

Southern California

Bridge News

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March 2019

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

559 Club Is the Boss!

by Mike Marcucci



Where does your imagination lead you when you have a stray thought? It has certainly gotten me in trouble too many times in the last few years & I will be thankful when I can again concentrate on golf. Nothing sinister here..... I'm talking about little things expanding into big things. Reading an article on bridge and noticing it gives an address of a Club in the area. So you write it down. Then a week later, another article gives another address and you write it down. Expand that about 1000X concerning masterpoints of your friends, dates of tournaments, locations of NABCs, winners of the Mini-McKenney races and 30 other bridge related subjects and that results in a computer full of files that takes 20 different folders to organize. All good, but that's how a small 40K file expands into 4.2 gigabytes of bridge records on your computer and another 20 CDs with all the historical data that is not changing or needs to be updated.

Never in a million years would this expansion have taken place while holding down a full-time job or raising a family. Retirement and free time affords one many decisions and one of those is taking any road that looks interesting! One of those roads was wondering how many bridge Clubs have operated in Los Angeles over the years.

One of the first unique data points I came across was that the San Marino Women's Club needed a place to play bridge in 1952, so they built one. If you care to see it, drop by any Monday or Wednesday to the San Marino Rec Center on Huntington Drive. They had 20 tables of bridge yesterday and they will probably have 10 tables tomorrow. The games have

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District Director Report

March 2018

by Kevin Lane

"Bridge is a game and should be fun."



District 23 elections next summer – consider helping the district!

As I mentioned last month, District 23 officers will be elected in July of next year at the Long Beach regional. Please consider contributing to

the district.

As District Director, I chair the search committee for candidates for D23 officers. Our current District President, Mike Marcucci, has energetically served his full two terms which provides a great opportunity to revitalize our district.

The consensus is that our district needs to create a better environment to attract more volunteers. Regional volunteers are always needed. The district can build on work already underway to expand teaching efforts and build membership. In short, anyone wishing to help the district can usefully contribute.

Please contact me at klaned23@gmail.com if you are interested.

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been “almost” continuous since 1952. The city needed a storage spot for all their Library’s books while a new one was being constructed, so the bridge folks were ousted for 2 years. Afterwards, everyone was a happy camper again.

The 2nd unique point I came across was when I read that the Eagle Rock Bridge Club started in 1928. Now that’s impressive. Even before ACBL was created in 1936, LA had at least one club with happy campers!

So here are some of the results of the last 10 years of research for you: There have been almost 800 bridge clubs in LA since 1928. 28 of them existed before or during Tom Stoddard’s Pacific Bridge League time period. The PBL clubs all closed long ago but there are 24 of the later ones existing in 2019 with another 17 “invitational” clubs operating on limited schedules. A few Club facts about each of our geographical areas:

Unit 551. Pomona-Covina. 3 Clubs presently.

42 previous Clubs, now closed. Oldest was the Claremont BC on N Indian Hill started in 1954 by Fran Armstrong.

Unit 553. Glendale-Tujunga. 1 Club presently.

35 previous Clubs, now closed. Oldest was the Glendale BC on W Cypress started in 1952 by Lon Conrad.

Unit 556. Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley. 3 Clubs presently.

27 previous Clubs, now closed. Oldest was the Edwards AFB BC at the Officer’s Club started in 1959 by Sidney Zalk.

Unit 557. Long Beach. 1 Club presently plus 2 Invitational Clubs.

79 previous Clubs, now closed. Oldest was the DeVico BC on PCH started in 1945 by John DeVico. Long Beach is also very special here in LA because its present Long Beach BC is the 2nd oldest continuously operating Club in LA. It started at its present location in 1982. A spirited teaching and novice program attracts many new players.

Unit 559. Pasadena-San Gabriel. 2 Clubs presently plus 7 Invitational Clubs.

80 previous Clubs, now closed. Oldest was the Eagle Rock BC on Yosemite started in 1928 by

Margaret Burnet, as previously mentioned. This Unit also has the oldest continuously operating Club with the same owners and directors in LA. Art & Diane Gulbrandson have been operating the Arcadia BC on Santa Anita Blvd since May 1973. That is a superb accomplishment. With thousands of hours of hard work, they have taught multitudes of new players our wonderful game and continue to do so each day. I very much wonder if there is any other Club in the country that has operated for 46 years with the same owners & managers. They probably deserve national thanks for their efforts.

Unit 561. San Fernando Valley. 2 Clubs presently plus 2 Invitational Clubs.

102 previous Clubs, now closed. Oldest was the N Hollywood BC on Cahuenga started in 1952 by Marian Horan. No present “Open” club in the valley, but a committee of 561 players is studying that issue to see if a new club could be started and be successful. With over 1000 players in the Unit, multiple clubs should work.

Unit 562. West LA. 3 Clubs presently plus 4 Invitational Clubs.

190 previous Clubs, now closed. Oldest was Tom’s Contract BC started in 1931 by Tom Stoddard. Many classic names patronized several classic & historical clubs like the Cavendish and the Wild Whist. Movie stars like Lorne Green and Jan Stone enjoyed many a pleasant afternoon playing against LA bridge stars like Lew Mathe and Helen Portugal. The stories that Eddie Kantar could tell! Candy Scott and John Jones also have entertaining bits to reveal about the inner stories of LA bridge. Here’s a tidbit of WLA history that I never turned in!

For ACBL Sanctioned Clubs Only
AMERICAN CONTRACT BRIDGE LEAGUE
RATING POINT CERTIFICATE
 National Headquarters
 2200 DEMOCRAT ROAD
 NEWSPRIS, TENN. 38116

Tables 17
 Ranking 4
 Name MIKE MARCUCCI
 Player No. 2641720
 Club WILD WHIST BRIDGE CLUB Club Number 166894
 City LOS ANGELES 90024 State CA
 (Check Appropriate Boxes) Mitchell ☒ Howell ☐ Non-Playing ☐ Certified ☐
 Playing ☐ Qualified ☐ Director ☐
 I Certify That This Game Had A Peake
 Authorized Signature Peake

Classification 1-2-3 1 Circle One
 Bonus Factors 0-1-2 0
 Date APR 9 1982
 Valid 3 years from date
 To record your certificates on your lifetime record, send them to the above address. Please make an effort to accumulate one full master point prior to sending them in for recording.

RP7 - Rev. 9/81 Printed in U.S.A. Copyright ACBL 1978

Unit 564. Downey-Whittier. 1 Club presently.

74 previous Clubs, now closed. Oldest was the Downey Women’s BC on Paramount started in 1959 by Nora Loflin.

Unit 568. Torrance-South Bay. 6 Clubs presently plus 1 Invitational Club.

90 previous Clubs, now closed. Oldest was the South Bay BC started in 1952 at Garnet & Catalina by Helen Wall.

These factoids were just small snapshots of the complete list & this one project is not finished at all. With more magazines and newspapers to review, more clubs will come to light. Why the list? To respect and honor all those brave owners, managers, and directors who took the risks to provide bridge players like us places to meet and socialize and practice our craft.

If your appetite for history has been piqued, please join us at the Long Beach Hilton this July, where all 800+ Clubs will be displayed on the walls & separated into our 9 Unit lists for your examination. Along with a listing of all 765 Sectionals that D23 Units have conducted since 1949, you'll have much to take your mind off that last bad board & reflect that you are enjoying the 85th District 23 Bridge Week. Who will win that Stoddard Trophy this summer & join that engraved list of 49 years of winners?

In the meantime, there's Memphis & Graceland to be visited... Do you hear that music? I wonder how many trophies ACBL will be displaying there?

Stay healthy, my friends.

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Legal issues

I have previously reported my progress on securing board member access to ACBL contracts and legal information. In short, I submitted a motion in November to achieve just that purpose, and was able to amicably reach an agreement constituting real progress – with more progress still needed.

Well, the ACBL has settled two expensive lawsuits in the past month or so which underscore the policy need for the ACBL to adopt normal business approaches to legal issues – such as the motion I submitted in the fall. In short, the ACBL is having to pay substantial legal costs. And, as a further heads up for potential bad news, another major legal case remains pending.

Generally, these legal issues pre-dated my election to the board. I did foresee and actively work to prevent one of the legal problems, but failed. Either

way, it remains my responsibility to help the ACBL. I will share more specific details of these legal issues as I learn what issues must remain confidential.

Some of these legal costs are covered by insurance, but nevertheless our 2018 bottom line will be a net loss of well over \$1M. These poor results are in part due to the poor Hawaii attendance and some other one-time issues. The bottom line: the board needs to address root causes.

I am working to minimize such financial exposure in the future by advocating for standard business practice. For example, I proposed at the fall board meeting that our legal counsel should discuss with the full board the root causes of our various legal issues and how to minimize future legal difficulties. This seemingly standard business practice strangely met with strong pockets of resistance from the board. Nevertheless, the board and management is planned for Memphis.

Feel free to contact me at klaned23@gmail.com

Southern California Bridge News

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North American Pairs Final Coming Soon

by Morris "Mojo" Jones

Eleven partnerships from District 23 will be traveling to the North American Bridge Championships in Memphis, Tennessee, to compete in the finals for the prestigious North American Pairs tournament.

The tournament is really three events: Flight A for all players, Flight B limited to players with fewer than 2,500 masterpoints, and Flight C limited to Non-Life Masters with fewer than 500 masterpoints. To reach the national finals, players had to compete and qualify at the club, unit, and district levels. These players are already big winners, and on their way to compete against similar winners from all of the twenty-four ACBL districts.

In Flight A for District 23, the top three pairs have been invited to compete. The top four pairs from Flights B and C have been invited.

Flight A will compete just before the start of the full nationals, with two sessions of qualifying on Wednesday, March 20, and the final two sessions on Thursday, March 21.

Flights B and C will compete over the final weekend of the NABC, with qualifying on Saturday, March 30, and finals on Sunday, March 31.

Here are the representatives from District 23:

Flight A

First Place



Gerard Geremia

Joseph Viola III

Runners-Up



Lance Kerr

Tom Reynolds

Flight B

First Place



Randolph Hammock Paul Allman

Runners-Up



Alyssa Kennedy

Rick Turner

Flight C

First Place



John Janus

Hsuehching Chang

Runners-Up



Larisa Rappaport

Mark Rappaport

85TH ANNUAL REGIONAL LOS ANGELES SUMMER

JULY 1-7, 2019

*D23 Youth Day on
Saturday, July 6!
Players 26 and under
PLAY FREE ALL DAY!*

TOURNAMENT HIGHLIGHTS

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

MONDAY JULY 1ST.

**** 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: \$14

**** Please register before June 24.**

Gerri Carlson
gsoffa@aol.com
310-377-0316

NEED A PARTNER?

Jan Wickersham
wickershamjanet@gmail.com
626-487-4014

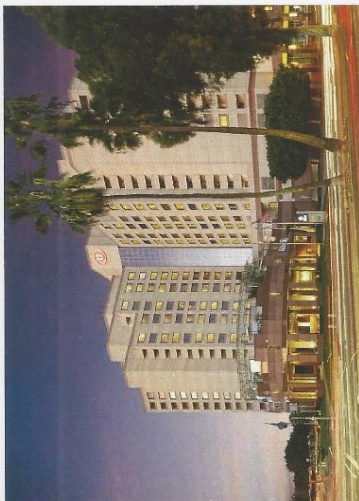
TOURNAMENT MANAGER:

Peter Benjamin
ahoneydo@aol.com
310-720-6050

DIRECTOR-IN-CHARGE:

Ken Horwedel

District 23 Director: Kevin Lane
District 23 President: Mike Marcucci



HILTON LONG BEACH

701 West Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, CA

Room Rate: \$144 (Free Wifi) Please Refer to ALACBU

Reservation must be made by Monday, June 10.

800-445-8667 or 562-983-3400

Card Fees:

\$14 for ACBL Members

\$18 for expired ACBL 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:

\$10

Lunch:

\$5 for Sunday Lunch

Sanction Number: R1907033

Background Photo Credit: Long Beach Convention & Visitor's Bureau



Monday, July 1, 2019

299er Free Workshop/Lunch (Reserv. Rqd.)..... 10:30 am
 Pro-Am Pairs (Reserv. Rqd.)..... 1:00 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (1 of 6)..... 1:00 pm
 Stratified Charity Pairs..... 7:00 pm
 Starburst KO (1 of 4)..... 7:00 pm

Tuesday, July 2, 2019

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
 Starburst KO (2 & 3 of 4)..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Bernie Mateer Open ABC Pairs (2 Sessions).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 GOLD RUSH Pairs (2 Sessions).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture..... 2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (2 of 6)..... 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (1 Session)..... 3:00 pm
 Starburst KO (4 of 4)..... 7:30 pm
 PM Side Game Series (1 of 5)..... 7:30 pm

Wednesday, July 3, 2019

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
 Open ABC Pairs (2 Sessions).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Mark Schreiber GOLD RUSH Pairs (2 Sessions).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture..... 2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (3 of 6)..... 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (1 Session)..... 3:00 pm
 PM Side Game Series (2 of 5)..... 7:30 pm

Thursday, July 4, 2019

AM Side Game Series (3 of 5)..... 10:00 am
 299er Pairs (Single Session)..... 10:00 am
 Bracketed Flight A/B/C Swiss Teams (7x7).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Firecracker KO (3 & 4 of 4)..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Open ABC Pairs (2 Sessions).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Pat Banks GOLD RUSH Pairs (2 Sessions).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture..... 2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (4 of 6)..... 3:00 pm
 PM Side Game Series (3 of 5)..... 7:30 pm

Friday, July 5, 2019

AM Side Game Series (4 of 5)..... 10:00 am
Walt Otto 299er Pairs (Single Session)..... 10:00 am
 0-99er Pairs (1 Session)..... 10:00 am
 Liberty Bell KO (1 & 2 of 4)..... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Cecil Cook Open ABC Pairs (2 Sessions).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 GOLD RUSH Pairs (2 Sessions).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture..... 2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (5 of 6)..... 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (1 Session)..... 3:00 pm
 PM Side Game Series (4 of 5)..... 7:30 pm

Saturday, July 6, 2019

AM Side Game Series (5 of 5)..... 10:00 am
 299er Pairs (Single Session)..... 10:00 am
 Queen Mary Compact KO (1 & 2 of 4)..... 10:00 am
 Liberty Bell KO (3 & 4 of 4).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Open ABC Pairs (2 Sessions).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Saturday, July 6, 2019

GOLD RUSH Pairs (2 Sessions).....
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (6 of 6)..... 3:00 pm
 Queen Mary Compact KO (3 & 4 of 4)..... 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session)..... 3:00 pm
 Youth Reception 6:30 pm
 PM Side Game Series (5 of 5)..... 7:30 pm

D23 Youth Day

Sunday, July 7, 2019

Ft Henry Stratified Fast Pairs (2 sessions).....
 10:00 am & TBA
 Flight A/X/Y Swiss Teams (7 x 7 Boards).....
 10:00 am & TBA
 U562 Player of the Year - **Nancy Heck**
 Bracketed B Swiss Teams (7 x 7).....
 10:00 am & TBA

Event Colors:

299ers: **Orange** Teams: **Green** Pairs: **Blue**

299er Games **Every AM** Compact KO on Sat
 Side Games **Every Day** Swiss Teams **Every PM**
 Open Pairs **Every Day** (4 x 6 Boards)
 Gold Rush Pairs **Sunday Swiss Teams**
 Tu - Sa 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 Swiss Teams:

0 - 2500

8 Teams/Bracket: **Top 3/Bracket Win Gold**

From the Director's Chair: *by Tom Lill*

How to Fix Problems During the Auction Without Fixing Yourself

[*Editor's note:* Jim was unable to submit an article this month, and with his kind permission, I'm filling in for him.]

How often have you seen it: The auction goes (You) 1♥ – (LHO) pass – (Partner) 2♣; (RHO) 1♠. Oops! That's not a sufficient bid. So RHO immediately pulls out another, and sufficient, card from the bid box.

Ouch. That's not the way it's supposed to work. The game has a Director for a reason, and it's not just to run ACBLScore and post the results. Believe it or not ...you now have some options as to what happens next, and it is certainly not improper to choose the option most advantageous to your side.

Your choices are to condone the insufficient bid, or to require a retraction and substitution of a sufficient bid. However, in one respect, you have no option: you must first summon the Director. Politely, of course. Speaking only for myself, few things are more grating on the nerves than a stentorian shout of DI-RECT-ORRRRRRRRR!!!

Why on earth would you want to condone the improper call? I can give two examples. Suppose partner opened 1♠, and RHO, not seeing the opening bid, tried to "open" 1♦. You are sitting there with

about 4-5 HCP and a few spades. If you condone the 1♦ bid, you can now bid 1♠ yourself. Really! This allows you to show partner you can support his suit, while keeping the bidding low. Of course, what you **MUST NOT DO** is have an agreement that if you condone the insufficient bid and then "support," you have a poor hand, while if you reject the insufficient call and then support, you have a decent raise. That would be an illegal concealed agreement. (One can only speculate: what if you *do* have such an agreement ... but don't conceal it? That would require partner to Alert your raise anytime your RHO's call was insufficient. I would not care to go there, personally! Ethics *uber alles*!)

Here's another one. Vulnerable against not, partner opens 1♥. RHO is again a bit off and "opens" 1♥ himself. You find yourself staring at ♠873 ♥2 ♦J7432 ♣10864, Yuck. Suppose you reject the insufficient bid. What are you going to do next? You don't have a bid, and you now know (legally) that there is a heart stack to partner's left. The auction is quite likely to go pass – double – all pass, and you are in the soup. But if you condone the 1♥ bid on your right – now *they* get to play in hearts with a bad break. Or maybe (probably!) they will find some better landing spot. Whatever that spot might be, -420 is certainly better for your side than -800 or so.

So: when an insufficient bid is made ... don't automatically reject it; consider the possible outcomes that might result, and choose accordingly.

But call the Director first! Just sayin'...

District 23 Rank Changes January 2019

Junior Master

Jamie Berger
Pat C. Marlowe
Cindy McKnight
Barry M. Potter
Melanie M. Smothers
Laura J. Soloff-Geller
Gay St. Clair
Carolee Windsor
Sara Ziman Goldberg

Club Master

Elaine L. Bock
Nora Lee Gecks
Frances L. Gross
Ina Rogal
Peggy Y. Shapiro
Gavin W. Spore
Rita M Stachniak

Sectional Master

James R. Degner
Phyllis Massing

Sectional Master

Timothy D. Moore
Maressa Naftulin
Martin Petrasek
Ginny Sand
Jim Werner

Regional Master

Joyce L. Hansen
Jim F. Keese
Jim L. Mercer
Susan Morse-Lebow

NABC Master

Sophia Chang
Masha Fleissig
Terry R. Hane
Angela N. Peters
Linda C. Tessier

Advanced NABC Master

Marlene Felix
Hanna Z. Zhuang

Life Master

Virginia S. Brewer
Lynn J. Danielson

BronzeLife Master

M. J. Jubelirer
Lee Sagendorf
Joanna Wallis

Silver Life Master

Elaine Godin

Ruby Life Master

Clinton Lew
Robert A. Rubin

Gold Life Master

Sheri Rivera

Diamond Life Master

John E. Ramos

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Around the Units in District 23



Long Beach by Jon Yinger

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

January 27 Unit game. Overall results: 1st in A: Jo Melis/Jon Yinger, 2nd John Melis/Jackie Hess, 3rd Hashim Mahmood/Hanefi Erten, 4th Dalia Hernandez/Cayce Blanchard, 5th Emma and Finn Kolesnick, 6th Alexander Kolesnick/Sharon Beynon. In the B flight overalls Margie Lee/Don Garner were 4th, Andrea Schmalz/Maria Glasgow 5th. In the C flight overalls Bettyanne Houts/Nancy Toussaint were 2nd. In the NLM game Raymond Boncato/Jeoff Wyrick were 1st, Ted Dow/Bonnie Shok 2nd, Aida Porteneuve/Newsflake 3rd, Elaine Bok/Toshie Bergan 4th. Congratulations to all!

70+% GAMES Jan 16 through Feb 15: In open games: Jan 22 Alan Olschwang/John Hagman had 70.15%. Feb 2 Eddie Rose/Ann Gillespie had 73.75%. Feb 7 Cayce Blanchard/George Welsh had 73.69%. And in NLM games Jeoff Wyrick/Raymond Boncato had 81.11% in the NLM section of the unit game, in a 16 board game Jan 28 beginners Mary Guzetta/Ted Dowe had 75%. Congratulations to all five pairs!

BIG MASTER POINT AWARDS Jan 16 through Feb 15: In the team game Jan 20 Bob Goodman/Dolores Backlund/Joyce Henderson/David Hoyt were 1st, each winning 1.10mp. In the unit game Jan 27 Jo Melis/Jon Yinger won 4.52mp for 1st, John Melis/Jackie Hess won 3.39mp for 2nd. In other open games: Jan 22 Alan Olschwang/John Hagman won 4.96 for 1st, Sharon Beiderman/Christine Frumen 3.72mp for 2nd. Jan 25 John and Jo Melis won 6.38mp for 1st, Richard Backovic/Alan Olschwang 4.79mp for 2nd, Karen and Mike McKittrick 3.59mp for 3rd. Feb 5 Fern Dunbar/Carol Murakoshi won 6.00mp for 1st, Hank Dunbar/Rob Preece 4.50mp for 2nd, Phil Schuster/Jackie Hess 3.38mp for 3rd. And

Feb 14 Dominique Moore/Bill McClean won 3.35mp for 1st. Congratulations to all!

NEW CLUB MEMBERS: Francine Defrance, Carole Grant, Sandra Delson. Welcome to the club!

STATUS CHANGES: New Junior Master: Shirley Knopf. New Bronze Life Master: Jerome Smith. New Ruby Life Master: Cayce Blanchard. Congratulations to you all!

GET WELL: Jane Reid, Martha Schuster

UP-COMING EVENTS AT THE CLUB:

Feb 20 ACBL-wide charity game: Extra points, \$12 card fee

Feb 24 Unit Game 12:30 Dessert served

March 4-10 Dist 23 STaC: Extra points. \$12 card fees

March 5 Mardi Gras: Lunch 11:45 \$3. Game 12:30. Extra points

March 11 ACBL senior pairs (age 60+). Extra points. Card fees \$11

March 17 12:30 Team Game.

March 20 First Day of Spring: Extra points, regular card fees

March 24 Unit Game 12:30 Dessert served

NEWS FROM LEISURE WORLD

BRIDGE CLUBS

Judy Carter-Johnson

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP--Clubhouse #3
December 20. Russell Gray/Fred Reker 1 in A, 1 in B. Joyce Henderson/Howard Smith 2 in A. Betty Jackson/ Diane Sachs 3 in A. Judy Cook/Frances Gross 4 in A, 2 in B, 1 in C. Judy Carter-Johnson/Gene Yaffee 5 in A, 3 in B. Richard Norris/Ron Yaffee 6 in A, 4 in B, 2 in C. Emma Trepinski/Bill Linskey 5 in B. Sharon Beran/Shirley Spink 3 in C. Donna and Jim Shaffer 4 in C.

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP--Clubhouse #3
January 14. Linda and Dick Stein 1 in A. Marilyn McClintock/Diane Schmitz 2 in A. Fern Dunbar/Lavone McQuilkin 3 in A. Ann Croul/Jeanette Estill 4 in A, 1 in B, 1 in C. Judith Jones/Al Appel 5 in A. Eileen Kotecki/Sibyl Smith 6 in A. Frances Gross/Larry Topper 2 in B. Gene and Ron Yaffee 3 in B, 2 in C. Chie Wickham/Alan Olchwang 4 in B, 3 in C. Bobbie Vann/Paul Chen 5 in B.

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP--Clubhouse #1
January 26. Marilyn McClintock/Gary Paugh 1 in A. Russell Gray/Mark Singer 2 in A, 1 in B, 1 in C. Ellen Kice/Al Appel 3 in A, 2 in B. Fred Reker/Larry Slutsky 4 in A. Mike Nielsen/Sue Bosell 5 in A, 3 in B, 2 in A.

CONGRATS TO: Louise Seifert and Stan Johnson who earned almost 2 master points at the Riverside Sectional.

CONGRATS TO: Our members who were named in Unit 557 list of ACE OF CLUBS and MINI MC KINNEY

Awards for 2018: Highest brackets first:

ACE OF CLUBS:	MINI MC KINNEY
Joan Tschirki	Joan Tschirki
Bob Mault	Bob Mault
Larry Slutsky	Larry Slutsky
Betty Jackson	Betty Jackson
Marilyn McClintock	Marilyn McClintock
Sibyl Smith	Russell Gray
Sherry Troger	Sylvia Kaprelyan
Fred Reker	Gene Yaffee
Howard Smith	Ellen Kice
Gene Yaffee	Louise Seifert
Cookie Pham	Stan Johnson
Ellen Kice	
Sylvia Kaprelyan	
Louise Seifert	
Stan Johnson	

WELCOME BACK: Joan Tschirki

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) 594-9698. Thursday—Sharon Beran (562)308-7838or 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— Sharon Beran (562) 308-7838 or email hbsharonb@gmail.com. Saturday—Judith Jones (714) 840-2300—(between 9am and 9pm only!) or her email: mikrojjones@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 March 16, 11:00 a.m., Glendora
Individual: Saturday, March 2, 9:30 a.m., San Dimas

Possibly the most significant news from the Unit is that Intermediate-level lessons have restarted. Still held at the Knights of Columbus hall on Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m., they are being led by Yours Truly. Cost is \$8 for the two-hour session.

And ... following the lessons, we will be holding a SANCTIONED game. Hands will be prepared to illustrate lesson material ... with of course some random deals thrown in to confuse the issue. It will be a short game, on the order of 14 boards or so, to allow time for discussion. Lesson attendees will play for no additional charge; all are of course welcome, for a small table fee (\$2). So ... if you've been looking for a sanctioned game nearby, your prayers have been answered. The game is expected to start shortly after 11:00 a.m., finishing up by 1:00 p.m.

The top finisher in the February Individual was Susie Emminger, with a 64.58% effort. Margie Hall was close behind, followed by Steve Mancini, Clint Lew, with Sofi Kasubhai and Dale Quasny tying for the final spot on the leader board.

The February Unit game was won by Penny and Gino Barbieri, with a score of 61.5%. A real close contest! Fredy and Lulu Minter were second, Bill Papa – Vic Sartor tied with Tim and Eileen Finlay for third, and Kiran Kumar dragged Yours Truly into the fifth spot.

Again this month, three pairs reached the magic 65% mark. Fredy and Lulu Minter hit 71.73%; Clint Lew – Linda Tessier scored 67.5%, and Bill Papa – Vic Sartor had a relatively poor month, only hitting 65.97%.

Other winners were, Claudia Cochran, Richard Patterson, David Ochroch, Linda Stuart, Esther Johnson, Hanan Mogharbel, Dominique Moore, Amr Elghamry, and Joe Unis.

45 players won club-level masterpoints in January. Bill Papa and Vic Sartor, both with 4.99, Bill

Papa and Vic Sartor, both with 4.99, topped the list. Clint Lew was just behind with 4.84. Next were, and Fredy and Lulu Minter, 4.17

No promotions this month. Oh well.

One of the nice things about Duplicate Bridge is that it removes the luck factor. Really? For our Hand-of-the-Month, we present possibly the unluckiest hand *ever*. Yours Truly held the following hand. IMPs, vulnerability irrelevant:

♠75 ♥QJ64 ♦Q107 ♣6432.

“So what,” I hear you thinking, “that’s my average hand!” Wait!

RHO deals and calls 2♣. LHO bids 2NT, alerted (10+ HCP). 4NT, 1 ace, and 7♠ closes out the auction. Well? Your lead ...

The “book” lead against a grand slam is, of course, a trump. That should not cost – declarer must have a spade suit from here to San Diego – but it’s unlikely to help. You aren’t going to lead a red suit, and possibly give up a trick (assuming declarer has a guess for a red queen). That leaves a club. That’s pretty ugly, too.

For better or for worse, you table the ♣4 (2nd best from a bad suit – no kidding!). Dummy comes down with ♠K1095. Oh-oh. Did you just pick up the ♣Q for declarer? No! Partner ruffs!! And declarer’s 15 tricks shrink to 12. 17 IMPs in, because your teammates made 7♠, not having received a club lead.

Now, I ask you – is that bad luck (for the opponents – YOU are happy!) or is that BAD LUCK??? Karapet would be jealous ... but not surprised.

Quote for the month: “If fifty million people say a foolish thing, it is still a foolish thing.” (Anatole France)



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

This year’s Magic Mountain Sectional will be held on September 21st and 22nd at the Friendly Valley Auditorium in Santa Clarita. For more information, contact tournament chair, Gay Gipson (gegipson@gmail.com)

Unit 556 will honor the winners of the Helen Shanbrom Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney contests at our annual Unit Game and Awards Ceremony on Sunday, March 31st at the Joshua Tree Bridge Club in Palmdale. The luncheon will start at 11:45 AM and game at 12:30 PM.

Upcoming Events:

District 22-23 STaC Games:

Monday, Mar. 4th at 12:30 at the Senior Center in Santa Clarita

Tuesday, Mar. 5th at 6:45 at the Senior Center in Santa Clarita

Thursday, Mar. 7th at 10:00 AM in at the Sports Complex in Castaic

Friday, Mar. 8th at 12:30 at Joshua Tree Bridge Club in Palmdale

Sunday, Mar. 10th at 12:30 at Joshua Tree Bridge Club in Palmdale

ACBL-wide Senior Pairs Game: Monday, Mar. 11th at 12:30 at the Senior Center in Santa Clarita. Please RSVP to Ruth Baker (rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net)

Western Conference STaC games: May 6-12

World Wide Bridge Contest: Friday, June 7th at 12:30 at Joshua Tree

Longest Day Games: Monday, June 16th at the Senior Center in Santa Clarita (both AM and PM) and Friday, June 20th at Joshua Tree in Palmdale.

Our condolences to the family of Onorita Pallanti who passed at age 97 in February. Onorita served on the board of Unit 556 for many years and achieved the rank of Life Master at age 93.

Next Board meeting: March 31st after the Unit Game in Palmdale.

Never Say Never?

Here’s one for you ... they say, “never trump partner’s winner.” Oh, really? Suppose, defending 4♠, pard leads ♦A, you are void, dummy has and ♠xxx, ♥xx, ♦xx, ♣AKQJxx and you have ♥QJx and not much else. You know from the bidding that declarer cannot have a singleton diamond (perhaps the opening bid was 1NT). It’s OK to discard on the ♦A, but you simply *must* trump pard’s ♦K at trick two. Staring at those clubs, you can tell any hearts in declarer’s hand are going bye-bye. So ruff and lead the ♥Q through declarer’s King. Down 1! Good for you! (If declarer has the ♥A, there’s no hope, of course.)



San Fernando Valley by Linda Silvey

April 6: Unit 561 Awards Luncheon/Game

A Unit 561 Mini-McKenney/Ace of Clubs Awards Celebration will be held on Saturday, April 6, at The 750 Club. The buffet lunch will be served at 12noon, followed by the presentation of awards at 12:45 p.m., and then an Open, Stratified game at 1:00 p.m. The fee is \$13 and reservations are required. A sign-up sheet will be available at The 750 Club in March or email Marcia Broderick at marciabroderick@gmail.com (by April 3) for reservations/partnerships.

2018 U561 Mini-McKenney/Ace of Clubs Winners

Bravo and congratulations to all of U561 Mini-McKenney/Ace of Clubs Winners for 2018! These players are as follows: 0-5 – Nava Grutman (MM, AC), 5-20 – Louis Simmons, 20-50 – Bette Gordy, 50-100 – Rudi Weinberg (MM) and Paul Goddard (AC), 100-200 – John Vacca (MM, AC), 200-300 -- Jerold Rose (MM) and Brian Fielding (AC), 300-500 -- Saul Prieuer (MM) and Beverly McLeod (AC), 500-1,000 – Raymond Primus (MM, AC), 1,000-1,500 – Rhoda Weisler (MM) and Alan Golden (AC), 1,500-2,500 – Dwight Hunt (MM, AC), 2,500-3,500 – Claude Le Feuvre (MM, AC), 3,500-5,000 – Om Chokriwala (MM) and Robert Perlsweig (AC), 5,000-7,500 – Freddie Straus (MM) and Susan Somogyi (AC), 7,500-10,000 -- Gilbert Stinebaugh (MM) and Andrew Vinock (AC), and, over 10,000 -- Mitch Dunitz (MM) and Steve Gross (AC).

2019 Unit 561 Officers and Board of Directors

Unit 561 is pleased to announce the 2019 Officers and Board of Directors as follows: Marcia Broderick – President, Karyn Shatzkin – Vice President, Ilene Feinstein – Secretary, Rochelle Lotto – Treasurer, Frona DeCovnick – Membership Chair, Jojo Sarkar – Tournament Coordinator, Susan Raphael – Hospitality Chair, and Linda Silvey – Publicity Chair. Additional Board Members are Carol Levin and Jerry Shapiro.

Special Congratulations

January Top Ten Masterpoints at The 750 Club were Michael Klemens 15.77, Ray Primus 11.86, Dwight Hunt 11.49, Louis Simmons 8.88, Ronald Malkin 8.50, Susan Raphael 8.07, Jerry Goodman 7.97, Carol Bell 7.80, Michael Wiener 7.68, and Daniel Strauss 7.52. The following pairs earned 70% games: Ilene Berg–Dick Berg 72.19%, Jojo Sarkar–Douglas Timmer 71.33%, Margaret Bissell–Carol Stein 70.67%, and Doni Sidell–Ray Primus 70.18%.

March 19: Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night

The next Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night will be held Tuesday, March 19. 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.

March Special Events at The 750 Club

Monday-Friday, March 4-8, will be Club Membership Week. Extra black points will be awarded for no extra fees. Both players must be ACBL members ("instant" membership forms available the Club). . . . Pies will be served at the day and night games on Thursday, March 14 (3/14), in celebration of *Pi* (rounded off to 3.14) Day.

Calendar

Monday-Friday, March 4-8, Club Membership Week at The 750 Club. Extra black awarded points for no extra fee.

Wednesday, March 13, Unit 561 Board Meeting at The 759 Club at 2:45 p.m.

Thursday, March 14, Pies will be served at the day and night games at The 750 Club in celebration of *Pi* (3.14) Day.

Tuesday, March 19, Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night starting at 6 p.m. See information above.

Saturday, April 6, Unit 561 Mini-McKenney-Ace of Clubs Awards Luncheon and Game will be held at 12noon, The 750 Club, Woodland Hills. See information above.

Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are Mark Bartusek, Leo Bell, Mitch Dunitz, Jeff Goldsmith, Ross Grabel, Mike Shuster and Jon Wittes.

1

Matchpoints
E-W Vul

South	West	North	East
???			1♦
You, South, hold: ♠KQ63 ♥KJ94 ♦A962 ♣K			
What call do you make?			

This column is dedicated to Andy Vinock. Andy passed away last month. Andy was a great partner and one of the nicest persons I ever met. I always enjoyed the games I played with Andy. Rest in Peace, Andy!

I was the director of a newcomer game at Long Beach Bridge Club when this hand occurred. Participants in this game are allowed to occasionally ask bidding (not play) questions during the game. Every person who held these cards asked me what to do. I told them 1NT. Later I asked other experienced players what they would do. I got: Pass, double, 1♥, 1♠, and 1NT. Let's see how the panel views it.

Grabel: Double. Not ideal but I prefer it to 1NT. Pass is not a reasonable alternative.

Dunitz: Pass.

Bell: 1NT. It's fashionable these days to bid notrump with a singleton honor, but I think it's the bid most likely to achieve the best result.

Bartusek: 1NT. This vulnerability at MPs says, "get into the auction". If it's our hand I don't want to be collecting 50 a trick. Additionally, most auctions will NOT allow me an easy entry on the second round if I pass now [except (1♦) - (1NT) - (2♣)]. I dislike double here because partner is very likely to end up in a poor club contract. Note that if the opponents try to penalize me I can always SOS XX to play a major suit. Overcalling a major comes with its own set of unsolvable problems.

Shuster: 1NT. Everything is flawed, so I choose the call that shows strength and aims towards the game bonus. I understand DBL since it is MPs, but I personally will stray from the call that could cause partner to declare in the opponents 8-card fit. This is the wrong hand type for a 1♥ overcall - the strength is awkward if partner raises - and it might lose us spades or NT.

Goldsmith: 1NT. The modern style is to double; I'm fine with that as long as the partnership knows about their tendencies, and as long as they are disclosed to the opponents.

Wittes: 1NT. This is a very awkward hand. I'd like to double, but have no bid over partner's very possible 2♣ bid. If partner can bid over 1NT, we'll likely get to a major suit fit if we have one. If not, we might be in the wrong spot.

Baqai: 1NT is my best option to describe my hand within a card, any other bid is likely to create greater distortion. It is especially true if I were to consider overcalling one of my 4-card majors as the choice of suits is problematic. I don't like passing with this type of hand.

<div style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">2</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Matchpoints None Vul</div>	South	West	North	East
	???			
	You, South, hold: ♠K ♥87642 ♦AKQ842 ♣7			
	What call do you make			

Bell: 1♦. I can't imagine any other bid. A preempt is ridiculous to me as is opening 1♥.

Bartusek: 1♦. I'll treat the heart suit as a 4-bagger and emphasize the diamonds. Sure, I might lose a 5-3 heart fit, but playing a likely 5-2 heart fit seems suicidal if I open 1♥ and rebid 2♦. Note that I'll rebid 2♦ on the next round since I don't possess enough playing strength to reverse (and it may stop partner from rebidding a moth-eaten spade suit).

Shuster: 1♦. 3♦ if I needed a swing. Both hearts and diamonds under-rank spades, so I prefer to stay away from a distorted 1♥ opening on what looks more like 4-7 shape than 5-6.

Dunitz: 1♦.

Goldsmith: 1♦. There's a very good chance that we will be defending. If we have a save or need a lead, it's probably in diamonds. Maybe I should open 4♦.

Grabel: 1♦. I'm bidding where I live. I don't object to passing and getting aggressive later.

Wittes: 1♦. Bid where my strength and length are. We might possibly miss a 5-3 heart fit if we have one, but I prefer to almost treat that heart suit as a four card suit.

Baqai: 1♦. Opening the bidding with 1♦ is the easy part, the much harder question is what to do if partner responds with 1♠ or 1NT. I believe the 6-5 distribution calls for reversing in hearts, but then controlling the auction from getting too high is a challenge. On the actual hand (yes JJ, I recognize the hand!), opening and rebidding diamonds would virtually make it impossible to uncover a 5-3 heart fit that happens to be only makeable game.

This was another Long Beach Bridge Club hand. I was asked about the hand and answered that I would bid 1♦. Ifti was nearby. He originally considered 1♥, but now has toed the party line, proving that even a UCLA grad can occasionally make the right bid!!! I almost always open the six card suit with 6-5. If I lose the five card suit that's too bad. But it's apparent the panel views which suit to open as a judgment call, and 1♦ here is only unanimous here mostly due to the great strength disparity between the suits.

<div style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">3</div> <div style="text-align: center;">IMPs Both Vul</div>	South	West	North	East
			1♦	4♦*
	<p style="text-align: center;">???</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* Natural, preemptive</p> <p style="text-align: center;">You, South, hold: ♠KQJ98753 ♥A ♦none ♣Q653</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What call do you make?</p>			

Goldsmith: 4♠. Stay fixed. Does partner have ♠Ax ♥xxx ♦xxx ♣AKJx or ♠x ♥KQJx ♦AQxxx ♣xxx? I can't find out below our safety level.

Grabel: 4♠. Having played with more than a few partners who held a card or two on the outside, I have hopes for a positive outcome.

Baqai: 5♦. I like to start with 5♦ that presumably should show strong major two-suiter or a hand with solid spade suit that is too strong to bid 4♠. I would correct partner's expected 5♥ bid to 5♠ to indicate slam interest though it isn't clear whether I'm looking for a heart control, a club control or making a general slam try. The other choice is to bid 5♣ but I'm afraid that might be misconstrued as looking for a diamond control though the bidding should suggest otherwise.

Note that Baqui's 5♦ bid is only invitational to slam. Compare that to Wittes' 5♦ call and Bartusek's 5♦ call later.

Bell: 6♠. Science marches on! This could be too low or too high. If RHO has solid diamonds, then partner should have useful cards. I don't see a way to bid this delicately.

Shuster: 6♣. RHO has good diamonds, so partner will have enough workers outside to give slam play. We're never going to have an intelligent auction to a grand after this start. In fact, this action might be our best chance to get to one.

Dunitz: 6♠. A practical bid. If I had more room, I could cue diamonds and bid 5♠ to show first round diamond control. Unfortunately, 5♦ sounds like a probe for strain - so I don't think there is an intelligent way to describe this hand.

Wittes: 5♦. Great problem! Over partner's likely 5♥ bid, I'm going to bid 6♠. 'If partner has the ♠A and the ♣AK, we're cold for a grand. In the most pessimistic of worlds, we could be off two aces or the AK of clubs, but I can't see bidding any less. Once again, this hand emphasizes the difficulty of bidding over preempts.

Bartusek: 5♦. This should guarantee first round diamond control and be at least slam invitational. After partner's presumed ♥ call I'll probably be aggressive and bid 6♠ instead of only 5♠. I would think that an immediate 4NT call would show some 2-suiter with slam interest (while a double would be negative and show a fairly balanced hand).

Bartusek and Wittes both bid 5♦ then 6♠. Is 5♦ followed by 6♠ a grand try? I think it is. I bid 6♠ on the actual hand. 6♠ was cold and 7♠ was reasonable. If you invite, I think partner will bid the grand for you. 7♠ made. I needed to find the ♣J.

<div style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Matchpoints None Vul</div>	South	West	North	East
		pass	pass	pass
	1♣	pass	1♦	pass
	???			
	You, South, hold: ♠KQ32 ♥7643 ♦K3 ♣K76			
	(4A) Do you agree with the 1♣ bid? Why? What would you do??			
	(4B) What now?			

I wish I got more suggestions for hands. Two different players suggested this hand from a Riverside Regional pair game. The opening bid here could be Pass, 1♣ or 1♠. Bruce Horiguchi and Doug Blagdon both opened 1♣ and had partner respond 1♦. Doug rebid 1♠. Bruce passed 1♦. Rebidding 1♥ and 1NT both have merit. I'll give the results after the panel chimes in.

Shuster: 4A. No. I'll sometimes open a non-suit. Other times I'll open light. I don't ever do both at the same time. I could live with pass or 1♠. If partner opens aggressively, I'd pass it out without a second thought.

Shuster: 4B. Pass. Partner will usually have at least five diamonds to not bid 1M, 1NT or raise clubs. Also, I want to make sure he doesn't start thinking about 3NT.

Bell: 4A. Yes. 4B. 1♥ No reason to do anything special here.

Bartusek: 4A. Yes, the hand qualifies with a Cansino count of 15 (and it contains both majors!). Opening 1♠ is also reasonable.

4B. 1NT. Partner has denied holding a 4-card major, so I am stuck rebidding 1NT and praying that partner doesn't make some invitational call. If I bid a major here I am showing at least 4+ clubs and risking a preference back to clubs at the 2 or 3 level.

Dunitz: 4A. I would not have opened this hand. 4B. 1NT.

Goldsmith: 4A. No. I'd open 1♠. When opening light in third seat, don't make prepared bids; bid your best suit. If it becomes clear that you opened light, partner is expected to lead your suit unless he has a good reason.

4B. Pass. Any non-pass shows a real opening bid.

Grabel: 4A. Do you agree with the 1♣ bid? Why? I don't feel strongly about it but I'm sure I would do the same.

4B. What now? Punt, er, pass. I have a feeling that LHO is sitting with clubs in which case a 1NT call might set the stage for the doubling to start

Wittes: 4A. 1♣ is all right. I have to open with 15 Pearson points in fourth seat. I might choose to open 1♠ however. If I open 1♣ and partner bids 1♦, I feel I have to bid 1♥ and try to find our 4-4 major fit if we have one. If we play that we frequently bypass diamonds over 1♣, I might be tempted to rebid 1NT, or even 1♠, so we can play no trump from partner's side if it's right.

Baqai: 4A, no I disagree with 1♣ opening as in the 3rd seat the reason for my opening the bidding is my spade holding so I would have opened the bidding with 1♠ with the intention of passing all responses (other than Drury of course).

4B. If I did open 1♣, I'm passing 1♦ as any other bids should promise a full opening hand and I'm likely to find our side in game aiming for a minus score.

Oddly, one of the 1♣ openers got a top and the other got a bottom. Bruce passed 1♦. The opponents balanced and his partner, thinking Bruce had diamond support, bid 2♦ which turned out to be a 4-2 fit. Doug was my partner and rebid 1♠. I tried 1NT which ended the auction. Our opponents were good players, but this was a good hand to be able to see all your side's assets. Declarer can be held to five tricks, but seven tricks were in the bag before the opponents realized what the best defense was.

5

IMPs
Both Vul.

South	West	North	East
1♠	pass	2♥	pass
2♠	pass	3♣	pass
3♥	pass	3NT	pass
???			
You, South, hold: ♠KJ8753 ♥QJ ♦Q5 ♣A63			
What call do you make?			

Dunitz: Pass.**Grabel:** Pass. I have nothing to add to the conversation that I haven't already shown.**Wittes:** Pass. I can dream up some perfect hands where it's right to bid over 3NT, but I can also think of hands where bidding would only get us in trouble. I've described my hand pretty well, so I'm done.**Baqai:** Pass. Given the balanced nature of my hand, I would prefer to rebid 2NT over 2H rather than 2S but now where we are, I'll be guessing to do anything other than pass. Partner can easily have 1-5-3-4 or 0-5-4-4 and 3NT may well be our best contract especially played from my side.**Shuster:** 4♥. Partner's slow route to 3NT showed interest in other contracts. If partner has doubt about 3NT, so do I.**Bartusek:** 4♣. Partner did not rebid 2NT with both minors stopped; so, I expect partner to be at least 5-5 in the rounded suits. A diamond lead through my queen is likely to be disastrous since 9 running tricks are unlikely to be available in 3NT.**Goldsmith:** 4♦. I know this hand. *Jeff was my partner.* I thought North's two-step to 3NT showed concern about diamonds. If he has ♦Kx, then we do not want to be in 3NT. If he has Ax, maybe we do. With extra spade length and better hearts than I might expect, I'll ask him to pick a major with 4♦.**Bell:** PASS. As Al Roth would say, "what's the problem?"

The problem ~~Mr. Roth~~, err Bell, is that partner held Jeff held: ♠xx ♥AT87x ♦KT ♣KQTx and 3NT is inferior to either 4♥ or 4♠. 3NT failed with 4♠ making. Radio sports commentator Jim Healy used to ask "Who goofed? I've got to know!". Jeff's housemate, touring professional David Grainger told Jeff "Not to bid 3♣, just bid 2NT and deal with the possibility that diamonds may not be well-stopped. You can't miss 6-2 major suit fits." It is interesting that the three panelists that removed 3NT all made different bids: 4♣, 4♦, and 4♥. The 4♥ can't possibly be a slam try, but 4♣ nor 4♦ are likely to be read that way either. Experts normally play that in questionable situations that "Strain before slam" applies. Which strain to remove to is a good discussion. I'll come back to that at some point. Based upon my current feelings, I'd try Shuster's 4♥ bid.