

Southern California

Bridge News

Volume 63, #6

June 2026

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

by Jordan Chodorow



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

The D23 GNT Final was held May 31 at Long Beach Bridge Center and saw eighteen teams vie to represent L.A. County at the Summer NABC in Minneapolis. Before we get to the winners, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to our new GNT coordinator, Jeanne Sinsheimer, for her tireless work in organizing a highly successful event that turned a meaningful profit for the District. Thanks also to all those who played a part in this year’s event.

Hearty congratulations to the winning teams. Open: Ifiti Baqai; Mitch Dunitz; Alex Kolesnik and Walt Schafer. Flight A: Nathan Gong; Ming Hu; Yonghuang Huang; and Ho Ming Yim. Flight B: Jim Brunet; Alyssa Kennedy; Rick Turner; and Alex Wiles. Flight C: Jason Howard; Tommy Howard; Barry Sinsheimer; and Jeanne Sinsheimer.

The winning Flight A and Flight B teams have elected not to attend the NABC, so the second place teams in those flights will ably represent us. Flight A: John Bakovic; Alan Flower; Lance Kerr; and Tom Reynolds. Flight B: Diane Elliot; Robert Jennings; Caryn Mason; and Bill Taylor. We wish all our representatives the best of luck in Minnesota.

Cornelia Gould reported at our June 7 meeting that the ACBL’s site selection committee found that the Westin Bonaventure does not currently meet its needs for an NABC, and therefore the Spring 2029 NABC appears to be headed to San Francisco. Good news,

PRESIDENT continued on page 2

Regional Director’s Report

by Cornelia Gould

(Region11Director@acbl.org)



I was perusing the ACBL website recently and noticed that D23 was short two members to the ACBL Advisory Council. This is an important ACBL body and I was hoping that two members of D23 would step forward to fill these slots. Advisory Council members serve three-year terms, which are staggered among the districts. The next term for D23 Advisory Council representatives will run from January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2029. If more than three people in a district run for the three slots, an election is held. The election period for the 2027-2029 term has already expired, and Sharon Beynon was elected to represent D23 by default. Now that the election period has passed, members of D23 who are interested in holding one of the two open positions, may submit their names to your D23 President, Jordon Chodorow at president@d23acbl.org. Since writing the above paragraph, two people have stepped forward to possibly fill these slots. However, I also want to educate the D23 membership on what the Advisory Council is.

What is the ACBL Advisory Council, and why would you want to serve as a D23 representative to it? What are the duties and responsibilities?

DIRECTOR continued on page2

Inside This Issue	
Bridge Jeopardy	page 2
GNT Winning Teams	page 3
New Life Master	page 3
Rank Changes	page 4
Around the Units	page 7
District 23 Presidents Listing	page 10
Problem Solvers’ Panel	page 12

PRESIDENT continued from page 1

though: we are told that another D23 hotel is under consideration, and we remain in contention to be awarded an NABC, perhaps as early as Spring or Fall 2030. I am heartened that there appears to be real momentum to bring “the nationals” back to Los Angeles.

Start making your plans to play in the D23 Summer STaC, July 20-26.

And if you are - or know - a bridge playing high school graduate carrying a 3.0 GPA or higher, consider completing the ALACBU scholarship application, which can be found on our website at <http://www.d23acbl.org>.

DIRECTOR continued from page 1

The Advisory Council was established years ago under the ACBL Bylaws (it was formerly called the Board of Governors.) Its purpose is to, in the words of the Bylaws, 1) act as a forum for the expression of opinion by the membership; 2) act as a liaison between members and both the Boards of Directors and ACBL management to ensure the needs and concerns of the membership are addressed; and 3) to improve communication and coordination among Districts and Units.

The Advisory Council generally meets from three to six times per year, usually in conjunction with the three annual NABC tournaments. These meetings are all held on Zoom, with the summer NABC meeting generally also held in person in conjunction with that NABC. At these meetings, the Advisory Council ratifies Bylaws changes proposed by the ACBL Board of Directors, and can vote to bring bridge-related issues to the attention of the Board.

Serving on the Advisory Council gives one the opportunity to become more active in the bridge community, both locally and nationally. It is hoped that district representatives will communicate local issues to the Advisory Council, and will also bring information learned at Advisory Council meetings back to local Units. The Advisory Council serves an important purpose in linking local Units and Districts with the national Board and ACBL management. Hopefully D23 will see the value and increase its representation on this important body.

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

Bridge Jeopardy *by John Jones*

Category – Famous Bridge Partnerships

First, a list of some of my favorite non-bridge partnerships:

- 1 – Batman & Robin
- 2 – Laurel & Hardy
- 3 – Lennon & McCartney
- 4 – Marty McFly & Doc Brown
- 5 – Sherlock Holmes & Dr Watson
- 6 – Snoppy & Charlie Brown
- 7 – Simon & Garfunkle
- 8 – Lewis & Clark
- 9 - Yogi Bear & BooBoo Bear
- 10 – Fred Astaire & Ginger Rodgers
- 11 – Abbott & Costello
- 12 – John Stockton & Karl Malone
- 13 – Clark Kent & Lois Lane

These are only some of my favorite partnerships. I’ll include more next month.

And the answer is ...

\$100 – They play a forcing club system, are known for very aggressive bidding, and their names together form the name of a convention for bidding over 1NT openers. One of them has over 100,000 Masterpoints.

\$200 – Both of them have the first name Robert (but neither goes by Robert), they were members of the Dallas Aces, and played a forcing club system with 4-card major openings.

\$300 – One of them was nicknamed “Broadway Billy”, and the other was a local expert who lived near the beach, was a champion at anything with a paddle, and a candidate for the best bridge writer ever.

\$400 – The two best players on the Italian Blue team. They played the Blue Team Club, a forcing club system based on the Neapolitan Club. One of them won 18 World Championships. The other won 13 championships, his life partner (who also played bridge) was the famous Lea DuPont.

\$500 – Both of these partners had last names beginning with the letter K. One of them was the editor of the Bridge World magazine. He promoted (along with Alfred Sheinwold), a system of bidding involving 5-card majors and weak NTs. The other one was known for always looking twice at a card before playing it, and was known for his calmness in difficult situations.

Grand National Teams Winners by Jeanne Sinsheimer

Congratulations to the following winners of the D23 Grand National Teams event, held recently in Long Beach. These teams are eligible to represent our District at the summer NABC in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Open Flight



Mitch Dunitz Ifti Bacqai
Walter Schaefer Alex Kolesnik

Flight A (0 – 6000 Masterpoints)



Yonghaung (Jeffrey) Huang
Nathan Gong
Ming Hu
Ho Ming Yim

Flight B (0 – 3000 Masterpoints)



Rick Turner
Alessa Kennedy
Alex Wiles
Jim Burnet

Flight C (0 – 750 Masterpoints)



Jason Howard Jeanne Sinsheimer
Tommy Howard Barry Sinsheimer

(We apologize for the name jumble for the Flight A and Flight B teams. Only the pictures and names were supplied. If the team members will contact us, matching up names and faces, we'll include a correction next month.)

District 23 Rank Changes June 2026

Junior Master

Nicolas Abeles
Nathalie Sarshalom
Candy Susnow

Club Master

Merrily D. Adams
Susan W. Bullock
David Foos
Caryn Grun
Vaughan W. Inman
Shantha Sutharshana

Sectional Master

Elizabeth Sweedyk

Regional Master

Tommy B. Howard
Nick Schwieterman

NABC Master

Andy P. Rooke
George E. Stinson
Gregory Z. Tsien

Advanced NABC Master

Robert Cook
Toban Toban

Life Master

Susan J. Briest

Bronze Life Master

Susan J. Briest

Silver Life Master

Kristi Kubo
Charles E. Laine

Gold Life Master

Thad Mikols

New Life Master
contributed by Mike Marcucci



Margery Teller – Nov 25
Unit 562



DISTRICT 23

North American Pairs Finals

Oct. 26, 2025

Pasadena Bridge Club 649 N Fair Oaks 201

sanction # 2510723

Unit Level Qualifying

Pre qualification at Club level required by Aug. 31

Finals

Sunday, Oct. 26 @ 10 am
and
Sunday, Oct. 26 @ 3 pm

National Finals will be held during the Spring Nationals in St. Louis
Pre-registration for L.A. Final by Oct. 20 required.
Card fees are \$36 (\$18 per session)

Point Limits and Conventions

Points as of September 2025

Championship: Unlimited, Open + chart
Flight A : 0-6000, Open chart Flight B : 0-3000, Basic + chart Flight C : Non-LM < 750, Basic chart

Maximum Masterpoint Awards

May be less, depending on game size
Championship Flight: 48.00 Gold
Flight A : 40.00 Gold
Flight B : 33.50 Gold
Flight C : 20.00, 50% Gold, 50% Red

Event chair

Jeff Grotenhuis • District 23 NAP
Coordinator email: jeffgro@gmail.com
cell: 310-600-4275 text preferred

Conditions of Contest may be found at:
<http://www.bridgewebs.com/acbl23>





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:** NO Individual in July
- The Longest Day:** June 19, 8:45 a.m., La Fetra
- Unit Pairs Game:** June 20, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
- Unit Team Game:** July 11, 9:30 a.m., Ontario
- Unit Pairs Game:** July 18, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
- Unit Board Meeting:** 10:15 a.m. before the game

Our “Longest Day” 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>

In the June Individual, Sofi Kasubhai turned in an impressive 72.73% effort to take top honors. Newcomer (to our games, at any rate) Elliot Meltzer took second, Judy Mogharbel tied third David Ochroch fourth, and Nony Bernal rounded out the list of top finishers.

In the May Unit game, Tim and Eileen Finlay topped the field with 62.04%. Steve Mancini – Patrick Finley placed second, Steve Andersen – David Raymond third, and Yours Truly – Judy Mogharbel squeaked into fourth.

Our June team game was a rousing success, with 10 teams vying for glory. The team of Vic Sartor, Caryn Mason, Patrick Finley, and Steve Mancini trashed the field, winning all four matches. Second was taken by the team of Karen McCarthy, Bruce Leavitt, Joe Maresh, and Mark Gersh. The “show” window paid off to Elizabeth Silvius, David Kennedy, Richard

Parker, Vaughn Inman, and Robert Davis. (Yes, 5- and 6-person teams are allowable.)

We had one promotions this month: Vaughan Inman is now a Club Master.

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

At La Fetra:

1	10.26	Fredy Minter
2	10.21	Patrick Finley
3	9.82	Caryn Mason
4	8.96	Tom Lill
5	8.07	Steve Mancini
6	7.86	Nona Stokes
6	7.86	Ramona Hernandez
8	7.85	Amr Elghamry
9	5.87	Steve Andersen
10	5.22	Vic Sartor

And at the Claremont Bridge Club:

1	1.88	Patrick Finley
1	1.88	Steve Mancini
3	1.71	Tom Cusack
3	1.71	Sofi Kasubhai
5	1.46	Peter Kavounas
5	1.46	Tom Lill

At La Fetra, no fewer than six pairs topped the magic 65% benchmark. Leading the rest were Peter Kavounas – Richard Parker with a very nice 71.19% game. Then there is a cluster just over the bar. Caryn Mason – Patrick Finley scored 67.00%, Fredy Minter – Amr Elghamry 68.63%, Karen McCarthy – Yours Truly at 65.33%, then Fredy and Amr again at 65.33%, and final Caryn and Patrick again, at 65.25% – which was only good for second place that day! Vic Sartor, Ramona Hernandez, and Nona Stokes also found themselves winners.

Over in Claremont, there was only one game over the magic 65%, but it was a whopper: 77.51%, by Steve Mancini and Patrick Finley. The other leaders at least gave the other players a chance: Marjorie Prestonz – Steve Andersen at 69.44%, and Yours Truly – Peter Kavounas.

Following on from last month, Patrick Finley also collated the list of Mini-McKenney winners from our Unit that placed high in District 23. Here it is:

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 Mini-McKenny rankings include:

0-5 Points Serena (Ce Ce) Mougharbel was 3rd with 39 points; *Louis Sterling was 5th with 31 pts

5-20 Points Olivia Esquibel was 21st with 15 pts

50-100 Points Patrick Finley was 1st with 150 pts and David Raymond was 13th with 33 pts

100-200 pts Art Weinstein was 6th with 68 pts; Dan Robinson was 23rd with 40 pts

200-300 pts Peter Kavounas was 3rd with 153 pts; Richard Parker was 5th with 146 pts

300-500 pts Caryn Mason was 1st with 172 pts; Steve Mancini was 15th with 64 pts

500-1000 pts Stephen Andersen was 11th with 146 pts; Sofi Kasubhai was 21st with 113

1000-1500 pts Judy Mogharbel was 13th with 157 pts; Tom Lill was 15th with 150

1500-2500 pts *Fredy Minter was 2nd with 291 pts; Harish Singh was 18th with 144 pts; Clint Lew was 20th with 136

2500-3500 *Kiran Kumar was 8th with 177 pts; Vic Sartor was 14th with 135

7500-10,000 Amr Elghamry was 4th with 121 pts

10,000 up *Lulu Minter was 7th with 449 pts.

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

Note that we have two Unit games again next month: the first one, on 7/11, is a team game followed by a BBQ lunch. Note the earlier start time for the team game! Advance sign-up is required: we can only accommodate 10 teams.

Here's another hand-of-the-month that is strictly for amusement. With no one vulnerable, after three passes, I found myself holding the following hand:

♠ Q 4 3 ♥ K 9 ♦ K Q J 10 9 8 6 4 ♣ void

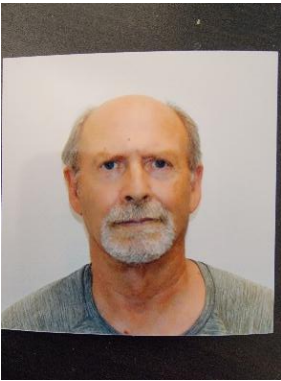
Not a classical opening bid by any means, but you know the old jape: "What do you call an 8-card suit? TRUMPS!" A 1♦ opening is just begging for competition in the majors, so I decided on 3♦! The looks I got from the other three players was priceless! A fourth seat PRE-EMPT? To quote King Leonardo, "Why that's the most unheard of thing I ever heard of." But 3♦ became the final contract.

It turned out that this was the full deal:

♠ KJ8	
♥ 8653	
♦ 53	
♣ AK94	
♠ 7652	♠ A109
♥ AQ	♥ J10742
♦ 7	♦ A2
♣ QJ10532	♣ 876
♠ Q43	
♥ K9	
♦ KQJ109864	
♣ void	

The opening lead of the ♣Q enabled me to ditch my two hearts; making five! Double dummy, I can be held to 9 tricks: a spade the Ace, and a heart back through the K-9. But who (without cheating) leads a spade from that holding, when also holding that nice club sequence??

Quote for the month: "Four or five frigates will do the business without any military force." (On dealing with the rebellious American colonies, 1774). (Lord North, British Prime Minister)



Santa Clarita- Antelope Valley by Don Dachner

The Santa Clarita Bridge Club has games at the Newhall Community Center on Saturdays during the summer at

10 AM which is a free open game with around 12 tables preceded by a half hour lesson on various subjects.

Game results:

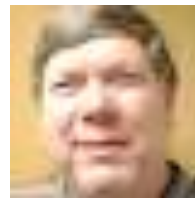
May 1st		
NS: Russ Gray - Steve Cormier		66%
EW: Bill Langlois - Donna Davidson		64%
May 8th		
NS: Sara Seely - Jacky Moor		63%
EW: Marc Brifman - Susan Strassner		57%
May 15th		
NS: May Abagi - Hani Abaham		60%
EW: Carole Provost - George MacDonald		64%
May 22nd		
NS: John Langer - David Khalieque		62%
EW: Bill Langlois - Donna Davidson		65%
May 29		
NS: Bernard Seal - Ruth Baker		60%
EW: Doug Nogle - Russ Gray		59%

We would like to congratulate these guys on turning 90 years old!

Congratulations!

From left to right: Harry Randhawa, George MacDonald and Ted Maki

Harry and George played bridge for years during the lunch hour at Lockheed, and Ted did the same at Litton.



Long Beach by Leo Dittmore

www.acblunit557.org

www.LongBeachBridge.com

Sorry, nothing from Long Beach this month.

San Fernando Valley by Toni Hansen

Sorry, nothing from San Fernando this month.

Downey-Whittier by Daniel F. Oakes

Sorry, nothing from Downey-Whittier this month.

West L.A. by Elisa Leonelli

There has been an exciting development at the Beverly Hills Bridge Club. During the months of April and May new manager Alan Curtis set up charity and championship games that caused our players to earn many more ACBL Masterpoints than usual.

Danny Kleinman and John Lu set the club record of 4.46 BLACK points on Saturday May 16, on

second place with 4.30 BLACK points on Sunday May 24 were Rachel Simon and Jay Swerdlow.

ACBL (American Contract Bridge League) changed the rules several times, since its founding in 1937, about ranks and how many pigmented or color points are required. Currently (if you joined after January 1, 2010) for Life Master (500-75 silver, 100 red/gold/platinum), Bronze (750), Silver (1000-200 silver/red/gold/platinum), Ruby (1500-300 s/r/g/p), Gold (2500-500 s/r/g/p) Sapphire (3500-700 s/r/g/p), Diamond (5000-1000 s/r/g/p), Emerald (7500-1500 s/r/g/p), Platinum (10000-2000 s/r/g/p). For Grand Life Master you have to win a qualifying event. Ruby and Sapphire ranks were added in 2016.

Congratulations to Rick Turner (Gold Life Master) and his team for winning the District 23 Championship for ACBL Grand National Teams.

For beginner and intermediate players the ranks below Life Master are: Junior Master (5 points), Club Master (20 points). Congratulations to Donna Damico for reaching this level! Sectional (50-5 silver), Regional (100-15 silver, 5 r/g/p), NABC (200-25 silver, 20 r/g/p), Advanced NABC (300-50 silver, 50 r/g/p).

In my case, since I started to play bridge at the BHBC in December 2019, and I only play twice a week, once in person and once online, I have not yet reached the Life Master rank, and considering how rarely tournaments offering these “glitter” points take place, I realize I will never achieve this milestone in my lifetime.

I trust that, before I turn 80, I will be able to obtain this consolation prize: Golden Age Master-ACBL member age 70 or older with 300 points of any color.

However, accumulating Masterpoints is not why most of us love to play bridge in person, so called F2F (Face to Face bridge). It’s because our club offers opportunities for social interaction with other people who share our passion for the game. Many players have become friends and gather for other events at various homes with or without bridge involved.

The number of new and returning players at our club keeps increasing, well above 300 in 2026, although this is far from pre-COVID levels, because playing online from home is more convenient. Our most well attended games take place on weekends, Saturdays and Sundays at 1pm, with upwards of 14 tables on Saturdays, the maximum that fit in our Doheny room. However we do have the additional Rodeo room

available for Limited 750 games or overflow from the open game. Free coffee and treats are set out on a large counter, such as chocolates, granola bars, licorice, crackers and cheese.

Ever since the club reopened after COVID in October 2022, we have offered free pizza on Thursday nights to encourage players to drive to Beverly Hills in rush hour traffic. Every other Thursday an expert lecture is held at 6.30pm before the 7pm game.

On Thursday June 25 Viktor Anikovich (Platinum Life Master) will speak about "Stayman or Transfer? How to Bid Majors 2 Suiter Over 1NT."

After a successful experiment on two Mondays in April, when we reached a record of 10 tables on April 20, by offering pizza, as well as additional points, the BHBC board decided that, starting June 8, pizza will also become a regular offering at our only other weekday game, Mondays at 12.30pm.

Please make reservations on our website, if you wish to come and play at the Beverly Hills Bridge Club.

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

- \$100 – Who are Eric Rodwell and Jeff Meckstroth?
- \$200 – Who are Bob Hamman and Bobby Wolff?
- \$300 – Who are Billy Eisenberg and Eddie Kantar?
- \$400 – Who are Benito Garazzo and Giorgio Belladonna?
- \$500 – Who are Edgar Kaplan and Norman Kay?

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!

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Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Mark Bartusek, Jordan Chodorow, Kitty Cooper, Daniel Korbel, Mister Mealy-mouth, 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.

<div style="font-size: 48pt; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">1</div> <div style="text-align: center;">BAM None Vul</div>	West	North	East	South
	pass	1♠	pass	2♥
	3♦	pass	4♦	X
	pass	5♦	pass	???
	You, South, hold: ♠ K4 ♥ QJ1084 ♦ A6 ♣ A1096			
	What call do you make?			

I sent a note with the problems that your partner who generated the unusual sequence was one of the world's best players.

On this unusual sequence do we have partner try to pick a slam, or should we pick?

Bartusek: 5NT. Before the moderator commented on this hand, I thought this auction might not exist. My original thought was that partner was passing 3♦ expecting me to bid 3NT with a diamond stopper. Partner is passing and pulling showing a very strong hand. He doesn't have heart support, doesn't have extra spade length (3♠ by him would have been forcing), doesn't have long clubs, and shouldn't be balanced since he didn't pass my double. With my prime values I must bid a slam somewhere. Thus, I must allow for a possible 4-4 Club slam in case partner has some strange hand like ♠AQJxx ♥Ax ♦xx ♣KQJx or ♠AJxxx ♥AK ♦xx ♣KQxx. I'm giving up on reaching a grand (or 6NT) due to the ambiguity of this auction.

Chodorow: 5NT. Pick a slam. God only knows why I doubled 4♦, a 100% penalty double. In any case, whatever partner has in mind, I've got the Mott's.

Some like 6♣, but aren't certain whether they are showing a club suit or the ace.

Cooper: 6♣. One crazy bid deserves another! I have this ace and this suit and will pass partner's next bid unless it is 6♦. Partner likely has a very good hand with 6=2=1=4 and spades not good enough to bid at the three level. At least one heart honor. Hmm, at BAM, 6♥ is likely the winner ...oh well. I dislike the double. We are in a force so double suggests a defensive-oriented hand which is not what I have.

Mealy-mouth: 6♣. When 6♣ is the only slam that makes, somebody's got to bid it, and partner has elected me. He still has a turn coming to correct me if I'm wrong. *He also thought the double of 4♦ was strange.*

Korbel: 6♣. My partner may need to know that I have the ♣A. I'm not sure what he's doing.

Roeder: 6♣. Partner lacks six reasonable spades because there was no 3♠ bid over 3♦. You have a solid hand in context although your diamond ace sounds like it is facing a void. Partner may be 5=3=0=5.

Wittes: 6♦. I don't have any idea what's going on, but I do have the ace of diamonds, so I'll bid 6♦ and let partner take it from there.

I would have bid 6♣, thinking I was showing clubs, but 6♦ turns out to be a winner. Partner, Billy Eisenberg, turned out to have ♠AJxxxx ♥Ax ♦void ♣KQJxx. 7♣ makes. His actual partner bid 5NT and passed 6♣.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">2</h1> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Matchpoints E-W Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	1♦	pass	1♥	pass
	1♠	pass	2♠	pass
	???			
<p>You, South, hold: ♠A862 ♥A ♦108642 ♣AK5</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

Most panelists bid 3♣, although their reasoning is a bit different. Let's hear from the panel.

Roeder: 3♣. But close to a coin flip with pass due to potential heart wastage and partner's inability to rebid 3♠.

Wittes: 3♣. This hand is worth one more try, and with the AK of clubs, I'll show where my side values are.

Chodorow: 3♣. This will warn partner not to overvalue heart cards. Many minimums without heart wastage make game.

Cooper: 3♣. This hand is worth a game try, so I will pattern out.

Mealymouth: 3♣. This hand is worth a game try. We "Culbertson Neanderthals" love clubs - very handy when we have to fight off woolly mammoths. Modern opponents will lead clubs against 3♠ or 4♠, thinking my 3♣ was a sly attempt to deter the lead.

Bartusek: 3♣. Instead of just jumping to 4♠, I will cater to partner having only 3-card spade support in a hand like ♠Kxx ♥KQxxx ♦Kxx ♣Cxx. If partner doesn't bid spades I will bid 3NT on the next round. This temporizing 3♣ bid will allow partner to either support diamonds with 3-card support or show a strong heart suit.

Korbel: 3♠. We will let partner decide. At IMPs, I would bid 4♠. I don't want to use 3♣ as my game try because the ♥K could easily be useful to me, so I don't want to tell partner about my singleton heart.

The lead I fear most is a trump. I think 3♠ is a better effort at getting a favorable opening lead.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">BAM N-S Vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	1♦	1♠	2♣	2♠
	X	pass	3♣	pass
	???			
	<p>You, South, hold: ♠ A ♥ K986 ♦ AQ9862 ♣ AQ</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>			

The 2♣ bid in this situation is not game forcing. It shows about 10+ HCP. The double of 2♠ in some partnerships is takeout with extra values, but would be penalties in other partnerships. It looks as though this partnership plays the double as takeout with extras. Otherwise, South would probably have tried 3♥ on the second call. At this point we could have a difficult time making game or an easy time making slam. Here are the panelists' thoughts.

I'll start with the optimists.

Roeder: 5NT. You pick, partner! While 6♣ is our likely destination, this should cover most bases. Anybody who stops short of slam is still scared of their shadow. *Only the Shadow knows!*

Chodorow: 4♦ or 4NT, whichever is keycard in clubs. Another mystifying double. The right 10-12 makes 7♣ and perhaps even 7NT laydown.

Now those that are more pessimistic.

Cooper: 3NT. This may not make but hopefully partner has at least KJxxx of clubs and the ♥A or the ♦K.

Bartusek: 3♠. The problem will come on the next round since we might have slam. If partner has a spade stopper, then slam is much less likely. Note that my double shows extra values which means that 3♣ is forcing; but, I don't know yet whether partner has an opening bid or not.

Wittes: 3♠. Once again, I have a good hand with the AQ of clubs, so I'll cue bid the ace of spades. Hopefully that shows partner a side club fit.

Mealy-mouth: 3♠. The cheapest clearly-forcing bid, trying to coax a diamond bid from partner with ♦Kxx so I can bid 6♦ and avoid the heart lead through me that might beat 6♣.

Korbel: 3♠. I'll probably follow with 4♣ over 3NT and drive to slam over no spade stop.

I don't feel strongly about it, but at BAM scoring, I would probably try 3NT.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">4</h1> <p>Matchpoints None Vul</p>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">South</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">West</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1♣</td> <td>pass</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠*</td> <td>pass</td> <td>???</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	North	East	South	West	1♣	pass	1♥	pass	3♠*	pass	???	
	North	East	South	West									
	1♣	pass	1♥	pass									
3♠*	pass	???											
<p>* Splinter. Heart support with short spades</p> <p>You, South, hold: ♠ KQ96 ♥ K9764 ♦ KQ76 ♣ void</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What call do you make?</p>													

The panelists are using some treatments that I will make an effort to explain. The 5♣ bidders are using Exclusion Blackwood – asking for partner to tell how many keycards they have without counting the ♣A. The 3NT bidders, and the cuebidders by their lack of making a 3NT call, are using either a convention called Serious 3NT or a convention called Courtesy 3NT. The idea is that after a 4-4 major-suit fit is found, we don't want to play 3NT. Thus, 3NT becomes a cuebid of sorts after we establish a major as trumps. There are two schools of thought to this agreement. Some play Courtesy 3NT where the 3NT bid is less strong than a cuebid below game. Others play Serious 3NT where the 3NT bid is stronger than a cuebid below game. The systems are similar and have the same concept. Some partnerships use one, other partnerships use the other. It is unclear which is superior.

I'll start with the panelist who thinks any move with significantly wasted spades may be too much.

Wittes: 4♥. I have a lot of values, but they're mostly in the wrong place with a club void and the ♠KQ opposite shortness, so I'll sign off unless partner wants to bid again.

Now for the Exclusion bidders.

Korbel: 5♣. How many aces outside of clubs, partner?

Roeder: 5♣. Exclusion Key Card. Zero ambiguity, even in the Gold Rush Pairs. You have a lot of experience in the Gold Rush Pairs, Rick?

And finally, the Serious and Non-serious bidders, who are taking the middle ground.

Bartusek: ♦. Despite my potentially wasted spade cards I have a very nice hand with an extra trump and a club void. Let's cuebid diamonds and see what partner does. I considered an Exclusion 5♣ bid, but I don't know whether partner has a stiff or void spade. 3NT does not seem right on this hand.

Chodorow: 4♦. This is a serious control bid. Way too strong for a unilateral 3NT. Slam is highly likely and a grand is well within view.

Cooper: 3NT - Serious. If partner now cuebids clubs, I will know he has that ace when I bid Blackwood next.

Mealymouth: 3NT. With hearts having been anchored, I'm showing slam interest while leaving room for partner to clarify by cue-bidding 4♠ with a void, or cue-bidding a minor-suit ace. I'll pass his possible 4♥ or retreat to 4♥ over his 4♣, having made my slam try.

With apologies to Dobie Gray, "I'm in With the in (between) crowd". I'll try 3NT as a Courtesy Cuebid or a 4♦, whichever is a less serious slam try in the methods I am using.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">5</h1> <p>IMPS None Vul.</p>	South	West	North	East
	1♦	pass	1♥	pass
	1♠	pass	2♣	pass
	3NT	pass	4♦	pass
	???			
You, South, hold: ♠96 ♥Q107 ♦J1054 ♣Q1076				

2♣ is Fourth Suit Forcing (FSF). It is played as game forcing by almost all expert partnerships. Over FSF, expert partnerships use the jump to 3NT to show about a king extra. Experts generally do not play Fast Arrival with NT bids. Thus, South has shown about 15 – 17 HCP already. The 4♦ bid is forcing and slamish.

I'll start with those that cooperate.

Chodorow: 4♥. Seems obvious to cooperate with a control bid. I would have preferred for one of my kings to be an ace for the jump to 3NT. *I agree, this aceless hand has marginal values for jumping! I would have preferred 2NT to see how partner reacted.*

Cooper: 4♥. RKC in Diamonds. I don't like the 3NT bid; why use up so much room in a game-forcing auction? What does it show anyway? Does it show extras with no fit? Is it Fast Arrival? If I already have shown extras then maybe Blackwood is an overbid and I should just bid 5♦.

Korbel: 4♥. RKC in diamonds. Obvious keycard bid if you ask me.

Now for the panelists who think they have shown enough and want off this train. Notice that the 4NT bids are negative, not a form of RKC.

Bartusek: 5♦. I have already shown extra values with a jump to 3NT (instead of bidding only 2NT). Thus, my weakest bid of 5♦ is indicated. I don't even have any first-round controls.

Mealy-mouth: 4NT. To deny the ability to “cue-bid” an ace and offer a choice of games if partner can't bid slam. I don't have anything extra for my jump to 3NT. I trust partner to read my shape from my failure to open 1NT as dealer.

Wittes: 4NT. I already showed extra values with my 3NT bid. I have no aces. I'm not sure whether 4NT is signoff or keycard for diamonds. If partner has all the aces, hopefully they'll bid again. With only 2 aces, hopefully they'll pass.

And finally, the last word goes to the man who advertises for playing Rangewood in this auction. Read his description.

Roeder: 4NT. 4NT would be the mainstream bid. Whatever my slam negative is, I am there with this aceless wonder. It is best to play the 4♦ bid is “optional RKC” in this auction. The first responding step is slam negative in context and second responding step starts your RKC responses. Thus, in my preferred methods, I would chirp 4♥ (*indicating a slam negative*). This is a vast improvement over Minorwood as you may need partner's input on slam prospects in addition to knowing the number of keycards he holds. If partner then bids 4♠, he is saying: “I do not care that you are slam negative: answer the number of Key Cards, please. Bill Haley rocked around the clock and so does “Rangewood!”

Count me as one who has had enough in this auction. I'm signing off, whether it is a natural 4NT, 5♦, or a Rangewood negative 4H♥ bid (I'm not answering RKC, at least not yet).