

276. Mark time

By Ron Klinger

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

North
♠ 10643
♥ K1087
♦ KJ92
♣ 2

South
♠ A
♥ A65
♦ A4
♣ AQJ6543

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	2♦ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♦	Pass	6♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Intended as natural and a reverse and prepared to revert to hearts if North supported diamonds.

After 1♣ : 1♥, what is South to do? The hand is too strong for a 3♣ rebid, which would be non-forcing. South decided to bid 2♦, supposedly natural, strong and forcing. When North rebid 4♦, South had had enough and jumped to 6♣. This was an unfamiliar partnership. Unsure of what was going on, North let 6♣ go. West leads the ♠8. Plan the play. ([Answer on page 2](#))

Cast of characters:

Harry Kemelman (1908-1996), Professor of English and an American mystery writer, wrote a series of books which featured Rabbi David Small. The first was Friday The Rabbi Slept Late (1964) and the twelfth and last was That Day the Rabbi Left Town (1996) Mark Horton, bridge journalist, author, expert player, member of the International Bridge Press Association, commentator on BBO and on Viewgraph at major tournaments, editor/contributor to Daily Bulletins at bridge tournaments.

Rabbi Leonard Helman (November 30, 1926 – June 7, 2013, one day after Bobby Richman died) was the Rabbi for the Santa Fe Synagogue. The Leonard Helman Bridge Club was named after him. We became good friends from the late 1980s until 2013 and visited each other from time to time. He joined us on a number of our bridge holidays. We first met when I had a bridge game with him at the NSW Bridge Association. After that, I wrote a bridge column for a number of years and called it, Thursday The Rabbi Played Bridge. Rabbi Helman made a generous donation to the Australian Bridge Federation. That is the basis for the annual Helman Awards for youth players.

Mark Horton, bridge author, bridge journalist, bridge magazine editor and contributor, expert bridge and chess player, editor/contributor to Daily Bulletins at major bridge events, BBO and Viewgraph commentator at major bridge tournaments. He had a professional bridge partnership with Rabbi Helman and they have played in two or three events a year, at the ACBL Nationals and in overseas events. One of their successes was a win in a Polish Teams Championship. Mark Horton and Eric Kokish co-authored The Rabbi's Rules: Tips and Tricks to Improve Your Bridge Game (published November 1, 2013). The star of the book was Rabbi Helman. Today's deal appeared in the June 2020 issue of the International Bridge Press Association Bulletin and the report was written by Mark Horton.

Wednesday the Rabbi Played Bridge

by Mark Horton

'If Harry Kemelman had ever met Rabbi Leonard Helman, I'm sure the result would have been another book in his series of best sellers about Rabbi David Small. Anyone partnering Rabbi Helman was always happy if he had to locate the king of clubs, for when Leonard was at the table, it was invariably singleton offside, conforming to what was fondly known as The Rabbi's Rule.

Leonard would have enjoyed (this deal, from ALT Invitational IV, held last May):'

Dealer East : Nil vulnerable

North	
<i>Jeff Meckstroth (USA)</i>	
♠ 10643	
♥ K1087	
♦ KJ92	
♣ 2	
West	East
♠ J985	♠ KQ72
♥ J932	♥ Q4
♦ Q865	♦ 1073
♣ K	♣ 10987
South	
<i>Thomas Bessis (France)</i>	
♠ A	
♥ A65	
♦ A4	
♣ AQJ6543	

South was in 6♣ (see page 1 for the auction). West led the ♠8. The question was how to handle the clubs. Declarer has a likely loser in hearts and a potential loser in clubs. South increased his chance of success by playing the ♦4 to the ♦J at trick 2. When it won, he took a safety play in trumps, ♣2 to the ♣A. When the ♣K dropped, declarer cashed ♣Q, ♣J, ♦A, and played ♥5 to the ♥K. He cashed the ♦K, discarding the ♥6 and had 12 tricks, +920. Had the ♦J lost to the ♦Q, declarer would have won any return, say, a spade, ruffed. South would cash the ♦A, cross to the ♥K, play the ♦K, discarding a heart, and finesse the ♣Q. That would work if the diamonds were 4-3 and East had the ♣K doubleton. Note that if you finesse the ♣Q or the ♣J, you have two club losers.

At the other table:

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣ ⁽¹⁾
Pass	1♦ ⁽²⁾	Pass	1♥ ⁽³⁾
Pass	2♣ ⁽⁴⁾	Pass	2♦ ⁽⁵⁾
Pass	2♥ ⁽⁶⁾	Pass	2♠ ⁽⁷⁾
Pass	3NT ⁽⁸⁾	All Pass	

(1) Artificial, 16+ HCP

(2) Artificial, 0-4 zz points (A =3, K = 2, Q = 1)

(3) 16-19 with 5+ hearts or any 20+

(4) Artificial, 3-4 zz points (maximum 1♦ response)

(5) Relay (6) 4=3=3=3 or 4=4=4=1 (= means that precise pattern)

(7) Relay (8) 4=4=4=1, 4 zz points, no ace

Mark Horton: 'East led the ten of clubs. Declarer gave the Rabbi more cause for enjoyment by rising with dummy's ace. Declarer continued clubs and when East came in, he switched to a spade, but declarer won and was not hard-pressed to execute a show-up squeeze on West in the red suits for 12 tricks and plus 490, but a loss of 10 Imps.'

Problem for Tomorrow:

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

North

♠ AJ952

♥ QJ53

♦ K10

♣ AK

South

♠ K

♥ A982

♦ 98752

♣ J85

West	North	East	South
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Pass

Pass 1♣⁽¹⁾

Pass

1♥⁽²⁾

Pass 2♦⁽³⁾

Pass

2♥⁽⁴⁾

Pass 4♥ All Pass

(1) Polish Club: Weak no-trump OR 15+ points, 5+ clubs OR 18+ points, any shape

(2) 4+ hearts, 7+ points

(3) 18+ points, 3+ hearts

(4) 4 hearts only and minimum values for 1♥

West leads the ♦Q: king – ace – five. East switches to the ♥10. Plan the play.

Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

Stop killing buffalo for their wings!