



March 2019 NEWSLETTER



NEW LIFE MASTER

After a much too long drought, we have a new Life Master. Congratulations to **Phyllis Ingram** for achieving this milestone. Of all the different ranks you can achieve in ACBL Land, this is the one that stands out the most in your memory. That's why I think it is the most important one. **Congratulations Phyllis!**

Following is the periodic and sporadic list of members who have achieved new ACBL Ranks. It encompasses some period of time since the last list.

Gold Life Master:	Al Kirkland
Life Master:	Phyllis Ingram
NABC Master:	Phoebe Walters
Regional Master:	Mary Allor Jamie Knudsen Joanne Sheehan
Junior Master:	Bill Parks

MARCH SCHEDULE

Well, the Evil Empire won the Superbowl yet again. Most other sports are just plodding on, waiting for the Playoffs to begin. Baseball is in spring training where they all stand around doing nothing, just like in the regular season. And it's another slow month in ACBL Land. Very few special games are available, but we got them all. In addition to our three allowed Charity Games we will have three Quarterly Club Championships and the following special games:

Grand National Teams Qualification Game – Friday, March 8th – This is an Open Team Game with **no handicaps**. No Perfect Ten, Dirty Dozen or any other restrictions since the rules and strats are set by the ACBL. Masterpoint awards are **half red/ half black**. Red points at the club level are rare, so, this is a good chance to earn some.

ACBL – Wide Senior Game – Monday, March 11th

– Pairs Matchpoint Game scored across all participating clubs in the ACBL. There will be hand records with written analysis of all the deals. There is a catch, however. You must have been born, or otherwise created, prior to January 1, 1959. I know this will exclude so so many of you, and I'm sorry, but think of it as a service to our senior citizens.

Unit Charity Game – Friday, March 15th – I have no idea what this is. I discovered I could request one, so I did, request granted, so here we are. I do know it rewards extra masterpoints like other special games.

Pro – Am Pairs – Friday, March 29th – I think we all know what this is. There will be a sign up sheet starting about three weeks prior to the game. It's also a Club Championship Game. Special Game Card Fee for members -- \$1.00.

Game Schedule - March 2019

Monday 1:30pm	Wednesday 1:30pm	Friday 1:30pm
		1-Mar Open Pairs&
4-Mar Open Pairs	6-Mar Open Pairs&	8-Mar Teams GNT Qualifier
11-Mar Senior Pairs#	13-Mar Open Pairs	15-Mar Open Pairs\$
18-Mar Open Pairs%	20-Mar Open Pairs%	22-Mar Open Pairs
25-Mar Open Pairs&	27-Mar Open Pairs	29-Mar Pro-Am Pairs%
Charity Game = & Club Championship = %		
ACBL Wide Senior Pairs = # Unit Game = \$		

STATISTICAL ANOMALIES

Y'all know what an anomaly is? Well, I thought I did, but I looked it up just in case and discovered it is exactly what I thought it was, the angular distance of a planet or satellite from its last perihelion or perigee. What could be clearer than that? However, I also discovered a somewhat obscure alternative meaning, which is, something that deviates from what is standard, normal, or expected. For this article we are going to go with the alternative definition.

ANOMALY #1 – MASTERPOINT WINNERS

After doing the January monthly report to the ACBL and our list of masterpoint winners, I decided to find the top five winners in each of our four team game handicap categories. If you are interested, the list is on our bulletin board (if you are not interested, it's there anyway).

I expected this to be pretty straightforward. The total masterpoints won by the top five players in Category 4 would be the highest, followed by the 3's, 2's and 1's. But, let's look at what really happened. The total and average points won by the top five in each category were:

	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>
4's	80.80	1.35
3's	39.63	0.72
2's	31.30	0.70
1's	53.03	1.02

As you can see, the Category 4 players were, as expected, the highest masterpoint winners averaging 1.35 points per play. However, the Category 1 players were second highest, averaging 75% of the Category 1 players and 43% more than the two other categories. So, what does this mean? Well, to me, it means our under 300 players are absolutely killing it. Will this anomaly continue for the rest of the year? No idea, but we will see. I am, however, thrilled that our aspiring players are being quite successful.

ANOMALY #2 – CELL PHONE PENALTIES

Our membership is approximately 60% of the female persuasion. However, more than 80% our cell phone penalties of three matchpoints are assessed against our male members. That is clearly way more than expected. So what we have here is a decidedly sexist penalty.

Admittedly, cell phone penalties are not all that common. Unfortunately, they are way, way less common than cell phone violations. Why? Most often we don't have a clue who the perp is. We can usually figure out if it's a man, since their phones are usually in their pocket, so, if a ring tone emanates from a man it is either a cell phone or they have a iPod or similar device up their

Almost all of the non penalized violations occur when a ring tone goes off in a gaggle of purses. For some reason, the owner is not able to recognize their ring tone even if it's Ravel's *Balero* or *When the Saints Come Marching In*. For some other unknown reason, no one seems to fess up to it being their phone. I have had a few members suggest that if a phone rings in a purse gaggle, I should search the purses to find the offender. Well, that, for sure, is not happening. Besides being a gross invasion of privacy, it could also be dangerous. Having seen some of the strange things that live in purses, I wouldn't be totally surprised if something bit me.

Wouldn't it be a lot nicer if the perp just owned up and said, "I did the crime, I'll pay the dime"?

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ANOMALY #3 – SCORE CORRECTIONS

Before I get to the anomaly, a few general comments about scorekeeping. We average about four score corrections per month occurring after the results have been posted on line. I don't think this is awful, but it seems it should be better. If you are North, before passing the Bridgemate to West for confirmation, take a couple of seconds to make sure the score that comes up is what you expected. If you are West, don't just look for the "accept" button, actually look at the result and make sure it is what you expected before accepting.

While correcting a score is not really that big a deal, it does create unnecessary work at that time. However, the real headaches are yet to come. Many players are very diligent about recording the points they win and comparing it with what they actually get from the ACBL. Most of them get that information from the personal summaries we issue after the game. So, if a score correction occurs after the game and it affects their masterpoint winnings, what they have and what the ACBL has for their points for the month are not the same. So, they, as they should, come bitching to me. Since there is about a two month lag between the game and point reporting by the ACBL to the member, tracking down the reason for the discrepancy, while always doable, can be challenging and time consuming.

Another problem area is team games. Guess what, every once in a while, the Director makes an error and enters the result in the computer incorrectly. This has happened numerous times, but is frequently corrected before it affects the integrity of the game. At least one person on each team should be keeping track of the Victory Points their team has won and compare it to the amount shown on the Scoresheet next to the table assignment sheet. If everyone does that, the error can be corrected prior to really messing up the game. If not caught early, the error can defeat the purpose of the Swiss format, which is to pair the highest ranking teams against each other each round, which tends to level the playing field for all teams.

So, as a favor to your Club Manager, let's try to do a better job checking the scores on the Bridgemates and the Victory Points in team play.

And now, to the third anomaly.

Scoring errors are, of course, inevitable, and they need to be corrected. When reviewing your scores, if you find an error, please let me know about it. While the change may not affect your placement in the event, it may affect two or more of your fellow members, no matter how minor you think it is. So, just report it.

In the last three years I have processed about 125 error corrections (estimate). Since the error can be noticed by either the pair who benefitted from the error or the pair that was damaged by it, the statistical expectation is that 50% of the corrections would be reported by each side. Well.....that's not exactly how it's played out. In my three years processing these error corrections, four (not an estimate) have been reported by the pair who unfairly benefitted from the error. Yep, that's right, 97% of the error corrections have been submitted by those who will benefit from the change and 3% from those who will not. Seems a far cry from the anticipated 50/50 split, thus, a true anomaly. Or, maybe not. An anomaly tends to be a temporary phenomenon, which, over time, regresses to the mean. When it persists for three years, for whatever reason, it is fair to surmise that it is actually the norm. In this case, that is quite sad.

Remember, we are on the long and winding road to the nicest bridge club on the planet. Geez Ron, not that crap again. Yep! Hey, it's your own damn fault; you could have run for Club Manager and never heard about it again. Anyway, one of the characteristics of nice clubs is that their members are committed to fairness, which includes the integrity of the game, the integrity of the scores, acceptance of procedural penalties as warranted equally applied to all members, and that the results are an accurate portrayal of what happened at the table.

Judging from nonanomalies #2 and #3, I would say our club needs a little work in this area. So, let's try harder to get our perihelion and perigee in alignment.

BOARD MEETING REPORT

The latest meeting of your Board was held on February 20th, 2019. The first meeting of each year is basically a housekeeping session, where we assign responsibility for various club functions as well as clear up any deferred activity from the prior year. Following is a very brief summary of the meeting.

Assistant Manager – the first order of business was welcoming our newest member, Lauren, to the Board, immediately followed by electing her Assistant Manager. Our By-laws instruct the Board to select an Assistant Manager from amongst the other Board members to serve in the absence of the Manager. Lauren and I will work together with the goal of teaching her all aspects of the Manager position. Many thanks to Alan, who has served in this position for the last three years.

Assistant Treasurer – the Board formalized an existing agreement between Mike and Phoebe that she serve as Treasurer in Mike's absence. This entailed creating the position of Assistant Treasurer and electing Phoebe to serve.

Sectional Tournament – the Board confirmed that we will have our annual Sectional Tournament on October 4th through October 6th. Greg Roberts agreed to be the Tournament Chair and hit the ground running. He has already negotiated with the City to reduce the Weeks Center's proposed significantly increased rental fee back to the 2018 rate, making the event financially viable again. He has also recruited Phoebe to be the Partnership Chair. Additional volunteers will be needed in the future.

Party Program – Sedley and Lauren volunteered to lead our party program this year. Since party planning and the food associated with it is way over my pay grade, as far as I'm concerned, they are dealing with a blank canvas. We'll see what they paint.

Holiday Party – Yep, we are already on this. Phoebe has agreed to be in charge of our Holiday Party again this year. She had already reserved Woodside Plantation Country Club for Monday, December 16th pending Board approval, which, of course, was granted. Having the whole place to ourselves on a Monday last year worked out great, and I'm sure it will again this year.

I think we cleaned up our house pretty good!

NOT MINE -- YOURS

Every now and then someone makes a comment to me about our Newsletter. Sometimes they say I enjoy **your** Newsletter, sometimes they say **your** Newsletter sucks, and often they just say I didn't know **you** wrote a Newsletter. The opinions are what they are, however, we have an issue with ownership. It is not **my** Newsletter, it is **YOURS**. So, why not consider contributing to it? If you have any comments, criticisms, suggestions, interesting bridge hands or stories, or anything else you would like to share with your fellow members, just write it up and send it to me. I don't do censorship and if the grammar meets the publishing criteria of the *Aiken Standard* (at least half of the sentences have a verb and a noun, two thirds of the words are spelled correctly and, while not mandatory, misplaced modifiers and dangling participles are strongly encouraged) your submission will appear in our Newsletter. Hey, give it a go, we all want to know what you think.