

# Bridge News

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Shore

### Entering the 21st Century



We figured out the mysteries of Zoom and were able to convene a District Board meeting this month. We covered several issues before recessing until our next meeting, which will be another Zoom meeting, this one at 3:30 p.m. on Friday, July 3. Here's a brief recap.

### Thank You to the Hilton

We have reached an agreement with the Long Beach Hilton to cancel the 2020 edition of Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional. I'd like to publicly thank the Hilton for its understanding. I want to be clear that, although I am confident that this was the right thing to do, both from the perspective of the District and as a public health imperative, the Hilton made the process of reaching this agreement much easier than it might have been. I can't say enough good things about both their customer service and their simple humanity in these trying times. I must also compliment our long-time tournament manager, Peter Benjamin, whose long-term relationship with the Hilton undoubtedly greased the wheels. When travel resumes again, please make an effort to thank the Hilton by staying in Hilton properties when you can.

Although we are sorry to lose the revenue from  
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## District Director Report

by Kevin Lane

“Bridge is a game and should be fun.”



### *Special Board Meeting*

The board conducted a special meeting (just concluded on May 30<sup>th</sup>) to handle urgent issues arising from the pandemic. We've been conducting these meetings virtually with a combination of

Zoom and GoToMeeting.

The most visible issue we addressed was the operation of online regionals and sectionals in the immediate future. I voted to allow the ACBL to continue as the sole operator of these in the short term – in order to address substantial financial impacts on the ACBL from the pandemic.

I have long been an advocate for districts running regionals and units running sectionals – I opposed the ACBL taking on regionals at sea and sectionals at sea in 2011, for example. I am also open to districts and units conducting online tournaments in the future if these events become popular. But the ACBL must be able to deal with the crisis at hand.

As a side note, management had expressed that they currently do not have the capacity to operate district and unit sponsored online tournaments.

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this regional, the Hilton's cooperation minimized the financial impact on the District. We have agreed to use the money already on deposit for Bridge Week 2020 as part of our deposits for Bridge Week 2021 and Bridge Week 2022. I am cautiously optimistic that by next summer, large bridge tournaments will again be both safe and appropriate.

### **Grand National Teams**

As you probably know, when ACBL cancelled the Montreal Summer Nationals, it also cancelled (not postponed) the 2020 national finals of the annual Grand National Teams competition. ACBL offered several options to districts that, unlike us, had already completed the process for selecting their entrants. Here in Los Angeles, of course, our usual mid-Spring competition did not occur.

We're hoping to put together a points-only district-level competition for 2020 teams who would like to participate. Our GNT Coordinator, Jeff Grotenhuis, and out-of-nowhere volunteer (the best kind), Tom Reynolds, have already done a great deal of leg work to figure out how to make this possible, but there's quite a bit more left to do. For starters, we have to convince ACBL to sanction the event, so I've asked our District Director, Kevin Lane, to lend his good offices to help make that happen. Also, it turns out that running a sanctioned team event on-line is a lot more complicated than running an on-line pairs event. We're trying to get our arms around all of these issues. Please stay tuned.

### **It's Always Something**

All of our District and Unit Board members (or at least, the vast majority of us) got some e-mail correspondence in the waning days of the month. District 25 (New England) shared a number of concerns about how ACBL is dealing with Districts and Units during the pandemic. In particular, their letter expressed a fear that ACBL would take over tournaments, and perhaps even do away with districts and units. Georgia Heth, President of ACBL, sent a responsive letter. Our Board's consensus was that District 25's concerns were not well taken. However, I will ask our Webmaster to place Ms. Heth's letter (which included the District 25 letter as an attachment) on our Web site so you can make up your own mind.

### **More Bridge for the Less Experienced**

Finally, as you'll see elsewhere in this newsletter, thanks to the prodigious efforts of Dave White, we're making more on-line bridge available for

our less experienced players. The District has created its own "virtual club," which is hosting *only limited games*. I'd like to thank Dave for the hours upon hours of hard work involved in making this additional opportunity for our players who are still learning the game.

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

### **DIRECTOR continued from page 1**

#### *Discontinuation of the District 23 CAP supplement*

Some clubs have benefited from a District 23 supplement to the cooperative advertising program. Due to cost cutting at the ACBL this CAP supplement will be discontinued. The normal 50% reimbursement that the ACBL provides will continue, of course. Only the District 23 supplement is being discontinued.

I welcome your input. klaned23@gmail.com

## **From the Director's Desk** *by David White*

*My partner is so bad, he revokes on BBO.*

Things you probably didn't know about BBO.

1. If you registered for a game, and then log off, or go play another game or at a practice table, BBO can cancel your registration. (You'll get your money back). You can also be booted if your cash in the BBO bank drops below the playing fee, e.g., that instant game you played while waiting.

2. Most score adjustments are made by the BBO computer; the director never sees them.

If the unfinished board had a contract, BBO will play it out and adjust to that.

If there was no contract, BBO adjusts to A==.

If BBO can't figure out a logical result, it adjusts to A==, but leaves the board on the director's screens for further consideration.

At no time does the speed, or lack of, by any player enters into the equation.

3. The director cannot levy slow play or procedural penalties. They can only adjust to a contract, average +, =, or -.

4. You can concede tricks you cannot lose. (You can also claim tricks you cannot win.) So, look carefully at all those claims.

5. The correction period is 20 minutes after the game. That's 20 minutes to finish the evaluation and adjustment, not just register the complaint.

ACBL guest policy at virtual clubs

ACBL's intent with the virtual clubs is to "allow players an opportunity to play with friends from their local club." The social aspects of bridge cannot be overstated. Anybody can play in the Speedball games or Support Your Club (SYC) games. But, a large majority of players want to play with the people whom they know.

While the brick and mortar clubs are open to anybody who shows up, the corresponding virtual clubs are essentially invitational. Virtual clubs can allow members to play with a guest partner. But, the number of guest partners must be kept to less than 5% of the field, on a weekly average. Guest pairs are not allowed.

Currently ACBL has no policy for special interest virtual clubs that have formed after physical clubs closed in March. They have been given a little leeway because they fill a need. These special interest virtual clubs are usually for specific areas where there are no virtual clubs. e.g. The PPDVBC club covering Units 551, 559, 564, is one. A club for a specific class of player, e.g. the D23 club for limited players is another.

Two or more clubs are allowed to pool their memberships. e.g. the clubs in Units 556 and 553, which are pooled and play as one entity. (Unit 556+) The players in all six clubs are considered members.



Here's something to fry your brain:

"There was a young lad at Purdue  
Whose limericks stopped at line two."

Ho, hum, you say, pretty fatuous.  
Yes .. but that's just the set-up. Try this:

"There was a young man from Verdun."

C'mon, 'fess up. Your brain just HAS to continue "Whose limericks stopped at line one."

But that starts an endless cycle from which there is no escape ...



Play or Defend?  
by John Jones

North

♠ 9 7  
♥ J 9 6 4 2  
♦ A K 9  
♣ A K 9

West

♠ 5 2  
♥ A K 3  
♦ Q J 10 8  
♣ Q J 10 8

East

♠ Q 6 4 3  
♥ Q 10 8 7 5  
♦ 4 2  
♣ 4 2

South

♠ A K J 10 8  
♥ void  
♦ 7 6 5 3  
♣ 7 6 5 3

Contract: 4♠ by South

West leads the ♥A. Do you play or defend?

If you need a hint, turn to page 4.

The solution is on page 8.



Submitted by John Jones:



Snoopy is, of course, an Honorary Life Master.

### District 23 Rank Changes April 2020

**Junior Master**

Marcy Kelly  
 Khushroo H. Lakdawala  
 Darrel E. Manson  
 Jane Manson  
 Gloria Orecklin  
 Susan Talty

**Club Master**

Marc D. Moser  
 Carol J. Schamp  
 Susan Smith

**Sectional Master**

Debbie Hamilton  
 Michael Rodrigues  
 Peter Schlesinger  
 Carling Sugarman

**Regional Master**

Jenny Ernest  
 Denise A. Simon

**NABC Master**

Tsu K. Jan  
 Michael Schiff

**Life Master**

Susan Morse-Lebow

**Bronze Life Master**

Rochelle M. Blumenfeld  
 Steven R. Little

**Silver Life Master**

Ruth J. Baker  
 Wayne D. Beagle  
 Susan E. Emminger

**Gold Life Master**

Nancy A. Heck  
 David Peim  
 Ernest J. Wong



#### Hint for “Play or Defend?”

It’s easy to see that five spades, two aces, and two kings are pretty easy for declarer to get, getting to nine tricks. Is there any way to get ten? Look at dummy’s spot cards carefully. You have five dummy entries, after all. Does that help?

Submitted by David White:





## 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)

*No news from Long Beach this month.*



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

Unit Game: Saturday June 1e - maybe  
11:00 a.m., Glendora – maybe  
Individual: TBD, Chino – maybe  
The Longest Day: Saturday, June 20  
9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., Glendora – maybe

Well, I'll start with some encouraging news. Our joint (with Unit 516) Sectional tournament, originally scheduled for last month, has not been cancelled, but has been rescheduled for the last weekend in September. That would be September 25-26-27. Same venue (the Upland Women's Club), same schedule. I don't have the flyers yet, but stay tuned to this station for breaking news.

More good news: through the efforts of our webmaster David White, and Morris "MoJo" Jones, we are now partnered with Units 559 and 564 in the PPDVBC (hey, we need to buy a vowel or something). That's the Pasadena-Pomona-Downey Virtual Bridge Club on BBO. There are open sessions Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 11 a.m.; Thursday at 7:15 p.m.; Friday at 4:15 p.m.; and Saturday at 12:30 p.m. There's a 0-1000 point game Monday at 7:15 p.m., and a 0-500 game Saturday at 10:00 a.m. The schedule

will no doubt be evolving; check it out at <https://bridgemojo.com/node/55>.

If you played at least one game at La Fetra, Bridge41, or our monthly Unit game since January 1, 2019, you are eligible to be a regular member of this club. (You had to have won some points, for some unknown reason.) If not, you are still eligible if you played in a 559 or 564 game. You can contact the club manager, Morris Jones ("MoJo") at [ppdvb2@bridgemojo.com](mailto:ppdvb2@bridgemojo.com).

The ACBL has decreed that all Virtual Club games held on June 20 and June 21 will be "Longest Day" games. I have queried the League as to whether we will be allowed to hold our scheduled games on the 20<sup>th</sup> – live at the K of C, I mean – but no reply yet. Stay tuned, but it seems unlikely that we'll have in person games by then. Since there won't be another SCBN before the scheduled games, try our Unit web site; the news will also go out on a "Bridge Alert!" Whether you play at a Virtual club, in person (I'm dreaming), or not, you can still donate directly by visiting <http://act.alz.org/goto/unit551>. Or go to our Unit web site, you will find a link on the home page.

All the "maybes" in the schedule are of course because no one can predict from day to day what's going to reopen when, if anything.

Still no word as to when our main playing site will reopen. Again, I'll send out a Bridge Alert when (if??) I get news, and will post the information on our Unit web site.

I must confess, I played on BBO for the first time last month. IMHO, it's fun (i.e., better than no bridge at all), but will never replace in-person bridge. The big advantages (aside from the inflated masterpoints being awarded) are, you don't have to leave home, and you save a lot of time by not having to pull your cards from the board, count them, sort them, then shuffle them and put them back in the board. I figure a minute per board right there. So don't panic at the 6 or 7 minute time limit. 4 minutes for speedball!

The virtual club manager, Mojo, ran a tutorial over Zoom in May. He has posted it; the link is: <https://bridgemojo.com/node/55>. It's also available on YouTube: [https://youtu.be/ERyL\\_DyLVxg](https://youtu.be/ERyL_DyLVxg).

One promotion to report this month. Susie Emminger has reached the heights of Silver Life Master. Congratulations, Suze.

Our hand-of-the-Month comes from a game played over BBO, reported by Ho Ming Yim. It was a team game. There was the possibility of a double slam swing, something you don't see every day. I'll give you the full hand for your admiration:

♠ Q 9 6 5	
♥ A Q 10 9 6 3 2	
♦ none	
♣ 3 2	
♠ K	♠ 8
♥ J 8 5 4	♥ K 7
♦ A J 3	♦ K Q 10 9 7 6 2
♣ K Q 10 6 5	♣ A 9 7
♠ A J 10 7 4 3 2	
♥ none	
♦ 8 5 4	
♣ J 8 4	

I will let Ho Ming describe this gem in his own words:

“This hand showed up today whilst playing on BBO. East opened a diamond and I was sitting North and bid 6♠ over 6♦.

“On the ♦A lead, with double-dummy play, South can ruff the first diamond, cash ♥A to pitch a club, ruff the ♥K on the second round of hearts, play the ♠A dropping the ♠K, then cross-ruff hearts and diamonds to set up two more heart pitches for the clubs, making 13 tricks. Conversely, although East is missing two aces, South has transportation issues to get to North's ♥A, so East would also make 6♦.

“Although it's not a true small slam swing (6♦ is cold whereas 6♠ makes on anything but a club lead), it's still close enough for me to call it a small slam swing in practice. I don't recall the last time I held a hand this distributional where both directions can make a small slam. I thought I'd share this fascinating hand with you to cheer you up.

“7♠ makes on a spade lead as well. Ruff heart two times and the entire heart suit sets up, and you still have three diamond ruff entries to the board. The bidding at my table was 1♦-3♠-5♦-5♠-6♦-P-P-6♠-X-P-P-P. The bidding almost guarantees a void in diamond in one of the hands. So a club lead is the winning opening lead. The opponents misread the auction and lead the top diamond. I wish I could tell you my

partner declared 6♠ correctly but the result was 6♠x-3. This was a team game and the other table also misplayed it and was 5♠x-1. I really wanted to see a double small slam swing on both boards. 6♠x+1 for +1310 and 6D=+1370, that's +2680 on one board for a 21 IMP swing. I would pay good money to see that happen...

“With 11-card fit, go for the drop. The mnemonic I use is “11-9-7, drop the K-Q-J respectively. 10-8-6, finesse the K-Q-J respectively.”

Well well well. Back to me. It's easy to be wise after the fact of course, but I would say I would almost certainly have led the ♣K from the West hand, while retaining the ♦A as an entry. (Or so I would think!)

Quote for the month: “After all, what is your hosts' purpose in having a party? Surely not for you to enjoy yourself. If that were their sole purpose, they'd have simply sent champagne and women over to your place by taxi.” (P. J. O'Rourke)

## Downey – Whittier by Linda Eagan and Liz Burrell

[Editor's note: no news from Downey-Whittier, and no cartoon to make you lose your appetite, either.]



## Santa Clarita-Antelope Valley by Beth Morrin

No news from SC-AV this month.



## West Los Angeles by Elizabeth Ryan eryan311@gmail.com

Congratulations to our New Life Masters Debbie Faigen and Merle L.! They both earned their

Life Master during Silver Point Week at the Barrington.

[Editor's Note: the following two articles aren't "Unit News" per se, but with the present situation of no physical clubs operating, we'll put items of a similar nature in this section.]

## The District 23 Club by David White

### Why a D23 Virtual Club?



*What bothers me most about the corona virus is now my health and well being depend on the common sense of others.*

So ACBL and BBO started virtual clubs with the intent of helping local clubs, providing a place for players to play against their friends and neighbors. Then some bright, and very greedy, bridge pro in Texas decided to open his game to everybody on the planet. Not what ACBL wanted, and not what the local clubs want either. Current ACBL policy is that one member of the partnership had to have played in the clubs "brick and mortar" location for the partnership be allowed to play in the virtual club game.

New problem. In the first couple of weeks in the BBO era, the table count of the virtual games was only 30% to 50% of the table count for the physical bridge club. OK for an open game that was 10 tables, disastrous for an Intermediate/Beginner (I/N) that was only four tables to begin with. Add in that those players were concentrating on playing the game, now they had to master some additional computer skills.

The D23 Club was created to provide a place to play a reasonably sized limited game, against people who live within fifty miles, with directors who will walk you through the BBO process.

D23 Club games are all limited. We have 299er, 499er, and 749er games, nothing higher. Part of our mission is to teach I/N players how to use the features of BBO and The Common Game. And, we'll support, in whatever way possible, limited games at other clubs.

\$1.00 of all entry fees go to the District, because unlike the clubs, the District has no income without the tournaments. After BBO and ACBL get their cut, the rest of the money will go to the clubs

where the players usually play. (Provided ACBL and BBO get their accounting organized.)

A small advantage of the D23 Club: I used to work in the IT department of ACBL. I have volunteered to try every "new" thing or idea, that ACBL, BBO and The Common Game come up with. So if you're in a D23 game you might see some strange things.

One thing D23 does, is a series. Example, all Sunday games are a part of a series. If you play two or more times in a month your top two scores will be entered into a series competition. The top six players get additional masterpoints. The number of points displayed are currently incorrect, but ACBL is working on it.

Or, how about a Zoom video call when you call the director?

#### D23 Club 299er Winners for May

May 3 <sup>rd</sup>			
David Khalieque - Aggi Oschin		1	
Carol Reukauf - Paul Reukauf		2	
Andrei Verona - Maria Verona		3	1
Michael Zelichov - Glenda Zelichov			1

May 10 <sup>th</sup>			
Jerome Paul - Margaret Shifley	1	1	
Anita Walker - Mary Townsend		2	
Sylvia Jones - Barbara Dischler	3		1

May 17 <sup>th</sup>			
Carol Ann Underwood - Harold Underwood	1		
Susan Smith - David Khalieque	2	1	1
Melinda Raine - Michael Vernia	3	2	2
Tomoko Stock - Jan Ladd	4	3	

May 24 <sup>th</sup>			
Margaret Shifley - Jerome Paul	1	1	
Jacqueline Moor - Melanie Moran		2	
Suzanne Wilcox - Susanne Hollis	3		1
Patricia Lester - Ann Heuer	4		2
Anita Walker - Mary Townsend		5	

#### May Sunday Series Winners

1	David Khalieque	0.88 Black
2/3	Margaret Shifley	0.58 Black
2/3	Jerome Paul	0.58 Black

4/5	Carol Ann Underwood	0.33	Black
4/5	Harold Underwood	0.33	Black
6/7	Anita Walker	0.21	Black
6/7	Mary Townsend	0.21	Black

## Virtual Bridge Club serves Pasadena, Pomona, Downey by Morris “Mojo” Jones

bridgemojo.com



With our comfortable, familiar bridge clubs shuttered for the time being, we need the outlet and connection of bridge more than ever.

Many of the District 23 clubs were early to adopt online bridge. For the smaller units it's been a challenge. All over the ACBL, units have been banding together in “pools” to give their players a chance to keep playing bridge.

Dave White has been a major influence and enabler for District 23. He's been training bridge directors to become BBO directors, and providing insider tips and knowledge about running games.

Before the events of March, I was about to open a new physical bridge club. When the clubs all went dark, I didn't have a club sanction. Dave encouraged me to apply for a new sanction in an effort to get a virtual bridge club to serve the players of three District 23 units that didn't have an online club.

And so the Pasadena Pomona Downey VBC (virtual bridge club) was created.

With the mad rush to online bridge, it's been quite a strain on the technical and human resources of the ACBL and Bridge Base Online. We weren't able to hold our first game until the Thursday before Silver Linings week.

As of this writing the Pasadena Pomona Downey VBC has 120 or so “official” member players. We serve the three units of 559 Pasadena / San Gabriel, 564 Downey / Southgate (the Downey Whittier club), and 551 Pomona / Covina (La Fetra and Bridge 41). The players from six sanctioned bridge clubs are included in the player list, giving us a private

place to play with our familiar friends from the bridge table.

Guest players from out of the area are welcome to play occasionally with a member partner. Guest pairs are not permitted, except as fill-ins when the game has a half table.

Online virtual clubs are relaxed from the formal “session” requirements of brick-and-mortar clubs, so the game schedule can have quite a bit of flexibility. We've had great turnout for our Open Pairs and Limited games. More players are discovering us and signing up every day.

To learn more about the Pasadena Pomona Downey Virtual Bridge Club, visit [bridgemojo.com](http://bridgemojo.com), or search for us on Google: use the search “Pasadena Pomona Downey Bridge”.

### Solution to “Play or Defend?”

You should declare! The hint about having *five* dummy entries was a red herring, of course. You only need *four* after the heart lead. The trump finesse doesn't help, of course. Here's how the play goes: you ruff the opening lead, cross to dummy four times using the two minor suit Ace-Kings, ruffing a heart on the way back each time. In the four card ending, dummy has ♠97 ♦9 ♣9, declarer has *bupkis*. The ♠97 are good for one trick. Simple dummy reversal, don't you know! This hand comes to you in slightly modified form (only two cards were changed) from *The Bridging of Troy – Tales from the Trojan Tournament*, by Chris Ackerley.

If you can track this book down (it was published in 1986), be prepared for a fascinating new take on the Trojan War ... and some truly awesome puns.

Thanks to the SCBN Editor (I think!) for submitting this problem.



# Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are: Mark Bartusek, Daniel Korbel, Roger Lee, Mister Mealy-mouth, Mike Shuster, and Jon Wittes.

*This column is dedicated to the memory of Gerald (Gerry) Bare. Gerry passed away recently due to heart failure. Gerry had been a panelist for this column long before I took over from Marshall Miles. Gerry had a hand in developing the 2/1 Game Forcing System (Walsh) that is common today. Gerry was Richard Walsh's regular partner for a while. Gerry was like clockwork in answering the problems for this panel. The answers always came back in two days. He would write the problems down and discuss the problems over with his wife, Pat (who plays kitchen bridge). Gerry was frequently the most conservative bidder on the panel. Gerry was one of my favorite partners. It was always nice to know that partner had his bid. Gerry was an outstanding defender, signaling well and helping partner solve problems. Gerry was always a gentleman. He was very quick witted and was knowledgeable in a host of areas. We'll miss you Gerry!*

*As always, panelists are playing 5-card majors, 15 - 17 NT, and 2/1 GF. Beyond that, except where indicated, panelists may use any reasonable methods.*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">1</h1> <p>IMPs None Vul</p>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
			3♠	dbl
	pass	4♥	pass	???
	You, South, hold: ♠A3 ♥AKJ9 ♦AQJ96 ♣Q9			
What call do you make?				

*We'll start with a good hand in a preempted auction. Should we bid again, trying for slam? One panelist thinks the hand is worthy of another try.*

**Wittes:** 4♠. Surely, this hand is worth one try, however, I make it with some trepidation. If partner has a weak hand without significant distribution, the 5-level could be too high. If we are missing the ♥Q and the ♦K, they rate to be offside. If partner has only four trumps with no queen, trumps could very easily break badly. Of course, if partner has five hearts to the queen with the ♣A and the ♦K, a grand slam is likely. One other consideration, at this vulnerability, pushing for a borderline slam is not as critical as it would be if the vulnerability were reversed.

*Other panelists think that the percentages are against bidding more and are worried about how safe the 5-level might be. Some of them are staunchly against bidding again.*

**Bartusek:** Pass. Preempts work! With my 5-loser hand I can't come close to guaranteeing that 4♥ will make, so why would I consider bidding further? Partner's average share of the points rates to be about 5-7 HCPs.

**Korbel:** Pass. There is no universe where I am worth another bid. There are a million ways we could go down if we get any higher. Yes, we could have a slam.

**Lee:** Pass. This isn't that close to me.

**Shuster:** Pass. Yes, we make a grand opposite a perfecto: ♠xx ♥Qxxxxx ♦Kx ♣Axx. But we might already be going down here (maybe doubled!) opposite a disaster: ♠xx ♥xxxxx ♦xx ♣Jxxx. Against a preempt, go for the low-hanging fruit.

*And then there was our resident joker Mister Mealy-mouth, who tried his standup routine on this problem.*

**Mealy-mouth:** Pass. I was playing on BBO with some guy from Italy named Fibonacci when I faced this problem. I passed and he managed to take eight tricks. I accused him of overbidding. He had ♠852 ♥8532 ♦532 ♣853, an eightboro (hmmm, New York City has only five) and told me afterwards that 8 was one of his favorite numbers. (*Maybe your eightboro buddy*)

*would do well with Lord Yarborough, they'd never have to bid!)* Do you think that with a name like that he might have been fibbing? I told him 13 was my favorite number. To my surprise, I learned that we won 6.7 IMPs. (*Check again and make sure it wasn't 1.12358 IMPs*) Maybe others who held my hand "Blackwooded" and reached 5♥ doubled.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">2</h1> <p>IMPs None Vul</p>	West	North	East	South
	2♦*	3♣**	3♥***	???
<p>* The opponents are playing Multi, 2♦ shows a weak two bid in either major.  ** Your agreement is to use ACBL Option #2; 3♣ shows a sound Club overcall.  *** Pass or correct.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">You, South, hold: ♠KQ6 ♥75 ♦Q10743 ♣Q83</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What call do you make?</p>				

*Some panelists don't think this hand is worth a call so they don't have to worry about which bid is best.*

**Wittes:** Pass. Surely, East has reasonable values to make a free 3♥ bid. I don't have anything exceptional in either high cards or distribution, and I don't want to push them into a makeable game.

**Lee:** Pass. Double is tempting but this hand looks too slow for 3NT to me.

**Shuster:** Pass. If LHO corrects to spades, I'll balance 3NT. But if he has hearts, I don't think we have game, and if partner can't double, we may not have a plus available. LHO will lead his major, and if it is hearts, 3NT is a sure minus score.

*One panelist gives up on 3NT, but raises partner to try to get to 5♣.*

**Mealy-mouth:** 4♣. What I'd bid had West opened an old-fashioned Edgar-approved Weak 2♥. If you're tempted to bid a stopper-showing 3♣, remember that adjective bridge is not only illegal, it's immoral. 3♣ here would show spades. (*4♣ works fine on the actual hand. Partner probably passes for +130*).

*A problem with ACBL Defense 2 is that it is very specific in some auctions and leaves other follow-ups undiscussed. Double in this auction isn't discussed but the panelists assumed it was card showing.*

**Korbel:** Double. It would have been nice had you included what DBL or 3S would mean here. I assume double just shows some values; I'm going to do that to aim for 3NT. Partner could easily have something like ♠Ax ♥Kx ♦Jxx ♣AKxxxx.

**Bartusek:** Double. The ACBL option #2 write-up doesn't specify what my actions mean in this sequence. It does indicate that 2♦ – double, – 3♥ – double just shows cards, so I'll assume my double in this sequence means the same thing. My guess is that this esoteric problem will probably be of interest to less than 5% of the readership.

*I don't think this problem is esoteric at all. Yes, Multi is somewhat rare in the ultra-conservative ACBL where it is restricted based upon the length of a match and other factors. But it's pretty standard in many parts of the bridge world. Defense #2 has some holes in it (although it is much better than Defense #1). This hand was sent to me by a reader, who tried 3NT unsuccessfully when the opponents took six hearts and an outside ace.*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">3</h1> <p>Matchpoints Both Vul</p>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
		1♣	1♠	1NT
	2♠	dbl	pass	???

You, South, hold: ♠A107 ♥Q96 ♦Q95 ♣Q943

What call do you make?

*Jeff Rubens wrote in the 2020 February Bridge World Master Solvers' Club "A while ago, there was a tendency among panelists to try to hedge in a difficult contested-auction situation by cue-bidding. More recently, expanded use of doubles has occasionally made this the I-don't-know-what-to-do action."*

*I'm not certain this is a good situation to be trading I-don't-know-what-to-do doubles for cooperative doubles that we had in our arsenal for so long. Most situations in which we give up penalty doubles to play negative doubles or responsive doubles have a way to collect on a penalty by passing and letting partner reopen with a double. Here with responder having made a fairly descriptive bid, s/he is highly unlikely to double.*

*We are at all vulnerable at matchpoints, the best possible situation for low-level doubled contracts. Collecting 200 on a part score deal frequently gets all of the matchpoints. I like making doubles which responder will pass frequently. Queens are frequently better cards on defense and this hand has a little more than promised. I like defending with the hand. Who is with me?*

**Shuster:** 3♠. In the modern style, partner's double is not penalties, but showing extra values and good shape. Our hand is very good for clubs, so is worth exploring for bigger things.

*0 for 1.*

**Korbel:** 3♠. A good hand for partner with the Ace of spades. The perfect bid. I'm passing 4♣, in case partner was just trying to compete based on a singleton spade.

*0 for 2.*

**Lee:** 3♣. Seems clear.

*0 for 3. My best Caltech player ever doesn't even think about leaving the double in.*

**Wittes:** 4♣. If we don't have 9 runners (unlikely especially if partner doesn't have six clubs), 5♣ is our most likely game.

*0 for 4. I'm going down in flames.*

**Mealy:** 3♣. I'm very inexperienced at problems like this, as I've never faced one at the table. Why? Because I've always raised to 2♣ with hands like this. There appear to be about 15 spades in this deck: East has five, West has three, I have three, and North has four. The most likely scenario has North (did you say that I'm playing with Mr. Magoo?) misplacing two of his clubs with his spades, which means he has at least five clubs, giving us a total of at least nine. (Either Mealy has never noticed that minors don't score very well, or he is back doing standup looking for laughs). I don't want to be caught breaking the law---er, I mean, LAW---so I'll bid 3♣ now. As I've bid, partner's double is business, not *je-ne-sais-quoi*.

*I'm not certain how to count that vote. He thought the double was penalty, but didn't like the 1NT response and removed the double.*

*The last panelist suggested the problem.*

**Bartusek:** 3♠. Partner guarantees extras and almost assuredly a singleton spade (unless strong enough for a 2NT rebid). (Even if we accept the modern style, I think "almost assuredly a singleton spade" is a bit of an overstatement. We wouldn't double on ♠xx ♥AKJT ♦xx ♣AKJTx (a 16 HCP hand that I wouldn't open 1NT, intending to reverse), ♠Jx ♥AKTx ♦Jx ♣AJTxx (a rich 14 HCP that knows they are going down), or a balanced 18 or 19 (can you say +800 (dialing an 800 number), or +1100 (sticks and wheels)). In a 5-card major 15-17 NT framework the most likely holding for partner is a 1=(34)=5 (1 spade, five clubs and three or four each in diamonds and hearts pattern with 15-17 HCPs (1=4=4=4 would usually open 1♦). If partner had a doubleton spade partner would usually have opened 1NT. Obviously partner is okay with me

passing for penalty, but only with a “good” spade holding. ♠A10x is not good in the context of my previous 1NT call, and we certainly don’t want to be defending against a 9-card spade fit at the 2-level. In addition, with no spade wastage opposite shortness I expect 5♣ to be frigid (which it was), and 6♣ a possible make. A 3♠ bid here usually shows the ace with a good hand; and this might even get us to 3NT if

partner raises with a stiff king. Note that this sequence is a standard exception to the rule that one guarantees a doubleton in the opponent’s suit for a competitive double at the 2-level.

*The panelists differed somewhat on what to bid, but they all bid something. Oh for the good old days when that X card and sharp defense could give the opponents a zero when they got in our auction.*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">4</h1> <p>Matchpoints Both Vul</p>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
		1♥	1♠	???
<p>You, South, hold: ♠AKQ3 ♥1087 ♦764 ♣Q95</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

*Show a heart raise or bid NT? Invite (2♠ or 2NT) or just compete (1NT or 2♥)? Both strain and level are issues on this MP problem.*

*Some bid NT, going low.*

**Lee:** 1NT. Not good enough for 2♠ or 2NT, and I suspect 3NT will usually be a better game than 4♥, so I’ll make the bid with decent upside while roughly showing my values. 2♥ is my second choice.

**Mealymouth:** 1NT. This hand is on the cusp between 1NT and 2NT. What sways me towards timidity is the likelihood of a bad mesh. Even if partner has as many as two spades, and even playing in notrumps, my spade tops are shirkers, not really workers whose job it is to promote other honors in partner’s hand.

**Shuster:** 1NT. It is MPs, so I’ll try to both go for the higher scoring partial and protect the plus with 1NT. I should be well placed if this doesn’t end the auction.

*(He might be able to bid hearts at some point).*

*One panelist bids NT, going high.*

**Bartusek:** 2NT. With no ruffing value I would generally expect the 9-trick game to be easier to make than 4♥. Partner is still there if possessing a distributional hand. In addition, it’ll be easier getting back to hearts after this start than getting to 3NT after an initial 2♠ cuebid.

*Two panelists show heart support, going high.*

**Korbel:** 2♠. It would be masterminding to bid notrumps now. I’ll raise hearts and if partner bids 3♦ or 3♠ we will be in 3NT, at least temporarily.

**Wittes:** 2♠. I’m tempted to bid only 2♥. Since East has such a terrible spade suit for a vulnerable overcall, the missing honors in the other 3 suits rate to be very poorly placed. Penalty pass at the 1-level seems a little much, even worse if partner can’t reopen.

*Nobody bid 2♥, but that is in the running too. I agree with Wittes that the penalty pass seems inferior to all of the other auctions. But it is MPs.*



5

IMPs  
Both Vul.

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♣	pass	2♥
Pass	3♠*	pass	3NT**
Pass	4♣***	pass	???

\* Short suit slam try in some suit

\*\* Forced to allow partner to show short suit

\*\*\* Short (singleton or void in clubs)

You, South, hold: ♠A65 ♥KJ65 ♦76 ♣AKQ10

What call do you make?

Partner has shown us a fit, club shortness and a slam try. We have a maximum, but a significant portion of our values are facing the club singleton or void. The methods described here have been around for a long time. Sometimes conventions are invented by multiple people, more or less simultaneously. I have heard it attributed to Grant Baze or Bobby Goldman. I don't know for certain who come up with it, but I do know that both Baze and Goldman were great players, wonderful gentlemen, and really fun guys!

Some panelists sign-off, citing the club wastage.

**Korbel:** 4♥. I don't believe I'm worth a move. We could still have a slam, but we may need a perfecto from partner (including a fifth heart) for it to be any good. I'm not willing to look for it when he will also accept with many hands where slam is terrible.

**Mealy-mouth:** 4♥. Sorry, wrong royals: shirkers, not workers. By the way, playing 15-to-17 notrumps, I'd have opened 1♣, as I rate this hand as (barely) worth 18 HCP. Prior to learning of North's singleton or void in clubs, I counted my ♣10 as a likely *trick*. Note that a heart contract figures to play better from the North side than from the South, a good reason to prefer 1♣ to 1NT if the decision is close.

I also dislike jumping to 3♠ as a slam try with unspecified shortness. Much better to use 2♠, over a 2♥ reply to Stayman, as artificial, forcing and confirming a heart fit, leaving the entire three-level available for further exchange of information. Yes, such an artificial 2♠ rebid can be used as a relay, asking opener for specific pattern information, but

even without any such convention it can trigger cue-bidding usefully below game. There is some merit in playing that 2♣ is a slam effort after 1NT 2♣ 2♥, but it depends on some of the rest of your agreements.

There, Marshall, is this mealy-mouthed enough for you? Oh, pardon me, John, it's you who directs this panel now, not Marshall any more. Why did Marshall have to leave us so soon?

Some panelists take an in between action, bidding Last Train, a convention which says "All of the room has been taken up, and I have a some extras, but not a clear bid past game. It is only used in slam auctions and is always the bid immediately below game. This is another good convention. I believe this one is attributed to Jeff Meckstroth.

**Bartusek:** 4♦. Last Train. Sure, I have a lot of club wastage, but I do have a control-rich super maximum. AKQ will usually provide some valuable pitches (e.g. xxx of spades with partner). I don't think I have enough to force to slam since partner could have hands like: ♠KJxx ♥Axxx ♦AJxx ♣x or ♠KQxx ♥Qxxx ♦AQxx ♣x which provide poor play for slam.

**Lee:** 4♦. Last train. Despite the concentration of club values, this hand has a lot of great features, and it would be a huge mistake to sign off. In fact, this hand is almost good enough to bid keycard.

**Shuster:** 4♦. This is good enough for last train, even with the "wastage" in clubs. The KQ10 could be three pitches after all and rate to take care of partner's spade losers.

*One panelist thinks this hand is worthy of a full-fledged slam try. I assume he has Last Train in his tool box, but chose to show a better hand.*

**Wittes:** 4♠. I have the worst club holding I could possibly have, but the rest of my hand is so strong with 4 reasonably good trumps, that I have to cooperate at least once.

*If I was going to bid slam on this hand, a reasonable thing to do would be to cuebid diamonds naturally (5♦, not Last Train, or 4♦ followed by 5♦). If we can talk the opponents out of a diamond lead then slam looks pretty good!*