



American Contract  
Bridge League

# Unit 174 Newsletter January 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](http://www.acblunit174.org)) to view updated information about the activities in our Unit and at our Clubs.

## President's Message

The 2019 LONE STAR REGIONAL tournament is almost here. I hope that by the time you read this, all your plans will have been finalized and you are getting excited to play in what we feel is the best Regional Tournament around. We have been working hard over the last few months and I can't wait to see our plans come to life. Our goal is again to exceed 3000 tables and to exceed our players' expectations. We are not scheduled against the Super Bowl this year, so we hope our Sunday numbers will be up from last year.

Logistical information about the tournament – speaker topics and session schedules – can be found in the [Unit News](#) section, but I want to take this opportunity to highlight a few things.

On Monday, the first session begins at **1pm**, not 2:30pm.

**Bill and Nancy Riley** and their outstanding team of volunteers will be running our fine partnership desk, and they are ready to help all comers. We always get kudos from our Unit members as well as our wonderful visitors for our results-oriented partnership desk! Bill and



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Nancy work very hard to provide excellent service, so if you haven't firmed your plans for partners and teammates, they will be ready to help!

The hospitality desk will once again be "command central" for information about the tournament. Stop by to receive your hospitality gifts (insulated lunchbox, appliqué, pencil and clip), to sign up for labels or to grab a piece of candy on your way to the table. And return there afterwards to collect your section top award.

**Nancy Guthrie** and her team are ready to welcome Intermediate / Newcomer (I/N) players and provide information they need to have a successful tournament. On Sunday, we will award a trophy for the player (or pair) who wins the most points in I/N sessions.

**Betty Starzec** has put together a fantastic schedule of speakers and topics. Our 2018 Teacher of the Year **Gary King** kicks off the speaker series on Monday at 12pm (not 2pm) with "The Secret of the Game." In addition to speakers presenting in the usual 2pm slot on Tuesday - Saturday, we have a special speaker at 8:45 on Saturday morning. Hall of Fame member **Eric Rodwell** will host a Q & A session. Breakfast will be served before the session, so come early, get a breakfast taco and have your bridge questions answered.

We are pleased that the new ACBL President, **Russ Jones**, will be at the tournament beginning on Tuesday. Let's give him a big Texas welcome. We will be holding an evening reception for him Thursday after the 2:30 game in Suite 1070/1072 with light snacks. Make plans to come, say hello and enjoy.

See you all at the LSR!

**Ken Hudson, President, Unit 174**

[kghudson@comcast.net](mailto:kghudson@comcast.net)

Cell: 713-204-5505

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## Board Business

### TOURNAMENT ENHANCEMENTS

The Board is continuing to work on ensuring our tournaments exceed our player's expectations and tasked our supply coordinator, **Jack LaVigne** with two projects that will be implemented at 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.

### UNIT 174 ANNUAL MEETING

The Unit 174 Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Sunday April 7, 2019 between the morning and afternoon sessions of the Election Sectional held at the Marriott Houston Westchase located at 2900 Briarpark Drive. Also included at this meeting will be a vote on a proposed bylaw change.

The proposed change will allow a member in good standing to vote for 1, 2 or 3 candidates and not be required to cast a vote for each vacancy in order for the ballot to be counted.

The members of Unit 174 will have an opportunity to vote for three members of the Board of Directors April 5-7, 2019, during the Election Sectional at the Marriott Westchase. Members can vote, either in person, early online, or by absentee ballot. For a ballot to be counted, a member must vote for exactly three candidates, which can include write in candidates.

Our slate of six candidates: **Debi Balter, Cindy Cox, Lauri Laufman, Paul Nimmons, Clif Rice & Thomas Rush.**

Information on each candidate and detailed instructions regarding early online or absentee voting, is posted on the unit website, and will be available at the Houston Lone Star Regional in February and printed in the March/April *Scorecard*.

### 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: **Vicki S Bell, Nancy Blackwell, Sandy Bridges, Herman N Burton, Robert C Crawford, Jewel L Dahl, Kartik Dixit, Betty J Friedman, Leon Gertsch, Joyce K Grindle, Marian Harrison, Art Jacikas, Marcie Jacikas, Sharon Jenkins, Bill Jenkins, Subhash Jhaver, Subhash Jhaver, Beverly J Leger, Leslye C Menerey, David L Mordy, Kathleen A Naylor, Abhijit Sarkar, Peggy Smith, Carole J Smith, Amy Xu.**

### **RANK ADVANCEMENTS**

Listed below are the new Unit 174 Masterpoint Milestones reported by ACBL for December, 2018. An explanation of ranks may be found at [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org).

Junior Master (5 Masterpoints)

**Steven A Bert, Harry A Bick, Michelle J Clary, John P Doyle, Leonard L Ferguson, Michelle R Lieske, Helen M Schwisow, Sherry C Taylor**

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

**Eric J Bauer, Zane K Bolen, Mike Davis, Rathindra N Dutt, Sharon Kaplan, Jim Lyssy, Michael Story**

Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

**Sara Hundley, Kathy L'Hommedieu, David E Vaughn**

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

**Barbara C Brown, Rao M Chalasani, Tommy Harris, Jan Pasternak**

NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)

**Cindy Hempel, Don J Hempel, Elizabeth W Hoepner, Linda Lewis**



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*Advanced NABC Master* (300 Masterpoints)

Susan D Domsalla, Patricia L Dunnell

*Life Master* (124 in Unit 174)

Thomas H Zimmerman

*Bronze Life Master* (306 in Unit 174)

Judith C Busby

*Silver Life Master* (191 in Unit 174)

Lotte S Optekamp

*Ruby Life Master* (169 in Unit 174)

Harry R Espey, Eugene L Hanson

*Gold Life Master* (91 in Unit 174)

Debra K Bellan

*Sapphire Life Master* (58 in Unit 174)

Julia A Blancet, Charles A Markowitz

*Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!*

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## **174** Unit News

### **2019 LONE STAR REGIONAL (LSR)**

The 2019 Lone Star Regional is just around the corner. Grab a partner and come on down to the Marriott Westchase on February 4-10. The Unit Board and others have put together a terrific line-up of speakers, sessions and services.



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## Speakers

**Betty Starzec** has put together a star-studded schedule of speakers. Please welcome these very busy professionals who are supporting our tournament with their time and energy.

- ◆ Monday, 12pm: **Gary King**, "The Secret of the Game"
- ◆ Tuesday, 2pm: **Bob Morris**, "Puppet Stayman"
- ◆ Wednesday, 2pm: **Shawn Quinn**, "Bidding Over Preempts"
- ◆ Thursday, 2pm: **Mike Passell & Eddie Wold**, "Let the Good Times Roll!"
- ◆ Friday, 2pm: **Robert Todd**, "Problem Opening Bids"
- ◆ Saturday, 8:45am: Breakfast with **Eric Rodwell** Q & A session
- ◆ Saturday, 2pm: **Jacob Morgan**, "ABCs of Bridge"

## Session Schedule

The [full schedule](#) is posted on the Unit 174 website. Please note the scheduled start times for each session; they vary by day. Monday sessions begin at 1pm and 6:30pm. On Tuesday - Saturday, sessions begin at 10am, 2:30pm and 7:30pm. Sunday's morning session begins at 9:30.

New this year, a Mini-Soloway KO event will replace the top bracket(s) of the regular Bracketed Swiss events beginning on Tuesday and Thursday. Teams with an average masterpoint holding of 12,000 or more will be required to play in the Mini-Soloway event and will not be allowed to play in the regular Bracketed Swiss event on those days. Teams with a lower average masterpoint holding may request to participate in the Mini-Soloway event instead of playing in the Bracketed Swiss. [Details and the Conditions of Contest](#) can be found on the Unit website.

## Services

Unit members have been working hard to ensure that you have an enjoyable experience.

- ◆ Need a partner? Contact **Bill** or **Nancy Riley** (PartnershipU174@gmail.com or 832-289-3833)
- ◆ New(ish) to the game or tournament? Stop by the I/N desk to have your questions answered by **Nancy Guthrie** and her I/N team.
- ◆ Sign in at the hospitality desk to receive your 2019 appliqué and this year's hospitality gifts -- an insulated lunchbox and a pencil with a pencil clip. Sign in here to receive labels. Pick up your section top awards here also.
- ◆ Hungry? There will be a reception for **Russ Jones**, the new ACBL President, after the afternoon session on Thursday. Join us in Suite 1070/1072 for light snacks. On



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Saturday morning, breakfast tacos will be served before **Eric Rodwell's** session at 8:45.

## **BEST PRACTICES TEACHER WORKSHOP**

In conjunction with the 2019 LSR, a Best Practices Teacher Workshop will be offered on February 3-4. The registration deadline is January 25. Contact **Betty Starzec** at 713-562-2568 or [lstarzec@comcast.net](mailto:lstarzec@comcast.net) for information or to register.

## **NAP SUCCESS**

Unit 174 members will represent District 16 in flights A and B of the North American Pairs events during the spring NABC in Memphis:

- ◆ Flight A: Mike Doyle and Daniel Jackson
- ◆ Flight B: Lunhui Lin and James Zhan; Ted Bain and Al Cupps

## **NATIONAL MASTERPOINT WINNER**

We have a national masterpoint winner in the Unit this year. **Susan Morrow** won the national Ace of Clubs 50-100 point category. Well done!

## **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. It's not too late to scoop up some extra points for your success at the table. Get in some practice before the Lone Star Regional.

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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](mailto: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 to the club website.

### **BRIDGE CLUB OF HOUSTON**

**Julie Halperin** gives a free lesson every Tuesday at 9:30am before the 0-20 supervised play event. The lesson is open to all. **Sam Khayatt** leads a single-topic discussion (Bridge Bits) every Friday before the open game. All are welcome at that as well.



Upcoming special games:

- ◆ Jan 24: Swiss team "8 is Enough"
- ◆ Jan 26: Member Appreciation game and Membership Meeting
- ◆ Jan 27: MiniBridge (1:30pm)
- ◆ Feb 02: GNT Qualifier game AND Open game
- ◆ Feb 02: LM Party for Fred Gregory and John Montgomery. Sign-up req'd.
- ◆ Feb 14: Daytime Mentor game
- ◆ Feb 18: Nighttime Mentor game
- ◆ Feb 21-24: 499r/NLM Tournament

## CYPRESS NORTHWEST DBC

Starting in January 2019, the Cypress NW DBC offers 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. Topics scheduled in January and February so far are: Convenient Minors, New Minor Forcing, Signals, and Drury. Guest speakers are welcomed

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

## LONE STAR BRIDGE CLUB

The bridge club at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Conroe is now officially the Lone Star Bridge Club (it was formerly known as LSBC). The new website is [www.lonestarbridge.org](http://www.lonestarbridge.org).

Lone Star 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 the church for a wonderful and successful year. Pastor Cindy and several church members will be attending. Please bring a dish to share. Sign up at the club or make your reservation via email to [maryemcdonald22@yahoo.com](mailto:maryemcdonald22@yahoo.com).

Congratulations to **Vicky Martinez**, who took the ACBL Director test and passed with flying colors. She will be directing at our club soon!

Diamond Life Master **Jeff Kroll** gives a free lesson every Thursday at 9:30 am. Upcoming topics include bidding slams on distribution rather than HCP and filling out the convention card -- what the choices on the card mean and the logical selection for most.





Upcoming special games:

- ♦ Jan 28: One-year anniversary celebration. Potluck at 11am. Sign-up req'd.

## **WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY**

Westside Bridge Academy (WBA) announced its December 2018 awards for success and participation at the club. The Most Masterpoint winners are **Joe Quinn** (Open) with 44.31 Masterpoints and **Greg Andrews** (I/N) with 11.12 Masterpoints. The Most Frequent players were **Debbie Bellan** (Open) with 24 sessions and **James Sells** (I/N) with 21 sessions. Congrats to all!

Upcoming special games:

- ♦ Feb 03: GNT Qualifier (6pm)
- ♦ Feb 13: Daytime Mentor game
- ♦ Feb 15: Swiss team "8 is Enough"
- ♦ Feb 26: Nighttime Mentor game

### **Double Dummy - the movie!**

WBA is sponsoring a showing of the movie *Double Dummy* on Tuesday, February 12th beginning at 6:30 pm at AMC First Colony 24, 3301 Town Center Boulevard S in Sugar Land. It will be shown only if 70 people register by February 5th. [Click here](#) to register to attend and to view a trailer.

John McAllister, the film's executive producer, has created this film as a means of raising the awareness of the game of contract bridge among the general community. Through the lens of the 14th World Youth Teams Championships, the most prestigious event in junior bridge, *Double Dummy* shows that bridge is still a game for people of all ages.

See you at the movie!

### **Robert Todd Seminar**

**Robert Todd**, *Bridge Bulletin* contributor, professional Bridge player and LSR 2019 speaker, will present a seminar on "Slam Bidding" Saturday, May 11. The \$50 registration fee includes both breakfast and lunch. Reservations are required. Email [jimmybreihan@comcast.net](mailto:jimmybreihan@comcast.net) to make your reservation; send payments to: Westside Bridge Academy, 9000 Southwest Freeway, Ste 290, Houston, TX 77074.



## 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**

Bidding Box problem 1 (page 37) is our choice this month. We are frequently asked how to find/bid slams when the combined hands have fewer than the 33 high-card points (HCP) generally required to bid a small slam on pure power/high card points.

West has 13 HCP; East has 16 HCP. Scott/Treitl and the *Bridge Bulletin* both reach 6H, but do so with different bidding sequences. 6H is worth a score of 9 on a 12 top. 6S is even better; however, it is more difficult to reach as most players seek the 4-4 major fit (hearts on this hand) as opposed to the 5-3 major fit (spades), which is usually - but not always - inferior. This hand is an exception. Usually you want the pitches on the five-card suit.

Keys to bidding this good slam are:

- ◆ There is a double fit, hearts and spades: two sources of tricks.
- ◆ East has a singleton club, providing second round in that suit. Plus, West has minimal wasted values in clubs – meaning that all his high cards should be working. Working high cards are valuable.

Note that in the Scott/Treitl auction that when Scott cue bid 4D, he denied a club control. Cue bids are made up the line. Now Treitl knows that West does not have the A or K of clubs, and using that inference he suspects the hands will fit great. He then checks for key cards and bids the slam.

We also liked **Alder's** column on page 44 in which he explains two situations where it is proper to play second hand high on defense:

- ◆ When declarer is trying to sneak an early trick to fulfill his contract.
- ◆ When declarer is trying to execute a strip and end-play



Finally, we also like the **Parrish** column on page 45, where he describes how to bid makeable slams with around 28 HCP by identifying useful shortness. This fits with the Bidding Box problem 1.

## **PARTNER'S BID: INVITATIONAL OR COMPETITIVE?**

When both sides are bidding, it is sometimes difficult to tell when partner's bid is truly invitational and forward-going and when it is just competitive, designed to obstruct the opponents' actions.

When considering the next bid, first identify whether you are in the direct seat or in the balancing seat. You are in the direct seat when, whether your bid or not, your partner has another opportunity to bid. You are in the balancing seat when a pass by you will end the auction. Actions taken in the direct seat show a stronger hand than those taken in the balancing seat.

The question of invitational vs. competitive comes up most commonly when we've agreed on a suit and so have our opponents. For example,

<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
1H	2S	2H	2S

North is in the direct seat (South has another bid coming). If North now bids 3H, he is showing extras (useful distribution, more points, extra values). If North has a minimal opener and a five-card heart suit, he needs to pass. He has told his story, and since he's in the direct seat, he is bidding only his hand - not partner's. It's not his job to push the opponents to a higher level; it's partner's.

If North does have extras, of course he can bid. But if he does so, he is inviting game; he is not merely competing.

If North and East both pass, South is in the balancing seat (his pass would end the auction). South should analyze the situation as follows:

- ◆ EW are stopping in 2S so they are unlikely to have game, or even close to it, as neither invited.
- ◆ How good is South's hand on defense? If the opponents are making 2S, the odds are overwhelming that NS will get a bad board. Is NS vulnerable? It's easier to interfere non vulnerable.



- ♦ What is the scoring method - matchpoints or IMPS? In matchpoints, one bad board is one bad board and not a disaster. At IMPS, if you interfere (especially vulnerable) and they light you up, that is often the match.
- ♦ Since you expect both sides to have an eight-card major suit fit, it is likely both sides can make two.

Whatever you do, do it in tempo. Squirming and then bidding invites the opponents to double you.

Usually South should bid 3H. Down one is a decent board in this situation. Pushing EW to 3S down one (or more) is a great board. Pushing EW to 3S, making, has the same result as 2S making three, so you will have lost nothing. Of course if you bid 3H and they find the double card and you're vulnerable, that will not get you a decent board. Minus 200 is worse than most part scores the other way.

After analyzing those factors, South bids on or not using all the information available to him. He is not inviting, he is competing.

Consider this hand, held by West (we are West): **Axxxxx | xx | Axx | xxx**  
and this auction:

North	East	South	West
1D	x	1H	?

If South had passed we would have bid 2S. We jump in response to partner's takeout double in this auction with 9-11 points. We count an extra point for the fifth spade – especially since partner promised at least three (unless he has a 17+ "double and bid" hand with his own suit). We count the two aces as 8 ½ points, so that puts us a 9 ½ points, enough to jump.

However, since South has bid, we no longer need to jump, as we are making a free bid. 1S shows at least four spades and 7 HCP. We have more than that, but not much more.

The auction continues:

North	East	South	West
1D	x	1H	1S
2H	2S	3H	?



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We take partner's 2S as saying that we can make 2S even if we're on the bottom of our bid. He's in the direct seat when he makes that bid, so his action shows extras.

We are now in the direct seat, so any action we take would be truly invitational. We have an extra spade and an extra 2 ½ points (over the 7 promised by the free bid) and so we would bid 3S.



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