

# Northwest Arkansas Bridge Newsletter

October 2009

Issue One



Purpose:: To promote contract bridge play in Northwest Arkansas.

Our aim is to build a sense of community among all of the bridge players – young, old, new, veterans, party bridge or competitive – Let’s work together to promote bridge play at all opportunities. If you feel that playing bridge has been good for you, then accept the challenge to give something back to the world of bridge play.

## Focus On – Pat’s Bridge Club

Local bridge player, Pat Larouche wanted a bridge environment where all of the players have fun. So she started Pat’s Bridge Club at the Rogers Adult Wellness Center. In just over a year, her group has grown to nearly 50 players of all levels and a weekly attendance of 6 tables.

The format is party bridge and table talk is allowed. Her players are trying to become better bridge players and playing on a weekly basis has been a real help for individuals. Players rotate after each round, so you get to meet and partner with other players each week.

If you are looking for a fun bridge group, give Pat Laroche a call (925-0019). Game time is on Wednesdays at 1 p.m. There is no cost to play – membership in the Adult Wellness Center is required.

## This Article from StarTribune.com

Kim Ode, Star Tribune • 612-673-7185

“Contract bridge is experiencing a resurgence, with an estimated 25 million players nationwide. The mean age of players also is trending younger -- it's now down to about 51. The boom is driven in large part by baby boomers who picked up the card game in college only to let it lapse and, now retired, have time to play again. It doesn't hurt that a 2003 study by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York found that playing bridge (or chess or a musical instrument) significantly lowers the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.

A 2005 study tracked fifth-graders at a public school in Illinois who were similar in academic ability. One group learned to play bridge as part of its math instruction, but the other did not. When they took the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the bridge players had a greater average increase in their test scores than their non-playing classmates -- double-digit increases across all five subject areas, from language to science. The researcher credited how the card game develops inferential reasoning. You might expect such news to send parents storming

into schools demanding bridge classes, and there have been clubs that come and go, said Sachs, who used to help out at one school. But students face a lot of competing interests, schools can only schedule so many activities and the trendy card game of choice often is poker. Also, unlike with older generations, it's doubtful that these students'

parents have ever gotten near the game. Still, Sachs said, "if we've lost one generation, by God, we can't lose this generation. Once they play, they discover the intoxicatingly addictive aspect of the game. It's like quicksand."

### At the Clubs

The Razorback DBC hosted the nationwide Instant Match Point event on September 9th. This very popular event was played simultaneously at local clubs all across the US. First place winners earn a Gold master point and the awards for other places are half Red and half Black. Because the scoring is made as soon as each table plays a hand, players can assess their standing throughout the game session.

Topping the leader board at the Razorback DBC were: Marina Scott & John Jennings (N/S) and Sandra & Robert Gromatka (E/W)

Sectional Tournaments at the Clubs (STaC) for District 15 is November 2 through November 8<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to check with your club manager to see if your club is participating. Higher Master Point awards are given to those players who place District-Wide. So if you need Silver Master Points, these events are a great way to earn some.



### Special Club Games

Bella Vista DBC - October 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>,  
November 19<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>

Razorback DBC - November 4 - STaC

Silver points awarded for overall

Dogwood DBC - Club Appreciation Game -  
October 23,

Club Championship - November 13

Ozark DBC - Club Appreciation Game -  
October 20

Club Championship - November 17

Club Managers – please email us information about your clubs and about any special games you are hosting. ([nwa-bridge@cox.net](mailto:nwa-bridge@cox.net))

### Rubber Bridge Corner

Q. My partner and I seem to struggle when responding to an opening one no-trump bid. This should be an easy situation to handle, but we can't seem to agree on a solution. Can you help us?

A. Your expectations are reasonable; since the point range for an opening one no-trump bid is a narrow three point range, it should be easy to make a meaningful responsive bid. As responder, you are the Captain because you have an excellent idea of what the bidding should become.

Your first priority is to determine if your hand is a balanced hand (4-4-3-2, 3-3-3-4 and 2-3-3-5). If your hand is balanced then no-trump is probably a better strain than a suit contract. If your hand is not balanced, then playing in a suit contract may be a better choice.

Your next priority is to determine the level at which the hand should be played. When you add your high-card points (HCP) to your partners, does the result equal a game level (25-26 HCPs), a slam level (33+ HCPs) or just a part-score contract?

Armed with the answers to those two questions, you are in a position to either place the contract or to drive the bidding forward to reach the desired contract.

The basic form of bridge that many rubber bridge players use does not employ conventional bids so we will assume that tools like Stayman and Transfers are not in use.

If you have determined that you and your partner do not have enough points for a game or higher level contract, then placing the contract in a part score, suit contract is your goal.

All bids of two of a suit are for play and the opening bidder is required to pass. For game-going values, a jump to three of a suit communicates that to our partners (or a jump to 3-NT if you have a balanced hand).

Remember, the responder is the Captain and the opener must respect the decisions of the responder.

I hope these fundamental guidelines are helpful to you and your partner. Good luck with your game.



### Duplicate Bridge Corner

Q. I play with several different partners and sometimes I forget which conventions I play with each partner. Can I look at the Convention Card during the auction to see what we've agreed upon?

A. Law 40 prohibits the use of memory aids and a convention card would be a memory aid. So unless your club has a rule allowing players to refer to their convention cards, then you may not look at the card.

We all experience those moments when we just can't recall our partnership agreements. Reviewing the card before each session is helpful, but that is not a sure way to solve the issue.

Have you thought about using the same convention card for all of your playing partners? Some players find it helpful to use a standardized card such as the ACBL's Standard American Yellow Card (SAYC). Since the SAYC card has the most commonly played conventions, it might well serve as a standardized card.

Good luck at the bridge table!

Name-the-Newsletter Contest

We don't have a suitable name for our newsletter. So a contest to name this newsletter seems like a good idea. Please email your suggestions to: nwa-bridge@cox.net

Web Site

We have a web site devoted to our Northwest Arkansas bridge players. There is a wealth of information there. If you have not yet checked out the site, please do so.

<http://members.cox.net/nwa-bridge>

Youth Bridge

The second National Youth North American Bridge Championship was held in Washington DC (July 22- Aug 2) – in conjunction with the North American Bridge Championship. Having their own national tournament, along with the annual Youth Summer Camp will help to spur the growth of bridge; but more must be done.

We need to promote bridge to the 'Adults of Tomorrow' at every opportunity. We can explore ways for each of us to contribute to the growth of bridge in subsequent issues of this newsletter.

**Ozzie Sez**

I favor light opening bids.  
When you're my age, you  
can never be sure that the  
bidding will get back  
around to you again.

-Oswald Jacoby at 77.

Tournament Trail

Here are the tournament results from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter and the master point awards.

Tulsa Regional - August 10-16

9.84 Thomas Graff, Fayetteville AR  
9.84 Roger Koeppe II, Fayetteville AR  
8.36 Robert Dray, Holiday Island AR  
5.59 Michael Foley, Springdale AR  
5.59 Brian Simet, Rogers AR  
4.54 Sandra Gromatka, Bella Vista AR  
4.54 Robert Gromatka, Bella Vista AR

Hot Springs 299er Sectional  
August 28 -30

6.49 Suzanne Krutsinger, Rogers AR  
6.49 Mary Lu Butler, Rogers AR  
5.42 Joe Patton, Bella Vista AR  
5.42 Elaine Patton, Bella Vista AR

Kimberling City Sectional –  
September 18-20

5.83 Len Fettig, Bella Vista AR  
3.02 Dolores Weiss, Holiday Island AR  
2.91 Suzanne Krutsinger, Rogers AR  
2.91 Mary Lu Butler, Rogers AR  
2.57 Kay Pantier, Bentonville AR  
2.57 Cathryn Jones, Rogers AR  
0.97 Robert Dray, Holiday Island AR  
0.50 Ron Nativi, Bella Vista AR  
0.50 Marshall Hamson, Bentonville AR  
0.50 Dolores Weiss, Holiday Island AR  
0.47 Jean Razer, Holiday Island AR  
0.47 Clarence Razer, Holiday Island AR

(continued)

Tunica, MS Regional - September 21-27

4.80 Robbie Tyler, Bella Vista AR  
4.80 Sue Van Hook, Bella Vista AR  
3.91 Robert Dray, Holiday Island AR

Overland Park, KS Regional December 26 - 31, 2009 ([Information](#))

On our web site we have a longer-range tournament schedule.



### Climbing the Ladder

Rank advancements reported in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter

Advancing to Life Master - Sandra Gromatka and Roger Koepp II

Advancing to Bronze Life Master – Joyce McCord

Advancing to Silver Life Master – Sue Van Hook

Way to go players!

### Tournament Schedule – 4th Qtr 2009

Kansas City, MO Sectional October 9-11, 2009 ([Information](#))  
Oklahoma City Sectional October 23-25, 2009 ([Information](#))  
Lawrence, KS Sectional October 30-Nov. 1, 2009 ([Information](#))

### Special Bridge Event

On December 9-10 a bridge tournament with a section for rubber bridge players and a section for duplicate bridge players will be held at the Rogers Adult Wellness Center.

This annual event is very popular and pre-registration is required.

Gift certificates are awarded to the top rubber bridge players and master points are awarded to the duplicate winners.

Check the monthly AWC calendar for more details, or pick up an event flyer at the center.

### Bridge Classes

Robert Makela is teaching bridge at the Northwest Arkansas Community College – Bella Vista site at Lancashire (US 340) and Forest Hills Blvd.

Details about the schedule are available from NWACC. Robert is teaching three classes on a revolving basis.

The classes cover bidding, play and defense. As his students complete one class, the next class in the sequence will be offered the following session.

Mr. Makela is offer each of the classes in each enrollment session. So interested individuals can start the series at any session and move easily through the full curriculum.

Suzanne Krutsinger is teaching bridge at the Adult Wellness Center in Rogers (behind the Dixieland Mall). Contact the ADC for class schedules.

In addition to her classes, Mrs. Krutsinger has open forum practice sessions for her current and former students on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays, 9:30 am at the AWC.

Both Mrs. Krutsinger and Mr. Makela are ACBL Accredited Bridge Teachers.

### Window of Opportunity

In a few weeks, a window of opportunity will close. The contract bridge players association – the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) is changing the requirements for the Life Master designation. After 70 years, the 300 master point requirement will become 500 points to make LM; effective January 1, 2010.

For any players who are members of the ACBL on December 31<sup>st</sup> and who have recorded one master point, they will be grandfathered under the 300 point requirement.

If you have not joined the ACBL, please consider doing that in the next few weeks. The monthly magazine is worth the annual dues. If you later decide to try for the Life Master rank, you will be eligible under the old requirements. Please give it some thought.



### Editorial Policy

We plan to make mistakes in the content of this newsletter. If we have omitted someone or misstated information, please let us know. We will cheerfully announce corrections in the following issue. Information has been collected from a variety of sources that we feel are reliable and whose content we believe to be Public Domain.

Contact us at:

[nwa-bridge@cox.net](mailto:nwa-bridge@cox.net)

Dummy apologizing for getting the partnership too high says: "I was hoping you had a second suit." Partner says: "I didn't even have a first suit".