

Southern California

Bridge News

Volume 62, #9

October 2025

Published by ALACBU

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. I am delighted that two students from UCLA reached out to me

recently, and I was happy to help them pursue their goal of organizing a sanctioned bridge club on campus.

One of the other perks of being District President is the opportunity to nominate two individuals each year to the Aileen Osofsky ACBL Goodwill Committee. Membership on the Committee is a lifetime appointment, and recognizes those who embody virtues I would describe as welcoming, courtesy, mentorship, equanimity and grace under fire at the bridge table. The Committee itself works to create goodwill for ACBL, particularly in the areas of conduct and ethics and bridge for juniors and the handicapped.

I will tell you about one of my two nominees this month and the second next month. D23 Treasurer Stan Holzberg is in his fourth term in this position but has also previously served as District President. He has also served as both President and Treasurer of his Unit, and as a longtime Unit representative to the District Board. You simply cannot help but smile back when you see Stan's warm smile. He has served his Unit and our District selflessly for decades, and richly deserves appointment to the ACBL Goodwill Committee. Stan, thank you for all you do!

The local sectional held at Beverly Hills Bridge Club September 20 and 21 was a smashing success! Reservations were sold out well in advance, and I and everyone else who played reported smooth games, competent directing, several appetizing restaurant

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Regional Director's Report

by David Lodge



The ACBL Board of Directors (BOD) is always discussing ways to improve our organization. Many of the ideas provoked by these discussions have potential positive impacts and undoubtedly, some unintended consequences. So, an experiment will be taking place in about 3 years to try out one of these ideas. In the fall of 2028 and again in the spring of 2029, the NABC will have no non-nationally rated events. In other words, there will be no regionally rated events, no gold rush or no new-comer events. I am bringing this up now to emphasize what I talked about a few months ago regarding the site selection process for upcoming NABC's. With this new concept, we will obviously need less ballroom space. Our current criteria in our request for proposals issued by our consultant, Conference Direct, require 100,000 square feet of ballroom space. The RFP issued for these dates has essentially cut this requirement in half. This opened many additional cities and hotels which can meet this requirement. In a recent informal meeting, a non-binding straw poll of the 10 BOD members in attendance unanimously voted to have the fall of 2028 in Austin. Our first NABC after the pause caused by COVID was in Austin, and the reviews were terrific. As

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options within close proximity, lots of friendly faces, and of course ample covered parking. Kudos to the BHBC board and in particular Maria Pendergast for putting on a great event. And congrats to my friend Gary Moore for walking away with the most masterpoints.

Don't forget to make your plans to attend the Long Beach sectional, November 15 and 16 at the Long Beach Bridge Center.

As for our District's 2026 regional, we received information that proved to be premature: namely, that FIFA had released our desired dates at the Long Beach Hilton and would not need them for the World Cup. As of this writing, they have not in fact released our dates, so our Tournament Committee has been diligently pursuing viable alternatives. The Board hopes to reach a decision at our November meeting, so stay tuned to this space for further details.

Finally, I wanted to mention an expert play by one of my students during an in-home lesson this week. She was on defense to a major suit contract and held QT83 of clubs with 965 in dummy. Advanced big room players will recognize the need to lead the ♣T as a "surrounding play," but this was not a concept I had taught her. Still, Marilyn Gelfand saw that the ♣3 wouldn't be good enough and the ♣Q would be too much, and fired the ♣T through like a pro. ♣ Great thinking, Marilyn!

DIRECTOR continued from page 1

another example of newer opportunities, we're considering Baltimore's Inner Harbor area for Spring 2029. The last time we were there was in 1987.

The following is not an issue of importance to most members. I'm bringing it up because I think a great opportunity to volunteer is indicated. We now have a program called "5/5/5". This refers to the percentage of dues paid by members of a unit which will get returned to the unit under certain circumstances. Prior to "5/5/5" 11% of all dues collected from members of a unit went back to the unit. The intent was to incentivize the unit to use the funds for marketing and growth purposes. In reality, most units just put the \$ into their general fund and made no unusual effort to obtain new members. Under the new program, the first 5% is guaranteed. The unit does not have to do anything to get this portion. However, if the unit partakes in certain other prescribed activities, it can earn as much

as an additional 10%, bringing the total to 15%. A primary activity we're asking units to undertake is actively reaching out to lapsed members. And what we've found is that emails, which is what most units are using to fulfill this step, just aren't effective. We've determined that the only way to have some measure of success in reactivating lapsed members is by personal contact. So, we're now requiring units to undertake a telephone campaign. This is where the opportunity for volunteering comes in. And you'll be supported by ACBL headquarters. We're using 4 of our existing staff and repurposing some of their time to get on the phone just as we're asking you to do. Just making the calls will get your unit its 2½% of your total dues attributable to this segment of the program.

This is crunch time for the financial staff at HQ. They are preparing a draft of the 2026 budget, which I, as head of the Finance Committee of the BOD, expect to receive next week. It will be refined, if necessary, and presented to the full BOD at our meeting at the fall NABC in San Francisco. I should be able to report on the budget in my next article, which will be my last. As another fellow board member who elected not to run for another term, it's time for us to quietly fade away.

Ventura is just around the corner. Another great Southern California tournament. You'll be sorry if you miss it.

FYI Part 19

The ACBL Website

by Bob Gruber



No series on bridge information would be complete without at least touching on the ACBL website, www.acbl.org. It's a good source of information on bridge, with a focus on current national events/issues, but with lessons and history.

The site does not require a password to access the general material. It does, however, require logging in to access your personal data. Logging in requires you to have an ACBL #. Note that the ACBL site makes updates periodically and some information here may be (slightly) out of date.

Registering for MyACBL

- Go to www.acbl.org
- Click on the **MyACBL** tab at the top of the window, about 2/3 of the way across
- Click on:
- Follow the instructions to join and establish your MyACBL Password

[Login](#)

[Not already a member?](#)

[JOIN NOW!](#)

Member No.
 1234567

Password

[Forgot Password?](#)

[SUBMIT](#)

First time users click on

[JOIN NOW!](#)

Clicking the eye toggles between showing and hiding your Password

Eligibility for Point Limited Games

Once you've created an ACBL account for website access to your personal ACBL records, getting your current masterpoints is quite easy. Log into MyACBL on the ACBL website. On the screen that comes up look at the 2nd column from the left. In that column, there's an identification block and then several groupings of data. The 2nd group has masterpoint totals. The one you want is Entry/Stratification points.

Setting Your Notification Preferences After You've Registered

- Go to www.acbl.org
- Click on the **MyACBL** tab near the top of the window, about 2/3 of the way across
- Enter your 7-character ACBL Member Number
- Enter your MyACBL Password
- Click on **SUBMIT**
- Click on Privacy Settings (located under “Membership” when you expand it)
 - If desired, set Privacy Settings to your preference for General Email Communication and for Cell Phone Text Communication
- Click on [Click here for Live for Clubs notification preferences](#)

MYACBL

Privacy Settings

Membership

- Member Information
- Renew Membership
- Paperless Billing
- Privacy Settings**
- Request Missing Bulletin
- Privacy Policy
- Financial Reports
- Member Benefits
- Membership Card
- New Member Forms (Recruiters only)

Bridge Bulletin

Masterpoint® History

Masterpoints®

Ribbon Qualification

District / Unit Races

My Profile

Manage My Privacy and Communication Settings

The ACBL wants you to enjoy all that your membership has to offer. Part of that is receiving communications about your achievements, membership updates and more. If you don't want to experience these benefits, you have the option to unsubscribe or not share. Members may reverse these settings at any time. Please select your preferences below.

General Email Communication ☒ Subscribe ☐ Unsubscribe

Receive tournament results, tournament announcements, rank change updates, member news and updates, billing notices, surveys, NABC Daily Bulletins (if attending the NABC), and ACBL Partnership Desk notices (participants only)

Cell Phone Text Communication ☐ Subscribe ☒ Unsubscribe

Receive tournament results and ACBL Partnership Desk notices (participants only)

* The ACBL is not responsible for any charges to your cellular service bill.

[Click here for Live for Clubs notification preferences](#)

Confidentiality

Email ☒ Share ☐ Do not share

Phone Number ☒ Share ☐ Do not share

Street Address ☒ Share ☐ Do not share

For bridge-related purposes, your contact information (street address, phone number, email) is shared with ACBL-affiliated groups including clubs, units and districts. You can adjust your privacy settings so that this information is kept confidential and not shared with other entities.

The screen below comes up.

Manage My Live for Club Notifications

Player Notifications

Player Score Emails ☒ On ☐ Off

Sends an email when scores for a club game that you played in are posted.

Email to Receive Notifications: [Click below to Confirm.](#)

If needed, enter the
Email to Receive Notifications:
then click on **Subscribed**.

[Need to change your Email?](#)

When your preference is fully set, click on **Subscribed**.

Website Symbols/Buttons and their Action



Go To the
Home Page



Open
the Menu



Expand
the List



Contract
the List

FYI Part 18

Through the Mists of Time

by Bob Gruber

In days of yore, technologically speaking, sanctioned, duplicate bridge was a primitive game. Pretty much everything was done manually. Quieting devices (bidding boxes), labor saving devices (computers), accuracy-improving devices (Bridgemates) were not employed. Not even low-tech devices, much less high-tech devices. If we peer through the mists of time, this is what we'd see at the Bridge Week Regional Tournament in Los Angeles around the 4th of July in the 50's, 60's and maybe the 70's.

For many years the tournament was held at the Ambassador Hotel. On Saturdays I believe it was, many players dressed in tuxedos and evening gowns. (In those days, only men wore tuxedos, only women wore evening gowns, not that there was anything wrong with that.) At some point the tournament switched to the Pasadena Convention Center.

It seemed that the tournament occupied the entirety of the Center, which was huge. The main room had tens of sections, which were abuzz with chatter because the low-tech bidding box, invented in Sweden in 1962, was slow to be accepted in the U.S. And yes, I may be mistaking the cigarette smoke filling the room for the mists of time. In any case, the room was also filled with small people, most the children of the players, scurrying about collecting small slips of pasteboard called pick-up slips. At each table, North filled in these slips with the contract, number of tricks made, and score for each board in the round.

But before the game could be started, the boards had to be made by hand—at each table! And made so that all tables in all sections played the same hands. To enable this duplication, many sets of hand records had been printed in a large font, two (2) hands to a page for all 36 boards comprising a set of boards. (A sample from a 2014 STaC is on the next page.)

Many directors had entire sets of these half-page hand records and they went around, section by section, putting down just the records for the boards that were on the table. Making the boards in this fashion delayed the game by 20 minutes, sometimes more. When done, since the players had seen these hands, there had to be a pre-game movement of either the players or the boards to ensure the players did not “meet” these boards during the game.

At the end of each round, the small people, better known as caddies, collected the filled-in slips and took them to another room, where a cadre of directors were seated like medieval monks making copies of the bible. But in their case, they sat in front of 11 x 17-inch sheets of paper, or maybe bigger. Below the general header on each sheet was a matrix (today we'd call it a spreadsheet) with about 27 rows and about 39 columns. The rows were for the pairs in the section, the first row being a header row. The columns included a column for the pair's names, a column for Rank, a column for Total Points and 36 columns for the match points on boards 1 through 36.

At the end of the game, the directors had to manually calculate the matchpoints each pair earned on each board. (ACBLScore was introduced in the early 1990s.) They also had to total all the matchpoints for each pair. Although the handheld calculator was introduced in the U.S. in the 1970s, early models that did only basic arithmetic sold for about \$250, which was a tidy sum in the early 1970s. That meant manual calculations remained the norm. But the mathematical drudgery didn't end there.

To avoid a flurry of corrections and a horde of unhappy players, a check and a cross check had to be done on each direction in each section. The matchpoints for each pair had been calculated and totaled for the game. These could be added and compared to what the grand total matchpoints should be. Total matchpoints would be a whole number, not a fractional amount. If the numbers matched, great. But if they didn't match, the director had to find the discrepancy.

Imagine the frustration if you were off by $\frac{1}{2}$ matchpoint. Further imagine trying to find that $\frac{1}{2}$ matchpoint error. What the director did was total the scores on each board, which should also be a whole number. If one of those boards added to x.5 matchpoints, that was where to look.

These manual calculations resulted in a considerable delay before the rankings and matchpoints could be posted. And some sections were slower than others to post. It could be quite a wait, say 20 or more minutes for the very last section to be posted. The 20-minute delay at the beginning and about 20-minute delay at the end made for a 3-hour and 55-minute game. With a game that long, there were no breaks! And did I mention game times were 1 P.M. and 8 P.M. So, 8 P.M. plus nearly 4 hours made it nearly midnight before you could get your standing/rank and matchpoints!

And yet many, many pairs stayed. Why? Well, there was no internet where that information could be posted and accessed later. If you wanted it quickly, you had to stay and manually copy the information to your private score sheet.

Me, I became a director in 2008. Today, my world includes smoke-free rooms, bidding boxes, computer scoring, Bridgemates, dealing machines, and websites. What a wonderful world it can be!

Wednesday Morning
December 10, 2014



1

♠ K 10 4
♥ K 2
♦ Q 10 6 5 4
♣ J 3 2

1

♠ A 9 8 2
♥ 7
♦ 3 2
♣ A K Q 9 7 6

W N E
S

♠ 7 3
♥ A Q J 9
♦ K J 9 8 7
♣ 10 8

9
13 11
7

♠ Q J 6 5
♥ 10 8 6 5 4 3
♦ A
♣ 5 4

1

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Printed using BridgeComposer (<http://bridgecomposer.com>)

Saturday Pairs

10:00 a.m. & 2:30 p.m.

\$14 card fees / session per person

Stratifications

NLM*

* 0 - 50

* 51 - 200

* 201 - 499

Open*

* 0 - 1500

* 1501 - 3000

* 3001+

*Stratification may be adjusted
based on attendance.

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Partnership Desk

Melinda Wilson
melindawilsonlaw@gmail.com
424-477-8744

ACBL Director



**AMERICAN CONTRACT
BRIDGE LEAGUE**

Sanction # 2511344

Email Reservations Required - 34 Table Limit
LongBeachSectional@gmail.com
November 15 & 16, 2025

LONG BEACH

**Sunday
Swiss Teams**

10:00 a.m. with a
lunch break

Must participate in both sessions -
\$28 card fees per person

Tournament Chair

Lillian Slater lilliands@gmail.com 714-287-3184

Long Beach Bridge Center

4782 E. Pacific Coast Highway
(Above and behind Big 5, enter in the rear)

The Puzzle Page

Bridge Jeopardy
by John Jones

Category: When 4NT Isn't Natural

And the answer is ...

- \$100 – 4NT asks for aces or keycards.
- \$200 – 2NT shows 5 or more cards in the lowest unbid suits.
- \$300 – 5NT asks partner to select the winning contract.
- \$400 – 2NT after an opponent interferes after partner opens 1NT asks partner to puppet to 3♣.
- \$500 – 5 NT asks partner to bid 7 of our suit holding 2 of the top three trump honors.

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. Jordon Chodorow
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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.

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:

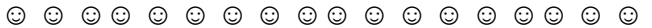
Unit	President
551 – Pomona – Covina	Eileen Finlay
553 – Glendale-Verdugo	Adam Barron
556 – Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley	Paula Olivares
557 – Long Beach	Leo Dittimore
559 – Pasadena – San Gabriel	Lisa Walker
561 – San Fernando	Joan Rubin
562 – West Los Angeles	Jordan Chodorow
564 – Downey-Whittier	Kent 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 12. No peeking!)



Submitted by Tom Lill



Around the Units in District 23



Pomona – Covina
by Tom Lill
www.acblunit551.org

La Fetra Games: Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:45
Individual: November 15, 10:00 a.m., Upland
Club Championships: November 11, 14, La Fetra
Unit Pairs Game: November 22, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
 October 18, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
Unit Team Game: October 25, 10:00 a.m., Ontario
 (Two Sessions, lunch provided)
Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

In the September Unit Game, lightning struck, the Earth trembled, strong men wept, stout-hearted women fainted. That's right: Yours Truly and Judy Mogharbel took the top spot with 59.32%. Well, as I say, even a blind squirrel finds an acorn in the woods, now and then. In second place were Peter Kavounas – Richard Parker, followed by Kitty Moon – Vic Sartor, and finally Serena Mougharbel – Tommy Howard.

In the October Individual, Judy Mogharbel won *again* with a 60.42% game. Finishing second was Dan Robinson, Ramona Hernandez, and then a FOUR-way tie: Serena Mougharbel, Steve Andersen, Dave Ochroch, and Kitty Moon.

Speaking of the Individual, with the October game we wrapped up our annual championship series. There were only 10 games held this year, so it only took 5 games to qualify, rather than the usual six. Here are the results:

1	Judy Mogharbel	61.9%
2	Peter Kavounas	56.2%
3	Kitty Moon	54.6%
4	Clint Lew	54.4%
5	Rose Roberts	54.0%

The percentages are calculated by taking each player's best 5 games, adding up the total matchpoints earned, and dividing by the total possible number of matchpoints. Yes, strange!

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

1	11.58	Patrick Finley
2	10.88	Caryn Mason
3	9.48	Tom Lill
4	8.85	Judy Mogharbel
5	8.64	Vic Sartor
6	8.23	Lulu Minter
7	6.64	Fredy Minter
8	5.80	Steve Mancini
9	7.36	Nona Stokes
9	7.36	Ramona Hernandez

And at the Claremont Bridge Club:

1	2.00	Patrick Finley
2	1.65	Steve Andersen
3	1.47	David Ochroch
4	1.15	Tom Lill
5	1.05	Patrick Rogers

Patrick Finley wishes that it be noted: Steve Andersen graciously gave up his seat one day when Patrick's partner failed at the last minute, enabling him to play. So the 1-2 finishers could have been rather reversed!

At La Fetra, there were six games over the 65% benchmark. Two were by Caryn Mason – Patrick Finley, a monstrous 72.92%, and a still-impressive 68.29%. Sandwiched in between those two were a 71.33% monster by Fredy and Lulu Minter, and a 65.60% game turned in by Judy Mogharbel – Yours Truly, and only good for second place! Finally, Yours Truly and Karn McCarthy posted a 65.89%-er, this time good enough for a win., and a 65.74% game by Caryn Mason – Vic Sartor. Other winners not topping that magic 65%: Steve Mancini, Ramona Hernandez, Nona Stokes, and Helen Wang.

Over in Claremont, there was only one big game: 65.63% by Duane Woodman and Gary Atwell. Other winners were Patrick Finley – Patrick Rogers, Kitty Moon – Dave Ochroch, and Steve Andersen – Yours Truly. Four games in September, four different winning pairs.

In tournament action, there were two sectionals in September. At Beverly Hills, Serena Mougharbel's

team finished 2nd in the Sunday 499-er Swiss. Clint Lew and Caryn Mason brought home a fractional point, no doubt winning a few matches in the Swiss but not placing overall. Over in Riverside, Tim and Eileen Finlay finished 5th in the Friday open pairs, while on Saturday Judy Mogharbel and Yours Truly took 4th in B of the open pairs.

We had one promotion last month. Eileen Finlay has reached Bronze Life Master status. And I owe Dan Robinson an apology: I misspelled his name as “Rovinson,” surely an unlikely name!

For our hand-of-the-month, I have a hand that showed up in one of our Individual games. You might have seen it before, since I did send it to John Jones for his PSP. But it was *such* a fun hand, I’m going to give it you again.

North deals, no one is vulnerable. After two passes, you gaze at this collection:

♠ Q ♥ J ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ A K J 9 8 7 6 5

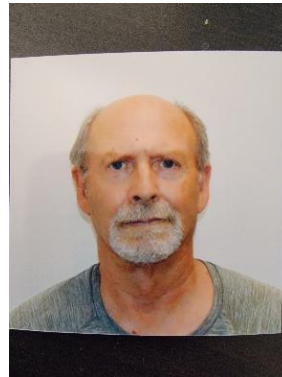
Zowie! Do you open 1♣ or 3♣? If clubs behave reasonably (but why should they?), you have 8 running tricks. If partner can come up with something, 3NT (or perhaps 5♣, even) could be there. OK, I decided to open 1♣. LHO tossed in a 1♥ overcall (don’t those opponents *ever* shut up?), and partner came in with 1NT. Nasty old RHO chimed in with 2♠. Now what? Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead! I pulled out the 3NT card and hoped partner could control hearts. She could, and 3NT rolled home. But the contract is *not* cold! It takes a double-dummy CLUB lead to beat it, because here’s the whole hand:

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

So! Partner has spades, hearts, and diamonds under control, all right, so on a lead of one of those suits, declarer is in with a chance. But a double-dummy *club*

lead will cut declarer off from dummy. When she runs 8 clubs tricks, it will squeeze her hand unmercifully. Who is going to find *that* lead? Without peeking?

Quote for the month: “A government big enough to give you everything you want, is strong enough to take everything you have.” (Thomas Jefferson)



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, and it’s free.

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 about what’s happening. There are mentors at all the tables to help out. We usually have 4 or 5 tables, and it’s free.

Also, on Wednesdays at 9:30, there is a half hour lesson covering various introductory topics usually attended by 10 people or so.

Congratulations! To:
Barry Parikh – New Sectional Master

And
David Khalieque – New Advanced NABC Master

September Friday game results.

September 5 th			
NS	Donna Davidson/Bill Langlois		62%
EW	Roy and Jan Ladd		60%
September 12 th			
NS	Beth Morrin/Ruth Baker		67%
EW	David Khalieque/Harry Randhawa		67%
September 19 th			
NS	Beth Morrin/Ruth Baker		66%
EW	Alan Nueman/Harry Randhawa		65%

September 26th

NS	Donna Davidson/Bill Langlois	60%
EW	David Khaliq/Ted Maki	65%

FIVE USEFUL WORDS

by Bill Langlois

In fourth seat, you hold Qxx= AKxx= QJx=Qxx. To your surprise, LHO opens 1NT, raised to three by RHO. Partner is obviously broke. Instead of leading a heart from his entryless five small, he makes a “top of nothing” spade lead trying to help you. The opponents’ hearts are 2-2.

Do you point out that you could have taken the first five tricks instead of the last three? Spare me.

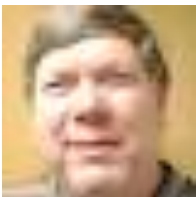
Say nothing? Better, but could come across as passive-aggressive, and partner needs a verbal hug.

Five short words tell partner you’re on his side: “It could have been right.”

Although not for use after a revoke or some other blunder, these words have application when partner has a judgement decision go wrong. For example:

Partner bids three spades over LHO’s three heart preempt, gets doubled, and catches you with a 4-4-4-1 yarborough. Your singleton of course is the deuce of spades. Bad board here, but “It could have been right.”

Coming soon: Bernard Seal will reveal what it’s been like playing ACOL in England these past few months.



Long Beach by Leo Dittmore

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

The Long Beach Bridge Center is getting ready to conduct its annual Halloween costume party, lunch, and bridge game. Prizes will be awarded for best costumes. This year’s event will be Friday, October 31, with lunch at noon and a unit rated championship game at 12:30. We expect at least two sections - one open and

one Non-Life Master limited. Make your reservation at www.LongBeachBridge.com.

We are also preparing for our Sectional Tournament November 15 and 16. Saturday, Nov. 15 will be two sessions of pairs. Sunday, Nov. 16 will be Swiss Teams. Games will begin both days at 10:00. Snacks and coffee will be provided. Seating is limited, and pre-registration is required by sending players' names and ACBL numbers to LongBeachSectional@gmail.com. More details at <https://web2.acbl.org/Tournaments/Ads/2025/11/2511344.pdf>.

LeoDittmore@gmail.com

310-863-1156

@LeoDaDiDit.Bsky.social

Downey-Whittier by Daniel F. Oakes

Sorry, nothing from Downey-Whittier this month.

San Fernando Valley by Alan Curtis

Congratulations to Om Chokriwala for becoming an Emerald Life Master during September - one of the super nice guys in bridge!

Our September 14th “End of Summer” UNIT game drew 10 tables with Marty Hurwitz and Dwight Hunt taking top North/South honors while Ellen Anten and Craig Kavin won the East/West battle...a great time was had by all!

Due to the upcoming Ventura Regional, the 750 club WILL be closed during the entire week of October 27th.....enjoy this great tournament!!!!!!

Our UNIT will be starting Easybridge beginning Saturday, January 17th at 9:30 am. The classes will be held at the 750 Bridge Club in Woodland Hills (20855 Ventura Blvd) and are designed for brand new players; players coming back to the game or players transitioning from party bridge to duplicate bridge. The classes will be taught by Jay and Toni Hansen and we thank them so very much for taking on this endeavor! Players can register by emailing

ACBLUNIT561@gmail.com or by calling Jay @ 805
501-9048!

Happy Autum!

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

\$100 – What is Blackwood or Keycard Blackwood or 1430 or 3014?

\$200 – What is Unusual NT?

\$300 – What is Pick a Slam?

\$400 – What is Lebensohl?

\$500 – What is Grand Slam Force or Josephine?

District 23 Rank Changes October 2025

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Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Wafik Abdou, Mark Bartusek, Kitty Cooper, Ellis Feigenbaum, Lynne Feldman, 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
N-S Vul

North	East	South	West
pass	pass	1♦	pass
1NT	pass	???	

You, South, hold: ♠ A94 ♥ AK10 ♦ K98632 ♣ Q

What call do you make?

Several panelists (two of them strenuously) noted that I had missed the possibility of opening 1NT.

I'll start with those who thought opening 1NT was clear:

Shuster: (abstain) Pass. I try not to abstain on these, but I can't imagine not opening 1NT. I guess now that I've done this, I need to pass and hope it's right. I'd try 3♦ at IMPs, but I can't go for a lower-scoring partial here.

Bartusek: (abstain) 3♦. I object to the 1♦ opening. Why does one torture oneself by not opening 1NT? I surely have no good rebid after partner responds 1♥, 1♠, or 1NT? Since the moderator dislikes people abstaining, I very reluctantly bid 3♦ (2NT is my second choice and an overbid), and I pray that partner isn't 3=3=1=6 or 3=3=0=7 in a bad hand. I can't bid a very conservative 2♦ for fear of missing a vulnerable game. The K&R hand evaluator tool gives 17.15 for the hand, while DK gives it 16+.

A couple of others were less vociferous, but still noted that a 1NT opening might be better (and avoids the intended problem).

Roeder: 2NT. Tough problem! Pass could easily be the winning call due to the lack of texture in the diamond suit. Difficult to see how a diamond rebid is a winner in matchpoints. The kinky people in West

Hollywood (perhaps a redundancy?) would have opened 1NT to prevent this type of problem. Who says that the rest of us cannot learn from West Hollywood?

Feigenbaum: 3♦. I might seriously have considered opening this hand 1NT, but once I did not there is no way to describe a soft 16 count without underbidding. I may have overbid here but will take my chances.

And for the rest.

Feldman: 3♦. This isn't perfect, but is the least of evils.

Cooper: 2NT. This hand is too good for 2♦ and not the right suit for 3♦.

Wittes: 2NT. I have the values for this bid, though not necessarily an immediate source of tricks. Partner doesn't have a major and rates to have some club length and maybe a diamond fit of some sort.

Michelin: 2♦. I have the values to jump to 3♦; however, my suit is lousy. My queen of clubs will be a fitting card. My partner might only have a six count so even though I have great controls I would need a lot of help from partner to make 3NT. Partner didn't bid inverted or even a simple diamond raise or 2NT. I am going to underbid 2♦. If partner has a maximum for their bid they will raise and game will be probable.

Our final panelist found a creative reverse that I like.

Abdou: 2♥. My diamonds are not good enough for the value bid of 3♦, so I bid where I live feeling the need to make a positive move. 2♦ is my second choice. 2♥ should be invitational or better on this sequence.

This was an actual hand from the recent Reno regional. Susan Sneed, my friend from Arizona, held this hand. She opened 1♦ and passed my INT response. I held ♠KT3 ♥432 ♦Q42 ♣A943, so any of the invitational responses, and maybe even 2♦ rebid will get us to game. In the play of INT, my opponent led a spade which cost the defense a trick. Rule of Restricted Choice nicely guessed the stiff jack of diamonds in the opening leader's hand. That yielded 11 tricks. When the opponents (both experts) had a signaling misunderstanding to allow the heart-club squeeze to operate, I had 12 tricks. Do you like your expected matchpoint score of +240? We got a dead average, losing to all the game bidders, but beating all the part scores.

2

Matchpoints
Both Vul

South	West	North	East
pass	1♦	1♥	pass
???			
You, South, hold: ♠ K983 ♥ K6 ♦ K5 ♣ Q6542			

What call do you make?

This was another real hand. It occurred in an online BBO game while I was playing with my friend Selby Winkler. If you ask enough people what they might do, you might get everything from: Pass, 1♠, 1NT, 2♣, 2♦, 2♥, and 2NT.

Is 1♠ theoretically forcing by a passed hand?

Bartusek: 1NT. I understand how 1♠ might find a 4-4 fit, but 1♠ promises a 5-card suit in my world (except in extraordinary situations). 1NT is an accurate description of the HCPs in my balanced hand containing a diamond stopper. Note that there was no diamond raise by RHO, which suggests that partner might have some diamond length.

Feldman: 1♠. I wish I wasn't a passed hand as this would then be forcing for a round; second choice is 2NT.

Feigenbaum: 1♠. I can always get to 2♥, 2NT, or 3NT later, but bidding that club suit at the 2-level, yuck! And describing my 11 HCP and a single diamond stopper with 2NT bid is a bit more yuck! *Sorry Ellis, but most good bridge problems fall into one of two categories: hands with a choice of good bids, or hands with only yucky bids. This is a yucky options only problem.*

Most of the panel considered the matchpoint scoring and tried some number of NT. They generally felt that 1NT wasn't enough, but 2NT might be too much.

Shuster: 1NT. Bidding spades on a 4-card suit is possible, but should be avoided if there is a good alternative.

Cooper: 1NT. NT is where the matchpoints are. I'm a little heavy for a 1NT advance, but 2NT could get us too high.

Abdou: 1NT. It is important to right side the hand and give partner room if he has a second bid coming.

Wittes: 1NT. Perhaps a little on the heavy side, but my Kx of diamonds doesn't seem very appealing, though it is better with the lead coming up to me rather than going through me.

Michelin: 2NT. I would have opened this hand. Partner did not make a takeout double. Now I have to choose bidding 2♣ on a lousy suit, 1♠ to see where this goes, or underbid with 1NT, or overbid 2NT to show my values. I guess 2NT; partner will want a double stopper, but bad luck.

Roeder: 2♥. I've got to do something, so least of evils it is. *2♥ is the bid Marshall Miles (the former moderator of this column) would have selected.*

On the actual deal, I held ♠AQ ♥AQJ84 ♦762 ♣K83. Both 3NT (from partner's side), and 4♥ have good chances, 5♣ has some play, and even the 4-2 spade fit could make on a miracle (you might need the Rueful Rabbit's guardian angel). But little goes well on the hand. The ♦A is predicably off, the ♣A is not short, and the hearts divide 5 – 1. 27 HCP and all games fail. Selby selected pass, so I made three against a soft defense for a 62%.

3 Matchpoints None Vul		North	East	South	West
		Pass	pass	1♦	1NT*
		pass	pass	???	
	* 15-18				
		You, South, hold: ♠ AKQ3 ♥ A2 ♦ K8754 ♣ Q4			
		What call do you make?			

Shuster: Pass. All white is awkward, but nothing fits.

Feigenbaum: Pass. I'm not even sure that it's close. Assuming partner has the right 6 HCP for us to make any type of part score then they have the right 6 HCP to beat 1NT by two or three tricks.

Michelin: Pass. Passing should be right unless my partner has all the missing high card points. Game would be out of the question. I'm going to defend and hopefully take my plus. If I double my partner might bid something out of weakness and we'd go down.

Abdou: Pass. Tough hand! I have the wrong shape for double (I should be 3-suited). Where are all the hearts? (*RHO didn't transfer to hearts.*) This seems like a misfit; I hope to go plus.

Feldman: Double. I'll double and over 2♥ by partner I'll bid 2♠.

Bartusek: Double. It is usually the kiss of death to let the opponents play 1NT non-vul at MP. Obviously, I will have a guess on the next round if partner runs to a rounded suit. It's unlikely that the opponents will be able to penalize partner's run-out.

Cooper: Double. In my regular partnership this shows majors and I can pull to 2♠ hopefully showing something like this. If partner jumps in hearts, why did he not bid before?

Roeder: Double. This round is not a problem. Next round might be. But I will act like the federal government and not worry about tomorrow's issues.

Wittes: 2♠. Pass could be right, but my hand and my spades are a little too good to sell out this low.

I held this hand at the recent Reno regional. I tried 2♠ at the table. I caught partner (Susan Sneed) with a poor 2=4=2=5 hand and she retreated to 3♦. Against sharp defense I failed by a trick. 1NT would have failed also. My RHO was my friend Mark Itabashi. We talked about the hand later. Mark preferred double, and thought the majority of the panel would vote for double. Pretty close – there were 4 votes for pass, 4 votes for double, and 1 vote for 2♠.

4 Matchpoints Both Vul	West	North	East	South
	1♥	X	2♥	???
You, South, hold: ♠ KQ8542 ♥ J ♦ J65 ♣ 932 What call do you make?				

This hand was sent to me by a reader, Rae Murbach. She had multiple related hands. I selected the problem I liked best and supplied the vulnerability.

2♠, 3♠, 4♠, and maybe even pass are possibilities.

I'll start with the 2♠ bidders.

Wittes: 2♠. Not quite good enough for 3♠, but I will surely compete to 3♠ over 3♥.

Shuster: 2♠. Either partner is strong or LHO has many hearts. In either case, 2♠ is easy and accurate.

Bartusek: 2♠. This is enough with my LTC of 8. I think an invitational (not preemptive) 3♠ is an overbid with so many losers. Give partner Axxx of spades and my queen of spades is of no value with trumps breaking.

And the 3♠ bidders (my choice):

Roeder: 3♠. Process of elimination as 2♠ does not reflect the sixth spade and 4♠ is too rich.

Feigenbaum: 3♠. It's a conundrum. 2♠ is a bit wishy-washy. We might buy it with 3♠ and partner might have the right hand to bid 4♠.

Michelin: 3♠. I am sure most will opt for 4♠. *You've made better predictions!* I'm too good for 2♠, with not enough HCP for 3♠ and a lot of losers even though I have a singleton heart. I'm a "wimpette" here and bid 3♠.

Abdou: 3♠. Partner has approximately a strong NT to double with heart length. My bid is aggressive but I have playing strength. I need to ease his worry about having only three spades possibly even two.

Think partners think alike? Check this out!

Feldman: 4♠. I'm not taking this to the bank but it seems right to make them guess as well. *There is a rather astute bridge exhortation "Don't be the last guesser."*

Cooper: 4♠. Partner likely has an off-shape NT or too good for 1NT or a Bramley takeout double (4333 12-count). Anyway, this is what I want to bid and on a good day I will make it.

5

IMPs
N-S Vul.

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

* Forcing 1NT

You, South, hold: ♠ 94 ♥ AQ8 ♦ 985 ♣ AJ854

What call do you make?

This is a hand from an old Eastern Solvers Panel. I'll report their results at the end. Partnership methods are important here. Whether the partnership employs Invitational Jump Shifts makes a difference in the follow-ups here. Also, many expert pairs play the Bart convention (invented by Les Bart) after 1♠ - 1NT - 2♣. There are multiple variations of that convention, but in all of them 2♦ is artificial. The convention helps solves both the heart fit problem and the minor fit problem. The only downside is that the partnership can't stop in 2♦. The convention allows for finding a 5-3 heart fit and gives the partnership multiple ways to bid invitational hands.

I'll start with a panelist who is making different calls depending on whether her partnership uses Bart.

Feldman: 2♦/2NT. 2♦ if playing Bart, if not 2NT.

If not playing any relevant convention, the decision involves whether to bid a more aggressive 2NT or a less aggressive 3♣.

Cooper: 2NT. The hand is too good to just raise to 3♣ and a heart lead into me is likely. However, with most partners I can bid 2♦ artificial followed by 3♣ (Bart) to show this hand. *I agree with her that 3♣ is not enough.*

Shuster: 2NT. 3♣ could be a lot lighter, so I go for the stronger invitation. Diamonds? What, me worry?

Bartusek: 3♣. At IMPs, I'm comfortable bidding clubs instead of an aggressive 2NT (which I would try at MPs). Admittedly this is a slight underbid and we might miss a vulnerable game; but I think it is the percentage action since 3♣ is probably safer than 2NT. Additionally, we need to be conscious of the modern expert trend of opening 11 and 12 HCP hands.

Wittes: 3♣. I have the values for 2NT, though I'm not crazy about my diamond holding.

Michelin: 3♣. Partner may have only three clubs. If he has four clubs we may have no stoppers in diamonds.

I'm heavy for just 3♣ and it's IMPs, I'm supposed to bid my games even though. Still, 3♣ is forward-going. If partner has a good hand and he bids 3♦, now I can bid 3NT.

Roeder: 3♣. I'm a little heavy but I do not see an alternative.

Finally, two panelists use the failure to make an Invitational Jump Shift (IJS) to use a 3♥ call in this situation in other ways.

Feigenbaum: 3♥. Possibly the most interesting hand of the set. A true bidding-theory hand. It depends on system. What would a 3♥ response to 1♠ have been? If 3♥ would have been invitational in hearts or a splinter in support of spades, I have denied both of those when I bid 1NT. In that case 3♥ should show a heart control and a surprisingly good club raise looking for 3NT if possible. If none of the above are true then I would bid 3♣ and hope partner can find another bid if it's right. To quote Jim Looby, may he rest in peace, "If I were playing with myself I would bid 3♥."

Abdou: 3♥. I have a system bid for this; 3♥ shows a massive club fit and two spades, 3NT is the same with short spades. A direct 3♥ over 1♠ is invitational and 2♦ over 2♣ is Bart. Absent that agreement a wide ranging 3♣ or a defective 2NT are the only choices.

The Eastern panel voted as follows: 3♣ – 8 votes, 2NT – 4 votes, 3NT – 1 vote, 4♣ – 1 vote, 5♣ – 1 vote, and 3♥ – 1 vote. The Eastern moderator didn't like the idea of 3♥ being a club raise because it didn't fit the system his panelists were supposed to stick to. But for my column, panelists have the freedom to use their own methods. This benefits readers when they explain their methods and the methods have merit. I appreciate the alternate meaning of 3♥ that Ellis and Wafik presented. Thanks guys!