

Bridge News

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Shore

Some Brief Updates Concerning Bridge Week



We are continuing to monitor developments in the wider world to take our best guess about whether Bridge Week will be viable this summer. As I'm writing this column, a few days into the Biden Administration, current projections state that by the end of spring, enough doses of vaccine will be **manufactured** to inoculate approximately half of our population. Although that will probably be enough to make the vaccine available to most of our players (who skew just a bit older than the general population), I'm guessing it **won't** be enough for state and local governments to loosen the current rules regarding large gatherings such as bridge tournaments. And as we're learning, just because a dose of vaccine has been manufactured doesn't mean it's actually completed the journey to someone's arm.

So over the next month or two, I'll be watching a couple of figures with keen interest. First and foremost, I'll want to know whether projected vaccine-manufacture numbers increase markedly over current projections. We should have a pretty good idea in the next month or so whether that's a realistic possibility. Second, I'll be monitoring our effectiveness in getting vaccines into arms once they're available. We'll probably need to see some improvement on that front as well to get enough of the population vaccinated fast enough to make in-person bridge tournaments possible in California by early summer.

The other development I wanted to share is forward-looking. We're discussing with the Long Beach Hilton our contract for Bridge Week 2023. As you may recall, ACBL has asked Units and Districts not to sign contracts for future tournaments so that they

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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

[Editor's note: our publishing deadline meant Kevin's column didn't make the cut last month. Here it is, in full. The February report follows.]

December Board Meeting

The board continues to conduct virtual meetings. In December, we held a single day of meetings.

The focus of the December meetings was ongoing pandemic issues, disciplinary issues and a variety of administrative and business issues between management and the board.

Transition Task Force

The end of 2020 means that my work as chair of the Transition Task Force has concluded. Our goal was to move bridge-related committee work off of the board so that board meetings can focus on issues that more

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can determine how many tournaments they'll be willing to sanction in the future. So before moving forward with this contract, I'm trying to find out whether we expect ACBL to be making these decisions by the end of the (calendar) year. I have a very difficult time believing that ACBL would prevent any District from holding at least one regional per year, but prudence still requires us to ask that question.

Next Meeting

It's approaching time for our next Board meeting, which will be the last regularly scheduled meeting on my first term. I plan to schedule it for sometime in March, by Zoom, of course. Unit Presidents, old and new, please let our Secretary, Tom Lill, know who your Board Representatives will be this year.

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

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directly impact ACBL's future prosperity. To that end we succeeded. Management has assumed responsibility for work previously undertaken by the board. A few "clean-up" issues remain, but as the board reduces in size over the next couple years, the workload of board members should be narrower and more constructively focused.

Happy Holidays

As I understand it, the charity grants for our district have been distributed. That's a great note to underscore my Happy Holiday wishes to the entire district for what has been a challenging year.

[End of January District Director's report]

2021 Elections

This year is an election for Regional Director for our district. As a reminder, our board voted to reduce the number of board members from 25 to 13 while retaining the 25 districts intact. As such, District 22 and District 23 hold a joint election for "Regional Director" which is the title of the national board member. I voted for the board reduction plan that ultimately passed.

At any rate, I have decided NOT to run for regional director.

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

From the Director's Desk

by David White



Alert! A New Alert Procedure

In the first major change to the alert procedure in twenty years, ACBL announced several changes to the procedure, and many changes to what is alertable. These changes took effect on January 1st.

Your Alert procedure primer:

In a face to face game (F2F), there are four types of Alerts.

1. Pre-Alert: things the opponents are entitled to know before the auction starts. A short club system like Precision, Blue Team, or a canape system, require pre-Alerts. (Note: leading small from a doubleton is no longer a pre-Alert, but Announced if asked about leads and carding.)

2. Announcements: Alerts that include the explanation. The NoTrump point range is an Announcement, as are transfers. (Note: in an ACBL online game, the NT point range is ALWAYS Announced, regardless of the range.)

3. Alerts: when your side makes a conventional call that the opponents are entitled to know about. But, they must ask for further details. You say "Alert." If they don't ask, you don't tell.

4. Delayed Alerts: late in the auction, conventional calls that are unlikely to influence the opponents bidding. (Once the opening bidder has made a bid of 3NT or higher, the delayed Alert rules take effect.) When a partnership is bidding toward slam, they are not required to Alert and explain every bid to opponents who are almost certainly out of the auction. In fact the opponents should not be interrupting the auction to question every bid. These bids are explained at the end of the auction, before the opening lead, without prompting.

The preceding are the face to face procedures. All online Announcements, Alerts, and Delayed Alerts are done immediately at the time of the call.

Let's look at some of the most common, and most discussed, Alerts.

1. In an ACBL sponsored event, the point range of a one No-Trump opening must be Announced. Despite the hopes and dreams of many players this rule has not gone away. Note: clubs, both online and F2F may modify this rule. The BBO rule is "All unannounced 1 NT openers are 15-17 HCP." Anything else must be Announced. Anything else really does mean ANYTHING ELSE, so a 'good 14-17' needs an announcement.

2a. Transfers are now Announced by stating the suit that is being transferred to.

Example: 1NT - P - 2♦*

*2♦ is a transfer to Hearts, just Announce "Hearts." This also applies to stolen bid doubles.

2b. Relays still require an Alert.

Example: 1NT - P - 2♠*

*2♠ is a relay to 3♣ and responder will pass or correct to 3♦. Alert the 2♠ call.

3. Short suit openings are now Announced specifying the minimum holding in the suit. Example: 1♣ and the minimum club holding is 1 card, then Announce "Could be as short as 1." This applies to suits of 0, 1, or 2 cards.

4. All F2F delayed alerts are immediate Alerts on-line. This most often applies to Gerber and Blackwood responses.

5. Natural jump shifts are no longer Alerts. Regardless of point range, if you have the suit you bid, no Alert is needed.

6. Direct cue bids which are not two suited Michaels-like hands, are Alerts.

Example1: 1♦ - 2♦*

*2♦ which shows 'top and bottom' (in this case, spades and clubs) is now an Alert.

Example2: 1♥-1♠-2♠*

*2♠, which shows a limit raise or better in Hearts, is now an Alert.

7. A Very Strong Artificial 2♣ opening is not an Alert, per se. But ACBL defines very strong as 20+

HCP. If you open 2♣ with less than a Very Strong hand, it should be Alerted.

Example: void - AKxxxx - AQxxxxx - void is not a Very Strong hand by definition.

Here is the link to the new procedures in its entirety:

<https://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/pla/y/AlertProcedures2.pdf>

And here is a link to ACBL rule modifications for online games:

<https://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/pla/y/AppendixO.pdf>

BBO Tips by David White

Symbols

Feel free to experiment with the emoticons – there are lots more!

| Type | To get | |
|------|------------|---|
| :) | Happy Face | ☺ |
| :(| Sad Face | ☹ |
| !C | Club | ♣ |
| !D | Diamond | ♦ |
| !H | Heart | ♥ |
| !S | Spade | ♠ |

Bridge Descriptions

| When You Type | It Means |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 4cM | 4-card Major |
| 4cm | 4-card minor |
| 5cM | 5-card Major |
| 5cm | 5-card minor |
| 4+cM | 4-card or longer Major |
| bal | balanced |
| dsip | do something intelligent, partner |
| flat | any 4-3-3-3 distribution |
| lr | limit raise |
| lr+ | limit raise or better |

Social

Add emphasis with an exclamation point.
All caps means you are shouting.

| When You Type | It Means |
|------------------------|---|
| 2 | to, too, or two |
| 4 | for, fore, or four |
| brb | be right back |
| cu | see you |
| cul8tr | see you later |
| fwiw | for what it's worth |
| gd | good defense |
| gl(p) | good luck (partner) |
| gt | good try |
| gtg | got to go |
| imho | in my humble opinion |
| imnsho | in my not so humble opinion |
| k | OK |
| lol | laughing out loud |
| n | no |
| np | no problem |
| r | are |
| rofl | rolling on (the) floor, laughing |
| focrofl | falling off chair, rolling on (the) floor, laughing |
| sry | sorry |
| sotm | state of the match |
| ty(p) | thank you (partner) |
| tx / tkx / thx / tanks | thanks |
| u | you |
| vwd(p/o) | very well done (partner / opponent) |
| y | yes |
| yb / yp | your bid / your play |

Conventions

| When You Type | It Means |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| NMF | New Minor Forcing |
| rNMF | reverse New Minor Forcing |
| BLKWD | Blackwood |
| GER | Gerber |
| DRU | Drury |
| rDRU | reverse Drury |
| STAY | Stayman |
| PUPSTY | Puppet Stayman |
| BER | Bergen |
| rBER | reverse Bergen |
| INVM | inverted Minor |
| WQ | Western Cue |
| SNAP | Snapdragon Double |

For the Director

| When You Type | It Means |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| ai | authorized information |
| bit | break in tempo |
| ui | unauthorized information |

[Editor's note: David invited us to add or modify these listings as appropriate. Heh-heh. Be careful what you ask for, you might get it. Brace yourselves:]

Before cell phones and the Internet starting destroying the English language, "LOL" meant "Little Old Ladies." This was a somewhat humorous and somewhat disparaging term for very weak players. However ... if you've played bridge for a while, you know there are two kinds of "LOLs." The first kind is true to the original meaning. Four women get together for tea, cookies, gossip, and bridge. The bridge may not be of championship quality, but they have fun, and what's wrong with that?

The other type of LOL – and here we are borrowing (ahem) from "Bridge Is a Contact Sport," by Wendell Abern and Jarvis Fiedler – is a pair of ladies who, finding their children grown and their husbands out on the golf course, decide to take bridge lessons. Unfortunately, their mentor is John Dillinger. Although their manner is most pleasant and charming, they take no prisoners and show no mercy. You want at least two of these LOLs on your side in a team game. Or a world war.

The unwritten and usually understood appendix to "dsip" (do something intelligent, partner) is, of course, "FOR A CHANGE!"

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District 23 Rank Changes December 2020

Junior Master

Cindy R. Cox
Barbara Herman
Nina Huang
Glenn Jeanes
Judy K. Martin
Teri Unsworth

Club Master

Kathy Baghdassarian
Regi F. Block
Mark S. Greenfield
Ming Hu
Carol Inman
Kitty Keck
Annette Madden
Margery Teller

Sectional Master

Pauline Annakin
Susan Smith
Michael Vernia

Regional Master

Patricia Jaeger
Ronald A. Lu
Janelle Morton
Rami Razouk

NABC Master

Mitchell Blumenfeld
Lindsay Gronich
Jill Sattinger
Patricia A. Sullivan

Life Master

David N. Ochroch

Bronze Life Master

Kent M. Burrell

Silver Life Master

Elaine A. Keyes
Vivian R. Kiley
Deborah Levinson
Stephen Page

Ruby Life Master

Linda R. Schwarz

Diamond Life Master

Robert C. Bass
Janet Wickersham

The Puzzle Page

Play or Defend?

by John Jones

North

♠ K J 3 2

♥ 8 6

♦ K Q 9 8 4 3

♣ J

West

♠ 10 5

♥ Q J 10 9 4 3

♦ J 6

♣ A 9 2

East

♠ Q 8 7 4

♥ 5 2

♦ A 10 2

♣ 10 7 6 5

South

♠ A 9 6

♥ A K 7

♦ 7 5

♣ K Q 8 4 3

Opening Lead = ♥Q

Contract = 3NT

All players can see all the cards. Do you play or defend?

Bridge Jeopardy

by John Jones

The topic is "Fictional Characters."

And the answer is ...

\$100: The luckiest bridge player from the Victor Mollo "Menagerie" series.

\$200: Also known as HH, the gluttonous, egomaniacal and technically brilliant Mollo character.

\$300: The pompous lead character in David Bird's stories involving the monks of the St Titus monastery.

\$400: Abrasive but brilliant bridge-playing robot in Danny Kleinman and Nick Straguzzi's book "The Principle Of Restricted Talent."

\$500: The Heroine in J.S. Simon's book Why You Lose at Bridge.

February 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?”



Defend. Declarer can win the second heart and lead a diamond at trick 3. If he puts up the K or Q, a simple duck of the ♦A defeats the contract. Switching to clubs for declarer fails against the first round of that suit being ducked also. Declarer can make the hand if he can insert the ♦9. However, West can foil that plan by inserting the ♦J on the first round of the suit. Declarer can cover but the duck defeats the contract.

This hand comes from Julian Pottage’s great book “Defend or Declare?”

The minority of people – I like to call them the elite – prefer to compete with their brains rather than competing physically. These are the bridge players. (Easley Blackwood)

Would you try to play golf or tennis blindfolded? That does not seem a very intelligent thing to do, but most players do exactly that when they play the hand at contract bridge. (Bob Hamman)

Bridge is one of my pleasures, but bridge teaches you how to endure misery. (Edgar Kaplan)

Solution to “Rebus”

Ice Cold Bottom

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

Every king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history:

Spades – King David

Hearts – Charlemagne

Clubs – Alexander the Great

Diamonds – Julius Caesar

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

\$100 – Who is the Rueful Rabbit?

\$200 – Who is the Hideous Hog?

\$300 – Who is Hugo Yorke-Smith, better known as The Abbot?

\$400 – Who is Chthonic?

\$500 – Who is Mrs. Guggenheim?



Submitted by John Jones:



Around the Units in District 23



Long Beach by Lillian Slater

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com



Steve Ramos completes the roster of the Bridge Brigade teachers at the Long Beach club. Wearing a beanie when it's cold or one of his baseball caps when it's warmer, Steve sets up to teach his Wednesday Play of the Hand class. His screen and computer slides at the ready, Steve munches on his favorite breakfast, Burger King Tater Tots and chicken tenders, while he waits for the class to settle in.

Steve confessed that he has always loved Tater Tots for breakfast. At the insistence of his doctor, he had to add protein to his breakfast, ergo the chicken tenders. Steve makes two stops on his way to teach—first to get his breakfast and then to pick up donuts for the Bridge Brigade students to enjoy. He loves donuts

too but, again on doctor's orders, he only can appreciate their aroma.

Steve got into hats as an adult. When younger, he heard that wearing a hat caused hair loss so he refused to wear one. However, he later discovered that hats are a great accessory when it's cold. Although he has many baseball caps, his favorite is a Phantom of the Opera one given to him by his daughter.

Steve's bridge career started when he was nine years old. On a cruise from Hawaii to California when his family was relocating due a change in his father's Navy assignment, Steve got sick. To keep him entertained, his mom taught him Honeymooner's Bridge. Steve added, "My mom was not a great bridge player but she was passionate about the game and loved it."

Steve was introduced to duplicate after he left the Naval Academy in the late 1970's. He went to Tory's in the Old Town Mall to find a chess game where John Jones (JJ) recruited him to play duplicate at what was then King's Bridge Center in Torrance (now South Bay Bridge Club). Before their game, JJ went over a card that was very detailed for a first-time duplicate player. While JJ reviewed, Steve nodded and managed to remember that opening 2-bids were weak (but missed the exception that 2 Clubs was strong). During the game, Steve opened 2 Clubs with a weak hand. Despite this, JJ continued to play bridge with him. Steve, JJ, and the famous Victor Touriel would often play bridge together at Steve's mom's house in North Long Beach.

Steve became a Life Master in September 2010 when his team won Flight B in the Orange County Regional's ending Swiss team competition, earning 20 gold points! His present rank is Gold Life Master, and he still enjoys competing in tournaments, "They're fun! You're playing with people who have devoted their lives to playing bridge and have developed it as an art."

Before safer-at-home, Steve played bridge twice on Monday and every Tuesday night at South Bay. Considering his nonstop play at tournaments, he figures he averages playing five times a week. He added, "Bridge is a great pastime. Even if you're not

victorious, it is never pointless.” During this period of social distancing, Steve is studying to improve his bridge game as well as playing other games he enjoys such as Civilization, “an addictive and immersive game.”

His initial advice to newer players was “don’t take drugs, and buy low, sell high.” Then, more seriously, he added, “Learn to be a good card player. The better you are at that, the better your bidding will be.” Steve likes any convention that makes his opponents lose focus and concentration.

Steve worked as a software developer and is still a whiz with computers. When JJ ran his car over his laptop, Steve was able to resurrect all its files! While still working, Steve attended technology conventions like Expo where he would demo his software.

One thing people may not know about Steve is that he loves dogs. He and Sharon currently have only one, Vladimir, a Pug named by his children. This is the family’s third Pug with Teddy Bear and Gemini having crossed over the Rainbow Bridge. They will probably get another Pug some time soon. Steve specifically waited until the kids were older to get their first dog so they would have a good experience that would last through life.

Steve knows and teaches counting out the hand, strip-end plays, squeeze plays, discarding, and signaling. Steve has modified Eddie Kantar’s lessons to match his style and fit in the eight-week OLLI schedule. The three Card Play programs are rotated through the year, session by session. Students are challenged but emerge better card players—whether declarers or defenders!



Pomona –
Covina
by Tom Lill
www.acblunit551.org

Discretion being the better part of whatever, let’s hold off on the Individual for one more month at least. By then we should be on our way to getting vaccinated, yes? Here’s to hope.

One of the saddest things about getting older is, you keep getting Bad News of a Certain Kind. I just got word, a few minutes ago as I write this, that long-time Unit member, former Unit officer, and all around Great Lady Cordell Goode has passed away. Cordell left our Unit for Ventura sometime around 2014. But she is still fondly remembered by those who played with, and against her. Never (well, hardly ever) a harsh word at the table. She was one of my early mentors. I remember one time, declaring a 3♠ contract, as the play finished up she said, “you only had 3 spades, right?” That was true. And with a twinkle in her eye, she then said, “you’ve been reading Victor Mollo again, haven’t you?” That was also true! (Lest you all think I had completely lost my mind, bidding a three card suit for the first time at the three level, Cordell had shown four spades via a negative double.)

We do have one rank change to report: David Ochroch has earned the coveted Gold Card and is now a Life Master. Way to Go, David!

Last year, everything shut down just as we were preparing to present the Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney awards. Well, obviously that never happened. The awards still exist – President Sartor has the Ace of Clubs certificates, and your Membership Chairman (guess who??) has the medallions. We will be ordering the 2020 medallions for presentation. The standings will be finalized around the 10th of this month, and the League will send out the certificates when they get around to it, I guess. But the standings are kind of sad, this year. You can tell that few of our members have been playing on-line bridge. I count only 12 Unit members who have participated in the PPDVBC. (Some of our La Fetra and Bridge41 regulars who aren’t Unit members do participate, also.) So I see, in the still-unofficial standings, Ace of Clubs winners with 0.84, 1.00, and 1.71 points; and Mini-McKenney winners with 1.61, 2.59, and 4.25 points. Well, I guess on-line bridge isn’t for everyone, and a win is a win!

Depending on how things shape up, COVID-wise, we will either present the awards later this year, or simply mail them out to all the winners. Stay tuned to this station for further developments.

Some interesting – if perhaps not instructive – hands came up this past month. We’ll start with one of the strangest I’ve seen for a while. It’s another illustration of “better lucky than good.” No one

vulnerable, dealer on your right, you find yourself looking at this collection:

♠ J 10 9 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ A Q 10 9 8 4 3 ♣ none

RHO passed. Well? Kind of strange for a 1D opening, and that spade suit kind of leans to away from a diamond preempt. So, for better or for worse, I passed. LHO now jumped in with 3♣. Partner overcalled 3♥, and RHO raised the ante with 4♣. And now it's up to you.

Now, partner and I have an agreement that if we take out partner's (undoubled) overcall, we promise exactly two cards in his suit – no more, no fewer. That gives him a place to run if he can't stand the new suit. The new suit also promises some reasonable values. So?

I figured, did I, that across from a passed apartner, that 3♥ bid must show a reasonably nice hand. And there doesn't seem to be any wastage in the club suit. AND the spades have to be *somewhere*. So I bit the bullet and called ... not 4♦, but 5♦!

Now we start the REAL fun. LHO showed some discipline by not preempting then bidding again, partner passed, but RHO raised the bar again with 6♣. Pass, pass, 6♦, all pass. Oh, boy, this is going to be a challenge, no? Who knows who can make what?

The opening lead was the ♣A, and dummy came down with

♠ A 7 6 4 ♥ A K 10 9 5 ♦ K J 5 ♣ 6

That's right, the opponents had a 12 card club fit. The hand sort of played itself, as it turns out. Ruff the club, trump to dummy's ♦K, ♥AK (no ruff with the lone outstanding trump, fortunately), heart ruff with the ♦Q (LHO showing out), trump to dummy, ruff a heart, and run one of the middle spades. RHO wins but what is the poor fellow to do? He has nothing but black cards remaining in his hand, so he has a choice of giving you free spade finesse, or a ruff-and-discard. Making 6, for all the marbles, and some extravagant praise from partner. (I guess he didn't think this thing was going to make. Well, who did?) No doubt, some of you are shuddering at the auction! Well, as I said, better lucky than good.

And, continuing our BLTG theme (maybe we should add this one to David White's acronym list?), here's a hand submitted by Ho Ming Yim. You need to see the entire deal to get the full flavor of it. (That flavor is sour indeed, for the opponents!)

North

♠ J 10 4 3 2
♥ A Q x x
♦ K Q x x x
♣ 10 x x

West

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

East

♠ A K Q 9 8 7
♥ 10 9 3
♦ 7 2
♣ J 9

South

♠ 6 5
♥ J
♦ A K Q 10 8 5 4 3
♣ A 4

The auction was short, but perhaps not so sweet. East opened 2♠, and South (Ho Ming), impressed perhaps by the quality of his major suit stoppers, bid 3NT! You will note that this "wrong sides" the contract – North has the spade stopper. But it actually right sides the contract, because poor West has no spade to lead! So although E-W have 5 top tricks, after the opening lead of the ♣K, Ho Ming simply claimed his 9 tricks.

BLTG!

Quote for the month: "A long dispute means both parties are wrong." (Voltaire)

Downey – Whittier by Linda Eagan and Liz Burrell

[Nothing from Downey-Whittier this month.]



Santa Clarita- Antelope Valley by Beth Morrin

Last year at this time, we had no way of knowing what kind of year we were going to have. After ACBL suspended play in regular clubs in March, we formed our virtual club, Unit 556+ which includes Unit 556 (Santa Clarita & Antelope Valley), the Glendale Unit, and the Baja Gold Coast Bridge Club. We have been playing 4 open match point games each week, a 499er game on Sunday at 3:15, and an open

IMP game on Sunday in conjunction with the 499er game. We more than doubled the number of tables we played in 2020 from the number played in 2019 – thanks to all players who have supported our virtual club. Also, a big thank you to our directors: Bob McBroom, Scott Campbell, Mike Savage and David White.

This year we plan to continue the virtual club, support online bridge classes, and hold the Magic Mountain sectional on September 25-26. A new change has been added to our virtual games – you can rent a robot for \$0.25 as a partner.

It is near time to select our board for 2021. We will vote by email this year and ballots will be sent to all ACBL members of our unit in March. If you wish to self-nominate, please contact Ruth Baker (rbaker1243@sbcglobal.net) or Paula Olivares (paula@pacbell.net). Nominations must be received by March 1st.

Winners in Unit 556+ Open MP games:

| | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Mon. Dec. 28 | | |
| N/S | Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky | 60.65% |
| E/W | Paula Olivares – Bill Brodek | 62.50% |
| Tues. Dec. 29 | | |
| N/S | Melanie Moran – Bill Brodek | 67.06% |
| E/W | Pat Larin – David White | 62.70% |
| Thurs. Dec. 31 | | |
| N/S | Debra Pride – robot | 64.09% |
| E/W | Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky | 64.22% |
| Fri. Jan. 1 | | |
| N/S | Pat Larin – David White | 62.22% |
| E/W | Bud Kalafian – Stephen Licker | 64.72% |
| Mon. Jan. 4 | | |
| N/S | Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky | 69.25% |
| E/W | Roshen Hadulla – Jackie Moor | 61.40% |
| Tues. Jan. 5 | | |
| N/S | Saul Teukolsky - Roselyn Teukolsky | 60.32% |
| E/W | Pat Larin – David White | 67.86% |
| Thurs. Jan. 7 | | |
| N/S | Carolyn Cohen – Dominique Moore | 61.49% |
| E/W | Susan Smith – Aggi Oschin | 67.04% |
| Fri. Jan. 8 | | |
| N/S | Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky | 64.74% |
| E/W | Jan Ladd – Roy Ladd | 59.62% |
| Mon. Jan. 11 | | |
| N/S | Carolyn Cohen – Gerry Belcher | 59.49% |
| E/W | Ramesh Sawhney – Temo Arjani | 63.34% |

| | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Tues. Jan.12 | | |
| N/S | Saul Teukolsky - Roselyn Teukolsky | 63.89% |
| E/W | Pat Larin – David White | 65.39% |

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|--------|
| Thurs. Jan. 14 | | |
| N/S | Amr Elghamry – Rae Murbach | 65.28% |
| E/W | Carolyn Cohen – Dominique Moore | 66.20% |

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Fri. Jan. 15 | | |
| N/S | Carol Trendera – Gary Trendera | 58.12% |
| E/W | Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky | 68.59% |

| | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Mon. Jan. 18 | | |
| N/S | Carol Ashbacher – Kristi Kubo | 65.69% |
| E/W | Georgia Seid – Kathy Baghdassarian | 64.58% |

| | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Tues. Jan. 19 | | |
| N/S | Saul Teukolsky - Roselyn Teukolsky | 62.85% |
| E/W | Amr Elghamry – Dominique Moore | 57.99% |

| | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Thurs. Jan 21 | | |
| N/S | Margaret Shifley – Jerome Paul | 62.12% |
| E/W | Bill Broek – Temo Arjani | 67.28% |

| | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|--------|
| Fri. Jan 22 | | |
| N/S | Alan Nueman – Harry Randhawa | 62.50% |
| E/W | Ramesh Sawhney – Temo Arjani | 65.67% |

Winners of Unit 556+ Sunday Afternoon IMP Pairs Game at 3:25:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Sunday Jan. 3 | Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom |
| Sunday Jan. 10 | Roshen Hadulla – Bill Brodek |
| Sunday, Jan. 17 | Debra Pride – Pat Larin |
| Sunday, Jan 24 | Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky |

Rank Changes in December:

Club Master

Kathy Baghdassarian, Glendale CA
Carol Inman, Los Angeles CA

Sectional Master

Susan Smith, Canyon Coutry CA

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. It is open to players

with less than 500 masterpoints. At least one member of the partnership must be a resident of District 23.

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

For January these winners were:

1. Edward Pelent (tie) 74.7%
2. Zonna Pelent (tie) 74.7%
3. Paul Brunton (tie) 68.3%
4. James Gates (tie) 68.3%
5. Rosalee McEntyre tie 61.7%
6. Judith Smith (tie) 61.7%

All-Western 99ers Nite Club

This on-line club is open all players with 100 Masterpoints or less who are residents of District 17, 21, 22, or 23; provided their home club has enrolled in the program. There is no guest plan for this club, each player must be a member of a club in one of those four districts.

A large portion of the entry fee is returned to the player's home club.

This club also host a zoom chat before the game and a short lesson, question, and answer session on Zoom after the game.

99er Nite Club games are held Mon-Thur at 6:30pm. At this time the club has no series awards.

Finding these limited games on BBO can sometimes be a challenge.

From the BBO opening screen, click on COMPETITIVE. On the new Tournaments screen click on ACBL Virtual Clubs. In the upper right hand corner, Click on SEARCH. Then type in the search word. *D23* for the D23 club, or *All* for the All-Western club. The game will appear in the much shorter list. Click the game and register as normal. If you are blocked or refused, message the director or 'ellis10'.

The link to the All-Western 99er Zoom chat 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.

If you have questions about the D23 club, click this mail link:

<mailto:paula@pacbell.net>

and include 499ers in the subject line.

Pasadena – San Gabriel by Morris “Mojo” Jones

bridgemojo.com



January was our biggest month for attendance since the Pasadena Pomona Downey VBC opened for business. We had 263 tables, breaking our December record of 225.

Part of the reason was great attendance during Silver Linings week. In an effort to try and help the non-Life Masters acquire precious silver, I added games on Tuesday evening and Thursday evening. Those were great games, and all of our other games had a nice bump in attendance as well.

With our costs mostly fixed, the extra income will all flow to the brick-and-mortar bridge club owners. Hopefully we'll be playing together in person again soon!

My Saturday morning 9:30 15-minute “mini lessons” have been drawing a big crowd. I've been making them available on YouTube for the past couple of months. You can find them at <https://www.youtube.com/user/mojola2/playlists> (user mojola2). Look for the Saturday Bridge mini lessons.

Our Wednesday and Saturday Newcomer (0-100) games have had several additions as well. Local players have been spreading the word and attracting friends from “out of town” to play in many of our games. Our “visitor” percentage is still quite low (around 6%), and we have a few new friends from out of the local area who've become regulars both in the newcomer pairs and the open pairs games.

New class starting Feb. 7 for six Sunday afternoons: Audrey Grant's *Improving Your Judgement - Opening the Bidding*. There are still a few seats available, but they may not last!

I'm also offering six Tuesday evenings on Popular Conventions, through PCC Extension online. This class is sold out, and I'm considering offering a repeat session on Tuesday evenings in late March.

Congratulations to new accomplishments in Unit 559! New Junior Masters: **Nina Huang, Glenn Jeanes, and Teri Unsworth.** New Club Masters: **Ming Hu and Annette Madden.** New Regional Masters: **Ron Lu and Janelle Morton.**

A very special callout to a very special lady, and a familiar face to all of us in District 23: **Jan Wickersham.** Jan attained the rank of Diamond Life Master this month. Jan took over as Unit 559 President (again) under what must be the strangest time to be a Unit President in the ACBL. Jan has been my bellwether, cheering section, and comforting voice of encouragement through all of my time here. Thank you Jan, and congratulations!

Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are: Sid Brownstein, Ellis Feigenbaum, Jill Meyers, Mister Mealy-mouth,
Marjorie Michelin, Mike Shuster, 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.

I am making three dedications for recently deceased friends. The first is for Tim Lolli. Tim was a long time panelist for this column. His participation as a panelist predates my participation; Marshall Miles was the moderator when Tim started contributing his thoughts on the bidding problems for this newsletter. Tim was always conservative. He rarely recommended actions that were overbids, no matter how difficult the problem was. Tim's last regular partner was Carolyn Cohen. My condolences Carolyn, I know Tim really enjoyed playing with you. The partner that I most remember Tim playing with was Bill Sides. Tim and Bill were always steady. Tim and Bill's slam bidding was frequently like listening to a fine concert pianist. Every bid had a meaning and they seemed to get the meaning of each bid. I remember them bidding and making 7♣ while 3NT failed at the other table. Tim and Bill frequently played on teams with the late Mike Pudlin and me. I remember playing 6-handed in a Spingold KO with Tim and Bill, a third pair, and Pud and me. We wound up down 65 IMPs at the 3-quarter mark to a team we knew we should beat. The first 8 boards of the 4th quarter were maybe the best 8 boards Pud and I ever played. Pud and I were crazy to begin with and were playing a very aggressive big club system. But down 65, we stepped up the craziness and every hand went our way. We took a bathroom break and Pud asked me: "Do we have enough, are we leading now?" I had already mentally gone over my estimations and answered: "If things have gone reasonably at the other table, we are up about 15, but remember Tim and Bill aren't in this set. Keep up the pressure, we have them on the run!" We kept up the pressure and added a couple more good boards. We started the comparison and the first thing one of our teammates said was: "things didn't go terribly well". Sure enough, we lost by about 10. As we walked to the car Pud commented: "We would have won if Tim and Bill were at the other table". Tim was not only an excellent bridge player but was also a good golfer. RIP Tim!

My second dedication is to another former panelist, Paul Ivaska. Paul moved to Las Vegas several years ago. Paul was a panelist for this column for many years beginning during Marshall's time as moderator of this column. Paul was also a solver for the Bridge World's Master Solver panel. Paul was one of the early theorists in the 2/1 GF Walsh system. He played in the Culver City and Westchester areas. Paul was truly knowledgeable and quite generous of his time with younger players. I enjoyed Paul's advice more than that of anyone else because he was so thoughtful, thorough, and helpful. Paul had a great sense of humor and at times came up with new bridge terms. We all know what an "air ball" in basketball is – a shot that misses everything; rim, backboard, and net. Paul used the term for a bridge sacrifice that missed everything: the sacrifice went down too much while the opponent's contract was going down. Paul wrote a column for his Vegas crowd about innovative bridge thoughts. Thank you for all you contributed to bridge Paul!

My final dedication is for Gary Zieger, an ACBL director. He lived in Arizona but frequently directed in Los Angeles. He was very respected as a director. Gary also served on the D23 Handicapping Committee with Cecil Cook and me. He was a great asset. He knew all the answers and on the rare occasions when he didn't know all the answers, he knew just where to find them. You'll be missed Gary!

| | | | | |
|--|--|------|-------|------|
| <h1 style="font-size: 4em; margin: 0;">1</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Matchpoints None Vul</p> | South | West | North | East |
| | ??? | | 1♣ | 1♥ |
| | You, South, hold: ♠KJ6 ♥876 ♦K654 ♣K54 | | | |
| | What call do you make? | | | |

Shuster: Pass. Partner is still a favorite to be balanced here. If he reopens with a double, the move is to cuebid to punish him. It shows this hand type, but still no exit in sight. Weak NT people have it easy here with 2♣; as partner is either strong or unbalanced.

Wittes: Double. I know I'm supposed to have four spades, but I have the values for a negative double, and if I don't act now, I'll never catch up.

Mealymouth: 2♣. I must do something to empower partner to compete. Competition changes circumstances. High-honor-third is adequate support for a minor in a pinch. Partner should not bid more clubs without five.

Michelin: 2♥. This is a problem hand. I have 10 points and don't want to pass. I can choose to bid 2♥ as a limit raise in clubs. It's a bit of a lie as I have only three clubs, or I can lie about my spade length and make a negative double (unfortunately I can't claim I missorted my hand for online bridge and had a club in with my spades). If I was playing with Ellis, I would make a negative double and chance playing our 3-3 fit. He plays them well. A good partner would have heart stoppers and bid NT for me!

Feigenbaum: 2♥. This might be the time for a John Jones negative double, Sputnik style with three cards in every unbid suit. *Yes, in the early days of negative doubles when they were referred to as Sputnik, all doubles were far less exact in their meaning than negative doubles are now. Ellis' guess that I am a doubler is wrong though, I like the 2♣ bid.*

Talk about making the problem look "easy cheesy," two panelists have a treatment that makes this hand look simple. Let's hear from them.

Meyers: Double. I think it is important to be able to show values (when they overcall 1♥) without a heart stopper. Lately I have been playing that bidding 1♠ shows fewer than four spades and double shows four or more; however, I don't think that is part of Bridge News standard so if I can't do that I will double, which I was "brought up" playing as showing fewer than four spades - and you bid 1♠ with four or more (this is easy to navigate if you play support doubles).

Brownstein: 1♠. I play 1♠ denies four or more and shows values (perfect for this hand).

Match game score: Jill & Sid = 1, Marjorie and Ellis = 1.

| | | | | |
|--|--|------|-------|------|
| <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">2</h1> <p>Matchpoints None Vul</p> | South | West | North | East |
| | ??? | | 1♦ | 2♥ |
| | You, South, hold: ♠A ♥876 ♦AK876 ♣AJ54 | | | |
| What call do you make? | | | | |

True confessions. This was not the intended problem. The hand was correct, but the auction was completely wrong. It turned into a real non-problem. The only possible problem would be those who might want to show clubs on this round, either with a 3♣ call or maybe with a fitted-jump to 4♣. Beyond that, starting with 3♥ to show a diamond raise looks obvious. I want you to notice how nice this panel was though. If Roger Lee had been on this panel he would have called me within minutes of my sending out the problems and asked me what I was thinking. If Jeff Goldsmith and Mark Bartusek had both been on the committee they would have agreed for once. They both would have quoted Al Roth asking "What's the problem." And if Rick Roeder was on this committee he would have asked "What's the difference between JJ and a Dumb Blond?" Answer – "The Dumb Blond is still blond and is better looking." But notice that this panel not only answered the problem, but their comments indicate they are thinking ahead to their next bid.

Setting up for the next bid, should we pass 3NT if partner bids it?

Shuster: 3♥. Is this a trick question? You really need to ask if I'm going to pass 3NT next....

Meyers: 3♥. This is GF and shows diamonds if partner bids 3NT I will be thinking for a while.

Mealymouth: 3♥. Which I trust partner will interpret as an artificial forcing raise. The real problem may come if partner rebids 3NT. As in strong minor-suit auctions, 4♣ should be the Roman Keycard ask if we're using any, I'll bid 4♦ over partner's possible 3NT, trusting him to retreat to 4NT if he has the likes of ♠KQ6 ♥KQ3 ♦Q1052 ♣Q107.

Michelin: 3♥: There must be some catch, this seems to be a mundane start with 3♥.

Brownstein: 3♥ is a good start followed with 4♦ forward going.

Feigenbaum: 3♥. Seems very normal, let's find out where we are going, there could be slam in either minor. I bid 4♣ if it's keycard in diamonds.

Wittes: 3♣. If I start with 3♥ the auction could get very awkward. We may belong in 3NT or a diamond slam. Partner is unlikely to bid 3NT over 3♥ with a minimum and a heart stopper. 3♣ gives partner more room to describe their hand. I always have time to support diamonds later.

Match game score: Jill & Sid = 2, Marjorie and Ellis = 2, the moderator, who matched almost all the panelists (that's bad) = -1.

| | | | | |
|---|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| <h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Matchpoints Both Vul</p> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> | <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> |
| | | | 1♣ | 1♥ |
| | dbl ??? | pass | 1♠ | pass |
| | <p>You, South, hold: ♠QJ54 ♥AQ86 ♦J932 ♣9</p> <p>What call do you make?</p> | | | |

Expert standard for the 1♠ rebid is either only three spades and a problem hand, or four spades and a balanced minimum. What would an expert do with four spades and a reasonable 14 HCP hand? Bidding 2♠ with four trumps and a decent 14 or so would be a popular choice. So the panel considers both the great heart holding and also the discouraging 1♠ bid and considers how aggressive of a move to make.

Mr. Shuster is the most conservative bidder? Say it ain't so, but listen to his argument.

Shuster: Pass. I'm not going to press for game at MPs in what is very likely a 4-3 fit (or partner is 4333.) The 4-3 fit rates to play better than NT, so I'll let it go here and see if they balance. They'd regret that.

Some panelists make a very small move with 1NT or 2♥.

Mealymouth: 1NT. In case partner felt compelled to bid 1♠ with ♠K107 ♥J7 ♦A107 ♣KQ852 or similar.

Meyers: 2♠. No one put a gun to my head to bid again and all partner did was bid 1♠, for all I know he/she has only three spades and didn't have a convenient bid over my double.

Others invite with 2NT or 3♠.

Michelin: 2NT. My choices are 1NT or 2NT. My partner will know I have four spades and heart stoppers. His 1♠ bid might have been made on only three. If I didn't hold four spades, I could have bid 1NT for us would show 8-10. After doubling, I could bid 1NT which shows what I have. But with my heart position, I think I'll upgrade and bid 2NT.

Feigenbaum: 2NT. Partner may not have four spades, let's give partner a chance to let us know.

Brownstein: 3♠. Nothing else seems appealing.

Finally, we have one panelist who loves his heart holding enough to just bid the game.

Wittes: 4♠. I'm not crazy about my stiff club, but the good trumps and upgraded heart holding seem to make game a good proposition.

Match game score: Jill & Sid = 2, Marjorie and Ellis = 3.

| | | | | |
|---|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| <h1 style="font-size: 4em; margin: 0;">4</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">IMPs Both Vul</p> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u> | <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> |
| | | | 1♣ | 1♥ |
| | dbl | pass | 2♥ | pass |
| | 3♦ | pass | 3NT | pass |
| | ??? | | | |
| <p>You, South, hold: ♠AK74 ♥Q ♦KQ983 ♣1054</p> <p>What call do you make?</p> | | | | |

We'll start with a couple of panelists who don't like the negative double, pointing that forcing with 2♦ and following up with spades will make this hand easier to navigate on many auctions.

Mealy-mouth: 4NT. I object vehemently to the "Negative Double" when I have a perfectly adequate 2♦ response available. Now I must show that I don't have a piece of cheese, so to invite slam I'll bid 4NT.

Shuster: 4♣. Double was awful. 2♦ doesn't deny spades, but double makes it nearly impossible to show the diamonds in a forcing way later - only because partner cuebid were we able to do so. At any rate, here we are. We have far more than partner can expect and partner has shown a very good hand that was wrong for a direct 3NT. That means clubs, so lets let partner in on the fit and extra values. Sure, they will play us for 4=2=4=3, but we can't do anything about that now.

Meyers: 4♣. Partner obviously has extras, and I think a long club suit. I have a partial heart stopper, I have not shown extras, partner could have something like ♠Qx ♥Jxx ♦Ax ♣AKQxxx.

Feigenbaum: 4♣. Partner sounds too strong to pass, there are some hands with solid clubs and a heart card that partner may bid this way. I bid 4♣, which systemically should be Keycard in clubs.

Michelin: 4NT/4♦. I think my partner has a very strong hand with the cue bid then bidding 3NT. I am bidding 4NT quantitative or 4♦ for me would be keycard in diamonds.

Brownstein: 4♥. This seems best slam try here.

Wittes: 4♥. Partner bid 2♥ and then 3NT opposite what could be a bare minimum negative double. I think partner has a very good hand with a long solid club suit. I don't think we're off two aces, so slam is likely.

I like 4♣. Partner likely has excellent clubs and it's clear that I have a slam try. I don't play 4 of a minor as automatic RKC though, so for me this just sets trumps.

Match game score: Jill & Sid = 2, Marjorie and Ellis = 3. Margie got two bids and neither of them matched Ellis.

| | | | | |
|---|--|------|-------|------|
| <h1 style="font-size: 4em;">5</h1> <p>Matchpoints None Vul.</p> | South | West | North | East |
| | 1♠ | 3♥\$ | dbl | 1♥ |
| | ??? | | | pass |
| | \$ Weak jump raise (preemptive) | | | |
| | You, South, hold: ♠AQ865 ♥85 ♦AQ4 ♣J82 | | | |
| | What call do you make? | | | |

Feigenbaum: Pass. No one said life is easy when JJ sets the hands (*except maybe for problem #2*), absolutely anything apart from 3♠ and 3NT could be right. If we can make 5 of either minor then Pass is going to generate a good matchpoint score.

Shuster: Pass. These 3♥ weak jumps seem to always be balanced; let's check my theory.

Meyers: Pass. At MPs I would pass, no other good bid, if they make it so be it but I think I have three tricks.

Mealymouth: Pass. If we play the misnamed "Responsive Doubles," they must have a level through which they apply, and in the absence of partnership agreement to the contrary, that level is 3♦. Partner is likely 2=2=4=5 or 2=2=5=4 and wants to defend; he's not looking for a 4-4 fit in a minor at this level. Oh, this is an opening lead problem? Sorry I misread it. I'll lead the ♥5. The eight of trumps is my second choice, but I love the eight of trumps so much I hate to give it up so soon.

Mealy is right that Responsive doubles are one of the more poorly named treatments. Note that Responsive doubles are always made by the advancer and never by the responder. It's not the only poorly named convention though.

Michelin: 4♣. I assume this was a responsive double from my partner. Partner is forcing me to the 4-level; they must have a decent hand so sitting for the double might be our best spot but I am going to bid 4♣. Partner knows where we are going. I hope!

Brownstein: 4♦. Pass seems reasonable but I would bid 4♦.

Wittes: 4♥. Best problem of the set. I may be looking through rose colored glasses, but if partner has a stiff heart, we surely have a minor suit game. If partner has a doubleton heart, game becomes problematical at best. If partner has Kx of spades, I expect them to bid 4♠, otherwise their best minor.

I'm with the passers at MP and think the problem would be harder at IMPs.

Final match game score: Jill & Sid = 2, Marjorie and Ellis = 3.