



THE DECLARER



Summer 2023

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Ken Trock, Editor

In this Issue

<i>Article:</i> Minor Suit Raises Redux	page 2
Youth Bridge	page 3
<i>Article:</i> Successful Bidding.....	page 5
<i>Article:</i> Pointless	page 6
Big Games	page 8
Tournament Results.....	page 9
<i>Article:</i> Revenge is Mine!	page 10
<i>Article:</i> Golden Rules Silver Linings	page 12
Milestones	page 14
Remembrances	page 16

The Declarer

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Minor Suit Raises Redux

by Eli Duttman

In a **previous** article, I critiqued the popular Inverted Minor raises bidding device. In this article I will float an idea that may have merit. I do not currently employ the method described below.

When well moderated by the “Law of Total Tricks”, the preemptive double raise of Partner’s 1 of a minor opening is just fine. I suggest having 6 cards in Clubs facing a 1♣ opener or 5 cards in Diamonds. My quarrel lies with the forcing single raise, which necessitates some very ugly 1NT responses. I firmly believe that the 1930s Culbertson style of single raises is correct. If a double raise is preemptive and a single raise is weak, what should we do with constructive and outright good hands? The answer seems to lie in the “Criss Cross” (jump shift in the other minor) device and the non-jump takeout in the other minor. This last point requires some discussion. An old bidding “chestnut” states that you can lie about your suit, but you must be honest about your strength. It’s comparatively easy to make up any lost ground when you hold a great deal of strength. Therefore, the simple takeout in the other minor is employed when outright good hands (game forcing or better) are held.

If Partner opens 1♣ and you hold ♠ Axx ♥ x ♦ KQx ♣ AQJxxx, you would be constrained to bid 1♦ and catchup later. If Partner opens 1♦ and you hold ♠ xx ♥ AKx ♦ KQJxx ♣ Q10x, you would call 2♣ in these methods. Intermediate, AKA Limit Raise holdings are described by Criss Cross.

Some words of warning about minor suit Limit Raises follow. Given the emphasis on reaching 3NT, the requirements for a Limit Raise of Partner’s minor suit opening are somewhat greater than those of a Limit Raise of Partner’s major suit opening. In general, a successful 3NT contract requires high card, not distributional, strength.

Reaction to the hybrid method outlined above is solicited and appreciated.

* Editor’s Note: The methodology endorsed here is not a standard treatment, specifically the non-jump bid of the other minor suit to show a strong hand in support of opener’s minor. We observe that some of the problems to which the article makes reference can be avoided by other more common methods.

Youth Bridge

by Barbara Clark

On Saturday, June 10th, Barbara Clark and Allan Bauer hosted a Youth Bridge tournament in Hackensack for middle school students. Vijay Ahuja directed the sixteen board game. Fourteen students participated and shared snacks, drinks, pizza, and brownies. Ten children traveled from Orange while four others came from Teaneck. Two adults filled in to complete four full tables.



All of the kids had been learning bridge in after school clubs. These clubs met once each week for an hour under Barbara and Allan's direction. For most of the children, it was their first experience competing under tournament conditions. A very special thank you goes out to school principals and teachers for promoting the bridge clubs.

Fast forward to the ACBL 2023 Youth North American Bridge Championships in Chicago in July. Nine of the ten students from Orange, along with five high school seniors from the STEM Innovation Academy of The Oranges competed in the YNABC, all with great success. Each pair placed, with two students from Oakwood Avenue School receiving several first place trophies.



The trip was memorable due to our Hop-On Hop-Off city tours, Lake Michigan boat cruise, a ferris wheel ride at the Navy Pier, the famous Chicago Bean, Mission Impossible and a Chinese noodle dinner. Thanks for making this extraordinary trip possible.

Hopefully, all these kids will continue to take part in our exciting game this Fall when school resumes.



Students from STEM Innovation Academy of The Oranges

Successful Bidding for Intermediate and Advancing Players

by Brett Kunin



Playing in the afternoon “Common Game” at the club in April of 2022, in an uncontested auction, you open 1♠ with ♠ A987x ♥ AKQx ♦ Kx ♣ 9x, and my Partner, Sam Borenstein, bids 2NT, commonly known as “Jacoby 2NT”, which shows a full opening hand with 4 card trump support.

Common responses are to show a singleton or good 5 card suit with systemic bids, to bid 4 of your opening major with a minimum hand and no shortness, or to bid 3 of your major with a hand that is at least a King better than a minimum. Some people play specific point ranges for 3 of the major and 3NT, but such a system is inferior in suit contracts where Aces and Kings reign supreme. Therefore, here, you bid 3♠.

You hear 4♣ from Partner, a cue bid, and it is your call. Many less experienced players ONLY show Aces in a control-showing auction, but a superior systemic response is referred to as a “multi-cue”, that is, bidding Aces and Kings up the line below game, and only Aces beyond game. I therefore responded 4♦, showing the Ace or King.

The advantage of such bidding becomes obvious, as Partner can place me with the AK of Hearts to show the extras I promised with 3♠, since he is looking at ♠ KQxx ♥ Tx ♦ Axx ♣ Axxx. He now made the good call of 5♦, which denies a Heart control or the ♣K. (Recall that Partner had cue bid 4♣ earlier, showing the ♣A. Even though we are beyond game, a 5♣ bid here would show a specific card, the ♣K, and be in system). Anyway, I now have an easy 6♠ call, as I have a certain club loser.

Even with Spades breaking 3-1, the contract tables, as I can ruff the losing Heart on the board, and the 29 HCP slam is bid and made with a constructive auction. Your efforts are rewarded, as to my absolute surprise, no other pair bid the excellent slam.

The mantra for the day remains the Principle of Fast Arrival: good hands bid slowly, so that information can be exchanged, while bad hands “get out” as quickly as possible.

	<u>Partner</u>	
	♠ KQxx	
	♥ 10x	
	♦ Axx	
	♣ Axxx	
<u>LHO</u>		<u>RHO</u>
♠ J		♠ 10xx
♥ 9543		♥ J62
♦ Q9754		♦ J103
♣ KJx		♣ Q1052
	<u>You</u>	
	♠ A987x	
	♥ AKQx	
	♦ Kx	
	♣ 9x	

<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
1♠	2NT ¹
3♠ ²	4♣ ³
4♦ ⁴	5♦ ⁵
6♠	Pass

- ¹ - 4+ Spades, opening hand
- ² - Better than a minimum opener
- ³ - Club A or K
- ⁴ - Diamond A or K
- ⁵ - ♦A

Pointless

by Peter Wright

Shelby is that rarest of duplicate players who take the game not only seriously but amiably. She is the only opponent in my experience with whom it is possible to banter pleasantly regardless of who gets beat up by whom. It has become a mutually shared schtick that, when she arrives at my table, I grab and polish up all my double cards in preparation for whatever festivities may be in the offing.

I pick up nothing as South.

	<u>North</u>
Dealer: West	♠ K10
Vul: None	♥ AKQJ107
	♦ K6
	♣ 964
	<u>South</u>
	♠ 98743
	♥ 9543
	♦ 1043
	♣ 3

Shelby, West, opens 1♠. Partner doubles, no doubt intending to insist on Hearts later. East (unfortunately from my point of view) has nothing to say. Cringing inwardly at my virtual yarborough, I dutifully bid 2♥. Shelby now selects one of my pre-polished double cards for takeout. Partner, unnerved by my temerity in bidding a suit for which he has full and clear title, leaps to 4♥. That rides around to a beaming Shelby. I present her with another glistening double card, which she puts to good use, and the auction is soon over.

Our bidding:

<u>Shelby</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>Me</u>
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♥
Dbl	4♥	Pass	Pass
Dbl	All Pass		

I now give Shelby my fiercest glare and tell her in no uncertain terms that it is not for her to double me; it is for *me* to double *her*. She just grins and leads a confident ♣A. Partner bangs down his world-class Heart support, muttering plaintively, “Be short in Clubs.”

The ♣A wins the trick and Shelby completes what she thinks is the second of a one-two punch with the ♣K. But Partner gets his wish, I **am** short in Clubs! Ruffing at trick 2, I take advantage of having succeeded in reaching my pointless hand by leading a Diamond toward Dummy’s King.

Shelby steps up smartly with her ♦A. Now, I figure, she’ll lead a trump, hoping to strand me in dummy. (It turns out, she couldn’t) Instead, she leads the ♠Q! Like the Rueful Rabbit, I sit up tall, feverishly alert, whiskers twitching. Well, ruefully, I don’t have any whiskers, but if I had, they’d be twitching.

Wow! think I. Has Shelby made the diabolical lead of the Queen from ♠AQJxx? Or worse, from ♠AQJxxx?! After an hour’s agony, I decide that Shelby is far too refined a lady to have conjured up such a monstrously Mephistophelian lead. So I “give” her five Ace-less Spades for her opening bid, add my five and Dummy’s two, arriving at a sum of 12 Spades. With tremulous conviction, I call for the ♠10 from Dummy, half rising from my seat in preparation to beat a hasty and shameful retreat if the Queen holds. But lo, East has to play her stiff ♠A! I can win any return, draw trumps, claim 10 tricks, and collect my steaming double cards back from the ever-radiant Shelby.

Here's the Real Deal, as Larry would say. And all of this is true except the actual name is not "Shelby".

Dealer: West
Vul: None

North
♠ K10
♥ AKQJ107
♦ K6
♣ 964

West
♠ QJ652
♥ --
♦ AJ87
♣ AKQ7

East
♠ A
♥ 862
♦ Q952
♣ J10852

South
♠ 98743
♥ 9543
♦ 1043
♣ 3

Big Games

(Must be face-to-face to qualify)

June 1, 2023 – August 31, 2023

OPEN

80.56%	Jim Brown - Judy Smith	Stafford BC
75.89%	Sharon Gross - Bobby Derosa	Queen of Hearts BC
74.41%	Himanshu Joshi - Dennis Thompson	Summit Area Bridge
74.28%	Julie Anderson - Donna Dulet	Queen of Hearts BC
74.21%	Alexander Allen - Donna Dulet	Queen of Hearts BC
74.21%	A O'Neill - Thea Lucarelli	Queen of Hearts BC
74.21%	Terrence Havican - Sheila Holderness	Montclair Golf Club
73.79%	Om Singh - Cho-Wei Sit	Summit Area Bridge
73.33%	Henry Van Handle - John Anderson	Shadowfax
73.22%	Cheryl Britton - Jane Bassett	Queen of Hearts BC
72.66%	Sonia Bibi - Elyse Menashe	Deal Bridge Club
72.62%	Justine Robertson - Jane Bassett	Queen of Hearts BC
72.22%	Priti Merchant - Peter Maulbeck	Montclair Golf Club
72.21%	Dottie Koernig - Stephanie Austin	Short Hills
71.78%	Peter Stein - Cho-Wei Sit	Summit Area Bridge
71.43%	R Levendusky - Ingrid D'Amanda	Spring Lake BC
71.43%	Justine Robertson - Cheryl Gorman	Queen of Hearts BC
71.15%	Michael Gecht - Eileen Lee	Deal Bridge Club
71.01%	Elyse Menashe - Lisa Walsh	Jersey Bridge Club
70.83%	Donna Dulet - Lisa Walsh	Deal Bridge Club
70.63%	Lance Greenberg - Sharon Scheckner	Regency at Monroe
70.54%	Rochelle Djmal - Lisa Walsh	Jersey Bridge Club
70.44%	A O'Neill - Thea Lucarelli	Queen of Hearts BC
70.37%	Kathy Hunter - Stephen Arshan	Bill's Bridge
70.37%	Lawrence Gordon - Steven Siegel	Summit Area Bridge
70.18%	Peter Stein - Cho-Wei Sit	Summit Area Bridge

LIMITED/INVITATIONAL

77.78%	Sheila McCrossin - Karen Hyatt	Seabright Bridge Club
75.00%	Betsy Ford - Gunther Ford	Seabright Bridge Club
73.77%	Edward Smith - Barbara Smith	Bay Head Yacht
73.64%	Paul Gessman - Michael O'Donohue	Regency at Monroe
71.67%	Charlene Zanetich - Susan Abbot	Seabright Bridge Club
71.67%	Patricia Pritchard - Laura Haaren	Seabright Bridge Club
71.11%	Justine Robertson - Cheryl Gorman	Seabright Bridge Club
71.11%	Sheila McCrossin - Sandra Davis	Seabright Bridge Club
70.83%	Barbara Tafro - Len Tafro	Westlake BC
70.56%	Edward Smith - Barbara Smith	Bay Head Yacht
70.00%	David Atkin - Henry Acselrod	Bill's Bridge

Unit 140 Top Masterpoint Earners at July Sectional in Edison

Player	Masterpoint Range (as of July 2023)		
	0 – 1500 MPs	1500 – 5000 MPs	5000 + MPs
Pradip Gandhi	9.83		
Sashi Sathaye	6.72		
Joe Wright	5.06		
Himanshu Joshi		13.43	
Ashok Agarwala		9.83	
Susan Schwartz		7.28	
Jiang Gu			17.44
Donna Dulet			9.57
Peter Stein			9.35



Action around the tables



Director Robert Neuhart

Revenge is Mine!

By Ken Trock

Playing in the flight B GNTs this past Winter, I encountered a couple of defensive challenges on small slams.

In 3rd seat, red on white, you hold ♠ 542 ♥ KQ3 ♦ J8763 ♣ Q9. The bidding is as follows.

<u>Partner</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>LHO</u>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	6NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

I lead a passive ♠2.

Contract: 6NT
 Format: IMPs
 Opening lead: ♠2

Dummy
 ♠ AQJ8
 ♥ A974
 ♦ A5
 ♣ A103

You
 ♠ 542
 ♥ KQ3
 ♦ J8763
 ♣ Q9

<u>Trick</u>	<u>Lead From</u>	<u>Cards</u>
1.	Me	♠2, 8, 10, K
2.	Declarer	♠2, 9, A, 5
3.	Dummy	♣10, 4, 7, Q (a nice surprise)
4.	Me	♥K, A, 2, 5
5.	Dummy	♣3, 6, K, ♦3 (OE discards)
6.	Declarer	♣J, ♠4, ♥4, ♣8
7.	Declarer	♠9, 5, A, 3
8.	Dummy	♠Q, 6, ♥8, ♥3
9.	Dummy	♠J, 8, ♥J, ??

Pop quiz, what are Declarer's last 4 cards? It's easy if we've been following along. From the bidding, Declarer probably started with 4 Diamonds. They showed delayed support for Hearts and have followed to 1 round of Hearts and pitched 2 others.

No Diamonds have been played yet (I pitched one). At trick 9, jettison the ♥Q. Indeed, Declarer's last 4 cards are ♦KQ92. Your ♦J will take the last trick for down 1.

Several boards later this happened:

<u>Partner</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>LHO</u>
--	--	--	1♠
Pass	2NT*	3♥	4♥
Dbl	5♣	Pass	5♦
Pass	6♦	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

* Limit plus in Spades

Partner leads the ♥A and here is your hand and what you see.

Contract: 6♣
 Format: IMPs
 Opening lead: ♥A

Dummy
 ♠ J743
 ♥ 104
 ♦ KQJ8
 ♣ A32

You
 ♠ 8
 ♥ KQJ652
 ♦ 75
 ♣ K976

Note that Declarer ruffs at trick 1.

<u>Trick</u>	<u>Lead From</u>	<u>Cards</u>
1.	Partner	♥A, 4, 6, ♠2
2.	Declarer	♦2, 4, K, 5
3.	Dummy	♥10, Q, ♠A, ♥3
4.	Declarer	♠K, 5, 3, 8
5.	Declarer	♠Q, 6, 4, ♥2
6.	Declarer	♠10, 9, 7, ♥5
7.	Declarer	♦A, 9, 8, 7
8.	Declarer	♦3, 10, J, ♣6
9.	Dummy	♦Q, ♥J, ♦6, ♥7
10.	Dummy	♣A, 7, 4, 8
11.	Dummy	♣2, ??

This is the 3 card ending.

Dummy

♠ J
♥ --
♦ --
♣ 32

You

♠ --
♥ K
♦ --
♣ K9

When they lead a small Club off the board you hop up with the King, right? Wrong. Declarer has a count of your hand but you have a count on his. You know he's got a Club suit in hand he's got to get right. We could have made our 3♥ call with ♥KQJxxx and ♣Jxxx. Play your ♣9 and in tempo if you can. Declarer thinks about it and puts in the ♣10, losing to Partner's ♣J. Partner puts him back on the board and Declarer is stuck with a Club loser. Revenge is mine!

Dummy

♠ J743
♥ 104
♦ KQJ8
♣ A32

Partner

♠ 965
♥ A9873
♦ 1094
♣ J8

You

♠ 8
♥ KQJ652
♦ 75
♣ K976

Declarer

♠ AKQ102
♥ --
♦ A632
♣ Q1054

Golden Rules Silver Linings

by Jay Korabow

North-South had an interesting BBO IMP Pairs auction to get to the reasonable grand slam in hearts. Utilizing the general rule that “an unusual jump that sounds like Exclusion IS Exclusion”, South’s 5♠ jump bid was handled accurately by North: they showed 1 (or 4) keycards NOT in Spades,

Dealer: North

Vul: Both

	♠ AK764		
	♥ KJ1087		
	♦ Q5		
	♣ 4		
♠ 1032		♠ QJ985	
♥ 432		♥ 65	
♦ 108763		♦ K9	
♣ 107		♣ KJ86	
	♠ —		
	♥ AQ9		
	♦ AJ42		
	♣ AQ9532		
West	North	East	South
W	N	E	S
	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	5♠
Pass	5N	Pass	7♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

with the 5NT response. South, who really wasn’t interested in hearing about the ♠A, also knew the rule about not using standard Blackwood with voids (or unprotected doubletons), so here made good use of the “Exclusion Blackwood” tool many advanced pairs play nowadays.

East, a student partner of mine, had also been instructed about the advisable rule to lead a trump against a grand slam, with rare exception. Here, with a

Spade suit to protect, they were happy to comply, and in fact this ♥6 lead took away one of the play options for North. That option would involve ruffing 3 Spade losers in Dummy while going about their other business. That was no longer possible after this lead.

The play possibilities here are complicated after a trump lead. North mainly attempted to set up Clubs without an immediate finesse, perhaps finding Spades 4-4 along the way, or needing a Diamond finesse later in the hand as a sort of last resort. Had Clubs divided 3-3 (or if the ♣K dropped), there would indeed be 13 tricks from 4 Clubs, 1 Diamond, 5 Hearts, 2 Spades, and 1 Spade ruff fairly easily.

As illustrated, Clubs did not behave as needed, but Declarer reached a point where they could “apparently” still make 13 tricks with a successful Diamond finesse. Here was the position after 7 tricks, and North to lead next:

	♠ 764		
	♥ K		
	♦ Q5		
	♣ —		
♠ 10		♠ QJ9	
♥ 4		♥ —	
♦ 10876		♦ K9	
♣ —		♣ K	
	♠ —		
	♥ A		
	♦ AJ		
	♣ Q95		

Ostensibly a Diamond to the Jack (as Declarer holds their breath) will win, and thereafter, the Clubs are finally set up using North’s last trump to ruff out East’s ♣K. Next, the ♦A is an entry to return to Dummy to pull the last trump. Only then with West’s nuisance ♥4 finally gone from the scene, can the Clubs be enjoyed, and a hard earned grand slam bonus be awarded.

Now, early on in days gone by, a learning East was also instructed: “second hand low, third hand high”. As a sidebar, newer players tend to hold on to their King when Partner leads low from QTxx to drive out Declarer’s Ace, but only if the King is played immediately can Declarer’s Jack be captured later as desired. Alternately, when Declarer leads low from Dummy to some presumed tenace like AQ in the closed hand yes, second hand’s King will likely become chopped liver, but don’t do Declarer’s work for them! And how embarrassing is it when Declarer actually has QJT and extensive length and Partner has the stiff Ace, which will be forced to swallow your King if you rise with it in second hand! Indeed, “Aces are meant to take Kings” but not like that!

Hence, the rule: “second hand low, third hand high” was born. Now many students will attempt to argue “but what if this and what if that, isn’t rising better?” And I always say, “when the occasion arises that failure to rise in second hand gives away the contract, I will shoulder the blame, so please follow the rule”.

Well, gotcha! I mean ME. In the diagrammed position, where East did play low and so the grand slam was made, this indeed was one of those very rare exceptions. Had East played the ♦K, forcing the ♦A (second hand high!), the blockage in the suit would mean Dummy could not be reached in a timely fashion, as the ♦J would NOT be a viable late entry to pull the final trump, and the slam would fail.

Yes, Declarer could play the ♦Q out of hand at the diagrammed juncture, and IF East covers (another rule?), the necessary entries for success would exist. But all those rules and what ifs, so let’s just say “my fault” and can’t we all just get along?

Milestones

Changes in Rank: June 2023 – August 2023

Sapphire Life Master

Chung-Zong Wan	Somerset
Chong-Hour Yang	Parsippany

Gold Life Master

Rena Pigula	Somerset
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Ruby Life Master

Xuhua Lin	Edison
Barbara Lowenstein	Springfield
Akshay Shah	Somerset

Silver Life Master

Elizabeth Carlson	Summit
Robert Levinson	Monroe
Xiaowen Li	Edison
Joseph Wright	Westfield

Bronze Life Master

Andrew Barlow	Lebanon
Mary Bowen	Princeton
Mark Pesner	Cedar Grove
Anthony Szulczewski	Middlesex

Advanced NABC Master

Leslie Degeorges	Millington
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NABC Master

Janos Geller	Morristown
Ved Gupta	Princeton Jct
Sheila Holderness	Montville
Michael Kelly	Plainsboro
Reva Oren	Denville
Cynthia Phelan	Short Hills
Paula Seidman	Montville

Regional Master

Gloria Buxbaum	Madison
Bo Gao	Ringoes
Nancy Goss	Colts Neck
Patricia Harris	Fairfield
Mark Kaplan	Westfield
Patricia Kay	Cranford
Shriram Phadke	Plainsboro
Patricia Sullivan	Rumson

Sectional Master

Patricia Einbender	Cedar Grove
Roy Gomez	Holmdel
Ann Graham	Hoboken
Janice Gross	Princeton
Judy Kutin	Princeton
Tim Mahoney	Manasquan
Peter Maulbeck	Roseland
Priti Merchant	Livingston
Jeanne Napier	Long Valley
Shula Nirody	Somerset
Ponraj Sakhivel	Dayton
Susan Tarnofsky	West Orange
Simonne Vaccaro	Neptune City
L Walker	Piscataway
Barbara Wheeler	Morristown

Club Master

Lissa Anderson	Mendham
Allen Bloom	East Windsor
Margaret Finneran	Point Pleasant
Alison Friedel	Rumson
Mary Holle	Maplewood
Akshay Javeri	Cranbury
Patricia Murphy	Little Silver
Hugh O Hare	Rumson
Ricardo Serrano	Belleville
Kenneth Smith	Montclair
Leslie Weber	Princeton

Junior Master

Manu Advani	Kendall Park
Rajkumar Bajaj	Somerset
Yirong Bian	Jersey City
Trudy Burke	Westfield
Christopher Cecila	Lawrenceville
Jeremiah Charles	Orange
Alex Fu	Westfield
James Fu	Westfield
Susan Galatro	Freehold
Ann Klemme	Basking Ridge
Cynthia Labrecque	Princeton
Margaret McGill	Atlantic Hlds
Kristina Papadopoulos	Westfield
Stuart Rice	Basking Ridge
Renata Serrano	Belleville
Sondra Slotnick	Long Beach Twp
John Townsend	New Providence
Stephanie Turner	Cedar Knolls

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.

Flossie Chvat

d. July, 2023

frequent player at Shrine

Stewart Manheim

d. June 15, 2023

frequent player at Shrine