

Bridge News

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Shore



Good News, Bad News

Bridge Week, the Summer's Best Regional, presented our District with good news and bad news. The good news is that we remain a popular destination regional. Our attendance was nearly 750 tables, 55% of our pre-pandemic attendance, which tracks or slightly exceeds the performance of other regionals around the country. Importantly, we satisfied our room and food guarantees.

The bad news, though, is that this table count wasn't enough to keep us out of the red. We took a significant financial loss on the tournament, more or less comparable in size to the District's treasury. What this means, in short, is after several years of recovery from the financially disastrous Glendale Regional, the District has financially returned to square one. We will hold a Board meeting via Zoom on August 13 to discuss and decide upon our various options.

North American Pairs

This is the last month of qualifying for North American Pairs. Once again, we'll be conducting a simplified process where players will go directly from club qualifying to the District finals, with no Unit finals as an intermediate step. But in order to qualify for the District finals, you still have to play in a club qualifying game (and finish either at or above average or in the top half of your field in that game). You may play as many club qualifying games as you would like, and they need not be in our District. (If you do play an out-of-District qualifier, though, you should send MoJo a link to the game's results so that he can confirm that you qualified.) The District finals award the usual boatload of master points to the winners, as well as the opportunity to represent our District at the national finals in New Orleans. To make it easier,

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Regional Director's Report

by David Lodge



Tuna.

This report is coming to you from the beautiful, luxury sport fisher, The Intrepid. We departed San Diego this morning, 7/24, and are cruising 450 southeast along the Baja Mexican coast, where we will start fishing for Yellow Fin Tuna, Wahoo, Yellowtail and Blue Fin

As I write this, Providence has just ended. Attending an NABC is fun! This tournament was no exception in spite of the fact that I didn't play any bridge. As has been said many times before, our avocation is one of the few in the world where you can rub elbows with the very best. Among our elite D22/D23 players, with whom I had the pleasure of sharing a dinner are Ross Grabel, Mitch Dunitz, Ifti Baqoui and Mark Itibashi. More time was spent in good natured bantering with attendant laughter than was spent talking about bridge.

Speaking of Mitch, the league has appropriately honored him for his great devotion to our game, by adding his name to the college tournament which is now known as the Mitch Dunitz Collegiate Bridge Bowl Championship.

Our national Board of Director meetings

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ACBL subsidizes the top two finishers in each flight.

Upcoming Board Meeting

Board members — please take note of our August 13 Zoom meeting. We will likely be making some decisions of enormous consequence to the future of our tournament and of our District. Please make every effort to attend. Unit presidents — please confirm that your board representatives can attend the meeting. If they can't, please appoint alternates and let our Secretary, Lillian Slater, know who those alternates are. I'd really like to have full attendance at this meeting so that no one feels later like they didn't have a chance to provide input into the process.

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

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started on Monday, 7/10 and continued through Thursday afternoon. On the cheating issue, we passed a motion that any Grand Life Master or member of the Hall of Fame, convicted of 1st degree cheating with a recommended suspension period of 2 years or more, shall be stripped of those respective honors with no chance of ever again achieving the title(s). Still on the cheating theme, EDGAR, the on-line cheating software adopted by the ACBL is ready to be put into use on a broad scale. Think of EDGAR like you think of a radar gun being used by law enforcement. If it catches you, you'll be assumed to be guilty. You'll have an opportunity to defend yourself, but you'll have to overcome the primary evidence. This approach will only be used for what are considered cases that won't rise to multi-year suspensions. It will eliminate many of the steps of the current discipline process.

The Education Foundation is going to partner with the league in a new, exciting endeavor aimed at identifying excellent, successful teachers and providing them with leads. Robert Todd, president of the Ed Foundation gave a compelling presentation to the BOD that prompted the board to authorize the investment of \$100,000 to further this program. The Ed Foundation will supply personnel as required to implement, monitor and measure the results of the program.

The 2023 budget for the ACBL does not paint a rosy picture. We are expecting to lose close to \$1,000,000 from operations. The BOD and management are committed to strongly assess every assumption about the needs of the organization. We

need to justify, as revenues decline, the need for all categories of spending. As an example, it has been determined that the requirement for an in-house counsel is no longer justified and the position has been eliminated. We are in the process of conducting a vigorous review of IT methods of accomplishing our objectives and the costs related thereto. Likewise, marketing and general and administrative expenses will undergo scrutiny to see what, if any, costs can be eliminated.

This year has seen the reduction of BOD members down to 19 from the 25 that existed before the reorganization. In 2023, we'll be down to about 15 and as of 1/1/2024, we'll be at our final number of 13. There is no question that some very excellent volunteers will have been eliminated via this process. However, the increase in efficiency is dramatic and in my opinion, well worth the trade off. The distinction between districts within a region, irrespective of the individual district size, are already getting blurred. At meetings you notice Regional Directors speaking to issues of their regions. I am confident that as future regional elections take place, it will be the best candidate within a region that will prevail.

Next month I'll update you on league efforts to look at our financial situation and the outlook going into 2024 and beyond.

Stay healthy, stay safe and enjoy our great game!

The Director's Corner
by David White

Language and Bridge: Three Lessons



In the 1970's, I was a young sergeant, living in Portugal and playing bridge with a Spaniard at a tournament in Flemish Belgium. At that time, the international language of bridge was French. Our opponents were Polish and the director was German. All this was before bidding boxes.

Somehow, my opening weak 2 Diamonds in Portuguese came across to the rest of the table as a strong 2 Hearts in bad French. A short time later, the opponents were screaming for the director when the auction died at 3 Hearts, each of them holding 5 trump. I was quite proud of myself, holding the results to

down 5, (-250) not vul, undoubled. The director had little sympathy for the Poles. He, quite correctly ruled, mine was a mistaken bid, not a mistaken explanation. And I could not have gotten advantage from the explanation because I did not speak the language in which the explanation was given.

A formal discussion on language at the bridge table has nothing to do with my propensity to tell off-color jokes. Or the fact that the directors, in private, have no morals or restraints in the insults they toss around. Please note: you must have a very thick skin to have dinner with the directors.

1. Language and the rules of Bridge:

Once the cards are out of the boards, the only two spoken languages allowed are English, and any language all four players had previously agreed upon. If either of your opponents has their hand out of the board and is speaking a language unknown to you, call the director. There is no set or automatic penalty. This is procedural. ACBL directors are surprisingly knowledgeable. While few are fluent, several speak Spanish, almost as many speak French. We can even find a few that can get by in Portuguese, Russian, or Mandarin.

It does not matter what they are saying. I once had a player tell me he had to use Chinese, English was not descriptive enough to tell his partner what an idiot he was.

2. Bridge and Language for medicinal purposes.

A twenty year study of retired people at a Seal Beach retirement community showed that those who played Bridge or Canasta daily retained more mental acuity. The study also suggested that learning new things or doing the same old things in a different way were advantageous to keeping your memory. So if you want to beat Alzheimer's, play bridge in Spanish and use your 'off' hand to pull the bidding cards.

3. Bridge as a language:

I recently overhear this lament at the bar during the after game post mortum.

"I picked up a swan in fourth seat. The suit was chunky and short of hiccups. If partner had his usual cheese, I might walk the dog home and steal a good board.

"My Palooka opened something. Righty, another card pusher, bid my seven bagger naturally. Pass by me, three bananas by lefty. Partner bids my

four card suit. RHO rebids my biggie. Pass. Pass. Now partner brilliantly starts the Biltcliffe coup by bidding again. Opps bid four bananas while partner doubles.

"I could pull, but either way we're going for a bath. This might be a telephone number, with area code."

Did you understand all that? I doubt it. Over the years bridge has developed its own vocabulary. Most expressions are obscure, many of the phrases are archaic. Don't be insulted if partner gives you a 'blue peter.' But, if you want to appear smarter than you are, learn a handful of these quips and sprinkle them liberally in your bridge discussions.

You can find many definitions online; check out Eddie Kantar's website. The D23 website has a section on bridge slang here:

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/acbl23/Bridge%20Slang.docx>

Any 'Bridge in the Menagerie' story by Victor Mollo is a lesson in its own right. But the best guide to bridge slang is the book "*The Talk of the Table*" by Larry Cohen.

Translation

Swan: a hand with 7-4-1-1 distribution. Ely Culbertson said play these hands in the 7-1 fit, rather than the 4-4.

Chunky: A couple of honors, not solid (e.g. KQTxxx).

Hiccups: HCP

Cheese: a poor hand. Swiss cheese: an even worse hand with holes.

Walk the dog: underbid with the hopes of drawing a double when you rebid again.

Palooka (also, card pusher): Clueless player.

Righty: RHO

Seven bagger: seven card suit.

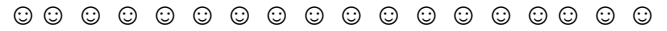
Three bananas: any legal bid at the three level that has no effect on the auction or play.

Biltcliffe Coup: an insulting term for this situation: the opponents bid a part score. Your partner bids one more time, 'just to push them up.' They then bid game. Partner doubles. They make overtricks. (e.g. they were willing to play for 140. You pushed them into 790.)

Bath: a big negative score. Usually a bad sacrifice ending in double zero.

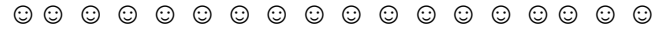
Telephone number: another bad score. (With area code: usually a four digit set.)

Blue Peter: playing high-low encouraging a third lead of the suit. (A British navel term for the comeback flag. This flag was raised over a port asking the last ship that left to return to port.



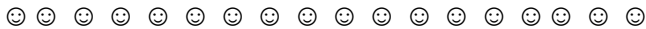
To play well you must know the ropes – including the kind you give an opponent so that he can hang himself. (Alfred Sheinwold)

Young man! You do not play whist? What a sad old age you reserve for yourself. (Talleyrand)



District 23 Rank Changes June 2022

Junior Master Ginny Hegge Nikki L. Marcello Patricia A. Mitchell Larry Rubenstein Muriel S. Savikas Sallie Shapiro Sharon Vaughn	Regional Master Stephen E. Andersen Steven Novak Janet L. Sobell	Bronze Life Master Tam Lachoff Linda Lin
Club Master Nabil J. Nahman Sally A. Shannon	NABC Master Paul S. Chen Mary K. Gillett Gordon I. Hull	Silver Life Master Nancy Klemens
Sectional Master Liza Billington Kevin S. Tambara	Life Master Linda Lin	Gold Life Master Judith L. Jones
		Sapphire Life Master Robert J. Levy
		Diamond Life Master Bill M. McLean



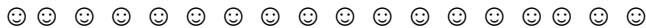
Submitted by John Jones:



Yes, a wonderful 7NT bid and made!



The director ruled I revoked!



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The Puzzle Page

Bridge Jeopardy by John Jones

Play or Defend? by John Jones

Category: Director Calls

And the answer is ...

\$100 – Failing to follow suit when you have a card in the suit.

\$200 – You lead to a trick, but it wasn't your turn.

\$300 – You bid lower than the previous bid.

\$400 – You open 2♣ (strong) with a rather poor hand.

\$500 – Partner makes the last bid, and you double.

North

♠ 10 6
♥ 9 8 4
♦ J 8 6 5 2
♣ 10 9 3

West

♠ 8 3
♥ Q J 6 2
♦ 10 9 7 3
♣ 10 9 3

East

♠ 5 2
♥ A 10 7 5 3
♦ A Q
♣ K Q 7 4

South

♠ A K Q J 9 7 4
♥ K
♦ K 4
♣ A J 6

Contract = 4♠

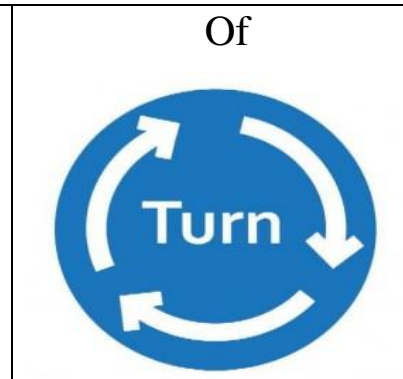
Opening Lead = ♥Q

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

(Solutions to these puzzles are on page 6.
No peeking!)

August Rebus

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



Of

Solution to “Play or Defend?”

Answer: Play. East will win trick one with the ace of hearts and probably return a heart (best). Ruff high, cash one high trump if you wish. Now make the key play, lead the Jack of Clubs from hand. East will win and likely return a heart again (nothing better). Now play the second round of trumps to the ten in the dummy. Lead either the ten or 9 of clubs from the dummy. East can cover, and in this case, win the second round of clubs and return to the dummy with the now established club winner. This yields an entry to lead to the king of diamonds. If East ducks the second round of clubs from the dummy, duck also and you have your entry to lead a diamond towards the king.

This is another hand from Julian Pottage’s original book Play or Defend.

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

\$100 – What is a Revoke?

\$200 – What is a Lead Out of Turn?

\$300 – What is an insufficient bid?

\$400 – What is Psyching a Strong Artificial Bid?

\$500 – What is Doubling Partner? (That’s not allowed no matter how poorly they bid – even though we’d certainly like to sometimes!)

Solution to “Rebus”

“Bid Out of Turn”

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

NAP Qualifiers Continue

June, July and August are when clubs can hold qualifiers for the annual North American Pairs tournament.

This year, as last year, players can qualify either at face-to-face clubs or online VACB virtual clubs. Qualifying games are announced by club managers. Contact your club manager for dates and times. Only designated NAP Qualifier games will count for qualification to the district final.

Club qualifying games award extra masterpoints, half black, half red. ACBL charges a small additional sanction fee to raise money to send the district-level winners to compete against the other districts at the Spring NABC in New Orleans.

The North American Pairs is really three tournaments: Open (Flight A) includes all eligible ACBL members. Flight B includes players with fewer than 2,500 masterpoints. Flight C includes non-Life Masters with fewer than 500 masterpoints. Your masterpoint holding at the end of May, 2022 (reported on June 6 and the July Bulletin) determines your flight -- so even if you go over 2,500 or 500 after May 31, you remain eligible for Flight B or C throughout the tournament.

For each scheduled weekly game, clubs may hold two qualifying games each month.

The district final will qualify players to compete in New Orleans at the NABC in March, 2023. Date and location for the district final will be announced soon.

Please review the full Conditions of Contest at the ACBL web site: <https://www.acbl.org/nap-qualifiers/>. District 23 NAP director is Morris Jones. Email questions to nap@bridgemojo.com.

Around the Units
in District 23



Long Beach
by Lillian Slater

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

70's Club Big Games



On July 12 Kim Wang and Louis Shen won in a field of nine table, scoring 70.24%



Jackie Hess and Cory Hand did it again! They had a 72.62% game in a field of 10 tables at the Unit game.



Alan Olschwang and Ken Miller, his brother-in-law from Australia, scored 70.54% in the STaC game on July 23rd in a field of 8 tables.



At the Leisure World Bridge Club on July 23rd, Larry Slutsky and Russell Gray had a 70.54% game in a field of 6 tables.



Pomona – Covina
by Tom Lill
www.acblunit551.org

Individual: August 6, 10 a.m., Ontario
September 3, 10 a.m., Ontario

Club Championships: August 9 and 12, La Fetra

Unit Game: Saturday August 20, 11:00 a.m.,
Glendora

STaC: August 23 and 26, 8:45, La Fetra

Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

Longest Day Update: we raised \$745 for the Alzheimer's Association, not bad considering that our game got disrupted (site-wise) and turnout was a bit disappointing. There is one or more mystery "thank you" to award: when I counted the game entry fees, I came up with \$11.00 extra. Now, I've come up short on the entries, on occasion, but extra? I conclude that some of the attendees tossed in some extra cash. I

added that on to my own donation – so whoever you anonymous donors are, Thank You. And Thank You to all those who participated, by playing, donating, or both.

There was of course no Individual game in July. This month for sure!

In the July Unit game, Vic Sartor – Bill Papa just edged out, by a single matchpoint, Fredy and Lulu Minter. Roger Boyar – Karen McCarthy took third, and Stephen Andersen – Linda Tessier wound up atop Flight C.

There was one rank advancement this month. Stephen Andersen is now a Regional Master. Congratulations, Steve, keep up the good work.

Topping the charts again this month are Fredy and Lulu Minter, at 70.82%. This edged out three 68%+ performances by Bill Papa – Vic Sartor, Roger Boyar – Steve Mancini, and Caryn Mason – Patrick Finley. Also topping the field at least once were Gary Atwell, Eddie Rose, Ramona Hernandez, Nona Stokes, and Stephen Andersen. Caryn and Patrick’s big game earned them first *overall* in the Friday morning STaC, awarding them 6.56 silver points. Well done!

Eleven players brought home a total of 61.12 masterpoints from the Bridge Week Regional last month. Topping the list with 11.59 was Hanan Mogharbel. This placed here 151st overall, out of 509 players who won anything at all. Rounding out the top five performers were (ahem) Yours Truly with 9.45, Richard Parker with 8.93, and Linda Tessier with 8.53. Don’t be too impressed by my total – I played *every session*, that’s 15 sessions and 360 boards. Not my best performance ever!

The only 1st Place performance was turned in by Caryn and Richard, winning a 299er session. But with the number of points they picked up, you *know* they placed fairly high in some other events.

Here’s a hand that came up during the Bridge Week Regional. The deal itself isn’t anything special ... just the usual semi-balanced hands ... but the auction was interesting. West is the dealer, with no one vulnerable. You, South, are holding

♠ 87 ♥ 86 ♦ KQ1082 ♣ Q1053.

The auction starts tamely enough:

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♠*	3♠	?

* Hearts and Diamonds (specifically)

Well? It would seem you have an obvious 3NT bid available, to ask for partner’s minor. Right? *Bzzzzzzzzt!* Thank you for playing our game, and we have some lovely parting gifts for you. Our intrepid South (no, it was not I – nor was I North) bid 4♣! An outrageous psyche. Obviously expecting to get doubled, then a retreat to diamonds, and get doubled again. The auction proceeded

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♠*	3♠	4♣ (!)
4♠	pass	pass	5♣ (!!)

Well, a big lie is easier to sell than a small one, I suppose. Let’s finish off the auction:

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♠*	3♠	4♣ (!)
4♠	pass	pass	5♣ (!!)
pass	X	5♦	pass
pass	X	all pass	

Opening lead: ♣A

Declarer caught a fair dummy:

♠ AK ♥ AKQ953 ♦ J7654 ♣ none

Making 6, for +650. A fine score, but not a top, because some pairs reached the diamond slam. An interesting use of the psychic bid ... but psyches can (and did this time) backfire!

Quote for the month: “There are two things to aim at in life: first, to get what you want; and after that to enjoy it. Only the wisest of mankind achieve the second. (Logan Pearsall Smith)

Downey – Whittier by Liz Burrell

July was a bit of a disappointment at the Downey Bridge Club. The first Wednesday, July 6, was canceled so that our members could attend the Long Beach Regional. The second Wednesday, July 13, was canceled because some of our members attended the Regional and became infected and/or exposed to COVID there. Last week, July 20, we had a four table Howell and a good game. John Petrie and Sankar Reddy were first overall earning 2.04 black points. Steve Wood and John Dobson were second with 1.53 black points followed by Tim Cole and Joyce Roberts with 1.15 black points. Congratulations to all winners.

It was good to see Tim, who has been summering on beautiful Whidbey Island in Puget Sound. Sigh. We were also happy to have Gabby Sill and the Krause's back with us. Hopefully all our members will be back from vacations or other involvements next week, July 27. That will be our last game for the month. Please join us.

For your information, we have canceled our Wednesday Potluck lunches. There are a couple of reasons for this: It doesn't make much sense to require masks if we take them off to eat at small tables with others. Also, it is a lot of work for the very few people who bring food. And it seems inevitable that Los Angeles County will be reinstating the indoor mask mandate any day now which precludes communal dining.

We are asking that you do not bring food to the Club at least for the time being. We experimented with playing straight through last week without a lunch break and everyone seemed to like it better. We were finished by 1:00 pm and no one starved. Hope to see a good crowd next week.



Santa Clarita- Antelope Valley by Beth Morrin

Unit 556 is still looking for a place in the Santa Clarita area to restart face-to-face bridge games. We are also looking for someone to be a club manager for a F2F game in Santa Clarita. Please contact Rand Pinsky (kathyrand1999@gmail.com) if interested or have suggestions for a possible bridge club location.

We will be holding 2-3 NAP games in August. Double points, half red and half black. Cost is \$4 a game.

Virtual Game Schedule

Monday:	12:15 PM	Open game
Tuesday:	6:15 PM	Open game
Thursday:	10:15 AM	Open game
Friday:	12:15 PM	Open game
Sunday:	12:15 PM	749er game
	12:30 PM	Open game

Contact our club manager at paula@pacbell.net for reservations. Our games cost \$3 unless it is a special game series.

Leaders in the Ace of Clubs Competition (as of June 30th)

0-5 MP	Alison Bosdet
20-50 MP	Hani Abraham
50-100 MP	Les Spitz
100-200	Tom Beggane
200-300	David Khalieque
300-500	Aggi Oschin
500-1000	Kristi Kubo
1000-1500	Ruth Baker
1500-2500	Kathy Swaine
2500-3500	Rand Pinsky
3500-5000	Bill Brodek

Big Games (65+%):

Thurs. June 23		
Gerard Geremia – Joseph Viola		65.28%
Fri. June 24		
Diana Borgatti – Cathryn Martin		69.11%
Sun. June 26		
Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky		66.67%
Mon. June 27		
Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky		73.38%
Tues. June 28		
Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky		65.00%
Thurs. June 30		
Ramesh Sawhney – Robot		65.74%
Mon. July 4		
Anita Walker – Robot		67.78%
Lulu Minter – Ernest Wong		67.22%
Tues. July 5		
Greg Vernon – Robot		65.28%
Sun. June 10		
Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky		65.74%
Fri. July 15		
Linda Young – Paula Olivares		69.44%
Rae Murbach		65.11%
Tues. July 19		
Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky		65.25%
Next Board meeting: TBA, via Zoom.		

Pasadena – San Gabriel

by Morris “Mojo” Jones

bridgemojo.com



I'm home from Providence, Rhode Island, where I spent two full weeks doing bridge activities. (And came back healthy this time.)

The trip started with the first in-person meeting of the American Bridge Teachers Association since Las Vegas 2019 (I'm currently their Recording Secretary). I received my Master Teacher pin, and ABTA gave out awards for Teacher of the Year and Books of the Year. If you're looking for a new bridge book, this is a great place to start. <https://abtahome.com>

Following was a ten-day binge of bridge, receptions, evening activities, and even a new play called *Bridge to Nowhere* by playwright / bridge pro Adam Parrish.

If you have friends who have been thinking about learning the king of card games, there will be new face-to-face classes for absolute beginners starting in September at Arcadia Bridge Center on Saturday mornings and through Pasadena City College Extension on Wednesday evenings. I'll update the schedule on <https://bridgemojo.com/class> as we get closer to class dates.

In July we held two Unit Games, though the second game is happening just as this column goes to press. Winners on July 17 were North/South A strat: **Fredy Minter** and **Lulu Minter**, B strat **Madhu Sudan** and **Stan Majcher**; East/West A strat: **Arthur Moore** and **Dominique Moore** in A (Overall winners), and B strat **Miriam Harrington** and **Mark Hartzell**.

Unit Game results can always be found on ACBL Live for Clubs by searching for “Unit 559,” or bookmark this link for club results: <https://my.acbl.org/club-results/905596> (ACBL promises that hand records will be included in the results after fixing some bugs.)

Congratulations to new Sectional Master **Liza Billington**. (I'm the proud teacher as well.)

August Unit Games will be held on Sundays the 14th and 28th. Game time is 12:30 p.m. and reservations are required. Contact Miriam Harrington

to save a seat for your partnership (626) 232-0558. (I'll suggest that we make those games NAP qualifiers instead of Unit Championships.)

And Now for Something Completely Different!

Ever have an idle moment (well, more than one) and an Inspiration? Here's a little ditty Your Editor came up with. It's sung to the tune of “Jug Band Music,” by The Lovin' Spoonful. I call it ...

More Bridge Lessons

I was at NABC, playing notrump, just three
when the lead just made me faint.
I put on a big frown, I thought I was one down,
I'd begun to see breaks that they ain't.
All the kibitzers gathered, to see what's the matter,
Director came to see was I tryin';
but my partner said, “Give him more bridge lessons;
they seem to help him play just fine.”

I was told a little tale about a pretty good player
Playin' a lot, trying to shake off some disasters.
He was hung up on his gold points, playin' teams
and trying to get enough gold points to make Life Master.
Well, I'll tell you in a jiffy how he entered in a Cinci
Regional, playing poorly, lookin' rusty.
He tried a little Swiss teams, a little bit of pairs;
he checked the recap sheets, but the points they were not
there.
Then his partner said, “Give him more bridge lessons;
they seem to help him play just fine.”

So if you ever go down three, then better run quickly
to the dusty closet shelf.
And pull down some Goren, it isn't too borin'
and do a little study yourself.
Then call on your team-mates, and set up some play dates,
and go and try it just one more time;
'cause your partner said, “Give him more bridge lessons;
They seem to help him play just fine.”

I was playin' in a part - score, with the overtricks galore,
when I got tripped up by a bad break.
It was 5-0 on my right but I still had lots of fight
and I searched around for tricks just for a bare make.
I struggled for an endplay, but the kibitzers thought “no
way”
as I tried to slip a singleton past leftie.
He counted up his sure tricks, I counted up mine;
and everybody knows that the very last line
is: My partner said, “Give him more bridge lessons.
They seem to help him play just fine.”

Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Mark Bartusek, Sid Brownstein, Ellis Feigenbaum, Jacob Freeman, Jill Meyers, Margie Michelin, Rick Roeder, Mike Shuster, and Jon Wittes are panelists.

Jacob Freeman is new to the panel. He is a young Canadian professional bridge player and teacher. Welcome Jacob!

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

<h1 style="font-size: 48pt; margin: 0;">1</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">IMPs N-S Vul</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">North</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">East</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">South</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">West</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">1♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">???</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="padding: 5px;">You, South, hold: ♠ AK842 ♥ QJ82 ♦ void ♣ A1082</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="padding: 5px;">What call do you make?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	North	East	South	West	1♥	pass	???		You, South, hold: ♠ AK842 ♥ QJ82 ♦ void ♣ A1082				What call do you make?			
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We'll start with an easy hand, because in this column panelists get to use their pet methods and just about any sequence could be right on this hand. The panelists are more-or-less in one of two camps. Some want their partner to describe the 1♥ opener, while others bid spades describing their own hand. First, let's hear from those who want partner to describe the 1♥ opener.

Shuster: 2NT. I want to set trumps and establish a force. I'm not interested in showing my shortness on a hand that is close to a slam drive. I want to leave as much room as possible to find out what I can about partner's hand. A splinter would just jam our own auction.

Freeman: 2NT.

Meyers: 2NT. I am going to start with 2NT Jacoby to see whether partner likes her hand, or get some idea of what partner has; I imagine I ultimately will bid Exclusion.

Michelin: 2NT. I would like to bid 1♠ and hope there is enough room to let me show a game forcing raise in hearts. 5♦ Exclusion is also coming to mind. However, with my luck partner will have three

spades and no ♣K and we will be in slam with no play. So I don't like it, but I will bid Jacoby 2NT.

Feigenbaum: 2NT. I would really like to bid 5♦ directly as Exclusion, but will take the mundane route of 2NT Jacoby and see what partner has to say.

One panelist gets it over quickly and bids an immediate Exclusion RKC.

Wittes: 5♦. Exclusion RKC. My first thought was to bid 2NT, but if partner bids 4♥, how do I then show my hand? The way I play Exclusion with most of my partners is that we make our normal keycard bids minus the ace of diamonds. If partner shows one, I will bid 6♥. If partner shows two without the queen by bidding 5NT, I would bid 6♣, which should ask partner to bid the grand with second round club control.

Roeder: 1♠. Superficially, Jacoby 2NT and a 4♦ splinter are very attractive choices. But the challenge on the hand is to find out about partner's spade holding. If you can deduce that partner has at most two spades or holds the ♠Q, the sky is the limit. Hopefully, a slow approach will offer insight.

Brownstein: 2♠. 2♠ is artificial; it includes hands with spades or hearts or both. It forces partner to bid

2NT. 3♦ now shows shortness with hearts. Cue bids will finish the description.

Bartusek: 2♠ / 1♠. Easy and clear-cut 2♠ Soloway Strong Jump Shift if you play them (I do). Following with 3♦ shows diamond shortness and 4+ hearts. An immediate 4♦ splinter would obviously show a hand strength without one of the spade honors. If not playing Soloway SJS, then I think bidding 1♠ to find out whether partner has spade support (and later the spade queen via RKC after cue bidding?) would be very useful. 1♠ would also allow partner to show distribution and strength in a lot of auctions. Unless you can show diamond shortness after bidding Jacoby 2NT I don't see how you can find out if the hands fit well. Jacoby 2NT works well if partner shows short clubs, but otherwise seems to gain little.

Mark is correct that if a SJS is available it makes the hand easy. 2♠ shows a variety of nice hands, 3♦ confirms it is spades including heart support and diamond shortness, 4♦ thereafter shows the void. Cuebids follow.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em; margin: 0;">2</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Matchpoints None Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	1♣	3♦	3♠	pass
	???			
<p>You, South, hold: ♠ A4 ♥ AQ42 ♦ Q82 ♣ AK76</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

After a hand in which many bids have merit, now we have what I think is the most difficult hand of the month. I love having 19 HCP, but no bid is right! What's closest to being on target?

Wittes: 4♥. Great problem! I have no sure solution. At least 4♥ should be forward going and hopefully forcing. I could bid 5♠, but if partner has KJxxx of spades and some outside controls including the ace or king of diamonds, we probably don't belong in a slam, certainly not in spades. Maybe partner has club support or a good six card suit that they can rebid. Over 4♠, I would bid 5♠ asking for second round diamond control.

Hoping for partner to have great spades and asking for a diamond control might work.

Shuster: 5♠. I have so much stuff I'm left wondering what partner has for their game forcing 3♠. I hope it is long, good spades. I think it is worth risking the five level to try to reach a good slam.

Bartusek: 5NT. Pick-a-slam (bearing in mind that I didn't rebid a forcing 4♣ with long clubs). Thus, unless partner has 6+ spades partner rates to have a side 4-card suit in which we'll play (although 6♣ opposite QJx will often work). I will gamble that partner has second round control of diamonds. The inconvenient level of the auction makes this 5NT pick-a-slam somewhat different than other versions. Other bids either distort my pattern, are non-forcing, or lie concerning my spade support.

If partner bids 6♣, I wouldn't be terribly comfortable passing, but nothing else seems right either. Many panelists inwardly groan and cue 4♦, whatever they think it means.

Meyers: 4♦. I guess I will cue bid 4♦.

Freeman: 4♦.

Feigenbaum: 4♦. Anything could be right, and I think it's time for something imaginative. So, I bid 4♦, a lead deflecting cue bid.

Roeder: 4♦. Brutal!! If 4NT was natural, that would be my call. Alas, partner will interpret 4NT as RKC. With bad breaks looming, cowardly bids of 3NT or 4♣ might be winners.

Speaking of 3NT and 4♠, here are the panelists who tried those bids.

Brownstein: 3NT. Uncomfortable bid! *If partner has two diamonds this bid could come up smelling like a rose!*

Michelin: 4♠. I feel like have too many extras despite my diamond holding to just bid only 4♠. I would like to cue bid 4♦ which would have to be in support of spades but partner might not take the joke. If 4♥ would sound like a forward going bid perhaps with spade tolerance I would choose that. Partner may take me for a 6-4 or 6-5 hand in my suits. If I am playing with a non-regular partner, I think I would bid 4♠.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">IMPs None Vul</p>	West	North	East	South
	1♣	dbl	1♥	???

You, South, hold: ♠ Q82 ♥ K ♦ Q9832 ♣ K1082

What call do you make?

Now for a hand in which I wish I had changed the conditions to vulnerable at IMPs. Let's hear from my pen full of MP pigs.

Shuster: 1NT. Matchpoints... all the money is in NT - so long as you make it.

Feigenbaum: 1NT. I hope I can make it.

Bartusek: 1NT. 7 to 11 in competition seems fairly perfect here (especially at matchpoints). Having so many points and good clubs makes NT better than diamonds. Obviously, I'll be able to rebid 2♦ if opponents compete to 2♣. If they compete to 2♥ I will have a guess (action double? 2♠?).

Michelin: 1NT. I am between 1NT and 2NT. My diamond suit is lousy, not worth a jump to 3♦ showing values and 2♦ might be bid on less. I'll bid 1NT showing about 8-10 HCP.

Roeder: 1NT. Swap out the 9 of diamonds for the diamond 10, and 2NT would be less of an overbid. Anytime you hold a Viagra card (Stiff King), No Trump should be given a long look.

Wittes: 1NT. At match points this seems like the best bid. At IMPs I would consider 2♦ or possibly 3♦.

Now the diamond bidders:

Brownstein: 2♦. Second choice 2NT.

Freeman: 2♦.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">4</h1> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">Matchpoints N-S Vul</p>	West	North	East	South
	1♥	1♠	pass	pass
	2♥	3♣	pass	???
<p>You, South, hold: ♠ A9 ♥ 7642 ♦ Q3 ♣ Q10852</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

We passed last round with a semi-constructive hand without a decent bid. Now that we have a great fit in clubs and additionally the ♠A. We must do something more than just a simple raise of clubs. The panel went with two different plans: 1) cuebid, 2) jump to 4♣, which they will argue shows a doubleton spade honor and a club fit.

The cuebidders:

Shuster: 3♥. This hand grew up fast and now I'm just looking for the best game. It wouldn't have been criminal to raise spades last round.

Roeder: 3♥. The auction has increased the value of this hand by leaps and bounds!

Brownstein: 3♥. This confirms a good club raise, stronger than 4♣.

Freeman: 3♥.

Meyers: 3♥. This must show clubs.

Wittes: 3♥. I couldn't have a better hand for partner on this auction. I must have a great hand for clubs with secondary spade support.

The 4♠ bidders:

Bartusek: 4♠. My hand has shot up in value given that partner's "dead minimum" would be something like ♠KQxxx ♥x ♦xx ♣AKxxx where 4♠ would often depend only upon a 3-3 spade break. I don't have enough quick tricks to guarantee 11 tricks in a 5-club contract, but 4♠ should often be makeable. Note that partner will know that I only have honor doubleton of spades since I didn't raise to 2♠ on the first round. I strongly considered a 3♥ cuebid, but that only shows a strong club raise and I might not be able to show my spade holding later in the auction (e.g., partner might bid 5♣ even though 4♠ would score better at matchpoints).

Michelin: 4♠. I've got great cards for partner. I am bidding game in spades and hope it makes. 5♣ may be the winning call.

Feigenbaum: 4♠.

5	North	East	South	West
	1♣	1♠	2♦	2NT*
	3♥	4♠	???	

You, South, hold: ♠ 75 ♥ 863 ♦ AQJ8642 ♣ 9

* Artificial 4-trump limit raise

What call do you make?

I'll start with the panelist who submitted the problem. Mike's partner, Meyer Kotkin, faced this problem in the recent GNT Superflight competition in Providence. He got it wrong at the table, bidding 5♥. This hand cost them advancing and Mike is lamenting it.

Shuster: Pass. I lead the ♠5. This hand is a bit of a sore spot for me, as it left me on the sidelines in the GNTs (well played D23!). Partner has shown a good hand with hearts and clubs and I have nothing in those suits and not enough of a fit to consider bidding at the 5-level. I think the opponents have stretched for the red game, so I'll just lead trump to cut down on the enemy ruffs. We rate to have minor suit winners anyway, so I don't think our side has much to gain by going for our own ruffs.

Feigenbaum: Pass. I have no idea what to lead. A trump could be right, but I will probably end up leading a club.

Wittes: Pass. Anything could be right. Partner rates to be 5-6 in the rounded suits. If partner is 2-0 in the pointed suits, I want no part of bidding. If partner is 1-1, 5♦ or 5♥ as a sacrifice could be right. If partner is 0-2, bidding 5♦ is probably right, very possibly to make. I think partner rates to be 1-1. To bid 4♠ vulnerable, I think the overcaller rates to have six spades.

Brownstein: Pass. I'll lead my stiff club.

Bartusek: Double. Why didn't I bid a WJS 3♦ (clearly a maximum) on the first round? I admit that I play fitted jumps with a few partners but the vast majority of ACBL players play this jump as weak. I realize that a lot of experts would just lie and overbid with 2♦ on the first round; but 3♦ seems the least of

evils. It modestly preempts the opponents, and gets the hand off my chest. Now, I'm faced with a seemingly impossible decision. With partner's 3♥ call "showing extras and forcing to game" most partnerships play forcing passes here!!! Thus, with no fit for partner, I'm reluctantly forced to double to avoid inviting partner to bid more.

Mark's suggestion of a Weak Jump Shift (WJS) has a few problems. 1) it is a pretty good hand to make a WJS (I was taught a WJS was about two to five HCP with a decent suit). 2) fitted jumps (four + cards in my suit, four + cards in your suit, with at least limit raise values) are now standard among tournament experts, replacing WJS. 3) The offensive value of the hand would get most tournament experts to bid 2♦, the same as Shuster's partner did at the table. However, Mark correctly raises the point of whether this auction is forcing on our side or not. Some partnerships would play that this auction is forcing, others would play it is non-forcing. Double was best on the actual hand.

Michelin: 5♦. I may be taking a phantom sacrifice here but I am bidding 5♦. Partner should know I have a good suit, probably seven of them with no tolerance for clubs. If he corrects to hearts, I am happy. Pass or double probably wins the board but I am bidding 5♦.

Roeder: 5♦. Partner may well be 1426. Your offense-to-defense ratio is quite high. While one or 2 club ruffs might sink 4♠, these colors suggest pushing on.

Freeman: 4NT. (*multiple places to play*)

Meyers: 5♥. I trust partner has five hearts for the 3♥ bid.