



THE BRIDGE TEACHER

For Your Information

To: All Bridge Teachers

As the long, hot summer comes to an end, I can easily say it's been a pretty spectacular year so far. The ACBL moved to its new headquarters building, the new state-of-the-art bridge museum was introduced at our dedication ceremony and all of us gathered for the annual ABTA Convention and Summer NABC in the better-than-ever city of New Orleans. There is a great tournament in Orlando to look forward to this fall as well as the official opening of the Bridge Hall of Fame coming later this year. Bridge has enriched all of our lives.



Youth NABC – The third annual Youth NABC was held during the NOLA NABC. It was a great success. More than 100 players age 19 and under enjoyed bridge, making new friends and visiting with old friends, hearing author Louis Sacher speak, visiting with astronaut Greg Johnson, watching a presentation by the New Orleans Zoomobile and a performance by the Funny Bones Improv Comedy Group. Plan now to bring your students to the next Youth NABC in Toronto, July 28-30, 2011. It will be fantastic!

ABTA Master Teachers – Congratulations to two of my favorite teachers who passed their tests in New Orleans to become ABTA Master Teachers – Patty Tucker of Dunwoody GA and Glenna Shannahan of Fitchburg WI. Becoming a Master Teacher is the ultimate honor in the teaching world. Anyone who is interested can apply to the ABTA for a review prior to the Toronto Convention next summer. Go to the ABTA web site, www.abtahome.com, for more information.

Fresh Ideas to Motivate and Entertain Your Students – When we were updating the Successful School Programs booklet this year, I received a wealth of exciting ideas from Earlye Lee Miller. She uses them with her school classes, but I'm sure that many of you can find a way to use Earlye's ideas to enhance your classes. Take a look on Pages 4 and 5.

The Teacher Pages at ACBL's Web Site

In preparing a workshop for the ABTA, I got reacquainted with everything currently in the teacher section of the ACBL's web site. There is a wealth of material for you to use to enhance your classes, so do yourself a favor and take a look.

At the top of <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html>, the teacher home page, you have access to the current issue of The Bridge Teacher newsletter as well as issues going back to March 2001. I picked a couple of issues at random and found ideas and tips that are still very current. For example, the April 2007 issue had an article by Lynn Berg discussing different ways to format your lessons as well as a list of "zingers" you can use to perk up your classes. Try reviewing some of the newsletters and see what you can find.

If you missed last summer's ABTA Convention or need a reminder of some of the presentations, three of them are posted online. Kathy Macnab had some great ideas for those of you who also run a club, Lynn Berg had tons of business tips and Rick Beye's talk on rulings makes a great handout for your students.

Have you read the Teachers' Handbook lately? Leslie Shafer told me she reads it twice a year to review the many tips on all aspects of a teacher's life. It is an amazing collection of ideas from our top teachers that have been collected and stored during the past twenty years. Why reinvent the wheel? Check this great resource and find something to help you with recruitment, retention, motivation, etc.

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look What's Inside ...

The Business of Bridge 2

Are the Inmates Running the Asylum 3

Tips for Making Bridge Come Alive and Be Fun 4-5

ABTA Teacher of the Year Award 6

Radio Ads for Clubs and Teachers 6

ACBL Hall of Fame 7

ABTA's Applebasket Award 8

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Be our Guest—Serving as a Guest Speaker

By Lynn Berg



A great way to acquaint a wider potential clientele with your skills is to serve as a guest speaker at a tournament, at a bridge club, or for a group. The group could be as organized as a chapter of

a Federated Women's Club or as casual as two tables of a bridge who meet in one another's homes weekly or monthly. If you want to teach advanced topics, offer to be a guest speaker at a novice or limited game. Since the pay for such talks is usually small—or non-existent!—your objective is publicity for yourself and your classes.

Be prepared with publicity materials. If you don't have an attractive business card, now is the time to develop one. It may not be as elaborate as Leslie Schafer's with its line drawing picture of Leslie, but it's easy to add a picture these days. Depending on your style, the card might be quite colorful. I like to add my slogan, "Bridge is for Fun," when I know the audience is made up of casual players or non-players I hope to attract.

You should have some sort of hand-out ready for any talk you give. Everyone likes to go home with a freebie. On the back of the hand-out, add a paragraph of biography. Again, you should to some degree tailor this to the audience. I wouldn't mention being a Gold Life Master to a garden club group. Instead, I'd emphasize my love of travel and how often I've taught on cruise ships.

Here's the paragraph which was prepared recently for a ship-board publication:

Lynn Berg loves bridge. She's been playing since her teens and teaching bridge for over 30 years, always with the hope of instilling in new players her enjoyment of the game. A retired college English professor, Lynn enjoys reading, gardening and crafts. She likes to travel, especially cruising. "Bridge has taken me all over the world," Lynn says. She also enjoys returning home to a dog and a cat. She is a widow with four children and six grandchildren.

For a more duplicate-oriented group, I might say:

Gold Life Master Lynn Berg is a popular bridge teacher, lecturer and columnist. She has been playing bridge since her teens, teaching and managing bridge clubs since the seventies. Lynn is also a club and tournament director. A

widow, Lynn lives in Florida, though her family is scattered about the U.S. She enjoys travel and often lectures and teaches aboard ship.

Prepare several versions of your biography. Choosing the right one will also help you determine what you should be offering to a particular group.

Is it safe to assume that everyone knows a little about bridge? If not, you have to be very careful to develop a lecture which will be interesting in its own right. A history of cards and card games, culminating in the early 20th century birth of the modern game would be effective. You can find much of the information in the excellent ACBL Encyclopedia of Bridge. How about a talk on the international popularity of the game. You could end such a talk with a brief description of how the game is played. In this case, rather than the typical hand-out, you could have a "Learn more about it" list of web sites and books, starting with ACBL.org and going on to list some sites where bridge is played and kibitzing allowed — BBO.com is one of the most popular free sites.

If your group has a little knowledge of the game, you must still develop a simple topic which will hold the interest of even the casual players and not intimidate. Of general interest are subjects like planning the play of the hand, opening leads, and defensive bids like preempts. Involving the group in the lecture captures their interest. If your group will be sitting at card tables, planning the lecture is much easier: cards on the table to illustrate your point works so well.

If you can't use cards on the table, try a whiteboard with everyone sitting facing forward. Worst case, you may have to struggle with an easel and an unruly pad of paper. You need to know as you plan and prepare what the physical setup will be. How many in the audience? How far will you be from them? Is there a mike system? If you want to do cards on the table, do you need to bring the cards? Bring your own markers. Have extra handouts available. If you are associated with a bridge club, have copies of its schedule, too.

Plan that the last 5 to 10 minutes of your allotted time will be for questions or examples. If you believe, as I do, that bridge is for fun, make sure you communicate that to the group.

Note from the Editor:

There are many mini-lessons available for free download at the ACBL web site. Perhaps these would help you feel confident enough to start offering your services as a speaker. Go to: <http://www.acbl.org/teachers/index.html> Scroll down this page and you will find a link to Celebrity Speaker Lessons. Please give a credit to the authors if you use their material.

In this same section you will find a link to five of the Easybridge! Sound Bites. These are excellent. There is a page of notes, including a recipe and joke, for the Presenter, and the second page can be printed as a handout for your audience. You are allowed to replace the masthead with one of your own, but again please give EB a credit when you use the lessons. Many more Sound Bites are available from Marti Ronemus at a nominal price and there are endless uses for them. (Contact Marti at mronemus@comcast.net.)



Are the Inmates Running the Asylum?

by Marti Ronemus

This is one of those conversations you couldn't make up if you tried. I got a call this morning from a man who wanted to know if Easybridge! could help him

slow the diminishing tablecount at his club. Some further questioning revealed that he had been giving lessons, but once the people started playing in the games, they left. Why? "Because the other players are nasty."

"Well," asked I... "where are the directors? Aren't they doing their jobs?"

"Our directors are excellent," he said somewhat defensively. "They know every single rule."

Huh? "Do you have Zero Tolerance? How do your directors handle infractions?"

"Those people won't change. They are on the board of directors, they ARE the directors, and they run the club."

"Let me see if I've got this straight. You have games filled with nasty people, run by directors who think they are doing their job by giving rulings, games that are so unpleasant that no new people will return, and you actually think a different kind of lesson can grow your games?"

The conversation went downhill from there.

If this were the first time I'd heard this kind of story, it wouldn't be so bad, but it sickens me how often I hear this. Here's the typical scenario. You have long-established clubs, usually member-owned. The board fusses and complains how the games are growing smaller and smaller. They are not the least supportive of new players – or even worse – don't realize how truly unpleasant their people are. They want the club to grow, but in actuality, the only growth they will really support is if a few dozen Life Masters moved into town. They can't understand why they are dying.

They expect the poor teacher to introduce players to bridge, and then drop them into the open game to build tablecount (and provide fresh meat for the Nasties). Then when the newbies don't stay, they blame the teacher.

Here is the truth: Management, and by that I mean directors and boards, are 100% responsible for the tone and growth of the club. There is absolutely not the tiniest excuse for rudeness and unkindness to exist in a club. "Oh, Prunella isn't really nasty, that's just her being Prunella. She's really a lovely woman, takes in stray cats and goes to church. And besides, she's on the board." If I had a nickel...

A company takes its culture from its CEO. A classroom takes its behavior standards from the teacher. A game takes its mood from the director. A wonderful tournament director, Charlie MacCracken, told me once that there was simply no excuse for a bad ruling. He said that we carry the law book with us, and there's always another director

around to ask for help. He said that a director's real job is ensuring the pleasantness of the experience.

I get so many of these calls that I have a standard response for these people. I tell them not to bother running classes. Each person that they introduce to our game who is subsequently treated badly will tell dozens of friends how miserable Duplicate Bridge is. They will spread the word far and wide, and that will scare off many potential players.

I tell them that if your club ever gets serious about Zero Tolerance, you have a fighting chance. Your club should have a thoroughly-explained and understood Zero Tolerance Policy. Your directors should tell a player the first time they offend that "If this happens again, you will be barred from this club for one month. If it happens again, you'll be barred for life. Tonight, you are receiving a procedural penalty of a full board."

(If you don't give the procedural penalty on the spot, you are like a parent who says, "If you do that again, I will punish you." The kid already knows he wasn't supposed to do it, and you just gave him permission to misbehave again!)

AND the directors should know they will be supported by the board, because those players will fuss until they finally believe that Zero Tolerance means Zero Tolerance!!

Teachers, if you are laboring in the vineyard of a club that only gives lip service to Zero Tolerance, my heart goes out to you. As hard as you work, you deserve much, much better.

What are your choices in this environment?

- 1) Refuse to run classes unless the players can go into their OWN game, not be put into the nest of copperheads. Explain to the board that tablecount is tablecount, whether it's in the open game or a limited game.
- 2) Try to get the board to understand that the future of the club isn't the Nasties; they are the past of the club. The future is new players.
- 3) Consider starting your own game for your new players. Maybe you can rent a time-slot from the Nasties; maybe you can find a nice place of your own.
- 4) And don't settle. Don't put in all those hours of hard work, don't put your emotions and heart out only to have your players treated badly. You all deserve better!!

And if your club isn't growing? If half of your players don't have less than 100 MPs? Maybe it's time to look at management for the answer!!

Comments? Questions? Need encouragement?
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TIPS FOR MAKING BRIDGE COME ALIVE AND BE FUN

for 4th and 5th Graders

by Earlye Lee Miller, Norfolk VA

My classes are fun for me and my students. I have developed a lot of ideas that I use to motivate them. Here are some for you to try in your classroom.

BRIDGE AEROBICS

I start each class with what I call Bridge Aerobics – the class answers in unison with enthusiasm to various questions like – Major Suits? Number of cards in the deck? Highest suit? Lowest suit? HCPs, for Ace, King, etc.

Include questions such as how many words is “a lot”? (a common error in students’ writing), How do you spell bridge?, penalty?, How many miles is it across the US?, Which president played bridge (Eisenhower)?, Whose grandmother played bridge (Obama),” etc.

BRIDGE IS A GAME OF MISTAKES

I use this idea I got from Audrey. I explain that bridge is a game of mistakes, and that I have put three pennies in my right pocket. I move one to the other pocket for each mistake I make. (I called a boy a girl one time.) I remind the students that I will not call on them unless they raise their hands because I want them to look at me and not worry about being called on.

STUDY TIME

We use the Bidding text provided by the ACBL. I use highlighters for students to mark the important parts of the lesson in the book. I ask the students to give me ten minutes three times a week to study the highlighted parts. The next week they use a different colored highlighter.



INTRODUCING THE BIDDING

To introduce opening the bidding I say the following, with the class answering in unison:

How many points do you need to start the bidding?
12

Say, 5543.

I didn't hear you. What did you say? 5543

Louder please.

That's too loud, softer please. 5543

Would you like to know why you said 5543?

Well, you said you need 12 HCP to start the bidding.
Now we have to know what to bid.

If you have 5 spades, you bid one spade.

If you have 5 hearts, and you don't have 5 spades, you bid one heart.

If you don't have 5 spades or 5 hearts, but you do have 4 diamonds, you bid one diamond?

If you don't have 5 spades, 5 hearts, or 4 diamonds, what do you bid? One club.

If you get lucky and have 15 to 18 HCPs and no singleton, what do you bid? One notrump.

I use chants, rap songs etc. to help students remember.

MOVEMENT CARDS

Students like using movement cards because they get a new partner each week. I use an individual movement for 20 players. After the basics, we play two hands each week. Each table is playing the same hand at the same time like 3-2 out of the Club Series. Students are given a number and keep it throughout the 16 classes. When they enter the room, they pick up their movement card and sit where assigned after being told which round we are playing. We play one board, and then everyone moves for the next round getting a new partner. I give each table a new board with all tables playing the same board. I matchpoint the boards, and I announce the students who are ahead in the race for the trophy the next week. Each week they can earn points. I keep a running total based on boards we play and team activities such as ballgame, etc.

BIDDING SONG

I use the "Bidding Song." We discuss each stanza and any word like charades. I do a charade and explain that it is a fun game with book titles, etc. I ask for a leader and the student leads the class in the song. We all sing together, then the boys sing one stanza, the girls sing another, the classroom teacher sings one, etc.

To the tune of Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Bid, bid, bid your hand,
But alas, alas,
If you have fewer than 12 points,
I guess you'll have to pass.

Bid, bid, bid your cards,
With a balanced hand.
If you have 15 to 18,
One notrump's your stand.

Bid, bid, bid your hand,
You don't need charades,
But you'll need a five-card suit,
To start with hearts or spades.

Bid, bid, bid your cards,
Don't sit around and stew,
Open your longer minor suit
With nothing else to do.

question correctly; if the answer is wrong and a member of that team can answer the question, the team gets one point. If that team doesn't know the answer, the other team can answer and win a point.

VAN GOGH AND OTHER CARD FACES

I use an overhead projector with Van Gogh's picture to talk about his life and art. Then we play with cards of his self portrait and Sunflower painting. I do not use many ditto sheets. Students get enough of those in class. I put the ditto sheets in plastic covers and use them over and over as needed.

I have a card collection, and I take a couple of decks to each class. We talk about what is North, South, East, and West of our country. I show the class card faces with the Canadian flag, Holland, England, ancient cards, Holiday cards, etc.

I explain to them that cards come in all sizes like people. I have 5 X 7 inch cards, 1 X 2 inch cards, round, square, and rectangular cards.

CLASS MANNERS

I do not allow any high fives, etc. I require the students to sit up straight. If they need help, they raise their hands and say, "Director, please." If they don't say "please," I don't answer.

FLY SWATTER GAME

The class is divided into four teams. Each team is given a different colored fly swatter. A chart is hung with vocabulary words and terms used in bridge. I ask a question such as how many points do you need to open the bidding or how many tricks must you take if you bid three hearts or why do we play bridge (for fun)? One person from each team goes up and taps the answer with his fly swatter. First team gets 4 points, second tap gets three etc.

BALL GAME

- The class is divided into two teams with each team in a line with about eight feet in between.

- A beach ball has the sections marked with the following words: Who, What, When, How and Free.

- One student tosses (we discuss the difference between throw and toss) to a member of the other

team. If his right thumb lands on Who, or When, etc. he gets a question such as Who is the declarer? Or When is the bidding over? How many HCP do you need to open one notrump? If the right thumb lands on Free, the student doesn't have to answer a question.

- The team gets two points if the student answers the

BRIDGE BINGO EXERCISE

At each table the students draw a card for the dealer. Highest card is the dealer. If two aces, the ace of the higher suit wins. Each student puts his cards on the table dummy-style facing him. I shuffle a deck and call the cards. If the student has the card I call, he turns it over in the middle of the table. When a student gets rid of all of his cards, he calls out "BRIDGE" and wins a deck of cards to take home. Directors gave me used decks of cards, and party bridge players give me their used decks to use for this entertainment.

Students are taught that the reason we do this is not to give a deck of cards but to increase hand-eye coordination. They discard their cards slowly at first, but after a few classes, all of them can do it as fast as I can call them. Each class ends with Bridge Bingo.

CLASS CLOSURE

Class ends with closure when the students tell me what they learned that day. I remind them of other things that they learned, and then ask if they will be here next week. Of course they will because they are in school, but they like having a choice. Students rarely are absent on the day I come to teach bridge.



South Carolina Woman Wins ABTA Teacher of the Year Award

Tina Radding of Charleston SC, described by friends and students as a tireless worker for bridge, has been selected as the first recipient of the American Bridge Teachers Association Master Point Press Teacher of the Year award.

The award for the best teacher was created in cooperation with Master Point Press, the world's largest publisher of books on bridge.

Radding was nominated by friends who know her at the Bridge Centre in Charleston. One of them wrote, "Tina works tirelessly to put teams together for tournaments and coaches them while there. She even makes their dinner reservations. She has inspired a whole group of Charlestonians to be the next Charles Gorens! She is an enthusiastic teacher who encourages and supports her students. She is devoted to her students."

Wrote another, "The games at the Bridge Centre have grown by leaps and bounds under Tina's guidance. The Centre was experiencing severe financial strain and now it is booming, thanks to Tina."

Tina is very creative and livens up her classes by using lots of teaching tools... hats, banners, tiaras, captain's hats. She also uses visual aids and hand outs. One student described this very, tiny lady as "The Pied Piper of Bridge on Steroids."

Another student said, "Tina makes it a point to know



Tina Radding and some of her students.

each one of us and asks each week about a particular thing in our lives. She cries with us, laughs with us, but more importantly gets us to love bridge. Her personality keeps us on the edge of our chairs waiting for the next lesson.

One thing is certain, Tina will be a tough act to follow for the winner of the 2011 award.

Sixty-seven teachers were nominated by their students. The eight finalists, besides Tina, were: Jo Bryan of Aubrey TX, Lila Cochran of Idaho Falls ID, Dave Glandorf of Houston TX, Linda Golumbia of Southfield MI, Linda King of Hollister CA, Enid Roitman of Toronto ON, and Kathie Walsh of Hilton Head SC.

RADIO ADS FOR CLUBS AND TEACHERS



ACBL has developed radio advertisements and are making them available to club managers and/or bridge teachers. The radio ads can be personalized to include a five-second "tag" with your club or class contact information at the end of the radio ad. Currently, there are two radio ads available — one targeting the "recently retired" and another one targeting the "empty nesters." We've even partnered with a media buyer who, at no cost to you, will:

- Handle the recording of your personalized "tag;"
- Find the best radio station in your area to air your personalized radio ad;
- Negotiate the best price for placing your personalized radio ad on the air.

A portion of the money you spend to place these radio ads on a radio station will qualify for reimbursement through the ACBL Cooperative Advertising Program.

For more information go to <http://www.acbl.org/marketing/radioadrequest.php>

ACBL Museum, Library, Hall of Fame

The August Bridge Bulletin has a wonderful spread showing some of the features of the new museum and library. I'd like to talk a bit about the new manner in which the Bridge Hall of Fame is displayed.

For those of you who visited us in our old building, you saw that the Hall consisted of portraits of each of the members elected to this honor. The portraits were okay, but did little to illustrate the personalities and achievements of the members.



"Tracey Yarbro, Archivist, and Natasha Brown, Accountant, watch the HofF show."

Today's Bridge Hall of Fame is state-of-the-art, and we can use your help to make it as good as possible.

On this page you see a picture of the three

screens that make up the display. The two side screens show a continuous loop of pictures of the Hall's members. In the center screen, you can call up a specific member and review that person's biography and accomplishments. In each case, when a video is available, you can see that as well.

ACBL archivist, Tracey Yarbro, and our Marketing Director, Vicki Campbell, are working with Running Pony to create video interviews of all available members of the Hall of Fame. If we are unable to meet with the member or if that person is deceased, our intent is to create videos filled with stories about each of them as told by friends, acquaintances, relatives, partners, etc.

Do you have a story about a Hall of Fame member? We would love to hear from you. Send it to us at Education@acbl.org. The more stories we have, the better the videos will be. Please take the time to let us hear from you.

Read on to learn my story about Hall of Fame member, Barry Crane.



"A Glimpse of the Hall of Fame Display"

My Friend Barry Crane

(Julie Greenberg's story for HofF member, Barry Crane. Can you add a story or two to our collection? Please submit at Education@acbl.org)

During my years in the field working as a tournament director, Barry Crane was always fun to be around and very generous with his time. Whenever we were near L.A., Barry would invite his friends to tour the movie studio where he was working or visit him on the set. That was a great experience. I'll always remember watching Larry Hagman filming Dallas and playing the evil J.R. He finished a scene, jumped away from the camera, looked at us and said, with a big, silly grin on his face, "That was really intense, wasn't it."

Barry was always trying to win the McKenney trophy and so when he attended a tournament, he played as often as he could. Frequently he asked a tournament director to play as his partner in the morning game. I guess he thought TDs were used to getting up early.

One tournament he asked me to play the next morning. I was too stunned and panicked to do anything but say, "OK." We sat down before the game and worked out what we were playing. I told Barry I had just one requirement – no kibitzers on my side of the table. He said that was fine and off we went – with Barry moving everyone away from me.

I pulled out my first hand, sorted it and the bidding came around to me. I looked up to make my call and was faced with what felt like a hundred eyes glaring at me. I was paralyzed. What had I done? Barry knew I was in trouble. He leaned over, made eye contact with me and calmly said, "It's your bid." I pulled myself together and carried on.

It was quite an experience. And, yes, we did win in spite of me. Barry was a master at playing the cards.

ABTA's Applebasket Award

Each summer at the annual ABTA Convention, teachers submit their ideas for consideration as the Tip of the Year. The people attending the convention vote on their favorites. This year's contributions were better than ever and it was hard to make a decision. I was excited to learn that the tip I voted for, submitted by Arnie Fisher, won. Here it is:

I have been teaching bridge for about 10 years and just recently came up with an idea that has worked very well. When teaching beginners, they often get overwhelmed in the responses to opening bids, whether in suits or NT. After giving them a point breakdown of minimum, medium and maximum bids, I have my students lay out a hand on the table with all the cards face down — except for the first card of each suit. I usually use any small card and have the first card of each suit face up (easier for the students to recognize the suits distribution). I usually start out with a balanced hand and tell my students I have opened 1♥ (or 1 of any other suit) and tell them they have 6 to 9 points.

They don't know where the points are, but they know the distribution by the backs of the cards they see. I now say, "Based on my opening bid, what is your bid?" They no longer have to look at their hand and agonize over where the points are. They make their bid based on knowing how many points I have told them they have and now concentrate on their distribution. I then keep changing the distribution having them bid with each change. This concept has made it much easier for them to grasp the bidding basics. After I've worked with the minimum point count, I now incorporate the medium and maximum point ranges. I also use this for opening NT responses. This system has worked well for me and perhaps other teachers might want to give it a try.



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