

Bridge News

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Robert Shore



Live Tournament Play

Starting next month, we will see something for the first time in approximately 18 months — the return of live open tournament play in North America. ACBL has approved a handful of live open tournaments, and has provisionally signed off on another small handful (one of which is in California), provided the tournament organizers agree to some extra precautions. Like most of us, I hope that vaccine rates continue to increase and that positive tests resume decreasing, as they had earlier in the year.

Why did I refer to “open” tournaments? It turns out that non-life master tournaments don’t need to use ACBL employees as directors, and therefore have more freedom to obtain sanctions. The Saddleback Unit in Orange County was able to hold its regularly scheduled non-life master sectional. So that’s apparently an option for any District 23 Unit that wants to return to tournament play.

North American Pairs

By the time you read this, qualifying for the 2022 North American Pairs championship will have concluded. I hope that many of us took the time to qualify, whether in a live game or on-line. As I mentioned in last month’s column, the District is handling the event differently this year than we have in the past. Ordinarily we hold a couple of Unit Finals (informally thought of as District semifinals) as an intermediate step before the District Final. We’re not doing that this year. So if you’ve qualified at the club level, you’ll be welcome to play in the District Final.

We don’t yet know where or when that District Final will take place. We’re also not sure of the format, although we certainly hope we will have enough players for a true flighted event, rather than a

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District Director Report

by John Jones



The fluctuating changes in the pandemic make deciding how to make decisions on when tournaments should reopen a nightmare. Last month I reported that the ACBL Board of Directors voted 22 -3 not to require masks for players at tournaments. That was assuming that everyone at the tournament (players, directors, caddies, kibitzers, book sellers) was fully vaccinated. That vote was taken just before a spike in Covid. The Board modified that vote in a special meeting earlier this week. (I’m writing this in late August, having gotten my wonderful editor Tom Lill, the other eight items I have promised for this newsletter). The modification allows Joe Jones (no relation) the ACBL Executive Director (top employee) to make such a decision. Part of the reason we took this step is because things seem to change so rapidly in terms of the pandemic.

Will the Austin national tournament scheduled for late November occur? I was asked that question a few days ago at a seminar I was teaching at South Bay Bridge Club. I answered that I would guess the tournament is about 30% to happen. I still intend to go if the tournament exists. Here are some key variables. The governor of Texas, Greg Abbott, has issued an executive order banning any state or local mandates

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stratified event. Those decisions will be made later in the year, when we find out how much progress we've made beating back the pandemic.

A Thank You to My Colleagues and Fellow Players

Not very long ago, one of my fellow District Presidents decided to step down from that position, not long after her election. Why? Because litigious players and board members were simply causing her too much grief and it wasn't worth the tsuris to her. The experience leaves me grateful for my colleagues in bridge governance at the Unit and District level, and most especially to our players. We certainly have our disagreements from time to time. But I really can't imagine any conflicts among us escalating to the point where valuable volunteers decide for that reason to step back from their roles. I honestly believe that we are all focused on the good of the game as a whole, much more than we are focused on any sense of individual advantage. So thank you, one and all, for maintaining a sense of perspective and proportion. As we have regularly read in these pages, bridge is a game and it's supposed to be fun.

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

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requiring people to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The name Abbott is famous and respected in American history. Jim Abbott was a wonderful pitcher with only one hand and is my favorite Angel baseball player ever. Also great is Bud Abbott, who combined with Lou Costello to form a marvelous comedy team. I like Jim Abbott and Bud Abbott, but don't think Greg Abbott knows Who's on First or much of anything. Many Texas school districts and cities have found ways to get around Abbott's mandate. The mayor of Austin has declared a local health emergency and the City of Austin Health Department is in charge of Covid regulations in Austin. It currently rates five degrees of Covid states/readiness. The current Covid assessment is that Austin is in category number 5. It will need to move to category number 2 before the city can have conferences and things like bridge tournaments. That may change some because the categories are currently not set up to differentiate between vaccination required events from vaccination not required events. But the bottom line is that 3 organizations will all need to say "Yes" before the Austin Nationals can occur. Those organizations are: 1) the City of Austin Health Department, 2) ACBL

Executive Director Joe Jones, and 3) the ACBL Board of Directors.

Online game regulations will be changing. It's clear that the online games hurt the F2F games which are the backbone of bridge. Against that, it's also clear that online bridge is here to stay and is important to bridge going forward. Which online games will be permanent and untouched is unclear. There are many entrepreneurs in the field who want to run massive online bridge games and make as much money as possible. That certainly is bad for bridge, hurts F2F games and even our smaller online games. There are ACBL employees who work with some of these business people that are inclined to allow anyone to run online bridge games. I'm going to guess that the BOD will not allow that to happen. The massive BBO run games (which cost little and only offer colorless points – not Black Points), are already out of the bag. They have an exclusive contract with the ACBL which runs for four more years. The BBO games are currently owned by a corporation whose board doesn't play nor understand bridge. They have refused to help with efforts for joint fundraisers to help F2F games. I wish we could do something significant to get around the BBO online games problem, but right now. The entire online games issue will be dealt with in the near future.

Cheating online continues to be a major problem. Every month we have a few more members who are disciplined for cheating violations. They wind up suspended for a length of time (6 months to 10 years), on probation when they can return, and the loss of masterpoints (frequently 1/10 or 1/3, but in egregious cases sometimes 100%). The bottom-line is don't cheat and quietly (not publicly) report those who you think are suspicious.

Fortunately, the current big bridge cheating controversy doesn't directly involve the ACBL. The European Bridge League qualifying matches for the World Team Championships and the European Champions' Cup (being played as I write) has the problem. Italy has fielded a team including Fulvio Fantoni. Fantoni was accused of cheating in the 2014 European Championships with his then-partner, Claudio Nunes. It was alleged that their positioning of their cards indicated the strength of their own hands. Other countries are boycotting their matches against Italy. This could leave Italy without enough qualifying points to move on, but the organizers may have to award some sort of special dispensation. I'm glad I'm not part of that decision.

I will finish by repeating that District 23 is NOT coming to end on December 31 of this year. Two things will happen. First, the 25 districts will be combined into 13 regions. D23 will be combined with D22 (most of Southern California) into Region 11. Second, a Regional Director will be elected. David Lodge, the current District Director of D22 is running unopposed and nominations are closed so he will be our new Region 11 Director.

The Director's Corner by David White

*The best thing about the good old days...
I wasn't good and I wasn't old..*



Psych vs Illegal Bid

The new convention chart and Alert procedures, that started in January has had some interesting side effects pertaining to Psyches and Illegal bids.

The use of Psyches decreases year after year, but they are still an integral and legal part of the game. (Rule 40.C. is my favorite.) Players may complain vehemently when the psych works, but nobody complains about a bad psych that goes for -1700.

The definitions and restrictions in the January revision of the Convention Charts makes it easier to identify a psych and distinguish them from illegal bids.

In the past many a director would treat an illegal bid as a psych and adjust, or penalize, only when there were multiple offenses. The rule makers hope that these definitions will create more consistent rulings.

A psych has always been a deliberate gross misrepresentation of high card values and/or suit length. This definition is a combination of Rule 40,C, and the restrictions in the convention chart.

A misbid, or a mislick, one that cannot be corrected, is not deliberate. It's a mistake and can never be a psych. Mistakes are part of the game and there is no rectification or adjustment for them. When a player tries to publicly correct or explain their oops, and their partner gets wind of the explanation, that is when it becomes Unauthorized Information, or

misinformation situation. Those we handle like any other UI or MI situation.

Gross misrepresentation now has a definition in the examples on the last two pages of the convention chart.

'Psych' Two cards fewer and/or an Ace weaker than the minimum expected for the bid would meet the definition of a Psych. A hand that is an Ace stronger than the maximum expected is also a psych.

To determine what is expected, look for the description of the bid in the appropriate chart. It will give you expected point range and length in terms of Average, near Average, Opening, or Strong.

EXAMPLES

Here is the justification, in legal terms, of a common situation. A player opens 1 No Trump with a small singleton, is it a psych or an illegal bid? After determining it was not an oops, we ask was it gross. An opening No Trump requires a balanced or semi balanced hand with at least two cards in every suit. The player only has one. This does not meet the 'Two cards fewer' definitions and can not be a psych, it must be treated as illegal.

A player opens a Flannery bid of 2♦, with 6-4-3-0 distribution and eight HCP. According to the restrictions, this bid must meet the Rule of 19, i.e. the number of cards in the longest two suits plus the number of HCP must equal 19 or more. The player explains that he gave himself two more points for the void.

Players are not allowed judgement with hands that promise a particular distribution. Flannery or Roman already promise shortness or length, so adding points is double counting the value. Since a psych must be an ace lower than the minimum expected, i.e. 10-4 or less. This is also an illegal bid.

QUIRKS OF THE CONVENTION CHART

While you are perusing the convention charts, remember the Basic and Basic Plus charts list allowed conventions. The Open and Open Plus charts list disallowed conventions.

Also note that some of the restrictions change slightly in different charts. The Rule of 19 in the basic charts, becomes the Rule of 18 in the Basic Plus chart.

SCORING an ILLEGAL BID

The way to score an illegal bid is simply average minus to the offender, average plus to the non-

offender, with a procedural penalty and a player memo being appropriate if there have been multiple offenses in recent history.

NAP District Final Information

by Mojo Jones

Save the date: November 7, at the Long Beach Bridge Center, for the District 23 NAP Final.

If you qualified to continue in the North American Pairs at a designated club game in June, July, or August, you are invited to play in the District Final game in Long Beach.

In years past, it was necessary to play in one of two "Unit Final" games before advancing to the district final. This year, with about half as many players qualifying, we've opted to hold a single District Final game.

At the completion of the two-session District Final game, eleven pairs will be invited to represent the district at the North American Pairs Finals at the Reno NABC in March: three pairs from Flight A, and four pairs each from Flight B (0-2500) and Flight C (0-500).

Players who would like to participate should read the Conditions of Contest from the ACBL web site here:

<http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/NAP/CoC.pdf>

To see if you've qualified to play in the NAP District Final, see the report here on bridgefinesse.com: <http://bridgefinesse.com/NAP/23NAPQualifiers.html>

District 23 Rank Changes July 2021

Junior Master

Renate L. Benaway
Marra Boada
Linda Carter
Patricia Ericson
Joachim Haffer
Kim M. Holmes
Lee Korich

Club Master

Hani Abraham
Sandy S. Berman
Irma L. Bernard
Morris I. Chernick
David C. Lachoff
Mary T. Mauch

Sectional Master

Jim Mente

Regional Master

Allan Baraz
Leo D. Dittimore
Gregory Gallagher

Life Master

Carole M. Hamburger
Barbara J. White

Bronze Life Master

Barbara J. White
Judy T. Zucker
Lou M. Zucker

Silver Life Master

Rochelle Lotto
Jill C. Thesman

RubyLife Master

Miriam Harrington

Gold Life Master

John C. Hand
Jeffrey L. Millman
Alan Schneider
Basant B. Shah

Sapphire Life Master

Charles T. Kelley

Platinum Life Master

Steven J. Onderwyzer

New Life Masters
by Mike Marcucci, John Jones, and Tom Lill

[*Editor's note:* we had planned to make this a semi-regular feature, honoring all our District 23 members achieving the coveted Gold Card. Well, with one thing and another, the feature kind of lapsed. We're going to make up for that lapse now.]



Jerry Rose
Calabasas
June 2019



Hanan Mogharbel
Glendora
July 2019



Joyce Roberts
Los Alamitos
January 2020



Dianne Sax
Venice
March 2020



Jojo Sarkar
West Hills
July 2019



Alexander Wiles
West Hills
July 2019



Susan Morse-Lebow
Los Angeles
April 2020



Anton Arbisser
Los Angeles
May 2020



Bernard Seal
Northridge
May 2020



Adam Barron
Glendale
June 2020



Judy Lorber
December 2019
Long Beach



Linda Stuart
San Dimas
December 2019



Timothy Cole
Long Beach
June 2020



John Hagman
Long Beach
July 2020



Ardis Laine
Long Beach
November 2020



David Ochroch
Claremont
December 2020



Marianne Newman
San Gabriel
January 2021



Mike Newman
San Gabriel
January 2021



Tam Lachoff
Beverly Hills
February 2021

We will now acknowledge two players achieving two of the more exalted ranks in our game ...

Basant Shah



My Bridge Story

I was born in Nepal. As an avid card player since my childhood, I came to learn about bridge when I saw four players playing auction bridge in Calcutta, India in 1961. Fascinated with the game, I immediately purchased an introductory bridge book written by Charles Goren and after reading it learned how to count high card points, the values of different cards, and the basics of bidding. By the year 1972 onwards I started playing club and National level bridge matches and won many tournaments organized in Katmandu, Nepal.

I, as an associate professor, started teaching Organic Chemistry in the department of chemistry of Tribhuvan University at Kirtipur, in 1972. I was also very interested in promoting bridge in the country, therefore, joined Kathmandu Bridge Club as vice-president, and with the help of Nepal Bridge Association which was then affiliated to World Bridge Federation, we organized bridge tournaments inside the country, started awarding master point to winners, and also participated in tournaments of neighboring countries.

I was one of the player of six member Men's Nepalese National Bridge Team, we went to play in the "Asia and Middle-East World Zone 4 Bridge Tournament" held in Karachi, Pakistan, in August of 1985. There I had an opportunity to play against world masters like Zia (Pakistan), Jaggy (India), Fritz (Sri Lanka), and other bridge players from Mauritius, Bangladesh and Reunion. Playing two round-robin matches between these seven countries, Nepalese Team had a big achievement in defeating Indian and Sri Lankan team in second-leg. There, I also met Billy Eisenberg, coach of Pakistan National team, who wrote on my autograph-book "Think clearly & be consistent," a tip which I always remember while playing bridge.

After migrating to USA in 1988, I became an ACBL member on 17 May 1989. It did not take me long to become a Life Master but I had a long wait to become a Gold Life Master. In mid-July of this year when I reached the coveted 2500 master point milestone counting masterpoints earned from other

BBO games, but I had to wait since ACBL does not get the total BBO points for July before the end of month. On 26th of July 2021, I was in need for about 0.25 MP from ACBL officially. In a hurry to become GLM, therefore, that day I played in a ACBL Robot game, and with some luck, came in first with a 70% game earning 0.60 MP and achieved my required goal.

I am sincerely thankful to all my bridge friends with whom I played bridge regularly in Valencia Bridge Club and also in Barrington Bridge Club. My special thanks to Jim Perkins, Richard Glikzman, Susan Somogyi, Rebecca Clough and Bryan Conley, who remotely played bridge with me in helping me to achieve GLM during COVID period of 2020 to 2021

Thank you,
Basant Shah, Ph. D.

Steve Onderwyzer went over 10,000 masterpoints and made Platinum Life Master. Here is his story.

I started playing bridge back in the 60s. Early mentors were Bob Scudamore and Don Thimpson both of Bell Labs where we all worked.

I worked at Bell Labs starting in 1963 for 10 years doing research and development work on anti-missile and missile systems such as Nike Zeus and Nike X. Later I worked in a family owned shmata business, Lucie Ann Lingerie, for the next 15 years until we sold it and I retired.

I retired in 1988 and that is when I had more time for tournament bridge. My best early partners were Aram Bedros, Alan LeBendig, Jan Cohen, Leo Bell, Jim Darvey, and Beverly Rosenberg. We had some terrific results winning KOs against teams with Grant Baze, John Mohan, and Mike Passell among others, and playing in the finals of national events.

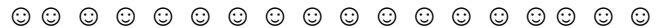
In 1990 I led district 23 (Los Angeles) in master points attained. Also, in the 90s I started playing money bridge at the Cavendish (and later at a private residence), with some terrific players most notably Meyer Schleifer, Jon Wittes, Mitch Dunitz, Bob Hamman, and Dick Ryder. I learned IMP bridge the hard way from them - losing money! When I started, they laughed at me for some of the matchpoint bids and plays I would make. To this day when playing KOs or IMP pairs I tell my partners to play like they are playing rubber bridge for a lot of money. It's not matchpoints.

In 1996 I was informed the Spingold was going to be shown on Okbridge. This was before BBO. I watched it and afterwards started playing most of my bridge online. I found Okbridge more to my life style as I enjoyed being home and being able to play as much paddle tennis, tennis, swimming, sailing and TV sports as I liked. Travelling to tournaments and staying in hotels did not suit me anymore.

Diane and I used to play bridge with Eddie Kantar and Yvonne every Friday night alternating homes for about 15 years. It was a lot of fun and also learned so much from Eddie. What a guy! We also went to several tennis tournaments with them, but always there were a few hours for bridge, sometimes spreading out a blanket on the grass to play.

Three of my best early partners on Okbridge passed away. They were Leslie Dreyfus, Dave Strasberg, and Richard Degan. I never met any of them face to face, but thought of them as good friends. Such is online bridge.

Lately on Okbridge my main partners are Erwin Linzner and Henry Shevitz. The bridge is certainly not the greatest, but it is so convenient for my life style. Okbridge is where I have earned most of my last masterpoints.



Bridge Wisdom from the Pros

If it's possible for the enemy to dig his own grave, lend him a shovel. (Eddie Kantar)

Has there ever been a worthwhile scandal at dominoes or checkers, or a murder of note at chess? Of course not. But there have been scandals galore at bridge, several murders, at least one suicide and a number of divorces. (Victor Mollo)

Players who count points and don't take note of distribution are a menace. (Terrence Reese)

When you can't follow suit, follow color – especially late in the game. (Alfred Sheinwold)

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



The Puzzle Page

Play or Defend? *by John Jones*

Bridge Jeopardy *by John Jones*

Category: 2♦ Opening Bids

North

♠ A 9 8 6 5 2
♥ A 10
♦ A J
♣ 9 5 3

West

♠ Q 4
♥ 8 5 3
♦ Q 9 6 5 2
♣ K 8 4

East

♠ 10 7 3
♥ 7
♦ K 10 8 4 3
♣ Q 10 7 2

South

♠ K J
♥ K Q J 9 6 4 2
♦ 7
♣ A J 6

Contract = 6♥

Opening Lead = ♦5

With both sides able to see all the cards and play perfectly, would you prefer to declare or defend?

And the answer is ...

\$100 – Normally shows a 6-card suit and between 5 and 10 HCP.

\$200 – Shows exactly four spades, five hearts and 11 – 15 HCP.

\$300 – Used in a big club system, this shows 4=4=1=4 shape with 11 – 15 HCP, although 3=4=1=5 shape, 4=3=1=5 shape, and 4=4=0=5 shape are also allowed.

\$400 – Named after a country, this opening bid shows a balanced hand of 18 – 20 HCP.

\$500 – The normal 2♦ opening bid in Europe or Australia, this shows a weak-two bid in either major suit, and is not normally allowed in ACBL pair games.

September 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?”

You should elect to declare. Win ♦A. Play ♠K, ♠A, and third spade ruffing high, setting up the spades. Lead a heart to the ace, collecting East’s heart. Play the fourth round of spades pitching a club. If West ruffs and returns a club, win ♣A, cross to ♥10 collecting West’s last heart and pitch the losing club on the long spade.

Thanks to Julian Pottage and his fabulous book Defend or Declare for this problem.

Solution to “Rebus”

Two Diamond Opening

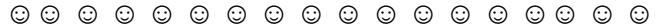
Have a good bridge rebus? Send it to johndjones44@yahoo.com

Bridge Jeopardy Questions

- \$100 – What is a Weak-Two Bid?
- \$200 – What is Flannery?
- \$300 – What is Precision?
- \$400 – What is Mexican?
- \$500 – What is the Multi?



Submitted by John Jones:



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Morris “Mojo” Jones





Southern California Bridge News
Published monthly by ALACBU, Inc.
1800 Avenue of the Stars, 12th Floor,
Los Angeles, CA 90067
Phone: 310-440-4100
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Copy deadlines: the 23rd of the preceding month. Opinions expressed in the Southern California Bridge News are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of ALACBU, Inc., The Bridge News or the Editor. The Bridge News reserves the right to reject material it considers to be in poor taste or deems otherwise unsuitable for publication.

Around the Units in District 23



Long Beach by Lillian Slater

www.acblunit557.org
www.LongBeachBridge.com

Sorry, no news from Long Beach this time.



Pomona – Covina by Tom Lill www.acblunit551.org

Individual: September 4, 9:30 a.m., Claremont
Unit Game: Saturday September 18, 11:00 a.m., Glendora
Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

Due to the lack of a quorum, we had no Board meeting in August. We could really use a fresh face or two on the Board. The work is not onerous, all you have to do is show up an hour before the Unit game and contribute whatever suggestions you might have for improving our Unit. Elections are coming up in October. If you really care about keeping bridge alive in the Inland Empire ... consider joining the Board. Please.

Congratulations are due to Susie Emminger, who took (and of course, passed) the ACBL's Director exam. Now your hard-working Club-Manager-Director-General-Stuckee has some more help available. Thank you, Susie. She will undergo some on-the-job training in the coming weeks, so she will be ready when Your Director (hey, "Our Director" was a march we used to play at football games!) just has to be away.

Sometimes, Directing can give you a warm fuzzy feeling. Not often, to be sure, but here's something I just *have* to share. While Directing last month's Unit game, I received a call. A player (relatively inexperienced, but hey, we all started out with zero masterpoints, remember) stated he had misbid. Away from the table, he admitted he had lost focus; he had intended to pass instead of bidding. I explained the law, and the mistaken call stood. (Fortunately, his partner made the hand.)

Then in the *same round*, a defender pulled the wrong card. I asked her partner, again a relatively inexperienced player, if she *could have seen* – not "did she see" – the card. She admitted she could have. That's a played card, then. And again, virtue did not have to be its own reward: the misplay did not cost a single matchpoint.

In both cases, less so in the first case of course, each player might have gained an advantage by not telling me the strict truth. So, all you experienced hotshots out there, you have a *very* high standard of ethics to live up to, from the example of these two. These players deserve public recognition: Caryn Mason, and Peter Kavounas, thank you, thank you, and thank you!

There are no promotions to report this month. Well, tournaments will be starting up again. Let's hope! (However, see the "New Life Masters section earlier in this issue for a couple of familiar faces ...)

We used to report game winners here. Somehow, this got forgotten with the suspension of face-to-face play. So, from the reopening of our clubs, here's a list of the first place pairs. Sadly, attendance has been kind of slow to regain the pre-pandemic level, but here goes: Clint Lew-Linda Tessier, Bill Papa-Vic Sartor, David Ochroch-Yours Truly, Roger Boyar-Steve Mancini, Fredy and Lulu Minter. The top score in July was a torrid 74% game by Bill and Vic. The Minters have the top August score, 65.64%.

I have some real gems for our Hand-of-the-Month. First off, a little exercise in freak hand bidding. You pick up the first hand of the night, you are the dealer, and you see this collection:

North deals, none vulnerable.

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

Now what? You have several options, as I see it. You could ...

... pass, figuring to walk the dog and maybe get doubled in a making 5-level contract. You only have 12 HCP so it's unlikely the deal will be passed out. Unfortunately, it is also not likely that the other three hands are all flat, so you are too likely to get outbid. *Someone* must have the majors. Let's hope it's not partner who's 6-5 or 6-6 there.

... open 2♣? Well, you *do* have 9½ tricks in your own hand! I would rate that as somewhere between "ridiculous" and "disgusting," since partner – with an ace or two in hand – will almost certainly drive you to some unmakeable slam or other. Uh-uh on this one.

... open some number of diamonds. What? Bid what you actually *have*??? Who came up with *that* crazy notion?

Well, I'm so far around the bend these days, I can't see it any more, so 5♦ is what I called. To my mild surprise, that was passed out.

And partner's hand? Take a look.

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

The opening lead was the ♠Q, they took their two pointed aces, and I racked up my 50% score. How frustrating. Someone did make 12 tricks – don't ask me – but they were not in the slam. The only pair in the slam made the same 11 tricks I did.

And, now for something (not) completely different. Again, you are dealer, at favorable vulnerability, and you find yourself holding another one of those semi-balanced hands:

♠ A K J 10 9 2 ♥ A K 10 9 7 4 ♦ void ♣ 10.

Well, Porcupine, what will it be? 1♠, or 2♣? Two-suited hands can be difficult to describe accurately when you open 2♣, right? (At least, that's what "they've" told me.) So, I opened 1♠, hoping to hear 1NT (forcing) from my center-hand opponent, whereupon I could leap to 4♥. That oughta do it, right?

Nope. There oughta be a *law*. The deal was passed out at 1♠, making 4. Partner's hand:

♠ 4 ♥ void ♦ Q 9 8 5 4 ♣ J 9 8 7 6 4 2.

Actually +170 was not a terrible result. While three other pairs bid to 4♠, only one made 10 tricks. The other two declarers went down 2, one of them doubled. Go figure!

Maybe next month I will feature an interesting 4-4-3-2 hand. Don't hold your breath though!

Quote for the month: "If you want truly to understand something, try to change it." [Kurt Lewin]

Downey – Whittier by Liz Burrell

The dog days of summer were upon us in August; however, our weekly game at Downey-Whittier Bridge Club kept us busy and thankful to be back for F2F games for eleven weeks in a row without any health concerns. We play at a facility which requires everyone who enters the building to show proof of vaccination and to wear masks. These restrictions may be a nuisance but the health and well being of our members is our main priority. We sincerely hope our extra precautions continue to provide a safe environment for all.

On a happier note, several of our members had outstanding games which helped to make August even warmer. Gabrielle Sill and Connie Kang posted a 69.50% game on August 4 and earned 2.81 master points as overall winners for the day. Today (August 25) Mohan Bhakta and ID Patel (ranked in C strat) were first overall with a 58.50% and 2.19 master points. In the "Wonders Never Cease" category, Yours Truly and partner Kent were first at our STaC game on August 18 with a 60.12% game and 1.78 Silver Points.

We still can't seem to get back to pre-Covid numbers although our most loyal members are doing their best to keep us going. (Thank you!) We encourage anyone who is fully vaccinated and who will comply with the necessary mask rules to join us for a good game of bridge every Wednesday at 10:00 am at the Downey Woman's Club. One of our good friends who rarely missed playing at Downey, Ernie Wong, recently reached an amazing milestone: Sapphire Life Master! We send our hearty

congratulations to him and the hope that he will soon be playing again at Downey.

We wish everyone a safe, happy and healthy Labor Day holiday.



Santa Clarita- Antelope Valley by Beth Morrin

Unit 556 has added two new members to our board of directors, Tom Beggane and David Khalieque. We thought we'd introduce them to you, so will include a short biography of Tom this month and David in October.

Tom Beggane is a native New Mexican. He grew up in a small town called Las Cruces. His father worked for White Sands Missile Range. He learned bridge in college.

Tom was introduced to duplicate bridge while stationed in Alamogordo back in the 1980's. A nice lady took him under her wings and became his mentor. However, after about a year of playing duplicate bridge, his job transferred him overseas. It was not an opportunity to pass up--two years in Italy! Unfortunately, life got in the way of bridge and he took a hiatus from bridge that lasted over 40 years.

During a mid-life crisis in the late 90's, he left his job and the Land of Enchantment and moved to Southern CA and began a career with LA County. He retired from LA County in 2017 as HR Director at Olive View Hospital in Sylmar CA. It was only after he retired and the death of his husband that he decided to reacquaint myself with bridge. He was lucky to contact Paula Olivares who patiently reintroduced him to duplicate bridge.

Tom would also like to find a steady partner was honored and privileged that Paula asked him to be on the board. He earnestly hopes that we can keep this great game of bridge alive and thriving.

Virtual Game Schedule (August through November)

Monday:	12:15 PM	Open game
Tuesday:	10:15 AM	599er game (\$5)
	6:15 PM	Open game
Wednesday:	10:15 AM	599er game (\$5)

Thursday:	10:15 AM	Open game
Friday:	12:15 PM	Open game
Sunday:	12:15 PM	599er game
	12:30 PM	Open game

Contact our game manager at virtualclub@bridgemojo.com for reservations. Our games cost \$3 unless it is a special game series.

Winners in Unit 556+ Open MP games:

Mon. July 19		
N/S	Walter Schafer – Ernest Wong	66.30%
E/W	Kristi Kubo – Robot	62.14%
Tues. July 20		
N/S	Amr Elghamry – Dominique Moore	61.31%
E/W	LuLu Minter – Ernest Wong	58.66%
Thurs. July 22		
N/S	Diana Borgatti – Rae Murbach	64.88%
E/W	Lianne Wallister – Avice Osmundson	62.50%
Fri. July 23		
N/S	Ruth Balker – Kathy Flynn	61.59%
E/W	Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky	61.54%
Sun. July 25		
N/S	Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom	60.47%
E/W	Amr Elghamry – Gerard Geremia	61.31%
Mon. July 26		
N/S	Gerard Geremia – Rae Murbach	59.92%
E/W	Ruth Baker – Roy Ladd	62.71%
Tues. July 27		
N/S	Lulu Minter – Ernest Wong	71.53%
E/W	Ruth Baker – Roy Ladd	65.28%
Thurs. July 29		
N/S	David Khalieque – Harry Randhawa	65.46%
E/W	Lulu Minter – Ernest Wong	68.80%
Fri. July 30		
N/S	Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky	69.17%
E/W	Carolyn Cohen – Bill Brodek	64.71%
Sun. Aug. 1		
N/S	Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky	62.78%
E/W	Debra Pride – Pat Larin	63.06%
Mon. Aug. 2		
N/S	Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky	72.49%
E/W	Temo Arjani – Ramesh Sawhney	60.70%
Tues. Aug. 3		
N/S	Lulu Minter – Ernest Wong	60.76%
E/W	Bill Brodek – Robot	65.97%

Thurs. Aug. 5		
N/S	Diana Borgatti – Rae Murbach	66.12%
E/W	Gerard Geremia – Joseph Viola	72.92%
Fri. Aug. 6		
N/S	Gary Zoss – Dwaine Hawley	66.67%
E/W	Carolyn Cohen – Bill Brodek	62.50%
Sun. Aug. 8		
N/S	Stephen Licker – Bud Kalafian	57.94%
E/W	Genise Hasan – Ann McClelland	63.89%
Mon. Aug. 9		
N/S	Sharon Wolf – Steve Shanker	60.44%
E/W	Ruth Baker – Roy Ladd	61.78%
Tues. Aug. 10		
N/S	Kathy Swaine – Rand Pinsky	62.65%
E/W	Amr Elghamry – Dominique Moore	60.49%
Thurs. Aug. 12		
N/S	Gerard Geremia – Joseph Viola	65.30%
E/W	Carolyn Cohen – Dominique Moore	63.41%
Fri. Aug. 13		
N/S	Alan Nurman – Harry Randhawa	60.18%
E/W	Kathy Flynn – Ruth Baker	69.69%
Sun. Aug. 15		
N/S	Stephen Licker – Bud Kalafian	68.55%
E/W	Carolyn Cohen – Cathryn Martin	59.38%
Mon. Aug. 16		
N/S	Thomas Beggane – Robot	64.63%
E/W	Lulu Minter – Ernest Wong	66.67%
Tues. Aug. 17		
N/S	May Abagi – Hani Abraham	64.51%
E/W	Rae Murbach – Joseph Viola	67.90%
Thurs. Aug. 19		
N/S	Lulu Minter – Ernest Wong	60.86%
E/W	Avice Osmundson – Lianne Walliser	61.62%
Fri. Aug. 20		
N/S	Carolyn Cohen – Bill Brodek	65.93%
E/W	Gerard Geremia – Rae Murbach	61.57%
Sun. Aug. 23		
N/S	Farryl Weitzman – Jane Archer	69.44%
E/W	Kathy Flynn – Bob McBroom	61.11%

Winners in Unit 556+ Limited MP games:

Tues. July 20		
	Jerome Paul – Margaret Shifley	70.14%
Wed. July 21		
	Tomoko Stock – David Khalieque	62.78%

Sun. July 25		
	Jerome Paul – Margaret Shifley	62.78%
Tues. July 27		
	Jerome Paul – Margaret Shifley	62.78%
Wed. July 28		
N/S	Maria Verona – Andrei Verona	62.50%
E/W	Kenneth Peyton – Michael Connell	62.50%
Sun. Aug. 1		
N/S	Jerome Paul – Margaret Shifley	61.57%
E/W	Terry Clougherty – Paulette Burkett	65.28%
Tues. Aug. 3		
	Ruth Roe – Linda Dillon	56.48%
Wed. Aug. 4		
N/S	Ruth Roe – Linda Dillon	57.87%
	Suzanne Kuuskmae – Carol Decordova	57.87%
	Pamela Risinger – Robot	57.87%
E/W	Caryn Musicer – Glen Musicer	59.72%
Sun. Aug. 8		
	Carol Trenda – Gary Trenda	56.25%
Tues. Aug.10		
	Michael Perera – Stephen Anderson	67.36%
Wed. Aug. 11		
	Sofi Kasubhai – Robot	61.11%
Sun. Aug. 15		
N/S	Caryn Musicer – Glen Musicer	69.05%
E/W	Susanne Hollis – Suzanne Wilcox	63.49%
Tues. Aug. 17		
N/S	Rebecca Pelissero – Dorcie Glen	59.92%
E/W	Kerry Goldstone – Glen Drogin	57.14%
Wed. Aug. 18		
	Jackie Moor – Harry Randhawa	68.75%
Sun. Aug. 22		
N/S	Claire Hammons – Margaret Keeler	62.04%
E/W	Jerome Paul – Margaret Shifley	64.20%

The Unit 556+ Virtual Bridge Club will continue games on BBO for at least the rest of 2021.

Next Board meeting: TBA, via Zoom.

Pasadena – San Gabriel

by Morris “Mojo” Jones

bridgemojo.com



For August our unit opted to hold two unit games rather than just one, and they’ve proven to be quite popular!

For the game on August 8, we had 12 tables. First overall was partnership of Jack Chang with Zheng Zhang (Jack repeating after winning with Sophia Chang last month).

Our August 22 game was a STaC game, with 11 tables. N/S and E/W top pairs tied with 57.41% games each, and tied for 1/2 overall! Fredy and Lulu Minter took first E/W, and Karen Arase and Gitta Earll took first N/S.

We’ll continue with two pleasant Sunday afternoon unit games in September, on the 12th and 26th. Note that advance reservations and proof of COVID vaccination are required for all unit games. For reservations, contact Miram Harrington at (626) 232-0558 or miratpf@aol.com. Games are held at the Bridge Center in Arcadia at 12:30 p.m.

We’re continuing to hold online games thanks to Paula Olivares and Unit 556 (Santa Clarita). We truly have a “North LA County” Virtual Bridge Club now, including the Santa Clarita, Glendale, Pasadena, Pomona, and Downey units. If you’re not on the email list for Unit 556+PPD games, drop a note to virtualclub@bridgemojo.com.

I’m getting geared up to offer a full schedule of bridge classes this fall, both in-person and online.

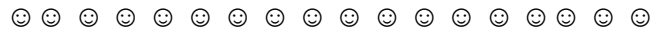
In-person classes will be held through Pasadena City College’s Extension program, and taught at Arcadia High School on Wednesday evenings. *Bridge – Introduction* will start on Sept. 15, and *Bridge - Popular Conventions* will start on October 20.

Online I’ll be offering Audrey Grant’s *2 Over 1 Game Force* class on Sunday afternoons, a *Bridge Basics Refresher* on Monday evenings, and *Competitive Bidding* on Tuesday evenings. Each class lasts about six weeks. All the information can be found at bridgemojo.com.

For November I’ll plan to offer some more classes for advancing players, and perhaps a series of online newcomer duplicate games on Tuesday evenings. Drop me a note if you’d like to receive my email newsletters!

Finally a couple of personal notes: I’ve been elected to the board of the American Bridge Teachers Association as recording secretary.

I challenged myself to try for the ABTA’s prestigious Master Teacher designation. The requirements and interview process are daunting! I had to teach a portion of a class to the panel, answer a collection of difficult bridge problems, and present research on a problem hand that was provided before the interview. In short, I am now an **ABTA Master Teacher**, and it’s one of my proudest accomplishments.



Trivia Time Again!

A “contronym” is a word that can be its own opposite. For example, if you seed your lawn, you add seeds. If you seed a tomato, you remove them.

Citizens of the Soviet Union began celebrating the defeat of Germany in WWII as soon as it was announced. Less than 24 hours later, the country’s entire supply of vodka had been depleted.

The fear that he might conceal a joke in it was one reason that Benjamin Franklin was not entrusted by his peers with the assignment of writing the Declaration of Independence.

Honey is the only food that doesn’t spoil.

The composer John Cage’s *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* (1953) never sounds the same way twice. It is scored for twelve radios tuned at random. [To which we append a quote from Lyndon Baines Johnson: “I may not be an educated man, but I can tell chicken salad from chicken \$#!T.]



Problem Solvers' Panel

Moderator: John Jones

Panelists are: Mark Bartusek, Jeff Goldsmith, Ross Grabel, Daniel Korbel, Rick Roeder, 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.

1

Matchpoints
N-S Vul

South	West	North	East
1♣	4♦	dbl	pass
???			

You, South, hold: ♠KJ1054 ♥void ♦AQ ♣KQ10952

What call do you make?

The preempt makes this hand a headache. One panelist goes low.

Goldsmith: 4♠. Stay fixed.

Several panelists debate the meanings of 5♦ versus 5♠. Is 5♠ a general slam try, or does 5♦ show a diamond control while 5♠ denies a diamond control?

Wittes: 5♦. If partner has two black aces we should be cold for a grand. If partner bids the expected 5♥, I will bid 6♠. I'd like to do more, but with only one black ace and a lot of heart wastage in partner's hand, that will be enough. At this vulnerability, the opponents might bid 7♦. If my right-hand opponent bids it, I will pass, encouraging partner to bid 7♠ with the right hand. If left hand opponent bids 7♦ and partner doubles, I will honor it.

Bartusek: 5♦. This is a massive hand considering that partner should have at least six cards in the black suits (no 6-card 4♥ bid and probably 2 or less diamonds). Thus, cue bidding 5♦ to show first round control followed by a 5♠ call (after partner's presumed 5♥ bid) will show my hand quite well. This should get us to the proper small slam (with chances of reaching a

making grand). A 5♠ bid instead here seems like an underbid considering that partner needs so little for a small slam to make. Note also that a 5♠ call here should be a general slam try instead of placing emphasis on a diamond control.

Grabel: 5♠. It's tempting to bid 5♦. However, I don't think partner should misconstrue 5♠ as asking for a diamond control.

Korbel: 5♠. I don't think this relates to a diamond control since I have no other way to unambiguously show what I'm about.

Shuster: 5♠. Too much for 4♠, but cannot commit to 6♠ when we might belong in clubs. 4-level negative doubles don't promise specific shapes, so this is pretty much a 5-level reverse.

Our local DJ goes high. He gets the added benefit of the opponents occasionally sacrificing when it is wrong.

Roeder: 6♠. Believe it or not, the Village People had songs other than YMCA. Such as Macho Man!

Count me with the 5♦ bidders.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">2</h1> <p>IMPs Both Vul</p>	South	West	North	East
	???	pass	1♣	1♠
	You, South, hold: ♠J54 ♥AK2 ♦10872 ♣KJ10			
	What call do you make?			

Our panelists selected either 2♠ or double. This is a problem from an East coast bidding panel from a couple of decades ago. In addition to 2♠ and double, there were 1NT and 2NT bidders in addition to a wimpy 2♣ bidder on that panel.

Wittes: Double. If partner bids 1NT, I will bid 3NT. If partner bids 2♣, I will bid 2♠. If partner bids 2♥, I will bid 3♣. If that's the auction, hopefully partner will play me for a hand that was too good to support clubs directly.

Grabel: Double. To be followed by a spade ask at next turn. We will probably get too high, but such is life.

Goldsmith: Double. Routine problem for bidding panels.

Jeff is correct that doubles with less than the expected heart length are a normal solution to problems of this ilk. Routine solution? Yes, more or less. A good solution? Let's hear from other panelists.

Shuster: 2♠. It's a lot of bidding with no specific target in mind, but the alternatives are awful. NT is wrong-sided, 2♦ on Txxx would make me vomit, and a negative double without four hearts is worse than either of those.

Bartusek: 2♠. This will make it easy for partner to bid 2NT showing a spade stopper allowing me to bid 3NT. If partner can only return to 3♣ then I doubt we have a game (and I will pass). I've always disliked making negative doubles of 1♠ or 2♠ bids without at least four hearts. The auction always seems to get out of hand or give me an impossible rebid problem. I reject a 2♣ massive underbid and a strange 2♦ call. Admittedly some people might bid a wrong-sided 1NT which could miss a game.

Korbel: 2♠. Easy. I hate three card 1-level negative doubles.

Roeder: 2♠. Least of evils. Those who make a negative double, should listen to the Castaways' one-shot wonder, Liar, Liar. This Moysian will not prove Wonderful, Wonderful most of the Tymes as the tap will come in the wrong hand.

I will admit I might well make a weird 1NT bid here. The hand has a soft spade card and 4333 distribution and isn't worth 12 HCP. 2♠ doesn't solve the problem well, and double is too dangerous for my taste.

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">IMPs Both Vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
			1♦	pass
	1♥	pass	2♦	pass
	3♦	pass	3♠	pass
	???			
	You, South, hold: ♠4 ♥A986 ♦J103 ♣K10754			
	What call do you make?			

Was 3♦ a pushy constructive bid or a blocking bid? It was probably intended as aggressive constructive bid. Now we can try 3NT, 4♣, 4♦, or 5♦.

Goldsmith: 3NT. You thought 3♦ was preemptive; partner thought it was constructive. Oh, well. Maybe you'll make 3NT.

Shuster: 3NT. Partner has expressed concern about the rounded suits, which I have covered. Given spade wastage, 5♦ will be too much. It wouldn't surprise me if 4♦ was the winning action, but it is red at IMPs, so I'm bidding game.

Grabel: 4♣. With a stiff spade I must give some encouragement, but I don't have enough to bid 5♦.

Korbel: 4♦. I didn't raise with the intention of playing 3NT. I could try 5♦, but that seems a bit rich.

Roeder: 4♦. Since there was no Jump (by either the Pointer Sisters or Van Halen) over my 1♥ call, the low road is indicated.

Wittes: 5♦. Partner may be asking me to bid 3NT with a club stopper, but with this distribution, 5♦ seems a more likely game. If partner has the ♦AKQxxx and the ♠A, I will apologize. If diamonds are not solid, they may have five tricks in NT before we make our nine.

Bartusek: 5♦. Partner's game try should either be showing very little in spades (no NT bid) or specifically the ♠A with poor diamonds (requiring a spade stopper from me for 3NT). Thus, our hands should fit well and 5♦ should be a viable contract. Additionally, partner has denied three hearts (and probably has at least two clubs) which fits my hand quite well. Basically, I have perfect cards on this auction. *Would it be more perfect with the ♣A instead of the ♣K?*

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">4</h1> <p>IMP Pairs Both Vul</p>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>
	???		1♥	2♣
	You, South, hold: ♠KJ9763 ♥K42 ♦2 ♣1093 What call do you make?			

The upside to this hand is the possibility of having a spade fit along with the heart fit. The downside that it's not easy to get the spades in the picture without overbidding.

Bartusek: 2♥. I don't see the problem and I look forward to hearing from the others explaining the issue. My three small clubs is the worst holding I could have on this auction. It's okay to have a maximum for your bid. Sure, we might have a double fit which makes game, but I'm not going to distort my bidding to cater to it when it's more likely that we have a misfit when partner has diamond length.

Grabel: 2♥. That's enough for now.

Roeder: 2♥. A tripleton in the overcaller's suit is ALWAYS a turn off. Cue Chubby Checker's Limbo Rock and see how low you can go.

Shuster: 2♥. T9x in clubs is terrifying. Maybe if spades is right we will get another chance to find it, meanwhile, 2♥ is accurate with regard to my enthusiasm for hearts.

Goldsmith: 2♥. You really meant partner to open 1♣ in a weak NT context, right? Then you have a bidding problem. East bids 2♦ and you have a rough decision.

Wittes: 2♥. If partner has a spade fit, this hand may be worth more. Without a spade fit, 2♥ is plenty.

Korbel: 2♣. Good problem. I kind of want to introduce my spades in case of a big double fit. We can still get out in 3♥ or 3♠.

This is a Michael Kamil problem which he posted on Facebook. His respondents had a greater variety of bids that were chosen. 2♥ was their plurality call, but negative double, 2♠, 3♣, 3♥ and a twisted fitted-jump 3♠ bid all were suggested. Kamil had the problem at the table and selected 3♣. Many panelists showed example hands with minimum values such as ♠xx ♥AQxxxx ♦Axx ♣xx that make 4♥ a reasonable contract. The negative doublers will be well placed if partner rebids 2♠ or any number of hearts, but will not easily be able to show their hand over a 2♦ rebid.

<h1 style="font-size: 4em;">5</h1> <p>Matchpoints N-S Vul.</p>	South	West	North	East
	1♦	1♥	1♣	pass
	???		1♠	pass
<p>You, South, hold: ♠Q ♥Q842 ♦A97643 ♣A8</p> <p>What call do you make?</p>				

The heart overcall has made this hand even tougher than it started. Several try 2NT, some wanting to go high and bid 3NT.

Roeder: 2NT. If I had the ♥9 of instead of the ♥8, I would use the extra fuel provided by Wilson Pickett's Engine Number 9 and bid 3NT in this form of scoring.

Bartusek: 2NT. Obviously I had originally intended to treat this as a game-force by reversing into hearts. Now with a known misfit and the heart length behind me game seems unlikely unless partner likes their hand. Sure, I probably guarantee a second spade for this auction, but 2NT seems like the least of evils here. This also allows partner to pattern out at the 3-level if they wish. Reaching 3NT, 5♣, or 5♦ is still possible.

Grabel: 2NT. While I would prefer to play from partner's side if 3NT becomes the final contract, this may be a misfit and I'm unwilling to force to game, especially at match points.

Korbel: 2NT. I like to play support doubles in this auction, so I'm not too worried about having a big diamond fit. Partner can always bid 3♦ if he has a singleton heart and we may wriggle out of notrump that way.

Wittes: 2NT. I have the high cards for this bid, but this hand has flaws. I have a good card in each of partner's suits, but no real fit, and I have only a tenuous heart stopper.

Some panelists go low.

Shuster: 1NT. No alternative is even slightly attractive. Maybe I've played too much Walsh, but I question the 1♦ response. For what it's worth, 1♥ would have made it *easier* to reach a diamond contract opposite a balanced hand.

Goldsmith: 2♦. I want my plus score.