

DIAMOND IN THE RUFF

ACBL District 21 Newsletter Vol 3, Number 6 December 2020

Leaves From the Executive Branch

By Ray Yuenger, President

On November 3, 2020, I posted the latest [installment](#) of this Presidential column in a new space on the District 21 (“D21”) website. It primarily reported on the September meeting of D21’s Board of Directors. I also sent out an email notifying D21 members of that column and our District Director’s latest reports on meetings by the ACBL’s Board of Directors. I intend not to repeat what I’ve already written, so what else has been happening at the District level?



I also don’t intend this newsletter to repeat our District Director’s latest report, which can be found [here](#) on the D21 website. Members have already been notified by email of its publication.

Committee Work

Bylaws revisions

Being confined to one’s house for months provides an opportunity to really study the eight-page [Bylaws](#) of D21 (nine pages if you count the listing of amendment dates). Earlier this year I reported that the Bylaws

Elections for D21 Positions 2021

By Jackie Ortiz, Nominating Chair

At the D21 Board Meeting in January we’ll have an election for D21 President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer for a one-year term 2021-2022. Also there will be an election for two seats available on the Board of Governors.

Any D21 member interested in these positions please contact Jackie Ortiz by December 31, 2020 at jackieo@sonic.net or 707-758-5716.

Please stay safe and wear a mask so I can see you next year at the table.

The list of upcoming tournaments and the regional flyers will not be published in this newsletter since the ACBL has decided to not provide tournament directors through February 2021. Monterey has been officially canceled.

committee proposed a number of technical amendments that the Board of Directors approved at its May 2020 meeting.

Close study has revealed more bad punctuation, missing words, inconsistent word usage, unclear wording, bad grammar, inaccurate references to official positions, and similar technical deficiencies. These are the kinds of errors I looked for when I reviewed drafts of legal opinions as a research attorney. A careful reader can figure out what a sentence was intended to say, but it could be said more clearly. At the next Board of Directors meeting in January 2021, the Bylaws committee will propose 12 sets of technical amendments for the Board's approval.

Probably the most dramatic of the technical amendments is to clarify that the people currently called a unit's "representatives" to the Board of Directors are actually members of the Board, specifically Directors. The governing Board of D21 consists of the Directors (up to two) from each of the 21 units in the District. Yes, so we potentially have a 42-member Board of Directors, though usually units are represented by only one person, if that, at the live Board meetings.

I'd like to see this position clarified in the Bylaws, because for several years when I was one of the representatives of Unit 507 at Board meetings, I had the impression that it was my job to listen to what the Board had decided, occasionally to vote on new candidates for offices and other topics of interest to the Board, and to report to my Unit Board what the District Board had decided. It was not my impression that I was part of

the governing body. Instead I thought at first that the Executive Committee ("ExCom") was the Board. Eventually I learned that the ExCom is really an advisory group to the President. Someone who is going to be elected or appointed to be a member of the District's Board of Directors should immediately understand what the position is. This clarification requires changes to nine sentences in the Bylaws.

The Bylaws committee is also going to propose nine substantive amendments. Substantive amendments will change the way D21 operates in some big and little ways. One of the smaller changes will resolve an ambiguity about which unit officer provides notice to the D21 Secretary about which the alternate Directors a unit has selected. Another one deletes a deadline for unit elections of Directors. There is no need for the District to dictate the schedule of unit elections.

One of the bigger substantive amendments will add a provision specifically allowing the District to hold meetings electronically, as we have been forced to do by the coronavirus pandemic.

Perhaps the biggest proposed change is to extend the terms of the four District officers, President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, to two years from one. A one-year term may sound like a long time until you consider that the District Board meets only three times a year, during regionals in January, May/June and August/September. So the President presides over three meetings a year, and I'll tell you the position takes some learning on the job. It is the practice in D21 that these positions are

uncontested after the first year in office and the officers are re-elected by acclamation. So why not simply elect officers to two-year terms in the first place and not have annual elections? It would save time at January Board meetings.

Combined with extending the terms is a proposal authorizing the Board of Directors to remove any underperforming officer by a two-thirds vote. Currently the Bylaws provide no mechanism for removing an officer for cause, and there should probably be such a provision even if the terms are not extended.

I don't intend to describe all nine proposed substantive amendments. They will be sent, according to the Bylaws, to the Board of Directors for review at least 30 days before the January meeting.

One of my proposals that didn't make it out of the committee was to downsize the Board of Directors. Just this year, the ACBL's Board of Directors approved a plan to reduce the size of its Board from 25 Directors to 13. So I proposed that if each Unit elected just one Director instead of up to two (and as many alternates as desired), the D21 Board would have 21 Directors instead of 42. But some committee members were concerned that a Unit might go unrepresented if its only Director was suddenly unable to attend a meeting and couldn't arrange for one of the unit's alternates to attend instead.

Written District policies

I finally found time to draft up a list of topics for the new Practices and Policies committee, consisting of Sandi Davis (on

every committee pursuant to the Bylaws), Stu Goodgold, Cornelia Gould, Sigrid Price, and Jackie Zayac, with me as chair. I described the general objective for this committee in my Presidential column in the [May 2020](#) newsletter.

Just like my initial confusion as a new unit "representative" about the membership of D21's Board of Directors, I've also been puzzled about how D21 operates. There are a number of committee chairs and some staff members. I spent my first months as President asking each of them for job descriptions and explanations of any written guidelines for their job performance. My objective is partly to document how the District operates so that newer Directors and D21 members can look up the answers online if they are curious. Beyond documenting how the District operates, I want this committee to consider whether the District's existing practices make sense in light of changing times or should be modified or eliminated. Then I'd like the Board of Directors, based on the committee's proposals, to establish written policies guiding the future operations of D21.

(1). Financial give-aways

One general topic under discussion is how D21 gives away money. Since about 2008, the District has been giving away \$5,000 annually to local charities. One of the criteria employed by our Charity Chair in selecting a charity is that it have no connection to duplicate bridge. This year at the May Board meeting, a virtual one because the Sacramento Regional had been

canceled, the Board approved a motion to increase its charity donations to \$6,000 for this year. Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll see Jeff Hack's column describing the approved charities. We have canceled three more regionals since that meeting. Regionals are the district's main source of income.

Because of the cancellation of the summer Nationals, the district did not give away this year up to \$20,000 to applicants for grants to attend the summer Youth NABC. I'm the chair of the Youth Grant committee. Last year we gave away \$10,000 in grants to 40 applicants. At our January 2020 meeting, the Board voted to double the grant limit.

Also because of the cancellation of Nationals, this year the District has not given away the \$10,400 it might have to the top teams (\$2,000 each) in each of four GNT flights and the second-place teams (\$1,200 each) in Flights B and C. Nor has it given away another \$1,200 it might have to the third-place NAP qualifiers. (Higher NAP qualifiers receive stipends from the ACBL.) The District also grants up to \$300 a year to assist units in holding teaching programs.

It is probably not the case that every successful team and pair asks for a stipend, but potentially D21 could be giving away each year about \$32,000 to bridge-related activities and \$5 to \$6,000 to bridge-unrelated activities.

I've been on the Board long enough to know that when a proposal emerges to increase our handouts, there is virtually no

general discussion about the big financial picture. One meeting it sounds like a good idea to give away another \$1,000 to charities because it's a rough year. Another meeting it sounds like a good idea to give youth applicants more in grants.

At the very least, it seems to me, the District should adopt a policy that it does not give away money when it is not making money. Perhaps, as Unit 507 proposed at the September Board meeting, the District should redirect its charitable inclinations to directly promoting bridge, which is one of the District's objectives according to our Bylaws. Can the District afford to give away \$5,000 annually to charity when we own a deteriorating set of card tables?

As the Youth Grant Chair, I believe that youths should be encouraged to play bridge, but I question whether giving individual applicants an average of \$300 apiece to attend the nationals is the best way to accomplish that objective. Perhaps instead the youth bridge organizations within the District should make written applications for grants to fund their programs, providing more teachers or more supplies. I've traced the history of the youth grant program in D21, and I don't believe that there was any policy decision made by the Board that attending the YNABC is the best way to encourage youth bridge.

It may take five different policies to address all the D21 give-aways, but I think the Board should gain a better focus on the bigger financial picture in discussing these policies.

(2). Financial controls

I'm a lawyer, not an accountant, but some of my best friends are accountants. It is hard for them to believe that D21, with over \$400,000 in assets, functions without a written policy requiring any major transactions to be reviewed or approved by anyone other than the people who write the checks on D21 accounts. I trust our Treasurer and our Tournament Manager. I believe they excel in their positions and are responsible for the District's assets being what they are, along with people like Calvin Harper, who has given so much of his life to transporting regional and sectional supplies for the district.

But I also believe that every organization needs a system of financial checks and balances. Yes, the Board of Directors sees a balance sheet and a profit and loss statement from the Treasurer three times a year, but the Board doesn't review the details of the regional hotel contracts. Pam Hughes, our Tournament Manager, has shared them with me so I can provide some legal insights into how we might be able to negotiate cancellations due to the pandemic, but this has not been a regular practice in the district.

It is not practical to involve a Board that meets three times a year in the details of ongoing contract negotiations, but the Board should delegate the authority to some officers to regularly review and approve of those actions by other officers and personnel that involve substantial commitments of D21's assets.

It will doubtless take some time for this committee to draft such a financial controls

policy, and more time for the Board to discuss it, modify it, and approve it. But the financial future of the District could be at stake, so it will be time well spent.

These are just two of the five topics I'd like this committee to examine and to propose some policies for adoption by the Board of Directors. You can see that this is a major project. It's barely getting started in my first year as President and that is ending in early January. It is unlikely it will be finished in another year. But I would like to try to make D21 operations much more transparent, understandable, and contemporary.

Another big topic to be addressed is whether D21 should plan to remain in the sectional supply business.

Next District Board meeting

As indicated in my comments above, some of this committee work is being done in preparation for the next District Board meeting, another virtual meeting, which will be held on January 9, 2021, what would be the last day of the Monterey Regional if we were having that regional.

For the last two virtual meetings I've requested units to select one of their two representatives/Directors to appear on the unit's behalf so that the Zoom screen isn't filled with 50 faces (up to 42 Directors, four District officers, our District Director, several committee chairs). If both representatives wanted to appear, they were welcome.

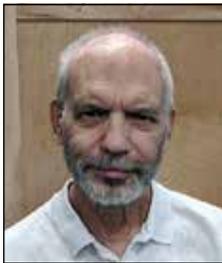
This time all the Directors will be invited, as we'll be considering some

substantive amendments to the Bylaws. It remains to be seen how manageable such a large meeting will be and how long it will take to hear from everyone, because I believe that everyone who wants to speak should be heard. Though we can't meet face-to-face yet, I still think we can make a lot of progress by virtual meetings.

Annual Charity Report

By Jeff Hack, Charity Chair

Every year District 21 allocates \$5,000 to charities. At the May Board meeting the District 21 Board voted to allocate \$6,000 this year. Nominations are accepted between January 1 and July 4 each year. In 2019 the board voted to accept nominations only from units. Individuals who have a charity request need to go to a board and get them to make the nomination request. It doesn't have to be your own unit board.



After watching the news and seeing how many people don't have enough food to eat, our plan this year is to donate to Food Banks and Food Pantries. Most Food Banks are connected through Feeding America even though we donate to each individually. We seem to have a two-tier country right now. The wealthy and the well-off who can invest in stocks are doing great as the stock market approaches all-time highs while those who are near the bottom don't even have food to eat. They wait hours in line to get a free supply of food.

Normally, we announce the selections at the All-Western Board meeting. This year that Board meeting was via Zoom.

This year we wanted to donate to charities that were helping the needy. Many people do not even have food to eat. This year the four charities nominated were selected to each receive \$1,500. All the nominations were for charities that met our criteria and all are long-term charities. They were approved by the Board of Directors at the board meeting in September.

The charities selected and the nominating units were: Richmond Emergency Food Pantry (www.refp.org) (Unit 497); Samaritan House – San Mateo (<https://samaritanhousesanmateo.org>) (Unit 498); Alameda County Community Food Bank (www.accfb.org) (Unit 501); and Community Service Agency of Mt. View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills (www.csacares.org) (Unit 503).

It might appear there is a Bay Area bias, but all the nominations were from units that made their recommendations independently.

Bridge clubs are all closed. Tournaments are canceled. If it wasn't for BBO bridge would be dead. We can't donate to our local clubs but you can support them through BBO.

I know that most players have spent less on bridge this year than budgeted for the year. The Cares Act has a special provision that you can donate up to \$300 and you can deduct this from your income tax even if you take the standard deduction. This would be a good year to take advantage of this provision. Just make sure that it's a 501(c)(3) charity.

RANK ADVANCES

OCTOBER 2020

JUNIOR MASTERS (5 MASTERPOINTS)

John Abbis, Menlo Park CA, 498
Rosemary Bardi, San Mateo CA, 498
Patti Beaulieu, Los Altos CA, 503
Terence Brown, Santa Rosa CA, 509
Barbara Calbert, Woodside CA, 498
Helen Carroll, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Chloe Chow, San Francisco CA, 506
Dave Clark, Sunnyvale CA, 507
Paul Downey, Healdsburg CA, 509
Raleigh Fohrman, Santa Rosa CA, 509
Becky Glikbarg, San Carlos CA, 498
Giulia Guidi, Mountain View CA, 503
Margaret Halliday, Orinda CA, 499
Louis Israels, Modesto CA, 529
Fan Jiao, Morgan Hill CA, 524
John Kobzina, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Ruth Kusnir, Carmel Valley CA, 530
Karen Lapin, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Adrienne Leigh, Burlingame CA, 498
Muhammad Randhawa, Turlock CA, 529
Bruce Stamper, Kentfield CA, 508
Peter Wickens, Alamo CA, 499
Janet Wright, Reno NV, 473
Timothy Zuffi, Walnut Creek CA, 499

CLUB MASTERS (20 MASTERPOINTS)

Shashi Agarwal, Santa Clara CA, 507
Mary Barker, Reno NV, 473
Romy Bauer, San Mateo CA, 498
Fay Bigelow, Half Moon Bay CA, 498
Noreen Blonien, Sacramento CA, 505
Romana Bracco, San Francisco CA, 506
Jerrold Braunstein, Rocklin CA, 505
Edward Bukowski, Sparks NV, 473
Sue Burish, Oakland CA, 502
Chase Dearborn, Palo Alto CA, 503
James Dirgin, Del Rey Oaks CA, 530
Sherry Dittiro, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Chi Ku, San Ramon CA, 499
Martie Lemos, Calistoga CA, 512
Marie Louie, Salinas CA, 530
Deborah Penrose, Half Moon Bay CA, 498
Pamela Pontius, Hillsborough CA, 498
Saul Rapkin, Folsom CA, 505
Robert Shanks, Sacramento CA, 505
Ray Spears, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Margaret Stovall, Stockton CA, 510
Sherri Sugarman, Mill Valley CA, 508
Lewis Tanenbaum, Larkspur CA, 508
Lynne Williams, San Mateo CA, 498
Margaret Wong, Hillsborough CA, 498
Helen Yang, San Ramon CA, 499

SECTIONAL MASTERS

(50 MASTERPOINTS)

Lucy Ballard, Redwood City CA, 498
Rochelle Becker, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Heather Black, Sunnyvale CA, 503
Amy Christen, Portola Valley CA, 498
Joni Conner, Santa Rosa CA, 509
Rosalind Fisher, Carmel CA, 530
Christine Foley, Martinez CA, 499
Mike Friedman, Sunnyvale CA, 507
Sarah Gopher-Stevens, Danville CA, 499
Xinpeng Huang, Foster City CA, 498
Debra Jones, Fremont CA, 500
David Leaver, Los Altos Hills CA, 503
Howard Levitan, Cupertino CA, 507
Patricia Mitchell, Menlo Park CA, 503
Jan Pfiffner, San Jose CA, 507
John Reininga Jr, Healdsburg CA, 509
Pat Silverstein, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Karen St Sure, Greenbrae CA, 508
Kristine Therian, San Francisco CA, 506
Ivan Zlatev, Reno NV, 473

REGIONAL MASTERS

(100 MASTERPOINTS)

Constance Birkie, Mill Valley CA, 508
Georgianna Farren, Larkspur CA, 508
David Freimuth, Martinez CA, 499
Helen Goldberg, Oakland CA, 502
Leslie Golden, Lafayette CA, 499
Thomas Griswold, Oakland CA, 502

Judy Grossman, San Francisco CA, 506
Dana Healy, San Rafael CA, 508
Ann Keag, Fresno CA, 522
Alan Lazar, Sacramento CA, 505
Ralph Lyle, Morgan Hill CA, 524
Edward Marlovits, Walnut Creek CA, 499
George Mayer-Oakes, Shingle Springs CA, 505
Nancy Price, Orinda CA, 499
Vickie Renbarger, Livermore CA, 501
Dennis Rubida, Gilroy CA, 524
Carole Seed, Stockton CA, 510
Gary Sheerer, Los Altos CA, 503
Mary Westin, Lodi CA, 510

NABC MASTERS

(200 MASTERPOINTS)

Maryann Hinden, Palo Alto CA, 503
John McManis, Oakland CA, 502
Andy Shockley, Pleasanton CA, 499
Clive Surfleet, Los Altos CA, 503
Helen Trop-Zell, Incline Village NV, 465
Eli Wismer, Los Altos Hills CA, 503

ADVANCED NABC

MASTERS

(300 MASTERPOINTS)

Gary McCormick, El Dorado Hills CA, 505
Kit Morse, San Mateo CA, 498
John Walker, Santa Cruz CA, 550

LIFE MASTERS

(300/500 MASTERPOINTS)

Christina Kamra, Woodside CA, 498

William Mann, San Carlos CA, 503

Ron Terry, San Jose CA, 503

Allen Samuels, San Jose CA, 507

Mark Sloan, Placerville CA, 505

James Van Ness, Millbrae CA, 498

BRONZE LIFE MASTERS

(500/750 MASTERPOINTS)

Kal Aziz, San Mateo CA, 498

Roger Bohl, Sonoma CA, 512

Mitchell Darnell, Fremont CA, 500

Linda Duchscherer, Castro Valley CA, 500

James Harper, Castro Valley CA, 500

Christina Kamra, Woodside CA, 498

Enid Rubin, Tiburon CA, 508

Patricia Shribbs, Petaluma CA, 509

Julie Burnet, Oakland CA, 502

John Harpootlian, Los Altos Hills CA, 503

Greg Schwemer, Cameron Park CA, 505

GOLD LIFE MASTERS

(2500 MASTERPOINTS)

Fern Herman, San Jose CA, 507

Winnie Jasper, Moraga CA, 499

SILVER LIFE MASTERS

(1000 MASTERPOINTS)

Alan Bostrom, San Francisco CA, 506

Mel Chaplin, Brentwood CA, 499

Gail Gabiati, San Francisco CA, 506

Janet Grove, San Mateo CA, 498

Christy Hartsell, Palo Alto CA, 507

David Levy, San Francisco CA, 506

Connie Lovette, Novato CA, 508

Diana Lowe, Palo Alto CA, 503

Malcolm Mendelson, Moraga CA, 499

May Mok, Walnut Creek CA, 499

Vilas Namjoshi, San Jose CA, 507

Dipak Patel, Redwood City CA, 498

Thomas Quint, Reno NV, 473

SAPPHIRE LIFE MASTER

(3500 MASTERPOINTS)

Evan Evans, Sacramento CA, 505

DIAMOND LIFE MASTER

(5000 MASTERPOINTS)

John Chan, Sacramento CA, 505

NOVEMBER 2020

JUNIOR MASTERS

(5 MASTERPOINTS)

Joan Albers, San Jose CA, 507
Debora Bakhtiari, Burlingame CA, 498
William Ballard, Livermore CA, 501
Anne Barton, Belmont CA, 498
Randall Baum, Hillsborough CA, 498
Carl Blaha, Brentwood CA, 499
Joan Cole, San Mateo CA, 498
Stephen Cotler, Healdsburg CA, 509
Dana Evans, San Rafael CA, 508
Barb Fallon, Hillsborough CA, 498
Vicki Kahn, San Francisco CA, 506
Norman Kulgein, Palo Alto CA, 503
Song-Song Liao, Moraga CA, 499
Pamela Miller, Dublin CA, 500
Gail Murayama, Half Moon Bay CA, 498
Jeffrey Rudsten, Ross CA, 508
Zachary Smentek, Cupertino CA, 507
Stacie Wong, San Mateo CA, 498
Wayne Wright, Livermore CA, 501

CLUB MASTERS

(20 MASTERPOINTS)

Kristin Andersen, San Ramon CA, 499
Katherine Beiers, Santa Cruz CA, 550
Ray Bland, Lafayette CA, 499
Boo Boero, San Rafael CA, 508
Beverly Brockway, Palo Alto CA, 503
Donna Casey, San Francisco CA, 506
Donna Davidson, San Francisco CA, 508
Mary Dean, Sant Cruz CA, 550

Richard Devoe, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Joyce Devore, Markleeville CA, 465
Steve Dinning, Concord CA, 499
Virginia Douglas, Sacramento CA, 505
Amy Drexel, Dublin CA, 500
William Follmer, Reno NV, 473
Miller Geschke, Los Altos CA, 503
Gary Hargrave, Martinez CA, 499
Ravi Krishnamurthy, Santa Clara CA, 503
Melanie Mauldin, San Mateo CA, 498
Prabhat Mishra, Milpitas CA, 507
Jane Ryan, Arinda CA, 499
Joshua Seelig, Berkeley CA, 497
Beverly Stamper, Kentfield CA, 508
Kathy Vita, San Jose CA, 507
Hans Wernetti, San Francisco CA, 506
Robert Williams, Cupertino CA, 507
Nancy Zorfas, Foster City CA, 498
Timothy Zuffi, Walnut Creek CA, 499

SECTIONAL MASTERS

(50 MASTERPOINTS)

Sam Callaway, Pacific Grove CA, 530
Mac Geschwind, Reno NV, 473
Jaime Hamilton, Oakdale CA, 529
Pamela Hoffman, San Rafael CA, 508
Marjory Jong, Livermore CA, 501
Raynard Jong, Livermore CA, 501
Shazia Makhdumi, San Francisco CA, 506
Edward Mein, Lafayette CA, 499
Mark Rudow, Santa Rosa CA, 509
Matthew Therian, San Francisco CA, 506
Mary Warner, Corte Madera CA, 508
Helen Yost, Calistoga CA, 509

REGIONAL MASTERS

(100 MASTERPOINTS)

Haig Agigian, Oakland CA, 502
Debra Bellings-Kee, San Rafael CA, 508
James Chibidakis, Carmel CA, 530
Linnea Cook, Livermore CA, 501
Mike Dotterweich, Burlingame CA, 498
Leslie Engler, Moraga CA, 499
Margaret Garms, Oakland CA, 502
Judy Huckabay, Fremont CA, 503
Betsy Jennings, Carmichael CA, 505
Ernest Johnson, Sacramento CA, 505
Patsy Ludwig, San Francisco CA, 506
Umesh Padval, Menlo Park CA, 498
Francine Pogue, Sutter Creek CA, 505
Martin Silverman, San Rafael CA, 508
Gretchen Wyatt, Atherton CA, 503
Cecelia Zimmerling, Folsom CA, 505

NABC MASTERS

(200 MASTERPOINTS)

Jim Albo, Mill Valley CA, 508
Patricia Albo, Mill Valley CA, 508
Karen Aldridge, Richmond CA, 502
Kathryn Barnard, Redwood City CA, 498
Kirsten Beda, San Francisco CA, 506
Jenny Blaschke, Stanford CA, 503
John Bowman, Placerville CA, 505
Larry Brenden, Lincoln CA, 505
Geri Derby, Palo Alto CA, 503
Marie Ernst, Reno NV, 473
Regina Hartwig, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Max Hinkle, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Amnon Igra, Sacramento CA, 505
David Jamison, San Francisco CA, 506

DIAMOND IN THE RUFF

Robyn Lee, San Mateo CA, 498
J D Lin, Oakland CA, 502
Carolyn Loe, Benicia CA, 512
J Jeffrey Mojcher, Oakland CA, 499
C Vivian Pezzani, Palo Alto CA, 503
Marilyn Press, Menlo Park CA, 503
Amy Salisbury, Atherton CA, 503
Eric Strauss, Portola Valley CA, 503
Julie Wong, Tiburon CA, 508

LIFE MASTERS

(300/500 MASTERPOINTS)

William Bushnell, Sunnyvale CA, 503
Anjan Ghose, Palo Alto CA, 503
Jonathan Kael, Oakland CA, 502
John Mount, Brentwood CA, 499
Clare Smith, Walnut Creek CA, 499
John Stremel, San Jose CA, 507
Carol Swenson, Stanford CA, 503

BRONZE LIFE MASTERS

(500/750 MASTERPOINTS)

Marc Grunseth, Carmichael CA, 505
Valerie Hatton, Los Altos CA, 503
Vera Huelbig, Morgan Hill CA, 507
Jonathan Kael, Oakland CA, 502
Mindy Kane, Livermore CA, 501
Gerard Kapolka, Salinas CA, 530
Peter Krag, San Francisco CA, 506
Kevin Liberg, San Francisco CA, 506
Steven Merritt, Incline Village NV, 465
Coralie Persse, Placerville CA, 505

SILVER LIFE MASTERS

(1000 MASTERPOINTS)

John Fiscalini, Modesto CA, 529
Bradley Haas, Sacramento CA, 505
Michael Kakalec, Morgan Hill CA, 524
Christina Kamra, Woodside CA, 503
Alex Martelli, Sunnyvale CA, 503
Addie Mattox, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Regina Norberg, Cupertino CA, 507
Andrea Ventris, Tiburon CA, 508
Margaret Wilson, Los Altos CA, 503

RUBY LIFE MASTERS

(1500 MASTERPOINTS)

Robert Berger, Berkeley CA, 502
Vivian Betcher, Lincoln CA, 505
Rosemarie Dean, Burlingame CA, 498
Barbara McKay, Alamo CA, 499
Charles Messenger, Salinas CA, 530
Dennis Uthe, Roseville CA, 505

GOLD LIFE MASTERS

(2500 MASTERPOINTS)

Diana Dragt, Gilroy CA, 524
Allan Harris, Hayward CA, 500
Asher Nathan, Santa Rosa CA, 509
Barbara Shukov, Los Altos CA, 503

SAPPHIRE LIFE MASTER

(3500 MASTERPOINTS)

Mary Ose, Incline Village NV, 465

EMERALD LIFE MASTERS

(7500 MASTERPOINTS)

Judi Callaham, Fair Oaks CA, 505
Gerard Laquerriere, Clovis CA, 522

DECEMBER 2020

JUNIOR MASTERS

(5 MASTERPOINTS)

June Bechtel, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Christine Ely, Half Moon Bay CA, 498
Donald Fennell, Pacific Grove CA, 530
Susan Foley, Woodside CA, 498
Toby Higgins, El Dorado Hills CA, 505
Cynthia Hubbard, San Francisco CA, 506
Robert Kahl, Lafayette CA, 499
Tiralisa Kaplow, San Jose CA, 507
Julie Kaufman, Atherton CA, 503
Randi Murray, Burlingame CA, 498
Patricia Neumann, Reno NV, 473
Bonnie Noya, El Dorado Hills CA, 505
Rick Pyle, Danville CA, 499
Paula Robichaud, Carmel CA, 530
Linda Sinclair, Reno NV, 473
Marcia Tolson, Woodland CA, 505

CLUB MASTERS **(20 MASTERPOINTS)**

David Anderson, Half Moon Bay CA, 498
Hallie Beacham, Healdsburg CA, 509
Sylvia Blumenschein, Sacramento CA, 505
Sarah Bouchier, Carmel CA, 530
Leslie Braker, San Mateo CA, 498
Dennis Corburn, Brentwood CA, 499
Kai Eckert, El Granada CA, 498
Susan Fox, San Francisco CA, 506
Shelley Gordon, Sausalito CA, 508
Rita Gupta, Menlo Park CA, 498
Gary Ho, Los Altos CA, 503
Dede Huffman, Los Altos Hills CA, 503
Cynthia Hull, Piedmont CA, 502
Jared Jacobs, Aromas CA, 550
Katie Kenny, Reno NV, 473
Paula Krauss, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Yvonne Lenbergs, Palo Alto CA, 503
Margaret Lockwood, Placerville CA, 505
Sarah Malarkey, San Francisco CA, 506
Debra Martinez, San Mateo CA, 498
Ann Morrison, Fremont CA, 500
William Pade, Menlo Park CA, 498
Richard Pope, Union City CA, 500
Jason Prochaska, Santa Cruz CA, 550
Brian Sloan, Rohnert Park CA, 509
Benjamin Smentek, Cupertino CA, 507
Tracy Solomon, San Rafael CA, 508
Liane Yuen Young, San Jose CA, 507
Nick Zhu, San Jose CA, 507

SECTIONAL MASTERS **(50 MASTERPOINTS)**

Cathy Adams, Danville CA, 499
Betsy Allen, Santa Cruz CA, 550
Robin Baker, Richmond CA, 497
Mary Jane Finch, Los Altos Hills CA, 503
Joe Fuchs, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Jeffrey Gaudio, Modesto CA, 529
Mike Ghosh, Walnut Creek CA, 499
Daniel Granger, Incline Village NV, 465
Feney Matthews, Richmond CA, 497
Mitchell Miller, Reno NV, 473
Joanne Nino, San Francisco CA, 506
Terri Rowe, Brentwood CA, 499
Terry Sciabica, Modesto CA, 529
David Wright, Reno NV, 473

NABC MASTERS **(200 MASTERPOINTS)**

Robert Dubroff, Carmel CA, 530
Marvin Kirchner, San Francisco CA, 506
Carla Shockley, Pleasanton CA, 499

ADVANCED NABC **MASTER** **(300 MASTERPOINTS)**

David Merenbach, Belmont CA, 503

LIFE MASTERS

(300/500 MASTERPOINTS)

Carolyn Drozdiak, Los Gatos CA, 507

Brian Zhang, Dublin CA, 501

Thomas Pajak, Oakland CA, 502

Donald Parsons, Reno NV, 473

Rajeeva Sharma, San Jose CA, 507

Krishnan Thondukolam, San Ramon CA,
499

Alan Williams, Pleasanton CA, 501

Brenna Wundram, Los Gatos CA, 507

BRONZE LIFE MASTERS

(500/750 MASTERPOINTS)

Rose Bauer, Hillsborough CA, 498

Cornelia Gould, Indian Wells CA, 465

William Mitchell, Lodi CA, 510

Diane Simpson, Bethel Island CA, 499

David Wong, Palo Alto CA, 503

GOLD LIFE MASTER

(2500 MASTERPOINTS)

Barbara Fendel, Walnut Creek CA, 499

SILVER LIFE MASTERS

(1000 MASTERPOINTS)

Robert Allen, San Jose CA, 507

James Coke, Shingle Springs CA, 505

Rita Rubinfeld, Portola Valley CA, 503

Cecilia Valdivieso, San Francisco CA, 506

SAPPHIRE LIFE MASTERS

(3500 MASTERPOINTS)

Mick Friedberg, Aptos CA, 550

Carl Oeser, Roseville CA, 505

Mark Peterson, Larkspur CA, 508

Joanne Wegsten, Napa CA, 512

RUBY LIFE MASTERS

(1500 MASTERPOINTS)

Lois Flock, Oakland CA, 502

Douglas Grant, San Francisco CA, 506

Philip Leung, Dublin CA, 502

Zelna Morrow, Lincoln CA, 505

EMERALD LIFE MASTER

(7500 MASTERPOINTS)

Ravi Bhalla, Berkeley CA, 502



DISTRICT
21-22-23

99er NiteClub

The California 99er NiteClub

A dedicated game for 99ers where you and your partner can play safely
and have fun

12-board ACBL Virtual Games, awarding Masterpoints®
Mondays-Thursdays at 6:30PM PT

Followed by post game analysis on [Zoom](#), hosted by our districts' finest teachers

Prerequisites:

Participants must have less than 100MPs
Participants must have played in at least one virtual game on BBO
Participants belong to a club that has opted into the 99er NiteClub program*

Registration:

Between 4:30PM and 6:15PM, log into BBO
Select "Competitive" under "Play or Watch Bridge"
Select "ACBL Virtual Clubs" under "Tournaments"
Search for VACB905265 "California 99er NiteClub"

If the ACBL has your email on file, you will also receive an invite on
those days your club has opted into this program, including the schedule for the day
plus links to previous day's program

\$6 entry fee – a portion of the proceeds will be returned to the clubs.

Proudly sponsored as a service to our 99ers by Districts 21/22/23 and Unit 526

For more information, please contact your home club
or the 99er NiteClub at 99erNiteClub@gmail.com

* Some players may not be affiliated with a local club – as "free agents," you will be vetted by the club manager when you register

HEART OF THE DISTRICT

CLICK ON THE LINK TO GO TO THAT PAGE

Area	Unit	Columnist
<u>Diablo Valley</u>	<u>499</u>	<u>Lisa Assoni</u>
<u>East Bay</u>	<u>502</u>	<u>Marcia Wasserman</u>
<u>Fresno</u>	<u>522</u>	<u>Laura Da Costa</u>
<u>Livermore Valley</u>	<u>501</u>	<u>Rosemarie LaFrancesca</u>
<u>Marin</u>	<u>508</u>	<u>Gail Haar</u>
<u>Monterey</u>	<u>530</u>	<u>Mary Block</u>
<u>Napa/Solano/Sonoma Valley</u>	<u>512</u>	<u>Tom Sheahan</u>
<u>Palo Alto</u>	<u>503</u>	<u>Judi Gentry</u>
<u>San Mateo</u>	<u>498</u>	<u>Fran Gaura</u>
<u>Santa Cruz</u>	<u>550</u>	<u>Karen Schamberg</u>
<u>Santa Rosa/Petaluma</u>	<u>509</u>	<u>Cecelia Zachar</u>
<u>Silicon Valley</u>	<u>507</u>	<u>Ray Yuenger</u>
<u>Stockton</u>	<u>510</u>	<u>Debbie DeZarn</u>

Diablo Valley

By Lisa Assoni/*The ShortCut Cook*

Christmas, Christmas, Christmas cheer, and maybe you'll even see Santa's Reindeer. December 25 is the special day for many. I'll bet there are folks out there who would love to play bridge on Christmas day. Many religions celebrate in different ways. The modern Santa Claus grew out of traditions surrounding the historical Saint Nicholas (a fourth-century Greek Bishop and gift-giver of Myra).



Well this year, there may be not much Cheer. Personally, the high expectations that this season brings make a lot of folks unhappy and sad - even before the Corona Virus. Expecting days full of good cheer, some are disappointed, while others may shed tears. Some have no family, friends who are busy, and some never receive any gifts. So it's time to plan and share your talent with others. We all have something special we can do. Dig deep, and you'll find it too.

Different cultures celebrate this day with different names. However, each one's focus is on sharing, giving and caring.

KISS, Keep it Simple Stupid. Who knew that phrase would take on a special meaning for this season. Order in, order out, but without a doubt, and be kind to yourself and others. No singing the holiday blues, because it will just emphasize there may be more to lose.

Bridge on-line has helped many of us feel connected to others. Are you playing? If you need assistance, you can call a Board Member and ask for help. If you win or lose, please don't fret or get upset. For me, I haven't been keeping my butter knife sharpened, and this dull blade is often smeared to the bottom of the heap. I know that my coming in last made someone else take first. Hard to swallow, but remember, you're not alone if you engage in the game of bridge. Spirits will lift, holidays will pass, and you can count your blessings. Each December 31, I make a joy column of events that etched my soul with happiness. This year, I'm really having to scrape the bottom of the pan.

This time last year, Andy Fine once again made the newsletter dicey. As host of the Tunnel Tournament held in Oakland, we fought a good fight, but were knocked-out by a mere few points. That leaves the desired Plaque still hanging on the Oakland walls, and maybe next year, we'll be certain to cook their goose.

Please don't wait to play on-line Bridge. You'll feel better and your brain will thank you. Let's try and keep our minds in good shape, and our bodies—Oh My. Too much pie!

Take care, Lisa

Sidenote: I have a website shortcutcook.com. It's sharing fun, fast, and healthy recipes. It was designed just for this terrible pandemic.

East Bay

By Marcia Wasserman

Well, not a lot is happening in the in-person bridge world, but a lot is happening in our virtual world.



There are club games every day except Saturday. Open games are Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday at 1:30, Tuesday at 10:30. 299er games are Friday and Sunday at 10:00, Tuesday at 11:00 and Tuesday evening at 6:45 pm. For the Tuesday evening game there is a pre-game lesson on Zoom at 6:00. Go to the EBCBC website for the link to the class. The Thursday game is a 999er at 1:30. The Thursday game is relatively new and has not gotten a lot of traction yet, but there are a lot of 999ers out there so come join the game so we can keep it going. Finally, there are also virtual club games on Monday and Thursday evenings at 7:10.

Congratulations to new Club Master Sue Burish, new Regional Masters Helen Goldberg and Tom Griswold, new NABC Master John McManis, new Bronze Life Master JJ Kael, and new Ruby Life Masters Bob Berger and Julie Burnet. JJ Kael managed to make Life Master and Bronze Life Master at the same time. Great job all!

ALERT!!!! One of our players contacted us to ask why she was being charged more than \$10 (\$14.99) to buy BB\$. If you are having this same issue, **KNOW** that this is not correct. Make sure that you are buying them on the BBO site directly. There is never a surcharge added on to your purchase.

Many of you have asked how our friends the Denyvens are doing these days. For those of you who don't know the Denyvens, they are veterans of World War II and were regulars at our club games. Wouldn't it be great if all married couples got along at the bridge table as well as they do? Andy Wasserman visited them on Veterans Day and took a wonderful photo of them. He brought them their favorite meal - Carl's Jr. Bacon Cheeseburger. For those of you who know Andy, the fact that he brought them something with bacon in it is a true tribute to the level of respect they deserve. Thanks, Andy, and David and Joyce, you are looking fabulous!!!



Burch and Patsy Fitzpatrick

Burch Fitzpatrick, a long-time unit member, died on November 3rd in the house in which he was born. One of his last acts was to vote in the Presidential election. He was from a family of duplicate players. He is survived by his wife, Patsy, another great duplicate player.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Having plans sounds like a good idea until you have to put on clothes and leave the house.

2. It is weird being the same age as old people.

3. When I was a kid I wanted to be older...this is not what I expected.

4. It is probably my age that tricks people into thinking I'm an adult.

5. During the middle ages they celebrated the end of the plague with wine and orgies. Does anyone know if there is anything planned when this one ends?

6. If 2020 was a math word-problem: If you're going down a river at 2 MPH and your canoe loses a wheel, how much pancake mix would you need to re-shingle your roof?

7. I see people about my age mountain climbing; I feel good getting my leg through my underwear without losing my balance.

8. We can all agree that in 2015 not a single person got the answer correct to, 'Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?'

9. So if a cow doesn't produce milk, is it a milk dud or an udder failure?

10. If you can't think of a word say "I forgot the English word for it." That way people will think you're bilingual instead of an idiot.

11. I'm at a place in my life where errands are starting to count as going out.

12. Don't be worried about your smartphone or TV spying on you. Your vacuum cleaner has been collecting dirt on you for years.

13. I'm getting tired of being part of a major historical event.

14. I don't always go the extra mile, but when I do it's because I missed my exit.

15. You don't realize how old you are until you sit on the floor and then try to get back up.

16. We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

If you liked this article, I wrote it, if you don't like it Sandi Davis wrote 99% of it. Thanks so much Sandi for letting me plagiarize your article. It takes a village.

STAY SAFE!

Fresno

By Laura Da Costa

Hello Everyone!

Hope all of you are well. It is strange that it has been nearly 9 months since we were last together. Very strange for me, as I have not even played during those 9 months.

A few months have gone by since I wrote last, but not much new to report. We are still in shutdown mode, the clubhouse is still packed up and stored, and we are still dealing with the ending of the lease.

The only other news involves our mandatory election each year. You should be receiving a ballot soon (if you haven't already). We are downsizing the board, so only 3 positions to fill with 6 names on the ballot. There is also a survey to get a feel of how many players intend to come back to in-person play when it is safe to do so. Please vote when the time comes.

The Board had a meeting and elected new officers to finish out the year. Don Austin is now President, Marion Austin will take on the Treasurer position (she was already our bookkeeper), I (Laura Da Costa) will remain as Vice President, and Kay Chrisman as Secretary.

Thanks to Mary Lou Pease who is retiring from the Board. Her work on recruitment and education has been invaluable since she joined the Board in January of 2013. Mary Lou, we will miss your abundant ideas, enthusiasm for recruitment, and wonderful experience that you provided all these years.

In other news, members are still advancing in rank through Online play. This month we congratulate Gerard Laquerriere who is now an Emerald Life Master (7500 mps)!

A reminder that www.fresnobridge.com is now our website. We will be working on updating this site to better meet the needs of the club.

Livermore Valley

By Rosemarie LaFrancesca

As we enter yet another month of sheltering in place, it is comforting to know that bridge is alive and well. The club has twice weekly games via BBO, and Paul Dubois has a weekly Zoom lesson.

Members are earning points and advancing up the ACBL ladder. A special congratulation to Allan Harris on achieving the rank of Gold Life Master, and to Ameen Paul on achieving the rank of Ruby Life Master.

We hope all had a safe Thanksgiving holiday. May you have many great bridge games in this Holiday Season.

Marin

By Gail Haar

In the spirit of the holidays, I share the following, written by a former Bridge instructor on the Royal Viking Sky.



‘Twas the night before Christmas,
Two guests in our house
Had started to play Bridge
With me and my spouse
“Please tell me,” she shouted,
Why didn’t you double?
‘Twas plain from the start
That we had them in trouble.
“’Tis futile, my dear,”
Said I, taking no stand,
“To discuss it with you-
Let us play the next hand.”

“Remember next time,”
Said she, icing a frown,
“To double a contract
That’s sure to go down.”
So I picked up my cards
In a downtrodden state,
Then I opened One Spade
And awaited my fate.
The guy sitting South
Was like many I’ve known;
He played and he bid
In a world all his own.

“Two Diamonds,” he countered
With scarcely a care;
The ace in his hand
Gave him courage to spare.
My wife, she smiled faintly,
And tossing her head,
Leaned over the table,
“I double,” she said.
And North, for some reason
I cannot determine,
Bid Two Hearts as though
He were preaching a sermon.

I grinned as I doubled,
Enjoying the fun,
And turned round to South
To see where he would run.
But South, undistressed,
Not at loss for a word
Came forth with Two Spades
Did I hear what I heard?
The other two passed
And in sheer disbelief
I said, “Double, my friend,
That’ll bring you to grief.”

South passed with a nod,
His composure serene;
My wife with a flourish
Led out the heart queen.
I sat there and chuckled
Inside o’er the fix-
But South very calmly
Ran off eight straight tricks!
He ruffed the first heart
In his hand right away,
And then trumped a club
On the very next play,

He crossruffed the hand
At a breathtaking pace
Till I was left holding
Five spades to the ace.
In anguish my wife cried,
“Your mind’s growing old,
Don’t you see six notrump
In this hand is ice cold?”
By doubling this time
I’d committed a sin,
It just goes to prove
That you never can win.

A big virtual welcome to our new members: Steven Masters, Michael Anderson, Teresa Crosbie and Brogan Duffy. I’m sure I speak for us all when I say we can’t wait for the day when we can meet you at the table.

If you haven’t done so yet, go to marinbridge.com and check out the steadily increasing information about our Unit’s BBO Virtual Club games. There’s also an excellent FAQ that is updated frequently with input from our members. If you are still hesitant about on-line bridge and are looking for a mentor to help you through the process, please contact Don Tusel at marinbridge.mentoring@sonic.net. We have mentors ready and eager to assist players at all levels to get comfortable in this new-to-many-of-us environment.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Monterey

By Mary Block

It has been a while since this publication has landed in your mailbox, and it will continue to be published only quarterly for the foreseeable future. Hope you are all well and staying safe.

The unit welcomes the following new members: Donald Fennell, Joan Aldrich, and Sandra Berris. Patricia Barr, Francene Tabak, and Anthony Miziko have transferred into our unit from other units.

Rank changes within the last three months have been reported: Eleonore Gutierrez, Karol Matheson, Russel Planitzer, Archie Robinson, Deanna Woodhour, and Ruth Kunsir are new Junior Masters. James Dirgin, Marie Louie, and Lynne Weatherman are Club Masters. Mano Singham, Rosalind Fisher, and Sam Callaway are Sectional Masters. (Personal note: When I became a Sectional Master and proudly shared that achievement with a non-bridge playing friend, her comment was “Does that mean you wrangle sofas?”) Kelly O’Keefe, Fran Soskins, and Jim Chibidakis have reached Regional Master. Gerry Kapolka is a Bronze Life Master, and Chuck Messenger is a Ruby Life Master. Sharon Larson is a Silver Life Master. Congratulations to all and keep on earning points.

Our Unit now has Virtual BBO games every day of the week. The schedule is posted on the unit website at the address at the end of this article. Thanks to Joe

Truskot who is our new webmaster and will be keeping the site current. You should all check the site out on a regular basis because that is the way we will be communicating for the time being.

Details are still to be worked out for a Holiday Event, a Zoom party to be held following the virtual game on Saturday, December 12 at 10:15 a.m. Watch your mailbox and check the website.

While we miss face to face bridge, this is a good time to take advantage of what BBO has to offer for a learning experience. While playing, make notes of hands about which you are curious, either the bidding or the play. You can go back to the hand and review everything from the bidding to the opening lead, even watch the play of the hand as if you are watching a movie. And watch not just your own hand, but how that infuriating pair at another table made overtricks, or set the declarer, doubled. Hetty Eddy has been giving lessons using the teaching table function. Many of us are taking advantage of free casual bridge to play with friends and try out new systems and partnership agreements. I have been doing this while on the phone in conference calls so we can discuss what we are doing. Or politics.

Again, stay safe and healthy and Zoom into the holidays.

We are www.montereybridgeclub.com. The Bridge Center is [831-747-1650](tel:831-747-1650). I am maru0407@comcast.net. The Foundation is <http://montereybridgeeducation.org>.

Napa/Solano/Sonoma

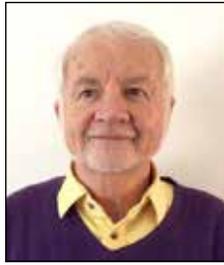
By Tom Sheahan

Hello to everyone. It feels like years since we've all seen each other and we all really miss each other. Once in awhile, we'll see someone from the unit we haven't seen in 9 months and it's like old home week. It's really great to see them and it usually results in long conversations about what we're all doing. Let's hope the vaccine arrives soon and we can all be together again. It's been too long, but in the meantime, stay safe. This virus can hit anyone at any time and it can be nasty especially to people in our age bracket.

The news is not good. Marilyn Edwardes recently passed away after some health issues. We always enjoyed being with Marilyn as she was one of the really nice people in our unit. She started playing about the same time we did and we enjoyed her company for many years. She will be greatly missed.

We did have some players reach milestones during these trying times. Congratulations go out to Theila Smith who reached 2000 points and to Renate Bialy and Roger Bohl who became Bronze Life Masters by picking up their 500th points. Well done by all!

Have a Happy Holidays! It sure won't be the same as usual, but keep the faith that we'll all be seeing each other soon.



Palo Alto

By Judi Gentry

Hi Bridge Friends: It has been 9 months since our Board of Directors and club owners closed our club facility in an effort to keep all of us safe and healthy. During the months that have ensued, bridge on line, particularly BBO, has been one of the things that has kept most of us sane! I have talked with several members who say that they don't know what they would do without the opportunity to play bridge most days! For those of you who miss the cheery environment of our local club and seeing all your friends, here's a picture (worth a thousand words).



If the picture doesn't do it for you, an even better opportunity to reconnect with friends is coming up. On Sunday, December 13, we will be holding our Annual Holiday Party and Bridge Game. Details haven't been finalized, but here is what I can tell you: The game will be played from 1:00-

3:00 on BBO. Before and after bridge there will be festivities for all using Zoom. Watch for an email with more information.

In the meantime, it is clear that many of you are enjoying a robust bridge life. Members continue to achieve new ACBL rankings. Following are advancements from the past couple of months. Congratulations to all of you on your recent successes. Junior Master: Norman Kulgein, Patti Beaulieu, Giulia Guidi; Club Master: Beverly Brockway, Miller Geschke, Ravi Krishnamurthy, Chase Dearborn; Sectional Master: Heather Black, David Leaver, Patricia Mitchell; Regional Master: Judy Huckabay, Gretchen Wyatt, Gary Sheerer; NABC Master: Jenny Blaschke, Geri Derby, Vivian Pezzani, Marilyn Press, Amy Salisbury, Eric Strauss, Maryann Hinden, Clive Surfleet, Eli Wismer; Life Master: Bill Bushnell, Anjan Ghose, Carol Swenson, Bill Mann, Ron Terry; Bronze Life Master: (500 master points) Valerie Hatton; Silver Life Master (1000 master points): Christina Kamra, Alex Martelli, Margaret Wilson, Diana Lowe; Ruby Life Master (1500 master points): John Harpootlian; Gold Life Master (2500 master points): Barbara Shukov.

Another way you can keep up on activities of your club is following us on Facebook. The Palo Alto Bridge Facebook Group now has 152 members and growing. It is a private group, for regular players only. It is easy to join. There is a link on our website. When you click on it there

will be a delay (up to 24 hours) while they ascertain that you are a member (this protects all of us from “trolls”).

In November, we held elections of new board officers for 2021. They will take their places starting in January. The new board members are David Merenbach, Jon Rayden, Stephanie Youngquist, and John Schwartz (serving a second term). A million thanks to the departing board members: Susan Zhang, Carl Baeuerlen, and Don Cohn, for your service to PA Bridge. It takes wonderful volunteers like you to keep this organization going. And while I’m at it, much gratitude to current and continuing board members: Geraldine MacDonald, Charlene Friedman, Marc Cervellino, Shakar Iyer, and Dan Thatte. It is their job to keep us connected, make sure we can meet our financial obligations, maintain our facility for future use and develop plans for the coming year, including special games and tournaments when those become possible. While we’re busy playing online, the board is making sure we have a club to which we can return. This is a reminder to support our club by playing in Palo Alto Bridge Virtual Club games.

We have so much for which to be thankful. We are looking forward to a return to normal activity sometime next year. Please do what you can to stay healthy. I’m looking forward to seeing you in 2021.

Judi

San Mateo

By Fran Gaura

As the year draws to a close we reflect on the turbulence we have all experienced in 2020. Most of us will be happy to bid the year adieu and look more optimistically toward 2021. The promise of a vaccine and a possible return to “normalcy” is tantalizing. But how will normalcy be defined? Will our bridge clubs return to their face-to-face configuration? Some folks say they are no longer interested in making the trek to the nearest club and sitting across the card table from their partner and opponents. Others are anxious to return to that more sociable atmosphere and miss the conviviality our clubs offer.

There is no doubt that the opportunity to play bridge on the BBO site and to do so virtually any time day or night has been marvelous. We are fortunate that this avenue is open to us and we are appreciative. We are also grateful to our directors for managing our clubs adeptly on this new platform.

We also reflect on the fact that many have lost friends and family to the scourge of COVID-19 as well as of death from other causes. That sorrow cannot be overstated. One such loss for Unit 498 was that of Ted Richmond, long a fixture in our bridge environment. Teacher, mentor, partner and opponent, Ted loved the game and shared his experience with others most willingly. He will be missed.

Looking ahead, we continue to find ways to keep our bridge world growing and perhaps the most energetic efforts in this

regard are being made by director Jennifer Kuhn. Jennifer is engaged in getting new players started, enthused and interested in competitive play. She offers beginning bridge classes, directs monthly Mentor/Mentee games and directs 49er games to acclimate new players to the game. Check her website www.peninsuladbc.com.

In a similar vein, but aiming at a more established playing audience, Raad Bunni offers weekly Open Games and classes on Tuesdays and Fridays. He has also opened a game on Mondays for mid level players at the 299er level. His website, www.sanmateobridgecenter.com is full of learning opportunities, from class material to quizzes and more information for advancing players.

For more experienced players, Gabi Bowling directs an Open Game Monday through Saturday and a 499er game on Wednesday and Friday. Robert Ng directs an invitational game at his Chinese American club on Monday evenings. Information on all these opportunities is available on our website, www.unit498.com. This is a period of rapid change with virtual games and lessons being offered on-line and revisions to schedules popping up often, so be sure to frequently check the website to get all the up to date info.

Congratulations to players advancing over the past months: to Junior Master, John Abbis, Rosemary Bardi, Barbara Calbert, Becky Glikbarg, Adrienne Leigh, Debora Bakhtiari, Anne Barton, Randall Baum, Joan Cole, Barb Fallon, Gail Murayama, and Stacie Wong; to Club Master, Romy Bauer, Fay Bigelow, Deborah Penrose,

Pamela Pontius, Lynne Williams, Margaret Wong, Melanie Mauldin, Nancy Zorfas; to Regional Master, Mike Dotterwich and Umesh Padval; to Sectional Master, Lucy Ballard, Amy Christen and Xinpeng Huang; to Advanced NABC Master, Kit Morse, Kathryn Barnard, Robyn Lee; to Life Master, Christina Kamra; to Bronze Life Master, Kal Aziz and Christina Kamra; to Silver Life Master, Janet Grove, Dipak Patel and James Van Ness; to Ruby Life Master, Rosemarie Dean.

Stay safe and keep your “social distance” and wear that smile (behind your mask, of course). Wishing you and your families the happiest of holidays and a wonderful New Year.

Santa Cruz

By Karen Schamberg

In the past (pre Covid years), Unit 550 has held its Holiday Party and Annual Meeting in December. This year, the meeting will be virtual and conducted at 10 am on Saturday, December 12th via Zoom. Unit 550 members have received an emailed link and invitation. If you join the meeting, it will be a chance to meet the 2021/22 Board of Directors, recognize members who have had significant achievements in the past year, and hear the unit’s Covid plans.



The two vClub games following the Annual Meeting are for Unit 550 members and at a reduced rate. One game will be

an Open Game and the other a 299er. Use the BBO Partnership Desk if you need a partner.

From mid-August through mid-November, high scores in vClub games were earned by: Gail Matthews & Jill Davidson, 70%; Alan Johnson & Ken Johnson, 70%; Dana Brown & Diane Shannon, 70.56%; Stu Goodgold & Mansoor Gowani, 70.24%; Carol Avenmarg & Angie Millslagle, 70.14%; Mark Wainer & Ken Llacera, 71.03%; Dick Wasserstrom & Rick Zinman, 71.11%; Betsy Allen & Michael Kerner, 71.3%; Lynn Yokel & Lynn Shannon, 72.22%; and Renee Flint & Janet Loops, 73.61%.

In addition, congratulations to the following folks for reaching Milestones from August through October: Advanced NABC Master, John Walker; NABC Master, Angie Millslagle; Sectional Master, Hemant Vaidya; Club Masters, Kathy Beiers, Mary Dean, Richard Hamlin and Albert Low; and Junior Master, Joani Mitchell.

Welcome to new members of Unit 550: Gerald Kibbey and Jane Ellingsen. Hope to meet you in person one day.

Unit 550 offers vClub games 7 days each week. Many of the games are Open while there are also games for 199ers, 749ers, and Mentor/Mentee games. Most games don’t allow robots, but there are several that do. The Game Calendar on our website lists all games and requirements.

There are now InterDistrict 99er Evening Games. Unit 550 has authorized our members for Mondays and Wednesday evenings. After each game, there’s a free

Zoom session where experienced players answer questions about the bidding and play of the hands. For more information, follow the link on our website home page.

Ken Llacera is offering his Play & Defend class on Mondays at 9:30 a.m. beginning Dec 7. Contact Ken via email to join this 10-session class.

Check the unit website often for updates and club news as it is our lifeline to bridge: www.santacruzbridge.org.

Santa Rosa/Petaluma

By Cecelia Zachar

What a challenging year! No use complaining. We've all made do, and we've some unexpected accomplishments. Most of us have learned to Zoom. Many of us have learned to BBO. Those of us who play bridge with robots have learned to appreciate partners who don't take us into a 5 card fit at the 5 level after we doubled 4S (yes, it can happen). Those of us who play with robots have found the joy (and frustration) of declaring 16 hands in an hour. Another plus, in tournaments we can easily watch a hand be replayed, to learn why someone else made one trick more than we did on a hand or how another pair got to slam on a hand we couldn't quite bid that high.

Having taught for a few years in a past life, I've taken particular interest in all the new bridge teachers. Last year there were classes at your local bridge club and perhaps an expert came to town and taught a class or two. Now opportunities abound.

Some classes you take at midnight in your pajamas, playing hands and then reading the commentary of a world champion. Other classes are live using Zoom or other tools for a virtual classroom. It's a great time to improve your game. Of course we miss our friends.

In the Wine Country, we've had to cancel our Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 sectionals. We're hoping to have our Fall 2021 sectional in Petaluma. We'll let everyone know the details next summer.

We also had to cancel our Holiday Party which is quite a shame. It's always excellent. The atmosphere brings out the best in our players. We usually hold our Annual Meeting at the Holiday Party. This year, we will have it on December 6 using Zoom. We'll be voting on 3 candidates for the board: Harley Conner (for his second term), Stephanie Poley, and Bill Walton.

Since my last article for this newsletter, we have had 8 big Virtual Club games: Helen Yost and Ann Schneider scored 73.02 on August 22; John and Patty Shribbs, 70.19 on September 3; Bruce Nissim and Peter Sager scored 75.69%, October 2; Robert Goetzinger and Lawson James, 70.74%, October 24; Linda Williamson and Michele Stephens, 70.37%, October 26; Bob Klein and Asher Nathan, 70%, November 1; Paul Downey and Hallie Beacham, 70.83%, November 9; and Kim Fusch and Harley Conner, 70%, November 16.

In other BBO games, Lynn Blumenthal and Jackie Ortiz scored 71.2% to come in 1st overall of 282 pairs on September 27; Bob Klein and Abbe Cohen scored 73.25%, 1st out of 36 pairs, in a Speedball game

on October 3; Hans Van Boldrik and Roy Redlich came in 1st out of 282 pairs in an IMPS game on October 22; Mark Hersko and Jackie Ortiz scored 70.48% for a 4th place out of 342 pairs on November 14; and Mark Hersko (again??!!) and Debbie Tesler scored 70.48% for a 4th place out of 342 pairs on November 15.

Many of our players move up in rank. Our new Junior Masters are Terence Brown, Paul Downey, Raleigh Fohrman, and Stephen Cotler; new Sectional Masters are Herschel Cozine, Carlene Reininga, Catherine Shanahan, Joni S Conner, John H Reininga Jr., Mark Rudow and Helen Yost; Roy Redlich and Patricia K Shribbs are our new Bronze Life Masters; Asher Nathan is our newest Gold Life Master; Kathy Venton is our new Sapphire Life Master. Congratulations all.

Have a happy holiday season, and stay safe.

Silicon Valley

By Ray Yuenger

I've had a rare three-month hiatus since my last Unit 507 ("U507") column for the September newsletter because the newsletter's publication schedule was changed at the September 2020 Board of Directors meeting to quarterly. I don't recall having such a long break since I started writing this column near the end of 1999. Someone who doesn't know me might think that with three months to



compose an article, I wouldn't miss my deadline. That someone would be wrong.

Let's look back and see what's been happening in the U507 bridge scene in the past few months. I'd have to say it looks like some good news and some bad news. In the bad news column, the San Jose Bridge Center lately has not been thriving online. At the beginning of the lockdown in March 2020, it seemed many players were learning the ropes on Bridge Base Online and showing up to play in our local virtual club. Directors could hold games without traveling to the club to make boards. Shorter games, 18 boards instead of 24 to 27, meant that more games could be offered. I found myself playing five games some weeks instead of my usual average of 1.5 games a week face-to-face ("F2F").

Where have all those new online players gone? Did the novelty of playing online wear off? Have players with a yen to play at lot succumbed to the lure of the \$1.75 games instead of the more expensive virtual club games? Have players found their way into other virtual clubs with larger attendance and therefore more masterpoints available? Have players been unpleasantly surprised by their partner's declaring ability with the opportunity as dummy to watch both hands? Maybe a combination of the above.

I know I tried to stay loyal to our club and play in a regular Wednesday morning open game (with the proceeds going to our directors), but from week to week we wouldn't get the minimum table count needed, and my partner and I had to scramble to find another game. The open

game eventually folded. I'm not trying to hold myself out as a paragon. One of my other partners regularly plays three or four games a day and can't afford to play in local clubs all the time, so I've agreed to a regular \$1.75 game at a time when we could play in a local club for black points. I suspect some other partnerships have gone in the same directions. So the San Jose Bridge Center is offering less than one daily game now, and the Friday evening game is succeeding because it's a joint effort or pool with the Santa Cruz club.

However, it does appear that unit members are finding places to play online, even if not in our virtual club, because they keep advancing through the masterpoint ranks. Congratulations to our unit's newest Masters, three months' worth: Joan Albers, Inderjit Aulakh, Beth Clark, Dave Clark, Zachary Smentek (Junior); Shashi Agarwal, Edward Leung, Prabhat Mishra, Kathy Vita, Robert Williams (Club); Mike Friedman, Howard Levitan, Jan Pffiffner (Sectional); Bharat Kamdar, Shirley Shi (Regional); Jiang Chen, Judith Corney, John Stremel, Anne Wilson (Life); Jiang Chen, Vera Huelbig, Anne Wilson (Bronze); Christy Hartsell, Vilas Namjoshi, Regina Norberg, Allen Samuels (Silver); Fern Herman, Subramania Krishnamurthi (Gold).

Our unit members have also had success during the ACBL's online regionals. Our District 21 webmaster has created an easy way to find out how well the members of a unit performed during a regional. 15 individuals are listed at this [link](#) as placing in the "Virtual Vacation" regional from

August 27 through 30. 15 individuals are listed at this [link](#) as placing in the "Fall Into Bridge" regional from October 15 through 18.

I haven't usually reported on regional side pairs results in live tournaments, but F2F side pairs games don't usually feature 65 tables. In such a session, Frank Xie & Luen-Jyh Luo were first overall in the "Fall" regional. Earlier the same day, Mike Friedman & Gerald Hewitt Jr. placed first overall in a 70-table 499er pair game. Later in the same tournament, Ruth Mohanram & Dave Clark had stratification tops in two 99er games.

The Unit Board keeps holding monthly meetings online via Zoom. As we aren't holding sectionals or any special unit games, there is much less to plan. We finally faced the fact that there will be no holiday party/potluck dinner/unit game this year. Because the By-laws call for an annual membership meeting, we did what we could this stay-home year. Our President, Stu Goodgold, sent an email inviting the unit members to attend a virtual meeting concurrent with our regular October Unit Board meeting. It was nice to see that three members turned up, a little short of the quorum of 95 (15% of the total membership) we needed to do business, but there was no membership business to do.

In the bad news column, I regret to report the passing of Karen Rice. It was not COVID-19, if you are wondering. She was perpetually friendly and greeted me and others with a smile and a hello.

As Executive Editor of the newsletter, I already announced the new publication

schedule by email, but I'll remind my readers here. Because of when the publication schedule was changed, I determined that a December issue should follow our last issue in September this year, but starting next year, the schedule will start in January and then every three months after that. The January issue will probably be delayed from the first of the month routine so that we can report on the meeting of the District 21 Board of Directors on January 9.

The doctors say this isn't the best time to be traveling to socialize with friends and relatives, so it will be an odd holiday season to end a very odd year. Please take care of yourselves.

Stockton

By Debbie DeZarn

Welcome back to our Newsletter which is now Quarterly rather than Monthly. Still looks like our clubs won't be open for many more months but if we all get vaccinated when the new vaccines are available we can play together sooner!



Starting with the good news--Rank Achievements! Carole Seed and Mary Westin reached Regional Master in August, just days after the deadline for the last issue. They are well on their way to NABC Master (200) as they play and win multiple times a week in the Sacramento Virtual Club games. Bill Mitchell has also been earning lots of points online and is now a Bronze Life Master. Within the next

few weeks there are several others who are SO close to next rank that for sure they will be celebrated in the next DITR. Kudos to Ann and Bill Nutting for a first place finish in the August 27 Virtual Vacation online Regional Morning Top-Flight Pairs.

Personal news and health updates have come my way. Sharon McDougall (Rio Vista) is doing well and in remission. She and Lois Brusen still play bridge online and each adopted a kitten recently. As they share a "bubble" they get together to have kitty playdates. Joyce Cates has stable platelets and feels well but is still careful about being exposed to other people. She has been doing well playing in Sacramento games and also the "express games" on BBO. Maria Uriz enjoys playing on BBO and is hangin' in there. Shirley Burns is feeling well enough that her dialysis has been reduced from 3 times a week to just two. She and Mike don't play online but do play cards with friends in their "bubble".

Lorna Crooks celebrated a milestone birthday in November. Shirley Womack, Lynette Foppiano, and Wendy Buchanan are taking horseback riding lessons. All have ridden before but are tuning up their skills and having a ball in the fresh air. Marilyn Rickard hasn't played bridge in ages but has engaged in many other activities such as Norwegian language lessons! Usha Bansal has been accepting substitute teaching positions when they don't interfere with her regular BBO games. Doris Ashcroft also got a new kitty. She and Joe have done dozens of jigsaw puzzles since staying at home and baked lots of pies over the summer with the bounty from the

many fruit trees in their yard. Rounding out pet news, Debbie Greenberg brought home their puppy, Buddy, at the beginning of November. She says it is exhausting like caring for a hyperactive toddler.

To more serious business, our unit continues to have income below the holding costs of the Club. If 40 people would play in a Support Your Club game at least once a week it would help tremendously. One of the SYC games offered doesn't

require a partner and can be played at your convenience. Thank you to those 8-10 of you who already play 2 or 3 times a week in those games--it is our sole source of income. I will close with the sad news that both Cissy Hilken and Barbara Smart lost their husbands to long illnesses on November 11. Both women have the love and support of their Stockton bridge friends.

**Have great news to
share from your unit?
Contact *Diamond in
the Ruff* Editor Rich
Luttrell at [luttrellr@
sbcglobal.net](mailto:luttrellr@sbcglobal.net) and tell
him all about it!**

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