



American Contract
Bridge League

Unit 174 Newsletter January 2020



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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

All hands are on deck preparing for this year's [Lone Star Regional](#) (LSR) at the Houston Marriott Westchase February 3-9.

Partnership Chair **Ken Hudson** has begun matching up those needing partners, I/N Chair **Cindy Cox** is busily scouting for Ambassador volunteers to play with first timers needing a partner and Hospitality Chair **Sam Khayatt** is working to secure lots of chocolate for those with a sweet tooth. Interested in getting involved? Contact them to donate 45 minutes prior to a session to meet, greet, award or help create partnerships. It's fun and a great way to make new friends, too.

We've been promoting *Aces & Knaves*, the movie. Why? Because not only is it about the game we love, it's very well done, has gotten excellent reviews and it's going to be fun screening it in Texas for the first time on Saturday night! It's less than an hour long so it's still going to be early enough to go out on the town afterwards if you're not sticking around to play in the Zip



KO game that follows! The more the merrier, invite your friends and family.

One of the board's main initiatives this year has been to decrease attrition, increase membership and have our 0-299er players more comfortable being part of our bridge family and tournament play. For those with under 300 master points, your unit board will be hosting a reception on Tuesday after the 2:30 session. For our newbies, please take advantage of our free 0-5 supervised play sessions at 10am on Tuesday and again on Saturday.

You may have noticed some changes at the Marriott over the past year, as they maintain, refurbish and enhance the facility. An upcoming change is that they plan to begin charging parking fees sometime in 2020. Ouch. While this does sting, might I compare this to "baggage fees" by airlines or "valet only" parking at many restaurants, this might be a bit easier to digest.

Self-parking will be free at LSR. Please know that we will continue to negotiate with the Marriott (or any other venues selected for tournaments) to secure the best possible experience at the least expense for our players. We'll keep you posted.

Looking forward to seeing you at the LSR!

Lauri Laufman, President, Unit 174
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Board Business

U174 CHARITY: DRESS FOR SUCCESS

The Unit 174 Board has voted unanimously for Dress for Success Houston to be this year's charity. Dress for Success Houston provides programs to underserved women in our community, including veterans. These programs focus on acquiring skills needed to find a job and be successful in the workplace, with the ultimate goal of attaining financial independence. The encouragement from staff and volunteers often provides the spark to motivate them to achieve these goals. Dress for Success = Success!



NEXT MEETING; SET UP FOR REGIONAL

The next U174 Board meeting will take place at 9:30am on Saturday, February 1, at the Westchase Marriott. Setup for the Regional will begin at 10am. Volunteers are wanted and appreciated; please contact [Lauri Laufman](#) if you are willing and able to help out.

FUTURE TOURNAMENTS

While heavily focused on the Lone Star Regional, we are also working on future tournaments:

Election Sectional (April 3-5)

At our Election Sectional, we will be trying something new! Our Annual Membership Meeting will be held at 9:15am on Sunday, April 5, with breakfast provided to those attending beginning at 9am. Directors will be on hand to sell entries to our early birds from 9-9:15; and then again once our meeting breaks. Lunch will be on your own. At 2:20, we will reconvene to make award presentations and announce Board election results.

Fall Sectional (November 13-15)

Our Fall Sectional will be held at the Arabia Shrine Center located at 10510 Harwin just inside Beltway 8. It offers free gated parking and is located just a few minutes away from the Marriott Westchase.

WONDERFUL WEBSITE

We would like to praise our webmasters extraordinaire, Carol Winograd and Allison Ochsner. In 2019, the number of users increased from 10,388 to 33,699; the number of sessions per user increased 19%; and there were around 182,000 views on our homepage. Way to keep 'em coming back!

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: Bruce Allen, Dilip J Dharia, Joey Huchette, Curtis R King, Lee A Ned, Carol J Picard, Curtis M Polk, James M Roberts, Michael Robson, Joseph E Rogers, William M Shepherd, David Stroble, Becky Surotchak, Jane E Vallier, Judy Vaughan

RANK ADVANCEMENTS

Listed below are the new Unit 174 Masterpoint Milestones reported by ACBL for December, 2019. An explanation of ranks may be found at www.acbl.org.

Junior Master (5 Masterpoints)

Druann Bauer, Sarah M Gellatly, Katherine G Low, Judy D Mann, Vasant K Patel, Dorian A Venable, Judy A Willig

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Michael B George, Alexa Kincannon, Marylinn Schwanitz

Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Sara W Dalton, Linda K Drake, Paula C Easter, Naomi S Higgins, Jorge L Rodriguez, Henrietta Sasser

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Patricia Freeman, Howard J Pollock, David Senior

NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)

Lila Lee Fennell

Advanced NABC Master (300 Masterpoints)

Charles L Woody

Bronze Life Master (295 in Unit 174)

Donald W Bell, Robert P Vilyus

Silver Life Master (186 in Unit 174)

Terry A Sucher



Gold Life Master (93 in Unit 174)

James P Ochsner

Sapphire Life Master (58 in Unit 174)

Brigitte Sandifer, Birendra BK Singh

Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!

174 Unit News

LONE STAR REGIONAL (LSR), FEBRUARY 3-9

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 & Saturday, February 4 & 8

On Tuesday and Saturday mornings, our newcomers (those with 0-5 masterpoints) can play in a free supervised play session. The Tuesday session will be supervised by **Julie Halperin**; the Saturday session by **Dave Glandorf**.

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 onsite.

Teacher Appreciation Day: Friday, February 7

Hot Dogs with fixings and cake will be served after the 2:30 session concludes in conjunction with the announcement of this year's D16 Teacher of the Year.

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.

NAP SUCCESS

Unit 174 members will represent District 16 in two of the three North American Pairs events during the spring NABC in Columbus, OH:

Flight A: **James Breihan, Carlyne Fox, Thomas Peters**

Flight B: **Herb Kalman, Lunhui Lin, Robert Reichel, James Zhan**

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.

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:

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

UNIT STAC RESULTS

The Unit STaC tournament took place during the week of December 16-22. "STaC" stands for Sectional Tournament at Clubs. Games during this week are tournament-rated, so masterpoints points awarded were silver rather than the usual black. We had a nice turnout:



813 players won 2267.16 masterpoints. There were 695 tables in play. The top ten masterpoint winners were: **Phillip Grothus, Steve Vaughn, Kitty Wong, Dan Morse, Linda McReynolds, Geri McKallip, Nelson Brown, Jr, Elisabeth Cabiness, Debi Balter and Mary Nelson.** [Click here for tournament results.](#)

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

Come **win some silver** points at the 499r sectional this week. Work out your kinks before **going for gold** at the LSR!

Upcoming special games:

- ♦ Jan 23-26 [499r Sectional](#)
- ♦ Feb 1 GNT Qualifier (Flights B and C)
- ♦ Feb 3-9 Club CLOSED for Lone Star Regional
- ♦ Feb 12 Class begins: 2/1 Game Force with **Julie Halperin**
- ♦ Feb 13 Daytime ,Mentor game
- ♦ Feb 17 Evening Mentor game
- ♦ Feb 23 [MiniBridge](#)
- ♦ Feb 27 "8 is Enough" Swiss Team

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. February's topic is "Opening Leads Against Notrump Contracts." 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 23-26 Club Membership Game
- ♦ Feb 1 Club Membership Game

LONE STAR BRIDGE CLUB

Lone Star offers open pairs games on Mondays at noon and Thursdays at 10:30am. There is a 299er game on the second Tuesday of each month.

On January 27, the club will celebrate its second anniversary with pizza and cake at 11:00am followed by the game at noon.

On February 11, before the 299er game, DLM **Jeff Kroll** will give the first in a series of lessons on the meanings of all those boxes on a convention card and a reasonable approach to completing the card.

The club will be closed during the week of the Houston Regional.

WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY

Westside Bridge Academy (WBA) announced its December awards for success and participation at the club. The Most Masterpoint winners are **Dan Morse** (Open) with 37.27 Masterpoints and **Linda Drake** (I/N) with 13.69 Masterpoints. The Most Frequent players were **B Haznedar** (Open) with 25 sessions and **Linda Drake** (I/N) with 23 sessions. Congrats to all!

WBA is hosting a 5 year anniversary party on Saturday February 1st. Reservations are required. To reserve your spot email **Katherine Onstott** at kjonstott@comcast.net. WBA will provide turkey and ham. Side dishes and desserts will be appreciated.



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

- ♦ Mar 6, 3:00-6:00pm Defensive Strategies
- ♦ Mar 7, 9:00am - Noon Modern Preempts

Upcoming special games:

- ♦ Feb 12 Daytime Mentor game
- ♦ Feb 21 "8 is Enough" Swiss Team
- ♦ Feb 25 Evening Mentor game

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



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**

January's article of the month is "Ask Jerry" on page 48. Jerry Helms presents two readers' questions with the same theme: making the best bid possible, even when that bid is not quite perfect. We would like to add a little context to this fine column.

For example, some players don't like to open 1N unless they have all the suits stopped, even if they hold 15-17 HCP and a flat hand. It's nice to have all the suits stopped, but even if you don't, you still need to open that hand 1N. It's just the most descriptive bid you have.

Question 1

In the first situation, right-hand opponent (RHO) bids 1H. The correspondent wants to know if a double promises four spades. No, it does not. It's great when you have four spades, because you would really like to find a 4-4 spade fit. If advancer (partner of the doubler) has four spades he should:

1. Bid 1S with 0-8 points
2. Bid 2S with 9- bad 12 points
3. Cue bid hearts with an a good 12 or more



However, the double promises only three-card support in the three unbid suits. So a fourth spade is desirable, maybe even likely (as partner didn't overcall a minor), but not guaranteed. Note that there is an exception to this promise. If partner has a 17+ point hand, he can double and bid a five-card or longer suit when he does not have three cards in the three unbid suits.

A related sequence that sometimes causes confusion is this (m = minor):

You	LHO	Partner
1m	1H	X

This double (a negative double) shows exactly four spades; with five, partner should bid a spade. The difference between this auction and the earlier sequence is the number of unbid suits. There are only two in this sequence, not three. It would be nice if partner had both spades and the unbid minor. But having the unbid minor is not absolutely necessary, as long as there is a place to play (frequently the original minor).

Question 2

RHO opens a minor and the correspondent wants to double. Does this double promise four cards in both majors? No, it does not. As stated in the earlier question, a takeout double promises only three cards in the three unbid suits unless the doubler has 17+ points.

Yes, it would be great if the doubler held four cards in both majors, as we would like to find a 4-4 major suit fit. In response to a takeout double, we will usually bid our four-card major (we will jump with 9-bad 12 points as before). We will cue bid the opponent's suit if we have an opener.

The main point of the article is that we cannot let the perfect bid be the enemy of the good bid. If our bids are too restrictive, we won't get to use them as often as we should and we will end up making weak bids when we don't have a bid to describe our hand.



Board 10		♠ A Q 10 4	
East Deals		♥ 6 5	
Both Vul		♦ A J 7	
		♣ Q 9 7 5	
♠ 8 3		♠ J 7 6 5	
♥ A Q 10 9 8 4 2		♥ K 3	
♦ 8 6		♦ 10 4 3 2	
♣ A 6		♣ 4 3 2	
		♠ K 9 2	
		♥ J 7	
		♦ K Q 9 5	
		♣ K J 10 8	
NS 3♠; NS 4♦; NS 4♣; EW 2♥; Par +140			

THE DOUBLE-EDGED PREEMPT

Players preempt because it works. When the opponents have the majority of the points we want to take away as much bidding space from them as we can and we want to make them guess. However, bridge is a game of statistics and good bids and/or plays are not always rewarded. Sometimes they are penalized. This is a deal where a perfectly normal preempt backfired.

The Auction: P-1D-3H-X | P-3S-P-4S

South's hand is not the greatest opening hand, but it is an opening hand.

We like West's 3H bid in this position. Partner has passed, making game unlikely. West has a nice heart suit, and likely only two defensive tricks (the aces).

At this level, North's double suggests four spades, an opening (or near-opening) hand and support for the other suit (clubs). North can also tolerate a return to diamonds by partner.

South's 3S is imperfect, but the best option. Of course South would prefer to have four spades. However, South cannot pass the negative double with the J7 heart doubleton. South could bid 4C, but that might work out horribly if North has only three clubs; they would be in a part-score at the four-level. Better to be in a part-score at the three-level with a 4-3 (Moysian) fit. So 3S it is.

North, not knowing exactly what South does and doesn't have, raises spades. Besides, he doesn't have to play it.

The Play

Defense takes the first two heart tricks and, at trick 3, East returns a club to West's A. West then leads another club, won by declarer. At this point, declarer would normally play the three top spades, hoping either for a 3-3 split or for the SJ to drop. However, since West preempted 3H, showing a likely seven hearts, and has already shown two clubs, it is unlikely that he has the SJ. So, instead of playing for the drop, South finesses against East to make the 4S contract.



The way to defeat 4S is a bit counter-intuitive. It is almost always incorrect to give declarer a ruff a sluff because it presents declarer with an opportunity to get rid of a loser he might otherwise be stuck with. However, giving declarer and ruff and a sluff is the way to beat this contract. East needs to dump the HK under partner's ace. West next wins the HQ and plays a third heart.

South would trump the third heart in hand (on the short side) and take four spades tricks, finessing against the SJ. South would also get the four top diamonds. So... four spades, four diamonds and a ruff comes to nine, not ten, tricks. When South goes after clubs, West would rise with the CA and lead out the rest of the hearts. Declarer, out of trump, cannot stop the hearts. The key to defeating 4S is to keep the CA in West's hand to be used as an entry to the hearts after all the trump have been played.

If you find yourself playing against opponents who can find this defense, we suggest you ask them to become your teammates.

Jeff Kroll & Sam Khayatt
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