

Southern California

Bridge News

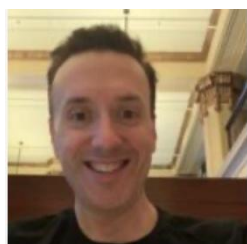
Volume 63, #9

September 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 deadline to register for the D23 NAP Final on Sunday, October 25 at Long Beach Bridge Center is fast approaching! Get those entries in to Jeff Grotenhuis or Mitch Dunitz, or you can email me at the address above.

The D23 Fall STaC will be held October 19-25. Make your plans to play early and often and bank those all-important silver points!

The Long Beach Sectional will be held November 14-15 at LBBC. Start times are 10 & 2:30 Saturday and 10 & TBA with a lunch break on Sunday. The earlier the better, I say.

I am writing from my room at the Irvine Marriott in the middle of another first-rate D22 sectional. As we get to work soon on LA2030, I am highly excited to work with D22 leadership to share information, ideas, and opportunities to volunteer to make each other's tournaments smashing successes. My dad has had a sign in his office for decades that I truly believe in: "None of us is as smart as all of us."

Regional Director's Report

by Cornelia Gould

(Region11Director@acbl.org)



As promised in my August report, I will devote this column to an overview of the issues discussed and decisions made at the ACBL Board meetings held in Minneapolis from July 6-9, 2026.

Exciting news for District 23 is that they have been awarded the opportunity to host the Fall 2030 NABC at a not-yet-disclosed Los Angeles hotel. Disclosure is pending final contract negotiations with the hotel. I am hoping that this information will become public after our November 2026 Board meetings. This is good news for District 22, since that NABC will be conveniently located for attendance.

Other highlights of the July Board meetings:

ACBL financials are looking good. Net assets had increased by \$792K through May. Hopefully that trend will continue.

The Audit Committee reported that ACBL received a clean, unqualified audit opinion. Note that audit reports are available on the ACBL website.

DIRECTOR continued on page 2

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DIRECTOR continued from page 1

There was an approximately 6% decline in membership year-over-year. This is a continuing trend as our bridge population ages. As I have mentioned before the ACBL is putting great emphasis on trying to encourage new players to join, offering initial limited free memberships. Offering bridge classes locally is one of the best ways to recruit new members.

The ACBL continues to review online play for cheating. At the time of the Board meetings, all ACBL online players through February 2024 had been run through the EDGAR system. This has resulted in approximately 3% of players tested being flagged as possible violators of bridge ethics. The ACBL is pursuing investigation of those flagged individuals.

The Masterpoint Committee has been working long and hard on a proposal to adjust masterpoint formulas at future tournaments to increase fairness among events. The new formulas will take effect starting in 2027. You can read a summary of the proposed changes in the attached "ACBL National Board Report: Summer 2026" prepared by the ACBL Board Communications Committee. I hope to provide more details about this in a future column.

The Bridge Committee proposed changes that were approved by the Board. Included was a decision that Units and Districts may use ACBL Certified Local Sectional Directors for local Sectional tournaments, under certain specific guidelines. This should result in making it less expensive to run Sectional tournaments and, therefore, incentivize Units to run more Sectionals.

(continued next column)

The Governance and Bylaws Committees continue to work on revisions to the Bylaws and Codification in order to simplify them and make them more reflective of current practices. The Codification (available on the ACBL website) is currently 243 pages long and incorporates information that is historical and not currently relevant. A major effort is being made by the Board to revise it to include only information which makes sense to be included. I will try to give more information on this in a future article.

Bridge Jeopardy *by John Jones*

Category – Their Names Are On Your Convention Card

The answer is:

\$100 – This man actually invented no conventions, but his name is near the top of the NOTRUMP opening bid section for a convention that attempts to locate a 4-4 major fit. It might be on your card spelled backwards if you play a strong preempt convention.

\$200 – This American man invented at least three conventions, two of which (transfers and 2NT over 1♥/1♠ openings) are quite common.

\$300 – This man invented the convention in which 4NT asks for aces. There are now multiple variations.

\$400 – This man invented a convention asking for aces after a NT bid.

\$500 – This cuebid shows at least 5/5 distribution.

The questions will be found on page 5.

The Teacher's Corner

Case for The Defense...and One for Declarer *by Dan F. Oakes*

First, a quiz: What do the following auctions have in common? Defenders' bids, if any, are in parenthesis. No parenthesis = Uncontested auction:

1. 1♠ – 1NT; 2♣ – P
2. 1♥ – (X) – P – (P); P.
3. 1♠ – (3♦) – 4♦ – (P); 4♠ – (P) – P – (5♦); P – (P) – P.
4. 1NT – 2♣; 2♥ – P.
5. 2♦* – 2♠**; P * = mini-Roman (11-15, 4441 or 4405, any three suits. ** = Pass or correct.

Now, a couple of hands (answers at end of column):

	♠653
	♥J83
	♦64
	♣AQT72
♠J982	
♥A62	
♦J95	
♣843	

Auction, starting with South, E/W silent: 1♥ – 2♥; 4♥ – P.

Disliking all of your choices, you lead a small heart. Partner wins the king and returns a heart to your ace, and you're back on lead at trick 3. Perhaps declarer is going to ruff a diamond or two, and you should take the third trump off the board? On the other hand, those clubs look threatening, so maybe you should try to set up a trick in clubs or diamonds before it goes away on dummy's side suit? Your lead to trick 3...

	♠AK64
	♥65
	♦765
	♣8764
♠J	
	♠7
	♥KQJT94
	♦AQ3
	♣AQ2

Auction (unopposed): 1♥ – 1♠; 4♥

Trick 1: ♠J...K...5...7
 Trick 2: ♠A...2...♦3...♠8
 Trick 3: ♦5...8...Q...K
 Trick 4: ♠T...4...3...♥4
 Trick 5: ♥K...3...5...A
 Trick 6: ♣3...?

If you find the trick-by-trick layout confusing, here's the summary: West led the jack of spades, and you took two spades to pitch a diamond, then took a losing diamond finesse. West forced you to ruff a third round of spades, and then you started to draw trump by playing the king. East returns a club through your AQ2, and the question is...hop up with the ace, finesse the queen, or play the 2?

Solutions:

A. Lew Mathe had a well-deserved reputation for being both an excellent and irascible partner. Reputedly, so the story goes, after a partner made a trump lead that worked out poorly, Mathe told him that there's only one time to lead trump. His unsuspecting partner asked when, and Mathe (loudly, so the story goes) replied, "When it's right!!"

That sounds like a flippant and not particularly helpful response, but Mathe's point was that you shouldn't lead trump just because you're not sure what to lead; you should lead trump only when you have a specific reason to. He probably would have pulled out his hair at the home games where I learned bridge, where the philosophy was essentially, "When in doubt, lead trump!" But if you think about how often you draw trump early as declarer, it should make sense that that's not really a great idea; often, you're helping declarer. So what do those auctions at the beginning of this article have in common? They're all auctions that call for a trump lead:

1. Dummy would go back to spades on almost any excuse (who wants to play in clubs?!) Dummy has a weak hand, short in spades, and declarer has 5 of them. If declarer has spade losers (and he probably does), he's likely to want to ruff them. Don't wait to see dummy; you know what it's going to look like.
2. You won't hear this auction often, but when partner leaves in your takeout double, lead trump! In this case, partner is basically saying that YOUR side can make (at least) 1 heart; just as declarer often wants to draw trump, here you can treat partner as declarer.
3. Partner made a strong raise, and you're facing a preempt and a sacrifice. How on earth are they going to come close to 11 tricks? They're probably going to need ruffs to generate extra tricks.
4. Stayman is usually used with invitational-or-better hands. When dummy passes a Stayman response, he should be either 3-suited short in clubs (intending to pass any response, including 2♦), or have majors and be willing to play a 4-3 fit in preference to 1NT, usually because there's a ruffing value.
5. Mini-Roman was reasonably popular at the club level in the late 20th century, and it's just about died out now. Why? I think probably because people figured out that when the opponents tell you that dummy has a balanced hand other than a singleton or void, you should come out leading trump and continue to do so at every opportunity.

B. Did those clubs scare you? They shouldn't. Partner can see them, too. If partner has bad clubs, he would have known that the suit is extremely dangerous – either declarer has the missing honors, or you have them and they can be finessed. In either case, he would have known that the defense needs to get spade or diamond tricks IMMEDIATELY, and he never would have returned a trump at trick 2. If you trust partner, he should have the clubs under control, which means dummy's only real asset is the diamond doubleton. You got off to a good start; play another trump.

C. It's clear to everyone that dummy is completely entryless. That means that left to your own devices, you could never get there to take a club finesse. So why is East offering you the chance to take one? Beware of Greeks bearing gifts; if East had the king of clubs, he certainly would have played another spade (West led the jack, so East has the queen), forced you to ruff, and waited for you to give him the club trick later. West has the king of clubs; play the ace, draw trump, then play your small club. The only chance for your queen of clubs is if West's king is doubleton.

This month's hands were taken from Frank Stewart's book, *"Who Has The Queen?"*

New Life Masters *submitted by Mike Marcucci*

Congratulations are in order to those D23 members who have earned that coveted Gold Card:



Mike Vernia – Jan 26
Unit 561



Robt Jennings – Mar 26
Unit 559

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	vacant
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	John Dobson
568 – Torrance-South Bay	Carol Decordova

*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!*



Kurt Trieselmann – Sep 26
Unit 551

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

\$100 – Who is Sam Stayman (his partner George Rapee invented Stayman and named it after him).
Namyats is Stayman spelled backwards.

\$200 – Who is Oswald “Ozzie” Jacoby?

\$300 – Who is Easley Blackwood?

\$400 – Who is Johnny Gerber?

\$500 – Who is Mike Michaels?

District 23 Rank Changes September 2026

Junior Master

Todd Shimoda
John Preskill
Terry Hargrave
Charles Haskell
Sean Morey
Brady Sullivan

Sectional Master

Kathleen Howell
Doris Fujii
Beth Hollander
Ann Garry
Cathy Roe
Ida Simms

Advanced NABC Master

Rita van Lierop
Jay Hansen
Toni Hansen

Bronze Life Master

Yongkang Huang

Club Master

Robert Samaniego
Sivan Garteiz
Karen White
Babu Shankar
David Blumenthal
Michelle Redston
Matthew Skinner
Leonard Lee
John Bretney

Regional Master

Nathalie Sarshalom
Debra Collins
Chris Halliwell
Tracey Whitney
Stuart Soldate
Chuan Wang
Steve Rouso

Silver Life Master

Robin Hill

Ruby Life Master

Linda Renkus

Sapphire Life Master

Vic Sartor
Sherie Schneider

NABC Master

Jane Archer
Liza Billington
Ronald Lu
Sheila Pressman

Diamond Life Master

Roberto Scaramuzzi

DISTRICT 23

North American Pairs Finals

Oct. 25, 2026

Long Beach Bridge Center 4782 PCH Long Beach CA Sanction 2610723 pending



Unit Level Qualifying

Pre qualification at Club level required by Oct. 18

Finals

Sunday, Oct. 25 @ 10 am
and
Sunday, Oct. 25 @ 3 pm

National Finals will be held during the Spring Nationals in Dallas
Pre-registration for L.A. Final by Sept. 28 required.
Card fees are \$40 (\$20 per session)

Point Limits and Conventions

Master Points as of May 6, 2026

Championship: Unlimited, Open + chart

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

Maximum Masterpoint Awards

May be less, depending on game size

Championship Flight: 32.00 Gold

Flight A : 27.00 Gold

Flight B : 24 Gold

Flight C : 16.00, 50% Gold, 50% Red

Event chair

Mitch Dunitz • District 23 NAP Coordinator
email: chodorow@stanfordalumni.org c
cell: 310-600-4275 email preferred



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



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WWW.BRIDGEANDBEYOND.COM



SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8

Long Beach Bridge Center
Pacific Coast Hwy
Long Beach - CA

YOUR TEACHERS



John Ramos



Christopher Rivera

Bridge And Beyond is thrilled to announce its first ever
West Coast land event!

Two days of premier bridge instruction in the comfort of the Long
Beach Bridge Center. Enjoy classes, duplicate bridge, and Q&As
with our dynamic teaching team!

See page 2 for more details and we hope to see you in November!



CONTACT US:
INFO@BRIDGEANDBEYOND.COM





EVENT SCHEDULE

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7

9:30AM	Breakfast
10:00AM - 12:00PM	Lesson
12:30PM - 3:30PM	Game Time
3:30PM - 4:00PM	Recap of Hands

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8

10:00AM - 12:30PM	Lessons
12:30PM - 1:30PM	Lunch Break
1:30PM - 3:30PM	Lessons

LOCATION & PRICE

LONG BEACH BRIDGE CENTER

Long Beach Bridge
Center, 4782 Pacific
Coast Hwy, Long Beach,
CA 90804
\$400



Allison Rudary
Bridge And Beyond's
Travel Advisor
allison@largaytravel.com

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Around the Units in District 23



Pomona – Covina
by Tom Lill
www.acblunit551.org
www.acblunit551.club

La Fetra Games: Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:45
NO GAME Friday, October 9
Claremont Bridge Club: Thursdays 9:30
Unit Pairs Game: September 19, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
Club Championships: September 15, 18, 8:45 a.m., La Fetra
Club Appreciation Games: October 6, 9, 20, 23, La Fetra
Individual: October 3, 10:00 a.m., Ontario
STaC: October 20, 23, La Fetra
Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

There will not be a game held on Friday, October 9, because of the Riverside Sectional being held on that day. Quite a few of us plan to be there. If enough of you still want to have a game on that day – and can find someone to run it! – fine with me, just let me know in enough time to make arrangements. They ran a nice tournament in Riverside last year, *almost* as nice as ours!

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

1	14.87	Fredy Minter
2	13.56	Lulu Minter
3	11.86	Caryn Mason
4	10.57	Vic Sartor
5	7.24	Richard Parker
6	6.87	Patrick Finley
7	6.70	Mary Ann Wotring
8	6.16	Clint Lew
9	5.76	Peter Kavounas
10	4.59	Linda Tessier

And at the Claremont Bridge Club:

1	2.58	Patrick Finley
1	2.58	Caryn Mason
3	0.77	David Ochroch
3	0.77	Duane Woodman
5	0.72	Aeshna Mathur
5	0.72	Teresa Wray

At La Fetra, we only had two scores were over the magic 65% benchmark. The best was by Fredy and Lulu Miner: 70.42%. The other was a quite respectable 67.47% game by Caryn Mason – Patrick Finley. Other winners not topping 65%: Vic Sartor – Caryn Mason, Clin Lew – Kiran Kumar, and Richard Parker – David Raymond.

Over in Claremont, all four sessions were captured by Patrick Finley – Caryn Mason, three of them big games: 77.78%, 73.61%, 67.46%. Remember the old baseball cry “break up the Yankees?” Sigh! Well, they *are* pretty good at this silly game.

Three promotions this month: Todd Shimoda is now a Junior Master, Vic Sartor has reached the exalted heights of Sapphire Life Master ... and as detailed below, Kurt Triesleemann has earned his Gold Card (Life Master).

A baker’s dozen players from our Unit brought home a total of 108.70 masterpoints, mostly gold, from the Irvine Regional. The best news: Kurt Triesleemann earned enough gold in the Monday bracketed teams to get to Life Master! Nice going, Kurt. The top five masterpoint earners:

Clint Lew	18.27
Steve Andersen	17.55
Amr Elghamry	17.17
Peter Kavounas	11.05
Judy Mogharbel	8.93
Yours Truly	8.93

The best finishes: the team of Kurt, Yours Truly, Steve, and Judy, finished 2nd in the Monday teams to get Kurt his gold. Peter finished 1st in a bracketed teams; Clint finished 2nd in a bracketed teams; and Cece Mougharbel finished 2nd in a bracketed pairs, but also brought home a couple of T-shirts by getting section tops.

I haven't been playing a lot lately – too many medical issues – so I don't really have a good hand for your this month. Instead, I'm going to give you a few auctions from the recent Irvine Regional, where I absolutely tortured my partner, getting a "deer in the headlights" look after one of my BOONs (that's a Bid Out Of Nowhere, by the way).

First hand (spots approximate): I held, in fourth seat, this nice hand, both vulnerable. IMP scoring, by the way.

♠ A J 6 ♥ K J 9 4 ♦ K J 10 3 ♣ 6.

This was the auction:

LHO	Partner	RHO	Torturer (me)
1♣	1♥	1NT	???

Well, sport, your hand evaluates to 16 points with hearts being trumps, and partner overcalled red. It's perhaps a bit aggressive, but red games at IMPs are worth trying if you have a 1/3 (roughly) chance at it. So, I called 4♥. This got doubled, and became the final contract. Making 4, +790 and a nice 12 IMP gain. The look on partner's face was priceless – and she nearly fell out of her chair!

Next day, again at IMPs, we had an interesting auction, with me holding this hand (again, spots approximate):

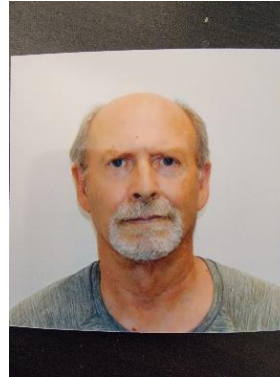
♠ Q 6 ♥ K J 8 5 4 ♦ 10 4 ♣ K Q 6 4.

Partner	RHO	Torturer (me)	LHO
1♠	X	1NT	pass
2♣	pass	3♣	pass
3♥	pass	???	

You probably do not agree with my bidding, but I thought (at red) that 2♥ over the X was slightly aggressive, so a slightly conservative 1NT it was. It seemed natural to raise partner's clubs, since how many hearts could she hold? Her (same partner I was victimizing the day before) 3♥ was clearly asking for help in diamonds, aiming at the magic 3NT. 10-4 didn't look like enough help there, so I figured, hmm, I figured, she probably has 3 hearts, so I raised to 4♥. Again, deer in the headlights, but she figured it out and passed. (I figured if she had only honor-doubleton in hearts, I could stand 5♣). Making 5! 3NT does not play well, partner had the bare ♦A. +650 and a nice 11 IMP gain.

Too bad we finished out of the money in both events. Win some, lose some.

Quote for the month: "The remarkable thing about a waltzing bear is not how gracefully it waltzes, but that it waltzes at all." (Mark Twain)



Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley by Don Dachner

The Santa Clarita Bridge Club has games at the Newhall Community Center.

Wednesdays (10:00 AM – 12:45 PM): 18-board game (perfect for newer players or anyone who prefers a more relaxed pace).

Fridays (10:00 AM – 1:30 PM): 24-board game.

There is a bridge lesson a half hour before each game. Both games are free but donations are accepted.

Friday open game results for August

8/1		
N	Ruth Baker - Bernard Seal	62%
S	Basant Shah - Beth Morrin	72%

8/8		
N	Donna Davidson - Bill Langlois	62%
S	Basant Shah - Ruth Baker	72%

8/21		
N	Donna Davidson - Bill Langlois	60%
S	Gary and Carol Trendera	61%

8/28		
N	Rand Pinsky - Ron Oest	68%
S	Basant Shah - Beth Morrin	63%

Wednesday open game results for August

8/19		
N	Donna Davidson - Bill Langlois	70%
S	David Khalieque - Kristi Kubo	60%

8/26		
N	Donna Davidson - Bill Langlois	61%
S	Harry Randhawa - Hani Abraham	67%

Our longtime bridge player Ted Maki has decided to hang it up.

He is truly going to be missed and his quiet demeanor.

Sorry to see you go.



Long Beach by Leo Dittmore

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

Sorry, nothing from Long Beach this month.

Downey-Whittier by Daniel F. Oakes

August started with a bang, as the first game of the month saw four(!) pairs within a board of each other for the top spot. When the dust settled, it was Aviece Osmundson and Kiran Kumar who held the top spot, just ahead of Mike Ventri and Steve Hough. John Jones and Nancy Stebbins were a very close 3rd, and Jack Rainsberry and Bill Skupen were just behind them in 4th, also taking 1st B. 2nd B were Bob and Linda Krause.

A week later, at the Unit Championship, Skupen and Rainsberry (who rarely seem to finish outside the top 2, or is it just me?!) took first overall. Anita Frost and Toni Hoffman were 2nd (and 1st B), and John Dobson and Raj Ramchandani were 3rd overall and 2nd B.

On August 19, Jones and Stebbins turned in the Game of The Month – 66.67%, easily outpacing the field. Rainsberry and Skupen were 2nd, ahead of 1st B and 3rd overall Dobson and Ramchandani. The Krauses took the 2nd B award.

Stebbins and Jones repeated a week later, at the month's second Unit Championship. Gabby Sill and Steve Hough were 2nd. Rainsberry & Skupen tied for 3rd with Osmundson & Kumar. Tom Cusack and Sofi Kasubhai were 1st B, just ahead of the Krauses, who took 2nd B.

West L.A. by Elisa Leonelli

I was impressed by a two-part lecture that Jordan Chodorow held at our Beverly Hills Bridge Club on two Thursday nights: August 13 and August 27. "Redouble your efforts: All about the Blue Card."

Understandable was the Support Redouble by opener, showing 3 card support for responder's suit, when Right Hand Opponent doubles rather than bidding a suit.

More complicated was the Strength-Showing Redouble to penalize opponents and notify partner, after their opening bid followed by a take-out double, that "It's our hand."

Jordan put on the white board numerous hands to explain the concept.

So I decided it was time to feature this long-time member of our club in my monthly column, and Jordan graciously agreed to answer a few questions.

At what age did you learn to play bridge and who taught you?

I learned to play bridge at Haverford College with my good friend Alex Werner and assorted friends. We had very little idea what we were doing. I'll never forget the first time Alex and I won at the club in Swarthmore, PA, and the director told us we were doing something right.

When did you start playing professionally?

My last two years at Stanford Law Alex and I played occasionally in Palo Alto and put together fairly extensive system notes. Once I got home to L.A., I started taking the game more seriously.

Where and how do you teach bridge as the expert that you are?

I play pro occasionally with a select few clients, most of whom are also friends. I go over the hands with them after the game so that they learn, not just play. I also teach bridge to a great group of four "Ladies" who've been with me for several years now and are making quite good progress.

Who are your teachers or the experts you look up to?

Gavin Wolpert, whose team will be representing the US in the Bermuda Bowl next year. His website, wolpertbridge.com, is a treasure trove of

incredibly reasonably priced video lectures with printable notes.

What is your ACBL rank?

Despite having about 16,000 masterpoints, I am an Emerald Life Master. I need 60 gold for Platinum LM. Although I've won two NABC titles, neither counts toward Grand LM.

What are your tasks as President of ACBL District 23?

(Humbly Jordan lists the names of more than a dozen people, claiming he could not achieve anything without their help. I recognize BHBC members Mitch Dunitz, Sharon Beynon and Alex Kolesnik) Together we put on tournaments and other events; disseminate the news of the District; conduct meetings to discuss important issues and take worthwhile actions; preserve and promote the game of bridge at all levels in Los Angeles County.

What has been your involvement with the Beverly Hills Bridge Club and when did it start?

I am in my tenth year as President of West Los Angeles Unit 562, of which BHBC is the primary public-facing club, I have played at BHBC for about three decades now, but despite attending board meetings, I have had no official role until very recently. (Jordan credits other people he is lucky to have as WLA President, such as "sterling Secretary Dr. Lee Hausner; small but mighty Ambassador-at-Large Marcia Fisher.")

You have recently agreed to serve as a director at BHBC. How did you learn the specifics of this task?

With Jonathan Holmes' retirement, the club needed new directors, so I suggested that if I were trained well, I would help out in a pinch. Jonathan was gracious enough to guide me through a training session and teach me many of the tricks of the trade. Alan Curtis was generous enough to do so twice, as well as to write up, with Nancy Heck's invaluable help, a Director's Checklist that can now be used by all directors and that we continue to update and perfect.

How was your first experience at directing. What did you observe and what did you learn?

I directed for the first time on Sunday, August 23, which I could not have done without the help and guidance of Rick Turner, who took time away from his partnership to help me with a myriad of details. Dawn Lee and Nancy Heck also helped immeasurably. Alan

was on speed dial and undoubtedly got tired of my dumb questions, but answered them all. I am indebted to each of them and to all of the players who bear with me so kindly as I get my sea legs.

What is your profession, and how do you balance the amount of time you devote to bridge with your work?

I am a tax lawyer by profession - three years of employment litigation proved a total mismatch for my non-confrontational personality - and also frequently handle purchases and sales of aircraft, yachts and major works of art. I balance work and bridge probably the same way as most who work and play. No special tricks.

Jordan directed for the second time on Sunday September 6 and commented as to how kind everyone was and how lovely the players in the 750 game were.

I played in the 750 game myself several times, as I only have 250 masterpoints, and I agree with Jordan. The atmosphere is relaxed, players are kind and non-judgmental.

We would like to increase participation in this BHBC 750 Limited game on Saturday and Sundays at 1pm. Beginner and Intermediate players, please come over and play in this friendly environment. Don't be intimidated, you are in a separate space, the Rodeo Room, while the open games take place in the Doheny room. But you may walk across the hall and enjoy snacks and coffee.

We have open games on Saturday and Sundays at 1pm, Mondays at 12.30pm, Thursdays at 6.30pm.

Problem Solvers' Panel

Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Mark Bartusek, David Grainger, Lynne Feldman, Alex Kolesnik, Rick Roeder, Mike Shuster, Claude Vogel, 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.

Claude Vogel is new to the panel. He is a Grand Life Master from the San Diego area (formerly from Chicago). He has been my partner in United States Bridge Federation championships in the past. He didn't provide any commentary accompanying his answers, but maybe he will enlighten us with his wisdom more in the future.

1

IMPs, long
match
Both Vul

West	North	East	South
1♠	5♦*	6♠**	???

* Solid Expert

** World Champion Bart Bramley

You, South, hold: ♠ 6 ♥ A872 ♦ K62 ♣ Q8653

What call do you make?

This problem, and two from last month, were submitted by frequent panelist David Grainger. It looks like the choices are: Pass, 7♦, and maybe 6NT (before running to 7♦ to indicate heart values). I'll start with the man who submitted the problem.

Grainger: 7♦. This is my problem. I bid 7♦ at the table and it was -800 versus -1430. Partner had a stiff heart, but no spades to score a ruff.

Bartusek: 7♦. Probably costs -800 vs -1430. Seems like 6♠ is a big favorite to make. Sacrificing is usually right if partner has a 9-bagger, but also with various 8410 patterns (partner is vulnerable).

Kolesnik: 7♦. Passing with my ace of hearts and a club card could certainly be right, but I'll take out insurance with 7♦, which should be relatively cheap.

Wittes: 7♦. If my partner bids 5♦ over 1♠, and Bart

Bramley bids 6♠, I would expect 6♠ to make. I don't expect to make 7♦, but I can't imagine 7♦ going down more than a couple of tricks.

Feldman: 7♦. This seems like cheap insurance.

Vogel: 7♦.

Some choose to defend.

Shuster: Pass. I think we're down two. I think they're down one. I guess I don't know. I can toss a coin but Bart can be an overbidder, so I will defend.

Bart has the skill to turn the opponents into being the last guesser. Bid 6♠ now and make the opponents guess whether to save or not. Nobody ever said playing against world champions in any sport was easy!

Roeder: Pass. One's answer reflects their religious beliefs (or lack thereof). Is it true that only Jesus saves? I will have to check my Bible on that important issue. What can Bart Bramley do if partner has a stiff heart or possibly even ♣J9? In a long match, if you take a

phantom, the opponents might whip out their dog collars. *Long matches are somewhat easier than short matches in one aspect. You take the percentage action and hope that if you are wrong that there will be chances to get it back later. Dog collars? They are best saved for my favorite beasts that help protect bridge players' parking lots. (Ask me about George and the SBBC transient sometime).*

I'm with the sacrificers, although I prefer 6NT before pulling to 7♦ to indicate I want a heart lead if they bid 7♠ (7♣ and then 7♦ would ask for a club lead against 7♠).

2

IMPs
N-S Vul

South	West	North	East
2NT	pass	4NT	pass
???			

You, South, hold: ♠ AQ6 ♥ A4 ♦ KQ953 ♣ A108

What call do you make?

There were supposed to be two issues on this problem. Issue number one, should we accept the slam invite given that we already upgraded a 19 HCP hand to a 20 – 21 2NT opener? Issue number two, how do we show a five-card suit versus a four-card or six-card suit? The panel made issue one, the evaluation problem, look easy: everyone accepted. The issue of methods was pretty much ignored.

Let's hear from the panel.

Feldman: 5♦. I've got too many controls and too good a 5-card suit not to accept, despite being minimum.

Grainger: 5♦. The hand is much better than its point count.

Bartusek: 6♦. This is a massive hand with all the prime controls and decent 5-card suit. Partner probably has a 4333 12 HCP hand with a 4-card minor since they didn't use Puppet Stayman (*Many expert pairs don't play Puppet Stayman over a 2NT opening, and who bids Stayman on a 4333 hand?*) or a 4♠ bid showing a slam invite with two 4-card minors (*this is commonly played at the expert level*). At worst it's probably on a hook, but it might be excellent (e.g. ♠Kxx ♥Kxx ♦Axxx ♣J9x with only 11 HCPs). Note that one usually downgrades 4333 hands.

Vogel: 6♦.

Roeder: 6♦. Close! My prime values offset the fact that I previously upgraded. Only caveat: if I was already in pole position to win the event, I would pass. *This isn't a barometer event, so go back to your dreaming!*

Kolesnik: 6♦. I will certainly bid a slam with my prime values and five card-suit. The question is whether 6♦ might be better than 6NT. I think I'll try 6♦.

Wittes: 6♦. I have a minimum but I have three aces and a good five- card diamond suit. If partner fits diamonds, I would expect them to pass, but if they don't have a very good diamond fit, I would expect them to correct to 6NT.

Shuster: 6♦. This is kind of an obvious 5♦ or 6♦ bid. For me, I'll bid six diamonds.

I have the agreement in many partnerships that a five-card suit bids at the 6-level in this auction. Bidding at the 5-level indicates either a 4-card suit (trying to find a 4-4 fit) or a 6-card suit (opener bids the suit again at the 6-level on the next round). Thus, I am a 6♦ bidder here.

3

Matchpoints
N-S Vul

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

You, South, hold: ♠ Q873 ♥ AKJ854 ♦ A104 ♣ void

What call do you make?

We get another evaluation problem. This one comes with the mention of a convention that hasn't fully caught on, but may increase in popularity in the future.

Grainger 2♥: This hand is a winner for Gazzilli where 3♥ is limited to 15 HCP. Failing that, I would bid 2♥ at MP.

Gazzilli is an Italian convention that uses 2♣ as an artificial bid (the Swedes have a similar convention called The Witch). A Gazzilli 2♣ rebid (the variations differ somewhat) shows any hand with significant extras or a minimum with clubs. This occurs on many hands and helps limit the HCP for other 6-4 and 5-4 rebids. I suspect some variation of Gazzilli will gain in popularity soon.

Roeder: 2♥. Not close in matchpoints as the dual specter of club wastage and minus scores in a matchpoint event loom almost as big as Godzilla. No Ricky, Godzilla isn't a bridge term; Gazzilli is the bridge term!

Wittes: 3♥. I'm a little light in high cards, but I have good distribution for a 3♥ bid.

Vogel: 3♥.

Shuster: 3♥. You have to bid three hearts. Sure, you could be on for a diamond contract but what are you going to do? The hearts are good enough, and if you did something like 2♦ then you could be stuck there with the whole field getting to an easy game.

Kolesnik: 3♥. 3♥ seems like the right value bid.

Bartusek: 3♥. 4♥ seems like the most likely game. This is a strong hand with the void. Too strong for 2♥, and 2♠ seems misdirected.

Feldman: 4♥. This hand has a low loser count.

The boys all settle for 2♥ or 3♥ (I'm with the 3♥ bidders). The only lady on the panel gets to game now! Any question about why she is so tough, especially in Women's Pairs?

4

IMPs, short
match
Both Vul

South	West	North	East
1♦*	pass	1♠	pass
???			

* Speak up if you disagree, but answer the given problem please.

You, South, hold: ♠ 3 ♥ AJ4 ♦ KQJ98752 ♣ Q

What call do you make?

I included the asterisk because I disagree with the 1♦ opening. I like opening 5♦ much better. A couple of panelists thought preempting the first time was OK.

Wittes: I don't object to 1♦, but I would prefer 3♦ or 4♦ as an opening bid with that hand.

Roeder: 3♦. Your opening bid is a coin flip between 1♦ and 5♦. Once both opponents have passed, there is no rush to bid 5♦ now.

Kolesnik: 3♦. I like 1♦. I think I'll bid 3♦ but the real problem might come on the next round of bidding if partner bids 3NT. It's IMPs so I think 5♦ is probably the right spot.

Bartusek: 3♦. This is a strong trick-taking hand. 2♦ might work better, but you have eight tricks in your own hand.

Vogel: 3♦.

Feldman: 3♦. Nothing else seems right.

I'll finish with the 2♦ bidders, who have a point. Their contention is that they have gotten past the opposition; it's partner who has good cards. This hand wants to play in 5♦ frequently. The best way to get partner not to bid 6♦ when it is wrong is to bid only 2♦ now and then insist on 5♦D.

Shuster: 2♦: This is the most important hand of the set. On this hand you should bid 2♦ now, and then insist on diamonds later. This hand is this light on high card points and partner rates to have a very strong hand. We don't want partner overly ambitious about slam. When partner forces the next time, we're going to jump in diamonds, maybe all the way to 5♦, so that partner knows that the hand is limited. But we want diamonds to be trump.

Grainger: 2♦. 1♦ is fine. With the opponents not bidding, I'm going to bid 2♦, expecting partner to bid again so I can keep bidding more diamonds.

5

IMPs, short
match
E-W Vul.

West	North	East	South
2♠	X	pass	???

You, South, hold: ♠ A97 ♥ K75 ♦ K873 ♣ K98

What call do you make?

If this were matchpoints, I think we would get a discussion about passing. I think I am a passer anyway (no raise from East indicates little help). Partner will lead a trump frequently, especially from a small singleton. This will help eliminate any possible ruff in the dummy. Yes, this is IMPs and passing is only for the courageous, but I like it. An important point is how we show doubt about 3NT using Lebensohl responses here (bidding 3NT directly, or bidding 2NT followed by 3NT after partner takes the puppet to 3♣. Some addressed it.

Grainger: 3NT. It's obviously wrong given this is a problem, but 3NT seems obvious unless 2NT then 3NT is agreed to show something like this.

Wittes: 3NT. This bid is not clear cut. We probably have the combined high cards to make 3NT, but we may not have the trick taking potential to take 9 tricks. Probably our best shot at game however.

Bartusek: 3NT. I can't think of a better way of bidding this. It's the most practical bid. Hopefully I can duck a round or two of spades to shut out West's spades.

Kolesnik. 3NT. I don't like having just the ace of spades, but 3NT seems very obvious.

Feldman: 3NT.

Shuster: 3NT. I have no issues with 3NT.

A couple of panelists are worried enough about 3NT being right that they start with 3♠ which may well be taken for a four-card heart holding.

Vogel: 3♠.

Roeder: 3♠. It is funny how bridge comments from 30+ years ago never recede from memory. I remember Jim Backstrom saying to try to avoid 3NT if your only stopper in their suit was the ace. RIP, Jim.

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