

BRIDGE ON THE EDGE, INC.
A NOT FOR PROFIT BRIDGE CLUB OWNED BY ITS MEMBERS
SERVING THE ST. JOHN'S DUPLICATE BRIDGE COMMUNITY



January 2020

Message from the President
Brian Shortall

BOTE: The Four Pillars

Our Bridge Club is not much different from any construction project. After a vision of the outcome has been achieved and a plan of action set out, our attention turns to the foundation. BOTE has four pillars or cornerstones upon which it rests: Governance; Administration; Education; and Membership. The interaction of these provides the platform upon which BOTE fulfills its mandate.

The January release date for our Newsletter coincides with the transition into the new calendar year of 2020. This is an appropriate time to pause and reflect upon the basics of our Club and its operations in a general manner.

Governance. Following the 2019 AGM, the Board of Administration convened a planning session. It was the strong consensus of the new Board that it maintain the transparent, open and responsible attitude upon which BOTE was founded. Members would be encouraged to have input and seek information about club matters. Among the Board's initiatives has been the creation of a member-owned library of bridge books. Another has been the decision to formally engage the services of an accounting person to provide financial services and advice. A third has been the initiation of a process to revise the term of office for the Board of Administration. This would see a two-year term of office for Board members with a 50% rotation of Board members each year. If accepted by the AGM, there would be a two-year transition plan established for immediate implementation. More information about this will be provided when the Notice of Motion to amend the Constitution is released to the members.

Administration. The actual day-to-day management of BOTE is the responsibility of our Club Manager, Rahul Chandra, under the direction of the Board of Administration. This is a contracted position. Its responsibilities include the compilation and security of the membership and bridge-scoring information as required by the ACBL (American Contract Bridge League), the normal daily administrative matters of club operations, and providing Bridge Directors with the necessary support to organize the sessions in accordance with ACBL requirements. The Club Manager is an *ex-officio* member of the Board of Administration and also assists with the maintenance and operation of the BOTE Web page.

Education Program. This is one of the constitutional priorities for BOTE. The Club offers a plethora of educational programming including lessons, mentoring and special programs designed to foster the growth and development of our membership, including outreach to potential new members, in the arts of Duplicate Bridge. The instructors for these programs are members of BOTE and follow the guidelines and policies of our Club.

Membership. Our Club is member-owned and the volunteer support and direction given our Club via services such as the BOTE Web page, social activities, committee service and housekeeping assistance are deeply appreciated. Members make the Club. It is important that a milieu is built within BOTE to welcome new members and to enable all members to identify with the Club. All of us share responsibility to make our Club a polite and inviting place.

These four pillars interact with each other and parallel the four legs of a bridge table. If one is out of kilter the entire table is off-balance. On behalf of the BOTE Board of Administration I wish every reader a prosperous and peaceful New Year.



The co-editors would like to thank all who have helped with the BOTE newsletter over the past two years. It is time to give someone else the opportunity to shine. Please contact a member of the executive to express your interest.

All the best for 2020 from Pat and Janet!!





Getting to Know You

Randy Bennett: World Champion

Randy was born in Tillsonburg, Ontario, the son of a salesman whose job kept him on the move. When he was 5 years old the family moved to Kingston, then Ottawa, and then back and forth between the two. By the time he finished grade 12, he had attended 17 different schools.

By this time, having developed no long-term friendships and with few stabilizing influences in his life, Randy was becoming a troubled teenager in danger of falling in with the wrong crowd. Instead, he found his way into a program run by a local Christian group in Kingston that attempted to help kids at risk. There he met 3 other teens who played bridge and needed a fourth. Randy had played cards as a kid – rummoli, euchre, gin, canasta – and as an older teen had engaged in a bit of gambling, so he sat down at the table. The boys gave him a few rough rules, dealt him a hand with 15 HCPs, instructed him to bid 1NT, and his partner, with 10 HCPs, bid 3NT. At trick one he took his first winning finesse to make one over.

This was looking pretty easy, he decided, and the game intrigued him. The foursome soon broke up but he began reading about bridge. The religious group subscribed to the *Globe and Mail* and he read the daily bridge column every day for 2 years. Then someone told him the local library had bridge books, so he went to the library every day and over the next year read an estimated 200-300 of them. His first book was *Five Weeks to Winning Bridge* which he read one night, then reread the following day.

In 1973, at the age of 21, he started to play bridge at a local bridge club. He came 4th the first time he played, 2nd the second time, and 1st the third. He had a regular partner for the next year or so until his partner's untimely death. Then the best player in the Club, who had been watching Randy's progress, took him under his wing and Randy developed a 2nd partnership. Audaciously, the pair entered the qualifying rounds for the World Championship, winning first at the Club level, then the Zone level, and finally the Provincial level. This qualified them for the World Championship held in Las Palmas, Spain, in 1974. Roughly 250 pairs from around the world competed and Randy and his partner ended up in the middle, heady stuff for a 22-year old.

His bridge partner was head of a health unit based in Kingston, and he offered Randy a job as Assistant Health Inspector. This started him down a path that ended with a Degree in Public Health from Ryerson University in 1980. At the time of his graduation, Doug Strong of the Newfoundland Department of Health was conducting interviews at Ryerson and offered Randy a job. He worked in Goose Bay, St. Anthony and finally, in 1983, St. John's in the field of Occupational Health and Safety. After finding John Clouston's bridge club in St. John's, he resumed playing bridge after a 6-year break, with one exception (see Team Labovic below). He also found Marilyn, a house, a dog and a mother-in-law.

In 1984, he played his first Atlantic Regional Tournament in Halifax where an old bridge buddy from Ottawa introduced him to Mike Betts of Fredericton. Mike invited Randy to join his 4-man Fredericton team and he played with the team for the next 3 to 4 years. He won the Lagan Trophy for the player who won the most Silver Points in Units 194 and 230 (the Atlantic Provinces) three years in a row. He also won the Royal Viking Pairs in 1986, which gave him an all-expense paid trip to the upcoming Nationals in Philadelphia.

By this time Randy had secured a position with the Federal Department of Health that required a fair amount of travel across Canada. He always managed to include a bridge tournament in the area he was travelling to. Events moved quickly after that.

He soon hooked up with a former Ottawa partner, Doug Heron, and together they played a number of national and international tournaments. At a Los Vegas tournament in the late 1980s they played a Spingold event against Marty Bergen and Larry Cohen's team. They played a total of 80 boards in one day, 16 boards more than usual because Randy and Doug were playing NS while their partners were also playing NS, when they should have been playing EW. Bergen and Cohen's team eventually won, but Bennett and Heron learned a lot in the process.

In 1990 Randy and Mike joined Doug's 4-man Ottawa team and won the Canadian National Team Championship, which qualified the team to play alongside over 200 others at the World Championships in Geneva. It also qualified them to compete in a tri-country playoff with Bermuda and Mexico (see photo) to determine who, along with the United States, would represent North America at the Bermuda Bowl World Championship to be held in Yokohama, Japan, in 1991. There, they played the top 16 teams in the world and placed 11th. This was quite an achievement because all 6 members of the team were amateurs, in the sense that all worked at other jobs for a living, competing in a field of bridge professionals. (A *New York Times* article described the team as "a squad unused to fame".) Randy and Mike then paired up to enter the World Open Pairs Championship for the Yokohama Cup, and placed 2nd overall!

In 2001, they learned that the winners of the Yokohama Cup (by then renamed the Swiss Plate) had been disqualified from all competitions they had won in the past. So Randy and Mike became World Champions – only ten years late! At his peak, Randy was ranked 2020th in the world.

Randy played for another two years without any significant achievements. He became frustrated and decided to take a break. He and Marilyn bought a cabin and settled in to enjoy it. He emerged from retirement from the tournament circuit to play twice more with Mike, first when they won Canadian Open Pairs Championship in 1997, and again in 2007 when he and Mike, now terminally ill, played at a Regional Tournament in Fredericton and won 2 out of 4 events.

Randy now dabbles in Bridge Base Online (BBO) but has no regular partner and no real system to play. He has never played professionally or received cash payments, though he has occasionally received benefits. He says that in Canada today there are probably as few as 6 professionals because to play professionally, you need to live in the States. He and Marilyn taught bridge on a couple of bridge cruises, one to the Baltic, the other Singapore to Cape Town. The trips were free, but they received no financial remuneration and it was a lot of work.

Ace of Clubs

In 1987 John Clouston moved to British Columbia and passed his bridge club over to Randy and Marilyn to run. (Marilyn was his niece.) They started out at the Senior Citizens' complex on Harvey Road, but when the government expropriated the land to build The Rooms moved to the new and purpose-built Senior Citizens' Club on Bennett Avenue. They ran the club for 30 years and significantly improved the level of bridge played in St. John's.

Looking Back

In the 1980s and 1990s Randy got to play with the 'Greats' – Crane, Mecstroth, Rodwell, Soloway, Passel, Levin, Hampson, Jacoby, Bergen, Cohen – but this doesn't happen anymore. Now, the 'Greats' play separately. He admires Bergen in particular. When he wants advice from Bergen he buys a \$5 pamphlet (the teacher's rate), then says, "And by the way, what would you bid with this hand ...?" The best advice he ever received: If partner opens 2C and LHO overcalls, you pass to say we're going to game, double to say you're a bust hand. Randy himself gives advice freely when asked because he himself received so much free advice in the past: "that's what good players do."

Who would he choose as a partner? Either Marty Bergen or Eric Rodwell. He admires Bergen's wild bidding style and Rodwell's disciplined play. Randy can play both roles, he says, "but both partners can't play the same role, and sometimes you have to switch roles during a hand".

How many conventions has he developed?

1. Transfer Landy
2. The Rueben Rescue devised jointly by Tony Rues and Randy Bennett: Weak NT opening, 10-12 HCPs. Opponents double. You need a rescue.
3. DD2: "All the Pros play it or some variation of it now." It keeps the auction down if you've opened light.
4. Transfer Lebensohl following interference over partner's 1NT opening. "All the experts play it or a version of it."
5. Minimax: Partner opens a Weak Two and you bid 2M, not forcing, but partner must raise with a fit, either a direct raise to 3M with a minimum hand, or 2N with a maximum.

Words of Wisdom

His advice to players reluctant to play up: "You want to play like Gretsky? You have to play with him or against him to get there."

"Every player seems to think they are two notches better than they actually are."

"You can play well with some people but not well with others."

"Your best friend at the table is spades, partner is a close second."

Team Labovic

The only time Randy played bridge between 1977 and 1983 was during his last year at Ryerson when he played for Team Labovic. Baron Labovic was a wealthy eccentric who had developed his own system, the Labovic Diamond, and had recruited 3 young Turks (the Baron was the 4th) to test it. The Baron covered all expenses including entrance fees and the team always got great results. After each match was over, Labovic would take his team to dinner, no costs spared, to debrief Randy and his partner. As the best of wine and food kept coming, they recounted, hand by hand, how they had achieved their winning results employing the Labovic Diamond system, while all the time Randy and his partner had been using their own system (Precision). The Baron never caught on. He held a farewell party for Randy when he left the team for Goose Bay.

A Wakeup Call

The first time Mike Betts played with Randy in 1984, Mike called Randy out. They were defending against 1NT, Randy had nothing, so discarded mindlessly. But in fact Randy had a 4th club, a spot card, which could have won a trick except that he had carelessly tossed a club earlier. Mike said to Randy that if he wasn't willing to defend every hand he could get another partner. Randy chose to defend.

World Championship Qualifiers, Mexico City, 1990



Left to right: Dave Willis, John Valliant, Randy Bennett, Mike Betts, Doug Heron, Ed Zaluski



Some of Randy's Medals

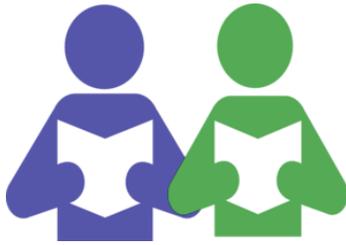
Marilyn Bennett and Brenda Woodman Bronze Medalists

Marilyn said she thought she knew how to play bridge before she met Randy, but Randy thought otherwise. She asked him to help her improve, he didn't agree immediately but finally said, "I'll teach you on condition you give up all your bad habits and start from scratch." It was the beginning of a successful relationship in more ways than one.

Only 3 Newfoundland players have qualified and attained medals in Canadian Bridge Championship finals, Randy, Marilyn and Brenda Woodman.

Marilyn and Brenda display the bronze medals won at the Canadian Women's Teams Championships (CWTC) in Calgary in 2014, teamed with Kathy McNab and Elizabeth Legacy of Halifax.





Sections from: *Playing Bridge is Like Being Married* by Norman Beck
in *Bridge Connect* Spring 2019

When you decide to get married you need to be very picky. Now I am not here to give out marital advice but rather to help you find a partner. In bridge, finding a good partner is key to loving this game. You want someone who understands that it matters not one bit who plays the hand, but rather that it is played in the right contract.

Most relationships fail for one simple reason; a lack of communication. In marriage if you don't listen or feel you are being listened to, one of you will eventually leave. In bridge if you don't communicate you will lose. The most important part of finding a bridge partner is that each listens to what the other is saying, so you can reach the optimal outcome. In any relationship you must also have trust. In bridge you must know what partner will and will not do. If they say things like "I didn't think it would matter" or "I forgot," the fact is that you can't trust them, and if trust isn't there you cannot have a relationship on any level. In bridge I would put TRUST at the top for any partnership.

Another ingredient for a happy partnership is understanding. I have had partners (for a brief period of time) that when they got a bad result, they would not be understanding of either the situation or the fact that you don't always get it right.

Lastly, it is important that you both be on the same page, or share similar goals. I do not care about master points, or the master point race. I don't care about anything but doing well against the best. I would not be well suited for a partner that would rather socialize and only play bridge once a week.

So how do you find the right partner? Just like being married it is very hard and it is possible you marry and divorce many partners over the years. Should you find a good one it is a good idea to not lose them!

The most important things to remember in finding a good partner is to be a good partner. Here are the things I do:

1. When I make a date to play, I don't cancel or back out.
2. Never be late!
3. Work at the partnership. Just like a marriage you must work on it regularly.
4. Focus on the task at hand. When the hand is over don't talk about it, good or bad.
5. Mistakes happen. When one is made, don't dwell on it, don't do it again, and don't forget it!
6. Respect you partner always.

Like in any relationship, a good bridge partnership is one built on Trust and Respect. If I don't respect you I can't trust you, and if I can't trust you I can't respect you. You will find and keep good partners by being one yourself.

Q & A: Heidi Janes



PO'B: When did you start to play bridge and with whom?

HJ: My husband and I started to play social bridge with three other couples about 25 years ago, and I've played a regular Wednesday night social game with a group of gals for around 15 years. Susan Follett, Nellie Burke and Carol Burden were part of the group.

PO'B: How, where and where did you start to play duplicate?

HJ: I started occasional lessons at BOTE with Susan in 2012, thanks to encouragement from Roy Perry. Susan and I joined ACBL in 2013, and we played a BOTE game once a week whenever possible. I decided to make duplicate bridge part of my retirement plan.

PO'B: When did you play your first tournament?

HJ: The Can-At Regional in Halifax in 2018 with Susan; we won a Gold Rush and were thrilled. Of course, I got hooked. I went to the Can-At in Moncton this year with Alice Collins, and we played a team game with Peter Rans (captain) and David Piper, both from Nova Scotia. (Peter used to live and play bridge in St. John's.) It was a thing of beauty. My most recent high was a team win at the 2019 Ottawa tournament, playing with Nellie Burke, Janet Hannaford and team captain Mary Lou Martin.

PO'B: What do like best about the game and who do you enjoy playing with?

HJ: I love the game. I love to focus my mind and be in the moment. And I love the tournaments. I find bridge a great retirement activity because I love learning, admittedly much of it through trial and error. I'm working to improve my game but have miles to go before I'm through. My goal is to become a Life Master, sooner rather than later. Mainly, I like knowing I tried hard, had fun, and did my best.

My long-time bridge friends Susan Follett and Nellie Burke fill in a lot of my dance card. I have also enjoyed great games and had fun times with other BOTE club mates, and I've benefitted from constructive feedback from many bridge players at the table.

PO'B: How does bridge fit in with the rest of your life?

HJ: I retired in November 2018 from a faculty position at the Marine Institute and during my career also taught at MUN's Faculty of Business and CONA. My work included a variety of local, national, and international education and curriculum development projects, including several in East Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and South America. Work now is limited to occasional private sector consultancies in the Caribbean, leaving me time to focus on improving my bridge game.

In addition to bridge, I enjoy walking, swimming, and skating. I recharge during time spent relaxing at our place on the Province's beautiful west coast in Pasadena. When I'm there I play a game a week at the Corner Brook Duplicate Club with Bernd Staben.

I have a wonderful, supportive husband (42 years and counting!). Luckily, he understands how much I enjoy bridge and gets a kick out of my exploits at the table. We are proud parents of an amazing son.

PO'B: You served as BOTE's vice-president and then president. How did you find that experience?

HJ: I was elected to a leadership role as BOTE transitioned from a private business to an NFP (not-for-profit), serving as vice-president in 2017-18 and president for the 2018-19 year. The Board did a lot of foundational work and role specialization in order to manage tasks efficiently. Our Education Committee, for example, took on a heavy workload and our Treasurer had a lot of responsibilities. We worked collaboratively and accorded each other a lot of respect. There were, as expected, some growing pains.

The best part of the job was getting to know my fellow board members and working with exceptional volunteers, including Judy Crewe (webmaster) and all our volunteer dealers. BOTE is very fortunate to have club manager Rahul Chandra. He is capable, level-headed, and reliable; I credit him with being the bridge that keeps us from going over the edge!

This year's board is in great hands, thanks to the seven club members who give freely of their time. The biggest challenge for an organization like ours is volunteer fatigue, so my thought is that we need to support the good people who serve.

PO'B: What aspect of the vice-president and president's job caused you to lose sleep?

HJ: I'll answer that with an underrated four-letter word from our bridge lexicon: Pass!

Overheard at the Ottawa Tournament

A couple of fellas join Tom and Richard's table. After checking out the name tags East says, "You know, I've only met one Newfoundlander I didn't like. Unfortunately he was my brother-in-law – a negative guy, no sense of humour, nobody in the family could get along with him." After Tom and Richard defeated him in a 3NT contract, East says, "Now there are three!"

Ottawa Bridge Tournament 2019
by
Nellie Burke with an assist by Heidi Janes

Heidi made a call and said "Nellie, my dear,
Let's go to the tournament in Ottawa this year."
"Ok," said Nellie, "that sounds like a plan;
We'll go and stay with my good friend Ann."

So, in preparation, we worked very hard,
Studying new stuff for our convention card.
We played in the fall as much as we could,
To work out some kinks as we knew we should.

We organized teams as we planned for our week
To play various events and hoped we would peak.
We'd play twice a day and party at night
And hope that results would still be alright.

We played in the Gold Rush the first day and night,
If we say so ourselves, we sure did alright.
When the results were all tallied, and the story was told,
We had come away with over 2 gold!

The Bracketed Knockouts were humbling for sure,
After two rounds on Thursday, we were pushed out the door.
But Friday with teammates, Janet and Mary Lou,
We decided that Bracketed Swiss is what we would do.

The competition was fierce, but we persevered
And the results were much better than we feared.
At the end of the day, when the story was told,
We made first place and took home 8 gold!

Saturday was Stratified Swiss, and the field was tough,
When we played against A players, it was certainly rough.
After that we were surprised, for lo and behold,
We learned that we had earned another 2 gold!

But the experience affected our plans for Sunday,
Instead of more Swiss, Gold Rush we would play.
Not that it helped, 'cause we didn't do much,
After 5 days of playing, we had lost our touch.

On Monday, sad to say, it was more of the same
With Pramila and Peter, we were both off our game.
But the overall tournament was absolutely a blast,
And the memories and highlights will certainly last.

Opening Lead Protocol



Source: *Bridge Bulletin* July 2019 p. 36, *Ruling the Game Moderator* by Matt Smith

Once the bidding is complete:

“The ideal procedure is as follows:

1. After the final pass, if the declaring side missed any Alerts or gave any mistaken explanations, they should tell the defenders at this point. (Law 20F5b)
2. The opening leader asks any questions they have. (Law 20F2)
3. The opening leader places the lead face down on the table. (Law 41A)
4. The opening leader’s partner and the presumed declarer ask any questions they may have. (Law 41B)
5. The opening lead is turned face up, the dummy is placed on the table, and play begins irrevocably. (Law 41C)

Of course, if there are any missed Alerts, incorrect explanations or other questions, the director should be called as soon as they are discovered. “

To eliminate the need of having defenders ask questions such as: "Whose lead is it", "What is the contract?" or "Would you review the auction for me?", John Goold suggests adding one more item when using bidding boxes:

6. The bids should be left on the table until after the opening lead is made and any questions answered.



A Novice at the 2019 Ottawa Regional Tournament

By Lorraine Moores

I actually learned to count high card points fifty years ago. I learned to open the bidding one of a suit with thirteen points and a four-card suit, or with a balanced hand, 1NT. For many years playing bridge became a social outlet as we honed our defensive and declarer play skills while sipping wine.

Ten years ago I became aware of two duplicate bridge clubs in the city. My friend Gwen invited me to check out the Ace of Clubs on Bennett Avenue. The first lesson was on the negative double, a new concept for me. I attended once more before a medical condition dictated time out. The following year, thinking I could play this game, I contacted Joan who was hosting a duplicate bridge game at St. Mark's Church. Although I felt like the proverbial fish out of water for quite a few games, I am grateful to Joan for continuing to pair me with patient partners, and grateful to those partners. I gradually became addicted to playing the game without the wine accompaniment.

I registered for bridge lessons given by Joan and Richard. My opening bids no longer included four-card major suits or 1NT with 12-14 points. There was a new ACBL standard. Stayman came back into focus, transfers were included, take-out and penalty doubles were accompanied by negative, responsive and support doubles. I was gradually beginning to understand the concepts and I was enjoying the company of other players and making new friends.

Each June as I returned to St. John's after enjoying spring in England, other club members were chatting about the Regional Tournaments they had attended. My desire to be part of this activity increased. In September 2018 I purchased a ticket to fly to Ottawa. One year later I used my ticket and participated in the 2019 Ottawa Regional Tournament. My partner was Pat O'Brien.

Our plan was to arrive Tuesday to play the evening game and depart on Monday morning after playing eleven games. Unfortunately a delayed flight precluded the evening game. This provided ample time to enjoy a Stella and a turkey club in the Marriot dining room. Leftovers came back to the room for breakfast next morning, with a beverage from the hospitality room around the corner. Each daily lunch also provided breakfast for the following day as we reviewed our convention card, partnership agreements, and misinterpreted bids.

I knew my bridge knowledge and skill level had not improved on the flight to Ottawa. I just wanted to experience the play in a different venue with more participants. Why was I nervous? We would play in the Gold Rush.

Pat and I were the first couple to register Wednesday morning. We were pair #1 in Flight 1, sitting East-West. We had paid our money and were requested to submit our email address and ACBL#. I easily recalled my email but it was fifteen minutes later before I successfully sequenced the digits in my ACBL#! My first opportunity to be declarer was the third board in the second round. We had bid a good contract. I carefully made my plan. All was going well; we would make the contract. Lorraine, however, accidentally pulled the wrong card to unnecessarily give up a trick for down one.

Thankfully we play for love of the game in a partnership that accepts that no one is perfect. Pat remembered all our agreed conventions, occasionally I missed one, particularly Drury. Sometimes we considered the textbook bid was not the best in a particular situation, sometimes we couldn't see one available, sometimes our judgement calls were not appreciated by partner.

Partnership agreements were updated. This is bridge whether in St. John's or Ottawa. Yet I enjoyed the intensity of each hand.

Participating in this tournament did increase my desire to review or talk about certain hands to assess how we could have bid, or played, differently. The experience has also prompted me to assess my style of playing – am I aggressive or too conservative? Certainly my passion for moving on to the next deal, or the next game, has been heightened. I'm a problem solver at heart, yet I also enjoy the social aspect of the game and a tournament.

Being from out-of-Province we quite often engaged in conversation with other players about the large number of players from BOTE, why so many, the distance travelled to get there, and if we lived near distant relatives or friends. One lovely lady indicated that she had a friend Gwen living in St. John's. Gwen was actually my friend who had introduced me to duplicate bridge at the Ace of Clubs. Whether in the hospitality suite, at lunch in the dining room, or while waiting for the elevator, chatting with other tournament players was interesting.

Pat and I had not verbalized any expectations for the tournament. Of course we were each hoping for a gold point or two. Primarily I wanted to test my interest and ability to play two games per day for a week, and to enjoy a week's stay in beautiful Ottawa. The evening walk along the Rideau Canal in 18 degree temperatures, the visit to the National Gallery, and dining in the Byward Market area all added to the enjoyment of the trip.

I enjoyed being part of the Bridge On The Edge contingent. Discussing with fellow BOTE members highlights of a session made for some interesting conversations, whether celebrating achievements or commiserating. I was surprised to hear Richard comment after one session 'We just got trounced'. His follow-up comment, 'These guys know how to play', quickly put the whole experience into context. I like a tournament atmosphere!



The Defense Detective



Talking Across the Table

Last time we talked about the Rule of 40 being used to estimate how many points partner has in hand. Now we as defenders have to communicate to partner where our potential winners lie.

Our first opportunity is on the opening lead. If partner has overcalled a suit we are told that there are only 2 reasons not to lead that suit:

1. You don't have any cards in that suit
2. You have a death wish or want a new partner

What card do you lead? If you have an honor in partners suit and only 2 cards then lead your honor, but lead a small card when holding 3 cards with an honor - this indicates to partner that you have "something" in that suit.

If partner has not bid a suit, your lead may be passive (giving a trick that they would get anyway) or aggressive (attacking a suit for your side) depending on the bidding and contract reached. Partner should consider your lead and deduce some meaning. If partner wants you to continue with that suit they will indicate by giving you the "COME ON" signal, a.k.a. the ATTITUDE signal. Attitude signals should be discussed with your partner and recorded on both convention cards.

The ATTITUDE signal is either:

- **Standard attitude:** a relatively high card indicates "keep 'em coming"; a low card indicates a switch to another suit would be preferred.

OR

- **Upside down attitude** reverses the meaning. Now low shows you like the lead. The rationale is that a high card may cost a trick. Often a J is led covered by the Q in dummy followed by the K from partner and declarer wins with the A. The 9 just got promoted to the second highest.

Madonna and Regina Venture to the National Tournament

What an experience we had at the North American Bridge Championships (NABC) in San Francisco!

The beautiful skyline greeted us on arrival. But we, the devoted bridge players, were inside the Marriott Hotel for marathon sessions of bridge. Met a lot of great people and many knew of Newfoundland from the play, *Come From Away*. Great to see familiar faces, Roy and Barbara, who were kind enough to play a few games with us.



The tournament offered a number of free educational events featuring authors from the ACBL *Bulletin* as well as Audrey Grant and Barbara Seagram. There were lots of handouts which hopefully will improve our game when we have time to read them.

As with most bridge games, we had a few stressful moments. Overall we were very pleased with our scores. One game in particular we will never forget! Despite some communication difficulties, we stumbled into a 7NT doubled contract...and no one was more surprised than us when we made game giving us a score of 1790!! Following that great hand...we placed first in the C division and received a small trophy which we dearly treasure.



Note: Trophies

As Intermediate/Newcomers, we would encourage others to consider tournaments in the future. We know we will!



Maddonna and Regina were in good (albeit wealthier) company at the Nationals. Shown above are Bill Gates and his partner Warren Buffett. Also playing was James Holshure, known as Jeopardy James after winning over \$2 million US playing Jeopardy this year.