clues outside the legal bidding and play. For example, if a player hesitates before passing, their partner is ethically bound not to draw inferences from that pause. Even if the hesitation suggests uncertainty, acting on it would be unethical. Ethical players go out of their way to avoid putting their partner in such a position and to ignore any UI they might receive.

Ethical Bridge players understand that winning at any cost is not winning at all. They value the game's honor and uphold its traditions, even when no one is watching. Unfortunately, ethics, unlike rules, may have different individual and setting standards. Hesitating could be used to transmit UI or perhaps someone is not paying attention. Exposing a card could be an accident or signaling a lead. We need to draw attention to each incident but we must to do so with kindness and respect for the people involved.

Ethics in Bridge are not just about avoiding wrongdoing, they are about actively fostering fairness, respect, and transparency. In a game where trust is everything, ethical behavior is the highest form of skill. Whether you're a novice or a seasoned expert, playing with integrity ensures that Bridge remains the noble game it was always meant to be.

Pasadena – San Gabriel
by Morris "Mojo" Jones

bridgemojo.com



Wanted: monthly columnist for Unit 559. No experience necessary!

[*Editor's Note: Yes, Mojo is seeking a replacement as Unit reporter.*]

Downey-Whittier
by Daniel F. Oakes

Sorry, nothing from Downey-Whittier this month.

San Fernando Valley
by Alan Curtis

As usual, the 750 club continues to offer upgraded master point games - only 2 in August were not! Due to scheduling conflicts including the Pasadena Sectional, we were not able to hold a UNIT game in August.....our September game will be this Sunday, September 14th for which the results will published in next month's publication.

There will be NO UNIT game in October....instead, we will be holding our 5th annual Tammy Purkin memorial game on Sunday, October 12th at 1pm. Tammy was a very popular and good player at the 750 club and her devoted husband and bridge partner Noel, will be treating us to lunch and another fun event.

As newer players are now getting interested in duplicate, we have decided to reinstitute the "Mentor Program" which was so successful at Bridge Academy II before it closed during the pandemic. More details to come!

Our August Club Championship week winners included:

Flight C - April Adams, Roz Glazer, Norma Silva, Alex Geczy, Jerry Shapiro, Ron Stewart, Jay and Toni Hansen.

Flight B - Fuad Khori, Toni Stitt, Gary Grey, Irv Klasky, Lewis Anten, Mark Gould, Gary Ansok.

Flight A - Noel Purkin, Sin O, Gil Stinebagh, Joan Rubin, Sheila Bozin, Doug Timmer, Alan Golden.

We had a few players who had some success at the Pasadena Sectional but the biggest win was by Gil Stinebaugh and Bud Bates playing with other partners in the Sunday Open Swiss and WINNING the event!

Finally we've had 3 recent 70% games:

Gil Stinebaugh and Joan Rubin; Gil Stinebaugh and Gary Grey; Jojo Sarkar and Doug Timmer

Remember to play nice, keep pace and smile!

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

$100 – Who is Eddie Kantar?

$200 – Who is Mike Lawrence?

$300 – Who is Victor Mollo?

$400 – Who is Marshall Miles?

$500 – Who is David Bird?

District 23 Rank Changes September 2025

Junior Master
Mark Beskind
Philip Bourdillon
Jennie Kim
Edward D. Mars
Mark Schaeffer
Peggy Wachtel

Club Master
Ann B. Brown
Robin Drapeau
Jason M. Howard
Tommy B. Howard
Yvonne Schimmel

Sectional Master
Maureen A. Lapoint
Caroll Maltzman
Mary T. Nafisi
Saime E. Parikh

Regional Master
Annie H. Ives
Fran Kern
Elisa Leonelli
Allan Lubitz
Daniel Robinson

Advanced NABC Master
Larry Cheung
Sarah Deschenes

Advanced NABC Master
Michael Lam
Richard E. Parker
Duane Woodman

Silver Life Master
Angela N. Peters
Jennifer Wellman

Ruby Life Master
Ramani Ravikandan
Rajath Shourie
Barry M. Speyer

Emerald Life Master
Om P. Chokriwala

Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Mark Bartusek, Jordan Chodorow, Mitch Dunitz, 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

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

* Weak Two-Bid

You, South, hold: ♠ AK4 ♥ 93 ♦ KJ87 ♣ 10952

What call do you make?

Partner has balanced in a situation where he/she might have a fairly wide range of hands. If partner has a poorly fitting minimum, ♠ QJTxx ♥ AJx ♦Qx ♣ Jxx, 2♠ might even be in trouble. But if partner has the perfect cards, ♠QJxxxx ♥AKxx ♦void ♣AQx, 6♠ might be a maker. Strain is also an issue here given that either spades or NT might be best.

Some panelists try 2NT now.

Roeder: 2NT (and hope they do not lead a heart!) While 2NT could easily be wrong, it ranks much higher than a 3♠ bid as game opposite a balancing 2♠ looks very far away. All their honors rate to be poorly placed for declarer. I admire the passers and should probably change my vote.

Bartusek: 2NT. I will give partner some slack non-vul in balancing chair (some unnamed partners need a lot of it!). These diamond honors are probably not that valuable playing in spades, and nine tricks might be easier than ten tricks. There might also be a diamond ruff out there, or the diamond king might not provide a useful pitch. I also keep the bidding low at the two level this way. We might potentially need a heart ruff though, which points towards playing in spades. We can get back to spades on some continuations.

Another panelist raises spades but goes low.

Dunitz: 3♠.

Shuster: 3♦. This is a good raise. You didn't ask if I'd try 3NT over 3♠ (it is clear over 3♥) - the answer is I would at IMPs. Hopefully partner bids in tempo to avoid constraining my plans.

Chodorow: 3♦. Bidding notrump gives value to the diamond holding that it may not have in a suit, but hearts could be wide open. Given that partner's balancing bid may be shaded, a limit raise strikes a nice balance.

The most optimistic panelist:

Wittes: 3♦. I'm a little too good to just bid 4♠. Let's see what partner bids over 3♦.

2

IMPs
N-S Vul

North	East	South	West
1♦	2♣	???	

You, South, hold: ♠ K972 ♥ Q97 ♦ J2 ♣ AJ63

What call do you make?

This hand comes from several years ago. The Caltech group frequently played bridge at Gene Smith's house near the Rose Bowl. Gene held this hand, partnering with me. Gene actually selected double at the table. I had an interesting hand and gave it to a couple of experts. They didn't find the perfect solution and asked for Gene's hand. When I showed them his hand, they both thought 2NT was completely clear with this hand.

Let's see what our panel does. Some think double is easy.

Roeder: Double. If partner rebids 2 of a red suit, I follow up with 2 NT. Buddy, you have given us harder problems.

Chodorow: Double. All continuations are easy, starting with 2NT over 2♥.

Shuster: Double. With 2NT ready if partner advances 2♥. Simple plans are often best.

Bartusek: Double. A negative double is fine here since I can rebid 2NT over partner's 2♦/2♥ call. I don't want to pass for fear it might go all pass and we miss a game. Additionally, passing in hopes of collecting a number won't get us nearly enough to compensate for a vulnerable game because my club spots are so poor. We might even end up plus 180 on some days.

Wittes: Double. I'm probably heading to 3NT, but just in case partner has four spades, let's double first.

One panelist did bid NT, but selected 3NT.

Dunitz: 3NT. What would Hamman do?

Bob Hamman's rule is that if you have a choice of bids and one of those choices is 3NT, pick 3NT! Just because Hamman is one of the greatest players in bridge history doesn't mean 3NT will make. But who am I to argue with Bob Hamman?

3

IMPs
Both Vul

East	South	West	North
2♠*	X	pass	4♥
pass	???		

* Weak Two-Bid

You, South, hold: ♠ A9 ♥ K3 ♦ AK1087 ♣ AK52

What call do you make?

This set of problems, in my estimation, is easier than some of the sets I have presented. But this problem is distinctly tough. We have over half the deck and partner jumped. Wow! What now? Could it be right to bid my diamonds? Would 4NT be Blackwood? Is 5NT Grand Slam Force or Pick a Slam? I think 5NT is Pick a Slam. In my partnerships I have the agreement that if 5NT could be Pick a Slam, then it is. Grand Slam Force (or Josephine by the inventor's name) is only for auctions where trumps are completely known without question. Let's see how the panel wrestled with this one.

Chodorow: 4♠. A bidding panel copout for the hardest problem of the set, guaranteeing the spade control partner might doubt after a more honest bid.

Wittes: 4♠. We're very likely to have a slam, maybe even a grand, but where is the question. If partner has a long semi-solid heart suit, it's probably in hearts. With shorter hearts, we may belong in a minor. Over 5 of a minor, I'll bid 5♠. Over 5♥, I'll still bid 5♠, still looking for a grand.

Shuster: 5♦. Too much hand to pass but not enough fit to commit to slam. We can even still get to clubs if partner tries 5NT.

Dunitz: 5NT, choice of slams. This shouldn't be grand slam force. If I was solely interested in hearts, I could bring out the old wood.

Roeder: 5NT. Pick, Partner! This hand exhibits why Grand Slam Force auctions have mostly gone the way of hula hoops (*now wait a minute, every high school gym class has hula hoops, and Alvin the Chipmunk sings about hula hoops every Christmas!)* and bell bottom pants. 5NT usually has more utility as a 6 level "pick a slam".

For the "old fashioned" Grand Slam Force to apply here, you would need to start with a 4♠ cuebid before trotting out 5 No Trump. *I agree!*

Bartusek: 5NT. Pick a slam. We should have good play for a minor suit slam if partner can bid a second suit. Otherwise, I hope partner has good hearts. Note that 4NT should be RKC here, so 5NT can't be Grand Slam Force. I see that the K&R hand evaluator tool gives a value of 24.45 for this hand.

4

Matchpoints
E-W Vul

South	West	North	East
1♣	1♠	pass	2♠
3♣	pass	pass	3♠
???			

You, South, hold: ♠ void ♥ AKQ ♦ K108 ♣ QJ109852

What call do you make?

Partner doesn't have too much, but they might have a little. It might all be in spades, or maybe in diamonds. If it's in spades, we want to defend. But if partner has diamond cards, clubs could play nicely. If partner has a poor hand with long hearts is 4♥ a possibility?

Bartusek: 4♣. I don't have enough defense to make a takeout double. Admittedly partner might have a nice penalty double of 3♠. If we can't make 4♣, then it will probably be a good sacrifice against 3♠ at matchpoints.

Shuster: Pass. I should have bid 4♣ last time, but having not done that, I should continue the path I laid out before myself and leave it to partner who could well have spades stacked.

Chodorow: Double. This sequence has timed out well so as not to overpromise, with 3♣ last round capping its strength.

Dunitz: Double.

Roeder: Double. Only at matchpoints. It looks like you have enough ammo for 3♣ to be a likely make. To protect the value of your plus score, playing for a potential 200 seems like the solution to this risk/reward proposition. Put another way, minus 140 already puts you at average minus on the board so the risk in a razor-thin double is lessened.

Wittes: Double. If partner has five of either red suit with a stiff or void club, we probably belong in partner's suit. With a doubleton club and only four of a red suit, I expect partner to return to 4♣. If partner has four spades with at least two honors, passing 3♠X might be right.

I'm with the doublers here.

5

Matchpoints
None Vul.

South	West	North	East
1♦	2♠*	3♦	3S

* Preemptive jump overcall

You, South, hold: ♠ A ♥ AQ9 ♦ AK1076 ♣ 10952

What call do you make?

Curse the opponents for preempting our auction. Remind me to preempt them when a get a chance!

Following Hamman's advice (yep, that's the same Bob Hamman who was advising Mitch on problem 2 – the guy gets around!)

Chodorow: 3NT. Hamman's Rule. *This works quite well if partner has the ♦Q, the ♥K and little else and might be my choice.*

Dunitz: 4♣. Is this hand worth forcing to game? Very close. If there is a heart finesse, it rates to be onside. But we could have three club losers. I'll start with 4♣.

Roeder: 5♦. 4♠ is tempting if partner has a hand like ♠xxx ♥Kxx ♦Qxxxx ♣Ax. While that perfecto is possible, there are all the other hands. But if you are desperate for a board, 4♠ is appropriate.

Wittes: 5♦. I'm not quite good enough to try for a slam over a mere 3♦ by partner, but game is very likely to make.

Now for the slam tries, they also could be right.

Shuster: 4♠. Might as well set up a force and try for slam. 3♦ has a pretty wide range here, so slam is in the picture.

Bartusek: 4♠. I think one try for slam is indicated. I will sign off in 5♦ after partner bids 5♣. I fear bidding 4♣ as a second suit doesn't seem very descriptive, and it doesn't send the message that slam is possible (making follow-up continuations difficult).

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Explanation of the odds on that *awful* slam from the Unit 551 "Hand of the Month"

First, you need trumps to be 3-2. That's about 34%. You also need the three card holding to be on your right, a 50% shot (½). Those three cards must include KQ. Let's look at just KQ10 for now. In the three card holding, one of the cards must be the K, Q, or 10 – that's 3 choices out of 5 (⅗). The next card must be one of the remaining two honors, or 2 out of 4 (½). The last card must be the remaining honor, one chance in three (⅓). So you get this result: (⅗ x ½ x ⅓) x (½ x 34)% = 1.7%. Since the 10 can be replaced by either of the other two missing spot cards, you can triple the odds to 5.1%. Lovely! If I've gone wrong somewhere, I'd love to hear about it. No, really.