



THE BRIDGE TEACHER

Summer Edition • August 2009

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For Your Information

Youth NABC — Be sure to read our feature story about the first Youth NABC. Youth bridge is booming thanks to our teachers who are supporting the efforts led by Patty Tucker, the ACBL Youth Coordinator. It's a great time to start teaching kids. Take a look.



Cruisin' in San Diego — There will be a “Bridge Teachers and Bridge Cruises” — course at the Fall NABC but the question is “when?” The tournament starts on Thanksgiving Day, the TAP (for those wanting to get their continuing education credit) will be Saturday, Sunday and Monday mornings (Nov. 28, 29, 30). If you are interested in the cruise course, let me know if you prefer a Tuesday morning slot (9 a.m. to noon) or two short between-sessions slots (Saturday, Nov. 29 and Sunday, Nov. 30 from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.). With the two short sessions, you would have to attend both. (Respond to Julie.Greenberg@acbl.org).

Fun with Bob L. — The ACBL is planning on having a good time using Bob L. as the foil. With any luck, some publicity for bridge, teachers, clubs and the ACBL will follow. Bob L. is travelling from the summer NABCs to the fall NABCs and will visit areas that request him. Check out his blog (use the link on the ACBL home page) and join the fun. You can sign up for a Bob L. visit by contacting Wendy Sullivan at wendy.sullivan@acbl.org.

Remember to Update Your E-mail Address — Whenever we send an e-mail message to our teachers, a large number bounce back. Please include us when you change your contact information. Send changes to Education@acbl.org

It's Official — The ACBL has a New Home



This is a very exciting time for the ACBL. A magnificent, new building in Horn Lake, MS has been selected as the official new home of the ACBL Headquarters.

This move isn't quite as dramatic as it may sound. We will only be about 15 minutes South of our current location. But we will gain room to expand our Hall of Fame, create a wonderful new library and house our archives, plus we can design the spacious office area to suit our specific needs.

The move will take place no later than spring of 2010, and we are hopeful it can happen sooner.

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Tips from the ABTA Convention

The 52nd ABTA Convention was held prior to the Summer NABC. As always, it was great to see all of the teachers and learn from their experiences. I was going between the Board of Directors meetings and the convention, so I missed some of the action, but here are a few things of note that I wanted to pass along.

Kathie Macnab of Halifax, NB has always been a source of great ideas. Her talk was on 52 ways to make your classes/games grow. Kathie's number one tip was to get your students names in lights! Everyone (new players, old players, expert players) love to see their name in lights — ANYWHERE, ANY TIME. She has Anniversary Week winners, Weekly winners, Rookie/Master winners, Rankings, game results, student achievements, a 70% game board, plaques and certificates — All on the walls of her club.

Kathie also plugged the idea of three-hour workshops — different workshops for different levels. Her students like the "Going for the Gold" workshop, designed for new players going to a regional for the first time.

I was particularly taken with her Bridge and Chocolate idea — a special treat around Valentine's Day. It's Ladies Only — pot luck — everyone brings a chocolate dessert. This past year there were three tables filled with all sorts of chocolate treats —

CORRECTION

April's article by Pat Harrington discussed teaching *Two Over One*. A correction was made to the online copy of this issue that you should make in your copy of *The Bridge Teacher*. In Dee Berry's "Two Over One in a Nutshell," she uses 2♥ as a negative response to an opening 2♣ bid, not 2♦.

including fancy chocolate drinks. The game consists of four rounds of 6 boards, an afternoon team game, and everyone had a blast.

Kathie's anniversary week celebrations were amazing. We are trying to get her to do a full writeup on this theme for the next newsletter. For now take a look at the recap of this annual event at the MCG Bridge Club at her web site — www.bridgestudio.org. There's much to enjoy.

Marian and Marie (Howarth and Dahl) — These ladies had the neatest business cards for advertising their joint lessons. It was simple with a nice teacher graphic in color — a reminder that your business card can help sell your lessons, so put some effort into what you create.

Here are a couple of quick sayings that I enjoyed:

E.B. Dyer: "Your hearing will improve if you use bidding boxes."

Dee Berry: "A hand well bid is half played."

Ted Applegate: He gives lessons to the SAAIB group — Semi-Advanced Almost Intermediate Beginners.

ACBL Teacher Home Page — I plan to add to the ACBL web site two more pieces of information that I really enjoyed. Rick Beye, ACBL Tournament Director, spoke on *52 Ways to Make Your Bridge Life Easier* — all about making rulings. This is a great guide. Lynn Berg's talk, *52 Weeks of Ideas and Tips*, was terrific. I don't want anyone to miss these. Check at <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html> for a new section called: Tips from the ABTA 2009 Convention. These two items plus Kathie Macnab's *52 Strategies* will be available soon.

There's so much to be learned and so much fun to be had at the annual convention. Why don't you plan now to attend next summer in New Orleans. The post-Katrina city is a thrill in itself.



THE BRIDGE TEACHER'S BOOKSHELF

A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play and Duplicate Bridge at Home

By Pat Harrington

The American Bridge Teachers' Association (ABTA) recently announced the winner of its book of the year award. Julian Laderman and Masterpoint Press received the award for *A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play*. This is Laderman's second victory. His first book, *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes*, won the ABTA award in 2006.

I was hooked as soon as I read the introduction. The author's goal is to identify "inspirational features" or triggers to the best line of play of a hand. This is what I find to be lacking in my students, many of whom are unable to identify the simplest lines of play. I eagerly started reading hoping to find the key to what I have been missing in teaching declarer play. Unfortunately, while the book is labeled newcomer/intermediate, my students' problems are on an even lower level of ability. However, the deals are definitely interesting and can be used with more advanced students. Even in a less advanced class, you might want to add one more difficult deal to challenge the students.

The hand analyses are entertaining as well as informative, similar to reading a good bridge column. A downside is that there are only 38 deals in the book, but this number is doubled with a unique exercise the author suggests. At the end of a deal,

he suggests making up a slightly different hand where certain parameters apply and provides one example for each hand for 76 total deals. The author's vocation as a mathematics professor is evident in his clear analyses as well as the final two chapters on calculating probabilities.

Available from Masterpoint Press or Baron Barclay at \$19.95 US or \$21.95 CDN, *A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play* is worth recommending to students who are serious about improving their play, and it would be a worthwhile addition to your own bookshelf.

Has duplicate bridge ruined shuffle and play sessions for you? We have been having fun with *Duplicate Bridge at Home*, a compilation of 120 deals played on Fred Gitelman's *Bridge Base Online* with commentary by Mark Horton.

Each player takes his own deck of cards to make up hands from individual printouts in the book. Once the deal is played, you find your result on the scoreslip to matchpoint it. Horton's analysis discussing the bidding and play can be read immediately after the deal is played and scored. The beauty is, as with any duplicate bridge game, that you can still score well even when you don't get your share of high cards.

There are a variety of uses for this book. We've played with

non-duplicate playing friends who found it an interesting evening. If you work with private groups of duplicate players, you can use the book with one table in a simulated duplicate setting and discuss each hand after it is played. Students can work on their own to improve their game by getting a foursome together to practice with guidance rather than not knowing what the best outcome might be. The only downside is that players can make errors in setting up their hands, which are not discovered until the hand is in play. One player should be in charge of having each player check his cards against the proper deal number before playing each hand.

Available from Masterpoint Press or Baron Barclay at \$19.95 US or \$21.95 CDN. Enjoy several sessions of challenging entertainment for less than the cost of one movie for four people.

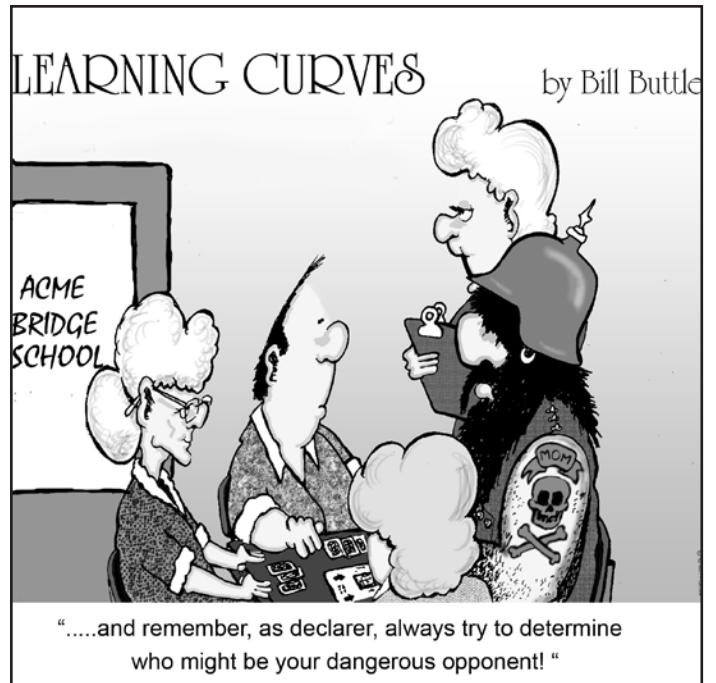


Why Not You?

Eleanor McIntyre of Myrtle Beach, SC was paid by a meeting planner to stand by a whole afternoon at one of the newest, lovely hotels in her town. She was available to teach and/or play bridge with conference participants during their “free time” for R&R that day.

Eleanor had three people who chose bridge. She played with them and gave them tips, which they said they wanted, about their rubber bridge bidding and play — and she took information along with her to promote ACBL, too.

Eleanor was impressed with this very novel idea. It's a great way to offer our bridge teaching services to conference groups through meeting planners in large cities or resorts like Myrtle Beach. In this case, the meeting planner called Eleanor, but you can contact meeting planners in your area through the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Not everyone wants to go to the outlet malls or the local gardens or historic places or even play a round of golf.



CONTINUATION OF ARTICLE FROM THE BACK COVER

The Wonderful World of Elderhostels

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a single table works. We have a Duplimat, so they never even shuffle.

I was interested to find out why none of the attendees were regular club players. There were two main reasons ... fear of the unknown and lack of awareness of clubs. One of my personal goals for the two weeks was to see if I could get them into clubs and lessons once they returned to their homes. I met this goal in two ways: First, we held a mini-tournament exactly the way a club game would be run, and secondly, we explored ACBL.org together.

Our mini-tournament was held their last night. It was a 12-board game, with score slips, entry slips, a director and ACBL Laws of Duplicate Bridge in effect. They came in, got an entry, had a brief explanation of how pick-up slips worked (I HATE travelers ... but that's a story for another day!), and then they played “to the clock.” At the end of the game, we scored it up, printed out the recap which we hung on the wall, and announced the Masterpoint winners.

We explained that they had now experienced the entire club routine ... everything except paying for their entry. I told them there would be no surprises,

except for how nice their new friends would be.

I also explained about Limited Games as opposed to Open. They aren't really ready for Prime Time, but will do well in any club with a nice Newcomer program.

Friday morning, we explored bridge resources, starting with ACBL.org. My goal was to show them how to find a club near them and how to find local teachers. I had my computer set up for them and away we went. We looked up clubs, found games that would be appropriate and identified teachers who can help them continue to grow.

Then I showed them how to use the site to find the answer to bridge questions. We found articles on limit raises and transfers to show them exactly how to settle those arguments by using ACBL as the Final Word.

We also went to OKbridge and Bridge Base so they could see how to play online. We used the rest of our resource time to explore other stuff on the web.

These two approaches worked great! Most of them seemed eager to find a club and teacher near them and many of you should be hearing from them soon. I know you'll take good care of them!

The one mistake I made was that I didn't have any instant ACBL membership forms with me. I'll correct this next year, you can bet!

If you have any questions about the wonderful world of Elderhostels, I'll be glad to answer them. mronemus@comcast.net

Getting Students to Play

By Lynn Berg



Sometimes we lose sight of the real purpose of bridge lessons: to get students to play bridge. In a selfish way, the purpose of bridge lessons is to improve our income or to give us the pleasure of teaching, but neither of those motives addresses the interests of the students. In our weak economy, it becomes more important than ever to offer attractive value so that consumers will use some of that lessened discretionary income on bridge lessons.

Ironically, the best way to get students to want more lessons is to get them out of the safety of the classroom and into the competitive world of duplicate bridge. If they only play in class and in the undemanding environment of the social bridge contacts they have made, they won't perceive the need for more bridge education. You will lose students for whom there is no longer any need for your services.

How can you get students into duplicate, so they want to compete and improve? Here are a few suggestions:

1. *Start your own duplicate game. You can even have a pupil game which offers miniscule masterpoints without ever obtaining a sanction. Create an appealing atmosphere for your game and introduce duplicate trappings — bidding boxes, convention cards, pickup slips — to prepare your students for what they will find in the newcomer games in your area.
2. *If no limited games are offered in your area, approach the local club about adding one. If you aren't a director, find one who is willing to provide the atmosphere which will encourage and welcome newcomers. Many ideas for offering welcome packets and providing various "New Player Services" can be found at the ACBL web site. Use the link for the "Handbook for Bridge Teachers" at <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html> to access Tips for Getting Your Students Playing. You can get details on creating a pleasant atmosphere for new players at club games at the ACBL web site. Check out: <http://www.acbl.org/clubs/club-managers.php>

3. *If there is a "user friendly" club nearby, get in touch with the club manager or the director of the limited session. Would they be willing to add a Bridge Plus+ game or have a special promotion for these newbies? (Go to www.acbl.org/teachers/materials.html for a link to the Bridge Plus+ and Lesson Games Handbook.)

There's no question — free or reduced cost play is an extra attraction for new players. Such a program would be a great advertising opportunity for the club and for you. Design some appropriate advertising and take advantage of ACBL's Cooperative Ad program to defray the cost. (For details, go to: <http://www.acbl.org/marketing/index.html>)

4. *If there is an upcoming tournament, will they have a limited session or more? Will 0-5 point players play free? How will this be promoted? Will the ten-point IN Program be offered? (For a link to the IN Chairman Handbook, go to: <http://www.acbl.org/units/units.html>) Can you help? Contact your unit's tournament chairman to get the answers.
5. *You should accompany your students on their first foray into duplicate, whether or not you are the director of the game. If there are hand records, offer to stay after the session to discuss a hand or two that's just been played. As you address the problems and challenges of the hands, you have the opportunity to make your upcoming lessons very appealing, too.

One of the premises of advertising is to create (or perceive) a problem and then solve it. The problem for students is that they need experience to absorb and use their bridge lessons. The solution is to play, especially in a competitive environment. Your job is to find or create that environment, get them into it, and jump in right along with them!

The Wonderful World of Elderhostels

by Marti Ronemus

This summer, once again, I found myself trapped in incredibly gorgeous Happy Valley, PA ... aka The Pennsylvania State University in State College ... running two weeks' worth of Elderhostels. I was forced to stay in a suite (so big I kept losing my purse) in a 5-star hotel, eating gourmet food every meal (except for when I had Sterling Silver Room Service). It's a terrible job, folks, but someone has to do it!!

Seriously, I was honored to be asked back, and looked forward to it all year. I was delighted that both of my weeks were sell-outs, and was gratified that almost 60% of the attendees were returns. The only problem with those returning students tho' is that I had to make sure I had all new material! And all new jokes.

Almost to a person, all the attendees were social and party bridge players, with very few duplicate or club players. Few had used bidding boxes, and while most had seen duplicate

boards, again few had used them regularly. I cannot imagine how to teach without bidding boxes ("Bid your hand, push the bidding cards in the middle, and we'll review."), so we used them and the folks caught on quickly. And loved them! Ditto the duplicate boards. "How can we look at the hand again if you throw the cards in the middle?" As you might think, that was harder for them to catch on to. They were determined to chuck those cards into the middle. Grrr.

Since I own a club, my view of bridge is a little different from many, in that my main reason for teaching people to play bridge is to get them into my club. I don't want them playing on the kitchen table at home ... I want them choosing from our 14 games a week, darn it!! As a result, my students never see a deck of cards that isn't already in a board and can't visualize how

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MEMPHIS, TN
Permit No. 854

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