

# THE BRIDGE TEACHER



## For Your Information...



### ◆ Gear up for 2011! ◆

While you are planning your New Year's Resolutions, be sure to consider all the resources ACBL has available for bridge teachers. A few of those resources are:

- **The Cooperative Advertising Program** – A fantastic program that can help defray your advertising costs for beginner and/or newcomer bridge lessons.
- **Pre-recorded radio ads** targeting the “empty nesters” and/or “recently retired” that can be personalized with your contact information;
- **Free bridge articles** that can be personalized with your contact information and presented to your local newspaper for possible publication—or, they can be used as handouts for classroom and/or workshop discussions;
- **Brochures & software available as handouts** such as ACBL bookmarks, “Learn to Play Bridge 1 & 2” CD’s, and the “Exciting World of Bridge – Welcome to Your First Duplicate Game”.
- **Youth Promotional DVD** available to anyone attempting to get the youth audience interested in learning to play bridge.
- **FedEx Office discounts** – 35% print discount on 8 1/2" x 11" black & white and color printing.
- **Office Max discounts** on certain products and printing.



Visit the ACBL website at [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org) for more information about the above resources or send an email to [marketing@acbl.org](mailto:marketing@acbl.org).

*Vicki Campbell*

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## look What's Inside ...

The Business of Bridge  
–KISS ..... 2

Learning by Doing ..... 3

Are the Inmates Running  
the Asylum?  
Part Two .....4-5

Educational Foundation  
Grants ..... 5

Seminars & Meetings  
Louisville NABC .....6-7

FYI ..... 7

Youth Bridge  
Symposium ..... 8

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### Membership Increases

*Don't forget that new membership fees are increasing.*

The cost for a new ACBL membership (first-time) will be \$28.00 (U.S.) effective January 1, 2011. Please discard any outdated instant membership applications that you may have at the end of this year (12/31/10).



# The Business of Bridge

## KISS

by Lynn Berg

Last year I was invited to a retirement complex to give a talk on bridge. I knew most of those attending weren't duplicate players, so I decided to keep it simple and very basic. So I talked about Stayman: a little of the history of the bid, including Sam Stayman's disclaimer that he had not invented the bid, some very obvious examples and some practice hands I'd hoped to be able to lay out.

Unfortunately, the audience were not at tables for four, and there was no way to do cards on the table. The whole lesson would probably have been easier to follow had they been able to see opener's hand and responder's hand—not just on an easel or blackboard but actually in front of them. Montessori was right: we learn better when all of our senses are engaged, as they are when students participate in setting up and manipulating cards on the table.

My friend Gail, a seasoned duplicate player, attended the talk. As the talk progressed, she wondered if the material was too basic until the woman on her right muttered, "I can't be bothered with all that complicated stuff!" Mind you, I didn't mention Garbage Stayman or Smolen or forcing Stayman or Stayman in competition. I didn't talk about 5-4 hands or following Stayman with the bid of a minor as a way of handling a very weak hand like ♠-K742 ♥-6 ♦-J97642 ♣-83. I dealt with

real "white bread" situations using Stayman with hands like

♠-KJ94 ♥-A732 ♦-JT7 ♣-82

Or

♠-KJ94 ♥-A73 ♦-AJT76 ♣-8

I realized that most of those present still played 16-18 no trumps and took that into account with my examples.

But nothing I said was going to convince Gail's neighbor that she should try Stayman. It was just too much for her.

I think the single most common teacher error is trying to do too much in the time allotted. Usually with the best will in the world, with the motive of giving more and more, we just do too much. Do you remember the story of the little boy who asks where his little brother came from? Very uncomfortable, his dad starts to stammer out an explanation of the process. The boy interrupts impatiently: "Dad, I just wanted to know what hospital Mom was in." We need to know what agenda the students have and we need to identify simple, clear objectives to accomplish in the teaching session. Don't tell 'em how to make a clock when they ask you for the time.

How can you avoid cramming too much information into your lesson?

Know your audience. How much background can you safely assume?

Do you have to start at the very beginning, or are you refining partly-developed skills? Is this a bright, receptive bunch? Some classes are very fearful and timid; they require a lot more hand holding and cajoling.

Plan your time so you have enough examples. It may take two or three tries before the light dawns for some. The trick is not to bore the ones who got it right away.

Look at the topic in several different books if you are not using a text for the class. You'll see that the best introductory lessons are starkly simple with well-defined goals and examples.

Be ready to deal with diversions. Even some of the "what if" questions are diversions when you are introducing a new idea. You are teaching Stayman and someone asks, "What if partner opens 1NT and the next guy bids 3D?" It's not exactly off topic, but if you stop to deal with that issue in the middle of Stayman 101, you'll lose the majority. Worse yet is the person who says, "I know this isn't what we're talking about, but..." You have to be gracious but firm that, interesting as those questions are, they're not what you're discussing today.

You can see that planning is the key. Justice Holmes once apologized to a correspondent that he was sorry to write such a long letter, that he hadn't had time to write a short one. Staying on topic and avoiding diversions, resisting the impulse to show just one more wrinkle or complication: the welfare of the class is in your hands.





## Learning by Doing *by Pat Harrington*



Experts in education tell us that the best way to learn is through experience. Our bridge students don't learn as much from listening to us as they do from actively experiencing bidding, play, and defense. As bridge teachers we must find new ways to let our students experience bridge.

Here are some examples:

Teaching defense lends itself nicely to learning through experience. When I teach the suit preference signal, I begin class by having each table play the hand shown below.

♠ Q 9 6 2  
♥ K Q J  
♦ K 4 2  
♣ K 4 2

♠ J 5	♠ 10 3
♥ 3	♥ A 10 8 4 2
♦ 10 8 7 6 5	♦ A 9 3
♣ 10 8 7 6 5	♣ Q J 3

♠ A K 8 7 4  
♥ 9 7 6 5  
♦ Q J  
♣ A 9

North deals and North-South reach 4♠ with South declaring. You can let the students bid if you wish but I just specify the contract. Suggest that West lead the singleton. Then leave the students on their own to complete the play.

Discuss the results. Sometimes 4♠ will be defeated; other times it will make. All the defenders who didn't beat 4♠ are wondering how they could have known that East had the ♦A rather than the ♣A. You offer the solution to their problem by teaching the suit preference signal. East returns the ♥10 to ask for a diamond back; the ♥2 would ask for a club instead.

This hand shows your students the need to learn suit preference signals and makes them anxious to hear what you are about to teach.

Nothing teaches better than seeing a concept in action. When I introduce the idea of balancing to a twenty-table class, I set up an experiment. I provide each table with a suited deck of cards and instruct them to lay out a minimum 1♥ opening hand for North (about 13 points) with six hearts. Then I have the students make up a hand for South showing a minimum response (about 7 points) with three hearts. North-South have a fit; the bidding will go 1♥ -- 2♥, and they will try to stop there.

In the second part of the experiment the students shuffle and deal out the remaining cards to East and West. When the East-West hands are laid on the table, lo and behold, every one of the twenty tables has an eight-card or better fit in some suit (it's mathematically impossible not to). Moreover, many East-West pairs have more points than the North-South pairs who were about to win the bid!

I then repeat the experiment giving North only five hearts. (Take back the East-West hands. You can use the same North-South hands by replacing a small heart with a different small card from the remaining cards in the deck.) This time some East-West pairs didn't have a fit, but many did.

I use this experiment to introduce a lesson on balancing when the opponents try to stop at the two level in their agreed suit. The experiment makes the concept far more memorable for the students than just hearing me say "you are very likely to have a fit when

your opponents have fit." Once the students experience confirmation that this statement is true, they can see the benefit of competing.

You could adapt the first part of the experiment for a small class by having your students try to change the hands to get rid of the East-West fit. Let them exchange cards in any suit except hearts. North-South must retain the nine-card heart fit. Repeat the experiment with North-South having an eight-card fit several times for a small group.

Because experience is so important to learning, I have increased the number of hands that I include for play at the end of each class. When I started teaching beginners, I was lucky to have time for four hands – time for each player to declare once. By the end of an eight-week course, each of these "bridge players" had declared a maximum of eight times! Now even my beginners play six or more hands per class. No, I didn't make my classes longer. I learned to talk less, and my students are learning more!

As bridge teachers, we need to break away from the traditional idea of being all-knowing teachers imparting information to the students. We need to create an environment where our students can experiment and learn under our guidance. That can be hard to do, but it is far more rewarding for both teacher and student.



# Are the Inmates Running the Asylum?

## Part Two by Marti Ronemus

What do you respond to someone like that? I just want to give her a hug.

Here's another one.

*As I was reading your article, I kept thinking of our teachers who work so hard and receive so little back from our Board and Directors. I as a director have seen some pretty nasty stuff and a lot of it comes from two long-time directors! Our club owner himself has been screamed at by both of these directors, and yet he doesn't seem to hear it. How do you deal with this? We don't have the money to start another club, so maybe we will just have to quit. The three of us are so passionate about bridge though, and we will miss it. The kitchen table is a poor replacement, but it will have to do.*

And the club owners will probably blame people growing older rather than their inability to face facts and see the damage they are doing!

It seems to me that there are three solutions to these problems. First, accept things the way they are and just live with it. I personally would find this intolerable, but when finding themselves in a hole they can't get out of, some people are content furnishing the hole as nicely as they can and living there.

The second solution is to stage a palace coup, a revolt. Get a group of like-thinking people and elect them to the board. Stamp your feet and insist on changes. Here's a letter from someone who made that work. (It was a help that she is a director and they needed her!)

*Many, many, many thanks for hitting all the nails right on the head in your August article in "The Bridge Teacher". You perfectly*

*described our club. The aged (and aging) nasties had driven our once-thriving 12 to 15 table Tuesday night club down to about 5 or 6 tables. Dissent was rampant. I had been the director many years previously, but quit. I agreed to come back with conditions. Most importantly, Absolute Zero Tolerance, period! Also a teaching and mentoring program. They agreed and to their credit, backed me up fully. Needless to say, "the rest is history". We are now regularly attracting 16 to 18 tables in Flight A and 4 to 6 tables in the novice section (100 mp or less). Had 24 tables yesterday!*

Now, THAT's what we like to hear!!

The third solution is to start a new club. People, the market has created a niche for you!! It isn't often that your competitor has insured your success with their bad behavior. Take advantage of this!!

Seriously, it takes very little to open a club. It is much easier than you think. You have a fantastic resource in the ACBL. Between the Club Department and the Marketing Department, you'll have all the guidance you need. They've got handbooks, check lists, everything! All you need to do is add water, stir and pop it in the oven. (I might add that if I did it, anyone can. I will also add that, without ACBL help, we wouldn't have lasted a week.) Start small, one game. And remember "Field of Dreams"... If you build it, they will come!

See what this gal says:

*I had the same problem several years ago. We ended up starting our own group (and club). When we first*

(continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4)

*started, as director I took several out in the hall and “explained our rules of etiquette”. We set the tone early and people quickly learned we MEANT it! We now are running 6 to 9 tables regularly while the other group struggles to get 4. The other players are beginning to come to our game now and are picking up the pleasant tone of our players and reacting in a positive way.*

I might quote another movie, “Network.” Remember when William Holden stuck his head out the window and yelled, “We’re mad as hell and we’re not going to take it anymore!”? Well, there you have it! Get mad. Change things.

Stay in touch, as if you need encouragement, I’m here. Keep the faith! [mronemus@comcast.net](mailto:mronemus@comcast.net)

### February is Junior Month



Teachers, if you are club managers, please consider running a game to benefit the Junior Fund during the month of February. If you aren’t a club manager, please support this program by asking your local clubs to run these games. Any regularly scheduled sanctioned session during the entire month of February can be a Junior Fund game. The Junior Fund helps support ACBL’s Junior Bridge Program.

## Educational Foundation Grants

The ACBL Educational Foundation is a charitable trust fund established as a nonprofit organization in 1987. This Foundation provides grants to promote the education of Bridge, separate from the day to day activities of the Education Department of ACBL, that supports the current needs of the Bridge community.

Its goal is to make Bridge a game played by people of all ages and walks of life. Contributions to the ACBL Educational Foundation are in the form of gifts from individuals, families and corporations. The Trustees of the Educational Foundation feel that grants to be made in the future are as important as grants made today. Grant Applications for all Bridge Educational projects and materials are encouraged.

The ACBL Educational Foundation encourages grant applications for bridge projects, education materials, programs, and services that help the future of bridge. Innovative “first time” projects and those involving “matching funds” are especially encouraged. The Foundation works through schools, nursing homes, hospitals, community centers, local ACBL Units and Districts, and ACBL national programs. To apply for a grant, go to <http://web2.acbl.org/hosted/edu/GrantApplication.htm> and print an Application Form and submit it to the Foundation for consideration. **NOTE: Due dates are February 15 for consideration at the Educational Foundation March meeting, June 15 for the July meeting, and October 15 for the November meeting.** Please submit applications early; grants are awarded for programs which are yet to occur, not for programs which have already taken place.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Mary Beth Lattan at [mlattan@frontiernet.net](mailto:mlattan@frontiernet.net).



# Seminars and Meetings at the Louisville Spring NABC – March 10–20

*There is more to the game at the North American Bridge Championships when members have an opportunity to take advantage of numerous educational and social activities.*



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## Club Directors Course

Comprehensive course that prepares candidates for directing club and bridge cruise games. Anyone interested in becoming a club director or a director aboard a cruise ship is invited to participate. Study materials may be purchased through Baron Barclay Bridge Supply.

Pre-register online by February 25 at (<https://web.acbl.org/Education/CDC/index.do>) or contact Joyce Stone at 662-253-3138 or [directorcourses@acbl.org](mailto:directorcourses@acbl.org).

**Fee:** \$50.

**Dates:** Tuesday - Thursday, March 8-10.

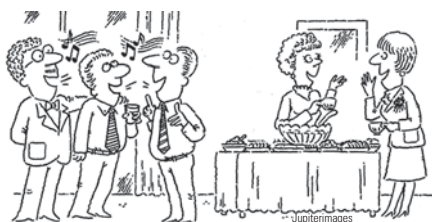
**Time:** 1–10 p.m. Tuesday with dinner break; 9 a.m.–10 p.m. Wednesday with lunch and dinner breaks; 9 a.m.–noon Thursday followed by lunch break and testing.

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## Reception for Teachers and Club Officials

**Friday, March 11,  
4:30 – 6 p.m.**

This is the ACBL's "thank you" reception for the teachers and club officials who work so hard to recruit and retain our members. All teachers, club managers, directors and owners are welcome to attend.



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## The Teacher Accreditation Program (TAP)

**Thursday, March 10,  
1:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.**

**Friday, March 11,  
9:00 a.m. – noon**

Introduction to the updated ACBL Bridge Series material and other popular teaching products. Learn modern teaching techniques from one of the ACBL's premier teachers in this 10-hour interactive learning course which includes three hours of hands-on experience. Learn the business side of teaching bridge and be introduced to 64 weeks of class material and more! There are even techniques to move your students into duplicate faster. Leave with the tools needed to develop a successful teaching career. Pre-register online at [www.acbl.org/teachers/upcomingTaps.html](http://www.acbl.org/teachers/upcomingTaps.html) or contact Dana Norton at 662-253-3161 or [dana.norton@acbl.org](mailto:dana.norton@acbl.org).

**Fee:** \$125  
(ACBL Accredited Teachers can retake for no course fee.)

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## ACBL score Q&A / Coffee With Carol

**Saturday, March 12,  
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

Come by for coffee with Ken Horwedel, ACBL Tournament Director, and Carol Robertson, Director of Club and Member

Services. They will be available to answer your questions on scoring, reporting your games and managing your club. *Free.*

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## Marketing Matters – Live!

**Saturday, March 12,  
11 a.m. – noon**

ACBL's Marketing Director, Vicki Campbell, will host a program for anyone interested in marketing their clubs, bridge lessons, tournaments, etc. Don't miss this chance to meet Vicki and explore your options.

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## Free Bridge Lessons

### Jerry Helms

**Saturday, March 12,  
10 a.m. – noon**

### Marti Ronemus

**Sunday, March 13,  
10 a.m. – noon**

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## Board of Governors Meeting

**Sunday, March 13, 10–noon**

All members of the ACBL Board of Governors are invited to attend the Spring NABC meeting. This meeting is also open to the general membership of the ACBL. Discussion will include recent actions of the Board of Directors, reports from the CEO and treasurer, and new proposals from the Board of Governors.

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## Seminar for Teaching Young People Bridge

**Sunday, March 13,  
10 a.m. – noon**

Interested in teaching bridge to young people? This seminar will help you focus on goals, format, course materials and successful practices. It will also be an opportunity to exchange ideas and to look at materials available for teachers. Bring your questions. Join Dana Norton, ACBL Youth Coordinator for an interesting continuing education opportunity. You won't want to miss it. *Free.*



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## Get Online with Bridge Base

**Monday, March 14,  
11 am – noon**

Don't miss this opportunity to meet with Fred Gitelman, the creator of the ACBL's Learn to Play Bridge program. Get a guided tour of the Bridge Base site and its outstanding teaching features.

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## Club Director Refresher Course

**Tuesday - Wednesday,  
March 15 & 16, 9 a.m. – noon**

Continuing education for bridge directors to increase their skills. Must attend both sessions.

**Fee:** \$15 covers both sessions.  
Sign up at door.

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## Celebrity Speakers

Daily presentations (Friday, March 11 through Saturday, March 19) by some of the best-known players and teachers at 9:15 a.m. and 6:45 p.m. *Free.*



### School Bridge Lesson Program

Youth bridge teachers that receive compensation from other sources are now eligible to also receive the \$350 (US) teacher stipend from ACBL. Total compensation from ACBL and other sources shall not exceed \$500 (US).

### Facebook

Check out our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Contract-Bridge-League/175353597157> — become a fan and promote your bridge lessons and/or club on ACBL's Facebook page.

### Toronto Summer NABC

If you are planning to attend the 2011 Summer NABC in Toronto please be aware that a passport is required for all US citizens traveling to Canada. You may apply for a passport at many post offices around the country. Go to [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) for more information on how to obtain a passport.

### Remember the ACBL Headquarters Moved

Just to remind everyone, the ACBL moved its Headquarters offices in April of this year. We have a new address and phones. Our new address is:

6575 Windchase Blvd.  
Horn Lake, MS 38637-1523  
Main Phone: 662-253-3100

Please use the new address when sending correspondence to the ACBL. We are still receiving mail addressed to the old address and this just delays our receiving your correspondence.

# Youth Bridge Symposium

**A North American Youth Bridge Symposium will be held in Gatlinburg TN on April 11th from 9:00 a.m. to Noon.**

Chris Shaw, Youth Bridge Education Organization and Patty Tucker, Atlanta Junior Bridge are co-hosting the event for individuals and organizations teaching youth bridge in North America.

Patty said "We recognize that individuals, teaching groups and bridge organizations all approach teaching the young players in their area with a variety of material, resources and focus. However there are many aspects of teaching youth bridge that need to be addressed and that will benefit us all. Our goal is to come together, recognize our goals and identify the tools and resources that we need to be successful and see how we can help each other. We welcome any and all interested in the promotion, support and success of building a strong and vibrant youth bridge population."

**Send your RSVP to:**

Chris Shaw  
217-854-7331  
ccshawjr@yahoo.com

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