

Pomona-Covina Unit
by Tom Lill

Unit Game – Saturday, December 16, 11:00 a.m.

Individual – Saturday, December 2, 9:30 a.m., La Verne

In the November Unit game, Bill Papa – Vic Sartor again topped the field, but were held to a paltry (for them) 60.4% score. Second were Joe Viola – Amr Elghamry. Rounding out the honors list by tying for the third spot were Linda Tessier – Paul Chrisney, and Margie Hall – Linda Ananea.

In the November Individual, Gino Barbieri took first place. The two-time defending champ wasn't able to try for the three-peat; some trivial excuse, he was assisting with his wife's recovery from knee replacement surgery. Pretty flimsy, huh? Paul Chrisney was second, Penny Barbieri third, and Clint Lew tied with Steve Mancini for the fourth spot.

As usual, the fight for the top score was a close one. Vic Sartor and Bill Papa's 67.8 % effort edged out Clint Lew and Joe Unit's 67.65% game. Other winners: Richard Patterson, Penny and Gino Barbieri, Hanan Mogharbel, Paul Chrisney, Linda Tessier, Claudia Cochran, Herb Stampfl, Kurt Trieselmann, Ken Bloomfield, Roger Boyar, Linda Stuart, Margie Hall, and Steve Mancini.

Once again, not a single promotion to report this month. How odd. Of course, the brackets do get wider as one climbs the ladder. Glendale is coming up this month, perhaps that will kick start things.

For our Hand of the Month, we have to reach back into the archives for an oldie. Your Correspondent has been conspicuously absent from the tables the last month (remember that knee thing?), so I think I'll present, once again, my favorite hand of all time, this time from the opponents' point of view. Second in hand, no one vulnerable, you pick up this uninspiring collection:

♠ Q 10 6 3 ♥ 10 8 6 ♦ Q 5 4 ♣ J 5 4.

Dealer opens 1♠, and after a rustic auction that would have made Victor Hilo¹ proud, the opponents wind up in 7♠! You are licking your chops – a sure trump trick, and who knows, maybe that diamond card will be useful. So ... do you double? Think on it, while we take a brief digression.

A PLEA FROM YOUR UNIT PREZ

Well, yes, it's the same guy who writes this bilge every month. I wear many hats in the Unit. Not all of them fit well.

If you look up the results of our recent Unit game – a STaC, no less – you'll see we had a whopping 3.5 tables. That's just ... sad.

Just as District 23 exists to support its member Units, the Units exist solely to serve their members. The volunteers who put our Unit game together (no one gets paid except the Director, and that's not going to make anyone rich) do this not because they have to, but to keep bridge alive and well in the Pomona-Covina area. 3.5 tables don't come close to even paying the rent,

let alone such trivia as sanction fees, snacks, new cards, and so on. We need YOU, our members, to support us, lest we be forced to fold up the tent and merge with another unit.

Can a merger be done? Certainly; when District 23 was formed there were something like twice the number of member units as now. But the geography gets ugly. For example, the next nearest club game to my home, within the District, is probably the Bridge Center in Arcadia. (No complaints, it's a fine, well-run club.) Well, I can *walk* to the boundary of District 22 faster than I can drive to the Bridge Center. No, nothing wrong with my car.

So, if you haven't been by to one of our games lately. won't you give us a try? I hear complaints "the games are too small." Hmmm ... it seems obvious that if more people would come, the games would be larger. Is there a flaw in this logic? There's a feedback mechanism involved, of course. As people drift away and games get smaller, more and more people find the games "too small." But it works both ways. As people drift in and the games get larger well, you can see the obvious, I'm sure.

Don't like something about the way our games are run? Our Board meetings are open to all Unit members, and are held 1 hour before each Unit game. Make your voice heard. We're not completely inflexible ... I hope.

OK, OK, I think I've made my point. We need YOU to come out and play. I'll now go have some cheese with this whine, and finish up the Hand-of-the-Month.

We left our Hero pondering a double of the spade grand. Did you double? Bad news, Buckwheat – a double is the only action that lets declarer make the hand (without peeking, of course). The full deal:

	♠ A K 7 4	
	♥ K Q J	
	♦ K 9	
	♣ K 9 6 3	
♠ Q 10 6 3		♠ none
♥ 10 8 6		♥ 9 7 5 4 3 2
♦ Q 5 4		♦ J 10 7 6 2
♣ J 5 4		♣ Q 2
	♠ J 9 8 5 2	
	♥ A	
	♦ A 8 3	
	♣ A 10 8 7	

Not the world's greatest grand, missing Q-10-x-x of trumps, is it? But if declarer can guess the trumps (and they are no worse than 3-1 on side), the slam rolls home. But declarer – heck, I told you this was my favorite hand – I asked myself, "what on earth did LHO double on? There's no gaping holes outside the trumps!" So after winning the heart lead in hand, I ran the ♠9. RHO showed out of course (and was understandably irate with partner over the double!), and I picked up the trumps. Although I could no longer ruff the losing diamond in dummy, clubs being 3-2 let me pitch the losing diamond on the last club. (Two clubs having been thrown on the ♥KQ of course.)

If LHO doesn't double, you will probably cash one high trump, after which you are toast, maybe going down two! +1770 was a cold top, needless to say.

The hand is reminiscent of a Rueful Rabbit hand², where he doubled a 7♣ contract holding ♣J-x-x-x. His reasoning was, only a lunatic would double a slam with a finessable trump honor, so the double protects the honor, because declarer won't suspect a lunatic ...

Quote for the Month: "Against invincible stupidity, not even the gods themselves shall prevail." (Friedrich von Schiller)

Until next month ...

References:

1. "Play It Again, Slam," Phillip and Robert King
2. "Victor Mollo's Bridge Club," Victor Mollo (also published as "Masters and Monsters")