



American Contract  
Bridge League

# Unit 174 Newsletter September 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.



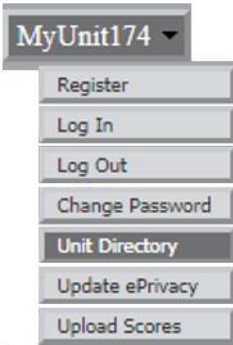
## President's Message

### Stay Connected

Unit 174 has a terrific web site maintained by volunteers **Carol Winograd** and **Allison Ochsner**. The web site address is <https://acblunit174.org/>.

Here you will easily find, among other things:

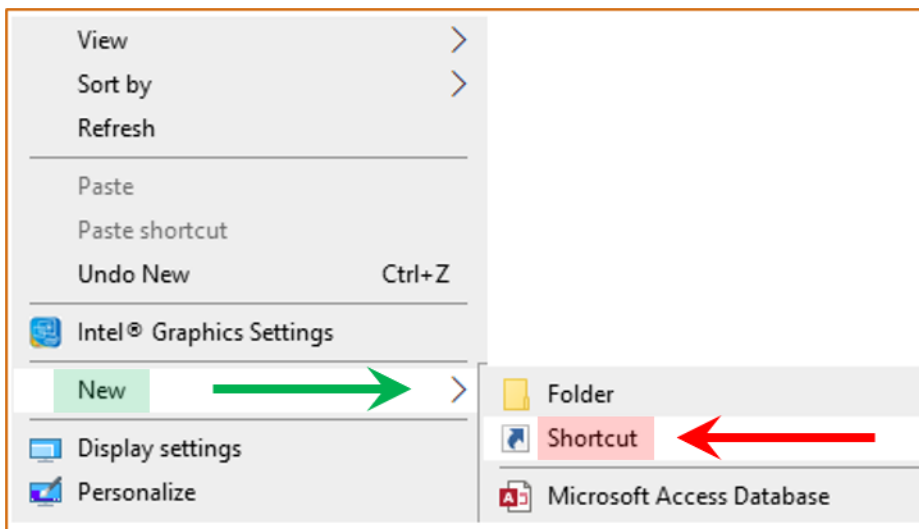
- ◆ Messages to keep you up to date on the main page
- ◆ Links to club web pages and other bridge sites
- ◆ Unit Masterpoint races (including a new Online Points race)
- ◆ Resources for new players
- ◆ Teachers and bridge classes
- ◆ Virtual game information



In particular, the unit directory enables you to locate friends and partners from your smart phone or tablet, if your paper copy is not available.

I recommend that you bookmark Unit 174 web site in your browser and visit it often.

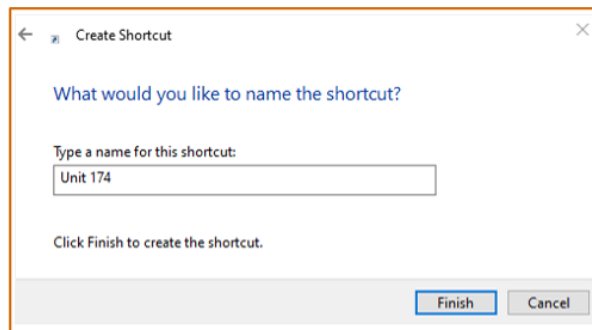
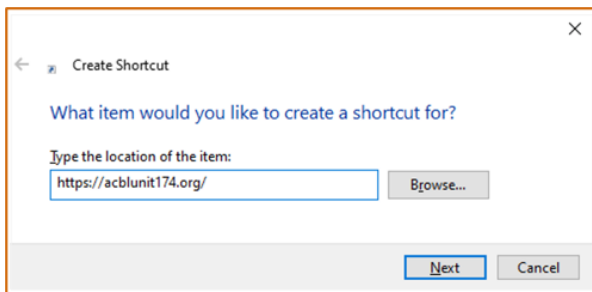
An even better alternative is to create a shortcut on your desktop. To create a shortcut, place your mouse in a blank area on your desktop. Then, hold down the right mouse button and select New > Shortcut.



Enter the web site address in the Create Shortcut box (below, left).

Click Next and name it (e.g., Unit 174).

A browser icon will be created on your desktop (Chrome shown below, right)



Until next month, may your play bring a smile to your partner's face.

**Jack LaVigne, President, Unit 174**

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



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## Board Business

### SUPPORT YOUR CLUB

The Unit 174 Board is asking you to reach out and support your local bridge club during this pandemic. Some of our clubs have been struggling financially during the pandemic. Both Westside Bridge Academy (WBA) and Bridge Club of Houston (BCOH) must cover hefty monthly rent while charging only half their usual game fee.

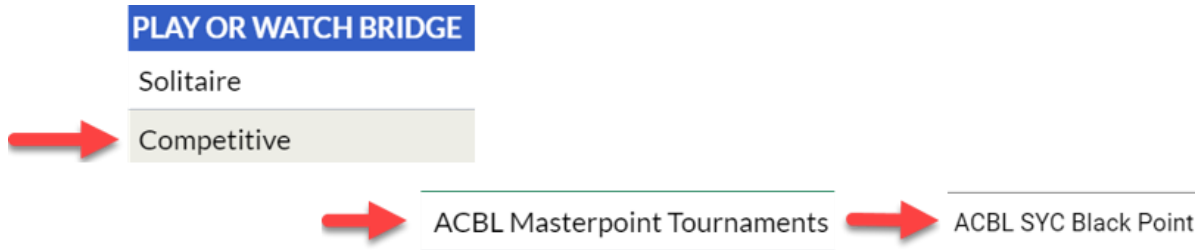
#### What can you do to help?

The best solution is to play online frequently at the club where you would normally have played before the pandemic.

#### What if your club is not online?

You can help your club by playing in any of the daily ACBL SYC (Support Your Club) masterpoint tournaments. A portion of your game fee will be returned to your club. ACBL runs three SYC pairs games each day plus a daylong individual tournament each day.

To register for an ACBL SYC game, navigate as shown below. Type "syc" in the search box (at the top of the left panel), to filter results for only SYC games, rather than all ACBL games.





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## 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: Marjorie J Abell, Barbara G Brown, Brenda K Cunningham, David Douglas, Eileen Grover, Robert L Grover, Mostafa R Hasan, Bill Lafuze, Libby M Rogers, Jason A Scott, Gordon A Vogel, K Gayle Vogel, Anita West

### **RANK ADVANCEMENTS**

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

#### Junior Master (5 Masterpoints)

Susan M Demarco, Arvin Doshi, Jyoti Doshi, Joanne Hogarth, Janet Jordan, Nancy L McWilliams, Mehmet F Okcu, Pamela H St Claire, Chung Tan

#### Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Beverly J Gebhart, Kimberlin Kane, Carol Kelly, Wynette B Stuntz

#### Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Nancy Blackwell, Barbara Craven, David S Good, Abu R Hasan, Laura L Hayes, Ronda F Kelly

#### Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Janice Hardcastle, Kathy L'Hommedieu, Joseph P McCormack, Jorge L Rodriguez, Elizabeth Wise

#### NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)

Phyllis L Maier, Moira Morris, Johara M Nour

#### Life Master (110 in Unit 174)

Mark Incerto, Carol A Jenkinson



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**Bronze Life Master** (281 in Unit 174)

Laura H Chandler, Frederick H Gregory, Gayle S Longmire, Lorita A Tipton

**Silver Life Master** (187 in Unit 174)

Jay Evert, Steven Gordon, Bernice M McElwain-Hick

**Gold Life Master** (101 in Unit 174)

Lynn Shapiro

**Emerald Life Master** (12 in Unit 174)

Jeff McKee

*Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!*

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## **174** Unit News

### **STARDUST WEEK, SEPTEMBER 21-27**

Tomorrow kicks off Stardust Week, similar to an upgraded Club Championship week. Special masterpoint awards will be given at every BBO virtual club. What's so special about winning during Stardust Week? All games in the Virtual Clubs will award double regular points, and points will be 1/4 **gold**, 3/4 black! Come out and go for the **gold**!

### **2021 LONE STAR REGIONAL CANCELED**

In accordance with ACBL directive, the 2021 Lone Star Regional has been canceled.

The next tournament scheduled is the Election Sectional set for Apr 16-18, 2021. The sectional will be held at the Shriners, 1510 Harwin Drive, with **Lauri Laufman** and **Karen Nussbaum** as chairpersons.



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## ONLINE EXPERT TEAMS

On Sunday evenings at 7pm, our Houston local bridge pros and experts will be playing team matches on BBO. The partnerships change each week. Mark your calendar and plan on kibitzing these great matches. It's free so we hope you will plan on watching.

Players include: **Jimmy Breihan, Ira Chorush, Timo Erkoc, Phillip Grothus, Daniel Jackson, Jack LaVigne, Bob Morris, and Vinh Tran.**

To find the game, do a player search for BBO name **Mrace** or **Devilscoup**. Then click the JOIN button in the upper right corner of the profile.

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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.

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.

### 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**



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## 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                    199r: Mon, Wed, Fri at 10:00am  
  299r: Tue, Thu at 10:00am

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

**EXTRA GAME for Stardust Week!** There will be a 199r game at 11:50 on Sunday, September 27.

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, Wed, Fri at 10:00am  
  Sat 1:15pm
  
- ◆ Limited Pairs                    99r: Tue at 10:15am  
  0-750: Tue at 10:30am  
  499r: Thu at 10:15am

BBO Search Term: **CLBC-GBC**



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## WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY

### Regular Schedule

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

### 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.

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

WBA holds Mentor/Mentee games twice a month on the second Wednesday morning at 10:15 and the fourth Tuesday evening 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 \$12 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**





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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 month we welcome occasional columnist **Jeanne Phelps**. A Club Master, Jeanne is a certified ACBL teacher and director. She is a member of the Cypress NW DBC.

### THE FIRST TWENTY MASTERPOINTS

By **Jeanne Phelps** (jsfphelps@gmail.com, BBO: jsfphelps)

*This column is for the newest duplicate players – those with 0-20 masterpoints or the Rookie and Junior Master players. I will share what I found the most helpful in improving my duplicate game. Once I understood these concepts, I became a better duplicate player. These simple concepts that created a framework for my duplicate play. Hopefully, ideas will also help and inspire you to continue to play duplicate.*

#### Please Come Out and Play

As of August 2020, there were 495 players, 20% of Unit 174 members, with fewer than 20 masterpoints. Most of you were excited and a bit nervous when you started playing duplicate. Then the quarantine began, and many of your efforts to move forward were cut short. The new vehicle recommended by ACBL was BridgeBase Online (BBO, [www.bridgebase.com](http://www.bridgebase.com)). Most of you have not created a BBO login, much less played a club game there.

We miss you. Please come out and play.

I would be happy to help you get started on BBO. Send me an email with your phone number, and I will give you a call. It will take about 15 minutes. Just think – finally, something new to talk about. Maybe this will reignite your interest and help you take the next step. It is not too late - you can play, practice and learn on BBO. You don't need to play in tournaments or club games to make progress in duplicate but that is fun, too.

If you are not yet comfortable playing in a game format, BBO has several tools to help you improve your declarer play and none of them requires you to have a BBO account. The most useful is Bridge Master, which provides a lesson on how each hand should be played. It has



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five levels from Beginner to World Class. Access Bridge Master by going to [www.bridgebase.com](http://www.bridgebase.com), scrolling to the bottom of the page and clicking the Bridge Master icon.

I strongly suggest you do not play in robot games. They are seriously flawed. The biggest flaw for newer players is that the robots don't signal. It is near-impossible to improve your game if you don't develop sound signaling habits.

This month's reminders:

- ◆ **It is just a game.** Repeat this to yourself and your partner every time you play. You are going to have good days and bad. You will make mistakes (some you won't even realize until much later) and have some brilliant successes. Eventually, everything will come together, and you will win some part of a masterpoint. It will be a great day. You should be proud. You have tested yourself and won something that few people will ever enjoy. Good work! Duplicate bridge is a fascinating game and can be addictive, but it is still just a game. It's a fun game, but it's a game. Remember, the real benefit is improving your memory, problem-solving ability, stamina, and interpersonal skills. You accomplish all of this while participating in a fun activity – a win-win.
- ◆ **Bridge is a partnership game.** You and your partner need to understand what each other is communicating both when you bid and when you defend. You already know the majority of what everyone else in the room knows. You have enough information to play in any stratified game and at any club in the world. Will you always win? No. Is there room for improvement? Yes. The better you and your partner communicate, the better you will score. If you are still unsure of yourself, then take two classes – Bidding and Defense. I like the ACBL Series, but there are lots of useful approaches.
- ◆ **The playing field is level – but it is up to you to ask.** On BBO, everyone has to explain almost every artificial bid, including transfers. An artificial bid is one where the suit bid is represented by bid actually made. Don't worry about knowing every convention. Every player has the right to understand what each bid means. At your turn to bid, you may ask for an explanation of the opponent's bid by clicking the bid itself. You may also consult the opponents' convention card. Use the information about your opponent's hand to plan the defense.



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- ◆ **Practice makes perfect.** My partner and I have spent many fun hours talking on the phone about the hand is our favorite approach to improving our play and defense. Casual play on BBO is a great way to practice with your partner. My partner and I play also play casual games with our friends on BBO. It is always for fun; you can talk about the bidding, the play, and go back over hands.

Start playing now, and you will be ready when the quarantine is over to hit the ground running. After all, you are one of the luckiest people in the world. You have found a world that is not only fun but full of opportunities for you to become a better person and at no real risk to yourself or those who are important to you. What a deal! You can keep yourself amused, and it doesn't require wearing a mask, stamina, wealth, or privilege. The most critical next step is the hardest and the easiest – Call your partner and log into to BBO and play! You can chat on the phone, figuring out how you and your partner can solve interesting bridge problems.

And... If you have some "light bulb" moments, please send them to me, and I will share them. Future topics will be about ideas, key card play, favorite web sites, and books that significantly improved my game.

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

The September 2020 article of the month is "Better Bridge with Bergen" by Marty Bergen on page 51. In this installment of his series on hand evaluation, Bergen discusses distribution.

Bergen makes the following key points:

- ◆ Having a hand with 5-4 in your longest two suits is significantly better than a hand with 5-3 in your longest two suits. That four-card suit will often supply an extra trick.
- ◆ Both of these hands should be opened 1NT despite the two doubletons in the second hand. There is no accurate second bid after opening 1C and hearing 1S from partner.

① ♠K10 ♥AJ8 ♦K43 ♣A9652

② ♠K10 ♥AJ87 ♦K4 ♣A9652

It's also nice have the opening lead come up to an unsupported King, especially doubleton than through it



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- ◆ Focusing on tricks should take precedence over focusing on points.
  - ◆ The flatter your hand is, the weaker it is.
  - ◆ The more shapely your hand, the greater its trick-taking potential.

### Other articles

Other articles that were considered:

- ◆ "Card Play 101" by Phillip Alder (p. 40) examines the play of card combination in conjunction with managing entries.
- ◆ "Parrish the Thought" by Adam Parrish (p. 41) looks at a specific combination - the AQT - and the benefit of also holding the 9.
- ◆ "Ask Jerry" by Jerry Helms (p. 47) on why a 1N response to partner's opening bid often does not show a balanced hand.
- ◆ "Mike's Bridge Lesson" by Mike Lawrence (p. 48) discusses how to avoid danger by a well-thought out duck.
- ◆ "Bidding Matters" by Karen Walker (p. 54) on when to hide your four-card major and bid notrump.
- ◆ "Mike's Advice" by Mike Lawrence (p. 56) on using deception to make it hard for the defense to find the winning line.
- ◆ "My Bridge and Yours" by Frank Stewart (p. 58). A standard strip and end-play is missed so declarer goes down in a cold contract.



## MINOR SLAM VS 3NT

2	<b>N Robot</b> ♠A753 ♥8 ♦AQJ96 ♣1052	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>WEST</th> <th>NORTH</th> <th>EAST</th> <th>SOUTH</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	1♠	Pass	1♥	Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass	4♦	Pass	6♦	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH																			
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♥																			
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT																			
Pass	4♦	Pass	6♦																			
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass																			
<b>W Robot</b> ♠KQ62 ♥97643 ♦74 ♣64	<b>S texashen</b> ♠AK1052 ♥K1082 ♦AQ73	<b>E Robot</b> ♠J10984 ♥QJ ♦53 ♣KJ98																				
6♦ South NS: 0 EW: 0																						

It has been said that if you find yourself in five of a minor when the rest of the field is likely to be in 3N, you may as well bid six. Once my partner bid beyond 3N, we're playing slam. 5D is unlikely to be a good matchpoint contract and I have extras. Course it's always better when your void is not in partner's suit.

	North	South	
	1♥	1♠	<i>When you are void in a major, and Lefty doesn't overcall in it, partner usually has it.</i>
<i>If partner bids 3S, showing six, I am strong enough to pattern out my hand with 3C.</i>	2♦	3♣	<i>New minor forcing, asking if I have three spades.</i>
<i>I do not have three spades.</i>	3N	4♦	<i>Slam invitational. There is no point in taking me out of 3N so that we can play in a minor-suit game.</i>
<i>I have extras and do not want to ask for aces with a void</i>	6♦		

This is a dummy reversal hand. I want to make dummy the master hand - make it good. I can't afford to pull trump as I need to ruff dummy's little spades.



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All the cards lie well for me:

5	Diamond tricks in dummy
1	Spade
3	Spade ruffs (it's always more fun to ruff when the opponents just have little ones)
3	Hearts (pitching two clubs from the North hand - what a lucky lie in hearts)
1	Club
<hr/>	
13	Tricks

Without the lucky lie in hearts, I would take two clubs when the finesse works. If I could have seen the K onside, I would have bid 7D, but we don't risk a small slam for a grand on a finesse.

The 6D contract was worth 96.4%; 5D making six was worth 21.4%.



**Jeff Kroll & Sam Khayatt**  
[texas.blue.hen@gmail.com](mailto:texas.blue.hen@gmail.com)