

Southern California

# Bridge News

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*by Robert Shore*



### No News Is No News

This has been a quiet month on the bridge front. We're continuing to monitor developments, both within the bridge world and in the world at large, and I remain hopeful that Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional, will be viable in July as scheduled. I am guessing that the vaccines will, by then, have received enough wide distribution to make both travel and the physical conditions of a typical tournament feasible. And of course, we will be aware of mandatory requirements at the local, state, and national levels, as well as recommended guidelines. So make your plans now! I'm guessing that plane tickets are cheap and hotel rooms are plentiful. That might not be the case later when people realize that life is approaching normalcy.

Something you want me to know? Contact me at [Bob78164@yahoo.com](mailto:Bob78164@yahoo.com).

## District Director Report

*by Kevin Lane*

"Bridge is a game and should be fun."



### *My Email*

*As noted in my column the past few months, because of changes prompted by ACBL headquarters, my email address for district director work is now:*  
*[district23director@acbl.org](mailto:district23director@acbl.org)*

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

[*Editor's note: There is unfortunately no news from Kevin this month.*]

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## Director's Corner

by David White



### BBO Voice Chat

No product is ever ready for release when the programmers says it's done. Which is why programmers never say a product is done.

BBO says the VOICE CHAT feature is ready to go. So now players and directors can start the real troubleshooting process.

Both Players and Directors; you can follow this link:

<https://news.bridgebase.com/2020/12/03/using-voice-chat-on-bbo/>

for BBO tutorial on how to use Voice Chat.

Players, since this a new feature, don't expect your Director to embrace it with open arms and a big smile. Directors, don't expect your players to have it working on the first try. And while cheating is always a concern, you as the director can see who is using voice chat and can listen in on any conversation.

### Hardware setup

I would love to write one comprehensive manifesto for getting your microphone and speakers working perfectly. It can't happen, every computer manufacturer, every operating system has small differences that would make a complete and accurate manual impossible. But here's a basic computer check-out.

**Windows machines:** in the far bottom left is a window icon, click it. (Or press the window key and 'I' at the same time. This opens the settings screen.)

Click on the system icon. It should be the first in the grid. This opens the system display screen. Click on SOUND in the list to the left. This screen tells you what speaker your computer is using, how many speakers are available, and the master volume control. You can also test your microphone here.

**Apple products:** on your toolbar there is an icon with a gear in a box (a wheel with teeth) click on it. A grid of icons will appear. In the third row about half way across is the icon of a speak labeled SOUND. Click on this icon.

Across the top are buttons marked INPUT and OUTPUT. Click on input to test your microphone, output to test your speakers.

As with any new product or feature it will take time for it to be used and accepted. As a Director I always enable voice chat. Once you take a complicated call with voice you'll never go back to typing.

Some BBO Tips for your consideration:

### **BBO Tip #5**

All of your settings are saved on your computer, in cookies. Open a private or incognito browser and cookies are not saved. Your settings will revert to default every time you sign in to BBO.

The same is true for new convention cards. SO made sure you play on BBO with cookies enabled.

### **BBO Tip #6**

For directors: Once the game starts you can not modify the number of rounds, But if you need to shorten the game: Tell your players which is the last round. At the start of the first unplayed round shorten the time per board to the minimum. (Different versions of BBO have different minimums; some 1 minute some 4 minutes.)

The boards will then timeout, usually with an assigned score of Ave/Ave.

### **BBO Tip #7**

For directors: If a pair is not accepting a valid claim, you can and should accept for them.

Click on the Blue Hamburger. Click on ADJUST SCORE. Adjust the score to what is being claimed. The table will then go on to the next boards.

### **BBO Tip #8**

For Players: If your BBO display is slow, here are some tricks to speed it up.

1. Turn off any apps you aren't using. Especially video apps. Which means don't watch the football game while playing bridge.
2. Use a wired internet connection. Cat 5 cable rather than Wi-Fi. While the latest Wi-Fi is as good as cable, anything more than a few years old is much slower.
3. While you are playing a hand, click on the blue Hamburger in the upper corner. If the line HAND DIAGRAMS is there click on it. This will change the card display to letters rather than pictures. It is much faster.

### District 23 Rank Changes November 2020

**Junior Master**

Joey Duree  
Ming Q. Hu  
Rajath Shourie  
Norine Wynn

**Club Master**

Barbara L. Ackerman  
Carroll H. Anawalt  
Richard Bentley  
Cory C. Brendel  
Donna J. Falcon  
E. Leonelli

**Sectional Master**

Michael Greer  
Julianne R. O Connor  
Sue S. Reese  
Jeanne D. Sinsheimer

**Regional Master**

Hillary W. Clark  
Ruth J. Lerner  
Jerome E. Paul  
Barry Sinsheimer  
Susan Spivak

**NABC Master**

Ruth E. Fleisher  
Betsy K. Nicassio

**Life Master**

Bob Becker  
Ardis K. Laine

**Silver Life Master**

Hsuehching Chang  
Elizabeth A. Morrin  
Katherine M. Weisberg

**RubyLife Master**

Booth Tarkington  
Rhoda L. Weisler

**EmeraldLife Master**

Michael J. Mikyska

## The Puzzle Page

### Play or Defend? *by John Jones*

#### North

♠ void  
♥ 10 6 4 3  
♦ A K 10 7 4  
♣ A 9 7 2

#### West

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

#### East

♠ 10 9 6  
♥ J 8 7 5 2  
♦ J 8 3 2  
♣ 5

#### South

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

Opening Lead = ♥K

Contract = 4♠

Do you elect to play 4♠ or defend it?

### Bridge Jeopardy *by John Jones*

The topic is "Athletes."

**And the answer is ...**

\$100 – This NBA star scored 100 points in a game and was described by as "the tallest bridge player".

\$200 – LH female Czech-American who won 18 tennis Grand Slam tennis championships and made countless bridge grand slams.

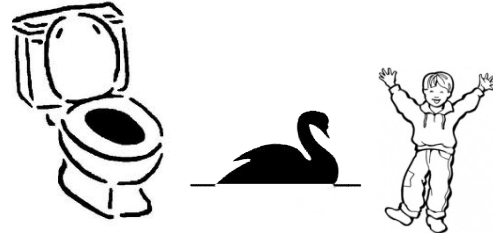
\$300 – Home run hitting 1920s New York Yankee OF partnered Lou Gehrig in bridge.

\$400 – This 6'9" HOF Power Forward played for the St. Louis and Atlanta Hawks was featured in a 2017 ACBL Bulletin.

\$500 – Was an All-Pro placekicker for the Atlanta Falcons, a math professor at CSU Sacramento, and is a Grand LM.

### November Rebus

Well, can *you* figure out what this says?



Solutions to these puzzles are on the page following. No peeking!

## Solution to “Play or Defend?”

Play. This is a real hand that Bob Hamman played in the 1970s.

Win the ♥A and play the ♠K. Ruff the return. Lead the ♠J. LHO wins but still can't lead clubs successfully. Ruff the heart return. Lead the ♦Q, then a diamond to the ♦A. Ruff a diamond with the ♣7. Throw RHO in with a little spade. Trumps are now pulled, and dummy has two good diamonds and the ♣A. That's exactly how Bob Hamman played it at the table. It was reported this way by Marshall Miles in his book Reisinger Challenge.

## Solution to “Rebus”

John Swanson

Have a good bridge rebus? Send it to johndjones44@yahoo.com

## Bridge Jeopardy Questions

- \$100 – Who was Wilt Chamberlain?
- \$200 – Who is Martina Navratilova?
- \$300 – Who was Babe Ruth?
- \$400 – Who is Bob Petit?
- \$500 – Who is Bob Etter?



The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV was Fred and Wilma Flintstone.

Coca-Cola was originally green



## District 23 History Corner

by Mike Marcucci

### D23 Clubs

Hope folks enjoyed the Bridge Club info from a few months ago. Thanks to Dave White, some new info popped up in the ACBL computerized mother

lode that we had never seen before. Way too much to cover in 1 SCBN column, but we'll do an intro.

For most of the last few years, the ACBL has published a list of the Top 50 Bridge Clubs in terms of attendance for the year. It is quite an honor to be in that Top 50 and several of our D23 Clubs have made the list many times. We don't quite top the Florida and NY Clubs – those people are crazy about bridge & play every day – but even tipping into the top 10 for the year reflects great credit on the particular managers, directors, and players who make that happen.

What Dave uncovered was some of the underlying data for that list. Anyone can actually see it on our D23 web site but it is a LOT of data to look at. What we're talking about is Dave's "Busiest Clubs in D23" section down on the bottom right side. The ACBL has, in other words, listed clubs' yearly table count all the way back to 1991. Now there is 30 years of history right there!

Making up a full matrix of all the D23 data was not difficult, but a 93 row by 33 column spreadsheet is hard to show all at one time, so we are going to distribute each Unit's data to your Unit President and then they each can disseminate that part of your Unit history as desired. It will all be stored in their Unit President's Handbook in any event, as part of your Unit's permanent history record. A few general observations:

There have been many ups and downs over 30 years.

- A) In 1991, there were 13 Units in D23 and 5900 players. Today, we are down to slightly above 3000 players.
- B) We had Unit consolidations in 1992, 1997, and 1999 to get down to 9 Units overall and have stayed at that number for the last 20 years. According to ACBL rules, Downey and Glendale are hovering right around the "minimum number of members" required to qualify as a separate Unit but their strong desire to do so has preserved their status so far. Pomona and Antelope Valley are right on the line. The effects of COVID-19 are hard on our membership numbers. We will recover players after this is all over. We are probably not alone across the US.
- C) We had 49 Clubs around LA in 1991. Today, we have 35. They are all shown on the

matrices. You can see each year's list on Dave's web site if you want a preview of your President's spreadsheet.

- D) In 1991, our 2 largest Units, Westwood and San Fernando were hovering around 1000 players each. Today, West LA at 977 is roughly twice the size of any other Unit in LA. The effects of a lower membership makes it hard to maintain table counts (i.e., stay busy) over the years. So what were they?

In 1991, our total District table count was slightly over 67K for the year. In 2000, it was 58.9K. By 2010, we counted in at 51.4K and by 2019 we came in at 44.6K tables. So, with almost 50% fewer players in 2019, we maintained a count only 33% lower than 30 years ago. Our 3000 LA players are tigers! Nowhere more so than in the Antelope Valley and South Bay. Our 99 Unit 556 players had a 10's table count 10% HIGHER than the 90's despite 20% fewer players. Similarly, our 497 Unit 568 players had a table count of 2% HIGHER in the 10's decade than in the 90's despite 20% fewer players. Super tigers!

If you really want to get lost in figures, Dave has uncovered the ACBL listings for ALL the Clubs in ACBL, also going all the way back to 1991, & those are shown just below the D23 lists. It appears there are 2723 Clubs in ACBL lately. Top of the '19 list is the Honors BC in NY with 18893 tables. The last on the list pops in at a grand total of 2 tables for the year! For D23, our high point was 12169 tables in '97 at the Bridge Academy in Canoga Park. The title of "North America" for the ACBL lists is a misnomer, because there is a Club in Dubai in there! Would love to see data before 1991 but that is probably a lost cause.

Our Clubs will recover when permitted to fully open again. Even though virtual games are going gang-busters these days (Dave says we have a very surprising number of guest requests for our virtual games in D23), nothing can replace those snacks at your local club or the gentle sounds of "Director, please" at your opponents tables.

It will be very interesting to see this year's Mini-McKinney and Ace of Clubs awards. The numbers are going to look very strange compared to previous years! I certainly won't be on any lists for this year but cannot wait for FTF again. ☺

## District 23 Top 30

*by Mike Marcucci*

Happy New Year to all. Certainly not in the regular sense since we doubt there were many parties. Celebrations need a new definition during our "world event". We can still celebrate achievement in our bridge world, however, since our players are resilient enough to utilize their friendly computers to create new bridge stories for everyone.

Each year in November, the ACBL recognizes the top masterpoint achievers in our hobby and publishes the top 100, sometimes the top 200, and sometimes the top 500. This year, it was the top 225! Besides our wonderful D23 players who made their list, we would like to recognize our local Top 30 lifetime achievers.

2020		
1	Jeff Meckstroth	91850
44	Steve Gross	29830
78	Ellen Anten	25234
84	Mitch Dunitz	25150
112	Jill Meyers	20978
163	Rebecca Clough	18750
167	Steve Mager	18550
218	Roger Clough	16899
8	Billy Cohen	16027
9	Ed Davis	15488
10	Pam Wittes	13775
11	Ifti Baqai	12236
12	Alex Kolesnik	12069
13	Walt Schafer Jr.	11790
14	John Jones	11788
15	Peter Benjamin	11541
16	Bruce Horiguchi	11532
17	Jeff Goldsmith	11499
18	Mike Savage	11184
19	Aram Bedros	11051

20	<b>Eddie Kantar</b>	10892
21	Gil Stinebaugh	10798
22	Rhoda Himmell	10064
23	Jordan Chodorow	9952
24	Steve Onderwyzer	9620
25	Gene White Jr.	9613
26	Lulu Minter	9014
27	Dr. Sid Brownstein	8673
28	George Wang	8490
29	Viktor Anikovich	8331
30	Bill Sides	8246

As always, we show Jeff M. just for reference. The green numbers show ACBL standings and the blue show D23. Names in red are our Grand Life Masters. We had to guess at Mitch's standing since he doesn't appear on the ACBL list!(However, in the same issue, ACBL recognizes Mitch for passing 25000 MPs! Nice picture, Mitch.)If we ever have another LA Regional, you will, of course, see the complete listings of our Top 30 all the way back to 1935.Next time, we may offer a prize to the person who counts the number of tape fragments it takes to keep that list on the wall.

Stay safe, my friends..



Submitted by John Jones:



***Really, Dear, I think it would be better if I get the Director's attention!***



## Around the Units in District 23



### Long Beach by Lillian Slater

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



Dalia Hernandez is the Queen of Conventions. From Jacoby 2NT to Inverted Minors, she knows and does teach them all to Bridge Brigade students!

Dalia and her family emigrated from Cuba to the United States with Dalia arriving in 1961. She entered fifth grade in Raleigh, North Carolina, not speaking a word of English. From this challenging beginning, Dalia became a software engineer/project manager at TRW/Northrop Grumman working on satellite and radar software until she retired in 2012.

Dalia has a twin sister, one of the two sets in her family! Dalia and her four siblings hit the genetic lottery. Both of her parents were college professors, her mother teaching physics and her father

mathematics. Dalia's father was also a good chess player who tried interesting his kids in that game but only Dalia's brother liked it. So, her father then taught them the basics of bridge, and Dalia liked it! Although she didn't take up the game right away, she always knew she would when she had the time. And retirement gave her that time!

Dalia came to Long Beach Bridge at the end of 2012 and started lessons with Mark Teaford, the teacher she reveres. Even today, when she plays bridge, she hears his voice in her head saying "Be a disciplined bidder. Carding and leading are not the same thing!" She repeats these mantras to her students adding her own that "every card means something." Dalia became a Life Master in 2016 and most recently attained the rank of Silver Life Master. She loves playing in tournaments because the competition is challenging. Playing against experts and world class players, she always learns a lot. Dalia really enjoys bridge because it requires many elements for success—thinking, logic, and working with another person to achieve a good result.

Dalia was also an avid tennis player competing in USTA tennis events. Unfortunately, she had to hang up her racket in 2107 when a previous knee injury from skiing became so painful she had to quit playing tennis. Dalia is also a dog lover and has two: a Havanese, the national dog of Cuba, and a Puli Hungarian sheepdog. Her Havense is named Jose Marti after an important figure in Latin American literature and a Cuban national hero in the liberation of his country. Her Puli, named Mimi, was adopted from a breeder who lets dogs go to good homes after she stops breeding them. Mimi happens to be the ultimate in how a Puli coat should look.

In addition to teaching her weekly OLLI class, Dalia mentors students in small group tutoring sessions three times a week. She donates the \$5 a person fee per session to Bridge Brigade, thereby generating over \$300 a month! When asked why she took on these responsibilities in retirement, she quickly responded, "Sharon needed help. She was carrying the heavy load and I wanted to help."



Dalia’s favorite convention is 2-Way New Minor Forcing because it allows the bidder to describe a hand perfectly. Dalia’s rewards in teaching are “seeing students bid and play hands well when they play against me. I am so proud of their success.” As to any frustrations in teaching, she said, “I don’t really have any although it is often tough to break folks of bad habits. But I do appreciate students who want to learn and improve.”

Thank you, Dalia, for all you do for Bridge Brigade, your students, your mentees, and the game of bridge. I know this “reporter” and many others hear your voice in our heads when we’re playing bridge!



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

Individual: Saturday, Jan. 23, 9:30 a.m., Upland

In re the above announcement, make sure to check both date and place. It’s subject to change. And let me know if you will be playing!

It’s Bargain Time: something for free, and worth at least that much. I happen to have an extra set of duplicate boards I’d like to shed. They are the old fashioned metal type, but still serviceable. Most of the cards therein are in reasonable condition, too. If you’d like to have them, all you have to do is let me know ... and come pick them up. You can reach me at [thomasmlill8@gmail.com](mailto:thomasmlill8@gmail.com), if interested.

This Hand-of-the-Month was submitted by Ho Ming Yim, played on BBO. It’s an interesting exercise in judgment and hand evaluation. With no one vulnerable, you, West, hold this hand:

♠A 10 9 7 5 2 ♥Q J 9 ♦5 2 ♣10 2.

This is the auction that unfolded:

North	East	South	West (you)
1♦	pass	1♥	2♠
X	3♠	3NT	?

North’s double was a support double showing 3-card support for hearts. Well, Chief, what now? Pass, 4♠, or something else?

If you chose “something else,” and that turned out to be “double,” you hit the jackpot. You must assume partner has something (including an entry) for his spade raise, of course. You lead the ♠5, and when the ashes settle out, you have +300 (two down) on your side of the score sheet. The key, of course, is that not only does partner have the entry you assumed, but YOU control the enemy suit, hearts. Well done! The complete deal:

<u>North</u>			
♠	6		
♥	A 8 3		
♦	10 9 8 6 4		
♣	A K J 7		
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>	
♠	A 10 9 7 5 2	♠	J 8 3
♥	Q J 9	♥	10 7 2
♦	5 2	♦	K Q
♣	10 2	♣	Q 8 6 4 3
	<u>South</u>		
	♠	K Q 4	
	♥	K 6 5 4	
	♦	A J 7 3	
	♣	9 5	

Quote for the month: “If you find yourself losing your hair when partner plays the hand, bid notrump sooner.” (Eddie Kantar)

## Downey – Whittier by Linda Eagan and Liz Burrell

[Nothing from Downey-Whittier this month.]



Santa Clarita-  
Antelope Valley  
by Beth Morrin

### Unit 556 Board Nominations

Are you looking for adventure of a new and different kind? Unit 556 is seeking members who are interested in serving on the Unit Board in 2021. This is an opportunity to give back to the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley bridge community, meet new friends, and have an impact on changing things for the betterment of Unit bridge players.

If you wish to self-nominate, please contact Ruth Baker ([rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net)) or Beth Morrin ([morrin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:morrin@sbcglobal.net)).

Nominations must be received by March 1<sup>st</sup>

**Winners in Unit 556+ Open MP games:**

Mon. Nov. 30  
 N/S Sharry Vida – Beth Morrin 61.06%  
 E/W Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky 60.37%

Tues. Dec. 1  
 N/S Bud Kalafian – Stephen Licker 62.30%  
 E/W Susan Smith – Aggi Oschin 59.52%

Thurs. Dec. 3  
 N/S Bob McBroom – David White 72.04%  
 E/W Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky 65.06%

Fri. Dec. 4  
 N/S Amr Elghamry – Gerry Belcher 58.84%  
 E/W Rae Murbach – Gerard Geremia 65.66%

Mon. Dec. 7  
 N/S Ramesh Sawhney – Temo Arjani 61.11%  
 E/W Ruth Baker – Roy Ladd 64.85%

Tues. Dec. 8  
 N/S Saul Teukolsky - Roselyn Teukolsky 63.49%  
 E/W Carolyn Cohen – Pat Larin 63.39%

Thurs. Dec. 10  
 N/S Amr Elghamry – Rae Murbach 63.06%  
 E/W Kathy Swaine – David White 59.17%

Fri. Dec. 11  
 N/S Robert McBroom – David White 74.15%  
 E/W Sharry Vida – Beth Morrin 67.64%

Mon. Dec. 14  
 N/S Jackie Moor – Roshen Hadulla 60.91%  
 E/W Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky 81.75%

Tues. Dec. 15  
 N/S Kathy Flynn – David White 59.38%  
 E/W Saul Teukolsky - Roselyn Teukolsky 62.15%

Thurs. Dec. 17  
 N/S Kathy Swaine – David White 66.02%  
 E/W Steve Shanker – Sharon Wolf 61.98%

Fri. Dec. 18  
 N/S Dwaine Hawley – Gary Zoss 63.66%  
 E/W Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky 62.27%

Mon. Dec. 21  
 N/S Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky 57.28%  
 E/W Rae Murbach – Gerard Geremia 65.39%

Tues. Dec. 22  
 N/S Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky 61.01%  
 E/W Saul Teukolsky - Roselyn Teukolsky 62.10%

Thurs. Dec. 24  
 N/S Carol Reukauf – Paul Reukauf 58.33%  
 E/W Paula Olivares – Roy Ladd 58.06%

Sat. Dec. 26  
 N/S Paula Olivares – Gay Gipson 63.54%  
 E/W Rae Murbach – Gerard Geremia 63.89%

Congratulations to Kathy Swaine and Rand Pinsky for a great game of 81.75% on December 15<sup>th</sup>. That is the highest score so far in this year's Unit 556+ Virtual games.

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

Sunday Nov. 29	Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom
Sunday Dec. 6	Ruth Baker – Roy Ladd
Sunday Dec. 13	Sharry Vida – Beth Morrin
Sunday, Dec. 20	Ruth Baker – Roy Ladd
Sunday, Dec. 27	Ruth Baker – Roy Ladd

Our Unit 556+ family made great strides this year in ACBL Ranking. If you were left off the list, we apologize. Please let Paula know ([paula@pacbell.net](mailto:paula@pacbell.net)) or me know ([morrin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:morrin@sbcglobal.net)) and we will mention your name next month. Below is a list of ranks earned

**Junior Master:**

Hani	Abraham
Craig	Dietrich
Carol	Inman
Khushroo	Lakdawala
Piyush	Parikh
Georgia	Seid

**Club Master:**

Thomas	Beggane
Liza	Billington
Deanna	Kean
Khushroo	Lakdawala
Janelle	Morton
Mariann	Nolan
Susan	Smith

**Sectional Master:**

Terry	Clougherty
Sarah	Deschenes
Kim	Ebner
Janelle	Morton
Glenda	Zelichov
Michael	Zelichov

**Regional Master:**

Hilary	Clark
Kim	Ebner

Lindsay Gronich  
 Melanie Moran  
 Jerome Paul  
 Harkirat Randhawa

NABC Master:

Ginger Boykin  
 Bonnie Cox  
 Carol Decordova  
 Betsy Nicassio  
 Zorina Pelant  
 Carol Reukauf

Life Master::

Adam Barron  
 Bob Becker

Bronze Life Master:

Adam Barron  
 Beverly McLeod  
 Stephen Page  
 MaryAnne Self

Silver Life Master:

Ruth Baker  
 Elizabeth Morrin  
 Mira Rowe

Ruby Life Master:

Kathy Flynn

Gold Life Master:

Linda Young

Sapphire Life Master:

Gerard Geremia  
 Pat Larin

## The District 23 Club by David White



### Masterpoint Limited On-line Clubs

The D23 club is an online club sponsored by Unit 556. It holds one game weekly at 3:15pm on Sundays. One partner must be a member of D23.

Unit 556 can open this game to all D23 499ers because they hold to a strict guest policy in their open games.

This game also rewards the series winners. The top six players each month, by the average of their two best games.

For December these winners were:

1	Glen Musicer	60.7%
2	Zorina Pelant	60.0%
3/4 tie	Paul Brunton	57.8%
3/4 tie	James Gates	57.8%
5/6 tie	John Meek	57.5%
5/6 tie	Ginger Boykin	57.5%

Honorable Mention to Carol Decordova, who for four months running has been 5<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> on the list.

### The California 99ers Nite Club Now All-Western 99ers Nite Club

This on-line club started as a District 23 Club, expanded to California with the addition of District 21 and 22. Now extends throughout a large chunk of the Rocky Mountains with the addition of District 17. Known as the All-Western 99ers Nite Club it is open all players with 100 Masterpoints or less who are residents of District 17, 21, 22, or 23.

All-Western 99er games are held Mon-Thur at 6:30pm. Games are usually 12 boards played in 7 minutes a board. This is followed by a half hour lesson on Zoom.

Registration:

- Between 4:30PM and 6:15PM, log into BBO.
- Select “Competitive” under “Play or Watch Bridge”
- Select “ACBL Virtual Clubs” under “Tournaments”
- Look for VACB905265 “All-Western 99er NiteClub”

The link to the All-Western 99er post-game Zoom chat and lesson is here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3050101825?pwd=OC9ueFJPVkJXQWxrWmhwVUJCN2s1UT09>

If you don't have Zoom installed on your computer, the first time you click the link it will try to install the Zoom program, which needs your permission.

If you have Zoom installed already, open the app before you click on the link. This will speed the sign in process.

For more information, please contact your home club or the 99er NiteClub at [99erNiteClub@gmail.com](mailto:99erNiteClub@gmail.com)

*Seeing how some people wear their mask, I now see how contraceptives fail.*

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

[bridgemojo.com](http://bridgemojo.com)



Nothing to do this winter but stay in and play bridge. Jane and I have been playing a bit more than usual in our available time. We both managed to play several sessions in the winter regional tournament. I enjoyed some great games with Karol Monroe from Palm Springs.

Table counts are up for the Pasadena Pomona Downey VBC (virtual bridge club). More players have been coming online to rediscover bridge, and finding that it's not as bad as they thought it would be.

Along with returning players, my beginning bridge classes are continuing to attract newcomers to the game. I have a new beginning bridge class starting January 5 through PCC Extension (almost sold out) and players from earlier classes are coming to play in our newcomer games on Wednesday evening and Saturday afternoon.

You may be aware that ACBL limits the number of visiting players in our virtual club games to 15% of the overall attendance. I've been monitoring our numbers, and we're consistently below 5%. So if you have friends or family members from out of the

area, feel free to invite them to play. Give me plenty of advance notice so I can add them to our Friends list.

I had a great time discovering the online bridge system currently being used by European and UK clubs, called RealBridge. They've incorporated audio and video with the game table, and it very much has the feel of an in-person bridge game. I hosted two tables on Christmas afternoon for some bridge, and am planning to do the same on New Year's Eve.

One thing that excites me about RealBridge is genuine support for team tournaments, either Swiss or round-robin format. I'm excited to try out some team play. One speed bump is the inability to handle an odd number of teams entered without forcing one team to have a sitout round. Hopefully they'll work out the logistics of three-team round-robins in the context of a larger Swiss game soon. Visit their site at <https://realbridge.club> to get a taste, or join us for our New Year's Eve game!

Congratulations to our players who attained new ranks this month! New Junior Master Ming Hu. New Club Masters Carroll Anawalt and Cory Brendel, and new Regional Masters Hilary Clark and Jerry Hall.

My personal project this fall was building a new email server to support the mailing lists that serve BridgeMojo and the Old Town Sidewalk Astronomers. It took about six months to complete the project: four months of fretting about it, two months of doing the work, and another three weeks of support from my hosting provider to get the new server unblocked by AT&T, Yahoo, Microsoft, and other email hosts. I'm delighted that I have a modern machine now with all the latest security protocols in place. I'm also providing mailing list support for Unit 556 and the Glendale bridge club. (My hosting provider is Linode, highly recommended.)

You can always reach me at [mojo@bridgemojo.com](mailto:mojo@bridgemojo.com).



# Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are: Mark Bartusek, David Chechelashvili, Ed Davis, Roger Lee, Rick Roeder, Mike Shuster, John Swanson, and Jon Wittes

*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.*

*This is our last newsletter for the decade, and I can't remember any year I am happier saying goodbye to than 2020.*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em; margin: 0;">1</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Matchpoints E-W Vul</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">South</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">West</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">North</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">East</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">1♣</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1♦</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">???</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="padding: 10px 0 10px 40px;">                     You, South, hold: ♠A ♥K52 ♦K974 ♣AKQ106                 </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="padding: 10px 0 10px 40px;">                     What call do you make?                 </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	South	West	North	East	1♣	pass	1♦	pass	???				You, South, hold: ♠A ♥K52 ♦K974 ♣AKQ106				What call do you make?			
South	West	North	East																		
1♣	pass	1♦	pass																		
???																					
You, South, hold: ♠A ♥K52 ♦K974 ♣AKQ106																					
What call do you make?																					

*We'll start with a strong hand that got even more interesting when partner responded in their side suit, but now has no easy bid. A 1♦ response to 1♣ might be made on just three diamonds, or on some fairly weak hands attempting to escape out of 1♣. Nevertheless, this hand is now way too strong to even think about bidding 3♦. 2NT is wrong in so many aspects: it is non-forcing, and doesn't show diamond support. 2NT is the wrong shape, and doesn't describe a hand with this much slam potential. So what's left? A splinter into 3♣ with a stiff ace, a reverse into a mediocre three-card major, RKCB, or bashing with some number of diamonds all look significantly flawed. Let's see what the panel comes up with.*

**Shuster:** 3♣. I absolutely loathe splinters on a singleton ace, but nothing else gets the job done. 3♦ isn't forcing and 2♥ will only obfuscate the rest of the auction. Please, PLEASE tell me no panelist bids 2NT here (*I certainly hope so!*). I feel comfortable passing partner's 3NT over 3♣. I wouldn't feel that way over any of my other rebids.

**Chechelashvili:** 3♣: Splinter. Not a perfect choice, but I think a second choice is even worse (2♥). Partner can be temporizing with 1♦ bid, so can have balanced hand with 6-7HCP in which case I want to be able to

find 3NT. Or she can have something like ♠xxx ♥Qx ♦QJTxx ♣xxx and we belong in 5♦. Of course partner can have a stronger hand in which case I believe we will be able to find slam after a splinter (even though it is made with singleton Ace).

**Lee:** 3♣. I don't know what the alternative is.

**Roeder:** 3♣. Splintering with a stiff ace is not ideal but the "least of evil" principle applies. True confessions: in matchpoints, I would have opened 2NT but the 1♣ opener has the potential to work out well.

**Bartusek:** 2♥. Seems fairly clear. The only other bid I considered was a 3♣ splinter, but that might cause us to bypass 3NT when it's right. I think I'm too strong for a 3♦ bid. The 2♥ call will usually cause partner to show a spade stopper for NT purposes. I'll be more interested in slam if partner can't bid no-trump. I plan on supporting diamonds next round, then perhaps 3NT (or 3♠) after that.

**Davis:** 2♥. If my spade ace was in a red suit and I instead had a stiff small spade, I would bid 3♣. As it is with the stiff ace of spades, I think I am better off saving room by bidding 2♥ and then bidding 3♦ (unless partner surprises me and bids 3♦ or 3♥). If partner bids

3NT after I have bid 3♦, I will settle for 3NT; otherwise, we will get to at least 5♦.

**Swanson:** 2♥. There is a reasonable hope that I can follow with 3♦, then 3NT. Too strong for 3♦ immediately.

**Wittes:** 2♥. One of my biggest pet peeves is jump shifting into a three-card major, but I don't see any logical alternatives to starting a game forcing auction. I could bid an off shape 2NT, but I would be a very unhappy camper if it were to go all pass over that bid.

*Given the unappetizing choices, I'd try 3♠ without much enthusiasm.*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">2</h1> <p>Matchpoints Both Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	dbl ???	rdbl*	1♦ pass	2♣ pass
	<p>* = Club raise with one of the top three Club honors</p> <p>You, South, hold: ♠K754 ♥Q1087 ♦62 ♣K97</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>			

*All but one panelist thinks that partner's pass is nothing to say, that he/she likely has 3=3=5=2 shape and needs help finding a reasonable part score for our side. Let's start with the panelist that plays that partner's pass suggests defending and thinks that the opponents are in trouble.*

**Shuster:** Pass. Looks like the opponents are having a bidding accident, otherwise partner wouldn't have passed for penalties while I'm holding K97 in trumps. It isn't like he didn't have an opportunity to rebid a long diamond suit or a four-card major, so he must have at least four clubs. At least it is MPs, so partner won't have to explain his action to our teammates.

*No other panelist is in the same camp as Mike, but before we dismiss his thoughts let's consider this: many expert partnerships play pass of redoubles at the one-level as scramble and penalties at the two-level higher. If this axiom applies then maybe it is the opponents that are in trouble. Let's hear from the rest of the panel.*

**Swanson:** Pass. Going for +400 rather than +110.

**Chechelashvili:** 2♦. Partner probably has something like 3=3=5=2. If not and partner had something different in mind (with majors) she will continue bidding.

**Lee:** 2♦. Sounds like partner is probably 3=3=5=2 so this is about as good as it's going to get. Hopefully they compete to 3♣, which is getting doubled.

**Bartusek:** 2♥. I would guess that partner does not have a preference for a specific major. Partner is probably 3=3=5=2. It seems anti-percentage with my poor hand to pass trying for the magic +400.

**Davis:** 2♥. I expect partner's pass to show a balanced hand without a four-card major and without 5 reasonable diamonds. Sign me up for 2♥ (and I hope we have more hearts than they do). It would not be unreasonable to pass 2♣XX but I'll just gamble that I will do better by bidding 2♥ now than by passing. However, if they bid on to 3♣, I will double.

**Wittes:** 2♥. Partner is most likely to be 3=3=5=2. He or she would surely bid a four-card major if they had one, or 2♦ if they had six, and must have a doubleton club, unless the redouble was made on honor X. The Moysian should play OK at matchpoints, especially with a club lead.

*Finally, here is our local comedian, who may well have consulted Sylvester, his cute and creative cat.*

**Roeder:** 2♥. The answer is 100% clear. **R**eredouble (and if a double card is red, and a redouble card is blue, what color is the reredouble card?) to get partner to pick! If I cannot cheat, I will chirp 2♥ and pray (even though agnostic).

*2♦ has the advantage of being able to run to 2♥ (or redouble – hey Ricky?) if they double. 2♥ gets the contract right sided given the likely club lead. I'd vote for 2♥.*

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Matchpoints None Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	pass	2NT#	3NT	2♥@
	???			pass

@ = Weak Two  
# = Ogust

You, South, hold: ♠KQ10764 ♥65 ♦J85 ♣83

What call do you make?

*What does 3NT mean? That is the key question. There are three types of hands that would like to bid NT. There are 1) very big balanced hands, 2) hands with a solid minor and a heart stopper, and 3) hands that have both minors that want to suggest saving against 4♥ without committing to the five-level.*

*If we bid 3NT directly over the weak two we would have the solid minor type hand. If we had the really big balanced hand we would double and then bid 3NT. How we would show the hand with both minors would depend somewhat on our methods. Does our approach change with the intervening 2NT bid, which could be a real size and suit strength ask, or could also be an unadulterated psych?*

*This is an old problem. It was previously used in a panel like this a couple of decades ago. The expert panel then was split 75% to 25% in favor of the 3NT bid being natural versus Unusual for the minors.*

*Here we have one panelist who is insistent that 3NT is takeout for the minors. I'll start with him*

**Roeder:** 4♦. Partner's 3NT is unusual as otherwise partner would have started with double. The 10 of spades is as seductive as 1959 Brigitte Bardot but I will be obedient. When I told Rick that most of the panel felt that 3NT was natural, he added the following comment: Thanks for following up. I stand my ground on the 3NT unusual bid. There is no rush to bid 3NT if that is where you wish to end up. Tom Petty says, "I stand my ground and I WON'T BACK DOWN!!"

*The argument in favor of 3NT being Unusual is that if you want to suggest bidding the minors and don't have enough to commit to the five-level you likely need to act immediately. That would leave the Gambling type*

*needing to bid the long minor and then bid 3NT. Dangerous? It would be unlikely to go all pass. I have the agreement with Jeff Goldsmith (not on this month's panel) that immediate direct 3NT bids are natural if they could reasonably be, but have no such agreement in any of my other partnerships.*

*Some of the other panelists addressed the meaning of a 3NT bid.*

**Davis:** Pass. I don't know whether partner has ♠x ♥Ax ♦xx ♣AKQxxxxx or ♠void ♥xx ♦KQxxx ♣AQJxxx. If he has the latter and they double, I will hope he will figure out that I don't know and run if he has the minors.

**Wittes:** Pass. Partner should have a long running minor with a heart stopper and a couple of cards on the outside. West could even be psyching 2NT at this vulnerability with a heart fit. If partner had both minors, I would expect them to pass and then back in or bid 4NT over 2NT.

**Lee:** Pass. Looks very much like partner has a long minor.

*Even if it's clear that partner that 3NT is based on a trick source, it's not clear whether to stay in 3NT or transfer to spades. Yes, the ♠10 does argue for 4♠.*

**Bartusek:** 4♥. Obviously a transfer to spades in this auction. I assume partner is bidding 3NT to make (and that the opponents are fooling around). This takeout seems reasonably clear because my hand could be almost useless playing in no-trump. This might even play well opposite x or xx in spades. Note that 3NT (without prior discussion) is usually to play in most competitive auctions. If partner really had the minors either a 4NT call or an initial 3♦ bid call would be better and less confusing.



**Chechelashvili:** 4♥. If playing with good partner we want to right side the contract. (*In this column partner is always assumed to be an expert unless specifically stated otherwise. The opponents are not guaranteed to be experts though*). Even if 3NT bid was based on 8 quick tricks with the hope of hearts being 9th, there is still a chance they will find the right lead to take all their hearts if partner has ♠x ♥Kx ♦Axx ♣AKQJxxx.

**Shuster:** Pass. If partner fits spades, I have a source of tricks. If not, maybe he has the source of tricks.

**Swanson:** Pass. Maybe I have six spade tricks; maybe partner has his own nine tricks.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">4</h1> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">IMPs E-W Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	???	pass	1♥	1♠
	You, South, hold: ♠5 ♥QJ54 ♦Q76 ♣KQ1084 What call do you make?			

*This problem comes from a real deal. The contestant that held this hand was Bobby Wolff. He held the hand in a 1975 match between Texas players and Los Angeles players. Wolff's scrapes with and insults toward Southern California experts are legendary. Also well known are Wolff's aversion to modern methods. I can be certain that Wolff did not have fitted jumps available. Maybe he had splinter bids in his arsenal, maybe not. He certainly had a cuebid and a natural 2♣ bid. Wolff used none of those. He jumped to 4♥. When the inevitable 4♠ rolled back to him he passed. Wrong! Spades made 10 tricks and hearts made 11 tricks. The LA pair at the other table competed to 5♥ over 4♠ and earned a double game swing. Unfortunately, they lost the match by one IMP.*

*The problem is that 4♠ is likely coming. You either need to decide what you are going to do then, or put partner in a position to make an intelligent decision.*

*One panelist spots the problem and takes a tactical approach.*

**Davis:** 2♣. Looking at my hand and seeing a 1♠ overcall on my right, my guess is that we can make game in hearts and that they can make 3♠ or 4♠. The right book bid is probably a (slightly) aggressive 3♠ splinter bid. However, I don't want them to know that I think we can make 4♥ AND I want my LHO to get his spade raise off his chest rather than me bullying him into bidding 4♠ by my bidding 3♠. So, using all this great (?) psychology, I'm bidding 2♣ and I am hoping that it will be less clear that I want to play in 4♥ (and that I have a stiff spade). Unless partner supports clubs or shows a 6th heart, I don't plan on going to the five-level in hearts. If this works out well, they will let us play 4♥. If this works out poorly, maybe I'll just try a 3♠ bid next time.

*The rest of the panel tries to put partner in a position to make a good decision on the next round. They make slightly different bids but their intent is similar: leave*

*the next decision to partner when the expected 4♠ bid hits the table. If Rick can quote from a Tom Petty song, I'll quote from another Billboard #1 song "I'm leaving it up to you, you decide what you're going to do". (The 1963 #1 hit with this song was sung by Dale and Grace. It was a good version, but not the original version. The song has been covered literally hundreds of times, but my favorite is sung by the inimitable Linda Ronstadt.) Here are the panels thoughts in helping partner make the winning decision.*

**Shuster:** 3♠. Game force, four trumps, singleton spade. It is important to establish a game force and forcing pass now, in case the opponents bid 4S (notwithstanding the vulnerability.) Needless to say, I will not be cooperating further.

**Wittes:** 3♠. Should show a game going raise in hearts with spade shortness. I'm a little light in high cards, but with 4 good trumps, this hand is surely worth that treatment.

**Swanson:** 3♠. Is this where the panacea fit-showing jump solves the problem?

*Panacea was the goddess of healing. We could certainly use her help in 2021.*

*Readers of John's wonderful column in the D22 newsletter (his column ended earlier this year) know that he is not a fan of fitted jumps. But some of the rest of the panel are great fans.*

**Roeder:** 3♣. Those who do not play fit bids probably still have four pairs of penny loafers in their closet.

**Lee:** 3♣. Fitted, seems very accurate to me.

**Chechelashvili:** 3♣. This shows the suit bid plus fit with invitational values. So that partner can decide whether to "sacrifice" against possible 4♠ in 5♥ with ♠xxx ♥AKxxx ♦x ♣Axxx. Or really sacrifice with ♠xxx ♥AKxxx ♦xx ♣Axx.

*None of the 3♣ bidders addressed the possibility of 4♣, the bid I like the most.*

**Bartusek:** 4♣ (or 3♣ if no fit bids). A 4♣ fit bid seems perfect with this hand allowing partner to determine how high to compete. One usually makes the initial fit bid as high as one is willing to bid initially (as long as the bid isn't game in that specific denomination). If not playing fit showing jump bids then I'm probably stuck overbidding slightly with a 3♣ splinter. Note that with so many calls available between 3♠ and 4♥ this is safer than splintering in a suit just underneath the trump suit.

*The panelists took somewhat different approaches to the problem, but everyone of them addressed the problem: how to deal with the competitive decision that's coming. Well done panel!!!*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">5</h1> <p>Matchpoints None Vul.</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	dbl	2♦	pass	1♦
	???			pass
<p>You, South, hold: ♠AKQ982 ♥AK75 ♦void ♣1082</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

*We finish with a problem of how to follow up after doubling the first time. We can double again, bid 2♠ to show a strong hand, bid 3♠ to get partner to raise with a probable trick, or cuebid 3♦ to force to game.*

**Chechelashvili:** 2♠. I believe it is correct matchpoint bid. If they bid 3♦, I will bid continue with 3♥.

**Wittes:** 2♠. Not quite good enough for 3♠. Partner doesn't rate to have much. A couple of key cards would give us enough to make game, but I would expect partner to bid again with those cards.

**Bartusek:** 2♠. I'd like to strongly emphasize spades over hearts. If I double again, I'd be somewhat afraid that partner might pass for penalties. I can always bid 3♥ over partner's 2NT, 3♣, or 3♦ bids (or the opponent's 3♦ call).

**Shuster:** 3♠. I don't have quite enough to force game and have no interest in defending 2♦ doubled (even though it wouldn't shock me if that was best.)

**Swanson:** 3♠. Time to suggest a trump suit.

**Lee:** 3♠. I might regret this but it's the bid I would make in half a second at IMPs, so it's probably fine at MP.

**Roeder:** 3♦. The problem comes next round if partner bids 3♥ (in such event, I would follow up with 3♠). That auction is a headache because partner could have a poor hand with 3=3=4=3, 2=3=4=4, or 2=3=5=3 distributions.

**Davis:** 3♦. I am going to force partner to bid something. If he bids 3♥, I will bid 3♠ (since he could have a three-card suit for a 3♥ bid). If he bids 3NT or 4♣ instead of 3♥, I will bid 4♠. So, we will get to 4♠ unless he bids 3♥ and passes my 3♠ bid or bids something over my 3♠ bid that gives me a chance to next bid 4♥. If partner jumps to 5♣ over my 3♦ bid, I will pass (since he was not strong enough to bid 3♣ over 2♦).

*I'm with the 3♠ bidders. This sequence asks partner to raise with one trick. I'll be wrong if partner has a poor hand with five small hearts and two small clubs, but I'm not quite going to force to game.*