

Bridge News

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Shore



The Report

I want to thank everyone who took the time and made the effort to travel to our November District Board meeting. I think it's important, or at least useful, to make some effort to spread the meetings geographically so that our more distant Units aren't always spending half their lives on our freeways just to attend our meeting. The summer meeting at Long Beach isn't going anywhere as long as Bridge Week remains the Summer's Best Regional, but there's presently no reason we can't hold other meetings elsewhere. I will probably try to schedule our Spring meeting either in the San Fernando Valley or the San Gabriel Valley, depending in part on venue availability.

Paying It Forward

The meeting began with a pleasant surprise from Mitch Dunitz. Mitch has been putting his fundraising skills back to work in the service of our game. His newest initiative is designed to bolster attendance at local regionals, starting with Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional. Mitch wants to encourage most junior players to get their first taste of tournament action. His idea is to make it a safer experience for these players by providing them a chaperone for the day who will help them learn the ropes. And to encourage chaperones to step forward, he (and the angels who are helping fund this project) will pay them \$100 for the day. Details later on whom to contact if you are (a) one or more junior players looking for a chaperone, or (b) a more experienced player willing to serve as a chaperone.

And Now, the News

The Board had extensive discussions on the subject of the Bridge News and made a number of

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District Director Report December 2019

by Kevin Lane

“Bridge is a game and should be fun.”



Board re-organization motion

Several motions in San Francisco relate to reorganizing the board. Here are my thoughts.

The main motion involves reducing the number of district directors while keeping the number of districts the same. The District 23 organization would be unaffected by this motion. I am inclined to favor this motion if it's cleaned up and -- more importantly -- if the motion is restricted to the narrow purpose of board size so that the board can focus on significant strategic and oversight problems without continued distraction on these board-internal issues. Let me explain.

Why I ran for district director

My election as district director is premised on the need for more business-savvy individuals on the national board. This premise remains sound. As of January 1st I believe I'll be the only board member with an MBA. Unfortunately, three of the four years I've been on the board have been consumed with endless discussion of how to re-organize the board and similar side issues.

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decisions. The District will continue to publish the *Bridge News* and we will continue to request that Units make a voluntary financial contribution of \$1.80 per member to defray the expenses of producing the paper. However, the Board voted overwhelmingly that Units who elect not to make this contribution will still have their members listed in Rank Changes and will still be offered the opportunity to include their minutes and a Unit column. Those changes have been implemented in this issue and members whose promotions were omitted from the last two issues will find their names in this issue.

After the meeting, our capable Webmaster, David White, was able to perform some magic and ascertain some usage figures. Information regarding page hits goes back only 30 days, but that's better than nothing. In the last 30 days prior to Dave's report, the *Bridge News* has been downloaded 1106 times. This comprises 750 downloads in the five days after we send our e-mail announcing the latest edition, and then an average of approximately 15 downloads per day for the rest of the month. This is consistent with the estimate developed at the meeting, when Dave observed that the Web site as a whole typically obtains 700-800 hits per month in the days immediately following our e-mail blast announcing the latest issue of the *Bridge News*.

The College Scene

We began a discussion of what support to provide college teams based within the District who intend to travel to the Collegiate Championships. However, at the suggestion of new Education Chair Alex Kolesnik, we deferred any decision until a later meeting. The thinking is that circumstances change substantially from year to year concerning in-District participation, so it makes sense to reach decisions on this issue on an *ad hoc* basis after we have more information relevant to the current year.

The Grand Slam Cup and Other Regional Issues

The schedule for Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional, is now out and the flyer is making its debut in this issue. We made a minor change in the schedule to accommodate a request from our professional guests. Last year we started a Knockout event Monday evening, with the second, third, and fourth sessions all taking place on Tuesday. The problem with this schedule is that anyone who got knocked out in the second session of the event missed out on two separate gold point opportunities, because

the second session of this Knockout was opposite the first session of the Tuesday-Wednesday Knockout. So instead of starting a Knockout on Monday night, we're holding the first session of a two-session Swiss. The second session will be held Tuesday night, which is when we held the finals of the Monday-Tuesday Knockout last year. We hope this schedule avoids any conflicts.

I'm also delighted to announce that we're moving forward with a new initiative. Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional, also will be the first event in the competition for the 2020-21 Grand Slam Cup. We will designate three other regionals throughout the year as the other Grand Slam Regional events. We will award the Cup to the player winning the most master points in the four Grand Slam Regional events combined. The winner will be announced and publicly honored at the 2021 edition of Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional.

We have invited our neighbors in the Western Conference to fill out the slate of Grand Slam Regional events. To my mind there are some obvious candidates but we'll leave that decision to the sponsoring Districts. I am happy to report that the Western Conference President, Ron Lien, expressed support for the idea and is in the process of presenting it to his Board. I'll provide further updates as I receive them. Our hope is that this exciting new competition will make Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional, a magnet for players all across the country.

Finally, the entire Board ratified the decision made by the ExComm a few months ago and reported in this space. As I previously reported, the Hilton provides a substantial points award to our Tournament Manager as a "thank you" for selecting them as our venue. My opinion, shared by both the ExComm and (now) the District Board, is that this award is well earned by our Tournament Manager in compensation for all of the travel that's necessary to scout potential locations and then to ensure the smooth running of the tournament.

Final Issues

The Board once again authorized payments of \$50 per person to the players qualifying in second or third position in each flight of the North American Pairs. Although we did not have this information in time for the Board meeting, I am delighted to announce that under MoJo's enthusiastic stewardship, participation in the event has continued to grow and is resulting in a healthy boost to the District's bottom

line. Separately, the Board also authorized a \$1000 budget to be spent at the President's discretion.

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

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Basic business issues demand attention from the board, but are getting sidetracked. In Hawaii the strategic meeting and a presentation on strategy were canceled although the board discussed at length ways to punish other board members for misbehavior and other side issues. **Strategic issues should be the centerpiece of board meetings.** In response to the cancellation of strategic discussions in Hawaii I arranged for (and paid for) informal meetings about strategic issues after the formal board meeting ended. The meetings were well-attended by other board members and were productive, but the serious problems facing the ACBL can't be addressed when strategy and other core board functions are a side issue.

Will the board re-org motion improve the board?

No. In fact, it's likely to make problems worse. The good news is that the motion preserves the district structures – at least for now. The other good news is that the motion includes one of many solutions to “the microphone problem”: my view is that working committees are much less effective if a microphone is required.

The bad news is that board effectiveness has little to do with board size so reducing board size is not at all the silver bullet many hope for. Reducing board size will not make existing board members more interested in the business of bridge. The board actually makes reasonably good decisions when an issue is presented to the full board without bias. Several catastrophic decisions have happened, by contrast, when a minority of the board (usually a committee) acts outside of full board oversight or when board leadership puts its thumb on the scales for a motion rather than letting the motion succeed or fail on the merits.

So, I'm highly skeptical that the proposed motion will by itself improve anything. And note that a key element of the motion is a bylaw amendment, which – as of this writing – hasn't been released to the board. A mania has gripped parts of the board, however, and progress on real issues appears impossible unless the board can – one way or another – remove the chronic distraction of these purely internal

issues. Hopefully next year we can focus on the success of bridge.

Feel free to contact me at klaned23@gmail.com

From the Director's Chair: *by Brian Richardson*

Mea culpa. In my previous article I stated “this effectively means that a deliberate “psych” of a 1NT opening bid that does not adhere to both the shape and point-range requirements is now an illegal bid!!” That statement is not entirely correct.

The 2018 Convention Chart, in relation to 1NT opening bids, defines a psych, as “generally” being an ace weaker, or stronger than expected for the NT range. This means that if a pair play an opening 1NT bid with a range of 15-17 a psych is defined as an opening 1NT that has 11 HCPs or 21 HCPs. The above-mentioned Convention Chart specifies that a 1NT range can be no greater than 5 points. This means that a pair who play a 15-17 range may **occasionally** open a 1NT with between 13 and 19 points – both of those extreme points are within 5 points of the 15-17 range. The advice given to Directors is that **SMALLER** deviations, opening a 1NT bid, when playing a 15-17 range, i.e. opening 1NT with 12 points or with 20 points, should not be accepted as “psychs” – they are illegal bids. It is illegal even if the partnership has an agreement permitting it. **IT IS AN ILLEGAL BID.**

BREAK IN TEMPO

Over some 40 odd years of directing (and some of them were indeed odd!), dealing with claims of “break in tempo” has been a very common reason for me to hear a call of “director, please”

There is **NO** Law against hesitating when considering whether to bid or not. However, a player who hesitates say for 20 seconds, and then Passes, **MAY** inhibit his partner's ability to enter the auction. That player has unauthorized information that partner was considering taking some action and then decided to Pass. The partner of the “slow Passer”, if he bids, must have a hand that justifies the bid without the knowledge that partner obviously has some values. In a recent Club game, my Right Hand Opponent paused for a very long time before passing, after my partner had opened with a bid of one of a major. The pause was for in excess of 45 seconds. Left Hand Opponent

made the ethical decision not to enter the auction after I passed. RHO, an experienced player, had 15 HCPs! At the Club level quite a number of bridge players seem to have a view that if, during the auction, one of the opponents has had a significant break in tempo, and then Passes, the partner of that person cannot bid. That is absolutely untrue. In fact, in almost all situations not even the Director can prohibit a player from bidding. After the hand has been played the Director has the task of allocating an adjusted score if he believes the bidder, who was in receipt of unauthorized information (partner's break in tempo and then passing), used that information in his bidding.

Breaks in tempo also occur during the play of the hand. There were several interesting cases in the Nationals in Memphis earlier in the year. During the play in the Platinum Pairs, this hand came up. Zia Mahmood, sitting West, opened the bidding with a call of 2NT. His partner, Curtis Cheek raised to 3NT and there the bidding ended. North led the ♠3. Here are the hands of Mahmood and Cheek:

<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
♠Q8	♠AT76
♥AK4	♥J85
♦Q943	♦AJ8
♣AKQ3	♣754

Declarer took nine tricks in the 3NT contract, and called the Director when the hand was finished. He stated that he believed South unintentionally deceived him with his tempo and mannerisms at Trick One. When the ♠6 was played from Dummy South played the ♠2. At Trick Two when a second ♠ was played by Declarer South played the ♠5. *[N.B. Notice the language that West used. He did NOT say that South deliberately set out to deceive him. That issue was up to the Director and/or an Appeals panel to adjudicate, which they indeed did.]*

As with all of the "big" bridge events there was a video of the play at this table. This video showed that after the ♠6 had been played from Dummy, South, after about 10 seconds, changed the location of a card in his hand. The ♠2 was moved towards the end of his hand. He then folded up his hand and thought for about another 40 seconds. At that stage he detached the 2 from his hand, held it in front of himself for another 2 or 3 seconds and then placed it on the Table. The Director ruled that players were entitled to think, particularly at Trick One, and did not change the result of 9 tricks being taken. East-West asked for a Review and a Panel subsequently

made an adjustment to the score so that it was now 3NT making 4. The reason for the change was Rule 73E. This states that if it is determined that "an innocent player has drawn a false inference from a question, remark, manner, tempo or the like, of an opponent who has no demonstrable bridge reason for the action, and who could have been aware, at the time of the action, that it could work to his benefit" an adjusted score shall be awarded. As South had only two ♠ cards, the 2 and the 5, in his hand it was extremely difficult for him to claim that he had a demonstrable bridge reason for taking 50 + seconds to play at Trick One.

An out of tempo bid can also be a cause for concern. Again, at the Memphis Nationals, a player's third bid was a slooow 3NT. His partner then bid again and the partnership ended up in a 6♣ contract, making. The Director polled 7 players as to what they would interpret a slooow bid of 3NT as meaning. All 7 agreed that the tempo suggested that bidding over 3NT would be more favorable than passing. The Director did not let the 6♣ contract stand and allocated an adjusted score of 3NT (weighted).

Enjoy your bridge everybody as the year begins to draw to a close. Nationals in San Francisco, and the Palm Springs Regional provide a lot of opportunity to play against many of the world's best players.

District 23 North American Pairs Final *by Morris Jones*



Seventy-four qualifiers from the three flights of the North American Pairs met on November 17 in Lomita to determine who would represent our district at the Spring NABC in Columbus, Ohio.

This year's contest featured a large and competitive field in Flight A, with seven full tables – and a surprising result!

At the end of the first session, partners James Perkins and Jonathan Holmes were tied for first place with partners Peter Knee and William Schreiber. Both pairs finished with 64.1% matchpoint scores, ahead of John Jones and Jeffrey Goldsmith at 55.77%.

In the afternoon session, the same two pairs finished with sub-par rounds of 48.72%, but it was enough to lead the field in the two-session total score, resulting in a tie for first/second for the entire event!

Rounding out the district representatives to the national event will be Jones and Goldsmith finishing in a strong third place overall.



Flight A TIED for first/second, William Shreiber with Peter Knee, and James Perkins with Jonathan Holmes



Flight B winners Ernest Wong and Frank Shih



Flight B runners-up Arvind Sheth and Wenjia Yen

The field in Flight B (0-2500) was smaller this year, with four tables competing for the win. Ernest Wong and Frank Shih took first overall, with Wenjia Yan and Arvind Sheth runners-up. Also earning an invitation to the NABC are Calvin Waller and Stanley Greengard, with Rick Turner and Alyssa Kennedy in fourth place.

Flight C (0-500 NLM) had another large field, with 7-1/2 tables competing. First place went to repeat Flight C representatives Larisa and Mark Rappaport. Runners-up are Alexander Wiles and Aton Arbisser. Also earning invitations are Lou and Judy Zucker, with Ginger Boykin and Joan Oliver rounding out the top four finishers.

Full results from the game are posted at ACBL Live (live.acbl.org) in the GNT / NAP section. Find Lomita, CA, Nov. 17, in the event list.



Flight C winners Larisa and Mark Rappaport



Flight C runners-up Aton Arbisser and Alexander Wiles

District 23 Rank Changes October 2019

Junior Master

Norma Arbisser (**)
 Gail H. Cohen (**)
 Robert Cook (*)
 Lawrence Mitchell
 Carol J. Schamp
 Diane R. Sharlin
 Li L. Wang (*)
 Jeanette N. Williams

Club Master

Elaine E. Abramson (**)
 Carol A. Ames (*)
 Gerald Ansell (*)
 Marlene F. Ansell (*)
 Judy E. Blits (*)
 Lisa Gauff (*)
 Anthony I. Gronich (**)
 Don F. Hughes
 David W. Khalieque
 Jan C. Schmidt (*)
 Nick Schwieterman (**)
 Chris Sun
 Monique J. Thomas

Sectional Master

Natalie Altman (**)
 Raymond Boncato
 Leo D. Dittimore
 Naum Grutman
 Jan Ladd
 Harkirat Randhawa
 Lois Rawitt (*)
 Rhonda L. Rundle (*)
 Carolyn J. Virgo (**)
 Henny Vlessing (**)
 Harriet I. Weiss

Regional Master

Ronald A. Bloom (*)
 Mitchell Blumenfeld
 Won-Young McDevitt (**)
 Ramani Ravikandan
 H. S. Jackson Tsao (*)
 Carnell Wingfield

NABC Master

Joseph M. Lieberman (**)
 Mark A. Singer
 Mary L. Williams (*)

Advanced NABC Master

Susan Morse-Lebow (*)
 Michael Piken
 Ira Thierer (*)

Life Master

Lisa Caras (**)
 Joan C. Oliver (**)
 Bob Weingarten (*)
 Judy T. Zucker (**)
 Lou M. Zucker (**)

Bronze Life Master

Carol L. Hanson

Silver Life Master

April L. Berg
 Howard I. Cohen
 Thomas A. Jones
 John Van Egmond

Ruby Life Master

George R. Macdonald

Gold Life Master

Robert T. Chen (*)
 Cliff M. Goodrich
 John C. Villalobos

(*) Promoted in August

(**) Promoted in September

A Note from the Editor

At the recent District Board-of-Directors meeting, it was decided that ALL rank advancements, and other news, would be included in the Bridge News, for all Units. West LA still has not found a columnist, which is why there's no news from our friends out there. But there's some good news: Peter Benjamin, West LA Board member, reports: "Adrienne Greene, owner of Barrington BC made an announcement that brought in \$54 in one afternoon from players that want to see paper (the SCBN) continued. Two dozen members contributed \$1.80 each, and hope that the unit will reconsider their action and pay what is due. The paper is essential to the well being of the District many believe."

LOS ANGELES PRESENTS THE 86TH ANNUAL BRIDGE WEEK

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

TOURNAMENT HIGHLIGHTS

*D23 Youth Day on Friday July 5th
Players 26 and under
PLAY FREE ALL DAY*

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

MONDAY JUNE 29TH
**** Free 2-hour Bridge Workshop**
 10:30 am - 12:30 pm
 Followed by Lunch

Marjorie Michelin
 Grand Life Master

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

Please register before June 22
daliahernandez@gmail.com
 562.221.1398

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: Bob Shore



HILTON LONG BEACH
 701 West Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, CA

Room Rate: \$149 (Free Wifi) Please Refer to ALACBU
Reservation must be made by Monday, June 15
562.983.3400

Card Fees: \$15 (Members) \$19 (expired Members)
Notice: Non-members will be required to either join ACBL on an annual basis or on a new temporary one month membership for \$7.99.

Self Parking: \$12

Lunch: \$5 for Sunday Lunch
 * First leg of the Grand Slam Cup

Background Photo Credit: Long Beach Convention & Visitor's Bureau Sanction Number: R2007106



Monday, June 2020
 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
 Stratified Swiss Teams (1 of 2 Sessions)..7:00 pm

Tuesday, June 30, 2020
 AM Side Game Series (1 of 5).....10:00 am
 299er Pairs (Single Session).....10:00 am
 Betsy Ross KO (1 & 2 of 4)...10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Bernie Mateer Open ABC Pairs
 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 GOLD RUSH Pairs.....10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture..... 2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (2 of 6)..... 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session)...3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (2 of 2 Sessions)..7:00 pm

Wednesday, July 1, 2020
 AM Side Game Series (2 of 5).....10:00 am
 299er Pairs (Single Session)..... 10:00 am
 Firecracker KO (1 & 2 of 4)...10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Betsy Ross KO (3 & 4 of 4)...10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Richard Patterson Open Pairs
10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Mark Schreiber GOLD RUSH Pairs
10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture..... 2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (3 of 6) 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session)...3:00 pm

Thursday, July 2, 2020
 AM Side Game Series (3 of 5).....10:00 am
 299er Pairs (Single Session).....10:00 am
 Starburst KO (1 & 2 of 4).....10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Firecracker KO (3 & 4 of 4)... 10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Open ABC Pairs.....10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Pat Banks GOLD RUSH Pairs
10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture.....2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (4 of 6).....3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams (Single Session)..3:00 pm

Friday, July 3, 2019 **D23 Youth Day**
 AM Side Game Series (4 of 5).....10:00 am
Walt Otto 299er Pairs (Single Session).10:00 am
 0-99er Pairs (Single Session).....10:00 am
 Starburst KO (3 & 4 of 4).....10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Stratified Swiss Teams10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Cecil Cook Open ABC Pairs
10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 GOLD RUSH Pairs10:00 am & 3:00 pm
 Guest Lecture.....2:15 pm
 Aft Side Game Series (5 of 6).....3:00 pm
 Youth Reception 6:30 pm

Saturday, July 4, 2020
 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
 Barbara Nussbaum Open ABC Pairs
10:00 am & 3:00 pm

Saturday, July 4, 2020
 GOLD RUSH Pairs 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

Sunday, July 5, 2020
 Liberty Bell Stratified Fast Pairs.....
 10:00 am & TBA
 Flight A/X/Y Swiss Teams (7 x 7).....
 10:00 am & TBA
 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 Tu - Sa Sunday Swiss Teams
 Done by 6 PM

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

GOLD RUSH Pairs:
 0 - 100 / 100 - 300 / 300 - 750

A/X/Y Swiss Teams:
 0 - 3000 / 3000 - 5000 / 5000+

Bracketed B Swiss Teams: 0 - 2500
 8 Teams/Bracket: Top 3/Bracket Win Gold

Around the Units in District 23



Long Beach by Jon Yinger

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

October 16: Club Appreciation Game:

Overall results: 1st in A John Petrie/Sankar Reddy, 2nd Steve Rowe/Loren Hilf, 3rd Betty Witteried/Gayle Grubb, 4th Sue Hunter/Sandy Rathbun, 5th Ludy Lorber/Shirley Knopf, 6th Marcie Evans/Jackie Hess. In the B flight overalls Sherry Troeger/Lavonne McQuilkin were 3rd, Jane Reid/Colleen Gardner tied with Mike Welsh/Alan Olschwang for 4/5, Fay Beckerman/Betty Jackson were 6th. And in the C flight overalls Charlotte Roush/Melanie Smothers were 1st, Bonny Walsh/Marilyn Landau tied with Chuck Laine/Martin Lipman for 2/3. Congratulations to all!!

October 27 Unit Game:

Overall results: 1st in A Marcie Evans/Marie Kiechle, 2nd Neal Kleiner/David Peim 3rd John Melis/Jackie Hess, 4th Alan Flower/John Jones, 5th Jo Melis/Jon Yinger, 6th Audrey Rennels/Robert Shore. In the B flight overalls Hanefi Erten/Oliver Yildiz were 1st, Sue Boswell/Rosemary Ford 2nd, Eva Mroz/Penny Wentworth 3rd, Fern Dunbar/Rob Preece 4th. In the C flight overalls Lillian Slater/Bonnie Shok were 2nd, Mark Singer/Paul Chen 3rd, Bettyanne Houts/Nancy Toussaint 4th. Mark Singer/Paul Chen 5th. And in the 199er section Elaine Bok/Toshie Bergan were 1st, Beth Byrne/Bill Cray 2nd, Freda Main/Pamela Haskins 3rd, Charlotte Roush/Allene Buchanan 4th. Congratulations to all!!

70% GAMES Oct 16 through Nov 15: In the open game Oct 16 John Petrie/Sankar Reddy had 71.63%. In NLM games: Oct 16 Melinda Wilson/Susan Hansen had 70.83%, Oct 29 Steve Zinser/Lee Berlinger had 70.14%, Nov 9 Jill Smith/Peggy Shapiro had 70.87%. And in beginner games: Oct 29 David Hoyt/Carol Poto had 70.12%,

Oct 30 Florence Cooper/Carolee Windsor had 77.08%. Congratulations to all six pairs!

BIG MASTER POINT AWARDS Oct 16 through Nov 15: In the Unit Game Oct 16 John Petrie/Sankar Reddy won 5.25mp for 1st, Steve Rowe/Loren Hilf 3.24mp for 2nd. In other open games: Oct 17 Jo Melis/Betty Witteried won 4.31mp for 1st. Oct 18 Steve Rowe/Loren Hilf won 4.50mp for 1st, Jackie Hess/Shirley Carroll 3.38mp for 2nd. Oct 19 Colleen Gardner/John Melis won 3.56mp for 1st. Oct 31 Sandra Schlosser/Baum Harris won 3.75mp for 1st. Nov 4 Alan Olschwang/Ken Miller won 4.08mp for 1st, Suzy and John Hand 3.50mp for 2nd. Nov 5 Baum Harris/Gayle Grubb won 4.67mp for 1st, Jane Reid/Colleen Gardner 3.29mp for 2nd. Nov 8 Robert and Richard Bakovic won 3.94 mp for 1st. And in the Unit Game Oct 27 Janet Logan/Dave Frinsky won 4.67 for 1st, Marcie Evans/Mary Kiechle 3.50mp for 2nd. In the instant matchpoint game Oct 31 Dominique Moore/Peter Szecsi were 1st N/S winning 3.75mp, and Sandra Schlosser/Baum Harris were 1st E/W also winning 3.75mp. Congratulations to all!

NEW CLUB MEMBERS: Susan Fitzpatrick and Marcie Evans. Welcome to the club!

STATUS CHANGES: New Jr. Masters: Kent Carlsen, Ray Ishaeik, Chris Oliver. New Club Masters: John Kilmer, Melanie Smothers. New Sectional Masters: Ted Dowe, Janice Fischer. New NABC Master: Al Appel. New Life Masters: Bill Dilks, Ernie Ross, Roy Tomooka. New Silver Life Masters Alan Olschwang, Diane Schmitz, Murat Veysoglu. Congratulations to you all!

GET WELL: Bob Mault, Phyllis Parker, Alan Flower

UP-COMING EVENTS AT THE CLUB:

Oct 21-27 Bridge Brigade Auction ends 5 minutes after Unit Game

Oct 27 (Sun) 12:30 Unit Game \$8 card fee, dessert served

Oct 31 Instant Matchpoint game and Halloween pot luck \$3 extra Extra points

Nov 4-10 Club Championship week. Extra points, regular card fee

Nov 9-10 NLM Sectional

Nov 11-19 District 23 STaC week. Extra points, \$11 card fee
 Nov 17 Eight is enough--Swiss Teams 12:30pm
 Nov 18 Birthday Monday Play for \$5 on your November birthday
 Nov 25 Pro-Am game 9:30-11:30 Pros Free, As \$5
 Nov 28 Thanksgiving Day. Club closed
 Nov 28-Dec 8 NABC in San Francisco
 No November Unit Game

**NEWS FROM LEISURE WORLD
 BRIDGE CLUBS
 Judy Carter-Johnson**

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP—Clubhouse #1
 October 19: Judith Jones/Al Appel 1 in A. Betty Jackson/Ellen Kice 2 in A. Kar-Yee Nelson/Chie Wickham 3 in A, 1 in B, 1 in C. Sue Fardette/Marilyn McClintock 4 in A. Mark Singer/Larry Slutsky 5 in A. Priscilla Cailloutte/Harriet Weiss 6 in A, 2 in B, 2 in C. Barbara and Alan Olschwang 3 in B. Joan and Ted Wieber 4 in B.

GET WELL: We wish one of our Directors Alan Flower a speedy recovery.

Any news for next month's column, please e mail me @ 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 December 21,
 11:00 a.m., Glendora
 Individual: Saturday, December 7, Chino

Some good news: Your *hard working* Club Manager actually uploaded all the October club games to the new ACBL-Live-For-Clubs site, earning us an Upgraded Club Championship. That pays considerably better masterpoints than a regular club game. As of this writing, the game hasn't been scheduled – I'll try to schedule it for a date when we expect a good turnout. Check the Unit web site. I'll

also send out a special Bridge Alert announcing the date. You don't get the Bridge Alerts? WHY NOT? All ya gotta do is ask, and you'll get them. Whom do you ask? Hint: whose picture is at the head of this article?

Because of the year-end holidays, the La Fetra Center will be closed December 24-25 and December 31-January 1. So while there will be the regularly scheduled Thursday-Friday games those two weeks, the Tuesday games are cancelled. Sorry about that.

The November Unit game was one of our largest in recent history – thanks to the participation by some District 23 Board-of-Director members. Needless to say, it was a pretty strong field! The winners were Bob Shore – Kent Hartman, who scored 59.72%. Only one matchpoint behind were Mitch Dunitz – Marta Monheim. In third place were Peter Benjamin – Jordan Chodorow, followed by Joe Viola – Amr Elghamry. Ho Ming Yim – Phil Savage tied with Sharry Vida – Beth Morrin for the top spot in flight B.

I promised to report the masterpoint totals for October. (BTW, my trip along the Danube / Main / Rhine Rivers was absolutely *fabulous*. Thanks for asking.) Attendance was good that month, and with the club appreciation games, the points really flowed. 46 players won 117.56 points. Topping the list we find Roger Boyar, at 12.80. Next was Fredy Minter, 8.64; Hanan Mogharbel, 7.52; Lulu Minter, 6.72; and rounding out the top five, Claudia Cochran, 6.47.

45 players won points in November, but nobody won very much. Partly due to the Thanksgiving holiday, and partly due to the STaC, not too many black points were given out. Only 56.54! Topping the list was Kurt Trieselmann, with 2.44. Next, Roger Boyar, 2.01; Bill Papa and Vic Sartor, with 1.90 each; and Fredy and Lulu Minter, with 1.88 each.

The top game in November was by Claudia Cochran – Esther Johnson, 70.00%. Bill Papa – Vic Sartor beat the 65% mark twice, with 67.57% and 65.83%. Fredy and Lulu Minter scored 69.00%.

Other winners: Roger Boyar, Steve Mancini, Marjorie Preston, Margie Hall, Linda Ananea, John Barrow, Mary Miller, Linda Tessier, David Ochroch, Karen McCarthy, Penny Barbieri, and Your Correspondent.

No promotions to report. What with the Rancho Mirage Regional taking place this month, there will no doubt be some next time.

The 2018-19 Individual Championship results have (finally) been tabulated. The way it works is, we take your best six results (you must play half the games to qualify) and compute a weighted average. Simple! 12 players qualified for the Championship. Once again, Clint Lew dominated the field. The top five:

1. Clint Lew	60.1%
2. Linda Tessier	57.8%
3. Tom Lill	56.7%
4. Gino Barbieri	54.6%
5. Richard Patterson	54.1%

All I can say is ... wait until next year!

However ... there may not *be* a “next year.” Sad to relate, attendance at the monthly game has been slowly, but surely, falling off. We’re on the edge of not being able to hold the game at all. It doesn’t seem to be a financial thing – the entry fee is only \$3 at most. But we need more players. So here’s an offer you *can* refuse ... but I hope you do not. Come on out and give it a try. Know some party bridgers who think duplicate is “too tough” or “too unfriendly?” Bring one along to the December game. You’ll both play free, and the newbie will get perks if he/she keeps on coming. Best offer I can make. Same offer applies if *you* have never tried our Individual: play free in December. How can you lose?

No doubt, some of you noticed that last month’s Hand-of-the-Month was a card short. Sorry! Put the ♦9 in there, please. At least I did give the shape, so you knew approximately what was wrong.

Some months, you can’t pick up an interesting hand for love nor money. Just cold games, flat hands, blah. And then there was a memorable night in November. The hardest part is to limit our Hand-of-the-Month discourse, choosing among no fewer than five grotesque hands that appeared in ONE session.

First, let’s look at one of the worst hands ever dealt. Sitting East, no one vulnerable, you see partner open 1NT while you stare at this *fine* collection:

♠ 86432 ♥ 84 ♦ 872 ♣ 853.

At the table, East transferred to spades, and 2♠ became the final contract. Down five, when North turned up with ♠AKJ965! In fact, one N-S pair was +140 in a spade partial! Oh ... I neglected to mention that East’s transfer was perhaps misguided: North had doubled the 1NT contract, showing an unspecified 6-card suit! So East might have relaxed and passed. Of

course, if West has three or four good spades, down only 1 or 2 will be a good save against North-South’s +140. (North’s suit was hearts, and nine tricks are available in that suit, also.)

We’ll briefly visit two more deals.

Now, nine card suits don’t grow on trees, and after partner’s opening bid of 1♠, you have a decision to make holding:

♠ none ♥ A95 ♦ Q109875432 ♣ Q.

That’s right, 12 red cards. Whatever you do, you won’t like it. LHO has the other four diamonds – ♦AKJ6 – and your diamond contract will be punished badly.

Finally, a bit later, you pick up:

♠ AKJ96 ♥ none ♦ 3 ♣ KJ86432.

That’s right, this time you have 12 *black* cards! You open 1♠, LHO calls 2♥, partner raises to 2♠, RHO goes 3♥, and you ... well, you have little defense against hearts, and prospects of setting up the clubs. So let’s try 4♠. This is doubled on your left (uh-oh), and the ♣10 is lead. You catch this dummy:

♠ 87426 ♥ A8642 ♦ 102 ♣ Q7.

Of course, all four missing spades (♠Q1053) are behind you, the ♣A is on your right, and you lose a diamond, a heart, the ♣A, and *three* trump tricks. And, because of the foul heart split, 4♥ goes down.

The dealing gremlins were out in force that night!

Quote for the month: “I respect faith, but doubt is what gets you an education.” (Wilson Mizner)



Santa Clarita-
Antelope Valley
by Beth Morrin

Unit 556 Board Nominations

Are you looking for adventure of a new and different kind? Unit 556 is seeking members who are interested in running for the Unit Board, beginning January 19, 2020. This is an opportunity to give back to the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley bridge

community, meet new friends, and have an impact on changing things for the betterment of Unit 556 bridge players. If you wish to self-nominate, please contact Ruth Baker (rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net) or Beth Morrin (morrin@sbcglobal.net). **Nominations must be received by January 1st.**

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

The Unit 556 Board election will be held on Sunday, January 19th at the Joshua Tree Bride Club, 2747 West Ave. L, Lancaster. A catered lunch will begin at 11:30 AM and the board election will be at 12:20 PM, followed by a Unit Game at 12:30 PM.

Results of the November District 22-23 STaC Games:

Tuesday Evening in Santa Clarita, November 12th:

1 st /2 nd	Viviane Dinehart – Rand Pinsky	55.36%
	Elaine Moore – Tom Shudic	55.36%
3 rd /4 th	Kathy Swaine – Carol Ashbacher	52.98%
	Ruth Baker – Anita Walker	52.98%

Thursday Morning in Castaic, November 14th:

1 st	Bert Stock – Tomoko Stock	66.67%
2 nd	David Khalieque – Paul Gill	57.29%
3 rd	Sharry Vida – Beth Morrin	56.48%
4 th	Richard Stark – Lamonte Johnson	56.25%

Friday Afternoon in Lancaster, November 15th:

1 st	Rosalee McEntyre – Beth Morrin	64.58%
2 nd	Robert McBroom – David White	63.89%
3 rd	Phoebe Evans – Les Spitz	52.78%
4 th	Carol Kemmerer – Rich Kemmerer	51.39%

Sunday Afternoon in Lancaster, November 17th:

1 st	Ron Oest – Mira Rowe	57.14%
2 nd /3 rd	Linda Young – Russ Buker	52.98%
	Rosalee McEntyre – Phoebe Evans	52.98%
4 th	Sharry Vida – Beth Morrin	54.17%

Congratulations to Bert and Tomoko Stock who were first overall in the Thursday morning game with 66.67%.

Upcoming Events:

Unit 556 will participate in the Western Conference Fall STaC games during the week of December 9-15, 2019. We will hold games at the following times:

Monday, Dec. 9th at 12:30 at the Senior Center in Santa Clarita

Tuesday, Dec. 10th at 5:00 PM at the Sports Complex in Castaic

Thursday, Dec. 12th at 10:00 AM at the Sports Complex in Castaic

Friday, Dec. 13th at 12:30 PM at Joshua Tree Bridge Club in Lancaster

Sunday, Dec. 15th at 12:30 PM at Joshua Tree Bridge Club in Lancaster

Next Board meeting: TBA



San Fernando Valley
by Linda Silvey

2020 Events in Unit 561

The Unit 561 Board (San Fernando Valley) has been busy planning 2020 events for bridge players in the greater Los Angeles area. These events are as follows: Unit 561 Awards Luncheon and Game, Saturday, March 21; San Fernando Valley Sectional Tournament, Friday and Saturday, May 1 and 2; “Summer Sizzler” Unit Luncheon and Game, Saturday, August 15; and Holiday Game and Dinner Party, Friday, December 18. All of these events will be held at The 750 Bridge Club in Woodland Hills.

Big Winners in Ventura!

Many U561 members and players participated in the recent Ventura Regional Tournament. Congratulations to following who placed first in their stratification in the various events: Gabriella Amadeo, Bud Bates, Cheri Bitar, Sheila Bozen, Robert Chapman, Om Chokriwala, John Clark, Mitch Dunitz, Dennis Edelson, Lynn Edelson, James Gardner, Naum Grutman, Nava Grutman, Dwight Hunt, Peter Ji, Claude Le Feuvre, Samantha Macdouglass, Sharyn Miller, Susan Morse-Lebow, Suzanne Peterson, Brian Reynolds, Janice Richter, Gilbert Stinebuagh, and John Vacca. Note: Sincere apologies to any players whose names were mistakenly left off this list.

Special Congratulations

Recent Life Master Accomplishments by Unit 561 players were: Sharyn Miller (Life Master); Sin Orensztin (Bronze); Jojo Sarkar (Silver – 1,000); Andrew DeSosa (Ruby - 1,500); Michael Klemens,

Mark Peters, and Noel Purkins (Gold – 2,500); and Om Chokriwala (Diamond – 5,000).

October Top Ten Masterpoints (regular) at The 750 Bridge Club were: Susan Raphael 8.32, Noel Purkin 7.31, John Van Egmond 7.31, Tammy Purkin 6.49, Ron Malkin 6.14, Sin Orensztstein 5.92, Mike Wiener 5.74, Linda Silvey 5.32, Gloria Feerst 5.12, and Marty Hurwitz 5.03.

The Top Ten Winners from Club Appreciation Week at The 750 Bridge Club were: Susan Raphael 12.52, A.D. Shah 7.53, Helen Malzer 7.41, Noel Purkin 5.79, Tammy Purkin 5.79, Mike Klemens 5.60, Jane Winston 5.57, R. Gasway 5.29, Gloria Feerst 5.24, and Betty Andelson 4.64.

The following pairs achieved 70% games: Herb Zweig-Bernie Davidorf 73.17%, Marty Hurwitz-Mike Wiener 72.42%, Mike Newman-Ron Stewart 71.14%, Doug Timmer-Phil Rabichow 71.13%, and Jerry Goodman-Dwight Hunt 70.93%.

December Events at The 750 Bridge Club

On Monday-Friday, December 9-13, Great Western STaC games will be held at the Club. This is a chance to compete with players in the Western U.S.A. and earn extra silver points. The fee for all games will be \$12.

Closings: On Wednesdays, December 25 and January 1, The 750 Bridge Club will be closed for the Holidays. Season's Greetings and Happy New Year everyone!

Calendar

Monday-Friday, December 9-13, GWSTaC games will be held The 750 Bridge Club. See details above.

Wednesdays, December 25 and January 1, The 750 Bridge Club will be closed for the Holidays.

Tuesday, January 21, Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night starting at 6 p.m. For reservations/partnerships, contact nrklemens@aol.com or (818) 609-1071.

Saturday, March 21, Unit 561 Awards Luncheon/Game, 12noon, at The 750 Club.

Downey – Whittier by Linda Eagan and Liz Burrell



A picture is worth a thousand words! John Jones on Halloween Game 2019

Top Games at Downey Whittier for November:

Bob Rubin and Larry Boles - 61.67 on Nov 6

Gabby Sills and Kim Wang - 63.84 on Nov 13

We welcome Bob Rubin to our game!

Leonard Beck was a long time player at Downey Bridge who partnered with Larry Boles. We are saddened by his death.

Marcie Evans has pneumonia. She is not able to have visitors yet but text her at 714-342-2822 with your get well wishes.

DWBC Christmas party is on December 18. We are planning a potluck this year so please let us know if you coming and what you would like to bring. Contact Liz Burrell 562-972-2913 or lizburrell7@gmail.com.

Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are: Gerry Bare, Mark Bartusek, Leo Bell, Eddie Kantar, Rick Roeder, David Sacks, and Michael Shuster.

1

IMPs
None Vul

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

You, South, hold: ♠J ♥AJ82 ♦863 ♣AK975

What call do you make?

[We'll start with a simple hand evaluation problem. Let's hear from the conservatives first.]

Bell: 2♥. Would anyone really consider anything else? Even in today's aggressive bidding world, this is a minimum opening hand.

Roeder: 2♥. More of a problem in the era before Rodwell invented the Bra Convention (aka, "Support Doubles"). As most cosmetic surgeons will tell you, "It is OK to have a little extra." *[If you'd study your hand instead of the female anatomy, you might find a more aggressive bid. ☺]*

Bartusek: ♥. Too many losers for 3♥ (Losing Trick Count is 7). Change my Heart Jack to the Queen and my hand would barely qualify for a 3♥ bid.

[I like 3♥, and three of my most regular partners like 2♥. Isn't partnership bridge an easy game?]

Bare: 3♥, gives partner best chance to make final decision.

Sacks: 3♥. Clean hand values, and partner knows to discount any ♠ values. This bid is usually based on shape, as a 2♠ bid would cover all of the power 3♥ bids.

Shuster: 3♥. This is right on trick-taking potential, especially given that I have the right singleton. In competitive auctions it is more important to make the single best description you can at your earliest turn.

Kantar: 3♥. Right off the bat, you put it to me, but I can't bring myself to bid only 2♥ with this hand.

[This hand is from the 1988 Vanderbilt KO Teams, an event won by Eddie Kantar playing with Alan Sontag, teaming with John Mohan and Roger Bates. This hand came from the semi-finals. The boards were not duplicated for this event, so Eddie's team didn't have this problem. David Berkowitz held this hand and rebid 3♥. His partner Zia bid 4♥ on ♠653 ♥T753 ♦AQT ♣QT8. 4♥ is tough to make, but Zia would probably have made it. We'll never know, though, because the 1♠ overcaller, Ron Anderson, holding ♠AKQ982 ♥K ♦K952 ♣63, self-sacrificed in 4♠. Zia doubled for down 300. Paul Soloway was in Berkowitz' seat at the other table. Soloway was playing a light opening bid forcing club system and opened 1♦. Soloway only rebid 2♥. This surprised me. I thought 3♥ was automatic, especially for Soloway, given that he might have opened light. But Frank Stewart, writing for the ACBL Contract Bridge Bulletin, called the jump to 3♥ "super-aggressive."]

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">2</h1> <p>Matchpoints Both Vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	1♥ ???	pass	1♠	pass
	You, South, hold: ♠7 ♥KJ10973 ♦AK93 ♣Q4 What call do you make?			

[We'll continue with another problem that has only two rational choices: 2♦ and 2♥.]

Kantar: 2♥. In view of the spade response, I don't consider this hand strong enough to rebid 2♦ and then bid hearts. I will go the weaker route and rebid hearts and then diamonds. Had my partner responded 2♣, I would rebid 2♦ and then rebid the hearts.

Bell: 2♥. My hand isn't good enough to take another call if partner rebids 2♠, so I will emphasize my good heart suit. I can rebid 3♦ over 2NT or 3♣.

Bare: 2♥. The heart spots make it pretty clear. If you bid 2♦ and later want to bid hearts again, in most auctions, you will be showing a stronger hand.

Bartusek: 2♥. A misfit, downgraded club queen. Not good enough for either 2♦ or 3♥. Additionally, my hearts are too good to risk partner's passing 2♦ at matchpoints (and partner might raise 2♥ to 3♥).

Sacks: 2♥. Did this rule change? Rebid in your lower ranking side suit when you are preparing to bid your six card suit again only if you have extra values. An auction of 1♥ pass 1♠ pass 2♦ pass 2NT pass 3♥ would

be forcing. *[Don't you want to force to game if partner rebids 2NT?]* Conversely, bidding 2♥ followed by 3♦ would be non-forcing.

Roeder: 2♥. Seduced by the 9 of hearts with due apologies to Eric Kokish.

Shuster: 2♥. The heart suit can play opposite a void, and I don't have extra values. There is no reason to complicate things by introducing diamonds, unless partner forces.

[This hand is from a Contract Bridge Bulletin Bidder's Box. Both of the bidding players bid 2♥, and the moderator also advocated 2♥. I used this hand because I like 2♦. I believe it is frequently right to bid the second suit in these situations, even with a relative minimum. This hand has 13 HCP with a shape that would contain 10 HCP (most of us would open without the ♦K, and everyone would open without the ♣Q), and excellent heart spots. Bidding the second suit helps partner with uncovering a possible ♦ fit and with learning where my high cards are. If partner rebids 2NT, I am strong enough to force to game with a 3♥ bid.]

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Matchpoints None Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
			1♦	pass
	1♠	pass	2♣	pass
	???			
<p>You, South, hold: ♠K10763 ♥KJ1052 ♦106 ♣Q</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

Bell: 2♦. There is some merit to treating a 4th suit 2♥ rebid as not game-forcing, but absent that agreement, I go low and am well placed if partner bids again.

Bare: 2♦, not nearly strong enough for anything else. You wish partner had bid 1NT so 2♥ would be not forcing.

Bartusek: 2♦ - I need to keep the auction going in case partner can find another bid. Not good enough for 2NT, and 2♥ is an extreme overbid.

Sacks: 2♦. Misfits belong to opponents. If partner bids again we will be well placed.

Shuster: 2♦. I'm glad my partners NEVER open 1♦ with longer clubs. *[I like the idea, but NEVER? They wouldn't consider opening 1♦ holding ♠void ♥Kxxx ♦AKQJ ♣xxxxx or ♠x ♥K ♦AKQJx ♣xxxxx?]*

Roeder: 2NT. Seduced by Halle Berry and her sisters (aka, the beautiful 10's). *[Normally I'd rant and rave over such a big overbid on a misfit, but all other bids are unattractive, too.]*

Kantar: 3♥. Invitational, the way I play. *[3♥ is a splinter bid in most partnerships, but maybe this is better.]* However, I play that a direct response of 2♥ to a minor suit opening bid shows 5-5 or 5-4 (always five spades) with 7-10 HCP. It eliminates problems like this. That would be my bid at the table.

[This nightmare hand was sent to me by my friend Lucy Tredenick.]

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">4</h1> <p>IMPs N-S Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
		2♥	dbl	4♥
	???			

You, South, hold: ♠KQ532 ♥7 ♦A ♣AQJ863

What call do you make?

[We now come to a seriously preempted auction where we have an excellent hand. There are several questions, though. What is 4NT? How do we best show our two suits? Can we show both suits without the ♥A? Should we show the second suit or just clubs?]

Bell: 5♥. It would seem the alternatives are 5NT (probably 2 places to play) or leaping to slam in clubs or spades. All partner needs for a grand is almost any combination that includes the major suit aces and the ♣K, so I at least need to make a try for it. Admittedly, if partner bids 5♠, I'll be faced with the same dilemma.

Kantar: 5♥ and over 5♠, 6♠. Partner knows that I am strong enough to bid 6♠ directly, as partner might have responded 6♦ originally. By bidding this way, I think I deny the ♥A, as I could have bid 6♥ over 5♠ (had partner bid that) with the ♥A, a grand slam try. Notice that I was clever enough not to include problems like this in my Keycard book.

Shuster: 5NT. Pick a slam without the heart ace (5♥ would be that.) Not that we'll be bidding seven, but bridge is an imperfect science.

Bare: 4NT. The problem will be, can you bid 7♠ over 7♥. So I bid 4NT, old fashioned Blackwood. *[Gerry plays that 4NT here is Blackwood, but I think that most*

experts would play that 4NT is two places to play.] I hope we have discussed responses over interference. I play that if the opponents' bid is high enough that if one bid one would be at the 6 level, double shows an even number of controls. In this case they are aces.

Bartusek: 4NT. Takeout showing at least 2 suits. I plan on bidding 6♣ over 5♦ (thus showing spades and clubs) which would allow partner to cuebid 6♥ as a grand slam try on the way to 6♠.

Sacks: 6♣. I do not think that 4NT is Blackwood.

Roeder: 6♣. Anything less would evoke 1939 France. You may not be done. If the opponents take a 6♥ dive, you can now bid 6♠. Their save attempt might even give you a chance to get to 7 if partner has the right cards.

[This hand was sent to me by a reader, Alyssa Kennedy. She didn't actually face this auction because the East hand passed, and she was able to bid Blackwood and steer the hand into a cold 7NT. But Alyssa's teammate did bounce the auction to 4♥, which is much tougher. She sent me the problem and asked about the meaning of 4NT. Moral of the story is that "Preempts work" and jump raising preempts work too.]

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">5</h1> <p>Matchpoints none Vul.</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
		1♦	2♣	pass
	2♥	pass	3♦	pass
	3NT	dbl	pass	pass
	???			
	You, South, hold: ♠932 ♥KQ1084 ♦10642 ♣A			
	What call do you make?			

If you would have bid differently on either of your previous calls, feel free to discuss the bid you would have made. But you were called to pinch hit in the middle of the auction, so what card do you pick out of your bidbox?

[I've saved the worst problem for last. Questions abound. Was 2♥ forcing? Is 10xxx a stopper? Does partner have a diamond stopper since he was missing the ♣A and may think that we need two stoppers to make 3NT? Is LHO sane? Is partner sane? What would partner's redouble mean? Maybe most frustratingly, what possible hands could partner and LHO have to generate this auction? As you read the experts' frustrated answers remember that this is the same panel who exuded such confidence with their answers to the previous problems']

[We'll start with the one panelist who undaunted, likes the problem.]

Roeder: Redouble. Since the extra points in a successful repop are inconsequential in matchpoints, this is a conventional call to express doubt. Boy, do I have doubt! A fascinating problem! A good opponent will not double on solid diamonds and out. Pard's 3♦ bid was based on a good hand lacking four spades. Since you are staring at the club ace, his most likely distribution is 3217. 3NT might make if either pard or RHO has a stiff jack and possibly even if RHO has doubleton jack! You were end-played into both of your previous bids so, I have no problem with your actions.

Bare: Depends on partnership agreements. The pass of 3NT doubled requires partnership discussion. *[The experts who taught me told me that a redouble of 3NT doubled was confirmation that the contract was making and that the opponents had goofed. The more modern treatment is play redouble as showing doubt from both sides (as Roeder used it). Gerry wants to*

know what their partnership agreement about redouble is.]

Bell: 4♣. If the opening leader thinks s/he can beat 3NT, s/he probably can since I likely don't have enough tricks even if I happen to catch some diamond honor from partner. 4♣ provides the most flexibility, as partner can retreat to 4♥ if the 3♦ cuebid was based on support.

Bartusek: Pass. I don't see anything better. It's only one board at matchpoints. 2NT seems right on the second round since my diamonds rate to be a stopper since RHO did not double 3♦. Obviously I'm worried about solid diamonds with LHO, but he might have KQJ with the heart ace (where partner's diamond ace gives me a second stopper!).

[Now watch the confusion and frustration mount.]

Shuster: Pass. Where can I go? LHO isn't likely to be doubling with solid diamonds, probably more likely KQJxxx of diamonds, the heart ace, and a club stopper. He might be disappointed to find that we have two diamond stoppers and are about to wrap this up on a diamond lead opposite partner's AQx Jx Ax Kxxxxx. *[Would you bid 3♦, not 3♣ with that hand?]*

[My sentiments about this problem are well expressed by the next panelist.]

Sacks: Pass. I pull the flightbag out. Then I pull the green card out. After all it is only matchpoints. Would not have bid 3NT on prior round. I prefer 3♥. What could partner have for his 3♦ bid? It's hard to figure out what hands the opponents or partner could have.

Kantar: Pass. What is 3♦? A strong heart raise? Asking for a diamond stopper? Natural? I must have thought it was asking for a diamond stopper, but that is unlikely since partner doesn't have the ♣A. Yet if partner has hearts, why didn't he bid 4♥? Why are you

doing this to me, John? I don't have a clue as to what to do. I know passing is wrong, but I have to get on with my life.

[Sometimes bridge hands remind me of songs. This hand reminds me of the Stealers Wheel song "Stuck in the Middle."

*Trying to make some sense of it all,
But I can see that it makes no sense at all,
Is it cool to go to sleep on the floor,
'Cause I don't think that I can take anymore?
Clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right,
Here I am, stuck in the middle with you.]*

[Eddie laughed when I sent him this song expressing my own frustration with the problem. This problem was sent to me by a reader, Ed Barad. 3♦ might be a stopper ask or a strong heart raise, but I couldn't figure out any layout that leaves everyone bidding sanely. Ed told me that the actual 3♦ bidder had ♠AKx ♥Ax ♦xxx ♣QJxxx. That's not my idea of a 3♦ bid, but nothing else is easy with that hand either. I'd bid 3♥; maybe I'll give the panel that sometime. Some of the problems used in this problem set came from readers. If want an opinion on your problem, send it to me at johndjones44 at yahoo. Happy New Year!]