



# JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER



## THE REPORT ISSUE

This issue of our newsletter is about reporting what's been going on at our little old club. First, we have a new Life Master and a new Diamond Life Master in our rank change report. We also have a report on our Longest Day event and yet another report on the virtual club thingy.

We also have an instructional bridge article by Jay with the pithy title *MORE SIMPLE RULES FOR PLAYING BETTER BRIDGE*. I admit to being a little confused by the title. Do we have additional rules or do we have simpler rules. It doesn't really matter, some good stuff there.

Speaking of confusion, I have been reading the Aiken Standard articles about the virus and they keep mentioning probable deaths. Well, I always kind of thought that was a yes/no thing. Can someone help me out here?

## NEW LIFE MASTER

Congratulations to **Sue Kline** for achieving this milestone. When we all embark on our personal bridge journey, achieving the rank of Life Master is the ultimate goal. Yes, once achieved, there are additional goals, but nothing is quite as important as earning that Life Master status. This is the one that you remember. **Congratulations Sue!**

So, it's time for a Life Master Party. The party is scheduled for, um, sometime and will be held at, um, someplace. Hope you can all make it,

**Congratulations Betty Hoopes!** She is our newest Diamond Life Master (5000 masterpoints).

Other rank changes in the last four months are:

Bronze Life Master:	Bill McGhee
	Don Scoggin
Regional Master:	Greg Gregorian
	Jim Hart
	George Ward
Sectional Master:	Chris Amabile
	Bill Ater

## JULY SCHEDULE

We no longer have any idea of what the ACBL is going to do for us or to us. They have added two Regionals, a Silver Point Week, and a Longest Day Weekend in the three months we have been playing online. While I am hardly the ACBL's biggest fan, I think these actions by them are terrific. They are giving players an opportunity to win pigmented points while generating sufficient revenue to keep the organization afloat during these unusual times.

**Breaking News .... Breaking News ....** we have just learned that the Regional held last weekend on BBO generated 13,000 tables and netted the ACBL about \$565,000 after BBO's fees. Huge success, way to go ACBL!

We have no idea what they will do next. So, right now our schedule is our usual three games a week awarding black points at 150% of the normal club rate. Then

# Que Sera Sera

## Game Schedule - July 2020

Monday 1:30pm	Wednesday 1:30pm	Friday 1:30pm
	1-Jul Open Pairs	3-Jul Open Pairs
6-Jul Open Pairs	8-Jul Open Pairs	10-Jul Open Pairs
13-Jul Open Pairs	15-Jul Open Pairs	17-Jul Open Pairs
20-Jul Open Pairs	22-Jul Open Pairs	24-Jul Open Pairs
27-Jul Open Pairs	29-Jul Open Pairs	31-Jul Open Pairs

## THE LONGEST DAY

The Longest Day is the Alzheimer's Association's major yearly fundraiser. This year, the ACBL decided that, due to the pandemic, all virtual club games played on BBO on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup> would be for the benefit of the Alzheimer's Foundation. We have participated in this event every year since its inception and did so again this year. The card fee was \$5.00, of which \$1.00 went to the ACBL, \$1.10 to BBO and the rest our club. Our club and the ACBL donated 100% of their portion to the Foundation and BBO chipped in 50% of their portion (Hey, if all this math stuff is too much for you, dontworryaboutit, it's probably wrong anyway). So, about 89% of your fee made it through to the Foundation.

This year we decided to have morning and afternoon games both days. So, how did we do? Meh. Attendance was disappointing, with a total of 26 tables for the four games. On the bright side, that's ten tables more than last year when we held only one game. Last year we had a silent auction for items donated by our members and gift certificates donated by local merchants. In addition, many members chose to place cash contributions in our little basket. In total, we raised nearly \$3000 for Alzheimer's last year.

Unfortunately, this year there was no way to hold the auction or have a little basket at our virtual games. The amount we raised from the four games this year is about \$450, a long, long way from last year.

# BUT WAIT

# IT'S NOT TOO LATE

While we still can't have an auction, Alan Brooks has volunteered to be this year's little basket. Thus far, the little basket has about \$900 in it. If you feel so inclined, you can make a donation to support Alzheimer's research by writing a check to the Alzheimer's Foundation and sending it to Alan at:

119 Quaker Ridge Road  
Aiken, SC 29803.

Thanks to Alan for being our Team Leader again this year, even though it was a whole lot different than we wanted it to be.

Finally, thanks to everyone who participated in the games and/or may contribute to this very worthy cause.

## VIRTUAL CLUB THINGY REPORT

June was our third month playing on BBO. In addition to our usual 3 games per week, we added four games for the Longest Day weekend. The Longest Day games were not well attended. Last month, we added two games during Silver Point Week, which were also not well attended. Therefore, it seems our membership is content to have our normal Monday, Wednesday, and Friday schedule.

I am happy to report that the turnout for our games has been, in my opinion, quite good. Excluding the extra silver point games and the Longest Day games, our average table count has increased each month. In April, we averaged 10.2 tables per game, in May, 12.5, and in June, 13.0. However, I think our table count is about as high as it will go. We certainly miss our members who have elected not to participate, but at this point, I don't expect any of them to change their minds. Also, there is really no way to attract new members, so I think we have about maxed out our game size. The good news is that it's at a more than acceptable level.

If any of you actually do change your mind, remember that Sherry is there for you. She will get you signed up on BBO and show you how easy it is to play. Contact her if you want to give it a shot.

We now have a sixth Director. Jay J finished his BBO training on Monday and is ready to roll. With six Directors, we are now able to make permanent assignments for directing. They are:

1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	Steve	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday	Jay
1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednes	Alan	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednes	Lauren
1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	Jesse	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Friday	Ron

For those months that have a fifth Monday, Wednesday, and/or Friday, we will randomly select a club member to be the Director. We'll let you know when your number is called.

Ok, let's talk about some other BBO related stuff.

**Player Registration Blocked** -- yes, this problem is back. About a week ago, it was decided to purge the friends list from every ACBL virtual club. This list is a secondary list of people allowed to play in our games, so its' elimination, once again, made certain players ineligible to participate. I'm sure there were some very good reasons for taking this action, I just can't imagine what they were. So, if you or your partner gets blocked, call the Director of the day to get the issue resolved.

**Common Game Hands** – yes, this is a repeat. I continue to get questions about where you can see the hand records and results so I am repeating the answer. You can review all the results and hand records on the Common Game web site. By clicking on player names in the board by board recaps, you can see their auction as well as the play of the hand. The link is in the email Common Game sends you. It is also here,

[The Common Game ClubWebResults Page](#)

**Number of Boards** – two weeks ago we increased the number of boards played from 18 to 20. While I have not, of course, been overrun with comments, the ones I have received have all been positive. So, we will continue with 20 board games until we don't.

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**Self Alerting** – we are really not very good at this. On BBO, you should **self alert** any bid or announcement you would make playing F2F (face to face). To do this, press the “Alert” box in your bidding box, enter the description (i.e. “15 – 17”, “transfer”, “2 or more”, etc.) and then make the bid. If you forget to do this, simply click on your bid in the bidding diagram and you can enter the explanation. The alert will be seen only by your opponents, your partner, as usual, remains in the dark. **Do not alert by chatting to the table or your opponents.** That kind of defeats the purpose of the self alert – that the opponents know what your bid means even if your partner doesn’t.

**NOTE:** remember our house rule for those of you playing Montreal Relay, Kennedy Club, etc., you must alert that 1 club could be short, that a one diamond response denies a five card major (and if it shows a 4 card major or not), and that a one heart or one spade response shows a five card suit.

If you wish to play more often, there are ABCL sponsored Support Your Club games every day at 10:00 am, 5:10 pm and 7:30 pm. These games are open to all players and cost \$6.00. The lion’s share of the entry fee goes back to support your home club or clubs. That would be us.

## MORE SIMPLE RULES FOR PLAYING BETTER BRIDGE

BY JAY JACOBS

- Bridge is a game of percentages – maximize your outcomes and minimize your risks – be aware of vulnerability – playing for tops or bottoms is losing bridge (better players beat the average without taking chances; taking big chances gets more bottoms than tops)
- Tricks and distribution both count more than points
- If we freely bid game, the opponents should not play the hand undoubled
- Sacrifices over the opponent’s game give them a no-lose option: to double or bid on – be sure they can make their game and you will go down less doubled before you take the plunge – phantom sacrifices cause many bottom boards
- In a competitive auction, a cue bid of the opponent’s suit generally indicates support of partner’s suit and, in any case, is forcing
- Don’t reverse if you don’t have the points – at best, you fool partner, and you may wind up in the wrong suit or too high – and then, how does partner know when you really have a reverse?
- Weak 2-bids are fine with 6-4 in two suits, even if the 4 card suit is a major, especially if you lack values in it and/or partner is a passed hand
- Be wary of opening 2C under any of the following conditions:
  - You have 5-4-4-0 distribution
  - Your five card suit is a minor and your distribution is 5-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2, or 5-4-3-1 (causes rebid problems and may wrong-side the contract)
  - You have 5-5, 6-5, 7-5, 6-6, or 7-6 in two suits (suddenly, you need a high level to show both suits) – don’t worry about opening at the one level because, with all that distribution, your bid will not be passed out
- Don’t open 2NT without all suits stopped – you may get lucky and they won’t lead the unstopped suit, but you could just as easily have game or slam in another suit and go down in 3 NT

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- When partner opens 1NT and you have ...
  - a 4 card major, no singletons or voids, and less than 8 points, pass – you risk getting too high when partner does not have your major
  - a worthless hand with no more than two clubs and at least 3 cards in each of the other suits, transfer to a major or use Stayman and pass partner's response (a/k/a "garbage Stayman")
  - a four card spade suit and enough points to bid Stayman, bid 2C if partner bids 2D, bid 2NT or 3NT, if partner bids 2H, bid 2S (partner could have both majors and bids hearts first or partner could have a worthless doubleton somewhere and prefer to play in a 4-3 fit instead of 2NT – partner can always bid 2NT over your 2S – give them the option)
  - 5-4 in the majors, use Stayman – if partner bids 2 diamonds, bid your 5-card major (at the 2 or 3 level, depending on strength) and partner knows you are 5-4 and your relative strength – if you transfer, you could be playing in a 5-2 fit instead of a 4-4 fit
  - 5-5 in the majors, transfer into one major and then bid the other – with a weak hand, transfer into hearts and then bid 2 spades, keeping you at the two level – with a game forcing hand, transfer to spades and then bid 3 hearts – either way partner should know you are 5-5 and your general strength
  - a 6+ card minor headed by the jack or queen and 5+ points (but not enough for game), transfer into it at the 3 level – it will probably play better at 3 of the minor than 1NT – but with a 5 card minor headed by the jack or queen and not enough points to raise, pass the 1NT (it's unlikely 3 of the minor will play better than 1NT)
- 4-level transfers to a major over 1NT indicate 6+ card suits and no / nada / zero slam interest – if you have slam interest or aren't sure of game, transfer at the 2-level and, as appropriate, don't let the auction die prematurely
- If you have an 8 or 9 card suit, it should be trump – open at, or be willing to compete to the 4 or 5 level, unless partner makes a penalty double and your hand is otherwise garbage
- Raising 1NT to 4NT is quantitative, asking partner to go to 6 with a maximum NT opener and pass with less – by implication, raising 1NT to 5NT asks partner to bid 6 with a minimum NT opener and 7 with a maximum
- If partner opens 2C and then rebids a major, a raise to 3 of the major is stronger than a raise to 4 – raising to 4 says we can't go higher – fast arrival indicates minimum values and denies any slam interest
- Don't double slams you can't set yourself (generally you should have a trump trick) – you will usually get a good enough score by setting the slam – the extra 50 or 100 points you may get is not worth the risk – remember, one of the opponents may be void in a suit you have an ace
- The 4-level of a minor belongs to the opponents, especially if they are vulnerable – don't take them off the hook unless you think you can make game
- If partner is strong and your hand is unbalanced, it is probably better to play in your long suit
- Be careful about doubling the opponents with a trump stack, especially if they have another suit to run to, unless you are also prepared to double the other suit – otherwise, you are giving them a roadmap to the hand – and sometimes, they retreat into NT which makes when the suit contract is doomed
- Once you and partner determine you have a misfit, get out at the lowest possible level – trying to fine-tune a part score contract can only lead to more trouble (if you each have a two-suited hand, it will not play well in no trump – you generally only have stoppers, not taking tricks)
- If you have a weak hand, it is better to support partner's suit than bid your own, unless partner opened a minor and you have a major (example, you have 4 spades, 3 hearts, and 6 points – partner opens 1 heart – bid 2H – only bid 1S with more points – otherwise, when partner bids two of a minor over your 1S and you return to 2H, partner only knows you prefer hearts to the minor and is unaware you have 3 card support)

- If partner opens one of a minor and you have 4-3-3-3 distribution (where the 4 card suit is a minor) and 5-10 points, bid 1 NT if partner repeats their minor, you can raise, but at least partner knows your distribution – if your 4 card suit is diamonds and partner opens 1 C, still bid 1NT – after all, you would bid 1NT over partner's bid of one of a major and now the opponents know which major they have – let partner keep her/his major secret
- Sometimes you can have 17 points and just have to pass – for example, opponent opens 1S and you have AKx of spades, QJx of hearts, QJxx of diamonds, and KJx of clubs – you can't double without 4 hearts and you have no source of tricks in NT – now if partner reopens the bidding ...
- A negative double of a minor promises no less than 4-3 in the majors and tolerance for the other minor (while a negative double of a major guarantees four of the other major and tolerance for both minors), or a strong hand with a self-sufficient suit
- When someone is vulnerable, -200 in a part score is almost always bad for them
- When playing a hand where you intend to cross-ruff, cash your side-suit winners first so the opponents can't throw away that suit during the cross-ruff and then trump in later
- Queens, jacks, and intermediate cards are worth more in NT than in suit contracts (in suit contracts, there may not be a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> round)
- If you have Qxx opposite Jxx, you will generally lose 3 tricks if you break the suit, but if the opponents break the suit, you have 3<sup>rd</sup> round control as long as second hand plays low
- Aggressive defense may be needed to defeat games, but passive defense often works well against part-scores
- Some bad opening leads
  - Underleading aces in suit contracts
  - Leading unsupported honors in unbid suits, except when you have reason to believe partner has values there, or you have no other viable lead
  - Leading from five to the jack against no trump
  - Trump, unless you have a compelling reason, such as the opponents may have an obvious misfit or impending cross-ruff, or leading any other suit is high risk
  - Leading shortness when you have a trump stack – you'll just be trumping with your trump tricks
- If you are on lead against a slam and have an ace in one suit and KQ in another, lead the suit with the KQ – then if you gain the lead in one suit, you can cash the other winner
- The lead of a high card generally denies an honor and the lead of a low card generally promises one – but, be careful, leading away from tens and jacks may only fool your partner
- The proper lead from K-J-10 is the jack – this traps the queen if partner has the ace – if the queen is over the jack, partner ducks, the queen is trapped, and, if the queen is not over the jack, partner plays the ace and returns the suit – if partner does not have the ace, don't lead the suit – you will lose two tricks
- When you have a two-way finesse for a queen, do it in a way that keeps the dangerous hand off the lead – otherwise, delay the finesse as long as possible as the opponents may lead the suit or make discards that give you clues as to who has the queen, or later in the hand you may have a better count and know who has length
- The more conventions you play, the more you and partner have to remember, and the greater your chances of getting into trouble if you are not on the same wave length – simpler is better (sometimes, less is more)

*Happy Birthday*  
*to US*

