



UNIT GAMES WE GOT 'EM! JANUARY 24 & 25; FEBRUARY 7 & 8

Be sure to sign up for one or both of the January Unit games. On Saturday, January 24 there will be a Pairs game *with a special Mentor/Mentee Section* – if we have 6+ tables. Lunch is at 11:30, Game at 12:00.

Then, Sunday, January 25 will feature Swiss teams with lunch at 12:00 and game at 1:00. The Sunday Unit game will be part of a Pro/Am Charity event for the National Parkinson Foundation. Hands will be played by 50+ bridge experts in Boca Raton, FL, and folks in participating local clubs can play the same hands too, virtually.

To compare your score with the pros you must register on-line and donate at least \$10 to the Parkinson Foundation. Information can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/site/bridgewiththestars/home/play-at-your-club>.

Your results will be combined with those of Boca Raton pros to constitute a virtual team, and then compared against other similar teams. Scores will be posted and winners will be announced. Visit the site at PlayWithTheStars.org for more information. Whether you decide to donate to Parkinsons or just play just with your team, do sign up and come on the 25th.

The next Unit games happen on February 7, a pairs game and ACBL charity event, and February 8, a Swiss Teams event. The Board has decided to remember Elinor Tanck by naming the February 8

EXCELLENT FINANCIAL NEWS FROM OUR TREASURER

The Unit had a very successful year in 2014, financially. This was due to our increasing table counts, profitable Firecracker and Non-Life Master sectionals, and the very well received new education initiatives, Learn Bridge in a Day and the Kantar lecture.

The result was that we ended the year with positive cash flow of \$4,400 and with liquid reserves of \$78,501, which exceeds our benchmark of 6 months operating costs (\$65,000).

Our balance sheet and a modified budget are available upon request. If there are any questions please contact the treasurer at todd.makler@gmail.com

game the annual Elinor Tanck Memorial Unit Game. As usual, it's very important to sign up in advance, lunch served at 11:30 on Saturday and at noon on Sunday. Y'all come!

We are having more games than last year and introducing some additional features, such as a Mentor/Mentee section to the Unit Pairs games. Should you have any suggestions or comments please email them to jmharris@pacbell.net

Should you need a partner or team members, sign up anyway and indicate your need.

Mark Your Calendars-- March Pairs and Swiss will be on the 7th and the 8th, respectively. April 4 will see a pairs game and we will hold the Jean Flocks Memorial Team Game on Sunday, April 12.

Find the *Kibitzer* on the Unit website, www.paloaltobridge.com

HOLIDAY PARTY A HUGE SUCCESS

The December holiday bridge party was a great success with a full house. Many thanks to James Harris for all his work and food selection from Chef Chu's; it was enjoyed by all. Also, thanks to Nancy Kehl for her beautiful holiday arrangement that brought out the holiday spirit as people entered the Bridge Center. We all appreciate the many people who gave their time in helping to set up and clean-up on that day. If you wondered who brought those delicious deviled eggs, well, it was Cres Cole. Thank you, Cres. We are all grateful for Will's effort in preparing the many boards, and most of all, thanks to all the directors and to all the players who attended making our party so much fun.

EDUCATION FUND

The Unit Board recently transferred \$6000 from our Unit account to our Education Fund to fund our Tuesday lecture series and library through Oct, 2015. Since there were funds available, a fundraising campaign was not undertaken. Tax-deductible donations can no longer be made to the ACBL Education Foundation that formerly granted the donations to our club. The board is currently investigating creating our own 501(c)3 Education Fund. Currently non-tax-deductible donations can be made to our Education Fund.

Junior Master	5 MP	Craig Allen, Hilary Charlton, Roger Dunlap
Club Master	20 MP	Gil Koury, Kate Walters
Sectional Master	50 MP	Joan Smith
Life Master	300 MP	Marc Cohen
Bronze Life Master	500 MP	Rick Flucke
Silver Life Master	1000 MP	Joseph Chin, Randy Ryals

JANUARY BOARD MEETING

At its January 2 meeting, the Board approved the 2015 budget. The Unit ended 2014 in excellent financial condition and expects continued growth this year.

The Board discussed and set priorities for 2015 by establishing four new working groups. One will focus on the future of the Firecracker Sectional, our biggest event. Another will examine Member Communications, including the Kibitzer, emails, and communications with volunteers. A third group will focus on Member Involvement, including growth in new membership and increased activity for existing membership. The fourth group will focus on Education Funding, primarily the financing of our educational programs in the long-term. Each of these group will need member volunteers to do a thorough job. Contact any Board member if you are interested in participating.

President, Jody Williams, will email our members asking for volunteers for several key jobs, to which the Board hopes you will respond. The Unit cannot thrive without its many volunteers.

We have a new Finance and Investment Committee in place to deal with bequests and unrestricted gifts to the Unit. Leslie Altick, our Board Vice-President, will chair this Committee.

Firecracker planning for 2015 is moving forward under co-chairs Gill and Paul Barsley. Contracts have been signed with the hotel and Convention Center.

Two weekend Unit games have been scheduled for each month through June, an increase from last year. We hope attendance will continue to grow.

The next Board meeting will be February 17 at 3:45 PM.

PLAYER ADVANCEMENTS

The December ACBL report shows that the players identified at the left have moved up.

Congratulations to all!

UNIT NEWS

Getting Younger—One of the ACBL's monthly reports tells us that two years ago, the average age in our Unit was 68.66 while now it is 67.92. Average age for the entire ACBL is different.....70.27 two years ago and 71.13 now. Hmmmm....

President's Day Regional, February 10-16—Now that Monterey is behind us, you may be planning for the President's Day Regional, starting Tuesday, February 10 at the Airport Hyatt Regency, 1333 Bayshore Highway, Burlingame. Here is a tip: you can park across the street at the Burlingame Bridge Center in the back, if there is room. During the Regional, all games at our Bridge Center will be *closed*, beginning Wednesday, February 11. The Alpine BC will be open Tuesday, February 10.

Achoo!!! - This is the cold and flu season and lots of players came home sick from Monterey. Let's be good citizens and stay home when we are sick. We all need to be extra careful this year because the flu shots given may not protect from some virulent strains. If you don't feel well, stay at home and talk with your doctor. **Web Site is Booming** - A special note of thanks for Alan Templeton's untiring dedication and effort to the Unit's website. 200,000 visits in 2014 and 1.25 million hits since its inception is amazing! Thank you Alan.

Larry Cohen coming - Mark your calendars on July 25th and 26th for all day seminars by Larry Cohen. Registration will open in May, 2014. Larry is a grand life master, author of award-winning bridge books, and one of the world's best teachers. You don't want to miss him.

Learn Bridge in a Day - Last spring our Learn Bridge in a Day was wildly successful, and we had to turn away applicants. So, our Unit has scheduled a second LBIAD for Saturday, May 9. Once again, we will have Patty Tucker, author of the program, coming from Atlanta, Georgia to teach the class. Please start letting your friends and relatives know about this super opportunity. We will soon have the sign-ups available on our website at paloaltobridge.com.

Check the Coat Rack for Chic Fashions! - Perhaps you've lost your favorite scarf, jacket or umbrella? Be sure to check the coat rack and Lost & Found ASAP. If unclaimed, all items will be donated to charity on February 11, when the center is closed for clean-up.

Lecture Series Continues - Carl Baeuerlen and Jim Hulseman cullycarl@aol.com have stepped up to manage the Lecture Series. Thanks, Carl and Jim! On January 27, Lynn Yokel, a favorite teacher at our Lecture Series, will give a presentation entitled "Six Hands." Sounds mysterious. Then on February 24, Frank Smoot, another fave due to his wonderful interactive style, will focus on matchpoint declarer play. Note date change - there will be no lecture on February 10 due to the President's Day Regional.

New Frank Smoot Class—Frank has been teaching our Unit's intermediate class on Thursday nights for nearly 20 years and hundreds of us have been entertained by his wit and humor. He will be teaching a new class that begins February 26th called Beyond Intermediate. Check our web site paloaltobridge.com/education/classes for details and other classes offered at our Bridge Center.

Library—A recent donation to our library is Win the Bermuda Bowl by Jeff Meckstroth. It is an over-the-shoulder look at the thought processes of one of the world's best players. Jeff Meckstroth takes the reader through the highs and lows of winning the Bermuda Bowl - the world teams championship. Give it a try!

NEWCOMERS

A hearty welcome to our most recent new members: Wes Christensen, Kerry Fanwick, Alan Mills, Robert Rooney, Max Schireson and Colin Tivol

WHY IS BRIDGE SO INCREDIBLY INTRIGUING?

BY VINITA GUPTA



I have recently returned from the Nationals in Providence, Rhode Island to savor my second consecutive Baze Senior Knockout National Championship win. I am ecstatic beyond belief. I never dreamt of winning a National

Championship when I started playing serious bridge 5 years ago.

I had a star studded team with Jeff Meckstroth, Eric Rodwell, Lew Stansby and Bart Bramley. Most importantly, I was thrilled to have Billy Miller, the famous Dear Billy, who was my coach and partner and also my staunchest critic and best champion. He has helped me develop my game and is the architect of our bidding system. He has painstakingly worked with me for 25 regionals and many BBO lessons, patiently watching me make mistakes, but always believing in me. A good coach is invaluable! Billy's most repeated advice to me before the game is "middle of the road partner." He believes that the best bridge is accurate, steady and disciplined bridge without heroic efforts.

Some of you have asked what it is like playing with the high-flyers on the team. Initially, I was nervous and fearful of making mistakes. Lew Stansby made an interesting comment "bridge is a game of mistakes!" Also, during the tournament these experts never dwelled on their mistakes, or those of others. There never were dragged out analyses and discussions of the old hands, as all energies seemed funneled in moving forward. Every day was a new day. I never felt that I had to prove myself to them. Mental discipline, building self-confidence and reviewing the bids that seldom come up was my everyday routine. Being able to maintain focus at the table, playing thoughtful bridge and having the top team is a powerful path to a possible victory. When asked for advice, Meckstroth said, "play well and be lucky!"

A bit of my bridge playing history which started 40 years ago. As a teenager I once watched some of my uncles play bridge during a multi-day, elaborate Indian wedding in India. I was even called upon to play

the dummy's cards when an uncle went for a break. Several years later I came to the US for my masters in engineering and later met and married Naren. I considered him a genius, not because he was a Caltech and Stanford graduate, but because he claimed he played bridge! This was the start of my bridge playing. Soon thereafter, the two of us showed up at the Palo Alto Bridge Club. A memorable hand from those days was when I had 6 clubs and 9 high card points. Feeling that it warranted a bid, a voice inside me made me say 2 C. My LHO paused for a very long time and doubled, my pard bid 2D (we did not know negative double responses). RHO bid 2H and LHO raised to 3H. All passed and they made 6H. A director was summoned with me feeling stupid and sheepish, but to our surprise the director ruled that as long as my partner understood my bid, the score would stand. As you might guess, we got a top board.

Naren and I are both highly competitive and a bit stubborn and soon we started arguing over bridge hands; that brought a stop to our club-bridge. The next 25 years were spent in building our companies and raising our two talented daughters. Later, when we had some time, we made it a priority to again return to the Bridge Club for Walter's lessons & games on Fridays. Only a few months later, we decided to attend the 1998 Reno Nationals along with two friends. Although each one of us had less than five master points, to our great surprise, we ended up winning an open board-a-match event. We won 25 master points each! The high of winning that event was like the high when I took my company public.

When I retired in 2004 after having a successful stint for 20 years as founder and CEO of a hi-tech company, I decided to show up at the bridge club

Palo Alto Unit 503 Board

Jody Williams, President

Leslie Altick, Vice President

Todd Makler, Treasurer

David Puryear, Secretary

Paul Davis, James Harris, Kevin O'Leary,

VINITA'S THOUGHTS ABOUT BRIDGE AND HER BIG PROVIDENCE WIN... CONT.

once again, but this time I came alone. Hansa hooked me up with Ed Barlow and Hamish Bennett, who introduced me to his good friend, Billy Miller. With Billy as my partner and Ed partnering with Naren, we won our first regional tournament in Las Vegas, when neither Naren nor I were life masters! Not playing as a husband-wife partnership but being on the same team has made our bridge a much more enjoyable experience.

For the last two years I have been very lucky to have the same team of Meckstroth-Rodwell and Stansby-Bramley for the Senior Knockouts which we won. This past year there was a thrilling hand which made me an instant hero with my team mates. It was the hand in which Billy, my partner, opened a gambling 3NT (solid minor with no outside A or K), My hand was AKJxxx Axxx no Ds KJx. I obviously knew my partner's suit. The thought of slam was floating high in my mind but the question was how to bid it. 6NT therefore did not seem right as partner's hand may have no entry. I therefore decided to bid 6D, a suit I was void in! It was passed all the way around. The lead was a small spade, and the dummy came down with x xxx AKQJxxx xx. I got a free finesse in spades, ruffed a spade, took seven diamonds, five spades, and the ace of hearts, making 7D. While on the other table they played 5D from the other side, the spade ten was led and the contract went down, as declarer treated the spade ten as a singleton, and misguessed the A /Q of clubs. If a bid feels right, place the contract and do not over think, as the experts say.

Last year in the finals of that same tournament, we played against the most feared top-notch Polish players, Adam-Cezary. I knew nothing about their Polish-club-system. I was told that the Polish 1C is natural 80% of the time, but for me it was nerve-racking. In this event we sat behind screens and I was on BBO viewgraphs. I was at a loss and perhaps asked far too many questions of them which irritated my opponents. It was not my brilliancy but their inability to deal with a rookie that irritated them and cost them the match. The lesson, of course, is to wait and ask all questions at the end of the bidding.

Talking too much can impact your own game negatively. But then perhaps talking too much might sometimes be beneficial.....welcome to bridge!

After my first win in the Nationals, in the very next Nationals in the Vanderbilt, we were playing against Bocchi and Madala, an aggressive top world class pair. I found myself totally intimidated to the point of being dysfunctional. Over the next few tournaments, I tried to overcome intimidation and discovered that by focusing on the cards, rather than on my opponents, I could divert my attention.

Another challenge for me in high level competition is being mentally ready every morning. Some days I am on and other days I am not, but that has not deterred me. Bridge will always be a work in progress, which is why I find it so intriguing.

Approx. 150 Unit members receive the Kibitzer in color electronically. Send your email to kelly.marian@gmail.com and she will add your name to our list.

THE FIRECRACKER IS SIZZLING

If you haven't done so already - mark your calendars – Our Super Sectional **The Firecracker 2015** will be held **June 10 – 14th** at the Santa Clara Convention center. The playing schedule is already available on the ACBL website and is posted on the Unit website. Thank you to everyone who responded to our request for volunteers to help out during the tournament. We are still in need of people to staff the partnerships and hospitality tables and to help with set up and tear down. If you are not able to assist with any of these activities, please help by playing at the tournament and promoting it to your bridge playing friends far and near.

Questions? Suggestions? Thank you from your co-chairs Gill Barsley gillbarsley@gmail.com and Paul Barsley pbarsley@sbcglobal.net

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 INFO
MON	Monday Morning	Open/Strat.	11:30 a.m.	John Schwartz	Bridge Center reservations necessary. Website or
	Monday Morning	<100,<500	11:30 a.m.	John Schwartz	Bridge Center signup123.com/jsbridge
TUES	Tuesday Noon BC	<100,<300,Open	12:00 p.m.	Walter Miller	Unity Church, YES Rm, 3391 Middlefield Rd, PA
	Alpine BC	Open/Strat/	12:00 p.m.	O'Leary/Watson/	Bridge Center
		<100, <500 MP	11:30 a.m.	Saunders	Bridge Center.
WED.	Bridge 'n Brunch	Open/Strat.	11:00 a.m.	Will Watson	Bridge Center
	Wed Aft. 99er	<100 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
	Thurs. Afternoon 49er		12:00 p.m.	Will Watson	Bridge Center
FRI	The EZ Game	<30 M.P.	9:00 a.m.	John Williams	Bridge Center
	TGIF AM Bridge	Open/Strat./	10:30 a.m.	O'Leary, Davis,	Bridge Center
		NLM	10:30 a.m.	Schwartz	
	Friday Night Barometer	Open/Strat.	7:30 p.m.	Will Watson	Bridge Center Is currently closed.
	Friday Night Barometer	<500 MP	7:30 p.m.	Will Watson	Bridge Center Is currently closed.
SAT	One Club	Open/Strat.	12:00 p.m.	John Prior	Bridge Center
SUN	Sunday Afternoon BC	Open/Strat	1:00 p.m.	Will Watson	Bridge Center

SPECIAL EVENTS

Jan 21, Wed. Doubleton Club 7p.m., Jr. Fund Game Extra MPs available

Jan 24, Sat. Unit Pairs Game, 11:30 a.m., lunch, game at 12, Extra MPs.

Jan 24, Sat. Mentor/Mentee Game to be held alongside the Pairs Game providing there are six mentor/mentee tables.

Jan 25, Sun. Unit Swiss Game. 12 p.m. lunch, game at 1 p.m., Extra MPs.

Jan 27, Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. Lecture by Lynn Yokel, Six Hands

Jan 31, Sat., No. American Pairs, Flight B District Finals, Bayshore Bridge Club, Burlingame

Feb 5-8, Fresno CA Fresno Winter Sectional, Bridge Center

Feb 7, Sat. Unit Pairs Game, ACBL charity event. 11:30 a.m. for lunch; game at noon.

Feb 8, Unit Swiss Teams Game, The Elinor Tanck Memorial Unit Game, 12 p.m. for lunch, game at 1 p.m.

Feb 7-8, Grand National Teams, Open Qualifying, East Bay Community Bridge Center, Oakland

Feb 10-16, Burlingame CA Presidents' Day Regional, Hyatt Burlingame

Note: Palo Alto Clubs are closed during this tournament

Feb 21-22, Spring Forward Sectional, Janet Pomeroy Center, San Fran.

Feb 24, Tuesday, 9:30 a.m., Frank Smoot on Matchpoint Declarer Play

Feb 28-1, NLM Sectional; San Jose Bridge Center

Feb 28-1, GNT Flight A Qualifying, E. Bay Bridge Center, Oakland

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