



## SWISS FEATURED ON THE MAY MENU

The players with a masterpoint average of fewer than 200 should select the game on Monday, May 7 at 6:30 p.m. at the Bridge Center. It is a STAC Swiss Unit game with extra masterpoints awaiting the winner and a chance to collect those precious silver points. Go to the Unit website to sign up.

From the menu of games, all players can choose "Swiss" on Sunday, May 20 at 1 p.m. at the Bridge Center, the date for the Charity Unit game with open and 199er flights. Reserve your team table on

the Unit sign-up list at the Bridge Center or on the Unit website. As at all Unit games, there will be many extras: appetizing food, interesting cards, good competition and, best of all, a great group of players to welcome you with a friendly smile. The ACBL requires an annual game for the benefit of the ACBL Charity Foundation. Usually we hold the event in April but because of the Grand Opening, the Unit has scheduled it in May.

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## GOING, GOING.....GONE?

As the *Kibitzer* goes to press, there may still be a few openings for the Grand Opening party luncheon at 11:30 a.m. and pairs game at 1 p.m. on Sunday April 29. We hope to include everyone who wants to come but we are now on waitlist status. Please go to the web site online sign-up page and leave a phone number/email where you may be reached.

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## GET READY! LIGHT UP THE FIRECRACKER!

Start planning to make our annual Firecracker Sectional Tournament another huge success! **Remember there are new dates this year: Wednesday, June 27 to Sunday, July 1.** The Firecracker is at the same venue as last year, the Santa Clara Convention Center, which is adjacent to the Hyatt Regency Santa Clara Hotel. Enjoy the convenience of free parking in the multi-level attached garage with elevator access to the Convention Center. The Hyatt is offering a special bridge rate of \$109 per night.

Players planning to stay over at the hotel should make reservations as soon as possible. The Hyatt is going to be very busy, so don't risk there being no available rooms.

The Unit is fortunate to have many new players who have taken an avid interest in learning how to play duplicate bridge. To generate excitement for their participation in the Firecracker, the tournament will feature **49er pair games** every day specifically for them. As always, (cont. p.2)

Find the *Kibitzer* on the Unit's website, [www.paloaltobridge.com](http://www.paloaltobridge.com)

## STACs BRING SILVER

Over 150 years ago, the 49ers came for gold in the California hills; today the 49ers, 99ers 199ers and 299ers are searching for silver at the STAC (Sectional Tournament at Clubs). This hunt will be underway Monday, May 7 through Sunday, May 13. The STAC is a sectional tournament played simultaneously in local clubs throughout the Western Conference. Please note that the May 7 Under 200 STAC game is a Swiss teams.

Shine up your bridge skills to get your share of sterling silver points and masterpoint awards while playing your favorite game. Come out to this masterpoint treasure to collect sectionally rated points at all the clubs listed in the directory except Easy Bridge. The competition is terrific, the masterpoint awards are high and a wealth of silver points awaits the winners.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR APRIL WINNERS!

Variations of eight characterized the attendance at the April Unit games. Among the eight teams at the April 199er Swiss, the team of Lolly Donovan-Judith Gentry-Anne Neeter-Peggy Wheeler came out on top. Eighteen tables enjoyed an open pairs Unit game on April 18 and the partnerships of Bruce Lutrell and Christian Lazarovici, along

with Dan and Manda Thatte fared well with a first in starta A and B, C, respectively. The 199er flight of eight tables had a three-way tie for first among the partnerships of: Roger Jackman and Ed Hughot; Clare Thorpe and Russell Norman; also, Drew Donovan and Bob Crosby.

**FIRECRACKER** (cont. from p. 1) there will be Open Pairs and Swiss Team games including 199er pair games every day and several Compact KO games that begin and end on the same day. Wednesday and Thursday will have afternoon and evening games and on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, there will be a morning game and an afternoon game. The full schedule for the tournament is available on the Unit's website.

The tournament co-chairs this year are Steve Barasch and Allen Wolman. The working committee chairs are: Carolyn Chaney, Partnerships; Allen Wolman, Setup and Take down; Sioux Atkinson, Hospitality; and Josephine Ventura, Caddies. Since this is a Unit event, your help is needed; please contact any of the above (contact information in the Unit Directory) to lend your support.

### NEXT BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, May 1 at 3:45 p.m. at the  
Bridge Center

### Palo Alto Unit 503 Board

Sue Griswold, President  
David Crosley, Vice-President  
Margot Livenspargar, Secretary  
Beverly Nuding, Treasurer  
Valerie Baldwin, Steve Barasch,  
Sue Barkley, Keith Burnett, Kevin O'Leary,  
Henryk Szejnwald, Allen Wolman

## UNIT NEWS

**Memorial donation** - Patsy Ja made a \$100 cash donation to the Unit. In her letter she said, "I would like to make a donation to your club, which Nami Honda loved, and hope you'll use it for whatever you'd like, maybe a lunch in remembrance."

**Art** - Ron Andrew's art is an expression of his inner feelings inspired by nature. As a trained physicist, he has come to appreciate the artistic beauty found in nature, particularly landscapes, from microscopic to cosmic scales. He chooses water-media in general, watercolor being a preference, because it uniquely enables spontaneity and boldness which he finds critical to his artistic expressions. Texture, line and color are major elements of his work. He paints abstractly, inspired by landscapes and mood. Please view Ron's in the newest exhibit at the Bridge Center.

**Bridge Mix** - The Monday morning game at the Bridge Center at 11 a.m. offers a stratified section for players with fewer than 500 master points.

**Volunteer at the Nationals**—Saturday, November 25 has been deemed Unit 503 Volunteer Day at the San Francisco Nationals at the Marriott. Please let Lori Spaeth [lespaeth@gmail.com](mailto:lespaeth@gmail.com) know if you are willing to be a volunteer. Volunteers (registration – general and intermediate/novice, prizes, partnership) will of course still be able to play and partake of amenities in a private hospitality room at the Marriott which is just for volunteers.

**Library** - Mike Lawrence has recently published a second edition of his bridge classic "The Complete Guide to Passed Hand Bidding." How does your bidding change when your side opens the bidding in the third or fourth chair? Hamish Bennett has recommended this book and has given it to many of his partners. Hamish said, "Anybody

who reads this book will improve his/her results and be a better player." Check it out from our Unit library.

**Lectures** - The chair, Fred Schwerer, has scheduled three lectures for May that will help Unit players improve their bidding and play Sue Johnston leads off on May 1 with the third of her series on "Finding NT Contracts." Next, Frank Smoot presents a positive bidding approach in "Competitive Auctions-Negative Doubles" on May 15. On May 29, Ron Karr explains strategy for playing the cards in "How to Play the Suit the Opponents Lead." Note the time change: All these lectures are at 9:45 a.m. at the Bridge Center.

**Learning Game** - On Saturday, May 12, the mentees will get expert help on "Control-Showing Cue Bids" as they continue to upgrade their skills.

**Spic and Span** - Thanks go to Kevin O'Leary and his helping hands committee for getting the new Bridge Center ready for the opening day, Sunday, March 18 Unit Game. Helpers include Tad Yoshikawa, Alan Cummings, Beth Cowell, Carolyn Chaney, Dave Bernstein, Dave Wheeler, David Gambelin, Elianna Meyerson, Elinor Tanck, Eusebio Menezes, Francie Green, Gene Drew, Harriel Shea, Joelle Perkocha, Josephine Ventura, Kevin Schoenfeld, Lee Haze, Lori Spaeth, Lu Isaacs, Jack Lucas, Lynne Johnson, Margot Livenspargar, Valerie Baldwin, Sue Griswold, John Hornback, Polly Siegel, Robert Horowitz, Ron Kilgren, Ron Perkocha, Steve Barasch, Trina Bowman.

**Ace-Mini** - The Unit has posted the 2012 Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenny race standings as of March 31 at the Bridge Center.

**Applause** - The Alpine BC had a congratulatory cake on April 10 to honor Barbara Sonsini whose team won the Women's Swiss Teams at the Nationals in Memphis.

## THE ALERT SYSTEM IN BRIDGE BY ED BARLOW

The Alert System in bridge requires that we alert our opponents when we make a special conventional bid. We alert but do not explain the bid unless an opponents requests an explanation at his/her turn to bid.

Some bids do not require an alert but an explanation is still a good idea. For instance, partner opens 1C and I respond 1D, tending to deny a major. If partner rebids 1NT and we buy the contract, I tell the opponents that the rebid might have bypassed one or both majors.

My purpose here is to discuss bad explanations, failure to use a convention correctly and failure to alert. I do not want to win simply because our opponents did not understand our special conventional bids.

We are playing Flannery, an alertable bid, where 2D shows 5 Hearts, 4 Spades and 11 to 15 high card points. I open 2D and partner does not alert. He bids 2S, which would show a good hand and at least 5 Spades if my 2D bid was a weak 2 bid in Diamonds. I have 4 Spades. Either my partner forgot to alert or he forgot that we are playing Flannery. I must pretend that we are in separate rooms and cannot hear or see partner's alert or failure to

alert. I must assume that he alerted and bid accordingly. In this case, my bid must be pass.

In the next case, we still are playing Flannery, but I forget and open 2D as a weak bid with 6 Diamonds. Partner alerts and bids 2H, which could be a doubleton and is supposed to end the auction. Even if I realize that I misbid immediately, I must pretend that I did not wake up to what I did. Also, I must pretend that partner did not alert and treated my bid as a weak bid in Diamonds. In that case, 2H is forcing and shows good Hearts, so if I have 3 Hearts I must bid 3H. I cannot pass. My rebids must not take the alert into account.

If partner failed to alert or explained my bid as a 3-suiter and the opponents may have been fatally misled, then the Director can adjust the score. If partner explained our convention correctly and I had forgotten, as long as I do not wake up to my mistake there is no score adjustment. A common example is I bid 2C (natural) over opponent's 1NT and partner alerts it as Majors. If I have 2 Spades, I must pass partner's major suit choice even if the opponents double.

### NEWCOMERS

A warm welcome to new Palo Alto Unit 503 members: Wendy Chartock, Kathleen Danforth, Elizabeth Burke, Karen Maness, Hamish Bennett, Linda Chang, Neda Dorjath, James Faix, Linda Frecia, Ralph Griffin, Susan Griffin, Steve Hubbell, Elizabeth Kaplan and Susan Koblick.

### SYMPATHY

The Unit officers and members extend their sincere condolences to the family and friends on the passing of Unit member Belle Ross.

### PLAYER ADVANCEMENTS

The April report from the ACBL shows that the following players have moved up. Congratulations to all!

Junior Master	5 MP	Winston Huang, Leslie Zatz
Club Master	20 MP	John Elman, Tim Kado, Mary Mason, Nancy Sabbag, Nick Ward, Carl Wolf
Sectional Master	50 MP	Sundri Alim, Annie Green, Roger Jackman, Shamik Mehta
Regional Master	100 MP	Kathy Puryear
NABC Master	200 MP	Ellie Bernhardt, Susana Krulevitch, Merry Stephenson
Life Master	300 MP	Gloria Darke, Larry Lasher
Silver Life Master	1000 MP	Jun Shi
Gold Life Master	2500 MP	Fung Bao, John Schoenbrun

## PROFILE OF ISHA THAPA, BY MARY VAN TAMELEN



That pretty, soft-spoken, very young girl playing with her father – you probably thought she was a beginner, just learning about bridge. You probably thought that, until you played against her, and then you

found out otherwise. Isha Thapa is a good player, really good – good enough to be selected for a team representing the USA at the World Bridge Federation’s 14<sup>th</sup> World Youth Bridge Championships in China!

She will compete for the RONA Cup that is presented to a women’s team of players who are all under the age of 26. It’s given every other year and was won two years ago by Poland. Just 17, Isha is the second youngest member of the team and partnered with Taylor Compton from Texas – whom she has yet to meet in person.

That doesn’t mean they haven’t been working together. Thanks to the Internet, there are weekly team practices and Isha corresponds daily with her partner. The team is being coached by Karen McCallum and Valerie Westheimer; the partnership is coached by Taylor’s mother, Donna Compton, who won the mixed pairs World Championship in 2010.

The group will get together at the Nationals in Philadelphia in July, practice actually playing together at screened tables, then go directly to Shanghai for the nine-day tournament in Tai

Cang, near Shanghai.

“I’m really excited,” Isha says, “and kind of nervous.” To counteract the nervousness, she just plans to practice a lot.

Not that there is a lot of time to practice. She attends Gunn High School where she is active in music. She missed some of the first tryouts for the bridge team because she had a solo part in the annual musical. She also plays the piano and looks forward to starting guitar soon. Plus, she’s a straight-A student. She loves her film literature class, and math but isn’t too fond of physics. As if that weren’t enough to keep her busy, she’s also on the Los Altos Hills Youth Commission, planning events and activities for youth of various ages in the town.

Her interest in cards started with playing Go Fish and then rummy with her grandmother in India. Her parents, Radhika and Mukund, saw her enthusiasm for cards of all kinds and, wanting to foster interest in the premier card game, they soon enrolled her in a bridge class. Radhika plays no bridge at all. Mukund had played bridge with some intensity in college then gave it up for a long while, but Isha’s interest in bridge rekindled his. Together they studied books – all the major ones – laid out hands, used software. On August 6, 2008, they played their first club game at Lori and Sue’s Wednesday night game. Then they tried tournaments. Isha became a Life Master in October.

Mukund says she specializes in false carding. He saw the gleam in her eye when she, as declarer, dropped a queen under the opponent’s ace. This caused the opponent to shift suits, and Isha made five instead of the four as most of the field.

“I underestimated you,” the opponent said. That’s something not many people will be doing in the future, as she represents the best of the youth of our country in China this summer.

*All games take place at our Bridge Center, 432A Stierlin Road Mountain View 94043 unless otherwise noted.*

DAY	BRIDGE CLUB	TYPE	TIME	DIRECTOR(S)	PLACE/ OTHER I NFO
MON	Bridge Mix	Open/<500	11:00 a.m.	Coleman/Prior	Bridge Center
	Monday Morning JCC	Open/Strat.	11.00 a.m.	John Schwartz	Jewish Community Center, 3921 Fabian Way, P.A.
	Monday Morning JCC	<50,<200	11.00 a.m.	John Schwartz	Jewish Community Center, 3921 Fabian Way, P.A.
TUES	Tuesday Noon BC	Open/Strat.	12:00 p.m.	Walter Miller	Unity Church, YES Rm, 3391 Middlefield Rd, PA
	Alpine BC	Open/Strat	12:00 p.m.	Will Watson	Bridge Center
	Grand Slam Club	Open/Strat.	7:00 p.m.	Marolyn Yancey	Bridge Center
WED.	Bridge 'n Brunch	Open/Strat.	11:00 a.m.	Sue Johnston	Bridge Center
	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	Bridge Center
	Lori & Sue's Dblton Club < 499 M.P.		7:00 p.m.	Spaeth/Johnston	Bridge Center
THUR	Thursday Morning JCC	Open/Strat.	11:00 a.m.	John Schwartz	Jewish Community Center, 3921 Fabian Way, PA
	Thurs. Afternoon BC	Open/Strat	12:00 p.m.	Will Watson	Bridge Center
FRI	The EZ Game	<30 M.P.	9:00 a.m.	Marolyn Yancey	Bridge Center
	Friday Morning BC	Open/Strat.	10:30 a.m.	Claire Coleman	Bridge Center
	Friday Night Barometer	Open/Strat.	7:30 p.m.	Will Watson	Bridge Center
SAT	One Club	Open/Strat.	12:00 p.m.	John Prior	Bridge Center
SUN	Sunday Afternoon BC	Open/Strat	1:00 p.m.	Coleman/Watson	Bridge Center

## SPECIAL EVENTS

- \* Unit lecture, Tuesday, April 17 at 9:45 a.m., Bridge Center
- \* Sectional, Saturday, April 21 at Catholic HS, Kentfield
- \* Help Suit Game Tries, Mentee game, Sat., April 28, 9 a.m., Bridge Center
- \* Sectional, Saturday, April 28 at Centre Plaza, Modesto
- \* Sunday, April 29 Unit Bridge Center Grand Opening. Lunch 11:30, Bridge 1 p.m., (Sign-up required)
- \* Unit lecture, Tuesday, May 1 at 9:45 a.m., Bridge Center
- \* Great Western Spring Fling STAC, Monday, May 7-Sunday, May 13, all clubs but EZ Bridge
- \* Unit Swiss STAC, Monday, May 7 at 6:30 p.m., Bridge Center
- \* Control-Showing Cue Bids, Mentee game. Sat. May 12 at 9 a.m., B. Ctr.
- \* Unit lecture, Tuesday, May 15 at 9:45 a.m., Bridge Center
- \* Sectional, Friday, May 18 at Bridge Ctr. Monterey
- \* NLM/500 Sectional, May 19 at Bridge-4-Fun, Reno
- \* Unit Charity Open/199er Swiss Teams, Sunday, May 20 at 1 p.m., Bridge Center
- \* Sectional, Friday, May 25 at Elks Lodge, Walnut Creek
- \* Regional, Monday, May 28 at Doubletree Hotel, Sacramento
- \* Unit Lecture, Tuesday, May 29 at 9:45 a.m., Bridge Center

### Club Contacts

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**EZ Bridge Closed Friday, May 11**