



Bag of Tricks

Unit 132

Nov.-Dec. 2024

President's Message

The air is getting nippy, the holidays are fast approaching, and another year is coming to a close. Seems that time flies so very quickly. Take the time during this season to be thankful for and enjoy your many blessings.

Congratulations to Jeanne Houghton (Ruby Life Master) and Steve Button (Life Master), who have achieved new honors. For those of you saying, "I'll NEVER get enough points," I say, keep having fun while you try. ANY COLORED points, at ANY TIME, shows that your game was competitive and your play is improving. Keep playing...We're glad play in our unit.

The first 10-week session of Introduction to Bridge, offered by WSU's Continuing Education program, and taught at the Wichita Duplicate Bridge Center, has ended. The second 10-week session will begin in mid-January. In the interim, we will be offering a special 0-20 game on Saturday mornings to keep our students involved with the game. More than half of them have indicated they will take the second set of lessons. These students were supported and mentored by many of our Wichita Duplicate Bridge Center players. My sincere thanks to all who made them feel welcome in our "home."

These folks were steadfast in helping the classes that were offered two times a week run smoothly: Barbara Gobbert, Herb Parsons, Sandy Hager, Barb Orzak, Mike Grommesh, Margy Beeler, Jo Windholz, Jeff Jones, Dennis Murphy, Tracy Callard, Janelle Robins-Gaede, and Richard Vore. It truly did "take a village" to make this work.

We extend our sympathies to the families of Marlo Goering and Donna Brown, who passed away recently. We also offer our condolences to Jan Carduff, whose daughter lost her battle with cancer.

Be watching for upcoming special events and games. We have two new ACBL-certified club directors (Linus Weimer and Teresa Scoles) who are eager to get to work. Let us know how we can better meet your needs as a player in Unit 132 games!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS,

--Julie Scherz



The Dish **Pat Dooley**

Wichita Players on Their Way to the NAP Nationals

Congratulations to Wichita players Teresa Scoles and Chris Boyce, who came in first in Flight B of the District 15 North American Pairs competition, in Oklahoma City, on Friday, Nov. 15. Their top score (59 percent) qualifies them to play in the NAP finals, which will be held at Memphis in March.

Other Wichitans whose play qualified them for the nationals are Tom Solnok and Mary Ann Fenske (Flight B Third place winners with 57.58 percent), and Jesse Moore and Steve Button (Flight C Second place winners with 56.25 percent).

The North American Pairs event has been a major ACBL pair championship event since 1979.

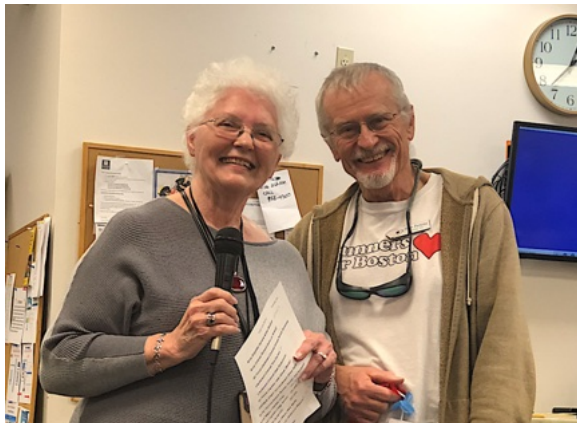


Oklahoma City Fall Sectional Winners

Wichita players not only showed up, but showed out, at the Nov. 14-16, Oklahoma City sectional tournament. Hal George won top honors in two competitions (Saturday, with Phil Cannon, from Hot Springs, Arkansas; and Thursday, with Raymond Zekauskas, from Tulsa. Other Wichitans who did well were Tom Solnok and Mary Anne Fenske; Chris Boyce and Teresa Scoles; Rich Williams and Dr. Phil Rindt; Sarah Allender and Diana Kidd; George Sevick and Susanne Hamker; and Kathy Williams and Margaret Francel.

Kudos and Cookies for Vets

The after the Nov. 11 Veteran's Day holiday, Betty Reiman MC'd a program honoring players who are veterans. Betty asked each of them to step forward to a round of applause honoring them for their contributions to the country's military.



Herb Parsons is a veteran of the U.S. Army.



“Win in Wichita” Regional/Sectional

Here are the overall stats from Wichita’s Oct. 10-12 sectional/regional tournaments. Wichita Open Pair players ranked especially high in the list of winners. Players came from as far away as Arizona, South Dakota, Texas, Arkansas and Missouri.

Regional	Sectional
Total masterpoints: 519.00 earned by 115 players	Total masterpoints: 133.84 earned by 53 players
Total attendance: 111 tables	Total attendance: 53 tables



Playing in Style

This painting from the National Portrait Gallery says it all: In the mid-twentieth century, Ely and Josephine Culbertson were a bridge pair to be reconded with. “Glamorous husband-and-wife team of Ely and Josephine Culbertson succeeded in transforming bridge from a parlor game into an international phenomenon,” wrote one author.

Their notoriety demonstrates the popularity of the game in the 1930s. They were featured in



newspapers, magazines, and were even the subjects of Hollywood filmmakers’ pre-movie shorts.

Bag of Tricks
 Bi-Monthly Newsletter

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Antique English Bridge Table



Bag of Tricks

PLAYER PROFILES

Building Bridges

Pat Dooley

Bridge players with interesting stories are all around us at the club. To find them, just reach out and ask questions. A few weeks ago, I learned something remarkable about Charlotte Brown. If you've played against Charlotte, you've already discovered that she's a really sharp player who knows what she's doing. She plays a couple of times each week: On Tuesdays with Karen Humphreys, and at other times with Carol Bowen.

Charlotte K. Brown: Thanksgiving Matriach

For 66 years, Charlotte Brown's family has gathered for Thanksgiving at the Wichita Country Club. Her face literally beams with pleasure as she talks about it.



Charlotte is 91-years-old, and on January 11, she will turn 92. A Wichitan her entire life, she

posted these "Likes" on Facebook: BookBub, Foxtrot Company, Association of Military Photographers "AMP," College Slam Dunk/3-Point Championships, Shocker Rowing, WSU Tri Delta, Suzanne Somers, and Tommy Bahama. Her Facebook friends posted these comments about her: "You are beautiful and ... you are one cool lady and young at heart." And, "Bad, Bad, Charlotte Brown, Baddest Putter in the Whole Darn Town!"

Bob's Game: Part Three—Bridge on the Road, Hamman's List, and Bridge Players

Bob Ellison

Notes from a Bridge Lecture

Around 20 years ago, I went to Tyler, Texas, to attend a lecture presented by Bob Hamman. At the time, he was ranked as the number one player in the world. His lesson focused on the question, "What are the minimum conventions needed?" His advice is still sound. I took notes and would like to share them with you.

Hamman's Lecture [GF = Game Force NF = Non-Forcing]

Conventions You Should Use:

- RKCB [Roman Key Card Blackwood] 0/3, 1/4, 2, 2, 2+Q
Note: The difference is small between 3014 and 1430.
- Stayman
- Reverse Drury
- Landy vs their NT
- Michael's—This is all you need. In pass out seat, bid clubs naturally and double for Landy.
- Two-way checkback over 1NT; 2C only by a passed hand
- Transfers over 2NT rebid
- Over Your 1NT Opening:
 - Transfers = Texas & Jacoby
 - 3C = minors invite
 - 3D = minors GF
 - 5 cd majors common
 - It's easy to bid over your NT, hard over theirs
 - Negative doubles when you open 1NT
- Transfer Lebensohl over their overall of 2D or higher – This means systems on over 2C, X (conventional), but if the double is for penalty, then systems are OFF.
- 3 Major = GF 1 suiter
- 5-card majors with mild modifications 1-4-4-4, 1-4-3-5, 1-4-5-3 15-16 open 1H
- 2/1 NF if suit rebid (this is used because Bob uses 1NT NF)
- NF 1 NT response
- 2NT response = Limit raise 3/4 trump
- 3C response = GF raise (this instead of Jacoby 2NT)
- 3D response = Undisclosed splinter with 4 card support
- When you open 1C and rebid suit at the 1 level, you have 4+ clubs.
- Responsive Dbls thru 4H; Negative Dbls thru 3S



Bob Hamman (Credit: BridgeBum)

Conventions You Don't Need:

- Gerber and Bergen raises

Travels in Europe and Africa

In Italy, we've visited Florence, Rome (with Alfredo Versace); Siracusa, Sicily; and Meta (near Sorrento). In 2018, we were fortunate to take a trip to Africa, where we visited South Africa, Boswana and Zimbabwe.

I'll never forget the first time we played in Florence, Italy. They have a nice club near the train station and our cabbie dropped us off at the door. We rang the bell. No answer. We knocked. No answer. We rang again. After about five minutes, someone stuck their head out. We were supposed to come in around back, through the parking lot! No one uses the front door in Italy! Once we got inside Gina talked with the director since my Italian at that time was non-existent. I believe we played a one-board movement! And heaven help you if you tried to move the boards. "Non toccare!" [Don't touch!] After every round "cambio!" [Change!]

In the middle of the game we came to a table where we played a 30-ish Italian man and his 20-ish Italian girlfriend. I still remember the contract – 3 hearts doubled. Somehow the girlfriend got into three hearts, and we whacked it. She went for 800, and the boyfriend exploded. He wasn't happy. I forgot about it, but later Gina stepped outside to have a cigarette (with most of the players), and there in the parking lot was this unfortunate boyfriend, whose partner had him leaned over backward on the hood of the car while she read him the riot act. It was great.



Bridge Club in Siracusa, Sicily

We've gotten to know one of the directors in Bologna—Carlo. He is a master of maintaining order. And he has to be because the Italians argue after every board, and it can get loud. Once we were playing at the Bologna clay tennis club when two elderly ladies started to argue. Every time Carlo yelled "Silenzio!" they would start up even louder "Silenzio!"—"SILENZIO!" We finished second in that game, probably due to shock.

In 2023, when visiting Bologna, Carlo picked us up to take us to a game in Rastignano, about 15-minute away. Carlo has four Jack Russell terriers, and he brought three of them along (one was out sick). So there we go, blasting through Bologna in a little Italian car, Gina with a dog in her lap, Carlo driving with a dog in his lap, its head out the driver's window, a third terrier on the floor up front, and me in back. Carlo explained, "I like dogs!" And the dogs have the run of the bridge club!

Sometimes, finding clubs in Italy (maybe all of Europe, for that matter), can be frustrating, because they are usually in walled villas with signs on their street doors that say, "For Sale." But if you try to get in that door, you'll be there until the game is over. Gina and I learned you simply go to the nearest coffee bar and sit down and drink a Spritz or whatever, and pretty soon you'll recognize the bridge players as they walk to the club. It's radar, really. Bridge players recognize each other: We would watch until Gina said, "Oh, theu look like bridge players!" When we followed them, they led us to the club each time. The method hasn't failed yet. We used it twice, in Meta and in Siracusa.



Bridge Players

Over the years, you accumulate a lot of bridge stories and meet a lot of characters. At first, you tend to look up to the experienced players. Later, you learn about all their dirty laundry. All clubs have histories. But if you like to people watch, bridge clubs can be a gold mine.

The pairs can be fascinating. In the early 90's, I noticed an attractive woman playing with a scruffy partner. It turns out she was a wealthy socialite from Dallas and her partner was a landscaper who dug ditches. It looked like he'd just shown up from work. But what fun. They might have been an odd couple, but there were many like them.

One of the local players who used to impress me the first year I played suddenly stopped coming. Where is "so-and-so?" I asked Bruce. "Prison." Oops. Maybe I shouldn't have asked. A couple of years later, I picked-up the Fort Worth newspaper and saw this headline: "Fort Worth Socialite Indicted!" One of our players had hired a hit man to shoot another woman in the club (there was a love triangle involved). Of course, when you go to a bar and try to find a hit man, who do you really hire? A cop! She got in a little bit of trouble for that. And 13 years later, one of the ladies told me I was supposed to play with her in the YMCA game! When I balked, she said, "Don't worry, I told her to leave the gun at home." I survived.

I think the most famous murder case in bridge history is the Parker murder case in Kansas City. It turns out Fort Worth had its own – the Fielder murder. You got it. This couple played bridge in the Fort Worth club, at least until Mrs. Fielder emptied a .45 semi-automatic handgun into Mr. Fielder. She even allegedly reloaded and shot him again (at least that's the story). Rumor has it the entire bridge club tried to get into the trial. Why? Evidently, there was a footlocker in the bedroom closet with chains, whips, handcuffs, etc. Wouldn't you know they'd be bridge players!

The Wichita Bridge Center has been tame compared to those oddballs. So I'll close with a wish that all our players keep learning and keep playing. And don't shoot your bridge partner!

-- Bob

*Art Nouveau, 1910,
Italian Playing Card*





Food for Thought

Pat Dooley

The holidays are nearly here, meaning recipes for bridge gatherings are more important than ever. Searching online for possibilities, I came across the “Bridge Ladies” of Canada. Since 1976, they’ve published more than two-dozen cookbooks.

“The Ladies of the Best of Bridge,” as they call themselves, came together out of friendship. Their website tells their story: “In 1975, at a weekend getaway, a group of friends

had an idea. Since a consistent highlight of their decade-old bridge group was the food they prepared and enjoyed together, perhaps they should think about writing a cookbook. This spur-of-the moment notion was the impetus of *The Best of Bridge*.” (www.bestofbridge.com)

Brandied Blue Cheese, Walnut and Pear Crostini (Serves 8)

Ingredients

- 4 oz. blue cheese, crumbled
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 2 Tbsp. brandy (or a substitute such as apple cider)
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 16 half-inch baguette slices
- 1 ripe pear, thinly sliced

Instructions

- Soften cheese and butter. Mash with fork until smooth. Stir in the brandy and walnuts.
- Place baguette slices on cookie sheet. Toast 1 side under broiler (watch closely).
- Turn and place pear slice on untoasted side.
- Top with teaspoonful of cheese mixture.
- Broil 4-5” from heat for about 2 minutes, or until cheese is bubbly.

