

Southern California

Bridge News

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May 2020

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Shore



The (Temporary) New Normal

Still not much to report at the District level. Our indefatigable Web master, Dave White, is working to make more games available to more partnerships for more points. Keep an eye on your e-mail for his progress to that end. No word yet on the fate of Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional, as we continue to keep a close eye on developments and on the government's orders. I'm personally skeptical that a group of more than 50 predominantly high-risk people will be legally permitted to convene in person to pass physical objects back and forth to one another, but we will see what the future brings.

Finally, I think I have figured out the mysteries of Zoom. I will probably try to convene a remote meeting of our District Board in May. District Board members, please take note and please keep an eye on your e-mail In box.

Something you want me to know? Contact me at Bob78164@yahoo.com.

District Director Report

by Kevin Lane

"Bridge is a game and should be fun."



Corona virus and Montreal

The Corona virus continues to severely impact bridge including, most notably, the cancellation of the Montreal NABC. The board of directors continues to meet frequently to address the range of issues emerging from the pandemic.

Last month the board voted on a delay of GNT and NAP finals to adjust for the cancellation of the Columbus NABC. The board has not yet considered what to do with these two events in light of the Montreal decision.

Since the board is actively making decisions which are transmitted to membership via email – a more timely communication than my monthly reports – I will limit my report this month.

I welcome your input. klaned23@gmail.com

Southern California Bridge News

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From the Director's Chair: by David White

[Editor's Note: David has set up some games on Bridge Base Online (BBO). For information on these games see District 23 web site, bridgewebs.com/acbl23. Here are some handy tips to help you get started.]

Getting Started on BBO

1. With your browser go to <https://www.bridgebase.com/v3/> (The /v3/ at the end ensures you use the latest version.)
2. Click on 'become a member' and follow the instructions.
3. Your BBO_ID must be unique so have several possibilities in your head before you start.
4. For name put in at least your first name
5. Very carefully enter your ACBL number. (For life masters using the letter is OK.) If this number is not correct you will not be receiving masterpoints for any ACBL event. And, you may be blocked from playing in other ACBL events.
6. Deposit, through PayPal or a credit card, to your "BBO\$" account by clicking the BB\$. (I recommend at least \$12, enough to get you started and to pay for several games.)
7. Spend a couple of days exploring the website, play solitaire, use the practice tables. Move up to competitive games when you're familiar with the system.

Common BBO Questions

Q: I do not understand how the hand we played was scored after time expired midway through the play.

A: Three things can happen when a board isn't finished.

- First and the most common BBO software will determine the most likely outcome and score it as such. The director never gets notified.
- Second BBO kicks it back to the director to determine most likely outcome. The director adjusts to most likely result of the contract being played. Continuing the line of play the declarer started. If the outcome is clear or unavoidable, a score is assigned
- Third, if the outcome is in question, could go

either way, or no contract reached; the director adjust to some combination of Average, Average+, or Average-.

In none of these cases is the speed of any player considered. The director makes no assumptions as to why the board wasn't finished. So if the director was not called earlier in the round, for slow play or an unresponsive player; one of the first two cases apply. If a valid slow play complaint was lodged during the round, then average scores are considered.

Q. Why was I blocked from a virtual game?

A. According to ACBL regulations: you may only play in a club's virtual games if you played in that club's brick and mortar location within the last year. If so you're on the Include list. Playing, but not winning requires you to be manually added to the Friends list..

The 'Include' list is generated by ACBL. The 'Friends' list is players added by the director and is kept on the director's computer. The big BBO computer in the sky, keeps a copy of the Friends list, but is not updated on a regular basis. Which is why a player can be on the Friends list and still be blocked; until the BBO computer updates.

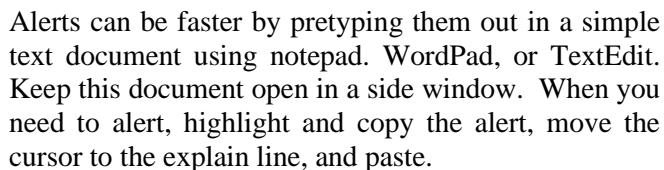
Once on either of the clubs list, there are still a few other requirements. Both players must:

1. Have a valid ACBL number linked to their BBO account.
2. Have enough money in their BBO account.
3. Use the latest version of BBO ([bridgebase.com/v3/](https://www.bridgebase.com/v3/))
4. Meet the masterpoint limits of the game.
5. Not log is as private or invisible.

If the director has recently (last 10 minutes) added you to the friends list, you must log off BBO, close the browser's tab, wait three or four minutes, open and log back into BBO.

Q. Self-alerting is strange, difficult, and time consuming. Why?

A. The BBO method of self-alerting guarantees that there is no unauthorized information given to partner. Only the opponents see the alert.



District 23 Rank Changes March 2020

Junior Master

Ilene H. Abramson
 Larry Cheung
 Bradford W. Edgerton
 Daniel B. Ferguson
 Martha J. Judson
 Yvonne M. Kroneberger
 Tamara Powers
 Jay E. Sandler

Club Master

Thomas J. Cox
 Patricia L. Kasschau
 Thomas E. Unterman

Sectional Master

Beth Mary Byrne
 Annie H. Ives
 Melanie M. Smothers
 Jennifer Wellman

Regional Master

Karmen Armoudjian
 Robin C. Hill
 Caryn L. Musicer
 Greg Stewart
 Esther C. Zacks

NABC Master

Pamela Boyer
 Peter P. Koeneg
 Annette Wolas

Advanced NABC Master

Michael P. McGory

Life Master

Joan Abrams
 Dianne K. Sax
 Stan Snyder

Bronze Life Master

Peter Connor
 Jerold A. Rose
 Dianne K. Sax

Silver Life Master

Marjorie Malloy

Hint for “Play or Defend?”

Whether you choose “Play,” or “Defend,” the play will almost certainly start with three rounds of spades. There are two variations. Variation 1 has declarer calling for the ♠K at trick one. East will win the ♠A since it is obviously critical not to give declarer an early entry to the dummy. East will return the ♠10 and South must duck. East exits with a spade to South’s ♠Q. Variation 2 has declarer ducking from the dummy at trick one. Here, East will contribute the ♠T. If South ducks, East will continue with the ♠A. The two variations both wind up with East taking two tricks and South winning trick three in hand with the ♠Q. South will table the ♦K and East has an easy duck. Now you are at the crossroads. East has the red aces ready to go, so can South get to dummy without East winning the ♣K or the ♥10? If you think East can stop South’s efforts, then you should elect to defend. If you like declarer’s chance to get dummy without losing more than the two obvious tricks, then you should pick declare.

LOS ANGELES PRESENTS THE 86TH ANNUAL

BRIDGE WEEK

The Summer's
Best Regional*
JUNE 29 - JULY 5

TOURNAMENT HIGHLIGHTS

D23 Youth Day on
Friday July 3rd
Players 26 and under
PLAY FREE ALL DAY

DAYLIGHT SCHEDULE! 299ER GAMES EVERY DAY!
PILE UP YOUR GOLD POINTS IN OUR GOLD RUSH PAIRS!
STAR SPEAKERS EVERY DAY! SATURDAY SPECIAL SHOW!

MONDAY JUNE 29TH

**** Free 2-hour Bridge Workshop**
10:30 am - 12:30 pm
Followed by Lunch

Marjorie Michelin
Grand Life Master

****Pro Am Game at 1:00 pm**
Card fee for Am's: \$15

Please register before June 22

Dalia Hernandez
dalia.hernandez@gmail.com
562.221.1398

NEED A PARTNER?

Jan Wickersham
wickershamjanet@gmail.com
626.487.4014

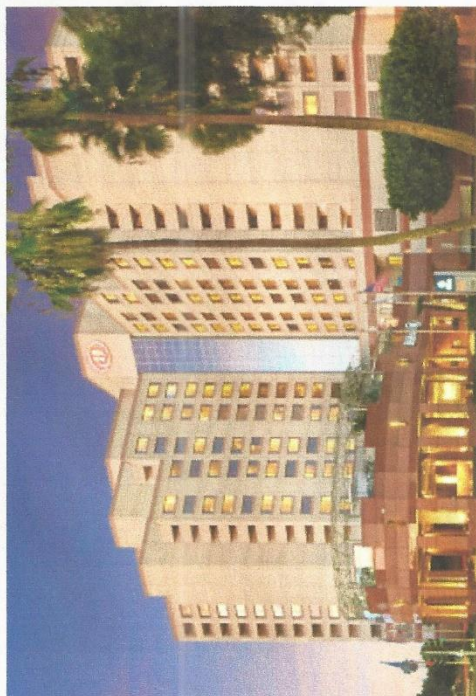
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310.720.6050

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Ken Horwedel

District 23 Director: Kevin Lane
District 23 President: Bob Shore



HILTON LONG BEACH

701 West Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, CA

Room Rate: \$149 (Free Wifi) Please Refer to ALACBU

Reservation must be made by

Monday, June 15

tinyurl.com/BridgeWeek2020

562.983.3400 or 562.983.3414

Group code: AB5



Card Fees: \$15 (Members) \$19 (expired Members)

Notice: Non-members will be required to either join ACBL on an annual basis or on a new temporary one month membership for \$7.99

Self Parking: \$12

Lunch: \$5 for Sunday Lunch

* First leg of the Grand Slam Cup

Sanction Number: R2007106

Monday, June 29, 2020

299er Free Workshop/Lunch (Reserv. Rq'd.) 10:30 am
 Pro-Am Pairs (Reserv. Rq'd.) 1:00 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (1 of 6) 1:00 pm
 Stratified Charity Pairs 7:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (1 of 2 Sessions) .. 7:00 pm

Tuesday, June 30, 2020

AM Side Game Series (1 of 5) 10:00 am
 299er Pairs (Single Session) 10:00 am
 Betsy Ross KO (1 & 2 of 4) ... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Bernie Mateer Open ABC Pairs 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

GOLD RUSH Pairs 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture 2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (2 of 6) 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session) .. 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (2 of 2 Sessions) .. 7:00 pm

Wednesday, July 1, 2020

AM Side Game Series (2 of 5) 10:00 am
 299er Pairs (Single Session) 10:00 am
 Firecracker KO (1 & 2 of 4) ... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Betsy Ross KO (3 & 4 of 4) ... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Richard Patterson Open Pairs 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Mark Schreiber GOLD RUSH Pairs 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture 2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (3 of 6) 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session) .. 3:00 pm

Thursday, July 2, 2020

AM Side Game Series (3 of 5) 10:00 am
 299er Pairs (Single Session) 10:00 am
 Firecracker KO (3 & 4 of 4) ... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Bracketed Round Robin Teams 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Open ABC Pairs 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Pat Banks GOLD RUSH Pairs 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture 2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (4 of 5) 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session) .. 3:00 pm

Friday, July 3, 2020

AM Side Game Series 10:00 am
 Walt Otto 299er Pairs (Single Session) 10:00 am
 0-99er Pairs (Single Session) 10:00 am
 Starburst KO (1 & 2 of 4) 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Cecil Cook Open ABC Pairs .. 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 GOLD RUSH Pairs 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture 2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (5 of 6) 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session) .. 3:00 pm
 Youth Reception 6:30 pm

D23 Youth Day**Saturday, July 4, 2020**

AM Side Game Series (5 of 5) 10:00 am
 299er Pairs (Single Session) 10:00 am
 Starburst KO (3 & 4 of 4) 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Bracketed Round Robin Teams 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Barbara Nussbaum Open ABC Pairs 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 (continued on right)

Saturday, July 4, 2020 (Cont.)

GOLD RUSH Pairs 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (6 of 6) 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session) .. 3:00 pm

Sunday, July 5, 2020

Liberty Bell Stratified Fast Pairs 10:00 am & TBA
 Flight A/X/Y Swiss Teams 10:00 am & TBA
 Bracketed B Round Robin Teams 10:00 am & TBA

Event Colors:

299ers: Orange Teams: Green Pairs: Blue

299er Games Every AM Bracketed RR Teams
 Side Games Every Day Th-Sat Open
 Open Pairs Every Day Sun. 0-2500
 Gold Rush Pairs Tu-Sa Sunday Swiss Teams
 Done by 6 PM

Stratified Pairs: 0-750 / 750-3000 / 3000+
 Open ABC Pairs: 0-2500 / 2500-5000 / 5000+
 GOLD RUSH Pairs:

0-100 / 100-300 / 300-750
 A/X/Y Swiss Teams:

0-3000 / 3000-5000 / 5000+
 Bracketed B Round Robin Teams: 0-2500

Around the Units in District 23



Long Beach by Jon Yinger

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

[Editor's Note: no news from Long Beach this month.]



Pomona – Covina by Tom Lill www.acblunit551.org

Unit Game: Saturday May 16 - hopefully
11:00 a.m., Glendora
Individual: TBD

Sigh. Our main playing site is still closed (completely) until May 15, at least. So there will be *no* club games held until at least May 19. If the situation changes, I will let those of you on my email list know as soon as I find out.

As expected, but which I just found out about, our joint Sectional tournament with Unit 516 is CANCELLED. Better luck next time, I guess.

The March Unit game was of course cancelled, due to our playing site's closure. *If* we are able to hold the *May* game, we will be presenting the 2019 awards at that time.

Unless I figure out how to extract masterpoint totals from BBO, I can't report anything along these lines. Sorry!

Speaking of BBO – I have requested a La Fetra session for BBO, but they haven't responded. I will keep plugging for this. Either I'm doing

something wrong or they are still swamped. BBO experts, I could use some help here.

There are possibilities for teaming up on BBO with another Unit ... I'm investigating, and also want YOUR feedback on whether you'd like this, dislike it, or are neutral. Let me know, please: tomlill@twc.com.

No promotions to report again this month. Not surprising, really, with play so limited.

Since I haven't actually played bridge in well over a month (NOT a big fan of online play!) I've had to reach way back (14 years, in fact) for a somewhat interesting hand. This is another exhibit from the Laurel and Hardy School of Bridge. At favorable vulnerability, you, East, deal and open 1NT holding

♠ AJ42 ♥ AJ82 ♦ J6 ♣ A52.

Not the best 15 count you've ever held, but three aces are nothing to sneeze at, either. With the opponents silent (for a change), partner transfers with 2♦, you bid 2♥, partner calls 3NT, and you have an obvious 4♥ bid. All pass, and after the opening lead of the ♣7, partner somewhat sheepishly faces this dummy:

♠ K863 ♥ 953 ♦ A1087 ♣ K3.

Partner 'fesses up that he pulled the wrong bidding card and meant to bid 2♣, Stayman. Oh well, time to lie back and think of England; 4♥ is the contract.

You win trick one with the ♣K; then 3♣ to ♣A and a club ruff. Next you play the ♥3 to the ♥8, and are pleasantly surprised when this is taken by the ♥K. Winning the spade return with the ♠J; and laying down the ♥A and playing another heart, there is no further problem in winning 11 tricks ... to the obvious disgust of the (expert-level) opponents. The entire hand is shown on the next page.

Of course, the field is in 4♠, making four or five, depending on how they played the hearts. Better lucky than good!

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

Quote for the month: "Life can be cruel, and it is ultimately tragic, but mostly it is wonderful, or would be if we'd allow it to be." (Poul Anderson)

Downey – Whittier

by Linda Eagan and Liz Burrell

[Editor's note: no 'news' from Downey-Whittier, but they thought we'd all enjoy this cartoon:]

When you want others to obey the
6 ft of space rule without having
to ask.....



Santa Clarita- Antelope Valley

by Beth Morrin

Unit 556 is now online with ACBL Virtual Clubs on BBO. The "Unit 556+Club" has 4 games a week: Monday at 12:15 PM, Tuesday at 6:15 PM, Thursday at 10:15 AM and Friday at 12:15 PM. The Monday and Friday games use hands from *The Common Game*. There is also a 499-er game on Sunday at 3:15. "See" you online – the game has two big advantages: you cannot lead out of turn and you can't revoke.

Congratulations to Linda Young who made Gold Life Master playing in the Monday afternoon game with Russ Buker. They came in first with a score of 64.93%!

Unit 556 is now listed as Unit 556+ because of the addition of Glendale and Baja Gold Coast to our friends list.

Who is automatically in:

- Anybody who has won points in any Unit 556 club in the last year.
- Same for winning points in Glendale or Baja Gold Coast.

Who will be added permanently:

- Anybody living in District 23 or Mexico who has played at one of those three clubs.
- Anybody living in Ridgecrest, Barstow, Apple Valley, or Tehachapi.
- Who can be added one time, and then removed:
- Anybody playing with somebody on the permanent list.

For more information, contact David White (davewhite50@verizon.net).

Our Unit is saddened by the loss of one of our longtime members, Bert Stock. Also, condolences to another member, Les Spitz, who recently lost his wife, Annabelle to a long illness.

This year's Magic Mountain Sectional is still scheduled to be held on Oct. 3rd and Oct. 4th at the



A black and white photograph of two men in suits. The man on the left is smiling and has a mustache. The man on the right is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. Both are wearing dark suits, white shirts, and ties. The background is a textured, mottled grey.

Bailliff, would you ask the judge to send in a set of bridge boards and some guide cards for a three-table Howell movement?

Oh, and tell him it will be another three hours.

You should declare! The play will certainly go three rounds of spades, followed by the ♦K, ducked. If South tries the ♥K or ♥Q, East will duck. If South leads a low heart to dummy's ♥J, Easy will win and return the ♥10. This prevents the ♥8 from providing a dummy entry. However, the winning play is for declarer to lead the ♥9 to the ♥J. If East ducks, declarer takes the club finesses. If East win, s/he is endplayed. A low heart return is run to the ♥8. A return of the ♥10 is won by declarer in hand and the carefully preserved ♥5 is an entry to the ♥8 and declarer is home. Thank you to Julian Pottage and his excellent book *Declare or Defend* for this problem.

Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are: Mark Bartusek, Sid Brownstein, Kitty and Steve Cooper (answering together - I'll refer to their answers as "Coopers"), Ed Davis, Ellis Feigenbaum, Daniel Korbel, Mister Mealy-mouth, and Margie Michelin.

1

IMPs
Both Vul

West	North	East	South
		1♥	???

You, South, hold: ♠AK52 ♥K9 ♦AQ864 ♣95

What call do you make?

(We begin with a problem with a nice 16 HCP hand, but no clear call. Marshall Miles, the late moderator of this column, would smoothly overcall 1♠. He believed in canape style overcalls. That brought its own style of problems but works quite nicely here. For the rest of us, we have to choose to make a very conservative pass, overcall a 15 – 18 NT, overcall 2♦, or double. Several panelists choose double. Those that double fall into three camps: 1) those who are planning to pass a 2♣ advance by partner, hoping that the extra values compensate for having only two small clubs, 2) those that are going to continue with 2♦ showing extra values, 3) those that play Equal Level Conversion (ELC) doubles and that double here is five or more diamonds with four spades. Some of our panel plays ELC and for them this hand is not much of a problem. I don't play ELC. I write my overcall range as 8 to 18 on my convention cards. So if I double and bid I tend to have at least 19 HCP or pretty close. Some of the panelists play ELC, and they yawned and politely doubled (their problems come when they have good diamonds with too much to overcall), but the rest of the panel has to decide how to handle the problem. I'll start with some panelists who don't play ELC.

Mealy-mouth: 2♦. Planning to compete in spades by bidding 2♠, and perhaps even 3♠, if necessary. I dislike doubling with such poor support for one of the unbid suits. A good hand for "Minimum Equal-Level

Conversion," of course, but without a partnership agreement to play it I must not double, especially when the opportunity to convert won't necessarily come at the two-level, for all too often a double may lead to ...a nasty rebid problem after West raises to 2♥ and North bids 3♣ as he would with ♠J832 ♥84 ♦K8 ♣KJT93. After 2♦, however, South has no problem bidding 2♠ when West's 2♥ comes round to him.

Korbel: Double. I don't want to lose the spade suit with a hand this strong. I think I'm just strong enough to bid diamonds over clubs if partner freely bids them (no ELC).

Bartusek: Double. Notrump might play very poorly with this distributional hand if we have only one heart stopper. I can't risk missing a spade fit by making a no-trump overcall. I'll rebid 2♦ over partner's 2♣ response to my takeout double showing a big hand. Note that this isn't really an overbid since K&R (*The Kaplan – Rubens hand evaluator*. See Jeff's Goldsmith's excellent website <http://www.jeff-goldsmith.org/cgi-bin/knr.cgi>) currently evaluates the hand as 18.4 (not even taking into account the likelihood that the ♥K is probably behind the ♥A).

I think that Mark and Daniel are stretching a teensy bit when they present their arguments that this hand is strong enough to double and bid. It's a tiny bit short in my estimation. But it's close enough that I like that action better than any other action.

Feigenbaum: Double is the most flexible. I am a great believer in bidding where I live, (*you live in California, so bid here during the pandemic*) but that is not clear yet.

Michelin: Double. I would double here. If partner bids 2♣ I will correct to 2♦. 2♣ shows less than 9 HCP usually. Most of the time if I bid 1NT partner passes with spades and about 7 HCP and we go down two or three in NT. It seems I want to play in a suit contract unless partner shows values.

Brownstein: Double. I'll bid diamonds over clubs, an ELC.

Coopers: Double. If partner is so rude as to bid 2♣, we bid 2♦ showing diamonds and spades.

Davis: Double. It is close between double and 1NT but I think a takeout double is better if playing (my choice) that equal-level conversion of clubs to diamonds does not show a big hand. If RHO had passed, I would open 1♦ rather than 1NT for related reasons – more likely to reach the best part-score contract and also be able to play the right game when we have a game. The simplicity of a 1NT opening or overcall may appeal to some.

<div>2</div> <div>IMPs N-S Vul</div>	West	North	East	South
		1NT	2♦*	???
		* Diamonds and a major		
		You, South, hold: ♠A9875 ♥K9754 ♦10 ♣K5		
	What call do you make?			

Davis: Double. I play takeout doubles over their interference to 1NT when they make a two-suited bid and they are bidding one of their suits. On this hand, I am willing to play 3NT if we do not have a 5-4 major suit fit since the auction indicates suits may not be splitting well and that makes notrump look more attractive. If partner chooses to pass my double to 2♦, at least they won't be getting much in the way of ruffs in dummy as I have an easy diamond opening lead. If my methods allowed me to show 5-5 in the majors with a GF hand, I would choose that instead.

Mealy-mouth: 3♦. A request to bid the major that East doesn't have. I expect partner to understand this without prior discussion. Thanks for this fastball-down-the-middle.

Bartusek: 3♦. Initially Stayman without a stopper playing fast denies (*Lebensohl*). I will probably follow up with 4♦ over partner's 3NT forcing partner to choose a major (it could even be best despite a 4-1 trump break). Admittedly 3NT might be a better contract. I think a better problem would have been on the next round.

Feigenbaum: 3♦. Stayman, I hope we can survive whatever partner bids or whatever I have made partner do, no doubt we will end up in our heart fit with a 5-0 break.

Brownstein: 3♥. I play Transfer Lebensohl (invitational or better at three level; here I bid 3♥, a transfer to spades then 4♥ to play in a major).

Coopers: 3♥. Invitational or better transfer to spades, part of Rubensohl (*I believe that Rubensohl and Transfer Lebensohl are identical, different names for the same treatment*). If partner rejects by bidding 3NT we will transfer to hearts, although it's not totally clear if we do that by bidding 4♦ or by bidding 4♥. Bridge would be a lot better if the enemy didn't bid in our constructive auctions.

Korbel: 3♠. I'm going to insist on a suit contract here. If playing Transfer Lebensohl I would start with 3♥, then continue with 4♥ over 3♠ or 3NT to show 5-5. Not playing Transfer Lebensohl, I'll start with 3♠ and then try 4♥ if I don't get raised.

Michelin: 3♠. This is a hand for partnership agreements. I could start with 3♦, usually Stayman (Stayman without a diamond stopper if playing Lebensohl). If partner bids 3NT, I'll bid 4♦ pick a major. However, if no partnership understanding exists I'll try 3♠, forcing, and if partner bids 3NT I'll bid 4♥.

<div style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">3</div> <div style="text-align: center;">IMPs E-W Vul</div>		West	North	East	South
			1♦	2♥	???

You, South, hold: ♠A85 ♥82 ♦1043 ♣AQ1065

What call do you make?

This aggravating problem has no good solution. The following calls were suggested by the panel: pass, double, 3♣, 3♦, 3♥. All of them are seriously flawed. Pass shows no values when you have a decent hand. Further, it doesn't end your miseries. What are you doing over partner's reopening double? Double is fine on HCP, but the obvious problem is that you are a spade short of a normal negative double. If partner responds 2♠ and you bid 3♣ is that a game try? 3♣ is fine on shape and suit, but it is game forcing. You are about a queen light of a minimum. 3♦ is fine with 10 HCP, but you are a diamond short, even two diamonds short of what you would like to have. 3♥ shows diamond support, asks for a NT stopper, and is a definitely an overbid.

Mealymouth: Pass. In tempo. No "Negative Double" without a fourth spade. No 3♣ response without a better hand. Second choice: 3♦, but not even close, with neither a necessary fourth diamond nor a desirable high diamond honor. Pass and (probably) go plus on defense. *This problem was given to me by one of my online students. She elected to pass and heard partner reopen with a double. What now? She tried 3♣ and played there, missing a game when partner had a rather poor 18 HCP and choose to pass her 3♣ call.*

Davis: Double. No bid fits this hand well. I don't have many options so I'll choose a takeout double and pass if partner bids 2♠. I hope that partner does not solve his bidding problem the same way I am solving mine, i.e., by indicating a four-card spade suit when holding only three of them.

Bartusek: Double. I detest making negative doubles without four of the other major in many auctions like this, but I see no alternative here. This is the least of evils. Passing will result in our side being shut out of a making partial too often, and a game-forcing 3♣ seems way too optimistic with such sterile distribution. Note that a heart tap will come in the short trump hand if we play in spades. *(Good point, assuming there is a short suit. Sometimes it will be a 3-3 fit though).*

Brownstein: Double. Double isn't perfect but the least of evils; if partner bids 2♠, I bid 3♣.

Korbel: Double. Not ideal, but what else can I do?

Michelin: 3♣. I am sure that if I double, I'll be playing my 3-3 spade fit. I am going to overbid and bid what I am looking at, 3♣. It is forcing to game or 4 of a minor. I have two tens and with luck 3NT will make. I have tolerance for diamonds. I am ready for partner to be disappointed in me.

Coopers: 3♣. Tough problem! If we double, the enemy will surely bid 3♥ or 4♥, followed by partner's spade bid intending to play a 4-3 (won't he be surprised!). That leaves us - reluctantly bidding 3♣.

I like the 3♣ overbid better than any of the other actions.

Feigenbaum: 3♥. I don't like it *(if you like my problems, am I trying hard enough?)* but I bid 3♥.

<div style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">IMPs E-W Vul</div>	West	North	East	South
	pass	1♣	pass	pass
	2♦	dbl	1♠	1NT
			pass	???
You, South, hold: ♠9764 ♥KJ10 ♦J104 ♣A96 What call do you make?				

OK, time for true confessions. I didn't intend this problem! How did it get here? There were two problems. As I was putting the problems together for the panelists I did some cut and paste to get formatting correct (tougher than it might seem given that different browsers and different email carriers have somewhat different default formats). I wound up with a hand from a former problem, and an auction from the intended problem. The errors weren't over; I had a typo in the intended auction. Talk about the bread landing butter face up. What could have been an illegal auction or a ridiculous one turned out to be a plausible problem. Yes, 1NT is not everyone's choice on the given mis-problem, but it's plausible. It's one of the calls a good player might make if the problem had been given that way. Not the best problem I have ever presented, but luckily not an absurd one. The panelists had to struggle a little with the meaning of the double.

Feigenbaum: 2♥. Who thought of these hands? Honestly Ellis, nobody really, I just goofed! But have fun with it! I hate this! I bid 2♥. Partner should know I only have three, I didn't double 1♠.

Korbel: 2♥. I assume this double is just value-showing and I do not like my honor structure for defending.

Bartusek: Pass. I assume that partner is making a penalty double here holding something like 3=3=3=4 or 2=4=3=4 with 14 HCPs, but I'm not very optimistic with partner's spade honors in the slot (at least -180 isn't game). Admittedly a 2♥ call might be the winner. I would have made a more practical raise of partner's minor on the first round (which would have made follow-up actions easier). This view is supported by the large vote totals in similar auctions in The Bridge World's MSC on both Dec. 2019 holding ♠xxx ♥Qxx ♦Kxx ♣KQ98 after 1♦ - (1♠), and Sept. 2017 holding ♠x ♥Txx ♦AT9xxx ♣Kxx after 1♣ - (1♥). (The

Master Solver's Club examples indicate that it is possible to try to raise a minor opening with only three trumps occasionally in difficult situations. However, neither of Mark's examples would tempt me to try 1NT. In this problem 1NT does look like a reasonable try in a difficult situation. I know that Mark has one former partner who would respond 1NT on the given hand in complete tempo. Who? See Mealy's answer!

Mealy: Pass. Ah, I see I bid 1NT on a Marshall Miles Stopper ("Any holding in a suit is a stopper if the opponents don't lead it!"). (That would certainly be Marshall's approach. (It was infuriating how often he would get away without having a full stopper in the opponent's suit. But let me bid NT without a full stopper and the opponents would happily run their suit on me.) I'd have bid 2♣ (a Tony Lazzeri Raise, "Throw the ball to Leo, he's so smart he'll know what to do with it!") in a flash at my first turn, but having made my bed earlier, I see nothing better than to sleep in it now. (I believe that is a reference to New York Yankees baseball players during the Babe Ruth – Lou Gehrig era. Lazzeri was a terrific infielder and hitter for the Yanks and Leo must be Leo Durocher, better remembered for his ~~mouth~~, er Lip, (sorry Mealy, I shall not use the word "mouth" in vain)).

Brownstein: Pass. I hate bidding 1NT but pass is worse; this is a penalty double. I pass.

Davis: Pass. This problem should have been "What should South do over 1♠?" (Definitely a reasonable problem). My answer to that question would have been to make a double since I have no interest in having the opening spade lead coming through whatever partner holds in spades. It is possible that 1NT or even 3NT would have been a good contract if played by partner but that we will take one fewer spade trick and also lose a tempo if I am declarer in notrump.

As it is, on this auction I've shown a balanced hand with about this shape and strength albeit with

something better than 9xxx in spades. This makes partner the captain as he is in the best position to make the subsequent bidding decisions. I suspect that this hand is making its way into this column because Captain North does not know what to do so he is making a takeout-penalty double (the very latest new gadget when partner thinks he should do something but doesn't know what it is). Of course, it is certainly possible that I am being too cynical and North is making a fine penalty double, i.e., just what he should do with ♠AT ♥Axxx ♦K9x ♣Kxxx.

Michelin: Pass. Partner is not making a one-suited take-out for hearts after I didn't make a negative double, he didn't rebid clubs, jump in clubs or reverse into hearts. He has a good hand. Maybe he wants to know if I have a diamond stopper for 3NT. I showed a spade stop and I am passing because I showed my values. I was a passed hand. I am prepared for -180 or -280.

Coopers: Pass. At **least** they're not in game.

<div style="font-size: 4em; text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center;">IMPs E-W Vul.</div>	West	North	East	South
			4♥*	???
	<p>* Stronger heart preempt available</p> <p>You, South, hold: ♠KQ109 ♥5 ♦A98643 ♣105</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What call do you make?</p>			

(Some think this is a non-problem).

Bartusek: Pass. I must have malware in my email app, because I received this problem instead of a real problem #5.

Korbel: Pass. You must be joking. This isn't even close to a bid. Switch the diamonds and spades and it'd be more interesting.

Mealymouth: Pass. Yes, I know that East's 4♥ opening is a command for me to bid something whenever I have a singleton or void in hearts. When I put my hand down as dummy in 5♣, I'll apologize to both East and North, offering the lame excuse that I thought my ten of clubs was the ace.

Some think they are in trouble).

(Others think it is closer but still pass).

Brownstein: Pass. I hope partner does something.

Coopers: Pass. We would probably double in balancing, but not here.

Davis: Pass. I'd probably double 1♥ but pass if they opened any higher number of hearts on my right (at least if playing equal-level conversion of clubs to diamonds does not show a strong hand).

(And a husband and wife agree (sort of) on a problematic double. Both of them are apparently using a life line. Ellis wants the director (on himself) and Margie wants the partnership desk; except we all know that at any tournament she is at Margie becomes the partnership desk for the experts and advanced players).

Feigenbaum: Double. I have a 9 count, preempts work. Now that I have tanked for 30 seconds I double and wait for the director call.

Michelin: Double. I have shortness. I am doubling and hope we don't get to 6 after correcting clubs to diamonds. In my heart of hearts I know pass is probably correct, but I am making an aggressive double. I see -1100 in my future and the partnership desk for me. Oh wait, I am the partnership desk! No problem.