



KIBBITZER



Newsletter of Palo Alto Unit 503 of the American Contract Bridge League

February & March, 2016

SUNDAY UNIT TEAM GAMES BEGIN EARLIER THIS YEAR.....

You recall that Saturday Unit pairs games always began at noon with lunch served before the game at 11:30. Sunday Unit team games began at one with lunch at noon. No longer! There has been a change. Both games will begin at noon this year with lunch served at 11:30.

Josephine Ventura has graciously volunteered to be the new Unit Game Director for the coming year. Please work with her to make the Unit Games enjoyable and financially successful.

The limited section is based on a maximum of 299 master points per team member.

Signups are essential. If you will please use the website to sign up, nobody will be confused by questionable writing.

If you need a partner or teammates please sign up anyway and indicate your need, including a ride, on the signup sheet.

We always need volunteers for setup and cleanup; please signup on the web or the Bridge Center if you can help out. Suggestions for Unit games can be emailed to Josephine Ventura, jovent16@gmail.com.

The upcoming schedule is:

- Feb. 7- Unit Charity ACBL Unit Swiss
- Feb. 16-Unit Pairs
- Mar. 26-Unit Pairs
- Mar. 27-Unit Swiss
- Apr. 23-Unit Charity ACBL Unit Pairs
- Apr. 24- Unit Swiss
- May 7-Unit Pairs
- May 15-Unit Swiss

FIRECRACKER 2016, JUNE 29 TO JULY 3

Save the dates to come, to play, have fun and win Silver Points. Plans for the Firecracker Super Sectional 2016 to "Come Home" to our Bridge Center and the adjacent IFES Hall are well under way with Team Firecracker moving ahead on all fronts.

The eye catching flyer is out; copies are available in the Bridge Center lobby. The web page with our schedule is up on our unit website.

The game schedule is oriented to meet the needs of all players with plenty of games for those with fewer points, including 0-5 Beginner Pairs on Saturday, July 2. Team games provide a lot of fun and opportunities for extra master points. Ron Karr is giving a talk on team games on Tuesday, March 29. Check it out and see what you have been missing.

To make sure everyone can park conveniently and easily, we have arranged to use the facilities at the Buddhist temple, just across the street. Steve Lubeck is organizing the details and will soon be recruiting volunteers to help with traffic control and direction.

Anne Keyser is organizing food and drink and we expect that the IFES kitchen team will be making sure that sustenance is available to keep all in top shape for playing bridge.

Michele Musy is organizing the Hospitality Desk which will be run in conjunction with the Partnership Desk under Joan Bower. They are looking to recruit volunteers to man the desks. Soon you will find an online sign up form linked to the Firecracker web page soon.

Most of all Team Firecracker invites you to come and play at the Firecracker and make this the best ever. **BOOK THE DATES NOW.**

DRAFT YEAR-END 2015 FINANCIAL REPORT BY LESLIE ALTICK

As expected, the Unit met its 2015 budget. Your Board continued to hold down capital expenditures and our many volunteer managers kept other assorted expense categories below budget. As a result, the Unit was able to offset the \$3,500 loss from the Firecracker and show a profit.

Some notable large dollar highlights include:

- ⊙ Table fees exceeded budget – thank you game owners for growing your games.

- ⊙ Supplies were under budget – thank you Kevin and your volunteers for being so cost conscious (and a special thank you to the donor of the metal forks).

- ⊙ Capital expenses were under budget – thank you to those involved in keeping the computer alive as long as possible and finding a cost effective replacement.

Now that the 2016 budget is finalized, here are the key risks and opportunities of which your Board would like you to be aware. As hosting classes with nationally known teachers is one way we have successfully raised Unit revenues, there will be a second guest lecturer this year – Barbara Seagram. Thank you to Valerie Baldwin for making this happen. The budget anticipates that table fees will continue to grow. So please keep spreading the word about our game schedule, especially about our newer limited games. The two biggest financial unknowns are our two sectionals. The Non Life Master sectional at the end of January will be something of a test for some of the processes that will be used for the Firecracker. The financial impact of the Firecracker itself is the most difficult to forecast with confidence. At this point, the budget has the Firecracker breaking even.

This summarizes the financial condition of the Unit. 2015 was a good year, as expected. 2016 can be a good year with the continued support of our many volunteers and members.

MORE NLM CHOICES....

Will Watson, our amazingly busy director, is announcing additions to his Wednesday morning Bridge 'n Brunch game. He is adding both a 49er and a 299er section starting on February 3 with a Club Championship. He says Kathy Harper twisted his arm, but he is hoping to see more of you than just Kathy's students....

MORE DIRECTORS, PLEASE.

The Unit would like to have more game directors available and is working to organize a directors class. If you are interested please let Lori Spaeth or Paul Davis know.

NEWCOMERS

A hearty welcome to our recent new members:

Margaret Dalton, Robert Field, Alan Huggins, Martha Huggins, Mary Huggins, Catherine Karanas, Nancy Martin, Ninad N More, Gloria Mullen, Lorie Pelc, Jie-Ren Shih, Idonna Snow.

IN YOUR LIBRARY

In 2006, S.J. Simon wrote the classic bridge text *Why You Lose at Bridge*. Julian Potage has written a follow-up book called *Why You Still Lose at Bridge*. He uses the same approach as Simon did to discuss common failings of modern club players: misdescribing your shape, overvaluing your hand, bidding the wrong slam, playing a flawed system, giving the wrong signal, making losing leads, and many more. Our bridge library has both books – give them a try! Another new acquisition is David Bird's book *A Practical Guide to Improving Your Game*. It is a guide to playing bridge at the intermediate and advanced levels written by one of the most prolific bridge writers. It contains tips shown in 250 photographs and diagrams.

BOARD MEETING REPORT

Unit 503's new Board met for the first time on January 14 at the Bridge Center.

Finalizing the 2016 budget, reporting on progress on the Non Life Master and Firecracker sectionals, and 2016 goals for the Board were the main items of business. The Board amended its policy for determining its emergency reserves to reflect the Unit's growing expense base. The change sets reserves at six months of current budgeted expenses instead of a fixed dollar amount. This was the original intent. The Board also reaffirmed the policy of having the Lecture Series pay rent to the Bridge Center (just as all other users of the space). Right now the Lecture Series has raised enough funds to cover its programs through the first half of the year. With these and a few other loose ends addressed, the Board adopted the 2016 budget.

The volunteers responsible for the Non Life Master tournament at the end of January are encouraged by the signups to date. As attendance is difficult to predict, expenses are being tightly controlled.

The Firecracker is a bigger unknown. We have most volunteer chairman positions filled, but are still recruiting chairs for set-up and take-down and the Second Harvest Food Bank. The plan again anticipates having IFES make and sell sandwiches.

Dave Puryear presented a list of potential 2016 Board goals. They included hosting a successful Firecracker in our new venue, assessing/addressing the Unit's needs for technology upgrades, and creating backup solutions for processes and people on which the Unit is highly dependent. Based on Board discussion, a prioritized list will be finalized at the next meeting, which will be on February 11.

In Sympathy

Unit officers and members extend their condolences to the family and friends of Joyce Sogg, a family crisis attorney who said she was more proud of having achieved Life Master than having passed the California Bar Exam.

BIG GAMES!

We had Big Games (greater than 70%): **November**, 1, Qing Lu - Michael Hu 73.89%; 9th, Behnaz Taidi - S Virmani 70.72%; 10th, Behnaz Taidi - Catherine Vivian Pezzani 70.00%; 15th, Adrian Heath - Benjamin Anderson 79.17%; 20th, David Crosley - Rita Rubinfeld 71.78%. **December**, 8, Henryk Szejnwald - David Cheng 73.24%; 11th, Michael Rosenberg - Kevin Rosenberg 77.16%; 15th, Max Schireson - Debbie Rosenberg 70.17%; 16th, Frank Xie - Ying Liu 71.73%.

LECTURE SERIES SCHEDULE

We are pleased to inform you that the remaining dates for the Unit 503 Lecture Series have been scheduled:

- 2/16/16 Frank Smoot: Slippery Defense Holdings – Mid-Hand Decisions
- 3/1/16 Sue Johnson: Second Hand High
- 3/15/16 Frank Smoot: One Notrump Forcing
- 3/29/16 Ron Karr: Pairs vs. Team Games – Differences in Bidding and Play
- 4/12/16 Frank Smoot: Doubles
- 4/26/16 Frank Smoot: Responsive and Maximal Doubles
- 5/10/16 Frank Smoot: Competitive Doubles
- 5/24/16 Sue Johnson: Director Please!

If you are currently not on the Lecture Series distribution list and would like to be, please send your request to 503lectures@gmail.com.

Palo Alto Unit 503 Board

David Puryear, President
 Paul Davis, Vice President
 Todd Makler, Treasurer
 Leslie Altick, Secretary
 Gill Barsley Peggy Chen, James Harris,
 Marolyn Imaoka

BRIDGE CAMP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN JUNE

SiVY Bridge (Silicon Valley Youth Bridge) announces its 2016 summer camp for students in grades 5 through 12, to be held the afternoons of June 20 through 24, 2016 at the IFES hall. For details, go to: <http://www.siliconvalleyyouthbridge.org/summercamp/2016/summercamp.html>

DOUBLETON CLUB HOSTS BRIDGE GURU...

Recognize the guy at the right below with his arm around Marolyn? Yup...it's Bob Hamman, one of the biggest bridge winners of all time. Bob had planned to be in the Bay Area recently on a Wednesday eve and asked his friend Billy Miller whom he might contact for a game. Billy mentioned his regular partner, Vinita, and Vinita promptly cancelled her Christmas party for that evening to play with Bob. The report is that everyone had a great time. Thanks to Lori for the photo.



L. to R: Marolyn Imaoka, Bob Hamman, Lori Spaeth, Sue Johnston

PLAYER ADVANCEMENTS

The November and December ACBL reports show that the players identified below have moved up.
Congratulations to all!

Junior Master	5 MP	Lisa Bao, Marianne Gardner, Therese Kristensen, Jay L Margulies, Jacob Plachta, Eve Reaven, Susan W Schofield, Aidan Shackleton, Sarah Youngquist.
Club Master	20 MP	Brenda Hatton, Michael Yang
Sectional Master	50 MP	Leslie Altick, David Aston, Patricia Berkley, Geri Derby, C Vivian Pezzani, Puliur Santhanam, Mike Wyman, Susan Zhang
Regional Master	100 MP	Ruby Chow, Joan Smith
NABC Master	200 MP	Eugene Acton, Deborah Machlin
Life Master	300 MP	Deborah Lundahl, Donna Raynor, Manda Thatte
Bronze Life Master	500 MP	Ellie Bernhardt
Silver Life Master	1000 MP	Robert Horowitz, George Paris, Brian Samuels

NOTE: The recent ACBL report documented players who qualify for the new designations, Ruby Life Master (1500 MP) and Sapphire Life Master (3500 MP). The list of such folks in our Unit is very long and is therefore not included here.

BILL BAILEY

BY JIM O'NEIL



You go down one in 2H and, after the game, your partner chides you with "But according to Deep Finesse, you should have made 3 on that hand!" Then the inevitable, "Oh, I see how to do it now," or "Well, no one would ever figure that out."

Yes, Deep Finesse (DF) is the software that provides a record of all possible successful contracts that you see for each deal on the hand records distributed after the game. In practice, DF allows you to determine what lead should have been made, and the most successful line of play. It is fair to say that DF has revolutionized post-game discussions of bridge hands played. And, as many of you know, this software was developed by our own Bill Bailey.

Bill is a Harvard-educated computer scientist who always loved games, puzzles, and the like and played chess while a university student. It was at this time that he learned to play hearts and, like so many of us, playing that game led to an interest in bridge. But none of his fellow students played bridge. Undaunted, Bill started reading the Goren/Sharif columns in the newspaper and picked up a library book on the mechanics of the game.

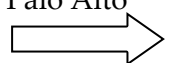
Fascinated by what he read, he delved further into the intricacies of bridge play and became "hooked" after reading Frank Stuart's *Better Bridge for the Advancing Player*. He finished his studies, came to Palo Alto to work for Oracle. Despite his then rather sophisticated knowledge of the play of the hand, he still had never bid or played a single hand!!

The plot thickens. Bill worked as a data-base developer at Oracle for ten years all the while reading

advanced material on duplicate bridge in books and newspaper columns but never playing the game. He did well at Oracle and, still a young man and father of two young children, he was able to take a breather from the Silicon Valley grind and pursue his desire to create software that could solve any double-dummy problem. In simple terms, knowing the location of all 52 cards on any deal, it should be possible to develop software that always makes the *winning* play (e.g., a double finesse, or dropping a stiff K) not the *best* play. With his computing skills and knowledge of the game, and after only a few days of work, he developed some algorithms that could do just this. But, it took more than a year to make it fast enough to be practical.

While there have been a couple of bug-fix releases, the first version is still in use and has never been shown to fail. Deep Finesse was finished in 1999 and embraced by the NABC in 2004. Since that time, we have all enjoyed these amazing analyses that appear on our hand records. After that hiatus of a year and a half, Bill became a cofounder and chief scientist of NetLedger, Inc, a start-up dot.com now called NetSuite, Inc.

So, when did he play his first game of duplicate bridge? Sometime in 1997 at our previous location on Elwell Court. A former colleague at Oracle who had once noticed a bridge book on Bill's desk dragged him to the club for a game. Despite 15 years of reading bridge books, he had never been inside a bridge club, nor had he seen a bidding box. He started to make his bids orally until duly chastised. He played at Elwell Court several times but, because of his 80-hour work weeks at NetLedger, he sadly abandoned his short-lived appearances at the Palo Alto Bridge Club until a year or so ago when he once again semi-retired. He is now a regular and formidable opponent at the Palo Alto Bridge Club.



DEEP FINESSE, CONT.

What is in the future? Deep Finesse will soon be available as Cloud-based software running inside a browser on any device (smart phone, PC, MAC, ...) from anywhere! There will be no need to download and install any software application. In addition, a version that supports single-dummy play (two hands are hidden) is in development. Initially there was a charge of about \$40 to download the software, but now it is free, Bill's way of giving back to bridge. Try it!

Thanks Bill for your wonderful contribution to the game we all love so much.

TOURNAMENT TERMINOLOGY 101

If you're confused by the terms used to describe the different types of bridge events played at clubs and tournaments, you're not alone. Here's a list of common bridge events with explanations.

Knockout Teams (KO): an event in which a team plays another team. The losers are eliminated or "knocked out" while the winners play other winners until only one winning team remains. The length of a KO match may vary from a single session to a full day (the Vanderbilt and Spingold) to a multi-day event (the Bermuda Bowl).

Bracketed Knockout Teams: a KO event in which teams are divided into groups, usually of 8, 16 or 32 teams, based on their masterpoint holdings. The top group (Bracket I) and all other groups compete in a separate event with their own set of winners.

Compact Knockout Teams: a shorter version of Bracketed KO teams.

Swiss Teams: an event in which a team (of four, five or six players, with four playing at a time) plays other teams in seven-, eight- or nine- board matches. Team A sits North-South at Table 1 and East-West at Table 2 while Team B sits East-West at Table 1 and North-South at Table 2. The results are compared and scored by International Match Points (IMPs).

Pairings for the first round are random. Pairings for succeeding rounds are determined by a team's win-loss record or Victory Point total.

International Match Points (IMPs): the most common method of scoring Swiss Team matches. Scoring example: if Team A scores plus 620 for bidding and making 4S on a particular deal and Team B scores only plus 170 (they didn't bid the game), the difference is 450, which converts to 10 IMPs. The IMP chart is shown on the inside of your convention card.

Victory Points: A method of scoring Swiss Team matches. After the scores are compared and converted to IMPs, the IMP total is converted to Victory Points. A team's VP total may be used to determine its next opponents and its final standing.

Side Game Series: a series of single-session pair games that pay red points. These series include at least three sessions and may have as many as six. You play in as many sessions as you like, but only pairs who play in at least two sessions are eligible for overall gold points. Your best two sessions determine overall winners.

Flighted pairs: When flighting is used, the field is divided by expertise or experience or both into several separate games. Flight A ("unlimited masterpoints") will be open to all players while the remaining flights will be limited. Flight B might be 0-500 MPs or 0-1000 MPs while Flight C might be 0-300 or 0-500. Each flight is scored individually, and masterpoint awards are made for each flight. Masterpoint holdings of a player determine her flight. If one player is quite expert while her partner is new, the pair must compete in Flight A.

In flighted events, you may play up but not down. That means you may play in Flight A or Flight B even if your masterpoint holding qualifies you for Flight C. Conversely, you may not play in Flight B or Flight C if you are a Flight A player.

Stratified Pairs: The idea is to compete against everyone but be ranked only with your peers. Each pair is assigned a stratum or "strat" based on the masterpoint holding of the partner with more masterpoints. Example: A = 1000+ mps; B = 300-1000; C = 0-300.

Thus, the most experienced players are placed in Strat A, intermediate players in Strat B and less experienced players in Strat C. Masterpoints are awarded for placings in all strats but gold points are awarded only in A and B. The game proceeds normally; the difference comes when the scores are tabulated and ranked. In a three-strat game, the scores are ranked three times. The first ranking is done as in a regular open game. These are the Strat A results. If a B or C pair does well in this ranking, they receive full credit for that performance. It is not all that uncommon for a Strat C pair to place first overall, and they receive the full masterpoint award for that game.

Note: A pair is eligible for only one set of masterpoint awards and automatically receives the highest award. The second ranking compares the scores of only the B and C pairs: The scores of the Strat A pairs are eliminated. Once again, if a C pair does well, they receive points for their finishing position in the Strat B results. The third and final ranking compares the scores of only the C pairs: All the scores of the Strat A and B pairs are eliminated.

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
		Also <50, <300		Will Watson	Bridge Center
	Wed Aft. 99er	<100 M.P.	1:00 p.m.	Walter Miller	Unity Church, YES Rm, 3391 Middlefield Rd, PA
	Doubleton Club	Open/Strat.	7:00 p.m.	Spaeth/Johnston/	Bridge Center
	Doubleton Club	< 499 M.P.	7:00 p.m.	Imaoka	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.	John Williams	Bridge Center
	TGIF AM Bridge	Open/Strat./	10:30 a.m.	O'Leary, Davis,	Bridge Center
		<100, <500	10:30 a.m.		
	Friday Night Barometer	Open/Strat.	7:00 p.m.	Will Watson	Bridge Center
	Friday Night Barometer	<500 MP	7:00 p.m.	Will Watson	Bridge Center
SAT	Only Unit Games				Bridge Center

SPECIAL EVENTS

- * Sat./Sun, Jan 30, 31. Our own Non-Life Master Sectional. Details and signups on our web site. Almost sold out as of mid-January.
- * Tues., February 2, 9:30 a.m., Unit Lecture, Lynn Yokel, Bridge Center
- * Wed., February 3, 11:00 AM, Bridge 'n Brunch Club Championship (Pairs) Includes Limited MP Section New 49er and 299er
- * Sun., February 7 at noon, Team Unit Game, Bridge Center
- * Sun., February 7 at 5:00 p.m., SiVY Youth Bridge Pizza & Bridge Party
- * Wed., February 10, 7:30 p.m., Club Championship, Doubleton Club
- * Thurs. February 11 thru Sun., February 14, Fresno Winter Sectional
- * Sat., February 13 at noon, Pairs Unit Game, Bridge Center
- * Tues., February 16, 9:30 a.m., Unit Lecture, Frank Smoot on Defense, Bridge Center
- * Sat., Feb 20, Sun., Feb 21, San Mateo Spring Forward Sectional
- * Sat, Sun., Feb. 27, 28. San Jose Limited Sectional, San Jose Bridge Center
- * Tues., March 1, 9:30 a.m., Unit Lecture, Sue Johnston Bridge Center
- * Sat, March 5, Sun., March 6, BER Almost Spring Sectional
- * Tues., March 15, 9:30 a.m., Unit Lecture, Frank Smoot, 1NT Forcing.
- * Tues., March 29, 9:30 a.m., Unit Lecture, Ron Karr, Pairs or Teams
- * Sat/Sun., May 21, 22. Larry Cohen returns to the Bridge Center.
- * Mon.-Fri., June 20—24, SiVY Bridge Camp for Youth. IFES Hall.
- * Wed.-Sun., June 29—July 3 **FIRECRACKER**, Bridge Center.
- * Sat/Sun., Sept. 24, 25. Barbara Seagram seminar.

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