



# THE BRIDGE TEACHER

## FYI –

The year is off to a good start. The Dallas NABC was great fun, and we are looking forward to Chicago this summer. Here's some information to keep you up to date ...



### Watch for Harriette

ACBL President Harriette Buckman is traveling this year to help promote and appreciate our ACBL teachers. Watch for her in your area. (See Page 2.)

### New Major Suit Raises I “Play” Course

See the article on this page and download your copy of the new teacher manual at the ACBL web site. Go to: [www.acbl.org/teachers/materials.html](http://www.acbl.org/teachers/materials.html).

### New “Sound-Bites” Mini-Lessons from Marti Ronemus

Have you tried any of the mini-lessons from well-known teachers and players available at [www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html](http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html)? Five new mini-lessons from Marti Ronemus have just been added. You'll love them. One page is a handout for your students and the other page gives the teacher tips for presenting the lesson, a joke and a tried and true recipe.

### Summer Is Almost Here

It's time to start planning your trip to the Summer NABC and the ABTA Convention prior to the tournament. See Page 7 for details.

## New Play Course

The Major Suit Raises 1 “Play” course is now available. This new four-week course (eight deals per week) was written by Pat Harrington and covers weak major suit raises, limit raises, game-forcing raises and major suit raises in competition. This is an excellent resource for additional practice for your students if you are teaching the Commonly Used Conventions course.

Lynne Beisswenger of Toronto test-marketed the course for us. Here's what she had to say about it...

“I have really enjoyed teaching the major suit raises course. I teach at two private clubs and have mostly repeat students, so I must constantly try to make material fresh and interesting – and my students just love to have lots of hands.

“I have taught the first two lessons twice to two different groups. One group is less experienced and the other group of 32 students is all regular duplicate players. I began these lessons by saying everything we were going to cover would be money in their bridge

Companion Guide  
for E-Z Deal  
Major Suit Raises I  
“Play” Cards

Major  
Suit  
Raises I  
“Play”  
Course



AMERICAN CONTRACT BRIDGE LEAGUE  
2990 AIRWAYS BLVD. • MEMPHIS, TN 38116  
901-332-5586 • FAX 901-398-7754  
[www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)

Spring Edition • April 2006

## look What's Inside ...

- President Update ..... 2
- Duplicate Do's/Don'ts..... 2
- Teaching Manners ..... 3
- Mini-Lesson, Lesson ..... 4
- ACBL Series Update ..... 5
- Teaching Adults ..... 6
- ABTA Convention ..... 7
- NABC Time..... 8

AMERICAN CONTRACT  
BRIDGE LEAGUE  
2990 Airways Blvd.  
Memphis TN 38116

[www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)



continued on page 4



# UPDATE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As we announced in our last issue, ACBL President Harriette Buckman has designated 2006 as The Year of the Teacher. It is her mission to shine the spotlight on the folks who teach the game, instill a love of the game and push or pull new players through the doors of our clubs. These are the folks to whom major credit is given for the growth of the league, and Harriette wants to honor them for their efforts.

Wherever President Buckman travels, she is having a Dinner with the President. This is a working meeting for teachers (only) whose ticket of admission (a must!!) is a printed teaching tip to share with everyone. It may be an idea about classroom management, recruiting or any of the facets of the game – bidding, play or defense. At the end of the year, all of these tips will be put into an online book so these great ideas can be shared with everyone. Contributors' name will be attached to their tips.

The three dinners that have been held so far have been in Orlando (District 9), Nashville (District 10) and Houston (District 16). The participants have deemed them very successful. Many of our esteemed bridge authors and publishers have contributed generously by donating books and CDs to the project. They are: Randy Baron (Baron - Barclay Bridge Supplies), Marty Bergen, Larry Cohen, Gerry Fox, Audrey Grant, Mike Lawrence, Ray Lee (Masterpoint Press), Barbara Seagram

and Frank Stewart. Their contributions are used as raffle prizes (no charge, of course) during the dinner. Harriette's travel schedule for the year includes visits to the following regional tournaments. Watch for her in your area and plan to attend the President's Dinner for Teachers.

District 12	Farmington Hills MI	May 17-21
District 7	Raleigh NC	May 24-29
District 1	Montreal QC	August 10-13
District 8	St. Louis MO	August 16-20
District 19	Seattle (Lynnwood) WA	August 23-27
District 21	Santa Clara CA	Aug. 29-Sept. 4
District 22	Costa Mesa CA	Sept. 6-10
District 20	Seaside OR	Sept. 25-Oct. 1
District 4	Lancaster PA	Oct./Nov.

Unit and District Educational Liaisons (UELs & DELs) who are reading this are being asked to contact teachers in their areas and invite them to the dinner. District Directors are being asked to coordinate with their tournament chairs to set up the dinner as to time, place and menu. The larger the crowd is, the more stimulating the exchange of ideas will be.

Come and be recognized and take part in a wonderful brainstorming opportunity sponsored by your league.

## Do's and Don'ts of Duplicate

In presenting proper etiquette at the bridge table, you can get valuable material online in the booklet "Welcome to the NABCs," which has been created for the NABC Intermediate-Newcomer (IN) Program. Go to: [web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/nabc/nabcwelcome.pdf](http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/nabc/nabcwelcome.pdf)

In this publication you will find information on Duplicate Do's and Don'ts, Being a Good Partner, Kibitzing, Bidding Boxes, Calling the Director, Claims, Active Ethics, Zero Tolerance Policy, among other things.

By introducing this material in your classes, you will help make your students duplicate-ready by the time they play in their first club game.



## **The Business of Bridge**

# **Teaching Manners**

*by Lynn Berg*



The old saying that manners are the grease that keeps the wheels from squeaking is true in bridge, too. We do our students a disservice if we don't get them ready to go out into the world of bridge prepared to behave in a fashion which will make them acceptable to others. Would we send someone to a dinner party who didn't know which fork to use? To the dance floor without knowing not just the steps but also how to ask for a dance?

When we teach bridge, we naturally concentrate on the details of bidding and play. Counting points, counting suits, learning conventions—it's all quantitative and requires memory work. We can be so busy trying to get our students to remember these details that we lose sight of the fact that bridge is a game, with manners and protocols that have nothing to do with these facts and everything to do with interaction with others and with being accepted and having fun.

The way you behave in the class sets the tone for your students. You should greet them, give name tags, learn their names, have something pleasant to say to them. You should be accessible at the start and the end of the session, thanking them for coming and acting as a host for the session.

Take a few minutes in every class to help the students know what is expected as normal courteous bridge behavior. If you know the history of bridge and its predecessors, for instance, you might tell them of the question in whist, "May I lead?" to which the answer was, "Pray do." While we don't want to enforce an artificial formality, we do want to them to know how to act. A little role playing by you will set a good example. For instance, have you taken any time to explain a face-

down lead? It's a great habit to get into. What you teach your classes is what they will take for granted. So we can say, "Is it my lead?" and wait for the answer. We can teach "Director, please" from the first day. It's important to learn that the director is a problem solver rather than an enforcer, and an early introduction to the help the director can provide is important.

They should learn duplicate, Chicago and rubber bridge scoring. Make the point that different social groups have different scoring preferences: maybe someone from each side has to keep score, for instance.

We teach our students to keep the cards in order in front of them. Do you also show them why this is important in a duplicate game? How to settle questions of revokes and who has won the trick? If we only deal with the artificially perfect situation of a class, we are not preparing our students for the real world of errors and disputes which inevitably occur.

Courtesy at the bridge table divides into two parts—the normal protocols of play and the settling of differences. Make sure your students know what behaviors will be expected of them at the table—in a home, at a country

club, in a duplicate club, at a tournament. If they know what to expect—if they've learned good bridge manners—they will be better bridge citizens. ACBL and the Goodwill Committee have an excellent Zero Tolerance handout that spells out acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Get copies for everyone. Put up a poster, too. You can download one from the ACBL web site.

Your students will probably be surprised and unhappy to learn that not everyone behaves courteously at the table, that there's even a need for a Zero Tolerance Policy. But you are doing them no favor if you don't make clear not only that good manners are expected but also that bad manners should not be tolerated. Many a newcomer has passively endured bad behavior by an opponent—and responded to it by never coming to play again. If you empower your students with the knowledge that they have a right to expect to play in a tranquil atmosphere as well as the means to get redress if there is a problem, that calling the director is not accusatory or "not done," they will be on their way to becoming full citizens of our bridge world.

A booklet of Lynn's "Business of Bridge" articles will be your gift this summer if you attend the ABTA convention.

bank. There is nothing exotic but lots of good advice and useful ideas well illustrated by the hands. For instance 'help suit game tries' are explained and examined in good detail. This area was new to them and an easy idea to pick up once they understood what to ask for.

"The material is full of lots of good ideas and help for the average player. The course really illuminates so well the importance of shape in evaluating a hand. Lots of small points are brought out by the hands which are more than sufficiently challenging. The second lesson I had to cut down for the less experienced group, as there was too much for them.

"Both classes have raved about the lessons and loved the detailed review of the major suit raises with all the fine points. Best of all it, the course moves students away from the pointcount obsession to think about what takes tricks and how better to evaluate hands and combined partnership assets."

The teacher manual for this course is a free download through the Resources for Teachers (teaching materials) section of the ACBL web site. Go to: [www.acbl.org/teachers/materials.html](http://www.acbl.org/teachers/materials.html) to access the material.

By the end of the year, the Major Suit Raises II "Play" course booklet and E-Z Deal cards also will be available. The second half of this series will have a teacher manual that will be available for free download, too.

The Major Suit Raises I "Play" booklet (\$5) and coordinated E-Z Deal Cards (\$3.50) are available now through the ACBL Product Store. Call toll free at 800-264-2743.



## A Mini-Lesson on Mini-Lessons

by Marti Ronemus

My sister Lynda and I often go to lunch and a movie on Saturdays. It keeps us in touch, plus we like the same movies. Last week we saw *Ice Age 2* and loved it. We had to sneak in behind a family though, because we were the only ones without kids and we weren't sure they'd let us in. Anyway...Lyn can't understand why I insist on being early enough to see all, and I mean all, the previews. I just love 'em...teeny weensy mini-movies, tempting, hints of fun and mysteries to come.

I use Mini-Lessons the same way the producers use "trailers," as they're called in "the industry." I use them as a taste of, and introduction to, my lesson series and my workshops. I use them to educate, delight...and tempt.

I work on a semester system for my lessons, with a new series of linking subjects beginning every three months. That gives me a chance to send out ads and just sort of make things new. All my lessons, mini or maxi, will be based on the same theme. Right now, I'm doing "Taking Tricks on Purpose: How to play a hand like you meant it!" as my theme.

Each Monday and Wednesday morning, I have a half-hour mini-lesson before my limited games. This morning I showed a hand that illustrated the concept of giving up a trick to absolutely ensure

your contract, rather than trying a failing finesse. (I love to use hands that I played poorly...I have an unlimited supply of material that way, and my students get a kick out of it.) At the end of the lesson, I tell them that if this idea intrigues them, to be sure to come to my two-hour workshop next Wednesday, called "Finesses are for Peasants," which will be focusing on finesse avoidance in depth.

Tomorrow, my mini-lesson will be on preserving entries...and it will be a lead-in to ... you guessed it, the next week's workshop.

Since I began using the "preview" concept, I've seen two excellent results:

Higher attendance at the games preceded by a mini-lesson.

Higher attendance at my lesson series.

Both of these results make me a happy camper!

Often I'll do a mini-lesson before an open game using the same concepts. I'm amazed by how many bronze Life Masters will then show up for the workshops. "I need a refresher on ..." is their comment. I have a guarantee that if you don't learn anything new, you don't have to pay, and I've yet to pay out!

Let me know how this works for you by e-mailing me at [mronemus@suscom.net](mailto:mronemus@suscom.net).

**5 Easybridge! Mini-Lessons created by Marti are available now at [www.acbl.org/teachers/index/html](http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index/html)**

# Updating the ACBL Bridge Series Materials

by Julie Greenberg

The Learn to Play Bridge programs (LTPB) I and II have been a stunning success for the bridge world. With more than 150,000 downloads, LTPB has been one of the factors helping to bring about an increased awareness of the game. LTPB offers new players the ability to learn a modern version of the game fashioned after the ACBL's Standard American Yellow Card, the most-widely accepted bridge system used in online play.

Beginning with the Club Series, now known as the Bidding Series, the ACBL Bridge Series teaching materials have been helping teachers successfully teach bridge lessons for more than 20 years. These books have been the backbone of bridge teaching throughout the ACBL. Although the ACBL Bridge Series has undergone a number of updates, the ACBL has decided to give the text books a major overhaul to align them with the Learn to Play Bridge program – to make the teaching materials focus more on duplicate bridge tactics.

All ACBL texts, teacher manuals, E-Z Deal cards and support materials will undergo this change. Note, however, that none of the new materials will be available to teachers until all of the basic materials (the five texts, the five teacher manuals, the five decks of E-Z Deal Cards and the three E-Z Guide booklets) have been republished. The Play courses will be reprinted after this body of work is completed.

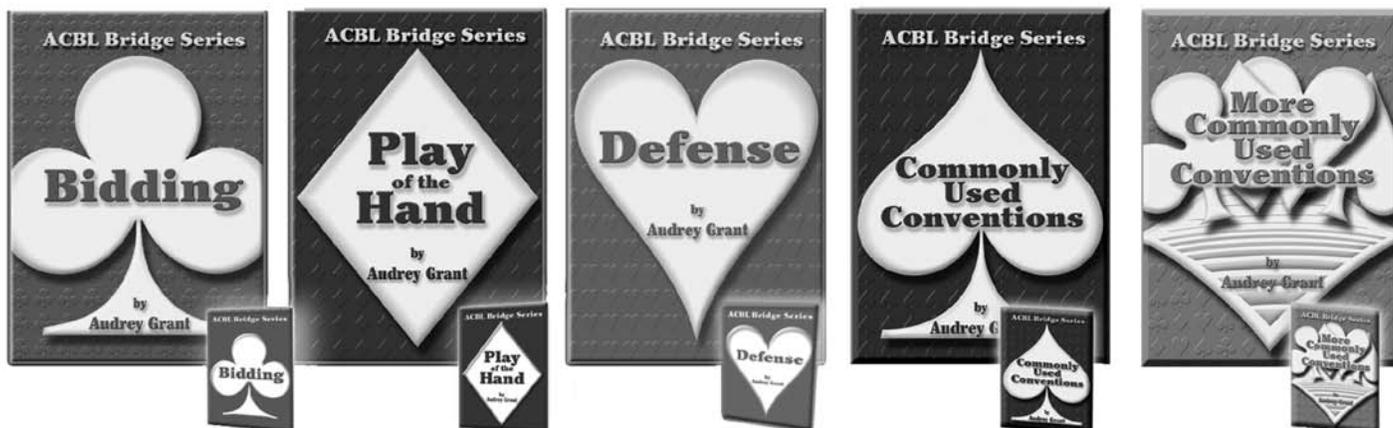
Jay Baum, ACBL CEO, said that he was excited about the fact that the ACBL will be able to offer teachers a coordinated, cohesive set of modern materials that will bring Learn to Play Bridge and the ACBL Bridge Series together. The ACBL texts will continue to incorporate the tried and true teaching techniques that have been so essential to teachers.

Our target date for the availability of the new materials is the Spring of 2007.

While there will be quite a number of small changes, the most basic changes to the ACBL Bridge Series materials will be:

- 25 total points required for games of 3NT, 4♥ and 4♠.
- Opening bids will still require 13 total points or more. Therefore, the opener's bidding ranges as well as responder's ranges will be slightly adjusted in order to conform to the 25 total points required for game. For example, responder's ranges will now be 6-9 total points for the minimum range, 10-11 total points for the medium range and 12+ total points for the maximum range.
- 1NT opening bids will be 15-17 and are based on high card points (HCP).
- 2NT opening bids will be 20-21 HCP.
- Overcalls will be allowed with as few as 10 total points with an upper limit of 17 total points.
- Each text book will contain a bonus chapter, which the teacher may wish to incorporate into class time. The bonus chapter for the Bidding Series will be Stayman.
- Strong 2♣ bids will be used along with Weak 2 bids.

The ACBL Bridge Series material is being updated and tested by Betty Starzec while she is in Tokyo. She has been using the new material for classes held at the Tokyo American Club. If any teachers have suggestions, questions or comments, you can contact her at [lstarzec@houston.rr.com](mailto:lstarzec@houston.rr.com). You can also contact the ACBL Education Department for more information.



# Teaching Bridge to Older Adults

## An Alternative Point of View

by Stephen Grossman

During the last 25 years my work has been focused on consulting, teaching and writing about creative thinking for adults ([www.gocreate.com/grossman](http://www.gocreate.com/grossman)). Recently, I have turned my attention to teaching beginning bridge to older adults (60+). My methodology is based on one important idea: The biggest difference between the ability to learn as youngsters and as senior citizens seems to be not a difference in “high cognitive function,” but rather ease of access to short term memory. Older adults know how to apply data once they have it, but have a harder time than youngsters remembering which data are appropriate for any specific situation.

Therefore, I find it paradoxically easier to teach high-level bridge to beginners than to teach them “beginning bridge.” I see the difference between these two playing out as a shift in emphasis from rules to concepts – from algorithms to general principles or heuristics. That is, teaching people to think like experts is easier and more rewarding than teaching them to memorize sets of (apparently) disembodied rules.

I use eleven basic concepts, to which I continually refer, during the course of my lessons that I call the fundamental principles of winning bridge.

These principles were summarized more than 100 years ago by Sir Francis Bacon, who said, “There is no excellent beauty without some strangeness in the proportion.”

Here are some examples of how these principles play out in the timing and format of the lessons:

### Fundamental Principles of Winning Bridge

1. Bridge is at least 75% to 80% bidding – however,
2. All bidding derives from an understanding of declarer play.
3. In descending order, the important criteria for bidding are (a) long suits, (b) trump fits and (c) high cards. The most powerful hands have high cards concentrated in the long suits.
4. Hands rarely stay the same in value during the bidding sequence.
5. There is something magical about a 4-4 major-suit fit – and the bidding should reflect an emphasis on finding one.
6. Given a choice of options, playing a hand in a minor suit, should be the last.
7. When possible in declarer play, the stronger hand should be concealed.
8. Players should strive to make descriptive bids. A descriptive bid is one that communicates both strength and distribution within a relatively narrow range.
9. The partner of the first descriptive bidder is almost always the Captain.
10. There are three types of bids – those that (a) give information, (b) ask questions, (c) give commands.
11. The Captain generally makes “b” and “c” type bids.

A. The first four to five lessons focus exclusively on the play of the hand using Eddie Kantar’s brilliant book, *Fundamentals of Declarer Play*. The students start to understand the importance of long suits, short suits and trump fits. There is no mention of bidding, no memorization and no rules. But when the bidding starts, the students understand the reasons for certain subtle bidding sequences.

B. When the bidding finally starts, the first thing students learn is the concept of Captaincy. It is now a relatively easy matter to teach artificial bidding conventions such as Stayman and subtle transfer sequences over notrump. They understand that the partner of the notrump bidding is in charge and every bid the Captain makes asks a question or gives a command. The biggest complaint I get from students is that their peers (who have been playing bridge for a long time) don’t play the “stuff” that they are

learning. I urge them to teach it themselves to their “more seasoned” colleagues and friends or to start new bridge relationships with their fellow students.

C. We move quite comfortably from strict pointcount evaluation to Losing Trick Count. This clearly is another application of declarer play understanding. I tell my students that they are actually starting to think about the play of a trump-suit hand while bidding. There are no complex “rules” for counting the value of singletons and doubletons, but rather an overarching format for hand re-evaluation once a trump fit has been found. Ron Klinger has an excellent book on this and, Phillip Alder has quite a nice summary that can be accessed via the Internet.

In summary, I tell my students that I don’t want to teach them how to play bridge, but rather to teach them how to be a bridge player. There is a significant difference between these two goals.

# STAR TEACHERS



**Norma Pierzchala** (Arlington VA) started teaching duplicate bridge when she retired from the business world. It has been the most rewarding experience of her life. She has made many friends and has seen almost all of her students go on to experience the thrill of playing in clubs and tournaments all over the country. Many have become life masters. All have enjoyed meeting new people and the social aspects of the game as well.

**TIP:** High card from the short side and second hand low, and if your partner makes an unusual bid that you do not understand, you must bid one more time.



**Judi Vineyard** (Colorado Springs CO) is a retired college professor and engineering manager. She started playing bridge in college, but didn't get hooked until she started playing duplicate. After retiring from engineering, Judi took the director's exam to improve her game. Shortly thereafter, she had the opportunity to take over the Colorado Springs Bridge Club. Judi has been directing and teaching ever since. She is one of Audrey Grant's teacher-trainers, and conducts the Better Bridge Teacher Accreditation Program at bridge tournaments throughout the United States. Judi also directs bridge on cruise ships.

**TIP:** Keep the energy level in your classes high! Teach your students chants and songs to help them remember various aspects of the game.



**Verla Zerebesky** (Saskatoon SK) Since becoming accredited, Verla has presented bridge lessons to more than 400 students in all five of the ACBL courses. Having served in many capacities at the club and unit level, she is currently the Education Coordinator for the Saskatoon Bridge Club.

**TIP:** Keep the convention card as simple as possible! Too many bells and whistles send the brain out for recess!



**Barbara Phillips** (Spring TX) is a retired history teacher who began teaching bridge 40 years ago in Pittsburgh. She has been teaching all levels of bridge for the past six years at the Conroe Bridge Center and The Woodlands in Texas. Usually found at the summer NABC and often at others, Barbara is closing in on Gold Life Master status.

**TIP:** 1) An overcall (non-jump) should be lead directing. You don't want to overcall on a jack-high suit only to have partner lead low from the king.  
2) When both sides lead the same suit, one of them is wrong.

## Join Fellow Bridge Teachers in Chicago July 11-14

The American Bridge Teachers Association (ABTA) will sponsor its annual Seminar and Convention at the Hyatt Regency Chicago prior to the NABC this summer. All bridge teachers are invited to register.

### July 11 and 12: Convention Seminar

Focus on teaching and the business of teaching

**Tuesday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.** - schedule includes Dennis Dawson and Barbara Seagram

**Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to noon** - Roberta Sez – session with well-known land and cruise teacher Roberta Salob.

### July 12, 13, 14: ABTA Convention

(July 12 1 p.m.-4:30 p.m., July 13 all day and July 14 8 a.m. –noon)

ABTA is proud to present an array of expert players and teachers including: Larry Cohen, Gerry Fox, Fred Gitelman, Julie Greenberg, Jerry Helms, Alan LeBendig, Ray Lee, Audrey Grant, David Lindop, Zeke Jabbour and Karen Walker.

**Seminar Cost \$40 US** includes continental breakfast on Wednesday morning.

**Convention Cost: \$150 US BEFORE JUNE 15; \$175 after June 15.**

Includes continental breakfast on Thursday and Friday and gala banquet on Thursday evening. Schedule updates will appear on ABTA website [www.abtahome.com](http://www.abtahome.com) as available. See web site to sign up for Wednesday night outing with the teachers.

Send registration or questions to: ABTA c/o Pat Harrington

14840 Crystal Cove Court #503 • Fort Myers FL 33919-7417 • [abta@earthlink.net](mailto:abta@earthlink.net)

**Special Friday  
morning session  
9 a.m.-noon:  
A Morning With  
Eddie Kantar**

**Check the Chicago NABC link from the ACBL home page  
for a full list of ACBL seminars.**

PRRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MEMPHIS, TN  
Permit No. 854

Lynn Berg • Stephen Grossman • Marti Ronemus • Julie Greenberg

CONTRIBUTORS

Cindy Hill

PRODUCTION

Julie T. Greenberg

EDITOR

AMERICAN CONTRACT BRIDGE LEAGUE  
2990 Airways Blvd. • Memphis, TN 38116-3847