

Bridge News

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Shore



March or Later

By now, most of you have probably heard that ACBL has cancelled, and will not staff, any tournament through February 2021. Later tournaments, of course, will have to await future developments. ACBL has not yet cancelled the Spring 2021 Nationals. I'm personally skeptical that a vaccine will be developed *and widely distributed* in time to save the Spring Nationals, but this is one of those occasions where I really hope I'm wrong.

In another development that may be news to many of you, I received an e-mail from ACBL talking about tournament frequency in the future. In short, ACBL has reached the conclusion that it's sanctioning too many tournaments and it plans to cut back. As a result, ACBL has asked Districts not to sign contracts for future tournaments until future notice. If we do so and ACBL elects not to sanction them, it's at our own financial risk.

Here in District 23, we're already down to one regional per year. My guess, therefore, is that any policy changes won't affect us directly. I have a hard time believing that ACBL would prohibit any District from holding at least one regional in a year. However, the changes may impact discussions we've been having with our neighbors in District 22 about sponsoring a joint regional and splitting the profits. I'll keep you apprised as I learn more.

For the Juniors

In the meantime, District 22 approached me with another idea. I'm still collecting input from around the District but the idea makes sense to me. They've identified a problem specific to evening

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District Director Report

by Kevin Lane

"Bridge is a game and should be fun."



My Email

As noted last month, because of changes prompted by ACBL headquarters, my email address for district director work is now:

district23director@acbl.org.

September Board Meeting

The board continues to conduct virtual meetings.

The centerpiece of this month's meeting was a secondary report and discussion on the future of online bridge. A task force had attempted to wrestle with the problem of where online bridge fits into the future of the ACBL, and they presented their recommendations in August. This month, management presented their views on the subject and the strategic committee of the board also shared relevant work they had been doing.

Management will be taking the discussion and guidance from these meeting and preparing a more comprehensive plan.

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bridge. Very few clubs (if any) have enough junior players to put together a viable *evening* game for their 99ers. That means 99er players who want to play at night are thrust into an unlimited game, ready or not. Many of them don't feel ready so they choose not to play at all.

So the idea is to collect 99ers from all across California, Districts 21, 22, and our own 23, to collect enough players to make evening games viable for this population. The idea is that players would be assigned to the clubs where they're already playing. That club would have to give permission for the player to be eligible for the game. Some clubs may have an evening game, so they could give permission on a night-by-night basis. In other words, a club that has a Wednesday night 99er game would be able to say that its players could participate in the all-California night game on any night *except* Wednesday. Clubs would be reimbursed each time one of their players participated in the game.

As I said above, this seems like a good idea to me and it appears to be technically feasible. But I do want to make sure that I've received input from the collective wisdom of our District board. We need to hold a third meeting at some point. I'm tentatively planning to schedule that meeting on Saturday, November 14. In the meantime, I hope anyone who has input will feel free to reach out to me.

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

DIRECTOR continued from page 1

Requesting District 23 Charity Preferences

District 23 is in line to receive the \$30K charity grants. Traditionally, each unit requests funds for a charity (unrelated to bridge) they closely associate with and those funds are distributed evenly across the district.

I'm fine with that plan, but I encourage units to consider pandemic-related charities this year.

Please email me your unit's preferred charity along with their address, a contact person at the charity, and the charities tax id number. As a reminder, the organization must be a non-bridge-related charity; mere "non-profit" organizations do not qualify.

I welcome all input. *district23director@acbl.org*

From the Director's Desk
by David White

My goal during quarantine: to get down to the weight I put on my Driver's license.



For players and directors alike:

Thanks to The Common Game, we can find lots of strange bidding on the same hand and compare results.

The following auction happened twice. At two different tables at two different clubs. Let's compare bidders' reasoning.

Everybody Non Vul

P	1♠	5♣	X
P	P	XX	AP

No other board details needed. Last hand of the game and the 5♣ bidder holds:

♠ x x x
♥ A x x x
♦ none
♣ Q x x x x x

This in the last round of the day. When asking the 5♣ bidders what they were thinking:

Answer #1: "We were having a rotten game and I was swinging through the trees trying to get it back."

Director's thinking #1: While this contains a hint of logic, it is poorly applied. It grossly mis-describes distribution and one good board is not going to save your game. Handle this as a frivolous psyche, which is illegal.

Answer #2: "We were having a rotten game and I wanted to make sure these opponents got a good board."

Director's thinking #2: Here one player is trying to play kingmaker when he has determined he is no longer in the running. This is an unsporting psych, which is also illegal.

Psyches, not to be confused with bad bridge, are one of the most misunderstood aspects of bridge. They can be discussed forever. But they are legal, except in the two circumstances above.

should email davewhite50@verizon.net for more detailed instructions.

More information to come.

Every time I start thinking about a diet, my stomach starts laughing and the theme from MISSION IMPOSSIBLE runs through my head.

Play or Defend? by John Jones

North

♠ K J 9 6
♥ A 9 4
♦ J 7
♣ Q 10 6 4

West

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

East

♠ 4 2
♥ 8 6 5 3 2
♦ K 10 6
♣ J 9 8

South

♠ A Q 10 8 7 5 3
♥ void
♦ A 5 4 2
♣ K 3

Opening Lead = ♥K

Contract = 6♠ by South

Would you like to play or defend?

If you need a hint, turn to page 5.

The solution is on page 6.



There has never been an addiction with the grip of bridge, unless it is alcohol, and, of the two, bridge is perhaps the stronger. One knows reformed alcoholics, but who knows any reformed bridge players? (Jack Olsen)



For Directors: problem, do you really want to play six rounds of three boards when you have one section of 15 tables? We wouldn't even think about it in the flesh.

There is a new BBO hack (command) to limit section size. (+SECTIONSIZE=nn+) where nn is the MAXIMUM number of tables in a section. Beyond this number of tables you will get a new section and the sizes will be as equal as possible.

If you put +SECTIONSIZE=12+, say, then if you have 12 tables it will be one section, but if you have 12.5 tables it will become two sections, one of 6.5 tables and one of 6. This way a format of 6 rounds of three is more acceptable to the purist among us. And you don't have to make last second changes to the game description.

For Club Manager:

District 23 is combining with Districts 21 and 22 to hold a once a week evening 99er game. The game is open to any 99er in these three districts, no guest allowed.

Under a program called 'product pooling' clubs can self-enrol their 99ers in this game. \$3.00 of the playing fee goes back to the clubs that the player is a member of.

The permission is only for that one game and only for players with fewer than 100 points. Permission can be withdrawn at any time, but if a player is a member of two or more clubs, either can grant permission.

A date has not been set for the first of these games. An email blast will be sent to club managers and the eligible players when it is set.

Club Managers familiar with the VACB Portal can see how enrolment works by logging into the portal, clicking "Commands from BridgeFinesse." Scroll down to "MPLimit Enrolment" and click. When the game is sanctioned, a D21/D22/D23 tab will be visible. Enter your club number and click "Enrol."

This enrolment is only for your club and not for any club you are pooled with. Each club must enrol individually. Clubs without a virtual presence

Life Masters in District 23 *by Mike Marcucci*

Though it is not self-evident to the beginning bridge player in our area, the history of the game has its roots centered around the cities of New York and Los Angeles. For the first 20 years of the ACBL’s existence (1935-55), there were 9 Districts, all located in the Eastern part of the US. Everything west of the Mississippi River was made up of the Pacific Bridge League, thanks to Tom Stoddard – our earliest driving force in the growth of our hobby in the West. The ACBL finally recognized the importance and the emerging competency of western players in 1956 when the two organizations merged into a single ACBL and the new area added 7 new Districts to the fold. LA was the central player in that western growth and our membership included many of the best players of the game. If anyone is interested in a more complete picture of that fast and compressed story about ACBLs early days, one of the best attempts at full documentation was Sue Emery’s 1977 book titled “No Passing Fancy.”

Fast forward to today and the task of keeping records of bridge accomplishments in District 23. If you have attended an LA Regional in the past few years, you have seen parts of that history on the tournament walls. We have tried to show all the Clubs in LA over the years, the top players, some of the award winners, all the past Sectionals and Regionals, and some player pictures to intrigue and entertain.

There are many more aspects to our record keeping that are in the works. Each of the Unit Presidents now has a “Handbook” with a Table of Contents that attempts to show all the information that will eventually be within its pages. Today, we will explain one of those items that has been distributed for discussion and, hopefully, completion to each of our 9 Units.

Becoming a Life Master in our game is usually a goal of a beginning player. I’m probably not the only person who thought, in the beginning, that is was too far in the future to think about and it was doubtful that it would ever be reached. If you have been around a reasonable time, you probably have heard that it was a huge, I say huge, accomplishment in the early days to make that goal. Points were stingily awarded back then. 1 MP for winning a Unit Game. 9 MP for winning a national session! Back in the “rating point”

era, all of us gathered those precious hundredths of a point slips, trying to accumulate MPs one at a time! In looking at the ACBL master lists, we find some interesting data on when the FIRST LM accomplished that goal in each of our LA Units. Here’s the picture:

Unit	1st LM
551	1957
553	1947
556	1959
557	1953
559	1948
561	1938
562	1936
564	1954
568	1957

In some cases, it was years before their 2nd LM accomplished their goal. (It was 3 years in 559!) At the ACBL level, LM #1 was awarded in 1936 to David Bruce, #100 was awarded to Ernest Rovere in 1948, and #1000 was awarded to Sydney Ritter in 1956. #2000 came along in 1959. For 20 years, making LM was such an accomplishment that players would have a picture and biography in ACBL’s monthly magazine. Everyone who makes that first goal should and is very proud of that effort and, we believe, should be recognized. One way of doing that is just to keep a list of their names in the Unit records and, possibly, display those names periodically, for example, at a Sectional. Wouldn’t it be interesting to see who made LM in 1976 in your Unit? In 1966? 1996?

District 23 is in the process of generating those lists and you can help.

Everyone should know by now, if you read your monthly magazine, that ACBL publishes a list of LMs every month. They have done that every month since 1936. That is certainly nice of them. However, for some strange reason, they decided to publish only last names and first initials for everybody from 1960 to 1980. That resulted in 24,000 players being recognized by only initials for all their effort towards that precious goal.

We set out to remedy that situation. Now the task of listing ALL LMs in LA is a big task. As a start, we did manage to produce that list up through the year 2000. That list comprises about 3460 players. 424 of them had only 1st initials. We weren’t going down without a fight. After discussing this plight with many players in all our different Units, we reduced that number to 269. At that point on 25 August, the “Total” and the “Initials” lists were sent to each Unit

President for assistance. An intriguing task and our goal is 0 “Initials”! Here’s our picture today:

Unit Names Summary			
		orig	Sep-20
Unit	Tot Names	w/initials	
551	125	18	18
553	134	6	6
556	85	3	3
557	374	54	38
559	358	55	4
561	582	63	63
562	1123	115	115
564	224	16	16
568	455	94	6
	3460	424	269

If you are a senior player in your Unit and wish to help identify those players whom we only know by first initial, please contact your Unit President and ask to see their “Initials” list. Some of your FRIENDS are on that list and we do not know their names.

Help us honor all those players who worked hard to earn LM. They deserve much credit and recognition, if only to know their full names! It may only take moments to remember a friend and then, after a phone call or e-mail back to your Unit President, they will be remembered forever in our D23 records! We thank you for any support you can give.

Stay safe these days..... Mike Marcucci

(PS. Hopefully, someone in each Unit can complete the years 2001-2020 for a complete record for the Unit.)

Hint for “Play or Defend?”

Declarer appears to have a club loser and a diamond loser on this deceptive deal. Can one of them disappear? Does it help to wait to decide what to pitch on the ♥A until later?

A Rewarding Job

Every year, the West Los Angeles Unit holds its Christmas party at a place known as the Olympic Collection. The Olympic Collection is large enough to host several events at once, so, as a unit board member, I was asked to direct traffic outside so that the players would end up in the right room. I must have done a good job since I received \$1.75 in tips and two invitations to a bar mitzvah.

Peter Benjamin
Culver City CA

The Bridge Bulletin

May 2002

District 23 History Corner *by Mike Marcucci*

Our history files have many lists of statistics for D23 bridge tournaments, clubs, races, awards, etc. They also contain lots of old pictures and many of them are unidentified. Can you help with the following picture? People, date, name of trophy? If you can, please contact Mike at nstarmgm@att.net. Hoping to interest our readers with these players from the past & make sure they are not forgotten, we will periodically have other pics from our pile to entertain you! Thanks, MM



District 23 Rank Changes August 2020		
Junior Master	Sectional Master	NABC Master
Carol Inman	Jennifer T. Lerner	Sandra J. Schlosser
David C. Lachoff	Janelle Morton	Lisa A. Walker
Linda Leventhal		
Pablo M. Parker	Regional Master	Bronze Life Master
	Natalie S. Altmann	Norma A. Firedman
Club Master	Kim Ebner	Ann Trygstad
Janie Coolidge	Irwin Jaeger	
Eveline Ginzburg	Carol S. Katzman	Silver Life Master
Bobbie Greenfield	Julie Moelis	Cooie Dampman
Danny H. Lerner	Melanie K. Moran	Donald K. Garner
Darrel E. Manson	Harkirat Randhawa	
Barbara Quinn	Melanie M. Smothers	Ruby Life Master
Joseph E. Roth	Marci Valner	Eknath Deo
	Arthur D. Vatz	Barbara Federman
Sectional Master	Jennifer Wellman	Margie Lee
Terry J. Clougherty		Sandra P. Spero
Gillian Cooper	NABC Master	Zachary P. Vedro
Belle Frieman	Bonnie L. Cox	
Jerome F. Katzman	Robin C. Hill	Sapphire Life Master
Linda M. Lane	Zorina Pelant	Rashmi K. Shah

Solution to “Play or Defend?”

You should elect to declare. Ruff the opening lead in hand and lead the ♣3 toward the dummy. If West ducks the ♣A, win the ♣Q and cash the ♥A pitching the ♣K from hand. Now play the ♦A and another diamond, eventually trumping the remaining two diamonds in the dummy. If West elects to win the ♣A at trick two, it doesn't matter what the return is. Declarer can win, cash the ♣K, draw trumps ending in the dummy, pitch a diamond on the ♥A and take two more diamonds pitches on the ♣Q and the then set up ♣10 (the ♣J having dropped on the third round). This hand comes from the book *The Play of the Cards Self Quizzes at Bridge* by Fred L. Karpin. This is a great book on declarer and defensive problems in single dummy terms, not double dummy terms. This was an actual hand. Karpin didn't state who the real declarer was, but the actual declarer played as suggested, making the slam when the ♣A was ducked. Karpin, recommended the winning line of play, but made the

only error I have ever seen him make, believing that the hand could be beaten if West won the first club. My guess is that he hadn't noticed the ♣J dropping on the third round. By the way, this play has a name. I think it is called a Morton's Fork Coup.

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Around the Units in District 23



Long Beach by Lillian Slater

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com



Sharon Biederman is the heart and soul of Long Beach Bridge and its educational partner, Bridge Brigade. She also serves as a member of Unit 557’s board and as one of its representatives to the District 23 ALACBU board.

When Sharon created Bridge Brigade in 2016 and later assumed ownership of the Long Beach Bridge club, she implemented changes—making them nonprofits, greatly expanding the education program, and making the Open games more welcoming and supportive of newer players. “Everything I do is by example,” she explained. “I would show what I want people to do instead of telling them.” This Show-Not-Tell strategy has transformed the club!

From its first full year of operation in 2017, Bridge Brigade grew from 185 students to 651 in 2019. Partnering with CSULB’s OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) was a brilliant move. OLLI provides the advertising and registration, which generates the enrollment in classes. Bridge Brigade now offers eight different classes four days a week, as well as an evening class as needed.

Of course, bridge lessons don’t make a bridge player; students have to actually learn through “time at the table.” Sharon initiated Newcomer games four times a week including one evening. She also recruited volunteers to run supervised play games on Tuesday/Thursday/Friday mornings. Since all these

games award masterpoints, students become familiar with ACBL and are “hooked” into earning points to advance their ACBL rank. Long Beach Bridge enrolled five new ACBL members in the year before Bridge Brigade but this number grew to 27 in 2018! The club now posts and celebrates players’ progress from Junior Master to Diamond Life Master. These varied opportunities for newcomer play combine with the club’s Tuesday/Friday/Saturday NLM games to provide an orderly and comfortable path for students to transition from Newcomer to NLM to the Open, while becoming prepared and feeling confident to compete in tournaments.

Sharon’s enthusiasm and work ethic inspire a regiment of volunteers that includes student and veteran players. They support her efforts by teaching OLLI classes, conducting Supervised Play/Newcomer games, mentoring newer players, sending emails, creating handouts, making boards for classes and the club, updating the website, publishing a monthly Table Talk newsletter, and posting on the club’s Facebook page.

Volunteers find it hard to say no when they see Sharon working by their side—usually arriving first and going home last. And, of course, if any volunteer cannot meet a deadline, Sharon willingly assumes the commitment as *the* primary and first volunteer. Her ultimate goal is to get enough volunteers for both entities to operate without her. She says, “I want so many people involved that I make myself dispensable.”

Sharon’s reward “is watching beginners grow and learn and become good players.” Her advice is “play as much as you can. It’s the best way really learn what you’ve been taught.” She leads by example—often supervising and substituting as needed in newcomer games and partnering with newer players when they transition to the Open. She also implemented a popular Pro-Am game three times a year. Additionally, twice a year, she recruits high-level players to donate the play of a game at the club for a Silent Auction. This Bridge Brigade fundraiser is very successful while providing winning bidders with a priceless experience.

Sharon’s personal bridge journey began mid-2009 after she retired and needed to combat an empty-

nest syndrome when her youngest got a role on the TV series *Parenthood* and moved out. Sharon’s husband Steve Ramos, an expert bridge player, taught her the game. Then, in December with a month off work, Steve brought her to the club, played with her 5-7 times a week, and encouraged her to find other partners. She did and the rest is history.

Sharon’s pursuit of Life Master was filled with many adventures. She, Steve, Susan Bibby, Renee Hoffman, and Kiyo Nagaishi travelled to regionals throughout California and Las Vegas to earn the needed masterpoints. Steve and Sharon also took a bridge cruise through the Panama Canal with a whole group of people from Long Beach Bridge. Sharon achieved her Life Master goal in 2013.

Prior to retiring, Sharon was an attorney specializing in banking litigation. She represented creditors in collections, handling the paperwork and appearing in court. Being a lawyer prepared her for her present responsibilities because she knows how to handle a variety of situations and paperwork. Also, she saw the value in making both entities nonprofit to encourage people to donate their time and money.

Right before the “safer at home” began, Sharon and Steve were scheduled to go traveling down the Danube on the first ACBL river cruise, but it was canceled. They are looking forward to reopening the club and still taking that cruise after “this” ends. Sharon also likes to crochet and is applying that talent to making masks with fabric liners.

To support the club through this period, Sharon learned how to create a virtual club and directed a daily online BBO game for several weeks. Subsequently aligning Long Beach Bridge with the Alliance virtual club allowed her to offer a wider variety of game types and times for the club’s players. Currently, she and all the Bridge Brigade teachers are learning to teach lessons and hold supervised play via Zoom and BBO.

Come visit our club when Long Beach Bridge reopens, and meet Sharon in person!



A fellow had made a bad bid and gone for 1400. “I’m sorry,” he said to his partner. “I had a card misplaced.” Asked his partner innocently, “Only one card?” (Charles Goren



Pomona –
Covina
by Tom Lill
www.acblunit551.org

Individual: Saturday, Oct. 3, 9:30 a.m., Chino
Unit Game: Saturday, Oct. 24, 11:00 a.m., Chino

That’s right, sports fans, we are going to try again to hold an Individual and (or?) a Unit Game. Please note, the Unit game is scheduled a week later than the usual third Saturday. As before, we REQUIRE advance signups for both games. If you’d like to play, let Yours Truly know not later than the Tuesday before the game. That gives me time to cancel if there’s insufficient interest. (As of this writing, we do have enough players for the Individual, but not yet for the Unit game.)

Speaking of the Individual, I’m sorry to say, it may be going away. The wife & I will be moving into smaller quarters before year’s end. Not only won’t I have room to host a game, I won’t even have storage room for the tables and chairs. (Having a three car garage does have its pluses.) I’ll have to get with the other two hosts and see if they are interested in continuing; or perhaps we can find a third host. I welcome your thoughts on this subject.

No promotions to report again this month.

Continuing to abuse Rick Roeder’s little musical addition to the world of Bridge, last month, here’s another “gem” (?) from Yours Truly. You have a pretty good idea of the distribution and a count on the hand; but it all comes down to the fact that you’re a trick short. You have a finesse available, and there’s a squeeze chance too. ONE of them is guaranteed to work (according to your expert analysis); but if one works, the other must fail, and vice versa. While you ponder, listen to the Lovin’ Spoonful’s “Did You Ever Have to Make Up Your Mind?” (Yes, yes, this does rather duplicate Rick’s “It’s Now Or Never” selection. Tough.)

For our Hand-of-the-Month, we present another hand from the Monday night PPDVBC game. You won’t learn anything from it, except that Fortune Favors the Bold, or perhaps Better Lucky Than Good.

Vulnerable against not, I sat West, holding this nice collection:

♠ A K 8 ♥ 2 ♦ 8 2 ♣ A K Q 9 6 5 2.

Naturally, North opened 4♥. Can't remember the last time I had a good hand in fourth seat where the auction didn't go out of control before it got to me. Anyway, partner came out with 4♠! RHO raised the ante to 5♥.

After I got off the floor and back into my seat, rehinged my jaw, stuck my tongue back in, and reseated my eyeballs, I said "what the whatever?" and shot out 6♠. It's cold on any lead, as you can see:

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

That's right! East came in, hot-against-not, with a 7-count (OK, 2 more for the long spades if you like). I suppose South's raise to 5♥ made it easier on me – over 4♠, what do I do? Cue bid my club control and hope partner reads it as a slam invitation? Raise to 5♠? Show my heart control with 5♥, thereby implying a club control? Will partner "get" any of this holding those rags over there? Will Beowulf slay the dragon? Tune in to our next exciting episode ...

Or would I have just done the same thing and shot 6♠? We'll never know.

We got 100% on this board (8 tables), since not surprisingly, no one else bid either making slam (6♣ is also cold, as you will note). Didn't help enough. We stunk out the joint on most of the other boards. But ahhhhh, one moment of glory.

Quote for the month: "Anything worth doing is worth doing slowly.." (Gypsy Rose Lee)

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Some people are so fond of ill-luck that they run halfway to meet it. (Douglas William Jerrold

☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺

Downey – Whittier by Linda Eagan and Liz Burrell

It has become increasingly difficult over the past several months to find anything entertaining to put in this column. Since we have not played at our clubs since March, and there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel, we thought you might enjoy a few interviews with prominent people at the Downey Bridge Club. Our first interviewee is Kent Burrell, current President of our club. When, where and why did Kent get interested in Bridge? We'll try to set out the facts for you. Read on.

Kent was born in La Junta, Colorado, and moved to a farm in Iowa at a young age. He learned to drive an Army jeep at about nine years old and spent his pre-college years working with his Dad raising corn, soybeans, and Black Angus cattle. Hard work for all but very good for mind and body. He graduated from Iowa State University in Ames, IA, where he was affiliated with Sigma Phi Epsilon. The Greek system was very different in those days and the men actually had House Mothers! "Mom McCone" was a big influence on these young men and most of them grew up with good manners, a great work ethic and many intangible life lessons.

Kent was introduced to bridge at a young age by his Mom and Dad who played Auction Bridge, but he began to play Contract Bridge regularly at Iowa State in 1955. In fact, playing bridge almost eclipsed studying entirely. But he did manage to graduate on time and soon after began his working career in Denver where he met Liz in the early 60's. They moved several times, each time another rung up the ladder. After spending four years in Fort Worth and four years in Chicago, the family (now including two young children) moved to Southern California and bought a fixer-upper where they still live.

Kent and Liz joined the ACBL while they lived in Chicago and their entire social life consisted of playing party bridge. In California Kent was in a men's bridge group for over 35 years, a couple's group for at least that long and he played in social games whenever possible. He retired in 2000 as president an owner from a busy, stressful career and began to play in tournaments and clubs. The quest for Master Points began in earnest very late in the game but he reached the first goal (Life Master) in 2017.

Playing in tournaments has (as everyone knows) its ups and downs, nice people and not so nice

people. Kent's experience has been that the more points a person has, the less nice they can be. There was a huge exception to that theory at a tournament where he and Liz were playing a few years ago. Through some inexplicable quirk of fate, they ended up playing at a table against Bobby Levin and his partner. Bobby has won just about every title he has sought since winning his first tournament at the age of 13, ACBL Player of the Year in 2014 and recently playing on the prestigious Nickell team (his favorite accomplishment in bridge). Coming from tables where the opposition rarely acknowledged their presence, Kent and Liz were a little wary of this famous face. But he could not have been nicer, more congenial, and sincere. (Not to mention drop-dead handsome as Liz says!)

Kent's many years in the corporate world and his experiences both nationally and internationally have contributed to his leadership abilities. He has been President of the Downey Bridge Club for almost four years and has been coordinator (along with Liz) of the OLLI Duplicate Bridge at Cal State Fullerton for over eleven years. Kent stressed to the authors that the late Marcie Evans (former Director of Downey Bridge Club) played a large part in his understanding and enjoyment of the game. We all miss her.

Bridge has been a large part of Kent's life and it continues to entertain, challenge and frustrate him with each hand. It is truly a game for a lifetime.



Santa Clarita- Antelope Valley by Beth Morrin

The Santa Clarita – AV Unit is still running “Unit 556+ Virtual Club” with 4 open MP games and a trial IMP game on Sunday afternoon. The open MP games are held on Monday at 12:15, Tuesday at 6:15, Thursday at 10:15 and Friday at 12:15. Members may have one guest per month and are asked to notify Paula Olivares, our club manager, via email (paula@pacbell.net) 24 hours in advance to allow time for the guest to be temporarily added to our database. Guest pairs are not allowed. All ACBL tournaments for the remainder of 2020 have been cancelled.

Meet Our Virtual Club Directors:

We are highlighting our virtual club directors since there are many players participating who may not know them. This month we are featuring our Monday afternoon director, David White.

Dave White took up bridge after his family refused let a ten-year-old stay up and play in the Friday night Pinochle game. He earned his high school varsity letter as a freshman on the Bridge team. He got started in directing in 1974 when a regular tournament director got sick and they were desperate for a substitute. During his twenty years in the Air Force he played bridge all over the world and became a Life Master while playing in Portugal and Germany. While overseas he kept busy directing ACBL tournaments in Germany, England, and Italy. David said: “Yes, the Air Force took second place to my bridge career.”

After the Air Force, Dave finished his formal education. He thinks 29 years some sort of record to get a BS, but we see in the news that there are plenty of people who finish their degrees after retiring from their regular job. He took more classes in Physics and Rocket Engines, with an advisor who was a horrible bridge player. After a couple of successful inventions, he finally had enough money to play some serious bridge. Alas, ACBL then hired him to oversee the new scoring program. They fired him when it crashed disastrously. Re-hired him to maintain the current program a little longer; was fired again when they gave up on that project. Another record: ACBL has hired him four times, fired him three.

Before COVID, Dave usually played with Pat Larin of Rancho Mirage, on the first and last day of any tournament he was working. He also played as often as possible with Bob McBroom in Santa Clarita. He says they are the only two people who can tolerate his peculiarly weird sense of humor and archaic weak notrump system.

Since COVID, Dave's 50-year marriage license, to a non-bridge player, has expired. He now commutes from Lancaster to Rancho Mirage. Now he is running more games than he plays in and he is still looking for the opportunity to play more serious bridge. He also serves as District 23's webmaster. No grass is growing under his feet.

Winners in Unit 556+:

Fri. Aug. 28 at 12:15

Amr Elghamry – Gerry Belcher 71.21%

Mon. Aug. 31 at 12:15	James Rozzell – Sharon Wolf	60.74%
Tues. Sept. 1 at 6:15	Amr Elghamry – Dominique Moore	63.61%
Thurs. Sept. 3 at 10:15	Amr Elghamry – Rae Murbach	66.34%
Fri. Sept. 4 at 12:15	Bud Kalafian – Stephen Licker	63.29%
Mon. Sept. 7 at 12:15	Gerard Geremia – Rae Murbach	63.69%
Tues. Sept. 8 at 6:15	Pat Larin – Carolyn Cohen	67.78%
Thurs. Sept 10 at 10:15	Carol Reukauf – Paul Reukauf	68.24%
Fri. Sept. 11 at 12:15	Bernard Seal – John Vacca	65.49%
Mon. Sept. 14 at 12:15	Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky	66.45%
Tues. Sept. 15 at 6:15	Amr Elghamry – Dominique Moore	76.56%
Thurs. Sept. 17 at 10:15	Temo Arjani – Bill Brodek	64.56%
Fri. Sept.18 at 12:15	Dwaine Hawley – Gary Zoss	58.94%
Mon. Sept. 21 at 12:15	Paula Olivares – Bill Brodek	58.75%
Tues. Sept. 22 at 6:15	Amr Elghamry – Dominique Moore	59.64%
Thurs. Sept. 24 at 10:15	Amr Elghamry – Rae Murbach	64.69%
Fri. Sept. 25 at 12:15	David White – Robert McBroom	66.67%

Winners of Unit 556+ Sunday Afternoon IMP Pairs Game at 3:20:

Sunday Sept. 6	Paula Olivares – Bill Brodek
Sunday Sept 13	Sharry Vida – Beth Morrin
Sunday Sept. 20	Ruth Baker – Roy Ladd
Sunday, Sept. 27	Ellis Feigenbaum – Marjorie Michelin

August Series Winners from ACBL Live:

Sunday 499ers	Lawrence and Marianne Newman
Tuesday Night Open Pairs	Amr Elghamry and Rae Murbach
Thursday Morning	Kathy Flynn and Bob McBroom
Next board meeting:	TBA

The District 23 Club by David White

You know you're getting old when there are more candles on the cake than friends at the party. (I've been old since I was seven.)



Say goodbye to the D23 club. Say hello to something new. (We haven't got a name for it yet. But it's coming.)

The Sunday 499er game is NOT going away. But for the next few weeks it will be sponsored by Unit 556 and D23 jointly. The 3:15 game will start at 3:16 like always.

An eternity ago when this quarantine and virtual clubs started, many clubs found they could not support a virtual limited game. Not enough beginners with computer skills. So D23 club was started as a district-wide club. Guest and visitor rules be damned, if you were a member of District 23, you could play.

More than one for-profit, face-to-face club complained. They wanted everybody to play in their game. They wouldn't allow their players to play in any other club, even if they didn't have a game.

Then BBO and ACBL kept throwing up road blocks, erasing the guest list, changing how guest were counted, removing tools used to add quickly players to a club. Currently ACBL does not allow series, two session events, and club championships on line.

But once again Units and Districts having some influence on ACBL policy. Districts 7 and 9 have tried to start District clubs, and requested (demanded) some accommodations from ACBL. (District 23 is the smallest district, and 9 is the largest, who do you think has a louder voice in policy?)

So, here's what's coming. A new club will be formed. It will hold two or three limited games a week. (Perhaps a Saturday 99er, a Sunday 499er, and a Monday 999er.) The games will be open to players in the masterpoint range who live in districts 21,22, and 23. The aim is a good size game that plays well.

Clubs can opt-in to the district club for as many or as few games as they want. If a club wants to join for the third 99er game of the month only, OK. They want in for only the 999er game, that's fine too.

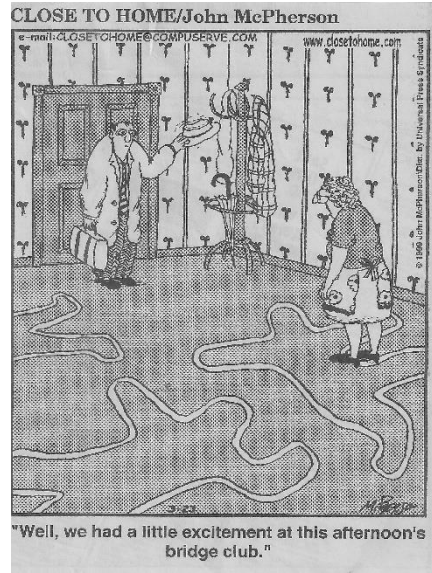
This club will feature some benefits for I/N players. One idea is for 49ers or 99ers to have a five minute lesson in the middle of the game, using a hand they just played. Another is leaving a Zoom chat room (monitored of course) open though out the game.

Since District 9 is about the same size as 21, 22, & 23, someone suggested we have an east coast - west coast challenge match. The trophy could be a bronzed jug of hand sanitizer and four face masks.

I spotted used Levi's on eBay. They were sizes 34, 36, and 38, but I was looking for size 40. So I texted the owner if he had a pair. His reply. "I'm still wearing the 40s," he said. "Another three months of quarantine and they'll be available."



Submitted by Tom Lill:



Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are: Mark Bartusek, David Chechelashvili, Jordan Chodorow, Mitch Dunitz and Rick Roeder

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.

David is a returning panelist. He no longer lives in the LA area, but lives in the country of Georgia (not to be confused with the Georgia that has Jimmy Carter and the city of Atlanta). Jordan is new to the panel. Jordan recently won the 2020 Summer NABC Robot competition, defeating a field of 3,342 over a 72 board competition. He is also on the ACBL's Ethical Oversight Committee. He has represented the West LA Unit since sometime last millennium and is in his fourth term as unit president. He practices law in Westwood handling cases involving purchases and sales of aircraft, yachts and works of art. He is also a crossword puzzle champion. Maybe we can get him to develop a crossword puzzle for the Bridge News.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">1</h1> <p>Matchpoints None Vul</p>	South	West	North	East	
				1♥	pass
	???				
	You, South, hold: ♠AJ82 ♥Q108752 ♦7 ♣52				
What call do you make?					

The first three hands are more or less from an old District 8 panel. I did alter the problems a tiny bit including critically changing the vulnerability on one hand. I'll include the panelists votes on these three hands.

We'll start with a hand that has too much offensive strength to preempt comfortably without showing strength. One panelist makes a simple limit raise.

Dunitz: 3♥. I would treat this as a limit raise. I would bid 4♥ with fewer spades.

Several panelists took advantage of the "panelists may use any reasonable methods" allowance to use pet methods to find ways to show some strength.

One panelist starts with a Bergen raise, planning to bid again.

Chodorow: 3♦. It's not right for Jacoby or a splinter, and I don't want to risk a limit raise being passed. (A spade response denies these hearts, plus interferes with my future plans.) I'll make a constructive Bergen raise (3♦, or 3♣ if playing Reverse Bergen) and then cuebid

spades over partner's 3♥ or 4♥. Extra trump length is the most likely explanation for the slam try continuation, especially over 3♥; if the reason were great/long spades, I would have bid them.

One panelist uses an artificial 3NT bid to make a good preempt, showing some defense.

Bartusek: 3NT. Not a problem for me since I often play that 3NT shows a 4♥ preempt with a defensive trick on the side (perfect!). It seems important to raise the level of the auction quickly to stop the opponents from getting together in a minor. We should be well-placed after this 3NT bid if the opponents come in. If I wasn't playing this convention, then I'd probably just bid 4♥.

Another panelist makes a mini splinter using a layered splinter system.

Chechelashvili: 3♠. Since I can use any reasonable methods, I will go with a mini splinter bid of 3♠, which shows approximately 8-11 HCP and shortness somewhere. Partner can then ask for my shortness

with 3NT. If I don't have that bid available I'll go with a practical 4♥.

David explains how this excellent structure works.

BTW, 3♠ is a mini splinter, so the way it works is 1♥-3♠ and 1♠-3NT are mini-splinters (8-11HCP) showing shortness anywhere, and partner can ask with next relay if interested. Normal splinters show 12-16 HCP, and with more than 16+ HCP we start with Jacoby (*I play these methods but allow the normal splinters to be unlimited, so Jacoby 2NT denies shortness*). The point count is lax, and you are allowed to upgrade or downgrade. So over 1♥, responses of 3NT (short spades), 4♣, or 4♦ would be 12-16 HCP splinters and over 1♠ responses of 4♣, 4♦, 4♥ also indicate 12-16 HCP splinters.

Finally, we hear from a panelist who hopes the opponents fall into the "bid spades when they have hearts" trap.

Roeder: 4♥. Nobody likes to bid hands with big heart fits more slowly than yours truly. However, with this spade holding, a jump to 4♥ has more going for it, as the opponents might wander into 4♠. Which could be really yummy if they can gin 5 of a minor. *I think Rick is implying he would pass 4♠ and not double for fear of having the opponents run to 5♣ or 5♦.*

In the original D8 panel, there were nine votes for 4♥, three votes for a 4♦ splinter, two votes for Jacoby 2NT, and vote each for a limit raise 3♥ and a 1♠ response. The only mention of a 3NT response, which is Bridge World Standard, came from Scott Merritt, the moderator. I think my panel did significantly better.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">2</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">IMPs E-W Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	1♠	2♥	dbl	pass
	???			

You, South, hold: ♠AK10952 ♥K5 ♦2 ♣KQ102

What call do you make?

We have a hand that now wants to describe two strains, extra good spades and a good four-card side minor and also describe extra values.

One panelist goes low, hoping that 3♣ is right or that he will get a chance to bid again. He will be well placed if 3♣ doesn't end the auction. I can hear Al Roth saying "If I can just get past this round..."

Chodorow: 3♣. Simplifies life. Ready to come in spades if the opportunity arises. Value of hand is unknown - certainly not known to be big enough to require more now.

Two panelists opt for a jump in spades.

Chechelashvili: 3♠. I would go with practical 3♠ bid, hoping for partner to have xx, or Q or J in spades for 4♠ to be reasonable. If I was playing in my regular partnership where we play a 2♠ opening as 10-13 HCP with six or seven spades, then I could bid 2NT showing 6 spades (2♠ would show a minimal, 5(332) type of a hand with no better bid available) and then we would have a space to reach the best game: 3NT, 4♠, or 5♣.

Dunitz: 3♠. The ♥K does not rate to pull its weight, but we need to show some life.

Two panelists elect to jump in clubs, one of them noting the problem is IMPs not matchpoints.

Bartusek: 4♣. Giving partner a typical hand of ♠x♥xxx♦KQxxx♣Axxx seems to indicate that 4♣ is the middle-of-the-road action. I don't think I'm strong enough to cuebid 3♥ and force to game. If partner has a doubleton spade s/he can always bid 4♠ (to play) along the way to 5♣. Needless to say, I doubt no-trump will play well with these distributional hands.

Roeder: 4♣. No quibble with 3♠ but partner can flip it back to 4♠ with honor doubleton after your 4♣ call. This is one of the few hands in which a bid in IMPs is more of a challenge than in matchpoints. In matchpoints, I just do not see how you can bury a beautiful 6-card major.

The original panel voted six for 3♠, five in favor of 4♣, three supporting 3♥ forcing to game, and one each for 3♣ and 5♣.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">IMPs Both Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
		1♦	pass	3♦
	pass	pass	Dbl	pass
	???			
<p>You, South, hold: ♠52 ♥A102 ♦QJ8 ♣AKJ52</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

This is a very unusual situation and the most interesting problem of the set. Partner elected not to act over 1♦, no overcall, no Michaels, no double - just pass. Then partner, who didn't act at the 1-level comes to life and balances at the 3-level. What hand(s) could partner have? How should we react?

The original D8 panel vote was nine for pass, six for 3NT, and one for 4♣. I hated the answers. However, the D8 condition was matchpoints, not IMPs. I felt the D8 panelists were not doing their job of constructing plausible hands for partner's brave almost impossible reentry into auction. There was no discussion of the possibility that hearts were a playable strain. I changed the problem to IMPs in which the cost of having the opponents make a doubled part-score is far greater than in MP. I think 3♦ will make a fair amount of the time, far too often to chance at IMPs. So I changed the problem to make pass less attractive. Changing the conditions had the effect of making pass less attractive, but also had an effect I hadn't realized at the time, which I didn't see until my panelists started answering. That effect was that a game bonus became more worthwhile. If 4♣ was making 11 tricks for 150 it was likely that partner's courageous double had already won the board at MP by netting us 150 when the field could be defending diamonds, either making or down 1. In IMPs, a vulnerable game bonus if available may be worth stretching for.

First, the one answer I really don't like. I hate to throw the new guy under the bus, but let's get it over with. What constructions do we expect 3NT to be good on? Partner must not have more than about 8 or 9 HCP and might have less. If partner has the ♣Q and the ♥K and ♥Q, is he likely to have a spade stopper?. Even if he has that hand, don't the opponents beat the hand by winning the diamond opening lead and switching to spades?

Chodorow: 3NT. Set the tone for the match. Comes home with a diamond lead opposite many realistic

companion hands. Not a Rule of 9 penalty pass (3 level + 3 trumps + 2 honors = 8). (*I believe this is Mel Colchamiro's algorithm for converting a takeout double.*) 4♣ is second choice but aims at a narrow target and could itself go down on a really bad day, plus 3NT would be very unlucky to go down a lot.

After reading my dislike for 3NT, Jordan emailed me back with this statement. "John: lots of realistic 3NT hands make. ♠KT9x ♥KQx ♦x ♣xxxxx and it's gin, or ♠KT9x ♥KQxx ♦void ♣xxxxx if you think that's more likely.

Now for a panelist who goes low, which I think is right. Partner has bravely balanced, lets make a bid that is consistent with him bidding most of our values with our diamond honors being of dubious value. Mark's first reaction was to try 3♥ (my second choice) but he later reflected and called me to change his answer to 4♣.

Bartusek: 4♣. Impossible double. Partner is almost assuredly void in diamonds. Partner probably has something like ♠KQxx ♥Qxxxx ♦void ♣Txxx or maybe ♠KJxxx ♥QJxxx ♦void ♣xxx. My best guess is perhaps 4♣. Bidding 3NT seems suicidal, and even though we probably rate to defeat 3♦ for +200, it seems too risky to pass (stiff club in one of the opponent's hands). I'll settle for my +130. Note that partner did not overcall 1♠ or 2♦ (Michaels). Partner is more likely to overcall 1♠ light than he would be to overcall 1♥ light with both majors.

Now for the panelists who stretch to game to get the vulnerable game bonus. I like making the conditions IMPs but wish I had also changed our side to non-vulnerable.

Dunitz: 5♣. Partner wasn't good enough to take action over 1♦, but is now balancing with a double, and I have the best hand at the table. Hmmm! So, give or take one card, partner has a 44(0-1)4 9 count. A diamond void would make his action more attractive.

Do I want to defend? At MPs I would take the plunge. 3♥, 4♣ and 5♣ could all be right. I'm going to reach for 5♣ and hold my nose.

Chechelashvili: 5♣. With both sides vulnerable partner either has 4405 with not enough strength to double the first time or (54)13 or (54)04 type of a hand with a bad 5-card major. In any case I will bid 5♣, as I don't have any other bids to investigate the right spot.

Well, there is one good investigating bid available if you are going to bid game. Let's hear from Rick.

Roeder: 4♦. Tough! Will pass 4♥ and bid 5♣ over 4♠. I will not be surprised if we only can take 10 tricks in clubs.

Yes, if you are going to force to game and think that hearts might be right then 4♦ is your best shot to choose between 4♥ and 5♣.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">4</h1> <p>IMPs none Vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
		2♦#	3♣	3♦
	???			
	# Weak two-bid. You, South, hold: ♠Q64 ♥A10852 ♦A9 ♣Q108 What call do you make?			

I may have hated to throw the new guy under the bus, but I have no qualms about laughing at my regular partner who posed this problem and then forgot about it. This problem is board 11 of our match in the September 10 OCBL (a very strong, mostly European online event). On the actual hand I bid 3♥, which must be 100% forcing by a non-passed hand. Rick, my partner, held ♠AKJ ♥96 ♦642 ♣AK764. Rick had no alternative except to raise 3♥ to 4♥. I passed and we played 4♥ which was inferior to both 3NT, and 5♣. We got lucky and hearts were 3-3. After the match Rick suggested that double was 1) a better bid, and 2) suggested I use the hand in this column. I agreed on both counts. OK, Rick, be careful what you wish for.

Roeder: 3♥. Obviously, a system question as to whether this bid is forcing. I think a new suit by an unpassed advancer, at the 3 level, should be.

Bartusek: 3♥. Seems like the normal action forcing to game. If partner doesn't have heart support then 5♣ or 3NT is likely to be a good contract.

Dunitz: 3♥. If partner bids 3♠, I'll bid 3NT.

Chechelashvili: 3NT. The practical bid again. If I bid 3♥ I might not hear 3♠ to bid 3NT then, and I am never lucky enough to find partner with a fit, so 3NT it is.

Chodorow: 4♦. Slam is in the picture. No need to revolve my life around getting to hearts at IMPs.

Focusing on the possibility of a club slam makes sense. There was no slam on the actual hand, but if you stop at 5♣ you'll be fine.

I think Rick's original suggestion that a responsive double is the most flexible call is accurate. I would guess that Rick will try 3♠ on his ♠AKJ. If I now try 3NT we will probably play there, but otherwise in 5♣.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em; margin: 0;">5</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">IMPs E-W Vul.</p>	South	West	North	East
	1♥	pass	pass	pass
	???		2♥	Dbl

You, South, hold: ♠9843 ♥AK1098 ♦AKJ4 ♣void

What call do you make?

This is another OCBL hand and is something of a methods question. The bid I made at the table was 3♣, a short-suit game try. But my partner, Rick, assumed that short-suit trys were off over interference. We missed a pretty good game.

Chodorow: 4♣. Not because I have slam aspirations but so that I can honor partner's choice over 5♣. *Good point!*

Dunitz: 4♦. This will help partner decide what to do if he hears 5♣ on his right.

Mitch uses the jump as natural. Jordan plays it as a splinter. Different methods but similar ideas. Get the hand described so that partner can help with future decisions.

Bartusek: 4♥. Important to stop the opponents from finding out they have a great club fit. If I do anything else West will have an easy club bid. Sure, we could have a slam, but it doesn't seem practical to try to get there, giving the opponents information to compete in clubs.

Chechelashvili: 3♦. I hope that induces diamond lead after possible 5♣ sacrifice over 4♥. However, I prefer a slow route to a possible 4♥, as RHO's double seems to indicate a void in hearts (they are vulnerable, and RHO is a passed hand). If LHO bids 4♣ and partner doubles, I would trust and pass, if partner passes 4♣, I would bid 4♥.

Roeder: 3♦. Crystal clear for both offense and defense (if the opponents venture to 4♠ or 5♣). I hear Elvis crooning "If I Can Dream" while imagining partner with: ♠Ax ♥Qxxx ♦Qxx ♣xxxx. *I guess he is doubling this time, 😊.*