

Pomona-Covina Unit News

September 2021

Individual: September 4, 9:30 a.m., Claremont

Unit Game: Saturday September 18, 11:00 a.m., Glendora

Unit Board Meeting: 10:15 a.m. before the game

Due to the lack of a quorum, we had no Board meeting in August. We could really use a fresh face or two on the Board. The work is not onerous, all you have to do is show up an hour before the Unit game and contribute whatever suggestions you might have for improving our Unit. Elections are coming up in October. If you really care about keeping bridge alive in the Inland Empire ... consider joining the Board. Please.

Congratulations are due to Susie Emminger, who took (and of course, passed) the ACBL's Director exam. Now your hard-working Club-Manager-Director-General-Stuckee has some more help available. Thank you, Susie. She will undergo some on-the-job training in the coming weeks, so she will be ready when Your Director (hey, "Our Director" was a march we used to play at football games!) just has to be away.

Sometimes, Directing can give you a warm fuzzy feeling. Not often, to be sure, but here's something I just *have* to share. While Directing last month's Unit game, I received a call. A player (relatively inexperienced, but hey, we all started out with zero masterpoints, remember) stated he had mis-bid. Away from the table, he admitted he had lost focus; he had intended to pass instead of bidding. I explained the law, and the mistaken call stood. (Fortunately, his partner made the hand.)

Then in the *same round*, a defender pulled the wrong card. I asked her partner, again a relatively inexperienced player, if she *could have seen* – not "did she see" – the card. She admitted she could have. That's a played card, then. And again, virtue did not have to be its own reward: the misplay did not cost a single matchpoint.

In both cases, less so in the first case of course, each player might have gained an advantage by not telling me the strict truth. So, all you experienced hot-shots out there, you have a *very* high standard of ethics to live up to, from the example of these two. These players deserve public recognition: Caryn Mason, and Peter Kavounas, thank you, thank you, and thank you!

There are no promotions to report this month. Well, tournaments will be starting up again. Let's hope! (However, see the "New Life Masters section earlier in this issue for a couple of familiar faces ...)

We used to report game winners here. Somehow, this got forgotten with the suspension of face-to-face play. So, from the reopening of our clubs, here's a list of the first place pairs. Sadly, attendance has been kind of slow to regain the pre-pandemic level, but here goes: Clint Lew-Linda Tessier, Bill Papa-Vic Sartor, David Ochroch-Yours Truly, Roger Boyar-Steve Mancini, Fredy and Lulu Minter. The top score in July was a torrid 74% game by Bill and Vic. The Minters have the top August score, 65.64%.

I have some real gems for our Hand-of-the-Month. First off, a little exercise in freak hand bidding. You pick up the first hand of the night, you are the dealer, and you see this collection:

North deals, none vulnerable.

♠ K 2
♥ void
♦ K Q J 10 9 8 6 4 3 2
♣ K

Now what? You have several options, as I see it. You could ...

... pass, figuring to walk the dog and maybe get doubled in a making 5-level contract. You only have 12 HCP so it's unlikely the deal will be passed out. Unfortunately, it is also not likely that the other three hands are all flat, so you are too likely to get outbid. *Someone* must have the majors. Let's hope it's not partner who's 6-5 or 6-6 there.

... open 2♣? Well, you *do* have 9½ tricks in your own hand! I would rate that as somewhere between "ridiculous" and "disgusting," since partner – with an ace or two in hand – will almost certainly drive you to some unmakeable slam or other. Uh-uh on this one.

... open some number of diamonds. What? Bid what you actually *have*??? Who came up with *that* crazy notion?

Well, I'm so far around the bend these days, I can't see it any more, so 5♦ is what I called. To my mild surprise, that was passed out.

And partner's hand? Take a look.

♠ 9 8 5 3 ♥ A K Q J 6 4 ♦ void ♣ A J 2

The opening lead was the ♠Q, they took their two pointed aces, and I racked up my 50% score. How frustrating. Someone did make 12 tricks – don't ask me – but they were not in the slam. The only pair in the slam made the same 11 tricks I did.

And, now for something (not) completely different. Again, you are dealer, at favorable vulnerability, and you find yourself holding another one of those semi-balanced hands:

♠ A K J 10 9 2 ♥ A K 10 9 7 4 ♦ void ♣ 10.

Well, Porcupine, what will it be? 1♠, or 2♣? Two-suited hands can be difficult to describe accurately when you open 2♣, right? (At least, that's what "they've" told me.) So, I opened 1♠, hoping to hear 1NT (forcing) from my center-hand opponent, whereupon I could leap to 4♥. That oughta do it, right?

Nope. There oughta be a *law*. The deal was passed out at 1♠, making 4. Partner's hand:

♠ 4 ♥ void ♦ Q 9 8 5 4 ♣ J 9 8 7 6 4 2.

Actually +170 was not a terrible result. While three other pairs bid to 4♠, only one made 10 tricks. The other two declarers went down 2, one of them doubled. Go figure!

Maybe next month I will feature an interesting 4-4-3-2 hand. Don't hold your breath though!

Quote for the month: “If you want truly to understand something, try to change it.”
[Kurt Lewin]