



American Contract
Bridge League

Unit 174 Newsletter December 2018



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Please visit the Unit 174 Website (www.acblunit174.org) to view updated information about the activities in our Unit and at our Clubs.

President's Message

I would like to wish everyone in Unit a very happy and special holiday season!!! Enjoy your time spent with family and friends.

One of the things I did this year was play a lot more bridge at most of the clubs in the Unit. A couple of ideas came to me from thinking back on my year. It is fun to meet new people, to play against other teams and to have the chance to sharpen my game. One of my takeaways from playing in the clubs was how hospitable and welcoming everyone was to me as a new player at each site. It made me feel special and want to come back and play at all of them again.

Another benefit of playing more was the opportunity to play with new partners – some of them were much better players than I – and to learn new systems, conventions and strategy. All were understanding, patient and helpful and improved my game considerably (relative term). If you can, try to play with other partners to help improve your game. If your club has



a mentor/mentee game, get involved and play with a mentor or be a mentee to a newer player. It will definitely help your game.

The Lone Star Regional is almost here and I hope that members of Unit 174 will extend the Texas spirit of hospitality to our visitors to Houston playing in the tournament. The LSR is known for its great hospitality and I would like our reputation continue to grow. Please be welcoming and kind, thank all our visitors for coming to Houston to play and ask them to come back next year!

Again – Happy Holidays to all and look forward to seeing everyone at the Lone Star Regional!

Ken Hudson, President, Unit 174

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Board Business

The Board is continuing to work on ensuring our tournaments exceed our player's expectations. **Jack LaVigne** is working on two projects that should be completed prior to the LSR - a new sound system to be used for announcements and our speakers and new playing boards to be used for the team games.

2019 LONE STAR REGIONAL

Please make sure to mark your calendars for the 2019 Lone Star Regional (LSR) tournament to be held at the Westchase Marriott February 4-10. We are heading into the final planning stages – the schedule is in place, speakers lined up, event naming opportunities are available, advertising in our fabulous *Daily Bulletin* is being sold, and dining options are being finalized. Many thanks to those working so hard to make this LSR the best ever. Please contact [Ken Hudson](#) or [Lauri Laufman](#) if you have any questions, wish to purchase an ad in the daily bulletin or naming event or if you have any questions regarding the tournament.

BRIDGE TEACHERS GIVE BACK

Thanks for your response to the Bridge in Schools project. We currently have the teachers required for the two school classes. If you are interested in helping out with future classes that will take place after the summer, please contact [Kathleen Malcolmson](#) or [Betty Starzac](#). If you would be interested in becoming a teacher, please talk to Betty or Kathleen on how and where



to start. There will be a Best Practices Teachers workshop held just before the LSR on Sunday and Monday that will put you well on your way to becoming a certified instructor.

UNIT CHARITY SELECTED FOR 2019

Make-A-Wish, Texas Gulf Coast and Louisiana, was selected by the Board to be the 2019 Unit 174 charity. **Carol Winograd** helped **Nancy Strohmer**, U174 Charity Chair, tremendously with the research in making this proposal to the board. Wishes make life better for kids with critical illnesses. This simple, but powerful, belief drives Make-A-Wish and we, as a Unit, look forward to supporting this charity in 2019.

New Members and Rank Advancements

ACBL notifies us each month about the members new to our Unit and about those who advanced a rank as of the 6th day of the previous month. Below are listed those players who either joined our unit or advanced a rank.

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome the following players to our unit: **Meril R Allen, Gary L Eilrich, Nan Leavell, Cynthia Monroe, Cameron J Newcomb, Meynard M Nussbaum, Chakra Sowmy, Kurt K Zhang**

RANK ADVANCEMENTS

Listed below are the new Unit 174 Masterpoint Milestones reported by ACBL for March, 2018. An explanation of ranks may be found at www.acbl.org.

Junior Master (5 Masterpoints)

Ruth Gilman, Zaki Husain, Pam Johnson, Francie Knox, Michael Linkins, Judith Meer, Edna Rice, Linda Warren

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Jane Furrow, Talmon Gaston, Earl Godkin, Manju Manek, Pamela Martin, Frank Posada, Angela Shah, Linda Spiegelhauer, Gloria Ventress

Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Helen Burton, Barbara Sweeney, Susie Way, Wanda Wisniewska

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Leslie Brewer, Leila Gilbert, B Haznedar, Jane Lawson, Joan Slayden



NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)
Laura McWilliams, Gail Waldo

Life Master (124 in Unit 174)
James Cauble

Bronze Life Master (308 in Unit 174)
John Bedford

Silver Life Master (188 in Unit 174)
Kathleen Hurst, Anita Rothfuss, Paula Tolbert

Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!

174 Unit News

FABULOUS FALL SECTIONAL RESULTS

We had a great turnout at the Fabulous Fall Sectional, co-chaired by **Nancy Guthrie** and **Jack LaVigne**: 666 players earned a total of 3136.40 masterpoints. The table count was 656; the average number of sessions per person was 1.02. Thank you all for coming out to play. Unit masterpoint winners in the top ten were: **Jack LaVigne (first overall), John Erickson, Sally Wheeler, Buddy Hanby, Syed R Naqvi, Romeo Bodrogi-Podoaba, and Linda Elmore**. Click [here](#) for tournament results.

LONE STAR REGIONAL (LSR)

The 2019 Lone Star Regional will take place February 4-10, 2019, at the Houston Marriott Westchase. It's not too early to start planning with your partners and teammates. For the first time, the LSR will include two Mini-Soloway events. [A Mini-Soloway is a four-session, two-day event](#) and will replace Bracket 1 of the Bracketed Swiss events on Tuesday and on Thursday.

SPECIAL GAMES - EXTRA POINTS

January has been designated by the ACBL as Junior Fund Month. Most, if not all, clubs in the Unit are offering Fund games all month. Come out and scoop up some extra points for your success at the table.



SUPPORT ACBL WITH A SMILE

Amazon Smile, that is. Why not support ACBL when you shop for holiday gifts? Sign up at <http://smile.amazon.com>. It's free! Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible Amazon Smile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice...why not make it American Contract Bridge League Charity Foundation? For questions, please contact **Nancy Strohmer**, President ACBL Charity Foundation, nastrohmer@yahoo.com / 713-882-0626.

UNIT STaC RESULTS

A Unit STaC Week took place December 3 - December 9. "STaC" stands for Sectional Tournament at Clubs. Games during this week are tournament-rated, so masterpoints points awarded will be silver rather than the usual black. We had a nice turnout: 805 players won 2088.39 masterpoints. There were 659 tables in play. Unit masterpoint winners in the top ten were: **Gil Micheletti, George Wieland, Paul Stereff, Jack LaVigne, Dan Morse, Ida Morrow, Mary Pat Gentry, Raleigh Williamson, and Harold Copeland**. Click here for tournament results.

Club News

Below please find information reported to us by the clubs in our Unit. Please send your club's news to Jeff Kroll at texas.blue.hen@gmail.com. Information on all our clubs is available on the [Unit 174 website](#). Check there for the most up-to-date schedules, results and other news.

BRIDGE CLUB OF HOUSTON

Upcoming special games:

- ◆ Jan 1: New Year's Day Party. Food at 11; game at 11:55
- ◆ Jan 3: Daytime Mentor game
- ◆ Jan 21: Nighttime Mentor game
- ◆ Jan 24: Swiss team "8 is Enough"
- ◆ Jan 26: Annual Members' Meeting

CYPRESS NORTHWEST DBC

Success at the Sectional!

Congratulations to our club players at the Fall Sectional! Our club cleaned up in the 299r games. On Saturday, **Betty Westbrook** and **Ann Johnson** came in first in their section and second overall in the morning and third in their section in the afternoon. On Saturday afternoon, **Sally Reagan** and **Tom Russell** came in first in their section and second overall. On Sunday, **Mary Vagnoni** and **Gloria Ventress** came in first overall in the morning and third



overall in the afternoon. **Sally Reagan** and **Tom Russell** were first overall on Sunday afternoon. Go teams!

Free bridge lessons!

Starting in January 2019, the Cypress NW DBC will offer a free bridge lesson on Tuesdays! The class will begin at 11:00 and end at 11:30 so there will be plenty of time to get a spot in our Tuesday game. There will be rotating teachers, but the focus will be to introduce a topic and then look at example hands. We will also leave some time at the end of the class to review hands from last week's games that were particularly hard or interesting. **Jeff Kroll** will teach the first class on January 8. His topic will be loser on a loser play when declaring. In his opinion, routinely making that play separates good declarers from ordinary ones.

Please visit our [website](#) for information on our location, game times, and finding a partner.

Upcoming special games:

- ◆ Dec 20: Christmas potluck lunch at 11am. Please bring a side dish. The club provides turkey, ham, rolls, coffee and tea.

LSBC

The club will be celebrating its One Year Anniversary on Monday, January 28. The celebration will begin with a potluck lunch at 11:00 am and game at noon. The celebration will be in honor of Pastor Cindy Hinson and St. Paul United Methodist Church for a wonderful and successful year.

Games are Mondays at noon and Thursdays at 10:30am at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Conroe. There is a 199r game directed by **Rani Sachdev** on the third Thursday of each month.

Diamond Life Master **Jeff Kroll** gives a free lesson every Thursday at 9:30 am. We are currently about halfway through discussing the standard meanings of cue bids. Upcoming topics include a trip through the convention card, what all those boxes mean, and what logical choices need to be made. Problem hands from the students are always welcome.

Contact [Anita Rothfuss \(larryandanita@gmail.com\)](mailto:larryandanita@gmail.com) for partnership help.

Upcoming special games:

- ◆ Jan 17: 199r and Open game
- ◆ Jan 28: One-Year Anniversary Party (potluck and game)



WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY

Westside Bridge Academy (WBA) announced its November awards for success and participation at the club. The Most Masterpoint winners are **Joe Quinn** (Open) with 25.27 Masterpoints and **GiGi White** (I/N) with 14.26 Masterpoints. The Most Frequent players were **Dolores Aquino** (Open) with 22 sessions and **James Sells** (I/N) with 23 sessions. Congrats to all!

Upcoming special games:

- ◆ Jan 1: New Year's Day party (begins at 10:30am) and game
- ◆ Jan 9: Daytime Mentor game
- ◆ Jan 13: GNT qualifier (note date change)
- ◆ Jan 17-20: 299r Tournament
- ◆ Jan 18: Swiss Team "8 is Enough"
- ◆ Jan 22: Nighttime Mentor game
- ◆ Jan 24: Life Master party for **Winkie Roper** and **Marcia Lindsey**



From the Editors

We are excited to have the opportunity to send out the Unit 174 Newsletter. We have worked together for several years, identifying information that from the ACBL *Bridge Bulletin* that may be useful, especially to I/N players. The last two years of these monthly summaries are available [here, on the WBA website](#).

***Bridge Bulletin* ARTICLE OF THE MONTH**

Our favorite was **Pat Harrington's** column on page 44. This column covers planning on defense and the importance of thinking and planning at trick one. It is often, but not always, correct to return partner's opening lead. She points out that if you see a source of tricks in dummy, it's important to take all your tricks ASAP before they disappear on dummy's long suit. Speaking of disappearing, this was Harrington's last *Bridge Bulletin* column. Fortunately for us, she provides a link (path2bridge.com) to all her columns going back to 2009. We will miss her.

We liked **Lynn Berg's** column (page 45) covering hand evaluation and her discussion of narrowly limited, widely limited and unlimited bids.

We also liked **August Boehm's** column (page 52) on setting up long suits – even when they are awful. He also discusses hand evaluation (a favorite topic of ours) and transportation (figure out how many entries you need and how you can create them).



IT'S ALL IN THE NUMBERS

Bridge is a game of statistics. It's about doing what works most of the time, and not about double dummifying your (and your partner's) results when you made a reasonable bid or a reasonable play. Newer players have a tendency to worry about the worst thing that can happen, and then to make sure that it doesn't happen to them. Instead they should focus on what will probably happen. Below are some bridge statistics and examples, not necessarily to be memorized, but to be generally kept in mind.

How many clubs does partner have when he opens 1C?

While a 1C open can be made with only three, the odds of the expected club length for a 1C opener (using Standard American guidelines) are:

- ◆ 3 cards: 17%
- ◆ 4 cards: 26%
- ◆ 5 cards: 38%
- ◆ 6 cards: 15%
- ◆ 7 cards: 4%

How many cards does partner have in the minor he opened?

In most cases, the opening bid of a minor promises four diamonds or three clubs. Normally you open 1C with 4-3-3-3 or 3-4-3-3 distribution. The only time you would open 1D with fewer than four of them is with 4-4-3-2 distribution. You'll have this holding less than 3% of the time.

So, assume when partner opens a minor he has at least four of them. Yes, you'll be wrong sometimes, but not often. Even if you are wrong and partner does have only three, it is unlikely that partner will end up playing in his three-card minor suit. He will get out himself, the opponents will outbid him, or you will get him out through normal bidding.

How often will the opponents' trump holding split evenly?

An odd number of cards out is likely to split as evenly as possible; an even number out, with one exception, will split slightly unevenly. The statistics are:

- ◆ 2 cards split 1-1 52% of the time (this is the exception)
- ◆ 3 cards split 2-1 78% of the time
- ◆ 4 cards split 2-2 41% of the time
- ◆ 5 cards split 3-2 68% of the time
- ◆ 6 cards split 3-3 36% of the time
- ◆ 7 cards split 4-3 62% of the time



Example: opponent has preempted

Good players preempt in suits where they have most of their high-card points. If their points are outside their long suit, it generally means they have help on defense. Why should they preempt to go down when they have a good chance of setting whatever contract you bid?

If an opponent has preempted, you have better information than that provided by the standard percentages shown above. The higher an opponent preempted the longer his suit, leaving less room in his hand for other cards – especially high cards. Therefore you should normally play the partner of the preemptor for any relevant missing high cards.

In his "Mike's Advice" column in the December *Bridge Bulletin* (page 58), **Mike Lawrence** discusses catering to a possible bad distribution in one suit based on the fact that an opponent preempted in another suit. We commented on this column in our notes posted on the WBA website.

Example: restricted choice

A fairly common situation occurs when you are declaring in a nine-card fit: you are missing the queen, jack, and two little trumps. The proper way to play this (assuming no hints from the opponents' bidding) is to play one of your top honors first. If the two little cards come down, play your other high honor and hope the Q and J both come down (it never hurts to pray). You are hoping that they will split 2-2, which happens only 41% of the time.

However, if either the Q or the J falls under your first honor, you should make every effort to finesse against the opponent who didn't play the first missing honor. The principle of restricted choice suggests that the opponent who played the missing honor did not have the option of not playing it. His choice to play that card was restricted by the fact that it was the only one he had. Therefore, his partner has the other honor (along with the other small card). This finesse will work 2/3 of the time. The finesse will not work 1/3 of the time, when one opponent has the QJ doubleton. It's still the right play, but the right play doesn't always work.

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