

Southern California

Bridge News

Volume 63, #5

May 2026

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.

Please join me in congratulating D23’s own Rajath (“Raj”) Shourie, whose team (Wolpert, Hurd/Kranyak, Bathurst/Demuy) won the U.S. Team Trials in a thrilling final and will be USA1 at the 2027 Bermuda Bowl.

Pre-registration closes on Sunday, May 24 for the D23 Grand National Teams (GNT) final, to be held Sunday, May 31 at 10am & TBD at the Long Beach Bridge Center. For complete information, find the flyer on the D23 website: <http://D23ACBL.org>. The winners earn entry to the national GNT, to be held July 8-12 at the Minneapolis NABC.

D23 lost one of our Grand Life Masters with the passing this year of Roger Clough. Roger was a friend and sometime partner and served the West Los Angeles Unit for many years as a Director and as our Treasurer. I was pleased to express my appreciation and fondness for Roger at the celebration of life held in Pasadena on Sunday, April 26, and to see so many old friends. We will all miss Roger’s conscience, kindness, graciousness, sportsmanship, and integrity.

Regional Director’s Report

by Cornelia Gould



There is no new ACBL Board news to report this month. Our next Board meeting will take place in Minneapolis in July. Here is a link to information about the NABC which will be held there from July 8-19, 2026. You may want to consider attending.

<https://www.acbl.org/minneapolis/>

And, if you don’t want to travel that far, but would like to experience an NABC, you might plan to attend the one to be held at the Manchester Grand Hyatt in San Diego from November 26 to December 6, 2026. Tournament Chair Lamy Angelidis and her team are making preparations for an excellent experience. Put it on your calendars!

As I have mentioned before, the ACBL has a major focus currently on retaining memberships and recruiting new members. As we all know, bridge players tend to be an older group. But, we don’t want bridge to die out with our generation. The best way to bring in new players is for teachers to hold classes – the more the better. There are also tools on the ACBL

DIRECTOR continued on page2

Inside This Issue	
Bridge Jeopardy	page 2
Rank Changes	page 2
The Teacher’s Corner	page 3
Around the Units	page 6
District 23 Presidents Listing	page 10
Problem Solvers’ Panel	page 11

DIRECTOR continued from page 1

website to help newer players. Here is a link to learning opportunities:

<https://www.acbl.org/learn/>

One thing I am excited about is Jump Start Bridge. This is a bridge program developed by renowned bridge instructor, Patty Tucker, who is based in Atlanta. She developed it primarily to help bridge volunteers start programs, primarily in schools, that provide bridge instruction to young people. That organization, which is a non-profit, will provide classroom materials and videos for use in teaching, as well as offer compensation to the instructors. If you are inclined to help promote bridge, you might contact your local junior high or high school to find out if they might support such a program in their schools. And, if you aren't up for teaching yourself, but support the concept, you might consider making a donation. Here is a link to the Jump Start Bridge website.

<https://www.jumpstartbridge.org/>

Enjoy your summers. Hope to see you at the bridge table.

Bridge Jeopardy *by John Jones*

Category: **Bids You Might Make with Few High Card Points (HCP)**

And the answer is ...

\$100: You hold a mediocre seven-card suit and a bad hand.

\$200: Partner opens 2♣ and you don't have much to speak of.

\$300: The opponents open a minor, and you are long in both majors.

\$400: The opponents bid a vulnerable game or slam and you don't let them play it.

\$500: You make a bid that doesn't accurately describe your hand's HCP or distribution.

(Solutions to Bridge Jeopardy are on page 10. No peeking!)

District 23 Rank Changes May 2026

Junior Master

Serena R. Bateman
John S. Buchanan
Penny F. Ford
Shaun Huttar
Jill Rosenberg
John D. Rowell
Robert Samaniego
Mathew Skinner
Dianne Vermillion

Club Master

Susan Damico
Jonathan Eastman

Club Master

Deb Ivons
Tom Ivons
Jolanta Poniatowska
Rick Shaw

Regional Master

Michael D. Weiner

NABC Master

Glenn T. Barry

Bronze Life Master

Ira Thierer

Silver Life Master

Glen Musicer

Ruby Life Master

Diane L. Elliot
Edward A. Ruttenberg

Diamond Life Master

Bruce A. Gordon

Platinum Life Master

Viktor Anikovich
Bill Langlois

The Teacher's Corner

Successful Operation; Dead Patient *by Dan F. Oakes*

I have a declarer play hand and a defensive tip for you this month. I'll start and finish with the declarer play hand, because it also contains a mystery...

♠AKJ4	
♥K53	
♦K72	
♣KT6	
♠T9	♠876
♥Q98	♥J7642
♦AT6543	♦9
♣J5	♣A987
♠Q532	
♥AT	
♦QJ8	
♣Q432	

Here's the bridge mystery. At a recent club game, the vast majority of the field played the above hand in four spades. With one exception, everyone made 10 or 11 tricks. Only one pair recorded a minus score as N/S. Declarer was South, playing in four spades down 1. As you can see, trump split evenly and declarer has no heart losers and one diamond loser. The jack of clubs in onside and doubleton. The declarer was, if not the best player in the room, on the very short list. He did not revoke, pull a wrong card, or expose a card to his detriment. Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to figure out how he went down. Now...on to our defensive tip.

Let's say you're playing 3NT, and you get the lead of a small spot card, for instance the 5 of clubs, that is apparently either from a 4-card suit or a 5-card suit. In that suit, you have Axx and dummy has xx. There's another suit (let's say diamonds) in which you have to knock out an ace, after which you have enough tricks to make your contract. What do you do?

Well, if you've been playing bridge for any length of time at all, hopefully you duck your ace twice. You win the third club, then knock out the ace of diamonds. If the player on your right has the ace, you're safe – if clubs are 5-3, he doesn't have one to return, and if they're 4-4, the defense only gets 3 clubs and the ace of diamonds. If you had won one of the first two tricks, RHO would still have had a club in his hand, and if LHO

had 5 clubs, you'd lose 4 clubs and the ace of diamonds. Down 1.

OK, everyone knows that; why am I wasting your time? Let's move to part B. Same hand, but this time you have Kxx of clubs and RHO wins the ace and returns the queen of clubs. What do you do? Hopefully, you duck the king of clubs at trick 2. Then when RHO plays a third club, you win the king, knock out the ace of diamonds, and make 3NT the same way you made it when you had the ace. But this time there was a blunder, one that a lot of intermediate players make. Did you notice it?

Let's try a third variation. Again you have Kxx of clubs. This time, RHO plays the queen at trick one. What do you do? If you duck the king, RHO may play a second club right through your king to the opening leader's AJxx. Now you're down 2, losing FIVE club tricks and the ace of diamonds. Oops. So what's my point?

When partner leads low in this situation and you have AQx, you shouldn't (almost always) be playing "third hand highest." When you play the ace, you allow declarer to duck his king without risk; it's now the top dog in the suit. Play the queen and declarer will probably grab the king, hoping clubs are 4-4. Now when you win the ace of diamonds, you play ace of clubs and another club and declarer is down one. Notice that the only risk in playing the queen is if declarer has a singleton king. If partner has the king, it doesn't matter whether you win the ace or the queen, and if declarer has it and it isn't singleton, declarer is entitled to a club trick anyway. So add "third hand middle" to your defensive toolbox when you have AQx against 3NT. OK, back to our mystery hand...

Let's look at how players of three very different levels might play this hand on the lead of the ace of diamonds, followed by a diamond ruff and a trump return.

The player who learned how to play two weeks ago draws trump immediately. Then he cashes two hearts and a high diamond. The newest players always like to postpone the pain of losing any tricks. Then a high club (have to lose a trick sooner or later). The defense returns a heart, forcing declarer to ruff. Declarer cashes a club, and when the jack falls doubleton, the ten of clubs is good. Declarer has lost the minor suit aces and a ruff; making 4.

Next comes the early-intermediate player. The early-intermediate player also draws trump, and notices that there's a possible third round club loser. It can't be ruffed, and there's no possible pitch coming. Is he just going to go down? No! Not yet, anyway. He knows about finesses, and spots that ten of clubs in dummy. No sense postponing the inevitable; when he drew trump, he finished in his hand, and he immediately leads up to the ten of clubs. The jack is onside, so the ten forces the ace, and he loses the same three tricks as his less experienced partner. Now let's see how the expert does. He's much better than the other two players. Perhaps there's some sort of triple repeating squeeze that will allow him to make 5?

The expert, of course, knows how to finesse, but he certainly doesn't like to. He can usually figure out a way to get better than an even money return on his gambles. He draws trump, and he does that other expert thing. What was it again? Oh yeah...he counts.

He knows the diamond and spade distribution; now he plays three rounds of hearts, ruffing the third, and both follow. So West had 6 diamonds, 2 spades, and at least 3 hearts; therefore at most 2 clubs. Probably exactly 2 clubs, because he didn't lead one, and people

love to lead singletons. And with a club void, he would have been 6-5 in the red suits, and people like to bid 6-5 hands. At any rate, East has at least two more clubs than West, making the club finesse a bad bet indeed. So he leads a club to the king, West following. Now he knows that clubs are 2-4 (almost certainly) or 1-5 (possibly).

He also knows that East has no diamonds and no spades. If he returns a heart, the expert will pitch his losing clubs and ruff in dummy. Instead, East returns a club. The expert knows that after one round of clubs had been played, East had at least 3 clubs and West had at most 1 club. If West has, specifically, the singleton jack, the expert can play the queen and drop the jack, making his 10th trick with the ten of clubs.

But since East has 2 or 4 clubs more than West, it's far more likely that East holds the jack of clubs and has been skillfully endplayed to lead away from it. So he plays low from hand, as an overwhelming favorite to win the trick in dummy with the 10. A surprised West takes the setting trick with his doubleton jack, and that's how one of the best players in the club gets a cold zero for his efforts.



Summer BBQ Teams

\$15/Person

INCLUDES LUNCH



Director:

Tom Lill (909) 518-6403
thomasmlill8@gmail.com

RSVP / Partnerships:

Caryn Mason (909) 588-8699
cremingtonm@gmail.com

Hamburger, 2 Hot Dogs OR Vegetarian Boca Burger
+ Sides & Dessert

SATURDAY JUNE 13 9:30 am
SATURDAY JULY 11 9:30 am

Location:
Friendship Center

Inland Christian Home
1950 S. Mountain Ave.
Ontario, CA 91762

Each game is 1 Session, 4 rounds, ~6 boards,
depending on attendance.

Cash only

Relax and enjoy a BBQ after the game. Bring
your favorite side dish!

RSVP Required

Around the Units in District 23



Pomona – Covina by Tom Lill www.acblunit551.org

La Fetra Games: Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:45
Claremont Bridge Club: Thursdays 9:30
Individual: June 6, 10:00 a.m., Ontario
Unit Pairs Game: May 16, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
Unit Team Game: June 13, 9:30 a.m., Ontario
The Longest Day: June 19, 8:45 a.m., La Fetra
Unit Pairs Game: June 20, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

Please note that what used to be called “The Longest Day” is now called “Do What You Love to End Alzheimer’s. But that’s too long for the block above here, so ...

Our fundraiser will be Friday, June 19, the regular La Fetra game. We’ll be asking for DONATIONS of \$10 per player for this event. ALL entry fees will go to the Alzheimer’s Association, as the Director will be paid what he’s worth ... OK, an old joke. Not sorry though. You know me!

Here’s the link for online donations:

<https://events.alz.org/fundraisers/thomaslill/unit-551-acbl-do-what-you-love-to-end-alz>

It seems to me that I have not perpetrated a truly **awful** joke in some time, so here goes. The answer will be found after our Quote for the Month: If April showers bring May flowers, what to May flowers bring?

In the May Individual, Yours Truly eked out a win with a paltry 59.38% game. Art Weinstein was breathing down my neck for 2nd, followed closely by Peter Kavounas and Nony Bernal. Next we find Clint Lew and Judy Mogharbel tied for 5th.

We had no promotions this month.

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

At La Fetra:

1	11.08	Fredy Minter
2	8.11	Amr Elghamry
3	7.38	Patrick Finley
4	7.28	Vic Sartor
5	5.91	Caryn Mason
6	5.52	Steve Mancini
7	5.01	Mary Ann Wotring
8	3.84	Tim Finlay
8	3.84	Eileen Finlay
10	3.52	David Raymond

And at the Claremont Bridge Club:

1	2.64	Patrick Finley
2	1.84	Steve Mancini
3	1.51	Steve Andersen
4	1.15	Duane Woodman
4	1.15	Dave Ochroch

At La Fetra, three pairs again topped the magic 65% benchmark. Leading the rest were Fredy Minter – Amr Elghamry at 71.65%. Next, Fredy Minter – Judy Mogharbel at 70.83%, and Fredy and Lulu Minter with 67.19%. Other game winners were David Raymond and Art Weinstein.

Over in Claremont, three of the five winners topped the magic 65%. Best was a 71.8% game by Steve Mancini and Patrick Finley. Next we find Ramona Hernandez – Steve Andersen at 69.44%, and then Sofi Kasubhai – Tom Cusack at 68.25%. Yours Truly – Peter Kavounas were also winners.

This item is a bit late – it was given to me by Patrick Finley back in January, whereupon I promptly forgot about it. Here goes:

As many of you know, the ACBL is divided into 25 regional districts, 20 in the USA, four in Canada and one in Mexico. In each district there are three ‘races’ or competitions among its members. The Ace of Clubs Award recognizes players who earn the most black points in local, over-the-board club competition and seeks to ‘reward’ players who compete regularly at the club level. The Mini-McKenney award recognizes players who earn the most master points in sanctioned tournaments along with club games. The Ace of Virtual

Clubs award recognizes players who earn master points in virtual club play online.

To encourage new and inexperienced players, each district honors fifteen categories of play, with honors going to players who begin the year with 0-5 master points, 5-20 points, and so on up to the highest level, those with 10,000 or more master points.

For District 23, which roughly corresponds to LA County, La Fetrians who placed highly in the district Ace of Clubs rankings include:

0-5 pts: *Louis Sterling placed 4th in the district with 22 black points in 2025

5-20 pts: Olivia Esquibel, 20th in the district with 14 pts

21-50 pts: Patrick Finley, 1st with 136 pts; David Raymond finished 10th with 32 pts

100-200 pts: Art Weinstein 9th with 43 pts; Dan Robinson 22nd with 31 pts

200-300 pts: Peter Kavounas 3rd with 67pts; Richard Parker 7th with 45 pts

300-500 pts: Caryn Mason 1st with 123 pts; Steve Mancini 10th with 49 pts; Duane Woodman 15th with 42 pts

500-1000 pts: Stephen Andersen 15th with 80 pts; 19th Ramona Hernandez with 73 pts; 20th Nona Stokes with 68pts; 22 Gary Atwell with 64 pts

1000-1500: Tom Lill, 20th with 68 pts

1500-2500 *Fredy Minter, 3rd with 206 pts; 20th Mary Ann Wotring with 83 pts

2500-3500: Vic Sartor, 9th with 114 pts; *Kiran Kumar, 21st with 60 pts

10,000 +: *Lulu Minter, 5th with 199 pts

* Not Unit 551 members, but regulars at our La Fetra and Unit games

Note that we have two Unit games next month: the first one, on 6/13, is a team game followed by a BBQ lunch. Note the earlier start time for the team game! Advance sign-up is required if you want to join us for the lunch, but walk-in teams are of course welcome.

I hope you enjoy this Hand of the Month, since it amused me. In a friendly (?) BBO match, as dealer, you hold this hand:

♠ K J 10 9 6 ♥ 5 ♦ 2 ♣ A J 10 7 6 5

Yes, still *another* of those semi-balanced hands I'm so fond of. Talk about a one-trick pony. Well, after all, how much interest can you find in a 4-3-3-3 hand?

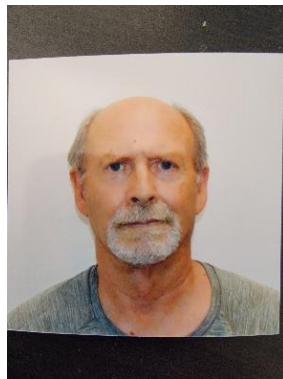
So, do you open this thing? Walter the Walrus sees 9 HCP, only 1½ quick tricks, and passes. Not being of *that* school, I saw a 4-loser hand (KJ10 and AJ10 are both only one loser – work it out for yourself if you don't believe it) and opened 1♠. I don't recall the remaining auction, but I think partner made a limit raise to 3♠. OK – 8 losers for that, my 4 loser hand – so 4♣ it is. I didn't record the opposing hands but here's the dummy I got:

♠ A Q 3 ♥ Q 10 9 4 3 ♦ A 9 5 4 3 ♣ none

The opening lead was the ♥7, won by RHO's Ace, followed by a diamond. So I took my two side aces and then rattled off 8 trump tricks on a complete cross-ruff. A nice swing at IMPs, since many others did not bid the game. As has been said before, shape is more important than high cards! Of course, it would be a lot harder on a trump lead ...

Quote for the month: The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits." (Barry Crane – also attributed to Albert Einstein)

Answer to the opening riddle: Pilgrims, of course!



Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley by Don Dachner

The Santa Clarita Bridge Club has games at the Newhall Community Center on Fridays and Wednesdays at 10 AM. The Friday game is an open game with around 12 tables.

Our Wednesday game features about six tables and is primarily for those in the learning stage, though everyone is welcome. At the Wednesday game, you can take back a bid or ask questions as things happen. There are also mentors at every table to assist.

Both games are free to attend.

On both days at 9:30, there is a half-hour lesson covering various subjects such as 1430 or defense topics usually attended by 10 - 20 people and is usually taught

by Ruth Baker but there have been other teacher volunteers such as Beth Morrin who talked about revokes and how the law works.

Game results:

April 3rd

NS: Rand Pinsky and Ruth Baker 58%
 EW: Donna Davidson and Bill Langlois 67%

April 11th

NS: Bernard Seal and Ruth Baker 60%
 EW: Carole Provost and George MacDonald 68%

April 17th

NS: Alan Nueman and Harry Randhawa 64%
 EW: May Abagi and Hani Abraham 61%

April 24th

NS: John Langer and David Khalieque 63%
 EW: Donna Davidson and Bill Langlois 63%

This month, we are celebrating Bill Langlois reaching the milestone of Platinum Life Master with 10,000 master points!

A native Rhode Islander, Bill has a degree from Notre Dame '53, and a graduate degree from Brown in '57. As an applied mathematician, Bill spent most of his career in the field of fluid dynamics at the DuPont Experimental Station and IBM Research. After retiring, he taught math as a community college instructor.

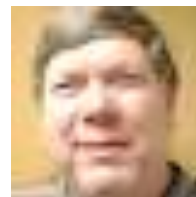
Bill grew up in a card-playing family playing whist which is similar to bridge, so he didn't consider himself a beginner when he began playing bridge. He credits his success to a sharp memory and a classic piece of advice: "Always give the opponents a chance to make a mistake."

After moving to California in 1959, he honed his bridge skills under the legendary Ed Barlow. He once came within a heartbreaking half-point of winning a National title which would have made him a Grand Life Master.

Bill moved to Santa Clarita three years ago to be closer to his daughter in Val Verde. When he isn't with family, you can find him winning at the bridge table with his regular partner, Donna Davidson.

Cheers to Bill on a remarkable achievement!

Bill with his "Brazilian son" Edison Berthold and wife. Bill hosted him as an exchange student and they have always kept in touch.



Long Beach by Leo Ditemore

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

Unit 557 continues its strong spring momentum with excellent attendance, standout performances, and major championship preparation all moving forward in sync.



Non-Life Master Sectional Success

Our May Non-Life Master Sectional delivered an outstanding day of bridge and community spirit.

- 8 tables competed in the morning session
- 15 tables filled the room in the afternoon session

The turnout, energy, and sportsmanship made this one of our most successful NLM Sectionals in recent years. Congratulations to all who participated and supported the event.



Big Games & Player Highlights

We proudly recognize two exceptional 75% games this month:

- Ed Piken & Steve Ramos — 75% on 5/7
- John Bakovic & Jo Melis — 75% on 5/11

These remarkable results reflect disciplined bidding, sharp card play, and strong partnership trust. Performances like these elevate the entire club.



Preparing for District GNT Finals

Unit 557 players are now gearing up for the Grand National Teams District Finals on 5/31.

Our teams have been practicing, reviewing hands, and sharpening competitive focus. We look forward to seeing strong representation from our unit at the district level.

San Fernando Valley by Toni Hansen

Did you note in the Bridge Bulletin that our very own Fuad Khuri took NATIONAL FIRST PLACE in the 1500-2500 Helen Shanbrom Ace of Clubs. **Well done, Sir!**

Congratulations to new rankers!

New Gold Life Master	Nancy Zeller
New Regional Master	Carol Goldman
New Club Master	Chuan Wang

Alan Curtis and Michael Klemens broke the dry spell with a 70% game on April 20.

We celebrated the birthdays of Alan Curtis and Janet Cooper at our Unit game with 4 different types of cake. Everyone's sweet tooth was well satisfied.

After 15 weeks we wrapped up our EasyBridge program for beginning players. Over 2 dozen students were registered during the course of the session. We hope that translates into long term players in one form or another.

To encourage that, The 750 Club added a 10:30 game on Saturday mornings for players with 99 or fewer ACBL master points. Though it is a sanctioned game, it is open to anyone who wants to play, even if they don't belong to ACBL. Please join us at 20855 Ventura Blvd, Woodland Hills, phone 818.805.3044. The inaugural game even enlisted 2 new ACBL members!

Plans are starting plans for a Longest Day game on June 14 to benefit Alzheimer's Research at the 750 Club. Please put it on your calendar.

Downey-Whittier by Daniel F. Oakes

The month started with a bang on April 1st, when Dan Oakes & Bob Hamman, visiting the club

from Texas, were 1st with a 78% game. I can't take credit, because it was mostly Bob's doing. I also can't take credit, because that didn't happen. You may have noticed, our first game of the month was on April Fool's Day. Gotcha?!

Meanwhile, back in the real world, the actual winners on April 1st were Gabby Sill & Jon Yinger, half a matchpoint ahead of John Jones & Nancy Stebbins. Tying for both 3rd overall and 1st B were Raj Ramchandani & Kiran Kumar and Jack Rainsberry & Bill Skupen.

On April 8th, Ramchandani & Dobson improved their way into the winner's circle. Mike Ventri & Dan Oakes were 2nd, and Alan Flower & Jon Yinger finished 3rd. Yas Takeda & Robert Yu rounded out the A prizes, while Skupen & Rainsberry were 1st B. Anita Frost & Toni Hoffman were 2nd B and 1st C.

Sill & Yinger were back on top on Tax Day, April 15th. Jones & Stebbins picked up another silver medal. Clinton Lew & Stephen Anderson were 3rd (and 1st B), while the C prize went to Ramchandani & Dobson, along with a tie for 2nd B Rainsberry & Skupen.

On April 22nd, Takeda & Yu edged out Ventri & Oakes for 1st. Skupen & Rainsberry (is there ever a game where they DON'T get points?!) were 3rd. Bob & Linda Krause took 4th overall and 1st B, ahead of 2nd B Ramchandani & Dobson (them too).

Rounding out the month, Jones & Stebbins powered their way into 1st with the month's only 70% game (70.50, but who's counting?), ahead of a couple of scores that might have won on some weeks – Mike Ventri & Steve Hough's 59.5% and the Krauses' 57%. The Krauses took not only 3rd overall, but 1st B.

West L.A. by Elisa Leonelli

The Beverly Hills Bridge Club is the best and only place in West L.A. to learn how to play bridge or get back into the game.

On both Saturday and Sunday mornings, 10am to 12pm, Dawn Lee, BHBC President, teaches a beginners' class. I audited it and, with other volunteers, I helped the players figure out how to bid the hands that Dawn had carefully assembled and indexed to practice her lesson on cue bids.

On Saturdays, also from 10 to 12, but in the larger of the two rooms that the club has been renting from the City of Beverly Hills since 1992, Nancy Heck holds advanced beginner lessons that she created with Powerpoint and shows on a large computer screen. I had attended one Supervised Play cycle, when the club reopened in 2022 after the COVID closure, but I went back last month to watch Nancy teach. I was enlisted to play at one of the tables that was missing a fourth, when practice hands were handed out.

Congratulations to Nancy who earned the rank of Sapphire Life Master in April.

Students pay the same \$15 per lesson as it is charged for games, and 10 vouchers may be purchased for \$135.

Every other Thursday night, expert lectures are held before the 7pm weekly game. On April 23 Danny Kleinman illustrated tips on "How to mislead the defenders."

On April 25 a special event was held for intermediate players of the 750 Limited game. Sharon Benyon taught a simplified version of the lecture "The Invisible Rules of Duplicate Bridge" that she had held for players in the Thursday Open game on February 12. It was a huge success, 50 people attended. A record numbers of 34 players stayed that day for the Limited game, and 52 for the Open game.

Both games are held at 1 pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

Attendance went up in April for the Monday Open game at 12.30pm, after pizza was served, following a board decision. Pizza has always been offered on Thursday evenings to accommodate players coming to the club directly from work in rush hour traffic without time to have dinner.

Additionally new manager Alan Curtis introduced benefit games with higher master points during the month of April, which encouraged more players to register.

Trivia: Both rooms of the BHBC are named after streets in Beverly Hills. Rodeo Drive, from the 1700s Spanish-Mexican land grant Rancho Rodeo de las Aguas. Doheny Drive, from Edward Laurence "E.L." Doheny, who struck black gold near Echo Park in 1892.

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

- \$100: What is a preempt?
- \$200: What is 2♦ waiting (or negative)?
- \$300: What is Michaels?
- \$400: What is a sacrifice?
- \$500: What is a psych?

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

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!

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 thomasmlill8@gmail.com
 Editor/Designer. Tom Lill
 Managing Editor. Jordon Chodorow
 Contributing Editor. John Jones

Copy deadlines: the 10th of the month. Opinions expressed in the Southern California Bridge News are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of ALACBU, Inc., The Bridge News or the Editor. The Bridge News reserves the right to reject material it considers to be in poor taste or deems otherwise unsuitable for publication.

Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Wafik Abdou, Mark Bartusek, Sid Brownstein, David Chechelashvili, Mitch Dunitz, Ellis Feigenbaum, Alex Kolesnick, Margie Michelin, Rick Roeder, 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.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em; margin: 0;">1</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">IMPs N0S Vul</p>	<table style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">South</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">West</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">North</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">East</th> </tr> <tr> <td>pass</td> <td>pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>pass</td> <td>pass</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>???</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	South	West	North	East	pass	pass	1♠	2♥	pass	pass	2♠	pass	???			
South	West	North	East														
pass	pass	1♠	2♥														
pass	pass	2♠	pass														
???																	
	<p>* Splinter, GF spade raise with 4+ spades, and diamond shortness</p> <p>You, South, hold: ♠ K5 ♥ AQ652 ♦ J6 ♣</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">What call do you make?</p>																

Partner opened in third seat and didn't make a weak-two. Partner balanced, not with the call we were hoping for "Double", but she did reopen. She definitively has an opening bid, just not a good defensive hand. I think we owe partner at least three spades, and with a vulnerable game hanging in the balance, I'd take the pressure off of partner and bid it.

Some hang on to their plus score.

Feigenbaum: Pass. Sometimes it's not worth the risk.

Kolesnick: Pass. I know partner did not open 2♠, but I think partner would double back in with all hands that would have a play for game.

Some invite.

Bartusek: 3♠. Partner didn't reopen with a double, so they must have a bad hand or a very distributional one. My actions should show a trap pass, otherwise I would have acted on the first round. I won't hang partner with a game bid.

Michelin: 2NT/3♠S. Is my partner still alive after not reopening with a double for me? Surely, he must be short in hearts. He didn't open 2♠ in third seat, which could still be an opening hand since I was a passed hand. He must have a hand not truly conducive for a reopening double. If 2NT implies this hand, one with good hearts,

willing to play spades with a holding like honor doubleton and invitational values that would be my choice. I think I have too much to pass. Raising spades may be right.

Chechelashvili: 3♠. Tough! 2♠ could be the last contract to make if partner has ♠AQJxxx ♥void ♦Qxx ♣Kxxx), or 4♠ could be cold (if partner has ♠AQJxxx ♥void ♦xx ♣Axxxx, (or reverse clubs and diamonds). A lot will depend on the lead, and if my RHO has a good lead option. I am still going to invite with 3♠, since it is a red game, although I am pretty sure partner is minimum with the void in hearts for his failure to reopen with a double.

Brownstein: 3♠. I'll try for game.

Wittes: 3♠. The Kx of spades is a good holding, and my hearts are well located, so I'll give it one push.

Some, like me, overbid a little.

Abdou: 4♠. This seems straight forward. Even if West can ruff a heart, East may not lead from the king. 3NT is unilateral, an overbid and West may double for a heart lead.

Dunitz: 4♠. The heart queen may not be useful but I won't bid less.

Roeder: 4♠. My minors do not suggest No Trump. Being vulnerable, no sense pussy-footing around.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">2</h1> <p>Matchpoints N-S Vul</p>	East	South	West	North
	2♠*	X	3♠	4♥
	pass	???		

* Garden variety Weak Two

You, South, hold: ♠A ♥A1065 ♦AJ1086 ♣AJ10

What call do you make?

Everyone moves here, but there are three schools of thought: blast the slam, cuebid 4♠, or bid 4NT (RKC).

The blaster.

Brownstein: 6♥. This should have play.

The RKC bidders:

Chechelashvili: 4NT. I don't think partner will bid 4♥ just on just KQxxx alone, so hopefully he has some useful holding in the minors so we can make a slam or a grand slam.

Dunitz: 4NT. I won't settle for less than 6♥. I'll start with the old wood, and assuming I find one keycard and the trump Q, I'll invite grand with 5NT.

Bartusek: 4NT. A simple RKC auction to determine how high we should get.

Abdou: 4NT. I think I have enough, 4♠ would just torture partner.

Michelin: 4NT. I could cuebid spades but that will not help since my partner has no aces to cuebid back. I am going to trot out RKC and see what happens.

It may be putting some pressure on partner to cue a king or something after they have already shown some stuff on an aceless hand, but maybe the most accurate call is 4♠ to keep partner involved.

Wittes: 4♠. Whether it's Keycard or a cuebid, my hand is well worth a 4♠ bid.

Feigenbaum: 4♠. Let's get partner in on the decision-making process here.

Kolesnick: 4♠ (cuebid). I have too much to pass, although I know partner may be under some pressure. I will pass a retreat to 5♥, but bid slam otherwise.

Roeder: 4♠. Since you hold all the bullets, this will likely just delay your problem to the next round. I am slam-bound, since as little as KQxxx of hearts and the diamond Q from partner might give you play for a grand. *That might be on a finesse opposite that hand.* 4NT is also OK.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">IMPs N-S Vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	1♠	pass	2♥	pass
	2♠	pass	3♣	pass
	4♣	pass	4♠	pass
	???			
	<p>You, South, hold: ♠AQ10654 ♥4 ♦A6 ♣A876</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>			

The first question in this auction is whether 2♠ shows six spades. The second question might be whether 4♣ is automatic Minorwood. I don't like the treatment and no panelist mentioned it, but I think some of them play automatic Minorwood. The third question is what did 4♠ show. Partnership agreements and partner's style become important here.

Some of the panelists go low and end the auction.

Bartusek: Pass, Partner is just offering up an alternative 4♠ contract. It seems like a possible hand for partner is ♠xx ♥AKJxx ♦xx(x) ♣KQx(x). Partner was hoping you could bid 3NT with a diamond stopper, rebid spades or give a heart preference. Partner would have bid 4♦ or 4♥ to try for slam in clubs.

Brownstein: Pass. Slam looks unlikely.

Most of the others either try 4NT (RKC, but with which trump fit?) or cuebid 5♦.

Abdou: 4NT. Assuming 4♠ was an offer with Kx or something we may have a club grand. Partner might have ♠Kx ♥Axxxx ♦x ♣KQxxx.

Roeder: 4NT. Many pairs play that the 2♠ rebid does not guarantee a 6-bagger, making the meaning of 4♠ murky. I do not believe 4♠ is an offer to play as 3♠ was not bid on the previous round. Partner may have a great hand lacking a diamond control. Regardless, my 3 bullets necessitate a forward move. In such situations where the Keycard suit could be ambiguous, I believe that the suit should be the first suit explicitly agreed.

Wittes: 4NT. I don't have a good heart fit for partner, but the rest of my hand should be quite valuable.

Chechelashvili: 4NT. To me, partner is patterning out, and probably is 2=5=1=5. Even if it is just a cuebid (singleton K), I can always offer a choice of slams providing we have the right number of keycards.

Dunitz: 4NT. Slam is possible and clubs could certainly play better than spades. For example, give partner ♠Kx, ♥KQxxx, ♦xx, ♣KQxx. 6♠ has no play on a diamond lead while 6♣ is cold with 3-2 splits in both black suits. That's not great but if you give partner the spade jack or a fifth club, things look brighter. I would bid 4NT keycard in spades.

Others choose my selection: 5♦.

Feigenbaum: 5♦. I cuebid the diamonds and let partner have a shot at putting us in the best spot.

Kolesnick: 5♦. ♠Kx ♥AKxxx ♦xx ♣KQxx gives us play for a grand, so I will make a move. Probably 5♦ is best. Over 5♥, I will bid 5♠ and let partner decide.

Michelin: 5♦. My partner is looking for a diamond control so I will bid it. We are going to slam. I don't think he has Kx of spades, since he didn't raise after 2♠. Maybe he has a stiff king. By bidding 5♦ and not just 6♣ I am implying that 7 is a possibility. I am probably overbidding by three tricks but I would hate for partner to call me a wimpette with all my good controls.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">4</h1> <p>IMPs Both Vul</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">South</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">West</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">North</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">East</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">1♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">1♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">3♦*</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">???</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	South	West	North	East	1♥	1♠	3♦*	4♠	???			
	South	West	North	East									
	1♥	1♠	3♦*	4♠									
???													
<p>* Fitted jump, Diamonds with 4+ Hearts, limit raise or better.</p> <p>You, South, hold: ♠void ♥AKQ984 ♦1065 ♣A876</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What call do you make?</p>													

Dunitz: 4NT. Make it sound like I have a singleton spade. *Cute!* Slam should have play on a spade lead. This is the best way to induce a spade lead. 5♣ might do the same thing.

Some try 5♠.

Chechelashvili: 5♠. I'm hoping to hear 6♦ from partner with ♠x ♥xxxx ♦AKQxxx ♣xx. Holding less, partner can always bid 6♥.

Feigenbaum: 5♠. This must show a club control, about the only way to find seven if it's there.

Kolesnick: 5♠. I'll bid 5♠. If partner has a minimum I suspect 6♥ will have play. Seven is certainly possible if partner has AKQxx of diamonds and the club king.

Other panelists like 5♣.

Michelin: 5♣. I will bid 5♣. I'm hoping to hear 5♦ in which case I will bid 5♠. That should get across solid hearts first round control of clubs and spades. *You may say "I'm a dreamer", but I'm not the only one.* I was taught to wish partner to hold the hand I want him to have but more importantly to figure out what I am doing.

Roeder: 5♣. For better or worse, not stopping short of slam. This is a better tactical bid than 6♥ since that stab more strongly suggests a spade void. I want a spade lead.

Brownstein: 5♣. Partner's cards appear to be working.

Abdou: 5♣. Partner has no wasted values in hearts, I am worth a try opposite no spade wastage.

Wittes: 6♥. With solid hearts, a side fit for diamonds, a spade void, and the ace of clubs, slam looks like a good proposition.

Bartusek: 6♥. It'll be very difficult getting partner to cooperate to bid a grand; so, I'll just bid what is most likely the best contract. Give the opponents the final guess.

The fitted jump may be new to some of the readers, but the panel didn't blink. Fitted jumps are routine at the expert level and the panel all loved the hand. I like all the answers, but I guess would bid 5♣.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">5</h1> <p>IMPS Both Vul.</p>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
	3♦	pass	pass	X
	pass	???		
<p>You, South, hold: ♠96 ♥Q107 ♦J1054 ♣Q1076</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

The panel loved this problem so much that you might think that “Ugh” and “Yuk” were part of the standard expert bridge vocabulary! Several of the panelists considered pass and might well convert the double at matchpoints. But they run here. Let’s listen to the panel.

Dunitz: Yuck! 3♥.

Kolesnick: 3♥. I hate passing a doubled partscore at IMPs. It’s between 3♥ and 4♣. I lean towards 3♥, although that can be very wrong.

Michelin: 3♥. I have soft values. 3NT may be right but I am bidding 3♥. It’s IMPs, I don’t think my one diamond trick is enough to pass for penalties even though one of my queens will be working.

Chechelashvili: 3NT. Maybe I will get lucky and catch partner with ♠KJxx ♥AJxx ♦Void ♣AKxxx. Passing is too dangerous; they might even make it with some luck on their side.

Roeder: 4♣. Passing is for matchpoints. IMPs is a more cowardly game, especially opposite a balancing double.

Brownstein: 4♣. Yuk!

Wittes: 4♣. I don’t like any bid with this hand, but if partner has a very good hand with support for 3 suits, 4♣ is the least dangerous bid. Passing the double could be right, but the 3♦ bidder is vulnerable, so it is likely they don’t have too many losers in their own hand.

Abdou: 4♣. Ugh, 4♣ and pray. I can’t stomach passing (at MPs it is worth a shot). Partner may be balancing on shape and not overwhelming strength: ♠KQxx ♥Axxx ♦x ♣Kxxx.

I love my panelists. They are my friends, partners, and teammates. But I am firmly in the camp that doesn’t run from this double. I think that our best shot at a plus score (yes, I think we are over 50% to beat it), is passing. Bidding is more likely to get a minus score, and 3♥ or 4♣ may get raised when they were squeaking out a make. I agree with my friend Ellis, put a green card on the table, then put a club on the table (a spade is not a hopeless lead). For those of you doubting my wisdom. I will point out that only two of the panelists gave sample hands (Wafik and David). On both of those examples, passing looks best. Mel’s Rule of 9 also suggests passing.

Bartusek: Pass. This is a nightmare scenario. Partner will assume that I have four hearts if I bid 3♥. I can hope that I have two defensive tricks and that partner has extras.

Feigenbaum: Pass. I lead a club.