

THE DECLARER

May, 2012

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Kent White

I have been invited to a "listening" session with ACBL President Sharon Anderson at our upcoming Regional at the end of the month. Several Sacramento area bridge administrators (teachers, directors, club owners, etc.) will be there.

In considering what I can add to the discussion about the health of duplicate bridge in our area and the reason why our Unit is the largest in the district and continuing to grow, I hope to share with the President that one important segment of the population that should not be overlooked in marketing the game of Bridge is "newly retired individuals who have played some bridge."

It will be easy to point to Sun City Lincoln Hills as the reason membership in Unit 505 continues to grow. I will also be proud to share with her the various programs we offer that bring new players to duplicate.

Please let me know of any topics you would like me to discuss when I go to the session.

SAN FRANCISCO MARRIOTT RESERVATIONS CAN BE ACCEPTED MAY 15.

The NABC is still 7 months away but if you are thinking of attending for a day or two, make a reservation on May 15. The rate for two people in a room is only \$149.00 plus tax.

When you make the reservation on line, you will receive a confirmation number. You can always cancel your reservation with no penalty if you can't make it, but rooms are going to sell out quickly. Once you reserve your room, look at the schedule and see if there will be time for you to volunteer to help me at Registration.

Editor's Notes for May

by Pat Lewis

Focus. Is it a matter of what you see, or rather the range of your thinking? It is probably agreed that one plays their best bridge when they are completely focused. That is when you can remember the

bidding, consider the meaning of the lead, and keep careful count of suits played. Your focus is entirely on making the contract bid, and you enjoy success.

Then there are those times when you lose focus, for whatever the reason. You gleefully trump only to be reminded by everyone at the table that the declarer is in a No Trump contract. Or you lose track of your trump, and someone trumps your sure trick. Again you are reminded that bridge is like life, and it is a challenge to stay focussed on goals and what is important.

Recently, I drove from Lincoln to San Clemente. When going seventy miles per hour the need to focus takes on new meaning. But I-5 has a mind-numbing affect, so as I drove I tried to live in the moment.

The Central Valley is probably one of the few places left in California, besides mountain tops or oceans, where you can see a complete dome of sky from east to west with not even a tree to interrupt the flat horizon. This day was not only sunny, but the sky had some depth, thanks to white fluffy clouds that floated above the miles of brown land. As I aimed the car south on the non-stop stretch of black road, I was reminded of how important focus on the horizon is to pilots.

Further along the route, changes showed thanks to the California aqueduct. Crops appeared in neat row patterns across rolling terrain. Then came fruit and nut tree groves with the bright green color of new growth on their branches. The hills of the coast range soon came into view in the west, and then the Tehachapi mountains to the south. Patriotic music lyrics, from too many days in the classroom, ran through my head.

Oh, Beautiful, for spacious skies,
For amber fields of grain,
For purple mountain's majesty,
Above the fruited plain!
America, America....

"Hey, are you okay?" he says from the passenger side, seeing a tear in my eye.

I answer, "Yes, just trying to focus!" May you all focus on what is most important whether at the bridge table or in life.

Special Games

Jim McElfresh

Wednesday, May 23 - Club Championship

Fridays - Extra MP games

This month is STaC month. We will have STaC games on the 9th, 11th and 12th. This is the only opportunity to win silver points at our club.

The Sacramento Regional begins on May 28th and lasts through June

3rd. There are games for every level and there are red and gold points to be won.

Pot Luck Dinner

Barbara Wheeler

Our annual Pot Luck Dinner will be held after bridge on Saturday, June 9th, at 5:30. This year's theme is Mexican Fiesta. Dishes served will not need to be Mexican, just good Lincoln Hills gourmet favorites. There will be a No host bar. See Barbara Wheeler to sign up beginning May 9. Hope to see you all at our annual dinner with your best recipe favorites, whether it be appetizers, salads, casseroles or desserts. We look forward to enjoying sharing out gourmet talents!

Evolution of a Bridge Player

This month we feature Harlan and Betty Sutherland's journey as a bridge couple.

Harlan and Betty Sutherland moved here from Berkeley and were one of the first couples in the Lincoln Hills Duplicate Bridge Club. They started playing party bridge when it was first played in the trailer, before Orchard Creek Lodge even opened. They played social bridge for several months until the duplicate bridge group was started.

Harlan, a retired Air Force Colonel, grew up in Berkeley and after graduating from Cal, he went to pilot training with the Air Force. After pilot training he spent four years in Germany as a fighter pilot. He was then assigned to Dover AFB, Delaware where he met Betty in Washington DC. After he shaved off his Groucho Marx mustache, Betty agreed to marry him.

Their first assignment after Delaware was Prestwick, Scotland. There Harlan introduced Betty to bridge, a game he had learned to play in college. Moving around as they did in his 30 year Air Force career, bridge was a wonderful way to meet new friends.

The Sutherlands have been assigned to the following bases;

Holloman AFB, Almagordo, NM

Cam Ranh Bay Vietnam, (unaccompanied F4s)

Bitburg AB, Germany

George AFB, Victorville, CA

Tahkli AFB Thailand, (unaccompanied F4s)

9th AF Headquarters, Thailand (unaccompanied staff tour)

12AF Headquarters, Austin, Texas

Fort Wayne, Indiana, Cheyenne, Wy,

Montgomery, Al, Tucson AZ, etc.

The Sutherlands have two daughters and two granddaughters. Lisa

and her family live in El Dorado Hills, and they keep busy going to the girls Basketball and Water Polo games. The other daughter Tamara and her husband, both retired college professors, live in Ivins, UT.

Their son Harlan Tod graduated from Cal and was working on his Masters in Geology for the University of Texas when he passed away. He is still missed.

Harlan is a new B player and Betty is a couple of points behind. They love our club here and enjoy the friendships they have made. Betty says, "It is a privilege to play with so many high caliber players and we get excited when we sometimes get near the top. We've learned a lot of systems, some that we can't seem to remember. We've gone to a few regionals and sectionals locally." They continue to work on their game as they are in several bridge groups. They are also in a wine club, and like to travel when they can. Harlan still plays golf when not at a bridge game.

A Dream of a Perfect Bridge Day

By Pat Lewis

Each player arrived in a timely way,
And had the exact small bills to pay.
There was no complaint about table assignment,
And all players showed their inherent refinement.

All were seated 'fore the lesson starts,
The microphone worked through all the parts.
Questions were clarifying and to the point,
The well-prepared teacher did not disappoint.

The coffee was perked and ready to drink,
The birthday cake helped us all to think,
That friendships are valued and people come first,
We all grow older, things here aren't the worst.

The duplicate boards were ready to play,
The pencils were sharpened, the supplies in array.
The room temp stayed at a comfortable degree,
No one was too cold, not even me.

We played an ideal nine table rotation,
Each section held no sit outs they shun.
Players were quick with their bids and play,
Table movement went great with no delay.

Partners were focused on making their bid,
They counted each suit, and carefully led.
No gossip, no politics, just polite civil talk,
No reneges to cause a director's walk.

It was a perfect afternoon of bridge play,
Volunteers caring made the day.
Each of you working to do your part,
Make every bridge day a perfect art.

Bridge Trivia

The following personalities are all avid bridge players. How many can you identify?

1. The "Oracle of Omaha"
2. Doctor Zhivago
3. 34th President of the United States
4. Female winner of 18 Grand Slams

Reversing the Bidding

Jim McElfresh

Reversing the bidding seems to be a difficult concept to grasp for the less experienced player. When someone "reverses" incorrectly, their explanation is that "*we don't play reverses*" as if it is a convention - like "*we don't play Jacoby 2NT*". Reversing the bidding is NOT A CONVENTION - it is part of the Standard American bidding system so the correct explanation is "*we don't understand reverses*". This article is intended help players with an understanding of the concept.

What is reversing the bidding? Anytime a lower ranking suit is followed by a rebid of a higher ranking suit at the 2-level the bidding has been reversed.

For example in the bidding sequence:

1H - P - 1N - P
2S

The bidding has been "reversed". Why? Because the opener has forced partner to the 3-level to make a simple suit preference in his 1st bid suit. In this sequence, if responder prefers hearts to spades he has to bid 3H. So what? A simple suit preference takes no more points than was required to respond to the opening bid - 6 points. If opener has 12 points and responder 6, 18 points are almost always insufficient to make a contract at the 3-level.

So how do you avoid this? By requiring the opener to have at least 17 points to "reverse". This gives the pair a minimum of 23 points (17+6), a total normally sufficient to make a 3-level bid.

Under many hand configurations this is not a problem - if you are holding a hand in which the higher ranking suit is as long or longer than the lower ranking suit - 5 spades & 4 of any other suit; 5 hearts & 4 diamonds and/or clubs; 4 diamonds & 4 clubs - the natural bid is

Suddenly I realized, I must have left them in the car. Frantically I headed for the parking lot. My wife had scolded me many times for leaving the keys in the ignition. My theory is that the ignition is the best place not to lose them. Her theory is that the car will be stolen. As I burst through the doors of the bridge club, I came to a terrifying conclusion. Her theory was right. The parking lot was empty.

I called the police and confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen. Then I made a more difficult call. "Honey", I stammered. (I always call her honey at times like these.) "I left my keys in the car, and it has been stolen."

There was a period of silence. I thought the call had been dropped, but then I heard her, "What??" she barked, "I dropped you off!"

Now it was my turn to be silent. Embarrassed, I said, "Well, come and get me."

She quickly retorted, "I will, as soon as I convince this policeman that I have not stolen your car!"

Bridge Trivia Answers

1. Warren Buffett
2. Omar Sharif
3. Dwight Eisenhower
4. Martina Navratilova