



# THE BRIDGE TEACHER

## For Your Information —

### Baron Barclay Bridge Supply

Turning over our teaching products to Baron Barclay was a big step. However, it did, allow us the opportunity to provide free teacher manual downloads for our new, updated courses, and we are very grateful to Jim Maier for this privilege.



Julie T. Greenberg

### Updating *The ACBL Bridge Series*

The decision to update *The ACBL Bridge Series* was a huge step. We have completed the first two courses and the third, *Defense in the 21st Century*, is almost finished. Expect to see the teacher manual online about the time you get this newsletter. It's been a lot of work, but the positive feedback you have given us makes it all worthwhile. As time allows, support materials are being updated.

### The New and Improved TAP

It was necessary to update the TAP, since the ACBL books were revised, and it turned out to be a plus. We had a chance to take a look at the program and to expand it to introduce more teaching materials in addition to the ACBL materials. The TAP has been receiving rave notices across the country and I am thrilled with its latest incarnation. TAPs are being held at all NABCs and as requested. Remember retakes are free. Contact Dana Norton ([dana.norton@acbl.org](mailto:dana.norton@acbl.org)) for more information.

### ACBL's Find a Teacher site

The Find a Teacher web site has been growing in popularity. It gets a lot of hits. To be listed there, you must fill out an application for an online listing which can be found at <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html>. Once you have applied, you do not need to reapply to make changes. If your information is current in the ACBL database, it will be reflected in your online listing. If you look online and don't see your name, it is probably one of three things:

1. You haven't sent in an application for a listing,
2. Your dues may have lapsed,
3. You don't have a valid e-mail address on file.

### New School Kid in Town

A group called The World School Bridge League, a branch of The League, is working with money donated by Bill Gates and Warren Buffet for the purpose of teaching bridge to young people. They will be launching a big media campaign in October that you should be able hook on to in order to promote bridge in your own area. Check out [www.schoolbridgeleague.com](http://www.schoolbridgeleague.com) for more information. The ACBL's funded program is still going strong. Get details at: <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/schoolBridge.html>.

### Teaching Online

A new addition to the ACBL web site is an article by Ellen (Caitlin) Pomer about teaching bridge on Bridge Base Online. If you are interested in what's available, reading this article by Caitlin may smooth your way to this excellent outlet. Go to: <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html>.

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2990 Airways Blvd.  
Memphis TN 38116

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



# Education Plus Pizzazz = Edutainment

by Julie Greenberg



Almost all of us have to work, but few of us are privileged to be able to call our work – “fun.” You, our bridge teachers, and I belong to this special group of people.

My parents were avid ACBL-members and tournament players. As I was growing up, I witnessed firsthand the enjoyment of playing the game and socializing with fellow-enthusiasts. I knew early in my life that I wanted to be involved in something that brought pleasure to people, and Bridge fit the bill.

This past summer, the ABTA (American Bridge Teacher Association) celebrated its 50th Anniversary. As I reflected on that, I realized that I had worked my first official session as a tournament director at the Hot Spring AR Regional on perhaps the same day the ABTA Charter was signed – May 27, 1957. After twenty-one years in the field and

twenty-nine years here in the office, first in the Tournament Division and then in Education, I realize that its been quite an amazing 50-year journey for both me and for the ABTA – lots of memories and lots of fun.

And speaking of fun – I recently learned a new word. It’s been around for a while, but didn’t come to my attention until I got a “thank you” note for a baby gift I sent to a friend of my daughter’s. She thanked me for giving her son the *gift of edutainment*. Edutainment is the buzzword for a form of entertainment that is designed to educate as well as to amuse.

Edutainment seems the perfect way to describe your job as a bridge teacher. You could even say you are an Edutainer!

When the ACBL’s teaching program first got started, there was a big emphasis on introducing some fun into the classroom. Hands on presentations got it all started. Then teachers were encouraged to make classes

more social, to allow students to interact and get to know each other, to distribute class contact information, to provide visual stimulation, to tell jokes, to bring props. Audrey introduced the bear posters and beautifully wrapped presents to peak the students’ interest. Pat Harrington used a red and a green mitten to demonstrate the dangerous hand, Arlette Schutte created a large poster of an E-Z Deal card to help students understand how to use the new decks. Edith McMullin did her best to teach us how to tell jokes. We received many ideas from our teachers, including quite a few from a very creative teacher in New Jersey, Virginia Melidosian. She showed us how to dress up for class – to be a captain when introducing that idea, etc. and to edutain. The early newsletters and our online file are filled with Virginia’s tips.

I wonder how many of you still put a focus on entertainment and how many of you have drifted into pure education. My guess is that the more successful teachers are those who understand and use edutainment.

I don’t think you could do anything more beneficial for your career as a bridge teacher than to take time to examine the format of your classes and to confirm that you too are giving the *gift of edutainment* – a mix of both entertainment and education. If you decide you don’t have a good mix – take to the Internet and fix the problem. There are hundreds of suggestions for adding a little pizzazz to your delivery available at ACBL’s teacher web site. Do yourself a favor and take a look.

## New ABTA Master Teachers – Inducted in Nashville



Left to Right: Kathy Harper, Denise Hoffman, Torre Houlgate-West, Donna Compton, Dave McIntyre, Joan Anderson with Ed Gentino. NP-Beverly Gardner.

# THE BRIDGE TEACHER'S BOOKSHELF

## ABTA Award-Winning Books

By Pat Harrington

The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) held its fiftieth anniversary convention in Nashville in July. One of the things I like best about attending the convention is the opportunity to see and learn about all the latest teaching methods and materials. I have a lot of information to share with you this time.

### 2007 ABTA Intermediate Book of the Year

But, first, let me take a moment to brag. Every year the ABTA presents one or two awards to outstanding books that were published during the year. My Major Suit Raises I and II "Play" Courses were named the 2007 Intermediate Book of the Year. I hope you are all familiar with the eight "Play" Courses that were created by ACBL. You are shortchanging your students if you have not tried them. Each "Play" course contains 32 analyzed practice deals. There is a course to follow each of the first three ACBL lesson series in addition to two Advancing Player Courses plus Modern Notrump Bidding and Major Suit Raises I and II. I created the last three Play Courses to provide more practice on specific topics in Commonly Used Conventions and More Commonly Used Conventions. ACBL has made the teacher manuals, which include extra lessons, available for free download from the ACBL website (<http://www.acbl.org/teachers/materials.html>). Kudos to ACBL for making their teacher manuals available online. "Play" Course booklets are now marketed by Baron Barclay and are quite inexpensive at \$5 each with E-Z Deal cards available at \$3.50 a deck.

### 2007 ABTA Beginner Book of the Year

The ABTA Beginner Book of the year Award went to Gary Brown of Australia for Gary Brown's *Learn to Play Bridge*, a beginner text. The material is modern Standard American covering: 5-card majors; 15-17 notrumps; weak twos; Blackwood; Stayman; overcalls and takeout doubles. The beauty of the book is its simple layout and avoidance of too much detail. Just the basic facts and practice exercises are all in only a bit over 100 pages of text. However, there are some exceptions. Some treatments that may or may not be your style are: the use of a 3♣ or 3♦ response to 1NT as an invitation to game; a 2NT first response to a minor showing an invitational

hand with 10 to 12 points; and the use of upside down attitude signals. Brown also uses what may be a more complicated, but probably more accurate, way of counting points for shortness. He uses 5-3-1 with four-card support but 3-2-1 with only three-card support. The biggest downside of Gary Brown's *Learn to Play Bridge* is its

availability. There are currently no North American distributors (but keep looking for that to change). You will have to order directly from the author ([brownbridge@ozemail.com.au](mailto:brownbridge@ozemail.com.au)). The author is in the process of creating a teacher manual to accompany the student text. He plans on making it available (free) in PDF format to teachers using his text. The text does not include any full deals for play. The author's lesson plans use deals from the ACBL *Bidding* text along with the E-Z Deal cards, but he selects the deal that makes the point he wishes to make and uses some deals from Lesson 2 the very first week.

### Another Winner You Don't Want to Miss

The first runner-up in the ABTA Intermediate Book of the Year Award was Mel Colchamiro's *How You Can Play Like an Expert (Without Having to Be One)*. Most students love gimmicks and Mel's book is full of them. You probably have seen some in his Bridge Bulletin column. Mel's Rule of 8 gives advice on when to make a direct overcall of the opponent's 1NT opening bid. Take the total number of cards in your two longest suits and subtract the number of losers in your hand using Losing Trick Count (LTC). As long as the result is 2 or more and as long as your hand has at least 6 HCP (notice the total of 2 + 6 is 8), go ahead and interfere. Apply Mel's Rule of 8 to these



Pat Harrington with ABTA book award.

(continued on page 8)



# Tips for Teaching *Bidding*

By Betty Starzec

Whether you have been teaching the *ACBL Bridge Series* for a long time or whether you are new to the material, here are some hints to make teaching *Bidding in the 21st Century*, the first of five courses, easier for you and your students.

As you probably know, the new text is now in sync with the Learn to Play Bridge 1 & 2 (LTPB) computer programs as well as the Standard American Yellow Card system. While this makes it technically a more challenging course to teach, the material is certainly within the grasp of beginning students. (In Japan, most teachers successfully present 2/1 – complete with bells and whistles – to their beginning students because that is the system used by most duplicate players in that country.)

## LEARN TO PLAY BRIDGE 1 & 2

It is strongly recommended that you go through all of the material – the text, the teacher manual and LTPB 1 & 2 – before you teach the new Bidding course. Depending on your level of concentration, each LTPB program should take you about 3 ½ to 4 hours, but don't be surprised if it takes longer. You may decide to answer the questions in the quizzes incorrectly just to see and hear what your students will see and hear. Once you go through the programs, you will have at your

disposal an important new tool for your students – as well as new ways to help explain concepts to those who may not “get it” on the first try.

In fact, from the very first lesson your students can practice play concepts with LTPB. The program is a lot of fun, and students enhance their learning experience at their own pace.

## JUDGMENT

One of the things teachers often tell each other is that beginning bridge students don't have the judgment necessary to make more than the simplest of decisions. Experience is the best teacher, but we can assist students with examples of when to follow guidelines, at the same time presenting situations where perhaps they should not – helping them develop that all-important judgment.

*Bidding in the 21st Century* helps teachers work with students as they develop judgment. There are a few bidding situations that call for students not to follow general guidelines. For example, 1NT opening bids are now balanced hands with 15-17 HCPs. But, must all 15-point, balanced hands be opened 1NT? I don't think so. Remember when we stated our 1NT opening range as 15+ to 18-? Maybe some of us still do. We recognized that not all 15 HCP hands are created equal.

Look at this hand:

♠ 7 5  
♥ A K Q J  
♦ 5 4 3  
♣ A J 6 4

With two unguarded suits and

low spot cards, many teachers would not open 1NT with this 15-point hand, and they do not want their students to do so either. However, other teachers don't want to veer away from the guidelines, trying to keep the information imparted to their students as simple as possible. LTPB says it is okay to open some balanced 15-point hands with one of a suit, so we need to pass along this information to our students. A simple explanation of why this hand can open (not *must* open) 1♣ instead of 1NT will offer your students a lesson in judgment. Your students need to learn that not all bidding is clear cut – it may take a time for them to apply this concept, but they will be better bridge players in the long run.

## NEW BIDDING CONCEPTS

In addition to the above example regarding the responses to an opening 2♣, there are a number of different bidding concepts that have been added. The most challenging for your students will be the use of the cuebid by the advancer in response to partner's overcall or takeout double.

### Cuebids

Advances to overcalls differ widely throughout the ACBL. For example, if the advancer bids a new suit following partner's overcall, is it forcing? Some of you are saying, “Of course it is.” Others would say, “Of course not.” There is no right or wrong answer. So what do you teach? The answer is simple – teach whatever local practices dictate. Although the text advocates that new suits by the advancer are forcing (as the

# Bidding in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

old text did), teachers should feel free to say that in their area this is not the norm, if that is the case. (In fact, as teachers, you should feel free to do what you have always done – change the material to make it relevant to your area.)

SAYC offers a little guidance in the ACBL SAYC SYSTEM BOOKLET regarding overcalls:

“Overcalls show 8 to 16 points (double and bid the long suit with a stronger hand). The only forcing response is a cuebid of opener’s suit, asking the overcaller about the quality of his overcall:”

(1♦) - 1♠ - (Pass) - 2♦

(Pass) - 2♠ = minimum overcall  
- other = extra strength (11 or 12 points minimum).

The text says new suits are forcing, so this is the one area where we have diverged from SAYC just a little. We kept a new suit by the advancer as forcing for one basic reason. Beginning students easily recognize a new suit by responder as forcing when partner has opened the bidding, so it is easy for them to think that a new suit by the advancer should be forcing as well. However, if you feel strongly that you want to follow SAYC as written, by all means teach that new suits by the advancer are non-forcing bids.

Overcalls now can be made on substantially less than an opening hand, so advancer’s responses had to be altered. For example, the advancer can make a minimum raise with 8 or 9 total points, which is more than the 6 total points that was previously required.

You need to help your students define continuing auctions

involving overcalls and takeout doubles. Again, there is a wide disparity across the ACBL on how these auctions should proceed. Follow local treatments and your students should be fine. There is a lot to be said about overcalls and takeout doubles, and obviously the text just scratches the surface. You might consider having a seminar or special class just to handle the continuing auctions after overcalls and takeout doubles.

## Responses to Preempts

In the past, our texts stated that, following an opening preempt, the responder needed about 16 or more total points to go to game. As players, we know that the key issue is how well hands fit together – not about high-card points. In the new Play of the Hand in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century text, we strive to help our students develop judgment and understand that responding to a preempt is more about counting tricks than counting points. The LTPB chapter on preemptive bidding is invaluable in helping your students develop judgment in this area.

## PUPIL GAMES

One of the best things you can do for your students is to add a celebration party at the completion of the *Bidding in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* course. The party would be enhanced by including a pupil game. Your students can practice playing in a non-threatening environment, and you get to award masterpoints to the winners! This will make your students even more excited about



the game and prepare them for your next course. We hope it is the four-week Bidding “Play” Course that follows in *The ACBL Bridge Series* program. Here’s how you can offer a pupil game to your students.

- Any bridge teacher can apply to the ACBL Club and Member Services Department for a free sanction for a pupil game.
- A minimum of nine boards must be played.
- A minimum of eight students are required. If there are only two tables, the game must be run as a team event, individual event or Swiss pair game.
- The teacher who runs the game need not be an ACBL club director.

## THE FUTURE

These materials are designed to provide a solid base for you to use as a foundation for your students – adding your own personal touches and area preferences as they develop. Remember, bridge is dynamic. New ideas and strategies are being tested all the time.



## The Business of Bridge

# The Write Stuff

By Lynn Berg

You should be looking for opportunities to write as you teach bridge. By producing quality written materials of all sorts, you encourage the view that you are a competent professional. You may not realize how much writing you already do, or how important it is that your productions should be distinctive. Your work should make anyone who has seen, it recognize it and react positively.

How do you go about making your writing recognizable? If you are sending out press notices or preparing announcements or posters, you should meet all requirements completely. Do they want single or double space? A certain print size or font? Is there a deadline? Someone to whom the material should be directed? For first impressions, hand deliver the material to the person who deals with it, if possible, and ask if there is anything else you could do to make your material more usable or to ease the work burden of the responsible party. If you can't go in person, include a brief, cover note

asking the same questions.

Follow up with a short thank you and acknowledgement of the time and space you've been given. Of course, that note is on your distinctive paper with your logo or motto. I first heard of the idea of self-"branding" from Edith McMullin. Her materials are all instantly identifiable. After an initial positive reaction, every time someone sees your "brand," your new materials will be handled happily because the person will already know you've made the job easier.

These same ideas will aid preparation of mailers and handouts. Follow Jerry Helms's advice and use the best quality paper you can afford. If it's a bit heavier and nicer to the touch than is common, you'll make an easy good impression. Also, handouts will last longer and look better on heavier paper. Choose color, font, print size and be consistent. And don't get cute with fonts: If it's not easy to read, it doesn't matter what the content might be. My two

favorite fonts at the moment are Lucida Sans Unicode and Comic Sans MS.

So far, I've only talked about the appearance of your materials – people do judge a book by its cover, and unappealing looks will deter a fair reading of the content. But content is where you can really shine. Give yourself time to produce worthwhile writing. Unless you've had tremendous practice, you probably need to make a draft, print it, edit it and revise, perhaps more than once. I used to hand write drafts, but now I work directly on the computer. I do find that I am a better editor when I can print out the draft and make notes on paper, however.

Save copies of everything you produce. Eventually you will have your own library of notices, handouts, publicity. In effect, you've collected an archive to which you can turn. If a student asks, "What do you think of Roman Key Card Blackwood," it's great to be able to say, "Would you like a sheet of information?" And the sheet already has your distinctive format, font, your name and contact information. Just put the appropriate paper in the printer and you're in business.



## THANKSGIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO

Join us at the NABCs this fall for some great courses and lots of fun.

Full Schedule at <http://www.acbl.org/nabc/sanfrancisco2007/education.html>

Pre-register at [dana.norton@acbl.org](mailto:dana.norton@acbl.org).

**Bridge Teachers and Bridge Cruises –**  
**Sunday, Nov. 25 (9 a.m. to noon)** Join Peg Cundiff, host of more than 100 bridge cruises, for an informative session about what you need to know to be a successful teacher and bridge host on a cruise ship. Fee: \$25 at door.

**The "New" Teacher Accreditation Program (TAP)**  
**(Mon., Tues., Wed. – Nov. 26, 27, 28) (9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.)** Introduction to the updated ACBL Bridge Series material and other popular teaching products. Leave with the tools needed to develop a successful teaching career. Fee: \$125 (ACBL Accredited Teachers can retake for no course fee.)

# Bridge Teachers Celebrate ABTA's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



ACBL WISHES THE ABTA A  
HAPPY 50TH ANNIVERSARY

In auction bridge days, Milton C Work held conventions for his bridge teachers. In the early days of contract bridge, Ely Culbertson founded National Studios to train teachers in his system. Teachers of the Goren system dreamed of a professional organization. It wasn't until 1957 that the dream materialized when George Coffin, financed by promoter Alexander Black, invited 650 bridge teachers to meet in New York City. On May 27, fourteen teachers from eight different states joined the promoters to become charter members of the ABTA (American Bridge Teacher Association). The members hoped to raise the level of bridge teaching and create a professional organization having the status of other professional groups.

From 1957 to 1969, Goren Teacher Forums were held in New York City to certify teachers in the Goren methods. These forums were the only way to become certified as a bridge teacher. From 1969 until the ACBL education program began in the mid-1980's, ABTA was the only organization certifying bridge teachers. Today ABTA and the ACBL education program complement each other nicely, and many ABTA members are also ACBL accredited teachers.

The first ABTA convention was

held in New York City. An annual convention is held in conjunction with the ACBL Summer NABC. The Nashville convention (Summer 2007) marked the fiftieth meeting of ABTA members. Successful teachers donate their time and share ideas and teaching techniques to help others become top-flight bridge teachers.

ABTA has had 27 presidents. Those still active include current President Dennis Scott, Leslie Shafer, Mary Jane Von Moss, Ted Applegate, Ed Gentino, Ginny Schuett, Roberta Salob and president-elect, Kris Motoyoshi.

A look at convention schedules in days gone by reads like a history of bridge. Regular

speakers included Oswald Jacoby, Easley Blackwood, Richard Frey, Howard Schenken, Sam Stayman, Freddie Sheinwold and Fred Karpin. Members were thrilled not only to hear what these experts had to say but to share conversations and take photos with them to bring back to their students. Recent speakers have included Larry Cohen, Frank Stewart, Zeke Jabbour, Jerry Helms, Fred Gitelman, Alan LeBendig, Audrey Grant, David Lindop, David and Lisa Berkowitz, Haig Tchamitch, Philip Alder, Eric Rodwell and George Jacobs.

All of those old-time experts eventually were named Honorary ABTA members. The first Honorary Member was Charles Goren. In 2001 Max Hardy joined their ranks as the first ABTA Honorary member to be named since 1982.

ABTA, with its rich history, is set to enjoy a bright future.



*Jay Baum, ACBL CEO, congratulates the group on their 50th Anniversary, as President Dennis Scott looks on.*

## The Bridge Teacher's Bookshelf *(continued from page 3)*

two sample hands from the book and decide if you would overcall after a strong 1NT is opened on your right:

**Hand 1:** ♠ K75 ♥ AQ865 ♦ K43 ♣ 76

**Hand 2:** ♠ K7532 ♥ K8654 ♦ 43 ♣ 7

On Hand 1, you have 12 HCP but the Rule of 8 takes 8 – the total number of cards in your two longest suits – and subtracts 7. (Simplified LTC counts one loser for every missing ace, king or queen until you run out of cards in a suit. This means 2 spade losers, 1 heart loser, 2 diamond losers, and only 2 club losers before we run out of clubs for a total of 7 losers. 8 – 7 is 1, which is fewer than the 2 Mel requires the answer to be, so it doesn't matter how many HCP you have, Mel's rule fails and you should pass.

Apply the rule to Hand 2, with only 6 HCP, and you will discover that you should bid! 10 cards total in the two longest suits minus an LTC of 7 leaves 3, more than the 2 required to bid in this situation. A simpler way to state the rule might be bid with distributional hands – even weak ones – and pass with balanced hands – even fairly strong ones. But

the students love those gimmicks, so maybe this will make the impression we teachers try so hard to make. I have to say I'd never heard of this guideline before but it usually works, so I might give it a try. And there are lots more where that rule came from (the rules of 2, 9, 17, 22 and 23 for starters). There is also an exceptionally long and good section on doubles in competitive auctions and determining their exact meaning. I plan on studying this section in detail and feeding it slowly to my students, who have been asking about making penalty doubles. I expect this book will be as popular with students as Marty Bergen's first book, *Points Schmoints* was. It has something of the same flavor. Order from bridge supply houses (cover price is \$21.95 US) or contact the author to ask about quantity discounts ([mcolch@ptonline.net](mailto:mcolch@ptonline.net)).



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2990 Airways Blvd. • Memphis, TN 38116-3847  
EDITOR  
Julie T. Greenberg  
PRODUCTION  
Leona Allison  
CONTRIBUTORS  
Pat Harrington • Betty Starzec • Lynn Berg  
Julie Greenberg