

# Kibitzer

Official Publication of the Chicago Contract Bridge Association June/July, 2026

## The United States Bridge Championships

### Finished in Schaumburg April 30

Several locals competed in the United States Bridge Championships in Schaumburg. **Ralph Katz** competed on the well-known Nickell team. Ron Smith played on the Kolesnik team. **Steve Garner** played on the Henner team. **Larry Robbins** and **George Jacobs** played on the Jacobs team. **Brian Platnick** played on the Fleisher team and **Eldad "Gino" Ginossaur**, a former local, played on the Rosenthal team. Other former locals in attendance were **Eric Rodwell** and **Gary Cohler**.

The event is held annually in Schaumburg at the Hyatt Regency to determine the United States representatives to the World Championships. This year's competition determined USA1 for the 2027 Open event (Bermuda Bowl) and the 2027 Mixed event. Next year's competition will determine USA2 in those two events as well as USA1 and USA2 in the Seniors and the Women's.

The first stage of play was an online RoundRobin to bring the fields down to 16 teams. (It was only necessary in the Open.) That was followed by 20 days of face to face play in Schaumburg.

The United States Bridge Federation (USBF) sponsors and runs these tournaments. The competition is played on chromebooks using the LoveBridge software. Two players, either North and East or South and West play in each room. It is well run and well organized by USBF COO, Jan Martel. Local **Jack Oest** is the USBF Recorder. He collects and reviews player memos should any be submitted during the event. Local **Suzi Subeck** is the USBF Appeals Chair and Chief Communications Officer. Suzi writes and produces the Daily Bulletins for the tournament and updates and maintains the USBF FB pages. You can find the Bulletins on the USBF website at [usbf.org](http://usbf.org).



**Mixed USA1 Winners:** Michael & Debbie Rosenberg, Xin Ge, Disa, Kevin Rosenberg and Amber Lin

Hand from the event on page 2

**Open USA1 Winners:** Vince Demuy, John Hurd, Rajath Shourie, John Kranyak, Kevin Bathurst, Gavin Wolpert



BOARD: 43  
 DEALER: SOUTH  
 VULNERABLE: NONE

♠ 54  
 ♥ AQ5  
 ♦ A8632  
 ♣ 976

♠ QJ9  
 ♥ J97642  
 ♦ 94  
 ♣ K4

♠ KT76  
 ♥ K83  
 ♦ QT5  
 ♣ AQJ

Par: -140

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N
NS	8	8	4	6	7
EW	5	5	9	7	6

♠ A832  
 ♥ T  
 ♦ KJ7  
 ♣ T8532

Home team	Visiting team	Room	By	=	★	IMP
						NS EW Home Visiting
Shourie	Wildavsky*	▶	Open	4♥ E ♦7	-2	100 - -
		▶	Closed	4♥ W ♠5	-2	100 - -
Nickell*	Fleisher	▶	Open	4♥ E ♦7	-2	100 6
		▶	Closed	3♥ E ♣2	=	140 -

W N E S

			PASS
PASS	PASS	1NT	PASS
2♦	PASS	2♥	PASS
3♥	PASS	PASS	PASS

2D=hearts

♠ 54  
 ♥ AQ5  
 ♦ A8632  
 ♣ 976  
 N Chip Martel

♠ QJ9  
 ♥ J97642  
 ♦ 94  
 ♣ K4  
 W Ralph Katz

♠ KT76  
 ♥ K83  
 ♦ QT5  
 ♣ AQJ  
 E Nick Nickell

♠ A832  
 ♥ T  
 ♦ KJ7  
 ♣ T8532  
 S Marty Fleisher

Ralph Katz and Nick Nickell are more conservative than some would think.

Their conservatism paid off well on Board 43 as they were the only East/West pair to stop short of the doomed heart game.

You can see that East/West have four losers: 1 hearts, 2 diamonds, and the SA (and they need to bury the HT to hold the heart losers to one!) 6 IMPs to Nickell

**A Hand from the United States Bridge Championships  
 from April 18, 2026 ... Schaumburg, IL  
 from the April 19 Daily Bulletin**

# Rank Advancements-Congrats!

## Unit 123 Board of Directors With Contact Information EC indicates Executive Committee:

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The Kibitzer is published six times per year by the Chicago Contract Bridge Association (CCBA).

Opinions of columnists are their own and may not represent those of the CCBA.

For more information, go to

[www.bridgeinchicago.com](http://www.bridgeinchicago.com)

or call the CCBA at 630-235-4718.

### Interim Acting Kibitzer Staff:

CCBA Communications Committee:

Suzi Subeck, Editor

Jan Churchwell

Jamie Rubenstein

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Timothy	Hain	New Junior Master
Kris	Izzo	New Junior Master
Andrew	Klein	New Junior Master
Maureen	Oconnor	New Junior Master
Laura	Smith	New Junior Master



As of April 6



As of May 6



Lana	Arbuckle	Junior Master
Linda	Cheney	Junior Master
Kathleen	Hettinger	Junior Master
Jeffrey	Slutsky	Junior Master
Jiateng	Sun	Junior Master
Neelum	Amin	Club Master
Barbara	Best	Club Master
George	Gilbert	Club Master
Elaine	Stowe	Club Master
Richmond	Yeung	Sectional Master
Sandeep	Raje	Regional Master
James	Lacy	NABC Master
Christopher	Staszak	NABC Master
Carolyn	Oesterle	Adv NABC Master
Genie	Baker	Ruby Life Master
Mary	Hilman	Ruby Life Master
Bill	Sack	Ruby Life Master
David	Schroeder	Ruby Life Master
Denyse	Holt	Gold Life Master
Michele	Pockross	Gold Life Master

## The 1 No Trump Structure – Part IV by Jim Diebel



### D. Two Suited Hands:

Suppose partner opens a strong 1NT and you hold either:

♠ KQT75	♥ AQ852	♦ 6	♣ T4
♠ QT742	♥ KQT85	♦ 54	♣ 9
♠ A7	♥ 5	♦ KQT64	♣ KJ843
♠ 7	♥ 85	♦ QJ753	♣ QT862

Since we have efficiently handled all of our one suited hands with bids of 2NT or below, we can use an immediate jump to the 3 level to show two suited (5-5 or better) hands in either both majors or both minors. The main reason that we would like to describe these hands with one bid, rather than two, is that when we have distributional hands, the opponents frequently will have them as well. Why give them room to pass information that could result either in their playing the hand, or finding the best defense? When partner opens 1NT, we employ the following:

- 3C:** A two suited hand with both minors of *less than invitational* strength  
(we'll be changing this one)
- 3D:** A two suited hand with both minors – Game Forcing
- 3H:** A two suited hand with both majors of *invitational* strength
- 3S:** A two suited hand with both majors – Game Forcing

Note that we don't have a bid to show an invitational hand with both minors. In virtually all good systems, the accepted rule is that when you can only show **two** types of hands (of the **three** types, non-forcing, invitational, and forcing), that you give up the invitational bid. It's more important to know what's forcing and non-forcing. When Responder holds the invitational hand (and can't show it), he makes his best guess and lives with his decision.

### Opener's Rebids after Responder Shows a Two Suited Hand:

Usually, Opener can leap directly to the best contract after a non-forcing or invitational call. When Responder bids 3C, Opener will pass or correct to 3D. Responder hasn't asked you to evaluate your hand, and you **must not bid any higher than the 3 level**. Similarly, when Responder bids 3H, Opener is extremely well-placed to either pass, or correct to 3S, 4H, or 4S. There is no slam – so Opener needs to check his major suit holdings along with his high card strength to determine the proper contract. Responder has turned captaincy over to Opener, so his bid will end the auction. When Responder makes a 3D or 3S forcing call, there is more to think about. Responder is unlimited, and Opener needs to keep this in mind. Any time there is a great fit, Opener shouldn't hide it. Consider the hands when Responder starts with a game forcing 3D bid, showing both minors:

A.	♠ KQ75	♥ AKJ2	♦ Q6	♣ T64
B.	♠ Q84	♥ AQT7	♦ KQ4	♣ Q75
C.	♠ A74	♥ J85	♦ K96	♣ AQJ8
D.	♠ KT62	♥ AT4	♦ AJ	♣ AT75

(Continued on page 5)

Hand (A) is easy. With no particular fit and high cards in the unbid suits, Opener simply bids 3NT. Responder is still captain, and has the option to continue further if desired. With hand (B), Opener has a problem. 3NT runs the risk of the opponents running the Spade suit since he has no true spade stopper. This dilemma is solved by simply cue bidding 3H – which is a **control showing** bid. Opener either has a good fit for one of the minors, (with a heart control), or is implying weakness in the unbid suit (spades). Responder doesn't know which hand his partner holds, but when in doubt should always assume the rule: "**Game before Slam.**" This rule states that a forcing bid by partner (unless there is direct evidence otherwise), is an attempt to get to the best **game**, not necessarily a slam. If opener is cue bidding because of a good minor suit fit, that will become evident soon enough. For now, Responder needs to bid on the assumption that Opener is denying a spade control. With a spade card, (assuming he is not strong enough to suggest slam on his own), Responder should simply bid 3NT.

If Opener had bid 3H to show a big fit somewhere, he will show his slam interest by setting the trump suit now on the 4 level. Hand (C) is very similar to hand (B). Opener will cue bid 3 spades, implying weakness in hearts. Responder will bid 3NT with a heart control. When Responder can't bid 3NT after a major suit cue bid, the partnership will look for game or slam in the minor suit instead of no trump.

On the last hand (D), Opener has a huge hand for Responder. He has controls in EVERY suit, as well as a terrific fit for one of partner's suits. He will not stop at 3NT, without making some kind of slam try. Note that when one partner or the other has great controls, the other usually will not. After all, there are only so many aces in the deck. The more controls you have, the more you should be prepared for partner to be unwilling to cooperate. When you are looking at the cards that are necessary for slam, don't ask partner if he has them. He doesn't. Take control of the auction. On (D), Opener should bid 4C immediately, to *right-side* the contract (protecting his King of Spades). If his minor suit holdings were reversed, (so he can't prevent his partner from being declarer in a diamond contract since he introduced the suit first) he would have started with 3H, and then raise diamonds later. Even though as Opener, you think you have a terrific hand for slam, Responder is the one who knows for sure if perhaps you shouldn't be looking. Suppose Responder has some dead minimum (but still game forcing) hand such as:

♠ Q                  ♥ Q6                  ♦ QT974                  ♣ AT643

He hears partner either cue bid and/or raise the minor to show slam interest. Responder knows that slam with a maximum of 26 HCP is remote at best, and needs to slow partner down. For that reason, 4NT by RESPONDER here is *natural*, and *to play*. Opener should not move further. How does Opener know that 4NT is not Blackwood? When exploring for slam in a minor, the partnership should reserve the 4S bid as the ace-asking convention. This sounds confusing, but it's necessary to be able to salvage your matchpoint score when one partner or the other has a hand that is really not interested. Even Opener can do it. Suppose he holds:

♠ KJ75                  ♥ KQJ4                  ♦ J6                  ♣ A93

Responder starts with 3D, showing a game forcing hand with the minors. Opener shows stops in both majors with no slam interest with 3NT. Responder now makes another try with 4C – showing considerable slam interest. Opener has about as bad a hand as he might hold & should bid 4NT – *to play*. This bid denies any useful controls and warns partner that his holdings are soft. Responder is *not* prohibited from bidding on. Once again, if Responder is looking at all the controls, he should anticipate that his partner will be uncooperative. Over the 4C slam try bid, if opener is looking at more promising values, he can cue a control, or even Blackwood the hand with 4S, if he holds say, both major suit aces. For those who play Key Card Blackwood, I recommend using a convention known as *Six Key Card Blackwood*, when one hand is known to hold 2 suits of 5 cards or longer. The Kings of both suits are treated as aces, and the steps are 0/3, 1/4, 2/5 *without* either queen, and 2/5 with *at least one* of the queens.

These are some of the most complicated sequences you are likely to encounter in an auction that starts with 1NT. I've gone into far more detail than all but the most practiced partnerships are likely to have discussed. While it's far from critical whether you elect to employ any or all of these treatments, the underlying *foundation* is what is most important to recognize. When partner uses a bid and you are unsure what it means, knowing what he would have done with other holdings – and didn't – will often lead you to the correct conclusions.

Once you grasp the implications of the 3D bid, the 3S bid will have few surprises. Once again, we use the rule: "*Game before Slam*" and assume that game is all in which partner is interested. The vast majority of the time, Opener will bid 4H or 4S and Responder will either pass or make a move toward slam. On rare occasion, Opener will hold a hand that is so rich in controls (meaning that he knows that his partner's hand is not) and contains such a good fit as well, that he simply cannot sign off in the major suit game without suggesting his slam interest to partner. Suppose you open 1NT holding:

♠ AQ75                  ♥ 97                  ♦ A63                  ♣ AK93

and partner bids 3S – showing a game going hand with both majors. Responder should not jump directly to 4S, his hand is much too good. He should imply his slam interest in one of the minors with a cue bid of 4C. Don't expect Responder to cooperate, since you have nearly every control. Responder will almost certainly bid 4H – not knowing which suit you have. This is not necessarily a control. Opener can now conveniently bid 4S, and now he has told his partner that he has a spade fit, with great outside controls. Responder may judge to pass incorrectly, but Opener has at least done most all he can to try to get to a slam if there is one. Reverse Opener's major suit holdings and the hand is even more awkward. Over 4C, expect partner to sign off at 4H, and Opener should make one move toward slam, probably with an ace-asking 4NT (Hearts is trumps).

# University of Chicago Collegiate Tournament...

On April 4th and April 5th, the University of Chicago Student Bridge Club hosted a Collegiate Bridge Tournament at their school. Universities throughout the ACBL were invited to send teams.

Student contingents from as far away as Georgia attended the 2-day event. The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, had six pairs representing the school.

Kendra Bridges directed the games. She was enthusiastic, and the students all had an excellent time. There were 18 tables in play every session.

The powers behind the organization of the tournament were the students themselves. **Nathan Gehl** and **Mark Benkert**, Co-Club Presidents, sent out the invitations to the schools, organized the set-up, planning and marketing.

The CCBA Education Committee under the Chairmanship of **Mark Stein** recommended to the Board of Directors that we make a donation to the event to support Junior Bridge in the Chicago area. The Board unanimously agreed, and a \$500 contribution was sent. **Bob Maxson**, CCBA VP, arranged with an anonymous donor to provide trophies.

When asked how it went, Nathan responded, "The winning team for our main event Saturday was from Washington University in St. Louis. Sunday, we played an abridged second event and there was a tie between a team from Georgia Tech and a team from Northwestern University." Nathan profusely thanked the CCBA BOD for its contribution to the tournament. We congratulate the U of C Bridge Club and their fine leadership for their support for our game!

Editor's Note: My middle granddaughter, Reagan, a freshman at the University of Michigan, was part of the Michigan squad. She said it was exciting and fun to play (her first ever bridge tournament) and she complimented Kendra and the organizers for making it happen.

More event photos are online at the CCBA website: [ccbaunit123.com](http://ccbaunit123.com).

Click the photos tab and check it out!



The winners with their trophies



Deep in Concentration...



The University of Michigan Players...  
Reagan Subeck, front left smiling!

# "Hand"y ... Dandy!

Dealer East. NS Vul.

♠ A 9 8 3  
♥ A 3  
♦ K 7 4  
♣ A Q J 9

♠ —                      ♠ K Q J  
♥ Q J 10 9 8 6 4      ♥ 7 5 2  
♦ 10 6                    ♦ A J 8  
♣ 7 6 3 2                ♣ K 10 8 5

♠ 10 7 6 5 4 2  
♥ K  
♦ Q 9 5 3 2  
♣ 4

West	North	East	South
—	—	1 NT	Pass
4 ♥	Double	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		

After East's weak notrump opening, West tried to jam his opponents out of the auction by jumping to four hearts. North showed a good hand with defensive strength by doubling and South, with his offensive rather than defensive hand, chose to take his chances in four spades. West led the queen of hearts. Declarer took that in hand with the king and led a trump. When West discarded it seemed that there were two losers in both trumps and diamonds. As the former were unavoidable, the focus had to be on reducing the latter to one.

As East had to have the ace of diamonds and king of clubs to justify his opening bid, two possible ways of making ten tricks were to find East with either (a.) a doubleton ace of diamonds or (b.) a doubleton king of clubs. However, neither was particularly likely to succeed, as West had advertised long hearts, declarer sought a line that was guaranteed to succeed.

After cashing dummy's ace of hearts, throwing a diamond from hand, declarer threw East in with a trump. East took his two trump winners and, as a diamond switch would run to the king which would allow declarer to then lead towards his queen, East exited with a low club, which was taken by dummy's nine. Declarer now played the ace of clubs, throwing a second diamond from hand, followed by the queen of clubs. It did not

matter whether East covered because declarer would ruff if he did and discard a diamond if he didn't. Either way, declarer would make four trumps, two hearts, a diamond and three club tricks for ten in all.

Dealer South. EW Vul.

♠ 8 5 4  
♥ A 9 6 5  
♦ J 9 7  
♣ A 10 9

♠ K 9                      ♠ 6 3  
♥ K J 10 8 4 3 2      ♥ —  
♦ 2                         ♦ A Q 10 8 5 3  
♣ Q 7 3                    ♣ K J 8 6 2

♠ A Q J 10 7 2  
♥ Q 7  
♦ K 6 4  
♣ 5 4

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1 ♠
2 ♥	2 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

East decided not to compete on what was likely to be a misfitting hand and because his side controlled three suits it was likely that two spades would fail. (East was somewhat hamstrung by his agreements - a two notrump bid would be natural while a double would promise a good raise in hearts.) West led the two of diamonds and East took the ace and returned the ten of diamonds. Declarer guessed well by playing low from hand. West ruffed and returned the king of hearts. Declarer played the ace and East ruffed. A third diamond ruff was followed by a second heart ruff to set the contract before declarer had even gained the lead.

Dummy was, as ever, unsympathetic. "All you had to do was duck the king of hearts" offered that oracle of doom. "West's king of hearts will win the trick and East can do no better than discard from a minor suit. East will ruff the next heart and give West a second diamond ruff, but the contract will then be secure. You will ruff the next heart, draw the last trump, cross to dummy with the ace of clubs and discard your club loser on the ace of hearts."

**Dealer South. EW Vul.**

♠ 3 ♥ A K J 10 4 2 ♦ J 9 3 ♣ A 9 3	♠ K Q 10 7 ♥ Q 7 6 ♦ A 5 4 ♣ 6 5 2	♠ 2 ♥ 9 8 5 3 ♦ Q 10 7 6 ♣ Q J 10 8
♠ A J 9 8 6 5 4 ♥ -- ♦ K 8 2 ♣ K 7 4		

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1 ♠
2 ♥	3 ♥	4 ♥	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

After North showed a good raise to three spades, South had an easy bid of four spades. West led the heart king and declarer made short work of the play. He ruffed, played a trump to the king followed by a club to the queen and king. West took his ace of clubs and returned the nine of clubs. West cashed two club winners before exiting with a heart. Declarer ruffed and eventually conceded a diamond for the fourth defensive trick.

A more experienced declarer would have avoided this fate by discarding a diamond at trick one. Suppose West shifts to a diamond. Declarer takes this in hand with the king, plays a trump to the king, ruffs a heart and then plays a diamond to the ace. After ruffing dummy's last diamond, declarer crosses to dummy with a trump and leads the queen of hearts, discarding the four of clubs from hand. West takes his ace of hearts but has no winning return. A club exit guarantees that the king of clubs will be the tenth trick while a fourth round of hearts will concede a ruff-and-discard.

**Dealer North. E-W Vul.**

♠ 4 ♥ 10 8 6 5 ♦ Q J 10 9 3 ♣ K J 2	♠ Q 7 2 ♥ A K 9 7 4 ♦ A 5 ♣ 6 4 3	♠ K 8 5 3 ♥ 3 ♦ K 8 6 4 2 ♣ Q 10 5
♠ A J 10 9 6 ♥ Q J 2 ♦ 7 ♣ A 9 8 7		

West	North	East	South
—	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♦
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♠	Pass	6 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

North's cooperating cue bid saw South drive to an optimistic slam when he discovered that his partner held two key cards and the queen of trumps. West led the queen of diamonds, taken with dummy's ace. Declarer saw that he needed the trump finesse and no nasty distributional surprises. After running the queen of trumps at trick two, declarer led second trump to the ten. Next he led the two of hearts to the ace. After taking another trump finesse and cashing the ace of trumps, declarer cashed the queen of hearts only to discover that the suit would not run; West had three hearts to the ten left and that would become a trick if he overtook one of his heart honours.

This problem should have been avoided by playing the queen of hearts to the ace at trick three. Now East's trumps are extracted as before but when the jack of hearts is cashed and East discards, the suit now runs after a finesse of the nine of hearts.

The question is whether this is the best play. Given that West did not have a club holding that he wanted to lead away from and the fact that East has four trumps to the king, the odds of West having four hearts compared to East's are about 20 to 3. So, yes, it is the optimal way to manage the hearts on this deal when only looking at the North-South cards.

**Unit 123 Windy City Regional  
Eventz, 1100 American Lane, Schaumburg, IL**

**Wednesday June 3 10AM and 3PM**

Open Pairs (Stratified)  
Gold Rush Pairs (Stratified)

**Thursday June 4 10AM and 3PM**

Open Pairs (Stratified)  
Gold Rush Pairs (Stratified)

**Friday June 5 10AM and 3PM**

Open Pairs (Stratified)  
Gold Rush Pairs (Stratified)

**Saturday June 6 10AM and 3PM**

Open Pairs (Stratified)  
Gold Rush Pairs (Stratified)

**Sunday June 7 10:00AM and 1:30PM\***

A, X, Y Swiss (5000+, 2500-4999, <2500)  
Gold Rush Pairs (Stratified)

\*Only a short break will be provided for lunch.

There are many fast food venues nearby. Players may bring food from home.

**Tournament Chair: Betsy Downs**  
loverofbeagles@gmail.com  
**Partnership Chair: Jan Churchwell**  
jan8242@gmail.com

Flyer online at ccbaunit123.com

**Unit 123 Labor Day Sectional  
Weber Leisure Center  
9300 Weber Park Place, Skokie  
September 4th — September 7th, 2026**

**Friday, Sept 4**

10:00 am Pair/Team Game  
10:00 am 0-750 Pair/Team  
If attendance warrants  
2:30 pm Pair/Team Game  
2:30 pm 0-750 Pair/Team  
If attendance warrants

**Saturday, Sept 5**

10:00 am Pair/Team Game  
10:00 am 0-750 Pair/Team  
If attendance warrants  
2:30 pm Pair/Team Game  
2:30 pm 0-750 Pair/Team if attendance warrants

**Sunday, Sept 6**

10:00 am Pair/Team Game  
10:00 am Chicago Invitational Pairs Qualifying\* (2-session event... sold as such)  
3:00 pm Invitational Pairs Final with Barometer Scoring  
3:00 pm Stratified Open Pairs

\*Both players MUST be qualified to play ... check qualification criteria at [CCBAUnit123.com](http://CCBAUnit123.com) under tournaments  
All pairs MUST pre-register with Adrienne Cohen (contact information below)

**Monday, Sept 7**

10:00 and TBA  
Swiss Team - six 7-board matches with short lunch break after the 3rd match  
Entry Fees: \$14.00/session \$7.00 students with proper I/D 56.00/team/session  
Stratifications: C: 0-1000; B: 0-3500; A: **Unlimited**

List of Unit Players with 1300+ Masterpoints is online at [CCBAUnit123.com](http://CCBAUnit123.com) under the Tournaments tab. Those players are automatically qualified for the Invitational Pairs! Annual performance Q's will follow!

**Between Sessions!  
SATURDAY ALERT:  
Free Diebel lecture,  
Sure to make sense...  
"Take all Your Tricks  
When you're on Defense!"**



**Tournament Chair:**  
Steve Donahue  
[spd47@aol.com](mailto:spd47@aol.com)  
630-290-3457

**Assistant Chair:**  
Bob Maxson  
[bishopmaxson@yahoo.com](mailto:bishopmaxson@yahoo.com)  
630-220-3217

**Partnership Chair:**  
Jan Churchwell  
[jan8242@gmail.com](mailto:jan8242@gmail.com)

**Invitational Pairs Chair:**  
Adrienne Cohen  
[dolly370@aol.com](mailto:dolly370@aol.com)  
630.699.5050

10 and 2:30 affords a short break.  
Pick up a burger... don't count on a steak!  
Choices nearby. Use your discretion  
Be back in time for the second session!!



## Board News...

The CCBA Board of Directors met on April 16th. **Missy Ravid**, treasurer, reported that the Unit is in good shape financially. The Finance Committee under the leadership of **Frank Pancoe** has met as has the Site Committee, also under the leadership of **Frank Pancoe**, the Communications Committee under the leadership of **Jan Churchwell**, and the Education Committee under the leadership of **Mark Stein** (via electronic poll).

Business:

**Steve McConnell** resigned from the District 13 Board of Directors when he left the Unit Board this year. President Subeck recommended that the vacancy be filled by **Mark Stein**. Mark accepted the nomination and the Board approved it unanimously.

**Bob Maxson**, Chairman of the Awards Committee, has requested that any suggestions for candidates for CCBA awards be submitted throughout the year, no need to wait until September as in the past. Bob's email address is [bishopmaxson@yahoo.com](mailto:bishopmaxson@yahoo.com). Please send ideas with reasons to that address. Sitting Board members are not eligible for awards until such time as they retire from Board duties.

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## GNT News...

The District 13 Championship GNT Team, representing D13 in Minneapolis, **Bob Gardner, Craig Gardner, Craig Allen,** and **Steve Donahue**, has added **Ronnie Smith** and **Oren Kriegel** to their team. Ronnie and Oren are an excellent partnership. We wish the whole team the best of luck in Minneapolis!

The District 13 Flight C team of **Graham Meyer, Zinnia Meyer, Adam Hemmer, Alex Xu** has added **Steven Wang** and **Jonathan Li** to their team for the event. We wish them the best of luck too!

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## ACBL Guest Memberships...

The ACBL is looking to grow membership. Membership starts with the Units. To that end, ACBL is encouraging interested players to sign up for a "Guest Membership." Guest Memberships are good for a limited time period and they are free. As a guest member, a player may earn up to 20 masterpoints, receive weekly bridge tips and receive access to the ACBL Bulletin online.

When Guest Memberships expire or are converted to standard memberships, players will receive an exclusive offer to save \$20 for their first year of paid membership! They will be able to convert their guest membership for just \$39 for the first year. Reach out to friends now, make them aware, help the ACBL and Unit 123 grow! More members means larger tournaments and more fun for all!

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## Club News...

**Eldad "Gino" Ginossaur** returned to the Chicago area to play in the USBF Bridge Championships in Schaumburg. He attended some games at the Chicago Duplicate Bridge Club, spent time with friends there, and provided after game hand analysis from April 8th to 10th.



# Highlights from the ACBL BOD Meeting in St. Louis

**MEMBERSHIP** The February 2026 report indicates a 5% decline in total membership, falling from 124,076 last year in February to 117,813. This is accompanied by a slight dip in new member acquisition; year-to-date (YTD) sign-ups reached 701, down from 1,508 in 2025. However, these figures are balanced by a significant expansion in new guest memberships, which rose from 914 last year to 2,482 this year—a growth of 171.55%. This interest provides a path for growth as guest members transition to long-term commitment.

**Strategic Alignment & Execution** For 2026, the primary strategic focus remains centered on membership growth and retention. The Board and Management are collaborating on a framework that synchronizes strategic oversight with the effective delivery of member-facing programs.

**Growth Framework & Reporting** Management’s approach to expanding the membership base focuses on the 5-5-5 program and specific membership pathways. Key strategic pillars include:

- **Retention-First Strategy:** Prioritizing the retention of existing members as the most sustainable engine for growth.
- **Funnel Expansion:** Broadening participation by opening the funnel to new players, ensuring a more diverse entry point into the organization.
- **Systems Integration:** Improving tracking by reconciling legacy and back-office reporting data to ensure outreach to lapsed members is based on accurate metrics.

**Engagement & Recognition** Updates were provided on the Sapphire program, which serves as the primary vehicle for tracking and recognizing member engagement. Management highlighted several critical areas for program scaling:

- **The 60-Day Conversion Window:** Data indicates that engagement within the first 60 days is the single most critical factor in converting guest members into permanent members.
- **Grassroots Coordination:** Focus is on strengthening communication with clubs and units to improve recruiter tracking and scale mentor involvement.
- **Strategic Outreach:** Refined tracking to allow for more targeted communication with members at risk of lapsing, ensuring they remain connected to the community.

**ONLINE ETHICAL OVERSIGHT** The ACBL continues to utilize EDGAR (Everyone Deserves a Game Above Reproach) to detect online cheating. Since December, the processing of approximately 20,000 additional player numbers was completed, with another 10,000 currently nearing completion. Two final large batches will be submitted to EDGAR to finish screening all individuals who have played online since 2020. These final runs and their subsequent processing are expected to conclude by May.

**Processing Statistics & Outcomes** Since February 2024, 50,795 players have been submitted for screening and fully processed.

- **Total Screened:** 50,795.
- **Disciplinary Actions:** 1,812 players identified by EDGAR have been charged or issued Official Warnings.
- **Current Cheating Rate:** Approximately 3.5%. This figure includes members, nonmembers and inactive accounts. The online cheating rate is expected to decrease as the pool of players subject to Player Memos (PM) for purported ethical violations has been fully screened. The estimated final rate is projected to be approximately 3%. Disciplinary actions have included Official Warnings (498); Fast Track Discipline (FTD) (939); Negotiated Resolutions (NR) (54); Management Adjudications (10); Institute of Bridge Arbitration (IBA) resolutions (44); with 41 resignations with charges pending, and 154 pending cases.

**Local Cheating Update:** At the current time, Unit 123 has 26 members “not in good standing” for reasons of ethics violation.

**BIDDING QUIZ – What would you bid with these hard hands on each auction below?  
By Jeff and Ginny Schuett**

We all have very hard hands from time to time. Sometimes it's best to be conservative with modest hands, even when distributional. Sometimes it's good to be aggressive with a good distributional hand and partner shows a fit. What does responder's bidding show and what do you bid in each of the following sequences with the indicated hand as South?



	<u>W</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	Your Hand as South?
1.	Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥	♠ 854 ♥ AJ94 ♦ 754 ♣ AQ5
	Pass	1♠	Pass	??	
2.	2♠	Dbl	Pass	??	♠ AK8 ♥ T2 ♦ K109542 ♣ 95
3.		1♦	Pass	1♠	♠ A109543 ♥ KQT82 ♦ - ♣ K2
	Pass	4♠	Pass	??	
4.		3♥	Pass	??	♠ A108653 ♥ Q105 ♦ 8 ♣ 1052
5.		1♦	Pass	1♥	♠ 108 ♥ AJ854 ♦ A83 ♣ T65
	Pass	4♣	Pass	??	

- 1NT – This is a slight underbid by a point, but nothing is better. You don't want to support partner's black suits without proper support, but are also flawed to bid NT with no ♦ stopper. In a recent bidding poll, most experts bid 1NT as the best bid.
- 3NT – Partner's double showed support for all unbid suits, so he has a fit for ♦, likely with one or two honors. It may be appealing to consider jumping in ♦. Given you have 2 spade stoppers with a long source of tricks, you should bid 3NT yourself.  
Some examples for partner's hand - ♠x ♥AKxx ♦Axxx ♣KJxx, or ♠x ♦AQxx ♦QJxx ♣AJxx.
- 4NT or 6♠ – Partner's 4♠ is opener's strongest raise, about 19+ points in support of ♠. With a void, you rarely will learn all you need from 4NT, but I cannot imagine that slam will not be a good bet. In fact if partner had raised to only 2♠, slam might be possible, so bid on. In fact, 6♠ was cold and 13 tricks possible with careful play.
- 4♥ - You have a 10-card fit with little defense, but bidding 4♥ makes it much harder for either opponent to enter the bidding. In fact, your opponents are cold for 5♦ but neither one can easily bid it – and you are also cold for 10 tricks in 4♥!!
- 4♦ - North's 4♣ is a splinter bid, showing a strong raise (19+ in support of ♥) to 4♥ with a singleton or void in ♣. You don't have a big hand, but it fits very well with partner in that you have no wasted values in ♣ and a 5<sup>th</sup> ♥ which is huge for slam. Partner could easily have something like ♠ AK2 ♥ KQ82 ♦ KQ1093 ♣ 8 which makes slam virtually cold for 12 tricks and partner can take over and bid 4NT. If you just bid 4♥, partner will rarely bid again.