

Southern California

# Bridge News

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Isn't It Time?

by Mike Marcucci



There are many characteristics of the bridge games we play in locally that could be changed to make our games more enjoyable. Over the decades, many environmental items have been encountered, endured, discussed, and changed if they detracted from our enjoyment of the game. A few of the toppers: smoking, rudeness, cheating, abusiveness, lack of challenges after "Life Master", point inflation, security, etc. Once identified, these subjects were seriously discussed among our ACBL managers, directors, players, agency partners, and all other stakeholders to find practical solutions or, at least, mediating actions to reduce the harm, discomfort, or integrity of our game and maintain or increase our pleasures in participating. Our whole game is still a "work in progress", as they say. Times change, people change, the economy changes, the world around us moves ahead. "Solve" is a dangerous word, however. Just as in our game, if you think everything is under control, you're probably missing something! But we do our best.

There are 3 areas of our game that I think could stand some work. By that, I mean either individual action or collective action. All of them are actually covered in the Rules and Regulations of our game. The issue is the practice of those R&Rs. Let's see if our readers agree with any of the following points and we would welcome any letters to the SCBN editor with agreement or disagreement.

1) Isn't it about time to clear up and enforce cell phone rules? As with most ACBL "policies", applicability and compliance at Clubs vs any higher

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## District Director Report

December 2018

by Kevin Lane

"Bridge is a game and should be fun."



### Update on Hawaii

The latest news on the Hawaii NABC is that ACBL headquarters has apparently mitigated the worst of the financial possibilities – a severe penalty. Evidently, some progress was also made on boosting attendance at the host hotel which also helps the ACBL bottom line, but the final figures won't be known until after the tournament is over.

### What have I done to help this situation?

In short, plenty. I've worked to minimize the immediate problem and prevent future problems.

The District Director position should be break-even, financially. It shouldn't cost me anything, and it shouldn't financially benefit me. This Hawaii situation, however, created a situation where I could leverage personal donations – where \$1 donated benefits the ACBL by ~\$3 – by facilitating increased attendance at the host hotel. In short, I was one of several board members – maybe more – who contributed personal money to address what I consider a crisis. I do thank the D23 members who moved to the host hotel on their own.

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level tournament is different. For anyone who does not realize this, Club owners can make their own rules. The ACBL “rules” on cell phones vary all the way from warnings to penalties. I think our tournament directors do a very credible job of explaining and enforcing the use of cell phones. They are well trained and aren’t afraid to enforce. My observation, however, is that Club directors in LA need some training and some backbone. They, as I said, have every right to selectively enforce, but this one is particularly annoying to most players, especially those in the vicinity of the law-breaker! My apologies to the 60% of our directors who do care enough about their games to enforce this rule, but those other 40% do a great job of spoiling a nice game of bridge by ignoring those few players who think they are above any rules or think that their lives are so important that they not only leave their phones “on”, but have the audacity to answer them and interrupt everybody else’s game/concentration with their conversations. I call on all Club Directors in LA to A) Post their policy, and B) Enforce their policy. Players, on the other hand should comment on those policies if they are not strong enough and make that director aware that cell phones have NO PLACE in a bridge room except for true emergencies. Common sense dictates that answer and the director can always help. I cannot wait to read some of those policies! ☺

2) Isn’t it about time to start complying with Convention Card rules? Anyone who has advanced past the Club level knows that ACBL policy is that at least one and many times both partners need to have identically filled out CCs with them at the table. This is again fairly well enforced once a player advances out of the local club. But why do Clubs not enforce this very intelligent idea? How many times have you encountered opponents with NO CC at the table? Too many times for my satisfaction! The crazy thing is, it is such a good idea for ANY partnership to follow. Beginners, especially, would greatly benefit if they would fill out a CC with every partner and use it. I make it worth about 5% to a beginner’s game. That’s the difference between scratching and being out of the money, folks! This partner discussion and practice would reduce much of the stress that results from simple misunderstandings where 1 partner is playing a bid one way and the partner is playing it differently. Sure, you can try to remember everything, but why?

Put the info in writing and it is there for you to see forever!

3) Isn’t it about time to clarify “Alert” etiquette and start following it? This is even easier to correct and implement than anything above. The trouble with this one is that, though we have all probably heard about the correct procedure, many may not have seen it in print (I’m one of those folks who likes the hard copy version) – so here it is: When asked what an “Alert” means by the opponent, please state WHAT the bid means, not what it is called. In other words, the name of the convention is NOT a proper explanation. That response probably just leads to more questions and, if not, might convey the wrong impression to the questioner. Much more effective than “It’s a Bergen raise” is the statement “It means my partner has 4 or more trumps for me and has 10-11 points.” This is the fair & honest way to respond, rather than expecting your opponent to figure it out. Many of your opponents do know what the conventions mean, but that is not the point of the rule. There are always variations, so a clear and complete explanation of the bid is better and is the proper thing to do. Let’s practice the Golden Rule. If you appreciate clear explanations, we should return the favor.

Solutions to these 3 issues lay in each of us. We have direct control of #2 and #3, and we can encourage our local directors to control #1. We can also roll over and play dead on all the issues & never see practices improve. It all comes down to a simple question that I always ask myself. Do I want to be part of the problem or do I want to be part of the solution? Which one do you choose?

Very soon many of us will be in Palm Springs, spreading more LA good cheer and practicing all of the above improvements we hope for in our LA clubs. Those who just got back from the Nationals in Honolulu, welcome back and aloha to you. It’s also the Holiday season, so let’s start to spread some of our cheer and smiles at the nearest bridge table to all your opponents and especially your partners.

Stay healthy, my friends.

DIRECTOR continued from page 1

I have addressed the Hawaii-specific problem as best I’m able. But, I continue to work hard on the underlying problem. Earlier this year, I was one of four board members to successfully push the idea that NABC sites should only be approved after headquarters shares a realistic income statement showing a profit. This policy won’t eliminate

problems because mistakes happen, but it should greatly reduce negative surprises.

Readers may recall that the 2018 Hawaii site was selected in 2011 – well before I joined the national board. Regular staff turnover means that none of the headquarters staff involved in the 2011 Hawaii contract are still working for the ACBL. But there are other contracts for future NABC sites that create financial risk for the ACBL – indeed, Memphis 2019 might be such a contract. I am one of several board members to urge a review of each upcoming NABC contract. We've completed an initial review of the key terms of the next five NABC contracts.

### *Transparency*

The call for board review of the hotel contracts highlighted a bigger issue. Does the board have legal access to see ACBL contracts? The law says “yes” since the board has a legal obligation to oversee the organization. But, unfortunately, not all on the board agree on this settled issue, and the resulting conflict creates mixed messages for headquarters.

As a result, I co-sponsored a motion to align the board's ability to review ACBL documents with the law. The idea is simple. To prevent major losses the board must be able to review corporate documents. These documents and information extend well beyond hotel contracts. Obstacles to board access to information have persisted for years, with the hotel contracts and other issues merely highlighting the problem.

Now, the current practice is that the ACBL President (the leader of the board of directors) has the effective right to decide which board members have access to ACBL documents. Legal opinion clearly rejects this idea. For the ACBL, transparency is particularly important for two reasons. First, some contracts are coordinated by board members. Second, some board members have been alleged to have conflicts of interest – allegations that are generally over-blown. In either case, good governance requires that one board member simply cannot prevent other board members from reviewing corporate documents.

The opposing view is that allowing all board members to request corporate documents would create too much of a burden on headquarters. Prevailing legal opinion rejects this view; a process can be created which allows the board to exercise proper oversight while protecting headquarters from frivolous document requests. I'm certain that a qualified attorney's advice would balance the need for board oversight with the

confidentiality and manpower constraints of the organization.

As of this writing, my motion for transparency to board members has been quashed – through a parliamentary maneuver. Despite this development, it remains possible for us to solve the underlying transparency problem in Hawaii, and I will certainly try to do so.

### *NABC costs*

Lastly, I mention that a motion has been put forward for Hawaii to raise NABC card fees from \$25 to \$35 with a rebate to those staying at the host hotel. This motion is a direct response to the Hawaii problem. I oppose the motion as an over-reaction to a problem that happened in 2011.

On the other hand, I very much support the idea of planning NABCs so that they make a profit and also contribute to overhead costs at headquarters. I've consistently advocated that each of the major ACBL product lines (NABC's, sponsored tournaments, clubs, and dues) should pay for themselves.

Feel free to contact me at [klaned23@gmail.com](mailto:klaned23@gmail.com)

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### Looking for a Club?

Check out

<http://web3.acbl.org/findalist/club>

All clubs in the Los Angeles area are listed.

You can look up all the game times,  
locations, and contact info.



# Bridge Cruise to Vietnam

March 2020 - From \$2,100 per person



Ha Long Bay, Vietnam



Host Jeff Grotenhuis is a Life Master. In 2011 he founded Agile Bridge Club in Hermosa Beach. At 21 tables, Agile's Friday open game is now the largest

Friday game in District 23. Jeff has also introduced more people to bridge in California this decade. He was a North American Pairs Finalist at the Philadelphia Nationals this year. When not teaching, directing or playing bridge, Jeff enjoys ballroom dancing and hiking.

Intermediate lectures and afternoon duplicate games will be held every day at sea. Our group dines together and then plays bridge virtually every evening. This will be our fifth bridge cruise. Jeff's wife, Jennifer, grew up in Vietnam. Our ship, the Celebrity Millennium, undergoes a major refurbishment the first quarter of 2019. Contact Jeff: (310) 600-4275 with questions regarding the bridge program.

To learn more about cruise contact:

Susan Dushane at Altour

(818) 464-9241

[susan.dushane@altour.com](mailto:susan.dushane@altour.com)

[www.cuebidcruises.com](http://www.cuebidcruises.com)



Cities Visited

## From the Director's Chair: *by Jim Perkins*

### **Making a Claim – State Your Line**

If you are certain that you can take all the tricks, usually as declarer, you may make a claim in the interest of saving time and getting on to the next deal. However, when making a claim care should be taken on a couple of points.

The first is to clearly make a claim when making a claim. Don't gradually lower your hand as declarer while you work your way through the outstanding cards, wondering if you have all the remaining tricks or if the defenders can manage one or two more. If you are at all unsure, keep playing until you are sure. Even before that, I suppose, is to be assured that claiming will save rather than waste time. With some opponents explaining the claim will take longer than playing the cards.

*[Editor's Note: we have found the following procedure useful when playing against unfamiliar opponents. Unless claiming at trick 12 or so, when your line is going to be 100% obvious, we say to the opponents "I can claim the rest of the tricks. Do you wish me to state a line of play, or would you prefer to play the hand out?"]*

The second is to avoid claiming in a couple of common situations where you are certain that your side can take all the remaining tricks. If it is not your lead, don't claim. And if there are any trump outstanding, don't claim. The Bols company has or had a series of famous Bols Bridge Tips which were little one sentence quips to improve your game. A panel of experts voted the best Bols Bridge Tip of all time: "Before you claim, draw one more round of trump."

Finally, when you claim, state your intended line of play clearly. If you can't state it clearly, then play on until your line is more clear and/or simple.

Despite my warning from the prior paragraph, if you claim when there are trumps outstanding, the first words out of your mouth should be "drawing trumps" after which you may go on to clarify your line. If there are trump outstanding and you fail to state that you are drawing trump, you may be held to have forgotten that one or more trumps are outstanding.

Claims can be agreed or contested. And agreed claims can be withdrawn through the end of the correction period (generally up to at least one half hour after the event has ended). If a contested claim is or may be a "bad claim" (claiming tricks that cannot or will not necessarily be won), the Director adjudicating the claim is required to rule that the player can make a careless play (for a player of declarer's caliber) but not an abnormal play (again, for a player of declarer's caliber).

Be mindful that your opponents have not been looking at your hand as the play has unfolded and may need a few seconds to verify that you do indeed have all the remaining tricks. If your claim is based on the fact that most of your winning tricks are in dummy you may wish to direct your opponents' attention to that hand, explaining what you are doing with any losers remaining over there.

Unless you are certain beyond any doubt that your claim is good (and maybe even then) just play the hand out.

And generally, no matter how completely you think you have counted partner's hand, don't concede on defense. 'Among other things a defensive concession creates many, many more possibilities for problems with Unauthorized Information under Law 16 and for that reason alone, should be avoided.

## District 23 Rank Changes October 2018

### Junior Master

Estelle Byrnes  
John A. Kilmer  
John J. Markovich  
Terry L. Royce  
Barry Sinsheima

### Sectional Master

Diane P. Schwartzman  
Carla R. Spinner

### Regional Master

Stephen Dorse III

### Bronze Life Master

Dick I. Berg  
Gerry R. Gastelum  
Clancy Martel  
Sherry V. Newman  
Elizabeth M. Ryan

### Club Master

Susan L. Allen  
Toshie Bergan  
Emily A. Blum  
Ted J. Dowe  
Naum Grutman  
Nava Grutman  
Kim R. Grundlach  
Ronald A. Lu

### NABC Master

Leah Levin

### Advanced NABC Master

Jaclyn H. Hatfield

### Life Master

Dick I. Berg  
Norma A. Friedman  
Beverly E. McLeod

### Silver Life Master

Martin G. Hurwitz

### Ruby Life Master

Arlene Greengard

### Gold Life Master

Gary F. Paugh

### Diamond Life Master

Paul D. Markarian

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### Top 30 in District 23

by Mike Marcucci  
D23 President

Each year in November, our friendly ACBL publishes a listing of the top MP holders of all time. See the listing below of our D23 players on that list.

Our players continue to excel with extraordinary achievements being continuously added to increase those totals and deserve much congratulations. So far, at the Honolulu NABC this year (as we speak), several super wins have been noted.

- A) **Ellen Anten** and **Steve Gross** have won the 2-day "Super Senior Pairs" event for an award of 40 masterpoints. Most likely these were of the platinum variety because of the unlimited classification of the event. Super win for Ellen and Steve.
- B) **Eric Greco**, already a many-time national champion, added another to his starry record when he was part of the winning Mitchell Open BAM team, captained by Marty Fleisher. Eric has an extraordinary ability to play and win at this championship level despite the demands of a full time options trader profession and a wonderful family that does not leave much time for bridge. Another 160 MPs to his total below. The beat goes on.
- C) Also a many time national champion, **Pam Wittes** added another as part of the winning Marsha May Sternberg Women's BAM team. A double whammy in that her team was defending their last year's title. Wow.

There may be more wins to come, but we have to go to press before all results are in. Congrats to all our players & good luck in all future games. (Jeff M at the top is only for reference. He lives in Florida! Our Top 7 show on the National List.)

### 2018

1	Jeff Meckstroth	87280.00
48	Steve Gross	28311.32
82	Ellen Anten	23625.73
96	Mitch Dunitz	22381.36
122	Jill Meyers	20678.27
132	Eric Greco	19586.46
176	Rebecca Clough	18063.35
187	Steve Mager	17629.12
8	Roger Clough	16348.48
9	Ed Davis	15298.70
10	Gerry Bare	15292.22
11	Billy Cohen	14670.08
12	Pam Wittes	13150.57
13	John Swanson	11326.36
14	Bruce Horiguchi	11089.07
15	John Jones	11078.34
16	Jeff Goldsmith	10958.78
17	Peter Benjamin	10939.63
18	Eddie Kantar	10891.86
19	Mike Savage	10886.71
20	Alex Kolesnik	10526.34
21	Aram Bedros	10468.02
22	Ifti Baqai	9928.65
23	Gil Stinebaugh	9860.73
24	Rhoda Himmell	9492.72
25	Andy Vinock	9301.10
26	Steve Onderwyzer	8413.49
27	Sid Brownstein	8353.81
28	Gene White	8340.45
29	Bill Sides	8190.54
30	Audrey Currie	8105.73

[Editor's note: the numbers look "funny" because the top places show the national ranking; after that, starting with Roger Clough, it's the ranking within the District.]

## Around the Units in District 23



### Long Beach by Jon Yinger

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

**October 28 Unit Game:** Overall results: 1st in A: Kevin Lane/Robert Shore, 2nd John Petrie/Sankar Reddy, 3rd Rai Osborne/Shailish Gupta, 4th Lulu and Fredy Minter, 5th Cayce Blanchard/Hashim Mahmood, 6th Kay Tseng/Wayne Rapp. In the B flight overalls Carol Murakoshi/Larry Slutsky tied with Marlys Harden/Stan Kosowski for 3/4, Barbara and Alan Olschwang were 5th, Dalia Hernandez/Alan Flower were 6th. In the 199ers overalls Caryn and Glen Musicer were 1st, Elaine Bock/Toshie Bergan 2nd, Beth Byrne/Bill Cray 3rd, Ray Ishaeik/Ted Dowe 4th. Congratulations to all!

**70+% GAMES** Oct 16 through Nov 15: In open games Oct 20 Paul Pettler/Hashim Mahmood had 73.50%, Nov 5 Steve Rowe/Toni Morford had 75%, Nov 15 Mark Tang/Sankar Reddy had 72.60%. Congratulations to all three pairs!

**BIG MASTER POINT AWARDS** Oct 16 through Nov 15: In the unit game Oct 28 Kevin Lane/Robert Shore won 4.52mp for 1st, John Petrie/Sankar Reddy 3.39mp for 2nd. In the open game Oct 31 Phil Shuster/Jon Yinger won 4.31mp for 1st, Cayce Blanchard/George Welsh 3.23mp for 2nd. And in the team game Oct 21 the team of Phyllis Parker/Jo Melis/John Petrie/Jon Yinger was first, each winning 3.15mp. Congratulations to all eight pairs!

**NEW CLUB MEMBERS:** Jan Van Lierop, Rita Van Lierop, Harriet Weiss. Welcome to the club!

**STATUS CHANGES:** New Junior Master: Patricia Donely. New Club Master: Allene Buchanan. New Sectional Master: Ardis Lane. New Silver Life Master: Dalia Hernandez. Congratulations to you all!

### GET WELL WISHES TO Bob Bakovic

### UP-COMING EVENTS AT THE CLUB:

Dec 2-8 STaC week. Extra points, \$12 card fees  
Dec 16 Unit Game: Holiday Potluck 12 noon; game 12:30. Card fees \$8  
Dec 17 International Fund Game. Extra points, \$12 card fees  
Dec 18 Birthday Monday. December birthdays play for free  
Dec 21 Volunteer Appreciation Day. Volunteers with invitation play for free  
Dec 23 Team Game  
Dec 25 Club closed Christmas day  
Dec 31, Jan 1 Club will be open New Year's Eve and New Year's Day

### NEWS FROM LEISURE WORLD BRIDGE CLUBS

#### Judy Carter-Johnson

**UNIT RATED GAME** - Clubhouse #3—  
October 15: Fern Dunbar/Rob Preece 1 in A. Bill Linskey/Larry Slutsky 2 in A. Jeanette Estill/Marilyn McClintock 3 in A, 1 in B. Alan Flower/Gary Paugh 4 in A. Monica Gettis/Peggi Spring 5 in A, 2 in B. Diane Sachs/Hank Dunbar 6 in A. Linda Nye/Alan Olschwang 3 in B. Dorothy Favre/George Koehm 4 in B. Julie Cunningham/Gene Yaffee 5/6 in A, 1 in C. Chie Wickham/Larry Topper 5/6 in A. Ellen Kice/Cookie Pham 2 in C.

**CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP** - Clubhouse #1  
October 20. Verna Burns/Sue Fardette 1 in A. Miriam Kelley/Judy Mathias 2 in A, 1 in B, 1 in C. Joyce Henderson/Howard Smith 3 in A. Mike Nielsen/Hanefi Erten 4 in A. Marilyn McClintock/Diane Sachs 5 in A. Sue Krause/Chie Wickham 2 in B, 2 in C.

### GET WELL: Joan Wieber

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Fern Dunbar and Rob Preece - On October 15<sup>th</sup> they had a 74.92% game!

**REMINDER:** ACBL classifies Leisure World bridge games as "invitational" meaning non-resident



guests must secure an advance reservation. Games are held on Monday/Thursday at clubhouse #3 at 12:15. For reservations please call: Monday—Midge Dunagan (562) 594-9698. Thursday—Sharon Beran (562)308-7838 or email: [hbsharonb@gmail.com](mailto:hbsharonb@gmail.com). Phone number for clubhouse #3---Late arrivals, last minute reservations, last minute cancellations, need a partner--After 12:00 noon: (562) 481-7368. Games are also held on Friday/Saturday at clubhouse #1 at 12:15. For reservations please call: Friday—Currently there is no reservation person for Friday—please come early and perhaps volunteer!! Saturday—Judith Jones (714) 840-2300—(between 9am and 9pm only!) or [mikrojjones@aol.com](mailto:mikrojjones@aol.com). Any news for next month's column, please e-mail 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)



Pomona –  
Covina  
by Tom Lill  
[www.acblunit551.org](http://www.acblunit551.org)

Unit Game: Saturday, December 8, 11:00 a.m.,  
Glendora

Individual: Saturday, December. 1, 9:30 a.m., Chino

That's right: because our December Unit game would fall during the Palm Springs Regional, we have advanced the date therefore to December 8 – one week earlier than normal. Mark your calendar!

The top finisher in the November Individual was Linda Tessier, at 62.5%. Margie Hall was second, just ½ matchpoint behind. Don Logsdon was third, Clint Lew fourth, and Sofi Kasubhai fifth.

The November Unit game was won by Bill Papa – Vic Sartor, with a 60.4% game. Hot on their heels in second we find Claudia Cochran - Hanan Mogharbel. Roger Boyar - Richard Patterson took third, with Barbara Papa – Kerry Sartor taking the fourth and final Overall award.

Only four pairs – and one Individual effort – reached the magic 65% mark this month. Hanan Mogharbel and Linda Stuart were tops with a 72.5% game. Next up were Hanan along with Richard Patterson at 70.0%. Third, we find Vic Sartor – Bill Papa at 67.94, Amr Elghamry – Lulu Minter with

65.63. In an Individual effort, Roger Boyar scored 71.4% a Cochran, Don Logsdon, Linda Stuart, and Sue Aspley.

Other winners include Linda Ananea, Genise Hasan, Herb Stampfl, Lulu and Fredy Minter, Linda Tessier, Sofi Kasubhai, and Claudia Cochran.

Lots of masterpoint earners this month, but no one really dominated. Hanan Mogharbel tops the list at 5.56. Vic Sartor tied with Bill Papa for second, 4.87. Richard Patterson was fourth with 4.77; and Roger Boyar was fifth with 4.66.

Two promotions to report: Stephen Dorse III is now a Regional Master, and Shariq Raza has now reached the dizzying (at least, from Yours Truly's perspective) height of Gold Life Master. Congratulations, Stephen and Shariq.

For our Hand-of-the-Month, we leave the “bit-of-fun” format for a while, and present a challenge. Can you get to the making Grand on these hands? North deals, there is no opposition bidding.

(North) ♠ J762 ♥ AQ103 ♦ AQ9 ♣ 86

(South) ♠ AQ10 ♥ K9 ♦ K2 ♣ AKQ1054

A typical SA sequence might be: 1♦ – 2♣; 2NT – 6NT. If 2♣ is game forcing, then it might go 1♦ – 2♣; 2♥ – 3♣; 4♣ – 4NT; 5♥ – 7NT. Maybe! It does require a 3-2 club break (clubs were in fact 3-2) to pull in 13 tricks. On a heart lead, you have 14 on top; if you like, you could take the spade hook for a 15<sup>th</sup> trick. (The spade finesse loses, of course.) In action, only one pair got to 7NT, on this auction: 1♦ – 4NT; 5♥ (2 key cards + ♦Q) – 7NT. Well, it's semi-scientific! Still a bit of a pot, though. Suppose opener's hand had been:

♠ K962 ♥ A1093 ♦ AQ92 ♣ 6?

A perfectly respectable 1♦ opening bid. But, now you have 3 spades, 2 hearts, 3 diamonds, and 3 clubs on top ... 11 tricks. You'll need some luck to bring in 13 tricks – either 3-3 clubs, or a good guess and a favorable lie in the either red suit. Oh well!

Quote for the month: “Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind.” (Albert Einstein)



## Santa Clarita- Antelope Valley by Beth Morrin

Unit 556 is going to offer a second sectional tournament this year called the **Holiday Magic Mountain Sectional** to be held on December 29<sup>th</sup> and December 30<sup>th</sup> at the Santa Clarita Senior Center at 22900 Market Street in Newhall. We will offer Open and Limited MP **Swiss Pairs** on Saturday at 10:00 AM and 2:30 PM and a duplicated play-thru (36 hands) **Swiss Team** games on Sunday starting at 1:00 PM. All profits for this game are being donated to the construction fund for the new Senior Center for Santa Clarita Valley. For more information contact Rand Pinsky (kathyrand1999@gmail.com) or for partnership help, Beth Morrin (morrin@sbcglobal.net).

### What Swiss Pairs are:

- The Swiss Pairs is run along the lines of a Swiss Teams.
- Pairs play against each other in short matches, with IMP scoring determining the winner.
- As in Swiss Teams, pairs with approximately the same records are paired against each other for subsequent matches.
- Boards are duplicated, everybody plays boards 1-6 in the first round, 7-12 in the second, etc.

### Why play Swiss pairs?

- The novelty is a large part of the reason.
- Being easier to get a partner rather than three teammates is another.
- Masterpoints are awarded for every match won. (It's really hard to be shut-out).

### Player strategy for Swiss Pairs:

- Make your contract (overtricks are not as important).
- When borderline, bid vulnerable games and slams.
- Do not double unless you have the tricks in trumps.
- Your teammates are the average in the room (the best, most steady teammates available).

**Results of the ACBL-wide  
Instant Matchpoint Game  
October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018**

First East/West: Phoebe Evans and Les Spitz 60.88%

First in A North/South: Mira Rowe and Ron Oest  
53.92%

First in B North/South: Carol and Hal Underwood  
51.92%

### Results of the November District 22- 23 STaC Games:

#### Tuesday Evening in Santa Clarita, November 13th:

1 <sup>st</sup>	Irwin Novick – Rand Pinsky	60.20%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Ted Maki – Lamonte Johnson	58.70%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Viviane Dinehart – Bernard Seal	58.25%
4 <sup>th</sup>	Susan Strassner – Mark Brifman	56.30%
5 <sup>th</sup>	Elaine Moore – Tom Shudic	55.17%

#### Thursday Morning in Castaic, November 15th:

1 <sup>st</sup>	Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky	58.21%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Ted Maki – Roshen Hadulla	54.35%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Carol Ashbacher – Lamonte Johnson	53.13%
4 <sup>th</sup>	Tom Day – Marissa Naftulin	52.48%

#### Friday Afternoon Aux. Pairs in Palmdale, November 16th:

1 <sup>st</sup>	Ron Oest – Mira Rowe	64.58%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Russ Buker – Beth Morrin	59.03%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Henry Roediger – Sharry Vida	56.25%
4 <sup>th</sup>	Carol Underwood – Hal Underwood	54.86%

#### Friday Afternoon in Palmdale, November 18th:

1 <sup>st</sup>	Bert Stock – Roy Ladd	62.96%
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Carol Ashbacher – Kristi Kubo	59.72%
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Ruth Baker – Beth Morrin	59.21%
4 <sup>th</sup>	Henry Roediger – Sharry Vida	54.17%

Congratulations to the team of Barbara Jones, Rom Jones, Tracy Boys and Ruth Baker who won the Saturday Compact KO-3 at the Ventura Regional.

### 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 15, 2019.

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](mailto:rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net)) or Beth Morrin ([morrin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:morrin@sbcglobal.net)).

**Nominations must be received by January 1<sup>st</sup>.**

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

The Unit 556 Board election will be held at the January 15<sup>th</sup> at the annual "After the Holidays Party" at the Senior Center in Santa Clarita. The potluck dinner will begin at 5:30 PM and the board election will be at 6:30 PM.

### **Upcoming Events:**

**Unit 556 will participate in the Western Conference Fall STaC games** during the week of December 3-9, 2018. We will hold games at the following times:

Monday, Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> at 12:30 at the Senior Center in Santa Clarita

Tuesday, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:45 PM at the Senior Center in Santa Clarita

Thursday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM at the Sports Complex in Castaic

Friday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 PM at Joshua Tree Bridge Club in Palmdale

Sunday, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 PM at Joshua Tree Bridge Club in Palmdale

**Next Board meeting:** Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:15 at the Santa Clarita Senior Center in Newhall.



**San Fernando Valley**  
by Linda Silvey

### **December 22: Unit 561 Gala Holiday Bridge/Dinner**

Unit 561 will host a Gala Holiday Bridge and Dinner Party on Saturday, December 22, at The 750 Club, 5700 Rudnick Ave, Woodland Hills. An Open, Stratified Game will start at 2 p.m. in Taylor Hall, followed by a festive, holiday dinner at approximately 5:45 p.m.

The cost is \$35 per person and includes both bridge and dinner. Due to limited seating, reservations are required via purchase of non-refundable tickets by

Tuesday, December 18. Tickets will be on sale at The 750 Club, or by mail to Rochelle Lotto ([nanalotto@yahoo.com](mailto:nanalotto@yahoo.com)). For mailing information, please contact Rochelle by Friday, December 7. Cash (if paying at The 750 Club) or checks payable to "Unit 561" will be accepted. Note: There will be no on-site ticket sales on the day of this event. For partnership assistance and/or further information, please contact Frona DeCovnick at [kidzathart@aol.com](mailto:kidzathart@aol.com).

### **Unit 561 Board Nominations**

Unit 561 is seeking members who are interested in running for the Unit Board, beginning January 1, 2019. This is an opportunity to give back to the San Fernando Valley bridge community, meet new friends, and have an impact on changing things for the betterment of U561 bridge players. If you wish to self-nominate, please contact Marcia Broderick at [marciabroderick@gmail.com](mailto:marciabroderick@gmail.com) or sign up at The 750 Club. The Unit Board Election will be held at the December 22 Holiday Party.

### **A Civic/Charitable Fundraiser at The 750 Club**

During the 2016 Election U561 members, Marge Romans along with Bill and Terry Morton, each contributed \$1.00 to the Prince of Peace Scholarship Fund for everyone who put up their "I Voted" sticker on the poster at the Club. This year the tradition has been continued by the same sponsors and a total of \$500.00 has been donated to the Church's Scholarship Fund. Special thanks to the sponsors and everyone who voted and put stickers on the poster! Note: The 750 Club is located on the campus of the Prince of Peace Church.

### **Special Congratulations**

October Top Ten Masterpoints at The 750 Club were Ravnesh Amar 9.17, Helen Malzer 9.44, Michael Klemens 8.42, Gary Baxley 7.50, John Tickner 7.45, Lou Simmons 7.38, Ray Primus 7.17, Mike Louis 7.08, Martin Hurwitz 6.77, and William Miles 6.35. The following achieved 70% games: Claude La Feuvre-Jerry Goodman 74.40%, Norman Bloomfield-Jim Gardner 70.89%, and Ron Malkin-Gloria Malkin 70.54%.

### **December Events at The 750 Club**

On Monday-Friday, December 3-7, Great Western STaC games will be held at the Club. This is a chance to compete with players in the Western U.S.A. and earn extra silver points. The fee for all games will be \$12. . . . Holiday-Themed "Free Play" Gift Cards will be on sale for \$10 each, Monday-

Friday, November 19-December 22. These make excellent gifts for your favorite partners, bridge friends, and even worthy opponents in celebration of Hanukkah, Christmas, or the New Year! . . . Club Championship Week will take place Monday–Friday, December 17-21. This is an opportunity to earn extra black points for no extra fee. . . . The 750 Club will be closed Christmas Eve, Monday night December 24<sup>th</sup>, and Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>, and New Year's Eve, Monday night December 31<sup>st</sup>, and New Year's Day, January 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Calendar

**Monday-Friday, November 19-December 22,** Holiday-themed gift cards will be on sale at The 750 Club.

**Monday-Friday, December 3-7,** Great Western STaC games will be held at The 750 Club.

**Monday-Friday, December 17-21,** Club Championship Week will take place at The 750 Club.

**Tuesday, December 18,** is last day to purchase tickets for the U561 Holiday Bridge/Dinner Party.

**Saturday, December 22,** Unit 561 Election for 2019 Board Members, Holiday Bridge and Dinner Party, at The 750 Club. **Please plan to attend!**

**Mondays, December 24 & 31,** The 750 Club will be open for day games, but closed for night games.

**Tuesdays, December 25 & January 1,** The 750 Club will be closed for the Holidays.

**Tuesday, January 15,** Braemar Dinner/Bridge Night starting at 6 p.m. For reservations/partnerships, contact [nrklemens@aol.com](mailto:nrklemens@aol.com) or (818) 609-1071.

**Saturday, February 16,** "February Fun" Unit Luncheon/Game, 12noon, The 750 Club.



**West LA  
by Robert Shore**

### We Could Have Done Better

We held our Unit Party on November 18, and thanks to the work of our tireless and indefatigable Party Committee, it was an enormous success. I'll

discuss the festivities below. I'm leading off with an apology, though, because it's quite clear we could have done better in at least one facet of the party planning, and that was my responsibility. As many of you know, our current facility for the Party imposes a hard cap on our permitted attendance due to space limitations. That means we weren't able to accommodate some of those who sent in checks and were hoping and expecting to go.

There's not much we can do about our capacity limits, but I could and should have done a much better job communicating earlier and more effectively to the people that we ended up having to turn away. I owe those people an apology. I have concrete ideas on how we can improve our communications. Look for us to implement them for next year's event. One of my ideas involves using the Unit's seldom-used Web site, so please keep the address handy: [www.bridgewebs.com/acblunit562](http://www.bridgewebs.com/acblunit562). I will add that anyone who would like to help us do a better job next year is welcome to join our Board. We still have two vacancies and we would love to fill them with enthusiastic volunteers.

### Endorsed by the Season of Winter

First, enormous thanks go to our Party Committee, who put together the only bridge event officially endorsed by the season of Winter. When Brana Hall's illness forced her to throttle back her participation, the remaining Committee members, Marcia Fisher and particularly our chair, Carolyn Taff, really stepped up to make sure the party went without a hitch. If Carolyn puts this kind of thought and effort into her real estate transactions, you couldn't ask for a better agent. She simply would not permit anyone (particularly including your Humble Scribe) to drop the ball.

I had the pleasure of introducing Nancy Heck as the West Los Angeles 2018 Player of the Year, given to the player who best exemplifies a combination of *sang froid* at the table and service to our community. Nancy is a wonderful example of both. Over the years, her service to the bridge community has included membership on our Unit Board and her current tenure on the Board of the Beverly Hills Club. Nancy's recent activities have been directed toward facilitating the recruitment of new players into the game we all love, through means including but not limited to the popular *Learn Bridge in a Day* program. However, Nancy was not able to be present for the ceremony. As befits our Player of the Year, she was off playing bridge — specifically, she and her partner



were qualifying for the District finals of the North American Pairs competition.

Then it was time for what I considered the highlight of the event. Our community depends on volunteers. Our Unit decided this year to confer Lifetime Achievement Awards for volunteer activities to two richly deserving recipients, Barbara Nusbaum and Cecil Cook. Until her recent retirement from our Unit Board, Barbara has been a fixture in our community for more than half a century. She spent many years during Bridge Week's heyday (in the days before BridgeMates) as Caddy Master, ensuring that we had enough youngsters to run pickup slips (remember those?) from the tables to the directors. Barbara spent decades on our Unit Board and her experience and wisdom are sorely missed. We were delighted that Barbara was able to accept her award in person. Barbara is no longer able to make it to the table so I hope her many friends and well wishers will take a moment out of their day to say hello from time to time.

Cecil Cook's service to our community is legendary. I've discussed it previously in this space, so I'll just touch on the highlights. In addition to his long-time service on our Unit Board, Cecil was for many years our District's representative to the ACBL's Board of Directors, serving as the Board's President at one point. Cecil also served as President of District 23. Cecil's experience and insight were invaluable aids whenever we needed to navigate ACBL's bureaucracy, and his thoughts were never more than a phone call or e-mail away. Accepting the award on Cecil's behalf was his widow, Beverly.

The party also included some bridge. We had a healthy turnout for our games, and were able to award lots of master points. Winning the Open Game were Pete Benjamin and Tom Lesser. Our 299er champions were Judith Stone and Carolyn Dubow. We look forward to seeing you next year.

### **But Wait. There's More!**

Last month also saw plenty of tournament action. We'll start with the District 22/23 STAC, which saw our Unit win a number of events. Aram Bedros and Art Zail topped the field in the Tuesday afternoon game. Your Humble Scribe and Mike Savage won the Wednesday evening game, and Peter Benjamin paired with Peter Knee to win the Friday afternoon game.

Moving up to the Venutura Regional, Nancie Barrier teamed with Charles and Jo Anne Kelley to

win their bracket of the Santa Barbara Knockout Teams event. Winning another bracket of the same event were Jaclyn Hatfield, Leah Levin, and Jill Thesman. Rochelle Blumenfeld and Val Romoff won a bracket of the Thursday Bracketed Swiss Teams event. Ifti Baqai won the Saturday Stratified Open Pairs, while Stuart Hemple and Saul Prieuer teamed up to win a bracket of the Friday-Saturday Knockout Teams event. Alex Kolesnik and John Ramos won the Saturday Compact Knockout Teams event, and on Sunday, Rachel Simon, Mori Taylor, Carolyn Taff, and Kathy Harouche won the Flight B/C/D Swiss.

We're still not done with last month's tournament action. Roger and Becky Clough traveled to the Leavenworth, Washington, Regional, where they won the Edelweiss Knockout Teams event. At the Sun City Sectional, Mike Savage picked up a win in the Sunday Stratified Swiss.

### **Departures and Arrivals**

Before reporting on our new members, we have sad news to relay. I've just received word that Terre Primmer has passed away. Although Terre never had a formal position on our Board (at least, not since I've been a member), he was always willing to lend a needed hand to make sure our events ran smoothly. Our condolences to Terre's friends and family.

We have nearly three full tables of new members to report. Joining the ACBL are Justin Ciccone, Beverly Ditmars, Ann Hastings, Barbara Kaye, Peggy Mitteldorf, Arnold Nelson, Linda Stagen, Thomas Unterman, and Mary Ann Yurkonis. Adding to our ranks from other Units are Barbara Berrie and Shirley Gero. Please give them a warm West Los Angeles welcome when you see them at the table.

### **At the Clubs**

Lots of club action to report this month. Winning a club championship at Barrington were Becky and Roger Clough. Aram Bedros had three 70% games — two with Art Zail and one with Wayne Karson — and the pairs of Les Rawitt and Bob Weingarten and Peter Benjamin and Steve Mager also hit that mark. Benjamin and Mager suffered from poor timing, though. Their game was opposite one of the Bedros-Zail games so it wasn't good enough to win.

Club champions last month at Beverly Hills were Rick Turner and Charles Kelley, Alex and Finn Kolesnik, Alan and Sherie Schneider, Brian Richardson and Brian Fielding, Bob and Sandy Carroll, Brian Rose and Herb Ehrmann, Steve Gross

and Bob Bass, and Lew and Rhoda Himmell. Topping 70% were Viktor Anikovich and Rama Linz, Viktor Anikovich and Amadeo Ursini, Paul and Elizabeth Ryan, Brian Rose and Herb Ehrmann, Mitch Dunitz and Mark Itabashi, your Humble Scribe and Mike Savage, and Peter Benjamin and Pete Knee.

### **Climbing the Ladder**

Taking their first step on the ladder of bridge achievement as our Unit's newest Junior Masters are Susanne Reyto, Julia Sladek, Sue Smyle, and Di Zheng. Reaching Club Master status are Barbara Dischler, Laurel Resnik, and Steve Rousso. Mary-Sue Wright has become a Sectional Master and Larry Feldman is now a Regional Master.

Congratulations to all on your accomplishments. Got news? Send it to me at Bob78164@yahoo.com.

# Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are Gerald Bare, Mark Bartusek, Leo Bell, Mr. Mealy-mouth, David Sacks, Mike Shuster, John Swanson, and Jon Wittes.

# 1

IMPs  
N-S Vul

East	South	West	North
1♣	pass	pass	Dbl
Pass	???		

You, South, hold: ♠K8 ♥K1064 ♦K9 ♣KJ764

What call do you make?

*One panelist wants to start this tough set with a plus score.*

**Bell** - Pass. If I could be sure game or slam would make, I'd bid 3NT or 4♥. I'll take the sure 300 or 500 and apologize to teammates if we lose IMPs. Yes, I know we could miss a slam if partner has the perfect hand, but reaching it might be difficult anyway.

*Other panelists try what they think is the most likely game.*

**Sacks** – 3NT. Perhaps only “worth” 2NT, or some contorted auction to show hearts and NT values. However, after following recent world and national championship trends, this hand must upgrade to about 15+ points. Opposite partner's 10 plus, we should be able to locate almost all the cards at trick one and find our way to nine tricks.

**Shuster** - 3NT. I choose to not defend at this vulnerability, since it rates to be a struggle to get more than a 300 point set (even when LHO runs, which he will). So, the choice is between judging whether the danger of a club ruff and trump promotion is greater than the danger of the defenders' sneak-attack in a pointed suit. Since LHO won't have a late entry, and any potential sneak-attack suit rates to block for the opponents, I judge the trump danger to be greater.

*Other panelists cuebid to select between 3NT and 4♥.*

**Bare** - 2♣. Tough set, the club spots aren't great, so I'll try for 4♥ or 3NT.

**Wittes** – 2♣. Very close to a pass, but I think it is probably unlikely we will get them for 800 against our vulnerable game, so I will try for 3NT or 4♥, either of which is a likely make. It is closer to a pass at IMPs than matchpoints, as 500 against our 600 or 620 is not that big a difference, especially taking into account possible bad breaks and partner is in the balancing seat.

**Mealy-mouth** – 2♣. Even if I can make 3♣, that's not enough for a penalty pass when vul. against not. If partner replies in hearts, we'll play in 4♥; otherwise, in 3NT. Without four strong hearts, I won't bid them first.

*Some panelists cuebid to try to find hearts, but aren't forcing to game if they don't find the heart fit.*

**Swanson** – 2♣. If partner bids hearts, I'll bid game; if he bids diamonds, I will bid 2NT, expecting him to continue, unless he is sub-minimum.

**Bartusek** - 2♣. Partner can balance with some 9 - 10 HCP hands, so I have to be careful. If partner bids 2♥, then we're in game; partner's 2♠ bid will fetch 2NT by me. My two doubletons make me lean towards suit play despite my club stoppers.

*Partner is undoubtedly short in clubs for his balancing double. Forcing to game may be punishing partner for a light balance. Taking the money by passing makes some sense.*

2

IMPs  
Both vul

South	West	North	East
1♦	3♠	Dbl	pass
???			

You, South, hold: ♠J75 ♥1054 ♦AKJ5 ♣K92

What call do you make

*The panelists complained a little about the light opening bid. Most of the panel would not open a 4333 12 HCP hand. I didn't want to alter the problem since I didn't design it. If I had designed it, I would upgrade the ♥10 to the ♥J.*

*Some try an exasperated pass, hoping partner has enough defense to beat it.*

**Wittes** – Pass. What a tough problem! If partner has a random 2=4=3=4 invitational or better hand, this is probably the winning action, as we will probably collect 200 or 500 against a probable part score. However, -730 is not out of the question, especially if RHO has a couple of well-placed heart honors. In the long haul, I think pass is most likely to net us a plus score.

**Bare** – Pass. It's close between pass and 3NT. Any bid could turn sour on this hand.

**Bartusek** - Pass. Seems like the normal thing to do. If LHO were non-vul, I might try 3NT, but I'm afraid he might have a good suit vulnerable.

**Mealymouth** – Pass. Something is happening, but you don't know what it is, do you, Mister Jones? *Readers have asked who Mr. Mealymouth is; maybe he is really Bob Dylan?* Living up to my moniker, I'll waffle. Everything depends on my partnership agreements, of which I have three with different sets of partners. With most, I play (A) Negative Doubles through 2♠ (as on the ACBL Yellow Card); with many others, I play (B) Negative Doubles through 3♠ (as in *Bridge World Standard*; with a few I play (C) Negative Doubles through 3♦ (a *Compromise*). So: (A) or (C), pass and drool. (B), pass. A Negative Doubler should be

prepared for a penalty pass at the three-level when opener has a balanced sub-minimum. *So Mealymouth knows his ABCs; will his pass be successful?*

**Sacks** – Pass. What else am I supposed to do with this piece of cheese that I should have passed in the first place?

**Shuster** - Pass. I suppose 3NT is possible, but even if they don't run spades, we haven't taken 9 tricks yet.

*One panelist tries 3NT, and points out that even if there isn't a spade stopper that the suit might block.*

**Swanson** - 3NT. At matchpoints I would pass expecting to defeat 3♠ most of the time. At IMPs I would roll the dice with 3NT. I don't want to pay out an occasional 730 when nine minor suit tricks may be available. We might not even need a traditional spade stopper, should partner hold two little and RHO a singleton honor.

*Another panelist hopes that hearts are playable.*

**Bell** - 4♥. Someone obviously put a gun to my head and made me open this piece of doggie doo. The only other really logical choices are 4♦ (hoping partner has a fit) or pass (hoping partner has some defensive tricks). Any guess here could be spectacularly wrong, but I just can't bring myself to pass 3♠ doubled with no trump tricks. Hopefully, partner has five or more hearts.

*John Mohan constructed this problem; he thinks that pass is best. I'm inclined to agree with the pass, but pass, 3NT, 4♣, 4♦ or 4♥ might work best on this nightmare layout.*



3

IMPs  
none vul

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♥	pass	???

You, South, hold: ♠7 ♥A ♦AKJ9653 ♣K963

What call do you make?

*How to handle a hand that wants to bid diamonds when 2♦, 3♦ and 4♦ aren't natural. One panelist hopes the opponents reopen.*

**Mealymouth** – Pass. The time to bid diamonds has not yet come. I won't cuebid 2♦, lest a misguided partner think it shows heart support. I won't jump to 3♦, lest we're playing it as a limit raise. I won't bid 4♦, which partner will surely take as a splinter. I won't bid 5♦, as I may not be able to make it, and (shudder!) partner may think I intend it as Exclusion Roman Key-Card Blackwood. 5♦ *shouldn't be Exclusion RKC, since trumps haven't been established yet. 2♦ followed by 5♦ should be Exclusion RKC.* Pass is almost forcing on West, as undoubtedly the opponents play Negative Doubles at least through 1♥ and believe in "opener's duty to reopen," a necessary selling point some 55 years ago when Al ("if I can get by this round ...") Roth set about convincing the stick-in-the-muds of that era to abandon low-level penalty doubles. But speaking of Negative Doubles, why hasn't East made one? Are the opponents still marching with their spades to the bog?

*One panelist cuebids and hopes things will work well.*

**Wittes** – 2♦. This set must be straight out of Bridge in the Menagerie. I'm still not sure what I'll do on subsequent rounds, but this hand is too good not to start with 2♦. *He probably will follow with 3♦ and then possibly 3NT.*

*All other panelist bid some number of NT.*

**Sacks** - 1NT. Yuck! This is the lesser of bad bids. Unless partner does something interesting, this just does not feel like a game going hand on this misfit.

**Swanson** - 1NT. I have no experience to rely on, and bridge literature doesn't waste paper with advice on what action to take in such an unlikely situation. I suppose that, using Transfer Advances, I could bid 2♣ and play the surprise pass card when partner bids 2♦. *The way I play Transfer Advances, 2♣ is the last natural bid before the transfers begin at two of the opponent's suit.* As it is, I will keep the auction going, holding both high cards and diamonds in reserve.

**Bare** - 2NT. No bid looks very good, but where is the spade suit?

**Bartusek** - 2NT. Seems right on strength. The auction will just spiral out of control if you cuebid 2♦. 2♦ followed by 3♦ will be a Western Cue. It's an impossible hand to bid, but after the 2NT call my follow-up diamond bids will be natural.

**Bell** - 3NT. What else?

**Shuster** - 3NT. This is obviously an awkward hand, but I'm down to hoping that spades are adequately stopped or otherwise blocked. I don't have a natural advance in diamonds, and bidding clubs, even if forcing, isn't going to accomplish anything. Imagine partner raises to 3♣ - what then? Partner won't have a diamond stop to bid NT himself.

*I'd try 1NT hoping someone would bid and I could then bid diamonds naturally. This is a deliberate underbid.*

<div style="font-size: 48pt; text-align: center;">4</div> <div style="text-align: center;">IMPs Both vul</div>	South	West	North	East
	1♣	1♠	pass	pass
	???			
	You, South, hold: ♠AQ94 ♥7 ♦Q6 ♣AKJ1073 What call do you make?			

*One panelist bids 3♣, about what the hand is worth.*

**Bell** - 3♣. If partner makes a move I'll bid 3NT.

*All other panelists pass, most of them focusing on the ramifications of how the heart suit lies.*

**Shuster** - Pass. This hand is really all about hearts. If partner doesn't have at least four hearts, the opponents probably can make 4♥. But if he does, then the lack of a negative double makes game our way very unlikely. Rather than risk -620, it must be better to try to get a plus score here, as our defensive prospects are rather promising with potential club ruffs and/or trump promotions coming in partner's hand.

**Bare** – Pass. Partner couldn't make a negative double. I am afraid of hearts so I pass.

**Wittes** – Pass. Partner didn't have enough to make a negative double, and I'm looking at a stiff heart. I'm a believer! The opponents have a better place to play than 1♠.

**Bartusek** - Pass. It seems very unlikely that we have a game, but the opponents might be cold for 4♥ if I give LHO another shot at the auction.

**Mealymouth** - Pass. None but the lonely heart can know my sorrow ... for the poor opponents who are in the wrong suit and will go minus instead of plus. I fear to act facing a passing partner when I have a singleton in an unbid major.

**Sacks** - Pass. Partner did not bid over 1♠! Bidding on this hand is begging for the auction to continue 2♥ by West, pass, 4♥ by East. Yes, it might be our hand in clubs. but more likely 1♠ is our best spot to score some IMPs.

**Swanson** - Pass. I think it more like that they have a game in a red suit than we do in clubs or notrump. This seems as good a place as any to try for a plus score.

*I held this hand in an individual game that was being scored in both matchpoints and IMPs. I passed, but my first reaction was to try 3NT. Pass was a winner on the actual hand, because partner had a weak hand with hearts and had judged well not to make a marginal Negative Double holding three spades. The opponents belonged in diamonds.*

<div style="font-size: 4em; text-align: center;">5</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Matchpoints none vul.</div>	East	South	West	North
	3♦	???		
	You, South, hold: ♠KQ105 ♥AKQJ109 ♦void ♣AK5			
	What call do you make?			

*We certainly have a great hand, but how to best describe it?*

**Wittes** – Double. I'll bid 4♦ over anything partner bids, looking seriously for a small or even possibly a grand slam. If partner has a pass over the double, we are likely to get this for more than a small slam.

**Sacks** – Double. A cuebid shows a strong two suiter. 4♥ precludes a black suit slam.

**Swanson** – 4♦, to be followed by 6♥. Hopefully, this is not a variation of the Mississippi hearts hand.

**Bare** - 4♦. Over 4♠ I bid 6♥. No way to really describe this hand.

**Bartusek** - 4♦. Initially showing a major 2-suiter (although it could theoretically be a different 2-suiter). Over 4♠ I will RKC and suggest playing 5♥ (extra heart length) if partner shows 0 controls. Over a 1-control 5♦ call I will jump to 6♥ and strongly consider bidding 7♠ if partner corrects to 6♠. I wonder if some people will try a hazardous 5♦ “Exclusion Blackwood” initially? Thereafter, I don't see a way to properly describe your respective suit lengths to reach the best contract. Note: I am afraid partner will pass a takeout double with some 3=2=4=4 hand with J10xx of Diamonds.

**Mealymouth** - 4♦, then 6♥ over partner's expected 4♠ reply. Even your mother should know what to do after that. *I think my mother would have passed regardless of what she held. Mother didn't like artificial bids, you'd be lucky if she didn't pass 4♦.*

**Shuster** - 4♦. I'm driving to at least 6♥, but won't risk partner's passing a takeout double along the way. I'll probably bid 6♥ next, but this gives partner the option to convert to spades with a real suit, which could solve a late club loser.

**Bell** - 5♦. This shows a big hand with a diamond void. Over 5♠, I'll bid 6♥ which should propel us to a grand if partner has something like Axxxx xx xxx xxx. The real problem is if partner bids 5♥, but I'll take my chances and raise. *If Leo is correct that the jump to 5♦ shows a void, this must be the right sequence.*

*Roger Clough sent me this problem. His wife Becky held this hand. She bid an immediate 6♥. Roger, holding the ♠A and the ♦A, raised to 7♥ which made for an excellent score.*

*Have a good hand? Send it to me at johndjones44@yahoo.com.*