

# DIAMOND IN THE RUFF

ACBL District 21 Newsletter Vol 3, Number 5 September 2020

## Leaves From the Executive Branch Summer Board of Directors Meeting

*By Ray Yuenger, President*

*By Jackie Zayac, District Director*

A recent conversation prompted me to consider the future of bridge and where Districts and Units might fit in the big picture.



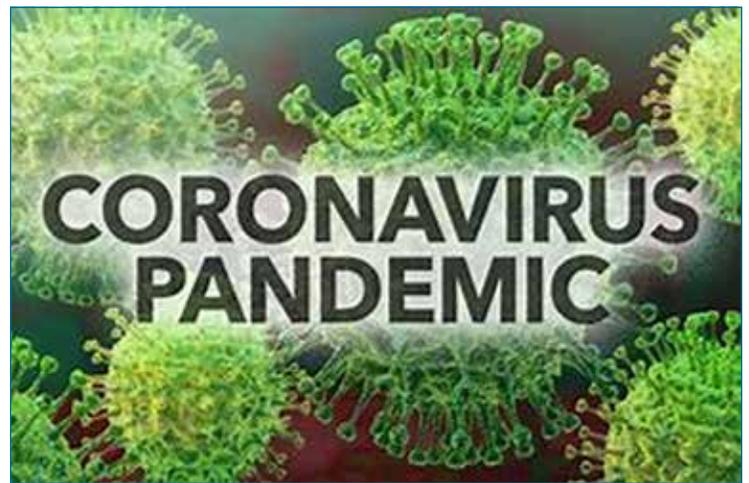
### What is an ACBL District?

What are the primary functions of an ACBL District? The structure of the ACBL is specified in its [Bylaws](#) and its [Codification](#). Not surprisingly, scheduling regional tournaments is one of a District's primary functions. (Codif., Chap. IX, Part A, § 1.) If you care to study the Codification because you have some time on your hands, possibly because you've been told to stay home for half a year straight to stay healthy, you can learn a lot about the ACBL's structure. It's a 420-page document.

Districts have traditionally also elected District Directors, and those 25 Directors, one from each District, constitute the ACBL's Board of Directors. I say "traditionally" because, as our Director Jackie Zayac has explained in the adjoining article, the ACBL is undergoing a historic reorganization, with the 25 Districts being consolidated into

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I hope that you are all healthy and staying safe. For the second time this year, the ACBL Board of Directors held its meeting online. The summer Montreal Virtual Meetings were held July 14 – 16, 2020.



The first item of business was to elect a new Treasurer since Claire Jones resigned from the ACBL Board. Joann Glasson ran unopposed and was elected ACBL Treasurer for the vacated term ending April 21, 2021. The following motions were voted on during the meetings:

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The list of upcoming tournaments and the regional flyers will not be published in this newsletter since the ACBL has decided to not provide tournament directors for the rest of 2020.

## *Yuenger*

*From Page 1*

13 Regions. This is a complicated process requiring amendment of the ACBL Bylaws and phasing in of regional directors. District 21 (“D21”) is being consolidated into Region 12 with District 20, which includes the northern part of northern California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii. Under the current plan, the first Regional Director for Region 12 will be elected in 2022 and begin a four-year term on January 1, 2023. This reorganization is intended to affect the National Board. Districts will continue to exist and perform their other functions. Meanwhile, there is an ongoing contested election for D21 Director featuring Jackie and Stu Goodgold. District Directors are elected by Unit Board members with online voting lasting a month beginning on August 15.

### **What is an ACBL Unit?**

Again the Codification establishes the relationship between the ACBL and Units. You might be surprised to read that “[t]he relationship of the ACBL to each of its chartered Units is that of an independent organization. This relationship shall not create any association, joint venture, partnership or agency relationship of any kind between a Unit and the ACBL.” (Codif., Chap. III, Part 1, § 1.3.4.) Obviously this language is intended to minimize the

ACBL’s legal liability. A unit “has the exclusive right to conduct all Sectionals held within its territory. In addition, it may obtain sanctions from ACBL to organize and conduct other games such as Unit Championships, Unit-wide games, Unit charity games and extended team events, as well as club games.” (Chap. III, § 2.1.)

Units are required to have Unit Boards and to hold at least one sectional every two years. Units, but not Districts, get 11% of the membership dues paid to the ACBL by the Unit’s members. (Chap. III, § 2.3.5.) Units are “encouraged” to “[e]ncourage people to conduct ACBL-sanctioned club games within the Unit” (Chap. III, § 2.4.3) and to “[p]romote an interest in duplicate bridge by providing a continuous and attractive program of bridge events to supplement those offered by clubs with sanctioned games” (Chap. III, § 2.4.5).

### **What is an ACBL Club?**

Notably, while Units can obtain sanctions for club games, Units are neither required nor encouraged to establish bridge clubs. Separate from granting charters to Units, the ACBL grants, at the request of club managers, sanctions that confer “the right . . . to conduct bridge games at regularly scheduled times and locations and award masterpoints at those games in accordance with specific ACBL rules and regulations.”

(Codif., Chap. VI, Part A, § 1.1.) There are grounds for a Unit or District Director to object to a new club game sanction in their area. (Chap. VI, § 2.3.1.) Sanctions are good for the remainder of the calendar year, after which they must be renewed. The annual fee per sanctioned game is \$11.50. (Chap. VI, § 3.2.1.) Clubs also pay fees to the ACBL per table that vary depending on whether the games are 18 boards or shorter. A sanction may authorize several regularly scheduled games at different sites. (Chap. VI, § 4.1.)

While Units have exclusive territories, sanctioned clubs don't. A sanction may be canceled if the club's venue is "unsuitable" (Chap. VI, § 2.5.1.b.), whatever that means, but the Codification doesn't expressly state that a sanction shall be denied because there is an existing club within a minimum distance from the new club's venue.

### **The Reality of Districts, Units, and Clubs in the COVID-19 Era**

These philosophical musings have been provoked by a recent conversation I had with a returning Unit Board member in D21. Face-to-face ("F2F") bridge essentially ended in March 2020 and bridge clubs began a remarkably rapid migration online, mostly to the virtual club scene on Bridge Base Online ("BBO") and other nationwide ACBL games on BBO. I don't intend to repeat my earlier descriptions of the operation of the virtual club scene found in my Presidential columns in the [April 2020](#) and [May 2020](#) newsletters.

I would like to highlight one aspect of the virtual club scene that has a real impact on Units and to a lesser extent on Districts.

In order to recreate the geography of existing brick-and-mortar bridge clubs, the ACBL looked to its club game sanction holders. This alone did not necessarily accord with pre-lockdown reality, because F2F club arrangements in the same area were vastly different for historical reasons. Using two examples I'm familiar with, the San Jose Bridge Center was set up by a directors' association to operate two daily games most days of the week, all under one sanction, with Unit 507 initially uninvolved in the day-to-day club operation. On the other hand, nearby Unit 503 has historically leased the premises for the Palo Alto Bridge Club and then arranged for individual directors, each with their own sanctions, to run multiple games a week.

In rapidly deploying the virtual club scene, the ACBL didn't first research where each sanctioned game was being held, and then designate, for example, one virtual San Jose Bridge Club with one sanction and one virtual Palo Alto Bridge Club with multiple sanctions. I imagine it would have taken massive research to track down the actual location of every bridge club in the ACBL and also correlate how many game sanctions were being utilized at each club. Instead the ACBL equated a valid sanction with an online club, and if the sanction holder wanted to set up a virtual ACBL club ("VACB") the ACBL would authorize it, educate the director as needed, and populate it with the players who had played in that sanction holder's F2F games during the prior 18 months. I won't repeat the rationale for this configuration stated in my earlier articles.

My emphasis here is the payment

structure. The ACBL continues to collect from online games its dollar per table fees for games with 18 or more boards. BBO collects a percentage for being the software platform for virtual clubs. But close to two-thirds of the table fees in VACB games flow back to the sanction holders.

As you've noticed if you play online, VACB games tend to be shorter than the F2F games they've replaced, but they also cost less (for my local club about half of the F2F table fees). So the sanction holders and their online directors will receive less money for online games of the same size as F2F games, but sanction holders can run more of them. Also, online directors don't need to preduplicate boards using dealing machines, print out hand records, provide snacks, make coffee, operate software to collect results from BridgeMates, straighten up a club before the game, or clean up after sloppy bridge players.

The operating conditions of BBO software also preclude the vast majority of director calls encountered in F2F games, including misdealt hands, calls out of turn, insufficient bids, inadmissible doubles, leads out of turn, exposed cards, revokes. Not that it's all rosy. I've been told that online directors have their own set of software problems to wrestle with. Prior to the big move to online bridge, BBO had not invested a lot of software development in facilitating the job of online directors. Tracking director calls required watching your monitor like a hawk, because there was initially no audible signal. Over time, the directing environment has become friendlier, but I'm sure directors occasionally wish they could just deal with a problem like a

BridgeMate not transmitting results to the server instead of trying to figure out how to substitute a regular player for a supposedly temporary but "sticky" robot.

Returning to my payment structure theme, table fees are flowing to sanction holders and their online directors, but what replaces the lost income for Units that used to collect a percentage of the directors' table fees for providing a location for their games? Some units effectively, if not literally, were subleasing space to their directors, but now it is BBO leasing the directors virtual space. Some sanction holders had arrangements to hold F2F games in no cost senior centers or recreation centers, but some Units have lease obligations ranging to \$4,000 to \$5,000 monthly. Must they depend on the kindness of the directors for a percentage of the online table fees? Have they been able to negotiate rent reductions with their landlords while F2F bridge is impossible?

Another potential issue for Units is with whom are the online players really affiliated. Unit membership by itself is not a factor qualifying a person to play in any particular VCAB. Unless a Unit was regularly running games in a brick-and-mortar club pursuant to its own sanction, that Unit has no "home" club members, and can neither set up an online VCAB nor pool its members with an existing VCAB.

### **Tentative Conclusions**

So what is a function of a Unit in the era of COVID-19? It has no sectionals to run, it may have no sanction of its own to hold any online games, it has no unit games or membership games or holiday parties to organize and run. It may hold a lease

for premises that it cannot occupy and have only an insufficient cash flow towards paying the rent. What value is it providing to its members and when might F2F bridge return? These are questions Unit Boards should be considering. Units are still able to promote the online games being held by virtual clubs in their area, and units can also offer teaching programs, including teaching members how to play online.

And what is the current function of D21 now that I have become President? Instead of holding regionals, our Tournament Manager is negotiating their cancellation with the host hotels without incurring liquidated damages for not meeting D21's room commitments. We traditionally make some grants to attend the summer Youth NABC, but that was cancelled. We typically send GNT and NAP winners to nationals, but those have been cancelled.

I do think there are some worthwhile objectives while D21 is in a fallow period. We have already made some technical amendments to the Bylaws to update them. I believe more amendments are in order. I have previously described other projects in earlier columns, particularly my May 2020 column, so I'm not going to repeat myself.

The District Board will be holding another virtual meeting on Sunday, September 6, during what would have been the All-Western Regional, so I'll have more to report on the future directions of D21 after that meeting.

## District 21 2021 GNTs?

*By Grant Vance - D21 GNT Coordinator*

Although the duration of the pandemic, and thus the return of face-to-face bridge, is unknown and looks to be lengthy, online bridge has taken up the slack.



The ACBL recently ran its first NAOBC, with a Premier team game, fashioned and seeded after the Springgold, and a Premier pair game, with the same qualification requirements as those for the Platinum Pairs. The team game required each player to use Zoom and share a session with one of their screenmates while playing.

I was pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to set up, and how sociable the game turned out to be. I got to chat pleasantly with David Berkowitz for two hours during my match, although my team came out on the losing side.

The implication of all this for the GNTs is to be ready to use Zoom when next the GNTs are held online. I was a newbie with Zoom for our first match, and a little lost and uncomfortable, but quickly took to it, and now rather enjoy it. It adds a personal element of contact missing from our normal BBO games, and makes security much more palatable. It won't replace the experience of holding cards, being with all our friends and foes, and travelling to tournaments, but it's a good step closer!

## **ACBL Board Reorganization**

The reorganization plan that passed at the Columbus Board Meeting was passed for a second and final time. Beginning in 2021 and concluding in 2023, elections will be held which will ultimately reduce the number of ACBL Board Members from 25 to 13. District 21 and District 20 will share one Regional Director. There will not be any changes to the structure of the Districts or the Units. The vote was 18-7 and met the requirement of 2/3 of the board voting in favor of the motion for it to be approved. I voted in favor of the motion. It became effective on July 19, 2020 after its approval by the Board of Governors.

## **ACBL Board Reorganization Alternative Plan**

This plan called for the election of 5–12 Managing Directors and a President by the 25 members of the Board of Directors. The remaining District Directors would attend one board meeting per year to elect this group. The vote was 7 to 18 and the motion was defeated. I voted no because I want the geographical representation contained in the reorganization plan approved by the ACBL Board.

## **Management Oversight of Credentials Committee**

With the impending reduction in size of the ACBL Board of Directors, the ACBL Transition Task Force identified the Credentials Committee as one committee

which could be administered by Management rather than the Board of Directors. The Credentials Committee approves exceptions to the residency requirements of the Grand National Pairs and the North American Pairs. The vote was 23-0-2. I voted in favor of the motion. It was effective immediately.

## **Management Oversight of Transfer of Fewer Than 100 Members Between Units and Districts**

The ACBL Transition Task Force also recommended that when groups of fewer than 100 members request transfer, Management need not consult the Board of Directors when approving or disapproving the request. The vote was 25-0. It became effective immediately.

## **Management Oversight of Honorary Member of the Year Selection Process**

Management will form this Committee annually and select the Honorary Member of the Year. The Board of Directors will approve the final selection. Another recommendation by the ACBL Transition Task Force. The vote was 24-1. I voted yes. It is effective immediately.

## **Minutes Committee Responsibility to be Transferred to Management**

The final recommendation by the ACBL Transition Task Force was to delete the minutes review by the ACBL Board of Directors from the codification and transfer the responsibility to Management. The vote was 25-0. It became effective immediately.

## **GNT Conditions of Contest 2020-2021**

The proposed GNT Conditions of Contest for 2020-2021 were approved. The vote was 25-0. It will be effective September 1, 2020.

### **Masterpoint Formula Modified for Strength of Field**

In all tournament events for which the overall awards are calculated by formula, (including Individuals, Pairs, Swiss Teams, Board-a-Match Teams, excluding STaCs and events with arbitrary first place awards, such as the Grand National Teams and excluding all events with a knockout phase, the masterpoint formula shall be modified to account for the strength of the field in that event. This motion will require a second reading. The vote was 25-0. If a second reading takes place in 2020 and the motion passes, it will be effective on January 1, 2021.

### **Web and Barometer Movements**

In any event in which gold masterpoints are awarded to section top winners, when sections are combined for scoring and ranking, the number of positions receiving gold points shall be equal to the number of combined sections of at least 8.5 tables. Sections of fewer than 8.5 tables do not increase the number of gold paying positions. Sections of 17 to 25 tables playing a Web or Barometer movement pay two (2) gold places. Lower strata must have the required number of contestants competing in order to award the specified number of places. The vote was 25-0. It will be effective January 1, 2021.

## **Barry Crane Tribute**

Eliminate the 35,000 masterpoint recognition and replace it with 35,135.8 masterpoints which is the exact amount that Barry Crane had achieved at the time of his death. The vote was 22-2-1. I voted yes. It is effective immediately.

### **Unit and Club Teacher Recommendations**

This is a motion from the Board of Governors. The ACBL shall establish procedures to (1) enable Teaching Clubs and Unit Boards to recommend teachers who teach at clubs or bridge centers to teach beginner bridge classes; (2) record these recommendations for all members in good standing and (3) list teachers and the beginner classes they teach on the trybridge.org website. The vote was 1-23-0-1 and the motion failed. I voted no because there are some excellent beginning bridge teachers who may not be included in the list.

### **Teaching Clubs and Centers**

This motion is also from the Board of Governors. The ACBL will establish procedures for designating Teaching Clubs and Centers. A list of Teaching Clubs and Centers will be made available to new prospects in response to their search for how to learn bridge. The vote was 0-24-0-1 and the motion failed. I voted no.

### **Board Requirements for Masterpoint Limited STaC Games**

In order to be eligible for overall awards in a STaC, or any event that is scored across more than one club, the minimum number of

boards played is set at 20 with the exception of masterpoint limited events restricted to players with less than 199 masterpoints whose minimum number of boards played is set at 18. The vote was 24-0-0-1. I voted yes. It is effective immediately.

### **STaC Conditions of Contest**

Codification Chapter 10, Part A, Paragraph 3.4 is deleted. It states that the sponsoring organization is responsible for collecting fees from clubs. With the implementation of ACBL Live for Clubs billing process, this will no longer be the case. The vote was 24-1. I voted yes. It will be effective as soon as Management can implement it.

### **Removal of Temporary Membership**

Remove the Temporary Membership category from the codification. Existing Temporary Memberships will be valid until the end of their current term. The vote was 25-0. It will be effective as soon as the ACBL can implement the changes in membership-related systems.

### **CDR Omnibus**

The CDR has been amended Table of Contents, Index and internal cross-references prior to Subsection 401 that have been completed by the Appeals and Charges Committee. From Subsection 401 onward these items need to be completed as well as all external cross-references throughout the CDR. The Board authorizes ACBL Management to make these changes. The vote was 25-0. It was effective on August 15, 2020.

### **Revised Schedule For Selected NABC Events**

The Board of Governors asked the Board of Directors to reconsider approving the following motion:

At the Fall NABC in Atlanta, Georgia in 2023, the approved game times will be 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM for the following events:

- The Super Senior (which is currently 10:00 & 3:00)
- The 0 – 10,000 Swiss
- The 0 – 6,000 Mini Blue Ribbon
- The 0 – 10,000 Fast Pairs
- The Senior Mixed Pairs
- The main event Regional events
- Any event added to future Fall NABC schedules that either has an upper masterpoint limit or that is limited to Seniors.

The reconsideration failed. The vote was 23-2 to uphold the revised schedule in Atlanta in 2023. I voted yes.

### **0-2500 Four-Session Swiss Team National Event**

Provide a two (2) day 0-2500 Swiss Team National Event on Tuesday and Wednesday of the Spring NABC. The first two sessions are for Qualifying and the second two session will be a Final. THIS IS MY MOTION! If the Spring 2021 NABC is cancelled, the first time this event and the 0-2500 nationally rated Pairs Event will be held is in Reno in the Spring of 2022. I hope everyone in the 0-2500 masterpoint range will support both new events! The vote was 25-0. It is effective January 1, 2021.

## **Spring 2025 NABC Memphis, Tennessee**

Approve the Spring 2025 NABC to be held at the Memphis Convention Center in Memphis, Tennessee on March 13-23, 2025. The vote was 4-21 and the motion failed. I voted no.

With the uncertainty of the pandemic, I did not think it was prudent to schedule any additional NABCs. Once we can see what the future holds with respect to COVID-19, I will be comfortable with scheduling additional NABCs.

## **Executive Director Succession Plan**

### **Employment**

Recommend terms of employment to the Board. Remove that In-House Counsel drafts the employment agreement with direction from the Search Committee Chair. The vote was 24-0-1. It is effective immediately.

I wish you all well as we navigate the smoke from the wildfires, COVID-19 and the hot temperatures we have experienced this summer. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at [jackiezayac@gmail.com](mailto:jackiezayac@gmail.com).

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

# RANK ADVANCES

## JUNIOR MASTERS (5 MASTERPOINTS)

Shushma Aggarwal, San Mateo CA, 498  
Rita Armstrong, San Mateo CA, 498  
Inderjit Aulakh, Saratoga CA, 507  
Nancy Beim, Atherton CA, 503  
Yuning Cao, Stanford CA, 503  
Janice Carter, San Mateo CA, 498  
Bonnie Chatfield, Sacramento CA, 505  
Beth Clark, Sunnyvale CA, 507  
Kathy Cook, Alamo CA, 499  
Mili Delbecq, San Mateo CA, 498  
Sadhna Diwan, Menlo Park CA, 498  
Brian Farley, Los Altos Hills CA, 503  
Muriel Ferland, Brentwood CA, 499  
Barbara Fink, Mountain View CA, 503  
Sandra Garafulic, Mountain View CA, 503  
Andrew Gerwitz, Granite Bay CA, 505  
Shelley Gordon, Sausalito CA, 508  
Linda Green, San Anselmo CA, 508  
Eleonore Gutierrez, Salinas CA, 530  
Gary Hargrave, Martinez CA, 499  
Peggy Henderson, Reno NV, 473  
Elizabeth Horton, Burlingame CA, 498  
Lela Hunter, Los Altos CA, 503  
Frank Jamieson, Novato CA, 500  
Kyle Lin, San Francisco CA, 506

Teresa Loftus, Pleasanton CA, 501  
Karol Matheson, Greenfield CA, 530  
David Minor, Walnut Creek CA, 499  
Joani Mitchell, Santa Cruz CA, 550  
Donald Nelson, El Dorado Hills CA, 505  
Russell Planitzer, Pacific Grove CA, 530  
Susan Pretel, Sunnyvale CA, 503  
Archie Robinson, Pebble Beach CA, 530  
Lauren Rosen, Burlingame CA, 498  
Nancy Rutledge, Oakland CA, 502  
Cathy Schuster, Novato CA, 508  
Mary Smith, San Mateo CA, 498  
Lisa Teel, Novato CA, 508  
Deanna Woodhour, Carmel CA, 530  
Kathy Zmay, San Carlos CA, 498

## CLUB MASTERS (20 MASTERPOINTS)

Janice Adragna, Concord CA, 499  
Michael Goldstein, Tiburon CA, 508  
Richard Hamlin, Aptos CA, 550  
Sandra Haslem, Reno NV, 473  
Jackie Jonas, Reno NV, 473  
Richard Kenny, Reno NV, 473  
Carol Lashman, Redwood City CA, 498

Edward Leung, San Jose CA, 507  
Neil Librock, Lafayette CA, 499  
Albert Low, Aptos CA, 550  
Shazia Makhdumi, San Francisco CA, 506  
Howard Miller, San Francisco CA, 506  
Tom Philipps, Concord CA, 499  
Mohan Ramana Rao, San Carlos CA, 498  
Suzanne Rhudy, Ashland OR, 501  
Padmini Sökkappa, Livermore CA, 501  
Nancy Steinbach, Palo Alto CA, 503  
Richard Tullis, Moraga CA, 499  
Lynne Weatherman, Greenfield CA, 530  
George Westin, Lodi CA, 510  
Edward Winchester, Reno NV, 473

## **SECTIONAL MASTERS** **(50 MASTERPOINTS)**

Debra Bellings-Kee, San Rafael CA, 508  
David Berger, San Rafael CA, 508  
James Bolton, Half Moon Bay CA, 498  
Jane Buerger, Novato CA, 508  
Ying Chow, Los Altos CA, 503  
Stephen Clark, Walnut Creek CA, 499  
Herschel Cozine, Santa Rosa CA, 509  
Leslie Delugach, Piedmont CA, 502

Carl Ebeling, Redwood City CA, 498  
Ronald Forney, Lafayette CA, 499  
Eve Heyman, San Francisco CA, 506  
Lee Holm, San Leandro CA, 500  
Carol Magnuson, Fairfield CA, 512  
Xiaomin Misenti, Fair Oaks CA, 505  
Rajnikant Modi, Modesto CA, 529  
Shirish Mulay, Roseville CA, 505  
Larry Orr, Palo Alto CA, 503  
Mary Pulvermann, San Francisco CA, 506  
Carlene Reininga, Healdsburg CA, 509  
Forrest Rice, San Francisco CA, 506  
Sharon Ritchie, Murphys CA, 505  
Mark Sawchuk, San Francisco CA, 506  
Betty Schafer, San Francisco CA, 506  
Suzanne Schauwecker, Palo Alto CA, 503  
Luann Schwab, Palo Alto CA, 503  
Bill Sekhon, San Martin CA, 524  
Catherine Shanahan, Windsor CA, 509  
Russell Silverstein, Walnut Creek CA, 499  
Mano Singham, Del Rey Oaks CA, 530  
Douglas Slaton, Burlingame CA, 498  
Joanne Thorne, Walnut Creek CA, 499  
Hemant Vaidya, Santa Cruz CA, 550  
Brian Wallace, San Francisco CA, 506  
Diane Walz, Reno NV, 473  
Dianne Wesselhoft, Lafayette CA, 499  
Mary Lou Zoback, Stanford CA, 503

## **REGIONAL MASTERS** **(100 MASTERPOINTS)**

Carol Alliger, Alameda CA, 502  
Judy Berkeley, Atherton CA, 503  
Penny Bess, Lincoln CA, 505  
Laura Carlson, Carson City NV, 465  
David Clayton, Berkeley CA, 497  
Bob Farkas, San Carlos CA, 498  
Pete Goldsmith, Hillsborough CA, 498  
Chip Gordet, El Dorado Hills CA, 505  
Margareta Hodzic, San Jose CA, 503  
Shankar Iyer, Cupertino CA, 503  
Bharat Kamdar, Monte Sereno CA, 507  
Agnes Kennedy, Sacramento CA, 505  
Barbara Lewis, Foster City CA, 498  
G Marsh, Modesto CA, 529  
John McManis, Oakland CA, 502  
Paul Melodia, San Francisco CA, 506  
Cindy Morris, Kentfield CA, 508  
Kelly O'Keefe, Salinas CA, 530  
Jon Rosen, San Francisco CA, 506  
Shirley Shi, San Jose CA, 507  
Frances Soskins, Monterey CA, 530  
William Stevens, Danville CA, 499  
Sylvia Victoria, Walnut Creek CA, 499  
Michael Whitaker, Moraga CA, 499  
Karen Wisialowski, San Francisco CA, 506  
Ann Wyatt, Alamo CA, 499

## **NABC MASTERS** **(200 MASTERPOINTS)**

William Burns, Orinda CA, 499  
Lynne Crawford, San Francisco CA, 506  
Angie Millslagle, Santa Cruz CA, 550  
John Shouldice, Castro Valley CA, 500  
Karen Weissberg, Petaluma CA, 509

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

Lisa Merenbach, Belmont CA, 503

## **LIFE MASTERS** **(300/500 MASTERPOINTS)**

H Daniel Banks, San Francisco CA, 506  
Jiang Chen, Cupertino CA, 507  
Judith Corney, Saratoga CA, 507  
Janice Kosel, Kensington CA, 497  
Anne Wilson, Campbell CA, 507

**BRONZE  
LIFE MASTERS  
(500/750 MASTERPOINTS)**

Lynn Blankfort, Mill Valley CA, 508  
Barbara Boyle, San Francisco CA, 506  
Jiang Chen, Cupertino CA, 507  
Lynn Dondero, Sonoma CA, 512  
Roy Redlich, Petaluma CA, 509  
Karla Reynolds, Reno NV, 473  
Anne Wilson, Campbell CA, 507

**SILVER  
LIFE MASTERS  
(1000 MASTERPOINTS)**

Dennis Del Paine, Stockton CA, 510  
Serena Guo, Dublin CA, 501  
Catherine Johnson, Reno NV, 473  
Russ Kirschenbaum, Oakland CA, 502  
Franklin Kitchiner Jr, Citrus Heights CA, 503  
Sharon Larson, Carmel CA, 530  
William Schoenemann, Union City CA, 500  
Baron Wang, San Francisco CA, 506

**RUBY LIFE MASTERS  
(1500 MASTERPOINTS)**

Susan Boyers, Oakland CA, 502  
Ameen Paul, San Ramon CA, 501  
Peter Sager, San Rafael CA, 508  
Brian Samuels, Los Altos CA, 503  
Fay Zerbo, San Jose CA, 503  
Qiang Zhang, Dublin CA, 501  
Susan Zhang, Los Altos Hills CA, 503

**GOLD LIFE MASTERS  
(2500 MASTERPOINTS)**

Naguib Abdallah, Fresno CA, 522  
Subramania Krishnamurthi, San Jose CA,  
507  
Nadine Levine, Alameda CA, 502  
Angelo Servino, Bel Tiburon CA, 508

**SAPPHIRE  
LIFE MASTERS  
(3500 MASTERPOINTS)**

Joshua Fendel, Walnut Creek CA, 499  
Kathy Venton, Petaluma CA, 509

# HEART OF THE DISTRICT

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<a href="#"><u>Diablo Valley</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>499</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Lisa Assoni</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>East Bay</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>502</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Larry Bowerman</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Fresno</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>522</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Laura Da Costa</u></a>
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<a href="#"><u>Napa/Solano/Sonoma Valley</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>512</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Tom Sheahan</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Palo Alto</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>503</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Judi Gentry</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>San Francisco</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>506</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Kim Fanady</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>San Mateo</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>498</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Fran Gaura</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Santa Cruz</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>550</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Karen Schamberg</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Santa Rosa/Petaluma</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>509</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Cecelia Zachar</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Silicon Valley</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>507</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Ray Yuenger</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Stockton</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>510</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Debbie DeZarn</u></a>

## Berkeley/El Cerrito/Richmond

*By The Beer Dude*

What's New(s). Not much – I got word 8/18 that we're dead thru the end of October - & I doubt we'll be reopening at all the remainder of 2020. We have 2 new members, Deborah Thompson & Helen Walker. If they're UC students, we're unlikely to see them @ the club ever; if not, we might once we reopen. Nobody died/moved away.

Thank heavens baseball's back – the A's have been fun to watch; not so much for the Giants & their shaky defense & bullpen. I'll watch the big golf tourneys, but have no rooting interest in the NBA/NHL playoffs with the Warriors & Sharks not involved. You can keep soccer, the most boring game on the planet. It's just weird seeing cardboard cutouts instead of real people in the stands. It may be a bit different for some NFL games, as some teams have decided to let limited numbers of fans in (not the Raiders, who won't because Vegas still is a COVID hotspot).

Keep staying safe & sane – wear those masks when you're out in public!

## Diablo Valley

*By Lisa Assoni/The ShortCut Cook*

This month is the table topper for good weather. Also, when we think of September, it's often associated with Labor Day. The first Labor Day was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882



in New York City. It spread with the growth of labor organizations, and in 1885 Labor Day was in full bloom; as many industrial centers in the country had parades and parties. Wow, what a difference 6 months can make!

Labor has many different meanings. My first reaction is childbirth. Yikes.

Labor intense and painful, but the reward is so sweet! Hard labor stems from physical work. Bridge can also bring on a little labor too. When we have a difficult hand to bid, we labor over what and how to respond. You may even get a tummy ache, with much less intensity of course. It can make you sweat, and create some anxiety too. Gee, what a fun game! Our addiction to bridge is shown through our on-line playing.

It's extremely healthy for the mind. I'll bet everyone reading this column is also grateful for this wonderful, zealous, headache-pounding game. All you smart cookies can relate.

I really can't compile the results from all the games, and just keep track of my own. I realize you all want to get top boards, but the competition is tough, and we really have to concentrate. Well, I didn't do that the last time I played. Right in the middle of playing, I get a text from our electrician that he's coming over in 15 minutes. He was scheduled to arrive at 12:15, and the bridge game would be complete. This distraction caused me to not evaluate my hands properly, and assess others. Yikes! SO, may we all learn a bridge lesson, don't play if you're Out of Focus.

So what are you all doing besides playing on-line bridge? Go to the grocery

store, right? When I go into the market, I repeatedly hear a voice over the loudspeaker telling us how to walk, cover your face, be polite, etc. I usually salute.

I also like to laugh-especially now. So how about a joke!

A man and woman were in the bedroom. Somehow burglars broke in to their room and tied them up. The thieves started ransacking the house, and the man was screaming, "Please let her go, please." He was begging. He even said, "if you do, I'll give you the keys to my Mercedes, and a pair of diamond earrings." The burglar responded, "You must really love your wife." The man said over and over, "I do, I do, and she'll be home in 15 minutes!"

Go turn on TV, search for comedies and great movies, seasoned with good-healthy food. You'll feel better, I promise.

Ciao Bella, Lisa "The ShortCut Cook"

## East Bay

*By Larry Bowerman ([lmjtbow@pacbell.net](mailto:lmjtbow@pacbell.net))*

First and foremost, I hope that everyone is doing well, staying safe and enjoying online bridge at BBO. After a brief "getting acquainted phase," I've found that bridge on BBO has been a good experience. It isn't perfect, but under the current circumstances, it is much better than "good enough." Obviously, we all miss the social aspects of playing at the EBCBC and Piedmont, but the BBO playing experience is straightforward and the "glitches" have been minimal. It's also nice that BBO automatically eliminates bidding out of

turn, leading out of turn and insufficient bids, thus avoiding the majority of director calls. So far, BBO hasn't figured out how to eliminate mis-bids and mis-clicks! After a bit longer adjustment period, I also like self-alerting on BBO, but I must admit to sometimes forgetting to do it.

We encourage everyone to keep playing in the EBCBC and Piedmont Virtual Club and Support Your Club games. If you need a refresher on the schedules, please visit the Unit 502 and EBCBC websites. Keep on playing to help keep our clubs alive and well during the pandemic so that they'll be around when we can again play in-person bridge, whenever that might be.

Given the continuing nature of the pandemic, the Unit 502 Board recently voted to cancel all remaining events in 2020, including all unit games, the Tunnel Tournament, the November 2020 Sectional and the Holiday Party. We hope that these events will be able to resume sometime in 2021, but it's too soon to tell. Stay tuned for further developments.

Since we won't be playing in-person bridge for awhile, there is much less of the traditional news that comprised much of these columns in the past. So, the question becomes what should we write about? A couple of obvious possibilities are some Unit 502 history or some memorable bridge moments. So, here goes:

While there are many others who have played bridge in Unit 502 much longer than I have and are much more qualified to relate the unit's history, I do have a couple of favorite memories from my 12 years or so as a member of Unit 502.

First, Barbara Harmon is one of the icons of Unit 502. For many years she worked tirelessly to promote bridge in the East Bay, giving lessons (my wife, Meg, took lessons from her), running the Wednesday afternoon game at the Dimond Library and as a member of the Unit 502 Board. Her memory and playing skills are legendary. When she retired from bridge in March 2009, a party and game were held to honor her decades of service to bridge. Believe it or not, there were 28 tables at that game! Another stalwart of bridge in the East Bay, Susan Wiebe, was Barbara's partner for the game. Naturally, they won with a 63.69% game and earned 5.38 masterpoints!

The following additional information about Barbara was provided by Tom Pajak (thanks Tom). [FYI - Tom Pajak and Sandi Davis shared the writing of these columns for about 10 years!]:

"Barbara Harmon migrated from northern Minnesota to Oakland in order to be a grade-school teacher in the Havenhurst District (near the Coliseum). She taught for about 20 years and was a well-respected educator who loved her job very much.

"She grew up in the depression when people had no extra money to pay for recreation activities, so her family taught her how to play bridge, since all you need for that are 4 people, a deck of cards, a pencil and a piece of paper...cheap entertainment! She was a quick learner and until the day she died her bridge game consisted mainly of Standard American, Stayman, Blackwood, and transfers. She thought a convention card loaded with special meanings and alertable bids didn't get you any farther

than simple, steady, smart play and careful card counting.

"As for bridge, Barbara was a bridge teacher, director, mentor--and she never used a computer to score the game either. It was always totally by hand and always 100% accurate, too. She served on the Unit 502 board for 40 years, mostly as the membership chairman who contacted new members of ACBL to welcome them and answer their questions, as well as phoning lapsed members to convince them not to abandon the game. Even during the last week of her life, she managed to get to a Monday night game of bridge to play with Sidney Mar, her regular Monday partner.

"When the unit honored her with a reception/party/foodfest/bridge game, it presented her with a Costco gift card so she could buy herself a new television. The unit offered to get her a computer, but she said she'd lived all this time without one, and what she really wanted was a new TV."



*Barbara Harmon*



*Susan Wiebe*

Second, Richard and Joyce Hart ran a weekly bridge game for many years at the Piedmont Community Center. Their game had a unique feature that I always admired and enjoyed, namely a pot of money for any pair that bid and made a grand slam. As I recall, the pot was always at least \$80 and it increased by \$20 per week until the next grand slam was bid and made. My partner, Ed Yunck, and I were fortunate to bid and make a grand slam at the Hart's game once back in 2012 or thereabouts. Unfortunately (just kidding), Neal Mazaroff and his partner also bid and made the same grand



*Richard and Joyce Hart*

slam that day, so the four of us shared the pot, which I believe totaled \$160 that day. Thank you to Richard and Joyce for maintaining this feature in their game for so many years!

In October stay tuned for “my worst bridge blunder,” “card mix-up at 3NT” and “Gold Rush Games.”

Welcome to new Unit 502 members Bert and Lois Carelli, Dana Corvin, Peter Freeman, Juanita Papillon, Harrison Pollak, Ann Schuyler, Sajan Srivastava, Daphne Stoermer and Nancy Zhu. Also welcome to Tom Chan and Paul Lipkin who have recently been reinstated; and Rob Johnson and Jeanne Oelerich, who have recently transferred into Unit 502! When you “see them” on BBO, please introduce yourself and welcome them to our unit.

Congratulations to the following members on their recent rank advancements: Richard Jacobs and Bruce Pollock to Junior Master; Ruth Kleinman to Club Master; Helene Byrne, Marilyn Chilcote, Gretchen Griswold, John McManis, John Vallerga and Valerie Wood to Sectional Master; Allan McAllister and Gail Oraftik to Regional Master; Karen Cabrera to NABC Master; Joseph Held to Bronze Life Master; Catherine Molnar to Silver Life Master; Rob Johnson to Gold Life Master and Rajeev Gupta to Sapphire Life Master! Well done, congratulations and keep on playing! There is always another goal in front of you!

I'm writing the October column, so please contact me if you have noteworthy results or other items to report.

## Fresno

*By Laura Da Costa*

Hello Everyone!

Just last year we were celebrating 10 years at our Shaw clubhouse, and now we are in negotiations to end our lease. With the shutdown since March 16, we could no longer live up to what the management company was saying we would need to pay. We have started to pack up and get ready to move and store our supplies until we can start again somewhere else. Obviously, this problem is not an issue just for our clubhouse; we have heard of other clubhouses that have also had to leave leases. Here's hoping that we will be able to find a place and have a new clubhouse in late 2020 or early 2021. We will keep you informed about clubhouse news.

Meanwhile, people are still advancing in rank through Online play. This month we congratulate Naguib Abdallah who is now a Gold Life Master (2500 mps)!

A reminder that our old website is also going to be shutdown. Once it is gone, please use [www.fresnobridge.com](http://www.fresnobridge.com) to keep up to date with what is (or is not) going on.

Stay well, and if you know a great place for a clubhouse, let us know.

## Marin

*By Gail Haar*

A big virtual welcome to Kelly Lundgren, our lone new member this month! 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. We have lots of rank advancements this month so it seems folks are now comfortable playing at a virtual table. Congratulations to Irene Cappelloni & Susie McCormick (Club Master); Michael Calder (Sectional Master); Brian Davis, Agnes Reti & Marilyn River (Regional Master); Carmella Sogge (Life & Bronze Master); Cyrus Ansari & Ingrid Purcell (Ruby Life Master); and Jeff Reid (Gold Life Master).



If you haven't done so yet, go to [marinbridge.org](http://marinbridge.org) 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](mailto: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.

Our Unit Data Massager par excellence, Bill Yeast, did some analysis of our membership which revealed 71% of our unit is working towards Life Master and of the Life Master and above group, the

largest percentage is Bronze Life Master. Club Director Peggy Tatro has run with this information and has added an under 199 game on Thursday morning. Our two Marin clubs have something for all levels, so come and support the home team.

Not much humor this time because nothing seems very amusing what with unbearable heat, wild fires and COVID but a friend told me that she'll be celebrating Thanksgiving and Christmas this month. Why? She's in a hurry to get 2020 over and done with.

And as Sergeant Phil Esterhaus said every week on Hill Street Blues, stay safe out there.

## **Modesto/Merced/Sonora**

*By Ray Adams*

May was the very first month for the Modesto Virtual Club, which started operations on May 17. There are three very competent directors: Libby Longstreth, Barbara Page, and Lee Maddocks. It was a very busy month with a total of 65 tables participating. This was due in large respect to the Silver Point week, where the club had at least one game a day offering a chance to players of all strata to win valuable Silver Points. More C players participated than are normally seen playing during the week. I personally was happy to see such an enthusiastic turnout.

The A players of the month were 1) Ray Adams 2) Ralph Jungwirth and 3) Bruce Ruskin; the top B players were: 1) Barbara Page 2) Vickie MacClyment, who barely

beat 3) Sharon Cole, who just nudged 4) Chris Gray; the leading C players were 1) Sherrie Barakatt 2) Gerald Marsh 3) Dennis Northern who only beat 4) Marcia Eblen by a nose (.02 Master Points).

I think most veterans of the Sunday Invitational Game at the old studio remember Imogene and John Engebretsen. They were the first to win all three strata – A/B, and C – in a game. Thus, this particular feat became known as an Engebretsen. Although Imogene and John are no longer with us, their name lives on in memory of this fine achievement.

There were two Engebretsens this May, with Jeff Gaudio and Terry Sciabata having a section Engebretsen on the 17th, finishing 1, 1, and 1 in Section One, and 2, 1, and 1 overall. On the 28th, this pair had a second degree Engebretsen, finishing 2, 2, and 1st in C. Also, Debbie DeZarn, a C player, did finish 1st playing with an A partner, and Gerald Marsh, another C player also won an event competing with a B player.

There were no Silver Point games in June, and possibly because of this, attendance dropped to 60 tables, although the bridge was just as exciting.

John and Pamela Mayne were A players of the month, barely edging out Ray Adams. Third was Chris Brown, turning in good results with several partners; among the B players, the leader was Vicky MacClyment, who barely sneaked by Larry Sweet in second place, while Mary Sue Moore was in third, and Chris Gray in fourth; in C flight, Dennis Northern took the honors, with Sherrie Barakatt close behind in second place and Lorraine Bocks in third.

## Monterey

*By Mary Block*

Jeff and Terry had a progressive Engebretsen in June, finishing third in A, second in B, and first in C on the 13th. Keep it up you two, you give C players something to shoot for.

The competition is already hot this July. Please make an effort to get on your computer and join us on Bridge Base Online. You should have a lot of fun.

I will end this short article with a bridge story on defense. Our opponents bid up to 6NT and I was on lead. Looking at nothing better, I led the ace of hearts. There were two small hearts in dummy and my partner, Sherrie Barakatt, signaled with the ten. I continued with a heart to her king and since declarer had started with queen doubleton, we eventually took five heart tricks for down four. Since this was the last hand of a speedball match, I kibitzed at another table where the contract was also 6NT. The bridge buff on lead also led the ace of hearts. His partner signaled with the DEUCE! The opening leader thought about this and switched. Declarer soon claimed 6NT. If I learned nothing else from this, it was: trust your partner's signals and if you like your partner's lead, please let him or her know, even if the best you can do is the three from K32. If partner is paying attention, he or she will notice.

Well, shortly after August 1, I will discuss the July winners. Let's make this month one to remember. All my best to all of you.

As if the Covid-19 hanging over our heads and isolating us isn't bad enough, as this is being written, we are also facing a heat wave, rolling blackouts and wildfires, creating either threatened or actual evacuation of members and friends of our unit. What next, locusts?

The unit lost a valued member, Mary Quenette. She was an active NLM player and had contributed to the unit in many ways, notably by serving on the Board of Directors and as Treasurer. We are sorry to have lost her and send our condolences to her family.

At the Board of Directors meeting in August, Maja was appointed to replace Barbara Calloway, who resigned. Thank you, Barbara, for your service. Our sad loss of Jill Leach has motivated 37 donations to the Unit totalling \$3,375. Thanks to Jill's family for naming Unit 530 to be the recipient of memorials.

Status changes for the month include the following: Martha Barry, James Dirgin, and Marcy Klein are now Junior Masters; John and Laura Gamble are Sectional Masters. Susan Mazzei is an Advanced NABC Master. Bill Cohen has reached the Bronze Life Master status.

With the addition of Janet Hedlund's Tuesday evening game, there are now virtual games seven days a week. The Thursday morning game is a 299'er game; all the others are open.

Hetty Eddy has been keeping very busy teaching newcomers. There is a teaching

table function available through BBO. Hetty can be reached at [hettyeddy1@me.com](mailto:hettyeddy1@me.com).

Some of our members are also using BBO casual games for learning experience, as well as fun. Your reporter participates in those regularly. Using conference telephone calls for the table makes it more of a learning experience, or more of a social experience, if that is what you want. Sometimes it is just nice to hear a set of familiar voices around a virtual table.

It is difficult to know when we will be back to face to face bridge and right now it is looking like 2021. As our world in general will never be the same, local bridge will not be the same. For most of us, our bridge playing has been a habit, scheduled for certain times on certain days. Not everyone will resume their former habits. For myself, I know that I miss seeing so many people and I hope that they will re-establish their bridge habits as I plan to do. It would be good for all of us to consider re-establishing our bridge contacts, even if we are not able to visit in person. I participate in a weekly Zoom “cocktail party” with a group of mostly bridge friends. You all have probably figured out how to do that for your family and business associates, but think about it for your bridge friends.

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

## Napa/Solano/Sonoma

*By Tom Sheahan*

This is the worst of times that Unit 512 has ever endured. We now have wild fires to endure again for the fourth straight year to go along with the Covid-19 pandemic. This column is being written 11 days before you will see it so we don't know yet how many of our players will be impacted by the fires and we can only hope and pray that everyone will be safe and no one will lose their home. The virus and not being able to be with our bridge friends was bad enough and we didn't think it could get any worse, but it has.



The even worse news is that we lost two more long time players in John Kardash and Bill Wells, both very likable players. John had some health issues of late, but that didn't hold him back from being his usual cheery self at the tables and he never complained. Bill lost his wife Pat of 50 plus years a couple of months ago and they did everything together. Bill missed her dearly. I'm proud to say that John and Bill were both friends of mine and they will be greatly missed.

The only good news we have is that Clyde Smith earned his 2500th point to become a Gold Life Master. Clyde would have earned it a long time ago if he hadn't been so generous with his time to direct the Friday game in Napa for many years. For some reason those rocket scientists all seem to make great players. Congratulations Clyde! Richly deserved!

Stay safe out there and hopefully things will get back to normal soon. We miss you all!

## Palo Alto

*By Judi Gentry*

Here we are, six months into the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of our bridge club with no end in sight. Thanks to the cooperative efforts of BBO, ACBL and PABC, most of us have managed to maintain an active (if virtual) bridge life. Actually, bridge is one of the things that has been most consistent through these months and continues to occupy a significant role in my “new-normal” life.



One of the changes in my life that I appreciate during these shelter-in-place times is that – with the slower pace and limited options for activities – I actually have more time to think! Recently, I started thinking about how being successful at the game of bridge requires many of the same skills that define success in life. Following are some of the comparisons I observed.

Bridge requires superior decision-making skills. Whether in bidding, declarer play or defending, one has many options to consider and must review them all in a timely manner to come to the best possible alternative. To do this, of course, you have to have knowledge of alternatives and a method to compare them. That method, of course, is an understanding of the odds of success from whatever course of action you

are considering. The more you know about your choices and the better you are able to consider your options, the more success you are likely to experience.

Your bridge style, as is your life-style, is very much influenced by your risk-taking tolerance. Neither a totally safe strategy nor a flamboyant speculative approach is likely to produce consistent success. Determining when to take that extra chance is a skill of a successful person ... and bridge player.

Another skill-set that is essential in life ... and in bridge ... is the ability to form trusting relationships. To be a reliable person on whom others can depend is a much valued trait. A partner whose bids are predictable and understandable is much sought after.

Along that same line, communication is a cornerstone of any relationship. Bidding is the language of bridge. To be a communicative partner you need to be fluent in this language, with all its nuances. And, of course, you and your partner need to speak the same (bridge) language.

And whether you are at the bridge table or anywhere else in your life, being kind, polite and considerate are essential behaviors.

I'd like to close with a quote that made me chuckle. It's by Florence Broadhurst, an Australian artist, singer and designer of the 20th century. Nowhere in her biographies have I seen it mentioned that she was a bridge player. However, the first line in one bio I read referred to her as a "risk-taker par excellence." Her quote: "Life is like a game of bridge—only a dummy puts all her cards on the table."

Till next month: take some risks, but – most importantly -- be kind and predictable!  
Judi

## San Francisco

*By Kimberly Fanady*

Did anyone else play in the NAOBC last month? Pard and I swam with the sharks in both the National KO and the Platinum Pairs. To my disappointment, in two weekends of bridge we did not draw one single famous megastar. No Meckstroths or Zias on our screens. Instead, we rolled over and were crushed by mere mortals – excellent bridge players, of course, but not Hall of Famers. Evidently it doesn't take a Hall of Famer to put me in my place. Maybe we will encounter someone famous in the ACBL's upcoming Virtual Vacation Regional during the last week of August.

QuickTricks held its first virtual Pro/Am in mid-August. The club's favorite event was just as popular online as in real life, drawing 25 tables including a sizable contingent of kids from the Center for Bridge Education. Kid power prevailed: high schooler Andrew Eidelhoch and his pro Andrew Sinclair racked up a 63% overall win, while CBE students and siblings Nathan Chow and Chloe Chow, with their pros Edmund Wu and Chris Chen, notched section tops. Megan Werneti and your faithful columnist struck a blow for Millennial and the elderly, respectively, by taking the last section top and second



overall. It was big fun – thanks to all the pros who volunteered and everyone who played!

The club's annual Tadd Waggoner Memorial online was also a great success with 30 tables, allowing the club to make a generous contribution in memory of its founder to the AIDS Support Group. Finally, the first QuickTricks Knockout is off to a good start, with 14 teams vying for the honor of club supremacy. The winner will be crowned by the end of the year. Check out the club website at [www.quicktricks.org](http://www.quicktricks.org) for results and details.

What's going on at other SF clubs? Let me know and I'll write you up too!

Congrats to our newly ranked: Junior Masters Jesse Costello-Good, Bill Sorenson; Club Master Daryl Babbitt; Sectional Master Adam Ross; Regional Master Jenny Caulfield; NABC Masters Greg Gauthier, Neil Vaz and Bronze Life Master Daphne Bransten. Nice going, everyone!

Welcome to our new members: Cynthia Hubbard, Aydin Khaleeli, Zhivan Khaleeli, Rohan Kumar, and Jackie Risley; and transfer Michaele Drayer (Greater New York), who has been here for a long time but finally made it official. Hope to meet you soon on BBO.

Finally, we sadly say goodbye to two longtime Unit 506ers: Susan Hillstrom-Masi and Tillie McCullough. Both Susan and Tillie took up bridge late in their full and accomplished lives, quickly fell in love with the game, and graced our tables for years. They will each be missed. Our condolences to their families and friends.

Stay healthy, safe, and out of the heat and smoke, Unit 506ers. Until we can see each other at the tables again, log on to BBO and keep clicking!

## San Mateo

*By Fran Gaura*

“It was the worst of times...” Perhaps we all feel this way as the year winds down. None of our normal routines are in place to make us feel secure. So perhaps this is the time we go a bit off track and do some things that might help us all get through these “dog days of summer.”

Maybe we could pet a pup or two (speaking of “dog days”) or maybe even a cat (this being an equal opportunity column!); call a friend with whom we haven’t spoken in months, perhaps someone from our Bridge Club, just to check in and share a smile; hand a bottle of cold water to one of our postal workers or the gardener or construction worker toiling in this smoke-laden air; write a “Thank You” (yes, I did say “write”) note to someone who helps keep your world in balance as everything teeters off (maybe a bridge director who is hosting BBO games or classes on line).

In the meantime, keep an eye on e-mails and updates from our Unit 498 team to let you know when on-line games are scheduled and how to sign on if you’ve never cracked the code of BBO. The web page at San Mateo Bridge Center, [www.sanmateobridgecenter.com](http://www.sanmateobridgecenter.com), gives you a good start for BBO as well as quizzes and lessons.

A warm welcome to new Unit 498 members: Robert Comartin, Jenny Hayden, and Tito Rael.

And congratulations, to players advancing over the past months: to Junior Master, Romy Bauer, Zoi Calomiris, Laura Dholakia, Carol Gonela, Rita Gupta, Judith Prothro, King Prothro and Margaret Wong; to Club Master, Gail Cameron, Josephine Killen, Hamid Motamed and David Platshon; to Sectional Master, Siuling Ku and Umesh Padval; to Regional Master, Gloria Halliday and Kaili Jiao

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 Unit 498 website, [www.unit498.com](http://www.unit498.com) to get all the up-to-date info.

Stay safe and keep your “social distance” and wear that smile (behind your mask, of course).

## Santa Cruz

*By Karen Schamberg*

It’s September and we’re still home, as are school kids, and lots of us are glued to either a computer screen or a TV. Personally, I’m re-watching favorite old comedy movies, British crime dramas, and just about any show where the actors speak with an Australian or New Zealand accent. Hating the rolling blackouts, but how about all that lightning and thunder last month! There are some amazing photos if you



Google “Lightning in Santa Cruz.” Yes, I’m a little bored.

But, back to the purpose of this column – the wonderful world of Bridge at Unit 550, the Santa Cruz Bridge Club.

High scores in vClub games were earned by: Ken Gamble & Mick Friedberg, 72.22%; Betsy Allen & Michael Kerner, 71.30%; Susan & Jim Slinger, 70.56%; and Ron Baron & Norm Marks, 70.24%.

Congratulations to the following folks for reaching Milestones this month: Gina Brown, Regional Master; Leslie Davidson, Sectional Master; and Mary Martin, Junior Master.

Welcome Albert Low, our latest member of the Santa Cruz Bridge Center. Hope to meet you in person one day.

You can play vClub games every day of the 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.

If you wish to play in a game that does not allow robots, click the link on our website homepage that says, “Getting A Partner in SCBC vClub Games.”

For those of you who like quicker games, Fast Pairs (6 minutes/board) are now featured at 6:30 pm Tuesday evenings. Robots are allowed and the game fee is \$3.

The Friday “alliance” games with San Jose are working out well and there are plans afoot to add a 199er alliance game. Check the homepage “News Headlines” for the latest on that.

Ken Llacera’s 8-week 2/1 class has ended. If you are interested in future classes, contact him. Ken Gamble is planning a Declarer class in September. Look on the “Game Calendar” and click on the white boxes with red borders for details.

Right now, our lifeline to bridge is the website: [www.santacruzbridge.org](http://www.santacruzbridge.org).

## **Santa Rosa/Petaluma**

*By Cecelia Zachar*

BBO! What would we do without it? Unit 509 is fortunate to have Virtual Club games 6 days a week at the Bridge Gallery and to participate in a pool of Northern California virtual clubs. The Bridge Gallery Club continues to be a success with Virtual Club games every day of the week except Wednesday. There were 278 tables in play the last month. For a list of all Unit 509 Virtual Games, see <http://santarosabridge.com>.

Seeing a need for newer players to be able to compete, socialize and learn in the same game, Kathy Venton will be adding a second Virtual Club game on Mondays at 11:25 a.m. starting September 7. The Open game starts 20 minutes later at 11:45 a.m., and both sessions will play the same Common Game boards, 18 in the <200 game and 21 in the Open. Kathy plans to be watching the game as it is being played and noting the challenges and opportunities of the various hands. Common Game will email hand records to players along with

commentary on some of the hands after the game completes. At 3 p.m. players in either Monday game or anyone else interested may attend a Zoom session to discuss the day's hands or other bridge topics. There is no charge for the Zoom session, but those who would like to attend the Zoom review will need to email Kathy at [bridgegalleryca@gmail.com](mailto:bridgegalleryca@gmail.com) so she can send them an invite for the Zoom meeting. As usual, table fees for the new Monday game are \$5. There is no charge for the Zoom meeting.

The masterpoints awarded for a game are based on how many tables are in play. That makes sense. If you beat 100 pairs, you should get more points than if you beat 10 pairs. When there are 2 sessions playing the same boards, the one with the stiffest competition will get awarded based on the total number tables in play in both sessions. So, on Mondays, if there are 15 tables in the <200 game and 10 tables in the Open game, winners in the Open game will get masterpoint awards for 25 tables, not 10. BBO has recently been upgraded to apply this computation method for ACBL Virtual games, and Kathy will be taking advantage of this change for the Monday 11:45 a.m. Open game.

Masterpoint awards for Monday's Open Game will be significantly higher than they were previously. She will also be adding a new Saturday Open Game at 11:25 a.m., which will run alongside the <2000 Stratified Pairs game that starts at 11:45 a.m. Note that if you and your partner both qualify for the <2000 game, you may play in either the <2000 game or the Open game, your choice.

One of our members, Tony Jackson, has acquired quite a following for the classes he has offered. These classes are generally for intermediate players — 2 Over 1, Play of the Hand, etc. I've been told they are terrific and I am waiting until he offers Elimination Plays again to attend. If you are interested, you can contact him at [atjsfo@gmail.com](mailto:atjsfo@gmail.com) to get on his mailing list.

Since my last article for this newsletter, we have had 3 big Virtual Club games. On July 22, Larry Spanier and Kathy Venton scored 70.25% in a 10-table open game. Not quite 70%, but soooo close, on July 30 Patty Shribbs and Carol Morse scored 69.05% in a 15-table Silver Linings game for 2.4 silver points. On August 18, Robert Goetzing and Lawson James scored 71.23% to come in first in an 11-table game. In other BBO games, on August 18 our Evelyn Holtz delivered a whopping 76.19% with Nick Wiebe, 1st in a field of 266 pairs, for 4.00 points.

We have two players who flew up to a new rank in July. Hallie Beacham is our new Junior Master and Dave Pankratz our new Diamond Life Master.

Keep well.

## Silicon Valley

By Ray Yuenger

There is little to report from the latest Unit Board meeting via Zoom. There are two candidates running for Director of District 21, our unit's own President, Stu Goodgold, and the incumbent, Jackie Zayac. The voters for these elections are the members of the unit boards in the district, so our Unit Board welcomed Jackie to speak and answer questions. Of course, Stu was excused from this part of the meeting. The election is conducted online over the course of a month by the ACBL submitting electronic ballots to the board members of all 21 units in District 21.



The unit has subscribed to a software package called Pianola for over a year. Some club directors used it to deliver game results to players at the San Jose Bridge Center before ACBL Live for Clubs performed that function. While that function is no longer needed, Pianola also provides a mass email function allowing the unit and club directors to communicate with unit members. Due to declining attendance at the San Jose Bridge Center's virtual club, we have received a reduced subscription rate, and on that basis voted to continue our subscription.

It is sad to see that several of our virtual club games have failed to reach critical mass attendance. I know the on-line directors are strategizing about how to reverse this trend.

In all likelihood the annual membership meeting called for by our by-laws will have to be a virtual meeting this year, and we will use Pianola to notify members of the schedule of that meeting.

Congratulations to the unit's newest Masters: Shashi Agarwal, Gene Caselli, Kumar Ramaiyer, Evan Teehan (Junior); Robert Maxfield, Ellen Railton, Archana Rathnaker (Club); Betsy Wagner (Sectional); Barry Aldhadeff, Rochelle Aldaheff (Regional); Jung Hu (Bronze); Panette Talia (Sapphire!).

If you ever have a yen to view the minutes of Unit Board meetings, I upload them to [sjbridge.org](http://sjbridge.org). In years past I've sometimes dropped the ball, but I am trying to keep them fairly current, keeping in mind that the minutes of the latest August meeting won't be approved by the Board until our September meeting, so there is a built-in delay of one month.

I hope you are staying safe and sane as COVID-19 continues to inhibit our lives.

## Stockton

By Debbie DeZarn

Even with no Stockton Club play, members continue to play bridge socially and on BBO for Masterpoints. Congratulations to Dennis Del Paine, Stockton's newest Silver Life Master. Margaret Stovall and George Westin, among Stockton's newest members, have reached Club Master in record time. That is a benefit of having a variety of multiple online bridge tournaments available throughout each day rather than just four games total each week.



There is no Board news to report from President Ken Hillman and despite my pleas for something to print, most people say "nothing to report." I did hear that Maryanne Sievers has a new batch of kittens at her house so contact her if you'd like to add a furry friend to your household. They have already had their first shots. Paula Monroe recently played some properly distanced social bridge with like-minded

friends and was not declarer a single time all afternoon. Her side got to some great contracts and even slams, but it was always her partner who got to play it. After 8 hands with each of 3 different partners it was a bit disappointing in addition to being an unusual statistic.

Aurene Schene told a story of accidentally setting off her smoke alarm while using the BBQ so her home security system monitor called the fire department unbeknownst to her. What a surprise when a gorgeously handsome group of firefighters showed up at her door! Jenny Lind does not yet play bridge online and spent much of spring and summer making her yard even more colorful with several dozen new plants. All is finished so she has turned to catching up on reading and is "thinking" of trying BBO.

I would love to hear from the rest of you what is going on in your lives so please share some news! Meanwhile, this newsletter and the monthly Bridge Bulletin keep us informed on what is happening in the greater bridge world.

**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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