

# Bridge News

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Shore



### GNT Update

I'm afraid the news is not good for our players who were hoping to play Grand National Teams at the District level this year. My current understanding is that ACBL is willing to let us do so, but only if we had completed the event by June 30. That was never in the cards (as it were) because holding an on-line teams tournament under the conditions necessary for a sanctioned GNT event turns out to be technically more complicated than a pairs game. If ACBL relents on its deadline, we would be happy to work on making this happen, but for now it does not appear that we will have an opportunity to provide a District GNT event in 2020.

### Get Used to Your Computer

Most of you have probably heard by now that there will definitely *not* be any live tournament play this year. ACBL has made the decision not to staff any live tournaments with directors at least through the end of 2020. Although this decision is obviously disappointing for fans (like me) of live tournament play, I agree wholeheartedly with ACBL's decision. In addition to being the responsible thing to do for our players (a vulnerable population), it's the responsible

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by Kevin Lane

“Bridge is a game and should be fun.”



### *My Email*

Because of changes prompted by ACBL headquarters, the best email address for my district director work is now: district23director@acbl.org.

### *Special Board Meeting*

The board conducted another special meeting in June. The main decision is to cancel all face to face ACBL nationals, regionals and sectionals for the year 2020. I voted against the motion. I fully support the idea that tournaments will likely be impossible to hold. My concern was primarily that cancellation of all 2020 tournaments seemed premature without additional input from the districts.

Notably, the vote came in a special meeting so there was not the normal gathering and vetting of information. And the cancellation of all tournaments is a major step that warrants full deliberation.

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

I reiterate the discontinuation of the district 23 CAP supplement that I first mentioned in my June message.

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%

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thing to do for directors. Until a vaccine or an effective treatment becomes widely available, gathering large numbers of people indoors is (to say the least) asking for trouble.

What a Long Strange Trip It's Been

This is the final column of my first year of my first two-year term as District President. (For those who may be wondering, I'm eligible for one more consecutive term before being term limited.) I knew, of course, that taking on a leadership role would pose its challenges. I think it's safe to say, though, that I had no clue that I'd be meeting those challenges in a world where in-person bridge was not a feasible option. No idea that factors such as droplet sizes, dispersal rates, and  $R_0$  would become issues I'd need to learn about to make responsible decisions. Life is definitely stranger than we can imagine.

I hope that my readers have been enjoying my columns and finding them informative as well as interesting. And as always, if there's something you'd like to see covered either in this column or in the *Bridge News* generally, please don't hesitate to let us know. My e-mail is at the bottom of every column.

The District Board's next meeting will be July 3 at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. My August column will report on that meeting.

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

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reimbursement that the ACBL provides will continue, of course. Only the District 23 supplement is being discontinued.

I welcome your input. [district23director@acbl.org](mailto:district23director@acbl.org)

## From the Director's Desk by David White

Directing in a BBO world.

*Apart from being bored, exhausted, broke, overweight, drinking too much and ready to have a mental breakdown, I'm fine. Thanks for asking.*

For the BBO player:

You think the opponents are taking too long, there might be a little unauthorized information being passed.... It's a thought that has gone through all of

ours heads at one time or another. So how do BBO and ACBL catch those unencumbered with a conscience?

The first line of defense is the other players. While not all funny bids and weird plays are suspicious, the unusual stuff is a start. So keep those complaints coming...

What is strange? Eg. hands from last week's Online Regional that went for an ethics review.

Leading small from AQJxx to partner's singleton K.

Leading small from AKxxx to partners Qx.

There were no clues from the bidding that either of those would be good leads.

Players who will get a call from Rob Gordon (ACBL lawyer) are the pair that bid 6, holding 22HCP, knowing they were missing an Ace, depending on a 2-2 break in trump, a 3-3 break in a side suit and two Kings being finessed. (That's about a 3% slam, perhaps a tad better.)

On BBO, hesitations are expected to be network lag. But taking an unusual amount of time is still investigated. Club directors can use TABLE HISTORY to show the time taken between all actions at a table. Table history also shows when alerts were posted and explanations given. At ACBL they have a tool that will analyze much more. Things like; the average about of time a player takes before passing, with and without an intervening bid. Or, how often a player deviates from their convention card.

ACBL and BBO are both dedicated to running a tight ship.

For the BBO director:

There are many small games where a Howell or scrambled movement would be your first choice. Getting BBO to run the movement you prefer is some times difficult.

'Hacks' are the codes you put in the game description that tells BBO what you want.

+allavail+ is the hack that tell BBO to wait until all players are available before starting the game.

+MPLIMIT=xxx+ sets the master point limit of the game.

+hm18+ is the most misunderstood hack. With six tables or fewer it will run an 18 board

Howell, six and a half tables or more it will run a six round, three boards a round, Mitchell.

But it only works as an eighteen board movement, with 18 in the hack. You can not use any other number. To run a Howell with any other number of boards, or with more than 6 and a half tables, you must specify the number of rounds, and the number of boards per round, and the total number of boards in play.

A better three table movement requires that Boards in the FORMAT section be set to 20, and boards per round be set to 4. Then in the description include the hacks +howell++rounds5+ .

This same method is used if you want to run a Howell with more than six tables. i.e. an eight table Howell with ten rounds and twenty boards is set to 20 total boards, with the hacks +howell++rounds10+.

Always be ready to restart the game in case it doesn't work the way you expected. You don't want to be the director in Seattle that set up a 16 table Howell with 31 rounds of one board each.

*The jellyfish has survived 630 million years without having a brain. This gives many of us hope.*

## Play or Defend? *by John Jones*

♠ K  
♥ 10 3 2  
♦ 10 4 3 2  
♣ A K Q 9 2

West  
♠ 4 3 2  
♥ void  
♦ K J 9 8 7  
♣ J 10 8 7 6

East  
♠ 7 6 5  
♥ A J 9 8 6 5 4  
♦ void  
♣ 5 4 3

South  
♠ A Q J 10 9 8  
♥ K Q 7  
♦ A Q 6 5  
♣ void

Contract: 6♠

Opening lead: ♣J. Do you play or defend?

If you need a hint, turn to page 4.

The solution is on page 12.



Submitted by John Jones:



***I didn't know  
it was a fib to  
open 1NT with  
just 6 points!***



## District 23 Rank Changes May 2020

### Junior Master

Thomas P. Beggane  
Regi F. Block  
Morris I. Chernick  
Janie Coolidge  
Emilie H. Elias  
Clementina Fleshler  
Sudha Govindarajan  
Juliet Green  
Carol Grosz  
Danny H. Lerner  
Saime E. Parikh  
Wendy Wax

### Club Master

Jonathan R. Dahlberg  
Sarah Deschenes  
Kim Ebner  
Belle Frieman  
Linda M. Lane  
Edward J. Nowacki  
Beverly S. Sugimoto  
Jan Van Lierop  
Michael Vernia  
Aissa Wayne

### Sectional Master

Marjorie Berg  
Paulette L. Burkitt  
Teresa Dubernet

### Sectional Master

Barbara A. Kaye  
Wendy T. Kelley  
David W. Khaliouque  
Ellen B. Kice  
C. C. Pulitzer-Lemann  
Marjorie M. Richards  
Stephen Richards  
Rosalie Stern  
Albert K. Szeto  
Arthur D. Vatz  
John C. Walker  
Janet M. Warner  
Alanna Lee Weisberg

### Regional Master

Elisabetta Beraldo  
Susan J. Briest  
Carolyn Byrnes  
Judith Cook  
Danielle Dina  
Georgann B. Dorn  
Gordon I. Hull  
Ilene Nathan  
Donna A. Moody  
Alan Nueman  
Edward D. Pelant  
David L. Swartz  
Prasad Upasani  
Andrei Verona

### Regional Master

Maria E. Verona  
Lisa A. Walker

### NABC Master

Lina Ashar  
Lawrence Trygstad

### Advanced NABC Master

Christina M. Craige  
David A. Duke

### Life Master

Aton Arbisser  
Debbie Faigen  
Merle P. Liebesman  
Bernard D. Seal

### Bronze Life Master

Joan M. Johnson  
Merle P. Liebesman  
Larisa Rappaport  
Mark S. Rappaport

### Silver Life Master

Robert C. Moest

### Sapphire Life Master

Bruce A. Gordon

### Hint for "Play or Defend?"

The defender's hands both can become stripped. East has no diamonds and might have to avoid winning the ♥A at the wrong time to avoid being endplayed in hearts or clubs. Can the defenders avoid that? Declarer might do well with parting with high cards to set up end positions.

## 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 July 18, 11:00 a.m., Glendora  
Individual: Saturday, July 4, 9:30 a.m., Chino

*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. Personally, I don't see La Fetra opening before Labor Day, and who can tell – it may be closed the rest of the year.

In better news, the Knights of Columbus Hall in Glendora has reopened. We did attempt to hold a Unit game on the 27<sup>th</sup> (the “normal” day was taken up by Longest Day festivities), but not enough players signed up and so, no game. We will try again in July. And again in August. And ... we are *nothing* if not stubborn.

Also, I'm going to try hosting an Individual on the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup> – the normal 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday. Masks required! We'll keep as far apart as possible. I have a spacious patio so we will play outdoors, weather cooperating. Afterwards I plan a picnic-style lunch, burgers-and-dogs, no extra charge. An humble thing, but our own. If you DO play to attend please let

me know. I doubt the player count will get out of hand, but ... you never know!

And back to bad news, you all no doubt got the ACBL's announcement that ALL Regional and Sectional tournaments (not to mention the Fall NABC) are *kaput* for the rest of this year. So, our joint Sectional is off again. Sigh. Better luck next year.

More bad news: Sue Aspley has succumbed to the corona virus. Note I got this from the grape vine so I hope I am not mistaken.

No promotions to report this month. I suppose that's not surprising given the limited play opportunities.

The Longest Day ... well, MoJo announced that a goodly amount of funds were raised. Sadly, NO ONE has contributed via our Unit web site (well, besides the Organizer (ahem) that is). You can still make a contribution via the Web by visiting <http://act.alz.org/goto/unit551>.

Before we get to our Hand-of-the-Month; here's the self-proclaimed “My Greatest Bid of the Century” from Ho Ming Yim. In his words:

“I was sitting in the fourth seat and picked up this disgusting hand, ♠T98532 ♥965 ♦AKQ9=♣void.

“We were vulnerable against non-vulnerable. I am still contemplating what to bid when the bidding already went 1♥-P-2♣ to me. The opponents are already in a game-forcing auction, and with a 6-4 distribution my hand screamed for a disruptive bid. But what should I bid? 2♠ isn't going to be effective, and 3♠ might get doubled and down a bunch. Tough decision, tough decision.

“I finally settled on an ‘inspired’ bid of 2♦, completely ignoring my six-card spade suit!! The bid was meant to be lead directing if nothing else. My LHO raised to 3♣ and my RHO jumped to 5♣. I immediately cashed out my diamond tricks and to my surprise the diamonds split 4333 and 5♣ was down one, while 3N makes precisely because of the 4333 split in diamonds!!

“The other tables all played it in 3N making three and we got a top board. One pair bid 2♠ with



my hand and his partner didn't even lead K from KT!!"

And on to our Hand. This comes from a session played in the "Endless Summer" tournament. It is, of course, from the Laurel and Hardy School of Bridge. Even the opponents were laughing at the outcome. For maximum laughs, I'll first give you only my hand, as dealer, Hot against Not:

♠ K ♥ A Q 3 2 ♦ J 10 8 2 ♣ A Q 9 6

Nothing strange so far. Even before the recent rule change, it seems an obvious 1NT opening. (Too bad we weren't playing Acol, then I open 1♥ of course.)

LHO chimed in with 2♣, DONT, Alerted as probably 5-5. Hmmm. His other suit is probably spades. Wait!

Partner bid 2♥, which we play as a transfer in this sequence. And what does RHO call? 2♠!!! OK, now I *really* don't have a clue (no wisecracks please). There must be a fifth suit in this deck.

Seeing no sensible alternative I passed. LHO corrected to 3♣ and there it sat. Not knowing who has what or how much of it, I let the auction die in 3♣.

Now look at the full deal:

♠ A Q 9 4 2	
♥ J 9 5	
♦ K 7 6	
♣ 4 3	
♠ J 10 8 7 3	♠ K
♥ 7	♥ A Q 3 2
♦ Q 9 5 4 3	♦ J 10 8 2
♣ J 7	♣ A Q 9 6
♠ 6 5	
♥ K 10 8 6 4	
♦ A	
♣ K 10 8 5 2	

This frightful contract went three down when declarer took the spade hook at trick 1. +150 was worth about 91% of the matchpoints. Two E-W pairs somehow made nine tricks in 3NT, for all the money. Don't ask me! No one else (that I could see) made anything. Spade and heart contracts got punished no matter which side played the hand. After the hand was over (it was nearly the last deal of the event), North ruefully observed "maybe I should have just let it go ..."

"Quote for the month: "If there are obstacles, the shortest line between two points may be the crooked line." (Bertolt Brecht)

## Downey – Whittier by Linda Eagan and Liz Burrell

We have some sad news to report this month. We've just learned that Fran Every, member of District 22 and long-time companion of Marcus Evans, passed away this past weekend (we believe it was June 26 or 27). Fran and Marcus played occasionally at the Downey Whittier Bridge Club and, of course, Marcus is the son of our late director, Marcie Evans. No information is available regarding services at this time. We send our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Fran.

On a lighter note, since we can't play bridge at this time, the Downey Whittier Bridge Club is having a picnic on July 1, 2020 at Penn Park in Whittier! We are asking members to bring their lunch, water, masks and chairs (spaced correctly for social distancing, of course.) The response to our invitation has been fantastic and we are very happy to be seeing our bridge friends again. It has been much too long.



## Santa Clarita- Antelope Valley by Beth Morrin

Unit 556 is now listed as Unit 556+ because of the addition of Glendale and Baja Gold Coast to our friends list. The "Unit 556+ Club" has 4 open games a week: Monday at 12:15 PM, Tuesday at 6:15 PM, Thursday at 10:15 AM and Friday at 12:15 PM. As an enhancement to your bridge experience we are using hands from the Common Game.

David White has started a D23 Virtual Club. There are 3 limited games a week: 749er on Wednesday night at 6:45, a 299er on Thursday night at 6:15 and a 499er on Sunday afternoon at 3:15.

A note about stratification: The director has no say in the stratification – it is based on the player with the highest masterpoints of the partnership (not the average). BBO has a different way of establishing stratification levels for each game: approximately 1/3

A players, 1/3 B players and 1/3 C players for that event. A player with no ACBL number is automatically an "A" player. Otherwise, each player's level is determined by the higher of their ACBL masterpoint total or their BBO total.

#### Big Games in Unit 556+:

Mon. June 1 at 12:15	
Beverly McLeod – John Vacca	67.29%
Tues. June 2 at 6:15	
Carolyn Cohen – Dominique Moore	67.22%
Thurs. June 4 at 10:15	
Bill Brodek – Temo Arjani	65.49%
Fri. June 5 at 12:15	
Amr Eighamry – Gerry Belcher	65.51%
Thurs. June 11 at 10:15	
Sharon Wolf – Steve Shanker	65.25%
Tues. June 16 at 6:15	
Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom	66.96%
Fri. June 19 at 12:15	
Roshen Hadulla – Ted Maki	66.65%
Sat. June 20 at 12:15	
Sharry Vida – Beth Morrin	67.36%
Mon. June 22 at 12:15	
Greg Vernon – Mary Anne Self	72.86%
Mon. June 22 at 12:15	
Gerard Geremia – Rae Murdoch	71.79%
Fri. June 26 at 12:15	
Linda Young – Russ Buker	71.74%
Fri. June 26 at 12:15	
Carolyn Cohen – Bill Brodek	66.86%
Fri. June 26 at 12:15	
Dwaine Hawley – Gary Zoss	66.52%

Online bridge has been a learning experience for all of us. There have been a few technical problems that BBO is working on due to the huge increase of online players. Unit 556+ held a practice Swiss Team game on Saturday June 6<sup>th</sup> and will hopefully hold regular Swiss Team Games in the future. For more information about joining our games, contact our club manager, Paula Olivares ([paula@pacbell.net](mailto:paula@pacbell.net)).

Sad News: Marlene Warren-Gasper passed away on June 25th. Marlene was a long-time member of Unit 556, Unit President many years, Tournament chair for the Unit 556 Sectional and more. She was a

great cook and organized wonderful homemade food for the Unit games. Her casseroles were delicious. She was a gold life master and a worthy opponent at the bridge table. She is survived by her husband David Gasper.

Next board meeting: TBA



West Los  
Angeles  
by Elizabeth Ryan  
[eryan311@gmail.com](mailto:eryan311@gmail.com)

Congratulations to Our own Bill Schreiber and Peter Knee for winning an online regional event last Friday! And then Bill went on to win a second event in the same tournament on Sunday with his brother, Michael, who lives in Dallas.

## The District 23 Club by David White



*When this is all over I don't know where I going first; the Bridge Club, the barber, AA, or Weight Watchers.*

Life in the CORVID-19 era is starting to settled down, and virtual clubs are firming up their schedules. ACBL is getting serious about restricting virtual clubs to local players. These two items are making it harder to operate a virtual only club. We had to cancel several games when BBO wiped out all clubs' friends list and several more when BBO removed the method for quickly rebuilding that list.

ACBL headquarters staff has been busy with last week's Regional on line. Hopfully they will reapprove the D23 Clubs exemption to the brick and mortar rules. And we can get back to a regular schedule.

299er series winners (18 tables)

½	Bonnie Cox	52.1
½	Marcia Hoffman	52.1
¾	Deepa Upasani	51.8
¾	Prasad Upasani	51.8
5/6	Kathine Chadbourne	47.1
5/6	Deeann Huddleston	47.1

499er series winners

1	Anita Walker	56.1
2/3	Judith Cook	53.3
2/3	Linda Slater	53.3
4	Linda Dillon	52.8
5	Nancy Guenther	50.6
6	Mary Ann Self	50.2

When a regular schedule is established, there will be an email to all D23 749ers.

*P.S. Guys, I need your help here. Last night I was arguing with my wife and she said I was right. What do I do now? That's never happened before.*

## Pasadena – San Gabriel by Morris “Mojo” Jones

bridgemojo.com



It's a little less quiet at the bridge clubs in June in the Pasadena – San Gabriel Unit.

Following what must be the longest closure in the 49-year history of the Bridge Center in Arcadia, they have re-opened for a few weekly games. Seats are available by reservation only, and face masks are required. You can reach the Bridge Center at (626) 445-3797.

New free online **bridge mini lessons**: For the next several Saturday mornings, at 9:30 a.m., I will be offering a 15-20-minute seminar covering defense topics, followed by a series on declarer play. Everyone is invited to join! To find a link to the Zoom meeting, visit [bridgemojo.com](http://bridgemojo.com).

Online games continue with the establishment of the Pasadena Pomona Downey VBC (“virtual bridge club”). The PPDVBC, as we call it for short ☺, is currently offering four open games and two limited games every week.

Open games are Tuesday and Wednesday at 11:00 a.m., Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.

Monday evenings we offer a 0-1000 game at 7:15 p.m., and a 0-500 game on Saturdays at 10:00 a.m. The Saturday game will start following the Zoom mini lesson previously mentioned.

We had an ambitious online schedule for The Longest Day weekend. I've always wanted to have a “bridge marathon” for The Longest Day, and the event is structured to enable such things for a full day of bridge activities (games and lessons), sunrise to sunset, in a traditional bridge club.

I decided to offer five open games every day, starting one every two hours with a lunch break, and four limited games. Of course not all of these games drew enough players, but we still managed to hold six open games and two limited games. Our table count for the weekend was 38! That's a lot of good support for the Alzheimer's Association.

There are still semi-private bridge classes available on a variety of subjects. I've been using a combination of BridgeBase Online teaching tables with Zoom to discuss topics and practice playing actual hands.

I admit I'm looking for an effective way to teach bridge to total newcomers. Other teachers in the ABTA are working toward the same goal, and some companies are building offerings. PCC Extension has asked its teachers to offer online classes this fall, and I'm planning to offer as much beginning and intermediate bridge as I'm able to do with the Zoom plus BBO combination.

Finally, after an interesting hand during the Endless Summer tournament, I added a feature article to [bridgemojo.com](http://bridgemojo.com) titled “Stolen bid doubles, why NOT to use them.” If nothing else, skip to the end, where there are interesting implications if the opponents are using stolen bid doubles.



# Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are: Nolan Chang, Angela Chen, Sophie Dai, Levi Katriel, and Cathy Miao..

*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.*

There is no Long Beach regional this July due to the pandemic. Thus, Youth Day 2020 will be online this year. It will be on Sunday July 5 at 2PM. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact me or Carol Frank.

As part of Youth Day, I am using youth panelists (all under 30) for my column this month. These five incredible young players are representative of the many talented youngsters living in the Southern California area. Let me introduce them.

Nolan is a recent graduate of Cal Poly Pomona and has represented the USA in WBF world championships. He is an awesome player. I have had the privilege of playing with him. I have played with some partners who were incredibly good declarers, Leo Bell, Jeff Goldsmith, Kyle Larson, Mike Pudlin, and Mike Shuman just to name a few. These players fall into the category of being magical with the cards. Nolan fits that description also.

I've had the pleasure of playing with Angela recently. She is 25 years old, studied at UCLA and lives in LA. She started playing bridge in Taiwan and was part of the bridge club at her university, mostly playing at Beverly Hills BC now. Despite being a relatively inexperienced player, Angela is a great competitive bidder. Learning to make good decisions at the 5-level normally takes years of experience. Some people say that "the 5-level belongs to opponents". Having watched Angela consistently make winning decisions at the 5-level, I state "The 5-level belongs to Angela."

Cathy and Sophie are bridge partners. They both graduated from Caltech this spring. Sophie will begin graduate work at Princeton this fall and is a member of one of our USBF teams. Cathy will soon begin working as a software engineer in Boston. Although neither of them has played bridge for long, they are a great partnership. They learn together, work hard on their agreements and are incredibly supportive of each other. I wish everyone reading my column could see how well this awesome pair works so sensationally together.

Levi Katriel is a 13-year old from the San Diego area. He is being mentored by world champion Leo Bell. Levi is learning bridge quite well. He has good instincts and is a good card player. We will hear much more about this very talented youngster in years to come.

<h1>1</h1> <p>IMPs Both Vul</p>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	1♣	1♥	pass	???
	You, South, hold: ♠KQ ♥J ♦AKJ3 ♣876542 What call do you make?			

*We have a decent hand with 14 HCPs, but where to go? We'll start with a panelist who summarizes the problem well.*

**Dai:** 2♦. Unfortunately, I can't bid my longest suit because that would be a cuebid and 1NT seems kind of bad because of the KQ doubleton and singleton heart, so might as well just bid my second longest suit.

*Agreeing with her and making a natural bid in her second suit.*

**Chen:** 2♦. Showing my own suit, looking to possibly play 3NT if partner has enough points.

*Two panelists try 2NT. Some partnerships play that 2NT shows a 4-card raise but absent that agreement, 2NT looks reasonable.*

**Katriel:** 2NT. This shows my strength, and I have necessary stoppers. Remember East didn't make a negative double and West didn't open 1♠.

**Miao:** 2NT. I would bid 2NT showing 12-14 points. Even though I don't have a club stopper, I have six (*a sixth round stopper?*) of them! Also, my bad heart suit was bid by partner. I would evaluate my hand (with 14 HCP) to be worth around 12 points.

*Never a shy bidder, Nolan bids what he thinks he can make. If you played the cards as well as Nolan, you'd bid aggressively too.*

**Chang:** 3NT. I think this describes the hand as accurately as possible with 14 HCP and the stiff J of hearts in partner's suit. Partner is invited to bid 4♥ if hearts are all he has.

*This problem comes from one of our online Caltech games (Sundays at 1PM, and Mondays and Thursdays at 7:30 – join us if you are available, johnjones is my BBO handle). My Icelandic partner Jacqui McGreal held this hand. Jacqui bid 1NT and made 9 tricks. Her counterpart bid 2NT, was raised to 3NT, but only made 8 tricks,*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">2</h1> <p>IMPs Both Vul</p>	West	North	East	South
	1NT	2♣*	pass	???
<p>* 2♣ showed the majors; 2♦ would ask for better major.</p> <p>You, South, hold: ♠2 ♥2 ♦Q108653 ♣Q10863</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

*We'll start with a panelist who describes this ugly problem in one word.*

**Katriel:** Pass. Yuck! I have no tricks to contribute in a major suit contract. If I'm lucky, partner will have two or three clubs.

**Chen:** Pass. We can't stop at 2♦ and the major fit could possibly just be 4-1 or 5-1, stopping at 2♣ has more of a chance of some kind of club fit. If the opponents double, I can run to 2♦ next.

**Miao:** Pass. I would Pass, since we could likely have a 7-card fit in clubs (or at least six), which is better than a 6-card fit in a major. If partner is void in clubs, I'm sorry in advance. (*OK, your sorry is accepted. Your pass is quite reasonable, but partner was void in clubs, had three diamonds and a good hand.*)

*This hand comes from the recent USBF Invitational run by Jan Martel. This hand wasn't from one of my matches, but was reported to me by regular panelist Daniel Korbel. The auction was different at Danny's table but was faced at the other table by Brad Moss and Joe Grue. Brad elected to pass, and 2♣ became the final contract. Joe is a great player, but even a great player has difficulty when the 5-0 trump break is your sides' holding. Danny's four-handed squad of Naren Gupta, Huub Bertens, Curtis Cheek and Daniel went through the field like a knife through hot butter, winning the final by 111 – 17 (their opponents resigned after three quarters). At Daniel's table the auction was: (the panel problem was slightly altered from the original)*

<i>Daniel</i>	<i>LHO</i>	<i>Curtis</i>	<i>RHO</i>
<i>pass</i>	<i>1♠</i>	<i>2♥</i>	<i>2♠</i>
<i>pass</i>	<i>pass</i>	<i>dbl</i>	<i>Pass</i>
<i>2NT&amp;</i>	<i>pass</i>	<i>3♦</i>	<i>pass</i>
<i>5♦</i>	<i>pass</i>	<i>pass</i>	<i>pass</i>

*& = scrambling*

*Curtis held: ♠QJxx ♥AK9876 ♦AKx ♣void*

*Making five, well done!*

*The last two panelists are probably getting to the 5♦ game.*

**Chang:** 2♦. This is not actually the worst hand to play in a major as your hand might be able to get a ruff off. Partner should have decent suits for overcalling red. Partner is likely to bid 3♦, showing a diamond fragment with a big hand.

**Dai:** 2NT. My partner and I don't really have an agreement on what this means, but if opponents opened 1NT then it should be clear to partner that this is forcing. Hopefully, partner will then understand that when she asked "2♣: pick a major" and I responded with "2NT: no I won't and please do something," she'll know that I have both minors and no support for either major and respond appropriately. Partner is likely to jump in diamonds after your creative 2NT bid.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">IMPs N-S Vul</p>	West	North	East	South
	You, South, hold: ♠AK7 ♥73 ♦A7 ♣AKQ1074			
	What call do you make?			

*A great hand! How to describe it?*

*The 1♣ bidder:*

**Dai:** 1♣. I'm kind of a wimp (*Yeah, Right!*) so I wouldn't risk bidding 2NT here. I'm not very fond of the doubleton hearts and diamonds vulnerable and would prefer to avoid playing NT if possible (unless partner shows hearts of course).

*I like 1♣ as a start. It's unlikely to get passed around. If partner responds 1♥ I can bid 3NT. If partner responds 1♠, I can buy time by reversing into 2♦.*

*The 2NT bidders:*

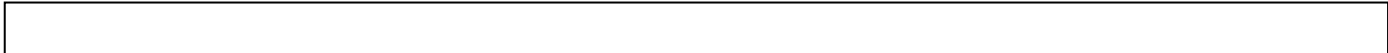
**Miao:** 2NT. I would bid 2NT, and nervously hope for the best.

**Chen:** 2NT. It's fairly balanced hand, and opening 1♣ will risk the hand being passed out.

**Chang:** 2NT. While I'm not enthusiastic about the 2 low hearts, it's no longer a requirement in modern bidding that opening NT guarantees a stopper in every suit. I don't really like the alternatives of opening 1♣ or 2♣ as the rebid options distort the hand.

*The 2♣ bidder:*

**Katriel:** 2♣. If clubs run (likely) I have 9 quick tricks.



## Solution to "Play or Defend?"

**Play.** Take the ♣A and discard the ♦Q from hand. Play three rounds of trumps discarding the minor deuces from the dummy. Lead the ♥K from hand. East must duck to avoid being endplayed in either hearts or clubs. After East ducks, the position becomes the eight-card end position shown.

♠ void  
♥ 10 3  
♦ 10 4 3  
♣ K Q 9

West  
♠ void  
♥ void  
♦ K J 9 8 7  
♣ 10 8 7

East  
♠ void  
♥ A J 9 8 6 5  
♦ void  
♣ 5 4

South  
♠ 10 9 8  
♥ K 7  
♦ A 6 5  
♣ void

Lead the ♦5 toward the dummy. If West wins the ♦J, a diamond return lets the ♦T become a dummy entry. It was necessary to jettison the ♦Q at trick one so that the ♦T could win a diamond return.

This hand comes from Dick Hess. This is not the Houston area bridge expert Dick Hess, but our own Dick Hess from Rancho Palos Verdes. Dick's hobby is creating a variety of puzzle (not just bridge) problems. This hand was published in a small booklet Dick produced for the Atlanta 2016 Gathering for Gardner.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">4</h1> <p>IMPs Both Vul</p>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	pass	1♥	pass	1♣
	pass	2♦*	pass	2♥
	pass	3♣	pass	???
* Fourth suit game forcing				

*I was given this hand by an east coast player, but my personal style is to raise to 2♥ on my second call. None of the panelists objected though, so let's hear from them.*

**Chang:** 3♥. 3♥ or 3♠, depending on partnership agreement. I like 3♥ a bit better suggesting a possible 4-3 heart contract if partner's diamond stopper is weak with something like ♦Axxx.

**Chen:** 3♥. 3NT is a possible final contract but without a diamond stopper I don't want to bid 3NT directly. If we're heading towards a club slam it also possibly shows the heart king control. Partner wouldn't mistake me for 4♥ because I didn't support hearts the first round.

**Dai:** 5♣. There's a club fit and I have a singleton diamond and partner forced to game.

**Katriel:** 4♣. It sounds like partner is interested in a possible club slam. I've already shown my shape, so I would make the forward-going bid of 4♣.

*One panelist addresses the issue of whether the game force is now off if nobody can bid NT. I believe the modern style is that to facilitate slam bidding the force is still on.*

**Miao:** 4♣. I would bid 4♣ to invite to 5♣ since partner clearly does not have diamonds stopped (since he would bid 3NT and not 3♣, as he can assume I have clubs stopped from my opening bid) and neither do I. Also, I haven't shown the full strength of my glorious club suit.



5

Matchpoints  
E-W Vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	1♠
dbl	rdbl*	1NT	???

\* No agreement, or whatever agreement you normally prefer.

You, South, hold: ♠A87542 ♥6 ♦AJ ♣KJ101

What call do you make?

*I like to play that redouble shows Qx, Kx, or Ax in partner's suit, but not necessarily anything more than that. We'll hear from the Cathy – Sophie partnership first.*

**Miao:** 2♠. I would take partner's redouble to be tolerance for spades (a doubleton maybe) and at least some values, since he thinks I can make 1♠. I will bid 2♠ since I have an extra one, but an otherwise minimum hand.

**Dai:** 2♠. I would think that the redouble means that partner has a lot of points (opponents cannot go undoubled in partscore) and then just bid normally, show my 6 card spade suit and let partner take it from there.

*Not quite the same interpretation, but they make the same bid.*

*Noticing the vulnerability, Angela thinks defending is reasonable.*

**Chen:** Pass. If redouble meant a spade fit, partner can always bid spades later. Without an agreement, my own spade suit is not great for 2♠ rebid. Plus, with values in other suits and a long spade suit, defending 1NT NV vs Vul might not be too bad.

*Holding extras, both the guys not only want to defend against the vulnerable opponents, but go for the throat, doubling!*

**Chang:** Dbl. Willing to try 1NTX especially with my holdings behind declarer, partner's heart holding behind the long hearts, and opponents vulnerable at matchpoints.

**Katriel:** Dbl. Partner either has a good hand or is showing three spades via a support redouble. 2♣ sounds weak, so I think double of 1NT is the clearest action.

*I got this hand from an old bidding panel. The panel there was all over the lot with possible interpretations and possible bids. That panel came up with 7 different calls. My young panel seems a bit more focused. Thank you to my young panel for a nice job on some tough hands.*