

September Problem

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




<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 NT	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 NT	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	All Pass	3 ♥

<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
1. W	♦2	3	A	4
2. E	♦6	K	7	8
3. S	♣5	6	A	10
4. N	♠2	J	Q	K

You led the two of diamonds to South's four heart contract. Partner won the ace and returned the six, won by South's king. South entered dummy with the ace of clubs and led a spade to partner's jack, South's queen, and your king. Plan the defense.

As is our custom, a Raleigh Bridge Club free play will go to the correct answer from the RBC member with the fewest masterpoints. "Correct" is a relative term; just saying "I lead X," even if X is the winning play, will probably not qualify unless nobody else finds the play. You need to furnish some justification for your play. (On the other hand, a briefly or poorly stated but correct justification will fully qualify, if I can figure it out. This is not an essay contest.) I am the sole judge of what constitutes "correct." Entries from non-RBC members are welcome and may receive mention next month, but of course will not gain the free-play prize. Send answers to JohnCTorrey@aol.com.

August Problem

	♠A Q 5 4 ♥A Q 7 5 2 ♦7 5 ♣K 6			
♠J 7 ♥J 10 8 6 ♦10 ♣Q J 7 5 4 3		♠K 10 9 6 3 2 ♥9 4 ♦J 9 4 3 ♣8	♠8 ♥K 3 ♦A K Q 8 6 2 ♣A 10 9 2	
E-W Vul				
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♦	
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	3 ♦	
Pass	4 ♦	Pass	4 ♣	
Pass	5 ♣	Pass	4 ♥	
All Pass			6 ♦	
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
1. W	♣Q			


West leads the queen of clubs against your six diamond contract. Plan the play.

This is a **very** complex problem. The only thing I am sure of is that it is wrong to take a first-round diamond finesse. Over 90% of the time West will win. When West returns a spade, your three chances to dispose of your fourth club collapse into one: four-two hearts are no longer helpful, and you can't try the hearts or clubs before deciding on the spade finesse.

My own choice is to take one round of diamonds and lead a spade to the ace, to lead the second club from the dummy. In the above layout, East cannot gain by trumping, and you get to ruff a club in dummy. If West is short of clubs and ruffs your ace, you can still hope to squeeze him in hearts and spades, if the spade finesse was right all along.

John Cobb and Ashok Damle submitted well-thought-out (but different) answers. John Cobb wins the free play.

July Problem

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 ♣
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 NT	All Pass	2 NT

<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
1. W	♦10	2	9	Q
2. S	♥4	3	J	6
3. N	♥A	2	7	8
4. N	♣3	10	Q	4
5. S	♥Q	K	♦5	5

You led the ten of diamonds to South's 3 NT contract. South played on hearts, eventually giving you your king. Last month we filled in the hidden hearts and clubs.

The only successful defense is to cash the ace of spades and lead another to partner's king. South cannot discard a diamond and so must release a club winner. Partner exits in clubs or hearts and waits for his two diamonds tricks at the end.

John Cobb was successful in reconstructing the hands, but did not find the squeeze on declarer. The winner is Ashok Damle, who is living up to his new handicap.

This hand is based on one in Hugh Kelsey's excellent book, *Killing Defense at Bridge*. Kelsey's analysis is succinct and accurate. The clubs are solid because otherwise South would be developing them rather than messing with hearts. East has the king of spades because otherwise South would be developing *them* rather than messing with hearts. East has the ace of diamonds, because otherwise we can't beat it. Finally, South misplayed the hand (do you see how?) but would still make it against all but the very best defense.