



Unit 174 Newsletter April 2021



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

At the beginning of 2020 we had no idea what was in store for us. The year started normally enough with a highly successful regional and then Covid took over. Face-to-face bridge ceased and online bridge (eventually) became the order of the day.

Online bridge has become remarkably successful, and although not all face-to-face players have joined, those that do play with greater frequency making the net table count even greater.

It is clear that club play will return this year, probably getting into full swing the latter part of 2021. What is the future of online bridge? Stay tuned, updates to follow.

I would like to welcome to our new board members, **Dave Becker**, **Carol Lombardino** and **Thomas Rush**.

This is my last newsletter. I have served on the Unit 174 board for the last three years and have enjoyed contributing to this great game of ours. It has been my honor and privilege to serve with fellow board members:

Cindy Cox	Kathleen Malcomson
Joyce Gore	Greg May
Nancy Guthrie	Kathy McDougall
David Henke	Karen Nussbaum
Ken Hudson	Clif Rice
Daniel Jackson	Sheryl Thomas
Lauri Laufman	

and the volunteers too numerous to name.

I would also like to thank former presidents **Paul Cuneo, Lauri Laufman** and **Nancy Strohmer** for their sage advice.

Until we play face-to-face, with eight top tricks may your left opponent lead the K of clubs against your 3N with dummy tabling JT0x and you holding the A.

Jack LaVigne, President, Unit 174
jacklavigne@att.net

Board Business

THANKS, ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

the election of our new Unit 174 board members was completed Apr 17. Congratulations to **Dave Becker, Carol Lombardino** and **Thomas Rush**, who were elected to serve.

A special thanks to the following:

- ◆ **Brigitte** and **Danny Sandifer** for once again performing election judge duties
- ◆ Outgoing board members **Nancy Guthrie** and **Sheryl Thomas** whose service was greatly appreciated

At the April board meeting the following officers were elected:

- ◆ President **Karen Nussbaum**
- ◆ Vice
 President **Kathy McDougall**
- ◆ Secretary **Clif Rice**

The following appointments were made:

- ◆ District **Lauri Laufman**
 Representative
- ◆ Supply Coordinator **Dave Becker**
- ◆ Technology **Greg May**
- ◆ STaC Coordinator **Joyce Gore**

New Members and Rank Advancements

ACBL notifies us each month about the members new to our Unit and about those who advanced a rank in 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: **Jim Beer, Gary L Eilrich, Leon Gertsch, Hendra Iskandar, Thomas Kemeny, Linda S McGimsey, Margaret L Pfeiffer, Alice H Young**

RANK ADVANCEMENTS

Listed below are the new Unit 174 Masterpoint Milestones reported by ACBL for January, 2021. An explanation of ranks may be found [on the ACBL website](#).

Junior Master (5 Masterpoints)

Ashok K Chhabra, Hendra Iskandar, Ellen T Rochelle, Patricia A Thibadeoux

Club Master (20 Masterpoints)

Jim Beer, Richard A Eisenach

Sectional Master (50 Masterpoints)

Lindy Kahn

Regional Master (100 Masterpoints)

Richard Napientek, Richard R Preston, Joseph E Rogers, Karrie C Washenfelder, Kay G Watson

NABC Master (200 Masterpoints)

Susan S Banks, Carolyn B Clapp, Gay V Conner, Janice Hardcastle, David C Hull, Stormy M Hull, Janet L Manchee, Ava Noble, Susan M Silvey, Margaret V Thomson, Elizabeth Wise, Nathan W Yee

Advanced NABC Master (300 Masterpoints)

Walt Clingo, Rupa Shah

Life Master (101 in Unit 174)

Jenelle W Chamberlain, Shirley D Kingsley, Bill Nash, Debbie L Nash, Michael Wells

Bronze Life Master (264 in Unit 174)

Yvonne C Sterkin, Julia E Thompson, Victor P Tong

Silver Life Master (190 in Unit 174)

Bonnie Burkhart, Ben L Landers, Thomas A Romz, Sheryl Thomas

Gold Life Master (98 in Unit 174)

Shou A Chao, Harry R Espey, Edward R Freiter, William E Houck

Sapphire Life Master (61 in Unit 174)

Charles H Hilding

Diamond Life Master (44 in Unit 174)

Brenda L Solovitz

Congratulations to all for these accomplishments!

174 Unit News

EXTRA, EXTRA POINTS! READ ALL ABOUT IT

April 22-25: Stay@Home, Play@Home

ACBL is offering a regionally-rated (red and gold points!) online event April 22-25. [Click here for the schedule.](#)

May 15-16: Grass Roots Weekend

Win DOUBLE black points while supporting D16 North American Pairs and Grand National Teams events. A portion of the entry fees is returned to the districts.

May 24-30: Silver Linings Week

Play in your usual vClub games to scoop up DOUBLE SILVER points all week long.

ACBL has published the 2021 Online Event Schedule through July, 2021. [Click here for the full schedule of ACBL online events and games.](#)

FUTURE LIFE MASTERS PROGRAM IS LAUNCHED!

This program was developed for our newest bridge players and features a BBO Virtual Game Schedule welcoming players from across the District. See below for the current Virtual FLM Game schedule with more being added regularly.

If you have fewer than 99 Masterpoints, please join us! Our mission is to provide a welcoming network of players who are looking for partners, information about bridge education (classes in person and online, and assistance to play in beginning level games.

Check us out at www.flm174.com and/or contact our Group Leaders:

Mary Ellen Vail, Apollo Group (0-20), Apollo@flm174.com
Janice Hardcastle, Gemini Group (21-50), Gemini@flm174.com
Betty Westbrook, Discovery Group (51-100), Discovery@flm174.com

<i>Future Life Masters of Unit 174</i>			
<i>Game Schedule</i>			
Playing Group	Day	Time	BBO Club
Apollo (0-20)	Tue	3:00	U174 FLM Apollo 0-20 Assisted Play
	Mon	4:00	D16 0-20 FLM Apollo
Gemini (0-49)			TBD
Discovery (0-99)	Mon	9:45	CLBC FLM Discovery 99r
	Thu	10:00	BCOH FLM Discovery 99r
	Sat	9:45	WBA FLM Discovery 99r

You must have an ACBL# in your BBO profile to register for these games.

ACBL PHASED PLAN FOR RETURN TO F2F

ACBL has canceled the sanctions for all tournaments through July. This decision was announced as part of a phased plan for the return to face-to-face (F2F) bridge. Phase 1 is the return of F2F when it is safe to do so and with safety protocols in place. In Phase 2, expected to begin in August, sanction requests for Sectional tournaments will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In Phase 3, expected to begin in October, sanction requests for Regional tournaments will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It is expected that the Fall NABC will be held in Austin, as currently scheduled. These dates are subject to changes as the year progresses.

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.

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). 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 immediately below. Information on face-to-face bridge is listed below the vClub information.

APPLE DBC

BBO 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

BBO 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

Mentor games are offered on the first and third Monday evenings during the month. Please contact **Roxie Walker** (roxie_w@hotmail.com) if you would like to play in one of them.

BBO Search Term: **BCOH**

CLEAR LAKE / GALVESTON

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

BBO Schedule (through 5/30/31)

- ◆ **Open Pairs** Mon-Fri at 10:00am
Sat 1:15pm
- ◆ **Limited Pairs** 199r: Tue, Thu at 9:45am; Sat at 1:00pm
- ◆ **Open Swiss** Sun at 2:30pm

BBO Schedule (SCHEDULE CHANGE beginning 5/31/21)

- ◆ **Open Pairs** Thu at 10:15am
Tue at 2:15pm
- ◆ **Limited Pairs** 99r: Mon at 9:30am
199r: Tue, Thu at 9:30am
299r: Mon at 9:45am

BBO Search Term: **CLBC-GBC**

Please refer to the Clear Lake Bridge Club entry below for information on face-to-face games.

WESTSIDE BRIDGE ACADEMY

BBO Schedule

- ◆ **Open Pairs** Mon-Sat at 10:00am
Sun at 2:30pm
Wed at 7:00pm
- ◆ **Limited Pairs** 99r: Sat at 9:45am
199r: Tue at 9:45am
299r: Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri at 9:45am; Sun at 2:20pm
749r: Mon-Fri at 3:15pm; Sat at 1:00pm
- ◆ **Open Swiss** Sun at 6:00pm

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.

Bert sends out an email invitation every Tuesday morning; if you would like to participate, please send an email to 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 99r game.

Mentor/Mentee Games

WBA holds Mentor/Mentee games on the second Wednesday morning at 10:15am and on the second and fourth Monday evenings at 7:00 pm. All three 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) 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**

CLEAR LAKE BRIDGE CLUB

Clear Lake Bridge club is re-opening on Memorial Day, May 31 with a combination of face-to-face and virtual games. Beginning May 31, all game fees (both F2F and virtual) will be \$5.00.

Face-to-face Club Games

- ◆ **Open Pairs** Mon, Wed, Fri at 10:00am
Sat at 1:00pm

- ◆ **Limited Pairs** 199r: Mon, Wed at 2:00pm
499r: Tue, Thu at 10:00am

- ◆ **Open Swiss** Sun at 1:00pm

BBO Schedule

- ◆ **Open Pairs** Thu at 10:15am
Tue at 2:15pm

- ◆ **Limited Pairs** 99r: Mon at 9:30am
199r: Tue, Thu at 9:30am
299r: Mon at 9:45am

F2F Requirements:

- ◆ Covid vaccine regimen completed
- ◆ No food at tables
- ◆ Masks OPTIONAL

Check the website for UPDATED GAME SCHEDULE, as it is likely to evolve: www.clearlakebridgeclub.org.

CYPRESS NORTHWEST DBC

Cypress NW DBC is holding F2F bridge games on Tuesdays and Thursdays with sign-in at 11:45 am at the Meg Weekly Community Center (8440 Greenhouse Road, Cypress, Texas 77433). The fee is \$6/pair. If you have any questions please call **Jim Warren** at 832/851-4745.

New club coming soon: Bear Creek Bridge Club at the Clay Road Community Center, 18650 Clay Rd, Houston, TX 77084.

FORT BEND DUPLICATE BRIDGE

We are reopening in Sugar Land on Tuesday April 13, 2021 at 9 AM.

Masks are required and you must be fully vaccinated.

Entries are only \$5.00 until we can play with masks off.

We are also limited 50 persons.

Please call ASAP if you want to play.

Eric Watson

Fort Bend Duplicate Bridge
Jacks Conference Center, Sugar Land
3232 Austin Parkway, Sugar Land
Tuesday games begin again, 9 AM April 13
832 287 9107

KATY BRIDGE CLUB

Jim Warren has purchased the Katy Bridge Club. Katy Club games will be held on Wednesdays as soon as the new community center opens on Clay Road (replaces flooded Bear Creek CC). The new community center is located at 18650 Clay Rd, Houston, TX 77084. If you have any questions please call **Jim Warren** at 832/851-4745.

New club coming soon: Bear Creek Bridge Club, also at the Clay Road location.

LONE STAR BRIDGE CLUB

LSBC Election Results:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| ◆ President | Kay Rice |
| ◆ Vice President | Deb Alexander |
| ◆ Secretary | Vicky Martinez |
| ◆ Treasurer | Carol Jenkinson |
| ◆ Club Manager | Linda Sutton |
| ◆ Church Liaison | Jeane Crumpler |
| ◆ Members at large | Bill Gemas, Doug Boswell, Sandra Maalouf |

Sandra will handle partnerships.

The new Board has voted to reopen Lone Star Bridge Club for in-person play in the second week in May. The first game will be on Monday, May 10th at noon. The next game will be on Thursday, May 13th, at 10:30 am. We will reopen the 299'er game as soon as possible. Watch for the announcement.

Based on the feedback from its members in the recent survey that was sent out, the Board has implemented health guidelines for playing in person:

- ◆ Proof of Covid vaccination (a one-time proof of vaccination will be required to start playing in person at the Club). If for health considerations, your physician has prohibited a Covid vaccine, a note from your doctor stating the same will be required.
- ◆ Masks will be required at all times while at the club.
- ◆ Hand sanitizer will be provided but the club encourages that each player also bring a personal bottle to be used at the table.
- ◆ East/West players will carry their bid boxes with them when moving tables.
- ◆ North will be the only person to enter information into the

BridgeMaster.

- ◆ All food will be discontinued except for small pre-packaged snacks and bottled water.
- ◆ The Club will sanitize boards, bid boxes and premises before each game.
- ◆ These policies will be reviewed quarterly and adjusted accordingly.



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**

The April, 2021, *Bridge Bulletin* article of the month is Marty Bergen's "Better Bridge with Bergen" on page 61. Bergen discusses his atypical preference for an unevenly divided trump suit (5-3 or more) over a 4-4 fit.

The usual argument for favoring a 4-4 trump fit over a 5-3 trump fit is based on the assumption that declarer will draw trumps and then use a long suit (not chosen as trump) to cover side-suit losers.

In a [2017 article](#) for the World Youth Team Championships, Jerry Helms cites the flexibility of a 4-4 fit as an advantage: "Extra trump tricks usually come by ruffing in the short hand...With equally divided trumps, either hand may become the short hand to create extra winners. With unevenly divided trumps, the short hand is pre-ordained."

Bergen understands the potential of 4-4 trump fits but considers them fragile. He also shares one of his "principles of a lifetime," that an independent suit (one with both length and strength) should almost always be the trump suit. The rare exception is one where the suit, in conjunction with the rest of the hand, will take the same number of tricks in notrump.

Bergen also notes that almost a third of the time, one of the opponents will have four trump. Bergen's preference is that one of the declaring side's hands holds more trumps than either opponent. He works through several examples with an independent suit as trump and discusses the consequence of making a different choice.

While in general we still prefer a 4-4 trump fit, there are some situations where a 5-3 (or better) fit is preferred. If an opponent has preempted, it is likely that the opponents' trumps are splitting poorly. Here, we agree with Bergen; we, too, want one of our side's hands to hold more trump than either opponent. And if our side has lots of tricks and doesn't really need the ruffs, then the 5-3 fit is superior. This is somewhat analogous to Bergen's principle regarding independent suits.

If you are lucky enough to have a choice of trump suits, consider all the information; do not rely solely on a general rule.

Other articles

Other articles that were considered:

- ♦ "Card Play 101" by Phillip Alder (p. 48). Suit-preference signals are discussed.
- ♦ "Parrish the Thought" by Adam Parrish (p. 49). After opener makes a jump rebid to 2N, responder bids based on the principle of fast arrival. An immediate game bid (fast arrival) shows no interest in slam; a lower-level bid invites more information from opener.
- ♦ "Ask Jerry" by Jerry Helms (p. 55). This is a nice discussion of fit, power and controls between the two hands. Asking for aces is typically the last step.
- ♦ "Mike's Bridge Lesson" by Mike Lawrence (p. 56). Lawrence explains how information from the auction should influence the play of the hand.
- ♦ "Chalk Talk" by Eddie Kantar (p.57). An example of how to get rid of the fourth card in a suit when the opponents' holdings do NOT split 3-3.
- ♦ "Challenge of the Month" (p. 59). Solving this challenge requires the reader to make a typical strip-and-endplay rather than to go for the more obvious (and unsuccessful) heart finesse.

DOWN ONLY 1 WITH QJ9xxx BEHIND DECLARER

The diagram shows a bridge hand with the following cards and bidding:

Player	Hand	Bidding
North (Robot)	♠ A843 ♥ 108 ♦ 1076 ♣ QJ86	
West (Robot)	♠ 2 ♥ QJ9642 ♦ A932 ♣ 92	Pass
East (Robot)	♠ QJ10765 ♥ ♦ J4 ♣ AK543	1♠
South (texashen)	♠ K9 ♥ AK753 ♦ KQ85 ♣ 107	2♥

Score: 2♥ South, NS: 0, EW: 0

The 1♠ and 2♥ bids are standard. West makes a trap-pass, hoping East will re-open with a takeout double that West will convert to a penalty double. East does not re-open, so we are declaring 2♥. Were we sitting East, we would either bid 2♠ or make a re-opening double.

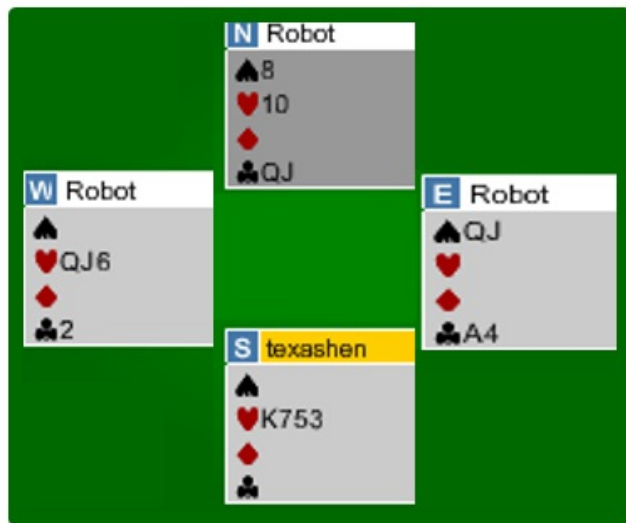
West leads the ♠2. Leading from shortness with trump stack is generally wrong. But, in this case, spades is partner's suit. West is hoping East can take some spade tricks, allowing West to discard the little clubs.

Dummy can't ruff anything; after winning the ♠K, we cash the ♥A. West discards the ♠5, giving us the bad news.

We then play the ♣T, hoping to get a slow club trick, if the clubs split.

East properly wins the ♣K and returns a spade which West ruffs.

West cashes the ♦A, making us happy with the KQ. West exits with the ♦3, and things are looking up for us when we win East's ♦J with king, making the ♦T a dummy entry.



We play a small diamond to the ten, and then play ♠A, discarding the last club. West trumps in and exits with the ♦2 to our ♦Q, leaving the position shown at left.

We get two more tricks for a total of seven: one spade, three hearts and three diamonds. Down 1, for a 96.4% board.

The key to getting this hand right (or as right as it can be) is to look at the diamond suit and note that the side that leads diamonds first gives up a trick.



Jeff Kroll & Sam Khayatt
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