

Pomona-Covina Unit News

February 2021

Discretion being the better part of whatever, let's hold off on the Individual for one more month at least. By then we should be on our way to getting vaccinated, yes? Here's to hope.

One of the saddest things about getting older is, you keep getting Bad News of a Certain Kind. I just got word, a few minutes ago as I write this, that long-time Unit member, former Unit officer, and all around Great Lady Cordell Goode has passed away. Cordell left our Unit for Ventura sometime around 2014. But she is still fondly remembered by those who played with, and against her. Never (well, hardly ever) a harsh word at the table. She was one of my early mentors. I remember one time, declaring a 3♠ contract, as the play finished up she said, "you only had 3 spades, right?" That was true. And with a twinkle in her eye, she then said, "you've been reading Victor Mollo again, haven't you?" That was also true! (Lest you all think I had completely lost my mind, bidding a three card suit for the first time at the three level, Cordell had shown four spades via a negative double.)

We do have one rank change to report: David Ochroch has earned the coveted Gold Card and is now a Life Master. Way to Go, David!

Last year, everything shut down just as we were preparing to present the Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney awards. Well, obviously that never happened. The awards still exist – President Sartor has the Ace of Clubs certificates, and your Membership Chairman (guess who??) has the medallions. We will be ordering the 2020 medallions for presentation. The standings will be finalized around the 10th of this month, and the League will send out the certificates when they get around to it, I guess. But the standings are kind of sad, this year. You can tell that few of our members have been playing on-line bridge. I count only 12 Unit members who have participated in the PPDVBC. (Some of our La Fetra and Bridge41 regulars who aren't Unit members do participate, also.) So I see, in the still-unofficial standings, Ace of Clubs winners with 0.84, 1.00, and 1.71 points; and Mini-McKenney winners with 1.61, 2.59, and 4.25 points. Well, I guess on-line bridge isn't for everyone, and a win is a win!

Depending on how things shape up, COVID-wise, we will either present the awards later this year, or simply mail them out to all the winners. Stay tuned to this station for further developments.

Some interesting – if perhaps not instructive – hands came up this past month. We'll start with one of the strangest I've seen for a while. It's another illustration of "better lucky than good." No one vulnerable, dealer on your right, you find yourself looking at this collection:

♠ J 10 9 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ A Q 10 9 8 4 3 ♣ none

RHO passed. Well? Kind of strange for a 1♦ opening, and that spade suit kind of leans you away from a diamond preempt. So, for better or for worse, I passed. LHO now jumped in with 3♣. Partner overcalled 3♥, and RHO raised the ante with 4♣. And now it's up to you.

Now, partner and I have an agreement that if we take out partner's (undoubled) overcall, we promise exactly two cards in his suit – no more, no fewer. That gives him a place to run if he can't stand the new suit. The new suit also promises some reasonable values. So?

I figured, did I, that across from a passed partner, that 3♥ bid must show a reasonably nice hand. And there doesn't seem to be any wastage in the club suit. AND the spades have to be *somewhere*. So I bit the bullet and called ... not 4♦, but 5♦!

Now we start the REAL fun. LHO showed some discipline by not preempting then bidding again, partner passed, but RHO raised the bar again with 6♣. Pass, pass, 6♦, all pass. Oh, boy, this is going to be a challenge, no? Who knows who can make what?

The opening lead was the ♣A, and dummy came down with

♠ A 7 6 4 ♥ A K 10 9 5 ♦ K J 5 ♣ 6

That's right, the opponents had a 12 card club fit. The hand sort of played itself, as it turns out. Ruff the club, trump to dummy's ♦K, ♥AK (no ruff with the lone outstanding trump, fortunately), heart ruff with the ♦Q (LHO showing out), trump to dummy, ruff a heart, and run one of the middle spades. RHO wins but what is the poor fellow to do? He has nothing but black cards remaining in his hand, so he has a choice of giving you free spade finesse, or a ruff-and-discard. Making 6, for all the marbles, and some extravagant praise from partner. (I guess he didn't think this thing was going to make. Well, who did?) No doubt, some of you are shuddering at the auction! Well, as I said, better lucky than good.

And, continuing our BLTG theme (maybe we should add this one to David White's acronym list?), here's a hand submitted by Ho Ming Yim. You need to see the entire deal to get the full flavor of it. (That flavor is sour indeed, for the opponents!)

North

♠ J 10 4 3 2
♥ A Q x x
♦ K Q x x x
♣ 10 x x

West

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

East

♠ A K Q 9 8 7
♥ 10 9 3
♦ 7 2
♣ J 9

South

♠ 6 5
♥ J
♦ A K Q 10 8 5 4 3
♣ A 4

The auction was short, but perhaps not so sweet. East opened 2♠, and South (Ho Ming), impressed perhaps by the quality of his major suit stoppers, bid 3NT! You will note that this "wrong sides" the contract – North has the spade stopper. But it actually right sides the contract, because poor West has no spade to lead! So although E-W have 5 top tricks, after the opening lead of the ♣K, Ho Ming simply claimed his 9 tricks.

BLTG!

Quote for the month: "A long dispute means both parties are wrong." (Voltaire)