

Bridge News

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Out of Time

by Mike Marcucci



It is an interesting part of life that even positive changes take a long time. Must be this democracy that we live in. An idea can be revolutionary and life-changing and pervasively useful but it will still take months, years, sometimes decades to go into effect. The best ideas – you've seen this before – often meet resistance from the multitudes just because they are different. Folks are wary of change. What are the motives behind the instigators? Now that I think about it, how apropos is this train of thought here, given that an election is just around the corner? When did you last encounter a good idea that was immediately accepted and put into effect quickly? The smaller effect circle it has, the more likely things will change sometime before the gray hairs start spreading. Count the fast ones on one hand...

So what has the bridge world of players been talking about over the decades? The declining player pool has been a topic since the 60's and everyone has their own solution. Many of the explanations could be real factors, but the turn-around has yet to come. A prevalent cause suspected these days has been the attention span of Gen-X and their work ethic. Don't shoot the messenger here, fellow readers. You've all been in conversations about this. Bridge is our game and we want the best for it. Let me illustrate the time frame of our game. ☺

The 60's were the good times in LA. An expanding pool of players, multitudes of clubs, lots of energy in the rather youthful volunteer Unit and District boards, TV programs, world class players.

PRESIDENT continued on page 2

District Director Report

November 2018

by Kevin Lane

“Bridge is a game and should be fun.”



Come to Hawaii

The Fall NABC is in Hawaii this November starting on Thanksgiving and lasting for 11 days. I encourage you to attend. This will likely be the last NABC in Hawaii, and you will be helping out both the ACBL and yourself. The deadline for host hotel rates has been extended to November 7th.

Please contact me if you're planning to attend the Hawaii NABC and haven't made arrangements yet. And also contact me if you have already made arrangements for Hawaii but are staying at some hotel other than the Hilton. There may be a discount (for D23 members only) depending on your situation: my email is klaned23@gmail.com.

Hawaii had some hurricane and volcano activity earlier in the year which has had the effect of lowering hotel prices in the area. That's good news for last minute travelers. But it's bad news for the ACBL because we scheduled this tournament years

DIRECTOR continued on page 3

Inside This Issue

North American Pairs Update	page 3
Vietnam Bridge Cruise	page 5
Director's Chair	page 6
Rank Changes	page 7
Around the Units	page 8
Special Feature: "OchLohr"	page 14
Problem Solvers' Panel	page 17

PRESIDENT continued from page 1

getting lots of exposure and contributing their time to improving the LA bridge experience at Clubs and tournaments, huge turnouts at the Regionals rivaling the NABC's of today. Players dressed up. Bridge was considered an elegant game. Life was good (and profitable).

For the next 2 decades, the numbers of players and attendance stopped rising and slowly dropped. Was this noticed by ACBL and the districts? Even before computers when we had to do math with a pencil ☹ our management wizards detected the trends and many articles discussed solutions. A popular cause was thought to be the lack of challenge after the LM plateau was passed. Only black and red masterpoints existed back then, so many ideas were debated. Yes, in 1969, gold points were introduced, but that was part of an effort to draw players out of their clubs for a wider experience & produce players at the LM level who had met the harder challenges at the regional and national levels. From 1970 to 1990, the number of articles are staggering on how to reverse the negative slope on our membership curve.

I cannot possibly cover all the committee agendas and proposals and discussions on this subject in one column, but give me some leeway and accept a summary that it took 20 years of discussion before a new MP plan was introduced in 1989 creating silver points to strengthen the draw of sectionals in a player's quest to make LM. Why needed you ask? Because sectionals were not attractive to a player when a lot less trouble was needed to stay at home and accumulate all your requirements for LM. The "new" MP Plan also introduced the Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Diamond LM levels to satisfy that challenge lacking earlier. Creation of the even higher levels are left to another column.

These changes were good for our game, but look how long they took to wring out the bugs and convince a committee of 25 to push the plan through the ACBL structure. When the ideas were introduced, they funneled through your friendly Unit Reporters in many cases. In perusing many old issues of the Bulletin, I first read about pigment changes in a Westwood Unit 566 column in March 1985 by Esther Stephenson. How many of our D23 players remember her? Then in October 1986, our D23 District Director, Bob Eisenstein, laid out the whole plan just as it was

implemented 3 years later. Three years of convincing was needed before action prevailed. The new challenges and recognition levels have accomplished a lot for those players who have pushed through the initial hurdles of our game and are still enjoying the competition.

All well and good, but what about that little negative slope issue that has lingered for 50 years now? Another thesis to be written by the ACBL PhD's sometime and a subject that has been tinkered with but not solved. Let me ask our readers a question. How many types of bridge players do we have? It's not a funny question from this standpoint: I think there are those of us who play bridge for the entertainment and friendship value and there are those who are seeking more and more points and will step over anyone in their way! Unfortunately, as many authors before me have written, it only takes one painful encounter with the latter to drive players away from the game. MOST new players take up bridge for the social aspects of the game and NOT the love of points. I believe that, if we are going to make any headway in reversing that retention and attendance slope, our behavior at the bridge table has to improve. I wish someone would come up with a way to isolate that 2% of our population who believe that they are God's gift to our bridge population and can violate all our common behavior standards. Giving lessons at the table. Telling opponents how they "should" have played the hand. Laughing at a beginner mistake. Pairs that come to the table oblivious to the presence of their opponents and still discussing that last hand.

The list is long and most of you have read the articles. I very much hope that you've ALL seen the lists of proper etiquette at our tables while we play our game. The irony of the situation is that 98% of the players I encounter are wonderful to talk with and to play against. Those are the folks that make the day enjoyable. These folks are a credit to our game and to their mothers and fathers who taught them good manners!

The other 2%, however, cannot be ignored and, most unfortunately, are having more of an effect on newer players than those of us who are behaving nicely. They move around the room and spoil a lot of days. What they really need is to be taken into a back room and re-educated.

Would someone please let me know how we can excise that 2% from our midst because we are out of time. Zero-Tolerance has been around for how long? We work so hard to entice new players to come enjoy our game and these 2% undo all our good work and drive them away. Without that 2%, I'll bet our curve would reverse. It may be an impossible task to get through their armor plated attitudes, but if we cannot, I think we can expect that slope to stay negative. We are out of time.....

Next week, I'll be in Ventura, spreading more LA good cheer and telling our other No-Cal neighbors how nice the July weather is in LA. Don't know how many I convinced at Seaside, but had some exciting hands nevertheless. Stay healthy, my friends.

DIRECTOR continued from page 1

years ago and locked in rates at the time. So our host hotel rates are good but the competition is pulling folks away from the host hotel when we need to meet our room block.

Other hotel contracts

After hearing about Hawaii, several of us on the board began seeking more detailed information about other future hotel contracts. Hawaii was the biggest problem, and I'm told by a District Director that one problem with the current Hawaii contract is that the organizers thought they needed more space than usual because the prior Hawaii contract didn't include enough hotel rooms.

That said, several of my colleagues and I are actively pursuing a more formal review by board members of all hotel contracts so we can assess risk. The earlier risks are identified the better they can be mitigated. Unfortunately, there is considerable culture on our board for limiting board member access to these type documents despite the responsibility of board members to oversee the organization.

The good news is that the attention raised about Hawaii has already allowed mitigation of (smaller) potential issues at other future NABC sites.

More campaign discussion

Last month I wrote about several issues that arose in the campaign and shared it online in the interests of transparency. I got favorable responses

from some of you who are more interested in national issues.

This month, I have added some new topics that I didn't include in last month's write-up. This month's write-up can be found at:

<http://acbldistrict23.org/PDFs/DD/D23-Campaign-Topics-part2.pdf>

while last month's write-up is at:

<http://acbldistrict23.org/PDFs/DD/D23-Campaign-Topics.pdf>

Feel free to contact me at klaned23@gmail.com

North American Pairs in Full Swing

by Morris "Mojo" Jones, NAP Coordinator, District 23

The 2018-19 North American Pairs tournament continues through its next phase. All qualifiers from NAP club games in June, July, and August (1,093 players!) have been invited to compete in one of two Unit Final events to qualify for the District Final in December.

The first Unit Final was held on October 21 at the San Marino Club. Seventeen pairs in the three flights were qualified to advance to the District Final. Here are the overall winners and runners up in each flight:

Flight A (open)

<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>
Robert Perlsweig	Viktor Anikovich
Pam Wittes	Edward Piken

Flight B (0 – 2500)

<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>
Sumit Daftuar	Rick Turner
Patrick Cardullo	Alyssa Kennedy

Flight C (0 – 500 NLM)

<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>
Mark Rappaport	Andrei Verona
Larisa Rappaport	Maria Verona

There is still time to compete! If you were a qualifier at the club level, you are invited to play in the second Unit Final game to be held at the Long Beach Bridge Center on **Sunday, November 18**. The game is two sessions with the first session starting at 10:00 a.m. The game will be finished by about 6:30 p.m. Players may enter with any other eligible qualified partner.

Reservations are requested! Partnerships with a reservation will enjoy a reduced card fee of \$12.00 per player per session (\$48.00 per partnership for the event). Walk-in players will pay \$12.50 (\$50 for the partnership).

To secure a seat at the second Unit Final, visit the District 23 North American Pairs on the web at nap.bridgemojo.com, or register by email to nap@bridgemojo.com.

60% of players in the Unit Final games will be invited to compete in the District Final to be held on Sunday, December 9, at the South Bay Bridge Club in Lomita.

From the District Final, the top three pairs in Flight A, and the top four pairs in Flights B and C will be invited to compete in the North American Pairs national finals held at the Memphis NABC in March. *The top two pairs in each flight will receive a travel subsidy* from the ACBL upon entering the event.

Entering the District Final is worth doing in any case! If one of the nationally-qualified pairs declines to attend, the next runner-up will be extended an invitation to compete in the national event.

During the Unit and District stage, players may form partnerships with any other qualified eligible player, but note that partnerships from the District Final will be invited to the national event *as a partnership*. Substitutions are not permitted at that level.

Come play some great bridge in Long Beach and be part of the event!

Southern California Bridge News
 Published monthly by ALACBU, Inc.
 410 Mill Creek Lane, San Gabriel, CA 91775
 Phone: 626-281-2179
 email bridgenews@acblidistrict23.org
 Editor/Designer..... Tom Lill
 Managing Editor..... Mike Marcucci
 Contributing Editor..... John Jones

Copy deadlines: the 23rd of the preceding month. Opinions expressed in the Southern California Bridge News are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of ALACBU, Inc., The Bridge News or the Editor. The Bridge News reserves the right to reject material it considers to be in poor taste or deems otherwise unsuitable for publication.

Looking for a Club?

Check out
<http://web3.acbl.org/findalist/club>

All clubs in the Los Angeles area are listed.
 You can look up all the game times,
 locations, and contact info.

**How to Keep Your Director Happy
... the Final Words**

(continued from last month)

If you are in danger of finishing a round on time, wait until all cards have been returned to a board before contesting the result. You will be amazed how effective this can be in slowing things down. The ensuing minutes are usually quite entertaining as well. Also, keep in mind that the Director has nothing to do most of the time and will appreciate the diversion.

If scoring with terminals, just hit “next” and enter the score – pay no attention to the actual number of the board you just played. When scoring on travelers, do so on random lines. On the first round, put your score on the line number of the board you played. If you find another pair has beaten you to it and taken “your” line, simply put your score on any open line.

At the end of the session, leave as big a mess behind as possible. Directors love to pick up trash, straighten chairs, etc. Since they have no life outside the bridge club, you are actually doing them a special favor by extending their day in the only place where they are truly comfortable.

Bridge Cruise to Vietnam

March 2020 - From \$2,100 per person



Ha Long Bay, Vietnam



Host Jeff Grotenhuis is a Life Master. In 2011 he founded Agile Bridge Club in Hermosa Beach. At 21 tables, Agile's Friday open game is now the largest Friday game in District 23. Jeff has also introduced more people to bridge in California this decade. He was a North American Pairs Finalist at the Philadelphia Nationals this year. When not teaching, directing or playing bridge, Jeff enjoys ballroom dancing and hiking.

Intermediate lectures and afternoon duplicate games will be held every day at sea. Our group dines together and then plays bridge virtually every evening. This will be our fifth bridge cruise. Jeff's wife, Jennifer, grew up in Vietnam. Our ship, the Celebrity Millennium, undergoes a major refurbishment the first quarter of 2019. Contact Jeff: (310) 600-4275 with questions regarding the bridge program.

To learn more about cruise contact:
 Susan Dushane at Altour
 (818) 464-9241
susan.dushane@altour.com
www.cuebidcruises.com



Cities Visited

From the Director's Chair: *by Jim Perkins*

Learning to Follow Suit

The laws around revokes are remarkably clear and as a director I am surprised when experienced players express surprise at what are very simple rulings. A player revokes when she holds a card in the suit that has been led but plays a card of a different suit on the trick. That is, she discards, rather than following suit. Presumably any such failure to follow suit is accidental and unintentional so we will not discuss additional or different rectifications that may apply in a case where a player deliberately violates her obligation to follow suit.

The one subtlety around the revoke laws is that, unlike many other situations in the Laws, there is no obligation to self-report a revoke. If you fail to follow suit and then later realize that you have failed to follow suit, you are not obligated to inform your opponents of your revoke. See Law 64B. On the other hand, as mentioned above intentionally revoking, even (especially?) if done so in the hopes that the opponents will fail to notice is, as with other intentional violations of the Laws, prohibited.

The second thing that seems to confuse even experienced players is whether and under what conditions the automatic trick adjustment in case of a revoke is one trick or two tricks. If the **PLAYER** that committed the revoke won the trick on which he revoked, then **that trick plus one** of any subsequent tricks won by the **SIDE** that revoked is automatically awarded to the non-offending side (two tricks total are transferred to the non-offending side). This rule, set forth in the Laws 64A, commonly comes into play when a player ruffs a card led in a suit despite holding a card in that suit. If the **PLAYER** that committed the revoke does not win the trick on which he revoked, then one of that or any subsequent tricks won by the **SIDE** that committed the revoke is awarded to the non-offending side (one trick total is transferred to the non-offending side). If neither the trick on which the

revoke occurred nor any subsequent tricks are won by the side of the player that revoked, then no automatic adjustment is made on account of the revoke.

Also, it is not possible (or at least not recognized and addressed) for a player to revoke at trick 12.

I had a highly experienced player with world championship experience complain to me that remedies set forth above do not necessarily or always punish the side that revokes. And that player is right. This rule does not, nor is it intended to punish players for revoking. The procedures following a revoke are remedial, not punitive.

There is, of course, a further exception that where the automatic trick adjustment does not put the non-offending side in the position that they would have been in but for the revoke, the director may award an adjusted score (as, for example, where a trump retained by an earlier failure to follow suit in trumps, stops the run of a long side suit that could have been run but for the failure to expend one's trump as required on the earlier play of the trump suit).

Revokes happen. If you revoke at trick 2 and realize at trick 5 that you did revoke earlier in the hand, you are not obligated to announce your revoke to your opponents. If you trump in and win a trick in a suit in which you are not void and your side wins a subsequent trick or subsequent tricks, you will have to return two tricks to the non-offending side. If you don't follow suit, but could have at trick 12 there is no adjustment, rather the cards are just picked up and played in the correct order.

Don't be surprised. This is what the Laws provide.

District 23 Rank Changes September 2018

Junior Master

Steve L. Cormien
 Patricia J. Donley
 Kerry A. Fleming
 Harkirat Randhawa
 Susanne Reyto
 Julia Sladek
 Sue Smyle
 Di Zheng

Club Master

Karmen Armoudjian
 Allene Buchanan
 Barbara R. Dischler

Club Master

Elizabeth Higgins
 Gail A. Leroy
 Laurel Resnick
 Steve Rouso
 Mary Louise Weissmann

Sectional Master

May Ho
 Ann Igawa
 Ardis K. Laine
 Caryn Musicer
 Mary-Sue Wright

Sectional Master

Larry Feldman
 Linda S. Mackenzie

Advanced NABC Master

David N. Ochroch

Bronze Life Master

Saul R. Prierer

Silver Life Master

Dalia Hernandez

Gold Life Master

Shariq Raza

Carolyn Taff & Marion Napier
REALTORS

Your Real Estate Partners for Life



RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

Relocation, Seniors, Luxury Properties and First Time Buyer Specialists Representing Buyers and Sellers in Probate & Trust Transactions; Estate, Condo and Investment Properties; Complex Real Estate Matters; Referrals; and Executive Transfers

Carolyn 310-871-5051

Marion 310-721-7782

2444 Wilshire Blvd.

Santa Monica, CA 90403

Around the Units in District 23



Long Beach by Jon Yinger

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

September 23 Unit Game: Overall results: 1st in A: Arthur and Dominique Moore, 2nd John Melis/Jackie Hess, 3rd Walt Schafer/Wenjia Yan, 4th Linda Renkus/Gayle Grubb, 5th Jeff Grotenhuis/Milton Kalikman, 6th Gerri Carlson/Steve Mager. In the B flight overalls Eva Mroz/Penny Wentworth were 3rd, Bettyanne Houts/Nancy Toussaint 4th, Betty Witteried/Christine Frumen 5th, Cayce Blanchard/Hashim Mahmood 6th. In the 199ers overalls Dale Quasny/Sofi Kasubhai were 1st, Gale and Caryn Musicer 2nd, Judy and Tomas Perder 3rd, Willie and Judy Brieb 4th. Congratulations to all!

70+% GAMES Sept 16 through Oct 15: In open games Sept 22 Peggy Waite/John Crabtree had 71.99%, Sept 26 George Welsh/Cayce Blanchard had 70.93%, Oct 13 Sean Lui/Margaret Yeh had 70%. And in the 499er game Oct 2 Ralph Bruson/Joyce Roberts had 72.50%. Congratulations to all four pairs!

BIG MASTER POINT AWARDS Sept 16 through Oct 15: In the unit game Sept 23 Dominique and Arthur Moore won 4.08 for 1st, Jackie Hess/John Melis 3.06mp for 2nd. In open games: Oct 8 Verna Baccus/Richard Bakovic won 5.06mp for 1st, Thad Mikols/Joyce Henderson 3.80mp for 2nd. Oct 9 Penny Wentworth/Eva Mroz won 5.59mp for 1st n/s, Mark Tang/Chiye Horiguchi won 5.59mp for 1st e/w, Fred Willbanks/Nu Beasley won 3.59mp for 2nd. Oct 10 James Nicola/Phil Feldman won 5.06mp for 1st, Rich Wasser/Mike Welsh 3.80mp for 2nd. Oct 11 Jackie Hess/KayTseng won 4.18mp for 1st, Verna Baccus/Sankar Reddy 3.10mp for 2nd. Oct 12 Dalia Hernandez/Ralph Beazley won 5.06mp for 1st, Joyce Henderson/Alan Olschwang 3.80mp for 2nd. And in the team game Sept 16 Bruce and Chiye Horiguchi,

Sankar Reddy and Mark Tang were 1st, each winning 0.70mp. Congratulations to all!

NEW CLUB MEMBERS: Ray Ishaeik, Neal Hudson. Welcome to the club!

STATUS CHANGES: New Regional Masters: Stan Johnson, Louise Seifert. New NABC Master: Ralph Rivera. New Ruby Life Master: Kiyu Nagaishi. Congratulations to you all!

GET WELL WISHES TO Bob Bakovic

UP-COMING EVENTS AT THE CLUB:

Oct 31: 11:45am Halloween potluck and costume contest; Game 12:30pm

Nov 7 7:00 pm Grass roots game: Extra points, \$11 card fees

Nov 9 7:00 pm Grass roots game: Extra points, \$11 card fees

Nov 12-18 STaC week. Extra points, \$12 card fees

Nov 18 NAP finals for Dist. 23

Nov 22 LBB closed for Thanksgiving

Note: no November unit game. Next unit game Dec 15

NEWS FROM LEISURE WORLD

BRIDGE CLUBS

Judy Carter-Johnson

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP GAME:

Clubhouse #3—Sept 13: Jeanette Estill/Diane Sachs 1 in A. Sally Fenton/Chie Wickham 2 in A, 1 in B, 1 in C. Joan and Ted Wieber 3 in A, 2 in B. George Alemshah/Martin Lipman 4 in A, 3 in B. Marilyn McClintock/Sibyl Smith 5 in A. Kiyu Nagaishi/Alan Olschwang tied with Melanie and Jerome Smith for 6/7 in A. Melanie and Jerome Smith 4 in B. Sue Boswell/Norma Krueger 5 in B. Mariam Kelley/Judy Mathias 6 in B, 2 in C. Barbara Vann/Paul Chen 3 in C. Gene and Ron Yaffee 4 in C.

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP GAME:

CLUBHOUSE #1—Sept 15: Marilyn McClintock/Gary Paugh 1 in A. Lynne Finley/Jane Reid 2 in A, 1 in B. Sue Boswell/Howard Smith 3 in A, 2 in B. Rai Scime/Mark Singer 4 in A, 3 in B, 1 in C. Cooie Dampman/Chie Wickham 5 in A, 4 in B.

Joan Tschirki/Fred Reker 6 in A. Monica and Paul Honey 2 in C.

GET WELL: To Verna Becker and Sharon Baren

CONDOLENCES to Betty Jackson and her family upon the death of her beloved husband Bob.

CONGRATULATIONS to Louise Siefert and Stan Johnson for advancing to Regional Master.

REMINDER: ACBL classifies Leisure World bridge games as “invitational” meaning non-resident guests must secure an advance reservation. Games are held on Monday/Thursday at clubhouse #3 at 12:15. For reservations please call: Monday—Midge Dunagan (562) 594-9686. Thursday—Sharon Beran (562)308-7838 or email: hbsharonb@gmail.com. Phone number for clubhouse #3---Late arrivals, last minute reservations, last minute cancellations, need a partner--After 12:00 noon: (562) 481-7368. Games are also held on Friday/Saturday at clubhouse #1 at 12:15. For reservations please call: Friday—Currently there is no reservation person for Friday—please come early and perhaps volunteer!! Saturday—Judith Jones (714) 840-2300—(between 9am and 9pm only!) or mikrojones@aol.com. Any news for next month’s column, please e-mail me at jcj90740@gmail.com Results of all Leisure World games are posted on www.acblunit557.org



Pomona –
Covina
by Tom Lill
www.acblunit551.org

Unit Game: Saturday, November 17, 11:00 a.m.,
Glendora

Individual: Saturday, Nov. 3, 9:30 a.m., San Dimas

Advance Notice: Because our December Unit game would fall during the Palm Springs Regional, we are advancing the date therefore to December 8 – one week earlier than normal. Mark your calendar!

La Fetra will be holding STaC games (silver points!) November 13, 15, and 16. The Unit game on the 17th will also be a STaC game.

The top finisher in the October Individual was Donald Logsdon, with a nice 66.7% effort. Tying for second were Dale Quasny and Your Correspondent. Al Lax took the fourth spot.

The October Unit game was won by Fredy and Lulu Minter, at only 72.9%. Bill Papa – Vic Sartor took second, Margie Hall – Steve Mancini third, with Timothy and Eileen Finlay taking the fourth and final Overall award.

Six pairs reached the magic 65% mark this month. Hanan Mogharbel and Richard Patterson had an astounding 75% game. Clint Lew and Your Correspondent got 68.99, just edging out Roger Boyar – Gino Barbieri. Richard Patterson – Gino Barbieri scored 65.76, Vic Sartor – Bill Papa hit 65.74, and Paul Chrisney – Roger Boyar hit 65% on the nose. Other winners: Linda Tessier, Claudia Cochran, Don Logsdon, Linda Stuart, and Sue Aspley.

Top masterpoint earners this month: Your Correspondent, 8.87; Clint Lew, 8.66; Claudia Cochran, 6.85; Hanan Mogharbel, 6.15; Richard Patterson, 6.10; Linda Tessier, 5.60; Vic Sartor, 5.58; and Bill Papa, 5.58.

Two promotions this month Gail LeRoy has advanced to Club Master, and David Ochroch is now an advanced NABC Master. Congratulations, and keep up the good play

For our Hand-of-the-Month, we once again present a bit of fun. Although, it must be said, declarer didn’t have much fun! At the recent Riverside sectional, you, West, pick up this promising hand:

♠ AQJ972 ♥ Q543 ♦ J ♣ A4

only to see RHO, the dealer, open 1♠! Pass, 2♥ (not game forcing) on your left! It gets better: partner now calls 2NT, obviously for the minors since there isn’t enough outstanding strength for him to hold 15-17 points. Thrilled at being asked to choose a minor suit, you are rescued by RHO who calls 3♣!!! It looks like Christmas is early this year. LHO now corrects to 3♠, and you know what to do when it comes around to you. The contract goes down 2, +300, and a joint top. Your side can make 3C or 3D (partner was 0=1=7=5); you did a bit better than that!

Quote for the month: “It is better to know nothing than to know what ain’t so.” (Josh Billings)

Results of the ACBL-wide Senior Pairs Game:



Santa Clarita- Antelope Valley by Beth Morrin

Unit 556 is going to offer a second sectional tournament this year called the **Holiday Magic Mountain Sectional** to be held on December 29th and December 30th at the Santa Clarita Senior Center at 22900 Market Street in Newhall. We will offer Open and Limited MP **Swiss Pairs** on Saturday at 10:00 AM and 2:30 PM and a duplicated play-thru (36 hands) **Swiss Team** games on Sunday starting at 1:00 PM. All profits for this game are being donated to the construction fund for the new Senior Center for Santa Clarita Valley.

What Swiss Pairs are:

- The Swiss Pairs is run along the lines of a Swiss Teams.
- Pairs play against each other in short matches, with IMP scoring determining the winner.
- As in Swiss Teams, pairs with approximately the same records are paired against each other for subsequent matches.
- Boards are duplicated, everybody plays boards 1-6 in the first round, 7-12 in the second, etc.

Why play Swiss pairs?

- The novelty is a large part of the reason.
- Being easier to get a partner rather than three teammates is another.
- Masterpoints are awarded for every match won. (It's really hard to be shut-out).

Player strategy for Swiss Pairs:

- Make your contract (overtricks are not as important).
- When borderline, bid vulnerable games and slams.
- Do not double unless you have the tricks in trumps.
- Your teammates are the average in the room (the best, most steady teammates available).

We had a great sectional in September at the Friendly Valley Auditorium in Santa Clarita with 53 tables on Saturday and 20 tables for the Swiss Team event on Sunday. Thanks to all who came out to play and support our Unit.

Friday, October 5th:

1 st	David White – Charles Morrin	6.25%
2 nd	Mira Rowe – Ron Oest	4.44%
3 rd	Judy Smith – Tim Sturtevant	0.00%
4 th	Carol Underwood – Hal Underwood	6.25%
5 th	Sue Guzenske – Bernie Guzenske	5.84%

Unit 556 Board Nominations

Are you looking for adventure of a new and different kind? Unit 556 is seeking members who are interested in running for the Unit Board, beginning January 15, 2019.

This is an opportunity to give back to the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley bridge community, meet new friends, and have an impact on changing things for the betterment of Unit 556 bridge players.

If you wish to self-nominate, please contact Ruth Baker (rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net) or Beth Morrin (morrin@sbcglobal.net).

Nominations must be received by January 1st.

Election of Board of Directors for Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley:

The Unit 556 Board election will be held at the January 15th at the annual “After the Holidays Party” at the Senior Center in Santa Clarita. The potluck dinner will begin at 5:30 PM and the board election will be at 6:30 PM.

Upcoming Events:

Unit 556 will participate in the Southern California Fall STaC games during the week of November 12-18, 2018. We will hold games at the following times:

Tuesday, Nov. 13th at 6:45 PM at the Senior Center in Santa Clarita

Thursday, Nov. 15th at 10:00 AM at the Sports Complex in Castaic

Friday, Nov. 16th at 12:30 PM at Joshua Tree Bridge Club in Palmdale

Sunday, Nov. 18th at 12:30 PM at Joshua Tree Bridge Club in Palmdale

Next Board meeting: Tuesday, December 4th at 5:15 at the Santa Clarita Senior Center in Newhall.



San Fernando Valley by Linda Silvey

December 22: Unit 561 Holiday Bridge/Dinner

Unit 561 will host a Gala Holiday Bridge and Dinner Party on Saturday, December 22, at The 750 Club, 5700 Rudnick Ave, Woodland Hills. An Open, Stratified Game will start at 2 p.m. in Taylor Hall (usual bridge room), followed by a festive, holiday dinner (catered by Stonefire Grill) at approximately 5:45 p.m., in the Family Center on Rudnick Avenue.

The cost is \$35 per person and includes both bridge and dinner. Due to limited seating, reservations are required via purchase of non-refundable tickets by Tuesday, December 18. Ticket sales will begin Thursday, November 15 at The 750 Club, or by mail to Rochelle Lotto at 1071 Terrace Hill Circle, Westlake Village, CA 91362, (nanalotto@yahoo.com).

Cash (if paying at The 750 Club) or checks payable to "Unit 561" will be accepted. If you are mailing in your ticket purchase, please plan to mail no later than Friday, December 7, and include your check, telephone number, email address, and your partner's name (if known). Receipt will be confirmed by email and your tickets will be held for pick-up as you check in on December 22. Note: There will be no on-site ticket sales on the day of this event.

Get your Holiday Season off to a "Grand Slam" and don't miss out on this annual Unit 561 special event! For partnership assistance and/or further information, please contact Frona DeCovnick at kidzathart@aol.com.

Unit 561 Board Nominations

Are you looking for adventure of a new and different kind? Unit 561 is seeking members who are interested in running for the Unit Board, beginning January 1, 2019. This is an opportunity to give back to the San Fernando Valley bridge community, meet new friends, and have an impact on changing things for the betterment of U561 bridge players.

If you wish to self-nominate, please contact Marcia Broderick at marciabroderick@gmail.com or sign up at The 750 Club. Nominations must be

received by Tuesday, December 18. The Unit Board election will be held at the December 22 Holiday Party.

Special Congratulations

September Top Ten Masterpoints at The 750 Club were Michael Klemens 10.85, Susan Raphael 10.48, Ravnesh Amar 9.77, Sharyn Miller 9.21, Vera Mandell 8.99, Jay Fuller 8.91, Larry Kussin, 7.77, Carol Bell 7.67, Nancy Klemens 7.47, and Daniel Strauss 7.44.

November 20: Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night

The next Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night will be held Tuesday, November 20. Dinner is \$20 per person and starts at 6 p.m. and the bridge is \$5 per person and begins at 7 p.m. This is an ACBL sanctioned game and the first place NS and EW winners will receive coupons for Braemar's Wednesday night "Taste of Tuscany" dinner. For reservations and/or partnerships contact Nancy Klemens at nrklemens@aol.com or (818) 609-1071.

November Activities at The 750 Club

Veterans Day will be celebrated on Monday, November 12. All veterans will be able to play for \$1 off the regular fee. . . . STaC week will be Monday – Friday, November 12 – 16. Players will be able to earn silver points and the fee will be \$1 extra. . . . The 750 Club will be closed on Thursday, November 22 for the Thanksgiving Day Holiday. A regular game will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, November 23.

Calendar

Wednesday, November 7, U561 Board Meeting will be held at The 750 Club at 2:45 p.m.

Monday, November 12, Veterans Day celebration will be held at The 750 Club.

Monday-Friday, November 12-16, STaC games at The 750 Club.

Thursday, November 15, Ticket sales will begin for the December 22 Holiday Bridge/Dinner Party. See details above.

Tuesday, November 20, Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night starting at 6 p.m. See details above.

Thursday, November 22, The 750 Club will be closed for Thanksgiving.

Saturday, December 22, Unit 561 Election for 2019 Board Members, Holiday Bridge and Dinner Party, at The 750 Club. **Please save the date and plan to attend!**



West LA by Robert Shore

First, an Apology

My apologies to my readers for my inability to get an October column written, and my apologies to my editor for the post-last-minute submission of this column. As you might expect of a column published around the first of the month, my October column was to be written in September. But in September I moved from my home of the previous 21 years, and handling that process, and getting settled in my new apartment, took everything I had. This month's delay was a combination of not wanting to overlook September's accomplishments and an exceptionally busy month at work. I hope to resume more timely submissions starting with the December column.

Last of the Leagues

This year's fall league championship was held at Beverly Hills, to give them a chance to get in on the fun. The Fall League champions were Om Chokriwala, Aram Bedros, Wayne Karson, and Rob Perlsweig. Flight B Fall champions were Seymour Stoll, Stephen Rothman, Linda Lin, Aton Arbisser, Tate Shafer, and Steven Novak. This league format seems to be a lot of fun for the participants and it's attracted a lot of participation, so I hope and expect a resumption of league activities once the calendar turns to 2019.

It's That Time of the Year

It looks like we will again meet or exceed capacity for this year's Holiday Party, so I hope that you've already gotten your reservations in. We will again enjoy the hospitality of the Brentwood Country Club, where in addition to a luxurious brunch and an afternoon of bridge, we also will have our Unit's annual membership meeting. And on top of that, the hotly anticipated announcement of this year's West Los Angeles Player of the Year and Volunteer of the Year awards. Doors open at 11:00 a.m. on November 18. I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

On the Road to Nashville

The second and last Unit Final in this year's North American Pairs competition also is scheduled

for November 18 at the Long Beach Bridge Club. If you're not able to get off the waiting list for our Holiday Party, the North American Pairs competition is a fine way to spend a Sunday. All three flights of this competition (including Flight C, which is restricted to non-Life Masters) can pick up some gold points. And the ultimate prize, for those who prevail at the District Finals on December 9, is a nice check to help with the expenses of attending the National Finals in Nashville in March. So as long as you picked up that essential club qualification sometime during June, July, or August, I hope you'll give the competition a try.

Catching Up

We've got a couple of months of tournament action to catch up on, so let's get to work. We saw a couple of wins at the San Jose Regional. Ifti Baqai won the Sunday Daylight Pairs, and Alex Kolesnik and Sharon Beynon were winners of the Monday A/X Swiss. Ifti picked up another win at the Sunday A/X/Y Swiss at the Irvine Regional, while Marlene Felix won her bracket of the Thursday Bracketed Swiss. Jim Lopes went all the way to the Medford, Oregon, Sectional to win the Sunday Stratified Swiss.

The first Unit Final for this year's North American Pairs saw Pam Wittes win Flight A, which Mark and Larisa Rappaport topped the Flight C field. Ifti Baqai continued his winning ways, pairing with Mike Mikyska at the Seaside Regional to win the Wednesday A/X Pairs and the Friday Open Pairs. Mike Savage makes another of his perennial appearances in this space with his win in the Saturday afternoon Open Pairs event at the Riverside Sectional.

And then, of course, there was the West Los Angeles STAC, held in lieu of a traditional sectional because we are still searching for a venue. Herbert Ehrmann and Phyllis Kantar won the Monday afternoon event. Peter Knee won on Tuesday afternoon. Winning the Wednesday afternoon game were Pam Morton and Saul Prierer. Aram Bedros picked up the victory Wednesday evening, and backed it up with a second win Thursday afternoon. Lew and Rhoda Himmell took the Friday afternoon game. Mark and Larisa Rappaport topped the Saturday afternoon field, and your Humble Scribe earned his laurel wreath in the Sunday afternoon game.

Welcome Wagon

A belated welcome to a host of new members of the West Los Angeles Unit. New to the ACBL in August are Ann Chappel, Farah Kolahi, Parvin Naderi,

Aida Rodgers, Mary Weems, and Di Zheng. Joining us from other Units were Sherrie Auhll and Roberta Brown. Last month's new members were Walter Hoyer, Lois Levy, and Claire Shea, while moving into our Unit were Charlotte Cogan, Joan and William Feldman, and Eliot Ostrow. That's nearly four tables of new members. Please give them a warm West Los Angeles welcome when you see them at the table.

Around the Clubs

Beverly Hills club champions were David Braverman and Homa Nasser, Martin Gelfand and Richard Weinberger, Maria Pendergast and Anna Benatar, Mark and Larisa Rappaport (twice!), and Peter Knee and Pete Benjamin.

Reaching 70% at Barrington were Aram Bedros and Art Zail, Rob Perlsweig and Peter Knee, Rob Perlsweig and Peter Benjamin, and Jim Lopes and Robert Carroll. Club champions were Aram Bedros and Art Zail.

Climbing the Ladder

Lots of people made tangible progress at the table over the last two months. Reaching the Junior Master milestone were Otis Birnbaum, Kerry Goldstone, Debbie Hamilton, Jane Jackson, and Myrna Silton. Peter Schwab and Marion Solomon became Club Masters, while Peg Burkhardt, Florence Cooper, Larisa and Mark Rappaport, and Jay Swerdlow are now Sectional Masters. Joe Lieberman, Linda Lin, and Adrienne Sarmiento have become Regional Masters.

Paul Allman and Stuart Hemple reached Silver Life Master status.

Moving on to last month's results, our Unit's newest Junior Masters are Frank Campbell, Irene D'Arcus, Carol and Victor Newlove, and William Taub. Marjorie Alden, Ross Bengel, James Degner, Manny Flekman, and Ilene Gerber have achieved Club Master rank, while Susan Morse-Lebow, Snehlata Patil, and Wendy Wilson are now Sectional Masters. Continuing their rapid climb, Larisa and Mark Rappaport join Bernice Silver as our Unit's newest Regional Masters. Roberta Brown and Alex Wiles have become Advanced NABC Masters.

Judy Hyde and Sandy Satlin have reached Ruby Life Master status. John Herriot has become a Gold Life Master. Congratulations to all on your accomplishments.

Got news? Send it to me at Bob78164@yahoo.com.

Special Feature

[You may recall, a few issues ago, we put out an offer to print your thoughts, as in “Letters to the Editor.” This isn’t quite that, but ... The following is a clear example of “Be careful what you wish for ... you might get it.”

David and Chuck are two budding bidding theorists. They are both Advanced NABC Masters. Let’s see what they have to say, and of course YOUR responses will be given equal time here. – Ed.]

The OchLohr Slam-Seeking Convention over 1NT

by David Ochroch and Chuck Lohr

Bridge isn’t the static game it may appear at first glance. Every now and then, a new convention or idea surfaces that people try out to see if it helps their game. In the past, for example, we’ve had 4th-suit-forcing, New-Minor-Forcing, X-Y-Z, and Meckwell (created and popularized by bridge masters Jeff Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell for defense over 1NT). Heck... even 2 over 1 Game Force used to be considered novel (but is now the “go-to” bridge system for new bridge players). Is there still room for yet another convention?

Strong 3-level jumps over a standard opening 1NT bid (15-17 HCP and balanced) have been around since the time of Goren and we play them: 3-level jumps over 1NT – 3♦/3♥/3♠ (typically 16+HCP) show exactly 6 cards in the responded suit (with good honor strength, typically 2-of-the-top-3 or 3-of-the-top-5 honors) with interest in game+ for 3♦ and game/slam for 3♥ and 3♠. [Note: We play Puppet Stayman over 1NT (as in 1NT-P-3♣) showing a game-going hand with at least one 3-card major so we don’t play 1NT-3♣ as 6 clubs and strong]. But Chuck and I saw an issue, particularly with 1NT-3♦: When should you stop at 3NT versus playing in 5♦? (and if you don’t play Puppet Stayman, you have a similar issue with 1NT-3♠). Similarly, when you’re playing match points, when should you push for 6NT versus 6 in a suit?

These 3NT vs 5-of-a-Minor and 6NT versus 6♦/♥/♠ questions are important in both match points and IMPs games. In match points (regular pairs game), small point differences have huge consequences: 6♠ vulnerable gets you 1430 but 6NT vulnerable gets you 1440 and those 10 points can make or break your match points standings. If your partnership stops bidding at 6♠ and all of your

competition bids 6NT (making), you end up with a bottom board, and all of your hard work to bid and make 6♠ is for naught. You may have a suit fit of 8, but you might get a better score by being in NT. In contrast, when you’re playing IMPs scoring, you want to be in the safest game (or slam) contract possible. 10-point differences are irrelevant in an IMPs game. In IMPs bidding, the shape of your hand guides you to safe contracts that usually lead to winning results. Question is: What bidding guidance helps the partnership make such decisions? That’s where the OchLohr convention (named as an amalgamation of our last names similar to Meckwell) helps out!

OchLohr allows the partnership to quickly determine the exact strength of their suit fit in a game+ situation over a 1NT opener when the responder has 6 cards in the suit. This is OchLohr’s distinguishing feature from other 1NT-3level response systems (such as traditional Goren responses). OchLohr is a step system that’s invoked after opener bids 1NT by responder’s bid of 3♦/3♥/3♠ (and also in the case 1NT-3♣ if you’re not playing Puppet Stayman). An OchLohr response shows the precise number of cards held by the 1NTER in the responder’s bid suit: The first bid step shows 2 cards (the expected minimum quantity of a traditional 1NT bid) and every step higher shows an additional card. Example: Over 1NT-P-3♦-P, a 3♥ bid by the 1NTER shows 2 diamonds, 3♠ shows 3 diamonds, 3NT shows 4 diamonds, and 4♣ shows 5 diamonds. I note that the fit is aligned strength-wise with the response level in that the more/higher steps the 1NTER bids, the better the fit (also true with Blackwood and Gerber in terms of Ace counts): That’s a very good characteristic of any convention.

Sample hands will show the potential advantages of using OchLohr.

1NT Opener (With 17HCP): 3♦ Responder
(With 16HCP): (see hands, next page)

♠: K-Q-J-x	♠: x
♥: A-Q-x	♥: K-x-x
♦: x-x	♦: A-K-J-x-x-x
♣: K-Q-x-x	♣: A-J-x

Depending upon the diamond fit and strength of the 1NT hand, the partnership may very well have 33+ points (including distribution)... but where to place the contract? The correct OchLohr sequence would be 1NT-P-3♦-P-3♥. After showing just two diamonds in the 1NT hand via the 3♥ response, the 3♦er should realize a diamond slam is less likely and that NT could yield a better score than a diamond contract. After a 4NT quantitative bid (showing 16 or 17 pts), the 1NTER can then respond accordingly (Note: 4NT is interpreted quantitatively with an 8-card fit in the suit in the OchLohr-initiated sequence). In this case, with a maximum 17HCP in the 1NT hand, 6NT looks like a reasonable bid. If the 1NTER had fewer points and passed the 4NT, this should still yield a better match point score than 5♦ and be of lower risk (the 3♦ bidder knowing that the 1NTER has to have some length in spades and some points there, too, since the 1NTER only has two diamonds and they're not the A-K-J).

Another example:

1NT Opener (With 15HCP): 3♦ Responder
(With 15HCP):

♠: Q-J	♠: x
♥: A-Q-x	♥: K-x-x
♦: x-x-x-x-x	♦: A-K-J-x-x-x
♣: K-Q-J	♣: A-x-x

After 1NT-P-3♦-P-4♣ (showing responder's 5 diamonds!), there's no question which contract strain is safer: clearly diamonds. 4NT via 1430 will establish the missing ace to take care of either the heart loser or the spade loser and with two aces, 6♦ rates to be cold (Note: 4NT must be 1430 after establishing the long diamond fit using OchLohr) and 6♦ rates a much lower-risk than 6NT with an 11-card diamond fit holding the A-K of diamonds. We point out that 6NT will fail badly with the expected spade lead. We cover interference, below, but Note: if the 2nd bidder interfered with 2♠, then 3♦ still shows OchLohr (systems-on); If the 4th bidder interfered with 3♠, the 4♣ bid would still show the 11-card fit (systems-on); if the 2nd bidder interfered with 3♠, then a 5♦ bid would be natural and a double of 3♠ would be for penalty and not for takeout.

OchLohr works over a major suit response to help in match point scoring:

1NT Opener (With 15HCP): 3♠ Responder
(With 16HCP):

♠: K-x	♠: A-Q-x-x-x-x
♥: A-J-x	♥: K-x-x
♦: J-x-x-x-x	♦: A-K
♣: K-Q-J	♣: x-x-x

After 1NT-P-3♠-P-3NT (showing opener's two spades), the 3♠ bidder might think that NT could gain a higher score than a spades contract (as in 4NT making 4 or 5 vulnerable (630 or 660) versus 4♠ making 4 or 5 vulnerable (620 or 650)). With 16 points, the 3♠ bidder bids 4NT quantitative and it can be passed. Note that an OchLohr response of 4♣ (showing 3 spades) more strongly suggests the partnership should play in spades with a 9-card fit, so going past 3NT isn't an issue. In IMPs, possible slams need exploration which is why 4NT is bid (versus stopping at 4♠).

We note that in all cases of 1NT-3♦/3♥/3♠ OchLohr responses, the 3-level jumper can elect to play in 3NT, after OchLohr establishes a minimal 8-card fit, if the jumper/responder has fewer than 16HCP. In IMPs, however, even with an 8-card trump fit, the 3♥ or 3♠ bidder would probably bid 4♥ or 4♠ with 15HCP since a 10-point scoring difference doesn't matter and playing in a suit fit is generally a safer contract. Naturally, this decision depends on the distributional nature of the 3♥/3♠ hand. Certainly, the 3♦ bidder with an 8-card fit and a flattish hand (such as 6-2-2-3) will elect to play in 3NT.

We emphasize that the OchLohr response of 3♦/3♥/3♠ indicates responder is expected to have exactly 6 (six) cards in the suit. You might be wondering, "What does responder do in the rather unlikely (but possible) event that there's 7+ cards in the suit?" We recommend only using OchLohr with 6 in the suit. For the major suits with a slam-interested hand having 7+ in the majors, we recommend first using a Texas Transfer (1NT-P-4♦/4♥, transferring to 4♥/4♠) followed by a 4NT rebid: This must be a 1430 keycard-asking bid, implying that the partnership will play in the suit rather than in NT. Usually Texas results in a major game sign-off: if you say 4NT after Texas, you can't have a signoff hand and must be showing 7+ in the suit.

Minor suit slam-interested bids are trickier, especially if you're using puppet Stayman (1NT-3♣). Let's tackle the club suit first. We suggest starting with a minor suit transfer. After 1NT-2♠ transferring to 3♣, the default suit is clubs and responder needs to qualify his hand. 3NT says "I have six clubs and enough points / balance to play there (or perhaps a 7-2-2-2 distribution)." The 1NTER can still correct to 5♣. 4NT is a quantitative bid showing the usual 16/17 points, asking the 1NTER to place the bid at an appropriate level. The jump to 5♣ is the shutoff bid and implies 7 clubs. Any other suit bids are controls up-the-line attempting to bid slam, ex: 1NT-2♠-3♣-3♠ (cue bid. NOTE: The first cue bid cannot be 3♦ else the 1NTER will think you're correcting to diamonds!)

So, what about diamonds? Since 1NT-3♦ is the usual way to introduce 6 cards in diamonds and interest in game+, any jumps to game+ via a minor suit transfer should show 7+ diamonds. After 1NT-2♠-3♣, a bid of 5♦ (or more) must show 7+ diamonds and ~13pts else you'd have used OchLoehr (as in 1NT-3♦ to first get a diamond count). The 1NTER can either leave it there or adjust depending on holdings or cue bid to decide between 6 and 7 diamonds. Note that 1NT-2♠-3♣-4♦ is a range-ask weaker bid showing an unbalanced hand with ~12 total points and asks the 1NTER to bid 5♦ with diamond help and a maximum hand. With 7-2-2-2 OchLoehr could still be used (1NT-3♦), particularly with A-x in doubletons...as with all bridge, good judgment is always required.

Since OchLoehr is a slam-going convention, there's much less risk of interference by opponents. But just in case, we've established solid rules that deal with opponent interference. Over interference, OchLoehr is systems-on. Against direct natural interference, there is no SBD (stolen bid double) as

that would indicate both sides have the same suit. Example: 1NT-3♦ (interference)-3♥ is still OchLoehr with systems-on showing exactly 6 hearts. If the interference occurs indirectly at a higher level, such as 1NT-P-3♦-3♥ (interference), then it's systems-on at 3+ in the suit bid by responder or SBD at 3+ in the suit (there's no point in doubling to show a two card fit), so a pass of 3♥ would show two diamonds (alertable), a bid of 3♠ would show three diamonds, etc. If the bidding went 1NT-P-3♦-3♠ (interference)-P then the Pass should again be alerted since it implies the 1NTER would have bid 3♥ (showing two diamonds) but was prevented by the interference as a double would have shown three diamonds and 3NT shows four diamonds. 1NT-(3♦/3♥/3♠ (all natural) interference)-Double would be for penalty since there's no SBD over direct natural interference.

Finally, the authors would like to state that, as with most conventions that preceded OchLoehr, this convention is a "work in progress;" we are continually tweaking it based on results at the bridge table or further risk versus reward analysis. If you decide to try the OchLoehr convention, we would enjoy receiving some feedback on your experiences. Furthermore, we would very much like to hear about any suggestions you have for improving OchLoehr. We hope you have fun exploring slams with OchLoehr!

Contact Information:

David Ochroch davidobridge@gmail.com

Chuck Lohr chuck.lohr8040@hotmail.com.

Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are Gerry Bare, Leo Bell, David Sacks, Mike Shuster, and Jon Wittes.

<h1>1</h1> <p>IMPs none Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	Pass ???	1♠	2♣	1♥ 2♠*
	* Shows 4 spades			
	You, South, hold: ♠A102 ♥KJ8753 ♦A72 ♣6			
	What call do you make?			

Wittes: 3NT. Should be our best chance at a game. Partner probably has at most three major suit cards. He should have six or seven very good clubs and an outside card, since he didn't bid an unusual 2NT and didn't preempt in clubs.

Bare: 3♣. Partner is short in both majors, and he should have good clubs. *[This looks weird to raise with only one club, but partner must have good clubs. This might be best.]*

Shuster: 2NT. I expect partner to bid 3♣ next (which I will pass.) What is partner's shape? He has at most two spades and two hearts, but that minimum shape would leave LHO with 4-0 in the majors! More likely, LHO is 4=1=5=3. RHO is 4=5=2=2 or 4=5=3=1. That makes partner either 2=1=4=6 or 2=1=3=7. So it appears the opponents won't have a source of tricks, but we might. Neither opponent rates to hold four clubs, and they won't be able to score a fifth spade. Those are all positive for 3NT, but it isn't enough. I need partner to have sufficient values that we can establish and run the clubs before they cash five tricks. Partner won't often have enough strength to raise to 3NT, but if he does, we rate to make it.

By the way, even if 2NT isn't expressly agreed as forcing here, it is forcing as a practical matter. If partner has strength, he will raise. If he is weak, he will always have long enough clubs to remove to 3♣. *[I agree. He'll raise to 3NT, signoff in 3♣, or possibly make a move towards 5♣, but virtually never pass.]*

Bell: Pass. If the auction continues, I may well enter the fray, but it's premature at this point. *[The sneaky dog quietly lies in the weeds waiting to get all the food. I can see him salivating; "Just one more bid, please one more bid and I'll go red!"]*

[Yet another brave soul!]

Sacks: Pass. I will bring axe if they bid again (unlikely), but it's just a bit too rich to double them not vulnerable at IMPs at the two level. *[Is double here really penalty?]*

[I like double. Surely partner won't play me for a spade stack and should know I have hearts. If partner infers short clubs, a heart stack, good controls and good defense, I'm very close to the mark.]

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">2</h1> <p>IMPs none vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	1♣ ???	2♦	2♥	5♦
	You, South, hold: ♠AK108 ♥7 ♦75 ♣AK9853			
	2a) Is pass forcing? 2b) What call do you make			

[This a tough problem, but hinges on whether pass is forcing.]

Bare: a) No.

b) Double.

Shuster: a) No, but it should be. [He means double isn't forcing in expert standard, but it should be. This problem is another commercial for 2/1 in competition creating a force if the opponents bid (especially if they preempt).] A two over one in comp does not establish ownership of the hand, so does not create forcing pass auctions. However, I prefer to agree that if 4th hand jumps to 4♠ or higher, it does create a forcing pass situation. As a practical matter, 4th hand does not jump like this expecting to make, so we should have our best tools available to judge the 5-level.

b) Double. I have short hearts and two diamonds. Yes, partner rates to hold no more than one diamond, but that isn't guaranteed. However, even when I catch my guy with a stiff diamond, he is not guaranteed to hold club support. So, given equal vulnerability, I'll just take my number rather than risk a hopeless 6♣ contract.

Wittes: a) Yes. Pass would surely be forcing if we were vulnerable. It probably should be forcing non-vulnerable as well, since even though 2♥ isn't 100% game forcing in competition, it still should show at least an invitational hand. The opponents are at the five level in an auction where we definitely have the preponderance of high cards.

b) Double. This is a very tough problem, and once again shows how preempts are so difficult to defend against at a high level. Partner almost surely has a stiff or void diamond. If he has a solid heart suit

or a club fit, we probably have a slam. I have so many controls in the black suits, it's going to be difficult for partner to carry on with some type of minimum opening bid. On the other hand, slam is no guarantee, and we should surely get 5♦ doubled for at least 500, very possibly 800 or 1100, even if the opponents have some distribution. So even if a double is wrong, we will still lose very little, if anything, against our possible slam. However, if a slam is not making, bidding on could be very costly. Also, if partner has a diamond void, and a good hand for either hearts or clubs, he can still bid over the double.

Sacks: a) Yes. It should be forcing. If my red suits were reversed I would pass.

b) Double: The only slam we may have is in clubs (if partner has both majors he should start with negative double). We have four primes but no known fit. A singleton diamond from partner is not guaranteed.

Bell: a). Yes. When the opponents are clearly preempting, pass should be forcing at the four level and higher.

b). Double. I think pass should imply some fit with partner or a hand where I can bid my suit after partner's action.

[My personal preference is that forcing passes are established by invitational auctions, especially when they preempt, so for me this would be a forcing pass. If pass here is forcing, I still think I would double. Hands with a stiff diamond and solid hearts or a club fit may produce 12 twelve tricks, but partner isn't through.]

<h1 style="font-size: 48px;">3</h1> <p>IMPs none vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
		1♦	2NT	pass
	3♣	pass	3♦	pass
	3NT	pass	4♥	pass
	???			
	You, South, hold: ♠K654 ♥102 ♦K742 ♣Q83 What call do you make?			

Bare: 6♣. May not be cold for 6♣, but should at least have a play.

Shuster: Pass. Partner is bidding to make and knows we have at most a doubleton heart. One cover card is not enough to look for slam.

Wittes: Pass. Partner should have six very good hearts and five good clubs, and probably a diamond void. My kings are not very well located, so we rate to have two losers.

Bell: Pass. Partner shows a very good hand with at least six hearts. The ♣Q is my only working card. I don't think that's enough to bid more.

Sacks: Pass. And pass the Advil.

[My kings are not well placed. Marshall Miles used to argue that hands that bid Unusual NT or Michaels and then voluntarily bid again could not have the major longer than the minor. If that agreement is in place, then I like correcting to 5♣. If partner has ♠xx ♥AKJx ♦void ♣AKJxx, then 5♣ will play better than 4♥ if it runs into control issues.]

<h1 style="font-size: 48px;">4</h1> <p>IMPs Both vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
				1♦
	pass	pass	1♥	pass
	2♦	pass	2♥	pass
	???			
	You, South, hold: ♠1072 ♥AQ5 ♦A102 ♣A862 What call do you make?			

Bell: 4♥. Just in case it makes.

Shuster: 3NT. Partner can pull with enough shape. Even if we are off the spade suit, neither opponent rates to hold five of them, and we could easily have the rest.

Wittes: 3♥. I don't want to punish partner for balancing, but my good trumps and controls surely warrant one more try.

Bare: 3♥. I could hardly be better after passing.

Sacks: 2NT. I might have bid 2NT last time. East is unlikely to have four spades as he/she would have bid one spade over 1♥ on most hands, I'm thus less likely to get a spade lead.

[I think any further action on this hand is flirting with danger. If partner has something like ♠Kxx ♥KJxxx ♦xxx ♣Jx, even 2♥ isn't cold. I want partner to protect aggressively, so I won't hang him. If I were going to make one further try, 2NT seems best].

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">5</h1> <p>IMPs N-S vul.</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	1♣	1♦	1♥	pass
	???			
<p>You, South, hold: ♠AQJ ♥AJ10 ♦3 ♣AK10742</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

Bare: 2♦. First priority is to ascertain if partner has five hearts. Second priority is finding out about a club fit.

Shuster: 3♦. This shows short diamonds and a good hand. 2♦ doesn't accomplish much, as it would be a forced choice with ♠AKJ ♥Qx ♦xxx ♣AKJxx. I'll wind up spending the next two rounds of the auction trying to clarify my hand, probably without much success. I'd rather let partner know I have short diamonds, heart support and interest in bigger things.

Wittes: 3♦. This should show a very good hand with three hearts and imply a long good club suit (if I had four hearts, I would be bidding 4♦). Slam is not out of the question, though the overcall behind me would tend to favor any missing cards being poorly placed for us.

Bell: 2♦. This should show a very good hand without heart support.

Sacks: 2♦. Rarely do I pass up the opportunity to bid a three-card suit, but here I have an easy force.

[I think 2♦ would be the consensus expert bid. However, I prefer the 3♦ call with the singleton diamond. It's a thoughtful way of getting across a description of the hand.]