

NEW LIFE MASTER



Congratulations to **Marc Carney** for achieving this milestone. This is the important one, and the one you remember.

When the latest Stardust Week began, Marc was less than one gold point short of making LM. After our game on Saturday, he was **.02** short. So, he went across the virtual river to Augusta on Sunday and got it done.

After a year or so of continuous nagging by Rose, Marc rejoined the ACBL in 2015 (he had been a member for one year in the sixties). A short five years later he is our newest Life Master and has accumulated over 700 masterpoints. In my opinion, this is a very, very impressive performance. **Congratulations Marc!**

Marc joins Cathie Lindler and Sue Kline on our list of honorees for our next Life Master Party. The party is scheduled for, um, sometime and will be held at, um, someplace. Please make your plans accordingly.

So, I guess we need a fourth. **Who's Next?**

DECEMBER SCHEDULE

At this time, there have not been any announcements of special games at the virtual club level. But, you never know.

There is, however, another series of regionally rated games scheduled for Thursday, December 17th through Sunday, December 20th, which the ACBL is calling

Winter Wonderland.

This appears to be the same format as the events held in June, August, and October. I have not yet been able to find a schedule of games for this event, but I'm sure the ACBL will get around to it sometime.

For the rest of the month, we will just plod on with our usual three games a week awarding black points at 150% of the normal club rate.

Game Schedule - December 2020

Monday 1:30pm	Wednesday 1:30pm	Friday 1:30pm
	2-Dec Open Pairs	4-Dec Open Pairs
7-Dec Open Pairs	9-Dec Open Pairs	11-Dec Open Pairs
14-Dec Open Pairs	16-Dec Open Pairs	18-Dec Open Pairs
21-Dec Open Pairs	23-Dec Open Pairs	NO GAME CHRISTMAS
28-Dec Open Pairs	30-Dec Open Pairs	

**Ran out of toilet paper
 and now using lettuce
 leaves.
 Today was just the tip
 of the iceberg,
 tomorrow remains to
 be seen.**

ANNUAL ELECTION

Our annual election is next January. We will elect two Board Members to three year terms. The current incumbents, Sedley Roach and Phoebe Walters are both eligible to run for reelection. At this time, Sedley has indicated that she will not seek reelection and Phoebe has indicated she will. Join me in thanking Sedley and Phoebe for their service over the last three years.

This year's Nominating Committee Chair is Sherry Buck. Joining her on the Committee are Linda Knox and Miles Hall. They are responsible for accepting nominations for candidates to fill these two vacancies. If you are interested in running for these positions, simply talk to any Committee Member. To ensure your name is on the ballot, the Nominating Committee must be aware of your desire to run by Thursday, December 31st, 2020.

As is the case with far too many things this year, our nominating process will be handled a little differently this year. In the past, the Nominating Committee has been charged with encouraging, begging, and/or coercing members to run for the Board. Since we are currently unable to gather together, this approach is not practical. Personally, I don't think it's desirable under any circumstances. So, if you want to run for the Board, you need to contact a Nominating Committee member; *you will not be recruited*. I would much prefer one nominee who wants to help make our club the best it can be to three or four who were coerced into running. If there is a vacancy, so be it. But there won't be, because nature abhors a void and always fills it appropriately.

For additional information on the positions, please talk to the incumbents or any other present or past Board Member.

While our election procedures allow write-in votes, my observation is that being a write-in candidate is equivalent to being a non-candidate.

NOTICE OF BOARD MEETING

The next meeting of your Board of Directors will be Monday, December 14th at 12:00 Noon. The meeting will be held via Zoom.

While the agenda is not yet complete, some of the items are:

- Approval of Minutes of October 19th Meeting
- Financial Status as of November 30, 2020
- Amendment Status
- Annual Election
- Compensation of Directors
- What's Next – Other Business

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 inform any Board Member.

If you would like to attend, please send an email to Steve at steve.banwarth@pobox.com. He will then email you a link (probably the day before the meeting) and instructions on how to join the meeting.

PRE – ALERTS

In the November Newsletter, we instituted a new program of using pre – alerts in our virtual club games. While we always expect low compliance at the onset of a new program, the level of non compliance was staggering, even by our standards. It appears to have been about 3.14159 hundredths of one percent. Such is the life of Pi.

Undaunted and never fearful, we sally forth using Pre – Alerts as our next sacrificial gnu. It will be beat to death in the next few newsletters. If a lot of the following looks familiar, that's because it is. But, please read it anyway.

So, What's a Pre - Alert – well, it's a nicety that has been in use in nearly all competitive BBO sponsored pairs tournaments for many years prior to the existence of ACBL virtual club games. It is also commonly used in a number of ACBL virtual club games. The purpose of the Pre – Alert is to make the game fairer for everyone. Very simply, before each round starts, you briefly explain (using table chat) to your opponents the main features of your methods. The explanation should include bidding and carding agreements.

So, Who Cares – well, you should. Why? Because in some methods there are strong implications of what other bids in the system may or may not mean. I will give two examples based on systems not frequently used in our club games.

- **Weak No Trump Openers (12-14 HCP or thereabouts)** – in weak no trump systems, a 1♣ or 1♦ opening is frequently a 15-17 HCP balanced hand that standard players would open 1 NT. Thus, a 1 NT rebid by opener shows the strong no trump hand, not a balanced minimum. Similarly, the auction 1 minor, one major, two of the major is not a minimum hand with four trump (sometimes three). It is either a 15-17 HCP hand with support or an unbalanced hand with support and 15+ support points. This is good to know if you are thinking about balancing after your opponents 1 minor, 1 major, 2 of the major auction. They probably have about 23 HCP between them, so bidding could well be expensive.
- **Precision and other Strong Forcing Club Systems** – in big club systems, it's important to know that all other suit bids are limited to less than the minimum for 1♣ (usually 16 or 17 HCP). Without the Pre – Alert you would have no way of knowing this important fact. This also changes the meaning of other auctions. For example, in standard bidding, a raise of one of a major to four of the major shows a weak hand with 5 trump and usually a singleton. In big club systems, it can be that hand or up to a balanced 15 HCP with only three card support. Be wary of this auction, it could easily be a trap where any action you take will be severely penalized.

So, How Do I Comply – well, all you need to do is add a short description of your methods to your greeting to your opponents (you do greet your opponents, right?). At the end of this article is a chart giving an appropriate short description (to be entered into "Table Chat") of most methods used in our club. If yours is not there, make up your own. If you can handle two windows opened at the same time, simply do a cut/paste from another document to the "Table Chat" on BBO.

So, In Summary – the Pre – Alert gives your opponent a brief description of the major features of your bidding and carding methods. **What it does not do, however, is relieve you of your obligations to alert and post a Convention Card.**

Description of System Agreements	Chat Description
Two over One game forcing with Standard Carding	2/1, Std Card
Standard American with Standard Carding	SA, Std Card
Standard American Yellow Card with Standard Carding	SAYC, Std Card
Weak No Trump with Standard Carding	1NT = 12 - 14, Std Card
Precision or other Strong Club System with Standard Carding	Forcing 1 Club = 17+, Std Card
Montreal Express, Kennedy Club, etc. with Standard Carding	1M/1m = 5+, Std Card
If you just bid by the seat of your pants and have no carding agreements. Thus making Every Hand An Adventure	EHAA
<p>Notes: If you play upside down count and attitude, type in "udca" instead of "Std Card"</p> <p>If you play odd even or Lavinthal discards, add "o/e" or "Lav" to your description</p> <p>If you play Rusinow Leads, add "Rus" to your description</p> <p>If you routinely open hands with less than 12 HCP and/or more than 7 losers, add "Open Lite" to your description</p>	

DON'T JUST THE BOX NEW MINOR FORCING

This is the eleventh article in our brand new series about commonly used, misused and abused conventions. You remember the scenario. Right? You and your newish partner have agreed to play New Minor Forcing (NMF) but that's as far as you got discussing it. That is just not good enough. What we are trying to do in this series of articles is convince you that you and your partner need to be on same page with any convention you adopt. That includes what it shows, what it asks for, and what the responses and continuations mean. It is also best to play the whole convention, not just some portion of it.

What is New Minor Forcing?

New Minor Forcing is a simple, effective tool used by partner only if she responds 1♥/♠ to your opening bid and you rebid 1NT (or 2NT). The primary purpose of the bid is to find out if opener has three card support for her bid major or four cards in the other major. It is an artificial bid, saying nothing about the suit bid, and thus must be alerted.

New Minor Forcing fills the need for the partnership to identify a 5-3 major-suit fit, since opener's 1NT rebid may include 3 cards in responder's suit. Playing standard methods, responder may be forced to rebid 2NT or 3NT over partner's 1NT rebid with a 5-card major, thereby missing the 5-3 fit. By playing New Minor Forcing and giving up the natural minor-suit rebid, this should not happen.

There are only six auctions at the one level where NMF comes into play. They are:

Opener	Responder
1♣	1♥/♠
1NT	2♦*

The first four are the classic NMF sequences. After opener's 1NT rebid, responder bids the minor opener did not bid.

Note: * = alertable

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♥/♠
1NT	2♣*

In the last two, since the opening bid was not a minor, both 2♣ and 2♦ are new minors. Standard practice is to bid your better minor, but it is still NMF, not a suit. Not everyone plays 1♥-♠-1NT-2♣/♦ as NMF, preferring it to show a second suit.

Opener	Responder
1♥	1♠
1NT	2♣*/♦*

As always, discuss it with your partner.

What does NMF show?

It shows a hand with **invitational or better values** (11+ points) and virtually always five cards in your major suit. Please read the last sentence a couple of more times. Invitational values are necessary because you are forcing partner to bid again and often won't get the rebid you were hoping for (3 card support). Since partner has limited her hand to 12-14 HCP you need the 11+ points to be able to make 2NT or a 3 level suit contract. You do not use NMF with lesser values just because you want to know if partner has three card support for your major.

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What does NMF ask for?

It simply asks for further clarification of your hand. Since you have already fairly narrowly defined your hand (12-14 balanced) there isn't a whole lot you can add. Thus, there are only five rebids available to opener. They are, in order of priority:

1. Bidding a 4-card major
2. Showing 3-card support for partner's major
3. Bidding no-trump with a stopper in the unbid suit
4. Raising the "new minor" with 4 cards in that suit
5. Rebidding your suit if none of the above conditions are met

Following are examples of these various rebids. The examples below illustrate a 12-14 HCP 1NT rebid by opener. If playing a weak 1NT opening bid, then opener's 1NT rebid would show 15-17 HCP, and responder's minimum strength would be revised downward by 3 HCP.

I would like to acknowledge the *bridgebum* web site ([Bridgebum: Bridge bidding conventions, how to play, and more](#)) from which many of these examples were pilfered.

1. Bidding a 4-card major

This is opener's top priority in case a 4-4 fit is available. When both a 4-4 fit and 5-3 fit are available, the 4-4 fit is generally preferred because the 5-card suit can theoretically be cashed to provide discards.

Opener	Responder
♠KJ7	♠AT932
♥AQT7	♥K932
♦A563	♦J2
♣65	♣KT

Opener	Responder
1♦	1♠
1NT	2♣ (1)
2♥ (2)	3♥ (3)
4♥ (4)	Pass

1. New Minor Forcing.
2. Opener's top priority is to bid his 4-card heart suit.
3. Responder raises with 4-card support and game-invitational values.
4. Opener bids game with a maximum

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2. Showing 3-card support for partner's major

With 12-13 points and 3-card support, opener should bid partner's suit at the 2-level. With a good 13-14 points, opener should jump raise.

Opener	Responder
♠JT3	♠KQ2
♥KJT	♥A7532
♦A4	♦Q32
♣K9632	♣87

Opener	Responder
1 ♣	1 ♥
1NT	2♦ (1)
2♥ (2)	Pass (3)

1. New Minor Forcing.
2. Opener shows 3-card support and minimum strength. (She also denies four spades.)
3. Responder passes with a minimum opposite a minimum.

Note: New Minor Forcing does NOT promise a rebid.

Opener	Responder
♠J73	♠KQ2
♥KQT	♥A7532
♦A4	♦Q32
♣A9632	♣87

Opener	Responder
1 ♣	1 ♥
1NT	2♦ (1)
3♥ (2)	4♥ (3)

1. New Minor Forcing.
2. Opener shows 3-card support and maximum strength. (She also denies four spades.)
3. Responder continues on to game knowing partner has a maximum.

3. Bidding no-trump with a stopper in the unbid suit

Opener can rebid 2NT (with 12-13 points) or 3NT (with 13-14 points) if she lacks a 4-card major or three card support for partner's major. A rebid in no-trump promises a stopper in the unbid suit.

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Opener Responder

♠KT3	♠94
♥84	♥AJ975
♦A97	♦KQT62
♣KQ632	♣8

Opener Responder

1 ♣	1 ♥
1NT	2♦ (1)
2NT (2)	3♦ (3)
Pass (4)	

1. New Minor Forcing.
2. Opener promises a spade stopper with 12-13 points.
3. Rebidding the "new minor" shows at least a 4-card suit. With game-forcing values, responder should jump-rebid either of his suits instead.
4. Opener passes with a minimum.

4. Raising the "new minor" with 4 cards in that suit

This bid occurs when opener cannot bid the other major, raise partner's suit or bid no-trump.

Opener Responder

♠Q9	♠AT42
♥84	♥AJ975
♦A9752	♦KQ4
♣KQ63	♣8

Opener Responder

1♦	1♥
1NT	2♣ (1)
3♣ (2)	3NT (3)
Pass	

1. New Minor Forcing.
2. Natural, denying a lot of things: four spades, a spade stopper, or heart support.
3. Responder is able to bid 3NT with game-going strength and a spade stopper.

Opener Responder

♠AKT	♠62
♥84	♥AJ975
♦A97	♦KQ2
♣KT832	♣A87

Opener Responder

1 ♣	1 ♥
1NT	2♦ (1)
3NT (2)	Pass

1. New Minor Forcing.
2. Opener promises a spade stopper with 13-14 points.

5. Rebidding her suit if none of the above conditions are met

This is opener's last resort. He lacks a 4-card major, a stopper in the unbid suit, 3-card support for partner, and he cannot raise the "new minor."

Opener Responder

♠K7	♠AT932
♥AJT75	♥K6
♦963	♦JT8
♣A52	♣KT3

Opener Responder

1 ♥	1 ♠
1NT	2 ♣ (1)
2 ♥ (2)	2NT (3)
Pass (4)	Pass

1. New Minor Forcing.
2. Opener has neither 3-card spade support, a diamond stopper, and cannot raise clubs.
3. Responder bids no-trump with a club control. With a maximum, she could bid 3NT.
4. Opener passes with a minimum.

Important stuff to remember about New Minor Forcing

- ➡ NMF is only used after a very limited number of specific auctions. One something, one major followed by 1NT is the auction required to be able to use NMF. While the number of auctions is very limited, the frequency of these auctions is very high. That is why NMF is such a valuable tool.
- ➡ NMF is an invitational bid (11+), forcing for one round only and does not guarantee a rebid. This allows you to invite game, but still stop at the two level if opener has a minimum. If you have a game forcing hand, you can still use NMF, but you are solely responsible for making sure game is reached.
- ➡ You frequently must make jump responses to NMF to show a good 13 or 14. While it may seem odd to jump with so little, remember, your jump bid is in context of your previous bids. Since your original 1NT rebid showed 12-14, your jump has a top end of 14.
- ➡ A very important corollary is that with silent opponents, the auction 1 ♣ or 1 ♦ - 1 ♠ - 1NT - 2 ♥ is completely non forcing, showing 5 spades and 4 or 5 hearts and asks you to pass or correct to spades. Partner is just trying to get out of Dodge. Just do as you are asked, don't get creative here.
- ➡ The only time responder will use NMF without the major being 5 cards long is the auction 1 ♣ or 1 ♦ - 1 ♥ - 1NT where the 1NT rebid does not deny four spades. But, Ron, you can't bypass the spade suit. That's heretical! Well, maybe not. Modern bidding theory prioritizes showing your hand type and point count as quickly as possible. Thus, bidding 1NT shows a balanced 12-14 point hand. If you do bid 1 ♠ instead of 1NT, you are showing an unbalanced hand with four spades and five or more of your minor. If you use NMF correctly, you will never miss the spade fit if you have invitational or better values.
- ➡ NMF is generally also played when opener's rebid is 2NT, showing 18-19 HCP. The responses are the same, but are forcing to game.

FREE BRIDGE LESSONS

The following is the text from a recent email I received from District 7 announcing free beginner bridge lessons. Following the announcement text I have added a few comments regarding the program.

District 7 and its local clubs, in partnership with SE Carolina, is offering a FREE expanded version the ACBL "Bidding in the 21st Century" course online using Zoom. Al Smith, an ACBL-Certified Teacher, who has taught this course numerous times, will be the instructor.

The goal of the course is to give you a good foundation in using modern Standard American bidding, introduce you to playing online on the BBO website and introduce you to the ACBL, the keeper of bridge in North America.

The course consists of twelve (12) lessons. Attend as many or as few as you want. Each lesson will be about 1 hour followed by a brief Q&A session. Lesson handouts will be emailed to participants before each lesson. There is a companion book, "Bidding in the 21st Century". The book is nice to have to read in parallel with the lessons but not needed.

The Zoom Online lessons will be on Tuesday afternoons at 1:30 pm. The course schedule is:

January 5, 2021	General Concepts
January 12, 2021	Opening Bids
January 19, 2021	Responses to 1NT Open
January 26, 2021	Responses to Suit Open
February 2, 2021	Rebids by Opener
February 9, 2021	Rebids by Responder
February 16, 2021	Overcalls
February 23, 2021	Takeout Doubles
March 2, 2021	Stayman, Jacoby/Texas Transfer
March 9, 2021	Reverse and Splinters
March 16, 2021	Strong 2C with 2D Waiting
March 23, 2021	Gerber and Blackwood

To register, click on the following online registration form link. Fill out and submit. Magic, you are registered. If you need help, feel free to call Al Smith at 910-457-6674 or email him at se.carolina.bridge@gmail.com.

<http://eepurl.com/hfh-BX>

I spoke with Al about a week ago to try to determine if this was an appropriate program for our members. While the primary purpose of the program is to introduce new players to bridge, I think there is value here for many of our players. The lessons do begin with 52 cards, four suits, four points for an Ace, three for a King..... yada yada yada. But after that, the lessons teach the 21st century version of the Standard American Bidding System. Many of us learned to play many years ago, probably at the kitchen table, and mostly from friends or family who may or may not have had a sound understanding of the game. Bidding concepts have changed considerably over the years, so you may not be current on today's methods.

For fear of offending someone, I wasn't quite sure I wanted to present this opportunity in the newsletter until I directed the November 24th virtual club game. I witnessed an auction straight out of the twilight zone. There were eight non-pass bids, of which, in my humble opinion, zero, nada, zip were correct, and I'm not so sure about the passes either. So, just maybe, some of us could benefit from a review of the basics. Just saying.....

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So, if you know someone who might be interested in learning how to play bridge. Please pass this information along to them. If you feel a review of the basics would be of value to you, please sign up. Remember, you don't need to take all the lessons, you can pick and choose, and there will be lesson handouts emailed to you. Sounds like a pretty good deal since it's free.

Full Disclosure – Applying the techniques I learned in *The Art of the Deal* (found it on a remainder table for buy one, get 10 free) I have negotiated a 6.17% commission on the lesson fees, and I am going to be a pig and keep it all for myself!



Best Wishes for a Happy New Year

And last, but certainly not least

Fare thee
well

2020