



American Contract
Bridge League

Unit 174 Newsletter

April 2020



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

Remember the movie *Groundhog Day* where the main character (played by Bill Murray) started the same day repeatedly? While each day may have slightly differed, the theme of each was similar.

No way you could have told me that two months ago, our "new normal" would include safely self-quarantining, practicing social distancing and finding new ways to do what before was taken for granted.



My "Groundhog Day" starts with our tiny 13-yr old poodle scratching on me (far earlier than desired), ready to get up and go out. This is followed by our 10-yr old yorkie announcing it is her breakfast time. Both happen prior to my first cup of Nespresso. These two darlings rule the roost (more so now than ever) and seem quite happy with the additional attention, walks and treats.



Other activities include going for multiple walks, completing some household or yard chore, ordering groceries online, talking and making plans with my mom, working on board-related matters, cooking up a little something and watching a movie or reading a bit.

And now that we can play bridge online “locally”, determining which unit club game to play in is something I look forward to several times weekly. Thanks go out to Apple, BCOH, Clear Lake/Galveston and WBA for providing us all with options to stay connected in the bridge community, “see” our friends, and have the chance to play bridge for ACBL masterpoints on BBO. If you have experienced a learning curve playing online, later in this newsletter you will find some helpful hints for navigating your BBO games.

Though I look forward to safely ending our current Groundhog Day “loop”, my hope is we do so slowly and with caution. I prefer no one ever experiences a pandemic again.

Yes, I should be working on my taxes...hold on, dogs need something, now it’s time to make dinner and then relax a bit before getting some shuteye and the clock resets itself.

Maybe tomorrow.

Lauri Laufman, President, Unit 174

llaufman@texas2211.com

Board Business

TRANSITIONS

With regret **Cindy Cox** announced her resignation from the board for personal reasons. **Joyce Gore** has accepted the Board's appointment and will complete the remainder of Cindy's term. We thank Cindy for her service and we welcome Joyce.

JUNE SECTIONAL

The June sectional will be chaired by **Clif Rice** and **Joyce Gore**. The flyer is posted on the Unit website.

ELECTIONS

Elections for the three open Board positions have been extended until the June sectional. Online voting has been extended through June 2. Election results will be announced during the Annual Membership Meeting at the June sectional.



We encourage you to vote online. If you prefer to vote by mail, your request for an absentee ballot must be received by May 8. You may request an absentee ballot:

By mail:

Brigitte Sandifer
507 Rozelle Ave.
Sugar Land, TX 77498

By email: sandiferdb@gmail.com

By phone: 281-494-1464

If June Sectional is canceled, there will be no in-person voting and online voting will extend until 3pm on Saturday, June 6. Results will be sent by email and posted on our website on June 7. The annual membership meeting will be delayed until the August Sectional & I/N Regional

VOTE ONLINE



Save effort and time and VOTE online! It's easy... go to www.acblunit174.org, and click the Click to Vote button. Click the image to view candidate statements and voting rules

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: **Betty E Battle, Marian R Bourgeois, Candace G Brown, Richard M Brown, Larry J Evans, John M Farmer, Rebecca A Fisher, Kathleen Gleason, Lynn L Hershey, Charlotte A Johnson, Janet E Jones, Mark Jones,**



Sandra L Kotinek, Rinda K Patton, Ying Peng, William B Price, Brian J Schwanitz, Jordan T Smith, Jerome Tilles, Carol Tsai, Carole S Van Hook, Ray Wieckert, Ellen T Wood

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)

Crissy A Clarke, Kathryn H Davis, James P Gill, Linda J Monroe Wall, Joan L Pariseau, William B Price, Ann G Sneed

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Nancy K Small

Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Sheryl K Feldman

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Linda K Drake, William C McCain Jr, Harshad Patel, Sarah P Springer

NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)

Joseph S Baker, Rao M Chalasani, Hasin F Jinna

Advanced NABC Master (300 Masterpoints)

Robyn G WilliamsNames

Silver Life Master (189 in Unit 174)

Richard M Burkhart

Ruby Life Master (174 in Unit 174)

Marilyn G Leiman

Gold Life Master (94 in Unit 174)

Norman Gautier, Bonnie Terrell

Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!



174 Unit News

This month's Unit News is presented under Board Business.

♣ 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.

Houston area bridge clubs are currently closed, but several have an online presence (a "virtual club" or "vClub") on Bridge Base Online (BBO).

You can support your club by playing on BBO (www.bridgebase.com). If you play at one of the Houston virtual clubs (see list below), a majority of the table fees go to that club and you get black (Club) points.

If your club does not have an online virtual club, ACBL is offering three special daily online pairs game where you can win black (Club) points -- at 9am, 4:10pm and 6:30pm (Central time). And the majority of your table fee will be returned to your local club. Look for the **ACBL SYC** games on BBO.

A POINT ABOUT POINTS

ACBL is increasing by 50% the points won in virtual club (vClub) games. These points are not visible on BBO but are visible in ACBL Live. So, if you have earned 1.00 master points in your BBO vClub game, ACBL will bump it up to 1.50 master points in their records and will display the augmented total in ACBL Live. This "bump up" is for vClub games only; not for ACBL SYC games.

U174 vClubs are listed below:

[APPLE DBC](#)

Apple Duplicate Bridge Club is running open pairs games on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 3pm.

BBO Search Term: **Apple DBC**



BRIDGE CLUB OF HOUSTON

The Bridge Club of Houston is running open pairs games every day and I/N games every weekday. Visit the club website for game times.

BBO Search Term: **BCOH**

CLEAR LAKE / GALVESTON

The Clear Lake and Galveston clubs have combined to form an online "virtual club". They are running open pairs games on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10am.

BBO Search Term: **CLBC-GBC**

WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY

Westside Bridge Academy is running open pairs games every day and I/N games on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Visit the club website for game times

BBO Search Term: **WBA**



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 month's article of the month is the "Mike's Bridge Lesson" by Mike Lawrence on page 56. Lawrence discusses what to play to trick one in the third seat, in front of declarer. Partner has led the SJ and a low card is played from dummy. East can let partner win the trick or overtake.

Based on the auction, East knows that declarer has a singleton spade: East has five, dummy has three and West, based on his bid, has four. EW play support doubles; holding only three spades, West would have made a support double instead of bidding 2S. The only entries to East's hand are in the spade suit. So the only way East will have an opportunity to lead through declarer is to win the first trick.

We typically want to lead through strength toward weakness. "When the dummy's on your right, lead to the weakest thing in sight..." There is weakness in dummy: the club suit.



DO DECLARER'S EYES DECEIVE HIM (OR HER)?

The screenshot shows a bridge bidding interface with the following information:

- Dummy (D):** ♠ 8
- West (W) Robot:** ♠ KJ103, ♥ J2, ♦ K94, ♣ AJ87
- North (N) Robot:** ♠ 95, ♥ KQ85, ♦ 108632, ♣ 106
- East (E) Robot:** ♠ Q864, ♥ A943, ♦ J, ♣ Q532
- South (S) texashen:** ♠ A72, ♥ 1076, ♦ AQ75, ♣ K94
- Bidding Table:**

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
- Score:** 3♠ West, NS: 0, EW: 0

We are sitting South and do not have a bid after 1C-P-1H. A double would show at least four spades and suggest at least four diamonds. The diamonds are not good enough to overcall at the two-level. The hand is not strong enough for 1 NT. So, pass it is.

At our second turn to bid, the auction is up to 3S. No way we are bidding over that, so we are defending 3S.

Partner leads the CT, which we hate. We know partner is not underleading an ace against a suit contract, and we know that when partner leads a ten that he denies the jack. So it looks like our CK is toast.

Declarer plays low from dummy. No sense in making it easy on declarer; we play the C9, hoping to make it look like we are starting a high-low, indicating a doubleton. As expected, declarer wins the CJ.

Declarer leads a low spade to the Q; we win the SA. We now lead the C4 to complete the deception that we started with a 9-4 doubleton. Declarer believes us and rises with the CA. We later win the CK, depriving EW of an overtrick and scoring an 85.7% board.



Declarer had to choose whether to trust us or our partner. By trusting our high-low, declarer assumed partner led the T from K T 6 -- certainly not a standard lead. Had we not played high-low, declarer would not have had to choose at all.

BBO TIPS, TRICKS & INFO

Houston bridge games have gone online and we have, too. Online clubs are referred to "vClubs" (for "virtual club"). Below please find information which may make your online path a little smoother and point out features which you may not have noticed. This is NOT an exhaustive list of everything you can do on BBO.

DISCLAIMER: The information presented here was obtained using a Windows-based PC. References to the location of specific screen elements might not apply to a tablet or to a computer with a different operating system. We have been told that it is much easier to set up and fund your account using a computer rather than a tablet.

Before you register for a vClub game

Before you even think about registering for a game, verify the following:

- ◆ There is a valid ACBL number in your BBO profile (and it is yours).
- ◆ There are enough BB\$ in your BB\$ account to cover the registration fee.
- ◆ You have logged into BBO using the red Play bridge now button in the middle of the screen and not the Login/Register button at the upper right.
- ◆ You have not logged in as Invisible (there is a checkbox for this option on the login page).

Verify (or add) your ACBL number to your BBO profile

- ◆ Log into BBO
- ◆ Under FEATURED AREAS, select **ACBL World**
- ◆ Click **Update your ACBL number** (button below game list
- ◆ If your ACBL number is not displayed enter it and click **Update**



Verify your BB\$ balance

When you log into BBO, there will be an orange message box displayed in the lower right corner of your screen. It will contain your Award symbol, Masterpoints (those earned on BBO) and BB\$ Balance. If the message box disappears before you have looked at it, click the BB\$ button at the top right (next to your BBO alias). You will be directed to the BB\$ site, which has its own login.

You can also access the BB\$ site directly from the BBO main page. After opening the main page, instead of clicking Play bridge now, click the BB\$ button in the upper right corner of the page.

Register for a vClub game

Registration for vClub games opens two hours before game time. Note that vClub games are classified as tournaments in BBO. Once logged in,

- ◆ Under PLAY OR WATCH BRIDGE, click **Competitive**
- ◆ Under TOURNAMENTS, click **ACBL Virtual Clubs**.
- ◆ Scroll down to find the tournament that you want OR click the **Search** button just above the **Entries** column to enter part of the game title.
- ◆ Once you can see your tournament, click the title of the tournament to launch the registration view.

IMPORTANT: both you and your partner must be online to register.

Tournament info during registration

When you click the title of a tournament, a horizontal menu is displayed across the top. The menu items each correspond to a different view of registration information:

- ◆ **Registration**
This view is displayed by default and contains the registration form
- ◆ **Entries**
This view displays the BBO aliases of the players who are registered for the tournament. Click on a BBO alias to view the player's real name
- ◆ **Partnership Desk**
This view displays the BBO alias of anyone who has indicated he or she would like a partner. If you need a partner for the game, you can add your name here or arrange to play with someone else who needs a partner



Tools

The right panel of the BBO interface contains tools that are always present (unless you choose to hide them). The tools are present in form of tabs turned sideways down the right side of the page. Each tab has a set of horizontal menu items across the top of the tab. The tabs are:

- ◆ **Messages**

This tab is displayed by default and within the tab, the **News** view is displayed by default. If there is a number next to the **Mail** menu item, it means that someone sent you a message when you were not logged in

- ◆ **People**

The **Friends** view is displayed by default. The BBO aliases displayed are those players with whom you have a relationship status of "Friend" or "Follow". You can add a BBO alias to this list using the **Add Friend** feature at the bottom of the page. If you follow someone and he/she follows you, the relationship status is changed from "Follow" to "Friend"

- ◆ **History**

The History tab displays a listing the tournaments you have played on BBO. Click a tournament to view your results and to see the boards. You can replay each board, trick by trick, if you want to.

- ◆ **Account**

The Accounts tab defaults to the **Profile** view. In this view you enter the information that other players see when they click on your BBO alias. In the **Settings** view, you can choose how you view BBO, what happens during play and what sounds you hear, among other things. It's well worth going through the entire list and ensuring that BBO is behaving as you want it to. You can change these settings at any time. The **Convention cards** view holds the convention cards that you play and identifies the partner with whom you play them. If you do not indicate a convention card, you are considered to be playing the ACBL SAYC.



During the game

When playing a game, the table is shown in the left panel and your tools are still in the right panel. Some not-so-obvious features...

The **blue box with three horizontal stripes**, usually at the upper left, contains a link to the convention card of each pair as well as a link to call the director.

As you probably aware, it is your responsibility to alert your own bids. There is an **Alert** button inside your bidding box. BEFORE making your bid, click the Alert button and then type the information. Then make your bid. It may be useful to create a document with standard alert phrases that you can copy and paste into BBO. For example, "transfer to hearts" or "forcing" or "15-17" or "4-card support and an opening hand".

The vClub games are barometer games, which means that everyone is playing the same board at the same time. The History tab (in the Tools pane on the right) has two menu items which are both interesting and distracting.

◆ **My Table**

This view displays the boards in play and your result on each. It's your private score. It also includes your percent score for each board and your overall percentage for the game. In the space beneath the scores, the auction and hands are displayed for the board selected in the upper section

◆ **Other Tables**

The **Other Tables** view displays the results (across your tournament) for board selected in the **My Table** view. It's a traveler and presents the results from best to worst. So, if you want to see why your +420 was only an 11% board, you can do so here. And by moving through the rows, you can see who got the better boards, how the auctions went and even how the play went. As mentioned above, this page can be very distracting!

When you are in a game, there is a **Tables** tab added to your tools. The **Tables** tab lists all the tournaments -- it's the same list that you see when you go to register. The views listed across top are **Pending**, **Running** and **Complete**. If you click the **Running** view and open your tournament, you will see who is sitting at what table in what direction. So you can identify all pairs against whom you will be playing and all pairs against whom you will be compared. It's the equivalent of looking around the room before you start a live game.



Convention Cards and related information

As mentioned above, if you and your partner have a card that you want to play, you must place that card in your profile, attached to your partner's name BEFORE you and your partner register. Otherwise it will not be visible during the game.

When you arrive at a new table (or a new pair arrives at your table), it's helpful to let the opponents know about your leads and carding. This is another situation where a document from which you can copy and paste (into the Comments, this time) is handy.

Enjoy your time online!

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