

UNIT 191 BRIGHT LEAF ALERT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF UNIT 191

MARCH 2021

Moving on to March 2021!

As we continue to practice patience with the ongoing pandemic, I am pleased to hear from our Unit members that they are well and getting vaccinated in preparation for a return to normal life. Hopefully we will return to in-person bridge soon but no details yet. The ACBL is projecting a late summer return for tournament play – but that is just a projection for ACBL sanctioned tournaments. We are hoping sooner for club play.

This is a good time to review some 2021 ACBL bidding rule changes (as described in The Bridge Bulletin Jan 2021 issue page 35):

- Pre-alerts (before bidding begins) - You must now pre-alert if you have a one-level bid that is artificial and doesn't imply a suit. That includes 1Club bids where it could be very short or a strong (think precision systems).
- ACBL rules require that you announce your 1NT opening range every time that you bid. BBO doesn't require that for its Speedball games only but all online club games follow ACBL rules. So alert your 1nt ranges in club games just as you do during in-person games.
- Support doubles and support redoubles are no longer alertable bids.
- Transfer bids are to be announced differently now. In the past, we would announce "transfer to a named suit" or lazily just "transfer". The most common type of transfer is a Jacoby transfer after a 1NT or 2NT opening bid. Now you are asked to simply announce the suit that is represented. Ex. 1nt – p – 2d – here the 2d bid would be announced as "hearts".

Lastly, as you play online, please remember to self-alert your bids. You can be penalized if a director rules that your failure to do so influences subsequent bids by the opponents. They do not have to ask if a bid should be alerted.

We hope that as the days get longer and the weather gets warmer that we will all continue to support our local clubs as they work to survive this pandemic. Looking forward to a marvelous March!

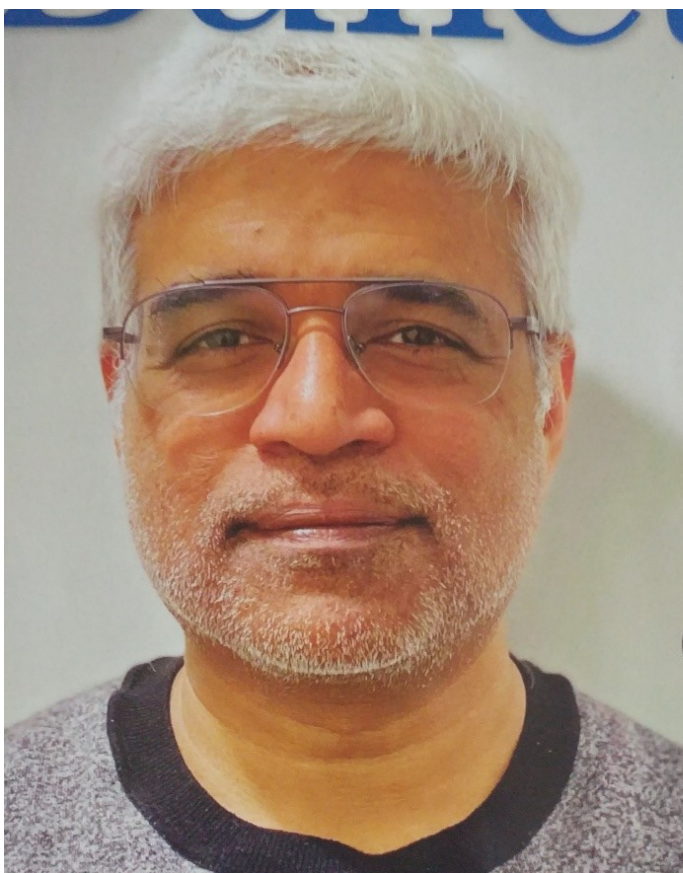
Recently I have noticed that some people do not alert their bids when they should. In online play, we are required to self-alert our bids. Alerting bids is important when you and your partner have an agreement that is not deemed "standard" by the ACBL. The fact that most of your opponents play a particular convention (such as Jacoby 2nt) or understand a bid, does not mean you don't have to alert. The ACBL decides what is an alertable bid. If you don't alert, that **IS an infraction of the rules**. Penalties for failing to Alert are not automatic. If your opponents are deemed to be harmed by the failure to alert, then the director may choose to award an adjusted score.

If someone fails to alert a bid and that affects subsequent bids, the director should be called. He/she will evaluate the situation and make a determination as to whether or not the non-offending side has been damaged by the failure to alert. Every player always believes that they have been damaged, but this isn't always straightforward and the director will try to restore equity if possible. No director wants to be forced to make such determinations! But you must call the director and let him/her evaluate the situation.

Please take the time to alert your alertable bids! Doing so informs your opponents of your conventional agreements. **Each bid description should have both a distributional requirement as well as a strength requirement if one exists.** It is becoming far too common to skip this step. Also describing a bid by stating the name of a convention is not sufficient. Please make an effort to describe the bid rather than name the convention. While it is true that almost everyone recognizes Stayman, there are many conventions that players are unfamiliar with.

Deanna Larus, Unit President





Knowing Uday Ivatury

By *Andrea Roitman*

When I heard that Uday Ivatury was awarded the 2021 Honorary Member of the Year, it brought back all my memories knowing Uday when he was a young man and starting his IT career.

My work history started in 1970 as a computer programmer trainee at The Port Authority of NY & NJ (PA) and I spent the first half of my career in IT. I became responsible for the PA's financial systems and also did the hiring of what we called job shoppers, people who worked as consultants. I did the initial interview and those that seemed promising went through a rigorous technical interview. I needed a programmer and Uday applied as a job shopper. The interview lasted all of five minutes. In the middle of the interview, someone walked into my office with an urgent technical problem.

Without a blink, Uday gave him the solution. That was the end of the interview. He was hired! It was the best decision of my IT career.

Uday's first assignment was that afternoon. He was to meet with the Accounting Manager and get his requirements. Most projects took from 2-4 weeks. I told Uday not to give any estimate, that we'd go back to the office, discuss it, and then I would call with the estimate. But that's not what happened. When we met, the Manager asked when he could have his software and Uday said, "You'll have it this afternoon!" I was both shocked and furious with my new hire. He already didn't listen to me. When we got back I told him he had better get it done, since he had made a commitment. And he did! Nobody on the entire staff could have even come close to that. I knew I had hired a gem.

After that I was the Department's hero; I promised all kinds of things and Uday got them done and never made mistakes. I then decided to give him a large project, to design and develop a new system. I told him I wanted to read his requirements document before he started programming. He responded, "Why, you won't understand it!" Now who talks to his boss that way and stays employed? Nobody. But he did. I really liked him even though he showed me such disrespect. I told him to patronize me and let me read his document. I read it and found a mistake. I called him in to go over that mistake when he responded, "I don't make mistakes!" How arrogant I thought, but he had to agree that he had made a mistake. Now I earned his respect. Imagine having to earn the respect of one of your staff. We never had another problem. However, the staff hated him. He was just too good, easily accomplishing the work of 5 people. And he had no problem telling staff they were stupid, which I chastised him for many times.

When he finished developing his system, he had to write a user's manual. Now we all know, computer programmers cannot write a manual that can be understood by anyone except themselves. Usually those manuals are useless. But Uday wrote in plain English that was so easy to follow and so incredibly well done. He was just good at everything.

Our agency had a “Take Your Daughters to Work Day” to show young girls that they can achieve important positions. Uday was right there entertaining all the kids and making the day fun. My daughter loved him. He was always so generous too. Everybody loved Uday except his co-workers who he continued to call stupid.

Then the day came when he told me he was leaving. He had decided to start his own Internet search company. We all looked at each other; what is the Internet? His company was the first of its kind and he sold it for a small fortune that left him independently wealthy. He stayed in touch over the years.

Years went by and I heard he was in partnership with Fred Gitelman of BridgeBase Online (BBO) around 2001. What happened as I was told is that the software needed a major overhaul. Fred knew Uday as a bridge player. Uday offered to rewrite the software. They never discussed price. It took him about half a year to complete it, which shows how difficult that task had to be, considering how quick Uday was. When Fred asked what he owed him, Uday replied that he did it for fun and wasn't looking for any monetary compensation! So he was made a partner. And recognizing his unique overall skills, he was ultimately made Chief Operating Officer with a staff of his own.

I read the article in the February 2021 ACBL Bulletin and a number of things stood out for me in the article. His most major accomplishment of late was dealing with the high demand for online bridge after Covid surfaced. In particular, he was a godsend to all the bridge clubs across the country that held games that now had no source of revenue. In a little less than two weeks, Uday worked nonstop building the infrastructure to support these bridge clubs. One of his staff who collaborated with him said “We accomplished in two weeks what would have taken six months with normal IT development.” Uday again is showing how incredible he is. And that is only one of the amazing things he's accomplished lately with BBO. The article goes on to say “he is not a people person.” From my experience, that can't be further from the truth.

John Torrey had been running bridge tournaments for me for several years in Carolina Preserve where I live. The players are at all levels, but mostly social bridge players. It is my challenge to keep the games interesting in a very social fun and friendly setting, including having dinner and wine. And I really challenged John to execute my sometimes crazy ideas, which he was always such a good sport about. One time I asked John to create all kinds of unusual hands with long suits and bad breaks. John didn't think the software would allow him to use that criteria to generate hands. So I called Uday. This was a few years ago. Of course Uday knew how to get it done and offered to speak to John. But once John knew it could be done, he figured it out himself. I got to have a long conversation with Uday and we caught up on everything. While on the phone, he mentioned to me that he finally understood what I had been chastising him for over the years. He said he had a lot of MIT graduates working for him and what did they do? They told other staff they were stupid! Uday finally got it, but look what he's accomplished? He has an amazing successful career; he is a super guy; he is a great bridge player; he is sharp as ever; and I am fortunate enough to be able to say I knew him when.



Is That a Club Game on the Horizon?

by Marc Goldberg

Many of us 65+ seniors are in the process of receiving our Covid-19 vaccinations. It has been a long year, but hopefully the end of our Covid isolation is in sight. Sometime in the near future, our clubs will reopen, and we will resume face to face bridge games. Will we be ready for this? I have some concerns.



I probably won't recognize anyone since I haven't seen them in a year. I only know my partners and opponents by their BBO nicknames, so if I give you a blank stare, just say, "Hi, I'm Joe. You know, *13Tricks*."

I'm not sure what the health precautions will be for face-to-face games. Maybe there will be a nurse at the door to scan our temperature? Are we going to have to show proof of negative Covid test or our Covid-19 Vaccination Record Cards when we come into the club? Maybe there will be a bottle of hand sanitizer at each table. Will we have to wear masks? That will be a pain. But it might be a good thing. Wearing a mask, I won't see my partner making faces when I make a dumb play. But she could still roll her eyes- maybe we should require face shields?

I haven't held thirteen cards in my hand in a year. I hope I remember how. I am so used to BBO sorting my cards for me, and then resorting them once the contract is set. I just know I will be confusing my diamonds and hearts the first time I have to play them.

I have not seen a director call in months. The BBO platform solves all those pesky issues of insufficient bids, bidding and playing out of turn, revoking, and a host of other minor issues. I'm pretty sure I will screw something up. The director may be pretty busy.

I have finally gotten the hang of alerting my own bids. How does that work again in a face-to-face game? I will probably get it wrong. I can hear it now, "DIRECTOR, please."

I forgot that a bridge game is mostly silent. The declarer calls for a card, and everyone plays without speaking. Playing at home, I've gotten into the habit of talking to myself- out loud. It helps me counting trump- "that's two, still three more out"- figuring out what the opponents are doing- "that card must be a singleton"- or determining how good my opening lead was- "Oh, \$&*#@%!" I guess at the bridge table I'll have to do all those things in my head again- it sure will get crowded in there.

Passing boards again will be a lot different than the barometer style in the virtual club games. I have gotten used to knowing how my partner and I did on each board and where we stand overall. No need to look at the one-round-to-go sheet. If we are below 50% going into the last round, we always try to reach for a game or slam to see if we can bring our score up. That rarely works, but we still try. How will we know when to do that at the club?

My partners usually play quickly, and we often have lots of time between rounds. I put those extra minutes to good use. You can do a lot in a few minutes- fold the laundry, clean a sink, empty the dishwasher, read my email, read a book, look at the news, watch TV, buy something on Amazon, make a Facebook post, take a bathroom break, grab a snack. (I have not personally done every one of these things, but I have partners who have.). What will we do with those extra minutes at the club? I better brush up on being sociable again and figure out some appropriate conversation starters. Here are some good guidelines on things to talk about: Talk about the weather- green light, should be ok. Comment on someone's appearance- yellow light, caution- might be misconstrued. Politics- **RED LIGHT**, definitely not- wife might be mad at me.

It's going to be hard learning how to be dummy again. I can't believe I'll just have to sit there and do as I am told. I've gotten used to watching my partners play and figuring out what they should do next. I know they can't hear me, but it sure makes me feel better yelling stuff to them- Take the club finesse! Better ruff high! Can't do that at the club- can I still fidget?

I am going to miss those "Private Chat" sessions with my partner between rounds. That gave us a chance to clear up any misunderstandings that we might have had. (me- "Hey, idiot! Didn't you see my discard? I asked for a heart back!" partner- "You moron! How can you open that hand? That is the lousiest 10 points I have ever seen!"). That kind of private chat banter might not be such a great tactic at the club- guess I'll just have to stick with the basics- Nice Play-Partner and Good Try Partner.

What a relief- I won't have to play against any more robots. Those guys drive me crazy. They always have their bid ready, and it appears instantly after I click on mine. They always know what card to play, like they don't even have to think about it. And they remember every card and every spot that has been played and know what is still out. I wish I had that good a memory. It's like I'm playing against a computer. Oh, wait...

I guess I'll have to review what's in my closet again. For the past year, attire for a morning game has been bathrobe and pajamas, and an afternoon game has been sweatpants and a T-shirt. I might have to look presentable again. It probably won't be good to wear the same clothes all week (although that really does save on laundry). Guess I'll have to shave, too.

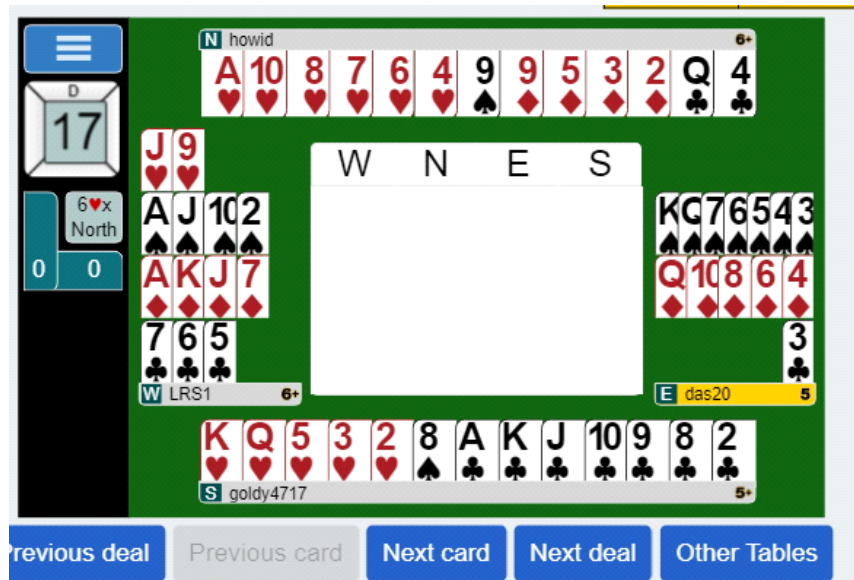
This will be like learning to play bridge all over again. So everyone be patient! See you at the bridge table (Soon. Really. I mean it!).



Four Slams in One Deal

By Marc Goldberg

Here is a hand from a recent BBO tournament played in a local virtual club game. BBO hands are supposed to be generated randomly, but I suspect some enterprising IT tech snuck this one in to have some fun. What is amazing about this hand is that it contains four slams. North-South can make 6C and 6H, and East-West can make 6D and 6S. Very unusual! Who could make this one up?



How did the field do on this hand? Here is a breakdown of the results for the seven tables.

- 2 NS pairs bid 6HX, making 6 for 1210
- 2 NS pairs bid 6CX, making 7 for 1190
- 1 EW pair bid 5S, making 6 for 480
- 1EW pair bid 6S, making 6 for 980
- 1EW pair bid 6SX, making 6 for 1210



Let's look at how different pairs got to slam and see if there are any lessons to be learned.

Getting to 6 Hearts

For both pairs in 6H, North (dealer) opened with 2H. What is your partnership's preempt style? Some pairs might insist on a preempt having a disciplined suit (two of the top three, three of the top 5), but a more modern approach is to "get in their way" whenever possible. With decent shape and being non-vulnerable, four out of seven Norths opened this hand 2H, while the other three passed. Many pairs today play the Ogust convention which allows a player to make an undisciplined preempt without fear of getting too high. (continued)

three passed. Many pairs today play the Ogust convention which allows a player to make an un-disciplined preempt without fear of getting too high.

After the 2H opening call, all Easts overcalled 2S. At this point, South should definitely be thinking about slam. As my basic bridge teacher taught, "Smell The Smoke," meaning have a sense that slam might be possible. In evaluating the hand, South should see that their side has 11 hearts (opener's six plus five in hand). Unless opener preempted with six hearts to the Jack or Ten (bad partner!), there should not be any heart losers. The nearly solid club suit can be set up to run by ruffing if necessary (North showing up with the Club Queen is just a bonus). There are no diamond losers and one spade loser. So 12 tricks in a heart contract seems very likely, and South must bid the slam. One South just jumped to 6H- not very scientific, but effective. One South tried Blackwood, which probably would not yield any important information given the diamond void, but it did keep West from bidding 4S (what if North shows 1 key card? Which one is it? The Ace of diamonds is not helpful; the Ace of Hearts is gold).



Getting to 6 Clubs

In both tables reaching 6C, North initially passed. East opened the hand with a preemptive 3S or 4S, and South overcalled in clubs. West supported spades, but South persisted in bidding clubs until 6C was reached. Both declarers made thirteen tricks. Why the difference in tricks? In 6HX by North, East would naturally lead the King of spades which would win the first trick. In 6CX by South, West is more likely to lead the Ace of diamonds. This trick gets ruffed by South, who then pulls trump and discards the losing spade on the long heart in dummy. Note the scoring- majors in slams are still better. 6HX making 12 tricks scores higher than 6CX making 13 tricks.

Getting to 6 Spades

In both cases, North opened the bidding 2H and East overcalled 2S. South then bid 4H. This bid proved to be the undoing for the North-South pair. It allowed West to communicate spade support and the East-West pair outbid North-South.

Doubling a Slam Contract

Each of the doubled contracts- 6HX, 6CX, 6SX- made. It is certainly tempting with Aces and Kings side suits to double a slam. Ax and AKx looks like 3 potential tricks, right? But as seen in this hand, that can be a risky double. If opponents blast to slam (as in 2H-2S-6H), you can bet that the responder doesn't care about what key cards are out. They surely have a void somewhere. When more technical bidders use control bids and Blackwood and still go to slam missing two aces, what gives? Do you think your opponents are just being aggressive (or stupid)? They probably have those suits covered. In a slam contract in a suit, sure defensive tricks are trump tricks. Aces and Kings in side suits can be neutralized by voids and long suits elsewhere. Use caution, and consider the outcome. If opponents bid to a foolish slam that doesn't make, defenders usually get a good score even without doubling. Most pairs in the field will be in game, making the contract. So setting the slam even by one trick gives a good score. If the rest of the field bids a slam that makes, and your side has doubled it, the declarer will get a bonus, and the doublers will get a low score. Sometimes passing is best.

(continued)

Lessons Learned

This is only one hand out of billions and billions of possible hands, so it will not likely come up again in our lifetimes. And the keys to success for this hand may not apply to similar situations in the future. But here are several key features that seemed to help the pairs that did well on the board.

- North's preemptive bid helped the North-South side. It put pressure on East, who is now an overcaller instead of an opener, and it allowed South to evaluate for a possible slam in hearts. Without the preempt, the best South could do was get to 6C which was an inferior contract.
- When slam is apparent, be aggressive in getting there. The South player who simply jumped to 6H probably made the best bid of the day.
- South players who bid 4H made a lazy bid. Certainly South can see at least 10 tricks, so game is obviously there. With a singleton spade, and knowing North is also likely short in spades based on a 6 card heart suit, South should be worried that East-West can find their spade fit. Just bidding 4H does not interrupt their communication like 4NT (ace asking) or 6H would do.
- Use caution when doubling a slam contract. Make sure you have the tricks to set it- high cards in a no-trump slam, trump tricks in a suit slam.

Note 1: The comments in this article relate to match point games. IMP scoring in team games is different- that system rewards pairs that reach for games and slams. Imagine the possibilities with this hand. In one match, the NS pair bid and make 6HX for 1210, and their EW partners bid and make 6SX for 1210. That is a difference of 2420 for 20 IMPs- a virtually unsurmountable advantage for that round. In a similar game, after EW bid 6S, NS bid to 7HX for a sacrifice, down 1 for -100. The EW partners make 6SX for 1210, a plus 1110 for 15 IMPs- still a very good swing. The reader can explore other possible combinations.

Note 2: The author thanks **Randy Joyce** for adding insightful comments to this analysis.

Membership Report

(covering January 4, 2021 through February 1, 2021)

Total Members - 627

TRANSFERS INTO UNIT

Jack Adler From Unit 188 - Westchester

Judith Adler From Unit 188 - Westchester

Anne Tomins-Durham From Unit 119 - North State

TRANSFERRED OUT OF UNIT

Nancy Benedict to Unit 169 Central Carolina

NEW SECTIONAL MASTERS

Kenneth Bann and Gene Mills

NEW NABC MASTER

Renee M Getz

NEW BRONZE LIFE MASTER

Dean Shangler

Submitted by **Phylliss Woody**,
Membership Chair February, 2021

Unit 191 members please check the Directory on our unit website (unit191bridge.org) and report to me (pwoody@unc.edu, (919) 612-7711) any changes or corrections that need to be made. Please remember Contact information in this directory is provided as a courtesy to Unit 191 members.

Unauthorized use of this information is forbidden.



Unit 191 Award Winners for 2020

The Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney standings below cover the calendar year 2020.

The Ace of Clubs points are those won at the club level.

The Mini-McKenney points are those won in all ACBL-sanctioned events.

ACE OF CLUBS	MASTER POINT RANGE	MINI - McKENNEY
Neil Khaner 36.97	0 - 5	Neil Khaner 39.77
Anna Stachon 26.83		Anna Stachon 26.83
Marlene Jones 23.83		Marlene Jones 23.83
Rich Haney 32.38	5 - 20	Rich Haney 32.38
Catherine Garland 24.11		Catherine Garland 25.05
Beverly Dugan 16.08		Beverly Dugan 16.08
Joanna Karwowska 63.06	20 - 50	Joanna Karwowska 63.80
Randy Grigg 57.27		Randy Grigg 57.27
Gene Mills 21.40		Gene Mills 22.66
Karen Popovich 55.97	50 - 100	Karen Popovich 55.97
Margaret Smith 38.07		Margaret Smith 39.94
Holly Hafer 19.89		Holly Hafer 20.91
Lori Scanga 190.41	100 - 200	Renee Getz 198.74
Renee Getz 160.81		Lori Scanga 192.77
Eileen Bok 100.23		Eileen Bok 137.66
Mary Ferguson 65.84	200 - 300	Liz Schuler 78.40
Liz Schuler 60.20		Mary Ferguson 69.31
Ira Mueller 58.48		Ira Mueller 65.89
Alice Hughley 85.21	300 - 500	Reece Shuler 112.02
Reece Schuler 80.96		Alice Hughley 99.31
Dean Shangler 69.87		Gail King 91.05
Michael Mendelsohn 247.86	500 - 1,000	Michael Mendelsohn 282.09
Mariee Walton 148.11		Martin Causley 229.01
Martin Causley 136.67		Mariee Walton 169.73
Marc Goldberg 187.41	1,000 - 1,500	Marc Goldberg 197.07
Betsy Mebane 109.50		Joyce Jenzano 146.51
Howard Hochman 104.71		Ian Cloudsdale 136.95
Victor Riva 183.81	1,500 - 2,500	Carol Grizzard 231.60
Melanie Riva 180.99		Deanna Larus 208.16
Carol Grizzard 176.91		Victor Riva 196.33
Suzanne Goldberg 370.22	2,500 - 3,500	Suzanne Goldberg 381.51
Kathy Newman 135.45		Peter Adler 142.04
Peter Adler 122.25		Kathy Newman 137.81
Thomas Roberg 237.60	3,500 - 5,000	Thomas Roberg 258.57
Ken Dye 132.21		Ken Dye 155.62
John Torrey 78.22		John Torrey 78.91
Mort Stromberg 32.59	5,000 - 7,500	Mort Stromberg 32.59
Mary Vickers 14.76		Mary Vickers 20.97
B Wayne Stuart III 57.62	7,500 - 10,000	B Wayne Stuart III 182.59
Elaine Landow 45.87		Elaine Landow 60.55
Kay Joyce 373.12	10,000+	Kay Joyce 642.85
Randy Joyce 283.22		Randy Joyce 545.41
Craig Robinson 194.57		Jacek Pszczola 288.98





FROM THE BRIDGE ACADEMY

LEARN AND PLAY

Zoom mini-lesson
Practice on Shark Bridge

IMPROVE YOUR BRIDGE

Join us on **Monday** mornings at 9:15 for a mini-lesson followed by a mini-duplicate game and board analysis on Shark Bridge. Fee is \$15.00

NEW DUPLICATE GAMES AND SOCIAL BRIDGE

Tuesdays at 9:45 am (post-game zoom analysis)
Thursdays at 7:00 pm (post-game zoom analysis)
 No masterpoints awarded. Fee is \$6.00
Sundays at 7:00—Social Bridge

FROM THE ARCHIVES

MARCH, 2011

Membership hit all time high of 545.

New members were: **Meg Hudson, Marian Meyer, Peg Richardson,** and **B.J. Vogel**—all of Chapel Hill, and **Cathy Somer** of Fearington Village. Transfers into the unit were: **Deborah and Allan Carlson, Kwong Chung, and Tammy and Chris Moll.**

New advances in rank:

Junior Maser	Madelon Sheff
Club Masters	Karen Curtin Pete Peterson
Sectional Master	Ovunc Yilmax
Regional Masters	Liana Fultz Joyce Jenzano Robin Marin Jackie Marks Charlie Marshall
NABC Masters	Connie Namm Virginia Wagner Gary Zadjeka
Life Master	Helen Moon
Bronze Life Master	Anne Hennessey
Silver Life Master	Mary Jo Doherty



The mentoring program, co-chaired by **Sharon Crane and Barbara Haskell,** has been reorganized. The program is hoping mentees and mentors sign up for another successful year.



♠ **Come Play with Us!** ♣
♥ **as a Mentee or Mentor** ♦

The  **Valentine's Day Eve Mentee-Mentor game**  was hosted by The Bridge Academy on the evening of **Saturday, February 13th**. Thanks to all who came out to play. We had 28 pairs, challenging hands, and a delightful evening!

Eric Hamilton provided an insightful commentary on slam bidding for four of these challenging hands. It is appended below. Our thanks to Eric!

Our hearty congratulations to the leaderboard for evening:

Roberta Titchener & Sue Little, 1st overall with 64.84%.

Gerri Stanczyk & Randy Poindexter, 2nd overall with 64.29%.

Debbie Morris & Peggy Haigler, 3rd overall with 62.45%.

Beverly Craig & Ed Fuller, 4th overall with 57.69%.

Renee Getz & Lance Shull, 5th overall with 56.59%.

Steve Dong & Bob Dunas, 6th overall with 55.31%.



We gave back to the local community, as well, in this time of need. **\$3** of each player's game fee, or **\$168**, was donated to the **Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina**.

Didn't play last time? Please join us for the next mentee-mentor game on **Fri-
day, March 12th (my Mom's 100th birthday)**, at **7:00 p.m.** The game will be hosted by **Triangle Bridge** on BBO (**VACB252858**). We hope to "see" you there. **Let us know if you would like to play and need a mentor.**

Play every card well,

Ed Fuller, Beverly Craig, Barbara Bute, & Donna Walther (Board Liaison)

Unit 191 Mentoring Program Committee

World Grand Master Kate McCallum's **"46 Bridge Rules To Live By": 5 & 6**

- 5. DON'T SELL OUT AT THE 2-LEVEL WHEN THE OPPONENTS HAVE AN 8-CARD FIT.** However, if you think that either side may have no 8-card fit it is correct to sell out at the 2-level.
- 6. DON'T PLAY TO TRICK ONE UNTIL YOU HAVE A PLAN.** Applies both to defenders and to declarer. If you don't know what you're playing for, don't play!

The Mentee-Mentor game on February 13th had a lot of slams: on four boards out of 21 there were twelve or thirteen tricks for the taking.

Board 1: It starts on the very first board. You're sitting there in that limbo waiting for the game to start and suddenly your hand appears: West, not vulnerable, ♠JT2, ♥AT6, ♦QJ63, ♣AQ6... a promising start indeed. LHO passes, your partner opens 1♠, RHO passes.... things are looking even more promising.

14 HCP opposite partner's opener says that we're going to game on this hand, so we bid 2♦, 2/1 forcing to game. Why not the Jacoby 2NT forcing raise? That promises four-card support and commits the partnership to playing in spades. But with this hand we're not sure yet about playing spades - easy to imagine that partner holds something that makes notrump or a diamond slam better. The 2♦ game force gives us plenty of room to investigate all options. (Usually, these 2/1 bids promise a five-card suit, but the 1M-2m sequences are an exception. It's very convenient to be able to force to game without committing to opener's suit).

Partner rebids 3♣, we rebid 3♠ to show that we have spade support that falls short of an initial Jacoby 2NT response. Now partner could do something to investigate slam but instead they bid a quiet and unexciting 4♠. You've told your story, so you pass. The bidding has gone: 1♠-2♦; 3♣-3♠; 4♠-Pass.

RHO leads and as dummy on BBO you get to see partner's hand: ♣K9863, ♥5, ♦AK8, ♠KJ92. The spade queen is with LHO sitting under the king and partner reels in twelve tricks without breaking a sweat, losing only the trump ace: four spades, the heart ace, and the minors are solid. Now it's recriminations time. First board of the night, and we've already underbid to miss a cold slam? This no longer feels like such a promising start. What went wrong? Who didn't bid enough?

And the answer is.... nobody. We took twelve tricks because the spade queen was onside and we could play JTx opposite K98xx for one loser. That's not a good slam, it's a lucky one and in the long run you'll win more matchpoints staying out of these (try calculating the matchpoints on this board assuming that your side only takes eleven tricks and you'll see what I mean).

The general rule of thumb is a small slam has to be better than 50% to make before it's worth bidding; less than that and you'll lose to people who stop in game more often than you'll beat them. Here spade queen onside is only 50% and we need some other luck as well, so this deal doesn't qualify.

Board 19: First seat, favorable vulnerability, you open 1♦ with ♠Q, ♥AJ98, ♦AK963, ♣Q96. Partner holds ♠4, ♥K52, ♦J742, ♣AKT43 and after some annoying interference from the opponents (they do have eleven spades between them, they will not be silent), we outbid them to land in 5♦. Naturally they lead a spade and we lose the ace, win any return, and start drawing trumps. Both opponents follow to the first round of diamonds, so we try a second high diamond.... and to our delight the diamonds are 2-2, the queen falls, we roll up another easy twelve tricks, and we're wondering if we underbid.

Again, not really. This slam required finding the diamond queen either doubleton or onside (and correctly deciding which to play for) as well as the clubs breaking. There's nothing wrong with bidding this slam, but if you do you're about as likely to go down as to make it.

So let's look at a slam that we want to bid, but is surprisingly hard to find.

Board 10: We have East in first seat with ♠AKJT8643, ♥ , ♦6, ♣QJ76 and West with ♠Q, ♥T753, ♦AJ93, ♣AT42. That's twelve cold tricks and a thirteenth if the club finesse is on.

East might reasonably open 4♠, a high preempt that unfortunately kills our chances of getting to slam on this deal. However East also might reasonably open 1♠ and then rebid 4♠ over our 1NT rebid; this sequence shows a one-suited hand too good to preempt, one in which we're expecting to take ten tricks.

Now West is looking at two aces and the missing trump queen. If East expects to take ten tricks without these cards, twelve tricks with them must be possible so West wants to investigate slam.

But how? West might just ask for keycards, but this is the wrong hand for that. Think about West's problem if East shows two keycards and a void (does your partnership have a way of showing voids?). The keycards are likely the ace and king of spades, but there's no way of knowing whether the void is in hearts (slam is good) or clubs or diamonds (we may be off two cashing hearts). If West is going to try for slam, better to control bid 5♣; East can now show the heart void with a control bid of 5♥ and the partnership will find the slam with bidding: 1♠-1NT; 4♠-5♣; 5♥-6♠.

The last of our four slammish boards is **Board 9**.

In fourth seat at unfavorable vulnerability, we pick up ♠T43, ♥AKQJT, ♦KT85, ♣Q and hear partner open 1♠. This does sound promising but just as with board 1 we don't yet know where or how high we want to be so we respond 2♥ to force to game while keeping all options open. Partner rebids 3♣ (even more promising with a balanced minimum sort of hand the rebid would have been 2NT) and we bid 3♠ to let partner know that we've found our fit.

This is where things diverge from the board 1 auction. We're giving partner a chance to make another move, but on board 1 partner with a moth-eaten trump suit and nothing more to show just bid a quiet 4♠ to end the auction. But this time partner control bids 4♣ showing continued interest, and it's back to you. With partner interested we're certainly moving towards slam, and unlike board 10 this one is a good candidate for RKCB. So 4NT to ask for keycards, partner bids 5♣ to show four (assuming 1430), and now we're thinking about a grand five spades, five hearts, the club ace and the diamond AK is thirteen top tricks.

But we don't have five sure spade tricks without the spade queen. If partner had two key cards we'd already know about the queen from their response (5♥ two keys without the queen, 5♠ two keys with the queen) but here we have to follow up with the queen ask (does your partnership use it? It's part of RKCB) by bidding 5♥, partner bids 5♠ to deny the queen, and we settle for 6♠ with the bidding: 1♠-2♥; 3♣-3♠; 4♣-4NT; 5♣-5♦; 5♠-6♠ (or 6NT if we feel like taking a small risk for a lot more matchpoints, but for now we're working on finding good slams and staying out of bad ones, not finding the absolute best).

Partner holds ♠AKJ65, ♥6, ♦A72, ♣A863 and as expected the slam is solid.

Key points from these four deals:

- Bid slams that are better than 50% to make. It's OK to miss the others.
- If you're going to play RKCB, know how to show voids and know the queen-ask sequence.
- Control bids are an essential tool.