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Diablo Valley By Lisa Assoni/The ShortCut Cook (499)

Pass It Along

This column is dedicated to encouraging us, as well as others, to play this brain game. Most younger people just think it's for old folks. But in reality, other countries have youngsters mandatorily enrolled in classes. India is one of the countries that believe Bridge helps the students home in on becoming smarter adults.

Studies show cognitive benefits to playing card games by teaching children new strategies for using mathematical information, categorizing patterns, sequencing and sorting.

So, share the good news with your children and grandchildren. If they are willing to patronize you for 15 minutes, SUPER. I did that with my granddaughter, took her to classes taught by Bruce, and she still likes to engage in bridge. This card game lasts for a lifetime.

When sharing with your neighbors, friends, whomever will listen, ask them to come and play. Truth be told, there's side effects. It's demanding, competitive, and comes with some regrets. However, the icing on the cake is winning, and that's why we keep coming back for seconds, thirds, and always wanting more.

Maybe as we age, it's more important to find value in playing and winning. Whatever emotions are provoked, it's best to keep them under wraps, and scream when you get home. Yes, socialization is vital, so we need to keep our cool and be kind, By conveying a positive message to others, we may just attract others to join in.

Lisa Assoni, ShortCut Cook (tm)

Fresno By Laura Da Costa (522)



Hello everyone. Summer break is coming to an end, but the heat doesn't seem to want to go away. I hope you all have managed to stay cool during these weeks of 100+ weather. Remember the clubhouse is always a place to cool off (some might even say it is a place to get too cold).

Past Events

Fourth of July Game: The 4th of July happened to be a Saturday this year. Even though a few players were telling me that they wouldn't be able to play, I had enough that said that they would like to play. We figured that we would have enough to have an Open game (combining the regular Open and 199er players). What I didn't expect was 8 tables! It was a bit like the old days when we used to have quite a few people attending on this holiday. Winners N/S were Gerard Laquerriere & Mun Takeda, and E/W winner (and overall) were Ray April & Bob Durbrow.



Non-Life Master Sectional: This Sectional was just this last weekend. The usual two-day tournament was changed to a one-day, Saturday Sectional this year. The change was due to the lower number of tables on Sunday in last year's tournament. By making this change to one day, it also allowed us to have a Unit championship game on Sunday so that some of the Open people did not miss out on playing this weekend (we managed 6 tables for that game!).

The Saturday games ran smoothly and seemed not to be too overwhelming to our under 750 mps players. Maybe we can find another Saturday in the year to have another one. The morning game missed out on having a separate 99er game, but it ended up producing a nice 7 table game when we put the two sides together. Winners for the 10 am game were N/S Judy Pierre & Madeline Lynes and E/W Jason McAlexander & Clint Hudson (overall winners). The afternoon game had 4 ½ tables and the winners were Rita Gladding & Pamela Pigg.

Congratulations to the 18 different players who managed to win silver masterpoints in the game. The highest winners, and the ones getting their names on the plaque, are Ann Keag & Doris Myers.

We were happy to get to know a table of our neighbors from the Visalia unit (Mike, April, Mary, & Dona). They came and played both sessions.

Thanks to all who contributed their help in putting on this tournament: whether helping the director, contributing to the lunch, or helping with the setup/cleanup—these include Jackie Finn, Marianne Kast, Ann Keag, Jason McAlexander, Doris Myers, Mary Warner, and June Weber. I am sure others contributed as well, but I am too exhausted to remember them all.

Upcoming Events

Fresno Fall Sectional on October 3rd & 4th: Oh no, not another sectional already. Yes, it is coming. This is the Local Open Sectional that I direct. The flyers are now in the clubhouse, so start making plans to join us. You can also see the flyer [here](#). The Fall Sectional does not have a team session, so all four sessions (two on Saturday and two on Sunday) will be pair games.

Mentoring Game on September 13th: Time to have another of these fun events. We call it a game, but no actual game is conducted, we just set up the lesson a bit like a game. The way we conduct this lesson is that we place mentors at North and then fill the remaining locations at the table with mentees. East/West pairs are often regular partnerships, with the Souths being players who came in without a partner. We move everyone around, so all get a chance to experience being at the table with different mentors. Usually, this lesson is fun for the mentors sharing their knowledge, mentees who are getting a chance to get this more personalized lesson, and, lastly, those who sort of fall somewhere between a mentor and mentee in experience. We



even teach a little about scoring for those who wonder where our game scores come from (match pointing lesson!).

Members News

Change of Rankings: New rankings for June & July 2026.

Junior Master

- James Moore

Club Master

- Valerie Goya

70% Games: We have some special games to report, 70% and above:

<u>Pair or Ind.</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Game</u>
Linda Arredondo	75.00	Fri. Aft. 199er Indiv. (7/10)
Pat Heckathorn	75.00	Fri. Aft. 199er Indiv. (7/10)
Laura Da Costa & Ray April	72.92	Sun. Aft. NAP Game (7/12)
Patricia Creede & Judy Geary	78.13	Tues. Aft. 750 Game (7/14)
Anthony Gamber & Patty Head	72.00	Sat. Aft. 199er Game (7/25)
Ray April & Lowell Gist	73.02	Mon. Aft. Open Game (8/17)

Bridge Lessons: Don Austin will be starting a new session of beginning bridge on Wednesday afternoons at 1 pm. These lessons are being conducted as part of Clovis Adult Education program and begin soon (August 26th is the first day).

Next issue of Heart of the District is in October. In the meantime, keep up with what is going on in the clubhouse or on our Website at fresnobridge.org.

Gilroy/Morgan Hill/Hollister By Jim Craig (524)

Chuck Wilson

We are sad to report on the passing of long-time Unit member Chuck Wilson, 90, most recently of Santa Cruz. Chuck and wife Carolyn moved to Santa Cruz to downsize and be closer to family a few years ago. They remained active participants with their many friends in Unit 524 on-line and at the local club. Together for over 65 years of marriage, they traveled all over the world, visiting more than 50 countries. Chuck was an outstanding athlete for most of his life, running, biking and sailing. Fifteen years ago a permanent partnership was born when Chuck and Norm Dow met at a beginning bridge club. Together they successfully sprinted across the Life Master threshold a few years later. They continued playing online right until the end. All of Unit 524 expresses



their condolences to Carolyn and the rest of Chuck's family. He had a full life and added fun and color to the Unit for many years.

Rank Advancements

We had a couple of advancements over the past two months.

Carmel Trela achieved Junior Master (5 mp):

Nancy Sampson achieved Club Master (20 mp)

Congratulations! Keep it up!

Unit Games

Regular monthly Unit Games are generally held on the third Sunday of the month. Occasionally the Unit Game must be moved to a different weekend, and sometimes additional, special Unit Games are added on a different, but announced, basis. Usually, the location is the Morgan Hill Centennial Recreation Center but check any announcements. Starting time is 11:30 am (which also can vary for different/special events).

Results

July Unit Game in Morgan Hill (7/19/26)

The open/stratified game had 8 tables

N/S A– Ken Johnson & Graham Kelly

N/S B&C – Betsy Wagner & Judy Gouvea

E/W A – Margo Kakalec & Dave Jackson

E/W B&C – Skip Pack & Ivan Godard

The 199er game had 3 tables

First – Dave Glashan & Bob Wiedlin

Second – Rebecca Sanchez & Helen Shaw



August Unit Game in Morgan Hill (8/16/26)

The open/stratified game had 8 full tables

N/S A – Seala Kelly-Fletcher & Graham Kelly

N/S B&C – Melanie Kakalec & Kirk Blackerby

E/W A – Jim Craig & Richard Ross

E/W B&C – Lennart Naslund & Dennis Rubida

The 199er game had 6 tables

N/S A&B – Jim & Kathy Krause

N/S C – Shireen Zekanoski & Hadi Eslambolchi

E/W A&B&C – Gretchen Ross & Carmel Trela

Full results are available on the ACBL “Live for Clubs,” and the “Common Game” websites, both with hand records.

Club Games

The **Tuesday** game in **Hollister** (Buena Vista Bridge Club) plays at the club house in Dunne Park (600 West Street, Hollister). Game time is 11:00 am Tuesday. The game is generally 3 - 6 tables, and open to all. If you plan to come and have not played there in a while, call Skip a day in advance to save your place (831-524-4883). Winners over the past two months were:

Jun 23 A –Graham Kelly & Seala Fletcher-Kelly

B – Barbara Earley & Suzanne Proctor

Jun 30 1st – Geff Kinn & Dave Glashan

2nd – Graham Kelly & Seala Fletcher-Kelly

Jul 7 1/2 – Graham Kelly & Seala Fletcher-Kelly

1/2 – Barbara Earley & Suzanne Proctor

Jul 14 1 – Jim Craig & Win Stone

2 - Patrick & Liega Arnett

Jul 21 1st – Barbara Earley & Suzanne Proctor

2nd - Jim Craig & Win Stone



Jul 28 A – Jim Craig & Win Stone

B– Nancy Sampson & Dave Glashan

Aug 4 A – Graham Kelly & Seala Fletcher-Kelly

B – Jim Craig & Win Stone

Aug 11 A – Jim Craig & Win Stone

B – Patrick & Liega Arnett

The **Thursday** game in **Gilroy** (Stone's Game) is at the Senior Center across from City Hall and adjacent to the Police Station, with a brief lesson hand at 10 am followed by play. There is an Open section and an Intermediate/Novice section with a top limit of 199 MP for all participants.

Jun 25 (Open) N/S A – Ken Johnson & Dave Jackson

N/S B – Skip Pack & Barbara Earley

E/W A – Sally Hale & Jeff Rogers

E/W B – Dennis Rubida & Rhonda Hardy

(<199) 1 – Irene Popenhager & Brad Whitaker

2 – Jim & Kathy Krause

Jul 2 (Open) N/S A – Jim Craig & Graham Kelly

N/S B – Carol Nicoletti & Suzanne Proctor

E/W A & B – Lennart Naslund & Dennis Rubida

E/W 2nd – Sally Hale & Jeff Rogers

(<199) 1 – Bob Wiedlin & Brad Whitaker

2 – Celeste Brandt & Peggy Bradley



- Jul 9 (Open) N/S A – Ken Johnson & Carol Nicoletti
N/S B – Skip Pack & Patrick Arnett
E/W A – Margot Kakalec & Mary Ann Ruggles
E/W B – Rhonda Hardy & Lesley Waltner
(< 199) 1 – Julia Meader & Merrill Wolfe
2 – Bob Wiedlin & Rebecca Sanchez
- Jul 16 (Open) N/S A – Ken Johnson & Joanne Wicker
N/S B – Dennis Rubida & Lennart Naslund
E/W A – Mark Moore & Norm Dow
E/W B – Carol Nicoletti & Lesley Waltner
(< 199) 1 – Shireen Zekanoski & Maria Schalk
2 – Dave Glashan & Geff Kinn
- Jul 23 (Open) N/S A – Ken Johnson & Graham Kelly
N/S B – Carol Nicoletti & Suzanne Proctor
E/W A – Sally Hale & Jeff Rogers
E/W B – Dennis Rubida & Lennart Naslund
(< 199) 1st – Irene Popenhager & Julia Meader
2nd – Lisa Mack & Maria Schalk
- Jul 30 (Open) N/S A – Jim Craig & Graham Kelly
N/S B – Ginny Arguello & Norm Dow
E/W A – Sally Hale & Jeff Rogers
E/W B – Dennis Rubida & Lennart Naslund
(< 199) 1 – Jim & Kathy Krause
2 – Dave Glashan & Geff Kinn



Aug 6 (Open) N/S A – Jim Craig & Graham Kelly

N/S B – Ginny Arguello & Betsy Wagner

E/W A&B – Lorrie Scott & Patrick Arnett

(<199) 1 – Pat Kelley & Ernestine Hicks

2 – Bob Wiedlin & Julia Meader

Aug 13 (Open) A1 – Sally Hale & Jeff Rogers

B1– Dennis Rubida & Lennart Naslund

(<199) 1– Cynthia Francis & Catherine Konrath

2 – Julia Meader & Merrill Wolfe

Full results are available on the Unit website, and ACBL "Live for Clubs," both with hand records (for Gilroy and some Hollister games).

Local Online Game

Win Stone, who operates the Thursday game at the Gilroy Senior Center, also hosts Bridge Base (BBO) online games, Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays at 1:25 pm local time. Players are welcome from all over, but generally it is made up of Unit 524 members and their friends. Usually, 3 to 8 tables of friendly competitors each day. Look for "Stones Game" at 1:25 (Pacific time) on BBO, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Livermore Valley By Don Garka (501)

The Livermore Club has started using RSVPbridge as a replacement for ACBLscore. It has many enhanced features that are not available with the ACBLscore. It has a reservation system that works very well, players are able to register with their partner or say they are looking for one as well as select their seating preference. The seating is then posted on a display, or they can log in and look on their phones to find their table. The RSVP system is web-based so you will need a good network or very good cell service. We have had some issues interfacing our Bridgmate's scores to RSVP and with our internet service. We are still working on getting a better network at the IOOF building where we play our games. We are also looking at the possibility of not using Bridgemates to keep score and to use cell phones for scoring. The new system does cost but the ACBL is paying for the first 200 tables. If there are any club managers that are interested in our experiences, please give me a call. Don Garka 925-606-8808.

The Livermore Club will continue to meet on Mondays at 10 a.m. All games are 'special', offer extra points, and still only cost \$7. Singles are always welcome please sign up on RSVPbridge and if you do not get a match, you will still be able to play as we



promise to find you one! Please arrive 10-15 minutes early. If you do not have an RSVP account or are having any issues using it, please let me know dgarka@comcast.net. Check livermorebridge.com for details about the club. The Livermore Village Parking Garage is now open and free with no time restrictions at 50 S L St.

Marin By Mary Warner (508)



Marin Unit 508 has a new Board with some enthusiastic young players. Here's what they are up to:

Building Bridge Through Community and Mentorship *Written by Chris Ohland*

Four years ago, after completing beginner bridge lessons with Henry Kingdon, a small group of four classmates began gathering on Friday evenings to practice, learn, and enjoy the game together. What started as a single table has steadily grown, and our most recent gathering filled four tables. This growth reflects something important about bridge: people stay



with the game when they find both a welcoming community and opportunities to learn from others. Every experienced player was once a beginner, and every new player benefits from encouragement, guidance, and a friendly partner at the table. As we continue to grow bridge in our Unit, let's remember that mentoring, teaching, and simply welcoming someone into a game may be the most important bids we make. Together, we can build a stronger bridge community, one new player and one new friendship at a time.



Congratulations to the following who have reached a **new rank** in ACBL!

Gary Grande - Mill Valley - Club Master

Brian Strunk - Bel Tiburon - Club Master

June Strunk - Bel Tiburon - Club Master

Karen Antonelli - San Francisco - Regional Master

Tess Offord - San Anselmo - Regional Master

Elizabeth D'Orazio - Corte Madera - NABC Master

Mary Warner - Corte Madera - Life Master

William Bailey - Mill Valley - Emerald Life Master

Congratulations to the **Q2 Grand Prix Winners**, for April, May & June:

1) Mark Buchignani 26.66 black points

2) Jo Anne Murdock 18.97 black points

3) Angelo Servino 16.9 black points

And so far, the YTD leaders are:

1. Mark Buchignani – 49.2

2. Jo Anne Murdock – 47.94

3. Angelo Servino – 40.49

4. Gene Simpson – 34.33

5. Diane Williams – 29.18

Do you recall this famous bridge coup in James Bond's movie "Moonraker?" The notorious multi-millionaire, Sir Hugo Drax, picks up a hand with 31 points!

Click on this [Link](#) to see it. Lesson? -- Distribution can trump high point count! Oh...and don't cheat!

Profile of the Week *Written by Bob Chilvers*

Have you ever witnessed the explosion of an atomic bomb? Or a hydrogen bomb? Do you know anyone who has? Chances are that you do. One of our Unit 508 bridge playing friends was deeply involved.



Roedel (Rod) Masters was born 95 years ago at an army base in Hawaii where his father (who was an army officer and a graduate of West Point) was stationed. Rod and his family lived on army bases for several years until his father retired. Then they moved to Burlingame. That is where Rod went to high school (graduating in 1950) and then to San Mateo J.C.

He got a job at UC Berkeley's Lawrence Livermore Laboratory which was deeply involved in the development of nuclear weapons. He was sent to the Marshall Islands, which includes the Bikini Atoll and the Eniwetok Atoll, where the first hydrogen bombs were exploded. While there he was involved in Operation Castle, which conducted several high-yield nuclear tests, including the most powerful nuclear bomb ever exploded by the United States. Rod was a member of the team that took photos of those tests.



After that he was involved in Operation Teapot, a series of nuclear bomb tests at a site in Nevada, where he and his teammates took very precise videos of the explosions. Then he worked for Holmes & Narver Construction Co., a primary contractor of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission that paid its employees very nice salaries. That firm needed employees with top secret security clearances. Rod was qualified! His job was to repair two-way radios and other devices.

Rod moved back to Burlingame to take care of his mother who had a stroke. While there he met Pachara Hanley, a woman who was born in Bangkok, Thailand, and had owned a Thai restaurant in Carmel. Her husband died and she had to sell the restaurant. Then she rented a place next door to Rod and his mother. They became good friends and Pachara would cook good dinners for him.



Rod got a job working in radio communications for the County of San Mateo. He worked there for nine years, then he had to put his mother into a nursing home. He moved to San Rafael, got a similar job with the County of Marin, and bought a house in the Canal Area of San Rafael. He asked Pachara to come and live with him. She accepted! He worked for Marin County for six years, then decided to retire (at age 48). Rod and Pachara lived together for 13 years, then they decided to get married. According to Rod, the most fun experience in his life was getting married to "a wonderful woman." 23 years ago they moved to the ridge just north of Hamilton, where they live now. According to Rod, he has hiked about 1,000 miles in Marin County. And he and Pachara have done a lot of traveling, including several cruises.



Rod was invited to join a group of friends at “party bridge” evenings. They would socialize, drink wine, and play bridge. About 20 years ago he and his regular partner, Irene Averil, decided to take up duplicate bridge. They played at the local clubs, sectional tournaments and regional tournaments. He is now a Silver Life Master, and is working on becoming a Ruby Life Master. Unfortunately, Irene recently passed away unexpectedly. We have all felt the tragic loss. Sadly, it has left Rod without his regular partner. Many are lining up to partner with him!

Rod’s comment on our game: “Bridge is a good place to be for someone who is retired. There are a lot of nice people.”

Thank you to our Biographer, Bob Chilvers for this profile.

Some exciting news at our Philanthropy, Homeward Bound, honoring the late Jerry Meislin, a dedicated bridge enthusiast and longtime Homeward Bound contributor. Read more.

[Introducing Jerry's Place, a Home for Seniors to Thrive](#)

Modesto By Ray Adams (529)



The Modesto Unit was shocked on July 21, when we found out about the untimely passing of very popular unit member Tom Au. Tom was a graduate of Yale who was so superlative with statistics that we relied on him to tell us the chances that a suit in bridge would split one way or the other. He was expert in several foreign languages and was rapidly improving his bridge skills. In fact, even considering the fact that he was unable to play after July 21, he still won the most points in July for a C player. Tom will definitely be missed.

A memorial for Tom will be held on Saturday, September 12 at 10:30 AM at the Modesto Chinese Christian Church at 2120 Presscott Road.

There were two rank advancements during this period. First, long-time member Mike Saeler won the points needed to become a Life Master. Mike had already won all his gold, silver, and red points and only needed .24 black to achieve his goal. He won those playing with Ed Jeffers in a club game. Mindi Lassman also advanced to Club Master in July. Well done, Mike and Mindi!

Judy's group staged five games in this period. On June 1, Sheila Carroll and Jane Griffith had a 63.75% game. Sue Winter/Nancy Lilly topped that on the fifteenth with 70%, with Lynn Brooks and Wes Remmers then topping that at 73.75% on the twenty-ninth. On July sixth, Sheila and Jane won with 59.38%, while the twentieth saw Christi Banuelos and Marilyn Tallent pacing the field with 67.97%, while Cathie Peck and Nancy Simas came in second at 64.58%.



Total point winners for the two months were: first, Sheila and Jane with 1.83, second, Dana Dempsey at 1.28, with Sandy Dieker (Mike Saeler's wife) and Mindi Lassman third at 1.17, while Colleen Black won honorable mention with 1.06.

The June Unit game was paced by Sheela Wani/Ray Adams at 61.81%. Libby Longstreth/Galen Neptune were first in B, with Stockton pair Debbie DeZarn/Frank Klo coming in first in C. Tying for third overall were Jaime Hamilton/Sharon Cole and Cindy Rodgers/Gary Capwell.

The July Unit game was won by Lee Maddocks/Ray Adams at 70.37%. Judy Remmers/Sheela Wani were first in B, while Libby Longstreth/Galen Neptune were third overall. Fourth was captured by Garrard Marsh/Lorraine Bocks, with Cindy Rodgers/Gary Capwell fifth. Barbara and Jim Page won the C division, while Tom Au/Joe Castiglione were second in this category.

High score of 72.2% for the Saturday morning game was turned in by the Pages. Sharon Cole and Joyce Rudesill were second at 69.44% and third with 68.25%, just edging Libby Longstreth/Jeanne Russo at 67.46%. Lynn Brooks/Lynn Pont led all C players with 59.75%.

The total point winners were: first, Barbara Page, second Joyce and Sharon, while Libby Longstreth was third. In C, Jim Page was first with Kathy Amos second, and Ray and Mindi Lassman coming in third.

In the open game, Bruce Ruskin/Frank Frohman had the high score of 68.51%, with Lee Maddocks and Frank second at 67.71%, and Ralph Jungwirth/Trelle Uhl third at 66.07%. Top point winners in the open went to A: Sheela Wani with 17.70, second Ray Adams with 17.36, and third Frank Frohman at 16.14. In B, Libby Longstreth led at 12.27, Garrard Marsh second with 10.86, while Barbara Page and Gary Capwell tied for third at 9.74, edging honorable mention Cindy Rodgers who had 9.45. In C, Jim Page won with 6.91, Tom Au was second with 5.82, Ray Lassman had 3.94, while Jaime Hamilton won honorable mention with 3.37.

Four unit members went to the Nationals in Minneapolis and did well. Lorraine Bocks/Garrard Marsh won about 18.5 gold points while Pam and John Mayne gained 3 platinum, 29 gold, and 3 red points in the Twin Cities.

See you at the table in August and September.



Monterey By Ed Schrenzel (530)

The Board of Directors at the Unit 530 Bridge Club was pleased to announce its new leadership positions:

President- Joe Truskot

Vice President- Ahmad Ahmadi

Secretary- Rita Harvey

Treasurer- Joyce Hazma

Membership Chair- Kerry Meyer

Goodwill Chair- Joanie Purcell

Hospitality Chair- Barbara Santry

Webmaster/Social Media Chair- Leigh Zerboni

Purchasing Agent and Game Director Liaison- Maja

Also, Mano Singham will continue to serve as a non-voting member in charge of game sanctions, Ray Mok will continue as liaison with the landlord, and Ed Schrenzel as the Diamond in the Ruff correspondent.

Meanwhile, the club hosted **two monthly Unit Lunch and Bridge events.**

On **Sunday, July 12th**, 48 players feasted on Kurt Schnebele's delicious "world famous" paella along with appetizers, salads, side dishes, and desserts.

Afterwards, Hetty Eddy directed the bridge game, which netted \$847, including \$87 in donations, to help offset club expenses.

The team of Jay Armstrong and Peter Gelfand finished first North-South, followed by Sharon Larson—Sam Dodson and Alan Hedegar—Leonard Chriss. The top East-West team was Mano Singham- Bob DuBroff, while Maja and Helen Rubin finished second and Tom and Ewan Eby were third.

Then on **Sunday, August 9th**, the Unit game drew 9 1/2 tables. Neville Kirby provided delicious hot dogs, and many others contributed side dishes and desserts.

Maja did a great job directing the bridge game, which netted \$629.95 of which \$85 were donations.

The top North South point getters were the team of Roy Shanker and Linda Gibson. Nancy Croom and Mo Wittels finished second while Marti Jones and Bob Farrell were third.



Finishing first East West was Alan Hedegard-Leonard Chriss, followed by Mano Singham-Bob DuBroff and Trulee Ricketts-Helen Rubin.

The next Unit Game will be on Sunday, September 13. Lunch is served at 12 noon, with bridge following at 12:30. The Monterey Bridge Center is located at 201B Calle del Oaks, Del Rey Oaks, CA; 831-747-1650.

Palo Alto By David Merenbach (503)



As we near the end of August the weather says it is still summer, but the calendar tells us fall is approaching and the days are getting shorter. Unit 503 and the Palo Alto Bridge Center (PABC) want to remember our amazing summer by sharing some memories of two great events! Below you will find a retrospective of our Firecracker tournament... by the numbers. Followed by our July 31, Hawaiian themed game... in pictures:

From June 24th to June 28th the PABC hosted our annual Firecracker tournament which featured:

- 1** – Fantastic tournament with...
- 2** – ... separate sanctions to allow Non-Life Masters to compete for gold masterpoints.
- 2** – Amazing co-chairs. Shout out to Marc Cervellino and Dana Shelley
- 4** – Unit 503 members (Gary MacGregor, Amber Lin, Kevin Rosenberg & Tahir Gokcen) who earned more than twenty-five Silver masterpoints at the Open Sectional
- 5** – Full days of fun at the tables.
- 8** – Minimum number of Gold/Red masterpoints earned in the NLM Regional by Unit 503 members Jian Fang, David Sweet, John Affaki, Suzy Papazian & Ping Chen
- 10** – Total sessions of bridge
- 16** – Number of District 21 units represented by players at the tournament
- 17** – Gold/red masterpoints won by Jian Fang who topped the NLM winners
- Dozens** – Number of volunteers who gave of their time to make this event a success *(Thank you all. Unit 503 and all the participants are in your debt)*
- 20** – people played in all ten sessions



- 20** – number of Firecracker participants who have earned more than 10,000 lifetime masterpoints
- 34** – Masterpoints won by Gary MacGregor – the top Unit 503 winner
- 40** – Masterpoints won by Josh Donn and Arti Bhargava – the top overall winners
- 52** – number of bracketed teams who played on Sunday
- 61** – number of players who had 0-20 masterpoints
- 76** – Percentage of players who won gold and/or red masterpoints in the NLM Regional (Congratulations to all, but especially those first-time colored point winners)
- 137** – Tables played at the NLM Regional
- 250** – **Years of independence. The reason we hold this tournament each year!**
- 305** – Days until next year's Firecracker. Plan now for the tournament June 23 – 27 2027
- 364** – Gold and red masterpoints awarded in the NLM Regional
- 462** – Tables at the tournament
- 534** – Individual players attending the tournament
- 2,020** – Masterpoints (gold, red, & silver) awarded during the 5 days of the tournament
- Unlimited** – Gratitude to Lynn Yokel and her team of directors for their patience, guidance and organization during this tournament

We hoped you enjoyed the Firecracker this year. We enjoyed hosting you. Unit 503 will be hosting two more sectionals this year: **August 6-9** and **October 22-25**. We hope to see you there.



For the **Hawaiian-theme game**, the 25 tables of players who entered the PABC were fashionably adorned in aloha garb. The room had been adorned with palm trees, pineapples, coconuts, and vacationing flamingoes everywhere. As you can see from the pictures below a good time was had by all.



For information about more great events like the ones above go to Paloaltobridge.org.

For comments or feedback on this newsletter contact the author at merenbach@yahoo.com.

San Francisco By Tom Stillman (506)

Milestones

Moving up the rung toward Life Masters in July are Jan Porto (Regional Master) and Eric Cohen (Sectional Master).

Tournament Recap

Palo Alto held their Non-Life Master Regional June 24th through June 28th. Many Unit 506 members placed in "the money," but David Sweet with his teammates came in first in the 10-table Gold Rush Pairs. David also finished with the second most Masterpoints overall with 11.75.



In the Open Sectional part of the Palo Alto tournament, Helen Chow was the top MP winner among San Franciscans with 12.07 MP.

Over in Lafayette at the Unit 499 game on August 1st and 2nd, Jo Ginsberg and Lev Vishnevsky of San Francisco came in first in the Saturday Open Pairs. Jo and Lev represented San Francisco quite well by taking home the most MP in Lafayette, 14.78.

Unit 506 at the Minneapolis NABC

The Summer NABC was held in Minneapolis this year from July 8th to July 19th.

Henry Zhang with his teammates from Louisiana and Texas won the 1st Sunday Bracket B Teams in a field of 9 tables.

More evidence of the talented youth in Unit 506, Eddy Qi came in second with his teammates from North Carolina, Florida, and Ontario in the 2nd Thursday Afternoon Youth Swiss Teams. Kaitlyn Kuang finished 9th in the event with her teammates from San Jose, Fremont, and Washington state. Kaitlyn's brother, Samuel, finished 5th in the National Youth Swiss Open with his teammates from Washington state and Illinois. Samuel also finished 2nd in the 2nd Sunday 499er AM Pairs with his partner, Kaining Sheng of Northbrook, IL. Kaitlyn finished fourth in that event with her partner, Muyi Chen of Bellevue, WA.

Mark Ralph, who you can usually find at Starbucks or Trader Joe's came in 50th in the Wernher Open Pairs with his partner William Harker of Santa Fe, NM, an event with 65 tables. What is notable about this result is that I can share with you readers who Wernher is and why a tournament is named after him. Wikipedia, my source for these items, has a rather low opinion of the Wernher which I will not share. The tournament has been held since 1934. It was a fixture of the Summer NABC until 1962 when it moved to the Spring NABC. It returned to the Summer NABC in 2004. As noted in my previous articles regarding major tournaments at the NABC, the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) was apparently 20 years behind the Women's Rights Movement of the 1970s. The Wernher as with many other tournaments did not allow women to complete until 1992! The tournament is named after Sir Derrick J. Wernher, a past president of the American Bridge League in the 1930s. Wernher was from London and Deal, NJ (that's a real place. Guess some of us are destined by where we live).

In the big Spingold Knockout Tournament, one of the premier bridge events, Mike Rippey with his international team from France, Italy, and Poland, made it to the round of 32. For those, like myself, who thought this tournament was named after a jigsaw puzzle company, let me set the record straight. The name of the jigsaw puzzle company is Springbok. Nathan Spingold originally studied law before working for three Chicago (his birthplace) newspapers. He then went on to work as publicists for many actors before moving to Columbia Pictures where he moved his way up to General Vice-President. Mr. Spingold donated the trophy for the winner for the tournament named



after him. He was regarded as one of the most influential men in contract bridge administration in the 1930s and 1940s.

More results will be given in the next installment.

Unit 506 Games

July

Attention to the World Cup and free Slurpees took away some players from our July Unit game held July 11th at St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral. Mark McCarthy and Robert Balas were the overall winners with 60.12% playing East/West. The North/South victors were Denny Arar and Christian Goetze with a 57.14%. Complete results can be found [here](#).

Sarah Malarkey and Jan Porto finished first out of four tables in the 499er game. Complete results for the July 499er game can be found [here](#).

August

Fifteen and half tables braved the traffic of Outside Lands to come to St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral for the August Unit Game on August 8th. Lauren Friedman and Daniel Kroll emerged as overall victors with a 63.45% game. Again, the North/South winners were Denny and Christian replicating their achievement from July. Complete results can be found [here](#).

In the 499er game, the top three positions were separated by only 2 match points, with the winners being Paul Blain and Andrew Bye. Complete results for the August 499er game can be found [here](#).

Loaves and the Fishes (without the fishes)

On Wednesday before the August Unit Game, two generous players came to pass out 16 French rolls. They had intended to order four rolls from Instacart but ended up with four bags (4 rolls in each bag). Marion Robertson our stalwart provider of refreshments before the Pandemic said she would take the rolls and make sandwiches for the Unit Game. By some miracle (perhaps due to Mary), those four rolls turned into about 100 sandwiches and a large plate of deviled eggs. Thanks so much Marion for your efforts in your support of the Unit.



San Mateo By Lauren Rosen (498)



We want to extend a huge thank you to everyone who has donated to our Unit 498 "Do What you Love to End Alzheimer's" campaign this year. Thanks to your generosity, we have raised more than \$35,000 to support this worthy cause.

Unit 498 Fall Sectional

We are looking forward to our Fall Sectional at the Palo Alto Bridge Center on September 26th and 27th. On Saturday the 26th, we will host 499er and Open Pairs games in the morning and afternoon sessions. We will also have a special 99er session Saturday morning where the winners will become the next pair to have their names permanently engraved on the Art Weinstein Memorial Trophy. On Sunday, all games will be team events. Pre-registration for Saturday is strongly recommended as tables are limited. No pre-registration is needed for the Sunday games.

Lesson and Bridge Game for 199ers on October 10

Phil Abrahamson will present his postponed lesson on "Card Play is the Heart of Bridge Play" on Saturday, October 10th, at the Villa. If you are interested in joining us and are a newcomer or intermediate player with fewer than 199 points, please mark your calendar. The lesson starts at 9:30 am sharp followed by an 18-board game with post-game hand review, aiming to be finished around 12:30pm. Entry fee is \$15. No partner needed! Snacks provided! Find more information on our website. We hope to see you there!

Please visit our [Unit 498.com](http://Unit498.com) for news and registration details for these events as well as info on new members, rank advancements, and results and schedules for our Unit and Club Games.

Santa Cruz By Leslie Davidson (550)



We have been enjoying our usual coastal weather, fog in the morning and warm afternoons. The beaches have been crowded but hopefully school starts soon and the traffic will decrease.

Thanks to our newer players, our games have seen an increase in table counts! Much thanks to Shamim Formoso, our Newcomer liaison. We are now holding Newcomer games every Wednesday morning and currently averaging 7 tables. Some of our newcomers are branching into the 750 and open games.



Our Sunday Brunches continue to draw bridge players for a fabulous meal. We have a new Chef, Ron and his wife Nikki, together with Heather each take turns preparing brunch each month. If you're in Santa Cruz on a Sunday, come join us. For times and dates see our website: scbridge.org.

Hitting New Heights

New Junior Master

- Betsy Powers

New Regional Master

- Anthony Nelson

70% Games 6-14 thru 8-9

7/13 Sandra Erickson/Cathy Foy - 71%

7/15 Jan Winham/Leslie Davidson - 71%

7/20 Margann Mentor/Matthew Nathanson - 71%

8/4 Heather MacGregor/Peter Gelfand - 71%

Red, White and Blue Party on 3rd of July, 2026

Another successful get-together was planned and executed by our wonderful Events Committee. Hot Dogs were supplied by the SCBC and all the sides, salads, and desserts by the membership.

We filled 9 1/2 tables and great fun was had by all.





Grab your favorite partner

Santa Cruz Surf's Up 2026 Sectional

October 10 & 11, 2026

See you in OCT ([flyer here](#))

Santa Rosa/Petaluma By Maxine Reagh (509)

Fall Sectional

October 3rd and 4th Unit 509 will host our **Fall Sectional** at the Petaluma Community Center. We try to make it a pleasant couple of days, providing plentiful snacks and beverages and a free lunch on Sunday. We are lucky to have this spacious venue with lots of parking. But it is YOUR attendance that makes the weekend successful. Please consider participating. See this [flyer](#) for more specific information.

Open October at Finley 509

All games will be Open Games in the month of October at Finley and each week there is something special:

Oct. 7 is a Unit Championship (63.6% more point value)

Oct. 14 is a Club Appreciation game (81.8% more point value)

Oct. 21 is the Instant Matchpoint Game (\$5 extra and you get a booklet) Chance for GOLD!

Oct. 28 is another Club Appreciation Game (81.8% more point value)

Unit Game and Lesson July 18

Evelyn Holtz opened us up to new possibilities for communicating in Jacoby Transfer and Texas Transfer bidding sequences. For many of us, this was completely new and eye-opening. For others, it was an excellent review of all the nuances involved. Over fifty people participated in the lesson, and we had 17.5 tables of bridge, necessitating two sections. Jackie Ortiz provided a delicious buffet lunch of green salad, potato salad, corn dogs, apple pie and cookies. We were more than



satisfied. Thank you to Evelyn and Jacki and Kathy V for making a great day. Here are the winners:

Section 1 N/S

- A Bob Klein and Gary Robinson
- B Lawson James and Jonathan Cohen
- C David Kramer and Veronica Berlin

Section 1 E/W

- A Evelyn Holtz and Lynn Blumenthal*
- B Andy Andrews and Carol Morse
- C Tony and Naomi Ramsden

Section 2 N/S

- A Daniel Harp and Joanne Wegsten*
- B Susan Cook and Barbara Simon
- C Katherine Schram and Stephanie Poley

Section 2 N/S

- C David Mendel and Jerry Besses
- B Larry Borsian and Asher Nathan
- C Azar Riazi and Tess Offord

*= overall winner

Unit Game and Lesson August 15

Game tries after suit agreement come in various styles, depending on partnership agreement. Tony Jackson gave a thorough explanation of the various approaches, with handouts that have several examples and quizzes that help you check your understanding. He also made time to introduce the Spiral Convention (and Modified Spiral) which helps players find the best spot to play when they might have a





seven-card fit. Jacki provided another great lunch with zucchini fritters, salads, and muffins. The winners in each tier from the fifteen tables that participated are:

North/South

Carolyn Zocchi and Ann Goldberg (B) 59.9%

Jackie Ortiz and Barbara Simon (A) 57.69%

Carolyn Loe and Randy Loe (C) 54.17%

East/West

Asher Nathan and Paul Scheinberg (B) 65.71%

Mark Hersko and Larry Spanier (A) 63.46%

David Mendel and Jerry Besses (C) 57.37%



Big Games

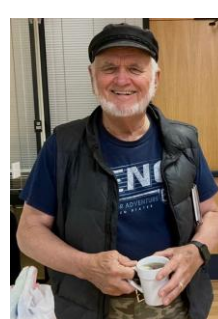
Jackie Ortiz and **Bruce Blakely** came in 3rd overall out of 138 pairs with a 70.3% game on June 9th.

Roy Redlich came in 3rd out of 2,143 players for an 83.07% game on FunBridge on July 10.

John Shribbs and **Lynn Dondero** got a 70.33% game playing in Sonoma on July 20.

ProAm Game at Finley

Nancy Gunn and **Pam Schrock**, N/S and **David Foote** and **Jesse Stamness**, E/W were the top winners in the July 29 ProAm game. They each won \$12, a lottery ticket, and two chocolate bars! Three people won door prizes, with the same contents but a \$10 bill instead. (Jeremy Brott, Lynn Blumenthal, and Patty Harberson). Our next ProAm game occurs on Sept. 30.





Sara Rothmuller Represents!

As of the writing of this newsletter, Sara is competing in the World Bridge Federation 2026 World Bridge Series in Katowice, Poland. She will participate on a team comprised of herself, Silvana Rojko from Slovenia and Thomas Rush and Victor Quiros from various parts of the U.S.A. I will report her impressions of this event in the October Heart of the District. Best of luck, Sara!

Rank Advancements

Jeff Sachar has become a Silver Life Master and **Barbara Olsen** has become a Club Master. Congratulations.

A Shout-Out to Kathy Venton

Kathy has been on vacation for several weeks but before she left, she made sure that all the clubs in Unit 509 (Finley 509, Oakmont and Bridge Gallery) had all the boards we were going to need in her absence. She prepared over eighteen sets of boards and accompanying hand records so that we would be able to "carry on" as usual. On behalf of the club managers, directors and players, thank you Kathy. That's a lot of work.

Bob Rottmayer

Written by Mary Lyons

Bob Rottmayer became ill during our late-April bridge cruise with Larry Cohen and died in Santa Rosa on May 24. We met at the Bridge Gallery in 2012. With his PhD in physics and mine in clinical psychology, we made an interesting partnership. During his distinguished career, he once led a team of 30 physicists and earned more than 30 patents. My son-in-law recently said, "All the scientists in heaven are cheering and clapping—he's here, he's here!"



He was an avid gardener - loved his grapevines, his wonderful vegetable garden, his fruit trees. Bob loved cooking, fine dining and great wine. Most impressively, he very well managed his type I Diabetes for more than 70 years. Bob was also a master wood craftsman, making pieces and furniture (much like the Amish) for his home and for his family. In his career Bob



travelled all over the world. And, in retirement we visited national parks - Glacier, Yosemite (often), Bryce and Zion - vacationed in summers at Lake Winnepesaukee, NH - and travelled to Alaska, Ireland, Germany (we experienced the entire Ring Cycle in Wagner's Opera House in Bayreuth). He loved opera and going to symphony concerts. In the past he played golf and tennis, was a serious bicyclist, and walked every day. Bob was married to Pat for 50+ years and has a sister, Sue in New York, his son, Mike (Agnes), his daughter, Julie (Paul) and two wonderful grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by us all.

John Kozero

from Legacy.com

John M. Kozero was born into a steel-working family on August 12, 1942, in the South Side of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and passed away on August 3, 2026, from complications of Parkinson's disease in his home in Santa Rosa, California. Possessing a rare combination of intelligence and earthiness, John pursued with consuming passion the interests that inspired him and loved with fierce generosity those he deemed worthy of that affection. From his childhood obsession with magic tricks to his mature enthusiasm for Easy Racer recumbent bike century rides, John did not believe in doing things halfway. He had an abiding love for verbal legerdemain (look it up, John would want you to!), bridge, theater, good food and witty company, and the belief that humanity would always prevail over evil.



As a student at Lehigh University, John developed many of these interests, writing for the Brown and White newspaper and performing at the Pennsylvania Playhouse where he was best known for his role in their 1962 production of "Send Me No Flowers." It was also at Lehigh where John first encountered bridge. One day, intending to join the chess players, whom he found solemnly plotting away at their matches, he saw another group of students laughing, chatting, and playing cards. Intrigued, he asked the game's name. "I'll take that," said John, who went on to found the university's bridge club, and later won several national bridge tournaments,



receiving the Life Master Award from the American Contract Bridge League in 1972.

After graduation in 1964, John served with the US Army Intelligence Corps first in

Vietnam then in Nuremberg Germany. He briefly wrote for the Easton Express (now The Express Times) in Easton Pennsylvania, before parlaying his mastery of language into a career in public relations. Following a stint with Kemper Insurance in Chicago, he moved to northern California where he worked as the Director of Public Relations for Fireman's Fund Insurance and met Sandra (Sandy) Chin while playing in a bridge tournament. The couple, united by their shared giving and passionate natures, would enjoy a happy marriage of forty-four years in their beloved Sonoma County, where they would serve many superior dinners paired with appropriate wines.

John is survived by his sisters Marie and Barbara Kozero, his brother Robert and numerous nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his wife Sandy, his brother Frank, his sisters Anne and Lucy, and his much adored and faithful Schnauzer, Watson.

Memorial contributions can be made to a Parkinson's charity of your choice.

Silicon Valley By Ray Yuenger (507)



It was seven weeks ago that I composed my last Unit 507 ("U507") report. I still file them on my computer as "Forum" columns from when I wrote them for the Contract Bridge Forum. More senior players will remember that multi-district Forum newspaper that arrived every month in the mail. Since then, District 21 has been publishing its own electronic bi-monthly newsletter and called it the Diamond in the Ruff.

I have a different kind of news to report from the U507 Board. In July every year the Board meets and elects its own officers. Stu Goodgold (Vice-President), Karen O'Connell (Treasurer), and Ray Yuenger (Secretary) all continued in their positions unopposed, but we had the first contested election for President since I joined the Board in 1999. Norman Marks, a former Board member, returned to the Board and was elected President. At our August meeting Norman recommended, and the Board appointed, its 10 members to seven different committees. Fortunately, [Mich Ravera](#) will remain active on the Board, sharing his considerable experience as a Board



member. He now heads the new website committee. If you have any proposals for improving sjbridge.org, you can contact him at the linked address.

Now I'll take a look at the tournament successes of our Unit members.

The summer NABC in Minneapolis gave our members the biggest stage of the summer, and they made the most of it. Peng Cheng & Xiaoyu Cheng won the Bean Red Ribbon Pairs and were second in the Bruce Life Master Pairs, an extraordinary week's work; Li Zhang was ninth in the Red Ribbon Pairs. Weilong Shen won the 0-3000 Mini-Spangold. In the Championship Flight of the Grand National Teams, Yanong Han & Tien-Chun Yang finished second.

In the regionally rated events at the NABC, Murat Alaybeyi's team won a top-flight Swiss and Anne Wilson's team won bracket 1 of a bracketed round robin. Anne also earned section tops in two mid-flight pairs games, and John Stremel earned one in another. James Eby & Ping Wen tied for a section top in a Bridge Plus game, and Hank Hsu had a section top in the Collegiate Pairs.

The Youth NABC, which runs concurrently at the end of the week, brought more good news: Demian Li's team won the Youth Open Swiss Teams, Flora Ding had a stratification top in the Youth Pairs, and Xintong Zhong a section top in the Cardrunk Pairs.

Closer to home, the Palo Alto NLM regional produced two wins. Demian Li won the Gold Rush Pairs, in which Pat Jeffries and Craig Hom took stratification tops and section tops went to Anna Kolodziejska & Andrea Decasper, Shu Wu & Joyce Tsai, and Gavin Nesom & Arlie Stephens. Saniye Burcu Alaybeyi & Kelly Heuschkel won the 0-100 Pairs, in which Julie Burkhart tied for first.

At the National Capital 4th of July regional, Peter Friedland had a section top in an open pairs game.

Turning to sectionals, the Palo Alto Firecracker sectional (held concurrently with its NLM regional) was a busy one. Michael Bodell and Frank Xie each won an open pairs game, where Peng Cheng & Xiaoyu Cheng had a stratification top and Cadir Lee a section top. Joanne Cornbleet and John Stremel each won a mid-flight pairs game, with a section top for Elenalani Lam. In the bracketed team events, Brandon Ge, Xin Ge & Peter Sun won bracket 1; Joanne Cornbleet & Linda Rocha and, separately, Li Zhang won bracket 2; and Peng Cheng, Xiaoyu Cheng, Yin Lin & Michele Liu won bracket 3.

Another Palo Alto sectional in August closed out the period. Li Zhang won the mid-flight pairs and Andrew Sinclair won the top-flight pairs. Stratification tops went to Amit Garg in the open pairs, Jeffrey Pugh & Jennifer Stern in a top-flight pairs game, and Songning Qi in the 0-100 pairs. Section tops went to Luen-Jyh Luo & Brenna Wundram (open pairs), Timothy Maloney (in both Silver Rush games), Jung



Hu and Richard Reitman (top-flight pairs), John Stremel (mid-flight pairs), and Reena Abrol (0-100 pairs).

Congratulations to our newest U507 Masters: Vrushali Chhatre, Cynthia Francis (Junior); Gigi Chu, Aniruddha Thakur, Joyce Tsai, Dean Zhou (Club); Carol Reid (Sectional); Craig Hom (Regional); Yin Lin (NABC); Betsy Wagner (Bronze Life); and Barbara Luttrell (Diamond Life). This list of rank advancements is shorter than most, because somehow in my last column I was able to report on the advancements for a three-month period rather than two, so this report is just for one month.

It's not news if you've been playing in our Wednesday game. Table fees increased in June from \$12 to \$15. Except for some very hot days, attendance holds steady. I look forward to cooler days because it's my job to bring two large fans to and from the games on the hot days. I better check the weather for tomorrow.

Stockton By Debbie DeZarn (510)



It has been a slow news cycle the past two months. People traveling or having surgery or other issues has resulted in small games of 5-8 tables. But the twice monthly non-Life Master game continues to draw a good crowd. A few more players even joined ACBL—welcome Gretchen Salvetti, Doug Hall, and Carolyn Martin. Unit 510 also received a transfer player—Christine Hevener, now in Manteca and an online Virtual Ace of Clubs contender. We hope to see you at a face-to-face game in Stockton any M-W-F at 11:30.

Last issue I missed mentioning two players who reached new ranks: Mikki Kindelberger and Zhimin Lin became NABC Masters! Congratulations and keep playing! Some others are so close to a new rank lacking only a few pigmented points. The Stockton Club will be offering NAP (North American Pairs) games August 24, 26, 27, and 28 which award RED points. Same \$9 entry fee, and you can qualify to play in the District finals in Monterey in January.

The Santa Clara Regional begins September 1 and offers daily opportunities for Gold and Red masterpoints. Those of you with fewer than 99 points should consider going on Saturday, September 5, for a lesson at 9am followed by a one session game at 10am. You will be done by 1pm and can go for a nice lunch and get home all in one day. You can win Red Masterpoints and it might get you excited enough to try Gold Rush pairs next time! It is only a 90-minute trip early on Saturday morning and the parking is free at the Hyatt Regency next to Levi's Stadium.



D I A M O N D I N T H E R U F F

I (Debbie D) plan to go with a Modesto partner and we are looking for another pair who is interested in playing in Bracketed Teams with us Thursday, Friday, or Saturday.

I will close with the sad news that Sonny Bailey, who had done so much behind the scenes at the Mountain clubs passed away in July. He made the games brighter with special seasonal surprises for each player such as Easter Eggs, Christmas scarves, and Halloween skeletons.