



# THE BRIDGE TEACHER

Spring Edition • Sept. 2006

## look What's Inside ...

The Business of Bridge ..... 2

Review of Pat Harrington's new beginner course ..... 3

Tibits from the Summer ABTA ..... 4-5

Star Teachers..... 6

The BIL at Bridge Base Online ..... 7

Martha Walls..... 7

Teaching in Schools Can Be Very Rewarding ..... 8

### FYI—

**Fall School Bridge Lessons.** Time to start your school bridge lesson series classes. There are a couple of changes for 2007:

**Teacher fees limited**

We've been the victim of our own success, with a record number of school courses (6425 students in 2005!). To meet our budget, teachers will be paid for no more than five classes each session (spring/summer and fall), a total of no more than 10 classes per year. If you start a fall 2006 class and it doesn't finish until 2007, it will be counted as a spring/summer 2007 class.)

**School Instant Matchpoint Game cancelled**

Teachers are urged to start school bridge clubs and organize field trips to sectionals and/or clubs to encourage the students to continue playing.

### Hawaii.

Going to the Fall NABC? The local committee has planned an exceptional tournament full of outstanding entertainment features. For that reason, we are limiting the number of seminars that will be offered. You can retake the TAP, take the Bridge Teachers and Bridge Cruises course and join Fred Gitelman for Bridge Base Online. Don't forget the ACBL Teacher/Club Officials "Thank You" party on the first Friday between sessions.

### ACBL's Find a Teacher Site.

If you are actively teaching, make sure you are listed online at ACBL's Find a Teacher site. You must fill out an application for an online listing. Use the link at <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html>.

## ACBL Product Store

In an effort to give greater focus to the ACBL core missions of promoting bridge, providing affordable playing opportunities in the future and supporting other existing programs, the ACBL has entered into a long-term agreement with Baron Barclay Bridge Supplies to sell bridge products.

What does this mean to you? After Sept. 15, 2006, all ACBL teaching products and support products will be sold by Baron Barclay. Founded in 1942, the company is committed to providing high-quality service and best pricing. In the future, please call Baron Barclay at 800-274-2221 or visit [baronbarclay.com](http://baronbarclay.com) for your textbooks and other supplies.

We are continuing with our efforts to update *The ACBL Bridge Series* texts, teacher manuals and support products. Baron Barclay expects to make the first two texts and teacher manuals, *Bidding in the 21st Century* and *Play of the Hand in the 21st Century* available early in 2007. The other books and support materials will follow. Remember that the main changes in the material will be 15 to 17 HCP notrump openings and the introduction of Stayman, Weak Two-Bids and Jacoby Transfers earlier in the material. For more detail see the April 2006 issue of *The Bridge Teacher*, available online.



AMERICAN CONTRACT  
BRIDGE LEAGUE  
2990 Airways Blvd.  
Memphis TN 38116

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





## ***The Business of Bridge*** **What's in a Name**

*by Lynn Berg*

You've heard it before—"Use Nametags" is a mantra I've often repeated in this column. Why? And what are your choices?

The "why" is to benefit you and your students. Unless your class is made up of one hundred percent folks who already know one another, they will appreciate the opportunity to seem friendly without having to rely on memory. And if even one person is a stranger to the rest, the use of nametags for everyone will help make that person more comfortable and more easily become a part of the group. The benefit to you is just as obvious—the more you seem to know the students' names, the more they will credit you with being wonderful and bright. Fair? Sensible? No. But a truth of human nature you must acknowledge.

You should use the process of putting on name tags as part of the routine of starting any class. Have the tags ready. If you have time yourself to write the names out and distribute them, great. If not, get an early bird to be the greeter who performs this ritual. And do make a ritual of it. Have the same kind of tags every week. Use a dark, thick pen or a slim felt-tip marker to print the names. Do you want just first names? Just last names? Both? The writing should be as large as possible if you are going to be able to

read the names quickly and easily. Discourage script: it's often decorative but illegible. Don't let anyone evade the process. Your cousin is taking the class, or your neighbor? Nametags are for everyone!

What should the tags be like? First, they must not be harmful to anyone's clothes. If you get a lot of complaints about stick-um, make tent-style folded tags, like something you'd use as a place card, and have the students put them on the table top. You can create these with inexpensive card stock. Use a postcard program if you want to pre-print or decorate them in any way. These can be kept and reused, but you should be prepared to have the participants forget them, so substitutes should be available even in the last week of class. Don't slack off about this. After all, what if a newcomer should come along with a friend in week eight? You'll impress her with your thoroughness.

You can buy inexpensive peel-and-stick nametags by the hundred in any office or school supply department, either with a colorful border or a "Hello." You can buy stock to print your own, typically print 8 to the page. Or buy address labels at 14 to the page and print your own. You might want to have a legend like "Bridge is for Fun" or "DeLand Bridge" or "Lynn's Lessons" or "Better Bidding" across the top

or bottom of the label. Anything that personalizes it is what Edith McMullin describes as "value added," making what you offer seem more valuable to the participants. After all, if you take trouble even with this small detail, then you are taking trouble with all aspects of their class.

If you want to have a larger initial investment, provide semi-permanent name badges for the students. These come in two basic forms: in either case, the tag slips into a clear plastic sleeve. One has a small alligator clip which allows the tag to be fastened to a pocket or a collar. The other takes a thin elastic which goes over the head and drapes the nametag below the neck. These can both be stored — either in a flat box for the ones with clips or on wall pegs for the hanging tags. Both are a bit of a pest. If you let the students take them home, they'll forget to bring them back. How about a small inducement to return the tags to your storage? Have some sort of a drawing each week — and pick the winner from the nametags which have been returned. It's amazing how even a little reward can be an incentive.

If you are offering an up-scale class in an affluent area, you can charge more for your classes and should spend more on making them unusual. Why not go on line to one of the many nametag services and provide permanent nametags to anyone who is a repeat student? Really splurge and get magnet backs — never any damage to clothing.

One last note: Wear a nametag yourself.



# Review of Pat Harrington's new beginner course

by Amy Nellissen

The more I teach this game, the more I wonder how anyone ever learns it. Since I started teaching six years ago, I've used six different beginner courses—including two that I tried to write myself (what a disaster!).

I was never satisfied with a beginner course — until now.

Pat Harrington's new course, *Play & Learn: Beginning Bridge – A Complete Lesson Package*, solves many of the problems I've encountered with other beginner courses. It simplifies the game for students and teachers alike.

## No Bidding Until Week 4

Teachers will appreciate Pat's approach: No bidding until the fourth week. Instead, students play lots of hands, learning basic play-of-the-hand and defensive tactics. The concept of game and choosing the best contract (trump suit vs. notrump) is introduced without bidding.

When I taught the course, I found that even those who had played before benefited from the time spent on play. By the time I introduced opening bids in Lesson 3, they were chafing at the bit to learn bidding. Quite a difference from the old days, where the fourth week was the one where their eyes began to glaze over and they started to drop out.

Throughout the course, new bidding concepts are paced appropriately for beginners. There's an entire lesson devoted to the responder bidding notrump, another where opener rebids notrump and another where the students learn to count dummy points and trump in the dummy.

## Easy to Customize to Any Length Class

Because the course comes in a three-ring binder, it's easy to teach any number of weeks that you choose. You get 13 individual lessons numbered 0 through 12. Use what you need; save the rest for the advanced beginner course.

Each lesson contains a detailed lesson plan for teachers, Pat's Play & Learn printouts and three or more handouts for students: 1) lesson notes on the day's topic, 2) a homework sheet, with answer key and 3) copies of the hands they played in class with analysis. Just add your name and phone number to the handout, make some photocopies and you're ready to teach. Your class fee can include the cost of printing handouts as well as a folder or notebook to hold them. There is no textbook to order or purchase.

## Play & Learn Hand Records are Included.

If you are accustomed to calling cards for your students, try the Play & Learn hand records once, and you'll be hooked. Students make fewer mistakes making up the hands, and you won't find yourself repeating cards for tables that weren't listening.

With this course, you'll need a good system for making up hands because ... They play LOTS of hands each week.

Most lessons provide eight practice deals. Since I run two-hour lessons, I couldn't quite get them all in. But even my newest beginners are able to play about six hands a week.

Over the years, I've given up on

the notion that my beginners will get together between classes to practice. It just ain't gonna happen. Since they can't learn without playing, they're going to have to play a lot of hands in class—and this course accomplishes that.

## Standard American for Beginners

The bidding system is Standard American with 16-18 notrumps, (there are no 18s, so you can change to 15-17 if you feel the need and the course discusses that change in a later lesson), five-card majors and limit raises. The last lessons include takeout doubles, preempts and strong two-club openings. You can add a lesson on Stayman by using the Introduction to Stayman lesson from the Modern Notrump Bidding Teacher Manual, which is available for free download at ACBL.org.

One innovation I really appreciated is a direct raise to four of a major shows 13+ points and 3+ trumps. I know from attending the American Bridge Teachers' Association conventions that many of the country's top teachers are doing this now.

This may make expert players cringe, but trust me, it's by far the best approach for your students -- because they understand it. One spade-two spades is 6-10 points, one spade-three spades is 11-12 points and one spade-four spades is 13+. Easy. Pre-emptive raises can be introduced later in an intermediate class where they belong.

If you've read this far, I guess you can tell I'm an enthusiastic fan of Pat's new course. I highly recommend it and suggest that the first time you use it, teach it exactly as written. It will change your teaching forever — to the benefit of both you and your students.

To order, send a check or money order for \$100 US to: Pat Harrington, 14840 Crystal Cove Court, Fort Myers, FL 33919-7417

# TIDBITS FROM THE CHICAGO



Join the ABTA and see the world! At least that should be the slogan of this wonderful organization of bridge teachers. This past summer all of us enjoyed both the convention activities and the city of Chicago.

It was my first trip to Chicago in a while and I was really excited to see the new developments downtown. Before our ABTA city tour, the teachers went to the free concert in the amazing Jay Pritzker Pavilion and listened to the Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus perform. What a fantastic facility and all free. We loved the new high-tech water park, Crown Fountain, and were amazed by the Cloud sculpture in Millennium Park. The city tour highlighted a lot of things I had done in years past and pointed out others that I wanted to try. I managed a side trip

to Chinatown with some friends, saw “Wicked” and loved it (tried in NYC but couldn’t get tickets), visited the cultural center in the old city library building and adored the Tiffany ceilings and, of course, fit in a shopping trip to the Miracle Mile. Wish there had been more time. But, on to the convention itself ...

Per usual, the American Bridge Teachers annual convention delivered an outstanding program and a lot of fun for all attending. There were a record-breaking number of first time attendees – 20! Let’s keep that number growing. You don’t want to miss this annual extravaganza. The speakers this year were exceptional. We heard Barbara Seagram, Jerry Helms, Gerry Fox, Roberta Salob, Eddie Kantar (!) and many more. What a program!

## JERRY HELMS

– I like the way Jerry gives each of his lessons a title and creates a handout for each. The titles reflect his humor, help him remember the point of the lesson and include one of his famous Jerry-isms. The handouts are an outstanding promotional idea. Jerry’s handouts offer two or more lines of play with his ratings and address the key points of each deal. We were treated to several hands including “I’d Rather Lose Them My Way” with the Jerry-ism, “There’s nothing wrong with temptation – the problem is when you yield to it!” Remember, Jerry is a frequent speaker in the NABC Celebrity Speaker Program, so watch for him and enjoy his polished presentations and great material.



## ROBERTA SALOB

– This lady is the ultimate professional. She has been teaching huge classes for many years and has perfected her approach. She also has some delicious humor to keep her lessons hopping. Roberta passed on so many great ideas that I wish I could include them all. She had rare insight into how to find a place to teach and how to make it work for you.



Roberta’s plan for structuring her courses is brilliant. Her students are offered a natural progression of lessons and know which course to take next. (I have to give you some detail here. She has three sets of eight-week lessons each year. Her first set of lessons are “Beginners,”



*First-time attendees. Note our own Dana Norton, 2nd from the right.*

# SUMMER ABTA CONVENTION

By Julie Greenberg

“Junior Intermediate” and “Advanced.” Each group grows into the next set of “Advanced Beginners,” “Intermediate” and “Advanced” – as Roberts sez, “Advanced is Advanced.” From there the students go to “Pre-Intermediate,” “Senior Intermediate” and “Advanced,” When they reach the end of the line of nine courses, there is Supervised Play.)

I liked Roberta’s tip that you need socialization in your classes for them to grow – she suggests that when you pair up singles that come to your class, you should “put look-alikes together.” She also commented that to her the most important rule in bridge is “Whenever there is a choice of where to win the trick – use up the honor from the short side first.”

On a serious note, Roberta asked the question, “Why teach?” She answered it by saying, “Because the students get so much out of it – it will change their lives.” What a great philosophy.

Incidentally, one of the highlights of each convention is the “give-aways.” Roberta generously distributed some of her advertising pieces and her mini-bridge books. She definitely understands marketing.



## **ZEKE JABBOUR**

– It is always a treat to have the opportunity to listen to Zeke! He is both charming and the king of deadpan humor.

I’ll bet going on one of the cruises he and his lovely wife Sharon host is a treat. Here are Zeke’s Zingers:

“Be kind to your partner – if you can’t, at least have the decency to be right.”

“Lying is one of the building blocks

of a polite society. (We often tell people they look nice when they don’t).”

“I liken psyching to frying bacon in the nude – you have a good chance of getting burned.”



## **BARBARA SEAGRAM**

– Barb was a first-time speaker at the ABTA and she was sensational – the perfect combination

of information and fun. She has a low-key sense of humor that is riveting. Here are a couple of her tips that I especially liked:

“I teach Boston – Bottom of Something; Top of Nothing. That’s how the city got it’s name, you know.”

“Tell your students, if they can’t work out what to lead, work out what not to lead.”

“On defense, your job is to hurt, maim and destroy – with a smile on your face.”



## **EDDIE KANTAR**

– Teachers can never get enough good hands. Have you discovered Eddie’s web site, [www.kantarbridge.com](http://www.kantarbridge.com)?

It is a treasure-trove for teachers. Eddie has many hands online that teachers can use simply by giving him credit. Check out and send your thank you note to Eddie at [ekbridge@earthlink.net](mailto:ekbridge@earthlink.net). It was both fun and educational to listen to Eddie’s lesson and play his great hands. I doubt that anyone left without learning a little something. Wow!

## **Awards, Presentations, Etc.**

Let’s not forget the presentations and awards.



The group bid a fond retirement to Pat Harrington who has served tirelessly as the ABTA Treasurer and Secretary for many

years. She will be missed in that capacity but hopefully will be able to enjoy the convention perks as a participant in future years. Deborah Murphy has accepted the position and is working with Pat to learn the ropes.

For the first time, four guys were declared Master Teachers: Jim Haws, Brian Richardson, Bruce Greenspan and Steve Sidell. Since there were all women the previous year, it only seemed fair.

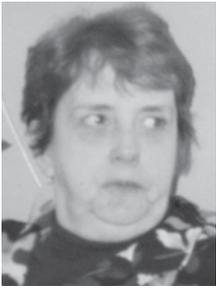
Julian Latterman’s “A Bridge to Simple Squeezes” won the Book of the Year award, and the Applebasket award for best Teacher Tip of the Year went to Amy Nellissen for “The Visual Dummy.” You can read more about these in your ABTA quarterly.

The panel was in top form and did a great job entertaining the crowd. Hats off to Alan LeBendig, Jerry Helms, Zeke Jabbour and David Lindop. It was amazing how many zingers this group was able to throw out.

## **Next Summer**

Plan now to join the group next summer in Nashville. Cities can surprise you and Nashville should be a really fun and interesting destination. The ABTA is still the best source of continuing education for bridge teachers. Don’t miss the next convention.

# STAR TEACHERS



**Darlene R. Wiltanger** (Kansas City MO) is a TAP accredited teacher, a club director, a Silver LM with over 2,000 points and a member of the ACBL Goodwill Committee. While working as a social worker, Darlene and her husband had the opportunity to live in Egypt. She took the TAP to have something to do. They sold the house, didn't tell the kids and moved to Egypt. Her first class had seven different nationalities. Not only did they not understand a word Darlene said because she talked too fast, she was using slang. It was a great lesson for her. Every time she teaches a new group, she remembers how hard the game is to learn even when we all speak the same language. **Tip:** Darlene always encourages her students by telling them she wouldn't have any master points at all if bad bridge wasn't rewarded.

Darlene says her strength as a teacher is in remembering how badly she has played.



**Jo Wragg** (Davis CA) played her first duplicate bridge game in 1991 while still on the faculty of California State University, Sacramento. After a win at the NABCs; Jo was hooked and began to study the game. Thanks to the help of many excellent players in the area, her first years were very rewarding — earning her the Mini-McKinney in 1993. Jo began teaching then and started with eight players at a Senior Center for minimum wage. She's been teaching steadily ever since and has taught over 1500 students. Jo loves teaching bridge and its many rewards — meeting new people, making new friends, keeping your own skills honed while providing a service to the bridge community. Many of her students have

moved from her classes into duplicate. **TIP:** Use bidding boxes. They help students focus on the bidding, teach the concept of “picturing the hand” and make the transition to duplicate easier.



**Tom Vind** (Hackensack NJ) graduated with a BS in engineering from the University of Minnesota in 1955 and became a full-time computer programmer writing applications for engineers to use. In 1989, he took the TAP course, retired, moved to a rural lake area in MN and began teaching. Tom's goal at that time was to improve both the quality and quantity of bridge in that area. Tom and his wife also started a sanctioned duplicate game which is still being held. The Vinds spend winters in Arizona, so Tom has taught there also. Tom loves *The ACBL Bridge Series* and has taught the courses so many times, he's lost count.

**TIP:** Teach your students that they can better defend a hand if they know what high cards partner hold. Shows them how to estimate the points in partner's hand when the bidding is complete either by partner's bids or the opponent's contract, to modify the count when the dummy comes down and as the play progresses.



**Patricia A. Peterson** (Hernando FL) learned bridge from her parents, both LMs and directors, and was playing with her Dad when he made life master. Pat became an LM in 1967, a certified director in the early '70s and is TAP, Better Bridge and Easybridge! Accredited. When she “retired” and moved from Massachusetts to Florida, Pat tried to concentrate on her golf, but there was a need for a bridge program in her area. Knowing there were negative vibes on playing “that kind of Bridge,” Pat started her country club game with Easybridge! and got a huge turnout. She developed a much touted program in her area and her students are becoming LMs. Pat gets great satisfaction from giving

something back something to the game that she is so hooked on. Pat's husband of 48 years finally took up the game, joined ACBL and enjoys the “fringe benefit” of cruising with her as an assistant.

**TIP:** The most important things to remember in teaching any level is to “Keep it Simple” and to respect the individual student. Remember that people play for different reasons and the important thing is for them to enjoy the experience. Pat loves to quote Edith McMullin, “it's not a career choice, it's a game.” If you enjoy what you are doing, your students will also.”



## The BIL at Bridge Base Online

*By Ellen Caitlin Pomer*

I recently came upon a club on Bridge Base Online (BBO) which I must share with all bridge teachers. It is called the BIL, beginners and intermediate lounge. Founded in September 2003, the BIL has seen in excess of 10,000 members from over 90 countries pass through its door.

The woman behind this success story is Maureen Hall of New Zealand. She recalls the founding of the BIL: "I had my first bridge lesson in 2001. I 'Googled' the word 'bridge' and saw Bridge Base 'educational software.' I accepted the invitation to write, expecting no reply. Instead, the next day I received a personal e-mail from Fred Gitelman and I became an instant BBO and online-bridge fan. In those days, one got excited seeing five tables playing at any one time on BBO. Over time it grieved me to see my peers come and go. I wrote Fred and asked him to enable a private club for me and the next day the BIL was born."

This private haven, amidst over 6000 players and kibitzers on BBO on any one given day, now offers free teaching sessions for all members. There are groups

and one-on-one individual mentoring sessions, teaching and competitive tournaments, team league matches, bridge movies in the BBO Lecture Hall, a weekly Gazette sent out to all members, 'Think with Fred' sessions, 'Listen to the Experts' as they comment on bridge hands and more! With bridge teachers, including myself, volunteering their time, in any given week there is up to 60 hours of activities on this site.

With a creed 'Cherish Your Partner and Respect your Opposition,' the BIL encourages its 'graduates' to volunteer their time to mentor newcomers, including sessions on how to use the BBO software. Maureen ensures no one gets lost at the BIL. Indeed her idea to form a "sanctuary" for members, guides all planning. She states that "I wanted to create a place where players could enjoy a social game without stress, a place where people could compete with their peers if they so wished to learn to play better bridge." Another goal for Maureen was to find a place where she could learn bridge but as a full time volunteer, that goal is on hold!

This year saw the introduction of the youth membership for 6 to 15 year olds who receive specialized tutoring as they compete in team matches. With this initiative, the BIL now boasts a membership ranging from ages 6 to 94. Surely such a place deserves our support and Maureen always needs volunteers, whether to mentor or help build the website.

For further information on the BIL, contact Maureen at hall@timaru.com. For your students who will benefit from this club, advise them to download the free site of BBO at [www.bridgebase.com](http://www.bridgebase.com) and visit [www.bridgebase.com/clubs/bil](http://www.bridgebase.com/clubs/bil). Upon joining the BIL, be sure also to join a private site for BIL members. Started in 2005 by Rosemary Dulaney, a

student and volunteer of the BIL, [www.thinkstop.com](http://www.thinkstop.com), is a terrific site. You must use your BBO handle to register.

Ellen Caitlin Pomer is co-author of 'Standard Bidding with SAYC' and founder of the largest online bridge school, Bridge Forum International ([www.bridge-forum.com](http://www.bridge-forum.com)).

## Happy Retirement, Martha

*by Julie Greenberg*



Many of you have had the pleasure of meeting Martha Walls over the telephone during the past two years

when signing up your school bridge classes. Martha has done an outstanding job with this program, but she will be retiring as of Oct. 1.

Martha started at ACBL in May of 1980 in our Print Shop when we were still in our old building. She continued with printing responsibilities when that function was taken over by the Publishing Department until her move to the Ed Department in 2004. This was a challenge for Martha but she was up to it. She learned some new skills and enjoyed the process. We have enjoyed having Martha in our department and will miss her. Martha said, "My years at ACBL (26!) have been great and I will take a lot of good memories with me!"

To register your school programs, please contact us at [Education@acbl.org](mailto:Education@acbl.org) and Dana Norton or I will be happy to assist you.

# Teaching in Schools Can Be Very Rewarding

By Ted Applegate



In Hays, KS for the school year 2004-2005, I had a class of six kids in the 5th grade. The school is Lincoln Elementary, one of six public elementary schools including the magnet school. The principal is a great woman named Elaine Rholeder who practically jumped across the desk to hug me when I went in to ask IF I could start a bridge class as something for the brighter kids who wanted for an “extra.” Lincoln has but one 5th grade and I did not know their chess class had quit and she needed something else.

With the help of one of my advanced students, a very good player in her own regard and a retired high school math teacher, we had two tables through which students rotated to have them experience different techniques, although the

lesson plans were the same. We both believed we had had a successful year.

At the end of the school lessons in May, we surveyed the kids who all said that their bridge class helped them with their math (expected) and their English (unexpected). We followed the kids through the 6th grade. I do not know how much influence otherwise we had, but I do know that ALL six of the kids finished the 6th grade with a GPA of 3.8+ and were invited to the honors tea! I would like to think we were at least a small part of their drive.

Note: It’s time to get your school classes started. If you need a school promo packet, let us know by e-mailing [Education@acbl.org](mailto:Education@acbl.org).

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

Lynn Berg • Amy Nellissen • Ellen Pomer • Ted Applegate

CONTRIBUTORS

Leona Allison

PRODUCTION

Julie T. Greenberg

EDITOR

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