

THE DECLARER



Spring 2023

Volume 66 Issue 1

Ken Trock, Editor

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President's Message Sectional Report by Brett Kunín

As most of you are aware, the NJBL held 4 Sectionals annually prior to the pandemic. With the reduction in attendance, a very large playing area is no longer required, and we have found a "new home" at the Elks Club, 375 Old Post Road, in Edison, conveniently located only a few blocks from US Route 1.

For many years, the Fall ACBL North American Bridge Championships concluded on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, and our Unit held its Holiday Sectional on the first weekend in December, which was well attended. About seven years ago, the ACBL changed its schedule for the event, starting it a week earlier, and we moved our Sectional to the second weekend in December. The Elks Club holds its Christmas party as a benefit that weekend, and their hall was not available to us. We did attempt to hold a Holiday Sectional the third weekend, but being that's the weekend before Christmas, it was, not surprisingly, poorly attended, and a financial loss. At the NJBL Board meeting in March, the Board voted to discontinue the December Sectional. We initiated negotiations with the Elks Club and obtained a weekend in October, in lieu of December, which the Board approved by a unanimous vote.

Our next two Sectionals are July 28-30 and Mid-October (a firm date will be announced soon), which we hope you will attend.

Wicked – That's All by Peter Wright

No other word for it. We're playing 4-way transfers with *suit accept*. We transfer Partner's opening 1NT to 3♣ using a 2♠ response or to 3♠ using a 2NT response. Opener *accepts* the indicated minor suit by *bidding* it, thereby promising a minimum of three cards including at least the Queen in that suit. Opener *declines* the transfer by bidding the *intermediate* denomination. The idea is to try to reach 3NT on a combined holding of 22-24 HCP when you have a 6 card minor suit and the NoTrumper – oops, can't say that – when the 1NT bidder has a fit for your long minor.

So Partner opens 1NT (15-17) and you're looking at $A95 \lor 97 \blacklozenge J109854 \clubsuit K2$. Luckily, you and your new Partner discussed minor suit transfers before play began, so you're loaded for bear. You trot out 2NT and wait to see what Partner does. Out of Partner's box pops the 3 card: transfer to Diamonds **not** accepted, as per above agreement. Up to you now. 3NT? Can you imagine winning nine tricks in 3NT before the opponents win five or more tricks, given "no fit" with your Diamonds? Didn't seem at all likely to me. So I bid 3 (swish) and received the opening lead of the 4 \pm , East playing the Jack.

I ducked the first Spade, hoping for a 3rd round ruff in dummy. East/West would have done well to deprive me of that ruff by leading Diamonds at tricks #2 and #3, but West continued Spades, so I got my 3rd round Spade ruff. Now I had only two Diamond losers and made ten tricks for 130. Seemed like a great result, since with a Spade lead from West likely against 3NT (if that had been *our* bid), the opponents should collect three Spades and two Diamonds before we can set up and run the Diamonds. And 2NT is worth only 120, vs 130 for ten tricks in Diamonds.

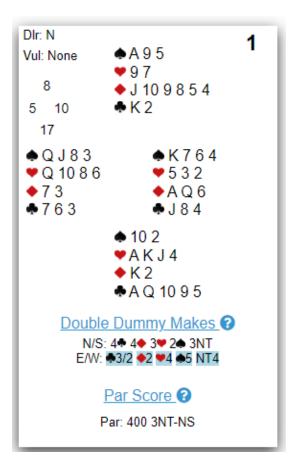
But Great Galloping Centipedes! When I get home and conjure up the hand record online, I discover that 3NT is undefeatable against a Spade lead or anything else! In 3NT, Declarer (North or South) can win the A♠ at trick #1 (or trick #2 or #3 – it doesn't matter) and lead a Diamond toward the King. East can take the A♦ and cash any remaining Spade(s), but looky here: East/West have three Spades and a Diamond so far, but Declarer now has a Spade, a Diamond, two Hearts, and 5 Clubs for a total of NINE NINE NINE NINE Nine Nine nine nine nine.

Now isn't that wicked? To make those nine tricks, three out of three things all *must* happen:

- 1. The A *must* be onside (chances are 50%)
- 2. Spades *must* break 4-4 (less than 50% of #1 now the chances are about 22%)
- 3. Clubs *must* break 3-3 (less than 50% of #2 now the net chances are about 10%)

Three pairs made ten tricks in either Diamond or Club contracts. Five pairs bid 3NT, two of whom found elegant lines of play to go down; the other three North/South 3NT overbidders made their wicked contracts!

Still, I'm not going to veer away from the *suit accept* approach based on this outrageous monstrosity. If I can tie for top board 90% of the time, that's good enough for me. And if Omar Wolff Kantar disagrees, he can go jump in the lake.



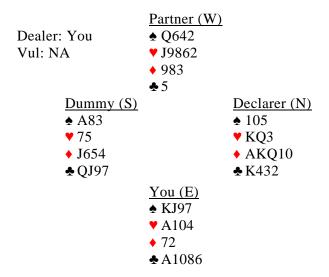
Winning Defense at Matchpoints by Brett Kunín

You are playing at your local club, and two interesting hands arise. In first chair, sitting East, looking at ♠ KJ97 ♥ AT4 ◆ 72 ♠ AT86, you open 1♠. LHO passes, Partner bids 1♥, and with 2 small Diamonds, you elect to raise to 2♥ (as with such strong Spades, it may advantageous to engineer a Diamond ruff in Dummy, and you do not wish to give the opponents the opportunity to find a Diamond fit, as is likely on the auction). After passes by LHO and Partner, RHO balances with 3♦, all Pass, and you are on lead.

The balance by RHO provides useful information: his failure to double 2* likely denies 3 Spades. Because of this, he should also have length in Clubs. Your conclusion is that 2 was likely to be successful, and therefore, to salvage any Matchpoints, you must defeat 3, and cannot rely on passive defense. Backing your judgment, you lead the A in the hope of getting Partner a ruff. A more than respectable Dummy appears: ♠ A83 ♥ 75 ♦ J654 ♣ QJ97. All follow to trick 1, and at trick 2 you play the \$6 (your lowest), asking for a Heart return, and Partner ruffs. Partner returns a Heart to your Ace, and you play the ♣10, demanding a Spade return. Your goal is achieved when the defense ultimately gets 2 Aces, 2 ruffs, and a Spade, and the time spent determining your defense is rewarded.

The bidding and full deal:

You	LHO	Partner	<u>RHO</u>
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	3♦
All Pass			



It is important to note: (1) despite holding only 3 HCPs, with 9 cards in the majors and a stiff Club, Partner's aggressive call is correct; and (2) if Declarer (North) chooses to balance, 2NT, promising both minors, would have been a better call. 3 makes with careful play, playing me for the \$10.

Because some chose to Pass with Partner's hand, the most common contracts were 2 or 3 or 3 or with one North/South pair getting to, and making 3 or and 3 North/South pairs in NT. Only one East/West pair was permitted to play the cold contract of 2 of a major, and to your pleasant surprise, as North/South is making 2NT (even against best defense), you are the ONLY pair to beat 3 or for ALL of the Matchpoints.

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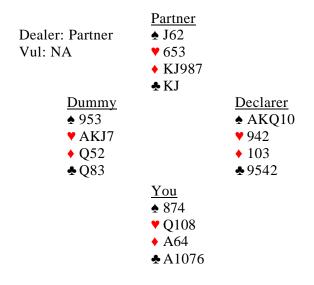
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Two boards later, Partner passes in 1st chair, RHO and you Pass, and LHO opens 1♣. Partner overcalls 1♦, RHO bids 1♣, and looking at ♠ 874 ♥ QT8 ♦ A64 ♠ A1076, you show Partner a limit raise by bidding 2♣. LHO passes, Partner bids 2♦, RHO bids 3♣, you compete to 3♦ (knowing it may not make), and LHO, with a difficult decision, chooses to bid 3♠, ending the auction.

You	LHO	Partner	<u>RHO</u>
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	1♦	1♠
2♣*	Pass	2♦	3♣
Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

* Limit raise in Diamonds

Your goal is to defeat the contract, and although the ◆A may be the correct lead, I do detest leading from Ace empty. Note that the same reasoning on the last hand prevails on this one: Partner is again likely short in Clubs. You again lead the ♣A, and Dummy is ♠ 953 ♥ AKJ7 ◆ Q52 ♠ Q83. Partner plays the ♣J, and you play your smallest Club, requesting a Diamond return. Partner wins the ♣K and leads a small Diamond to your Ace, and you give Partner a Club ruff. Partner cashes the ◆K, and you defeat the contract by 1. That's 2 Diamonds, 2 Clubs, and a Club ruff. This is worth 85% of the Matchpoints. In this case, the lead of the ◆A would have also worked.



Of course, the opponents can take the first 6 tricks in the majors against our 3♦. The lesson here is that far too many try to outbid the opponents, bidding 3 over 3 without the requisite 9 card fit recommended by the Law of Total Tricks, and trade a plus score for a minus.

Big Games (Must be face-to-face to qualify)

March 1, 2023 – May 31, 2023

	OPEN	
81.37%	Alexander Allen - Donna Dulet	Queen of Hearts DBC
76.50%	Peter Stein – Cho-Wei Sit	Summit Area Bridge
75.38%	Himanshu Joshi – Ashok Agarwala	Summit Area Bridge
74.15%	Robin Shamah - Rochelle Djmal	Queen of Hearts DBC
73.33%	Robert Brolin – Jeffrey Halle	Jersey Bridge Club
72.50%	Beau Norton - Marc Lipman	Stafford Bridge Club
	Himanshu Joshi – Dennis	Summit Area Bridge
71.04%	Thompson	
71.00%	Peter Stein – Donna Dulet	Monroe
	Virginia Disch – Wilhelmina	Summit Area Bridge
70.63%	Moyer	
70.54%	Beau Norton – Bob DeRose	Stafford Bridge Club
70.43%	Katherine Smith - Rochelle Schack	Summit Area Bridge
70.37%	Larry Sklar - Warren Kaplan	Queen of Hearts DBC
70.31%	Robert Brolin - Rosalie Slutsky	Monroe
70.24%	Susan E G Slusky – Peter Wright	Bill's Bridge
70.24%	Om Singh - Cho-Wei Sit	Summit Area Bridge
70.24%	Beau Norton – Marc Lipman	Stafford Bridge Club

	LIMITED/INVITATIONAL		
76.64%	Anne Haback - Donald Haback	Regency at Monroe	
72.22%	Maryanne Curtin – Trudy Burke	Summit Area Bridge	
72.22%	Denise Devine - B Carton	Rumson Bridge Club	
71.83%	Gautam Desai – Maya Desai	Shadowfax	
71.76%	James O'Hara – Pramod Khanna	NJBL Sectional	
71.67%	Ruth Bronzan – Charles Clark	Bill's Bridge	
71.43%	Hedda Lans – Susan Kappelman	Regency at Monroe	
70.83%	Barbara Codispoti – Jim McCarroll	Shadowfax	
70.00%	Simonne Vaccaro – Lois Gerber	Queen of Hearts DBC	
70.00%	Kate Bergin – Simonne Vaccaro	Queen of Hearts DBC	

Player	MPs earned
Jiang Gu	26.87
Stephen Arshan	20.24
Donna Dulet	20.04
Dennis Thompson	19.78
Peter Stein	18.48
Ronald Kraft	16.85
Himanshu Joshi	11.14
Arnold Kohn	9.85
Sam Borenstein	9.48
Steve Albin	9.48
Lawrence Lerner	9.48

Unit 140 Overall Winners at May Sectional in Edison

Unit 140 Overall Winners at June Regional in Fairfield

Player	MPs earned
Jiang Gu	60.37
Himanshu Joshi	48.69
Donna Dulet	42.28
Xiaowen Li	39.33
Dennis Thompson	32.29
Joan Brody	30.26
Steven Siegel	22.26
Ira Tarnow	22.21
Lawrence Gordon	19.80
Peter Stein	19.31

3 Looks Around the Table By Ken Trock

Playing Matchpoints online, in 4th seat, white on red, you pick up:

♠ QJ765 ♥ A1075 ♦ -- ♣ K642.

It goes 1+, Pass, 2+ (forcing), ?? Given these colors I think we should act, but with what? What's our goal, compete for a contract or get Partner off to an eventual lead against some number of Diamonds or NT? I decide on 2+, to which opener bids 3NT, ending the auction.

<u>LHO</u>	Partner Partner	<u>RHO</u>	You
1	Pass	2♦*	2♠
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

* Forcing

We'll look at the play of the hand 3 different ways, from ours, Declarer's, and Partner's. Here is it from our vantage point, playing 3rd hand on opening lead.

Contract: 3NT Opening lead: ♠A

<u>Dummy</u>	
▲ 103	
🂙 Q64	
♦ AKJ42	
♣ Q53	

٠	QJ765
۷	À1075
٠	
÷	K642

You

Ok, \bigstar A, 3, 5 (encouraging), 2. Then \bigstar 9, 10, J, 4. I clear the suit, \bigstar 6, K, 8, \checkmark 4. Declarer leads the \bigstar 3 to the Ace, and we have to discard. Partner and I are playing upside down discards, but I'm not sure Declarer knows this. Anyhow, since Declarer is likely to be much more involved in the rest of the play than Partner, I decide to try to hide my entry from Declarer. I play the \checkmark 7, ostensibly discouraging. So that was \diamond 3, 10, A, \checkmark 7. Then \bigstar 3, 2, J, 7. From Declarer's hand \diamond Q, 6, 2, \checkmark 5, the "discouraging" Heart discard echo. Now \diamond 8, 7, K, \checkmark 10. Dummy's 2 Diamonds are probably good. and almost for sure I'm squeezed. I decide to let go of clubs. \diamond J, \bigstar 4, 5, 9 and then \diamond 4, \bigstar 6, \checkmark 2, \bigstar 10! Nooooooo!!!...... (more on this later). I believe Declarer has us setup for the kill in Clubs. At trick 10, with 7 tricks in the bank, he leads a Heart off the board! I take the \checkmark A and 2 Spades for down 1.

Here's a replay from Declarer's view.

Contract: 3NT Opening lead: ♠A

Trick 1.

2. 3. 4.

5.

Dumn ▲ 103 ♥ Q64 ◆ AK ▲ Q53	4 J42
<u>Decla</u> ▲ K42 ♥ K92 ◆ Q85 ♣ AJe	2 2 53
<u>Lead From</u> LHO LHO RHO Declarer Dummy Declarer	<u>Cards</u> ▲A, 3, 5 (encourages), 2 ▲9, 10, J, 4 ▲6, K, 8, ♥4 ◆3,10,A,♥7 (discourages) ▲3, 2, J, 7 ◆0, 6, 2, ♥5

6.	Declarer	♦Q, 6, 2, ♥5
7.	Declarer	♦8, 7, K, ▼ 10
8.	Dummy	♦J, ♣ 4, 5, 9

8. Dummy ↓J, ♣4, 5, 9
9. Dummy ↓4, ♣6, ♥2, ♣10

At this point, several Clubs have been discarded. If he's counting, only 2 remain out, with a decent chance his are now good. But I've hopefully put this idea in his head that I don't have the high Heart entry. From this

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view my hand would be a little thin for a $2 \ge$ call. Anyhow, he chose wrong and led the $\forall 6$ off Dummy.

One more time, from Partner's view.

<u>Dummy</u>

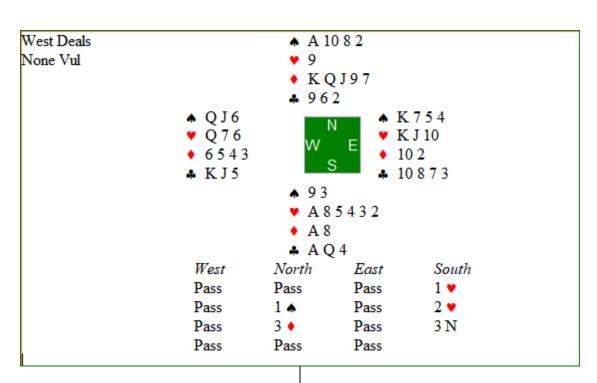
- **▲** 103
- ♥ Q64
- ♦ AKJ42
- **♣** Q53

I thought Declarer had a good idea of where the missing cards would be. Partner, not so much. He can't see where the missing Clubs are. So when I discourage Hearts at trick 4, he believes me and holds onto his, shedding the €10 at trick 9. It could have and probably should have cost us the hand.

Going back to my own defense of the hand, given the bidding, the 10 HCP I held, and Partner already showing an Ace, it seemed he would no longer be a factor in the defense. That was not the case. If there's a takeaway from this hand for me, it would be that even though Partner has almost 0 HCP left after trick 1, their spot cards and length can still help stop a suit. It's usually better to give them honest carding.

	Partner Partner	
	♠ A98	
	V J83	
	10976	
	▲ 1097	
Declarer		Dummy
★ K42		<u>Dunniy</u> ▲ 103
¥ K42 ▼ K92		¥ 105 ♥ Q64
◆ Q853		◆ AKJ42
◆ Q000 ◆ AJ6		♣ Q53
1100		- 200
	You	
	▲ QJ765	
	♥ A1075	
	♦	
	♣ K642	

Fortuitous Finesse by Jay Korobow



Trump coups, squeezes, endplays, and such often make for an interesting bridge article, but here is a plain old dogfight for trick 9 in 3NT. Every suit has a compelling aspect, as does the timing, layout, and communication. The auction was also interesting in this BBO IMP pairs deal amongst reasonable players.

As a passed hand, North faced a rebid hurdle over South's 2♥. Passing could be right, but also might miss a game, as well as a better trump (or No Trump) fit. Fortunately, 3♦ was non-forcing (as a passed hand), and was also forward going while suggesting a playable trump suit. Thus the 3♦ call was made, and the hurdle now passed to South.

Was Partner 5-5 (or 5-4 or 4-5?). Certainly there was at most one Heart to be found in the North hand, so it was really a choice between 3NT and passing, although the latter might conceivably be a 4-2 fit. The ♣AQ tenace as well as Bob Hamman's often sage advice ("bid 3NT when in doubt", or such) combined to make that the final contract, and now the hurdle was with West to find an optimum opening lead. The unbid suit was of course an option, and several players also facing 3NT chose a Club, which gave Declarer an easy 9 tricks. While the ♠Q held some promise, it was also not without risk. Finally, the ♦6 was chosen, and Declarer saw 8 tricks were assured, but the ninth would require a successful Club finesse. Or would it?

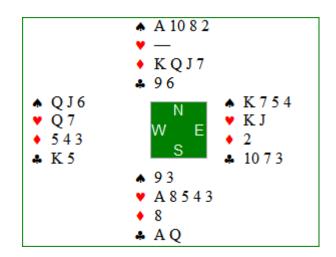
It would be nice to test an alternative or 2 before relying on the finesse, such as Hearts breaking 3-3 or the opponents breaking the Spade suit to Declarer's advantage. But communication (as is so often in the News these days) was far from ideal, as was keeping the Defenders from 5 tricks while going about the pursuit of 9.

One example of the challenge was winning the first Diamond in Dummy to play a Heart to the Ace and another Heart. Then Declarer could win the next round of Diamonds in hand with the Ace to try Hearts again. A 3-3 Heart break - with the ♣A as an entry - would score up 3NT, but what could go wrong? Well, Hearts could be 4-2, and the opponents might cash 3 Heart tricks, but that wasn't the real problem. Following the Volume 66 Issue 1

defense cashing these Hearts (if they are 4-2), Declarer would now have 9 tricks (before their 5). That's 1 Club, 5 Diamonds, 2 Hearts, and 1 Spade. The real problem is if Declarer wins the first Diamond in Dummy and is thus down to the stiff Ace in hand, the opponents may find a timely Spade switch when in with the first Heart. Then all those nice cashable Diamonds in the entry-less Dummy are blocked from usage!

Declarer found a gem of a Diamond play at trick 1 to deal with this, the \diamond 9! An unsuspecting East covered with the \diamond 10, forcing the \diamond A, and now the \diamond 8 was an entry IF wanted, and IF safe: Declarer could give up the lead in Hearts, still getting back to the Diamonds in Dummy if the opponents played Spades. Or they could use the \diamond 8 to get to hand to continue Hearts if the Spade Ace was left intact in Dummy.

So, at trick 2 Declarer, after winning the ◆A played a low Heart. West really didn't want to be on lead and wanted a Club switch thru, so let that pass to Partner's high Heart. East dutifully tracked the ◆8, and due to Dummy's ◆9, Declarer was still able to defer the "real" finesse in that suit for the moment, playing low to this position:



Winning with the \bigstar J, West was back on lead yet again. Feeling uncertain about the location of the \bigstar K, they persevered with another Diamond. Still in possession of both black Aces so that either hand had a sure entry remaining, Declarer now enjoyed the fruits of the prescient Diamond play by winning this in hand with the \blacklozenge 8. Now the \blacktriangledown A and a third Heart was available as an option and was both safe and efficient.

Had Hearts broken 4-2, the opponents couldn't cash them all, since that leaves Declarer with 9 tricks (the ♥8 then being good), while the defense enjoys only 3 Hearts and one Club. But "fortuitously" (sorry, couldn't resist), they were in fact divided 3-3, not 4-2. Now 9 tricks and a 3NT game without the benefit of a Club lead (or finesse) was there for the taking. And for a plus 6 IMPS, it indeed was taken for a gem of a result.

Milestones

Changes in Rank: March 2023 – May 2023

Diamond Life Maste	r	NABC Mas
Sam Borenstein	West Orange	Charles Cla
		Kim Gimbl
		Rosalie Gir
Gold Life Master		Zhu Liu
Cho-Wei Sit	Watchung	Joy Scally
		Marilyn Sc
Ruby Life Master		Kathryn W
Joan Prezioso	Red Bank	
		Regional N Kathleen B
Silver Life Master		Robert Car
James Campbell	Tuckerton	Susan Cort
Richard Graveman	Morristown	Gwen Cole
Dennis Mondelli	Barnegat Light	Robin East
John Overdeck	Short Hills	Kirby Kana
Jason Tokuda	Livingston	Jacqueline
	Livingston	Zhu Liu
		Elaine Rob
Bronze Life Master		Shashikan
Cooki Gulkin	West Caldwell	Gayle Som
Xiaowen Li	Jersey City	Zuguang T
Howard Siegerman	North Caldwell	Doug Weig
Life Master		Sectional
John Gimblette	Lakewood	George Iss
Lynn Goldberg	Morristown	Nancy Kop
, Cooki Gulkin	West Caldwell	Thomas Le
Anand Mhaskar	Succasunna	Irene Mad
Mark Pessner	Cedar Grove	Joyce Mich
		Howard R
		Jaime Serr
Advanced NABC Mas		Frederick
Wendy Miller	Morristown	

NABC Master	
Charles Clark	Skillman
Kim Gimblette	Lakewood
Rosalie Ginda	Somerset
Zhu Liu	Princeton
Joy Scally	Essex Falls
Marilyn Schultz	Warren
Kathryn Wagenseller	Somerset
Regional Master	
Kathleen Burke Montclair	
Deheut Council	

Kathleen Burke	Montclair
Robert Carroll	Lawrenceville
Susan Cort	Middletown
Gwen Coleman	Livingston
Robin Eastern	North Caldwell
Kirby Kanarek	Livingston
Jacqueline Lipper	Landing
Zhu Liu	Princeton
Elaine Robinson	Hoboken
Shashikant Sathaye	Warren
Gayle Sommer	Short Hills
Zuguang Tian	Kendall Park
Doug Weider	Keyport

Boonton	
Livingston	
Watchung	
Summit	
West Orange	
Morristown	
Belleville	
Hackettstown	
	Livingston Watchung Summit West Orange Morristown Belleville

Lois Bhatt	Madison
Eileen Elsas	Rumson
Marcia Geltman	Randolph
Gillian Levy	Lawrenceville
Ujwala Mulgaonkar	North Caldwell
Roby Weinreich	Summit
Xi Xing	Princeton

Junior Master	
Gautam Desai	Flanders
Joseph Eastern	North Caldwell
Fran Kraver	Livingston
Michael Meyer	Monroe
Marti Omberg	Westfield
Brian Suchoff	Livingston
Shelly Suchoff	Livingston
Elaine Wang	Princeton

REMEMBRANCES

The Board of Directors of the New Jersey Bridge League offer their condolences to the families and friends of the following members of the 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 Julie Anderson at Julie17rae@gmail.com of any deaths within our membership; indicate, when known, dates of passing and club(s) attended.

Sam Amer

d. April 4, 2023 bridge pro living in NYC

Arthur Frank

d. March 30, 2023 frequent player at Princeton

John Hegedus

d. April, 2023 frequent player at Princeton

Beverly Crane Dubee

d. April 4, 2023 frequent player at Princeton

David Hagen

d. April 13, 2023 frequent player at Princeton

Irene Payne

d. June, 2023 frequent player at Monroe