

Southern California Bridge News

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE SCBN Readers

by Mike Marcucci, District 23 President



When we talk about bridge institutions in LA, one item I would put on the list is the Southern California Bridge News – our District 23 newspaper. First issue was June 1964 and we have issued it monthly ever since. I have read every one of them from January 1972 on, and I can tell you that the history of D23 bridge and its players is contained in those pages. There is going to be a discussion about continuing this newspaper at the D23 Board meeting at the Glendale Regional on 29 Dec, so I thought a little background would be valuable. The discussion will affect every bridge player in LA and I would like every player to know what is happening behind the scenes.

By the time this article comes out, that meeting will be over, but I hope the topic will not be closed. I am going to do my best to ensure that all the Units understand all aspects of the SCBN and they do not vote on impulse or flawed information. The whole story needs to be understood before decisions are made.

Our background is divided into two phases. From 1964 till 2008, we printed the newspaper and physically mailed it to each household on the first of the month. Max Hardy was the 1st editor, then came Alfred Sheinwold, Elif Anderson, Eugenie Mathe, Barbara McKisick (for 25 years!), and, finally, Jennifer Einberg since 2004. Folks that I have talked with loved that paper, courtesy of the US mail. It had articles, book reviews, sectional flyers, tournament results, player MP races, and **all** the Unit news that entertained readers endlessly. Play-of-the-hand articles by experts helped to educate us all, and just about everything you needed to know about bridge in LA was in that paper. What a shame to stop mailing it out.

The District was forced into that decision because

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More from San Diego by Kevin Lane, District Director



*Bridge is a game
and should be fun*

The San Diego NABC is now concluded. The final tablecount for the tournament was 11,747 tables which exceeded expectations. Note, however, that the 2009 San Diego tournament brought in 12,927 tables which shows how NABCs are generally attracting fewer players.

Generally, the San Diego got rave reviews as a playing site and hotel. I favor returning to the hotel.

Board Meeting

Last month I reported on the start of the board meetings. I continue that report here.

Budget: At every fall NABC the board reviews a preliminary budget that is formally voted on at the spring NABC. I express concern about three areas, the unfavorable 2018 NABC schedule, the planned membership growth, and the organization's priorities.

First, 2018 will be a uniquely challenging year financially because of the particular set of scheduled NABCs: Philadelphia, Atlanta, and Hawaii. Hawaii is especially a weak tournament financially.

Ironically, part of the problem with the Hawaii tournament is that many players enjoy the locale so much they engage in other activities than bridge. On the positive side, the cost of the board of directors meeting in Hawaii is likely to be smaller than in San Diego.

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of costs. Between publishing and mailing, it cost us about \$25,000 per year. The Units contributed about \$8K of that total and the District made up the rest. By 2008, that arrangement was not working. An extensive trade study led by Mark Raggio concluded that an on-line paper was the best balance between our players' needs for information and our bank balance. We cut our costs to about \$7,000 per year and that has been maintained for the last 10 years.

Our online version is pretty snazzy and in a different format to make it readable on a computer screen. Yes, you need a computer now for access. Get used to it, folks – you're living in the 21st century. Printing in color would have been virtually impossible from a cost standpoint, but now our paper looks beautiful in vivid color on your screen.

So what is the problem here? Some Units do not think continuing the SCBN is worth their contribution because "nobody reads it anyway." That is what I'd like to address.

First of all, make no mistake about the cost. That works out to 18¢ a player for each edition of the SCBN. Where can you buy a newspaper for that? Each Unit contributes the **exact same** proportion of costs for the present SCBN. Whether a large Unit or a small Unit, the contribution is the same \$2 per year per player. Billings are based on the number of players in the Unit and

that bill is affordable because ACBL refunds twice that amount to each Unit every year as part of their operating budget. It is not a question of affordability even though some billings are larger than others. Both amounts are on a "per member" basis.

So let's address the value of the SCBN. It does not have as complete a coverage of all the news as the print version. Units now advertise on their own web sites. We have fewer article contributors for book reviews and bridge lessons. Would we like to have these? Yes – all we need are the volunteers. Jim Perkins just started a new feature called "Director's Corner." We look forward to those as we roll into the new year. On the plus side, John Jones and his panel of experts put in a ton of work on the hand analyses feature each month. He does not get enough credit for all the time that section takes. We would welcome a volunteer writer for a parallel 299'er feature each month. Then there are the Unit columns. Wow. The work that all our Unit Reporters put into those columns is also probably unappreciated. Lots of news and lots of results. In the 70's and 80's there was a lot more social info in there. Home parties, births, vacation trips to Peru, club incidents, cookie recipes, kids graduations, etc. As many of you have seen, there is a lot of historical info on the walls at our tournaments. We obtained **almost all** of that info from the SCBN editions of the past. Which is why you see very little info from 1964 to 1972. We have never found those editions anywhere!! We are preserving our present for folks in the future and sharing our present with each other right now.

Next point I would address is to request that we solve the right problem. If the assertion really is that the Unit Board (notice I did not say the players) does not want to spend money on a paper that few read, I ask whether the solution is to stop their contribution?? That action would end the SCBN. (We cannot afford to publish the SCBN, even online, if the Units do not contribute.) I propose the solution is to make it easier for all D23 players to notice and read each edition.

I will have asked, by the time you read this, for two actions. First, I will ask each of the Units who are doubtful of the SCBN's value to survey all their players on this. The players will not be in the dark for this vote because a complete info package will be sent to each for their examination and contemplation. The second arises because of comments I have personally received when I ask players a friendly question at the tables.

When I hear that a player has not read the latest →

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edition of the SCBN, I ask them if an email directly to them would make it easier to remember it and read it. I have received 100% “yes” responses. As the Units are proceeding with their votes, we will work on implementing direct emails for future editions. This is a reasonable action because of a few items. The District used to have this capability but has lost it. We need to trace down that cause. If it is a reasonably easy task, then we will have answered our player’s needs for an easy path of action. If it is not easy for one person, we may have to ask for a volunteer in each Unit to spread out the labor. Reasonable? Yes. I personally emailed every member of Unit 559 a few days ago and it took me ½ hour. That was doing it the slow way. I’m sure I could get that down to 10 minutes with a little effort. It might even be as easy as a one-click action when we learn how to do it right! We will work on it.

The downside result of no SCBN is that all our Units in D23 will become insular. In order to find out what is happening in any other part of our area, a member would have to access multiple web sites which may or may not be up-to-date. There will be little feeling of community in the District without that east monthly influx from nine different Units all in one place – the SCBN. The District web site does not serve that function. The SCBN has been functioning as that community sharing vehicle for 53 years now. We need our community to continue.

Now off to prepare for the Glendale tournament. Hope to see you there. It’s party time on Saturday night. I hope we can handle the crowd and the dance floor is big enough.

In the meantime, happy trails.

DIRECTOR continued from page 1

Second, management is renewing efforts to grow membership which has more or less stagnated in the past 10 years. I wholly endorse efforts to increase membership, of course. My concern is that we shouldn't budget increased revenue from new members until we have a proven track record on the various new approaches we're trying.

Third, I'm concerned that the ACBL's many and varied projects divert energy and money from strategic priorities such as growing membership. I'm delighted to spend money on our key strategic priorities.

My fear is that adoption of so many other smaller programs diverts the ACBL's attention from those priorities. In short, if we focus on everything then we're not focusing on anything.

Term Limits

The board voted to adopt term limits for District Directors. Because this change is a bylaw change, the board of directors must vote on it again and also the board of Governors before it becomes effective.

Furthermore, the vote must pass by 2/3 of the board of directors – which it did in San Diego.

If the motion eventually becomes enacted, District Directors will be limited to four terms. This constraint is rather mild, but it's an important milestone since this very motion has been defeated so many times in the past. I voted in favor of the term limit motion.

Contact me at kland23@gmail.com to share your thoughts.

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♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠♥♣♦♠

From the Director's Chair: Slow Play

by Jim Perkins

I know. You are late this round because the opponents took too much time playing their obvious 4♥ down 1 on any lead and any line. You are late the next round because the pair in front of you was late the round before. Or, as Roseanne Rosanna Dana used to hear from her father, it's always something.

As a club director, it's my job to make sure that everyone has a reasonably good time and that we finish the game within a reasonable margin of our scheduled stop time. I need to keep the game moving. If you are on time in the bridge game, you're not doing the director a favor. You are just being minimally considerate of the other players.

We all get the same 15 or 21 minutes to finish our two- or three- board rounds. Virtually every pair I have encountered is capable of virtually always playing the allotted number of boards in the allotted time interval. What they are not capable of in that limited interval is

giving partner all the instruction they believe partner needs. FYI, you will not improve your partner's play with at the table criticism. At least not for this session.

Play in the afternoon. Discuss in the evening. Or, as we used to say when we were young enough to enjoy bars, play at the club, discuss at the bar. And if you're late more than twice in one game (let alone being late more than twice every time you play), it's not them. It's you. We all face the same conditions. Show some consideration for your fellow players.

If the pair in front of you is running over, call the director and let him or her know. This protects you should you run over in the following round and reminds the director of his or her job to keep all the pairs moving. Then do your best to catch the table up. Remember, this is your weekly or daily club game, not the Vanderbilt teams North American Bridge Championship.

Top 30 for District 23

By Mike Marcucci, D23 President

I missed this last month. Thinking too much about the Glendale tournament and not enough about D23 history. Ah, the good old days.

Each November, the ACBL publishes a list of the Top 100 Lifetime Masterpoint holders. Sometimes they extend that list to 300, and sometimes 500.

Included in the list are many

deceased players, many of whom are now legends of the game. We must all be amazed that, when Barry Crane passed in 1985, he was more than 10,000 points ahead of second place! He still stands 21st on the list after 32 years! What an accomplishment.

What we have on our list are the top 30 for District 23 off that ACBL list. A few notes of explanation are warranted. The first name on the list is just for reference. Jeff

is not in D23, but his total just shows you the stratospheric range he is in. Our next point is on the colors. Grand life masters are identified in magenta rather than black. Then, lastly, the first group of column standings are the ACBL numbers in green. D23 standings then follow in blue.

So here, fellow players in D23, are our Top 30 MP holders for October 2017. Congrats to all on their hard work and dedication.

1	Jeff Meckstroth	84,836.95	11	Billy Cohen	13,397.74	22	Gil Stinebaugh	9,420.31
49	Steve Gross	27,338.04	12	Pam Wittes	12,838.54	23	Alex Kolesnik	9,411.58
87	Ellen Anten	22,664.98	13	John Swanson	11,326.36	24	Rhoda Himmell	8,970.37
111	Mitch Dunitz	20,738.95	14	Eddie Kantar	10,891.86	25	Andy Vinock	8,938.67
114	Jill Meyers	20,513.59	15	Peter Benjamin	10,646.04	26	Sid Brownstein	8,222.86
137	Eric Greco	18,773.40	16	Jeff Goldsmith	10,636.47	27	Ifti Baqai	8,195.08
178	Rebecca Clough	17,486.15	17	Mike Savage	10,620.21	28	Ellen Kent	8,157.41
194	Steve Mager	17,133.96	18	Bruce Horiguchi	10,566.87	29	Bill Sides	8,125.11
245	Roger Clough	15,718.57	19	John Jones	10,412.00	30	Audrey Currie	8,105.73
270	Gerry Bare	15,219.23	20	Jonky Chung	10,032.94			
273	Ed Davis	15,168.20	21	Aram Bedros	9,990.65			

Around the Units in District 23



Long Beach by Jon Yinger

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

November 24 Unit-rated Black Friday Game: Overall results: 1st in A: Mike Welsh/Ted Gibbs, 2nd John and Jo Melis, 3rd Dominique and Arthur Moore, 4th Lutrell Long/John Williams, 5th Lavonne McQuilkin/Carol Murakoshi, 6th Melanie and Jerome Smith. In the B flight overalls: Jean Matz/Pamela Kirkner were tied with Joyce Henderson/Alan Olschwang for 4/5. In the NLM section Elaine Dovgard/Marilyn Landau were 1st n/s, Rai Scime/Don Vallens were 1st e/w. Congratulations to all!

70+% Games Nov 16 through Dec 15: In the beginners games (only 12 boards) Dec 4 Katharine Seibert/Lillian Slater were 1st with 79.17% and Dec 8 Phil and Phyllis Din were also 1st with 79.17%. Congratulations to both pairs!

Big Masterpoint Awards: Nov 16 through Dec 15: In the team game Nov 19 the team of Mark Singer/Jeanette Estill and Bob and Rosalie Cuccias were first, each team-mate winning 2.40mp. In the open game Nov 21 Ted Gibbs/Mike Welsh won 3.21mp for 1st. And in the open game Nov 30 Paul Pettler/Kevin Lane won 3.06mp for 1st. Congratulations to all three teams!

New Club Members: Ernesto Analla, John Benson, Marie Benson, Kent Carlsen, John Cliby, Ted Dowe, Adam Gardner, John Markovich, Michael Mirabal, Larry Wisinski and Howard Small. Welcome to the club!

Status Changes: New Junior Master: Beth Byrne. New Club Masters: Juliane Deluccio, Leo Dittimore, Ana Winn. New Life Master: Alan Olschwang. New

Silver Life Master: Sue Fardette. New Gold Life Master: Larry Slutsky. Congratulations to all!

Get Well Wishes to Debra Skinner.

Condolences to family and friends of Al Beebe and Mary Thomas both of whom passed away in December.

Upcoming Events at the Club

January 1 New Year's Day unit-rated game. Extra points, regular card fees.

January 10, 12, 13 Junior Fund Games. Extra points, regular card fees.

January 21 Sunday Swiss Teams.

January 23 ACBL-wide Junior Fund Game. Extra points, regular card fees.

January 28 Unit Game. Card fee \$8. Only dessert served.

February 1 Bob Mault Day. Extra points, regular card fees.

February 3 Junior Fund Game. Extra points, regular card fees.

News from Leisure World Bridge Clubs

by Judy Carter-Johnson

Unit Rated Game: Clubhouse #1—November 17: Judy Carter-Johnson/Mark Singer 1 in A, 1 in B, 1 in C. Judith Jones/Al Appel 2 in A. Jeanette Estill/Marilyn McClintock 3 in A. Joyce Basch/Dorothy Favre 4 in A. Nancy Lichter/William Dewell 5 in A, 3 in B, 2 in C. Betty Scharf/Bill Robinson 6 in A, 4 in B, 3 in C. Barbara Harris/Jean Kato 5 in B. Ellen Kice/Russell Gray 4 in C.

Club Championship Game—Clubhouse #3—November 20: Judith Jones/Al Appel 1 in A. Jeanette Estill/Marilyn McClintock 2 in A. Joyce Henderson/Thad Mikols 3 in A. Fern Dunbar/Rob Preece 4 in A. Diane Sachs/Hank Dunbar 5 in A. Verna Burns/Judy Carter-Johnson 6 in A. Ted Cooper/Mark Singer 1 in B, 1 in C. Sylvia Kaprelyan/Russell Gray 2 in B, 2 in C. Chie Wickham/Alan Olschwang 3 in B. Verna Becker/ →

Ted Wieber 4 in B. Monica Gettis/Peggi Spring 5 in B. Ellen Kice/Cookie Pham 3 in C

70% Game: Judy Carter-Johnson and Mark Singer had a 70.37% game on November 17.

Congratulations to Larry Slutsky attaining the rank of **Gold Life Master!** And at the NABC'S in San Diego: Howard Smith who earned over 4 master points (3.36 were gold) and Louise Seifert and Stan Johnson each of whom earned over 1 master point.

Get Well Wishes to Stan Blitz - hurry back to the bridge table!

Condolences to the family of Jaye Woodington. For many years Jaye was in charge of reservations for Clubhouse #1 and also taught some bridge classes.

Reminder: ACBL classifies Leisure World bridge games as "invitational" meaning non-resident guests must secure an advance reservation. Games are held on Monday/Thursday at clubhouse #3 at 12:15. For reservations please call: Monday—Midge Dunagan (562) 594-9686. Thursday—Cookie Pham (562) 431-6453. Phone number for clubhouse #3---Late arrivals, last minute reservations, last minute cancellations, need a partner--After 12:00 noon: (562) 481-7368. Games are also held on Friday/Saturday at clubhouse #1 at 12:15. For reservations please call: Friday—Jeanette Estill (714) 647-2609. Saturday—Sue Fardette (714) 995-5879. Any news for next month's column, please e mail me at jcj90740@gmail.com Results of all Leisure World games are posted on www.acblunit557.org



Pomona Covina by Tom Lill

Unit Game – Sat, January 20, 11:00 a.m.

Individual – Sat, January 6, 9:30 a.m., San Dimas

In the December Unit game, Penny Barbieri – Rosalie Roberts took top honors with a nice 67.4% effort. Right behind them (well, maybe a board and a half aren't exactly "right behind") were Pat Rademaker and Yours Truly. Bill Papa and visitor Charly Kao were third. Margie Hall – Steve Mancini took 1st in C.

In the December Individual, the two-time defending champ who missed the November game returned to

the top spot. Ahem. (Look it up, We Don't Like to Blow Our Own Horn Too Much.) Roger Boyar was second, Steve Mancini third. Unfortunately, our usual host, the fabulous Lois, fell and injured herself pretty seriously last month, and so won't be able to host this month's game. Penny Barbieri will be filling in as host.

This month, the battle for the top score was so close ("How Close Was It?") that we'll give the top four. The top two were a virtual tie between Fredy and Lulu Minter, and... themselves. They posted a 69.0% game and one of 68.9%. Not much to choose between those two. And narrowly missing out on the top spot with their 68.76% game were Karen Olin – Mary Miller. Finally, the fourth spot, with "only" 68%, were Kurt Trieselmann – Ken Bloomfield. Other winners: Richard Patterson, Penny Barbieri, Paul Chrisney, Claudia Cochran, Roger Boyar, David Ochroch, Chuck Lohr, Charly Kao, and Yours Truly.

One promotion to report this month. David H Van Fleet is now a Junior Master. Keep up the good word, David.

For our Hand of the Month, we have a real puzzler for you. All depends on your methods... and your nerve! At matchpoints, not vulnerable, third to speak you pick up this semi-balanced collection: ♠2 ♥-- ♦AQJ842 ♣JT7542.

Well, you are 1-0 in the majors, and 6-6 in the minors: "Semi-balanced." Partner opens 1NT (15-17), RHO passes, and you.... well? Speak up!

If you are playing in the style of 50 years ago (Goren!), you can bid 3♦, forcing. If partner signs off in 3NT, you bid 4♣, also forcing, asking partner to choose. Too bad, 3♣/3♦ over 1NT is treated as invitational by most these days. (Or even as Puppet Stayman, at least for 3♣.) Minor suit Stayman – if you are using it – might work. What are the odds of partner having a four card minor? Who knows?

As it turns out, 3NT wins the day. Partner's hand is ♠QJT ♥KQT9 ♦K765 ♣A3. Making 4. Clubs are 3-2 with LHO having ♣Qx. Five of either minor will make (due to the favorable club division), but it is matchpoints. If 3NT was your call, well done!

Quote for the Month: "Never go out to meet trouble. If you will just sit still, nine times out of ten someone will intercept it for you." (Calvin Coolidge)
Until next month ...



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

Western Conference Fall STaC Week

Monday Afternoon, December 4
Friendly Bridge Club in Santa Clarita

NS Winners

- 1 Tracy Boys and George MacDonald - 59.82%
- 2 Ted Maki and Lamonte Johnson - 57.14%
- 3 Shirley Ramspeck and Bob Biangella - 53.57%

East/West Winners

- 1 Bernard Seal and John Vacca - 63.10%
- 2 Deanna Kean and Bert Stock - 60.12%
- 3 Carol Provost and Russ Buker - 57.44%

Friday Afternoon, December 8th
Joshua Tree in Palmdale

- 1 Kristi Kubo and Paula Olivares - 61.11%
- 2 Carol Reukauf and Paul Reukauf - 60.19%
- 3/4 Onorita Pallanti and Rosalee McEntyre - 54.17%
- 3/4 Carol Provost and George MacDonald - 54.17%

Sunday Afternoon, December 10
Joshua Tree in Palmdale

- 1 Kay Aiken and Charles Morrin - 52.5%
- 2 Kathy Swaine and Rand Pinsky - 56%
- 3 Carol Ashbacher and Beth Morrin - 55
- 4 Onorita Pallanti and Rosalee McEntyre 54

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 16, 2018.

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).

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

The Unit 556 Board election will be held on Tuesday, January 16 at the Santa Clarita Valley Senior Center, 22900 Market Street, Newhall, at 6:30 p.m. The "After the Holidays Party" had to be cancelled due to a conflict in scheduling at the Senior Center. A Unit game will be held after the meeting at approximately 6:45 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: The new board will have their first meeting on Tuesday, January 23rd at 5:15 before the Tuesday Night Game in Santa Clarita (6:45 p.m.).



**San Fernando
Valley
by Linda Silvey**

Unit 561 Holiday Bridge/Dinner Party Report

A highly successful Unit 561 Holiday Bridge and dinner Party was held on Saturday, December 2, at The 750 Club in Woodland Hills. A bridge game of 27 tables was held in the afternoon and ably directed by Mike Fierman. This was followed by dinner catered by Stonefire Grill. Special thanks are due to Jan Toppel for the outstanding, festive table decorations and the rest of the Party Committee consisting of Marcia Broderick, Dwight Hunt, Sandy Hunt, MJ Jubelirer, Nancy Klemens, Rochelle Lotto, Terry Morton, Susan Raphael, Jerry Shapiro, Linda Silvey, and Barbara Simpson.

A Unit 561 business meeting was held after dinner. Unit 561 Board Members selected for 2018 were April Adams, Frona De Covnick, Ilene Feinstein, Marge Romans, JoJo Sarkar, Jerry Shapiro, and Karyn Shatzkin. The following continuing Board Members who also will be serving in 2018 are Marcia Broderick, Rochelle Lotto, and Susan Raphael.

Winners in the Open bridge game were: NS – Renee Wishengrad – Betty Andelson (68.30%), Ray Primus – Estelle Baron (62.87%), Rochelle Lotto →

– Steve Lotto (58.06%), Philip Calloway – Shoshana Blumenfeld (57.26%), and Elaine Keyes – Charles Shapiro (56.98%); EW – Lauren Silinsky – Carole Eglash (63.76%), Zanda Schirn – Susan McIntosh (62.44%), Gloria Malkin – Ronald Malkin (57.93%), Jeffrey Hartmann – Monica Fastovsky (57.55%), and A. Fradkin – Aimee Deiter (56.95%).

Special Congratulations

November Top Ten Masterpoints at The 750 Club were Susan Raphael 10.37, Vera Mandell 8.55, Ray Primus 6.21, Gary Baxley 5.55, Phil Calloway 5.38, Jerry Goodman 5.27, Dwight Hunt 5.24, Jerry Rose 5.14, Helen Malzer 4.83, and Shoshana Blumenfeld 4.59. The following three pairs earned 70% games: Mort Light – Bob Soll 71.82%, Susan Raphael – Fuad Khuri 70.92%, and Fuad Khuri – Dwight Hunt 70.24%.

Holiday Sharing Week Fundraiser

The 750 Club observed “Holiday Sharing Week”, December 11 – 15, with a generous donation of \$1,878.00 to the West Valley Food Pantry, the Club’s next-door neighbor. These funds were provided by \$1.00 from each card fee (thanks to Bill and Terry Morton) and additional monies collected from the day and evening players. The Pantry was most grateful for this contribution that enabled them to purchase Holiday provisions for many needy and hungry families in the San Fernando Valley area.

January 16: Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night

The next Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night will be held Tuesday, January 16. Dinner is \$18 per person and starts at 6 p.m. and the bridge is \$5 per person and begins at 7 p.m. This is an ACBL sanctioned game and the first place NS and EW winners will receive coupons for Braemar’s Wednesday night “Pastabilities” dinner. For reservations and/or partnerships contact Nancy Klemens at nrklemens@aol.com or (818) 609-1071.

January Special Events at The 750 Club

“Fifty-Two Shades of Play” will be celebrated during the week of January 8–12. This is in recognition of the Club’s listing in ACBL’s “2017 Top Fifty Clubs in North America” (based on the total number of tables

played for 52 weeks with 52 cards in each deck!). A big “thank you” to all the players, helpers, and directors who made this possible for a December ranking (not final) of number 34 out of 50 with 6,204 tables of bridge played through November 30.

Special treats provided during the “Fifty-Two Shades of Play” celebration will be as follows: Monday, Jan 8 – Pizza (morning), Ice Cream and Cake (evening); Tuesday, Jan 9 – Coffee Cakes and Cookies (morning); Wednesday, Jan 10 - Submarine Sandwiches (morning); Thursday, Jan 11 – Pizza (morning), Pies (evening); and Friday, Jan 12 – Bagels (morning).

Calendar

Monday, January 8 – Friday January 12, “Fifty-Two Shades of Play” celebration at The 750 Club. See details above.

Tuesday, January 16, Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night starting at 6 p.m. See details above.

Wednesday, February 7, U561 Board Meeting, The 750 Club, 2:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 3, Unit 561 Mini-McKenney-Ace of Club Awards Luncheon and Game, 12noon, The 750 Club, Woodland Hills

Friday-Saturday, May 4-5, U561 San Fernando Valley Sectional, at The 750 Club, Woodland Hills



Torrance-South Bay by Steve Mager

Unit: www.freewebs.com/bridgeatunit568

SBBC: www.southbaybridgeclub.com

Upcoming Events at the South Bay Bridge Club

Unit Game: Friday, January 5, 11:30 a.m.

Club Championship Week:

January 22-27, All Games are Championships

Club Championships

The dates that were given to me as Club Championships at the SBBC for the previous month were →

not scored as such. This being the case the winners of these games are not listed here.

The Inglewood Beach BC championship on December 8 was won by David Cheshire/Jean Tamaki in Flight A with Joan Chrishal/Virginia Brewer leading Flight B and Wanda Yeo/Paul Sachs taking Flight C. The December 13 Veterans Park Championship was led by David Cheshire/Bill Malcolm in Flight A, Patricia Wells/Luda Kuprenas in Flight B and Steve Kiser/Bruce Walker in Flight C. The December 15 championship at the Beach Cities BC was won by Hank Sheehan/Bob Bacharach in Flight A with Chick and Marge Thorsoll taking both Flights B and C. The Veterans Park Championship on December 18 saw James and Judy Scott sweeping the board winning Flights A, B and C.

Team Winners

December 5: CVal Gamio, John Jones, Ed Piken, Steve Ramos

December 19: Fran Israel, Luis Gamio, Jim Dutton, Bronck Felczer

Western Conference STAC Results

Following are the pairs in games played in TSB Unit Clubs placing in the overalls of the recent Gigantic Great Western Winter STAC.

Monday Morning, December 4, Open Pairs SBBC

- 7A 4B Hank Sheehan/Steven Dangel
- 26B Elaine Godin/Ed Srenco

Monday Evening, Aux Pairs SBBC

- 2A Fran Israel/Steve Ramos
- 3A Stan Greengard/Mark Raggio

Tuesday Morning, SBBC

- 24A Gerri Carlson/Arlene Greengard

Tuesday Afternoon, 499er Pairs, Agile Bridge Club

- 8A 7B Adrienne Sarmiento/Mary Williams
- 11A 10B 5C Douglas Carlson/Howard Schecter

Wednesday Morning, Open Pairs, SBBC

- 20A Carol McCully/Cal Waller

Wednesday Evening, Aux Pairs, SBBC

- 7A Fran Israel/Mark Raggio

Thursday Morning, 749er Pairs, SBBC

- 1A 1B Doug Carlson/Howard SChecter
- 2/3A Betsy Miller/Joyce Klossner
- 2/3A 2B Loretto Russell/Tajie Major
- 4A Nancy Karnes/Joyce Field
- 5A George Stinson/Setsuko Miyasaka
- 6A 3B Laura Gastelum/Edwaed Ruttenberg
- 4B Bruce Walker/Steve Kisor

Friday Morning, 499er Pairs, Agile BC

- 4A Sandy Rathbun/Michael McGory
- 9A Deborah Downes/Nancy Karnes
- 10A 7B Carol DeCordova/Bonnie Okamoto
- 12/13A Mary Roberts/Ann Doublier
- 12/13A Charles Strathman/Thomas Fisher

GUV AWARD

Perhaps I should thank Bruce Horiguchi for getting me off to a great start at the San Diego NABC. On one of the first boards of the tournament I held: ♠KTX ♥xxx ♦AQJx ♣xxxx. LHO opened INT (12-14) and Bruce bid 2♥ supposedly showing hearts and spades. Not because I was a hand hog, but because I preferred having LHO on lead and a spade lead in case the opps bought the contract, I bid 2♠.

Well wouldn't you know it, Bruce had forgotten our conventional understanding and came down with three small spades and ♥AKxxx. The No Trump opener actually had five spades. Most contracts on this board were 2♠ making by the opponents.

I would like to attribute it to my brilliant declarer play but actually it was the opponents bad defense which let me out for down one (-100). This score stacked up well against a wall of 110's for opposition pairs and we got about a 75% board. Thanks Bruce.

Na Zdrowie



West LA
by Robert Shore

The Lead Is Easy

I've said it before and I'll say it again. When a →

Unit member wins a national title, this column's lead writes itself. It turns out that's not quite true. This year's San Diego Nationals left me with a decision to make. I had to decide who goes first. I decided on chronological order.

Pam Wittes added to her championship collection by winning the Sternberg Women's BAM Teams. This is Pam's seventh win in a North American Championship, along with her World Mixed Pairs title. Eric Greco, who recently moved to our Unit, won the Blue Ribbon Pairs for his fifteenth victory in an NABC+ event.

There are some other wins from San Diego to report as well. Alex Wiles, Karen Byrd, and Nancy Heck combined to win their bracket of the first Saturday-Sunday Knockout Teams event. Edward Benda won his bracket on the Wednesday-Friday morning Knockout Teams event. And Paula Nataf won the Compact Knockout Teams event on the second Saturday.

Unit members didn't limit their winning to San Diego. Rhoda and Lew Himmell won the Monday afternoon event in the Great Western STAC. At Palm Springs, Judy Freeman and Sue Ann Simon teamed to win their bracket of the Wednesday Bracketed Swiss Teams event. John Ramos topped his bracket of the Thursday-Friday Knockout Teams event. On Saturday, Anna Benatar, Joyce Lelah, and Richard Gliksman won their bracket of the Compact Knockout Teams, while Ifiti Baqai on the Friday-Saturday Knockout Teams and Alan and Sherri Schneider teamed with Lidia and Mauricio Epelbaum to win their bracket of the Friday-Saturday Knockout Teams.

Looking Forward

I hope many of you showed up and had a great time at our inaugural year-end Glendale Regional. Coming up next on the calendar, January 14 will see the District Finals for all three flights of the North American Pairs. District winners will get a nice check from the ACBL to help defray their expenses to the national finals this spring, in Philadelphia.

Looking Back

My apologies for missing last month's column (my first since I stepped into this role in 2011), and my thanks to Jordan Chodorow for filling the gap with almost no notice. In order to get as much recent news as possible into the Bridge News, I routinely put off writ-

ing the column until the last minute. In this case, the last minute was the evening before I left for the San Diego Nationals. When I got home that night to begin writing, I discovered that our house had been burgled. (No one was hurt, and we didn't even lose very much.) Between waiting for the police to clear the house and cleaning up the extensive mess the thieves had left, the time I'd allocated for the column went by the wayside. I hope you understand.

News of the World (or Our Little Corner)

I've been playing in the Los Angeles area for nearly 40 years, and for as long as I can remember, Tom Oakley has been a fixture of our game. He's one of the first established players to make me think I was learning something about the game, by asking me partner and me to join his team at a regional. Unfortunately, I've received the sad news that those days are now behind us, as Tom recently passed away. His wife, Annie, left us not long after. Our condolences to Annie and Tom's family and friends.

Many of you have probably heard by now that Beverly Hills has decided to discontinue its Thursday night team game. Based on an email I recently received, Barrington may be investigating whether it can fill this gap in the area's bridge offerings. You'll get more news on this front as I receive it.

And finally, by the time you read this column, the STOP card will have gone the way of the dinosaurs. Effective at all tournaments starting on or after January 1, 2018, the STOP card should not be used, nor should an oral "skip bid" warning be given. Players should simply get into the habit (if they're not already) of hesitating for 10 seconds after each and every skip bid (yes, that includes 1NT – 3NT). Clubs can decide for themselves whether to continue using the STOP card. This reporter hopes that our local clubs will help our players develop good habits by removing STOP cards from their bidding boxes.

Check One Off the Bucket List

At IMPs with no one vulnerable, after a 3♦ preempt on my left, I played 4♥ with the following hands:

Dummy: ♠AK85 ♥Q5 ♦Q32 ♣AK76

Declarer: ♠64 ♥K98754 ♦75 ♣J83

Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists: Mark Bartusek, Daniel Korbel, Roger Lee, Jill Meyers, Rick Roeder, and Jon Wittes

1
 IMPs
 NS vul

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
?			

You, South, hold: ♠KQJ983 ♥KQ52 ♦A ♣J7
 What call do you make?

Wittes: 3♦. This is a very interesting hand. Give partner something like ♠Axx ♥xx ♦KQJxx ♣Qxx, and the four level is the limit. On the other hand, a hand such as ♠Axx ♥Ax ♦Kxxxx ♣Axx, and a grand is quite likely. I'll start with 3♦. Hopefully partner will read it as a cue bid, and not bidding out my pattern, and will continue to cooperate with the right hand.

Korbel: 3♦. With some partners we agree to bid shortness at the 3 level here, and 3M with 5422 minimum and 2NT with 5422 extras. I'll give it 3♦ here because it sounds forward going. Basically, I just want to drag a club control out of partner so I can keycard.

Lee: 3♠. Nothing else really fits, so I'll just see what partner has to say.

Meyers: 3♠. We are in a GF auction why not see what

partner's next bid is; maybe partner can cue bid 4♣.

Roeder: 3♠. Setting trumps and hoping for a 4♣ cue-bid from partner. It seems unlikely we are off two cashing clubs, but I am not yet late for the bus.

Bartusek: 3♠. One typically patterns out with 5431 distributions (with 2NT showing 5422). Thus, bidding 3♠ should show 6-4 with extras and request that partner start cuebidding. Obviously, we might be off the first two club tricks which makes RKC too dangerous.

It's normal to make this bid delineate the distribution, before cuebidding. Steve Robinson suggested 3♣, implying diamond shortness. His thought was that 3♠ should be 5422. Normally 6=4=1=2 could splinter, but 4♦ on a very valuable singleton ace looks quite wrong.

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2

IMPs
EW vul

South	West	North	East
?		P	P

You, South, hold:
 ♠K97642 ♥T ♦853 ♣983
 What call do you make?

poor partner do now? I think I would pass, and take my chances. We would probably have collected 1100 against our vulnerable slam. Partner was afraid to bid 6♠, because he thought the psycher had psyched his void, and would now beat us on a heart ruff. So, partner chose to bid 6NT, hoping I had the ♦K among my values, which could have been right, but was obviously very wrong on this hand.

How to create the most havoc and be relatively safe? Let's hear from the 2♠ bidders first.

3♠ would be my choice.

Bartusek: 2♠. This seems like the completely normal mainstream action at these colors. I imagine that some extremely aggressive players might roll the dice and actually bid 3♠ (gasp!).

Meyers: 3♠. I'm not generally a 3♠ bidder with a six-card suit of this quality but I think maybe it is the best way to keep them from a potential slam (by taking up their bidding room).

Wittes: 2♠. The state of the match is critical on this hand. Obviously, the opponents have at least a game, and the vulnerability is perfect for us to operate. If we were way ahead in the match, I would pass, and take my chances. If the match were pretty even, I might try something like 2♠, and hope we don't get crucified. I am a terrible operator, but if we were way behind, I might try something like 3♥, and hope we can land on our feet, and throw the maximum monkey wrench into the opponents. We had an interesting hand of this nature in the recent Palm Springs Regional. I opened 2♣. My partner responded 2♦, showing 0 or 1 control. The next hand held ♠x ♥x ♦AKxx ♣T9xxxxx. He bid 2♥!!! I showed my hand by bidding 3♠, and it went 5♥! Poor partner held ♠xx ♥KJ10x ♦Qxxx ♣QJx. He doubled, and it went 6♣. I held ♠AKQJ10xx ♥Axx ♦x ♣AK. I said double, and it went pass. What does

Korbel: 3♠. 3♠ might hit a homerun and the colors and position are right. Partner knows I can be operating here and won't bury me, unless I've already buried us.

Lee: 3♠. This feels very much like the normal bid. Psyching is a little too ambitious for me.

Yes, psyching a short suit is very dangerous. However, 1♠ is relatively safe and might confuse the opponents a little. Nobody mentioned 1NT, but that might be in some players bag of tricks too.

Roeder: 1♠. Preempting "x" spades is fine also. Passing is reserved for those who greatly admire Neville Chamberlain. I like 1♠ because it might give declarer more problems in the play than opening 2♠.

North American Pairs Qualifying District 23 Final: January 14

*by Morris Jones
D23 NAP Coordinator*

The District Final for the North American Pairs will be held this month on Sunday, January 14, at the San Marino Bridge Club, 1800 Huntington Drive, in the San Marino Community Center. Game time is 10:00 a.m. for this two-session event. Card fees will be \$48 per

partnership for the event (\$12 per player per session).

Ninety-seven players have qualified for the district final, after great games in the two Unit Finals.

In Flight A, the top three pairs will be invited to play at the national level. In Flights B and C, the top four pairs are eligible to compete nationally at the Spring NABC in Philadelphia. ACBL will notify eli-

gible players about available travel subsidies.

At the District level, partnerships may be formed with any other qualified player from the Unit Finals, but the same partnership will be required to compete at the national level.

Watch for winner announcements and pictures in the next Southern California Bridge News!

3

MPs
NS vul

South	West	North	East
	1♠	P	P
?			

You, South, hold:
 ♠A2 ♥K65 ♦J93 ♣JT965
 What call do you make?

Bartusek: Pass. Too light for a take-out double due to the fact that I have only 3-card heart support (and partner will strain to bid hearts). Fourth seat usually acts with a queen less than direct seat (i.e. would you make a T/O double in direct seat with an extra queen?). It is very unlikely that we have game since partner passed over 1♠ (obviously more relevant at IMPs).

Wittes: Pass. I certainly have some sympathy for double. If west has a big hand for the 1S bid, we may have no home. If west has a normal opener, we may be able to make a no trump or two, if partner has a balanced opening hand with nothing to bid over 1♠. We might even collect a small number if partner sits for my reopening double. If the points are equally divided we may have no good spot to play. The opponents might even have a better spot in one of the red suits.

Roeder: Double. With apologies in hand if I have balanced the opponents into 4♥.

The more conservative your partner is with his or her overcalls and takeout doubles, the more aggressive you need to be with your balances. With my style, a double at MP is probably right, but at IMPs the risk versus reward ratio makes pass mandatory.

Korbel: Pass. I'm not smart enough to disturb this contract.

Lee: Pass. Bidding feels like asking for trouble, especially vulnerable.

Meyers: Pass, I see no reason to bid.

4

IMPs
EW vul

South	West	North	East
	1♦	1♥	P
P			
?			

You, South, hold:
 ♠Q653 ♥K7 ♦T75 ♣AJ94
 What call do you make?

hand-type. I really hate 1♠ and 2♦, they are just not bridge bids.

Meyers: 1NT. I don't have much of a diamond stopper, but I have the right shape and overall values.

Bartusek: 1NT. Jeff Rubens and others in the Bridge World MSC often support bidding notrump with balanced hands despite minimal stoppers. A close second choice is raising to 2♥ (which Marshall Miles would always bid with hands like this).

Influenced by Marshall, 2♥ would be my choice.

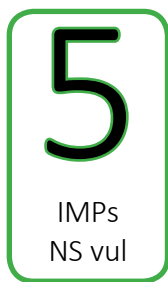
Roeder: 2♥. I must do something. bidding 1♠ with that holding is repulsive.

Wittes: 2♥. What I lack in trump support, I make up for in high cards, and Kx is probably as good as xxx in trump support of an overcall by partner.

We have 10 HCP, but no obvious bid. 1♠ shows four in some partnerships, but five in others. The 1NT range in this situation is about a good 7 to a poor 11, but it normally has a diamond stop. Stoppers are not quite as necessary at the one level as they would be at higher levels. 2♥ on ♥Kx might work out well also.

Korbel: 1NT. 1♠ is possible but I tend to have 5 of them.

Lee 1NT. The diamond holding doesn't bother me at all, and I just want to show my general strength and



South	West	North	East
P	1♣	P	1♠
P	2♠	Dbl	P
?			

You, South, hold:
 ♠765 ♥87 ♦7654 ♣Q876
 What call do you make?

Wittes: 2NT. Partner is very likely to have clubs, diamonds, and hearts, with spade shortness and no bid over 1♣. 2NT brings the club suit back in play, and since the opponents have the balance of high cards, we want to find a 4-4 fit rather than a 4-3 fit. Even then, we are quite possibly too high.

Korbel: 2NT. Let partner pick a minor and struggle.

Lee: 2NT. I have two places to play, so I'll show them — partner often has some club length on this auction.

Meyers: 2NT. This shows more than one place to play the hand – I will pass whichever minor partner bids.
Roeder: 2NT. Like West Hollywood, it is unusual.

The panel easily found the 2NT bid. But I think this hand would be tough for lesser players.

Let's hear from the lone 3♦ bidder first.

Bartusek: 3♦. I would typically expect partner to be 1=4=4=4, 2=4=(43), or 1=4=(53). If partner understood 2NT to ask for a minor suit then that would be preferable (especially in this age of prepared 1♣ openers). It's dangerous to try 2NT without a partnership agreement to that effect.

WLA continued from page 10

This collection isn't particularly promising because with a preempt on my left, it looks like I'm likely to lose two diamonds, two hearts, and a club. But looks can be deceiving.

The defense started with three rounds of diamonds, RHO following to the first two. On the third diamond, after a lot of thought, RHO ruffed low (discarding wouldn't have helped). I overruffed and led a trump to dummy, noting the 10 on my left. RHO won the A and fired another trump back. Both restricted choice and the rule of vacant spaces (diamonds were 6-2 so LHO had less room than RHO for the heart J) pointed in the same direction. I played the 9 and was relieved to see LHO pitch a diamond. (If RHO hadn't ruffed the third diamond, I'd have pitched a club and I had the entries for a trump coup.)

I then finished drawing trump with the king, throwing a club from dummy, and then cashed my penultimate trump, throwing another club. At this point, RHO, who'd been dealt a 4423 pattern with the club Q, was cooked. If he threw a spade, I'd be able to play AK and a spade ruff and dummy would be good. Seeing

that, and hoping that his partner had the club J, he tried discarding a club. But now the club AK brought down the club Q and a spade ruff was my reentry to cash the club J. Over the years, I've written up hands where I wished I'd seen a trump squeeze in time to execute it. This hand marks my first successful trump squeeze.

Around the Clubs

Barrington club champions last month were Hans Kraepelien and Michael Nash, Renee Mancuso and Sid Brownstein, and Aram Bedros and Art Zail. Reaching 70% at Barrington were Marion Tumen and Jaelyn Hatfield, Susan Somogyi and Sally Aminoff, and Basant Shah and Jim Perkins.

Moving to Beverly Hills, club champions last month were Walter Bodlander and Frank Neiman, your Humble Scribe and Om Chokriwala, Phyllis Kantar and Herbert Ehrmann, Farideh Sigari and David Segal, and Eddi Samandar and Rahim (Does 3NT count if someone else bids it?) Israel. Hitting 70% were Zalman Perelman and Keith Miller, Rhoda and Lew Himmell, Rob Perlsweig and Pete Knee, and Eddi Samandar and Rahim Israel.

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

District 23 Rank Changes December 2017

Junior Master

Carol Ames, Edward Benda
Marty Foster, Deeann Huddleston
Shuai Lan, Philippe Perebinosoff
Carol Poto, Steve Rousso
Gavin Spore, Julie Spore
Paul Stanko, Stefanie Woodburn, Jiaqi Zhu

Club Master

William Cray, Jenny Ernest
Grace Frey, Judith Hirsch
Anna Nelson, Dennis Nelson
Jill Sattinger, Katharine Seibert
Lillian Slater, Leslie Spitz, Jack Stewart

Sectional Master

Lorna Belman, Pamela Haskins
Stanley Kangas, Ellen Levitt
Harry Levitt, Les Nakasaki
Howard Rosen, Barbara Wallace

Regional Master

Douglas Carlson, Tom Keese
James Nathan, Carol Ann Underwood, Donald Vallens

NABC Master

John Brant, Terry Morton, Homa Nasseri

Adv NABC Master

Hanan Mogharbel, Jill Thesman

Life Master

Graetchn Torres

Bronze Life Master

Graetchn Torres, Berry Wilkinson

Silver Life Master

Alex Chen, Ann Croupe

Ruby Life Master

James Perkins

Diamond Life Master

Joseph Viola III