



THE DECLARER



Fall 2018

Volume 61 Issue 3

Peter Wright, Editor

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THE DECLARER

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NEW TROPHY!

The NJBL is inaugurating a new trophy to be presented to the winners of the Flight A Double Knockout winners.

Anyone interested in sponsoring this trophy, in honor of someone or as a memorial to someone who has passed away, is asked to contact **Arnie Kohn**.

Phone: 609-3295-8319

Email: akohn71138@aol.com

We take special note
of the 2018 passing of

Len Myers

Len served for six years on the NJBL Board and was, at the time of his death this year, serving at the Recorder for Unit 140.

He had several wins in regional tournaments and twice represented District 3 in North American Pairs, Flight B, reaching the finals both times.



New Jersey Bridge League HOLIDAY SECTIONAL December 7-9, 2018



Hungarian-American Citizens Club
95 Port Reading Avenue, Woodbridge, NJ 07095
Playing site phone: 732-634-9697
Tournament Chair: Arnie Kohn at 732-216-5579

Friday, Dec 7

10:00 AM: ● Open Stratified Pairs ● Stratified 299er Pairs
2:30 PM: ● Open GRASSROOT Stratified Pairs ● GRASSROOT 299er Stratified Pairs

Saturday, Dec 8

10:00 AM: ● Open Stratified Pairs ● Stratified 299er Pairs
● Youth Bridge (19 & under, 0-50 MP's) – Trophies for Winners; Free Entries
For further info, contact Barbara Clark at 973-736-1969
2:30 PM: ● A/X (X=0-4000) GRASSROOT Match Points (open to all)
● B/C/D GRASSROOT Match Point Pairs (3000/2000/1000)
● Stratified 299ers GRASSROOT Pairs

Sunday, Dec 9

9:30 AM: ● Light breakfast
10:30 AM: ● Seven-round Bracketed Round Robin Teams: Team average master points will determine your bracket, or your team may play in the top (Swiss) bracket by choice. We will have a short break in mid-afternoon for a complimentary lunch with bagels, rye breads, spreads, salads, and hummus.

Stratifications: Open Pairs A (3000+) B (1000-3000) C (0-1000)
299ers Pairs A (200-300) B (100-200) C (0-100) (May be varied based on participation.)

In pair events, strats will be based as an average of the total master points of the pair. In any event or flight with a master point upper limit, no individual's MP total may exceed that limit.

GRASSROOT Games: Almost 30% More Masterpoints

Guaranteed Partnerships: We guarantee partners for you in both the Open and 0-300 games for all Friday and Saturday sessions. You **MUST** request a partner by Tuesday, December 4th, to be guaranteed a partner. Email your request to George Browne at brownege4111@gmail.com or call him at 973-819-0308. In addition, please contact George if you have questions about the tournament or need help putting together a team.

Food: Between sessions Friday and Saturday, we will serve pizza for \$1/slice (cheese) or \$1.50/slice (with a topping), small salads for \$1/each and cans of soda for \$1/each. Sunday's complimentary food includes our light breakfast, mid-afternoon lunch, and snacks throughout the day.

NJBL Website: Visit our website www.njbl.net to read about upcoming tournaments and events, past results, bridge clubs, the DECLARER (NJBL's online newsletter), and many other useful bridge links.

Entries: \$28/pair Friday & Saturday; \$112/team Sunday. We must charge an extra \$3/person for those who are not current ACBL members.

DIRECTIONS

From NJ Turnpike Exit 12: At the tollbooth, bear to the extreme right, and keep bearing to the EXTREME right at the ramp, following the signs to RAHWAY. The off ramp will put you on Roosevelt Ave. You will pass a Holiday Inn on your right. The third traffic light (about ¾ mile) is Blair Road (BP station on the SE corner). Left onto Blair Road and proceed past the first traffic light, staying on Blair Road into the Industrial Park. After about ¾ of a mile from the light, the road narrows, and you will cross a freight RR track. Shortly thereafter, the road curves right. Stay to the extreme right, which is Port Reading Ave, go another two blocks, and turn right into the parking lot.

From other routes: NJ TPK Exit 11, Southbound GSP exit 129, Northbound GSP Exit 127, follow to Route 9 North. Once on Route 9, take Main St. Woodbridge Exit (Route 514). Turn right and go 1 mile to railroad overpass. Look for monument. Turn left BEFORE monument and continue on route 514 East. Go to second traffic light and turn right onto Port Reading Ave. Club is ¼ mile on left.

From 287: Stay southbound, past exit 1 and NJ Tpk exit, and take the Route 9 North exit. Once on Route 9, take the Main St. Woodbridge Exit, and proceed as above.

BIG GAMES

(must have 5 tables to qualify)

June – July – August - September

OPEN		
76.79%	Arline Fulton / Sharon Gross	Manasquan
76.67%	Harold Schacter / Mark Savedoff	Toms River
76.25%	Cleo Guastella / Rochelle Djmal	Toms River
75.99%	Kim Feddersen / Vijay Bhise	Essex
74.78%	William Esberg / Richard Ross	Jersey
74.21%	Helen Nugent / Ellen Hyslop	Spring Lake
74.20%	William Hait / Sharon Hait	Essex
74.07%	William Esberg / Muffie Gur	Jersey
73.81%	Bob Warendorf / Richard Goldman	Bay Head
73.81%	Muffie Gur / Reha Gur	Kjersey
73.67%	Flora Tawil / Renee Sutton	Deal
73.38%	William Hait / Sharon Hait	Essex
73.23%	Richard Levendusky / Helen Nugent	Manasquan
72.45%	Judy Rothstein / Piotr Olszewski	Essex
72.45%	Vijay Bhise / Kim Feddersen	Essex
72.35%	Karen Chera / Renee Dondero	Jersey
72.32%	Barbara Aukstikalis / Tony Aukstikalis	Stafford
72.30%	Kirsten Deutsche / Zenon Komar	Murray Hill
72.24%	Piotr Olszewski / Dottie Koernig	Murray Hill
71.97%	Rachel Mouhadeb / Linda Khezrie	Deal
71.85%	Richard Levendusky / Mary Ann Wagner	Spring Lake
71.76%	Barry Salka / George Moehring	Monroe
71.67%	Harold Schacter / Mark Savedoff	Manasquan
71.66%	Harold Schachter / Anthony Cafaro	Toms River
71.45%	Harold Schacter / Mark Savedoff	Manasquan
71.25%	Donna Dulet / Stephen Arshan	Jersey
71.11%	Alice Welt / Howard Welt	Spring Lake
71.10%	Harold Schacter / Mark Savedoff	Toms River
71.08%	Rochelle Imhoff / Robert Imhoff	Shrine
71.06%	James Di Napoli / Mark Savedoff	Stafford
70.85%	David Hoffner / Karen Hoffner	Stafford
70.83%	Sharon Hait / William Hait	Essex
70.83%	Richard Levendusky / Mary Ann Wagner	Spring Lake
70.83%	Donald Prior / Richard Levendusky	Manasquan
70.75%	Terrence Havican / Roberta Satin	Shrine
70.75%	Muffie Gur / Donna Dulet	Jersey
70.60%	Lisa Pheney / Edith Koenig	Four Seasons
70.56%	Joyce Betesh / Elaine Aizer	Deal
70.54%	David Hoffner / Karen Hoffner	Stafford
70.51%	Susan Schwartz / Andrew Barlow	Shadowfax
70.51%	Sharon Hait / Lester Sokolower	Essex
70.50%	Harold Schacter / Mark Savedoff	Toms River
70.48%	Thomas Griffith / Sandra Krietzberg	Toms River
LIMITED / INVITATIONAL		
80.50%	Harold Schacter / Mark Savedoff	Lakewood
79.17%	Marvin Pincus / Ellen Ostrovsky	Essex
77.78%	Mitch Cohen / Susan Lippa	Essex
76.89%	Jack Wind / Lona Whitmarsh	Essex

LIMITED / INVITATIONAL (cont'd)		
76.79%	Lona Whitmarsh / Jack Wind	Essex
76.19%	Leslie Degeorges / Nancy Whipple	Essex
75.97%	Herb Shulman / Marc Weil	Jersey
75.87%	Brenda Cohen / Meryl Pfeiffer	Essex
75.00%	Kirby Kanarek / Gayle Sommer	Essex
75.00%	Carol Press / Terry Honigfeld	Essex
74.40%	Mary Ann Moore / Irene Madden	Essex
73.84%	Tracey Moreno / Ellen Hall	Spring Lake
73.71%	Eddie Kaplan / Norman Friedman	Essex
73.70%	John Gimblette / Kim Gimblette	Jersey
73.21%	Barry Isaacs / Maureen McGreal	Essex
73.14%	Alan Zbik / Norm Kersh	Westlake
73.14%	Marge Levy / Lynn Marsh	Princeton
73.12%	Sharon Glauberg / Peggy Fitzpatrick	Essex
72.91%	Herb Shulman / Marc Weil	Jersey
72.32%	Eliana Lomnitz / Sue Gottlieb	Essex
72.22%	Cynthia Hopkins / Carolyn Parr	Essex
72.02%	Lesley Miller / Gwen Coleman	Essex
72.02%	Marty Ginsberg / Ruth Ginsberg	Essex
72.02%	Lissa Anderson / Joan Frey	Essex
72.02%	Mavda Kale / Marty Kale	Essex
72.02%	Kirby Kanarek / Gayle Sommer	Essex
71.99%	Ilene Cowen / Robert Cowen	Essex
71.67%	Suzanne Manelski / Laurie Smith	Rumson
71.60%	Jacqueline Saba / Barbara Rockel	Princeton
71.53%	David Moshenberg / Orly Moshenberg	Jersey
71.43%	Paul Lieberman / Herbert Goldfarb	Essex
71.43%	Howard Wolfish / Sean Manna	Essex
71.43%	Herb Waldman / SallyuSohigian	Essex
71.39%	Julie Bernhardt / James Francoeur	Essex
71.30%	Don Edwardsz / Jeff Block	Essex
71.18%	Betty King / Bob King	Westlake
70.98%	Debra Shelkowitz / Sonia D'Italia	Essex
70.94%	Herb Shulman / Marc Weil	Jersey
70.91%	Eileen Rosen / Cindy Dratch	Essex
70.79%	John Gimblette / Richard Levendusky	Lakewood
70.73%	Ron Ilan / Dale Karo	Essex
70.71%	Tabby Cochran / Norma Adams	Shadowfax
70.61%	Justine Robertson / Sheila McCrossin	Rumson
70.60%	Edith Koenig / Lisa Pheney	Lakewood
70.45%	Marvin Wertheimer / Jeff Fass	Essex
70.42%	Harold Schacter / Mark Savedoff	Lakewood
70.37%	Thomas Hennessy / Stanley Dziekonski	Princeton
70.35%	Norman Friedman / Pat Kay	Essex
70.35%	Barbara Romann / Phyllis Kessler	Essex
70.24%	Rita Ziegler / Bruno Verducci	Montclair Golf
70.17%	Edith Koenig / Lisa Pheney	Lakewood
70.03%	Christine Hetzler / Justine Robertson	Rumson
70.00%	Cathy Walsh / Beth Nelson	Spring Lake

ADVANCED BLACKWOOD BIDDING

by Brett Kunin

For Intermediate and Advancing Players

Playing at the club this month, an interesting hand arose. As E-W, my partner and I observed the following auction:

North	East	South	West
1♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣ ¹	Pass	5NT	Pass
6♣ ²	Pass	6NT	All Pass

- 1 Roman Key-Card Blackwood, 0 or 3 keycards
- 2 Explained as showing 0 Kings (most flight A players would have responded 6♥ to show this)

I led a spade, and an amazing dummy (North) hit the table:

♠ A5
♥ AQJ9842
♦ 85
♣ A2

Although 6NT was a very good score at the club, I was astonished that no pair reached the cold grand slam. Although I may not approve of the auction, there are certain implications that should have enabled North to bid the grand. Once partner bid 4NT, he **guaranteed** that he held at least 19 HCPs. When he bid 5NT, he promised **all the key cards** (i.e., the remaining

♦A, the ♥K, and at least 12 other HCP). Therefore, even if partner is missing a side King, he must hold the ♠Q, the ♦AQ, the ♥K, and two of the three other Kings.

With the North hand, you can now make the following assumptions: (1) since you would have opened 1♥ even with one Ace fewer than you actually hold, you know you have **nine tricks** for partner; and (2) partner cannot have bid 5NT without knowing the partnership holds all of the Aces and the ♥K.

Therefore, after 5NT, the appropriate bid is 7♥ (!!), because you have a running suit (remember, when you opened, you promised only five Hearts) and nine sure tricks for partner. Partner can correct to 7NT, if he wants, but either contract makes 13 tricks. Declarer's hand was:

♠ KQJ3
♥ K73
♦ AKJ
♣ Q76

Remember: don't be woodenly bound by an auction. With such significant extras, it is the burden of the Blackwood responder to bid the grand.

KOHN'S KORNER

by Arnie Kohn

Card Combinations

Many times, during a session of bridge, different card combinations will occur. Let us assume for our discussion that we are playing at No Trump, and we have entries to either hand.

With this combination,

Dummy
QJx

Declarer
Axxx

anyone can make two tricks, but, **your** mission is to make **three** tricks. Lead a small card from your hand (you may have to do this twice) toward the QJx. Anytime the King

sits before the QJx in dummy, you will make three tricks in the suit. You may note that if the suit divides 3-3, you also make three tricks, but the odds are that the suit will divide 4-2.

Another combination is

Dummy
Jx

Declarer
AKxx

and you need **three** tricks in the suit. Lead small toward the Jx. If the Queen sits before the Jack, you have accomplished your mission.

REMEMBRANCES

The Board of Directors of the New Jersey Bridge League offer their condolences to the family and friends of the following members of ACBL Unit 140. They will be missed at our bridge tables. We would like to remember all who support and participate in this great game. Please notify Kelly Kiefer at Paul.Kiefer619@gmail.com of any deaths within our membership, and indicate, when known, dates of passing and club(s) attended.

Mary Browne
d. July 20, 2018, 2018

Frequent player at Essex Bridge Center

Tom Komline
d. July 15, 2018

Frequent player at Bridgewater

Len Myers
d. July 15, 2018

Frequent player at Hillsboro and BCCNJ

Marge Grossbarth
d. September 28, 2018

Frequent player at Shrine Center

PLAYER of the YEAR RACE

Standings by Range as of October 1, 2018

Player of the Year Masterpoints are those earned in Unit 140-sponsored events only. These comprise the annual Awards Brunch game, the four sectional tournaments held each year, the Autumnfest Newpicate and Autumnfest Charity Swiss events, and the Double Knockout team matches.

Player of the Year standings format has caught up with modern times and no longer lists separate categories for men and women. It is now consistent with the listings for Mini-McKenney and Ace of Clubs standings.

Masterpoint range	0 - 50	Chantel Frantzen	Princeton	10.87
		Robert Frantzen	Princeton	10.87
50 - 100		Jay Fisher	Florham Park	7.41
		Jared Schuller	Hillsborough	4.67
		Debbie Schneider	Livingston	4.28
		Susan Harden	Summit	3.51
100 - 300		Lewis Lefkowitz	Edison	12.55
		Pramod Khanna	East Windsor	12.47
		Edward Fisher	Manalapan	8.71
		Piotr Oleszewski	Hackettstown	26.47
300 - 1000		Jacqueline Hewlett	Bridgewater	23.88
		Michael Hewlett	Bridgewater	23.88
		Ruth Yeselson	Highland Park	31.48
		Arnold Dorin	Manalapan	27.70
1000 - 2500		Dorothy Koenig	Summit	27.11
		Jiang Gu	Mountain Lakes	80.54
Unlimited		Arnold Kohn	Monroe Township	51.20
		Dori Byrnes	Morris Plains	34.75

MASTERPOINT RACES

Top Three Leaders as of October 6, 2018

Mini-McKenney medallions are awarded to the players in each Unit, one per ranking level, who earn the **most total master points** during the previous year. All points of any color and source are counted. **Ace of Clubs** certificates are awarded to the players in each Unit, one per ranking level, who earn **the most master points in club games** during the calendar year. Only black points are counted; points earned in STaCs and other special games paying "pigmented" points don't count. The awards are not mutually exclusive; it's possible to win either or both in the same year. The level you compete in is the one within which you started the year.

MINI-McKENNEY

ACE OF CLUBS

Masterpoint range

0 – 5	Julie Bernhardt	Nutley	21.36	Julie Bernhardt	Nutley	18.19
	Ricardo Serrano	Belleville	9.57	William Heller	Farmingdale	6.95
	<u>Gregory Gauthier</u>	Princeton	7.60	<u>Adam Seyhan</u>	Farmingdale	6.95
5 – 20	Stephen Hopkins	Montclair	21.08	Stephen Hopkins	Montclair	20.66
	Rise Meyers	Jersey City	19.04	Victor Silverstein	Princeton	16.19
	<u>Victor Silverstein</u>	Princeton	16.19	<u>Rise Meyers</u>	Jersey City	13.98
20 – 50	Lawrence Harte	Livingston	32.75	Graham Oakes	Montclair	21.58
	Robert Frantzen	Princeton	27.43	Lawrence Harte	Livingston	20.00
	<u>Chantal Frantzen</u>	Princeton	27.43	<u>Alan Jacobs</u>	Short Hills	16.86
50 – 100	Tony Gribin	Ocean	31.43	Sheila Holderness	Montville	27.22
	James Francoeur	Maplewood	30.86	Esther Eisenberg	Holmdel	20.22
	<u>Sheila Holderness</u>	Montville	27.22	<u>Timothy Corey</u>	Spring Lake	17.56
100 – 200	Eric Sonenblum	Monroe Township	41.95	Chris Schwinger	Rockaway	37.01
	Chris Schwinger	Rockaway	39.84	Martin Eisenberg	Holmdel	29.09
	<u>Charles Tomlinson</u>	Princeton	38.55	<u>Loretta Standing</u>	Chatham	26.10
200 – 300	Narayanan Sanker	Jersey City	62.13	Ira Tarnow	West Orange	31.74
	Ira Tarnow	West Orange	54.80	John Shotliff	Tinton Falls	31.35
	<u>Edward Fisher</u>	Manalapan	53.55	<u>Marcia Michaels</u>	Montville	27.97
300 – 500	David Weil	New Vernon	73.50	Bruce Williams	Oceanport	31.16
	Charles Dvorkin	Manalapan	65.43	Joseph Wright	Westfield	28.73
	<u>Joseph Wright</u>	Westfield	62.24	<u>Charles Dvorkin</u>	Manalapan	28.15
500 – 1000	Piotr Olszewski	Hackettstown	252.61	Piotr Olszewski	Hackettstown	139.48
	Foster Osborne	Summit	116.48	Chung-Zong Wan	Somerset	49.98
	<u>Chung-Zong Wan</u>	Somerset	92.08	<u>Stephanie Austin</u>	West Caldwell	49.80
1000 – 1500	Martin Singer	Verona	142.60	Martin Singer	Verona	71.57
	Ashok Agarwala	Edison	101.42	Barbara Codispoti	Mount Arlington	50.97
	<u>Mark Savedoff</u>	Lakewood	70.20	<u>Mark Savedoff</u>	Lakewood	49.90
1500 – 2500	Wendy Lee	East Hanover	173.74	Michael Rosen	Freehold	102.57
	Neil Jaffe	Belle Mead	128.31	Summer Freedman	Short Hills	73.65
	<u>Chorng-Hour Yang</u>	Parsippany	108.11	<u>Wendy Lee</u>	East Hanover	70.80
2500 – 3500	Stephen Cooper	Belle Mead	196.75	Stephen Cooper	Belle Mead	87.85
	Nat Zucker	Monroe Township	151.14	Elyse Menashe	Deal	62.59
	<u>Julia Zucker</u>	Monroe Township	137.83	<u>Elizabeth Evans</u>	Mountainside	60.33
3500 – 5,000	Joan Brody	Livingston	238.00	E Freeman Bunn	Chatham	130.51
	E Freeman Bunn	Chatham	162.35	Dave DuBois	Westfield	84.06
	<u>Donna Dulet</u>	Ocean	122.21	<u>Joan Brody</u>	Livingston	83.54
5000 – 7500	Peter Stein	Hillsborough	202.28	Judy Rothstein	Livingston	138.55
	Dori Burnes	Morris Plains	195.52	Bruce Witzel	Scotch Plains	73.52
	<u>Judy Rothstein</u>	Livingston	164.43	<u>Dori Byrnes</u>	Morris Plains	71.07
7500 – 10,000	Jiang Gu	Mountain Lakes	371.69	Abe Pineles	Jackson	97.24
	Dennis Thompson	Lake Hiawatha	251.72	Dennis Thompson	Lake Hiawatha	64.08
	<u>Abe Pineles</u>	Jackson	187.98	<u>Cheryl Angel</u>	Livingston	55.45
10,000+	Alexander Allen	Annandale	202.29	William Esberg	Long Branch	40.24
	William Esberg	Long Branch	84.56	Lester Sokolower	Verona	39.54
	Lester Sokolower	Verona	40.74	Alexander Allen	Annandale	36.72

ROUGH WATERS vs CALM SEAS

by Francis Gupta

To Open Or To Pass

[Author's note: With respect to skill, expertise, and experience, bridge players come in a wide assortment. Yet bridge can be enjoyed by all. But for those of us who wonder how players in the "rough waters" (Open section) evaluate and bid hands versus players in the "calm seas" (Non-Life Masters section), this column tries to shed some light. The objective here is to illustrate the value various bridge conventions bring to competitive bidding for players at all levels.]

In reviewing the results of a duplicate bridge game played at the Princeton Bridge Center, it was surprising to see a board passed out at 3 of 15 tables in the Non-Life Masters (NLM) section, while it was played at all 12 tables in the Open. This suggests that Open pairs are more aggressive in their bidding. The hand illustrates the differences in competitive bidding between the rough waters and the calm seas.

		<u>North</u>	
Dealer: West		♠ 8652	
Vul: All		♥ KQ32	
		♦ K4	
		♣ K102	
		<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
		♠ AQ4	♠ J9
		♥ 1087	♥ A964
		♦ Q96	♦ J102
		♣ J983	♣ AQ76
		<u>South</u>	
		♠ K1073	
		♥ J5	
		♦ A8753	
		♣ 54	

Though none of the hands is particularly strong or exciting (which is to be expected for a board passed out at some tables), E-W have a small HCP advantage, with a total of 21; N-S have the remaining 19. All the hands are balanced (containing no singletons). South holds a not-very-attractive 5-card Diamond suit, but none of the remaining hands can add points for length. N-S have an 8-card Spade fit and E-W have an 8-card Club fit. The higher-ranking suit gives N-S a slight advantage in competitive bidding.

The fits in Clubs and Spades suggest that we should expect to see part score contracts in those suits, though no game bids. However, there are a couple of partial game contracts in both directions. N-S will probably make 2♠; E-W will probably make either 2♣ or 2NT, the latter producing the par score on this board.

So how did this board play out at the club game? The table below presents all the contracts for this board and the frequency of the contracts in the Open and NLM sections.

Contract	Declarer	Number of Contracts	
		Rough Waters [Open]	Calm Seas [NLM]
1♠	South	-	2
1NT	West	6	4
2♣	East	-	2
2♦	South	2	2
2♥	East	-	1
3♣	East	3	1
3♠	North	1	-
Passed Out		-	3
# of Tables		12	15

Note: Thanks to David & Liz Hagen for sharing the travelers for this board.

Since in reality players are not all-knowing, this hand produced a variety of bidding results, ranging from All-Pass to as high as 3♠. Anyone familiar with bidding conventions can indulge in the exercise of hypothesizing the bidding processes that generated these contracts.

It is easy to imagine the bidding process for the three tables in the NLM section that passed out this board. Since the E-W hands rate to make 2NT, this result was very favorable to the N-S pairs.

At the remaining 24 tables, somebody opened the bidding. The most likely opener on this board should have been East, holding 12 HCP. But it wouldn't be surprising if North, holding four cards in both the majors and hoping to find a fit in one of them, opened the bidding light in 2nd seat with only 11 HCP. The 1♠ contracts that were played by South at two NLM tables attest to this fact. Most likely the bidding went as follows:

W	N	E	S
Pass	1♣ ¹	Pass ²	1♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

¹ Longer minor

² Wait-and-see approach, because holding a 4-card Club suit

If the bidding did go that way, then after South bid 1♠, East should have doubled to show four Hearts and an opening

[continued next page]

ROUGH WATERS vs CALM SEAS

To Open Or To Pass

[concluded]

hand. West could then have bid 1NT, showing a spade stopper. By allowing N-S to steal the contract at 1♠, East rewarded North's aggressiveness, giving away a board that belonged to E-W. As expected, both 1♠ declarers made eight tricks for a plus score of 110.

By far the most popular contract was 1NT, played at 10 of the 27 tables and in every instance by West. Perhaps the bidding went as described above and East found a double, leading West to bid 1NT. Or perhaps North did not open light in 2nd seat, and the bidding went like this:

W	N	E	S
Pass	Pass	1♣ ¹	Pass
INT	Pass	Pass	

¹ Longer minor

This is a "most reasonable" bidding sequence for the board. The 1NT response to a minor opening by a passed hand is a shut-out bid (unless the minor suit opener has game-going values). And because 1NT is so difficult to play correctly, it is commonly referred to as the "dreadful 1NT" contract. That is one reason why opponents don't like overcalling after a 1NT bid. But, if 1NT is difficult for declarer to play, it is even more difficult to defend against properly. Indeed, at two of the 10 tables where this board was played by West in 1NT, it went down one trick for a N-S score of 100. Seven tricks were made at one table for a sub-optimal E-W score of 90. Eight tricks were made at three tables for the optimal E-W score of 120. Finally, nine tricks were made at four tables, for an E-W gift score of 150. Go figure!

The 2♣, 3♣ and 3♠ contracts can also be explained by a "most reasonable" sequence in which West, instead of responding 1NT, raised partner's Club suit. (A response to 1♣ needs **five** Clubs, since partner might have opened with only **three**.) The 2♣ bid was passed out at two tables in the NLM section. At three tables in the Open and one table in the NLM section, N-S pushed E-W to 3♣. This was most likely the result of North's doubling after the 2♣ bid,

forcing South to bid 2♠. At one of the tables in the Open, N-S did not allow opponents to play this board in 3♣, preferring instead to play in 3♠. Here is a bidding process that might have generated these contracts:

W	N	E	S
Pass	Pass	1♣ ¹	Pass
2♣ ²	Dbl ³	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Pass or 3♣ ⁴	Pass
Pass	Pass or 3♠ ⁵	Pass	Pass
Pass			

¹ Longer minor

² Support for Clubs

³ Hoping to find a Spade or Heart fit

⁴ Not allowing opponents to play in 2♠

⁵ Not allowing opponents to play in 3♣

Once E-W bid a makeable 2♣, it was competitive on the part of N-S to bid 2♠ which, as we learnt earlier, is also makeable. This is exactly why 2♣ by West is an inferior bid to 1NT. Once N-S found their Spade fit at the 2-level, E-W was going to have to compete by bidding on to 2NT or 3♣. At this stage of the bidding, all the E-W pairs preferred the 3-level contract in Clubs (going down one) rather than 2NT, the makeable contract. Note that, even though 2NT is the optimal contract, no E-W pair bid it or was allowed to play there if they did. However, if West had responded with a bid of 1NT instead of supporting clubs, it is very likely that N-S would have allowed E-W to play the "dreadful 1NT." By not bidding 1NT and responding 2♣, West allowed N-S to enter the auction, thereby, missing out on getting their optimal par score of 120 with a 1NT bid that makes two.

Needless to say, the 3♠ bid over a 3♣ sacrificial bid, was perhaps a tad bit aggressive.

Takeaway: Always open a 12 -point hand, especially in 3rd seat, and do not fear the "dreadful 1NT" bid. Opponents dislike defending against this contract even more than declarers dislike playing it.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

In the Heights

In its infinite wisdom, the ACBL has created a slew of categories to rank its players by **Mps** (read **Master points**, not matchpoints). Untinted designations march upward from Rookie to Life Master. Above that level begins a dreamcoat of rainbow-hued pigeonholes in which players get stuffed, stuck, or enthroned, depending on how you view the rankings.

A mere five current Unit 140 players have reached the exalted 10,000+ **Mps** level of **Platinum** and **Grand Life Master**, those in the latter having also won an ACBL national event:

Alexander Allen	Platinum Life Master
William Esberg	Grand Life Master
Jiang Gu	Grand Life Master
Lester Sokolower	Platinum Life Master
Barbara Tepper	Platinum Life Master

Rankings are not infallible guides to Bridge smarts. As we all know, there are some Club Masters who, on a given day, have the potential to knock the socks off a few of those who have attained, say, Bronze stature, but if we're talking, say, Diamond level, a member of the Sectional species is typically over-matched. Even so, on a given hand, a Junior Master pair can hope to have the satisfaction of going plus against a pair of experts who bid a great game contract that makes 364 times in a year, but not on *this* particular day.

The Rookies among us start with fractional **Mps**. Club and Sectional Masters break into the 2-digit range, and if we can sport 3 digits' worth, we're up to at least the Regional level. A major goal for many is Life Master, for which we must earn not only 500 but also satisfy a menu of multi-colored distributional **Mps**.

Thereafter, we can fold up our convention cards or else aspire beyond Life Master to further points and an entire spectrum of pigments. Some can eventually boast of four digits, **Mp**-wise. But after that, the slogging gets mighty tough.

To reach the El Dorado of the 5-digit **Mps** plateau, you gotta be Napoleons at Bridge wars. Think of it: 10,000+ smackeroos, when most of us generally have to settle for 0.37 **Mps** for coming in 5th out of 15 at the local club, and we don't even have another game scheduled until next month. Maybe if we lived for 10,000+ years . . . but do we really want to deal with all the new conventions that will have been invented by the year 12333? Nope, better to pack it in at Bronze or Silver and check out in somewhat less than 10 millennia.

And yet, these few Napoleons live right in our back yard. Most of us have gone up against them, whether we knew it or not at the time, and they're still among us, plugging away at adding a 6th digit to their aggregate **Mps**. We should know their names; such players don't grow on trees. If we meet them at the table, we should bask in the light of their reflected glory. We should be honored to be down three in a contract that everybody else makes without breaking a sweat. Consider, if nothing else, the number of bottoms and averages they must have suffered through in their quests to win enough top boards to reach the zenith of the Bridge world!

William Esberg, **Lester Sokolower**, and **Barbara Tepper** have inhabited the top Bridge echelons for quite some years. The *Declarer* recently recognized **Jiang Gu** on his 2018 accomplishment. That **Alexander Allen** was not similarly recognized when he rose to these Olympian heights a year ago was a lapse of proper attention which your editor is hereby trying to set right.

NO SURREY – WITH A FRINGE ON TOP

by Jay Korobow

North

♠ 1074
♥ 54
♦ K842
♣ QJ97

West

♠ Q63
♥ K9762
♦ 5
♣ A542

East

♠ AK8
♥ AJ3
♦ QJ63
♣ K86

South

♠ J952
♥ Q108
♦ A1097
♣ 103

Back in the late night random BBO impairs game, I sat East with a new partner of relatively unknown skill level. The lack of intermediates (10s, 9s) and flatness swayed me to open 1NT on this 18-count. Not that increasing the likelihood of declaring had anything at all to do with my reasoning, “No Surrey!”

I next heard 2♦ from partner, whose profile said “advanced,” so I assumed it was safe to take this as a *Jacoby transfer*. Despite good Heart support and a super-max, I bid a quiet 2♥, awaiting developments. When partner next bid 4♥, I thought of many partners who play transfers on the 4-level (a convention called *Texas*) as well as the 2-level, and who would mean the slower sequence to be a mild slam try. The thinking is: with 6+ Hearts and no slam interest, you transfer immediately via 4♦ (or via 4♥ if your suit is Spades), shutting out both room for the opponents to bid and any slam probing. Therefore, a delayed approach to 4♥/4♠ shows some extras, potentially even enough for slam.

Jim Jacoby was a great player from Texas known for several conventions, including *Jacoby transfers* and *Jacoby 2NT*. The *Texas transfer* and the mild slam interest aspect associated with delayed arrival at 4♥/4♠ are two more. On this particular hand, if I had been playing with Jim Jacoby, I would probably have made a move over the delayed 4♥ call. (Of course, I would not have opened an 18-count 1NT with him as partner!)

An amusing memory I have from facing him at the bridge table was when my partner and I played in a regional pairs event at a nationals, and our opponents were Jim and an elderly Texas socialite decked out in exquisite, paired gemstones. Jim of course played professionally much of the time, and this fine lady desired to have an excellent partner for what was likely a princely sum. He opened 1NT, probably on a flat 18 like I just had, and possibly for similar reasons.

The Texas belle next bid 3♠, and I glanced at Jim inquiringly for some sort of alert about this unusual bid in these days of transfers. He wistfully shook his head from side to side. You

see, with all her fine adornment, the complexities of transfers was not something Jim’s partner could cotton to. (Well, this was the *Dallas* nationals, so why not a cotton joke?) Anyway, Jim dutifully raised to 4♠, and she proceeded to misplay it by two tricks for a not-very-good score. Gentleman Jim just smiled as the sublime rewards of the Jacoby transfer bid were lost to posterity, or maybe more accurately, to prosperity!

Back in impaired nighttime bridgeland, South led the ♠10. With visions of slam banished from my thoughts, I wistfully shook my head like Jim as I saw that partner had leapt to 4♥ with a 9-count and a 5-card suit. It was lucky I had 3-card support and 18, and maybe I would also be lucky to find the ♥Q onside. Alternatively, if the lead was from ♠109x or some other 3-3 distribution in clubs, I could make ten tricks with four Hearts, three Spades, and three Clubs, even if the Heart finesse failed.

Which it did, after I won the Club in dummy and tried a Heart to the Jack. (Cashing the ♥K first in case South had a singleton Queen seemed both awkward and unlikely, and it might remove some positions that could be beneficial later.) When the ♥J lost to the ♥Q, South played the ♣3, and 3-3 Clubs now looked as remote as a plus score. Nonetheless, it would cost nothing to try for the needed layout right away, so I played a third round of Clubs, not surprised when South showed out.

North won and next played a fourth round of Clubs, at which point my partner angrily typed, “Can’t count to 17 and can’t play the hands either!” and left the table in a huff. I was faced with this position as North’s ♠Q hit the table:

North

♠ 1074
♥ 5
♦ K842
♣ Q

West

♠ Q63
♥ K976
♦ 5
♣ 5

East

♠ AK8
♥ A3
♦ QJ63
♣ –

South

♠ J952
♥ 108
♦ A109
♣ –

By necessity I trumped the ♣Q with my Ace, then successfully finessed against South’s ♥108 to dummy’s ♥K9. Pulling trump and claiming ten tricks was all she wrote, as a gain of 13 IMPs resulted when no other declarers in 4♥ had managed to find this path. Of course, it can be assumed that none of these other declarers approached the skillfulness of Jim Jacoby. Nor for that matter, the jewelry of the ex- Cotton Bowl Queen!

THE BRIDGE CONNECTION

by Rosalie Slutsky

When you're in 4th seat, with three passes to you, rules for opening the bidding change a bit. For one, most pairs employ "intermediate" twos rather than weak twos – a 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠ opening shows a good 6-card suit, usually about 10-16 HCP (depending on partnership agreement). Secondly, you use the "rule of 15" to see if you can open. Add your HCP to the number of Spades you hold. If it's 15 or more, open the bidding; if it's fewer than 15, just pass out the hand.

In a team game, against silent opponents, you (South) open 2NT. You and your partner find your way to 6♠ after a transfer and Blackwood auction. West leads the ♣3, East following with the deuce. Plan the play.

	<u>North</u>
Dealer: South	♠ AQJ10854
Vul: All	♥ 10
	♦ 8
	♣ 10765
	<u>South</u>
	♠ 93
	♥ A62
	♦ AQ2
	♣ AKQJ9

This might originally seem like a simple hand. Even if the Spade finesse fails, you can count at least 12 winners:

six Spades, a Heart, a Diamond, and five Clubs. **But** – there is still the chance to go down. Of importance to note is the opening lead, the ♣3. This lead has all the indications of a singleton. If you take the Spade finesse and it loses, RHO may return a Club and LHO may get a ruff, which would set the contract!

So, to guard against this, win the Club in your hand, lead the ♠9, but take the ♠A regardless! This way, if RHO has the ♠K, he can't gain the lead while his partner still has a Spade left, and you'll make your contract.

	<u>North</u>	
	♠ AQJ10854	
	♥ 10	
	♦ 8	
	♣ 10765	
<u>West</u>		<u>East</u>
♠ 76		♠ K2
♥ KJ543		♥ Q987
♦ K10543		♦ J976
♣ 3		♣ 842
	<u>South</u>	
	♠ 93	
	♥ A62	
	♦ AQ2	
	♣ AKQJ9	

HAPPY BRIDGING, EVERYONE !!

MILESTONES

Diamond Life Master

Donna Dulet	Ocean
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Sapphire Life Master

Liz Bartholomew	Pennington
Douglas Widman	Fanwood

Ruby Life Master

Arnold Dorin	Manalapan
Robert Goldberg	Rockaway
Tom Kaufmann	Pine Brook
Don Snow Jr	Short Hills
William Sumner	Lawrenceville
Larry Youell	South Orange

Silver Life Master

Audrey Egger	Princeton
Garry Goldberg	Scotch Plains
Piotr Olszewski	Hackettstown

Bronze Life Master

Jane Carter	Brick
Eli Duttman	Monroe Twp
Gayle Friedman	Freehold
Xuhua Lin	Edison
Michele Losman	South Orange
Dennis Mondelli	Barnegat
Bruce Rothenberg	Monroe Twp
Rochelle Schack	West Orange

Life Master

Kathy Arshan	Jackson
Richard Bindelglass	Martinsville
Lance Greenberg	Monroe
Xuhua Lin	Edison
Michele Losman	South Orange
Dennis Mondelli	Barnegat
Lynda Pullen	Hillsborough
William Robinson	Chester
Bruce Rothenberg	Monroe Twp

Adv NABC Master

Trina Frankel	Short Hills
Ira Tarnow	West Orange

NABC Master

Romesh Arora	New Providence
Merle Barnett	Monroe Twp
Venkatesh Basapur	Holmdel

NABC Master (cont'd)

Daniel Colodner	Branchburg
Cindy Dratch	Livingston
Rita Lee	Chatham
Lewis Lefkowitz	Edison
Lenore Paddock	Montville
Eileen Rosen	Short Hills
Barry Salka	Monroe Twp
Chris Schwinger	Rockaway
Eric Sonenblum	Monroe Twp
Leny Struminger	New Brunswick
Mary Lou Van Handle	Succasunna
David Weil	New Vernon
Cynthia Wigton	Morristown
Bobby Willig	Princeton

Regional Master

Raymond Carle	Derry
Madalyn Crackel	Manchester
Esther Eisenberg	Holmdel
Martin Eisenberg	Holmdel
Jay Fisher	Florham Park
Ellen Friedman	West Orange
Arthur Greenberg	Manalapan
Sophie Hafif	W Long Branch
Susan Harden	Summit
Pamela Harding	Basking Ridge
Martha Haviland	Bridgewater
Steve Katzman	Short Hills
Carol Keating	Caldwell
Chris Kemp	Chatham
Carol Ann Krueger	Warren
Dana Langerman	Short Hills
Linda Levitt	Skillman
Harriet Lifson	Roseland
Gilbert Meierhans	Metuchen
David Moshenberg	Long Branch
Orly Moshenberg	Long Branch
Jeff Needel	Randolph
Ann Nelson	Mantoloking
Betty Oconnor	Summit
Barbara Palmer-Kramer	Clifton
Debbe Pierson	Princeton

Regional Master (cont'd)

Ann Pineles	Verona
Janet Remig	Basking Ridge
Nancy Rizzuto	Kinnelon
Richard Roth	East Windsor
Paula Seidman	Montville
Kathe Serbin	Livingston
Debra Shelkowitz	Livingston
Tehmtan Tehsildar	Hillsborough
Maria Vikan	Berkeley Hts
Paul Vikan	Berkeley Hts
Ellen Waldman	Parsippany
Marsha Wilkie	Bernardsville

Sectional Master

Adarsh Bajaj	Princeton
Julie Bernhardt	Nutley
Wendy Bregman	Springfield
Peggy Dickson	Princeton
Mitchell Firger	Springfield
Denise Fisher	Florham Park
Vladimir Friedman	Scotch Plains
Herbert Goldfarb	Short Hills
Ray Handwerker	Monroe Twp
Anna Howie	Fair Haven
Alan Jacobs	Short Hills
Hilda Jennings	Lawrenceville
Phyllis Kessler	West Orange
David Kreidler	Vero Beach
James Lawler	Princeton
Dorothea Libman	West Orange
Paul Lieberman	Livingston
Graham Oakes	Montclair
Linda Perri	Shrewsbury
Shirley Rathemacher	Atlantic Hlds
Laurie Ruben	Berkeley Hts
Garret Sayia	Mantoloking
Gregory Smith	Berkeley Hts
Linda Treilman	Monroe Twp

Club Master

Sheila Albert	Princeton
Nancy Crabbe	Locust
Robin Eastern	N Caldwell

MILESTONES**(concluded)****Club Master (cont'd)**

Suzanne Fast	Livingston
Jody Giedraitis	Summit
Deborah Gingher	Mantoloking
Myron Greenbaum	South Orange
Janice Gross	Princeton
Pamela Helmer	Short Hills
Richard Helmer	Short Hills
Sylvia Hinge	Madison
Sallie Hollander	Skillman
Ron Ilan	West Caldwell
Roxy Kalis	Basking Ridge
Dale Karo	West Caldwell
Mark Kaufman	Monroe Twp
Sherry Kaufman	Monroe Twp
Robyn Krieger	Livingston
Amy Mackoul	Riverdale
Christine Mason	Westfield
Gloria Mizhir	Spring Lake
Mary Ann Moore	Summit
Bernard Murphy	Little Silver
Gail Pollard	Summit
Sally Potts	Harvey Cedars
Barbara Sasson	Oakhurst
Judith Smith	Beach Haven
Ann Stone	Bernardsville
Alan Talpalar	Short Hills
Susan Wyrsh	Barnegat
Charlene Zanetich	Rumson

Club Master (cont'd)

Joseph Zawadzki	Marlboro
Barry Zehnacker	Kendall Park

Junior Master

Jonathan Adelman	Verona
Janet Adrian	Manalapan
Linda Amado	Wharton
Judith Bendory	Morris Plains
Ariana Black	Orange
Carol Churgin	West Orange
Miriam Cohen	Livingston
Mitchell Cohen	South Orange
Karen Cook	Chatham
Kevin Dai	Edison
Nancy Dainesi	Montville
Justin Dapoah	Orange
Janet Denoia	Little Silver
Penny Dragonetti	Manalapan
Carol Elliott	Little Silver
Catherine Fernandez	Monroe Twp
Marion Filler	Morristown
Rosalie Ginda	Somerset
John Gingher	Mantoloking
Dale Gordon	Springfield
Michael Gordon	Springfield
Cynthia Hopkins	Montclair
Alan Johnson	Middletown
Martha Johnson	Orange
Patricia Kay	Westfield

Junior Master (cont'd)

David Kestner	Manchester
Simon Lazarus	Princeton
Valerie Levy	North Caldwell
Yael Lin	Randolph
Jane Maucere	Tinton Falls
Arun Mehra	Warren
Stephen Mikula	Iselin
Molly Munkatchy	Bloomfield
Elena Pontoriero	Tinton Falls
Charles Rebick	Princeton
Barbara Robe	Whippany
Howard Rudd	Florham Park
Momo Sacko	Orange
Catharine Smith	Sea Bright
Aaron Snead	Newark
Gayle Sommer	Short Hills
Rachel Stein	Morristown
Laurie Taylor	North Caldwell
Simon Thomson	Summit
Janice Victor	Montclair
Kathryn Wagenseller	Somerset
Laura Wallenstein	Livingston
Daryl Weis	West Orange
Nancy Whipple	Chatham
Laura Wiss	Maplewood
Keith Yao	Edison
Barbara Young	Shrewsbury
Janice Zunde	Livingston

MORE ADVANCED BIDDING CONCEPTS

by Brett Kunitz

For Advancing and Intermediate Players

The hand below came up as Board #3 in the Unit 140 StaC on Monday afternoon, June 25th. South and West pass, but you have picked up

♠ AQ8
♥ AK
♦ AKQJ95
♣ A8

When initially taught how to respond to 2♣ openers, beginning players are advised that after 2♣ - 2♦ (waiting), a rebid of 2NT shows a balanced hand with a good 22 to 24 HCP; 3NT, 25-27; and 4NT, 28-30. Most people at the club this day had an auction that was either 2♣ - 2♦; 3NT or an auction which showed Diamonds and ended up in 3NT, 4NT, 5♦ or 6♦.

Conceptually, very "square" hands (any 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2) should be bid this way. However, this hand is exceptional, because if the Diamonds run, it has 10-1/2 top tricks (6 Diamonds, 2 Hearts, 1 Club, and 1-1/2 Spade tricks if partner has as little as the ♠J and out). Therefore, this hand must be re-evaluated, as it takes very little to make a slam. "Points, schmoins, shape takes more tricks," as Marty Bergen would say, and is worth a 4NT rebid over 2♦. I bid that at my table, and partner promptly bid 6NT, holding:

♠ K1063
♥ 107532
♦ —
♣ QJ74

You get the ♠7 lead, which looks suspiciously like a lead from ♠7x. RHO plays the ♠9, and after winning the ♠A, you take stock. Since you are in a good contract that the field does not rate to bid, and it appears you have 12 tricks (6 Diamonds, 3 Spades, 2 Hearts, and 1 Club), you should ask: "What can go wrong?" Two possibilities loom: Spades could be 4-2, as you suspect, and diamonds could be 5-2 or 6-1. Therefore, you can guarantee 12 tricks at trick #2 by playing the ♣A and a Club to the dummy, not caring who wins, and you make 6NT, for a shared top. Those who are greedy, and who did not play for bad breaks, are held to 11 tricks, because your RHO held

♠ J952
♥ Q9
♦ 108762
♣ 103

Therefore, careful play and good bidding are rewarded. The moral is: when you are in a very good contract that the field is unlikely to get to, you should play "extra safe" to ensure your contract.

NJBL BOARD NOMINEES and CONTINUING MEMBERS

The following have been nominated to serve as new or continuing members of the board of the New Jersey Bridge League (Unit 140). Election will take place at the annual brunch and meeting of the entire unit membership

★ Cheryl Angel
★ Arnie Dorin
Lew Lefkowitz
★ Stephanie Miller
Asish Sengupta
★ David Sutton
Fred Weiner
Joe Wright

★ incumbent

YOUTH BRIDGE *by Barbara Clark*



At the Autumnfest Youth Bridge Tournament held in West Long Branch on September 29th, 19 pairs competed. Top honors were earned by those listed below in very impressive performances. We are proud and thankful for the continued support of their principals, teachers, coordinators and support staff.



North / South

1st place (62.89%)

Aryssa Black – Autumn Tarver
Orange

2nd place (62.71%)

Badra Traoe – Makadia Samuels

3rd place (61.42%)

Jaheim Watson – Jeremiah Charles
Orange

4th place (51.99%)

Chidigo Iherobiem – Chidumebi Iherobiem
Orange



East / West

1st place (74.55%)

A'rina Black – Martha Johnson-Jackson
Orange

2nd place (69.93%)

Justin Dapaah – Momo Sacko
Orange

3rd place (68.87%)

Tamyra Rumble – Maia Walzer
Orange - Tenaflly

4th place (55.57%)

Luke Tong – Oliver Que, 55.57%.
Princeton



In August, 21 kids – 17 from Orange and 4 from Edison – traveled from NJ to Atlanta to compete in the 11th Youth NABC. The Friday Daily Bulletin featured Dr. Denise Harlem, Technology Coordinator for Park Avenue School in Orange. She said that the players “are like family, and the kids’ parents are really supportive.” Tamyra Rumble met a youngster from Austin, Texas, Surbhi Chandak (age 7) and established a new partnership. While in Atlanta, the kids were housed in suites on the 47th floor of the Marriott Marquise, which was very elegant and offered a beautiful view. They visited the Aquarium, Coca Cola Museum, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Museum, his home, and the church where he preached.

KUDOS

Recent Unit 140 Player Accomplishments

World-Wide Bridge Contests (June 1 and 2, 2018)

Rochelle and Robert Imhoff (Scotch Plains)

placed 7th among ACBL pairs pairs and 11th world-wide

Dori Byrnes (Morris Plains) and **Jiang Gu** (Mountain Lakes)

placed 10th among ACBL pairs and 15th world-wide

Atlanta Nationals (August, 2018)

Jiang Gu won his second national title,
and 110 Platinum Points in the
Freeman Mixed Board-a-Match teams,
a 2-day, 4-session event

North American Pairs (Oct. 6, 2018, Oakland, NJ)

Neil Jaffe and Greg Gorshkov

1st place, Flight A

Alex Perlin

3rd place, Flight A

Piotr Olszewski and Jerry Owczarek

2nd place, Flight B

Jason Tokuda

1st place, Flight C

William and Janet Schoener

2nd place, Flight C

All are entitled to represent District 3 at the national finals

HOPELESS

by Peter Wright

That's what I was . . . and helpless, and hatless –anything but hip, and yet not heartless or, as it turned out, not hapless, neither . . . no sir!

It was Saturday morning at the May Woodbridge sectional. Partner and I were steaming half-throttle ahead and I was gazing at a hand that every South in the room would open 1♣ - except of course for the weak no-trumpers, Polish clubbers, big clubbers, big fibbers, land lubbers, and card-carrying believers in the precept “Nine Ever, Dummy Never,” who bid 3NT on any hand in which they hold 13 cards.

Being none of such ilk, I opened a contented 1♣ holding ♠AJ72 ♥AQ43 ♦83 ♣K62. Oblivious to the vulnerability, West tossed in a fearless 2♥ nuisance bid, later recollection of which nearly cooked my goose. Partner “raised” West to 3♥. East, perhaps all too familiar with *his* partner's weak jump overcalls, passed. And here's how it went:

South	West	North	East
1♣	2♥	3♥	Pass
4♠ !!	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♥	Pass	6♣	All Pass

My 4♠ master bid caused a pocket of low pressure to form around our table, sucking out all the air. When partner bid 5♣, I thought, “Hot zag! Her limit raise was of the *or better* ilk.” So I cue-bid with 5♥, hoping she'd bid a Spade slam if she had the ♦A. (Yes, that's what I was hoping. Don't ask, just pay attention.)

Her next bid of 6♣ surprised me. I studied my hand and the bidding to date. I smelled a rat, and knew it was me! Still, exuding nonchalance, I placed a Pass card on the table and awaited a display of goodies in dummy.

West demanded to know the meaning of partner's 3♥. “Why,” sez I, “a limit raise or better for Clubs, silly.” (No, I didn't say “silly” out loud; it was a silent characterization of myself.) “And what was 4♠?” persisted West. Understandably, partner had no good answer for that one.

West led the ♦K, and I beheld some goodies in dummy, all right, just . . . not enough of them.

North
 ♠ 103
 ♥ 7
 ♦ A1076
 ♣ AQ7543

South
 ♠ AJ72
 ♥ AQ43
 ♦ 83
 ♣ K62

Contract: 6♣. Hopeless. But at least I had escaped a trump lead. Soldiering on, I won the ♦A and continued the suit, needing to ruff at least one and, with luck, maybe two Diamonds in my hand before drawing trumps. West allowed East to win the ♦9 at trick #2, and at trick #3, he led the ♦J.

That was helpful. I ruffed low, cashed the ♥A (certain the ♥K was held by West for his overcall in that suit), and ruffed a Heart in dummy. Imagine my elation to see that King fall from East! I now had a parking place for dummy's second Spade on my ♥Q, but I couldn't cash it before drawing trumps because East would trump it.

The fog was lifting, however. I led dummy's last Diamond, East pitching a Spade, and ruffed it low. The Force was with me when, after leading my stiff ♠K to the Ace, the ♣Q drew the last two trumps. Now it went Spade to my Ace, ♥Q pitching dummy's other Spade, and claim of 12 tricks.

According to BridgeComposer, optimum defense holds declarer to 11 tricks on this hand. East could have defeated 6♣ by returning either the ♥K (wouldn't *you*, given West's overcall?) or the ♠K. A trump lead would probably set me too, but that's too complicated to puzzle out here.

As partner entered the result, I apologized profusely – that was my word, “profusely” – for having stumbled into a slam that, given the lie of the cards (and, though I didn't mention it, some help from opponents) came home to roost.

So what was my 4♠? Well, my mind, or what's left of it, had spun me a tale in which I had opened with a legitimate 1♠ bid. Only when partner's 6♣ hit the table did I finally come to my senses. Otherwise, I might have bid 6♠, which, as you can see, would not have fared too well.

Dealer: South
 Vul: E-W

North
 ♠ 103
 ♥ 7
 ♦ A1076
 ♣ AQ7543

West
 ♠ 9
 ♥ J98652
 ♦ KQ54
 ♣ 108

East
 ♠ KQ8654
 ♥ K10
 ♦ J92
 ♣ J9

South
 ♠ AJ72
 ♥ AQ43
 ♦ 83
 ♣ K62