

# THE FRIENDSHIP CLUB

## *March/April Newsletter*

### **Hello!**

What a wonderful winter we are all enjoying! The weather has been beautiful, and the bridge has been fun and educational. Friendship Bridge Club has been enjoying full competitive games with lots of tables in a warm and relaxed environment. That is a fantastic start to our year! Twelve months ago, we launched a new website and began the newsletter. Amazing! It seems like only yesterday that we began.

Our website address is [bridgewebs.com/friendship](http://bridgewebs.com/friendship). You can also google “friendship bridge club coral gables” and the link will come right up. If you do this often enough, the link will become the first or second listed. Another way to access it is that you can bookmark our link which is [bridgewebs.com/friendship](http://bridgewebs.com/friendship). If you save it in favorites (if you know how to do that) you just click on the link each time. Either way works. The important thing is that we want everyone to be able to take advantage of the website. There is a huge amount of information on the website, and many helpful links. You can get daily results, compare your score to others, study your mistakes, and celebrate your successes. There is also a ‘learning’ section on the left hand side. Thanks to David Babcock, we now have a link and can actually look up and learn the rules of the game, including the new revisions to the laws. With Ronnie Burman’s invaluable help, the website will continue to get better and better. If you have any questions or suggestions, don’t hesitate to ask.

While we have been busy uploading email addresses - thank you EVERYONE! - there are always a few folks whose emails we don’t have. Please let us know if someone is not receiving our newsletter. We will be happy to add them to the more than 330 people currently on our mailing list.

This issue once again features an article by Kim Hall on how to be a true student of the game of bridge. We are ever grateful to Kim for his advice and guidance and his constant availability to help anyone who asks. We also have included a summary of the annual meeting that was held in January. The Board feels it is important for everyone to be involved in our club and to know what is going on. This month we are featuring Norman Pestaina as our featured interview. I am guessing that a lot of you don’t know Norman all that well. He is a real student of the game and is a very interesting and kind person. In our learning section, we offer possible major suit responses after partner opens 1N. We have had interesting discussions with Kim and others about what to include in the learning section, and we would love your feedback. For now, take what you will of what we offer. If it helps you, great. If not, just ignore it. As usual, we will have Ben’s Blog and conclude with Feinswog Funnies.

### **Announcements**

Please **DO NOT** wear perfumes or colognes or aftershaves that linger. We have members who are allergic to scents who have had problems breathing. Just bring your sweet selves to the club, not the scents.

Our directors ask that we remember that bridge is a game of rules, and that it is also a timed event. If the Director takes a board away because of slow play, PLEASE do not argue or say that the table behind you has just begun a board. Directors are aware of the pace of play throughout the room. If he or she removes a board, it is because of the tempo in the room. Also, please remember that a Director call is not meant as a punishment or as an embarrassment. Calling the Director to rule on a perceived infringement is the correct thing to do. We do not want players to determine who is at fault. NO ONE wants to commit a rule infraction, of course, but sometimes mistakes occur. Please be patient with your opponents, partners and Directors, and remember Directors actually had to take an exam to be a Director, while most members have not.

Please remember not to use the handicap bathroom. Yes, we know it is bigger and more inviting, but should a person using a walker enter the bathroom while someone is in the larger stall, that person has to stand and wait. Please be considerate of those who actually need the extra room. And thank you!

Finally, we want to remind you that the folks, who help with food always, always need help. If you play several times a week or even just occasionally, please get up and help once in a while. Your assistance will be much appreciated.

**Congratulations** to **Morris Futernick** on reaching Gold Life Master! We also congratulate **Doug Winship** on reaching Silver Life Master. Kudos also go to **Janet Obregon** and **Joan Ambrose** for reaching the level of Club Master and to **Ronnie Burman** for Advanced NABC Master.

And congratulations also go to **Alina Castells** and **Michael Yau**, who were first overall nationally on January 7th Junior Fund game that had 4372 pairs playing the same hands provided by The Common Game. They had a 77.05% game! Wow!

Each year, the ACBL announces by point division who won in each of two different races after a calendar year. The Ace of Clubs (most points won at clubs) and Mini McKenney (most points won at clubs and tournaments) are awarded at the Unit, District and National levels. We have a number of members who scored well in both races. **Ronnie Burman** won his division in the Mini McKenney in both the Unit and the District. He also placed in both for the Ace of Clubs. **Doug Winship** also won his division in both the Unit and the District for the Ace of Clubs and he placed in both the Unit and District in the Mini McKenney. Others who did well in one or both races, placing in either in the Unit or the District are **Tina Tessaro**, **Vivian Reedy**, **Abby Hellring**, **Sheila Cesarano** and **Michael Singer**. Congratulations to all those who did so well.

Finally, during the recent STaC, **Nino Giacobbe** and **Margaret Seroppian** came in fourth and earned a whopping 14.64 Silver points! Way to go Margaret and Nino!

## **Extra Point Games**

At Friendship Bridge Club, we try to maximize our results by providing as many extra point games as the ACBL permits. March features a variety of extra point games. Six are Junior Fund games and six are quarterly championships. Another is a Unit Championship.

April has extra points every day of the month! You can check out whether a day will have extra points on our website [bridgewebs.com/friendship](http://bridgewebs.com/friendship) and then click on the left hand side that says “Calendar.” The Calendar section is just one of the advantages of using our website. Check out other items on the left hand side of the website page!

## **Kim’s Corner**

### **A Student of the Game**

A good friend who was also a good bridge player paid me the best compliment I have ever received. He said I was “a student of the game.” He didn’t say I was a great player. He didn’t even say I was a good player. He merely said I was seriously working at learning the game.

This could be seen as a cliché but, if we can interpret its meaning, we can use it to improve our game in a scientific, psychological and strategic way. Here are some of the considerations that indicate the seriousness of someone aspiring to be a good player:

He analyzes information – He is as accurate and objective as he can be. He always considers that his ideas could be wrong and that others may have valid ideas that should be considered.

He keeps the big picture in mind – He knows there is more to the game than the nuts and bolts of bidding and play. There are always considerations as to the “state of the match,” the opponents against with whom he is competing and the form of scoring. Bidding and playing the same way at different stages of the competition, against different levels of opponents or different forms of scoring don’t address the larger issue, the point of the game – to win.

He considers the feeling and rights of his opponents, partners and himself – He remembers that bridge is a game and, in order to enjoy it, he needs to keep that in perspective. He wants to win but does not break or bend the rules for emotional or competitive reasons. He doesn’t let others take advantage of him but tries to be sensitive and understanding of others’ limitations and situations.

He is humble to the game – He knows he is not above the strategic guidelines of the game. He does not make the guidelines; he follows them, sometimes bends and rarely breaks them.

Certainly these are ideas that we would all say are “automatic” to be better bridge players and better people. We also know that we don’t always live up to these lofty ideals. If, however, we consciously aim for them we will be more and more successful as we progress. We will be students of the game.

## Get to know Norman Pestaina!



“Quick, methodical, always driving himself to explore new ways to improve and innovate bridge while also loving and caring and always ready to help,” is how Michele Mataillet describes him. “To be honest, I’ve never seen such a selfless, big hearted person, always smiling and innovating bridge systems,” raves Ronnie Burman. Such are the ways people who know Norman Pestaina describe him. I am guessing there are some folks who do not know who Norman is. I can tell you they are missing out. Quiet and self-contained but with a wry sense of humor, Norman is a wonderful guy who knows a lot about bridge...but let me begin his story way before I met him.

Norman was born in the Barbados in 1951. His roots in Barbados go back much further to the 1600’s, and part of his family’s story is detailed in a book by Andrea Stuart entitled, “Sugar in the Blood.” He is the second of six children, and he has an older sister, two younger brothers and two younger sisters. His dad was an Anglican priest, and Norman grew up with lots of structure and rules. With a strict dad, I am sure Norman had his moments of rebellion, but one sure would not notice that now. His mom was a homemaker and spent her time taking care of her children all of whom were smart as whips. She must have had her hands full managing all of them. They are still a close-knit group of siblings, though one of his brothers has died from ALS. Norman told me that he is “all about family,” and it is clear that his siblings feel the same way. Despite the fact that his older sister and brother live in Barbados, a younger sister lives in Toronto, and another in Antigua, they make an effort to stay connected and to visit one another. Norman’s dad passed away in 1976, when he was just fifty-five, but his mom is still hanging on at 90. He told me her mind is sharp, though her body is less so. He knows he is lucky to have her.

In 1969, Norman left Barbados for Jamaica where he went to college at the University of West Indies. One of Norman’s pleasures in college (and high school) was acting. He played Prospero in the Tempest and Oedipus in Oedipus Rex among other roles, but once he graduated, that was the end of his thespian days since he needed to devote time to family and career. He got his degree in mathematics and immediately went to work teaching high school math in Jamaica. It was during college that he met his wife. Cheryl, who hails from Nassau, graduated about eighteen months after Norman, so he stayed put until she finished her degree. I asked him if he experienced love at first sight. He hesitated and then said in his inimitable way, “Yes, but it was probably lust, too.” They married in Nassau after she completed her studies. After teaching, Norman found his way to the US to attend graduate school at Penn State where he majored in computer sciences. He spent the next two years in Boston, working at Lincoln Labs. He then spent the next three years working in Barbados. Finally, he and Cheryl settled in Miami. Here, Norman taught at FIU until just last year. He told me he really enjoyed his job, particularly the early years which focused more on students and which he really enjoyed. Cheryl went on to earn her Master’s degree in public administration and worked at United Way and New Horizons Community Services, specializing in geriatric programming. She retired a year before Norman, in 2017, and both are now enjoying life.

Married almost forty-five years, Cheryl and Norman have three wonderful children. Their oldest son, Khary, has been a high school history teacher and is now studying for his PhD in History. His daughter, Michelle, is Associate Director of Admissions and Financial Aid at FIU Law School, and his son, Evan, is an artist who currently is an account manager at Kaseya. They have five grandkids ranging in age from four to twenty-one. As you would guess by now, they are all extremely close. Norman says he gets emotional when he thinks of his kids and grandchildren, and he spends as much time as he can with them.

Norman's interest in bridge dates back to 1981 during his days in Barbados. He and a friend learned to play Precision, a bidding system that many folks do not want to spend the time learning because it is so complex and precise. He played duplicate for one year and really enjoyed it. Then life took over, and he did not play for many years. Bridge resurfaced as a hobby around the year 2000. He started playing in South Miami in Jeanne Hall's bridge club. I asked if Cheryl played bridge, and Norman told me she thinks serious games are oxymoronic, which of course, they are. So Norman developed many wonderful partners over the years and enjoys playing with them all. He loves developing ways to think about systems and has written many articles about various conventions. If you are interested, you can google him under "Norman Pestaina bridge notes." You will learn a lot, and you will have the advantage of having Norman around to ask follow up questions. In addition to bridge, Norman is also a real jazz junkie. He just loves it and when asked, enthuses about everyone from Thelonius Monk and Dizzy Gillespie to the newer players today. I asked Norman what radio stations he recommends, and without missing a beat, he responded, 88.9 FM. If you, too, are a jazz enthusiast, tune in. You can be sure Norman will also be listening.

We are all so blessed to have Norman in our midst. He is funny, warm and loves our game. I think when you get to know him, you will love him, too.

## Learning

Our hope is that whenever there is a submission to the learning section, we all remember that these are options not requirements or best play. What matters most is that you discuss these options with your partner and that YOU can remember them and want to adopt them. In this case, there are multiple ways to give major suit responses. What follows is just one.

### Major Suit Responses after Partner Opens 1 no trump

0-7points

1. With 5+♥ or ♠, transfer to the major (announce the transfer) and pass
2. With 5♠ and 4♥ or 5♥ and 4♠, bid 2♣ (Stayman) and then if partner bids 2♦, bid 2♥ which asks partner to pass or correct to 2♠.

8-9 points

1. With 5♥ or 5♠, transfer to the major (announce the transfer) and then bid 2NT
2. With 5♠ and 4♥, bid 2♣ (Stayman) and then if partner bids 2♦, bid 2♠ which shows 5-4 invitational
3. If partner bids one of the majors, re-evaluate your hand and then invite or bid game.
4. With 5♥ and 4♠, transfer (announce) to ♥ and then bid 2♠.

5. With 5-5 in the majors, bid 3♥.

10-15 points

1. With 5♥ or 5♠, transfer to the major and then bid 3NT.

2. With 5♥ and 4♠, bid 2♣ (Stayman) and then if partner bids 2♦, jump in your FOUR card major (3♠) which shows four of that major and 5 of the other major (Smolen). Remember to alert Smolen.

1NT P 2♣ P

2D P 3♠\* (\*alert)

3. With 5♠ and 4♥, bid 2♣ (Stayman) and then if partner bids 2♦, jump to your four card major (3♥) which shows 4 of that major and 5 of the other major (Smolen).

1NT P 2♣ P

2♦ P 3♥\* (\*alert)

4. If partner bids one of the majors after Stayman, re-evaluate your hand and bid game or investigate slam.

5. With 5-5 in the majors and a desire to play game in one of the majors, bid 2♣, and then if partner bids 2♦, jump to 4♣, which asks partner to bid a major suit game. This is called Weisberger. It must be alerted.

6. If you have a stronger hand with 5-5 in the majors, bid 3S after 1NT, which shows a hand with, 5-5 in the majors with slam interest. Again, this bid must be alerted. If partner also has interest in slam in one of the majors, he should bid 4♣ to show interest in a heart slam or 4♦ to show interest in a spade slam.

7. With 6+♥ or 6+♠, use the Texas Transfer, which is a transfer at the four level. Texas Transfers must be alerted. After 1NT, 4♦ transfers to ♥. 4♥ would transfer to spades. When you transfer at the four level, it most often shows no interest in slam.

8. With 6-4 game forcing hands, use Extended Texas. Bid Stayman first, and then if partner bids 2♦, transfer at the four level (Texas Transfer) into your six-card suit. Remember to use Texas transfers only when you have no slam interest.

1NT P 2♣ P

2♦ P 4♦\* transfer to ♥...shows 6♥ and 4♠ (\*alert Texas Transfer)

1NT P 2♣ P

2♦ P 4♥\* transfer to spades...shows 6♠ and 4♥. (\*alert Texas Transfer)

## Ben's Blog

I'm thrilled to see that our membership continues to grow at the Friendship Club, as we placed in the Top 200 of all ACBL-affiliated clubs in number of tables during 2018. Even more importantly, I'm delighted that our friendly players are happy with our entire bridge playing atmosphere.

I'd like to add my congratulations to Morris Futernick, Doug Winship, Janet Obregon, Joan Ambrose and Ronnie Burman for having achieved new ACBL ranks, and to Alina Castells and Mike Yau for their incredible accomplishment placing first place nationally in the January 7th Junior Fund game.



I do think it makes it even more exciting and rewarding for all of our players that our club leadership works hard to make sure that we hold every possible special extra point game allowed by the ACBL. We continue this effort in March when nearly half of the games feature Junior Fund or Championship games of one type or another and again in April when every single game awards extra points!

I'd also like to remind everyone to check out our website, [bridgewebs.com/friendship](http://bridgewebs.com/friendship), which contains not only our calendar, but also lots of other good stuff. If you have any comments or suggestions for improvement, please share them with Audrey.

I love reading Kim's columns, and I think this one about how to be a good partner is particularly worth re-reading.

I also believe that although our wonderful game of bridge is a competitive one with necessary rules, it is one that is so much more enjoyable for each of us as we all continue to practice courtesy and understanding with other players and directors.

In this context, it is important to remember that when a Director is called to your table not to think of it as a criticism or punishment. It is the Director's job to listen to the problem, ask questions and make a ruling. So, please, to facilitate this and to be fair to everyone, let's all remember to (1) call the Director to the table promptly and nicely when there is an issue, and (2) just calmly answer his or her questions, rather than all talking at once, and let the Directors do their job.

As Mal announced at the Annual Membership Meeting last month, she will be retiring on May 1<sup>st</sup> as the primary food and food supplies purchaser. We need a replacement. Please let Donna Blythe or me know if you are willing to help.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the tables for some fun bridge!

## Feinswog Funnies



## From Bridge Magazine February 1935

Four old gentlemen were playing Bridge together the other day. They had been doing little else but play Bridge with each other for some years.

On this particular day South trumped his partner's Ace.

North thought for fifteen seconds. Then he spoke:

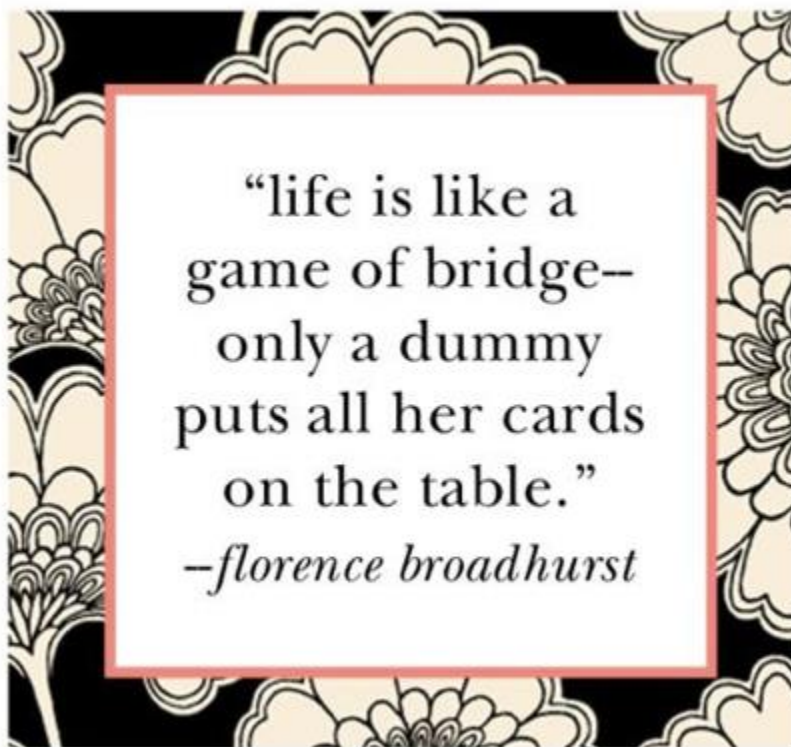
"I have known for some years that each day you played Bridge worse than you did the day before. I do not resent that. But I resent the fact that you are playing today the Bridge you should play the day after tomorrow."

## Marital Bliss

On their wedding night, a couple arrives at their hotel room and the phone rings. The husband answers and talks with his friend about a bridge hand. The conversation continues for hours as the friend tells how he went down in six spades.

When it finally ends, the distraught wife is in tears and says, "How can he be so inconsiderate? That was terrible!"

"You're right, honey. All he had to do was take a finesse."



How did the card game come to be called Bridge? An interesting question, because no one seems to be able to answer it. Many seem to attach value to the Russian word biritch or britch, which apparently meant an announcer or herald of some news or event. However, when you ask an etymologist, you could receive an answer like the following from a renowned expert on the subject. The truth, alas, is that no one knows precisely where the name bridge for the card game came from, although it is fairly certain that it has nothing to do with other senses of the word bridge. The invention of bridge in the 19th century was, evidently, based on a card game long popular in the Near East and known at that time as Russian whist. The word whist itself, by the way, is an old British equivalent of shhh!, and is a natural name for a game that demands silence from its players. Russian whist was also known as biritch or britch, both of which do sound Russian although neither



of them seems to be an actual Russian word. In any case, once the British took up the game, britch became bridge through a process known as folk etymology, which is a fancy way of saying that people often substitute a word they do know for one they don't, even when the substitution makes no sense. So the answer is that the name bridge is almost entirely random and does not mean a thing, or, as we say at my house, Go Fish.