

## **The Evolution of a Bridge Player**

Pat Lewis

Bob and I met at a novice bridge game in Sacramento in early 1969. We both barely knew anything, but we put on a good bluff. In those days, there were no bidding boxes or alerting, but there was lots of smoking. There were always two ashtrays on each table and at halftime break you couldn't even see across the room.

Everyone smoked except Bob. I don't know how he stood it. Bridge was a lot more vicious then--trick your opponents as much as you can--a lot like poker.

By the end of 1969 we were married and moved to Kansas City, Mo. He waited until we were married to tell me that he was being transferred! We played duplicate in KC once a week or so. We played a system called Schenken which is a lot like what the Safra's play--opening 1club = 17+ HCP. People in KC didn't like it much, but that didn't faze us. Remember, confuse the opponents as much as you can was the (our) rule. One night we had a hand which Bob opened 1C (17+ pts); I responded 1H, which meant something, but said nothing about hearts; he asked about Aces, I answered and he bid 6 Hearts--all pass. I was declarer because I bid hearts (artificially) first. The opponent led the Ace of clubs, dummy came down (Bob's hand) with NO Clubs, 9 top hearts, 2 small Diamonds, and 2 small Spades.

I trumped in dummy, drew trumps of which I had NONE, lead a Diamond to my one Ace in my hand, dropped the remaining diamond, and the 2 spades on my KQJ of clubs, making 7! The opponents were outraged! They called the director and got NO relief. They were so M-A-D-D! We never went back there again. We like to take credit, though, for the alert system that ACBL thereafter developed -- I don't know when.

By the time we started playing duplicate again in Sacramento in the late '90's we had to learn about alerts (oh, darn!) and bidding boxes. From 1974 until the mid '90's, Bob played a little lunch time bridge and I played none. I guess we were too busy riding motorcycles and taking care of our two kids. In about 1993, he wanted to start playing duplicate again, but I didn't have time. So, he taught our 12-year-old daughter to play. After a couple of evenings with her, playing two-person bridge at the kitchen table, he took her to a Sectional in Sacramento at the Scottish Rite Temple (that's where Sac Sectionals

were held before they moved to the Orangevale site). They ended up winning their section which got our daughter hooked.

For the next couple of years (until Kellie got her driver's license), they played regularly at the Dante Club and especially at Sectionals. When she turned 16, she ditched him. That's when I started playing duplicate again. After all, poor Bob needed a partner. It was awesome for a couple of years, though. When our 13-, 14- and 15-year-old daughter was out late at night, she was with her dad playing bridge!

I think I started teaching bridge here in LH in about 2007. Before that, Squeak Conner taught Bridge Plus and Steve Conner taught Beginning Bridge. Squeak very graciously asked me to take over the Bridge Plus class. I told her I couldn't. I never taught anything in my life! She very flatteringly kept after me until I relented after making her promise to help me. She gave me all the materials and lesson plans, etc. At first, it was real scary; but, eventually, I came to enjoy teaching a lot. I think I missed my calling in life.

When we moved to LH, we never dreamed that bridge would become so much a part of our lives. We greatly appreciate the wonderful club we have here and all the generous people who tirelessly devote their time and energy into running it. This place is the best kept bridge secret in the world -- no alerting!