

# Bridge News

## 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](mailto:President@D23ACBL.org).

By the time this issue of the SCBN goes to press, our D23 STaC will have concluded. I hope a great many of you joined me at the table in search of silver points. This marks the perfect time to recognize and thank our marvelous STaC coordinator, Ruth Baker.

I am saddened to see the growing list of names of D23 members on the ACBL’s Under Discipline List, and in particular teachers who have conscripted their students into their corrupt conspiracies. What a supreme violation of their positions of trust.

On a happier note, our spring D23 Board meeting will take place within the week. Stay tuned to this space, because I may just have some very exciting news to share with you in the near future.

## Regional Director’s Report

*by Cornelia Gould*



I have just returned from St. Louis, Missouri, after having attended my first 3 ½ day ACBL Board meeting preceding the NABC.

I will give a more detailed report on the Board meeting in the April D23 newsletter after the meeting summary and draft Minutes have been prepared and distributed. In the meantime, here are a few highlights of what was discussed.

Due to declining ACBL membership, especially since COVID, the Board and ACBL management are placing a heavy focus on how we might grow our membership. The Sapphire program has been introduced, under which interested parties are given a free membership in the ACBL for use while getting started in playing ACBL-sponsored duplicate games. During the intro period they may earn Sapphire points for reaching certain milestones (e.g. bidding and making their first grand slam). Those points are convertible to black at a much reduced rate when they pay for their first year of membership. Here is a link to a more detailed description of the program (<https://acbl.org/sapphires/>). Please encourage your friends who may be interested in bridge to sign up. And, after they do please continue to mentor them to help

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them find partners and become more involved in the world of bridge.

In the past, the ACBL paid entry fees for Flights A, B and C for the first two days of play in the Grand National Teams (GNT) held at the Summer NABC. Now they also pay the fees for the Championship flight. Through an error, in the past the ACBL has undercharged individual Districts for the fees for days 3-5. That practice will remain the same in 2026, but the correct formula will be used starting in 2027, which will result in the Districts owing more. In order to raise funds for the GNTs and the North American Pairs (NAP), the ACBL is recommending that Grass Roots Fund events be held in the Districts. There is generally an additional charge per player for these events, but they pay enhanced points. These events can be held in clubs or at Regional or Sectional tournaments. Here is a link to the Grass Roots Fund Events Guide:

[https://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/GrassRoots\\_Fund\\_guide.pdf](https://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/GrassRoots_Fund_guide.pdf)

The Board and ACBL staff have been working on a Regional Tournament Planning Guide, which should be available soon for use by those who plan Regional tournaments. Hopefully this will simplify the process of putting on a Regional tournament. I believe that guides are also being worked on for Sectional tournaments. As soon as the guide has been released, I will make sure that all of you know how to find it on the ACBL website.

More next month.

**Masterpoint Leaders in D23**  
*by Mike Marcucci*

<u>Mini McKenney</u>	<u>2025</u>
>10000	Mitch Dunitz
7500-10000	Mike Mikyska
5000-7500	Junko Hemus
3500-5000	David Peim
2500-3500	Laura Gastelum
1500-2500	Fuad Khuri
1000-1500	Rajath Shourie
500-1000	William Taylor
300-500	Caryn Mason
200-300	Yongkang Huang
100-200	Les Klein
50-100	Patrick Finley
20-50	Andy Rooke
5-20	Kirk Bretney
0-5	Tommy Howard

<u>Ace of Clubs</u>	<u>2025</u>
>10000	Gil Stinebaugh
7500-10000	David Segal
5000-7500	Joan Rubin
3500-5000	David Peim
2500-3500	Trudi Lamendola
1500-2500	Fuad Khuri
1000-1500	Jeff Goldberg
500-1000	William Taylor
300-500	Caryn Mason
200-300	Michael Lam
100-200	Les Klein
50-100	Patrick Finley
20-50	Andy Rooke
5-20	Kirk Bretney
0-5	Beth Howard

MMK overall points for year 2025

green - National ranking		black - D23 rank
8	Mitch Dunitz	1857.2
14	Ifti Baqai	1662.9
47	Billy Cohen	1040.6
108	Alex Kolesnik	736.2
124	Rajath Shourie	706.7
216	Gil Stinebaugh	561.9
285	John Jones	518.0
300	Mike Mikyska	508.1
313	David Peim	495.4
398	William Taylor	453.3
413	Lulu Minter	448.7
447	Laura Gastelum	437.3
462	Junko Hemus	434.0
477	Hemant Lall	427.9
482	Fuad Khuri	426.4
491	Ed Piken	422.0
17	Steve Gross	406.8
18	Joan Rubin	404.9
19	Viktor Anikovich	404.1
20	Terry Hane	385.3
21	Carl Wolinsky	370.4
22	Mark Tang	364.7
23	Sin Orensztain	356.3
24	Peter Knee	349.4
25	Sheila Bozin	334.5
26	John Ramos	325.5
27	Mark Peters	316.1
28	Jeff Goldberg	314.9
29	Diane Elliott	314.7
30	Nina Huang	314.0

Top 30		(31 Dec)
1	Mitch Dunitz	35180
2	Steve Gross	32977
3	John Mohan	31170
4	Ellen Anten	27887
5	Jill Meyers	22441
6	Hemant Lall	21995
7	Billy Cohen	21062
8	Rebecca Clough	19627
9	Ifti Baqai	19540
10	Ken Scholes	19186
11	Roger Clough	17275
12	Alex Kolesnik	15631
13	Jordan Chodorow	15299
14	Pam Wittes	15268
15	John Jones	14140
16	Gil Stinebaugh	13899
17	Lulu Minter	13573
18	Gene White Jr	13325
19	Walt Schafer Jr	13260
20	Steve Onderwyzer	12841
21	Aram Bedros	12481
22	Peter Benjamin	12423
23	Mike Savage	11933
24	Bruce Horiguchi	11532
25	Viktor Anikovich	11291
26	Peter Knee	11137
27	Rajath Shourie	10253
28	Mike Mikyska	10245
29	Rhoda Himmell	10068
30	Leni Holtz	10031

challenge to face such experienced opponents, yet the atmosphere remained incredibly welcoming. Some pairs greeted us warmly at their tables, while others seemed genuinely surprised—and perhaps a bit impressed—that we had made the trek to our first Nationals.

Beyond the competition, the educational opportunities were abundant. We attended several of the many **bridge presentations** offered throughout the tournament, which provided fresh insights into the game. One of our favorite moments was “kibitzing” a high-level player; watching the precision of their bidding and the solidity of their declaring skills was a masterclass in itself. We were also inspired by a **12-year-old player** who competed with the pure enthusiasm and joy of a child simply loving a game—a great reminder of why we all play.

The bridge fever even extended beyond the America’s Center. We visited several local restaurants where the air was thick with bridge talk, not just among players but even with locals who weren’t in the tournament. It was in these moments, and over the card tables, that we made many **new friends** and reconnected with familiar faces from our SoCal regionals.

The highlight of our trip came on Saturday, when we were thrilled to **qualify for the Sunday finals**. Returning home with that achievement, and a wealth of new experience, has only deepened our love for the game. For any of our fellow Southern California players considering a National tournament: don’t hesitate. It is a pleasant, enjoyable, and truly unforgettable experience.

## From SoCal to St. Louis: Our First NABC Adventure

*by Peter Kavounas / Richard Parker*

When Richard and I boarded our flight from Southern California to the **2026 Spring North American Bridge Championships (NABC)** in St. Louis, we weren’t quite sure what to expect. While we’ve enjoyed many regional tournaments back home, the prospect of a National event felt like a significant step up. What we found was an experience that was as challenging as it was rewarding, filled with high-level play and a wonderful sense of community.

The sheer caliber of players was the first thing that struck us. Even within our bracket, we encountered many participants who had previously competed in the **North American Pairs (NAP)**. It was a serious

## The Teacher's Corner

### Case for the...Defense by Dan F. Oakes

OK, we're going to bring it back to a little defense, especially since a perfectly illustrative hand came up at the table last week. But I'll also get into my rant about the auction I threatened ERRRR promised to discuss in my last article. Let's start with defense, though, because the hand I'm going to show you features a high-level special technique that all experts and advanced players know. Novice/intermediate players may have heard of it, but it may not be in their arsenal, so I'll see if I can shine some light on it. It's less complex than you might think, I promise.

I'll give it to you as it came up during a club pair game. Your hand is: ♠Q ♥8763 ♦973 ♣A7632. The opponents bid to 4 spades in an unopposed, mostly unrevealing auction, thus: 1♦ – 1♠; 2♠ – 4♠. Wanting neither to lead one of the opponents' suits nor an unsupported ace, you hold your nose and come out with a low heart, and this dummy hits: ♠J654 ♥KT4 ♦AK54 ♣K8. Your least-of-evils leads is a success, as declarer tries the king, losing to partner's ace, and partner continues with the queen of hearts as you pitch a club. Partner shifts to a trump, and declarer's ace drops your queen. Declarer continues with the king of spades, dropping partner's ten, then starts playing diamonds, ruffing a heart along the way as partner shows a doubleton diamond.

Partner's diamond shortness means declarer gets no pitches; she plays four rounds from both her hand and dummy, ending in hand. You've taken two tricks, and the position is now:

(DUMMY)	♠J6
	♣K8
(YOU)	♥8
	♣A63

Declarer leads the jack of clubs, and the question is, do you grab your ace and hold her to 4, or play low and hope for a misguess into partner's queen? Solution at the end of the article along with the high-level technique that enables expert declarers to get the right 100 times out of 100.

Meanwhile, the (albeit rare) auction I noted last week was 1♣ – (1♠) – X – (P); 2♦, and the question was,

does 2♦ show extra values (i.e., is it a reverse)? Most partnerships, at least non-pro partnerships, haven't discussed this; the expert/advanced players I've discussed it with mostly say it doesn't show extras. Here's why I think they're wrong.

First, let's dismiss a phrase that drives me nuts. I've been at the table several times when responder was questioned about the double (Yes, I occasionally play with people who apparently don't think that everyone plays negative doubles at least as high as one spade.) More than once, I've heard the explanation, "It's a negative double, showing the other two suits." No.

No, no, no, no, no NO, no, NO, no, no, NO. a negative double does *not* (necessarily) show the other two suits. Responder *could* have hearts and diamonds. Responder could also have hearts and clubs. Responder could have a one-suiter in hearts without the points to bid 2 hearts. Responder, in short, is showing hearts. Period, full stop. Other than the fact that we know what a few of LHO's cards are, the auction has essentially gone 1♣ – 1♥. And when the auction goes 1♣ – 1♥, a 2♦ rebid by us is (wait for it) a reverse, showing extra values. Because if partner doesn't like our diamonds and can't rebid his hearts, he has to go to the 3 level to get back to our first suit, and when we force a minimum responder to the 3 level, we need extras.

Well, you might ask, what if you have a minimum opener with 5 clubs and 4 diamonds? Let me punt that one back to you: What would you have done if LHO had passed and partner bid 1heart? When you open that 4-5 hand 1♣, you're either strong enough to reverse, or you were planning to bid something like 2♣ (with 5 really good ones). Otherwise, you can open 1♦ and rebid 2♣.

There's one valid objection to my position: Perhaps you were 2-2-5-4, and you intended to rebid 1NT, but after the overcall, you don't like that rebid with your small doubleton. To that I say...tough luck. Plan ahead and open 1♦, or suck it up and rebid 1NT anyway; it's only the one level, and you're still (sort of) describing your balanced minimum. If partner has enough points to get you in trouble, there's a good chance some of them are in spades.

OK, what's this super-secret expert technique I've been describing? Steppingstone squeeze by the defense? Sorcery? No...it's called (gasp) *counting*. Declarer stopped pulling trump after two rounds, and

partner didn't ruff in on diamonds, so partner had two trump and you had a singleton. Four were in dummy, so declarer had six. Declarer ruffed the third heart. That's eight cards in the majors – six spades and two hearts. Declarer played four rounds of diamonds. We're up to twelve. That jack of clubs is a singleton; grab your ace! Nobody would have a problem if declarer had a small singleton club, but the jack is high enough to trap a lazy defender...maybe declarer will run it. Not a chance; she's down to three trump and that jack of clubs. If you take your ace, declarer makes four and you get 75%. If you duck, dummy's king wins and you get 19%. And all you had to do for that 75% was count to twelve and beat the half of the defenders who didn't.

**Southern California Bridge News**  
 Published monthly by ALACBU, Inc.  
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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 Rank Changes March 2026

<p><b>Junior Master</b>                  Robert C. Biangella                  Stephen Block                  Richard Feldman                  Patricia A. Frazier                  Julie Gilmartin                  Katherine Lin                  Barry Perlstein</p>	<p><b>Club Master</b>                  Jennie Kim                  Mollie Leibowitz Rabin                  Maneesha Prakash                  Roberta Preskill                  Sharon Rosenberger                  Chuan Wang</p>	<p><b>Regional Master</b>                  Carol A. Goldman                  Wendy K. Wanderman</p>
<p><b>Club Master</b>                  Ryan E. Carlson                  Noel Drorian                  Ronnie Hon</p>	<p><b>Sectional Master</b>                  Anne L. Buettner                  Dennis G. Depauw                  Luda Kuprenas</p>	<p><b>NABC Master</b>                  Cherene Birkholz</p> <p><b>Advanced NABC Master</b>                  Sue Hunter</p>
		<p><b>Life Master</b>                  Robert S. Jennings</p> <p><b>Gold Life Master</b>                  Nancy C. Zeller</p>

## Around the Units in District 23



### Pomona – Covina by Tom Lill [www.acblunit551.org](http://www.acblunit551.org)

**La Fetra Games:** Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:45  
**Claremont Bridge Club:** Thursdays 9:30  
**Individual:** April 4, 10:00 a.m., Ontario  
**Unit Pairs Game:** April 18, 11:00 a.m., Ontario  
**Unit Board Meeting:** 10:15 a.m. before the game  
**UNIT 551 Sectional:** March 20-22 at the Upland Women's Club

In the February Unit Game, the winners once again were Mary Ann Wotring – Vic Sartor, with 58.33%. Second were Caryn Mason – Patrick Finley, followed by Clint Lew – Linda Tessier, then Peter Kavounas – Richard Parker. There was a rare three-way tie for the final spot (no, not last place, the last place paying masterpoints!): Vaughan Inman – Maria Marvosh, Stephen Andersen – Kitty Moon, and Tim and Eileen Finlay.

Due to the vagaries of the calendar, we are able to report the results of the March unit game, also. Fredy and Lulu Minter. Mary Ann Wotring – Vic Sartor dropped to second this month, followed by Steve Mancini – Patrick Finley, Ramona Hernandez – Nona Stokes, Karen Olin – Karen McCarthy, Margie Hall – Linda Ananea, and Richard Parker – Peter Kavounas.

In the March Individual, top honors went to ahem – Yours Truly, who sneaked home with a 72.92% game. I must admit, my birthday came way early this year or something, because I got a lot of gifts during the game! I cannot claim skill for that result. In second was Ramona Hernandez, then Daniel Robinson, Eileen Finlay, and Art Weinstein.

We had one promotion last month. Wendy Wanderman is now a Regional Master. Congratulations, Wendy!

Thanks again to Patrick Finley, for collating the masterpoint statistics for February.

#### At La Fetra:

1	13.55	Caryn Mason
2	11.99	Lulu Minter
3	11.90	Patrick Finley
4	11.42	Vic Sartor
5	8.89	Mary Ann Wotring
6	7.28	Fredy Minter
7	7.09	Peter Kavounas
8	6.55	Richard Parker
9	4.65	David Raymond
10	4.35	Clint Lew

#### And at the Claremont Bridge Club:

1	1.86	Patrick Finley
2	1.27	David Ochroch
3	1.16	Dan Robinson
3	1.16	Carl Silsbee
5	1.14	Kitty Moon
5	1.14	Patrick Rogers

At La Fetra, no fewer than five pairs topped the magic 65% benchmark: Caryn Mason – Patrick Finley led all the rest with a whopping 73.63% game. Fredy and Lulu Minter posted 69.63, Gary Atwell – Lulu Minter chimed in with 66.67%, Caryn Mason – Vic Sartor scored 66.15%, and Duane “Woody” Woodman – Kurt Triselmann had a 65.28%-er. The only other winner was Amr Elghamry.

Over in Claremont, only one pair made the honors list: Caryn Mason – Patrick Finley scored 69.79%. Other winners were Patrick Rogers, David Ochroch, Joan Ochroch, Carl Silsbee, and Dan Robinson.

For our Hand of the Month, we return to the Laurel and Hardy School of Bridge. It's IMPs, only the opponents are vulnerable. My partner dealt and opened 2♥, weak, and next hand doubled. My hand:

♠ A ♥ 5 ♦ A K 10 7 6 3 ♣ Q J 7 5 4.

Hmmm. Seems like my LHO may have a real heart stack, so I'll try 3♦. Pass, pass, pass, and here is the whole deal:



messages. Because Gil had organized many tennis and pickleball tournaments, he thought he can apply his background to bridge game organization. After discussing with Paula about streamlining the game registration and seating, he created a simple Google form to capture player signups on a weekly basis. The responses are recorded in a Google sheet in which a player list, seating charts, and a yearly club schedule are consolidated. With everything in one place, creating a seating chart can now be completed accurately and in a lot less time. The game schedulers are very grateful. Thanks Gil!

Here's a couple of pictures of Ted Maki being recognized before the Friday game for his achievement of becoming a Gold Life Master with 2500 master points!



A few words were spoken by Rand Pinsky and George MacDonald.

Congratulations Ted!



**Long Beach**  
by Leo Ditemore

[www.acblunit557.org](http://www.acblunit557.org)

[www.LongBeachBridge.com](http://www.LongBeachBridge.com)

**Successful STaC Week**

March 9 to March 15

**Upcoming Events and Preparations**

Preparing for NLM Sectional on May 15

Preparing for GNT District Finals on May 31

**Game Participation**

70% of games were played by the following partnerships:

Carl Wolinsky & Rob Preece

Wayne Rapp & Gabby Sill

Neal Kleiner & Trudy Lamandola

Jackie Hess & Cory Hand

Mel Fineberg & Mike Brooks

Jeanette Estill & Ron Lee

Steve Ramos & Michael Piken

## San Fernando Valley by Alan Curtis

*Sorry, nothing from San Fernando this month.*

## Downey-Whittier by Daniel F. Oakes

On February 4th, John Jones and Nancy Stebbins were 1st E/W and 1st overall with a 66% game, edging out Mike Ventri and Steve Hough for the overalls. Ventri and Hough took 1st N/S. Gabby Sill and Jon Yinger were 2nd N/S ahead of 1st B overall Bob and Linda Krause and 1st C N/S Anita Frost and Toni Hoffman. Rounding out the point winners on the E/W side of the field were Jack Rainsberry and Bill Skupen (2nd A E/W) and Raj Ramchandani and John Dobson (1st B E/W and 1st C overall).

February 11th saw Jones and Yinger take the top spot by a fraction of a matchpoint, beating out Rainsberry and Skupen. Gabby Sill and Steve Hough were 3rd, while the Krauses were 2nd B and 4th overall.

Jones and Stebbins returned to the winners' circle on February 18th, beating out Rainsberry and Skupen, last seen selling silver medals on Ebay. Sill and Yinger were 3rd, ahead of 2nd B Avic Osmundson and Kiran Kumar. The Krauses took 1st C honors.

Finally, on February 25th, birthdate of great wives, great cousins, and George Harrison, Yas Takeda and Robert Yu had a sizzling 74% game to take 1st everything (but for the sake of completeness, they sat N/S). Jon Yinger and Alan Flower were 2nd N/S, and the Krauses (if you're keeping score at home, that was their 4th in-the-money finish in four weeks) were 1st B N/S. On the other side of the table, Dan Oakes and Mike Ventri were 1st E/W (and an extremely-distant tie for second with Yinger & Flower). Second E/W were Kiran Kumar and John Dobson, who also took 1st B overall. Rainsberry and Skupen were 3rd E/W (oops...I jinxed them with that silver medal crack).

On a more somber note, coming on the heels of the passing of John Petrie, longtime club member Barbara Horn has passed away. I first met Barbara more than 25 years ago, when I bought the Anaheim Bridge Club (then the "Bridge Center of North Orange County") from Marcie Evans. The game ran 10 sessions a week (those were the days!), with 20+ tables regularly on Monday nights, including a separate non life master

game with a free lesson beforehand, and Barbara and her partner Betty Boss were regulars. I've always been very gratified to see so many of the Monday nighters still playing decades later. Barbara will be missed.

Sadly, we have yet another loss to report. Longtime unit member Brij Walla also passed away earlier this year. Although Brij hadn't been active of late, he is remembered as a fine player and a gentleman at the table.

## West L.A by Elisa Leonelli

Thanks to Rick Turner, former BHBC Manager and ACBL Director, I discovered a plaque where the City of Beverly Hills, and its then major MeraLee Goldman, congratulated the Beverly Hills Bridge Club on its 10th Anniversary in 2002, after its founding on May 5, 1992, for being "dedicated to providing classes and stimulating games in bridge to the community."

Our club is the only place left to learn and play duplicate Bridge in West LA Unit 562, since the Barrington Bridge Club, founded in 1993, closed during COVID and never re-opened. BHBC, after many delays from Beverly Hills Recreation and Parks, eventually re-opened on October 22, 2022.

During the protracted COVID closure, in August 2020 President Tim Deegan notified club players that BHBC Manager John Ramos, who had been a teacher at our club since 2016, organized online games on BBO and offered advanced classes: "Think like an Expert" with Finn Kolesnik, and "Bridge Professors" with Christopher Rivera and Giorgia Botta.

Board member for education Nancy Heck continues to offer intermediate lessons followed by Supervised Play. Dawn Lee, BHBC President, teaches beginner classes.

An unusual lecture held on Thursday February 12 by Sharon Baynon was about "Invisible Rules of Duplicate Bridge." It aimed to encourage experienced players to be more welcoming to beginner and intermediate players during club games. It listed rules that many players are unfamiliar with, such as when it's appropriate to call the director.

I wish to thank BHBC directors Viktor Anikovich and Jonathan Holmes.

The Thursday lecture on March 26 at 6.30 pm, before the 7pm Open game, is "Reverses Made Easy" by West LA Unit President Jordan Chodorow.

Congratulations to BHBC players who earned ACBL ranks in February 2026: Sectional Master (50 points) Lawrence Morse, Louis Sterling. Junior Master (5 points) Samuel Leonard, Babu Shankar.

Hey, Unit Presidents, Secretaries, Reporters: help us keep our "Unit President" listing up to date! When you hold a new election, please report the results to us!

The Puzzle Page

Bridge Jeopardy by John Jones

Category: Bridge Slang

And the answer is ...

- \$100 – Cold.
\$200 – Hook.
\$300 – Quacks.
\$400 –Moose.
\$500 –Phone number.

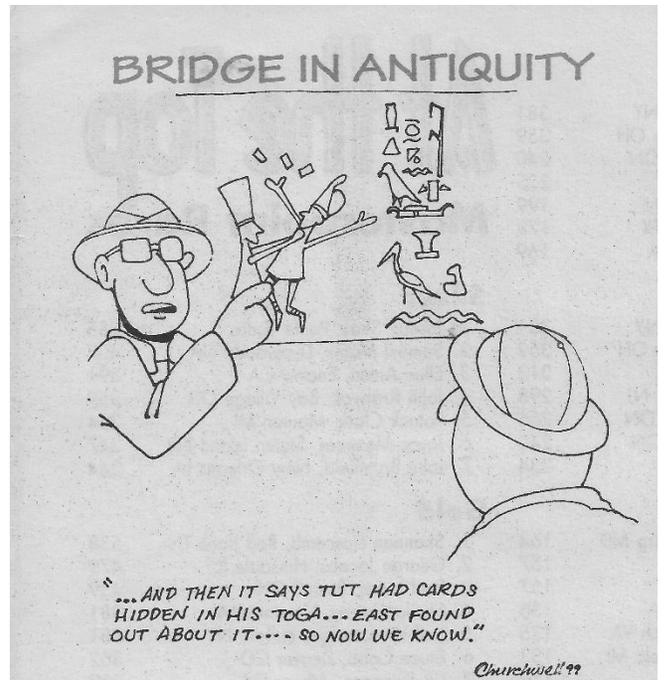
District 23 Unit Presidents

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:

Table with 2 columns: Unit and President. Rows include: 551 – Pomona – Covina (Eileen Finlay), 553 – Glendale-Verdugo (Adam Barron), 556 – Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley (Paula Olivares), 557 – Long Beach (Leo Dittmore), 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 15. No peeking!)



Submitted by Tom Lill



# Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Mark Bartusek, Ed Davis, Mitch Dunitz, Jeff Goldsmith, Danny Korbel, Roger Lee, Mike Shuster, John Swanson and Jon Wittes are panelists.

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

*This is a reprint. This column originally appeared in March of 2021.*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">1</h1> <p>Matchpoints Both Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	1♠	pass	1♥	pass
	3NT	pass	2♣	pass
	???		4♥	pass
	You, South, hold: ♠J1083 ♥K10 ♦KJ84 ♣AK5			
What call do you make?				

*We'll start off with a problem that has a critical question at it's core: Does partner's sequence of hearts, clubs, hearts show extra values? Old fashion standard as I was taught it, played this sequence showed extras. But as a practical matter, rebidding 2♣ on hands with six hearts and four clubs so often uncovers a superior strain that I believe it is better to play this auction doesn't show extras.*

*We'll start with those who believe partner has shown extras and move.*

**Bartusek:** 6♥. Partner must have extras for this auction (and be presumably 6-4). If he had a minimum he would just rebid 2♥. I believe he has a hand that would have raised a 2♥ preference to 3♥. (e.g. ♠Qx ♥AQJ9xx ♦A ♣QJxx). Since I have three great key honors, slam is probably a good bet (especially with a non-spade lead likely).

**Dunitz:** 4NT (*Mitch actually answered "Blackwood". His answer caters to partnerships that play that 4♣ Kickback would be the Blackwood bid for their partnership in this sequence*). Partner has shown a good hand w/ six hearts and four clubs.

**Lee:** 5♥. But I would've started with 2♦ and avoided this problem. But I think in old fashioned bridge,

partner should have some mild extras (or a void), especially given that he is missing the KT of hearts.

*The rest of the panel isn't certain of extras for partner on this auction.*

**Davis:** 5♥. Both ♠x ♥AQJxxx ♦x ♣QJxxx and ♠void ♥AQJxxx ♦Ax ♣QJxxx are reasonable hands for partner to hold on this auction. Since we are likely to take 11 tricks on the first hand and 13 tricks on the second hand, it seems right to invite partner to bid a slam by bidding 5♥. As I could have bid 4♠ or 5♦ over 4♥ as a slam try with the ace of that suit, partner will probably realize that my interest in slam is based on good cards in his suits. He is likely to make the right decision.

**Swanson:** 5♣. Makes Jacoby 2NT appear to be a poor convention. Partner doesn't have to hold extra values, so bidding on carries quite a risk.

**Wittes:** Pass. Sure, it's possible partner could have a perfecta like ♠x ♥AQJxxx ♦Ax ♣QJxx, but even with that hand, I don't think they would risk a non-forcing 2♣ bid. I think they would probably bid 3♥. There are a lot of lesser hands that beyond the 4-level might be too high. How about ♠Kx ♥AQJxxx ♦x ♣QJxx?

**Goldsmith:** Pass. Does partner have ♠x ♥AQJxxx ♦AQ ♣Qxxx or ♠Qx ♥AJxxxx ♦A ♣Jxxx? Since the 5-level is not safe, I won't risk bidding.

Some play Hearts-Clubs-Hearts promises extras. Sometimes, they get to play 2♥ in their 6-0 fit instead of some number of clubs in their 4-6 fit. This time, they can try for slam.

**Korbel:** Pass. I believe that this sequence does not guarantee significant extras. This is how I would bid a minimum 6 5.

**Shuster:** Pass. Yes, we have three covers, but that isn't enough, we rate to be off two aces. Extra credit: what would 4♦ by partner have shown? *Extras with 0=5=3=5 or something pretty close would be my guess.*

*There was a real hand on this one. Partner held ♠A ♥AQJxxx ♦x ♣Q9xxx and 6♥ or 6♣ made. Maybe inviting with 5♥ is best (especially if you don't know if partner plays this sequence shows extras).*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">2</h1> <p>IMPs Both Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	???	1♣	2♠	pass
	You, South, hold: ♠KJ3 ♥Q876 ♦AKQJ87 ♣void			
	What call do you make?			

*Partner has made a vulnerable preemptive jump. He doesn't have as great a suit as he might have had at red versus white, but it shouldn't be ratty at all red. Some hands partner could have are easy slam makes. But the opening lead may be crucial. A scientific way to make a slam try is to splinter. But that decreases the chance that a club would be led. Another possibility is to try 2NT whatever meaning (Ogust, Feature, Singleton ask) the partnership plays. Maybe we should bash it and see if they can straighten out the lead.*

*We'll start with panelists that make a sneaky 4NT bid. Didn't anyone ever tell you not to bid Blackwood holding a void? Oh, you want to deceive the opening leader!*

**Shuster:** 4NT. It is probably worth taking a stab at slam that depends on a favorable lead or favorable catch. No reason to not bid keycard along the way (we can stop opposite zero) and it doesn't spill the beans about the void.

**Bartusek:** 4NT. My first thought was 6♠, but a RKC 4NT seems very valuable here. If partner doesn't have the ♠A (e.g. Q10987xx vulnerable), then we can stop in 5♠. I will risk the slight chance that partner has the club ace but not the spade ace. 4NT will probably induce a club lead instead of the dangerous heart lead that I fear. Anyone thinking of bidding 7♠ will just convince the opening leader not to lead a club.

**Davis:** 4NT. I expect partner to show one keycard (the spade ace) and, since partner is vulnerable, he is a favorite to also have the spade queen or a seventh spade since I have both the king and jack. If partner shows one keycard, I will bid 6♠ and expect to make it unless they lead a heart. Of course, I am bidding 4NT not because I need to find out about keycards but because I do not want to create suspicion that I am void in clubs and deter a club lead. This is not the way one is supposed to bid. 4♣ is the "book" bid and then stopping in 4♠ if partner cannot show a heart control (where a

singleton would be his most likely control). However, if partner shows one keycard over 4NT, I expect to take all 13 tricks if they do not lead a heart. Even if LHO doubles 6♠ with the ace-king of hearts to suggest a non-club lead, we still make it if they don't guess to lead heart or if partner has a singleton heart.

**Swanson:** 4NT. This insures that we avoid slam off two aces and has good deceptive value. Ed's idea, and a good one. Now they are tagging teaming me. 😊

*One panelist bashed the slam giving the opponents no further chance to communicate.*

**Wittes:** 6♠. Vulnerable at IMPs, I would expect partner to have at the least a very good suit, especially when I'm looking at KJx. It would be nice to know the state of the match before making this bid, but they will almost surely need a heart lead to beat this contract, and even then partner might have a stiff heart or even ♥Kx. A 4♣ bid would be more descriptive, but would alert the defense.

*Now we'll hear from the splinter bidders.*

**Dunitz:** 4♣. I want to hear partner cue bid a second-round heart control. PLEASE!

**Goldsmith:** 4♣. This is a toss-up. Bash to make it harder for them to compete, or try for slam? Slam might be cold vs. the right minimum, so I'll try with 4♣. I'll regret it if it goes (double)-4♠-(5♣). A Real Man (tm) just ups and bids the grand and dares them to find a heart lead.

**Korbel:** 4♠. If I was down in the match, I would just jump to 6♠ but it might have no play, and efforts to investigate via 4♣ might even lead to 4♠ going down. Imagine partner with ♠QT9xxx ♥xxx ♦x ♣Axx, after a 4♣ splinter they will very often lead a heart, and oops.

**Lee:** 4♣. If partner cuebids 4♥ we're off to the races.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Matchpoints None Vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	pass	pass	1♦	pass
	1♥	pass	1♠	pass
	???			
	<p>You, South, hold: ♠Q86 ♥AKJ62 ♦J2 ♣964</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>			

*We have an invitational hand (some would have opened the bidding), with no semblance of a stopper in the fourth suit, and a suit not long enough to make rebidding it easy. Fourth suit forcing is possible if you play it on by a passed hand. However, Bridge World Standard and many partnerships play fourth suit as natural by a passed hand. If you are playing XYZ where after three bids and still at the one level 2♣ puppets to 2♦ with the next bid then being natural and invitational then 2♣ is a possibility. But choosing between 2♥ and 2♠ on the bid thereafter is still difficult.*

*We'll start with panelists that assume we don't have special methods available (yes they do play them, they chose not to use methods many readers don't have available).*

**Shuster:** 2NT. It would be good to have some clarity about methods here. I don't know if 2♣ is natural, but if it isn't, that would make it clear. Does 1♠ promise an unbalanced hand? If so, that makes 2♠ more attractive than 2NT. I don't think it is helpful for panelists to say "This isn't a problem for me, because my pet method solves this hand." How does that help our readership?

**Swanson:** 2NT. One assumes this is a promotion for XYZ.

**Wittes:** 1NT. An unsolvable problem. In modern bidding methods with such a good heart suit, I would have opened 1♥ in first seat to eliminate this problem. 1NT is an underbid, and I have no club stopper, but it probably is the best solution at this point. A Moysian 2♠ bid would probably be my second choice.

*Eddie Kantar is not on this panel, but I'd bet on Eddie being in the 1NT or 2NT camp. He believed in bidding your shape on difficult rebids like this. We'll hear from the 2♥ and 2♠ bidders next.*

**Bartusek:** 2♥ (it's Monday). Somewhat of a toss-up between 2♥ and 2♠ (and I bid 2♥ on Mon/Wed/Fri/Sun and 2♠ on Tu/Th/Sat). Either choice could work out poorly, but at least the heart quality adds some safety. I

definitely do not like 1NT with the lead going through dummy.

**Goldsmith:** 2♠. An old chestnut to which there is no answer. I'll guess 2♠.

**Korbel:** 2♠. Alright, alright. You found a hand where I'll intentionally bid like a weirdo.

*Finally we'll hear from those that play an artificial 2♣ is available.*

**Dunitz:** 2♣. 2♣ if we play FourthSuitForcing by a passed hand. If not, I'm getting a headache. Hmm. Otherwise 3♠ (holding my nose).

**Lee:** 2♣. I like to play this is a little something extra — I'll bid 2♥ next. I also would have opened 1♥ at this vul/position/scoring and considered it rather obvious.

*Ed's answer tries to explain XYZ. XYZ is the invention of Orange County's great Joe Kivel. I like XYZ. If XYZ is available I'd bid 2♣ followed by 2♥ hoping partner uses the inference that I couldn't bid open 1♥ the first round to guess that my hearts must be either five good or six bad and I have other strains in mind.*

**Davis:** 2♣. Five hearts, three spades, no stopper in the unbid suit and invitational values with no good invitational bid – a not infrequent type of hand and one clearly in need of some help. Wait, what is that I see off in the distance? Yes, it is XYZ riding in on his trusty white steed to rescue the fair maiden in distress (or, in this case, to solve the bidding problem). Many are familiar with XYZ. One of the elements of XYZ is an artificial 2♣ bid after the auction of 1X – 1Y – 1Z (such as 1♣ 1♥ 1♠) where 2♣ forces 2♦ (opener bids 2♦ unless too strong or too shapely). The sequence is used to sign off in 2♦ or to show some kind of invitational hand. The XYZ treatment exchanges the non-XYZ meaning of 2♣ (artificial GF if partner opened 1♦ OR natural and non-forcing if partner opened 1♣) for the ability to signoff in 2D or show one of a few different types of invitational hands. (A 2♦ bid directly over 1Z is an artificial GF when playing XYZ.) Over the expected 2♦ bid by

opener, I play that 2♠ by responder shows this type of hand — a three-card spade raise with invitational values and no better description of the hand. Responder usually will also hold five hearts (although I would also bid this way holding ♠Kxx ♥AQxx ♦Qxx ♣xxx). Some that play XYZ use this sequence instead to show a raise to 2♠ with four spades and invitational values (the same as what a raise to 3♠ would mean if not playing XYZ) thus gaining when the hand only makes 2♠. But the main point is that XYZ can be used to handle an otherwise quite awkward hand.

## Bridge Jeopardy Questions

\$100 – What is an easily makeable contract?

\$200 – What is a finesse?

\$300 – What are queens and jacks?

\$400 – What is a very big hand?

\$500 – What is 4-digit penalty, such as 1100 or 1400?

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">4</h1> <p>IMPs None Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	1♦	1♠	2♥	4♠
	???			
	<p>You, South, hold: ♠A4 ♥K ♦AQJ832 ♣QJ104</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>			

*The biggest question in this situation is if the 2/1 (in competition) created a forcing situation. Does the vulnerability matter? The panel is not in agreement whether pass would be forcing or not. I like the 2/1 to create a force if the opponents jam us, but the expert world is not at all in agreement on this issue. A secondary issue here is what would 4NT mean. The possibilities include RKC for hearts or takeout for the minors. Let's hear from the panel.*

**Davis:** Pass or 6♦ (depending on the partnership agreements or lack thereof). There are a couple of issues relevant to this auction where there may not be common agreement even among experts. One is whether or not pass by the opening bidder is forcing over 4♠ and the other is whether 4NT by the opening bidder over 4♠ is Keycard Blackwood for hearts (or just regular Blackwood if that is the version of Blackwood that you play) or whether it is takeout of spades (most likely with 1=3=6=3, 1=3=7=2 or 1=2=6=4 distribution). For me, the answers are that pass is forcing and that 4NT is takeout but I think that many players would play differently. If I knew that my partner played the same way as I do, I would pass 4♠ and ensure that we reached slam if partner did not double 4♠; if partner doubled 4♠, I would pull the double to 4NT (takeout) and then settle for playing 5♦ if partner bid 5♦ or bid 5♣ (since partner could have bid 2♥ over 1♠ on six hearts to the AQ and a minor suit king). If I was playing with a partner where these issues had not been discussed, rather than risk a bidding misunderstanding, I would jump to 6♦ over 4♠.

**Wittes:** 4NT. Another tough problem. Should show a good hand with six diamonds and four clubs, and possibly heart tolerance if partner has a very good suit. We could surely make a slam opposite the right hand. Almost good enough for a 5♠ bid.

**Dunitz:** Pass. I play this forcing at these colors. If partner doubles, I will bid 5♦ showing slam interest. If partner bids 5♣, I will bid 5♠; if partner bids 5♦, I will boost. If partner bids 5♥, I will pass.

**Swanson:** Pass. Forcing according to my definition.

**Korbel:** Pass. For practicality my partnerships all play this as a forcing auction. Sometimes they make a shapely 4Sx but this allows us to sort all the other hands out. 4NT is RKC for hearts.

**Goldsmith:** 5♦. Sadly, (1) I don't play that 2/1s in competition produce a force, and (2) I do play 4NT as key card for hearts. I'll guess 5♦. How bad can it be to bid my long suit?

**Bartusek:** Double. Seems clear (especially at IMPs when there isn't much difference between +500 and +600). We are in a non-forcing auction so I must double to show extra values with no clear bid. Double just asks partner to do something intelligent. The alternative 4NT showing 6-4 in the minors could easily be misinterpreted by partner as RKC for hearts (not to mention 5m not being assured opposite 2=6=2=3 or hands where partner lacks three of the five crucial honors I need).

**Shuster:** Double. We aren't in a force, so I must act. We have no known fit and no 5-level safety. That leaves only double.

**Lee:** Double. I'm a big fan of playing this double as showing extras with no clear direction; seems great here.

*So the panel doesn't agree whether we are in a force, they don't agree on what 4NT means and they don't agree on the meaning of double. And these guys are all strong theoreticians. Isn't bridge an easy game?*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">5</h1> <p>Matchpoints None Vul.</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	1NT ???	2♣	1♠ 2♠	dbl 3♣
	You, South, hold: ♠Q5 ♥J82 ♦J963 ♣AJ96 What call do you make?			

*We finish we a straight forward matchpoint problem. Double, pass and 3♠ are all possible. We'll here from the bidders first.*

**Bartusek:** 3♠. If the opponents were vulnerable I would double to presumably collect the magic +200. Unfortunately, +100 won't cut it at matchpoints against our expected +140. Besides, ♣K10xx or ♣QTxx could easily be behind me so I can't even guarantee two defensive trumps tricks (although likely). In addition, partner might have a club void and not know to pull if I double.

**Davis:** 3♠. If everybody has their bid, it is likely that my LHO has five clubs (he will rarely bid 2♣ over my 1NT bid on a four-card suit) and that RHO has four clubs and probably a stiff spade (he will not usually compete to 3♣ with only three clubs). I am probably about 80% to score two club tricks since I can overruff if declarer plays to ruff multiple spades in dummy. But we would need three tricks outside of clubs in addition to partner's ace of spades to score more than +100 in 3♣ doubled. Since I expect partner to be void in clubs, he may well be 6=3=4=0. If, for example, he has AKJxxx xxx KT9x -, we may make 3♠ and not beat 3♣. Regardless, if the opponents are less aggressive at the other tables, the other pairs our direction may play 2♠ for at least +110 and the best way for us not to lose matchpoints to them is to bid 3♠ and make it.

*Next we'll listen to the passers.*

**Korbel:** Pass. No way am I doubling. Perhaps I should bid 3♠. Maybe the panel will enlighten me.

**Lee:** Pass. It doesn't feel like I should double in front of partner with this hand, even though I have decent defense.

**Wittes:** Pass. Another very tough problem. 3♣ may very well go down because of my 9 of clubs, but a double would tend to make them more careful in the play. 3♠ rates to go down 1 or 2, which might be a decent board if not doubled down two, provided they can make 3♣.

**Swanson:** Pass. Maybe a plus score will be good enough. I expect to win an extra trick by not disclosing the trump situation with a double. From my book, "How to Lose at Duplicate Bridge." *Hmmm. I have an extensive bridge library and I seem to be missing that book. Maybe you can send me a copy.*

*Finally the doublers.*

**Dunitz:** Double. The Club nine is a sexy spot card!

**Goldsmith:** Double. There rate to be 16 total trumps, and since I have some minor stuff in clubs, probably 15 or 16 total tricks.

**Shuster:** Double. We rate to be able to take 8 tricks in spades, so a hungry MP double. I've been -470 before, but I think we are a favorite to beat it on spade forces.

*One hand proves nothing, but this hand comes from an actual hand so I will give the result. It is from an ACBL Instant matchpoint game from about 20 years ago. San Diego's Lynne Feldman held this hand and bid 3♠ in tempo. BINGO. Partner held ♠JTxxxxx ♥AKx ♦Qxx ♣void. 3♠ went down one for minus 50, but 3♣ was making doubled or not. I'll confess, I'm in the doubling camp anyway. I'll argue that if they never make a doubled contract against you then you aren't doubling enough.*