



American Contract
Bridge League

Unit 174 Newsletter March 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

In a matter of the last month or two, for most, our daily routines and way of life have been affected by a virus whose name most of us had never heard of until recently: Coronavirus-2019 a.k.a. COVID-19.

As bridge players, over the past few weeks we struggled with whether playing at our local clubs or venturing to a planned tournament was safe and in our best interest. Believe me, I was right there with you. Admittedly, being able to share time with my mom certainly would have trumped my continued play as the risk of contamination increased.

Being on your unit board, making the decision to cancel the April Sectional upon reviewing guidance from the CDC and governmental authorities was easy; figuring out how to do so with respect to our given duties and postponing our annual meeting and elections took a bit more time to work through.



Special thanks go to **Paul Cuneo**, Unit Attorney **Chuck Gillis**, and Unit Parliamentarian **Paul Nimmons** for their time, advice and recommendations where needed to help our board navigate through this process. My appreciation also goes to those at the Marriott Westchase who graciously waived all cancellation fees related to our event and cancelled reservations for those who booked on our room block for the event.

While I prefer playing bridge (and most other table games) in a social gathering, I am admittedly now looking forward to safely “connecting” at the bridge table even if it is via online play and chat. Like many of you, I am watching with interest as ACBL is working to bring local bridge to us via BBO.

I hope that you and your family stay healthy and safe during this difficult time. Here’s to “seeing” you soon at one of our local bridge clubs, at least online until we can meet again in person.

Lauri Laufman, President, Unit 174

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Board Business

LONE STAR REGIONAL

The estimated income after expenses is \$59,000 which is in line with previous years with similar attendance. Over 130 volunteers provided assistance with I/N, Hospitality, Awards, Partnerships and Set-Up. We have reviewed the recommendations and comments provided and will work to make next year's tournament even better.

FINANCIALS POSTED

Treasurer Gary Hercules completed the end-of-year financials which have been posted on the unit website. The unit is in excellent financial state at this time with a healthy buffer available to offset unknowns/unanticipated challenges. Thank you, Gary, for all your hard work.



APPOINTMENTS

There have been transitions in some of the non-board functions. The board has appointed individuals to the following roles:

- ◆ Unit Attorney **Chuck Gillis** has been appointed to assume these duties from **Buddy Hanby**.

- ◆ Member Communications Committee Chair **Jeanne Phelps** has taken over this responsibility from **Catherine Miller**. Catherine will continue to volunteer as a member of this very important committee that sends emails and makes phone calls to welcome new players to the unit.

- ◆ *Scorecard* Editor **Barbara LaVigne** will take on this responsibility from **Carol Wilson** beginning with the July/August issue.

- ◆ *Events & Classes Newsletter* **Ann Sinclair** has agreed to become the editor of this informative monthly, replacing **Lauri Laufman**, beginning with the May issue.

The board thanks Buddy, Catherine, Carol and Lauri for their service to Unit 174 in these leadership roles.

DIRECTORIES

Directories are being distributed via clubs within our unit and at unit events. Club managers should contact David Henke with requests for directories.



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: **Peg Abshire, Carol K Battle, Unal Bayram, Carol Brady, Rosalind W Curtis, Carol Davidson, Carol Gertsch, Jenard M Gross, Harriet Hart, Donna W Haylett, Wade Buddy Johnson, Carol C Levinson, Carol L Lofton, Walter**



Mallard, Carol J Menerey, Carol S Merkel, Kamal Osman, Paul A Overbeek, Nihat Ovtmen, Miller Sanislow, Donald K Steinman, Carol Tanner, Carol Tanner, Alisandra Tieke, Zach Tieke, Lucy D Trammel, Carol Wald, Carol N Weaver

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)

Marilyn Beal, Lucie Gysen, Betsy E Himmel, Utkarsh Koshti, Veronique Lhemann, Emily D Ryan, J Daniel Scott, Jan Talley, Benedicta Tung, Michael J Wieland, Nancy L Wright, Stuart E Wright

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Gloria L Bazer, Sandy E Belsan, Jeanne C Goff, Kathryn M Johnson, Vasant K Patel, Randall E Rollins, Robert M Ross, Utako Tomoeda

Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Mary Burrows, Craig P Howard, Changling Huang, Pam Johnson, Yetty J Mikkelsen, Mary Clemmer Ruth, Carol L Scaper

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Roger O Burrows, Brian R Dudley, Marcie Jacikas, Mary Ann P Murray, Bill Nash, Debbie L Nash, Ronald K Perkowski, Ingrid L Schulz, Barbara D Sweeney, Robert M Wang

NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)

James Bettis, Robert W Dennis, Jackie S Fakhouri, Barbara E Frankel, May Hakki, B Haznedar, Julia A Hill, Clydene Jones, Rony Klein, Mark Levy, Dale P Miller, Danuta Parzych, June K Poplack, Helen M Schaps, Susan D Smith, Larry E Wadler, Betty Westbrook, Gigi White

Advanced NABC Master (300 Masterpoints)

Douglas S Lilly, Kathleen Pflueger, Scherry Sprague, Michael Wells

Life Master (000 in Unit 174)

Tera Boyd, Jay Evert, Helene Gersch, Steven Gordon, Jerry N Hoffman, Joni L Holten, Linda Lewis, Ronnie T Martin, Gregory May, Andrew C Remson, Nancy E Shomette



Bronze Life Master (000 in Unit 174)

Jeff V Armstrong, Steven Gordon, Joni L Holten, Linda Lewis, Andrew C Remson, Marilyn Gale Vilyus

Silver Life Master (000 in Unit 174)

Ron Brown, John W Caudill, Karen Dittert, Mary Cris Emmons, Norma J Lampkin

Ruby Life Master (173 in Unit 174)

A Desmond, Judith Smith

Gold Life Master (93 in Unit 174)

Joyce Gautier, Susan S McMahan

Sapphire Life Master (60 in Unit 174)

Nancy C Boothe, Steve N Vaughn

Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!

174 Unit News

APRIL SECTIONAL CANCELED

The April Sectional, to have been held at the Marriott Westchase, April 3-5, has been canceled. If you have made a hotel reservation for this event outside of our room block, remember to cancel it.

Our Annual Membership Meeting and Board Elections have been postponed until June when we plan to hold our next Sectional at the Marriott Westchase, June 5-7. In the meantime, absentee and early voting will continue.

CLUB CLOSINGS

During this uncertain time, please check our unit website and the individual club websites for the latest information on each club.

WIN BLACK POINTS ONLINE; SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CLUB

ACBL is offering **two** special daily online pairs game where you can win black (Club) points -- one at **9am**; the other at **4pm** (Central time). And the majority of your table fee will be returned to your local club.



Things to know:

Register early! The game is currently limited to 300 pairs; registration opens two hours before game times.

What is "my" club? ACBL will share the revenues to each club based on participants' ACBL player numbers and their recent live sessions. 60% of your \$5 fee will be divided among the clubs in which you have played over the last 12 months. The funds will be divided in proportion to the number of times you played at each club.

Partners. You do need a partner and both of you must be online when one of you registers.

Questions? Full instructions can be found [here](#).

VOTE!!

Save effort and time and VOTE online! It's easy... go to www.acblunit174.org, and click the **Click to Vote** button. Your last chances for in-person voting will be one hour before each session of the June Sectional on Friday and Saturday and then on Sunday morning. [Click here to view candidate statements and voting rules.](#)

JUNE SECTIONAL

The June Sectional will, we are hopeful, take place June 5-7 at the Marriott Westchase. The District 16 GNT Finals will also take place then, concurrent with the regular tournament games. The Annual Membership Meeting and Board Elections will also occur that weekend. It's going to be a busy time! We hope to see you there.

SPECIAL GAMES - EXTRA POINTS

ACBL has designated the month of April for Charity Club Championship games. Most, if not all, clubs in the Unit will offering Fund games all month. If we are back playing, come out and scoop up some extra points for your success at the table.



GNT FINALS IN JUNE

The District 16 GNT Finals to qualify the District’s entries into the National Finals, to be held (we are hopeful) in Montreal in July, were scheduled to take place at the now-canceled April Sectional.

District 16 GNT Finals are now rescheduled to take place in conjunction with the Houston June Sectional, at Westchase Marriott on June 5-7.

If you have any questions about the GNTs, please contact Scott Nason at sdnason@sbcglobal.net.

Club News

Houston area bridge clubs are currently closed. Please check the Unit 174 website and your club’s website for the most current information. As of March 18, the ACBL is suggesting that clubs remain closed until May 11. We will update club events in the April newsletter.

Until then, please take precautions to keep yourself and those around you safe.



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**

This month’s article of the month is “Reasoning with Robert” on page 46. We usually like to bid what we’re looking at, but sometimes that is not the best course of action.

We hold: ♠AQ8743 ♥A54 ♦5 ♣K43. The auction:

Partner	RHO	We	LHO
1C	P	1S	P
2C	P	??	



Now what?

Obviously, we are looking at an attractive and rebiddable spade suit. We might be in slam, depending on partner's hand. We need to make a forcing bid, but there is no forcing bid available in the suit that we're looking at. None of the available spade bids is forcing and none indicates our interest in a potential slam:

2S shows the rebiddable spades but 6-9 points. We have 13 HCP and prime values, with our suit headed by the AQ. Partner could pass 2S which would be a disaster.

3S shows 10-12 points. That's an invitational bid that can be passed. We're too strong for that.

4S shows a long spade suit with no interest in slam, fast arrival. It's a close out bid. It only works if there is no slam.

Therefore, we must look elsewhere for our forcing bid.

The forcing bids available at the two level are 2D or 2H. As long as notrump has not been bid by either partner, a new suit by an unpassed responder is forcing. 2D is the winner. We prefer to make artificial bids in the minor suit as we typically don't want to play there. We want to save the 2H for when we really have hearts.

Partner will make a delayed raise in spades with three-card spade support. Without the spade support, he could bid 2NT or 3C.

With partner's spade support, our prime values, nice suit, first round heart control, second round diamond control and fit for partner's clubs, we are interested in slam. Without the spade fit, there might be a club slam, but there's no spade slam.



We also liked Mike Lawrence's column on page 52 about watching spot cards.



MATCHPOINT STRATEGY (MATCHPOINT MADNESS?)

An extra ten points is worth a lot at matchpoints but little in IMPs.

No one vulnerable, we are sitting South, playing match points, holding
 ♠KJT ♥KT3 ♦AQT943 ♣Q.

Partner opens 1H and we plan to make a game-forcing 2D bid before supporting hearts. Fate intervenes and East bids 2S, giving us these options:

Pass. We would count on partner to protect us by bidding – hopefully a reopening double. Which we would leave in, hoping to set East three tricks for 500 and a great board. This is a top or bottom call; if we set East only two, it will be really bad. We expect East to take four spade tricks, if EW has another two tricks, it'll be good for them and bad for us.

3S shows a limit raise or better in hearts. Course, partner may well bid just 4H when we could have slam. We promised only ten points and three hearts. We're way better than that.

3N. We have spades double-stopped, great intermediates (three tens) and the possibility of running either or both red suits.

Note that 4H is not an option. In this situation, 4H shows a weakish hand with lots of hearts -- maybe 6-9 HCP and five hearts.

D		N Robot		WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH			
1		♠32		1♥ 2♠ 3NT			
		♥AQ654		Pass Pass Pass			
		♦52					
		♣AJ108					
W Robot		S texashen					
♠94		♠KJ10					
♥98		♥K103					
♦K86		♦AQ10943					
♣K97654		♣Q					
3NT South							
NS: 0							
EW: 0							



We like 3N, even though we have a 5-3 heart fit. We expect spades to be double-stopped, we have great intermediates (three tens) and we expect to run hearts or diamonds or both. Yes, we are giving up the opportunity for club ruffs in our hand, which would be the short side in a heart contract. But we think it's worth it.

The play:

West leads the S9 to East's A. East, realizing that he's not getting in again, returns the D7 (when the dummy's on your right, lead to the weakest thing in sight...).

We play the DT (not the D9; as declarer we play the higher of two equal cards) and West wins the DK. Now that we know that East holds the DJ (West would have won the DJ, if he could have done so), our diamonds are set up.

At this point, we are looking at five diamond tricks, one spade trick and likely five heart tricks. Making our contract with two overtricks.

If the hearts had not come in as expected, we could have successfully finessed the CK and SQ, based on the auction and on East's switch at trick 2.

Side note: When we lead the QC, West should not cover. He knows partner is short and all the other high ones are in dummy. There is nothing to promote in partner's hand.

As it turns out, both 3N and 4H make 11 tricks. Those ten extra points (460 vs. 450) got us a top board.



Jeff Kroll & Sam Khayatt
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