Southern California **Bridge News**

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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.

It was great to see so many friends at the Ventura Regional - and, after Saturday's play, to spend two nights in my childhood stomping grounds of Ojai. I was delighted to see so many friendly faces at my Thursday afternoon lecture on "Reverses Made Easy." Shoot me an email if you'd like the notes.

Closer to home, flyers are already up for our own D23 Bridge Week Regional, right back in its usual location at the Long Beach Hilton and its usual spot on the calendar, June 28 through July 4, 2027. The Olympics will prevent us from holding Bridge Week in 2028, so make your plans now to attend next year.

For 2028, the Tournament Committee is looking into the possibility of a D23 Regional during another part of the year - most likely in February, with late September a possible alternative. Stay tuned to this space for information as it becomes available.

The D23 NAP Final was a success, thanks to the valiant efforts of Mitch Dunitz and Jeff Grotenhuis and our excellent director, Brandon Sheumaker. Congratulations to Open pairs Alex Kolesnik and Walt Schafer; Ifti Baqai and Mitch Dunitz; and Viktor Anikovich and Ed Piken. Congratulations to Flight A pairs Lance Kerr and Tom Reynolds; Thompson Jin and Gary Moore; Sharon Beynon and Elizabeth Ryan; and William Taylor and Paul Ryan.

Congratulations to Flight B pairs John Bakovic and Alan Flower; Jeff Grotenhuis and Stephen Kiser;

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Regional Director's Report

by Cornelia Gould

(Region11Director@acbl.org)



What is on my mind this month is the national NABC tournament to be held at the Manchester Grand Hyatt in San Diego starting on Thursday, November 26. Yes, that is Thanksgiving Day, which has traditionally been the starting date of the Fall NABCs. Obviously, some of us will wish to celebrate that holiday at home with family and friends. However, for other dedicated bridge players it is an opportunity to socialize and play our favorite game as a way of celebrating the holiday. Games that day begin at noon.

For me, I am thinking about this NABC a lot, both because our fall Board of Directors meetings will be held earlier in the week of the start of the tournament, and because my husband, Ed, and I signed up to Chair the Welcome and Prize Desk at the tournament. We are busily assembling prizes and making sure we have enough volunteers to serve at the desk. As of now, most volunteer slots have been filled. However, if you are

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Kim Ebner and Peter Jager; and Dawn Lee and Alexander Wiles. And congratulations to Flight C pairs Paul Chen and Michael Teng; Peter Kavounas and Michael Lam; Glenn Barry and Ralph Brunson; and Barbara Laier and Susan Morishita. Good luck to all who will be representing us in Dallas!

Unit 557 will be holding its STaC at the Long Beach Bridge Center right as this month's issue hits the stands, November 15-22. If you need those shiny silver points, come and get 'em!

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interested in serving, here is a link to the volunteer sign-ups.

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/nabcVolunteers?useFullSite=true#/

If you have been to previous NABC's, you will understand how exciting and energizing it can be to attend. If you have not, I recommend that you give it a try – especially since it is in our back yard this year. The next NABC to be held in Southern California will be in Los Angeles in the Fall of 2030. For complete information about the tournament go to:

https://www.acbl.org/sandiego/.

There are events for all levels of player. And, Tournament Chair Lamya Agelidis and her team, as well as folks at ACBL headquarters, have done an amazing job of selecting Welcome gifts and prizes, and arranging hospitality and fun extracurricular events for all. Downtown San Diego is a fun place to be. There are lots of great restaurants and things to see. A restaurant guide will be provided to all who attend.

Next month I will plan to report on highlights of the Board meetings to be held in a few weeks.

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Bridge Jeopardy
by John Jones

Category – Conventions for Improving Tournament Players

The answer is: (Questions on page 3)

$100 – After opener raises your 1♥ or 1♠ bid, this convention tells you whether partner has three trumps or four, and whether partner is minimum or maximum.

$200 – After partner opens a weak-two bid, this convention will tell you if partner is minimum or maximum and the quality of their six-card suit.

$300 – You use this jump bid convention after the opponents open 2♥ or 2♠ to tell your partner you have a strong hand with 5+ of the other major and 5+ of the minor you bid.

$400 – You use this bid after your partner opens 1NT. This bid asks if partner is minimum or maximum. You may have a balanced hand, or long clubs with any strength.

$500 – This system was invented by Orange County's Joe Kivel. After the partnership makes three bids at the 1-level, this three-letter convention allows you to signoff, get out in 2♦, invite game, force to game, or invite slam.

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	Ramona Hernandez
553 – Glendale-Verdugo	Adam Barron
556 – Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley	Paula Olivares
557 – Long Beach	Leo Dittemore
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!

23 Rank Changes November 2026

Junior Master
Roberta Bowman
Prabha Chanani
Renee Dessy
Daniel Felsenthal
Douglas Herbst
Staajabu Heshimu
Lorraine Holton
Vinny Jindal
Boaz Kelmer
Davina Klein
Jim Robinson
Mary Takami
Sharon Vaughn
Elizabeth Zumbro

Club Master
Jeffrey Chang
Mirdula Kedia
Lucy Kihm
Samuel Leonard
Michell Levine
Jacqueline O Neill
George Pappas
Mary Robbins

Club Master
John Rowell
Ellen Yurko

Sectional Master
Miriam Angel
Mavis Baynard
Diane Corwin
Sharon Demshki
Loren Giorgio
Beth Howard
Jennie Kim
Mollie Leibowitz Rabin
Carol Muchin
Jennifer Pendry

Regional Master
Thea Drayer
Peter Ji
Carol Maffin
Patricia Warner

NABC Master
Nicole Berte
Michael Teng

Advanced NABC Master
Susan Morishita
Andy Rooke

Life Master
Ming Hu
Peter Kavounas
Stephen Kiser

Bronze Life Master
Lewis Anten
Stephen Kiser
Michael Levin

Ruby Life Master
Kim Ebner
Nina Huang
Thomas Lill
Lisa Walker
Alexander Wiles

Emerald Life Master
Sankar Reddy
Mark Tang

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

$100 – What is Spiral?

$200 – What is Ogust?

$300 – What is Leaping Michaels?

$400 – What is Size ask?

$500 – What is XYZ?

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
Claremont Bridge Club: Thursdays 9:30
Unit Pairs Game: November 21, 11:00 a.m., Ontario
Individual: December 4, 10:00 a.m., Ontario
Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

In the October Unit game, Lulu Minter – Amr Elghamry took the top spot with 62.92%. They edged out Mary Ann Wotring – Vic Sartor by just ½ matchpoint. In third we find Kiran Kumar – Avice Osmundson, followed by Ramona Hernandez – Nona Stokes, and then Roger Boyar – Patrick Finley.

Our first-of-its kind (possibly the last – who knows?) Halloween game, Caryn Mason – Patrick Finley took first with 61.48%. In second were Judy Mogharbel – Joe Maresh, then Dan Robinson – Cece Mogharbel, Mary Ann Wotring – Kiran Kumar, and Sofi Kasubhai – Art Weinstein. We had 6¼ tables, so I just kibitzed – and I will tell you, it was about as enjoyable as playing! Some of the bidding I saw – well, just say it wasn't entirely mainstream.

The game featured not only a costume competition, but an off-the-wall contest suiting my somewhat unhinged mind. I'm a fan of wild comedies, so I made a list of outrageously funny lines and challenged the players to identify both the movie, and the speakers (either role or actor would do). I guess it was kind of tough, because only 5 people submitted entries – and there were prizes for the top 3! For those who entered and would like the answers, they are posted on our web site.

Here are two of my favorites, along with the answers, just to show you how my mind works – or doesn't work, sometimes:

"Butler gone … but *pockets* still there?" From *Murder by Death*, spoken by Sydney Wang (Peter Sellers).

"If I were joking, I'd say 'What do you do with an elephant with three balls?' (shrug) 'You walk him, and pitch to the rhino.'" From *Hot Shots*, Ramada Thompson/Valerio Golino and Topper Harley/Charlie Sheen.

The November Individual was not held, due to lack of attendance. Attendance at this fun game has been rather poor lately. If I can't get enough to play next month, I will probably not renew the sanction. So if you enjoy this outing … c'mon and play!

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

1	20.12	Lulu Minter
2	19.99	Caryn Mason
3	19.17	Patrick Finley
4	15.70	Fredy Minter
5	13.31	Vic Sartor
6	8.59	Steve Andersen
7	7.91	Mary Ann Wotring
8	7.84	Peter Kavounas
9	7.81	Clint Lew
10	7.31	Linda Tessier

Totals were higher than normal because of all the special games in October, paying extra points.

And at the Claremont Bridge Club:

1	2.64	David Ochroch
1	2.64	Duane Woodman
3	2.56	Patrick Finley
3	2.56	Steve Mancini
5	173	Todd Shimoda
5	1.00	Olivia Esquibel

At La Fetra, we had four scores were over the magic 65% benchmark. The best was a monstrous 78.0% game by whopper by Fredy and Lulu Minter. They also had a 73.33%-er and a 65.93%er. The other big game was by Caryn Mason – Patric Finley, 67.92%, finishing second that day to you-know-who. Mayy Ann Wotring – Steve Anderson, and Caron Mason – Vic Sartor were also winners, although not topping the magic 65%.

Over in Claremont, three of the five winners were over 65%: Steve Mancini – Patrick Finley scored 68.06% and also 67.46%.. Duane Woodson – David Ochroch scored 65.80%. The other winners were Todd – Shimoda – Olivia Esquibel, and Art Weinstein – Sophie Kasubhai.

There were two promotions this month. Peter Kavounas has become a Life Master … and Yours Truly is now a Ruby Life Master. I'd say it's more a triumph of persistence over ability, myself. And I played with some pretty good partners.

Only a few of us traveled to Ventura for the Halloween regional. Six players brought home a total of 43.85 masterpoints. The bulk of this was earned by Stepehen Andersen, who earned 27.91 gold points with two firsts and a third in bracketed teams events. Peter Kavounas brought home 7.63 with a win in bracketed teams. The rest of us brought home the rest, a few dribs and drabs of red points. Sigh.

However, to show you that you can still have fun at this game, even while getting the stuffing knocked out of you, here's an amusing incident from that Regional. Partner opened 1♣, I responded 1♦. I don't recall exactly what the final contract was, but I believe it was some number of notrump. I faced my dummy, and as my ♦98764 hit the table, partner gave me the stink-eye. I said, deadpan, "What? It's a solid suit. Just missing the top five!" RHO almost fell off his chair laughing, and even the very sober LHO gave a smile.

Seven of us traveled to Long Beach for their annual Sectional. Top performer was Amr Elgamry, whose team finished 2nd overall in the Open Swiss and gathered 9.08 silver points. The team of Steve Andersen, Peter Kavounas, Judy Mogharbel, and Yours Truly managed 5th in B (10th overall, which didn't pay) to bring home 2.69. Cece Mougharbel had a very respectable 56.7% in the open pairs to earn 2.29. And Art Weinstein – Carl Silsbee, while not placing overall, did earn 0.48 each.

Our hand-of-the-month comes from the Vincent Price School of Horror. North deals, N-S are vulnerable, and you hold:

♠Q 8 4 ♥J 9 8 6 3 2 ♦4 3 ♣7 2

You are treated (?) to the following auction:

North	East	South	West
1♥	pass	1♠	X
pass	???		

Absolutely fabulous. You are 2-2 in partner's suits with your whopping 3HCP, all in *their* suits. What, oh what, do you do now?

I elected to bid 2♣ – not because it was the stronger (!?) one, but because it was the lower ranking one. South competed to 2♠, and West called 3♣. Oh, joyous day. Hopefully I can get out of this one alive.

3♣ turned out to be a make – Bridge Composer confirms that it is makeable, double-dummy – because the full hand was

North
♠ 5
♥ A K Q 5 4
♦ 10 8 7
♣ J 9 4 3

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

South
♠ K J 10 9 6 3
♥ 10 7
♦ J 9 2
♣ K 6

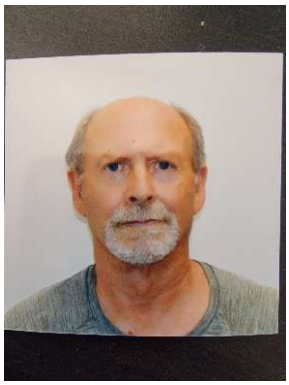
Where North found that opening bid is unknown. It *is* a 7 loser hand, but ick! +110 turned out to be a fine score – one other pair was +130 on our cards, the only ones to top us. Other scores ranged from +100 N-S to +90 E-W. According to that optimistic Bridge Composer, the par contract is 2NT by EW, +120, although how you get there is left as an exercise for the Student. We can also make 3♦, and (!) 2♥. Right.

Quotes for the month:

We just had the bi-annual midterms, so you get a bonus Quote-for-the-Month:

"If voting changed anything, they'd make it illegal." (Emma Goldman)

"Almost anything you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it." (Mohandas K Ghandi)



Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley
by Don Dachner

The Santa Clarita Bridge Club holds 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). There is also a beginner's bridge table with 6 enthusiasts in attendance.

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 October.

10/2		
N-S:	Bernard Seal - Ruth Baker	61%
E-W:	S John Langer - Beth Morrin	60%
10/9		
N-S:	Donna Davidson - Bill Langlois	68%
E-W:	Bernard Seal - Ruth Baker	66%
10/16		
N-S:	Bernard Seal - Beth Morrin	68%
E-W:	Allan Nueman - Harry Randhaw	65%
10/23		
N-S:	Mark Brifman - Susan Strassner	60%
E-W:	Gil Garteiz - May Ho	56%



Long Beach
by Leo Dittemore

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

Long Beach Unit 557 continues to thrive, thanks to the outstanding dedication of our members, volunteers, and leadership team.

Our recent Sectional tournament was a tremendous success, drawing more than 30 tables on both days of competition. Special recognition and sincere thanks go to Lillian Slater, Casey Steirs, Marlinda Wilson, and all of the volunteers whose hard work and commitment helped make the event such a success.

Regular club attendance remains strong, with 10 or more tables in play six days each week, reflecting the continued enthusiasm and support of our membership.

We are also pleased to see ongoing growth in our beginner and developing player programs. New Player Games continue to be offered on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, providing an inviting environment for newer players to learn, practice, and enjoy duplicate bridge.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that new classes will begin in January, creating additional opportunities for players of all experience levels to expand their skills and become more involved in the game.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to the continued success and growth of Long Beach Unit 557. Together, we are building a vibrant and welcoming bridge community.

Downey-Whittier
by Daniel F. Oakes

Sorry, nothing from Downey-Whittier this month.

Problem Solvers' Panel

Problem Solvers' Panel

John Jones is moderator. Mark Bartusek, Sid Brownstein, Ellis Feigenbaum, Ross Grabel, Jill Meyers, Margie Michelin, Rick Roeder, Mike Shuster, and Jon Wittes are panelists.

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

Most of the content, including the problems and the panelist answers and comments are being reused. The original column was presented in November of 2022. The thank you acknowledgments below are new. I wish to thank my proofreaders: Patrick Finley, Chris Hitchcock, Caryn Mason, Bob MsDonnell and Jo Melis for the phenomenal job they do. I also wish to thank my editor Tom Lill for the absolutely tremendous job he does!

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen! I appreciate all of you. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

1

Matchpoints
N-S Vul

North	East	South	West
1NT	1♠#	2NT*	3♠
pass	pass	???	

\# Natural, single-suited (had two-suited bids available)
* Lebensohl

You, South, hold: ♠ KQ ♥ Q1092 ♦ A973 ♣ AJ5
What call do you make?

The first question is do we double the opponents? The second question is how high do we bid if we don't double the opponents?

Some panelists consider dropping the hammer on the insolent opponents who dared interfere with our auction.

Michelin: Double. My double should tell partner I was bidding Stayman with a stopper *(or possibly 3NT with a stopper)* and not trying to get out in a minor and let him make the decision.

Feigenbaum: Double/3NT. Think my answer depends on who I am playing with. For family harmony I probably double; left to my own devices (often entertaining) or in the famous words of Jim Looby, "if I were playing with myself", I bid 3NT still showing a four-card heart suit with a stopper *(again, possibly 3NT with a stopper)*.

Other panelists think we aren't getting enough on defense, but don't wish to invite a slam.

Roeder: 3NT. I'm confused as I thought there were only 40 HCP in a deck. 4♥ could work well but might run into mirror distribution.

Grabel: 3NT. Should show a 3NT bid with a stopper whereas a direct 3NT bid would have shown the values without a stopper.

One panelist suggests a twist on standard Lebensohl.

Shuster: 3NT. Double is possible, but I don't expect partner to pass if I do, and I can't afford to risk missing 3NT at MPs. I prefer to not use Lebensohl to "show" a 3NT bid with a stopper; I think it a poor idea to tell the opposition whether or not they should lead their suit and to give advancer the three level for a lead directing call. If playing Lebensohl the way I recommend, then this sequence would promise four hearts.

Some panelists follow through with their slam try.

Brownstein: 4NT. Quantitative.

Bartusek: 4NT. At this vulnerability penalizing them will only get us +500 which is insufficient at MPs (they'll get five trumps and a ruff in dummy). The KQ tight opposite xx requires me to slightly downgrade the hand. The K&R hand evaluator rates this hand as 15.05 while DK gives it a 16+ evaluation (I more realistically evaluated ♠Ax ♥Q1092 ♦A973 ♣AJ5 as 15.5 which K&R says is 15.35). Thus, the choice is between 3NT and an invitational 4NT (a 4♠ bid will probably spiral the auction out of control, imply first round control, and lose the ability to invite slam). (*Hand evaluators are pretty good at assessing the value of balanced hands in an auction where no bid has yet to be made. The K&R evaluator is very good and the DK is pretty good. However, those evaluating tools are severely limited in the sense that they don't change after an opening bid).* The expected red suit length with my LHO makes me lean toward the conservative action; however, I've generated far too many hands for partner that will make slam. Note that any suit bid at the 4-level by me would show six+ cards in a hand that probably wanted to sign off at the 3-level (but took the push). *Mark is 100% on target with that remark; 4♥ is a very dubious call. 4♥ overstates the heart length (we have four instead of six) and understates overall HCP strength (we have 15 HCP instead of about five to seven).* A double by me after Lebensohl would guarantee a spade stopper and be an action double, but I'm more interested in partner's strength rather than his distribution. I suppose the quality of partner's 1NT openings and slam acceptance tendencies are very relevant to this problem. Note that partner can be assured that I've guaranteed at least second round control of spades by bidding 2NT then 4NT (and I might have cuebid 4♠ with first round control).

Two panelists object to the auction, thinking that an original takeout double is superior to the 2NT Lebensohl call.

Wittes. 4NT. I don't accept the 2NT Lebensohl bid. That's the last bid I would make with this hand. I think 4NT quantitative is the least likely bid to be misconstrued. Or negative double followed by 4NT. Partner should take into account that my RHO could surely be psyching at this vulnerability.

Meyers: Abstain. I would have doubled 2♠ as takeout so this is a silly problem and since I made such a ridiculous bid to start with I am abstaining.

The panelists who preferred an original double are completely correct. Double over an overcall of 1NT has been played as takeout for several years now. The actual hand is from Long Beach Bridge Center, and I don't know whether the partnership who gave me the hand, Melanie Smothers and Lillian Slater, play doubles as penalty or takeout. I was playing with Jo "The Beast" Melis and she held the hand in question. She did not have a takeout double available, as she picked penalty when I gave her the choice. She used Lebensohl only to signoff in 3NT (there was no 3♠ bid at our table; I made the normal 11 tricks). At the table in question, the 2♠ overcall made by Alan Olschawang was not a thing of beauty, holding ♠J98762 ♥A7 ♦T54 ♣73. But advancer's raise to 3♠ on ♠T43 ♥8653 ♦Q8 ♣QT94, made by my friend Alan Flower, is probably best described as "bidding on his good looks." That got doubled, but this netted the down three that several of our panelists suggested, with declarer scoring an ace, four trumps in hand, and one ruff in the dummy.

2

Matchpoints
Both Vul

South	West	North	East
pass	1♥	1NT	pass
2♥&	3♣	X	3♥
???			

& Transfer to spades

You, South, hold: ♠ J10842 ♥ 4 ♦ K972 ♣ KJ3

What call do you make?

Most of the panel doubled, an action I agree with. I'll start with the panelist who disagrees.

Bartusek: Pass. My initial reaction was to double since it's our hand with the balance of strength. Unfortunately, I can see dummy hitting with three trumps and the expected club shortness making my defensive assets worthless (Give LHO ♠xx ♥AQJxxx ♦void ♣Axxxx and they might even make 4♥!). It really depends upon whether partner has three or four hearts and can lead trumps twice to cut down club ruffs. With presumably no spade fit it seems like it's the opponent's hand. Thus, I'm going to reluctantly pass because I don't think we can make anything (BTW, downgrade hands with jacks).

Now the majority.

Brownstein: Double. I have invitational values and too much to pass.

Roeder: Double. With 23-25 HCP, we cannot let them play undoubled.

Feigenbaum: Double, and hope partner either finds a 3NT bid or leads a trump.

Shuster: Double. I'll try for 200. Partner will realize I don't have a heart stack here, just a good hand. It seems like RHO doesn't like his hand much to have not bid 2♥ over 1NT, so if partner passes, I expect dummy to track with two hearts and one club.

Wittes: Double. I have maximum values for my bidding, so I think it's our hand. Right hand opponent didn't bid 2♥ directly over 1NT, so all they're doing is taking a preference. I don't expect partner to have more than two spades, and even if they have three spades and no great defensive holding in hearts, they are allowed to bid 3♠ over my double. It would be nice if partner could lead a trump, but they might not have a heart holding they can lead from. I also don't want partner leading the ♠K from Kx, but bridge is not a perfect game.

Grabel: Double. I have invitational values and too much to pass.

Michelin: Double. At IMPs I might be too chicken to double but in MP I am doubling because I want partner to know I was at least invitational with my transfer. I told him I had five spades and he knows I don't have a heart stack when the opener has at least five. Maybe he has a few hearts for his NT bid and East took a preference.

Meyers: Double. I have too much to pass; if partner passes, I am hoping for a trump lead. If they make it, I have been minus 730 before. But East didn't raise to 2♥ so how good could they be? If I double partner will be clued in that I have values.

This is an old problem that I got from a D8 panel from many years ago. The majority of that panel also voted for an action double, but there were also votes for 3NT, Pass, and a mention of 3♠.

3

Matchpoints
Both Vul

North	East	South	West
pass	pass	pass	2♠
X	pass	???	

You, South, hold: ♠ Q1098 ♥ KQ4 ♦ Q3 ♣ 9765

What call do you make?

Several panelists ask the question of what 2NT would mean in this sequence. Lebensohl and natural are both mentioned. Which is best? For problems posed in this column, each expert is allowed to select rational options that he/she think are best, or what they play in their favorite partnerships.

First, we will hear from those who try for +200 on defense.

Brownstein: Pass for penalty!

Feigenbaum: Pass. Who am I playing with, Thomas Torquemada?

I sit and hope plus 200 is there; if not, it's matchpoints; and, I haven't blown the whole game.

Now for the 3♣ camp.

Wittes: 3♣. My left-hand opponent opened 2♠ vulnerable in fourth seat, so I don't think my QT98 is as great as it appears on the surface. I expect LHO to have ♠AKJxxx more often than not. Also, partner is a passed hand, so I expect the points to be fairly equally divided among all four hands. Partner rates to be 1-4-4-4 to force me to bid at the 3 level as a passed hand, so at least we should have a 4-4 fit, even if any missing honors rate to be off-side.

Roeder: 3♣. The location of the ♠J might make the difference between +200 and -670. Do not give partner a heart attack for what may have been a heroic action. As Clint Eastwood famously asked, "Do you feel lucky, punk?" Today, no.

Shuster: 3♣. I don't expect my trump trick will stop the fourth seat two bidder from taking eight tricks. I'll just bid my long suit and hope they push one higher. 2NT would be natural, but also probably -300.

Bartusek: 3♣. This is a guess between 2NT and 3♣. Since the doubler is a passed hand there is absolutely no need for Lebensohl to be on in this auction. Thus, 2NT is natural here which describe my hand fairly well (although I would strongly prefer QJ9x of spades). It would definitely be too scary passing for penalties since partner is a passed hand. In 3♣ I won't be happy if partner puts down a 1=4=5=3 hand, but 2NT will go down a lot after a small spade lead. It's likely that there is no successful action here. Note that 3♣ is more likely to be doubled, but more likely to be successful than 2NT (although if LHO foolishly leads a high spade against my known four-card suit then 2NT would work out better).

Michelin: 3♣. I need to know whether 2NT is Lebensohl. Here, with some partners after you are originally a passed hand it is natural. I'd like to have 10 or 11 but I'll chance 2NT if natural. Otherwise, I'll have to bid 3♣. The 2♠ bid for me is 11-14 with six plus spades.

Now for the 2NT bidders.

Meyers: 2NT. If 2NT is natural I bid 2NT, otherwise I bid 3♣. If 2NT is Lebensohl I bid 3♣.

Grabel: 2NT. Ostensibly this is to play in two places but hopefully my partner reads the situation right and passes.

Is 2NT best used as natural or Lebensohl? I stated previously that panelists were allowed to select rational conventions based upon their expert beliefs and experiences. In my world, it is completely illogical for Lebensohl to be on. Many of the follow-up sequences make no sense when both partners are passed hands. Does that mean that 2NT should be natural? No, I think that is a poor method here also. 2NT is best played here as Scramble, two places to play (normally the minors). This describes a 4-4 hand and allows the partnership to play in their best fit if the takeout doubler is 1=4=5=3 or 1=4=3=5, 0=4=4=5 or 0=4=5=4. Only Grabel mentions this treatment (some of the 3♣ bidders might play this but didn't comment on the convention).

4

Matchpoints
None Vul

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♥	2♠	pass
pass	4♣	pass	???

You, South, hold: ♠ 109852 ♥ K7 ♦ Q2 ♣ K952

What call do you make?

We passed a difficult hand on the last round. Partner showed extras. Do we come to life and try to let partner in on our secret? If we take the position that we are coming to life, what's the best call?

Roeder: 6♣. Which hit version titled "Magic" do you prefer? Pilot in 1975, Olivia Newton-John in 1980, or the Cars in 1984? *(Extra credit if you can identify which version hit #1 nationally)*. Because Magic is what you have. Technically, one can argue for a 4♠ cuebid, but I do not want to discourage a spade lead against slam.

Michelin: 6♣. I may be cold for 6 of either of partner's suits. 4♥ would be a safe bid. I know he must have at least six hearts and five clubs and a spade void. I have two very important cards for partner, the kings of his suits. I hope we are not off two aces or two diamonds. I am willing to take wrath from partner, but I don't want to hear that I bid it like a girl. I could bid 4♠ if I had the understanding that it would be a super accept of partner's minor. *Yes, 4♠ must be a cuebid with a super hand for his/her minor. 4♠ is what I would bid.*

Shuster: 4NT. I'm going to commit to 6♣, so I might as well check for keys in case we have a grand. ♠void ♥Axxxxx ♦Ax ♣AQxxx is not out of the question. I'm glad I don't use any method of "showing" a void over keycard - if we did, we would not be able to locate the ♣Q in time.

Some cite the matchpoint scoring and stay in hearts.

Bartusek: 4♥. Matchpoints requires us to take the risk of playing in a 5-2 heart fit. Note that partner did not use Michaels, so could easily have a sixth heart (but is expecting a 4♥ preference with xx on occasion).

Feigenbaum: 4♥. Seems too easy. We might easily be making 6♣ on a non-diamond lead. This is one of those hands where you want to bid 4♦ to deflect the lead on the way to a club slam. If it works, I am a hero; if it doesn't work we were going down in 6♣ whatever happens.

Grabel: 4♥. Partner should have at least two more hearts than clubs or he would have bid 2♠ over 1♠.

Meyers: 4♥. Although I would bid 5♣ at IMPs. I am playing partner for something like ♥AQxxxx and ♣AQxxx.

Other panelists don't want to try for slam but think that clubs may prove to be the superior strain.

Brownstein: 5♣. Hearts gets tapped trick one. May have a shot at 6♣, but no 4♣ Leaping Michaels bid *(4♣ would be a preempt for most partnerships)* on the first round argues against going slamming.

Wittes: 5♣. 4♥ could be right at match points, but with a spade tap on the go, and hearts likely breaking badly, let's play the nine-card fit.

ANSWER to Roeder's trivia question: Olivia Newton-John.

5

Matchpoints
Both Vul.

North	East	South	West
1♠	pass	2♠	pass
3♥*	pass	4♠	Pass
5♠	pass	???	

You, South, hold: ♠ K865 ♥ Q542 ♦ J73 ♣ 84

What call do you make?

Does partner need to have a void for this auction to make sense? Should we have tried 4♥ on the previous round?

Some go low, thinking they have represented the hand already.

Shuster: Pass. When we jumped to 4♠ without cuebidding a minor on the way, partner can infer that we did that based on two major suit covers. So, we've shown our entire hand (and maybe a bit more). Sounds like partner needs three major suit honors for slam.

Roeder: Pass. Because partner did not cuebid 5 of a minor, partner is concerned about trump quality. If I had just a touch more, I would bid on. We will not get a terrible score if slam happens to be on.

Meyers: Pass. I think partner is looking for a club control; if partner had a club control she could key card.

Wittes: Pass. Even though I have four trumps, I have a minimum with no controls other than the king of spades and queen of hearts. In view of the subsequent auction, I kind of wish I had bid 3♠ over 3♥ to see what partner would have bid next on that auction.

Other panelists bravely bid the slam.

Brownstein: 6♠. ♥Q should be enough.

Bartusek: 6♠. My initial reaction was to pass because I have an aggressive dead minimum acceptance of partner's game try. But, I have all my values in the majors which partner is asking about along with a fourth trump, and partner could have something like ♠AQxxxx ♥Axxxx ♦void ♣AK or ♠AQxxxx ♥Axxxxx ♦void ♣A or ♠Axxxxxx ♥AJxx ♦void ♣AK or ♠Axxxxxx ♥Axxx ♦A ♣A. If a side ace or potentially a king would have been useful, then partner would have started cuebidding. Note - I could have described my hand by bidding 4♥ on the second round which guarantees at least Hxxx of hearts (perhaps my hand is too weak?). Then, RKC might have sufficed.

Feigenbaum: 6♠. Is 5♥ a general slam try or old fashioned Josephine? *(In the USA, Josephine more commonly comes in the form of 5NT, although trump help asking bids can have other forms. In the USA it is commonly referred to as Grand Slam Force, but in other parts of the world it is called Josephine after its developer, Josephine Culbertson.)* I would have bid 4♥ *(I agree)* on the way to 4♠; partner is allowed to have a four-card heart suit here. Having said that, I am an old-fashioned type of guy and I bid 6♠ because I have one of top three honors in spades.

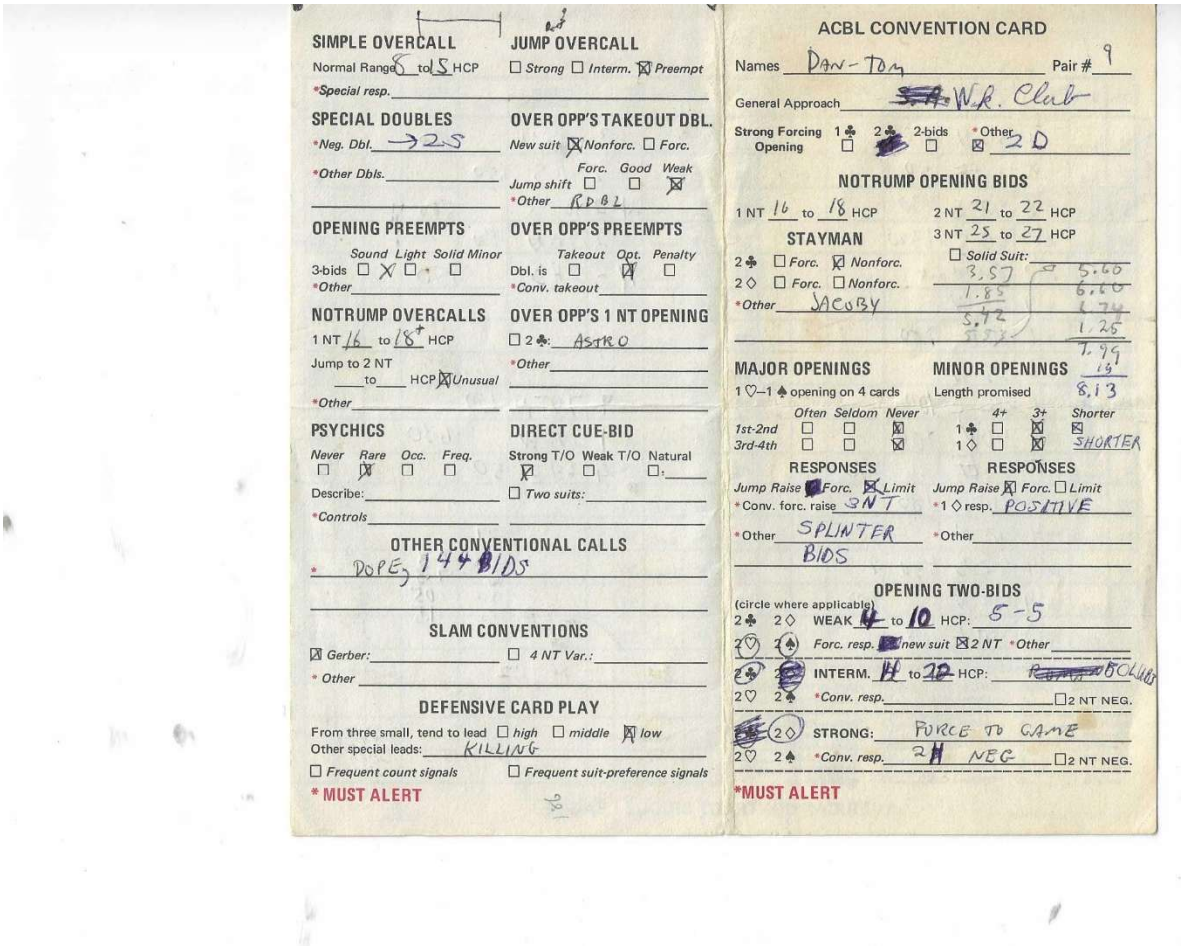
Grabel: 6♠. With ♠K and ♥Q, hard to imagine what more he might expect!

Michelin: 6♠. Since only two suits were bid the 5♠ bid can't be asking for first or second round control in the unbid suit. Partner must have a void and he is asking me about my trumps, with four to the king I am bidding 6♠.

Hands 4 and 5 were sent to me from Michael Kamil via Facebook. Thanks Michael!

A Bit of Fun

Rumaging around in my archives, I found this ancient convention card – vintage around 1971. Ignore the cockamamie system it describes – obviously it was homegrown, just fooling around, and I had *never* read a bridge book. Notice there is still a place for describing psychic bids! When was the last time you saw *that* on a CC? 16-18 1NT was still pretty standard, too. The game has changed a bit, hasn't it!



SIMPLE OVERCALL
Normal Range 8 to 15 HCP
*Special resp.

JUMP OVERCALL
☐ Strong ☐ Interm. ☒ Preempt

SPECIAL DOUBLES
*Neg. Dbl. → 2♠
*Other Dbls.

OVER OPP'S TAKEOUT DBL.
New suit ☒ Nonforc. ☐ Forc.
Jump shift ☐ Forc. ☐ Good ☐ Weak ☒
*Other RDBL

OPENING PREEMPTS
Sound Light Solid Minor
3-bids ☐ X ☐ ☐
*Other

OVER OPP'S PREEMPTS
Dbl. is ☐ Takeout ☒ Opt. ☐ Penalty
*Conv. takeout

NOTRUMP OVERCALLS
1 NT 16 to 18+ HCP
Jump to 2 NT ___ to ___ HCP ☒ Unusual
*Other

OVER OPP'S 1 NT OPENING
☐ 2♣: ASTRO
*Other

PSYCHICS
Never ☐ Rare ☒ Occ. ☐ Freq. ☐
Describe:
*Controls

DIRECT CUE-BID
Strong T/O ☒ Weak T/O ☐ Natural ☐:
☐ Two suits:

OTHER CONVENTIONAL CALLS
* DOPE, 144 BIDS

SLAM CONVENTIONS
☒ Gerber: ☐ 4 NT Var.:
* Other

DEFENSIVE CARD PLAY
From three small, tend to lead ☐ high ☐ middle ☒ low
Other special leads: KILLING
☐ Frequent count signals ☐ Frequent suit-preference signals
* MUST ALERT

ACBL CONVENTION CARD
Names DAN - TOM Pair # 9
General Approach S.A. W.R. Club
Strong Forcing Opening 1♣ ☐ 2♣ ☒ 2-bids ☐ *Other 2D

NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS
1 NT 16 to 18 HCP
2 NT 21 to 22 HCP
3 NT 25 to 27 HCP
☐ Solid Suit:

STAYMAN
2♣ ☐ Forc. ☒ Nonforc. 3.57 5.60
2♢ ☐ Forc. ☐ Nonforc. 1.85 6.60
*Other JACOBY 5.12 4.74
1.25
4.99
13

MAJOR OPENINGS
1♡–1♠ opening on 4 cards
Often Seldom Never
1st-2nd ☐ ☐ ☒
3rd-4th ☐ ☐ ☒

RESPONSES
Jump Raise ☒ Forc. ☒ Limit
*Conv. forc. raise 3NT
*Other SPLINTER BIDS

MINOR OPENINGS
Length promised 8,13
4+ 3+ Shorter
1♣ ☐ ☒ ☒
1♢ ☐ ☒ SHORTER

RESPONSES
Jump Raise ☒ Forc. ☐ Limit
*1♢ resp. POSITIVE
*Other

OPENING TWO-BIDS
(circle where applicable)
2♣ 2♢ WEAK 4 to 10 HCP: 5-5
2♡ 2♠ Forc. resp. ☐ new suit ☒ 2 NT *Other
2♣ 2♦ INTERM. 14 to 20 HCP: RUMP BOLUS
2♡ 2♠ *Conv. resp. ☐ 2 NT NEG.
2♣ 2♢ STRONG: FORCE TO GAME
2♡ 2♠ *Conv. resp. 2H NEG ☐ 2 NT NEG.
*MUST ALERT