



# Was it Something I Said?

*by Jay Korobow*



East Deals		♠ K 10 2	
None Vul		♥ K 10 3	
		♦ K 7 6 4	
		♣ 6 5 4	
♠ A J 8			♠ 7 6 4 3
♥ Q J 9 5 2			♥ 8 6 4
♦ Q 10 2			♦ 8 5 3
♣ J 8			♣ Q 3 2
			♠ Q 9 5
			♥ A 7
			♦ A J 9
			♣ A K 10 9 7
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♣
1 ♥	1 N	Pass	3 N
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Simply watching the experts play IMPs or teams on BBO can be both an entertaining and educational experience. In fact, there are usually hundreds of spectators (also called kibbs or kibitzers) amongst the thousands of players one finds online. Some are watching friends and top players or even just any old foursome, and of course there are the well-known Vugraph broadcasts where an event or special match is being shown. These are often with expert commentary the watchers can view (or listen to) as well as see the play-by-play.

In today's illustrated deal, East/West were experts and South was a renowned expert playing with a student. It can be entertaining or enlightening to hear the teacher discuss the actions of the student in an educational way in real time, although leaving the discussion "for later" is the usual tactic. The auction here to 3NT was straightforward, and the student sitting North that was about to declare joked "Was it something I said?" when raised to 3NT.

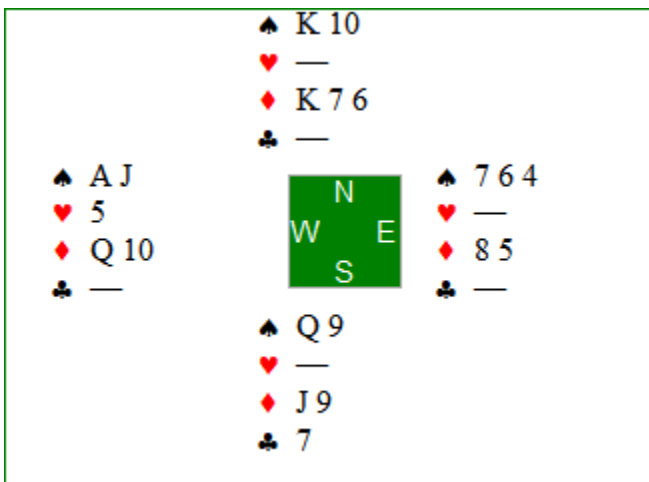
With the Diamond finesse off, the play for 9 tricks was challenging after East led a Heart to get that Defenders' suit going. Four Club tricks (barring an unlikely doubleton ♣QJ) plus 2 Hearts and 2 Diamonds leaves Declarer a trick short. Although it didn't really matter here, Declarer practiced a recommended technique by ducking the first round of Hearts in both hands, and West then led a second round to the stiff ♥A in Dummy. West's spot card to drive out the singleton Ace was the ♥9, which is an obvious high card in the suit, signaling where their side entry might be. (A high card would ask partner to lead the high side suit, Spades, should they gain the lead later and be out of Hearts to continue.)

As I watched the proceedings, I was thinking how that high ♥9 signal and the general likelihood the overcaller West had the ♠A could lay a roadmap for success. Drive out the ♠A NOW, most likely by playing up to the ♠Q. Later, East might be thrown in with the third Club, or even a Diamond, and could not easily reach their partner's good Hearts.

Meanwhile, Declarer goes about setting up 9 tricks before the Defenders get 5. It all gets rather complicated... can we still take a Diamond finesse later, what if West ducks, where is the ♠J, etc.

As I was imagining how the lesson “later” might go, (as well as the play), the student Declarer simply played 3 rounds of Clubs instead of something more exotic. East therefore won their ♣Q and then played their last Heart, putting Declarer in hand with the ♥K. North next played a Diamond to get to Dummy, pausing to consider inserting the ♦J in case the ♦Q was onside, which would spell doom here. Perhaps they should have at least ducked one round of Clubs earlier, playing low to the ♣10 in case ♣QJx was onside to keep communication. Again, I was imagining how the lesson later might go.

Following “the duck in the hand is not as good as two in the bush” (or something like that), Declarer went up with the ♦A to cash the two good Clubs. There were still just 8 sure tricks, but on those 2 Clubs being cashed West had to make some painful discards. Here is the position as the last winning Club in Dummy was played:



West finally parted with their ♠J (as well as one of their winning Hearts earlier) to keep the ♦QT and the ♠A. Now a Spade play lets West take their Ace as well as their one remaining Heart for defensive tricks 3 and 4, but West is then endplayed from the ♦QT to allow for 3NT to be made. Well done! Yes, North can just keep a high Spade and ♦K for the last 2 game-going tricks, but the more elegant endplay aspect is something the author couldn't quite resist.

West discarding one of their winning Hearts as well as the ♠J ... and no Diamonds at all... was in fact a dead giveaway. The

true story however is that the student didn't absorb the implications of all that, and instead of playing a Spade at the critical juncture, simply cashed a high Diamond, hoping somehow that the ♦Q would miraculously drop. It didn't, so down 1 to lose 9 IMPS was the result, and the lesson later was likely to be a very lengthy one.

# Effective Slam Bidding and the Importance of Defensive Preemptive Calls

by Brett Kunin

I find it astonishing how often a one-session game has a few hands which create a theme for a particular subject. The hands in this article were all from the afternoon of "The Common Game" earlier in 2024.

I was playing with Dennis Thompson, and in the first round, board 20, with both sides vulnerable, Dennis, as West opened one Spade, and my RHO overcalled 2♣. Looking at ♠ K8643 ♥ 9764 ♦ -- ♣ KQ42, even though partner is probably short in Clubs, my hand is still worth a limit raise. It has a 5th trump, a void, and a working ♣K. As a 2♦ bid would have been an unconditional one-round force, most advanced players would call 3♦, which shows a Diamond singleton or void and a minimum of 4 trumps, which was my call. Partner now bid 4♣ showing a Club control, and based on the overcall, presumably shortness, and I called 4♦, which confirmed a void. Partner bid 4♥ as a slam try, and with nothing else to say, I signed out in 4♠. After some thought, partner bid 6♠, and after 2 passes, the overcallers' partner doubled, and all passed. The overcaller led the ♥K. Partner's hand was ♠ AQ10952 ♥ AJ ♦ AJ865 ♣ --. Dennis' auction was very thoughtful, he was attempting to elicit a 5♥ call from me, looking for a grand slam, which I denied by signing out. Notice the importance of promising a 4th trump, without which the slam would not have been a good proposition.

Dennis had 2 lines of play, either which would have been successful: 1. After winning the ♥A, he could ruff a Diamond, and lead the ♣K as a ruffing finesse (most likely losing), pitching his losing Heart, or 2. He could attempt to ruff out the Diamonds, hoping for the unlikely fall of the ♦K and ♦Q in 3 rounds, and on which there may be squeeze chances for an overtrick. Dennis chose the second line of play. Note that since the doubler is a competent player, and the auction screamed for a trump lead to stop the likely crossruff, there is a mild negative inference that trumps were 2-0, with my LHO holding both trumps (which was the case). In any event, Dennis could draw trumps and come to 12 tricks. He gets 9 Spade tricks by drawing

2 rounds and using the other 7 in the cross ruff. Add 1 Heart, 1 Diamond, and 1 Club for 12 tricks.

6S doubled and vulnerable making was +1660, with no other pair bidding the good slam.

<u>West (Dennis)</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East (Brett)</u>	<u>South</u>
1♠	2♣	3♦ <sup>1</sup>	Pass
4♣ <sup>2</sup>	Pass	4♦ <sup>3</sup>	Pass
4♥ <sup>4</sup>	Pass	4♠ <sup>5</sup>	Pass
6♠	Pass	Pass	Double
All Pass			

<sup>1</sup>- Splinter

<sup>2</sup>- Control

<sup>3</sup>- Void (in light of splinter)

<sup>4</sup>- Control

<sup>5</sup>- Signoff

The full deal:

Dealer: West	<u>East (Brett)</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>
Vul: Both	♠ K8643	♠ --	♠ J7
	♥ 9764	♥ KQ82	♥ 1053
	♦ --	♦ 1032	♦ KQ974
	♣ KQ42	♣ AJ9865	♣ 1073

West (Dennis)

♠ AQ10952

♥ AJ

♦ AJ865

♣ --

**2 boards later**, the importance of preemption was demonstrated. At unfavorable vulnerability in 1st seat, as East, I held ♠ 1084 ♥ 9 ♦ 10 ♣ KQ1097654. In this partnership, we play a gambling 3NT, which would show a running minor (no worse than AKQ10xxx). 5♣ is a bit too high at unfavorable vulnerability, so I opened 4♣. The opponents ended up in 5♦, which was a good Matchpoint score for us. It takes an unlikely Spade lead to beat 6♥. The hands were:

Dealer: West	<u>West (Dennis)</u>		
Vul: Both	♠ AQJ96		
	♥ 10432		
	♦ 7		
	♣ J83		
		<u>South</u>	<u>North</u>
		♠ K73	♠ 52
		♥ J5	♥ AKQ876
		♦ AJ6543	♦ KQ982
		♣ A2	♣ --
			<u>East (Brett)</u>
			♠ 1084
			♥ 9
			♦ 10
			♣ KQ1097654

The preemption beyond 3NT cramped the opponents bidding, and they were unaware of the good double fit, ending in the lowest scoring game contract. Again, good bidding and effective (but not suicidal) preemption are keys to giving the opponents the last (and often incorrect) guess at Matchpoints.

## ***Member Profiles***

### *Lew Lefkowitz*



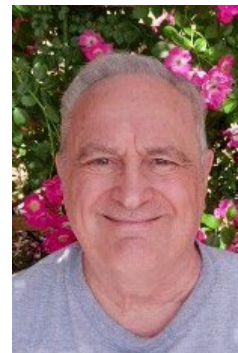
**I was always** a guy who liked playing card games, starting with Go Fish and War as a kid and graduating to Gin Rummy and Poker as a teenager, but only when I went to Rutgers Law School in Newark did I learn to play bridge. While the first semester was especially grueling (over 25% of the class would flunk or drop out, it was designed that way), I soon learned how to survive and even thrive. To show you what kind of student I was, we had Ruth Bader Ginsburg, one of the greatest legal minds of the 20th Century, teach us Constitutional Law and my best friend Lonnie and I would sit in the back of the lecture hall and play Battleship. I really regret not paying more attention to her then. We had a study group of six guys (there were very few women in law school in those days, while today they are a majority). In our second year, our class schedule was such that on two or three days a week we would have a class from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and then nothing for another four or five hours. We didn't need that much time for lunch or studying and Lonnie said our group should learn bridge and play it in the student lounge, which we then proceeded to do.

Lonnie had learned the game as an undergraduate at Harvard and taught us the rudiments. I picked up a couple of books and pamphlets on how to play bridge including "How to Play Bridge the Winning Way" by Charles H. Goren, which I still have. The one on leads still has a sticker from Bamberger's indicating that it cost \$0.25 (circa 1970). I enjoyed the game immensely: the thrill of making a game or slam contract, the challenge of making the right lead, the joy of defeating the opponents. Soon we had convinced our wives (most of us had married prior to law school) to learn the game too and we would have bridge nights with two or four couples every so often.

Alan, another of my friends, suggested we play bridge at a club. We went to an evening session at the Metuchen Bridge Club which was then held in The Old Franklin Schoolhouse dating from 1807. Of course, I had never seen or heard of bridge boards before, so like a fool I took the cards out of the board and started shuffling. The director had to come and restore order, but I got over my embarrassment and we were soon playing there on a semi-regular basis. We must have been doing okay, because it was suggested that we go to a tournament.

We soon found ourselves at a hotel in, I believe, West Orange, playing in a Regional tournament. As far as I recall there were no limited or beginner games in those days, so we played against some pretty advanced and experienced players. As future lawyers, Alan remembers that one of them was Amalya Kearse, a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and a world class bridge player. We managed to do well and ended up with a small trophy for the best novice pair, which I treasured for many years and that helped cement my love of the game. In the back of one of those old bridge pamphlets I recently found some of the old master point post cards that the ACBL used to mail out monthly. They showed that I had accumulated 11.14 masterpoints in less than two years, which were much harder to come by in those days.

Unfortunately my nascent bridge playing had to come to an end in the spring of 1972 following my graduation from law school, the dispersal of my group of bridge playing friends, taking and passing the bar exam, the birth of my first son (the day before the bar exam, talk about stress, but that is a story for another forum), and my entry into full time employment. After a year of a judicial clerkship in New Jersey, I ended up working for a law firm in Manhattan where I was expected to bill over 2200 hours each year, which meant very long work days (and some nights) with very little time for my growing family let alone any hobbies like bridge for 30 years.



In early 2002 I was able to move to a less demanding position timewise as in-house counsel at a large corporation. With my children now mostly grown, graduated from college and starting their own careers, I finally had time to pursue card playing again. I soon joined a bi-weekly Friday night poker game with some friends in Edison. A few years later we took a cruise with some friends. By happenstance it was a bridge cruise and the wife of the other couple and I managed to play a few times, which rekindled my interest in the game. I started following the bridge column in the newspaper again.

In the summer of 2013, I officially retired from my full-time position, although I continued to consult and work part-time for several years thereafter. My wife insisted that I couldn't sit around and do nothing, so I resolved to re-take up the game of bridge. That Fall I joined an intermediate class given at the local JCC/YMCA joint campus in Edison taught by Gil Hollander. After I had refreshed my bridge skills, I got one of my poker buddies, Michael Fried, who is an excellent bridge player, to go with me to the Wednesday afternoon duplicate game (non-sanctioned) then run by Al Steinberger at the JCC. Those games were fun and I met a number of people who would become friends and bridge partners, including Gil Meierhans, Ed Josell, Jacques Schmied, and Michael Brown. In addition to directing and playing, Al would explain hands, give us problems to solve and provide tips, which certainly enhanced my playing and bidding skills.

Al eventually suggested that we attend a sanctioned game that he played in: Jim White's Scotch Plains Thursday Afternoon Bridge Club. So, late in 2014 Michael and I went and actually placed, earning something like 0.25 masterpoints. Bruce Witzel, another outstanding bridge player and fine gentleman, often ran the games there. I highly recommend his bridge tips for novice players which can still be found by Googling Bruce Witzel's website. He told us that, as new players, the next session there would be free, so of course, we went back and to our surprise, we won, earning a whole masterpoint. Now I was really hooked and tried to re-join the ACBL. However, my old player number had been reassigned, literally, to a little old lady in Pasadena. So, I had to start all over, although I recently was able to get those 11.14 points from 1972 credited to my account.

So my bridge "career" was in full swing. Prior to the Pandemic I was playing in person at least three afternoons a week, Mondays at Bill's Bridge, first in Bridgewater and later in Hillsborough, Wednesdays at the JCC in Edison, and Thursdays in Scotch Plains. The other two weekdays I went to the gym for a good workout. I really enjoyed those Monday games with upwards of 20 tables including a non Life Master section. Gil, Ed, Jacques and I would drive together from Metuchen/Edison and kibbutz each other and good-naturedly tear each other's games apart all the way there. On the way back we would go over the hand records and try to see where we could improve. It made the game that much more fun and interesting. I miss that comradeship dearly with most of my playing being online now.

Needless to say, we were soon going to Sectionals and Regionals and thanks in part to my partners, we won several Gold Rush Pair events and had section tops at other events. Among the highlights for me were winning the District 3 NAP Flight C in 2017 and getting a stipend to play in the Spring NABC in Philadelphia, my first national tournament. Also, I placed first in the GNYBA Gold Rush Pairs in December 2019 on two different occasions with two different partners and winning free entries to future events, which due to the Pandemic, turned out to be several years later.

In February 2019, I was elected to the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Bridge League, so my maximum six year term will be ending soon. It was great to work together with disparate individuals to try to improve and sustain the game of bridge through some rough times. I appreciate all the hard work that so many people put in. While it is nice to be able to attend board meetings from my easy chair over Zoom, I do miss those great Essex County bagels that were served in the early years whose quality I cannot match where I live now.

I love the game of bridge for many reasons. One being the intellectual stimulation of the game itself; each hand presenting new challenges to solve and obstacles to overcome. I enjoy trying to figure out which line of attack to pursue, what the opponents are up to, and how best to play the hand. And the fact that there is always a next hand and more challenges so that you can and must quickly get over your previous mistakes. Bridge players are, for the most part, great people and I appreciate all who have offered words of encouragement, advice, and even criticism to me. I relish the many people I have met at the bridge table over the years, from incredible players to warm human beings to crazy characters, including those who were still playing bridge well into their 90's and even over 100, which gives me hope.

I became a Life Master in December 2020, a Silver Life Master in December 2022 and a Ruby Life Master in November 2024. But it is not the ranks that I have achieved, but rather the friends and acquaintances that I have made along the way that are most important to me. I want to thank all who have played with and against me over the years, but especially my regular partners, Michael Fried and Gil Meierhans, and my teammates Rich Helfman and Bill Levy, for putting up with all my shortcomings and character flaws and carrying me to where I am today. And I am eternally grateful to my wife, Merle, for suggesting I take up a hobby in retirement and indulging my passion for bridge.



## Youth Bridge

By *Barbara Clark*



**Rian Souffrant** started playing Bridge when he attended Oakwood Avenue Community School. He continued once he moved on to Orange Prep. Rian served as a mentor this summer working with Ms. Venable and the Oakwood students who traveled to the Youth North American Bridge Championships in Toronto, Canada. Rian is a kind, caring individual who demonstrates true leadership skills. We congratulate Rian, a rising STEM Academy 11th grader, for being selected as **this year's Sportsmanship Award winner**. Rian will receive a \$1,000 scholarship towards his college education.

## Spiral

by *Arnie Kohn*



**Often an auction** will go one of a minor by the opening bidder, followed by one of a major by their partner. Modern bidding deems it correct to support your partner's call with only three of their major if you have an outside singleton or small doubleton. Partner can discover your holding if they have invitational or game going values with a 2NT call. This is not a natural 2NT. Rather, it's a convention called "Spiral". Opener, with a three card trump holding and a minimum opener (that is, 11-13 points) responds 3♣. With a three card holding and a maximum opener (14+ points), they bid 3♦. With four card support and a minimum holding, they will respond 3♥; and with four in support and a maximum, they bid 3♠. This is a very useful tool in modern bidding.

### Unit 140 Top Masterpoint Earners at October Sectional in Edison

Player	Masterpoint Range		
	0 - 1500 MPs	1500 - 5000 MPs	5000 + MPs
Roy Samitt	12.47		
Tianyang Chen	9.92		
Charles Dvorkin	7.89		
Jeffrey Halle		16.37	
Bob Wang		11.87	
Robert Brolin		11.79	
Jiang Gu			32.77
Peter Stein			11.88
Ralph Buchalter			11.87
Alex Perlin			11.87



Kelly Kiefer, Anton Tevald, Joanne Moynihan, Dan Cooperberg

Peter Stein, Steve Arshan



## ***Big Games***

(Must be face-to-face to qualify)

**September 1 – November 30, 2024**

### OPEN

<b>75.01%</b>	Ann Huber - Bernice Haimson	Montclair Golf Club
<b>73.98%</b>	Otilie Bello - Lee Schwartz	Summit Area Bridge
<b>73.57%</b>	Bonnie Britton - Lawrence Lerner	Summit Area Bridge
<b>73.33%</b>	Jim McCarroll - Barbara Codispoti	Shadowfax
<b>72.34%</b>	Jaime Serrano - Ricardo Serrano	Summit Area Bridge
<b>71.36%</b>	Stephen Arshan - Ronald Kraft	Monroe Bridge Club
<b>71.17%</b>	Ashok Agarwala - Pradip Gandhi	Summit Area Bridge
<b>70.88%</b>	Andrea Granet - Stephen Granet	Summit Area Bridge
<b>70.83%</b>	Dennis Mondelli - Susan Jones	Stafford BC

### LIMITED/INVITATIONAL

<b>78.89%</b>	Michael Jeary - Laurie Smith	Rumson Friday
<b>77.27%</b>	Patricia Pritchard - Laura Haaren	Rumson Friday
<b>76.31%</b>	Norm Kersh - Gail Kornfeld	Westlake BC
<b>75.69%</b>	Herb Allen - Stan Dubroff	Westlake BC
<b>73.02%</b>	Jacqueline Lipper - Andrew Barlow	Shadowfax
<b>72.33%</b>	Jeannie Kelly - Eileen Elsas	Rumson Friday
<b>70.77%</b>	Rochelle Castellano - Gene Horowitz	Queen of Hearts BC
<b>70.72%</b>	Ann Hawley - Janet Rotchford	Rumson Friday
<b>70.63%</b>	Gautam Desai - Maya Desai	Shadowfax
<b>70.42%</b>	Ruth Bronzan - Charles Clark	Bill's Bridge
<b>70.40%</b>	Norm Kersh - Gail Kornfeld	Westlake BC
<b>70.00%</b>	Nancy Del Priore - Patricia Sullivan	Queen of Hearts BC



## Milestones

Changes in Rank: September 2024 – December 2024

### Emerald Life Master

Stephen Arshan	Jackson
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### Ruby Life Master

Kim Andriano	Manchester
Brian Dicker	Morris Plains
Audrey Egger	Princeton
Lewis Lefkowitz	Somerset
Marilyn J Millard	Summit
George Moehringer	Monroe

### Bronze Life Master

Warren Kaplan	Morganville
Joan Parks	Monmouth Beach

### Life Master

Warren Kaplan	Morganville
Joan Parks	Monmouth Beach

### Advanced NABC Master

Denise Fisher	Berkeley Heights
Kim Gimblette	Lakewood
Arman Tookmanian	Budd Lake

### NABC Master

Norman Ladov	Upper Montclair
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### Regional Master

Barbara J Alper	Bloomfield
Laurel Dobalo	Metuchen
Edmond C Fursa	Bloomfield
Kelley Kiefer	Wall
Thomas Lewis	Watchung
Prakash Malkani	East Brunswick
Robert Morse	Madison
Arline Oberst	Toms River
Steven D Rothschild	Monroe
Alan Talpalar	Short Hills
Hongji Wei	Jersey City

### Sectional Master

Stephen Felton	Princeton
Gerry Isaacs	Boonton
Jesse Rockoff	Rahway
Ricardo Serrano	Belleville

**Club Master**

Gautam Desai	Flanders
M Nancy Elia	Summit
Joanne Laforgia	Monroe

**Junior Master**

Maryann Baret	Rumson
Margaret Brooks	Montclair
Ellen Cohn	Manalapan
Stephanie Cuskley	Rumson
Nancy Geiss	Chatham
Ella Greenberg	Westfield
Danielle D Greene	Rumson
Archana Kapur	Basking Ridge
Teresa Kellner	Highlands
Thakor Patel	Kendall Park
Supriya Sharma	Holmdel
Alex Shih	Hillsborough
Bill Slezak	West Orange
Phyllis D Stanley	Chatham
Kathy Wolff	Basking Ridge

## 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](mailto:Julie17rae@gmail.com) of any deaths within our membership; indicate, when known, dates of passing and club(s) attended.

### **Mike Canner**

d. November, 2024

frequent player at Princeton and Monroe

### **Janis Charkow**

d. November 28, 2024

frequent player at Princeton and Monroe

### **Pete Jones Sr.**

d. November 18, 2024

frequent player at Summit

### **Griff Smith**

d. November 24, 2024

from New Providence

### **Endel Uiga**

d. June 21, 2024

frequent player at Shadowfax