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American Contract
Bridge League

Unit 174 Newsletter

April 2019



This month's newsletter includes the sections listed below. Click a link to jump to the corresponding section. If your browser does not support these links, scroll down to find a specific section.

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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

As I look back to my first 3-year term in 2007-2010 as a newbie (and still working full time), to my recent 2017-2019 board appointment, and now as I begin this new 3-year term, I can't help but recall all of those who have mentored me along the way and who continue to be my trusted advisors. That list is a bit too long and I might leave someone off by mistake, but you know who you are, and thanks.

It is with pleasure that as President this year my first official post recognizes several others who give so much to our Unit and that I ask you to consider giving just a little of your time to volunteer, too.

I wish to first share my total appreciation of all our past and current board members, treasurers and the others who have taken on the responsibility of caring for our unit over the years for their hard work in continuing to make our Unit one of the best within the ACBL!



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Second, recognizing the recipients of our District 16 Unit Goodwill Award recipients, **Betty Freedman** and **Brigitte Sandifer** is in order. This award is intended to recognize and honor

District 16 players who exhibit a spirit of courtesy, kindness and tact at the Bridge table. These two women not only exceed in each of these traits but also continue to volunteer their time to the unit and our members. If I could “live by the example” of others in our bridge community, these two recipients come immediately to mind as well as our past recipients of this award – every single name on this list.

Third, I want to give a special shout out to our two outgoing board members. Our immediate past president, **Ken Hudson** took on the presidency with such flair and it seemed that there was no matter that he couldn’t handle in his typical patient manner and great sense of humor. I learned so much from him and can only hope that I can fill those huge shoes. **Betty Starzec** is a giant in a small frame! Our unit is so lucky to have her fill a board vacancy last year and even luckier to have her continue as Education Liaison this year. Expect great things on a larger scale as she now is our District 16 Second Vice President.

My hope this year is that you will consider giving just a little of your time to volunteer in some capacity and get involved with our Unit if you haven’t recently done so. Please reach out and just let me know where your interests might lie in addition to playing bridge as well as how much time you might be willing to donate, (be it just two hours per month or more) and I promise we will find you a fit. Trust me; there are many options and we always welcome new and continuing volunteers!

Lauri Laufman, President, Unit 174
llaufman@texas2211.com

Board Business

BOARD ELECTIONS

At its first meeting, the new Unit 174 Board elected the following members to leadership positions on the Board:

- ◆ President **Lauri Laufman**
- ◆ Vice President **Jack LaVigne**
- ◆ Unit Secretary **Kathleen Malcolmson**



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GNT FLIGHT B SUBSIDY INCREASED

Seven Unit 174 members played on the two Flight B teams that qualified to compete at the national level. (See GNT Success in the Unit News section). The Unit Board has approved extending the travel subsidy, which covered one team per flight, to cover Unit players on both Flight B teams. Nationals will be held during the Summer NABC in Las Vegas, NV.

FRAGRANCE-FREE POLICY

As there are still those that don't know or might forget about our Fragrance-Free Policy, the board will be more proactively publicizing this and asking the Directors at our events to help enforce it.

APPLE II DOUBLE-MATCH

Charity Chair **Nancy Strohmer** reported that Apple II doubled-matched the contribution raised by table fees at the most recent D16 Charity Games held benefiting the Make A Wish Foundation. Thank you, **Brigitte Sandifer!**

FINANCIAL VERIFIER TRANSITION

After six years of serving as our Unit 174 Financial Verifier, **Mike Hoffman** has decided to retire from this position. He did a fabulous job and we appreciate all that he did!

We would like to welcome **Patrick Tourais** who has agreed to take over the position. Patrick plays primarily at Kingwood DBC. When not at the table, he is most likely out on the golf course or hard at work as Treasurer of the Men's Golf League at Kingwood Country Club.

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: **Homer B DeLong, Linda K Drake, Rose M Force, Lindy Kahn, Carolyn I Keane, Susan H Keefe, Ryan Lee, Christine M Pillow, Michal Propas, Joy Pruett, Billy G Safford, Ingrid L Schulz, J Daniel Scott, Joan E Scott, Joseph Weiss, Mary L Wells, Mary E Wilson, Max Yu.**



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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)

Linda B Denison, Betty Simpson

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Charles Carson, Susan Carson, Sallie S Davis, David Feuerbacher, Carol Hasserd, Mary Matson, Don Mendel, Barbara C Nehr, Jeanne S Phelps, Jorge L Rodriguez, Henrietta Sasser, Sandra Weir

Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Thomas Cook, Sandy J Hill, George Marchand, Leah Rae Marchand

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Judith A Hughes, Janet L Manchee, Kathleen F McDougall

NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)

Babs Clingo, Walt Clingo, Susanne Dittmann, Corbin N Shouse

Life Master (126 in Unit 174)

Carol P Helms, Jeannie Stone, Michael I Windham

Bronze Life Master (306 in Unit 174)

Susan K Fenton

Silver Life Master (191 in Unit 174)

Herbert Warner, Mary J Watters

Ruby Life Master (175 in Unit 174)

Linda G Coapland

Gold Life Master (92 in Unit 174)

Jerry A Bowen

Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!



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174 Unit News

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Lauri Laufman has been re-elected to the Unit Board; **Cindy Cox** and **Clif Rice** have joined the Unit Board. Congratulations to all three! Thanks very much to departing Board members **Ken Hudson** and **Betty Starzec**.

The amendment to the Unit bylaws was approved; future voters for open Unit Board positions may select one, two or three candidates. Voting for less than three will not invalidate the ballot, but each candidate may be selected only once per ballot.

Kudos to **Betty Starzec**, winner of the Unit 174 Texas Star Award. This award honors volunteers who have served our Unit. **Betty Freedman** and **Brigitte Sandifer** shared the District 16 Unit Goodwill Award. This award honors players who exhibit a spirit of courtesy, kindness and tact at the bridge table.

ELECTION SECTIONAL RESULTS

We had a good turnout at the Election Sectional, co-chaired by **Sheryl Thomas** and **Nancy Guthrie**: 673 players earned a total of 3054.30 masterpoints. Thank you all for coming out to play and for your patience during the temporary power outage. Unit masterpoint winners in the top ten (there was a tie for tenth) were: **Joe Quinn, Shawn Quinn, Daniel Jackson, Victor Sitton, David Henke, Laura Jones, Jimmy Breihan, Tony Haddad, Ann McDougal, Lily Andre** and **James Andre**.

GNT SUCCESS

The district GNT finals were held during the Election Sectional in Houston. Unit 174 members played on three of four teams that won a D16 Grand National Team (GNT) qualifying event. The following players from Unit 174 were on teams that qualified for the national finals in Las Vegas:

- ◆ Championship Flight **Dan Morse and Tom Peters**
- ◆ Flight A **Lunhui Lin and James Zahn**
- ◆ Flight B **Thomas Rush, Wes Peirce, Suv Biswas, Robert Reich, Herb Kalman, Mike Fagan, and Arjune Bose**



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ABA/ACBL PAIRS CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

The ABA/ACBL Pairs Championship Game will take place at the Westside Bridge Academy on **Saturday April 27, at 1pm** (NOT at 10:30am as originally published). We expect a large turnout, as this is the only game at WBA that day and the game fee is only \$5. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

SPECIAL EVENT FOR BRIDGE TEACHERS!

All District 16 and Unit 174 teachers are welcome to join in a special teacher reception with **Robert Todd** on Saturday, May 11, at Westside Bridge Academy. Robert will be facilitating a course in the morning at Westside and then playing in the afternoon. The teacher reception will follow the game where Robert will discuss level-based teaching. Robert is an extraordinarily talented and sought after teacher as well as promoter of the game. As a regular celebrity on cruise ships, presenter for the American Bridge Teachers' Association and Trustee of the ACBL Educational Foundation, Robert will offer an insight into many aspects of teaching. Light bites will be served and a drawing will be held for some of Robert's great teaching materials. Please contact Betty Starzec, lstarzec@comcast.net, if you plan to attend.

NEARLY SUMMER SECTIONAL

The Nearly Summer Sectional will be held June 7-9 at the Westchase Marriott. Co-chairs **Sheryl Thomas** and **Kathleen Malcolmson** have arranged for terrific speakers. On Friday, **Betsy Dubose** will speak on "Opening Leads" and on Saturday, **Julie Halperin** will speak on "Reverse Drury." Don't miss it! [Click here to view the tournament flyer.](#)

SPECIAL GAMES - EXTRA POINTS

April has been designated by the ACBL as Charity Month. Most, if not all, clubs in the Unit are offering Fund games all month. A portion of the game fees from will go either to a local charity or to the ACBL Charity Foundation. Earn extra points for good causes!

May has been designated by the ACBL as Grassroots Fund Month. Most, if not all, clubs in the Unit are offering Fund games all month. Funds raised are returned annually to the district in which those funds were raised to support the Grand National Teams and North American Pairs. Come out and scoop up some extra points for your success at the table.



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♣ 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](#). Or, click a club name below to jump the club website.

BRIDGE CLUB OF HOUSTON

Upcoming special games and events:

- ◆ Apr 22 Member Appreciation Game (members pay \$5 game fee)
- ◆ Apr 25-28 299r Tournament. [Click here to view flyer.](#)
- ◆ May 2 Daytime Mentor Game
- ◆ May 6 - Beginning Bridge with **Daniel Jackson**
[Click here to view flyer.](#)
- ◆ May 20 Nighttime Mentor Game
- ◆ May 22 Workshop: Jacoby 2N & 3N with **Julie Halperin**
- ◆ May 23 "8 is enough" Swiss Teams
- ◆ May 27 Memorial Day Hot Diggity Dog Game. Food at 11;
Game at 11:55. Please bring a side dish or dessert.

CYPRESS NORTHWEST DBC

Free classes:

- ◆ Apr 23 Intro to Ducking
- ◆ Apr 30 Intro to Jacoby Transfers
- ◆ May Chapter 1 - Stayman Convention

Starting in May, we will be offering free classes using the ACBL reference: Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century. While you do not need the book to attend the class it is available online from Baron Barclay www.baronbarclay.com/ for \$19.95. You get a discount if you use your ACBL number. The plan is to cover a chapter a month. The first week will introduce the chapter, 2nd and 3rd weeks will be play of example hands, and the final week will be a brief review, quiz (with answers) and question and answer.



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Upcoming special games and events:

- ◆ May 7 2nd Quarter Club Championship game
- ◆ May 9 2nd Quarter Club Championship game

Looking for a partner? **Darrell Way** is ready to help. Email him at darrellway@yahoo.com
 Have questions? Contact Club Owner **Jim Warren** at jwarren760@gmail.com or 832-851-4745.
 Keep an eye on our webpage - <http://www.bridgewebs.com/cypressnw/> for more details about the classes.

LONE STAR BRIDGE CLUB

The Lone Star Bridge Club had more than 100 members join for the 2019-2020 year. LSBC continues to run games on Mondays at noon and Thursdays at 10:30 am. Diamond Life Master **Jeff Kroll** gives a free lesson every Thursday morning at 9:30 am. They will now focus on key points made in the ACBL *Bulletin* and topics and hands from the members. Topics and hands can be submitted directly to Jeff or in the box at the club.

Jeff's lesson on Common mistakes was recorded by **Mary McDonald**. She and **Doug Boswell** will put it on the club's website soon.

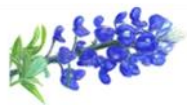
The board for 2019-2020 is:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| ◆ President | Mary McDonald |
| ◆ V. President | Anita Rothfuss |
| ◆ Secretary | Vicky Martinez |
| ◆ Treasurer | Helen Wren |
| ◆ Club Manager | Linda Sutton |
| ◆ Liaison to St. Paul | Vicky Martinez |
| ◆ Members at Large | Bob Frederick, Jeff Kroll, Bill Gemas
and Gene Levy |

The club is happy to announce that **Vicky Martinez** has joined the team of game directors for the club.

All games in May will be Junior Fund Games.

For more information about the club, visit our website at www.lonestarbridge.org.



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KATY DUPLICATE BRIDGE

Bridge west of the Beltway! Katy Duplicate Club has moved to 222 West Grand Parkway South, Katy, TX 77494 (next to Costco). Come and join us for bridge, beer and BBQ on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 12p. Please contact **Robert Lee** at relee@leekon.net or 713 557 4077 with any questions.

WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY

Westside Bridge Academy (WBA) announced its March awards for success and participation at the club. The Most Masterpoint winners are **Joe Quinn** (Open) with 26.11 Masterpoints and **James Sells** (I/N) with 14.81 Masterpoints. The Most Frequent players were **Joan Pleason** (Open) with 21 sessions and **James Sells** (I/N) with 27 sessions. Congrats to all!

Upcoming special games and events:

- ◆ May 8 Daytime Mentor Game
- ◆ May 11 Slam Bidding with **Robert Todd**, 9am-12pm
- ◆ May 13 - Learn to Play Bridge with **Terry Currie**
[Click here for information](#)
- ◆ May 16-19 499r Tournament
- ◆ May 28 Nighttime Mentor Game

The Robert Todd seminar on slam bidding still has some spaces left. Saturday, May 11th, from 9am-noon. \$50 to attend. Please email jimmybreihan@comcast.net if you wish to attend.

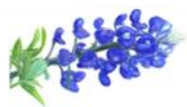


From the Editors

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**

This *Bulletin* is one of their best if not their best. It's a wealth of useful information, some of which we wrote up and can be found on WBA's website. Our favorite hand was the first one in Eddie Kantar's "Test Your Play" column on page 65.



This is not a difficult hand to play; it will make 6S if you can avoid losing two hearts. The opponents never bid and the DT doesn't tell you anything about hearts.

It all depends on how you play the hearts. You have T4 in your hand and KJ873 in the dummy. If West holds the AQ, you can't go wrong leading toward your KJ. If East holds the AQ, the only way to make 6S spades is to bribe him.

About half the time the honors will be split: one defender will have the A and the other the Q. The worst approach is to play off all your winners, leaving hearts to the end. By that time, any defender with a pulse will realize what is going on and will be prepared when you finally lead toward your KJ. You will be left with a pure guess.

You should always give your opponents the opportunity to help you.

A good approach is to lead a heart from your hand immediately -- on the second trick. A nervous West might think you are trying to steal a heart trick and rise with the ace, making your king good. An unprepared West might squirm and fumble around, letting you know he has the ace. (There's no need for him to squirm if he has the queen, as there's no reason to play in Q when he's looking at the KJ). You are not ethically allowed to play your partner's body language, but you can play your opponents' body language with a clean conscience.

A more clever choice--and the best approach--is what Kantar recommends.

Cross to the CA (not the Q – no point telling West you hold the CK), then lead the SQ. Then overtake with the SA. This gives West the impression that you hoped East would cover the SQ with the SK, and then decided to play for the SK to drop when East didn't cover.

Now lead a heart toward the KJ in dummy. You are hoping West will rise with the HA, thinking his partner will make the SK for the setting trick. If West does not rise with the A, insert the J.

It's true this might not work, but it will work a lot of the time and you'd have given it your best shot.

FORCING... PASS?

"Players don't make passes at..." Oh, wait, that's something else. At the bridge table, players can and do make passes, and some of them require partner to take action.

When we make a forcing pass we are telling partner that he must decide whether to defend or bid on. If partner wants to defend, partner should double. If partner wants to bid on, then partner does so—usually (but not always) in our agreed-upon suit.



In the situations below, partner's pass is forcing. You must take some kind of action.

They sacrifice against your game

You and partner bid to game voluntarily based on playing strength (as opposed to preempting your way there), your left-hand opponent (LHO) bids, and partner passes. You must double (to defend) or bid on.

When we do bid a suit other than our-agreed upon suit, it's a cue bid showing slam interest. We play cue bids above game level as showing first-round control. Some play them as first or second round control.

They interfere after you open 2C

We like to interfere in the direct seat when we have a decent suit to interfere with. It will often make the auction harder for the opponents, and since it's likely that we will end up on defense, partner will know what to lead.

Since opponents like to do the same thing, we must have a way to counter (or at least address) their actions. So, over the direct interference bid after we open 2C, we pass when we have at least a K (that's the positive call); it's a forcing pass. If we double we deny an A or K (that's the negative call). If they double the 2C bid (which we would do with good clubs), then redouble is the negative call. Pass is still the positive (and forcing) call. This approach is based on Larry Cohen's system; his Two Club opening article can be found at <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/two-club-opening>.

However, Bridge is an evolving game. **Betty Starzec** notes that the growing modern style by top players is that a pass says you don't have anything and a double says you have something. Clearly, you and your partner need to have an understanding on this topic. You should also understand how your opponents handle this situation.

They sacrifice in slam

Sometimes opponents will bid all the way to the six-level to sacrifice. In the direct (after the sacrifice by opponent) seat, a pass shows first-round control of the opponents' suit and asks partner to bid small or grand slam based on partner's hand strength.

Note: There are some aggressive players who play that any pass over an opponent's pre-empt is a forcing pass. We are not that aggressive.

Once either hand doubles, partner should leave it in unless he holds a hand so distributional that the doubled contract is likely to make. Forcing passes should be discussed with your



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regular partner; not everybody plays them the same way. Absent discussion, the approaches

above are probably familiar to most experienced players. For more information, check out August Boehm's column on page 65 of the April *Bulletin*.

COMMON MISTAKES AT THE TABLE

Jeff recently taught a class at Lone Star College on common mistakes made at the bridge table. The class was recorded in two sections and can be viewed on YouTube:

- ◆ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9pk8yexGfA>
- ◆ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58SdsRebUvE&t=1738s>

Jeff Kroll & Sam Khayatt
texas.blue.hen@gmail.com