



American Contract
Bridge League

Unit 174 Newsletter December 2019



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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

Bridge is a game of partnerships and teams. It challenges our minds and sometimes our patience. It brings joy and frustrations, usually the latter when we end up in the wrong contract (among other things). I love the game and yes, being of a social nature also enjoy my time at the table visiting with a vast array of others... and sometimes making a new friend along the way.

As you might have noticed, my messaging as president this year has tended to focus on being kind, welcoming and promoting goodwill. Why? Very simply, by all of us practicing these three actions – chances are our bridge family will continue to thrive amidst the downward trend we continue to hear about elsewhere.

This month, I really enjoyed the messaging provided by a movie, *Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, about Mr. Rogers, and the *42nd Annual Kennedy Center Honors* which recognized the TV show *Sesame Street*.



Our bridge clubs and tournaments are much like *Sesame Street*, or at least that is my hope. In the words of characters Big Bird, Abby and Grover when being interviewed recently “Whether you’re a grouch, a big bird, a fairy or a snuffleupagus – all of these people, they are our friends!”

And Mr. Rogers, he always seemed to know exactly how to help and what to say to make others have a brighter day... “Imagine what our real neighborhoods would be like if each of us offered, as a matter of course, just one kind word to another person.” Won’t you be my (bridge) neighbor?

In February, we will be hosting the Lone Star Regional with the mindset that we want everyone to make it their favorite regional. On Tuesday and Saturday mornings we will be offering a free 0-5 supervised game to welcome and support our newer tournament players.

Help us welcome everyone and make them feel like our (bridge) neighbors.

Lauri Laufman, President, Unit 174

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Board Business

LONE STAR REGIONAL (LSR) 2020

Lone Star Regional (LSR) 2020 is just around the corner...

I/N Ambassadors Needed

We are looking for volunteers to fill 14 slots as Ambassadors to play with a First-Time player. The first timer will most likely be someone who has taken some lessons and/or previously played bridge socially or at a club but not a tournament. We want to have one volunteer available should a first timer need a partner – if you enjoy meeting new people, playing bridge and would like to help out – please contact **Cindy Cox** (BridgeCindy5@gmail.com)

Aces & Knaves

Please invite your friends and family to come enjoy viewing the movie, *Aces & Knaves* on Saturday at 7pm for free in the Grand Pavilion. It is aimed not only at not only at bridge enthusiasts, but also at those who have never picked up a hand. It mixes vintage stills and old



movie footage with dramatic coverage of international tournaments. This hour-long film zooms in on the players, the scandals, and the intense competition inside the world of bridge.

Spotlight Club I/N Offerings

Attention teachers and club managers! We would love to promote your classes and club games designed for newer players. Please provide any related flyers so we can display them at these special events. And, thank you in advance for helping to spread the word about the special 0-5 game, movie and Ambassador needs to your students and I/N population.

WELCOME BACK, NANCY STROHMER

The Unit 174 Board of Directors is pleased to announce that **Nancy Strohmer** graciously agreed to fill the board vacancy created by **Daniel Jackson's** recent resignation and move to San Antonio. Thanks Nancy for your willingness to once again serve on the board!

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: **Judith S Barr, Druann Bauer, Kathryn H Davis, Gary L Eilrich, Gerald Fritz, Anita L Goldman, Pamela A Greenwood, Marilyn M Gregg, Rosalie A Guyer, Eugene Hornstein, Nancy S Levicki, John G McCune, Loretta S Phillips, Maria Godzina, Tara Samson-Williams, Tanya Slayton, Mark Talieh, Jacob M Wheelock, Douglas White, Carolyn M Worsham, Nancy L Wright, Stuart E Wright**

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)

Elizabeth B Fischer, Sherry Klumpp, Sharla Papitto, Barbara Sklar, Daniel P Urban

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Richard Napientek, Edward Stollenwerck



Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Janice Hardcastle, Joan M Pratka, Joy Pruett

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Hasin F Jinna, William M Petersen, Sarah S Stephens, Carol H Teufel, David E Vaughn,
Wanda Wisniewska, Peggy A Woods

NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)

Dennis D Beckman, Phyllis A Dillard, Kathleen F McDougall

Bronze Life Master (297 in Unit 174)

B J Renshaw, Gail Wood

Silver Life Master (188 in Unit 174)

Jack Dean, Jeanette M Dean

Gold Life Master (91 in Unit 174)

Kay K Humphries

Diamond Life Master (46 in Unit 174)

Donald R White

Grand Life Master (10 in Unit 174)

Ira S Chorush

Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!



174 Unit News

GRAND NATIONAL TEAMS

It's not too late for Flight B (0-2500) and C (0-500 NLM) teams to qualify at the unit level for Grand National Teams (GNT). Super Flight and Flight A (0-6000) teams are not required to qualify. Qualifying games are offered at the following times and locations:

- ◆ Dec 29 Westside Bridge Academy
- ◆ Jan 12 Clear Lake Bridge Club
- ◆ Jan 26 Westside Bridge Academy
- ◆ Feb 1 Bridge Club of Houston
- ◆ Feb 16 Clear Lake Bridge Club
- ◆ Feb 23 Westside Bridge Academy

Qualifiers are invited to play in the District qualifier games on during the Election Sectional, April 3-5, 2020.

[Click here](#) for more information.

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.

LONE STAR REGIONAL, FEBRUARY 3-9, 2020

Planning for our Unit's flagship event is well underway, with events for all! In addition to a full schedule of games, we are pleased to offer the following:

Supervised play: Tuesday, February 4 & Saturday, February 8

On Tuesday and Saturday mornings, our newcomers (those with 0-5 masterpoints) can play in a free supervised play game.

I/N Reception: Tuesday, February 4

I/N players - those with fewer than 300 masterpoints - are invited to a reception on Tuesday after the afternoon session. Details to be provided at a later date.



Director's Refresher Class: Sunday, February 2

Brush up on the basics or clarify the handling of a complex situation. The fee is \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. Please contact **Lauri Laufman** (llaufman@texas2211.com) to register. The class runs from 10 - 4.

Aces & Knaves: Saturday, February 8

We are planning a FREE screening of *Aces & Knaves* at 7pm on Saturday evening, thanks to underwriting by the ACBL Education Fund, District 16 and Unit 174. This film "zooms in on the players, the scandals, and the intense competition inside the world of bridge – the most complex mind sport ever invented." For a sneak peek:

<https://www.acesandknavesthefilm.com>.

As the movie is just under an hour long and the night will still be young, we invite you to stick around for our Evening Zip KO at 8:30pm! For those of you who have never played, it is a fast-moving knock-out team game and quite fun. Cost to enter will be only \$5 per person.

Education Open House: Saturday, February 8

The showing of *Aces & Knaves* is being marketed by our unit board to bring in interested individuals to see what the bridge is all about. The film features a quick-paced explanation of the game, lively interviews with the world's superstars and a segment on bridge and brain science. Elite cheating of the game is also discussed. Friends and relatives of current players are invited plus dedicated marketing in the Houston area is being done by the unit board.

Teachers are invited to display their class schedules and meet these potential students on Saturday evening. Offering the ability to immediately sign up for classes is the key to making this marketing effort successful. If you are a teacher, please join in this marketing effort helping to grow our game. If you have any questions, you can contact **Lauri Laufman** at llaufman@texas2211.com or **Betty Starzec** at lstarzec@comcast.net.

See you at the movies!

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 Pot Luck. Food at 11:00. Game at 11:55.
- ◆ Jan 2 Daytime Mentor Game
- ◆ Jan 11 Annual Members' Meeting. Members pay \$5.
- ◆ Jan 16 Swiss Team "8 is Enough"
- ◆ Jan 20 Evening Mentor Game
- ◆ Jan 23-26 [499r/NLM Tournament](#)

CYPRESS NORTHWEST DBC

Our games start promptly at noon, are stratified, and come with a game summary at the end of the game.

Also, join us on Tuesdays for a free class before the game. **Dan Egner** is going to focus next on techniques for defense. You don't want to miss the lively discussion about recent hands and the different methods taught through time!

Details about our location, getting questions answered, or finding a partner: can be found at the club website: <http://www.bridgewebs.com/cypressnw>

Questions about our club? Contact **Jim Warren** at jwarren760@gmail.com.

Upcoming special games:

- ◆ Jan 7 First Quarter Club Championship
- ◆ Jan 9 First Quarter Club Championship



KATY DUPLICATE BRIDGE

New Location! Starting Jan. 15, 2020 we will be playing at a NEW location:

SPRING CREEK BBQ

21000 Katy Freeway, Katy, Texas.

Westgreen Blvd, and I-10

Phone (281) 829-0359

Come join us for lunch, bridge or both!

Fee: \$5 (no charge if you purchase a meal)

For info or partnership assistance, contact: Bob Lee at relee321@comcast.net or by text at 713-557-4077.

LONE STAR BRIDGE CLUB

Upcoming special games:

- ◆ Dec 23 Unit Club Championship
- ◆ Dec 26 Club is CLOSED
- ◆ Dec 30 Local Charity Game for St. Paul
- ◆ January All Games in January will be Junior Fund Games

Upcoming free lessons with DLM **Jeff Kroll**:

- ◆ Jan 14, 9:45am Evaluating card combinations in the bidding, and playing them as declarer
- ◆ Jan 20, 11:00am "Last Train." Making a clever cue bid when looking for slam

WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY

Westside Bridge Academy (WBA) announced its November awards for success and participation at the club. The Most Masterpoint winners are **Timo Erkoc** (Open) with 43.12 Masterpoints and **Paddy Fiorino** (I/N) with 16.72 Masterpoints. The Most Frequent players were **James Sells** (Open) with 25 sessions and **Paddy Fiorino** (I/N) with 23 sessions. Congrats to all!

Upcoming special games:

- ◆ Jan 2-5 299r/NLM Tournament
- ◆ Jan 8 Daytime Mentor Game
- ◆ Jan 10 Swiss Team "8 is Enough"
- ◆ Jan 21 Evening Mentor Game



Upcoming classes (start dates):

- ◆ Jan 6 Beginning Bridge, with **Joyce Ryan**
- ◆ Jan 6 Beginning Bridge, with **Terry Currie**
- ◆ Jan 8 Learn to Play Bridge, Part 2, with **Gary King**
- ◆ Jan 8 Play of the Hand with **Terry Currie**
- ◆ Jan 9 Defense with **Terrie Currie**
- ◆ Jan 11 Supervised Group Study for the Flight B Player with **Gary King**
- ◆ Jan 15 Bidding after NT Opening with Joe Quinn

[Click here](#) for details on all the classes.

WBA has supervised play Tuesdays starting at 2:15pm and Thursdays starting at 10:30am.

WBA is hosting two seminars by **Robert Todd**:

- ◆ Mar 6. 3:00-6:00pm Defensive Strategies
- ◆ Mar 7, 9:00am-noon Modern Preempts

Space is limited. To reserve your spot email jimmybreihan@comcast.net. Make check payable to WBA. \$60 for one session or \$100 for both.



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 few years of these monthly summaries are available [here, on the WBA website](#).

Bridge Bulletin ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

We chose Lynn Berg's "Playing in a minor key – part 2" on page 47. We agree with the following points she makes:

- ◆ Playing a short club is not a worthwhile treatment. As Berg points out, this is an issue only when your distribution is 4-4-3-2 and you don't have a 1N or 2N opener. That doesn't come up often. Furthermore, opening such a hand 1D is



unlikely to result in a diamond contract. We will find any 4-4 major fit and likely end up in notrump without a 4-4 major fit.

- ◆ A 1C opener is made with three clubs only about one-sixth of the time. Since minor suits contracts are a last resort, we rarely will play in clubs despite opening 1C. But for planning purposes, we should realize that the 1C open has four or more clubs the vast majority of the time
- ◆ We like to play inverted minors and we show our stoppers up the line starting with opener's second bid. We like to bid notrump as long as we have both major suits stopped even without a stopper in the other minor. Course that is up for partnership agreement.
- ◆ When the opponents interfere with your 1-minor bid, For example, partner opens 1D and righty jumps in with 1H. We like to play what Berg suggests:
 - 2D is weak with four diamonds
 - 3D is weak with five diamonds



SUIT ON THE SIDE, ACE ON THE BOARD

You are East, playing a pushy 4H heart contract. They lead the the HJ. The key to this (and lots of hands) is how you will play your long side suit (clubs, in this case).

Do not touch the spades, for the following reasons:

- ◆ The SA might be your only entry to the clubs; don't waste it.
- ◆ The defense might attack spades and set up your T.
- ◆ If you attack spades, you will always lose a spade unless the QJ is doubleton.

N Deals None Vul	♠ Q5 ♥ 532 ♦ AJ732 ♣ A97	1
♠ A108 ♥ 86 ♦ 1085 ♣ K10432	♠ J942 ♥ J107 ♦ KQ96 ♣ J8	♠ K763 ♥ AKQ94 ♦ 4 ♣ Q65
EW 5♥; EW 5♠; EW 3♣; EW 1N; NS 1♦; Par -450		

So, pull trump. Don't make the novice mistake of trumping diamonds in the long trump hand. Those trumps were always going to be good and by needlessly trumping with them, you could lose control of the hand.

After pulling trump, you have two plausible lines of play. One is clearly superior to the other.

Line 1

Immediately play a small club towards the K, T finessing the J. The advantage to this line is that you preserve the SA as an entry to the clubs later. You will take two spades, five hearts and four clubs – making five. This is the best line.

Line 2

Use your SA as an entry to the board. The advantage of this is that you get to lead toward the CQ. North may pop up with the ace solving all your problems, or either defender might have a stiff CJ.

In this case, your Q will hold. Once the CQ of clubs takes the trick, you know that the CA is behind the CK (or South would have taken your Q). So, lead low towards the K T. In this case the CJ is played by force. You put in the CK. If South had three clubs to the J (and so played low), you would insert the 10 and the Ace would come down as it's doubleton.

A strong defender will let you win your CK and save his ace for the third round, when you will no longer have an entry to the rest of your clubs since your SA has been played. You will take two spades, five hearts and two clubs – down one.



A weaker defender will win the second club trick, and then you'd still make five. But as we have mentioned before, you will better your game when you play with and against better players.



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