



THE BRIDGE TEACHER

Winter Edition • December 2008

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For Your Information —

Duplicate Decisions — If you are running a duplicate game, I encourage you to invest in a new copy of the updated DD. It's better than ever and will be a valuable tool in making good rulings. (www.baronbarclay.com)

Lessons Anytime — Carol Mathews discovered one of the best teaching ideas I've heard in years when she visited Jeanni Blume's club in Florida. Read about it on Page 2.

Youth & Junior Division — Under the capable guidance of Patty Tucker, ACBL's new Youth Coordinator, a revamping of ACBL's Junior Program is underway. There is now a Youth Division for students under age 20 and a Junior Division for students under the age of 26. Watch the Bridge Bulletin for details.

Teachers and School Lesson Programs — A new web site for Bridge Teachers of Youth (www.btfy.com) has been organized by Patty Tucker to help teachers easily access the information they need to run successful school bridge programs. Be sure to check it out. A workshop will be held at the Houston NABC for this group. We hope you will join us.

Land Cruises — If you attended last summer's ABTA Convention, you probably heard Marilyn Kalbfleisch talk about her experiences in running Land Cruises. Be sure to read a synopsis of her talk in this issue. Land Cruises can be money-makers for the teacher and are certainly fun for the student. Why not put one on your wish list for 2009?

Bridge in the Menagerie — I recently polled each of the bridge players in the office to find out what their favorite bridge book was. Mollo's Bridge in the Menagerie series won hands down. The enthusiasm of each player when he or she talked about these books was contagious. Read Keith Well's book review and, if you have already enjoyed them, consider buying one as a gift for a friend.



Julie Greenberg

Yeah, Pat! Bridge Baron will be selling Introduction to Bridge – Play & Learn with Pat Harrington, the first in a two part series to learn bridge from scratch following her own beginning bridge lesson plans (see Amy Nellissen's review of the plans in the September 2006 Bridge Teacher on the ACBL web site.) Ordering information will soon be available at www.greatgameproducts.com or you can e-mail Pat at mrsbridge@embarqmail.com for more information.

Don't forget to set your goals for

2009

Let's make it a great year!



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LESSONS ANYTIME!

“When there is a session, there’s a lesson.”

by Carol Matthews

While I was in Florida playing duplicate at the Posnack JCC in Davie ... a wonderful game run by Jeanni Blume, Jeanni showed me a table of beginners, self-teaching during the open game. I was amazed.

Jeanni said, “For 20 years I would schedule lessons, block out the time, plan the sessions, rent the room and hope they would come. Finally I decided to take students on a first come basis anytime I had a duplicate game scheduled. As soon as I had three or four students, I would start a class at whatever level they requested and supervise them DURING THE DUPLICATE GAMES, charging them the same fee as I charged for the duplicate game.

“These students would usually continue (according to their schedules) and as soon as I had three or four more students, I would start another table. Sometimes we have beginners and intermediates at different tables all playing lesson hands with handouts, talking and helping each other. This approach had added benefits, since when I had three or more tables finished with lessons, they had their own NEWPLICATE game.



Eventually they feed into the regular game on the same night they used to come to take lessons!”

When I came back to New York, we (my partner Susan Scholer & I) decided to try it at our club. How wonderful it is! We ask students to notify us before they come (up to 1/2 hour before). We use mini-lessons, which we take from the Bidding or Play of the Hand in the 21st Century books. There are many sources of material, but this is what we used. We print a page with the summary of a chapter and the deals at the end of that chapter, and we give a copy to each student. We also provide a duplicate board with each of the deals read to play. The students are asked to read the page and play the first deal. After they complete the play, they read how they should have bid and played the hand. Sometimes, they decide to replay it, according to the directions. They can always ask the Director to clarify a point, or to explain something they don’t get. Students can work at their own pace, without any pressure from anyone, and leave when they want.

The key is: When someone wants to learn bridge, all we need is to get four students together, and we can start them on a minimum-supervised, self-teaching program, that allows them to come and go as they please. The fee is reasonable ... just the cost of playing in a regular game.

Having the students actually come to the club to play is a big plus, because it takes away the fear of coming to a real duplicate game. They become familiar with the surroundings, and will be more comfortable when it is time to come to an actual duplicate game.

We promote “lessons anytime” on our website – You can learn to play bridge ... just call us and we’ll help arrange a group and a time.

I really want to thank Jeanni for that day at her club. I appreciate her generosity in passing on this great idea. I hope all of you will check out her special events at www.bridgejeanni.com.

Carol Matthews is a TAP Trainer, popular bridge teacher, and co-owner of the Smithtown Bridge Studio in Smithtown, New York

BRIDGE CAN BE ...

Keith Wells

ACBL LIFE MASTER

ACBL TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

FUN-DAMENTAL

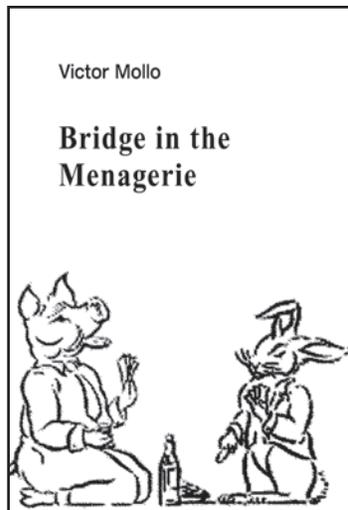
Back in the Seventies and Eighties, when I was growing up, the U. S. Government had a program called “Reading is Fundamental” to encourage kids to read. I fell for their advertising, hook, line and sinker. To me, reading has always been a source of pleasure and contentment, except when the reading was from textbooks that were written like VCR instructions.

When I started playing duplicate in the early Nineties as an homage to my grandmother, I looked to books to help improve my play and bidding as so many others do. What I found was a sea of books, many that were technically well written, but reminded me excessively of those dreaded textbooks. The biographies and histories were better, because for me the player’s insight was intrinsic to bridge, as I first began learning the game at age four at my grandmother’s knee while at family reunions. The interplay between my aunts and uncles, the laughter, the joy they had in each other’s company; bridge was a celebration of life, not a mechanical exercise in probabilities.

It was in the “Bridge in the Menagerie” series by Victor Mollo that I found the written equivalent of that joie de vivre I remembered from the family games of my youth. Mollo was one of the top rubber bridge players in Britain from the Thirties until his death in

1987, as well as an accomplished instructor, writer and advocate of bridge. But the “Menagerie” series, as well as the colorful characters that make up the players at the fictitious Griffins Club, are recognized as his crowning achievement.

What is so special about this series, you ask? I say the reality one finds in the books. While some technical masterpieces are displayed, it is not the bridge hands themselves or the play that are the stars, but the players. Mollo’s characters leap off the page, their personas imminently recognizable to anyone who has played for any length of time at a bridge club. From the heroes, the Hideous Hog (the sometimes insufferable, but undoubtedly brilliant, top player of the Griffins) and the Rueful Rabbit (the permanently befuddled, but amazingly lucky, novice), to the villains, Papa the Greek (a superior technician, but always second best to the Hog, his age-old enemy) and the Secretary Bird (a rules merchant to his core); all are brought to life in the battles around the green baize battlefield of the bridge table.



The “Menagerie” series is not about the mechanics of the play, but rather the psychology, the personalities. While anyone could make Four Hearts on a hand, only the Hog can find the way to make Five Diamonds on the four-two fit, luckily because Papa is his left hand opponent. Some deceptive play and

control of the pace of play, and a Small Slam missing three Aces comes home. At other times, luck leads to the play of an ice cold contract going astray, such as when the Rabbit defeated a slam by leaving the Ace of Spades in the duplicate board, thereby not taking the opening lead and inspiring Papa to play the contract in a different way.

Always humorous, deftly written with tongue in cheek, the Griffins are also extremely human. One hopes to have the chance to become a Junior Kibitzer so as to watch the epic battles between the Hog and Papa. While the bidding is English ACOL (which might confuse new American players) and the emphasis is on rubber bridge play (Mollo’s preferred court of competition), a trip to the “Menagerie” is a trip well worth taking.

Treat Your Students

by Marilyn Kalbfleisch

Many of us are ordinary bridge teachers, without the facilities, market or time to run large classes of bridge students. Not everyone is prepared to or anxious to spend time on a ship as a cruise bridge director/teacher. How can we combine our bridge teaching and director skills for fun and possible profit? One solution is to organize a 'Land Cruise.' A bridge land cruise is the same as a bridge sea cruise, except that it is run 'on land', usually at a resort, rather than 'at sea' on a ship.

Steps to Organizing a Land Cruise

WHERE?

The first consideration is to find a location. The resort should be within a reasonable distance of your potential market. Be sure that the facilities are suitable for running bridge games and/or giving bridge instruction. Consider space, lighting, accommodation, meals, tables, recreational facilities, PA equipment, reputation of the resort etc. Land Cruises can be organized at other venues, such as a hotel or golf course, and this type of land cruise will generally be a one-day workshop featuring bridge activities only.

WHEN?

This decision is usually made in conjunction with the resort. Many are happy to have organized groups in the slower time of the year or in the slower part of a week. Select a time that will not conflict with long weekends, national holidays or popular nearby bridge tournaments.

FORMAT

A Land Cruise can be organized in many different ways. It can focus on duplicate bridge games or lessons or social bridge or a combination of all of these. It can be a one-day workshop or run a full week. Two and three day packages tend to be the most popular. You can offer games, lessons, mini-lessons and social activities. Note that sanctioned duplicate games must be run by a club or higher-rated director.

Note that an official ACBL Land Cruise must include sanctioned duplicate bridge. ACBL sanctions club masterpoint games as part of a Land Cruise. A fee of \$30 is charged for Land Cruises up to 3 days, \$50 for 4 to 7 days and \$100 for 8 to 14 days. Obtain a sanction form from the ACBL Club and Member Services Dept. at least one month before the scheduled game(s) membership@acbl.org or by calling 901-332-5586 ext. 1220. The completed application must be accompanied by a letter of permission from the location on land, authorizing a current ACBL member to conduct games as Club Manager.

SCHEDULE

WELCOME RECEPTION — Offer when you can. It's an excellent way for everyone to meet informally, but it adds to the expense of the package.

DOWN TIME — Don't over-schedule. When planning your activities, be sure to give every one a little time to relax. They will appreciate it.

MEALS — When meals are part of the package, the resort must be involved in scheduling the games and/or instruction around the established meal times.

REMUNERATION

Don't sell yourself short. Expect a reasonable return, especially when starting out. You can negotiate for a set amount, regardless of the number attending, or a set amount per attendee, based on how the workload and the expenses are divided — and generally with a bonus per person over a certain number. Be sure you add in all of your expenses before you set a price for your services.

EXPENSES

Determining 'who pays for what' must be established before the Land Cruise arrangements are set. Some resorts pay for everything; sometimes the presenter is responsible for many of the expenses which might include: the welcome reception; mailings (labels, stamps, envelopes); a brochure/flyer; sanction fee; advertising (Unit newsletter, newspapers); prizes; handouts; table, microphone or other rentals, if required; travel costs and accommodation/meals for the presenter and guest (?); nametags, cards, convention cards, score pads, tape, pens etc.

INCENTIVES & PRIZES

Here are some typical incentives used by the resorts and Land Cruise presenters to encourage people to attend and/or return:

DISCOUNTS — Recommend a new player and receive a 10% discount per person; Tournament winners receive 50% off package, 2nd 35% and 3rd 15%; Receive a 10%

ts to a Land Cruise

discount if you are returning.

PRIZES — Provide section top awards, trophies for overall winners or certificates. Find some way of determining winners if you offer social bridge and award prizes.

DRAWINGS — Have a prize table for random draws. These could include bridge books, T-shirts, resort and bridge-related souvenirs. (My resort has the best draw of all: Two complete packages for the next bridge getaway, a value of \$800 including taxes and service charges. Check with your resort's marketing department to see what's available.)

MARKETING PLAN

A successful Land Cruise depends in large part on successful marketing. Once you have run a successful Land Cruise, word of mouth will be a valuable tool. Until then ...

- ◆ Mail brochures to your target market. Obtain labels from ACBL for a nominal fee- label@acbl.org or by calling 901-332-5586 ext.1258. Request labels for a certain unit or units and specify a particular masterpoint range: Unit 246, 0-20 masterpoints.
- ◆ Mail flyers and brochures to local clubs
- ◆ Distribute flyers and brochures at tournaments
- ◆ Advertise in local papers and your unit newsletter, if there is one
- ◆ Advertise in the resort's brochures and web site
- ◆ E-mail prospective attendees using stationery mail
- ◆ Mail information to groups connected with your target group; for example, if senior citizens are one of your target groups, research seniors' community groups and send them your information.

Other Considerations When the Land Cruise Begins

REGISTRATION FORMS

Capture up-to-date information for all attending. It isn't always possible to get this from the resort's front desk. Email addresses are important.

NAME TAGS

Get the reusable kind with plastic covers from an office supply house. These will help your players get to know each other. Collect them at the end and use them for the prize drawing. Save them and re-used when someone returns.



PRINTED MATERIALS

- ◆ Handouts are appreciated for all instructional sessions.
- ◆ At registration, give each participant a printed schedule of activities with times and location noted.

ASSISTANTS

Good help is absolutely necessary in running a successful Land Cruise. I rely on three "regulars" who among other things greet and register guests, hand out name tags, set up equipment, sign up players for games, fill in as partners, helps with bidding boxes etc.

PARTNERSHIPS

Use your helpers or standby players to ensure that everyone has a partner.

LESSON MATERIAL

Emphasize play and defense topics. DO NOT include absolute beginners.

EVALUATION SHEET

You can't get enough feedback. Ask those attending to complete an evaluation sheet prior to leaving on every aspect of the Land Cruise.

Writing About Bridge

By Lynn Berg



For years, I've been writing about bridge, for students, for teachers, and lately in *The Bridge Bulletin* monthly magazine. I have found writing to be useful — both as a teaching aid and as publicity for my classes. In addition to the excellent basic materials available to us, I often find a need for some material on a specific topic, usually for a single-session workshop, although I've also developed my own five session introduction to 2/1. Here are some of the policies I've developed over years of writing.

Have a specific audience. The articles I've done on 2/1 for the *Bulletin*, for instance, were written for the player who's just emerging from the beginner's stage into a serious study of the game. This person still lacks experience and self-confidence, so I've tried to keep the concepts uncomplicated, few in number, and clearly grounded in the Standard American they already know (I hope!). Moving from the known to the unknown is a fundamental of teaching. With the exception of the so-called Rule of Twenty, I've avoided very aggressive bidding on marginal pointcount, because newer players lack the skills to make the most of a hand. Too much challenge becomes daunting and ultimately discouraging.

Limit the objective of your writing. No matter the level of the audience, your writing will be more effective if it has a single purpose and sticks to it. There's an old essay-writing maxim: "Say what you are going to write about, write it, and then say that you have written it." Not such a bad idea — announce your topic, develop it, and then sum it up. While your audience will be sympathetic (I often get the comment, "Oh, I could never write anything!"), they will absorb and remember your material much better if its development is clear and easy to follow.

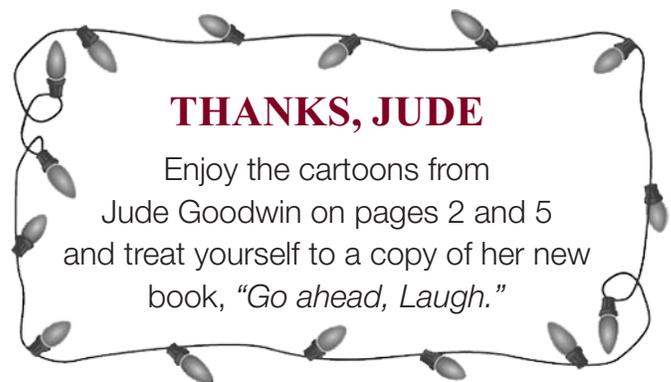
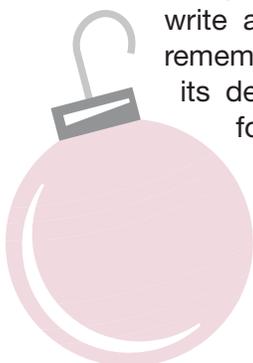
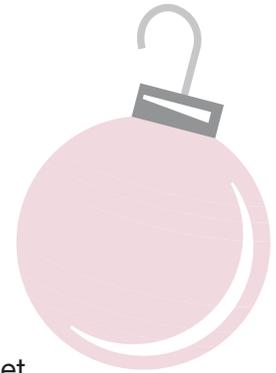
Let the writing get "cold." Try not to wait till the last minute to write. Give yourself time to let the draft sit for a day or two. You'll be able to self-edit with a much clearer eye. Always assume that

you will need to revise. Get someone else to read what you've written at this stage. If you have a very specific target audience or purpose, that should be clear to your reader, and a few questions from you will find out if you've been on target. If you give your material to a student to try out, treat that person as a collaborator, so it's clear you're not just looking for praise or self-justification. Don't defend yourself, either, but try to listen to comments constructively.

Remember that examples and illustrations make your job a lot easier. We are fortunate enough in my home bridge club to have hand records at all pair games, so I have easy access to hands all the time. I try to save hands which are good examples for common teaching situations. Again, advance work will save you untold trouble when it's time to write. Make sure the hand only illustrates your point; if it can be handled another way to produce another result, will that alternative confuse your readers? "Test drive" hands on several players to be sure your choices are good.

Have your own voice. Your writing should reflect your personality as a teacher or player or both. Be careful, too, if you've been reading other writers, that you don't unconsciously echo too closely someone else's work. Always give credit where it is due, never hesitating to quote someone else with proper attribution.

Bridge writing is like any other form of authorship. It can be rewarding if it is approached carefully and with thorough preparation.



THANKS, JUDE

Enjoy the cartoons from Jude Goodwin on pages 2 and 5 and treat yourself to a copy of her new book, *"Go ahead, Laugh."*



Another Winner from Barbara Seagram

By Pat Harrington

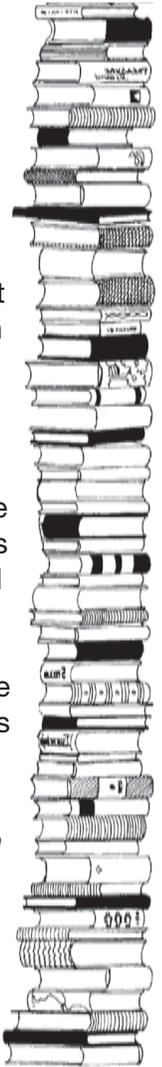
Barbara Seagram's *Beginning Bridge*, just published by Masterpoint Press, offers teachers another alternative for a beginner text.

After the usual discussion of mechanics and opening bids, Chapter 3 discusses how to respond to a suit opening bid with 6 to 9 points. The next chapter covers responses with all other ranges, including a 3NT response to show 16 to 18 points and a jump shift, which shows 19+ points. Opener's rebid comes next and then Chapters 6 and 7 cover responding to 1NT openings, including transfers and Stayman. Chapters 8 through 11 deal with overcalls, takeout doubles, strong opening bids (2NT, 3NT and 2♣), and preemptive bidding including weak twos. Each lesson also includes discussion of a play concept (promotion, taking high cards from the short hand first, finesses, the hold up, entries, and drawing trump) plus a taste of defense (opening leads and the attitude signal). By the end of the 11-lesson course, a beginning bridge player has been given all the information needed to play with friends, online, or in a novice game at the club.

Most bridge teachers are familiar with the format of the many "25 Series" books that Barbara co-

authored. Although *Beginning Bridge* is not part of that series, the style and format is similar. Let's Try It! — exercises (with answers), which provide practice using what was just discussed, are interspersed throughout each chapter. Lesson deals and analyses are included at the end of each chapter — 4 deals each after the first chapter. Color-coded playing cards are available so your students can deal the lesson hands themselves. Teachers familiar with the bridge cartoons of the late Harry Lampert will appreciate the inclusion of cartoons provided by his daughter, Karen.

The price is \$19.95 US and \$21.95 Canadian. US teachers can save on shipping by ordering from Baron Barclay but check at the Masterpoint Press website for quantity discounts. If you order 30+ books or items, you are likely to save more than enough to cover the extra shipping cost to the US.



www.masteringbridge.com

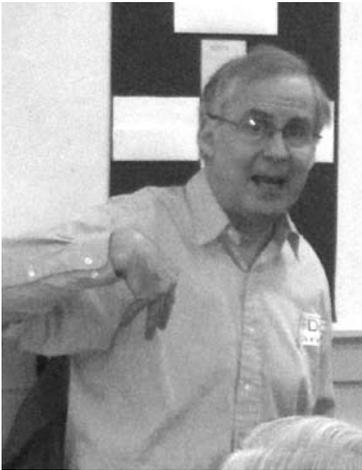
Do yourself a favor and check out this new web site soon. Until now, only members of the American Bridge Teachers' Association have had the chance to pose teaching questions to fellow teachers online using ABTA's e-mail discussion group. Now, masteringbridge.com offers that opportunity to all bridge teachers and players in their online forums (no e-mails, you read posts at the website) — one for teachers and another for players.

The teacher resources section has lots to offer including excerpts from a variety of Masterpoint Press publications, bridge articles and a featured teacher column. Take a look!

This site also lists super monthly specials. At the time this article was written, the special was a free copy of Barbara Seagram's *Beginning Bridge* with the purchase of one deck of companion playing cards for the regular price of \$8 US and free shipping to boot! Even if you are too late for this one, you'll find new specials regularly in the teachers' section at www.masteringbridge.com. Those who do not have Internet access can order by calling Masterpoint Press at 416-781-0351.



Special Day for Club Directors *by Marti Ronemus*



Doug Grove

Continuing education is of interest to all professionals, and directors are no different. It's a little harder for us, tho', since usually advanced classes are only available at NABCs or some large Regionals, and (let's be honest!) it's often hard to fit in those classes between games!!

The latest changes in the Laws of Duplicate Bridge prompted Unit 168 (Central PA, Northern MD

and part of WV) to hold an all-day seminar on a recent Sunday. It was tough finding a Sunday that didn't have a local tournament held at the same time, but we managed! Hosted by and held at Bridge Boardroom, the event drew together 38 directors to update their skills.

Uber-Director Doug Grove put together and presented all the sessions. The participants were delighted that Doug was able to take complicated material and make it not only accessible, but interesting enough to hold

our attention all day. He interwove Laws, examples, and philosophies for successful clubs into a fabric that we could all take home and use immediately.

Since the material was intense, we wanted everyone to stay awake. Thus the policy was small, frequent meals. Participants were welcomed by Bagel-and Fresh-Fruit. Lunch was a

light salad with home-baked bread, and mid-afternoon we had an English-style High Tea. It seemed to work, and no one either fell asleep or went hungry!

The cost for the day was \$30 for each participant, which included all meals and materials. Unit 168 picked up the expense for all Unit participants.

If you feel your Unit would like to duplicate this event, we would be glad to share publicity material and all menus and recipes with you. Just contact us at mronemus@comcast.net.



Edward Scanlon

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