



THE DECLARER



June 2026

Volume 69 Issue 2

Ken Trock, Editor

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The Declarer

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The Declarer is published online four times per year by the New Jersey Bridge League (Unit 140, District 3 of the ACBL).

President's Message

by Arnie Kohn

I have established many goals to accomplish during my term as President. The primary goal is to make our tournaments strong and well attended, and our Tournament committee under Arman Tookmanian is working very hard to achieve these goals. We particularly want to increase our attendance at the Non-Life Master games. My next goal is to increase our membership and find markets where people will be interested in learning and playing Bridge. Arnie Dorin and Judy Kutin are doing a fantastic job, and we are beginning to show results. Other goals are to improve our website and to keep accurate records for the Player of the Year. I am getting older and I am training others to take over key Board positions.

Peter Stein

by Arnie Dorin

A member of Unit 140 since 1978, Peter Stein became a Platinum Life Master (PLM) at our March Sectional this year. He is currently 1 of 9 active unit members at that level or above.

The requirements for Platinum Life Master are 10,000 Masterpoints, including 100 Platinum points. Platinum points are achieved via Masterpoint awards in Open National events as well as some small percentage of the awards in Limited National events (for example, Peter was on the winning team in the 0-10K Swiss in Philadelphia in 2018 playing on a team with Steve Arshan and Rich Ross from our Unit where 10% of the 70 MPs were Platinum).



Peter got his 100th Platinum point finishing in the overalls in the Silver Ribbon Pairs in St Louis playing with Carole Weinstein of Massachusetts who he met online. He got his 10,000th Masterpoint in the Friday afternoon pairs game at the Sectional playing with Steve. Less than 1% of ACBL members earn PLM status so this is quite an achievement (at least for him ☺).

Peter started playing bridge in clubs in NYC in the early '70s after a friend who learned in college gave him the book 5 Weeks to Winning Bridge (of course it was more like 55 years). After he moved to New Jersey, he started playing more regularly and started really improving his game when he fell in with good partners such as Rich, Steve and Donna Dulet in the '90s.

He feels he owes his success to longevity, competitiveness, good partners and a continuing desire to improve his game. Over the years he has given seminars to help players improve their bidding. Opponents often ask him for advice on hands and he answers with warmth and a good word.

His ongoing goal is to be a better and nicer player (especially to Arnie Dorin) but of course he continues to want to win.

Wooden Ya Know

by Jay Korabow

North Deals
Both Vul

♠ K 2
 ♥ A Q 10 5
 ♦ Q 5 4
 ♣ A K Q 3

♠ 8 7 5 3
 ♥ 7 6 4
 ♦ 7 6 3
 ♣ J 7 4

N
 W E
 S

♠ Q 9 4
 ♥ K 3 2
 ♦ A 8 2
 ♣ 9 8 5 2

♠ A J 10 6
 ♥ J 9 8
 ♦ K J 10 9
 ♣ 10 6

West	North	East	South
	2 NT	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	3 NT	Pass	4 ♣
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	6 ♥
Pass	6 NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Who NOSE what mayhem the PUPPET convention has created for bridge bidding; maybe Pinocchio? It certainly has made things interesting at times, as if “more conventional” bidding doesn’t... hmm, or should I say “LESS conventional?”

The “ACBL toolkit” says: “Puppet Stayman is a specialized version of regular Stayman that is popularly used in response to a 2NT opening bid... (and goes on to say it addresses) ... if you open 2NT on a hand that has five Hearts or five Spades, wouldn't it be easy to miss a 5–3 major suit fit?”.

Now that we know this convention is unapologetically called a “tool”, let’s note 3 of the common mishaps. Only one partner thinks they are playing Puppet. Only one of them think it applies after 1NT openings also (as some do play - but with transfers available and having space be less of an issue after 1NT, the majority reserve

it for 2N openings.) Lastly, a popular version goes like this: 2NT - 3♣ (do you have a 5 card major?) - 3♥ or 3♠ (yes I do and it's Hearts or Spades respectively... good news being the big hand benefits from an opening lead coming INTO it will be the Declarer.) A 3♦ reply says "no, but I have a 4-card major" and 3NT says: no 4's no 5's (Go FISH!)

It's after 3♦ (yes, I do have a 4-card major, maybe even both!) that we might see things get hairy. Normally in Stayman, bidding 2 or 3 Diamonds says no I don't have a major ...maybe this "tools" name should be anti-Stayman? Anyway, in the never ending (but worthy) quest to have the big hand declare, the weaker responding hand could have 4 Hearts and say: 3♥ to mean "I have 4, you too?" If yes, opener would raise to 4♥, but alas... as the 6-count hand bid Hearts first, the opening lead will be disadvantageously through the big hand (called "wrong siding the hand"). One prefers a

lead around into AQ or AKJ, which the stronger hand is likely to have, not through these holdings if they are in Dummy.

Never at a loss for creative modifications, the tool makers thus devised: a 3♠ response (to 3♦) says I have a 4-card Heart suit... a 3♥ response says I have a 4-card Spade suit. Now the strong 2NT opener will accordingly place the 4-4 fit contract and indeed be the Declarer.

A mishap of a different kind occurred in the diagrammed hand in a random BBO Imp game. As random partnerships might see things the same way more often than Halley's Comet, South thought they were playing PUPPET over 2NT, but North did not. To South, the 3♥ reply showed 5 Hearts and opposite the right 21 points, the value of their doubleton Club might indeed make 6♥ an excellent contract. The best South thought to probe for slam was to cue bid 3♠, their Ace.

North, with Pinocchio and puppets far from mind, bid 3NT as they weren't quite sure what 3♠ was about; maybe a 5 card Spade suit that started with Stayman? So they bid 3NT; as in how could that be bad?

Well, South, the huge fan of tools next decided to check on Aces via Gerber, the 4♣ tool. ("Tool and die makers are highly skilled manufacturers who produce precision tools" - just wanted to throw that in should I need a joke about "dying" later in this article.)

Standard practice is that 4♣ is Gerber after NT directly (2NT - Pass - 4♣ or 1NT - Pass - 4♣), or if there's an obvious jump (1♦ - Pass - 1NT - Pass - 2♠ - 4♣). On the diagrammed hand this natural sounding 4♣ bid had North placing partner with perhaps five Spades and four or more Clubs. Accordingly, they declined to answer Aces but raised to 5♣. Oh my, thought South, and maybe some readers also.

5♣ was the proverbial "cart went off the rails" bid to South. Their arrival at solution was next to bid 6♥... if North wanted to convert to 6NT (or even 6♠) all that was ok with South.

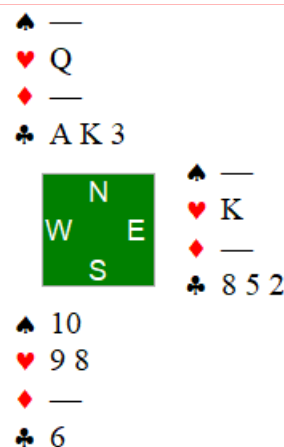
North thought long and hard about passing 6♥, (and about Geppetto) but retreated to 6NT. 6♥ is not the world's worst contract, but with the ♥K offside and

losing to the ♦A unavoidable, that was slated for down 1 and a 12 IMP loss.

Against 6NT, East led the ♣9, after asking numerous questions about the auction which didn't uncover a great deal of satisfying information but gave Declarer an inkling where all the missing cards might just lie. With trick 1 going ♣9, 10, J, Q, East couldn't safely play another Club later when in with the ♦A (in case the club ♣7 was in North's hand for a potential trick 12.)

With marionette-like skill and insight, North got the Spade position right, and suspected East was shaped 3-3-3-4 when the ♠Q fell on the third round of that suit. While a successful Heart finesse would indeed bring home the bacon, so would a squeeze if the ♥K was offside and the same hand held four Clubs.

When playing the ♥J did not induce a cover, Declarer went up with the ♥A and reached this position as they played the last Spade:



On the ♠10, North pitched their last Heart, and East was unable to find a discard that didn't give Declarer all of the remaining tricks and a 12 IMP win, no strings attached!

Tournament Results

In the quarter since the last Declarer we've had 2 Sectionals and a charity weekend. Here are the combined results for these 3 tournaments in the 0 – 1500, 1500 – 5000, and 5000 + Masterpoint ranges.

Player	Masterpoint Range		
	0 – 1500 MPs	1500 – 5000 MPs	5000 + MPs
Kuo-Tung Hsu	26.56		
Andrew Barlow	18.56		
Leigh Walker	13.98		
Jeff Halle		31.67	
Arnie Dorin		28.88	
Stan Weiss		25.00	
Jiang Gu			58.88
Alex Perlin			28.57
Peter Stein			19.49



Stephanie and Bill Miller (on the right) were in Japan and just happened to be on the same tour as Chuck Adelman and his wife Denise

6 7

by Ken Trock

In 2025 an Internet meme/slang term called 6 7 was introduced. Some videos went viral over it even though 6 7 has no definitive meaning. It was first introduced in a Philadelphia rapper's song who lived on 67th street. Some people thought it was for a 6-foot 7-inch basketball player since the phrase was used in professional basketball games. Or it has been linked to the general "brain rot" of Internet culture. Bridge players might know it as a uniquely shaped hand, something like the following: ♠ -- ♥ 10987532 ♦ -- ♣ AKJ1074.

MPs, we are white on red in 3rd seat. It goes Pass, 1♠ to us. How do we treat this, do we slow play it or do we take the bidding up? Are we sold on Clubs or should we keep Hearts in the picture? I bid a 2♠ Michaels for now, showing Hearts and a minor. Predictably, the bidding continues 4♠ on our left, Pass, Pass to us. Good, I think we have an easy 5♣ call. Pass on your left and Partner corrects to 5♥, a key call. Righty bids 5♠. Again, I think we have an easy call, 6♥. Lefty doubles and it gets passed out. What would you do if they bid 6♠? I think I'd let it go, thinking a Club or 2 is cashing.

The bidding with you sitting West:

<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>
Pass	1♠	2♠*	4♠
Pass	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♥	5♠	6♥	Dbl
All Pass			

* Hearts and a minor

The full deal:

	<u>West</u>	
Dealer: East	♠ --	
Vul: Opps	♥ 10987532	
	♦ --	
	♣ AKJ1074	
<u>South</u>		<u>North</u>
♠ AK1084		♠ Q632
♥ K		♥ QJ
♦ QJ865		♦ AK109
♣ Q5		♣ 832
	<u>East</u>	
	♠ J975	
	♥ A64	
	♦ 7432	
	♣ 96	

Trumps aren't 3-0 and the ♣Q is in a friendly place. 6♥ doubled making 6, +1210. To North it probably looked as if we were sacrificing. Instead, we had a result worthy of our own TikTok video.

Big Games

(Must be face-to-face to qualify)

March 2026 – May 2026

OPEN		
75.83%	Stephanie Miller - Bill Miller	Bill's Bridge
73.81%	Jim McCarroll - Barbara Codispoti	Shadowfax
73.21%	Eileen Dolan - Pat Dolan	Stafford Bridge Club
72.62%	Roy Samitt – Jeff Halle	Jersey Bridge Club
72.32%	Alex Allen – Donna Dulet	Queen of Hearts BC
72.22%	Barbara Codispoti - Jim McCarroll	Shadowfax
72.00%	Hans Neuteboom - Anthony Palumbo	Jersey Bridge Club
71.88%	Peter Brudner - Jane Bassett	Jersey Bridge Club
71.67%	Donna Dulet - Stephen Arshan	Spring Lake BC
71.58%	Lisa Walsh - Sonia Bibi	Jersey Bridge Club
71.53%	Jim Buell - Roland Bechade	Shadowfax
71.43%	Marc Lipman - Beau Norton	Stafford Bridge Club
71.25%	Bob Wood - Diane Wood	Stafford Bridge Club
71.11%	Elizabeth Ford - Laura Haaren	Two Rivers DBC
70.83%	Alex Allen – Donna Dulet	Queen of Hearts BC
70.68%	Erik Solberg - Bill Slezak	Montclair Golf Club
70.59%	Arnie Kohn – Steve Albin	NJBL Spring Sectional
70.30%	Michael Hewlett - Jacqueline Hewlett	Summit Area Bridge
70.24%	Beau Norton - Robert Derosa	Stafford Bridge Club
70.02%	Dennis Thompson - Cho-Wei Sit	Summit Area Bridge

LIMITED/INVITATIONAL		
79.17%	Martha Chamberlain - Mary Lawrence	Rumson Friday
74.25%	Alan Gotliffe - Catherine Gotliffe	Summit Area Bridge
72.92%	Richard Gurak - Gordon Cable	Stonebridge
70.63%	June Seligman - Suzanne Tierney	Queen of Hearts BC
70.63%	Bob Welgos - Ginnie Thomas	Shadowfax
70.00%	Charles Clark - Ruth Bronzan	Bill's Bridge

Competing at Matchpoints

by Brett Kunin



Here are a couple hands from the popular Common Game.

On Board 1, your RHO opens 1♣, and you (East) hold ♠ JT82 ♥ K752 ♦ A10 ♣ A105. You have a rather less than average 12 count (Aces in short suits, and poor holdings in the majors). There are those who would double with such an opening hand, but such a lack of discipline may lead to partner bidding Diamonds, giving you no idea how to proceed. You Pass, your LHO bids 1NT, and the auction goes Pass, Pass, back to you. Should you balance? This is a close decision, as you would much rather that the holdings in the minors be reversed. The 1NT bidder is likely to hold either long Diamonds or a Club fit with their partner. Nevertheless, with a strong possibility that partner holds a 4 card major or long Diamonds (should the opponents have a Club fit), it would be timid NOT to balance with a full opening hand. We'll hope that partner is not shaped 3343, 3244, or 2344, in which case, you may have willingly jumped into quicksand. Also, playing with a strong partner, they would be unlikely to compete in Diamonds, given the danger, without a 5 card suit, and instead, elect to play in a 4-3 major suit fit. It is important to note that once you decide to balance, you MUST Pass if partner bids Diamonds. Therefore, since Matchpoints is a frequency game, and balancing is slightly more likely to succeed than fail, you double. LHO passes (who wound up with a difficult choice), and partner bids 2♦, ending the auction.

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1♣	Pass	1NT	Pass
Pass	Dbf	Pass	2♦
All Pass			

Partner held ♠ 765 ♥ Q83 ♦ KJ8764 ♣ J. They received a small Club lead, winning the Ace. Based upon the likelihood that his RHO was longer in Diamonds than opener, he played the A♦ and ran the 10♦, picking up the suit without loss, and made his contract.

The full deal:

	<u>East</u>	
Dealer: East	♠ J1082	
Vul: Opps	♥ K752	
	♦ A10	
	♣ A105	
<u>North</u>		<u>South</u>
♠ AQ4		♠ K93
♥ AJ10		♥ 964
♦ 95		♦ Q32
♣ Q9862		♣ K743
	<u>West</u>	
	♠ 765	
	♥ Q83	
	♦ KJ8764	
	♣ J	

Note that with a rather good 8-count with 4 Clubs and a balanced hand, South's choice of bid was quite reasonable, and for those of us who play Inverted Minors, 2♣ is not an option. Deep Finesse notes that 2♦ makes with good Declarer play, and "absolute par" (difficult to achieve on this layout) would be 3♣ doubled, -1. Either of these would be a top board for East-West. Many advanced players play that the auction 1♣ - Pass - 1NT promises a good 8 to a bad 10 HCP. This has the advantage of North-South knowing they hold the balance of power.

On Board 3 at unfavorable vulnerability, partner opens 1♦, your RHO bids 3♥, and it is your call, facing a difficult decision with ♠ QJ32 ♥ JT98 ♦ K5 ♣ A43. A Negative Double could be a disaster if partner does not hold a 4 card Spade suit, and you are a Queen light to insist on game. I decided to grit my teeth and follow the rule proposed by the legendary Bob Hamman: when in doubt, if No Trump is a possible place to play, BID IT! This is what I chose, 3NT. On this particular hand partner opened an average 12 count with short Hearts; 4♠ would have been preferable due to a fortuitous lie of the Spades.

<u>Partner</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>	<u>LHO</u>
1♦	3♥	3NT!	All
Pass			

Dealer: Partner	<u>Partner</u>		
Vul: Us	♠ A985		
	♥ 7		
	♦ AQJ64		
	♣ J86		
	<u>LHO</u>	<u>RHO</u>	
	♠ K10	♠ 764	
	♥ K	♥ AQ65432	
	♦ 109732	♦ 8	
	♣ KQ975	♣ 102	
	<u>You</u>		
	♠ QJ32		
	♥ J1098		
	♦ K5		
	♣ A43		

With good Declarer play, 4♠ makes 5, 3NT makes 4, and 3♥ doubled is down only 2 tricks. This is on our combined 23 HCP.



SILVER POINTS

New Jersey Bridge League Summer Weekend Sectional July 25-26, 2026

Edison Elks Lodge
375 Old Post Road, Edison, NJ 08817
Playing Site Phone: 732-985-2487



SILVER POINTS

Tournament Questions and Partnership Contact: Arnie Dorin (732) 841-2351

----- Saturday, July 25 -----

10:00 AM • Open Pairs • 199ers Pairs*

Free Assorted Sandwiches and Salad Between Sessions

2:15 PM • Open Pairs • 499ers Pairs*

*Entry fees are half price, and all participants in the 199er and 499er games will receive a coupon good for a free entry to any future NJBL sectional of their choice (never expires).

----- Sunday, July 26 -----

9:30 AM: • Free Bagel Breakfast

10:30 AM: • Playthrough Bracketed Swiss Team with *Free Hot Buffet Lunch*

Stratifications

Open Pairs: A 3000+	B 1000-2999	C 0-999
499ers Pairs: A 300-499	B 100-299	C 0-99 (May be varied based on participation)
199ers Pairs: A 100-199	B 50-99	C 0-49 (May be varied based on participation)

In pair events, strats are 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.

Entry Fees: Saturday Open games: \$20 per person per session. Saturday 199er & 499er games: \$10 per person per session. Sunday: \$40 per person / \$160 per team max. ACBL Junior members (under 26 years old) always half price!

Entry Prerequisite: Players must have an ACBL membership number. Lapsed members and non-members may sign up at the tournament to become active members. Lapsed members must renew with a minimum of a one-year membership or pay an additional \$4 per session event. Never been an ACBL member? Join the ACBL on site at half-price and play your first session free! Or you may sign up for a free limited membership.

Parking Policy: PARKING IS LIMITED - carpooling is recommended. DO NOT park in spots marked "Reserved." Overflow parking is available across the street in an Edison High School parking lot.

Food and Beverages: Free coffee and various snacks. Bottled water and soda, \$1.00. Free assorted sandwiches and salad served Saturday between sessions. Free hot buffet lunch provided Sunday.

Partnerships: Send requests to Arnie Dorin via email (arnied26@gmail.com) or phone (see above) by Saturday, July 18th. We will try to form partnerships for Saturday's games and teams for the Sunday Swiss. Note that the EARLIER you make the request the more likely we will be able to find partners.

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

Milestones

Changes in Rank: March 2026 – May 2026

Platinum Life Master

Peter Stein	Hillsborough
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Ruby Life Master

Michael Fried	Monroe
Jerry Owczarek	Hackettstown

Silver Life Master

Cheryl Britton	Monmouth Beach
Betty Kleinberg	Flanders
William Levy	Somerset
Joel Steinberg	Princeton Jct.
Susan Tillis	Florham Park

Bronze Life Master

Daniel Walsh	Tinton Falls
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Life Master

Chantal Frantzen	Princeton
Robert Frantzen	Princeton
Daniel Walsh	Tinton Falls
Sen-Yuan Wu	Lawrenceville

Advanced NABC Master

Joe Scally	Essex Falls
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NABC Master

Mark Kaplan	Westfield
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Regional Master

Barbara Sasson	Oakhurst
Susan Strober	East Windsor
Scott Yablonowitz	Monroe

Sectional Master

Marjorie Attalienti	Jackson
Hien Cardinali	Martinsville
Marie Coulter	Westfield
Paul Coulter	Westfield
Gurmeet Dhaliwal	East Windsor
Jane Griffin	Little Silver
Patricia Lawler	Hackettstown
Ellen Ostrovsky	Livingston
Abby Schenkman	Warren
Madelin Sinoway	Landing
Lee Vallone	Locust

Club Master

Wendy Benton	Madison
Sandy Berger	Manalapan
Joanne Castellazzo	Jackson
Simon Chen	East Brunswick
Navin Chopra	Warren
Robbie Drossner	Westfield
Sari Netsky	Westfield
Sharon Sietz	Bridgewater
Michele Weiner	Rumson
Kathleen Windram	Jackson

Junior Master

Steven Berkowitz	Hillsborough
Beverly DeCello	Florham Park
Deborah Faust	Lambertville
Jens Hinge	Madison
Alice Kessler	Long Branch
Janet Lee	West Orange
Robert Niederer	Rumson
Aadi Rane	Dayton
Marvin Scherb	Summit
Angela Schroeder	Summit
Diane Small	Red Bank

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.

Roy Gomez

d. March 25, 2026

frequent player at Queen of Hearts

Vijay Kotak

d. April 14, 2026

frequent player at Monroe

Linda Treilman

d. April 1, 2026

frequent player at Monroe