



# THE BRIDGE TEACHER

Summer Edition • August 2008

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## For Your Information —

Did You Know? Here are some ACBL facts from my ABTA (American Bridge Teacher Association) speech this summer that I thought you might be interested in.

- ACBL's membership has grown every month this year.
- Online play has increased 44% in the past year.
- ACBL has decided to keep its headquarters in the Memphis area.
- There are ten (soon to be eleven) teacher manuals at the ACBL web site that you can download free.
- If your e-mail address isn't current in the ACBL database, the system will drop you from the Find a Teacher site.
- New members receive four "Welcome to the ACBL" newsletters during their first year of membership (starting in January 2008).
- *The Bridge Bulletin* has been in its current large format for five years. How quickly time passes.



Julie Greenberg

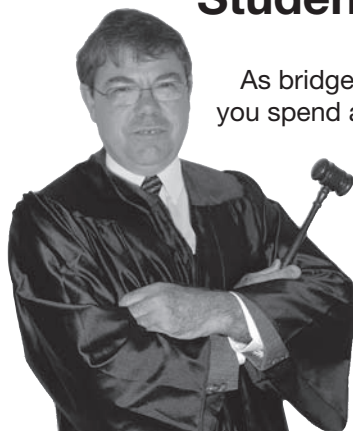
### Playing Bridge Online

If you don't currently introduce your students to bridge online, consider making that a part of your class. There are so many features of Bridge Base Online that can help them learn and enjoy the game. Read up on how easy it is and follow the steps outlined in this article: (<http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/teachers/teaching-bridge-on-bbo.pdf>).

### Don't Forget to Update

The new TAP is continuing to please the teachers who are taking the course for the first time as well as those who are retaking it for continuing education credit. The focus of the TAP is still the successful teaching techniques, but the new features are equally exciting: marketing tips from Roberta Salob, additional teaching materials from top teachers and making a lesson plan using a text from Barbara Seagram. You don't want to miss the new course.

## What Bridge Teachers Should Tell Their Students About the Laws *by Mike Flader*



As bridge teachers, you spend a lot of time teaching your students about bidding, play, and defense. Naturally, you hope that they will take up the

game and become players. Some of them will progress to sanctioned tournament play, and some of them will become passionate about it, even achieving

ACBL's highest and most coveted rank – Life Master.

Some students accomplish all of this without knowing anything about the rules of the game, or, if you will, The Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge.

This is a situation that needs to be addressed. I can't tell you how many times in my directing career I have arrived at a bridge table, where there has been a lead out of turn, only to find that the "offender" has put the improperly-led card back in his hand. Or a table where a player has made an insufficient bid and, before the director has had a chance to explain everyone's rights and obligations, has

*(continued on page 2)*

## About Laws *continued*

made a correction. And, while we are on the subject, let's not forget about "hesitations."

The purpose of this article is to help teachers talk with their students about the rules of the game in a non-threatening way. Together we can help create players who not only enjoy the game of bridge, but who are also good bridge citizens.

Here are a few things you might choose to discuss with your students:

**The Role of the Director.** New players need to know that the Director is one of the "good guys," and the director's job is to come to the table whenever there is an irregularity. The Director is the only person allowed to arbitrate the Laws. The role of the Director is to apply the Laws and provide redress for damages. Convince your students that irregularities happen all of the time. There is no need to feel a sense of embarrassment at having made a lead out of turn or a misbid, etc.

**The Role of the Non-Offender.** When an irregularity occurs, someone at the table must call the Director. When one of the players chooses instead to say what should happen following an irregularity or gives the supposed penalty for the offense committed, that player is in violation of the laws. Only the Director can tell you what correct procedure is and only the Director is empowered to apply the Laws. Most players do not mean to violate the laws; they think they are either saving the Director the trouble of coming to the table or taking an action that is more timely. They don't see themselves in the same category as the player who has led out of turn or revoked, but they become offenders when they take this type of action. Even experienced players occasionally make errors when they make their own rulings.

**What is a Minor Penalty Card?** Many players think that declarer has a penalty card when he revokes and then makes a legal correction. Law 50, which deals with revokes, very clearly states that no card from

the dummy or declarer's hand ever becomes a penalty card.

Any card from a defender's hand that is prematurely exposed does become a penalty card. But, there is a difference in penalty cards. Some are "Major" and some are "Minor."

If the card prematurely exposed is one that was accidentally exposed and below the rank of an honor, it is designated by the Director as a minor penalty card. There is almost no penalty for having a minor penalty card. It does not have to be played at a player's first legal opportunity. Nor will the partner of a player with a minor penalty card be subject to a lead penalty. The only limitation on the offender is that he may not play any other card below the rank of an honor in the suit until the minor penalty card has been played. Many players who have been playing for years do not recognize this difference, probably because of the fact that the minor penalty card was not a part of the laws prior to 1997.

**Who's Responsible for the Dummy?** I answer a lot of e-mails for the League from members who are checking to see if their local Director has properly applied the laws in a ruling he made at their table. You would be surprised to hear how many players believe that "everyone is responsible for the dummy," and who believe that if dummy revokes, there is no way that the Director can adjust the score when the defenders are damaged as a result of this.

Since about 1987, the laws have been changed to make the responsibility for properly displaying the dummy the responsibility of the dummy player. If he displays the dummy in a sloppy manner and this works to his side's advantage, the Director is supposed to award an adjusted score.

**Bidding with the Cards from a Different Deal.** What is the correct procedure when a player bids a hand with cards from another deal? Many still believe that the Director is supposed to simply give that player the right hand and play the deal out. This has not been part of the laws since before I was born! Well, maybe not that long.

**Hesitations.** This brings us to the subject of hesitations. New players are very likely to hesitate in the normal course of playing in a bridge tournament. After all, they have less knowledge and experience, so, they are more likely to have a problem than those of us who have been playing for a long time. What do we tell our students about these situations?

It's important to encourage them from the beginning to not think too long before making a decision. Teach them to make a choice and live and learn with it. When they become more experienced, we need to introduce the concept of how information is conveyed, both legitimately and illegitimately. Early in their bridge careers, they learned that a slow pass shows something different from a fast pass, and so on. At some point, they need to learn that when they hesitate or when their partner hesitates, the information conveyed by such an action may only be used by the opponents (and then only at their own risk). They are not allowed to use the information in borderline situations, and, if they do so, they may have the Director giving them an adjusted score if the opponents are damaged.

In conclusion, I want to say that I don't think it is your responsibility as bridge teachers to teach your students the rules of the game. They have enough to think about. But, at some point in their education, they should be made aware that a set of rules do exist. Encourage them to read them the Laws on their own. Loan them your copy of Duplicate Decisions. Present them with the Ruling the Game articles that you feel they will be able to understand and enjoy.

**Top Tips on Proper Procedure.** If you can, try to teach your students a few things that will serve them well as they begin to play in duplicate games. Here's what I suggest:

- Call the director to the table whenever there is an irregularity.
- Make face-down opening leads.
- Question partner when he/she doesn't follow suit.
- Pause for about 10 seconds anytime RHO makes a bid that skips a level of bidding.



# Elderhostels: A Swingin' Group!

by Marti Ronemus

I just returned from two weeks of instructing two

Elderhostel groups in bridge. I thought this would be an easy gig, but I'm here to tell you, this was no walk in the park! I'm so tired, I haven't unpacked yet, and I've been home for four days!

First, a little background on Elderhostels. Originally begun as a way to use college campuses during the summer when bills are still accumulating but income isn't, Elderhostels are learning vacations. From their initial humble beginnings with participants staying in the dorms, they are now held all over the world: Barge trips down European rivers to study history; music history at the Peabody Conservatory; art and pottery-making in Santa Fe, architecture in Savannah GA. There are 8,000 tours available in more than 90 countries. You name it, they've got it! ([www.elderhostel.org](http://www.elderhostel.org) will give you an overview.)

Most tours, but not all, run from Sunday evening through Friday morning.

While non-profit and run through local colleges and organizations, there is oversight nationally through the national organization, and colleges must toe the line to meet very exacting requirements.

The Pennsylvania State University has an active involvement with Elderhostel, running a couple dozen different programs each summer. Their bridge instructor had to suddenly drop out, and through various referrals, they found me. After a vigorous interview process (they are very selective about their instructors, as their attendees are experienced learners and travelers), I'm proud that I was selected to teach two separate weeks.

The program and agenda had already been set by the former instructor, so it was locked in. The first week was for absolute beginners and the second for

intermediates, with subjects already published and set.

I had never been to the Penn State campus before and what a treat! It is the oldest land grant university in the nation, and simply gorgeous, with many historic buildings. It turns out that one in every 124 college graduates in America was graduated from Penn State!

My workshops were held at the Nittany Lion Inn, a first-class hotel run by the University's college of hotel management. The staff was without a doubt the most helpful I've ever seen. I was given a suite that was so large I kept losing my pocketbook! Every meal was a gourmet feast, and I'm going to be doing penance on that for quite a while!!

On to the bridge: My first-week group was small, only 16 students, but not one of them had ever played bridge before.

Thank goodness for Easybridge! I used the program for every lesson. And get this: these people expected three sessions a day!! I did put my foot down and refused to start at 8:30 (that's A.M.!!), and insisted that 9 a.m. was gruesome enough. Our first session was 9 to 11:30. Break for a gourmet luncheon (oh, I forgot to mention the breakfast buffet. Lordy.) Then a second session from 1:30 to 4:30. Gourmet dinner at 6. The evening session was supervised play...Stump the Prof (that would be me) with questions.

Thanks to the Easybridge! format, they were happily playing bridge from the first afternoon. Thursday night, they even had a little tournament.

They left ready to go home and find a club to continue their bridge careers. They truly loved their first exposure to the game, and I was touched to be able to be the one to introduce them to a new avocation that will give them pleasure for the rest of their lives.

My second-week group was 52 students, a very mixed bag as far as experience goes! Yowza! Once again, Easybridge! to the rescue. Fortunately, there was an Easybridge! workshop that covered every one of the preset subjects. The workshops are designed for on-the-table study, with lots of hands to play. Again, we had a little tournament Thursday night, complete with prizes.

In addition to their bridge sessions, they also visited museums and attended a couple of evening lectures, one of which was given by a forensic engineer—absolutely fascinating!

Here are some of my observations: These folks are every teacher's dream. Many of them have multiple degrees and most have made learning part of their lives. Some had attended (get this!!) more than 25 Elderhostels, and one

(continued on page 7)



Marti and her Penn State Class.



# The Art of Self Publishing

By Pat Harrington



Have you ever thought about publishing your own bridge book? In Las Vegas, ABTA Master Teacher, ACBL star teacher and director Brian Richardson gave me a review

which retails at \$20.99. I order multiple copies whenever I need them, and I have them in about three weeks. The publisher also copyright registered the book and obtained the ISBN number.

**Q: Tell us about your role in the publication process.**

**A:** I had to create the material and present it in the format I wanted on CD. There was little room to make changes. They decided the font size and style. I wanted a larger font but this was going to increase the number of pages and thus the retail price of the book. I wanted color and text boxes but these became prohibitively expensive. If I had used graphics, the cost would also have gone up. I had some input in selecting the binding and paper quality. I had several discussions with their designer and had the final say on cover design and colors.

**Q: Is it the author's responsibility to proofread the book?**

**A:** Yes. It's extremely important to do a thorough job of proofreading before you submit your draft and even more important when you get the pre-publication proofs. Later changes to remedy mistakes can be quite expensive.

**Q: Once the book is published is it costly to rewrite a section or make changes?**

**A:** I have not explored the option of corrections or rewrites.

**Q: Do you decide how many copies to print initially? Is it cheaper per copy for a large run?**

**A:** This form of publishing is essentially a 'print on demand' system. You order the number of copies you want as the author and they arrive in about three weeks. If you purchase through Barnes & Noble or another retail outlet, there are always a number of copies in stock and the rest take about three weeks from the time of placing an order.

**Q: Do you market the book or does the company you work with do it?**

**A:** Xlibris provided about 50 full cover postcards and about 50 full cover bookmarks advertising the book. They also have various levels of marketing packages that you can pay for. As part of the basic upfront charge (about \$750), the author's summary of the book and the author's biographical details appear on the Xlibris website.

**Q: Who decides the price?**

**A:** Xlibris determined the price based on the number of pages. The cost for this book is \$20.99, through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Borders and \$17.84 through Xlibris.

copy of his book, *An Introduction to the Science of Bidding*. Brian self-published this book working with Xlibris, a company that specializes in helping potential authors publish their works. I asked him to answer some questions on how the process works.

**Q: What made you self-publish?**

**A:** I was dissatisfied with using teaching texts that did not advocate teaching transfers and weak two bids to beginners, I wrote the book, used drafts of it for almost 12 months in classes, modified it, and then looked for a publisher.

**Q: Had you presented it to bridge book publishers first?**

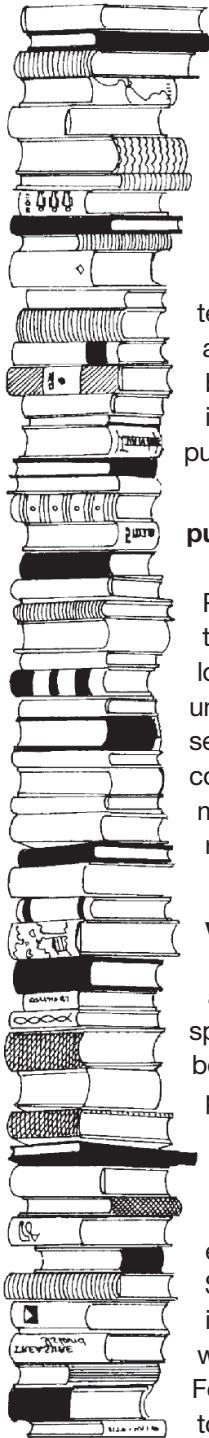
**A:** I had sent a copy of the book to Master Point Press who declined to publish it on the grounds "we are not at this moment looking to publish a beginners' book from an unknown author." Now that they know through self-publishing we have sold over a 1,000 copies, they have asked to have a look at the manuscript for the second book, when it is ready.

**Q: How did you choose the company to work with?**

**A:** After a Google search, I identified a number of self publishing companies, spoke with them, and finally settled on Xlibris, because their presentation seemed the most professional and cost-effective

**Q: What kind of financial layout is required?**

**A:** My memory is a little fuzzy about the exact cost, but the initial cost was about \$750. This got the book published and listed in Barnes & Noble, Barrons and Amazon, with an author discount on a sliding scale. For example, if I purchase 100 books, the cost to me is about \$9.50 per copy for the book,



## 2008 ABTA Book Awards

The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) annually recognizes outstanding books and software published during the preceding year. At the ABTA's recent Las Vegas Convention, the following awards were announced:

**Software of the Year** to Norma Sands and Jan Janitschke for their version of Bridge Master 2000 to practice declarer play (complete review in my April 2008 Bookshelf article);

**Novice Book of the Year** to Joan Anderson for *HANDS ON — Weak Two Bids* (complete review in my December 2007 Bookshelf article);

**Intermediate Book of the Year** to Danny Roth for *How Good is Your Bridge*, a series of card play problems designed to help intermediate players learn as they work through quizzes in the book (published by Master Point Press and available from Baron Barclay for \$18.95).

**Special Award** — This year, a special award was presented to Edward MacPherson for *The Backwash Squeeze and Other Improbable Feats* (see Amy Nellissens's article in the December 2007 Bridge Teacher).

**Note:** All reviews referred to provide prices and ordering information. Go to <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html> and click on the date of the Bridge Teacher issue you want.

**Q: Did outside sources sell a large percentage of the copies or were most sales by you personally?**

**A:** Most of the copies of the book have been sold by me.

**Q: Do you give quantity discounts for teachers who want it as a text?**

**A:** For teachers I will sell the book at \$16.50 + postage for orders of 10 or more. (To order, contact the author at [brian\\_delia@verizon.net](mailto:brian_delia@verizon.net))

**Q: It sounds like a LOT of work — authoring, formatting, editing, and proofreading. Did you find the experience rewarding both financially and personally?**

**A:** Yes the process has been rewarding in all senses of the word. Royalties are \$2.10 for sales through Amazon, Borders, etc. and \$4.46 for sales through Xlibris.

**Q: Have you self-published other books?**

**A:** No, but if my second book is not picked up by a publisher, I will again self-publish, probably through another company.

Brian has certainly succeeded in his goal of teaching transfers from the beginning. After a chapter on the mechanics of the game and one on opening bids, chapter 3 attacks responses to a 1NT opening bid beginning with Stayman and transfers. The first two responses the reader learns about are artificial bids! While Brian suggests using *An Introduction to the Science of Bidding* as a first book for absolute beginners, my own preference would be to use it for a change of pace in a review course for those who already play — perhaps in a course to help social players modernize their bidding. Chapters 2 through 9 each provide at least 4 complete lesson deals for a total of 43 deals in the book.

If you are in the market for a change of pace, go to Brian's website ([http://mysite.verizon.net/brian\\_delia/id5.html](http://mysite.verizon.net/brian_delia/id5.html)) for more information on his book.



## Continuing Education

All of us know there is very little available in the way of continuing education for a bridge teacher.

You can retake the TAP and update your skills, you can monitor another teacher to see what they are doing that you might use in your classes and, you can ask another teacher to monitor you and assess your performance. Occasionally, there will be a new course offered at the NABCs that you might be interested in. Every summer there is the ABTA Convention.

There are a lot of books on the market that can offer new ideas for a “tired” set of lessons. I tried going to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) — books, and typed in “teaching adults” and “teaching techniques.” Some very intriguing titles came up. Why not give it a try and see if you can find a book of interest to you.

## The Business of Bridge

# Enjoy the Process – Downplay Results

By Lynn Berg



Many of us who teach bridge are also serious bridge competitors. We view our success in competition as a validation of our ability as teachers. That old saw about “those who can’t, teach” was never true, really. Our students feel more secure in accepting instruction from a successful practitioner of the game.

Think about it: “Put on your game face” doesn’t mean have a good time, but rather to concentrate, look fierce, show that you mean business. I was reminded of this as I watched the Olympics. Rarely did we see someone who seemed to be having fun while competing, though smiles did appear on some (not all) of the winners.

We are making a mistake if we try to inculcate such ideas in our students. It is the rare advanced student who is truly serious about becoming an expert at the game, let alone the newcomers who don’t even know what bridge is all about when they first take lessons.

Being too serious, making success too much the object of the exercise, will drive off some of the participants, discourage others. We have to remember that bridge is a game, that games are recreation for most people, and we have to learn how to have fun sometimes as much as we need to learn the responses to opening bids.

As usual, it’s your role as leader to show the way.

Act like a host or hostess. Begin by greeting everyone and knowing names. Use name tags. Thank pupils for coming as they leave. Comment if you can on something positive, just as you would in a social setting. Show by

### Bidding Box Boon

Do you use bidding boxes in your classroom?

Try using just one at a table and have the students pass it around. Chris Shaw of Carlinville, IL says this works well with his school classes. Passing the box around reaffirms the direction of the bidding and helps with underbidding. Give it a try!

your dress that you think the occasion and participants are important to you.

Create ice-breakers. Play bridge bingo. Have a fact-finding session in which each person has to introduce another and say a few interesting details about the person. Have a joke of the week competition. Take a break and have some kind of snacks, even if it’s only packaged cookies or pretzels and iced water. The time you use this way isn’t wasted.

When the students play the lesson hands, don’t make too much of their results. You might say generally, “If you didn’t see how to make four, lay the hand out for yourself – it’s one reason you have the easy deal cards.” And move on.

If possible, add free playing time after the lesson. While the lesson hands we use in class are wonderful illustrations of the points being made, they’re not the sloppy and incredibly un-systemic hands we encounter as we play. If you are teaching in a bridge club, put out hands played earlier along with their travelers. It’s quite instructive to see that other players have also had trouble with the bidding or play of a hand. Also, while it’s bad form to brag about your successes, it’s reassuring for your students to find out that there’s more than one approach to many hands, and that you have sometimes failed! They also need to hear that we usually learn more from our disasters than from our successes.

My students hear over and over, till they can recite it with me like a mantra: “And what happens if you have a disaster? In about five minutes [here I pause dramatically and they all chime in], you get to play another hand!” I’ll tell them about the session where my favorite partner and I had a 42% game. “And you know what we did after the last hand? We made a date for the next Tuesday.”

Bridge is a game. It’s meant to be fun. You have to give your students permission to experiment and to fail. They have to learn from your example that no one is perfect. If they’re old enough, remind them about the great slugger Ted Williams – in his best season, he didn’t get to base under his own steam more than 56% of the time, yet his batting average of 405 is considered amazing even today. Let us all enjoy the process of the game, even when the score isn’t so terrific.



# Reflections on the ABTA Summer Convention

by Julie T. Greenberg

The room is buzzing with energy — excitement at seeing old friends, being introduced to new associates, enthusiasm about classes and students, ideas bouncing around — active brains are absorbing all manner of information.

That's what the American Bridge Teacher Association's annual convention is all about. Every year I marvel at how many new and interesting topics are presented, and how much fun it is to see what bridge teachers are doing.

Although I wasn't available to listen to everyone's talk, I always come away with a few tidbits from the presentations I did enjoy. Here are a few thoughts I'd like to share:

- Sandy Stevens made an interesting presentation on how people learn. She stressed using games to encourage social interaction and had us try one. If you go to: [www.teachervision.com](http://www.teachervision.com), you will find games that you can adapt to bridge.

- Several speakers cautioned us not to refer to Party Bridge as Social Bridge and to remember that ALL Bridge is Social.

- Carol Griffin uses "Drop-In" Bridge at her club. She encourages her students to drop in to practice using "real" hands. Carol is there to help with bidding.

- Leslie Shafer suggested recruiting organizations for lessons. They can help the members of the group become more cohesive by getting to know each other.

- The Association for Home Schooling is a good group to offer a presentation on the value of bridge lessons.

- Leslie also suggested starting a class with a general information question ("What's your favorite movie?") to enhance the social aspect of the class by helping the students get to know more about each other.

- Remember to use the ACBL "Play" courses. They give students the chance to apply what they have learned.

- Julian Laderman, the best natural comedian I've ever run into, told us that the best way to learn something is to teach it. That's how he learned Chemistry — when he was teaching it at the college level.

- Marilyn Kalbfleisch gave us an overview of a land cruise she runs each year at a resort in her area. She made it sound like a great opportunity and something any teacher could do. Check with the ACBL Club Membership department on the requirements to run a land cruise.

- Jerry Helms told teachers to watch out for Trumpaholics — students who are obsessed with taking out the trumps before even looking at the other suits. They need to be reminded that the goal is not how many tricks you can take in a row.

- Jerry offered a good teaching technique when you are using pre-dupes. Ask North to take out his hand and to work with East. Ask South to take out his hand and work with West. After consulting with each other, each pair bids the hands (assuming no interference).



Pat Harrington with New Master Teachers — Ronald Kral from Reston VA, Kathie MacNab from Halifax NS, Charlie Williams from Gaithersburg MD Sarah Sentman from Scott Depot WV

- Mel Colchimarino equates Bridge to "Name that Tune." First you make a boast (I can make 4♥) and then you have to do it!

- George Jacobs had the ultimate message. Teach your students that winning is obviously more fun, but playing the game and enjoying it is what it's all about.

- Eddie Kantar gave us a wonderful program, full of his fascinating hands. Don't forget to visit Eddie's web ([www.kantarbridge.com](http://www.kantarbridge.com)). It's an amazing resource for humor, quizzes, hands and tips — all of which Eddie generously makes available for you to use in your classes.

## Elderhostels – continued

woman was on her 39th. They never get tired!! They are in class on time, and stay till the bitter end. They don't want to miss a minute!

They come from all over to attend. I had a couple from San Jose, CA, and all over the country. I expected them to be local, but very few were.

They are very discriminating and have high expectations. They expect the best, since Elderhostels have delivered over and over.

Did I say they never get tired?! Never.

I'm very please that at the end of the two weeks, the program manager contracted with me for next year. I'm going to change things just a little, with no classes for raw beginners. I'm going to do one week on bidding and one week on play of the hand and defense.

Now, if you find this interesting and think maybe you'd like to give it a try, here would be my recommendation. Hit the Internet and see if there are any Elderhostels at colleges or universities in your area. If so, contact the program manager, present your credentials and try to arrange an interview. Be your very best, and get ready to have some fun yourself.

Did I mention that they NEVER get tired?

If I can help in any way, e-mail me at [mronemus@comcast.net](mailto:mronemus@comcast.net) and I'll give it a shot.

## Activities of Interest to Teachers at the BOSTON FALL NABC

(More information on each course can be found at the ACBL web site. Click on "Boston NABC" on the home page and then go to Education Programs.)

### Club Directors Course (November 18–20)

Teachers who are interested in running bridge programs on cruise ships need this course.

### The "New" TAP Teacher Accreditation Program (TAP) (November 20 & 21)

The new TAP is getting rave reviews. Earn your continuing education credit by retaking the course. The focus is still on successful teaching techniques, but new course material has been added along with marketing tips and information on how to make your own lesson plans from texts that don't have teacher manuals.

### ACBL's Thank You Party for Teachers and Club Officials (November 20)

Join the ACBL staff at a between-sessions reception to thank teachers and club officials for all they do to benefit our organization.

### Reception for Bridge Teachers of Junior Players (November 23)

If you are currently teaching bridge in a school or interested in trying to start a school lesson program, you will enjoy this program.

### Free Bridge Lessons

Jerry Helms — Saturday, Nov. 22, 9:45 a.m.–noon

Marti Ronemus — Sunday, Nov. 23, 9:45 a.m.–noon

Teachers will benefit from watching these two pros give a free bridge lesson to a room full of eager students. Jerry and Marti have entirely different styles that work.

### Get Online with Bridge Base

Here's your chance to find out more about Bridge Base Online and the many ways this free site can benefit you and your teaching program.

Do you plan to attend the Houston Spring NABC in 2009? Let us know which courses you would like to attend and we'll see if we can get them scheduled ([education@acbl.org](mailto:education@acbl.org)).



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