

UNIT 191 BRIGHT LEAF ALERT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF UNIT 191

APRIL 2021

Netflix Mini-Series on Bridge

Due to the tremendous success of Netflix's 2020 coming-of-age period drama, *The Queen's Gambit*, about an orphaned chess prodigy rising to the top of the chess world while struggling with drug and alcohol dependency, Netflix has a new mini-series in production about a bridge neophyte and his octogenarian bridge partner, Tina, who has sharp card skills and energy to burn. The mini-series, *The Backwash Squeeze*, is based on Edward McPherson's 2007 book *The Backwash Squeeze & Other Improbable Feats: A Newcomer's Journey into the World of Bridge*.

What is a Backwash Squeeze? It is a rare squeeze which involves squeezing an opponent which lies behind declarer's menace. An example from *The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge* is illustrated in the following diagram:

S Q	
H -	
D 10	
C Q	
S -	S 6
H -	H -
D 9 7	D J
C 9	C A
S 8	
H K 4	
D -	
C -	

South is on lead in a spade contract. She needs the last three tricks to make her doubled contract. She leads a heart and ruffs in dummy with the spade queen. East is squeezed in the *backwash*. If he under-ruffs, South's hand is good. If he discards his diamond or his club honor, he promotes dummy's card in that suit, which is then led through him.

In the mini-series Tina is played by our own Pearl Schechter. The part of bridge neophyte Edward is performed by Chris Moll. Okay, the jig is up. This article is an April Fools' parody. McPherson's book, however, is not. An interesting read, it portrays Edward's newcomer's journey into the world of bridge. Setting out to discover why we love our game so much, he tours myriad bridge events, focusing on several bridge professionals as well as us eager but fumbling amateurs. The book culminates with his wild times in the Windy City playing with Tina in the 2006 Summer North America Bridge Championships.

Greetings!

April! Flowers, sunshine and warmth and the hope of the return to normal life. Many of have been fully or at least partially vaccinated. Everyone is excited that in the coming months we may in fact find ourselves gathering together with friends for a game of bridge. Unit 191 will announce when that day comes. The planning by the ACBL and our local club owners continues. In the meantime, our Unit has hosted a total of 572 tables of ACBL sanctioned bridge online in 2021. Thank you all for supporting our local bridge clubs! Keep it up!

The way that we play bridge online is changing. The Bridge Academy began offering bridge with video/audio capabilities at the tables using the Real Bridge platform in December. The other day, I played a TBC club game and lo and behold, now BBO had updated their software and now we could see and talk to others at the table. It felt strange and I was inclined to turn off the camera and microphone during play of the hands. Do I really want to share with others what I do and say while playing? Not sure you want to hear me screaming! Then my partner asked me - "What will I do when we go back to in-person bridge?" We will all have to adjust again! Just know that I will happily put my poker face back on and do it!

Deanna Larus, Unit President

REMEMBERING GEORGE BLOOMER

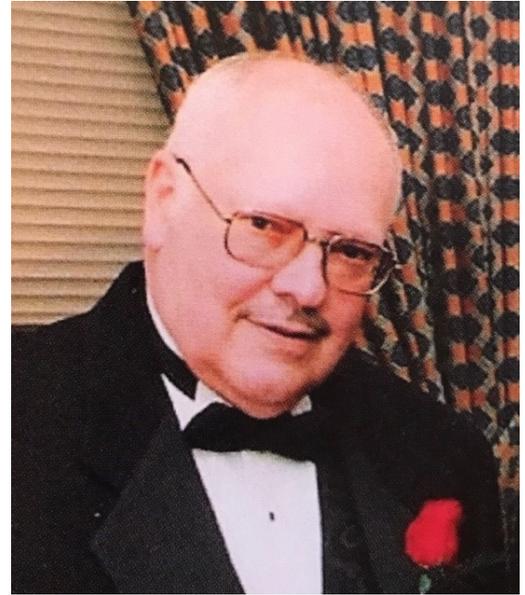
When George Bloomer died on February 28 at the age of 90 years, he had not played competitive bridge for three years. That's a long time away from the game, but the people who played with him and against him have unlimited memories of their times at the table with him. Wherever he sat, his chair was at the head of the table. Without raising his voice, he dominated. He was a big man, but his physical presence was not the source of his domination: it was the focus and command of his play.

George had tremendous bridge-stamina: he could play three sessions a day for a week, even late in life. His bids and plays, were deliberate, never rushed, always with same motions. I found that when I played against George, I made mistakes I might not have made against other players. I could not decide if this was due to George's dominance at the table or he subtlety of his play. Between hands, George was friendly and personable, always ready to give credit for an opponent's good play. If players felt uncomfortable playing against him, it was not due to personal intimidation.

Judith Bloomer, George's partner in life and in bridge for over 50 years, remembers how the two got started in the game, around 1964. There was a club a block and a half away and they tried the novice game, with mixed success. They were soundly beaten in a rubber-bridge session by another couple, and George decided to figure the game out, using Alfred Sheinwold's book, *Five Weeks to Winning Bridge*. (I know other good players who learned the game from the same book). From that point on the Bloomers were very hard to beat. The two joined the ACBL on the same day and have consecutive ACBL numbers. By the time their children were grown, they were playing at all the tournaments they could reasonably attend, partnered and teamed with nationally-known players. If a child wanted to marry, the wedding would very likely conflict with a tournament: careful planning was required. George was never active in bridge politics. But he put in the work, serving on committees, in the Mid Atlantic Bridge Conference (which runs the tournaments in Districts 6 and 7), and in his own District.

The tournament marathon was slower for the Bloomers by the time they moved to Pittsboro and George started playing in Unit 191 club games, but he still had stamina in his eighties. When he played in evening games at TBS, he would bring a paper-bag dinner, play in the afternoon, and nap on the couch between sessions. When he stopped driving himself, he'd get a ride to the first session from Judith or Mort Stromberg (a friend and frequent partner) , and a ride home from a team-mate in the evening.

The first time I played with George as partner was in a TBC pair game about eight years ago. I remember feeling worn out by the end of the session—playing with George required concentration. On one of the deals from that game, I put George in a slam in a competitive auction where the opponents bid 5 diamonds. I had two small diamonds, good cards in George's trump suit, and plenty of winners in my own suit, so I gambled that George would have a singleton (only one loser) in diamonds. The opposition took the first two diamond tricks, but George was so cheerful that I thought I should remind him that we actually went down. That's a good partner! (continued)



For several years, I played in those evening team games, on teams with Jim Drake and Joanna Pagano. George's team was always "the one to beat," and winning against them meant a good session, even if the other results were not so good. Later, George joined our team (playing with me), and I split the drive-home duties with Joanna. We'd talk about baseball and other sports on the rides home. George remembered Jimmy Foxx and Luke Apling, players I thought of as legends.

I remember a bad result we had in a team game. I had persuaded George to play negative doubles when our opening 1NT was overcalled. On this hand, I opened 1 NT, my LHO bid 2 spades, and George doubled. I took it out and we ended up making 3 NT with an overtrick or two, losing by about a thousand to the penalty in 2 spades doubled at the other table. Technically, George forgot our agreement, but the whole thing was my own fault. I should have known better than to try to make him deviate—it was like telling Jimmy Foxx to change his swing. George was again the great partner, putting down his K Q 10 8 x of spades in dummy with a smile and no words.

George won over 29,000 masterpoints (number 56 on the all-time ACBL list, and tenth among players no longer living). More than half his points (but less than half his playing sessions) came in his partnership with Judith, who says that he regretted that he never won a NABC championship. His passing is a loss to our bridge family, and perhaps marks the end of an era.

John Torrey

GEORGE BLOOMER, 1930-2021

George B. Bloomer, Jr., 90, Pittsboro, NC, died on [February 28, 2021](#) after a long illness. He passed away at home surrounded by family.

George was born in Washington, DC and lived most of his life in the area before retiring to North Carolina. He was a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill and Benjamin Franklin School of Accounting. He was Comptroller of the American Road & Transportation Builders' Association in Washington, DC. George is survived by Judith, his wife of 65 years, many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.



George and Judith joined the ACBL in 1964 playing in the local dupes while raising a young family. They played in their first sectional tournament that summer and won the novice event. George was hooked. Thereafter it was a scramble to find enough time for work, family, and bridge. In 1968, he achieved Life Master. He went on to play in just about every MABC Regional and most nearby sectionals. After retirement George was able to travel to some NABCs. Though coming close at times and reaching a master point total of over 29,000, he never achieved his dream of becoming a Grand Life Master! About half his points were won with Judith, the other half with a myriad of wonderful partners/friends. He also served on many boards from the unit and district level in Districts 6 and 7 to the MABC Board. The Gatlinburg Regional was an annual favorite tournament, but he loved them all. More recently, due to deteriorating health, George stayed closer to home, primarily playing in the local games up to 6 times a week and attended a few nearby tournaments. After being paralyzed by a stroke three years ago, he was no longer able to play and he missed the game and the social contact every day.

In addition to bridge, George loved sports, history, biographies, attending seminars, watching old movies, and spending time with his family. A memorial service is planned for a later date.

(Article which will appear in the ACBL bulletin)

With great sadness I recently learned of George's passing. I fondly remember how lucky I was to begin playing with George soon after I moved to Chapel Hill. Although some found him a tad difficult, I never did. He was a thoughtful partner who almost always put his hand on the right card or bid. When I moved to Naples, I met and began playing with another coy old fox, Marty Baff. It didn't take me long to learn that George and Marty were longtime friends and partners in the Midwest. They were a special breed that is almost extinct. They plied their skill with such flair and piled on the points when club games awarded .08, a big .56 and the outrageous monthly Master Point Night that awarded a full point.

The awfulness of COVID has awakened for me a greater appreciation for all the people who have been part of my life. George, your light will always be shining for me.

My condolences to Judith and the Bloomer family.

Sandy McCay

P.S. George, I haven't forgotten the day we went to dinner between sessions and we ended up with each other's credit card. When you went to use your card the next day and the number wasn't right, you had my credit card cancelled. I appreciated you a little less that day. :)

There was a time when we had to shuffle the hands when the boards were put on the table for pairs games. About the third round in, I was sitting at George's table when he picked up his hand and said, "This board wasn't shuffled. We played it last week." He pointed to his partner and said, "You have 'X'," and describes his partner's hand. Then he looked at me and said, "And you have 'X'." He was absolutely correct!!!!

The hand had not been shuffled at the first table. It was a hand he had played at least 5 days earlier!!!!

Darleen Boone Bates

When I first started playing bridge in North Carolina (at Triangle Bridge Club), George Bloomer was one of the first people I met that made me think, "Wow, there are amazing players in this state." And nobody could argue that George was in a league of his own, clearly the best player in the state and I got to play against him. Of course his demeanor and his reputation made a newbie like myself feel well over her head. But he couldn't have been any nicer to me, and that was my experience the entire time I knew George.

It wasn't long before he asked me to be his partner. I was honored. He asked me to call him and we very patiently filled out our convention card. When it was something new to me, George gave me a detailed explanation that always made sense. I was excited to play with him and we came in first our very first time. I didn't plan on asking him again to set up another date, since it was clear to me he was out of my league. But he called me. We must have been on the phone close to two hours, as we went over all the hands from that day. I only played with George when he asked me, and every experience was a pleasure, with a follow up phone call from him. I will never forget his kindness and the warmth he displayed to me. The bridge world lost a true icon.

Andrea Roitman

George was certainly an "icon" in our Club games! He was always fun to play with - and an adventure to play against. He was also a great sports enthusiast, and was a wealth of information on past and present sports history. (Ed. note— especially Carolina)



I often drove him home from either day games or evening games, and we never lacked for conversation. He often wanted a quick "drive through" of nearby neighborhoods just to satisfy a curiosity. He really was a lot of fun and I miss him dearly.

Joanna Pagano

Sweet Pea Remembers George

Learning of George Bloomer's passing was a sad moment but given his love of bridge, the saddest George day for me was the last day he was able to come to the table. And now it is sad for me to remember George, not just as a fierce opponent but also as a kind-hearted bridge friend.

At least 20 years ago, I met George when someone dragged me to a duplicate game. Mind you, I played college dorm bridge and suffered through a few duplicate games with my mother, not a tolerant partner. So...you know how incompetent and unschooled I was. In those days Unit 191 was populated by a good number of formidable and somewhat – can I say cranky – players. After a few humiliating sessions, I realized I needed to study, play often and toughen up or go home in tears.

George Bloomer was always deemed the best player in the room. While he was never rude to me, he did tilt his head and offer a sly smile when my partner and I arrived at his table. He may have sensed my ongoing frustration because once he tore into my abusive partner, an act of kindness that left me in shock. It also woke me up to the reality that I should not abide abusive partners. I never played with that person again and that remains my partnership standard to this day. Thank you, George.

After that confidence builder, I mustered up the nerve to ask George what I had done wrong. He never hesitated to politely explain my errors, but he often noted I was unlucky because I got the killer lead. At the same time, he often praised Judith's game, allowing she was actually a better player than he. While he was known to be tough on his partners, he never uttered a harsh word to Judith nor did she criticize him. Once he told me he always knew that when Judith passed, she either had nothing or was waiting for him to double so she could pass. However, when she bid after he had doubled her back in, he knew she really had nothing. That was a good lesson. He also taught me how to handle a certain bidding sequence. To this day I list it as "Bloomer Convention" on my convention card.

At least ten years had passed when all a the sudden George began to call me Sweet Pea. What prompted that is a mystery – perhaps affection, perhaps pity – I was always pleased to hear those words from George, they brightened my day.

As I mentioned, George could be a harsh partner. So harsh, I once laid into him when he upset a good friend of mine. I blasted out a string of unkind words about his poor behavior but then regretted it when he swallowed my wrath in stride and hung his head.

Once when Judith was in Australia, I invited George for dinner with my husband and me at our home. George was a charming guest and clearly enjoyed eating. We learned how he met Judith, how they managed the care of several children when both worked and how after a long day, he would take all the children to the nearby playground while Judith cooked dinner. It was clear that Judith was the love of his life and he hers. He credited his mother for forcing him to attend a church social where he met Judith. I doubt he played much competitive bridge in those days.

I think George was born with an internal time clock. He walked slowly, considered what to bid or which card to play slowly and always maintained his eternal tempo. I tried and failed to master his style though this worked beautifully for George. No question, he was a superb player. In 2010, he was listed 39th on the U.S. masterpoint roster. Amazingly, he was at 56th with nearly 30,000 masterpoints in 2021 though he hadn't played in two years.

I was never George's mentee and never had the guts to be his partner, I was always flattered to have been called Sweet Pea – no matter his motivation. At this moment I envision him sitting there, head atilt, slightly nodding his approval if I hadn't faltered, but always wearing that sly little half smile.

Mary Jo (Swee' Pea) Doherty

I know that George came across as a gruff and bridge obsessed guy but I feel that I was lucky enough to get to know his softer side.

1. AWAY FROM BRIDGE—I moderate a Movie Group and George and Judith loved watching and discussing films; they came to many of our meetings and seemed to enjoy themselves. This was the only time I saw him away from the bridge table and I saw a soft and shy side of George who was willing to admit his imperfections.

2. AT THE TABLE—I saw his humble and deferential side when he played with **Judith** and **Sandy McCay**. When some of his regular partners were no longer around, George was desperate enough to ask me to play with him. I asked him to be polite to me when I make mistakes. We played many times, had pretty good results and George was kind to me when I made errors. I also learned a lot from watching his decisions and talking to him.

I have missed George (and Judith of course) since his health deteriorated. I feel that he let me inside his hard exterior to see his soft side and his many fine qualities.

Jim Cunningham

George was ready to leave us. He hated being confined to the bed, the wheelchair, the house, He missed his beloved bridge and all the people he saw on a daily basis. That was his life in retirement. I am relieved that he doesn't have to suffer any more. Of course, I miss his love, presence and commitment to family. Our 66th wedding anniversary would have been on March 25 (our son Larry's twins' 8th birthday by the way).

As my brother in Australia said in our dad's eulogy: "Our sister Judith married an American man and started a dynasty!"

Judith Bloomer

Thank you to all who submitted stories about George. We all have missed him for the past 2-3 years—the memories will help keep his spirit with us.

Hello Spring!



♠ **Come Play with Us!**



♥ as a Mentee or Mentor ♦

The March Madness mentee-mentor game was hosted by Triangle Bridge on the evening of Friday, March 12th. Thanks to all who came out to play instead of watching the semifinals of the ACC basketball championships with the **UNC Tarheels** whooping the **Florida State Seminoles**. Oops, the score was the other way round, but then it is **April 1st**. We had 24 pairs in the mentee-mentor game, challenging hands, and a delightful time!

Our hearty congratulations to the game's leaderboard:

Karen Popovich & Glen Anderson, 1st overall & 1st NS with 60.23%.

Lori Scanga & Jon Nadel, 2nd overall & 1st EW with 57.77%.

Becky Fuchs & Barbara Hudson, 3rd overall & 2nd EW with 56.74%.

Barbara Bute & Martin Causley, 4th overall & 3rd EW with 54.91%.

Reece Schuler & Deanna Larus, 5th overall & 4th EW with 54.85%.

Jill Koury & Jim Rhew, 6th overall & 2nd NS with 54.83%.

We gave back to the local community in this time of need. **\$3** of each player's game fee, or **\$144**, 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 **Saturday evening, April 10th**, at **7:00 p.m.** The game will be hosted by **The Bridge Academy** on BBO (**VACB267385**). 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": 7 & 8**

7. NEVER MAKE A PENALTY DOUBLE OF A PART-SCORE WITHOUT FOUR TRUMPS. (That means never!)

8. LIMIT YOUR HAND WHENEVER YOU CAN. Partner knows the partnership level, and the bidding goes smoothly from here.

WORDS OF WISDOM

.....by *Bill Wisdom*

Dealer: South

Vulnerable: North-South

	North	
	♠ J 10 9	
	♥ A 2	
	♦ A Q 10 8 7	
	♣ Q J 3	
West		East
♠ 8 7		♠ A 6 3
♥ K Q 10 8 6 3		♥ J 9 7 5
♦ 4 2		♦ 5 3
♣ 9 7 5		♣ K 6 4 2
	South	
	♠ K Q 5 4 2	
	♥ 4	
	♦ K J 9 6	
	♣ A 10 8	

There were a myriad of results on this board from Cindy's Corner November 6 Open game. Two out of 14 pairs bid the 6 ♠ slam, which was/is a lucky make...no ♦ ruff available, and the K ♣ onside. Two pairs were in 5 ♥ X, down 1100. They were rewarded with 2.5 matchpoints. Five pairs were in 5 ♠ (one doubled for plus 1050). Five pairs rested in 4 ♠.

The two unlucky pairs who were the recipients of -1430 were Julia Lowe/Rick Bentley and Peter J. Boyd-Bowman/Bud McKinney...just a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

One possible auction is:

South	West	North	East	
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♦	Pass	
3 ♥*	X	3 ♠	Pass	*splinter in support of diamonds
4 ♣	Pass	4NT	Pass	
5 ♠**	Pass	6 ♠	Pass	** 2 key cards with Q♣

If West sticks in a nasty 3 ♥ bid over 1 ♠, the slam is much more difficult to bid.

Randy Joyce and I bid the lucky slam, and so did Ann Paschold and Anne McKiernan.

Thanks to **Randy Joyce** for getting approval from Bill—and suggesting this column.

ACBL UNIT 191 REPORT

Includes all transactions processed 1/31/21 through March 1, 2021

Total Members - 624

NEW MEMBERS

Michael H Guilmette - 14 Woodcliff Circle - Durham NC 27712

Kaiyun Huang - 906 Ingram Court - Hillsborough NC 27278

Cecile West-Settle - 5910 Farrington Road Unit 101—Chapel Hill NC 27517

TRANSFERS INTO UNIT

Mrs Elaine Kolodny - 109 Boxwood Place -Chapel Hill NC 27517 (Old Unit # 242 - Nassau Suffolk)

Mr Everett John Pyle - 107 Old Franklin Grove Dr.— Chapel Hill NC 27514 (Old Unit # 128 - Florida)

NEW JUNIOR MASTERS -

Terrance S Coyne **Diane D Cutshaw**

NEW CLUB MASTER

Ralph P Balzac

NEW SECTIONAL MASTER

Ms Pamela J Powell

NEW SILVER MASTER

Michael J Mendelsohn

NEW GOLD LIFE MASTER

Mr. Victor F Riva

DECEASED

George Bloomer passed on 2/28/2021

Submitted by **Phylliss Woody**, Membership Chair

March, 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.



ACBL Unit 191 Brightleaf



Unit 191 Website

<https://www.bridgewebs.com/unit191brightleaf/>



About two years ago, Unit 191 lost their web hosting arrangement, and we had to make a big change. Fortunately, we had several volunteers who tackled the challenge and brought us to where we are today.

Ed Fuller had experience with web page development, and Marc Goldberg had been the webmaster for several other organizations. Together, they researched several options and recommended to the Unit 191 board that we shift the website to a site hosted by BridgeWebs.

BridgeWebs is a British Company that developed a website shell designed specifically for bridge organizations. Their product has a number of advantages that make it a good choice for our unit. They host websites for several thousand bridge clubs and units around the world, so there a lot of other good examples to draw from. Page design and layout are geared toward the layman- you don't have to know coding or HTML to make a good web page. They have excellent help menus and customer service when problems are encountered. And BridgeWebs is relatively inexpensive- it only costs the Unit £68 (Pound sterling- about \$95) per year to have a quality web page.

There were a number of challenges in creating the new website. It was not as simple as copying from the old site and pasting to the new site. The team had to design the new home page, determine what additional pages were needed to support various Unit activities, and then insert the content for all of the pages. Additionally, historical content was located on many people's computers, and those files all needed to be collected and organized.

The result of Marc and Ed's efforts has been remarkable. The Home Page is well-organized and uncluttered. It is easy to navigate and to find things that members need. The menus are straightforward and provide additional pages where more detail is required. Hyperlinks (anything in blue text) make it easy to download documents and to access other websites. The web team works hard to make sure the information on the website is up-to-date. And finally, there is ample room to store the history of Unit 191.

Another big advantage of using BridgeWebs is the ability to send mass emails to Unit 191 members and guests. We have over 850 names in our membership directory, and we communicate with them regularly by email. Previously, we had used email through Google's Gmail, and that had serious limitations.

(continued)

Any email with more than 250 addressees was tagged as spam and was not sent. Work-arounds to “fool” the Gmail system were tedious, and it took a lot of time and effort to send out just a single email. BridgeWebs solved that problem by allowing us to send emails to all of our addressees at one time, with no limits on the number of emails we send, and at no additional cost

BridgeWebs has improved privacy and security of personal information. We now list our members’ email addresses and phone numbers in the Members Only section. This is password protected and can only be accessed by Unit 191 members. This means that outside entities and hackers cannot “harvest” this data for spam or other nefarious purposes.

BridgeWebs also provides a capability to use on-line forms. The web team adapted this feature to allow on-line voting during the annual election for the board of directors. Not only did this make voting convenient, but it was crucial to allowing smooth operations last year where Coronavirus isolation rules prohibited an in-person annual meeting.

The web page team also centralized backups for all of the documents and photos on the website. Future boards and webmasters will not have to scurry around to find out where old files or reports are located. They are all backed up in one spot that is secure and accessible.

Unit 191 is fortunate to have capable volunteers who contribute their talents to make the Unit a great place to play bridge. Thank you, Marc and Ed, for your work in making the website a terrific tool to keep us all informed.

P.S Thank you Marc, for providing the background regarding the website.

Check out the website often, it is current and contains volumes of information. The archives section is amazing—if anyone wants to know what was happening in the unit years ago—it’s there.

BRIDGE



The Bright Leaf Alert is published monthly and is the official newsletter of Unit 191. If you have ideas or suggestions for articles, please let a board member know—or e-mail me at BMartin1@mebtel.net

