

BRIGHT LEAF ALERT

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF UNIT 191

MAY, 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS:

Did we say Happy Spring? Or should we say Happy Early Summer! It's been hot out, and depending on where you play, it's been hot inside too. We roll with it, right?

Welcome to "*the lovely month of May, when everything goes blissfully astray!*" So goes the famous song from *Camelot*, which eventually gets to the line relevant to our purposes: "*Everyone makes divine mistakes, the lusty month of May!*" The mistakes we made in April—not so important anymore.

On Monday April 20, the Board hosted the 2025 Annual Meeting for members of Unit 191, on the zoom platform. Thanks to all who attended. Attendance was up about 50% this year. If we keep up this rate of growth in interest in Unit activities, there's no telling what we can accomplish! Of note, we're going back to tradition: the 2026 Annual Meeting and all that goes with it will be held in December 2026 with a Unit championship game at the Triangle Bridge Academy, as our fiscal year ends in November.

A few highlights from the meeting:

* Unit 191 is financially stable, with about \$27,000 in reserves. Part of our good position reflects the great turnout from our Winter Sectional held in November, with thanks to so many of you who attended and contributed. The 2025 Treasurer's report which can be found on the Unit web site was approved. Thanks to **Ian Cloudsdale** for another year of service as our Treasurer!

* The Summer Sectional returns this year, co-sponsored by Raleigh Bridge Club as a 50-50 venture. You will remember that last year the Board reluctantly cancelled the Sectional because of a shortage of Board and Unit member volunteers. We recognize that July is a bad time to hold a sectional because of summer vacations and the National tournaments. Since that time, our own member volunteerism has dramatically responded to that wake-up call, and Raleigh will further support this enjoyable summer offering. Members with fewer than 10 MPs will play for free, subsidized by the Unit, furthering our effort to enlarge our community of players. Beginning in 2027, we are moving the Summer Sectional to late June to avoid scheduling conflicts with Nationals and other events.

* Growing our Membership base is a Board priority, as Unit funding from ACBL is determined by the number of ACBL members residing in our district. We urge very member whose friends enjoy playing—maybe newer learners/students who can join ACBL for free for a year—tell them to go to **www.ACBL.org** and join us as members. We have 69 guest members who, if they became actual real members, would significantly improve our quarterly income from ACBL. Little things like this really matter! We have 9 member players who are Duke students (more on our efforts to support them in a future Alert). We'd like to add more of these bright motivated newer players to our ranks.

(continued)

* New Leadership Membership Participation Cultivation is a Board priority as well. We have been gratified with the offers of our talented members who have stepped up to support our Web Master and Mentor Mentee Program!! There are many ways to support the Unit in leadership roles, which in turn supports our ability to play high quality games week after week.

* We want your input on how we can make your experience better. If you have any suggestions, please let either of us know (emails below). None of this happens without your support! Thanks to you all!

Going forward we hope to add commentary on club and tournament play, and to highlight our Unit's individual clubs and Members. Feeling motivated to share? Send a message to either of us, or to **Barbara Martin**, Editor of Alert, to highlight your interests, your Club, and your successes at the table.

And continuing from Camelot: "*It's May, It's May, the month of great dismay, When all the world is brimming with fun, wholesome or un.*" Have yourself some fun this month!

Looking forward to seeing you at the table!

Your Co-Presidents, **Morris Weinberger and Ray Boylan**

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DUKE BRIDGE CLUB GOING FOR THE GOLD!

This semester, the Duke Bridge Club has received some extraordinary mentorship from our local bridge players. Early on, we learned about concepts like losing trick count, and our mentors helped us solidify our defensive carding agreements. In later weeks, we played identical hands across tables and discussed them under supervision. I think this helped us understand not just how to play better, but also how to efficiently think about future hands.



Last weekend, four of us played in the Gatlinburg Regional. It was an incredible amount of fun, making it to the second day of a knockout bracket (earning our first 5 gold masterpoints)! **Hugon, Martin, Michael, and Stanley** - thank you for all the advice and time you have gave us.

The next big tournament for us is the Collegiate Nationals in July. We may come to ask for some more advice.

Thank you,

Anthony

Why Should You Play in Bridge Tournaments?

Marc Goldberg

Unit 191 members are very fortunate to have a wide array of bridge tournaments available to choose from each year. Locally, Unit 191 and our neighbors in Raleigh host several **Sectional** tournaments each year. Plus, there are other **Sectional** tournaments within an hour or so drive (Greensboro, Pinehurst, Winston-Salem, Wilmington). Greensboro has a **Regional** tournament every other year, and there are several other **Regionals** close by (Charlotte, Richmond, Myrtle Beach, Hilton Head, and others).

Playing bridge at the Club level is fun and rewarding. We have many opportunities for club play in our area, so why go to the trouble and expense of playing in a **Sectional**, **Regional**, or even a **National** level tournament? Personally, I like playing in tournaments, and if you are not a tournament aficionado, I hope this article might change your mind.

For newer players, tournament play is required for their journey to Life Master rank. ACBL requires players to have a certain number of Black, Silver, Red, and Gold points to earn that rank. Red and Gold points are awarded at **Regional** tournaments, and Silver points are awarded at **Sectional** tournaments (and the occasional **STaC** games- Sectional Tournament at Clubs). Black points are awarded at club games (both face-to-face and online). The road to Life Master may seem daunting at first, but it is worth the trip. Tournaments offer an array of games such as Gold Rush Pairs, Gold Rush Teams, and other limited-point games. Some **Sectional** tournaments are devoted entirely to Intermediate/Newcomer players (0-750 MP). Newer players can be competitive in acquiring the points they need at these events. I didn't mean to leave out Platinum points. These points are only awarded at the top competitive level at **National** tournaments. They may be out of reach for most of us, but if you are so inclined to try, go for it.

So what about players who no longer "need" Gold and Silver points? Not so fast- you may actually still need more Gold points at some point in the future. When you review the point requirements for the various higher-level ACBL ranks, the color points required for Life Master will carry you all the way through Bronze (750 MP), Silver (1000 MP), Ruby (1500 MP), and Gold Life Master (2500 MP). After Life Master, all you need to achieve these higher ranks is additional Black points which you can earn at club games. In the ranks above Gold Life Master- Sapphire (3500 MP), Diamond (5000 MP), Emerald (7500 MP), and Platinum (10,000 MP), ACBL requires that 10% of the points must be Gold. Some of those ranks may seem a long way off, but it is a lot easier to get the Gold points you need for future ranks by attending **Regional** tournaments when you can still play in a lower stratum. Believe me, it is much more difficult to win an event when the teams you are competing against contain professional bridge players and Grand Life Masters. Get your Gold points early.

But this is important- tournaments are much more than just acquiring points. They expand your bridge experience and skills in many ways. Here are a few examples.

Tournaments give you the opportunity to play against a different set of opponents than the regular club games. Playing at the club is fun, and it is nice to socialize with and play with people you know. But at the club, you get to know how people play and what their game is like. “Joe” is conservative and solid- he always has his bid. “Jane” will always bid one more if you push her. “Jill” will (pick one) always/never double me if I make an adventurous bid. Familiar opponents affect how you play. At a tournament, you may not know your opponents or their style, and that makes you focus more intently on you and your partner just playing your game.

Sometimes at a tournament, you get to play against a well-known bridge personality. It can be very intimidating when you move to the next table, and Jeff Meckstroth and his client are your opponents. **Gulp!** Say hello and just play your game. As an experienced player once told me, “The pros must take finesses just like you do. Sometimes they work, and sometimes they don’t.” Pros aren’t bridge gods; they just make fewer mistakes than we mere mortals. Concentrate on your game and minimize your mistakes.

Occasionally, you play against opponents who use conventions that you are unfamiliar with. They may be unusual or obscure. You may not know what they mean or how to play against them. How do you interfere when a precision bidder opens 1C? What do you do when Opener’s 2D bid is alerted as mini-Roman? Sandwich No-trump? Leaping Michaels? Old-style Goren? And there are many other “way out there” conventions that you may be exposed to. Tournament play gives you a chance to learn new things. Playing against unusual conventions will help you improve your bidding and your defensive strategy.

Regional tournaments normally offer a free bridge lesson between the morning and afternoon sessions. These are presented by nationally known bridge players, teachers, and lecturers. I learn something new and valuable every time I attend one. This is a great time to grab a sandwich (tournament locations usually have a food concession available) and listen to the daily presentation. You will learn a lot, and it will help clear your mind before the afternoon bridge game begins.

The bridge community is a fun group of people. Most tournaments have some social aspect in the schedule, and it is fun to chat with some new friends about their bridge experiences and their lives. Your Unit 191 friends are a tight community, as well, and they will include you at dinner or the lounge after a grueling day at the tables. And don’t forget the “5 degrees of separation”- your tournament opponent may very well be your distant cousin, so it is a great time to reconnect. (True story- Suzie and I recently played at the Richmond Regional. A woman came up to her and said, “You look very familiar. Have we met?” Long conversation later, they were friends and had carpooled our kids to pre-school together when we lived in Virginia 30 years ago. Go figure.)

Now, you have a great opportunity to put these suggestions into practice. Unit 191 is sponsoring a **Sectional** tournament July 16-19. Find a partner and play bridge! Hope to see you at the table.

DIRECTOR PLEASE!

Director, Please!

You are bidding a hand or playing a hand and suddenly your opponent raises their hand and calls out "Director, please!". You immediately think – "uh oh, what did I do?" or "What is wrong?".

The role of the director during a bridge game is to:

- *Set up the game and inform the players of the game movement so all are informed as to how a particular game will proceed.**
- *Score the game and submit the results to the ACBL.**
- *Handle any irregularities that may occur at any table during play.**

So let's talk about irregularities, in particular player mistakes. Even the best players make them. There are several common infractions that disrupt equity at the table. We make the wrong bid, give misleading or incorrect information about our bids. We fail to alert an alertable bid. We call or play the wrong card. We drop and expose half of our cards on the table for all to see. It can happen. These are just some of many possible irregularities. When one happens, regardless of what or why, the game director **SHOULD BE CALLED**. He or she will listen to explanations of the situation from both pairs equally and apply the Laws of Duplicate Bridge and most importantly restart play as quickly and as fairly as possible. This can sometimes, but not always, involve assessing a penalty as a means of restoring equity. Regardless, the director should evaluate the situation and issue a resolution. It is important to call the director **immediately** and not wait until after the hand or round has ended. However, Dummy should not call the director during play of a hand.

Directors make decisions/rulings based on how they interpret the situation. Players at the table may not always agree with the director's resolution. In club games in our unit, there is little recourse if you disagree with a ruling. In tournaments, a player may submit a protest over a ruling and a protest committee discusses the situation and make a final ruling. Regardless, director's rulings do not always feel fair to both sides. Sometimes a pair/team gets fixed. That means that an error made by the opponents results in a unfortunate poor score for the other side. Regardless, ACBL directors do their best to fairly follow the laws of the duplicate bridge and restore equity quickly.

The bottom line: You should never be hesitant to call the director. You should not feel ashamed or embarrassed if an opponent calls the director. It is part of the game for experts and beginners. It should only take a minute or two to explain the situation and decide what is needed for fair play to resume quickly. That is a primary goal of any good director. If you have additional questions about the irregularity, feel free to talk to the director later so that you can learn more for future games. Do not try to apply the laws of duplicate bridge on your own or trust the opponents' interpretation of the irregularity and application of the Laws. Director, please! These words ensure a fast, accurate and fair game for all players in the room.

Thanks to **Deanna** for the information.

Breaking News from the Card Table: Roxboro Bridge Club Declared More Fun Than Folding Laundry

ROXBORO, NC — In a shocking turn of events, local experts (and by “experts,” we mean regulars who know how to finesse a queen without breaking a sweat) have confirmed that the Roxboro ACBL Bridge Club is, in fact, one of the most entertaining ways to spend an afternoon or evening that does not involve binge-watching TV in your pajamas.

If you’ve ever thought, “I should really do something social, mentally stimulating, and slightly competitive... but also indoors and with snacks nearby,” then congratulations—you’ve just described our bridge club.

The Roxboro ACBL Bridge Club meets **every Monday afternoon at 1:00 PM** and **Wednesday evening at 7:15 PM** at the Person County Senior Center (87 Semora Road, Roxboro). For the low, low price of **\$5 per game**, you get an afternoon (or evening) packed with strategy, laughter, and just enough suspense to make you wonder if your partner will ever forgive that last bid.

Not convinced? Let’s review the benefits:

- **Exercise your brain** without needing stretchy pants or ten-pound weights
- **Meet friendly people** who will absolutely remember that one time you miscounted trumps (lovingly, of course)
- **Learn new skills** like bidding confidently while internally panicking, our club gives grace to new players

Enjoy mild drama—the kind that comes from a perfectly executed slam, not reality TV

And here’s the best part: **your first game is completely free**. That’s right—no commitment, no pressure, just cards, camaraderie, and the chance to discover whether you’re a natural card shark or delightfully unpredictable.

Whether you’re a seasoned player, a returning enthusiast, or someone who just learned that bridge is not actually about construction, you’re welcome at the table. Partners are often available, advice is plentiful, and good humor is practically required.

All we ask is that you please call or text Jayne Bremer, Club Manager, if you plan to join us so we make sure we have enough tables set up. She can be reached at **919-824-0666**. Otherwise, you may end up playing solitaire and wishing you were home folding laundry.

Dear Bridge Players,

Unit 191's bridge mentoring program continued in April. The program sponsors games in person, at Triangle Bridge Academy, and online, on BBO. The in-person games have two tiers. Tier I is for mentees with fewer than 250 masterpoints playing with mentors who have fewer than 500 masterpoints. Tier II is for mentees with fewer than 500 masterpoints; mentors are unlimited.

Refreshments are provided by a crew of volunteers — **Ray Boylan, Ann Fisher, Martha Schulwitz, and Maggie Smith** — to whom we offer our appreciation. They are always looking for more volunteers. Please email one of them if you can help.

Tier I plays on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 10 AM, preceded by an optional lesson from **Henry Meguid** at 9:15. On April 28 Henry was absent but **Michael Lavine** talked gave a lesson encouraging players not to rebid five-card suits. The game had 4 tables. Two pairs scored over 63% — **Victoria Washington** playing with **Michael Lavine** and **Dave Michelman** playing with **Paul Cornwell**. Congratulations to all four players.

Tier II plays on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 10 AM, preceded by an optional lesson at 9:15 given by a rotating set of advanced players. The game on April 14 was preceded by a lesson from **Michael Lavine** saying that rebidding a suit, whether by opener or responder, usually shows six cards. We try to avoid rebidding five-card suits. There were five-and-a-half tables. The game was close, with all pairs scoring between 43% and 61%. Congratulations to **Ray Boylan** and **Hugon Karwowski** for their winning score of 61%.

The online game is new this year and is for mentees with fewer than 500 masterpoints. The mentees play together in pairs at 7 PM on the third Wednesday of each month. After the game, a panel of advanced players write comments on all the boards, which are then circulated to the mentees. Many thanks to the panel members for volunteering their time and expertise: **Glen Anderson, John Cobb, Mary Jo Dunnebacke, Eric Hamilton, and Michael Lavine**. The April game was on the 15th and had three tables. The game was quite close, with scores ranging from 45% to 54%. Congratulations to **Maggie Smith and Anna Stachon** for finishing first with 54%.

Some of the games also have post-game analyses by a panel of experienced players. You can find them under the Mentoring Program tab on the Unit 191 website. You can find the hands by going to the ACBL website and following the links ACBL — > Results —> Live for Clubs and then searching for either Triangle Bridge Academy (Tuesday F2F games) or Triangle Bridge Club (Wednesday BBO games).

If you would like to join any of these groups or help with organizing the mentor/mentee program, please email **Michael Lavine**.

MAY 2026

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| | 12:30 PM Unit Championship Game (\$12) | 1-4 PM Barometer | 9:30 AM Nuplicate Barometer 12:30 PM Grass Roots FUNd Game (\$13) | 12 PM Private ABA Game | 12:30 PM Grass Roots FUNd Game (\$13) | |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| | 9-11 Play and Learn Online 12:30 PM Grass Roots FUNd Game (\$13) 6:30 – 8:30 Social Bridge | 9:15 AM MM Tier II Lesson 10 AM MM Tier II Game | 9:30 AM Nuplicate Barometer 12:30 PM Grass Roots FUNd Game (\$13) | 12 PM Private ABA Game | 12:30 PM Grass Roots FUNd Game (\$13) | 10 AM Eight is Enough Swiss Team Game |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| | 9-11 Play and Learn Online 12:30 PM Grass Roots FUNd Game (\$13) 6:30 – 8:30 Social Bridge | 1-4 PM Barometer | 9:30 AM Nuplicate Barometer 12:30 PM Grass Roots FUNd Game (\$13) 7 PM Online BBO MM Game | 9 AM Limited Game (<750mps) 12 PM Private ABA Game | 12:30 PM Unit Championship Game (\$12) | |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| | 9-11 Play and Learn Online 12:30 PM Grass Roots FUNd Game (\$13) (\$13) 6:30 – 8:30 Social Bridge | 9:15 AM MM Tier I Lesson 10 AM MM Tier I Game | 9:30 AM Nuplicate Barometer 12:30 PM Grass Roots FUNd Game (\$13) | 12 PM Private ABA Game | 12:30 PM Grass Roots FUNd Game (\$13) | |