



# THE BRIDGE TEACHER

## For Your Information

**ABTA Convention:** It's time to sign up for the annual ABTA (American Bridge Teacher Association) Convention this summer in Las Vegas. You won't want to miss this outstanding program and the opportunity to network with your peers. Go to the ABTA web site for more information – [www.abtahome.com](http://www.abtahome.com).



**In This Issue:** Don't forget to read on Page 2 about the New Member Newsletter, a publication for ACBL members who have joined the organization after January 1, 2008, and the updated information provided on the ACBL CAP (Cooperative Advertising Program).

**The Updated TAP:** If you are going to the Vegas NABC this summer, make plans to stay for the updated TAP course in order to find out what's new and to earn your continuing education credit. The new TAP has been receiving rave reviews. To accommodate those of you attending the ABTA convention, the TAP will be held on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday (July 19, 20, 21) mornings following the convention. You can pre-register online if you are taking the TAP for the first time. Use the Las Vegas NABC link on the ACBL home page ([www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org)) and click on Education Programs. If you are retaking, just e-mail Dana ([dana.norton@acbl.org](mailto:dana.norton@acbl.org)) to let her know you plan to attend.

**Bridge Teachers and Bridge Cruises:** This popular course will be offered in Vegas on Tuesday morning, July 22. We are currently holding this program infrequently. We hope you will try to take advantage of the opportunity to take this course if you have plans to be a Bridge Cruise Host in the future. Check out Marti Ronemus' latest adventure on the High Seas on Page 3.

### E-MAIL: THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE

As electronic communication continues to gain in popularity, it's easy to see why. Not only is it cost-effective, but it's fast and painless.

We need your help to make the ACBL's attempts to e-mail important information to our members as effective as possible.

- If you aren't on ACBL's e-mailing list, please submit your e-mail address ASAP.
- If you change your e-mail address, please remember to update us. (Note that the ACBL system will drop you from the "Find a Teacher" site if your e-mail is either missing or invalid.)
- When you receive communications that you aren't interested in, it's easy to use the "opt out" option to prohibit getting any more.

Many of our members are enjoying the new e-mail flyers announcing upcoming tournaments. Unit and District officials receive the Marketing Matters e-newsletter. Club officials are receiving the Club Managers Newsletter by e-mail. Teachers receive periodic e-mails of interest. The possibilities are limited only by the imagination.

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# UPDATE: The ACBL Bridge Series

by Julie T. Greenberg

This project is nearing an end. Four out of five of the series texts have been updated and published. *Commonly Used Conventions* is in the works and will be ready by the end of the year.

Here's where we stand on the series teacher manuals. The first three TMs are posted online and ready for free download from the ACBL web site (<http://www.acbl.org/teachers/materials.html>). These three manuals also are available for sale from Baron Barclay Bridge Supply.

- *Bidding in the 21st Century*.

- *Play of the Hand in the 21st Century* – note that an update has recently been posted. You might want to download a new copy.
- *Defense in the 21st Century*.
- *More Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century* – the text has been printed and the TM should be available online by the time we leave for the summer NABC.
- *Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century* teacher manual will be available later this year.

As needed for reprint and as time permits, the support materials for *The ACBL Bridge Series* are being updated. This includes “Play” courses, E-Z Deal cards and E-Z Guide booklets. Baron Barclay is printing the new materials as the old stock runs out and as demand requires.

We believe that it is a definite advantage for ACBL and new duplicate players to have our teaching materials, support materials, Learn to Play Bridge software and SAYC (Standard American Yellow Card) system all in sync.

## More Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century Errata

The text for *More Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century* has just been reprinted by Baron Barclay. Whenever technical books are reprinted, you can expect some errors. It takes years to produce a technical book without any faults. If you have purchased a copy of the newly printed text for *More Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century*, note that a missed return has skewed three hands on the bottom of Page 12 and the top of Page 13. Check the “Teaching Materials” section of the ACBL web site for assistance with these changes.

## Newsletter for New ACBL Members

### A Recruitment Incentive by Jean Patterson

Julie Greenberg, ACBL Director of Education, is the editor of a new publication, aptly named the “New Member Newsletter,” that is designed especially with the new member in mind. Cindy Hill and Eva Niknahad, the ACBL Publishing Dept., are in charge of production. The first issue was mailed this month.

Beginning with those who joined on January 1, 2008 and after, each new member will receive four issues of the publication, mailed quarterly.

Here's a sampling of the contents of the first issue:

- New members are invited to “get to know us better” through articles that welcome newcomers to the ACBL, explain the history of the organization and what we are about.
- Readers will learn about Intermediate-Newcomer Sectional tournaments and how to navigate the ACBL web site.
- “Read All About It” by Brent Manley, editor of the ACBL

Bridge Bulletin, offers lists of readers' favorite books beside a list of the experts' favorites.

- Another helpful section is devoted to demystifying bridge expressions by giving definitions of these words and phrases in everyday language.

We hope the newsletter will prove to be a special incentive for you to sell memberships to your students this year. Hopefully, this publication will facilitate our new members' journey to become a part of the ACBL family.



# How Much Pampering Can a Body Take?

by Marti Ronemus

Last night I returned from a 10-day cruise with 60 of our Bridge Boardroom players. If I had to spend two more days on that ship with all that pampering, I would have been rendered incapable of cleaning ever again. Another week and I'd need someone to cut my meat and dress me. I'm not sure if that much luxury is good for me. I whimpered as I made the bed this morning, and I'm thinking of burning the laundry.

This is the third cruise we've taken with our club. Rather than work for the cruise line, we are working for ourselves, and we don't have to please anyone except our players (a job in itself!). I prefer this, since we are treated differently as a large group than we would be as an employee.

We've traveled on three different ships and three different lines. So far, I personally have liked Royal Caribbean best, as not only was the ship spectacular, but the bridge facilities were the best for our needs.

We have an outstanding travel agent who puts together a great package for our players. She not only gets us amazing group rates, but she gets us a large room to play bridge in. She even accompanies our group, as she said jokingly, "It might be dangerous to let that many bridge players on their own for that long."

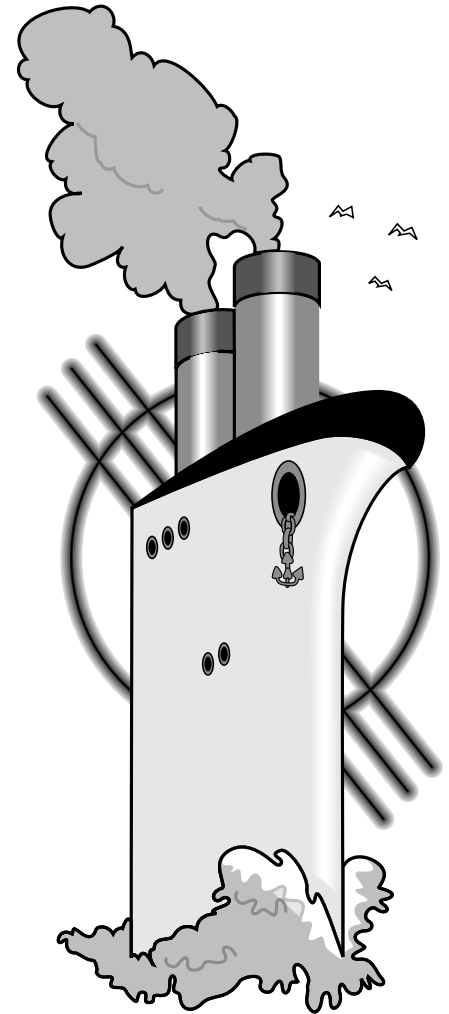
In actuality, she runs interference for us, handling any and all special requests, making special arrangements for us, and solving any and all problems.

We have two games a day, one at 9:30 to noon, and the other 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. We give masterpoints, and we bring with us all of our supplies. Rather than pack 60 bidding boxes, we ask each person to take a box the last time they play with us before we leave. Our agent arranges ahead of time to get us a large room, as the card rooms on most ships are much too small and are in use by the ship's card program.

We don't compete with the ship's program at all, and we are not allowed to advertise in the ship's daily program. That's fine, as we have plenty of people of our own.

As far as compensation, it depends on the ship and your agent. Depending on the size of the group, we've gotten our cabins free and/or a per person compensation. This has to be worked out with the travel agent, but it is MUCH more than the ships offer.

I'd be glad to answer any questions anyone might have. This is a wonderful way to experience the fun of travel, combined with bridge. Who could ask for more? [mronemus@comcast.net](mailto:mronemus@comcast.net)



**NOTE:** If you are interested in teaching bridge on the high seas, try to schedule time to take the popular "Bridge Teachers and Bridge Cruises" course during the Las Vegas NABC. It will be held on Tuesday, July 22 from 9 a.m. to noon. You can sign up at the door.



## THE BRIDGE TEACHER'S BOOKSHELF

# *Computer Software and Teaching Declarer Play*

*By Pat Harrington*

My intermediate group has finally gotten keen on lessons on play of the cards. I named my course *The Secret to Winning Bridge* and stress with them that they will win more often if they play and defend better. Believe me, they have a lot of room for improvement! We spent the fall and winter lessons of the 2007-2008 season focusing primarily on finesses, entries and developing long suits. In many courses, my students are more interested in discussing bidding than play, so I didn't ignore bidding in these new lessons. I tried to find interesting auctions where they might learn something new or review topics they have forgotten. But I wrote the suggested auction on the board and forced the contract and declarer, so everyone had the same play problem. The students really got into working on card play, and several reported back that they had used a technique taught in class to score a top board at duplicate.

Despite the success of the course, the students still need a lot more practice. Computer software programs, focusing on declarer play, are the perfect way to provide that practice.

My favorite new program is the latest version of *Bridge Master 2000*. Expert teacher Norma Sands paired with expert player Jan Janitschke to create 100 lesson deals starting at early

intermediate level and advancing from there. It is clear that an experienced teacher was involved in selecting the lesson deals. They are on target for intermediate level bridge students and deal with practical play situations rather than the spectacular plays some authors offer. Carefully constructed deals make the lesson points clear. The auction is shown and the computer defends against the user, who is always declarer. As with all *Bridge Master* programs, the computer provides perfect defense and only rewards declarer when the correct line of play is followed. After play is completed, a bridge movie explains the correct line of play. An advantage that a computer has over play in the classroom is that the user can play at his own pace, start over at any time and replay a hand until he solves the problem. A great addition to your bridge software library and a superb learning tool for your students, this product can be ordered from Baron Barclay at \$39.95, but teachers should check for quantity discounts by contacting Rocky Mountain Books in Colorado at (303) 771-6654.

A previous version of *Bridge Master*, the Audrey Grant Better Bridge edition (\$44.95), contains 117 deals on basic play from Audrey plus a bonus 60 more difficult deals. The original *Bridge Master 2000* by Fred

Gitelman comes with 180 deals split among five levels and sells for \$59.95. I found only the lowest levels good for students. Gitelman has created additional deals in sets of 30 for beginners, intermediates and advanced players. These add-ons append into all three *Bridge Master* programs. Cost for each additional set is \$14.95. (Deals labeled "expert" will not work with the Sands version.) Order any products mentioned in this paragraph from [www.baronbarclay.com](http://www.baronbarclay.com) (1-800-274-2221).

If you are not familiar with the *Bridge Master* products, you can play 30 sample deals at [www.bridgebase.com](http://www.bridgebase.com). Click on "educational software," and then click on "free demo" on the new screen to download a sample of *Bridge Master 2000*.

I urge you to order your own copy of the Sands/Janitschke version. I adapted several deals from it to use in The





Patty Tucker, President of Atlanta Junior Bridge (AJB),

has accepted a consulting position with the ACBL as the Youth Coordinator for North America for the next two years. She is an ACBL Accredited Teacher and a Diamond Life Master who has dedicated herself to working with young people in her area. Patty has been the driving force in establishing AJB and is working hard to make the first Youth NABC (Atlanta, July 3-8, 2008) a booming success. (Check the ACBL web site for details on the Youth NABC.)

Patty is very excited about the opportunities that she plans to create for young bridge players and is looking to you for ideas that might help build and increase youth participation. Patty also wants to be involved in solving any problems concerning Youth Bridge that you need solutions for. (Contact Patty by e-mail at

# Welcome, Patty!

wimsey@mindspring.com.)

One of her first 'tasks' is to 'identify, document and create a data base of every youth teacher and program in North America'. Patty will start with the Education Department files from the School Bridge Lesson Series Program, and she hopes to add to that the small pockets of people teaching young people in schools, recreation centers, clubs, churches and anywhere else!

We need you to help her pull this information together. Please answer the following questions and send your comments to Patty (wimsey@mindspring.com).

- ♥ Do you know of a teacher who is presently teaching bridge to kids?
- ♥ Does your town have a bridge program aimed towards youth teaching?
- ♥ Did your partner teach his grandkids how to play bridge over the summer?
- ♥ Does your local college or university have a bridge club?
- ♥ Do you know of anyone involved in Youth Bridge?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, please e-mail Patty Tucker at wimsey@mindspring.com or call 404-735-4779. They do not have to be ACBL members or affiliated with ACBL in any way. Patty is looking for all of the youth bridge information available. Don't expect that someone else has already sent the information in, or that 'they' already know about it....e-mail. All youth groups and programs need to be identified, so that they can be kept in the loop about opportunities for kids to play and meet more young bridge players.

Please don't be shy about telling Patty like it is. This is your opportunity to let her know what you feel needs to get accomplished. And, share what you know about that is working well. The future looks bright for Youth Bridge. Let's do it together!

**Note:** Patty will be hosting a workshop for Bridge Teachers of Junior Players during the Vegas NABC. Please join us Sunday morning (July 20) at 10 a.m.

## Bridge Teacher's Bookshelf

*continued*

Secret to Winning Bridge. Doing this takes a lot of thought. What is a great lesson on the computer is not necessarily such a good lesson when played by four students. A different opening lead than the one chosen by the computer might scuttle the contract. While you can specify the lead, I find my students lose focus on the point of the lesson when a play they wanted to make

would work better than the play I suggest.

A good declarer-play lesson deal will have a clear-cut opening lead (or work with any lead) and will punish declarer for taking an inferior line of play. Easy to do on the computer where cards can be moved from hand to hand depending on what declarer does, but difficult to do in real life. Hands that test declarer's play in the classroom should have a straightforward line of defense. This is not a criticism of the

software programs, but a warning to teachers to take care when selecting lesson deals from books or software where defense is often controlled to make the point clear.

Even if you do not wish to distribute the Sands/Janitschke Bridge Master version, do your students a favor and tell them how to order it. Computer practice enhances the lessons we teach, but nothing can ever replace the personal touch and live interaction between real people that we provide in our classrooms.

# Update: CAP (Cooperative Advertising Program) Ads

by Ruth Francis

What makes an ad eligible for reimbursement under the Cooperative Advertising Program (CAP)? It's not just the use of the ACBL logo.

An ad must focus on bridge lessons or ACBL member recruitment. In other words, "ABC Bridge Club also has beginner bridge classes" is not an eligible ad. The ad focuses on the bridge club and not the lessons. To make this ad eligible, the ad

should be written something like, "Beginner bridge classes will begin at 7:30 p.m. on May 1 at the ABC Bridge Club."

For more information check the CAP information online at the ACBL web site. Go to [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org), then to "Marketing and Advertising," or you can contact the Marketing Department at 901-332-5586, ext. 1368 or by e-mail at [marketing@acbl.org](mailto:marketing@acbl.org).

## LIGHTEN UP

Are your classes fun? Do your students have an opportunity to laugh? There are many tips for enhancing your lessons in the ACBL Teacher Manual. If you can't find your copy, use the teacher manual link at <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html>.

Here are a couple of teaching tips collected by Carol Mathews, ACBL TAP Trainer from Ridge NY, during the recent TAP at the Gatlinburg Regional.

### **To the tune of "If You're Happy And You Know It, Clap Your Hands ..."**

If you have a sequence, lead the top

If you have a sequence, lead the top

'Cause partner's sure to know it

That there's POWER just below it

If you have a sequence, lead the top.

### **Here's a good opening line when beginning a new series of bridge lessons ...**

"Coming to my bridge lessons is like visiting my remodeled kitchen.

The kitchen has the same purpose as it always did, only it's updated and modernized ... just like bridge. There are always changes, but the object of the game is always the same."

### **Try this when teaching "opening the bidding"...**

When you have two three-card minor suits, bid the one with the three circles, clubs. When you have two four-card minor suits, bid the one with the four points, diamonds.

### **If you are running a duplicate game for your students and using the Mitchell movement ...**

Tell them that the pairs go to heaven (up) and the boards go to hell (down).

### **When we talk about "Effective Classroom Strategies," a TAP participant came up with:**

"Students don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."



# *The Business of Bridge*

## **Back to Basics — or is it On to Basics?**

*By Lynn Berg*

One of the real frustrations I've had as a teacher is trying to undo errors and mistaken ideas my students already have — or even just to modernize their ideas. It often would be easier to teach true beginners — no bad habits or preconceptions to deal with! But what most of us get is people who have already played bridge, often with no lessons or with lessons so long ago that modernizing their methods is a real issue. It can be very challenging to get the students to move forward without scaring them — or offending them.

You would think that people who already know how to play would be acknowledging that they need change just by appearing at lessons. Still, you should be careful not to criticize them or any past teachers they have had. Don't forget that all teachers are misunderstood and misquoted. Your students might resent that money they've spent in the past was wasted — an inference that could be made if you actively slam a past teacher. Instead, take your cue from the new title of the ACBL's basic bidding text: *Bridge in the 21st Century*, which looks forward to new methods, not back at past errors.

Whenever possible, move from the known to the unknown. Figure out what the students already know which hasn't changed — or needs only small changes, and start there. For instance, if they already play 16-

18 NT openings, changing to 15-17 or 15-18 is a small modernization. Remind them of the three hand patterns for NT which they already know. Perhaps telling them to think of "Sweet Sixteen" would make them more comfortable with the new point range — just stay within a point of Sweet Sixteen in either direction. If they already play Stayman, adding transfers might not be too traumatic.

If they preempt at the three level, you can introduce Weak Twos much more palatably by calling them Six Card Preempts. After all, weak three bids are effective and fun to use, so why not add the frequently effective weak two bids? By beginning with a review of the already familiar three-level preempt, you will find it much easier to move on to the unknown two-level version. While you are at it, if you have flexible students, you could also refer to weak jump overcalls — preempting after the opponent has opened the bidding is something they may already know to do with seven card suits.

An old problem which resurfaces from time to time is the "Short Club." It was popular for a while in the 50's and 60's to open 1♣ with lots of hands — no particular holding in clubs was expected. Responder was required to keep the bidding open with a 1♦ bid, even with no points. These folks will be very uncomfortable opening 1♦ on a hand pattern of xxxx xxxx

xxx xx. Many will want to open 1♣ when their diamonds are Jxx and their clubs AQ. It's very hard to convince students that the need to open a three card minor is actually infrequent — less than a third of club openings are made with fewer than four, and a much smaller number of diamond openings are made with only three. Try not to refer to the past when you'd be highlighting something you want them to forget. Instead, just keep referring to shape messages and the fact that you can rarely assume that points are in the suit bid unless the person is preempting. This hand might help:

♠ 97542  
♥ KJ8  
♦ AQJ5  
♣ A

Everyone opens 1♠ with this hand, with no high card points in the suit at all!

Why change? If you have a '45 Chevy that can still get you from point A to point B, would you want to give up all the safety and convenience of a modern vehicle? Respect your students' past, but lead them into the future.

**P.S.** How do you like my new curly hair? I am enjoying the curls, which I never had before (and which may not last, from what I hear). I got a good report from the oncologist and am busy with bridge classes and bridge writing.

## New Program for Younger Students

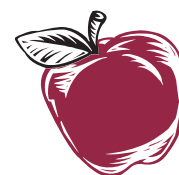
Are you teaching bridge in an elementary school? Have you found it difficult to fit in 16 hours of classes during a semester? Do your students have trouble grasping bidding principles?

If your answer to the above questions is “yes,” ACBL’s new school program may offer a solution for your problems.

Starting this fall (September 2008), you can participate in ACBL’s funded school program by teaching eight hours of MiniBridge to a minimum of 12 students in grades Pre-K to 6th (elementary schools only). A fee of \$200 will be paid to the teacher (assuming the teacher is not being otherwise compensated), and t-shirts will be given to the students completing the course. It is expected that teachers will use the early lesson plans in the teacher manual written by Kitty Cooper or other suitable MiniBridge materials. No more than five programs per teacher per semester will be authorized.

To participate in this program, you must sign up with the Education Department prior to starting your classes. You can e-mail Dana at [Dana.Norton@acbl.org](mailto:Dana.Norton@acbl.org) with the name of your school, the name of the school principal and the sponsoring teacher, the grade level and number of participants, the expected start date and completion date. Please let us know if your school program will be conducted during class time, after school, on a club day or other venue.

Shorter programs should be easier to schedule. Hopefully MiniBridge will prove to be something your students will want to continue. When they reach an age where you decide they can handle the complexities of bidding, it is expected that an opportunity to enjoy the full game will be presented to these students.



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EDITOR  
Julie T. Greenberg  
PRODUCTION  
Leona Allison  
CONTRIBUTORS  
Marti Ronemus • Pat Harrington • Lynn Berg