

Southern California

Bridge News

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Shore

Future Planning



Palm Springs had a reasonably successful tournament, clocking in at more than 1600 tables. This isn't up to their pre-pandemic standard, of course, but most of the drop-off appeared to occur among intermediate and newer players. Like Las Vegas, the tournament required proof of vaccination (evidenced by hospital-style bracelets to make confirmation easy), and starting Wednesday, December 15 (when state rules changed), the tournament also required masks. My guess is that none of these steps adversely affected attendance. I think the drop-off was due to a combination of competition from on-line play (particularly attractive to newcomers who have yet to experience a live tournament) and people worried about congregating in light of the omicron variant.

I am hoping that both of these factors will fade into memory by the time Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional, rolls around. We will certainly work with the Hilton (which historically has been very cooperative) to adjust financial agreements as necessary in light of then-current conditions. But I'm hoping for a tournament that attracts nearly as many people as we were seeing before the pandemic. Whether I'm right will mostly be up to our local players, particularly intermediate and newer players. So please start making your plans now.

A couple of news items with respect to tournament planning. First, our long-time tournament manager, Peter Benjamin, is warning us that he foresees retirement in his future. I'm very grateful to the work Peter has done throughout the years and I hope that he postpones that retirement for several more years. Nonetheless, to prepare for his eventual departure I've asked Kevin Lane to begin working

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District Director Report

by John Jones



I am leaving the ACBL Board of Directors. There are a few major issues that are up in the air as I prepare this report, so I will plan to do one more report next month and then stop as my term as District Director ends on January 1, 2022.

David Lodge, the D22 Director (who was not termed out), is now the Regional Director representing D22 and D23. David ran unopposed in the Regional Director election.

Southern California had a major success in the Austin Nationals. There are 6 NABP+ premier events of the Fall Nationals which are not restricted by age or gender. Two are IMP events: the Soloway KO teams, and the Keohane North American Swiss teams. Two are Board-A-Match (BAM) teams: the Mitchell BAM and the Reisinger teams. Two are pair events: Life Master pairs and the Blue Ribbon Pairs. Want to earn major masterpoints in just a few days? These events pay between 125 and 250 masterpoints (depending on the length and perceived difficulty of the events). D23 members won one of those events: Ifti Baqui, Mitch Dunitz, Ross Grabel, and Mark Itabashi. Ifti and Mitch are currently D23 members and Ross and Mark are former D23 members. All four all are regular or

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with Peter in the capacity of Deputy Tournament Manager. You may remember several years back we held a small regional in Long Beach between Christmas and New Year's. (Not to be confused with the more recent year-end tournament we tried a few years ago in Glendale.) Kevin managed that tournament, so he has experience in the role.

Second, I'm starting to talk to neighboring districts in an effort to launch the "Grand Slam Cup." Just as tennis and golf have "grand slam" tournaments that are considered prestige events in their realms, the goal here is to establish Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional, along with three other regionals spread throughout the year as Grand Slam Cup events. Negotiations remain in progress so the shape of the event is not yet clear, nor are the other participants as the Fall's Best Regional, the Winter's Best Regional, and the Spring's Best Regional. My best guess, though, is that we will end up stratifying the event in some way and awarding recognition (and perhaps a literal cup or similar trophy) to the top combined masterpoint winners in the four grand slam events in multiple flights, so that (as with the Mini McKenneys) players can achieve recognition without needing to compete head-to-head with established pros.

Another Transition

By the time this column sees print, the metamorphosis of the ACBL's Board of Directors will have begun. The position of District Director of District 23 will have expired. Our representation on the (shrinking) national board will now take place through Regional Director David Lodge, whom we share with District 22. I'd like to take a moment to thank and recognize John Jones for his time and contributions over the last several months as our last District Director. We're lucky to have John as part of our District, and I'm looking forward to his future contributions.

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

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occasional PSP panelists for this newsletter. Well done gentlemen!!! The leading D23 masterpoint winners (my apologies if I missed someone).

243.80 Mitch Dunitz, Sherman Oaks CA
 209.59 Finn Kolesnik, Ventura CA
 206.26 Iftikhar Baqai, Irvine CA
 91.87 Steve Gross, Agoura Hills CA
 65.11 John Jones, Santa Fe Spgs CA
 53.42 Ellen Anten, Encino CA
 48.08 Billy Cohen, Sherman Oaks CA
 36.36 Leonard Holtz, West Hollywood CA
 31.51 Michael Mikyska, Los Angeles CA
 30.54 Jill Meyers, Santa Monica CA

The attendance was down for the Austin Nationals. It was predicted to be a little below 50% of normal, but luckily beat the estimates by a little. The consensus was that the tournament event pre-registration system was a success.

The pandemic has changed how we play the game. Many of our players have discovered the advantages of playing online and others are holding out for a return to face-to-face bridge, so we will work on a new hybrid model that provides a place to play for all of our membership.

As an organization, we must do all we can to enable our face-to-face bridge clubs to survive. The pandemic has dealt a serious blow to face-to-face play and unless we can recover, the future of our wonderful game is in danger. Prior to the pandemic our new members came mostly from bridge clubs that offered teaching programs. It's in the best interest of the organization to try to protect the survival of teaching clubs. While ACBL membership continues to decline slightly each month, the pace has begun to slow. Total membership is down 9.4 percent compared to the prior year. As of November 1, 2021, the ACBL has approximately 144,306 total members.

We also need to address the process of keeping cheaters out of the game of bridge. The Recorder system has been overwhelmed since the pandemic began. Changes, some of them major, are coming.

Joann Glasson of D4 was unanimously elected Board President for the 2022 year. She has played in our district and I supported her election. She is the current ACBL Board Treasurer.

The IT division of the ACBL was awarded a significant increase in their budget. I think this is a step in the right direction but not nearly enough. I

believe we are going to have online bridge become much more important in the near future. I believe that online bridge will require many additional IT changes. Additionally, we are not paying our programmers top dollar. I think we should pay more. We have college students whose first job out of college is currently paying more than what the ACBL is paying the IT Director, our highest paid IT employee. How do we expect to compete and get critical items such as architectural changes to the website developed and changing ACBL Score to a web-based program if we don't offer quality salaries?

Last year the ACBL made a profit. Everyone recognizes that is temporary because of the pandemic. We will almost certainly lose money this year. Optimists estimate the two years together will be in the black, there are several that think we will be in the red over the two years.

Have a great 2022!

North American Pairs District Final January 16

Make your reservations now for the North American Pairs district final. The two-session all-day event will be held Sunday, January 16, at the Long Beach Bridge Center. The first session will start at 10:00 a.m., and the second should be finished by 6:30 p.m.

Reservations are required! Visit the NAP information page at <https://nap.bridgemojo.com> where you'll find a link to make your reservations. Send player names, ACBL numbers, and email addresses.

The information page also has links to see the national Conditions of Contest, and the official list of qualifiers for the event from District 23.

If you qualified at a club game, in person or online, in June, July, or August of 2021, you may play with any partner who also qualified and is eligible for your flight. Advancing to the national event is done *by partnership*; changing of partners is not permitted after the district final. Check that your partner is available for the Reno NABC!

Players making reservations will be added to the event on RSVP Bridge, and invited to create an account there. You'll be able to pay card fees in advance, and see the current slate of players expected for the game.

As of today, COVID mitigation requirements include showing proof of full vaccination, and masks required during card play. Booster shots and day-of-game tests are highly recommended.

Top pairs in each flight will be invited to compete in the national North American Pairs championships at the

Reno NABC in March. See the Conditions of Contest for full details.

The Director's Corner by David White



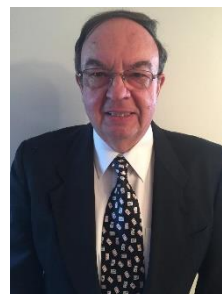
Dave White was last seen in a very agitated state, swimming toward a small island off the coast of Panama, screaming "I can't take it no more."

While populated by some very beautiful women, the island has no internet and rumor is that nobody there plays bridge.

We expect Dave will make the long swim back in time for the next edition of the Southern California Bridge News.

New Platinum Life Master in D32 by John Jones

This is the only rank advancement story that I am going to include in this month's edition. There are a few reasons for that. First, this story is very long and significantly longer than a normal rank advancement story (normally three paragraphs is about right). However, it is a Platinum LM story and few of us will ever reach the lofty goal of 10,000 Masterpoints. Second, and more importantly, my ACBL email account is horrid. It is difficult to use in the first place, but more importantly sometimes deletes emails that haven't been revisited within the last 30 days. I can't get at everything that has been sent to me. So, if you have a rank advancement story that you would like me to include in the February issue, please send it to me. You may include a photo (headshot) if you would like. Send it to my email account of johndjones44@yahoo.com (the ACBL email account will be going away soon as my term as D23 Director expires on December 31, 2021). Thanks – John Jones



Lulu Minter recently gained the ACBL rank of Platinum Life Master. Here are some of the highlights of his bridge career.

Lulu grew up in Romania and was a serious chess student. He studied the games of the

Russian masters and was good enough to be the practice partner of the future national champion of Romania, whom he defeated a little more often than not. He won several tournaments and finished second out of 600 college students. He gave simultaneous exhibitions and in one event in 21 matches he defeated 18 experienced players, with only three draws.

He learned bridge at 12 years old. He was taught by Mircea H, one of his father's friends. Mircea taught Lulu and his father the basics of bridge including counting the hand, opening on quick tricks, scoring and guidelines for responding and competing. He started playing rubber bridge against friends for small stakes.

Lulu wanted to get better at bridge so he searched for a bridge book. The only book he could find was a book in French, written by the great French champion Jose Le Dentu. He later read a book by world champion Rixi Markus. That book explained point count bidding and the forcing club system played by the Italian Blue Team.

Lulu's favorite early partner was his father, Isac Minter. When he was 18 years old, Lulu, Isac and three married couples opened the first bridge club in Romania, called ICPET. In 1968, after five months, it was closed down by the Communist Party and no bridge club was reopened in Romania until after the December 1989 revolution. He continued to play bridge at home using European card decks (King = R, Queen = D, Jack = V). For a while Lulu and his father played a homemade destructive overcall system. In that system when the opponents opened 1♣, their bids had the following meanings: Pass = 16 + HCP, Double = 13 – 16 HCP, 1♦ = 10 – 13 HCP, 1♥ = 7 – 10, 1♠ = 4 – 7 HCP, and 1NT = 0 – 4, with higher bids showing two-suiters. Many bad boards resulted.

He met his wife, Yolly, in 1970 and married in August 1973. She had some card playing experience, and learned bridge quite easily. They used to play together frequently but currently only play on cruise ships. They left Romania in 1974 and emigrated to Israel. Being busy with learning the language and starting their engineering careers, they played very little bridge, mainly on the weekends. They played ACOL style which was popular in Europe at that time. Their son, Fredy, was born in 1976.

They moved to the United States in September 1977, and their daughter Toni was born in 1978. They didn't play any bridge for a while, being busy raising Fredy and Toni. Lulu's first club game was in May

1981 after seeing advertisement in the Pasadena Star News about "The Bridge Center" in Arcadia run by Art and Diane Guldbrandsen. Lulu played with his father on a regular basis, and they joined the ACBL in June 1981 playing mainly in Arcadia and Downey clubs. Lulu has also played in major tournaments and has completed against greats including Benito Garazzo.

Fredy was always upset when Lulu left to play bridge, so when he was about 8 years old, Lulu took him to a club. Fredy took a keen interest in bridge and Lulu taught him how to play. Fredy played on a regular basis for about six years, quit for a while and came back when he was 30 years old. Lulu now plays regularly with Fredy.

Russ Berberian, Lulu's first bridge student, went on an Alfred Sheinwold bridge cruise in April 1989. Sheinwold was going to retire from cruises, and Russ asked Lulu if he wanted the job. He was afraid of getting sea sick, and hesitated at first but agreed to try and Russ put him in touch with an agency in Palm Springs. Yolly and Lulu went on their first cruise in August 1989. They went to Alaska and fell in love with cruising. They have taken over 200 voyages all over the world on most of the cruise lines. He has taught bridge to over 15,000 guests and signed up over 600 new members to ACBL.

He thanks his regular partners for helping him improve and help make the rank of Platinum LM. Some of the players that have been regular partners include: Walter Bales, Bill Berry, Ron Moekel, Marie Nimrich, Art Guldbrandsen, John Fox, Mike Kirkland, Alan Bell, Mike Shuman, Robert Radwin, Sanjeev Pathak, George Wang, Shirley Betz, Ross Berberian, John Wang, Fred Theuerkauf, Steve and Charlotte Sturm, Eddie Rose, Subba Ravipudi, Bill Papa, Ron Lien, Bob Gish, Milt Kalikman, Frank Jones, Jim Griffin, Bill Holmquist, Ernie Wong and of course Yolly, Isac and Fredy Minter.

Congratulations on a fine bridge career Lulu!

The Puzzle Page

by John Jones

January Rebus

Well, can you figure out what this says?



Bridge Jeopardy

by John Jones

Category: Signals

And the answer is ...

\$100 – This signal might be Upside Down or Standard, but it is how you indicate to partner that you like or dislike his/her lead (hint: sticking out your tongue is not the correct answer).

\$200 – Another signal that might be given either Upside Down or Standard, this shows whether you have an odd or even number of cards in a suit.

\$300 – This signal lets partner know which suit your entry or side strength is in.

\$400 – This discard may only be used once per defender per hand. A discard of a 2, 4, 6, or 8 is discouraging in that suit, but a discard of a 3, 5, or 7 is encouraging in that suit.

\$500 – Another discard that can only be used once per partner. This discard is discouraging, and by the size of the discard indicates which side suit you like.

North

♠ 6 2
♥ A J 10 5 2
♦ 7 3
♣ 10 8 6 5

West

♠ K 10
♥ Q 9 6
♦ A K 10 4
♣ A J 4 3

East

♠ 7 5
♥ K 8 7 3
♦ J 9 6 5
♣ Q 9 2

South

♠ A Q J 9 8 4 3
♥ 4
♦ Q 8 2
♣ K 7

This is a BBO practice hand that Dave Pelka and I had during our morning practice. This is the actual auction:

West	South	East	North
1♣#	pass	1♦\$	1♠
1NT%	pass	2♣&	2♠
pass	pass	pass	

= Big club, 15+HCP

\$ = Negative, 0 – 8 HCP

% = 1NT = 15 – 18 Balanced with a spade stopper. Takeout double works better.

& = Stayman

West leads the ♦A. Do you play or defend?

(Solutions to these puzzles are on page 6.

No peeking!)

District 23 Rank Changes November 2021

Junior Master

Sandra L. Marsh
Lynda M. Montgomery
Janaki Potukuchi
Shyamala Reddy

Club Master

Jonathan Fuhrman
Susan E. Kane

Sectional Master

Gail E. Leroy
Julie E. Spore

Bronze Life Master

Lisa Caras
John L. Horn

Silver Life Master

Dane T. Margol

Ruby Life Master

Ronald Oest

Gold Life Master

D. Geffner

DiamondLife Master

Carolyn R. Cohen
Sankar M. Reddy

Do you prefer standard or upside down count and attitude?

Oh, I don't care, so you choose.

No, no, don't be so wishy-washy. You know I respect your opinion.

Really, I'll play it your way.

Well, you know so much more about the game than I do, so which do you think is best?

Hmmm, upside attitude makes good sense, but not upside count.

Thank you! Standard it is.

Have a good bridge rebus? Send it to
johndjones44@yahoo.com

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.

Around the Units in District 23



Long Beach by Lillian Slater

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

Sorry, no news from Long Beach this month.



Pomona – Covina by Tom Lill www.acblunit551.org

Individual: January 8, 10:00 a.m., Chino
February, 5, 10:00, TBD
Unit Game: Saturday January 15, 11:00 a.m.,
Glendora
Team Games: January 18 and 21, La Fetra
Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

Please note, to participate in the team games, you must sign up in advance. Otherwise, it takes a miracle to get an exact multiple of four players for the games.

Although Bridge41 is no more (*gasp!*), the monthly Individual will continue under the auspices of La Fetra. So if you see, on the ACBL website, that La Fetra is now a “multi-site” club, don’t panic. The weekday games will continue as usual at the senior center. Only the Individual will continue to peregrinate.

And if you never figured out the mild joke in the name “Bridge41,” try pronouncing the numbers separately, instead of as “forty-one.”

Winner of the December Individual was Mary Ann Wotring, with a 61.46% game. Last month’s

winner, Stephen Andersen, dropped to second (nothing to be ashamed of, of course). Daniel Robinson tied with Rose Roberts for third, Yours Truly was fifth, and Kiran Kumar tied with Linda Hedden for sixth to round out the leader board.

Several of our members did very well at the Palm Springs Regional. The best performance was by the team of Vic Sartor, Mary Ann Wotring, Caryn Mason, and Richard Parker, who pulled in an impressive 22.86 gold points by winning their KO bracket. David Ochroch placed third in a side game, and fourth in B in an open pairs game. Vic Sartor and Mary Ann Wotring placed fourth in a B/C/D pairs game, also fifth in a side game. Carl Silsbee and Art Wallace took second in 299-er pairs game. Finally, in the Sunday B Swiss, a team with Yours Truly, Hanan Mogharbel, Linda Tessier, and a “foreigner” (i.e. someone NOT from our Unit) squeaked into second place in the top flight. This was somewhat of a shocker because we had been slaughtered in the first match, 1-19 in Victory Points, by the team that eventually won the event. So, never give up! We just edged out the team with Vic Sartor, Mary Ann Wotring, Clint Lew, and another “foreigner,” who finished third.

Sorry to say, the flyer for our upcoming (let’s *hope*) Bridge Week Regional next July was not available at the tournament, although it was expected to be. Stay tuned!

In the very competitive December Unit game, Eddie Rose – Ann Gillespie took first place with 58.33%. Fredy Minter - Amr Elghamry were second, Kiran Kumar – Hanan Mogharbel placed third, Mary Ann Wotring – Linda Tessier fourth, and taking honors in Flight C were Kurt Trieselmann – Paul Chrisney.

One rank advancement this month: Gail Leroy has been promoted to Sectional Master. Congratulation, Gail.

The top game at La Fetra in December was posted by Fredy Minter – Roger Boyar, another 72.5% whopper. Other top finishers were Caryn Mason, Mary Ann Wotring, Lulu Minter, Vic Sartor, Bill Papa, Patrick Finley, and Yours Truly.

To get out of that rut I mentioned last month (all those semi-balanced hands), let's try something different. Perhaps these hands are better suited to the October issue (Halloween), or to the April issue (Walpurgis Night), but what the heck? Here are some amusing atrocities I participated in. In all cases, I was the helpless victim. (That's my story, and I'm sticking to it.) And my partners were not beginners or "chairs," either.

Horror story #1: at favorable vulnerability, I held

♠ A x x ♥ Q ♦ x ♣ K Q J 10 9 x x x

and was treated to the following auction:

Partner	RHO	Me	LHO
1 ♥	4 ♠	5 ♣	5 ♠
pass	pass	dbl	All Pass

Down came the dummy:

♠ x x ♥ A J x x ♦ A J x x ♣ A x x

I lead the ♣K. Oops! Making 5. Partner had opened 1 ♥ on

♠ -- ♥ K x x x x x ♦ J x x x x x ♣ x

Perhaps partner should have pulled, with so little defense, but ... to *what*?

Horror story #2: I held

♠ A 10 ♥ 6 4 3 2 ♦ A Q J 9 ♣ 10 x x

and the auction went

Me	Partner (Silver Life Master)
pass	1 ♣
1 ♦	2 ♥
3 ♥	3NT
4 ♠	Pass

Partner's hand:

♠ Q x x x ♥ A K Q J ♦ K ♣ K J 9 x

Trumps were 5-2 with the K-J bare on my left. I could not avoid losing 3 trumps and the ♣A (the ♣Q was on my left) for down one. Everyone else was in 4 ♥, making 6. My 4 ♠ bid was an obvious (or so I thought) control bid. Yes, I had passed a hand that some (many?) would open. But the hand improved after partner's old-fashioned strong jump shift. Could I possibly have a diamond suit, four card heart support, and also a spade suit worth mentioning for the first time at the four level?

Finally, Horror Story #3: in a 299-er (yes, it was a while ago) Sectional Pairs, I picked up

♠ K Q x x ♥ A K J x x ♦ void ♣ Q x x x

With neither side vulnerable, the auction was

Partner	RHO	Me	LHO
1 ♠	3 ♣	4 ♣*	5 ♣
dbl	pass	5 ♦**	all pass

* agreeing spades as trumps.

** control bid.

Aiy, caramba! In the post mortem, partner said she thought I had mis-bid the first time. To add insult to injury, trumps broke 8-2! Partner had ♦AKx and figured that might make a fine trump suit. And for frosting on the cake, 5 ♣X would have gone for 1100.

Oh well. These things happen.

Quote for the month: "It is much easier to be critical than to be correct." (Benjamin Disraeli)

Downey – Whittier by Liz Burrell

It seems I went to bed on October 31 thinking about the little ghosts and goblins running up and down the streets and woke up December 15 thinking, "What just happened? There was no turkey and dressing! What are all these decorations on our neighbors' houses?" It was like a total time warp and I'm still in a stupor. Time starts going faster once we pass August and never slows until some time in February. Still not sure what month it is, but it's a cinch I'm woefully behind.

We were informed some time ago that there would be no more STaC games until sometime in 2022. However, the plans must have changed since we hosted a STaC game at Downey on December 8. It was gratifying to see that our little club had three pairs in the top 20 over several districts. Bob and Linda Krause were second overall with a 65.63% game and 8.30 silver points; Mary and Al Kiechle were sixth in B and earned 1.50 silver points; Nancy Toussaint and Jay James were fourth in C with 1.25 silver points. Congratulations to all winners.

The Downey Bridge Club celebrated 20 years (plus a few months) as well as the Christmas season at a luncheon, hosted by our friend, Ernie Wong, on

December 15. We were happy to honor the founder of our club, Mary Kiechle, who still plays with us every week at Downey. Attendance was lower than we had hoped but we realize some people who might have joined us were playing at the Palm Springs Regional. However, we did have six full tables and some very good games: Bob and Linda Krause were first overall with a 64.17% game earning 2.33 points. Several other pairs had good games, including George Wang/Ernie Wong, Steve Sturm/Alan Flower, Carol and Ron Copley and Tom Reynolds/Phil Feldman. Well done everyone.

Like many face-to-face clubs, ours is experiencing the effects of having been closed for over a year because of the pandemic. Our attendance has suffered and it's difficult to entice players away from the comfort of their home computers and online play. The recent ACBL Bulletin was filled with dire predictions about the future of club play and it's hard to dispute these opinions. However, we sincerely hope there will be a reversal of the current trends and that the backbone of ACBL, local clubs, will survive this tempest. We all need to work together to accomplish this goal.

Best wishes to everyone for a better year in 2022. Stay safe, healthy and happy.



**Santa Clarita-
Antelope Valley
by Beth Morrin**

Virtual GameSchedule (for 2022)

Monday: 12:15 PM Open game
 Tuesday: 10:15 AM 599er game (cost is \$5)
 6:15 PM Open game
 Wednesday: 10:15 AM 599er game (cost is \$5)
 Thursday: 10:15 AM Open game
 Friday: 12:15 PM Open game
 Sunday: 12:15 PM 599er game
 12:30 PM Open game

Contact our game manager at paula@pacbell.net for reservations. Our games cost \$3 unless it is a special game series.

Special games for January:

January 6-9: Junior Fund games, 2x regular club points, extra \$1 per entry

January 17 - 23: Silver Linings Week, 2x regular club points, all silver, extra \$1 per entry

February 12-13: Valentine's Weekend, 2x regular club points, 50% red 50% black, no extra charge!

February 21-27: Educational Foundation Week, 2x regular club points, black points, extra \$1 per entry. Also of note: currently online virtual club games (vacb) pay 125% of regular club games. That multiplier will drop to 100% after the New Year's weekend, on January 3.

Winners in Unit 556+ Open MP games:

Mon. Nov. 22

N/S Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom 64.39%

E/W Gerard Geremia – Rae Murbach 66.05%

Tues. Nov. 23

N/S Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom 67.78%

E/W Avice Osmundson – Kiran Kumar 68.33%

Thurs. Nov. 25

N/S Paulette Burkitt – Robot 63.89%

E/W Paula Olivares – Robot 58.33%

Fri. Nov. 26

N/S Paula Olivares – Linda Young 63.06%

E/W Avice Osmundson – Kiran Kumar 66.11%

Sun. Nov. 28

N/S Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom 60.86%

E/W Avice Osmundson – Kiran Kumar 64.10%

Mon. Nov. 29

N/S Gerard Geremia – Rae Murbach 60.35%

E/W Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom 62.63%

Tues. Nov. 30

N/S Temo Arjani – Khushroo Lakdawala 66.20%

E/W Pat Larin – David White 61.11%

Thurs. Dec. 2

N/S Diana Borgatti – Rae Murbach 59.62%

E/W David Khalieque – Harry Randhawa 68.16%

Fri. Dec. 3

N/S Paulette Burkitt – Robot 61.54%

E/W Mira Rowe – Ron Oest 61.97%

Sun. Dec. 5

N/S Avice Osmundson – Kiran Kumar 65.68%

E/W Rae Murbach – Joseph Viola 60.58%

Mon. Dec. 6		
N/S Diana Borgatti – Carolyn Cohen	61.62%	
E/W Gerard Geremia – Rae Murbach	69.44%	
Tues. Dec. 7		
N/S Mira Rowe – Ron Oest	54.17%	
E/W Pat Larin – David White	75.46%	
Thurs. Dec. 9		
N/S Adrienne Pearsons – Pat Larin	62.71%	
E/W Ruth Baker – Kathy Flynn	62.91%	
Fri. Dec. 10		
N/S Carolyn Cohen – Bill Brodek	58.10%	
E/W Harry Randhawa – Alan Nueman	67.59%	
Sun. Dec. 12		
N/S Roshen Hadulla – Bill Brodek	64.58%	
Mon. Dec. 13		
N/S Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom	76.91%	
E/W Temo Arjani – Robot	58.02%	
Tues. Dec. 14		
N/S Rae Murbach – Joseph Viola	71.39%	
E/W Amr Elghamry – Dominique Moore	58.33%	
Thurs. Dec. 16		
N/S Carolyn Cohen – Dominique Moore	61.87%	
E/W Ruth Baker – Kathy Flynn	61.36%	
Fri. Dec. 17		
N/S Jan Ladd – Roy Ladd	61.39%	
E/W Graetchn Torres – Michael Connell	62.50%	
Sun. Dec. 19		
N/S Lulu Minter – Ernest Wong	57.69%	
E/W Rae Murbach – Joseph Viola	61.85%	

Winners in Unit 556+ Limited MP games:

Tues. Nov. 23		
Laurel Harvey – Karen Lidman	67.36%	
Wed. Nov. 24		
Maria Marvosh – Robot	60.42%	
Sun. Nov. 28		
Caryn Musicer – Glen Musicer	59.03%	
Noel Jeffrey - Xiaoyan Zhou	59.03%	
Tues. Nov. 30		
Kerry Goldstone – Glen Drogin	66.67%	
Wed. Dec. 1		
Michael Vernia – Robot	60.00%	
Sun. Dec. 5		
Susanne Hollis – Suzanne Wilcox	64.72%	
Tues. Dec. 7		
Graetchn Torres – Michael Connell	61.81%	

Wed. Dec. 8		
Sofi Kasubhai – Robot	65.56%	
Sun. Dec. 12		
Aggi Oschin – David Khalieque	63.43%	
Tues. Dec. 14		
Terry Ross – Paulette Burkitt	70.00%	
Wed. Dec. 15		
Robert Mallano – Patricia Sullivan	58.33%	
Sun. Dec. 19		
Patricia Konrad – Robot	61.11%	

Next Board meeting: TBA, via Zoom.

Pasadena – San Gabriel by Morris “Mojo” Jones

bridgemojo.com



Our December Unit Game was held on December 12, as a STaC game with the Western Conference. It was a lightly attended session throughout the conference, but our game contributed 16 tables out of 36 in play for Open Pairs.

Arthur and Dominique Moore were the big winners, taking first place in the conference with a 68.85% game -- not a small feat in a 16-table 26-board game! **Peter Szecsi and Amr Elghamry** took second in our game, and third in the conference, with a 63.33% game.

In January we have two Sunday afternoon Unit Games on the calendar: January 9 and 23. Hopefully these will take place as planned! Game time is 12:30 (not 1:00!), with reservations and proof of COVID vaccination required. For reservations, contact Miriam Harrington at (626) 232-0558.

New Club Masters in the unit include **Jonathan Fuhrman** and **Susan Kane**, two of my students!), and new Bronze Life Master is **John Horn** from Glendora. Congratulations!

The Unit 556+PPD virtual bridge club is still going strong with games every day but Saturday. I've turned day-to-day club management back over to Paula Olivares for a couple of months. The full game schedule is available at bridgemojo.com.

I had a cruise scheduled for the second half of January, but I'm honestly hoping not to be on that particular trip. Instead maybe I'll see you on BBO or at the Unit Game.

Those of you who qualified for the North American Pairs, see elsewhere in this issue and make plans for the District Final game on January 16.

Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Mark Bartusek, David Chechelashvili, Jordan Chodorow, David Grainger, Roger Lee, Daniel Korbel, Mister Mealy-mouth, Rick Roeder, Mike Shuster, John Swanson, and Jon Wittes are panelists.

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

1

IMPs
Both Vul

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	1♠	???

You, South, hold: ♠AQ ♥K7642 ♦1097 ♣AQ10

What call do you make?

I revised an old East Coast panel problem (beefing it up a little). I also had a similar problem while playing in the recent Austin Nationals. I passed throughout because of the danger of bidding 2♥. To my chagrin, we made 4♥ (with a probable overtrick), and sold to a making part score their way. I was playing with Rick Roeder who was a kind partner and commiserated with me rather than call me a chicken. Pass, double, 1NT and 2♥ are all possible on this one.

Mealy-mouth: Pass. Remember the 3/5th rule? Let historians argue whether it was meant to increase the representation of slaveowners in Congress or to decrease their taxes. But what happened to the other 2/5? I propose a 2/5th rule. To estimate second hand's miltons after a one-over-one, subtract my own miltons from 24 and multiply the difference by 2/5. Everybody get 3.6 miltons? That's probably enough to hold 2♥ to down one if he has the right 3.6 miltons. But my partners have a nasty habit of holding singletons opposite my five-baggers. (Please check my math, John.)

I taught math at USC or in LAUSD for 30 years, and worked as a mathematician on nuclear evaluation, satellite/missile guidance systems, and sports handicapping programs. I wrote math placement tests

for both USC and the Hollywood Screen Directors Guild, and have eaten at Milton's Deli. But how can I check your math when I never, ever used or heard of miltons as a mathematical concept. Is miltons the amount of coal a whole bunch of Tennessee Ernie Fords could load?

During proofread, I got a follow-up response from Mr. Mealy-mouth. He intended "miltons" to be a humorous reference to the 4-3-2-1 HCP count promoted by Milton Work. Work wasn't the original inventor of the A = 4, K = 3, Q = 2, J = 1 count, but he was instrumental in promoting it. Charles Goren adopted the counting system and it was widely used thereafter.

Shuster: 2♥. True, the hearts are weaker than I'd like, but the hand is too promising to pass. Hearts is the strain where we are most likely to be able to effectively compete for a plus score.

Swanson: 2♥. Holding J7642 of hearts, I would double. With the ♥Q I would be on the fence.

Lee: 2♥. This seems mandatory at IMPs to me even though it could be silly. 4♥ might make, and this is the easiest way for us to get there.

Chodorow: 1NT. With a vulnerable game in the picture if both opponents are a little light, some action

appears to be called for. This heart suit is (*essentially*) four cards long, so 2♥ is out. 1NT should promise a spade stopper, but not necessarily a diamond stopper. An esoteric double and even pass are possible.

Grainger: 1NT. Too much to pass, with nice honor combinations, but too weak a heart suit to just overcall it.

Wittes: 1NT. Very tough problem to start. To me there are 3 choices: 1NT, Double, and 2♥. None of these are perfect, but I think 1NT is the least of all evils. Partner rates to have anywhere from 0 to 7 points, hopefully in the 5 to 7 range. I have a balanced hand with the right strength, and we have a good chance to land on our feet. Double would be better if I had a fourth club, one less heart, and maybe fewer high cards. I hate overcalling at the 2-level vulnerable with a bad suit. I know I have extras, but unless partner has a fit, 2♥ rates to work out poorly.

Korbel: Double. I dunno. I'm not passing and we can still find 4♥ when partner has some points. This should be safer than 1NT or 2♥.

Chechelashvili: Double. I prefer to distort my shape now rather than end up with the problem if it continues 2♠ by LHO followed by Pass Pass.

Bartusek: Double. I have too nice of a hand to stay out of this auction. Double seems like the safest call. We still might be able to locate a 5-3 heart fit under some circumstances. Obviously a 2♥ bid is too dangerous at IMPs with this suit and 3 cards in LHO's suit. My second choice would be Pass, although I might overcall 1NT at matchpoints against a weak pair.

Roeder: Double. 2♥ is asking for trouble on a bad day. On such a bad day, butting into a live auction with this 15 count is also risky.

Yep, I'm a doubler now. Any call has some risk, but adding a club to the hand may be the smallest distortion.

2

BAM
N-S Vul

North	East	South	West
1♥	pass	2♣	2♦
pass	5♦	???	
You, South, hold: ♠AQ93 ♥AJ2 ♦10 ♣KQ753			

What call do you make?

The nasty opponents took up a large amount of room. We could double, bid 5♥ or 6♥. If we pass we have two options: pass again if partner doubles, or pull partner's double to 5♥. This treatment is known as pass and pull and is stronger than immediately bidding 5♥, and becomes a slam try.

Shuster: Double. Partner passed over 2♦, so won't have a sixth heart, a good club fit or extra values. The opponents probably have mistaken favorable vulnerability for invulnerability.

Swanson: 5♥. Close between 5♥ and pass, then pull to 5♥ as a slam try.

Lee: Pass. I'll pull a double to 5♥ to show a slam try (or bid 6♥ if partner doesn't double).

Korbel: Pass. I don't think I have quite enough to drive to slam on my own. I will pass and pull the expected double to 5♥. Even if it's the winning action, I can't choose to defend 5♦ here in my opinion.

Chodorow: Pass. This looks like a textbook pass and pull, not committing to slam in our possibly eight-card fit but making a strong offer.

Roeder: Pass. Tempting to bid a slam but partner might have chirped 5♥ with an excellent heart suit. If you trust your partner, you can pass and then pull a double to 5♥. However, if your tempo is an issue, I would haul off and bid 5♥ immediately.

Mealymouth: 5NT. Grand Slam Force? Not tonight, Josephine, as the only suit agreed by anyone is diamonds, and I don't think we belong in a diamond slam; sorry, Marshall, we don't have the required 3-0 fit. So 5NT must be pick-a-slam. I expect partner to bid 6♦, Flannery at the six-level, to put the play in the right hand (mine!), and I'll correct to 6♠. (*Are the clubs strong enough to warrant a choice of suits given that partner didn't support clubs? I think not!*)

Wittes: 6♥. As long as partner has nothing in diamonds or maybe even the ace, this rates to have a play. I wish I could invite, (*would pass and pull accomplish that?*) but the opponents didn't leave me any room.

Grainger: 6♥. Easier decision at BAM. If partner has the ♦K, maybe we don't make, but if partner has ♦xx, they will need the missing important cards aside from the ♦A to have an opening bid.

Chechelashvili: 6♥. Partner does not have six hearts, four spades, or four clubs, so very likely her/his shape is 3=5=2=3. Even if partner has a wasted honor in diamonds, 6♥ might still be a good spot. Picture: ♠xxx ♥KQxxx ♦Kx ♣AJx. I am willing to take a risk at this form of scoring and bid 6♥ hoping for a diamond lead.

Bartusek: 6♥. Partner must be precisely 3=5=2=3 because of the failure to bid 2♥, 2♠, or 3♣ on the second round. Thus, partner must have the ♠K, ♥KQ, and ♣A. I really can't generate a weaker 11 HCP hand that would have opened 1♥ (especially vulnerable).

An additional gain that a confident 6♥ bidder might garner is that an undisciplined opponent might save in 7♦. It's not sound tactics to preempt the opponents into slam and then save, but we've all seen players take out insurance in similar situations.

[*Editor's note: apparently, Mr. Mealymouth has thrown in a little joke here. The jump to 5NT as a Grand Slam Force was developed by Josephine Culbertson, and the convention is known by that name – "Josephine" – in Europe.*]

3

Matchpoints
None Vul

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♥	2♠	dbl
3♠	4♦	pass	???

You, South, hold: ♠54 ♥73 ♦KJ973 ♣AKQ5

What call do you make?

Pass, boost partner to 5♦, offer hearts, or make a slam try? Let's listen to the panel.

Swanson: Pass. Flip a coin – next time 5♦.

Bartusek: 4♥. We need to cater to partner being 2=6=4=1. Partner will often have 6 hearts on this auction where 5♦ is down off 3 top tricks. Hopefully partner will not attempt to play an insufficient 5-2 fit expecting Hx of hearts from me. *(Doesn't 4♥ normally show honor doubleton in these situations?)*

Chechelashvili: 5♦. I don't have Hx in hearts for a 4♥ bid. It's not even Tx.

Chodorow: 5♦. My heart holding looks about as expected. Preferring frequent 2♥ overcalls of 1♠, I would want honor-doubleton to offer 4♥ here; partner would pass with too many holdings that were “better than they might have been” but still unplayable. AQ in both red suits makes game probable, so I can't stop short. Slam is not inconceivable, but partner may already have done well to compete and this may be a rare time when 5m matchpoints well.

Lee: 5♦. It doesn't feel like the kind of hand that will play well in 4♥. Pass could be right but I'm just not doing that.

Korbel: 5♦. How can I not? If partner has ♠xx ♥KQxxx ♦AQxx ♣x, too bad.

Mealymouth: 5♦. I'd have doubled 2♠ if my ♣A were the ♣J, so as it isn't, I'll bid one more.

Shuster: 5♦. Maybe I should bid 5♣ on the way, but 2-2 majors just needs too many specific cards for 12 tricks. It might well be good enough just to find diamonds on this hard to bid setup.

Grainger: 5♦. Maybe make a slam try at IMPs, but at MP I'll be happy to make 5♦.

Wittes: 5♦. I'm a little on the good side for this bid, but it would take a perfecta to make a slam.

Roeder: 5♣. I would like the ♥J to offer 4♥ as a possible destination. For slam to be good, Partner needs 3 of the following cards: Heart Ace, Heart King, Spade Ace and Diamond Ace. Even that may not be enough.

This problem came from an old hand from an East Coast panel. The votes on that panel were ten votes for 5♦, five votes for 4♥, two votes for 5♣, and one vote for pass. There was an actual hand. The 4♦ bidder held ♠xx ♥AQTxx ♦Axxx ♣xx. That hand is a minimum for some, and a sub-minimum for some. But declarer came up smelling like a rose when hearts behaved and he found the ♦Q to bring 5♦ home.

<div style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Matchpoints Both Vul</div>	West	North	East	South
	pass	pass	1♦	1♠
	2♥	3♣	pass	???
You, South, hold: ♠AJ9875 ♥J4 ♦AKQJ82 ♣void What call do you make?				

Mealy mouth: Pass. Anyone else hear the silence of the snapdragons? My void is better support for partner's suit than his singleton is for mine. The second-best place to play a misfit is in the long suit of the weak hand, not the strong hand.

Hidden in Mealy's comic question is the crux of this problem. Does partner promise spade tolerance? His key phrase is "the silence of the snapdragons." Snapdragon is the name of the double which occurs after partner overcalls and responder bids a new suit. A snapdragon double typically shows five or more cards in the fourth (unbid) suit, and a doubleton in partner's suit. Does partner's failure to double deny spade support? Or does logic indicate that any action that our passed-hand partner takes must dictate spade support? Will 3♦ clarify the issue?

Korbel: 3♦. If partner can give me 3♠ I'll chance 4♠, even if it could be wrong. I don't believe partner's bid guarantees a spade fit although others disagree. Do you want to have to pass throughout holding ♠x ♥Kxxx ♦x ♣AQxxxxx?

Shuster: 3♦. I don't know what North is up to. Maybe it will become clear soon. I'm not willing to play in clubs opposite a passed hand.

Chodorow: 3♦. The only way for me to show my pointed two-suiter is to bid diamonds naturally now. Partner is free to pass or, better, show a doubleton spade.

Some don't like 3♦.

Swanson: 3♠. What's the point of 3♦? I have no interest in notrump and no chance of playing in diamonds even if somehow that would be the best trump suit.

Wittes: 3♠. As a passed hand, it's hard to believe partner could venture into a new suit at the 3 level without at least some tolerance for my suit. Worst case scenario, I might never get to dummy and use partner's hand, but I have extras and my suit has pretty good texture.

Lee: 3♠. Potentially, a massive underbid, but I'm worried about my small diamonds on this auction and to me partner has not shown a doubleton spade at all, it sounds like partner might be 4=6 in hearts and clubs.

Most of the panelists that believe that partner has spade tolerance bid 4♠ and hope to make it.

Bartusek: 4♠. Partner passed non-vulnerable in 2nd chair so he/she should have spade tolerance. If 4-6 with a side heart suit then partner wouldn't have entered this auction with a misfit. It seems very likely that East psyched NV in 3rd seat. Admittedly it is very strange that partner didn't make a 4th suit double (*Snapdragon*) showing Clubs + Spade tolerance; but even a stiff spade might give me a play for 4♠ with decent breaks.

Grainger: 4♠. Passed hands should really at least have a couple of your suit to introduce their own at the 3-level or higher. Much better to not warn West off the diamond lead.

Roeder: 4♠. The High Road, Baby! Partner is not likely to have great clubs and out (no 3 club preempt). Partner would likely be turned off with a misfit as nobody put a gun to his head to bid at the 3-level, especially after the opponents have shown significant strength.

Chechelashvili: 4♠. I don't think partner would bid 3♣ with no fit or tolerance in spades

5

Matchpoints
Neither Vul.

East	South	West	North
1♦	???		

You, South, hold: ♠A654 ♥AKQ7 ♦973 ♣K8

What call do you make?

This problem comes from a local panel. I participate on that panel. There were votes for pass, double, 1♥ and 1NT. I was the only doubler on that panel, but look at how some of our panelists feel about double.

Bartusek: Double. There must have been a mishap in the editing room for this problem to get past the censors.

Korbel: Double. I thought we have collectively moved on past this hand type.

Chechelashvili: Double. What else?

Lee: Double. Automatic!

Roeder: Double. Not close.

Swanson: Double. I'd award 1♥ 50 out of 100 (*using the scoring system in place for the Bridge World's Master Solver Contest*)

Shuster and Wittes address what I thought the real problem was. What to do next if we double and partner advances 2♣.

Shuster: Double. I'll convert clubs to hearts, but first I want to try to find spades.

Wittes: Double. If partner bids a major, I'll raise. 2♣ by partner, and I'll begrudgingly pass. *I agree that I would pass 2♣ but I think it is close.*

Chodorow: 1NT. Completing the month-long theme of totally disregarding and disrespecting the opponents' diamonds, 1NT does not promise a stopper in their minor. It is far too important to put our hand in a box for partner and activate our notrump structure, with which we should average 70%. One might choose 1NT even if a diamond were a club, but here the lack of a third club gives double a second flaw (the first being that partner will not place me with three diamonds) and takes it out of contention.

Grainger: 1NT. Will have a hard time getting your strength across otherwise. Will fail if partner is too weak to act with a 4-card major, but will reach game when you are supposed to. Double -Pass -2♣ is not something you can recover from and 1♥ is no picnic either.

Mealymouth: 1♥. My real problem may come if I must put down my hand as dummy in a club contract, when I'll have to invoke "Eeny, meany, miney, moe" to decide whether to mix the ♦3, ♦7 (*and have two ♥7s?*) or ♦9 with my hearts. But if I were to double instead, I'd almost surely have a thornier problem, relying on the same time-honored procedure to decide whether to mix the ♠4, ♠5, ♠6 or ♠A with my clubs: four choices instead of three, and all less pleasant. Second choice: pass.

Happy New Year!