



NOVEMBER 2019

NEWSLETTER



THE ECLECTIC ISSUE

Jay J is back with an article on one level opening bids and preparing for partner's response. We also have updates on our Holiday Party, our Sectional, and a bunch of other stuff.

For a change of pace, we also have a word game contest called "Animal Crackers" written and submitted by an anonymous member

MESSAGE FROM JOYCE

Many Thanks for all of your cards, phone calls, thoughts and prayers. There are still some restrictions on bending for a few weeks, but therapy has gone very well.

RANK CHANGES

Following is our quarterly report of members who have achieved new ACBL Ranks during the last three months. **Ron Note – for the first time in the four years I've been producing this quarterly report, it reflects three months.**

Silver Life Master: Lauren Alexander
Kathy Kimmerling

Advanced NABC: Phoebe Walters

NABC Master: Barb Dellamora
Carol Camino
Jane Cloninger
Jim Gossage

Regional Master: Dee Barron

Sectional Master: George Ward

**Congratulations to
each of you.**

PARTNERSHIP CHAIRPERSON

I am very happy to announce that Joanne Sheehan has agreed to become our new Partnership Chairperson. Her contact information is:

Phone: 985-778-6570

Email: joannechic@yahoo.com

Cathie Lindler has done an excellent job as our partnership arranger for over two years and I wish to express my thanks and appreciation for her service in this sometimes quite frustrating, but always important position.

Thanks Cathie and Thanks Joanne.

NOTICE OF BOARD MEETING

The next meeting of your Board of Directors will be Wednesday, November 13th at 11:45 a.m. in the Croft House conference room.

This is the current agenda but is always subject to change.

- Financial Status and State of Operations
- Holiday Party Update
- By-Laws Revision Non Progress Report
- Nominating Committee Chairperson
- Croft House Lease
- Individual and Pro – Am Game Viability
- Team Game Format
- The Dreaded Other

Remember, our Board Meetings are open to all members, so please join us if you are interested. If you have any items you would like to have included on the Board Meeting Agenda, just talk to any Board Member.

GAMES IN NOVEMBER PLUS THE GREAT PROGNOSTICATOR

Well, it's November and all fall and winter sports are underway. There have been a few hiccups in my choices for the College National Championship Playoffs. South Carolina beat Georgia in the ugliest game ever seen, and the Cornell Big Red somehow lost four in a row before winning again on Saturday. My crystal ball was apparently a tad cloudy.

Baseball is finally in the home stretch. With any luck at all, the World Series will be over by the time you read this. By the way, how come you didn't root, root, and root some more for my Atlanta Braves? Very disappointing.

Congratulations to the Washington Nationals for being the Baseball World Champions. The only person I know who thought they would happen is our own Linda Knox, who shall now be known as The Great Prognosticator. On the night the Nationals won the one game playoff to get into the post season, she told me they would win it all. Something about Cinderella. Whatever, she got it right!

Our November schedule is also full of many different types of games. There are three Charity Games, three Club Championships, three Unit Championships, a GNT Fundraiser, and a **Membership Game (IMPORTANT NOTE – any partnership containing a non ACBL member is ineligible to win master points in a Membership Game.)**

Here are a few other games of interest.

Grand National Teams Qualification Game – November 8th. This is one of the two “Grass Roots” Events sponsored by the ABCL. The **Dirty Dozen format will not apply and there will be no handicaps.**

The Conditions of Contest are set by the ACBL and we are expected to adhere to them. Masterpoint awards are half red/ half black. Qualifying teams are eligible to play in the District finals, and, if successful, at the next Summer Nationals. District winners will also receive a stipend to help offset costs of attending the Nationals if they so choose.

District 7 Fund Games – November 27th and 29th. These games award significant extra masterpoints. Why they were scheduled surrounding Thanksgiving is beyond me, but I guess that's why the District 7 honchos get the big bucks.



Game Schedule - November 2019		
Monday 1:30pm	Wednesday 1:30pm	Friday 1:30pm
		1-Nov Charity Game
4-Nov Charity Game	6-Nov GNT Fundraiser	8-Nov GNT Qualifier
11-Nov Veterans Memorial Pairs	13-Nov Charity Game	15-Nov Unit Championship
18-Nov Club Championship	20-Nov Club Championship	22-Nov Club Championship
25-Nov Membership Game	27-Nov District Fund	29-Nov District Fund

AIKEN FALL SECTIONAL REPORT

Well, another Sectional Tournament is history. This yearly event always makes me anxious because you never know what you're going to get. Two years ago we had great attendance, last year nobody showed up, and this year was between the two. We had 156 tables this year, an increase of about 13%. So, with your support and the support of our friends in Augusta and Columbia, it was definitely a success.

I want to thank the people who did an excellent job making this thing go. The Tournament Chair was Greg Roberts, Food and Beverage was handled by Phoebe Walters with a large assist from Sherry Buck. The Partnership Chair was Barb Dellamora, and Jesse Roach, once again, did all the heavy lifting by setting up and tearing down the playing area. Alan Brooks did his usual excellent job of running the tournament, and Lynn Pope, once again, used her artistic flair to turn a gym into an attractive venue.

The Tournament organizers did a great job of controlling expenses. They eliminated some expenses which added little value to the player experience, such as lunch subsidies and the Club absorbing extra ACBL fees for the morning games. The Food people put out a wonderful assortment of goodies while keeping spending in check. These actions, combined with the sizable increase in table count resulted in the event running a surplus or about \$1500, well in excess of anyone's wildest expectations.

A significant portion of the increase was, I believe, due to the Columbia Bridge Club's Board deciding to close their club in support of our tournament. This tacit agreement had been in place up until about six or seven years ago, and I am pleased that it is back. We have a similar uninterrupted agreement with the Augusta Club and I would like to thank Ray Coleman and the Augusta players for their continued support. By cooperating with each other and supporting each other's events, my hope is that we can better serve our area players simultaneously with reducing the financial risks associated with these events. We will, of course, reciprocate by closing our club during their Sectional. More importantly, I would hope that our players will support their event as well as they supported ours.

Now, for the best part. I can't thank you all enough for your support. We had many members show up on Thursday night for set up and stay after the Sunday Swiss for take down. Each day I was amazed by the number of people walking in with cakes, cookies, dozens of deviled eggs, and other goodies to share with all the players. The whole thing was heartwarming – just another leg on the journey to nicest club on the planet!

HOLIDAY PARTY UPDATE

This year's **Holiday and Volunteer Appreciation Party** will be **Monday, December 16th at the Woodside Plantation Country Club.**

Many thanks to **Phoebe** for, once again, handling all the arrangements for this enjoyable event.

We have access to the building at 1:00, and will do our best to have our bridge game start at 1:30, dependent on how quickly we can set up the room for bridge. After bridge, probably about five, we will have a social hour (with cash bar) followed by a buffet dinner at six. If you feel compelled to know what's for dinner, don't ask me, I have no clue.

Since the Country Club is closed on Mondays, we will pretty much have the whole place to ourselves. The bridge games and the dinner will be held in separate rooms, so there should be no need to move tables around. In addition, the parking lot should be pretty empty. The walk to the building entrance is quite sloped, so, if this is a problem for you, please arrange for someone to drop you off at the entrance. Finally, we are not allowed to bring any of our usual treats to the venue, so, if you need an afternoon sugar fix or two, bring your own. Coffee and water will be available.

The same surcharges as the last two years will apply. Club members who have not played at our club at least 15 times in the twelve months ending November 30th of this year will incur a \$20.00 surcharge if they wish to participate. The charge for spouses to attend will also be \$20.00. The surcharge applies only to those staying for dinner; there is no card fee for members or their spouses.

The reason for the surcharge for infrequent players and spouses is simply a matter of fairness. Our frequent players contribute more to the surplus that allows us to have this event. While non playing spouses don't really contribute anything, we pay half as a reward for them putting up with their spouse's addiction.

Please Read This. Sign up for the party begins Monday, November 18th and ends Monday, December 9th. December 9th is also the last day to pay any surcharges for yourself or your spouse. Phoebe is in charge of sign up and surcharge collection and will station herself at the first table as you enter the room. If you sign up and pay, you may cancel and get a refund as long as it is by December 11th. After that, we are locked in to our guarantee to Woodside so no cancellations or refunds are possible.



THANKSGIVING TRADITION



The National Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation is a ceremony that takes place at the White House every year shortly before Thanksgiving. The President of the United States is presented with a live domestic turkey by the National Turkey Federation. This bird is colloquially referred to as the White House Turkey.

Ahead of Thanksgiving each year the president pardons a turkey or turkeys. In his tenure thus far President Trump has pardoned four turkeys named Drumstick, Wishbone, Peas, and Carrots.

The tradition of pardoning the turkey has been carried out by various presidents through the years, but according to the

Library of Congress, the tradition fully began with President Harry Truman who pardoned a turkey the night before Thanksgiving in 1947. The pardoning continued somewhat sporadically until the Presidency of George H. W. Bush, when it became a tradition (since carried on by all of Bush's successors) for the president to issue a mock "pardon" to the turkey, sparing the turkey's life.

This strikes me as a nice tradition and I hope the current turmoil in Washington does not cause its demise.

I do, however, have one question for you. What do you think will happen first, the White House Turkey's **PARDON** or his **IMPEACHMENT?**

OPENING ONE LEVEL BIDS

BY JAY JACOBS

I learned bridge at my mother's knee. It was all Goren all the time. (Goren, decades earlier, attended the same high school as such illustrious people as Alan Brooks, Bill McGhee, and I). A minimum opening bid was 13 points AND 2 ½ quick tricks (a quick trick = an ace, or a KQ in the same suit; 1 ½ quick tricks = AQ or KQJ in the same suit; ½ a quick trick = a king or, sometimes, a QJ in the same suit). We deducted a point for an aceless hand. We added points for distribution (except in no-trump) and deducted a point for any 4-3-3-3 distribution. All 2 level opening bids were strong. It was common to open a 4 card major. There were basically 3 conventions: Stayman, Blackwood, and Gerber, and doubles were generally for penalty.

How things have changed. The average hand contains 10 high card points (40 total HCP in the deck, divided by 4 hands). The question is: how much above average do you need to be to open? A 12 point hand is 20% above average while a 13 point hand is 30% above average. Many people now open all 12 point hands, and even some 11 point hands (for example, with 3 quick tricks such as AK in one suit and an outside A). The concept of quick tricks has generally gone by the wayside. Some people use losing trick count to evaluate hands, although it has limitations. Other popular methods are Marty Bergen's "Rule of 20" and Jerry Helms's "Suggestion of 22". Few people open or overcall 4 card majors. Virtually everyone uses weak 2 bids and negative doubles. There are strong club systems, weak NT systems, Montreal Relays, Precision, and a myriad of conventions.

Distribution trumps points (pun intended). Highly distributional hands play well in suits. (After all, a 13 card suit is only 10 high card points, but makes a grand slam.) Two suited hands play well if partner has a fit for either or both suits.

But, bidding is an art, not a science. You cannot memorize all every possibility and always know what to do. Sometimes, you are actually forced to think (no fair). And, those who do think have a competitive advantage over those who play by rote.

When determining what to open, make sure to consider your rebid after partner's likely responses. This may vary based on whether or not partner is a passed hand. In any case, before opening, consider what you will say after any 1 or 2 level response partner might make. Thus, with 5-3-3-2 distribution, I may need to either repeat my suit (perhaps at the 2 level) or bid 1 NT. It's better to figure this out in advance than to have to make a decision on the fly. This is especially true when you go into the tank before making a bid, which could give unauthorized information.

Likewise, with 5 clubs, 4 diamonds and 2-2 in the majors, in the long run I am probably better off opening 1 D rather than 1 C, since I may not want to bid 1 NT over partner's anticipated bid of a major AND rebidding 2 C implies 6, while bidding 2 D is a reverse (see next paragraph). With 5-4 in the minors and 3-1 in the majors, I may support partner's major with only 3 card support (since I provide a ruffing value in the short suited hand) even though partner may only have a 4 card suit. But, what to do if partner bids the other major? I have a problem. I could bid 1 NT, hoping my 3 card major, coupled with whatever partner has, will provide a stopper, or I can bid at the 2 level. In that case, I would almost always be better off opening 1 D, so I can rebid 2 C, whether I am 4-4, 5-4, 4-5, or 5-5 in the minors, as long as partner understands that. Partner then knows I have at least 8, and likely 9 or more, cards in the minors. However, with 6 clubs and 4 diamonds, open 1 C and rebid 2 C (or 3 C, depending on strength) over partner's non-diamond response

Let's talk about reverses. Many people say they do not play reverses. Nevertheless, they make reverses and need to understand what that means. A reverse occurs when you bid a new suit at the 2 level higher ranking than the one you originally bid, so partner has to go to the next level to take a suit preference. Presumably, the 2nd suit is shorter, or at least not longer, than the 1st suit. Consequently, you should have a strong hand (say 17-19 points), since you may be forcing to the 3 level, with the possibility of playing in a bad fit. Too often I have seen someone open 1 of a minor, partner responds 1 S, and they rebid 2 H on a 4 card suit and not a great hand. Partner may only have 2 hearts and 2 or 3 of the minor. What are they supposed to do? When you create a reverse, the problems of getting too high or into misfits at a higher level are your penalties for ignoring

this issue. (If you play two-over-one, reverses are generally off if responder's initial call is a two over one game force since you are already committed to game.)

Reverses naturally segue into jump-shifts. A jump shift means skipping a level to bid a new suit (for example, you open 1 H, partner says 1 S, and you say 3 D). This means you have a strong hand (say, 18+ points), no great interest in partner's suit, and your 2nd suit is not necessarily as long as your 1st. Partner must not pass a jump shift as it is forcing to game.

With unbalanced hands (one suited hands and some multi- suited hands, such as 6-4, 5-5, 5-4-4, 6-5, 6-6, 7-4, etc.), you want to get your suits into play as quickly as possible. Sometimes, a double works. If partner replies in the wrong suit, bidding another suit means you have a very strong hand, either one-suited or the remaining suits. Hopefully, partner can figure out which. So it is better to save the double for when you have all the other suits covered OR you have a very strong hand to avoid creating a problem for partner. Partner then knows if you bid another suit it is a strong hand.

With 6-4 or 7-4, bid your longer suit twice before showing your shorter suit (depending on how high you are willing to go), unless, of course, partner bids your 4 card suit. Sometimes, people with 6-4 will bid their 2nd suit before returning to their 1st suit. Traditionally, bidding the four card suit prior to rebidding the six card suit shows a stronger hand than rebidding the six card suit immediately. This may be a matter of circumstance or preference. Make sure you and your partner agree on what that means.

With 5-5, 6-5, 6-6 or 7-5, I prefer to bid my major, or higher ranking suit, even if the minor, or lower ranking suit, is longer or stronger. But this is a matter of choice and not everyone agrees. Similarly, as an overcaller, I prefer bidding my suits rather than showing a distributional hand with Michaels or Unusual 2 NT. There are several reasons for this: (1) if partner has a fit for my 1st suit, no one has to know about the 2nd suit in reserve; (2) these bids often force partner to the 3 level, which may already be too high, or we may wind up in the wrong suit, or we may be better off defending, and partner can't know how strong my hand is (especially a problem when vulnerable); and (3) I just gave the opponents a roadmap to defend or to play the hand if they eventually declare – they know what suits I have and, by elimination, what partner has. Let me emphasize, however, that these are personal choices, and not everyone agrees with them. The important thing is to consider the alternatives and make sure you and your partner are on the same wavelength.

How about opening 1 NT? Whatever your point range for 1 NT, consider partner's possible responses, if any. While you are permitted to open 1 NT with a singleton A, K, or Q, it is not always a good idea. The singleton may be partner's long suit and you may wind up playing there. Generally, partner assumes you have nothing less than a worthless doubleton. Although 1 of the top 3 honors may be equivalent to a worthless doubleton, if pard has a 5 card suit to the 9 and transfers into it, you could be headed for big trouble. Or, if pard passes with a minimal hand and the opponents lead the suit of your singleton, nothing good will follow.

Many people are reluctant to open 1 NT with a worthless doubleton. Please rethink this. It is almost impossible to have the necessary points for 1 NT, have all suits covered, AND have a source of tricks, such as a runnable suit. You need to trust that partner's cards, along with yours, provide a stopper, or that the opponents don't lead that suit. Otherwise, you will miss out on many NT contracts. Naturally, sometimes you will go down. But, bridge is a game of percentages and in the long run you are better off ignoring your lack of a stopper. When you don't open 1 NT, you are bidding against the field, which will bid 1 NT, meaning that in many cases you are playing for a top or bottom. This is NOT sound bridge.

So what about hands with a long suit and/or 2 worthless doubletons? Well, if the 5 or 6 card suit is a major, bid it. If I have 5-4-2-2 or 6-3-2-2 distribution, values in at least one of the doubletons, and the long suit is a minor, consider opening 1 NT (after all, its partner's responsibility to cover the suits you don't control), especially if the long suit looks runnable.

What about opening 1 NT with a 5 card major? This is a matter of choice – sometimes it works great, other times you miss a 5-3 fit when partner passes or raises in NT. If you play 1 NT forcing over 1 of a major, consider what you will bid after that. This becomes problematic with 5 of a major and 3-3-2 in the other suits.

In such cases, it might be better to open 1 NT, if you are in your NT range. Nevertheless, if my 5 card major is weak (say, 5 to the jack), I may open 1 NT without blinking (they can't run that suit and my outside values cover the other suits). Yet, if my major is weak and I also have a worthless doubleton or a singleton honor, I would not open 1 NT. The most important thing here is to agree with partner whether or not you regularly open 1 NT with a 5 card major.

In 3rd or 4th position, I still perform the same hand analysis. After all, I want to know what I am going to respond after my partner or one of the opponents opens. Clearly, overcalls are impacted by strength and vulnerability. It is generally not a good idea to overcall in a suit you don't want partner to lead (say, 5 cards to the 9). However, knowing what you are going to do over any 1 level bid by partner or the opponents puts you in a much better position than making an ad hoc decision. This is especially true if you deliberate for a considerable time and then pass, since that may constitute unauthorized information given your partner and/or may ban your partner from bidding.

Bottom line: before bidding, consider your rebid over partner's likely responses. Every bid means something. What you don't bid may be as meaningful as what you do bid. Avoid ambiguous bids. Think ahead. Be prepared.

ANIMAL CRACKERS

Are you competitive? Do you like to win prizes? Do you like word games? If the answer to any of these questions is "yes", then you might be interested in entering the contest to try to provide the desired answers to the following 10 questions.

1. Why did the man name his dog Timex?
2. Why are owls so apathetic?
3. Who does a duck see when it has laryngitis?
4. What do you call a short elephant?
5. Why are some horses even tempered?
6. Why couldn't the chicken find her eggs?
7. Why don't leopards play hide-go-seek?
8. What do you call an unborn baby rabbit?
9. Why do bees have sticky hair?
10. How does a flock of crows swear?

Here's an example to give an idea of the type of answer that will be looked for:

Q: How do a dentist and a manicurist fight?

A: Tooth and nail.

Now that the game is understood, here are the rules.

1. You must be a member of the Aiken Bridge Club.
2. You must be at least 21 years of age. (Exhaustive research has shown this should not be a problem at the ABC.)
3. You must not be a professional paronomasian.

The winner of the contest will receive three tickets for games at the club, and second place will receive one. If, in the eyes of the omnipotent judges, a contestant answers all 10 questions in the desired way, that contestant will win an additional game ticket. Ties will be broken by a random draw.

Please provide your answers to Ron by Wednesday, November 27. The winner will be announced at the Christmas party.