

# Southern California Bridge News

Volume 50, #1

January 2014

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Home of a Champion

by Becky Clough, ALACBU President



This month I'm reprinting a feature story from the Phoenix Nationals. Many of you probably don't know that Los Angeles is the home of the world's finest woman bridge player, Jill Meyers. Jill represented the United States in Bali on the team that won the Venice Cup

this past September. The win marked her seventh gold medal in World Bridge Federation events. She lives in Santa Monica. However, bridge is not the only thing she does well as you will discover upon reading the feature article below.

Intuitive Meyers scales the heights  
By Brent Manley, courtesy of ACBL

In June 1971, Jill Meyers was in Philadelphia looking for an apartment. She had enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania to study linguistics and was looking for a place to stay.

As she made her way around the city, it came to Meyers that something wasn't right. Following her instinct, she immediately dropped the plans for school, went to New York City and worked for five months to save money — all of \$800 — and then headed for Europe. She was not afraid to follow her intuition, then

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## 2014 Grand National Teams Qualifying

Dates have been set for the District 23 2014 Grand National Teams event.

Winners at our district level will win the right to represent District 23 in Las Vegas this summer. The dates for the events are May 3-4 for the Open flight and flight B. April 26-27 is the weekend for flights A and C. See next month's Bridge News for locations and times. The information will also be posted on our district website.

## League Finances

by Rand Pinsky, District Director



The Fall NABC National ACBL Board meetings focus heavily on the finances of the League. As treasurer, I arrive a day earlier than most board members to meet with the Finance Committee and management personal to review the next year budget proposal and to

receive a 10-month financial report as to the financial yearly status. I am pleased to report that through October of this year, total revenue to the League is just over 13 million dollars with expenses just over 12.5 million dollars. Including our investment income, we have a change in net assets of \$637,344. With this surplus and following general accounting principles, we will be prepaying our pension obligation for 2014 in an effort to reduce this debt sooner rather than later.

In reviewing the 2014 budget, it is estimated revenues to be over 16 million dollars with a net change in assets of \$5,832. These amounts include the capital budget of \$670,000 consisting of ACBLScore+, Learn to Play Bridge Website, and Online Partnership Desk. The 2014 budget also includes some very small revenue increases with membership dues for regular members increasing from \$37 to \$39, and 1st time members increasing from \$28 to \$29. We will also be ending the online club volume discount and there will be a 1.5% increase in tournament sanction fees for a grand

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total revenue increase projected of \$124,395. The 2014 budget will be finalized at the Spring NABC in Dallas next year.

Motions of interest that were passed in Phoenix include the amendment to the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations that “Unit Sponsored Clubs” are subject to the CDR and that electronic smoking devices are not permitted in the playing area during any bridge playing event at an NABC.

A motion that failed to pass was one which tried to increase the masterpoint restriction on the Micro-Spangold KO Teams from 1500 to 2000. This failed as the majority of the Board felt that this event was specifically designated for the 1500 masterpoint player.

Next month I will discuss some items from Robert Hartman’s Management Report.

**It's a Different View  
from Dummy**

As we begin 2014, Kathy and I wish all of our District 23 members a healthy and masterpoint full year. We had the pleasure of attending many of our Unit Holiday parties, including Glendale, Pasadena, and Pomona. We will be also attending the Antelope Valley –Santa Clarita party which will be held in January.

Also, in January, the Long Beach Unit will be hosting a “Learn Bridge in a Day” seminar and they need many mentors to assist in the program. For anyone wanting to be introduced to this program I encourage you to contact the Long Beach Unit for more details.

You can always reach me at [Pinsky4Bridge@earthlink.net](mailto:Pinsky4Bridge@earthlink.net)

# Happy New Year

## from The Southern California Bridge News

**What do you think?**

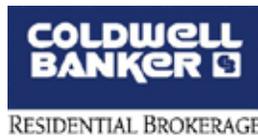
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or now.

Meyers' faith in her inner self, a bit of luck, and a lot of skill at bridge — plus help from a collection of fine partners and teammates — have taken her to the top of women's bridge.

Her team's win in the Venice Cup in Bali, Indonesia, two months ago made her the "most titled" woman in World Bridge Federation history. She has seven gold medals — four in the Venice Cup, the premier women's team event — to go with three silver and two bronze. The seven world titles have come with six different partners. Were it not for a slow-play penalty and a mis-scored board from the Venice Cup in 2000, Meyers would have eight world titles. The penalty and scoring error left her team in second by .4 victory points.

In major ACBL events, Meyers has 18 wins, including four in open events, notably the 1999 Kaplan Blue Ribbon Pairs with John Mohan.

The Blue Ribbon win is right at the top of her list of achievements in bridge. She won her first North American title in 1987 — the Smith Life Master Women's Pairs — and tacked on six more women's championships before the victory with Mohan.

"I was determined to win an open event," she says, "and I always felt I could."

"She is a fighter," says Ed Davis, one of Meyers' mentors at the start of her duplicate career in Southern California. "She is a winner."

Meyers has come a long way from her early days in New York, where she was born, and various other places where the family

landed after her father, a gambler, felt it necessary to relocate.

When it came time for higher education, Meyers chose Newcomb College (Tulane University) because it was in the South. She had lived in the north and the west and in Florida and wanted to try the south. "I was looking for a new experience," she recalls.

On full scholarship at Tulane, she graduated with a degree in political science, achieved between anti-war protests as part of the Tulane Liberation Front.

She graduated in June of 1971, stopping briefly in Philadelphia before the European adventure. "It was great," she says. She returned to the U.S. in May 1972.

At that point, she had an invitation from her older sister, Nina, to take a job with 20th Century Fox, who was closing corporate headquarters in New York and moving to California.

Meyers, a card player from childhood, learned bridge after Nina came home from college one year and introduced the family to the game. In California, the two Meyers girls went looking for a bridge game and ended up at Paul's Bridge Club in Culver City. They walked in and saw all the duplicate oriented stuff on the walls and figured they were in the wrong place. They were on their way out when the club manager, Doris Richardson, "chased us down the stairs and made us come back to play."

The game they played in featured a now-obsolete method of scoring in which North-South pairs record regular scores and East-West pairs score by the reciprocals. The upshot is that low East-West scores were good, high ones bad. Meyers and her sister played East-West,



**Bridge Champion Jill Meyers**

finishing with a score of 200 on a 156 average.

"We didn't know what we were doing," Meyers recalls, "but we were hooked."

The two attractive young women had no lack of partners, including Davis.

"Ed taught me how to play bridge," Meyers says. "He didn't let me play any conventions for a long time. I didn't know how bad I was, but I was fearless and wasn't intimidated by anyone."

Meyers recalls the time that Davis taught her about Unusual 2NT, the convention used to show two-suited hands. On one occasion, Meyer's righthand opponent opened 1S and she overcalled 2NT, ostensibly showing the minors. What she actually had was clubs and hearts.

Davis, with the right hand for a raise to 3NT over a minors-showing bid, put Meyers in the notrump game, not knowing they had a huge fit in hearts.

Meyers made her contract for a big score because the field was in 6H, going down when the opening leader found his partner's void and there was an ace to cash. →

“She had a lot of raw talent,” Davis says, “and she is just very, very smart.”

About three years after moving to Los Angeles to work at Fox as an administrative assistant, Meyers felt she needed a “real job,” so she called someone she knew at Columbia Pictures to see if there was anything she could do there.

There were two options — corporate affairs or the Music Department. The former hippie had no difficulty making a choice. She started out handling administration for scoring sessions — the process for putting music in the movies.

By the time she left Columbia, she was second in charge in the Music Department. Along the way, she earned a law degree taking night classes at the University of West Los Angeles.

“I thought it would be good to have the degree in my back pocket,” she says, “and I dealt with attorneys all the time. Plus, Columbia was paying 75% of it.”

One of her first important jobs was negotiating rights for songs used in the hit film “Close Encounters of the Third Kind.” Says Meyers, “I had no idea what I was doing.”

Meyers now owns and operates Jill Meyers Music Consultants in Santa Monica, where she and her husband, Sid Brownstein, live. The company does one thing— negotiate music rights for movies and television, and she is heavily involved in the latter at present. Her primary focus is The Voice, NBC’s popular reality singing competition.

Bridge took a back seat while she was in law school, but she broke through with an NABC win in 1987, the same year she met Brownstein, now a retired dentist who teaches part-time at UCLA. “He is my rock, my home,” says Meyers. “I’m blessed to have him.” The two have been married since 1990.

With help from Davis and other experts, Meyers developed her bridge game and caught the notice of many of the area’s top players. A year before she won her first women’s title, Beverly Rosenberg, one of the area’s top players, called Meyers to say “you’re playing with me on a team (at an NABC).”

Through the years, as the wins piled up, Meyers learned to rely on her intuition. She can sense energy at the table and envision outcomes of events.

In Lille, France, in 1998, Meyers had decided to do some touring instead of playing in the World Women’s

Pairs. The night before the event, it came to her that she and Shawn Quinn were destined to win. She changed her mind about playing and her vision came true.

Before her game with Mohan in the Blue Ribbon Pairs, she was convinced that they would win. “I saw it,” she says. Even when things weren’t going well during the six-session contest, Meyers was calm and confident.

In the play, Meyers can be prescient. “I’m not afraid to follow my intuition, and my intuition is very strong,” she says.

These days, Meyers plays little except for world championships and the NABCs. After playing with her husband at the Fall NABC in Phoenix the first weekend, she flew back to California to work, planning to return on the weekend.

“Bridge is my hobby,” she says. “I’ve been very lucky to do as well as I have.”

She credits Davis and Mohan for a lot of her development, and she admits that, although her desire to win has not faded over time, “the need to win isn’t there. If I lose, I don’t get crazy because it’s not my life.”

Friends admire Meyers for her honesty and loyalty. One of her biggest fans is Mitch Dunitz, a frequent teammate and occasional partner who has known her for more than 30 years.

“Jill is a fine bridge player and a better person,” Dunitz says. “She has an incredible moral compass. Anyone you talk to will tell you their life is better for having been her bridge partner or friend, and she gives more than she takes. She is all class.”

Adds Davis, “Jill is a wonderful person, with qualities you would want in your daughter or spouse. She does the right thing.”

Meyers could make her living playing bridge, but she prefers the challenges of her job and her life with Brownstein, who says, “No one has a better essence than Jill.”

Her job and bridge, she notes, have similarities. “Both are problem solving,” she says.

In the music business, she has to find out who owns a song and talk the owner into a reasonable price for its use in a film or television show. In bridge, there is often a discovery process. In both, she notes, “sometimes you have to make the impossible happen.”

## District 23 Rank Changes November, 2013

### Junior Master

Patricia Balzano  
 Carole Gibson  
 Sandra Goldman  
 Bernadine Hoffman  
 Mari Jacobson  
 Eric Kraskian  
 Joyce Powell  
 Diane Reynolds  
 Richard Stammerjohn  
 Homer Wallace  
 Helene Winkler  
 Sandra Young

### Club Master

Deborah Downs  
 Karen Gidwitz  
 Martha Hunt  
 S Hunt  
 Rosalee McEntyre

Zorina Pelant  
 Miles Rubin  
 Fern Sulkes

### Sectional Master

Barbara Catino  
 Jeanette Christy  
 Tam Lachoff  
 Diane Maye  
 Anne-Lise Scott  
 Larry Wong

### Regional Master

Gary Baxley, Elizabeth Burrell  
 Kent Burrell, Lynn Danielson  
 William Dilks

### NABC Master

Colleen Gardner

### Life Master

Ruth Ann Poppa  
 Linda Renkus  
 Thomas Robinson

### Bronze Life Master

Kiyo Nagaishi  
 Marion Tumen

### Silver Life Master

Colin Gordon  
 Stanley Greengard  
 Margaret Yeh

### Gold Life Master

Maurice Suhre Jr

### Diamond Life Master

Eugene White Jr



Beautiful California Weather



## Woodland Hills, CA | February 17-23, 2014

The Woodland Hills Marriott features a new poolside Oasis with lush foliage, fire pit and a bar for casual enjoyment. Starbucks is on-site, and the newly restyled Breeze restaurant features indoor and outdoor dining. Enjoy upscale martinis, microbrews and a full appetizer menu at the Q Martini Bar. Many great restaurants are just a few blocks away, and there are shopping choices for all at the nearby Westfield Topanga Mall.



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 Reservations: 800-228-9290,  
 or reserve online at  
[LosAngelesRegional.com](http://LosAngelesRegional.com)

- Room rate \$129 single or double w/ Free in-room internet
- Reserve by 5:00pm January 31, 2014
- Discounted Parking \$7 or \$10 overnight (obtain discount pass at valet desk)
- The Marriott is a smoke-free hotel

The **Los Angeles Regional** at Woodland Hills includes the **Gold Rush Pairs**, in which you can win **GOLD Points** and *nobody you play will have more than 750 masterpoints*. On Sunday try the **Bracketed B Swiss** with teams in each bracket having similar average masterpoints. Three teams in each bracket of eight win **GOLD points!**

- Tournament Manager, Peter Benjamin, 310-720-6050, ahoneydo@aol.com
- Partnership, Betty Jackson, 562-594-4420, rjackson6277@roadrunner.com
- Card fees \$13 for paid members, \$17 for others

### Need a Partner? Need Teammates?

Try our online partnership desk at [LosAngelesRegional.com](http://LosAngelesRegional.com)

Brian Russell  
 Director-in-Charge  
 Sanction 1402035

# Around the Units in District 23

## Glendale Verdugo by Sharon Wolf

January Unit Game, January 11, 2014  
Lunch at 11:15, game at noon

**Reminder:** Beginning in January 2014, all Saturday games, including Unit Games, will begin at noon instead of 1:00. For the Unit Games, lunch will begin at 11:15 and will continue to be a catered affair.

There was a scoring glitch in the December Unit Game results, and we're still waiting for an update. It was a stratification and game classification problem, affecting MP awards, not the rank order in which everyone finished. Look for the results in next month's column.

Happy New Year. Please join us for our next unit game on January 11.

## Long Beach by Jon Yinger

unit website: [www.acblunit557.org](http://www.acblunit557.org)  
club website: [www.LongBeachBridge.com](http://www.LongBeachBridge.com)

**November 27 Unit Game:** Overall results: 1st in A: Aaron Jones/Walt Schafer, 2nd Sankar Reddy/Greg Tapia, 3rd Betty McClellan/Jo Daigle, 4th Yas Takeda/Yoon Kim, 5th Larry Slutsky/Dennis Schmitz, 6th Louis Shen/Alfred Lee. In the B flight overall: 2nd Doreen Maes/Phyllis Greenstein, 3rd John Petrie/Orhan Gurbuz, 4th Kiyoo Nagaishi/Renee Hoffman, 5th Fern and Hank Dunbar, 6th Linda Nye/Terre Premmer. In the C flight overall Rhoda Weisler/Carol Levin were 4th, Kathleen and Douglas Preble were 5th. Congratulations to all!

**70+% Games** November 16th through December 15: Both in evening games: Wednesday evening Nov 20 Jo and John Melis had 70.83%. And Friday evening Sean Lui/Earl VanDerVord had 71.42%. Congratulations to

both pairs!

**Big Masterpoint Awards** in open games November 16 through December 15: Nov 18 Steve Rowe/Toni Morford won 3.15mp for 1st, Nov 19 Marcus Evans/Bill Wilson won 4.08mp for 1st, Chiye Horiguchi/Cecil Cook 3.06mp for 2nd. Nov 20 Bev Shafer/John Crabtree won 3.85 for 1st. Nov 21 Bob Weiser/Mike Ullman won 3.03 for 1st. Nov 22 Cecil Cook/Lowell Andrews won 5.02mp for 1st, Randy Hamlin/Mark Fraser won 3.77mp for 2nd. In the Unit Game Nov 24 Aaron Jones/Walt Schafer won 5.10mp for 1st, Sankar Reddy/Greg Tapia 3.83mp for 2nd and Larry Slutsky/Dennis Schmitz won 3.11mp for 1st in B. Nov 29 Ed and Mike Piken won 4.68mp for 1st, Bill Wilson/Pam Kirkner 3.51mp for 2nd. Dec 2 Toni Morford/Steve Rowe won 4.33mp for 1st, Sankar Reddy/John Petrie 3.25mp for 2nd. Dec 3 Mark Teaford/Renee Hoffman won 3.79mp for 1st in the afternoon game, Kay Tseng/Orhan Gurbuz 3.00mp for 1st in the evening. Dec 4 Betty McClellan/Toni Morford won 4.67mp for 1st, Phil Schuster/Jon Yinger 3.50mp for 2nd. Dec 5 Kay Tseng/John Melis won 4.00mp for 1st, John and Suzie Hand 3.00mp for 2nd. Dec 6 Baum Harris/Patricia Jay won 4.67mp for 1st, Greg Tapia/Les Rawitt 3.50mp for 2nd. Dec 7 Sankar Reddy/Greg Tapia won 4.17mp for 1st, Phyllis Parker/Alan Flower 3.13mp for 2nd. Congratulations to all!

**New Member:** Ralph Brunson. Welcome to the club!

**Status Changes:** New Sectional Masters: Peter Giotta, Gayl Knapp. New Regional Master: Shirley Knopf. New NABC Masters: Susan Bibby, Roy Tomooka, Karen Watson. Congratulations to you all!

**Get well wishes** to Pat Peters

**Upcoming events at the Club:** Jan 5-11 Grass Roots FUNd week. Jan 12-18 Club Championship Week. Jan 19 is the next Unit Game. Lunch at 12:30, game begins at 1pm. Jan 22 evening Inter-Club Championship. Sunday, Jan 26 Bridge-in-a-Day game in the big room, regular open game in the back room.

## News from Leisure World

by Judy Carter-Johnson.

**70% games:** On November 15 Bee Kinman and Joan Tschirki set a new record with a 77.78% game. Bee is a Diamond Life Master and Joan is a Gold Life Master. On December 5 Verna Becker and Dorothy had a 70.60% game.

Club Championship Results: November 14— Clubhouse #3 Overall winners: 1st in A and B: Melanie and Jerome Smith. 2nd in A Verna Baccus/Larry Slutsky. 3rd in A, 2nd in B Lottie Kostar/BettySichel. 4th in A Joyce Henderson/Rob Preece. 5th in A Verna Becker/Dorothy Favre. 6th in A Emma Trepinski/Kimiko Matsumoto. 3rd in B Jean Byer/Sue McHale. 4th in B Bob Lofstrom/Chuck Cutchshaw. 5th in B Gene and Ron Yaffee.

Holiday Party. On Dec 6 both groups had a joint bridge game and holiday dinner at Clubhouse #1. Sixty bridge players and additional guests enjoyed pre-dinner snacks and turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Thanks to all of the Board Members and other volunteers who helped make this a great event.

Get Well Wishes to Lottie Kostar.

Upcoming Club Championship: Clubhouse #3— Monday Jan 13.

Upcoming Unit Rate Game: Clubhouse #3— Thursday Feb 20.

If you have any news for next month's column, please email me at [jcj90740@gmail.com](mailto:jcj90740@gmail.com). Results of all Leisure World games are posted on [www.acblunit557.org](http://www.acblunit557.org)

**Get the Unit 557 Newsletter via email:** Send me your email address, and I'll put you on the list. My email is [jyinger1@gmail.com](mailto:jyinger1@gmail.com).

## Pasadena-San Gabriel Valley by Roy Wilson

Marie had some eye surgery and asked me to fill in for the January column, so you will just have to put up with me as nobody else has stepped forward to write this stuff. Our unit really needs a volunteer who would like to provide us with a bit of monthly prose and bridge gossip. The only thing we ask is that you write about bridge topics. Anybody?

## Coming Dates

The next regular unit game date is Sunday, January 5 and then another one on February 16. After that it's another party - our Election Party which will be on March 2. It always seems to be something of a chore to get people to consider being on the Unit Board but if you have any desire at all to help us, please consider putting your name forward. You don't have to be an old hand at bridge either, just have a willingness to attend a monthly meeting to make decisions and then work your butt off to make them happen. But I guarantee that you will enjoy it and learn something about how this wonderful game is almost entirely run by volunteers.

## A Bit of History

Did you know that the Arcadia Bridge Center was established by Art and Diane in 1971? That's a very long time it's been around! I bet you didn't know that the San Marino Bridge Club is even older. Marie and I have been in this unit since about 1967 and a few other players may have been here longer, but none of them can recall when the Woman's Club on Huntington Drive opened as a clubhouse for our unit's bridge game.

Mike Marcucci has been collecting historical bits and pieces of unit 559 for quite awhile now, but he doesn't know either. Even so, I'm glad it has been part of my life. Sadly, there are 323 names of players on our website's list of departed members and Marie and I knew almost all of them and considered them as friends. Mike tells me we don't have all of the names, though. (If you have anything historical about our unit, Mike would surely appreciate it, and someday he says he will share with us.)

## North American Pairs

There will be a district-wide NAP game this month.

## International

Margie Gould and Jeanette Deverian played in the Regional in Puerto Vallarta and won an Open Pairs. Then they became tourists in Panama. They also played in an International Tournament in Cuba and finished third in the teams and third in the pairs. The players were from Norway, Spain, France, Argentina, Mexico, Columbia, and Cuba and Margie and Jeanette →

thought most of them were very good.

### San Marino Christmas Party

We had a good turnout at the San Marino Christmas party and Herman Helber and Jake Frenkel had a nudge better than 70% to win the whole thing. Ruby Davis and her Christmas Elves did great job with the food! Thank you, all of you.

### Unit Christmas Party

We had 20 tables at our annual Christmas Party and a great dinner between games. It was held at the Arcadia Community Center and I'm sure that everybody gained at least two pounds since there were lots of good-tasting calories! The afternoon flight A game was won by Peter Szecsi and Bernie Mateer while Bill Brodek and Hugh Bartlett were the best flight B players in the room. They were also 2nd in the A flight. Thanks to all the players who donated raffle items - they were a big hit! We'll do it again next year.

### Arcadia Christmas Party

Art and Diane had a party for the rookie players and another party for the open players. As usual, the desserts were wonderful, but the candy canes, not so much.

### Gold Points

Congratulations to David Solin who went out to the Palm Springs Regional and picked up partners at the partnership desk. He brought home over 14 gold points and now is but a few points away from becoming a Life Master.

### Board 26

Here's a hand that my partner, Gabrielle Sill, played in Palm Springs. Do you see how to make seven spades? The lead was the queen of diamonds from the South hand.

- ♠ 93
- ♥ T652
- ♦ 432
- ♣ QJ64

- |         |          |
|---------|----------|
| ♠ KJ    | ♠ AQT765 |
| ♥ J973  | ♥ A8     |
| ♦ A95   | ♦ K7     |
| ♣ AK85  | ♣ T9     |
| ♠ 84    |          |
| ♥ KQ4   |          |
| ♦ QJT86 |          |
| ♣ 732   |          |

Okay, it's not immediately clear how to take 13 tricks, but it was obvious from the lead that South had to guard the diamond suit, right? Now, Gabby decided that if South also had the heart honors she could do it. She took the ♦K in hand, drew the missing trumps and then the two top clubs and the ace of hearts. When she played off the rest of the trumps she came down to these last three cards. What could poor South pitch when she played that ♠5, the last trump?

- |      |       |     |
|------|-------|-----|
|      | ♠     |     |
|      | ♥     |     |
|      | ♦     |     |
|      | ♣ QJ6 |     |
| ♠    |       | ♠ 5 |
| ♥ J  |       | ♥ 8 |
| ♦ A9 |       | ♦ 7 |
| ♣    |       | ♣   |
|      | ♠     |     |
|      | ♥ K   |     |
|      | ♦ JT  |     |
|      | ♣     |     |

Bridge is such a simple game.  
See you at the table!

## Pomona Covina by Tom Lill

Unit Game - Saturday, January 18, 11:00 a.m.  
Individual - Saturday, Jan 4, 9:30 a.m., LaVerne site

I'm afraid it's going to be a somewhat skinny column this month. What with our Unit Game falling well after the deadline for getting this thing to the editor, and Roger being out of town (and therefore not posting game results to his web site), not to mention La Fetra being shut down for two weeks due to the Christmas boutique, there isn't a lot to report. No winners list, no high-percentage game, no Unit Game, no nuffin'. →

Well, almost.

Where has Roger been? Goofing off, that's where, on a cruise to Hawaii. No sense of perspective, I guess. On the other hand, Clint Lew has been idling in the islands for nearly two months. Oh well, life is hard, but someone has to do it.

The December Individual was captured by Margie Hall, with an impressive 72.73%. Tough luck for Larry Clark, whose 70.45% game would usually be good enough. Rounding out the top finishers were Claudia Cochran, Donald Logsdon, and Linda Tessier.

**Promotions this month:** Umesh Jindal and Esther Johnson to Junior Master. Marty Husted and Lois Snowden to Club Master

In other news, our own Penny Barbieri has been nominated to the Goodwill Committee for 2014. And in thanks for all their hard work supporting the Longest Day back in June, Cordell Goode and Vic Sartor have been nominated to the National Charity Committee. Thank you all for all your hard work!

Our hand for this month is something of a puzzler. Nobody has a freak, nobody has a rock crusher or a dog. The high card strength is nearly evenly divided between the two side. But hold on ...

As dealer, no one vulnerable, you pick up this beast: ♠ -- ♥ T543 ♦ KT9642 ♣ AT5.

Being a disciplined bidder (not to mention the fact that the 6-card diamond suit is not a thing of beauty), you pass. LHO opens 1♣. Partner doubles, RHO passes. And you?

Well, you have 7 HCP, and you can add a couple of points for the long diamonds if you like, or add something for the spade void. But should you do that latter thing? If partner's strength is concentrated in that suit – something like KQJx – the hands aren't going to fit very well. So you take the low road and just call 1♥. (Why not 2♦? Something I didn't tell you: partner's takeout doubles are very major suit oriented; there might not be much in diamonds over there.)

LHO passes, partner jumps to 3♥, and you have an obvious raise to 4♥. The opening lead is the ♣K, and you catch this dummy:

♠K7642 ♥AK986 ♦Q5 ♣4.

Trumps are 2-2 and diamonds behave, so you take 12 tricks, losing only to the ♦A. "Big deal," you say. What's the problem? **This** is the problem: How do you get even to the cold game, let alone the slam? You have

19 HCP between the two hands (of course, there is some shape here). Partner's jump raise was ... well, let's just say it was optimistic. Yes, you could have jumped to 2♥ at your first turn, but is that so clear cut (for the reason stated above)? How DO you get there? (Not everyone did, some languishing in 3♥.)

At another table, the game was reached on another odd auction. The holder of your cards opened 2♦, partner called 2♥ (forcing), which was raised to 4♥.

If you can come up with a sensible auction on these cards, leading to the game (the slam isn't really that good a contract), we'd all like to know about it.

Quote for the month: "If you leap into a well, Providence is not bound to fetch you out." (Thomas Fuller)

Until next month ...

## Torrance-South Bay by Steve Mager

Unit: [www.freewebs.com/bridgeatunit568](http://www.freewebs.com/bridgeatunit568)  
SBBC: [www.bridgeclubs.org/index.php?id=sbbc](http://www.bridgeclubs.org/index.php?id=sbbc)

Upcoming Events at the South Bay Bridge Club

Club Championship: Wednesday, January 8, 11:30 a.m.

Club Championship, Monday, January 13, 11:30 a.m.

Club Championship: Saturday, January 25, 2:00 p.m.

Cheapest Game in Town:

Handicapped Swiss Teams, Tues Evenings \$2/player

Friday night games on January 3 and 17

### Free Lessons

Gerri Carlson and Arlene Greengard will continue with free Bridge lessons in 2014. They will conduct lessons on Thursday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. beginning January 9 and Saturday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

### Club Championships

The club championship on December 3 was won by Patty Taylor/John Farr. At the unit Christmas party on December 8 Fran Israel/Ray Mack were first overall in Flight A with Hank Sheehan/Steven Dagle leading the way in Flight B. In the CD game Joyce Klossner/Roberta Brown led the way. On December 9 KIm →

Wang/Ray Mack won Flight A and Joan Chrishal/Clara Trummer led Flight B. On December 13 Fran Israel/Gabriela Jackson led the way while in the 49er game Kathy Shinkle/James DeFlon were the leaders.

At Anderson Park the December 13 Club Championship was led by David Cheshire/Jeanne Tamaki in Flight A with Sally and Christopher Earnest winning Flights B and C.

### Team Winners

Following are the winning quartets in recent Tuesday night handicapped Swiss games at the South Bay Bridge Club.

- November 19: Carol McCully, Lucy Gellner, Ed Barad, Wayne Otsuki
- November 26: Steve Ramos, Ed Piken, John Brailliar, Bruce Horiguchi
- December 3: John Brailliar, Steve Ramos, Ed Piken, Lucy Gellner
- December 10: Fran Israel, Luis Gamio, Arlene and Stanley Greengard

### GUV Memorial Award

I think a record was set for the biggest number I ever went for at a recent South Bay Club game. Since I have been playing an awful long time I may have forgotten an even bigger disaster. Well actually it was my unnamed partner who had the pleasure of going for the number mainly because it was her fault. I held ♠ Jxxxx ♥QJxxx ♦xx ♣x in fourth seat non vul. LHO opened a diamond and pard overcalled 2♣. When RHO quickly passed I correctly surmised that he was sitting on a penalty double and I hoped LHO would save us. But no, LHO reopened with a double followed by two fast passes. It looked like if there ever was a time for a "please save me pard" redouble this was it. So I redoubled. However, pard didn't get the message and left it in. Down 5 for minus 2200. If pard bid her ♥Kxx after the redouble we might not have made 2♥ but it wouldn't have been anything close to minus 2200.

Actually I do remember opponents going for even bigger numbers against me years ago. In one instance against a husband wife pair I held something like ♠QJxxx ♥KJxxxx ♦x ♣x. I was playing with a partner known for his abuses of unusual no trump bids. Pard passed in first seat, RHO opened 1♥ and LHO bid 1♠.

I saw pard warming up over there for an unusual No Trump call and prayed that he would just bid 1NT as a passed hand. UnLucky, pard bid 4NT. This probably would have gone for a bigger number than 2200 except husband saved me with a 5♥ bid which I doubled. Wife, wanted to double us so badly that she decided to really punish husband with a redouble. This went down 5 for 2800.

I'm sure my own personal record positive score occurred at the old Westwood Bridge Club. One emotional opponent was so unhappy with his partner's bidding that he leapt to 7NT as punishment. When doubled, he redoubled. This was good for 3800. Almost makes minus 2200 seem like a good score.

Na Zdrowie

## West LA by Robert Shore

### Holiday Cheer

As usual, our Unit's Holiday Party was the event of the year. Featuring festive nutcrackers from the personal collection of Volunteer of the Year Carolyn Taff, the party saw its usual full house. In addition to the Volunteer of the Year award, the Unit also named John Jones as its 2013 Player of the Year. Of course, after awards and brunch, there was bridge. Farideh Sigari and Suzanne Menck won the open game, while Lee Hausner and Arlene Todd took top honors in the 299er game.

Next year we're probably going to do things a little differently. We will continue to accept walk-ins for the Holiday Party as long as we have capacity. But you'll save yourself money (and the Unit Board members staffing the event aggravation) by making reservations in advance. The tentative date for next year's party is November 23, 2014, so save the date now.

### More Money Matters

We're advised by Rand Pinsky, District 23's representative to the ACBL's Board of Directors, that a fee increase is in the works. So if you've been procrastinating the renewal of your membership, now would be a good time to act. The fee increase will likely happen in late winter or early spring, so get moving now. →

### A Good Cause

As mentioned in this space last month, Cyma's game at Barrington at 7:15 p.m. on January 14 will be a Charity Club Championship in memory of her late husband Jerry. The proceeds will go to research for fighting Alzheimer's Disease. I think the club has a capacity of approximately 30 tables, and I hope players within and outside our Unit will join me in giving Cyma as much business that day as she can handle.

### Names in the News

Before moving on to results at the table, a couple more news items to relate. First, we wish bon voyage to Marshall Wengrow. As many of you know, Marshall and Helle received an offer they couldn't refuse — the opportunity to live within convenient driving distance of their grandchildren. They've left for North Carolina, but I'm sure that those of us who travel will continue to see them at the table from time to time.

Second, the New York Times bridge column on November 25 featured one of our Unit members. The column, which can be found on-line at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/25/crosswords/bridge/defying-conventional-wisdom-at-a-florida-regional.html>, featured a successful defense by Reese Milner, playing in September at a regional in Naples, Florida.

### Alliteration

Success was sweet for Mike Savage, whose team won the Sunday Swiss at the Sun City Sectional. David Kempe finished first in Flight A of the District's second semifinal for North American Open Pairs, so we'll be seeing him and his partner on January 26. And we had a number of winners at the Palm Springs Regional. Joanie Pepper and Keith Miller started things off by winning the Monday evening Charity Pairs event. Bill Rogers won the Wednesday A/B Pairs, while Mauricio and Lidia Epelbaum teams with Ken and Diane Bishop to win their bracket of the Cathedral City Knockout Teams. Lew and Rhoda Himmell picked up the win in the Friday A/B Pairs event. On Saturday afternoon, Judith Stone won the 99er Pair game while Rita Levin's team won their bracket of the Bermuda Dunes Compact Knockout. Joel Schiff capped things off by winning his bracket of the Flight B Swiss.

And then there was Phoenix. Bob Kent picked up

a win in the first Saturday-Sunday morning Compact Knockout Teams event, while John Herriot won his bracket of the Saturday-Sunday (full) Knockout Teams game. Reese Milner won the Four Sisters Knockout Teams, and Ifti Baqai picked up two wins: the Friday-Saturday Compact Knockout Teams and the Second Sunday Stratified Open Pairs.

### A Phoenix Problem

Playing at IMPs with all red, you hold: ♠Q76 ♥AQJ654 ♦AQ8 ♣2

Partner opens 3♦ as dealer, and right or wrong, you decide to try 3♥. Partner raises to 4♥ and that's the contract. The opening lead is the ♥T and this is what you see:

Dummy: ♠J ♥32 ♦KJT9643 ♣KQ6

Declarer: ♠Q76 ♥AQJ654 ♦AQ8 ♣2

RHO plays the ♥K. Plan the play.

At our table, Declarer took 2 heart tricks and discovered that they were 4-1, giving her an inevitable trump loser. She also lost the obvious three black suit tricks, going down 1. But look what happens if she simply ducks trick 1. Spades are still under control and as long as she can get back to her hand with either a diamond (if the defense taps dummy) or a trump (if it doesn't), the most she can lose is a club, a heart, and a spade. When she gets in she draws trump and has 12 tricks available, less whatever the defense has cashed before letting her in. Our teammates played a diamond partial, so the swing on this board was the difference in the match.

### Welcome Mat

This month's new members are Barbara Fischer and Bill Korbin. Transferring to us from other units, near and far, are Anna Benatar, Susan Prescott, and Roger Rasmussen. Please give these players a good welcome when you meet them at the table.

### Around the Clubs

As reported in this space last month, Rhoda Himmell has hung up her notebook as this column's reporter from the Beverly Hills Bridge Club. Stepping up in that role is new volunteer Lee Hausner, who has my thanks. Beverly Hills had no club championships

# Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

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

# 1

IMPs  
no 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.

**Bartusek: 2♥.** Too many losers for 3♥ (Losing Trick Count is 7). Change my ♥J to the ♥Q and my hand would barely qualify for a 3♥ bid. *[I like 3♥, and my two most regular partners both like 2♥. Isn't partnership bridge an easy game?]*

**Roeder: 2♥.** More of a problem in the era before Rodwell invented the Bra Convention (a.k.a., "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.]*

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

**Sacks: 3♥.** Clean hand values, and partner knows to discount any spade 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."*

# 2

MPs  
all vul

South	West	North	East
1♥ ?	pass	1♠	pass

You, South, hold: ♠7 ♥KJT973 ♦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 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 recent 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 could 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 heart♦ 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.*

West LA *continued from page 11*

last month, and the only 70% game was recorded by Lee Hausner and Rahim Israel.

At Barrington, Danny Kleinman and Evan Krantz won a club championship, as did Sheri Rivera and Aram Bedros and Chuck Maltz and Sandy Carroll. Picking up 70% games were Robert Levy, Sally Aminoff, Jill Richmond, George Wagner, Adrienne Green, and Mim Spertus.

### Climbing the Ladder

New Junior Masters this month are Lila Levine,

Ubaldo Marson, James Morrow, and Marilyn Rohlin. Reaching Club Master status are Brenda Berland, Cheri Bitar, Ms. E.L. Johnson, Paula Nataf, Suzanne Peterson, and Arnold Stein. Joseph Lieberman and Pamela Morton have become Sectional Masters, while Leslie Brucker, Yehudit Hasin-Brumshten, and Katherine Weisberg are now Regional Masters. Diane Sax and John Paul Shaby have become NABC Masters, and Ken Okel is now an Advanced NABC Master.

Reaching Life Master status is Carol Sherman. Congratulations to all on your accomplishments.

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

3

MPs  
no vul

South	West	North	East
1♠ ?	pass	1♦ 2♣	pass pass

You, South, hold: ♠KT763 ♥KJT52 ♦T6 ♣Q  
What call do you make?

**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 (a.k.a., 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.*



## LOS ANGELES REGIONAL

Woodland Hills, CA | February 17-23, 2014

The Woodland Hills Marriott features a new poolside Oasis with lush foliage, fire pit and a bar for casual enjoyment. Starbucks is on-site, and the newly restyled Breeze restaurant features indoor and outdoor dining. Enjoy upscale martinis, microbrews and a full appetizer menu at the Q Martini Bar. Many great restaurants are just a few blocks away, and there are shopping choices for all at the nearby Westfield Topanga Mall.



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The Los Angeles Regional at Woodland Hills includes the Gold Rush Pairs, in which you can win **GOLD Points** and *nobody you play will have more than 750 masterpoints.* On Sunday try the **Bracketed B Swiss** with teams in each bracket having similar average masterpoints. Three teams in each bracket of eight win **GOLD points!**

- Tournament Manager, Peter Benjamin, 310-720-6050, [ahoneydo@aol.com](mailto:ahoneydo@aol.com)
- Partnership, Betty Jackson, 562-594-4420, [rjackson6277@roadrunner.com](mailto:rjackson6277@roadrunner.com)
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Brian Russell  
Director-in-Charge  
Sanction 1402035

4  
 IMPs  
 NS vul

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 opponent's 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.*



5

MPs  
no vul

South	West	North	East
	1♦	2♣	pass
2♥	pass	3♦	pass
3NT	Dbl	pass	pass
?			

You, South, hold: ♠932 ♥KQT84 ♦T642 ♣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 Txxx 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 expert's 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 to 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 he can beat 3NT, 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 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. Shuster's layout of ♠AQx ♥Jx ♦Ax ♣Kxxxx comes close. We could change it slightly to ♠KQx ♥Jx ♦Ax ♣KQxxxx and that's a reasonable 3♦ bid. LHO could be doubling on something like ♠Ax ♥Ax ♦KQJ9x ♣JTxx. The ♥J is a huge card on that layout. 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!*

## Ventura 299er Sectional in Camarillo

January 18-19, 2014

All Events at:  
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(805) 482-4881

1605 E. Burnley Street, Camarillo {Corner of Carmen & Burnley}

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At Burnley, turn right. Quick left into parking lot.

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(0-50, 50-100, 100-300)

Fees per person per session: \$10 ACBL members  
\$13 unpaid & non-members

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

**Saturday, Jan 18**

10:00 A.M. & 3:00 P.M.  
Single Session 299er Pairs

Speaker at 2:15 P.M.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣

**Sunday, Jan 19**

10:00 A.M. & 3:00 P.M.:  
Single Session 299er Pairs  
3:00 P.M.: 299er Swiss Teams (1 Sess.)

Speaker at 2:15 P.M.

Unit 547 Sanction # SN1401119

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*Director In Charge: Tom Ciacio*  
*Tournament Chair: Bob Gruber*  
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