



KIBITZER



Coming up first is the Charity IMP Open and 99er Pairs on Sunday, April 26 at 12:45 p.m. Win extra masterpoints, benefit the ACBL Charities, honor the Unit's Ace of clubs and Mini-McKenney 2008 winners and the newest Life Masters and enjoy the fun of your favorite game all at one event.

Next on the docket is the Monday Night Swiss with open and 99er flights on May 4 at 6:30 p.m. There's an extra bonus in store this night with the chance to stack up the silver masterpoints. Yes, it's a STAC game. To signup, enroll on the Unit site or phone Phyllis Gaffney at (408) 730-0654. The Unit will not post a list on the bulletin board for this event.

Finally, the Unit Game on Sunday, May 17 at 12:45 p.m. is the "Eight Is Enough" Open Swiss Teams. What's that? Read the article on page 4 and sign up your team. For the 99ers, there will be a regular Swiss Teams, without concern for "eight is enough."

All of these games are at the Bridge Center with great eats, lots of fun, masterpoints and great cards in interesting hands.

Calendar Shows Three Unit Games on Tap

April 26, IMP Pairs

May 4, Swiss, STAC

May 17, Swiss 8 is Enough

Soon it will be time for our annual Firecracker Sectional tournament at the **Santa Clara Convention Center on Wednesday, July 1 through Sunday, July 5**. So put it on your calendar and start making your plans to help make this year's competition another big success. The Santa Clara Convention Center, at 5001 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara is adjacent to the Hyatt Regency Santa Clara Hotel (where last year's Firecracker was held).

Once again the hotel is offering a special bridge rate of \$95 per night, not bad for a first class facility. There is a large and free parking structure at the Convention Center, and we will be occupying the same areas there as we did for the Firecracker two years ago (2007), namely the Great America Ballroom on the lower floor, and the Great America Meeting Rooms on the 2nd floor up the escalator.

The program will have something of interest for players of all levels with many Open Pairs and Swiss Team games, and once again we are featuring 199'er Pairs games every day except Sunday, when there will be a two-session 199'er Swiss (to p.4)

Firecracker on the Near Horizon

Board-a-Match Brings Out 19 Teams; Monday Night Swiss, 15 Teams

At the Unit Board-a-Match game held in two sections on Sunday, March 29, players took advantage of a format which was unique to most of them. Two teams tied in Strata A/B for the top spot: Michael Fleisher, Melinda Foos, Derek and Teddi Fiero and Lisa Evans, Cheryl Haines, Jack Fulcher and Blair Hoffman. The leader in C was the team of Jacqueline Blake, Suzanne Barnett, Sissy McAlister and Cayce Blanchard.

The Unit was fortunate to obtain the services of Chuck Wong to fill in as director at the last moment. Once the matches got underway with Will Watson giving directions for the movement, the event went smoothly. Again our appreciation goes to Chuck and to Phyllis and Walt Gaffney and of Elinor Tanck, who helped with the set-up and clean-up.

The first Unit Monday Night Swiss held on April 6 was very successful with seven teams playing in the Open and eight in the 99er. The winners in Open Strata A were Michael Andrews, Gene Drew, John Stanczak, Helga Solleder; in B, Michael Bodell, Alan Malloy, Melinda Foos, Michael Fleisher; and in C, Jonathan Pines, Elena Grewal, Belinda Gu, Alex Lovejoy. Tops among the 99ers in both A and B were Richard Treacle, Devesh Goyal, James and Sara Sevey.

Search for Silver at May STAC

No need to mine the Comstock Lode to search for silver, just play in the Sectional Tournament at Clubs (STAC), the second largest sectional in the world, at Unit clubs during the week of Monday, May 4 through Sunday May 10. All the clubs listed in the directory on the back page, except the EZ Game, plan to hold STAC games, with sectionally rated points for good scores. Come to this popular event – the competition is great, the masterpoint awards are high and a hoard of silver points awaits the winners. Play well, play often to mine the silver points at the STAC!

The May STAC is a sectional tournament played simultaneously in local clubs throughout the Western Conference. The ACBL promotes attendance by offering silver points and inflated masterpoint awards while playing in your home club comfort.

Flood Recovery News

The Unit had the air tested at the Bridge Center again on April 2 and received a preliminary report. It indicates that the air at the joint wall with Twisters is beginning to be affected by the continued moisture in the wall but is still at safe levels. Tests indicate that our new air filters are helping and the testing company suggested we buy five more, which we will do. We are continuing to work with Twisters to get a timely resolution of this problem, which we believe will involve significant rework to the common wall, the kitchen and other areas. When the additional work is performed, we will probably be closed for an indeterminate time. The Unit is looking for alternate places to play and will keep the members informed.

Stanford Closure—Eric Mayefsky announces the decision to permanently close the Stanford Thursday evening game. Special games may be scheduled in the future.

Ace-Mini - The Unit has posted the 2009 Ace of Clubs and Mini McKenney race standings as of March 31 on the Bridge Center bulletin board.

Lecture Series - Learn more about counting on Thursday, May 7, when Jim Leuker discusses "Losing Trick Count, What Is it? How Does it work?" Come back on Thursday, May 21 for Kathy Harper's "RE RE" That's short for "Redouble Trouble."

Director Course - What a turnout! Twenty-five students have enrolled from units as far away as Marin and Castro Valley, including three from our own Unit. Teacher Nancy Boyd began the class at the Bridge Center on Monday, April 13 and will continue it for three more Mondays. Congratulations to Jeanette McNeill for organizing such a successful endeavor

Help! - The Unit invites the players to help out the Unit Game chairs, Phyllis and Eric, at the Sunday afternoon and Monday Night Unit games. Just contact them to lend a hand with the set-up and clean-up chores by sending an email to either 2oma-opa-gaffney@comcast.net or mayefsky@stanford.edu.

Extra! Extra! - Yes, read all about the news of the Palo Alto Unit in the *Forum* each month. Just send your news, anecdotes or anything else of interest to help fill in the space to the Unit columnist, Eric Mayefsky at mayefsky@stanford.edu.

Unit News



NEXT BOARD MEETING:

Tuesday, May 5 at 3:45 p.m.

Bridge Center

Palo Alto Unit 503 Board

Michael Atherton,, President
 Dave Wheeler, Vice-President
 Susana Krulevitch, Secretary
 Alan Templeton, Treasurer

Trina Bowman, Phyllis Gaffney,
 Nita Girand, Steve Lubeck, Eric
 Mayefsky, Jeannette McNeil, Grant
 Spaeth

SYMPATHY

The Unit Board and members extend their condolences to the family and friends of Unit member Evelyn Beckwith, who recently passed away and to Shirley Blum on the death of her husband.

Here Comes the Firecracker!

cont. from p. 1

Team game. Also, the program features three Compact KO games named the Star, Spangled and Banner games which all start and end on the same day. Additionally, there is one Bracketed KO game over Friday and Saturday, and the traditional ending day (Sunday) Open Swiss with the A/X and B/C/D sections and the above-mentioned 199'er Swiss.

Tournament plans and arrangements have been underway for some time with Steve Lubeck acting as Tournament Chair for the second year. The working committee chairs are: Phyllis Gaffney, Decorations and Hospitality; Fran Bennett, Partnerships; Steve Barasch, Setup and Take down; and Carolyn Lemm, Caddies. In addition, Marian Kelly is distributing and mailing flyers to other units in District 21. If you would like to help (and many helpers are a must) please contact any of the above (contact information in the Unit Directory) and we'll welcome you with open arms.

Eight Is Enough!

Eight is enough plays just like a normal Swiss Team game. The only difference is that the number of masterpoints which players on your team can possess is limited in an unusual way. Your team has up to 8 "chips" to "spend" on your four players as follows:

--A player with 2000 or more masterpoints "costs" 3 chips.

--A player with between 500 and 2000 masterpoints "costs" 2 chips.

--A player with fewer than 500 masterpoints "costs" 1 chip.

So your team could be two players with 2000+ and 2 players with fewer than 500, or 4 players with between 500 and 2000, or any other combination so long as the total doesn't exceed 8 chips. Each player's masterpoint record is the total received from the ACBL with the *May Bulletin*. This is a great opportunity for newer and more experienced players to team up on an even playing field!

Player Advancements

The ACBL April report shows that the players named here have moved up.
 Congratulations!

| | | |
|--------------------|---------|------------------------------------|
| Junior Master | 5 MP | Nancy Colella, Shirley Cooper |
| Club Master | 20 MP | Paul Losch, Christopher Prael |
| Regional Master | 100 MP | Laura Tanner |
| NABC Master | 200 MP | Dori Foster, Alex Lovejoy, Pei Sun |
| Life Master | 300 MP | Rose Lachman |
| Silver Life Master | 1000 MP | Donald Lowry |

All About Sue Johnston



By Mary Van Tamelen

Sue Johnston, prolific director of Wednesday morning's Bridge 'n Brunch and co-director of Wednesday evening's Doubleton Club, vividly remembers playing bridge for the very first time. It was July 4, 1985 and she was dragged "kicking and screaming" by her first husband. She had no idea what a "trump" was; her only card experiences having been with Crazy Eights, Go Fish and Cribbage.

Six weeks later she played her first duplicate game, loved it and was hooked. Since then, she's even more hooked, becoming a director before she made Life Master. Sue met her present husband, Mike Andrews, playing bridge. No surprise there.

Born in New York, Sue was a typical Air Force brat, having lived in the Azores, Japan, Vermont and Mississippi. She attended Yale, in the first class that admitted women, majored in physics and afterwards worked in physiology research at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. In her spare time she sang, having studied voice at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, as a concert soprano. And she had two children, a son currently a concert violinist, concertmaster for the Erie Philharmonic orchestra and on the Ohio State faculty, and a daughter, a pathologist who also attended Yale.

Sue no longer sings; her vocal cords were suddenly paralyzed, and at the moment the top half of her range is gone. She has developed another interest, genealogy. She had grown up with four generations alive all during her childhood and she loved to talk with her grandpar-

ents and great grandmother. The next steps were delving into her own background and then taking advanced archivist and methodology courses. She subsequently became the genealogist for the Loudon Park cemetery in Baltimore and later served as a consulting researcher for the National Archives, specializing in military records. The Department of Defense hired her to do a research project on the history of a fort.

On Friday, August 13, 2004 Mike dragged her, again kicking and screaming, to California where he had accepted a job at SRI. But even before they came, she had found a bridge club—ours! By October of that year Sue was directing again, running the bridge club in Fremont. Shortly thereafter, she began subbing occasionally for Cameron Cotton's Wednesday evening game, and now feels fortunate to share ownership of that game with Lori Spaeth.

Sue's interest in genealogy has persisted; she teaches both basic and advanced courses at Las Positas College in Livermore. And just recently she was interviewed for "Dear Myrtle," an online, national genealogy column.

Sue likes our Club's facilities and people. "It's really fun to work with them," she says. Getting to know the players has been her greatest joy. The only bad thing about directing, Sue says, is that she doesn't get to play enough, although she manages a couple games a month with her favorite partner, Mike. By now she's forgiven him for dragging her to California.

**A Message to
Intermediate/
Newcomer**

Players:

**Try an Open
Game!**

By Eric Mayefsky

Palo Alto is one of the best places around to play bridge, and that's thanks in part to the fabulous array of masterpoint limited games available, both at the Bridge Center and around the Unit. However, lately I've been becoming aware that for many players in these games, there is a considerable stigma attached to the idea of playing in an open game. Players are worried that they will face conventions they have never heard of, that they will have the director called on them for breaking rules they've never heard of, and that they will get a bottom on every board. I urge players to overcome their fears and give it a shot. My arguments are as follows:

Make your own fun

Remember that you are the one primarily in control of whether you enjoy yourself playing bridge--not your partner, not the opponents, not the score you earn or the masterpoints you do or don't get. If you approach an open game (or any game) expecting to have a lousy time, you will! But if you go in expecting to have fun, you probably will. Anybody can get a good board off a good player with a little bit of luck and skill. And anyone can take pleasure when something funny happens at the table. I know it's a cliché, but don't forget that bridge is a game! You can and should have fun playing against players of all

levels. Nobody has the right to be mean to you in any game, and in Palo Alto, they won't be.

The experience is invaluable.

Someone may make a bid you've never seen before. You may have someone complain about your breaking a rule you had no idea you broke. But when you see such a bid, now you've seen it, and in some cases, you might even want to add it to your own repertoire. And when the director tells you about the rule you broke, you'll know for next time. These are all good experiences! Just relax and try and learn, the same way you try and learn by taking a bridge class or anything else. Don't hesitate to ask a more experienced player why they chose the bid or the play they did after the hand. And in terms of reinforcement, the open games are a great resource, because you will be punished for your play mistakes more often. This may result in low scores at first, but you'll quickly find that you know more and can play better (and get better results).

You can win!

It's not like you can't win masterpoints in the open game! Often the only pairs in the lowest stratification in the open game don't have substantially more experience than the limited players. In many cases, scores of 48 or 50% will earn you more master-

points than you could have won by winning the limited game! And don't think it's impossible for less experienced players to win overall in the open game, because it certainly does happen.

You don't have to pick.

When I was first getting started playing (in Westchester, NY), there was only one newcomer game in our area at a time of day we could play, but we wanted to play more than once a week. So we played in the newcomer game and we played in a weekend open game. I still think this was the best decision we could have made for improving our game. We liked winning, and we had a good shot of doing that in the newcomer game; but the learning we did in the open game advanced our skills much, much faster than we ever could have in the newcomer game. So, you don't have to give up your weekly intermediate game(s). Just try coming to an open game on a different day of the week.

At the end of the day....If you've joined the ACBL, you'd probably like

to become a Life Master some day. And even though it only requires 300 points to make it (or 500, depending on when you joined), some of those points--the gold ones--you can't get by playing in events with very low masterpoint limits. If you acclimate yourself to open games now, the quest for those points will be easier later! And don't forget that some day you yourself will **have** too many points for the games you're currently playing in...so if you play in open and limited games side by side now, that transition will be easier later.

Are the open games faster paced?

Yes. A little bit. But that doesn't mean there aren't some very slow players in the open section. Just do your best to play as fast as you feel comfortable playing and then don't worry about it. (And remember, you usually get to play more hands in the open section!)

Try it! Have fun!

If you get a bad score...try it again. I promise that if you try and have fun, you will, and over time it will do wonders for your game.

Newcomer Games
Tuesday evening (Begin./ Intermed.)
Wednesday afternoon (<50)
Wednesday evening (<50) & (-200)
Friday morning (<30)

NEWCOMERS
 A warm welcome to new Palo Alto Unit 503 members: Marc Cohen, Lorraine Godfrey, Linda Kaiser, Mary Mason, Barbara Shukov, Janet Tate, Ellie Bernhardt, Vijesh Iyer and Donald Partridge.

All games take place at 2639A Terminal Blvd., Mountain View 94043 unless otherwise noted.

| DAY | BRIDGE CLUB | TYPE | TIME | DIRECTOR(S) | PLACE/OTHER INFO |
|------|--------------------------|---------------|------------|------------------------------|--|
| MON | Bridge Mix | Open/<2K | 11:00 a.m. | Kevin/Bonnie/ Claire/John | |
| TUES | Tuesday Noon BC | Open/Strat. | 12:00 p.m. | Walter Miller | Unity Church, YES Rm, 3391 Middlefield Rd, PA |
| | Alpine BC | Open/<1K | 12:00 p.m. | Will Watson | |
| | Just For Fun | Begin./Inter. | 7:00 p.m. | Solna/Omer | No master points given. Call Solna at (408) 685-5323 |
| WED. | Bridge 'n Brunch | Open/Strat. | 11:00 a.m. | Sue Johnston | |
| | Wed Aft. 49er | <50 M.P. | 1:00 p.m. | Walter Miller | Unity Church, YES Rm, 3391 Middlefield Rd, PA |
| | Lori & Sue's Dblton Club | Open/Strat. | 7:00 p.m. | Spaeth/Johnston | |
| | Lori & Sue's Dblton Club | <50 M.P. | 7:00 p.m. | Spaeth/Johnston | |
| | Lori & Sue's Dblton Club | <200 M.P. | 7:00 p.m. | Spaeth/Johnston | |
| THUR | Thur. Afternoon BC | Open/Strat | 12:00 p.m. | Beardsley/Mattis | |
| | Sherie's BC | Open/Strat. | 12:30 p.m. | Sherie Greenberg | 4000 Middlefield Road, Auditorium, Palo Alto |
| FRI | The EZ Game | <30 M.P. | 9:00 a.m. | Roy Robinson | Closed Friday, May 8 |
| | Friday Morning BC | Open/Strat. | 10:30 a.m. | Claire Coleman | |
| | Friday Night Barometer | Open/Strat. | 7:30 p.m. | Will Watson | |
| SAT | One Club | Open/Strat. | 12:00 p.m. | John Prior | |
| SUN | Sunday Afternoon BC | Open/Strat. | 1:00 p.m. | Coleman/Watson | |
| | Sunday Afternoon BC | <99 M.P. | 1:00 p.m. | Coleman/Watson | |

SPECIAL EVENTS

- * **Unit lecture, Thursday, April 23 at Bridge Center has been postponed.**
- * Sectional, Saturday, April 25 at Catholic HS, Kentfield
- * Unit Charity IMP Pairs, Open and 99er, Sunday, April 26 at 12:45 p.m. Bridge Center
- * Sectional, Friday, May 1 at Community Center, Orangevale
- * Great Western Spring STAC Week, Monday, May 4-Sunday, May 10 – all clubs except Easy Bridge
- * Unit Swiss STAC, open and 99'er games, Monday, May 4 at 6:30 p.m., Bridge Center
- * Unit Lecture, Thursday, May 7 at 10 a.m. Bridge Center
- * Sectional, Thursday, May 14 at Bridge Ctr., Marina
- * Unit Eight Is Enough Open Swiss Teams, Sunday, May 17 at 12:45 p.m. Bridge Center
- * Unit 99'er Swiss Teams, Sunday, May 17 at 12:45 p.m. Bridge Center
- * Unit Lecture, Thursday, May 21 at 10 a.m. Bridge Center
- * Regional, Monday, May 25 at Doubletree Hotel, Sacramento

EZ Bridge Closed Friday, May 8

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