



American Contract  
Bridge League

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

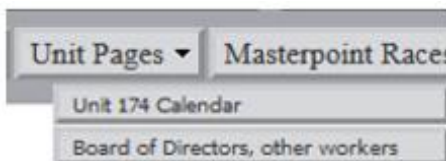


## President's Message

When I was five years old my mother told me:

*Tis better to give than to receive*

As a child I was shy and timid, so I politely nodded my head in agreement with my mother.



However, I didn't believe it for a minute. I knew I loved getting toys and presents on my birthday and at Christmas. More on this later ...



In the spirit of giving unit members can set any charitable organization to be your Randall's Remarkable card Good Neighbor program and/or Amazon Smile selection. Randall's will donate 1% of your grocery purchases and Amazon Smile 0.5%. **Gary Hercules** recommends using



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ACBL Unit 174 as the charitable organization. This doesn't sound like much, but if everyone in the unit decided to do this it would add up to a considerable sum.

Information to select the ACBL for Randall's and Amazon Smile can be found at our unit website <https://acblunit174.org> and then clicking on Unit Pages → AmazonSmile and Randall's Cards

Recently I was rummaging through my closet and found an excellent headset still in its original package. I decided to take it to the Tracy Gee community Center which has a drop off box for Toys for Tots. When I left it gave me a warm fuzzy feeling to think that a child would enjoy the headset that had been just taking up space in my closet.

It made me think of what my mother had said:

*Tis better to give than to receive*

...and you know, she was right.

Until next month, may you and your partner be dealt more than your fair share of spades.

***Jack LaVigne, President, Unit 174***

[jacklavigne@att.net](mailto:jacklavigne@att.net)

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## Board Business

### **2021 CHARITY: HOUSTON FOOD BANK**

Nancy Strohmer and Carol Winograd studied nine worthy nominations for Unit 174's 2021 charity. They recommended that the board select the Houston Food Bank, and the board agreed. Thank you, Nancy and Carol, for all the hard work.

Houston Food Bank Mission: Food for better lives. More than 1.1 million people in the 18 southeast Texas counties served by Houston Food Bank are considered food insecure, meaning they lack consistent access to enough nutritious food to fuel a healthy life. In order to address this issue, the Houston Food Bank distributes food and other essentials to those in need through a network of 1,500 community partners. In addition, they also provide programs and services aimed at helping families achieve long-term stability including nutrition education, job training, health management, and help in securing state-funded assistance.



## ELECTION SECTIONAL

The board approved the budget and schedule for the April 2021 sectional tournament. The tournament is planned for April 16-18, 2021, at the Arabia Shriners, 10510 Harwin Dr., Houston.

### What about COVID?

The ACBL controls when face to face tournaments will occur. At the moment, ACBL has canceled all face to face tournaments in January and February 2021. The safety of our members is their primary concern. We are hoping to see a dramatic improvement from the current situation so that ACBL will allow face to face tournaments. Stay tuned ...

## 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: **Names.**

### RANK ADVANCEMENTS

Listed below are the new Unit 174 Masterpoint Milestones reported by ACBL for October, 2020. An explanation of ranks may be found at [on the ACBL website](#).

#### Junior Master (5 Masterpoints)

**Fuat Y Bingol, Robert Boyd, Richard A Eisenach, Sandra G Gross, Linda F Hall, Michael E Hanna, Susan L Hanna, Mary B Hosking, Karen Leeman**

#### Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

**Pawan K Bassi, Elizabeth B Fischer, Linda L Hagerman, Lindy Kahn, Christy W Kolva, Edward Massin, Cora Bess Meyer, Cathryn R Selman, Tom Washenfelder**

#### Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

**Amy Grossman, Patricia A Holy, Angela R Sanders**

#### Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)



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**Douglas Kincannon**

***NABC Master*** (200 Masterpoints)

**Terry K McGarrity, P M O'Shea, Yandell Rogers Jr**

***Life Master*** (108 in Unit 174)

**Names**

***Bronze Life Master*** (277 in Unit 174)

**Bonnie A Loudin, Bill Nash, Debbie L Nash**

***Silver Life Master*** (189 in Unit 174)

**Louis Bockman, Robert D Crawford**

***Ruby Life Master*** (165 in Unit 174)

**Mercedes G Barker, Cathy C Chen, Carol H Jewett**

***Gold Life Master*** (100 in Unit 174)

**Timucin Erkoc**

***Sapphire Life Master*** (61 in Unit 174)

**Barbara C Grantham**

***Diamond Life Master*** (44 in Unit 174)

**Susan K Stubinski**

*Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!*

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## **174 Unit News**

**GO FOR GOLD, NOVEMBER 23–29**

November 23-29 is Stardust Week, where the points are doubled and 25% of them are **GOLD**.

Come and get 'em!



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## SUPERVISED PLAY CONTINUES

Unit 174 is offering supervised play sessions at 2PM on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. The entry fee is \$3.00, the lowest allowed by BBO, and the games are restricted to Unit 174 players with 0-20 masterpoints.

We will play twelve boards and allow eight minutes per board. Table hosts will be available to answer questions about the bidding or the play. Masterpoints will be awarded in these games.

Registration for the first game opens at 12PM on Monday, October 26. Look for the Unit 174 0-20 Game or search for VACB901744, the unit host account. If you do not have a partner, sign up at the partnership desk; the director will find you a partner.

If you have any questions about this event or about setting up your BBO account, contact **Bill Riley** ([ichicbanbill@gmail.com](mailto:ichicbanbill@gmail.com)).

## NAOBC - NORTH AMERICAN ONLINE BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS

From November 27 to December 6, ACBL is running the North American Online Bridge Championships. This Fall NAOBC features both a Premier Knockout Team event (Nov 27-Dec 6), and a Premier Pair event (Dec 5-6). Both events have three flights: Open, 0-5000, and 0-1500. Both award NABC titles. More information can be found here:

<https://nabc.acbl.org/naobc/>.

## ONLINE EXPERT TEAMS

The online expert teams event is on hiatus until after the holidays.

Thank you to **Jimmy Breihan, Ira Chorush, Timo Erkoc, Phillip Grothus, Daniel Jackson, Jack LaVigne, Bob Morris, and Vinh Tran** for providing terrific games these last few Sunday nights.

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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](#). Check there for the most up-to-date schedules, results and other news.



Most 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](http://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.

Houston vClub schedules are listed below.

Information about face-to-face (F2F) bridge is presented below the vClub schedules.

### APPLE DBC

Regular schedule:

- ◆ Open Pairs                      Mon, Wed, Fri at 3:00pm
- ◆ Limited Pairs                    299r: Mon, Wed, Fri at 2:45pm

BBO Search Term: **Apple**

### BRIDGE CLUB OF HOUSTON

Regular schedule:

- ◆ Open Pairs                      Mon–Fri at 10:20am  
Sat, Sun at 12 noon  
Tue, Thu, Sat at 7:00pm
- ◆ Limited Pairs                    99r: Thu at 10:00am  
199r: Mon, Wed, Fri at 10:00am; Sun at 11:50am  
299r: Tue at 10:00am

Mentor games are offered on the first and third Monday evenings of each month. Please contact **Roxie Walker** ([roxie\\_w@hotmail.com](mailto:roxie_w@hotmail.com)) if you would like to play in one of them.

**NOTE:** BCOH is offering its regular game schedule on Thanksgiving Day.

BBO Search Term: **BCOH**



## CLEAR LAKE / GALVESTON

The Clear Lake and Galveston clubs have combined to form an online "virtual club".

### Regular Schedule

- ◆ Open Pairs                      Mon–Fri at 10:00am  
  Sat 1:15pm
  
- ◆ Limited Pairs                    49r: Wed at 9:45am  
  99r: Mon, Fri at 9:45am  
  199r: Tue, Thu at 9:45am; Sat at 1:00pm

BBO Search Term: **CLBC-GBC**

## WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY

### Regular Schedule **UPDATED**

- ◆ Open Pairs                      Mon–Sat at 10:15am  
  Sun at 2:30pm  
  Wed at 7:00pm
  
- ◆ Limited Pairs                    99r: Sat at 10:05am  
  199r: Mon, Wed, Fri at 10:05am; Tue, Thu at 3:05pm  
  299r: Tue, Thu, at 10:05am; Sun at 2:20pm  
  499r: Mon, Wed, Fri at 12:45pm  
  0-750: Tue, Thu at 3:15pm; Sat at 1:00pm

### Free Mini-Lesson

**Bert Onstott** gives a FREE 30-minute mini-lesson every Tuesday morning from 9:30-10:00 via Zoom. It's open to anyone, but geared to newer players. We will be continuing a series on "Card Play Technique" this week.



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Bert sends out an email invitation every Tuesday morning; if you would like to participate, please send an email to [bertonstott@comcast.net](mailto:bertonstott@comcast.net) asking to be added to the invite list.

It will be over in plenty of time for you to play in the Tuesday morning 299r game.

### **Mentor/Mentee Games** (*Schedule change*)

WBA holds Mentor/Mentee games twice a month on the second Wednesday morning at 10:15 and on the **second and fourth Monday** evenings at 7:00 pm. Both games last about two hours.

Mentees are those with less than 300 masterpoints, Mentors have over 300. If you would like to be included, let **Katherine Onstott** know (email [kjonstott@comcast.net](mailto:kjonstott@comcast.net)) and she will pair you with a suitable partner.

The entry fee is \$10 for the pair, which the Mentee is encouraged to pay.

For more information, visit <http://www.westsidebridgeacademy.com/Mentor-Mentee.php>.

BBO Search Term: WBA

### **CYPRESS NORTHWEST DBC**

Cypress Northwest DBC has discontinued its F2F games.

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## **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' summaries are available [here, on the WBA website](#).

This week we welcome back occasional columnist **Jeanne Phelps** ([jsfphelps@gmail.com](mailto:jsfphelps@gmail.com)) with another installment in her **The First Twenty Masterpoints** series.

### **THE FIRST TWENTY MASTERPOINTS**

#### **Become a Card-Whisperer**

When my partner, Chris, and I played social bridge, defense was a bit of an afterthought. It took us a couple of years before we took advantage of using signals to communicate a hand's trick-taking power. Once we started using signals, our score started going up!





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By agreeing to a set of card-play signals with your partner, the card you play can tell your partner information about your hand's shape and strength. Then, using the bidding sequence, her own hand and the dummy on the table, partner can deduce where other cards are located and improve her card play.

Signals are part of the defender's toolbox. Signals fall into the broader category of card-counting or estimation. The signals you and your partner use are documented on your convention card and can usually be found in the lower left-hand corner. They are part of "leads and carding" that include leading the top of a sequence or leading the fourth-best card of your longest and strongest suit against a notrump contract. In a perfect world, each card played by you and your partner tells a story about the hand.

There are three basic types of signals:

- ◆ Attitude Signals –Used to encourage or discourage the suit led by a partner. Usually, playing a high card means to continue, and a low card no need to continue.
- ◆ Count Signals – showing either an even or odd number of cards held in the suit led.
- ◆ Suit-Preference Signals – indicating a preference for a specific side suit.

So far, my partner and I have only mastered the first two, and my partner is better than I at count signals; I miss them a lot. My favorite is attitude signaling, a high card to indicate to partner that if she takes that trick to lead it again. It means I have a winning trick in that suit (or that I want to set up a trick). It's not perfect, but it works most of the time.

Consistency in card play will also help your score and improve your game. Always leading the fourth-best card against a notrump contract will enable partner to use the Rule of Eleven to figure out what card she should play to the trick. Leading from the top of a sequence helps partner know what cards you do and do not have. Do not get frustrated – with constant use of signals, and you will get better.

There are two caveats:

1. Do not forget to check those convention cards before you play against a new team – once you get good at these, the rules allow you to change them to confuse your opponents (for example, upside-down signals).
2. Signals can read by both teams to help estimate/infer the shape of hands.



"Even if you can't contribute a card that will win the trick or promote winners for your side, every card you play is important. Partner may not know whether you like the suit led. Your attitude signal can give the help partner needs. If you automatically play your lowest card when you can't win the trick, Partner has to guess whether you like the suit. Naturally, partner would go wrong about half of the time. Help your partner by signaling your attitude when you have a choice of cards to play." (1)

(1) ACBL Teaching Series – *Defense in the 21st Century Teacher Manual*. Chapter 5 has excellent examples of when signals work and why you should add them to your toolbox.

### **Bridge Bulletin ARTICLE OF THE MONTH**

The November, 2020, *Bridge Bulletin* article of the month is August Boehm's "Boehm on Bridge" on page 54. In this continuation of the **Along the spectrum** series, Boehm examines what to do when the opponents have shown game-going points between them and you, too, have an opening hand. The example auction is 1♠ - 2♣ - P - 2♠ - ?? . 2♣ is game-forcing.

**A** ♠J8 ♥KJ962 ♦AQ7 ♣Q105

**Pass.** With two opponents holding opening hands, you will not win the contract unless it's doubled for penalty. A double by lefty would be for penalty. A heart lead by partner is probably best if you end up defending against notrump, but maybe not if you end up defending spades. If you do overcall, you are helping declarer place the cards.

**B** ♠98 ♥KQ62 ♦AQ765 ♣K10

**Pass.** Just like in hand A you are not going to buy the contract unless you end up in a spot where they can double you for penalty. And by bidding, you will help them place the cards. Note: If the bidding were 1C-P-1S to you, this would be an ideal takeout double.

**C** ♠98 ♥KQJ82 ♦7654 ♣105

2♥. You know you want a heart lead. Your heart suit is sufficiently robust that it is highly unlikely the opponents will find a penalty double of 2H. Also, you are not misleading partner as to your strength. Partner knows that the opponents have both shown openers so partner knows that your side is unlikely to have more than 14 hcp between your two hands. The overcall may also mislead the opponents into thinking you have whatever high cards are missing in the other three suits.



♠ 9 ♥ QJ106532 ♦ A765 ♣ 10

3♥. This is textbook preempt; lots of offense in hearts and only one defensive trick.

### Other articles

Other articles that were considered:

- ♦ "Don't Let the Tail Wag the Dog" by Mel Colchamiro (p. 23). Colchamiro explains New Minor Forcing and Spiral, two conventions that are easy to learn and popular. He explains when to use them and when not to.
- ♦ "The Bidding Box" Problem 2 (p. 33). Using standard bidding, Jim Munday shows how to reach the good club small slam. Both pairs ended in 3NT.
- ♦ "Reasoning with Robert" by Robert Todd (p. 42). Todd discusses the use of the responsive double and other choices in this auction: 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♠ - ??.
- ♦ "Lessons Learned" by Michael Berkowitz (p. 44). Berkowitz discusses declarer's entry-management.
- ♦ "Mike's Bridge Lesson" by Mike Lawrence (p. 48). Lawrence demonstrates taking all his chances when declaring.
- ♦ "Challenge of the Month" (p. 52) is a strip and end play example.
- ♦ "Bidding Matters" by Karen Walker (p. 55). In this installment of the **Relearning bridge** series, Walker discusses telling the smallest lie when all your bidding choices are flawed.
- ♦ "Mike's Advice" by Mike Lawrence (p. 56). Partner doubles after opening a weak 2♠. What is partner doing?



## KEEP THE OPTION TO GET OUT EARLY

The image shows a bridge hand simulation interface. At the top left, a card '9' is shown in a blue box. Below it, the West hand (Robot) is shown with ♠Q1084, ♥A842, ♦J102, and ♣A5. The North hand (Robot) is shown with ♠AK97532, ♥10, ♦AQ76, and ♣3. The South hand (texasheh) is shown with ♠J, ♥QJ65, ♦K3, and ♣KQJ842. The East hand (Robot) is shown with ♠6, ♥K973, ♦9854, and ♣10976. A bidding table at the top right shows: WEST (Pass, Pass), NORTH (1♠, 2♣), EAST (Pass, Pass), and SOUTH (1NT, Pass).

	North	South
	1♠	1N <i>This bid is forcing; we can see what partner has to say.</i>
<i>With a strong seven-card suit, bid what you're looking at.</i>	2♣	P

We considered a game-forcing 2♣ at our first turn. And if we weren't looking at a singleton spade and an aceless hand, we might have bid 2♣. The clubs are great, but if we don't play clubs, they might not be so great. 1N gives us another opportunity to bid, if partner's bid improves our hand.

Partner is right to rebid seven-card major rather than show the four-card minor. If the hearts and diamonds were reversed, he might consider 2♥. However, we really like rebidding a seven-card spade suit to the AK.

North has shown a minimal opener with six or more spades. This has devalued the South hand, as spades is the last place South wants to play. Notrump is speculative as there are likely to be transportation problems. It doesn't make much sense to introduce the clubs, as a club partial is unlikely to be better than a spade partial. Mismatches sound the alarm to get out early.



**Jeff Kroll & Sam Khayatt**  
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