



Unit 174 Newsletter June 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

There are a great many things going on in the Unit at the start of the summer. I would like to commend the Board and all the volunteers who helped the Unit put on two sectionals and the Bermuda Bowl Trials in a six-week period. Whew!

Kudos and thanks to **Daniel Jackson** and **Kathleen Malcolmson** for heading up the Big Switcheroo sectional.

By the time you receive this message, Longest Day activities will be well underway. It is heartwarming to see the amazing efforts put forth by our clubs and players to help combat Alzheimer's Disease. Thank you.

I have to give a pat on the back to **Jack LaVigne** for spending a day to inventory and organize the Unit's supply bins and crates. The end result is our supplies are set-up for easy access and have never been in better shape. His efforts will be appreciated by directors and volunteers at future tournaments.



I wish you all a great summer – wherever your bridge game takes you. We hope to see everyone at the Awesome August Sectional tournament, August 9–12, at the Westchase Marriott. Best of luck to you and remember to always be kind to your partner, opponents, directors and staff!

Ken Hudson, President, Unit 174

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Board Business

The Board held its annual planning meeting on May 7. Norm Gautier facilitated the meeting, which was attended by the entire Board, Nancy Strohmer and Gary Hercules.

The objective of the planning meeting was to set Board guidelines and expectations and also identify key areas of emphasis. Board assignment were made and agreed upon, we affirmed the targeted liquid asset level and reviewed our meeting guidelines and how our Board meetings are to be conducted. We agreed that membership attraction and retention continues to be a key area of emphasis and will be an agenda topic at every Board meeting. The planning meeting was a great way to kick off our new year and to ensure the board will be operating at full efficiency on behalf of all the members of the unit.

Planning is already underway for the 2019 tournaments. The 2019 Lone Star Regional will take place February 4-10, 2019, at the Westchase Marriott. The fall sectional will be a destination sectional in November, 2019. More details to come.

Lastly, we are looking at upgrading some of our tournament equipment. The Board is investigating replacing the stanchions that denote playing sections and where scoring recaps are hung. We will have stanchion models available at the August sectional for members' review and comments

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: Melba K Armstrong, Gail S Arnow, Steven A Bert, Alice M Busch, Mark Carrigan, Jyoti Doshi, Arvin Doshi, Aubrey M Farb, Joyce K Grindle, Alannah Hallas, Janice Hardcastle, Carolyn A Johnson, Michelle R Lieske, Karen Loonam, Virginia Lowe, Gail Lungaro, Ava Noble, Randall E Rollins, Rashmi K Shah, Jitendra D Shah, Fonda Tenenbaum, Jerome Tilles, Sally E Ward, Mary C Wilder, Aline D Wilson.

RANK ADVANCEMENTS

Listed below are the new Unit 174 Masterpoint Milestones reported by ACBL for April, 2018. An explanation of ranks may be found at www.acbl.org/masterpoints-results/masterpoint-ranks/

Junior Master (5 Masterpoints)

Zane K Bolen, Mike Davis, Catherine Eimer, Michelle Herring, Dennis B Malpass, Carol Paden.

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Changling Huang, Valerie J Salle, Barbara D Sweeney.

Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Ethel V Black, Carol Ferguson, Kathryn R Phillips.

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Linda B Lauga, Carmen Nash, Michael L Wexler.

NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)

Russell B Chandler, Patricia L Dunnell, Carol A Jenkinson, Roslyn L Wallace.

Bronze Life Master (311 in Unit 174)

Barbara A Sharp, Robert J Ziegler.

Silver Life Master (187 in Unit 174)

Goldie Rose

Ruby Life Master (176 in Unit 174)

Phyllis Carter, Bathsheba Perry.

Sapphire Life Master (51 in Unit 174)

Hugh Miller

Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!



174 Unit News

AWESOME AUGUST EXPERIMENTS

The [Awesome August Sectional](#) will take place August 9-12 at the Westchase Marriott. The August tournament is where we try out new concepts to see how our members like them. This year's experiments include:

- ◆ A \$5-per-session horizontal Swiss team event on Friday and Saturday nights.
- ◆ A 499r NLM Swiss Team event on Sunday.
- ◆ A single-session open pairs/team game on Friday afternoon. You will receive the higher of your pair score or your team score.

Light bites will be served in the Hospitality Suite between the afternoon and evening sessions on Friday. On Saturday, also between the afternoon and evening sessions, **Daniel Jackson** will run a "bridge lab." And... morning coffee will be offered at no charge!

Speakers and their topics include:

- ◆ "The Match Game" by **Betty Starzec** on Thursday
- ◆ Topic TBD by **Vinh Tran** on Friday
- ◆ "Range Stayman" by **Bob Morris** on Saturday

BERMUDA BOWL TRIALS

Dozens of Unit members volunteered to help out at the Bermuda Bowl trials in May, where 21 teams competed to represent the US in the 2019 Bermuda Bowl in Sanya, China. Kudos to **Phillip Grothus** who worked magic each day on the VuGraph and **Hans Strohmer** who worked hospitality each morning. Volunteers were organized by **Shawn Quinn**, **Nancy Strohmer** and **Betty Starzec**. Players said the hospitality was one of the best ever.

The final pitted the Nickell team against the Lall team. They played 120 boards over the last two days with the lead bouncing back and forth between the teams. However, after board 119 the teams were tied! Nickell was the ultimate winner.

BIG SWITCHEROO A SUCCESS

The Big Switcheroo Sectional, co-chaired by **Daniel Jackson** and **Kathleen Malcolmson**, was a big success. For this tournament, the pair games were played in the smaller room and the team games were played in the larger room. This "switcheroo" was generally well-received by the players and directors.



Overall attendance was 580.5 tables. A total of 2675.41 masterpoints was earned by 626 players. **Daniel Jackson** topped the Masterpoint Winners list with 29.75. Other Unit members in the top ten were: **Sally Wheeler, Buddy Hanby, John Zilic, Gil Micheletti, and Stephen Toplansky.**

BIG SWITCHEROO LECTURES

Gil Michetti presented "Doubles," which, for a little fun, concluded with the Striped Tailed Ape Double. This double is made when opponents likely have a slam. The doubler is trying to lure opponents into settling for a doubled game score, which pays fewer points than their slam.

In the example given, the doubler holds: ♠ Qxx ♥ - ♦ Q ♣ JT9xxxxx. The auction is

1H - P - 3H - P

4N - P - 5H - X! ! = please play here

Opponents make 7, for 850 (NV) or 1250 (V). However, had they bid even a small slam, they would have scored 1010 (NV) or 1460 (V). [Click here for the session handout.](#)

Daniel Jackson presented "Beating the Bots," a strategic look at how to beat the Bridge Base Online (BBO) robots. Practice makes perfect: in a 12-month period Daniel played 30,000 hands against the bots. He also keeps spreadsheets on the robot games and tries to identify ways to improve his results (Hint: sometimes it's okay to lie to your partner, if your partner is a robot...)

Daniel noted that Chris Compton mentioned playing 600 sessions last year when he won the Barry Crane award. At 24 hands per session, that works out to 14,400 hands! [Click here for the session slides.](#)

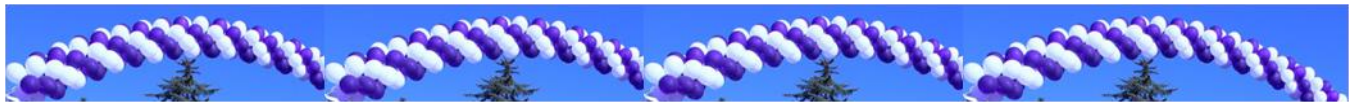
♣ Club News

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

Special games at BCoH (now located at 4876 Louetta Rd., Spring 77388):

- ♦ June 20 - Longest Day
- ♦ June 28 - Swiss Team "8 is Enough"
- ♦ July 4 - Hot Diggity Dogs at 11; Game at 11:55. Reservations required for both open and 199r games.



- ♦ July 5 - Daytime Mentor game
- ♦ July 16 - Nighttime mentor game
- ♦ July 26 - Swiss Team "8 is Enough"

LAKE CONROE DBC



The Lake Conroe DBC awarded its annual scholarship to **Jade Chang** (pictured at left with Club Manager **Gerry Earnest**) granddaughter of **Marilyn Jordan**. Jade will be attending the University of Houston and plans to major in Theatre, emphasizing lighting design technologies, and to minor in Dance. Over the last seven years, Jade has been in more than 30 productions. Most recently, at Kingwood High School, she directed "The Laramie Project" and performed in the "Little Shop of Horrors." In her senior year, Jade was president of both the Drama Club and the American Sign Language (ASL) Club.

LSBC

LSBC has several special games in July:

- ♦ July 9 - ACBL Instant Matchpoint Game and Gold Life Master celebration for **Sarah Hardin** and **Mavis Warren**. Pot luck lunch at 11am. Reservations are required.
- ♦ July 16 - Unit Championship Game
- ♦ July 23 - August 2 - all games held at Incredible Pizza in Conroe. The \$10 game fee includes lunch. Reservations are required.

To make reservations, contact **Mary McDonald** at maryemcdonald22@yahoo.com or 936-890-8593.

WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY

Westside Bridge Academy (WBA) announced its May awards for success and participation at the club. The Most Masterpoint winners are **Ariel Leibovitz** (Open) with 26.83 Masterpoints and **Paul Sinsheimer** (I/N) with 11.74 Masterpoints. The Most Frequent players were **Debbie Bellan** (Open) with 22 sessions and **James Sells** (I/N) with 18 sessions. Congrats to all!

Participation in the Longest Day fundraising efforts will take place on Saturday, June 23. There are six different fundraisers that day, including naming rights for the sessions, an expert panel and dinner, and silent auctions for the opportunity to play with an expert. Details can be found on the front page of the [WBA website](#).



Check out the [WBA Class Schedule](#) for information on:

- ◆ Beginning Bridge with **Terry Currie**, starting July 2.
- ◆ Commonly Used Conventions with **Terry Currie**, starting August 9.
- ◆ Learn to Play Bridge with **Gary King**, starting September 5.

WBA is hosting an Independence Day party on July 4 and a 299r tournament July 12-15.

Barbara Seagram, one the ACBL's most popular and successful teachers, will present "Defensive Strategy and Signaling" on Saturday, December 1. The \$50 registration fee includes both breakfast and lunch. Attendance will be limited to 160 individuals; reservations will be required.



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**

The June *Bridge Bulletin* has many wonderful articles and for us, it was a close call between two. We chose **August Boehm's** column, "F is for Finesse," (p. 54) as the article most useful for most players. He covers several subtle declarer plays that frequently come up:

- ◆ The difference between playing AKJTx opposite three small, and AKJTx opposite two small
- ◆ Why the 9 is usually the correct play when leading to AQ9
- ◆ Creating a plan when the bidding strongly suggests the location of a specific honor.
- ◆ Creating a plan when one opponent preempted. It is now more likely that the other opponent has the high cards and length in the other suits (those not bid by the first opponent).
- ◆ Trying to make the defender with the expected strength to play second, not fourth.

A close second was "Squeezes made easy - part 1" (p. 57) by **Marty Bergen**. Bergen lists the actions taken in executing a squeeze and explains what you are hoping will happen. Squeezes work when a defender can't protect everything he needs to. A pseudo-squeeze works when the defenders don't signal, count, or pay attention to discards and end up guessing wrong on what to hold.

Key actions for a successful squeeze:



- ♦ Cash all your winners in the "irrelevant" suits - those in which you are not getting any extra tricks no matter what the defenders do (or don't do).
- ♦ Keep communication between your hands open so you can reach a good trick once you have established it.
- ♦ Pay attention to discards in the "relevant" suits - those in which you might be able to get an extra trick if defenders are forced to guess.
- ♦ Rectify the count. Lose all the tricks you are allowed to lose as quickly as possible.

BRIDGE TIP: OPENING 1NT AND SUBSEQUENT TRANSFERS

1NT is the opening bid that most players learn first. We have described below ten points to ponder in your 1NT auctions. — 1 —

When you open 1NT, you have described your hand reasonably well, so your partner is now the captain. Partner will control most of the auction from now on. This is a basic tenant of bridge: once one partner has defined his hand reasonably well the other one is in charge.

— 2 —

You are allowed to open 1NT with a singleton A, K or Q, provided that you do not also hold a doubleton.

Jeff Meckstroth has been quoted in the ACBL *Bulletin* that opening 1NT with a singleton A is a losing proposition. So, consider opening 1NT with a singleton only when that singleton is a K or Q.

The South hand below is one we would open 1NT with a singleton K, hoping to find a 4-4 major suit fit with the lead coming to the strong hand.

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH

Pass 2♠ Pass 1NT
 Pass 4♥ Pass 2♥
 Pass Pass Pass Pass

N Robot

W Robot

E Robot

S texashen

4♥ S
 NS: 0
 EW: 0

Note the two useful Ts, which are worth a point between them.



— 3 —

It is safer to open 1NT when you have a singleton King or Queen in a minor. Partner needs a six-card minor to transfer you to his suit; he needs only a five-card major to transfer you to his suit.

— 4 —

Absent interference by the opponents, you must accept the transfer even if it's to your singleton K or Q. You made partner the captain when you opened 1NT. Partner can (and usually should) create a transfer sequence with 0 points. Often partner's hand won't take a trick unless the contract is played in partner's long suit. Almost 50% of the time, partner will have six high-card points (HCP) or less when he initiates a transfer. This statistic mentioned in an [article on the Bridge Guys website](#).

— 5 —

You may pass the transfer after RHO bids if you have a singleton or doubleton in partner's suit. If partner makes another transfer at his next bid, you must accept. Trust your partner.

— 6 —

Do not bid no trump following partner's transfer unless (1) you are prepared to play it exclusively from your own hand, or (2) the transfer is to a minor and you can count nine likely tricks.

— 7 —

If you do open 1NT with a singleton K or Q, 18% of the time partner will have exactly five cards in your singleton. Partner will have exactly six cards in your singleton 6% of the time. Playing in a 6-1 fit is often fine, while playing in a 5-1 fit is often dicey. The Bridge Guys' [Mathematical Probabilities and Percentages tables](#) have these details and more.

— 8 —

Super-accepting is accepting the transfer at the three-level, rather than the two-level: e.g., 1NT-P-2H!-P | 3S (super accept). Super-accepts can be dangerous, as 50% of the time partner will have transferred with six or fewer HCP. So you should have four of partner's suit and 18 dummy (support) points to super-accept. Consider the following when evaluating your hand in this situation:

- ♦ Aces are really worth about 4.25 HCP.
- ♦ Kings are worth a bit more than 3 HCP.
- ♦ Queens and jacks in suits without aces and kings should be downgraded.
- ♦ A small doubleton is now worth a point.
- ♦ Add a point for a decent five-card suit; add two points if it's the trump suit.
- ♦ Add for useful tens (those in a four-card or longer suit containing two other honors). You might add a point for AKT, even though it's a three-card suit.

In her article, "Losing Trick Count, updated - part 2," in the June *Bulletin* (p 30), **Jennifer Jones** recommends super-accepting with four trump and no more than six losers.



— 9 —

When partner super-accepts, a good-seven point hand is enough to raise. A good seven-point hand is something like an A-K in the trump suit, or K-J in one suit and K in another. You want your points to be in your trump suit. Queens and jacks pull their weight in a trump contract only if they're with a higher honor.

— 10 —

Strategies for success at IMPs-scored games differ from those for success at games scored with matchpoints. In IMPs scoring, the game bonus is big -- especially vulnerable. Stretch to bid game in IMPs scoring. At matchpoints, bid game only if you have a 50% or better chance of making it.



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