



Bag of Tricks

Unit 132

May-June 2024

President's Message

ACBL AWARDS

When logging in to myACBL on the ACBL website, have you noticed this on the left menu bar: District/Unit Races? Click on it and you may be surprised to see your name on a list of top players. Here is information about these races, as well as the Unit 132 players who achieved honors in 2023. Congratulations to these dedicated players!

Mini-McKenney Masterpoint Race

In 1974, the ACBL Board of Directors voted to establish the Mini-McKenney races in order to recognize the masterpoint achievements of its players. As a result, the top 25 winners at each level of achievement are annually recognized in the April issue of ACBL's *Bridge Bulletin*, and at the district and unit levels on ACBL's website. Who is honored is determined by the number of masterpoints players earn during an entire calendar year. Standings are updated monthly.

Unit	0-5	Marlyn Ash-Potter	500-1000	Linus Weimer
132	5-20	Cynthia Ward (Hutchinson)	1000-1500	Charles Wiggins
Leaders for	20-50	Madalynn Neu	1500-2500	Tom Solnok
2023	50-100	Susan Eagle	2500-3500	Grier Jones
	100-200	Susanne Hamker	3500-5000	Frank Boyce
	200-300	Dr. Philip Rindt	5000-7500	Rajan Mehta (Salina)
	300-500	Charlotte Brown	7500-10,000	David Kopper

Helen Shanbrom Ace of Clubs

To recognize achievement at the club level, the Ace of Clubs competition was created in 1984 to recognize club championships at the unit and national levels. All points won at the club level are counted, with the exception of those won in STaCs. This award was renamed in 2011 in honor of Grand Life Master Helen Shanbrom, of Tamarac, Florida. Shanbrom was one ACBL's most active players, and won the top Ace of Clubs category more times than any other player.

Unit	0-5	Richard Vore	500-1000	Linus Weimer
132	5-20	Cynthia Ward (Hutchinson)	1000-1500	Charles Wiggins
Leaders for	20-50	Fred Chang	1500-2500	Jeanne Houghton
2023	50-100	Susan Eagle	2500-3500	Dan Forbes Jr.
	100-200	Kenneth Howell	3500-5000	Frank Boyce
	200-300	Dianne O'Neal (Hutchinson)	7500-10,000	David Kopper
	300-500	Charlotte Brown		

Congratulations are always in order for those who become new life masters or achieved a boost in their life master rank. Our unit's newest life master is Gordon Tolle, and players who advanced to a higher level are Kathy Williams (Ruby Life Master), Carol Bowen (Silver Life Master), and Lynn Oetting (Bronze Life Master).

HELP OUR DIRECTORS "LET THE GAMES BEGIN!"

Ever wonder why sessions are sometimes slow in getting started, or why you're asked when you pay whether you're going to be there next time?

Before any game can get started, directors have to log into the computer, identify the session's exact number of players/tables, if there will be a "phantom pair" (sit-out table), and the exact number of boards to be played. They try to do that ahead of time, based on what they know about who will be playing in that game. Obviously, things slow down when players are late, are "no-shows," or if they show up without having let their directors know ahead of time. When that happens, the directors essentially have to start over to get the game entered correctly. You can help the directors immensely by letting them know if you can (or cannot) play ahead of time and by being seated at a table by the time the game is to start. Please do your part to get the games going!

UNIT 132 BY-LAWS CHANGES

Thanks to all of you who voted electronically on our unit's proposed by-laws changes, which passed successfully. The board will monitor our by-laws on an annual basis to be sure they're accurate and practical. The electronic voting system saved the unit considerable time and money. Thanks to David Kopper for spearheading the effort.

WIN IN WICHITA SECTIONAL

Be watching for information about the Win in Wichita Sectional Tournament coming up June 6-8 at St. James Episcopal Church. We'll need lots of volunteer help, especially to move equipment and tables/chairs to that venue. Please be ready to help when asked.

THAT'S ALL, FOLKS!

Thanks again for playing at the Wichita Bridge Center and the other venues in the unit's area. We are pleased to see that Salina will soon be restarting their sessions. May the bridge gods be smiling on you!

--Julie Scherz



Bag of Tricks
Bi-Monthly Newsletter

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The Dish

Pat Dooley



Recent tournaments in Abilene, Kansas, and Midwest City, Oklahoma, drew nearly 40 Wichita Bridge Club players, and reports on the events are favorable.

Abilene Sectional March 21-22

Abilene's March sectional filled 41 tables and awarded 159.18 masterpoints.



COME HOME TO ABILENE

Wichita club players Mary Hembree and Peggy Mitchell's grand total of 8.45 points put them in the tournament top five, and they came in first, with 64.38 percent, on Friday afternoon. On Friday morning, Teresa Scoles and Mary Ann Fenske were at the top of the winners' list, with 58.10 percent.

Two Wichita club members who also won points on Friday were partners Madalynn Neu and Betty Krehbiel. Madalynn texted that everyone seemed to enjoy the event. "There were players from 11 Kansas cities, with 10 tables in the morning and 11 in the afternoon," she wrote.

Neu appreciated the quality of Abilene's hospitality. "Lunch was delicious...and the cookies and donuts were wonderful and plentiful."



Sooner Regional, April 8-13

A few weeks later, Wichita players headed south for the Sooner Spring Regional. The six-day tournament was held in Midwest City, a suburb of Oklahoma City. A total of 436 tables were filled during the event, and 2,652.54 masterpoints were awarded. All 20 of Wichita's players who played in Midwest City won points, and Dan Chocron and Hal George's 37.97 total score put them in the top 15.

The games were held at the Reed Conference Center, a comfortable site next to the hotel. The event's hospitality committee hosted an awesome happy hour at the end of each day.

*Spring flowers outside the Reed Conference Center
(Photo, Pat Dooley, 2019)*

What's the Deal with the Deal's?

Speaking of tournaments, after the dust settles, the qualities of their bridge hands are typically great fodder for discussion. A bit of online research in the "Board & Card Games" section in a discussion forum titled *Stack Exchange* offers insight into the concerns of some tournament players.

Stack Exchange Q & A

The Debate

hands?"

"How are bridge hands dealt at tournaments? Are there set criteria for

Behind the Questions

random distributions...."

"I've noticed that bridge hands in many top tournaments are often extremely uncommon combinations of distributions and types....Clearly these aren't

In Response

"All bridge players 'know' that the hands are cooked. They all have their own ideas how. Each person's ideas are different. They're all wrong. Mostly this is because humans, and bridge players in particular, are "pattern-matching" machines, and in a 24-board session, they can always find some coincidence (for instance, yesterday I had four voids in 24 boards, including two diamond voids on consecutive hands! Monday I had either five or six 5-5 or better hands. Bridge hands for high level tournaments are always created on a computer with zero human interaction....So, far from "selecting interesting hands," the program does its absolute best to ensure that no selection takes place at all. [They are] 100 percent random."

Source: Stack Exchange, an online network that helps people find the answers they need. The forum includes a Board and Card game section. (Stackexchange.com)

The author of the above "hands aren't rigged" statement explained that many tournament directors use a hand dealing program called Big Deal, and added, "The joy of bridge is that you don't have to cook the hands to have a great game."

In a future column, I'll report on how our club's directors deal the hands we play, along with their thoughts and those of our members on the "cooked" hands debate. In the meantime, I'd love to hear from you about all this.

Worth Noting

Kudos to Jeff Jones (Club Master) and Jo Kready (Junior Master) for outplaying the stiff competition at Jeanne Houghton's Friday, March 29, open pairs session with their 61.25 percent final score.

Bridge + Art = More Brain Power

Bridge players are better off than non-bridge players, since brain stimulation is well known for being high on the list of the game’s benefits. But Wichita club members are even luckier, since the walls of our facility are lined with the colorful and whimsical prints of artist and bridge player Connie S. Cofer.

Cofer’s thinking on the benefits of art is in line with that of Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross, the authors of the recent Random House book *Your Brain Art: How the Arts Transform Us*. According to Magsamen, “Artists have always known that art changes us in profound ways.”*



A Wichita resident and print maker for many years, Cofer said, “I greatly appreciate the opportunity to display my prints at the Wichita Bridge Center.



Cofer’s current work is created using a mixed- media approach. “I’m currently adding watercolors, acrylic paint, and markers to my prints. This has provided great flexibility in color and value, and is also a source of great joy to me,” she explained.

A member of the American Color Print Society and the Tallgrass Prairie Printmakers group, Cofer displays her prints in local galleries and museums, and occasionally in national shows.

Bridge + Art, from left: Sandy Hager, Warren Smith, Barbara Orsak, and Richard Vore

* Quote from Colleen Smith, who reviewed this book in the February 27, 2023, issue of *Art & Object*. Go to: <https://www.artandobject.com/articles/neuroaesthetics-how-art-scientifically-proven-help-brain-health>; (Photo, Pat Dooley)

Old News & Views

“A Wichita man drew a perfect hand in spades in a bridge game and didn’t faint nor lose a trick. How uninteresting for the opponents.”

--Wichita Beacon (Nov. 11, 1931)

“Perhaps, muses the *Chickasha Express* (Oklahoma), nothing would go further toward promoting world peace than an international pact making it unlawful for a man and wife to be partners in a bridge game.”

--Wichita Eagle (Dec. 11, 1932)

“Hints on [Bridge] Etiquette: When a bridge game follows a dinner, refreshments are not generally served afterward, unless the playing has continued until very late.”

--Wichita Beacon (Jan. 15, 1937)

“One kick out of life that some people get is under the table during a bridge game, observes the *Kansas City Kansan*.”

--From the column “Kansas Currents” (Dec. 27, 1943)

Wichita Player J.G. Ripstra (1900-1982)

These excerpts from the Feb. 6, 1955, *New York Times* feature the performance of Wichita bridge player J.G. Ripstra, who became the ACBL’s president and was the creator of the Ripstra convention.

KANSAN IS IN LEAD IN BRIDGE TOURNEY

**Ripstra Goes Into 3d Session
of Life Masters Play Here
With 557½ Match Points**

By **GEORGE RAPEE**

J. G. Ripstra held the lead last night in a field of seventy-two top-ranking contract bridge players as the third session of the 1955 life masters individual championship got under way.

On the following hand, Mr. Ripstra, sitting North and playing with F. Ayres Bombeck as his partner, deliberately contracted for 7 no trump where 7 clubs was a lay-down. His gamble was successful. He made 7 no trump for a top score.

NORTH			
♠ A 6 2			
♥ Q 10 7			
♦ A K			
♣ A Q J 7 5			
WEST		EAST	
♠ 9 8		♠ Q 10 7 5	
♥ 8 5 4 3		♥ J 9	
♦ 10 7 4 2		♦ Q J 9 8 6 5 3	
♣ 9 8 4		♣ —	
SOUTH			
♠ K J 4 3			
♥ A K 6 2			
♦ —			
♣ K 10 6 3 2			

North dealer, neither side vulnerable. The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1 ♠	3 ♦	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
5 ♠	Pass	7 ♣	Pass
7 No T	Pass	Pass	Pass

With the jack of hearts dropping doubleton, the hand could not be beaten. Declarer took five club tricks, two diamonds, four hearts and two spades.

Food for Thought

Pat Dooley

They say food is good for the brain, so bridge players must have their snacks. Here's a recipe for a delicious concoction Janice Hilyard brought to a recent Tuesday session. She didn't have an exact recipe, so gave me a list of ingredients. I went shopping on my way home and threw a batch together to take to the next day's open session. It received favorable reviews, but Janice's was better.



Ham 'n Craisin Spread

- Ham (1 pound approximately) – Chopped or minced in a food processor
- Chopped freshly boiled hard eggs (to taste)
- A bit of chopped onion and/or celery
- Craisins in any amount you like
- Shredded cheddar cheese (or any other kind of cheese you have in your refrigerator)
- Sweet pickle relish
- Mayonnaise/Miracle Whip
- A dollop of honey mustard dressing, or simply mustard and honey
- Salt/pepper to taste

Mix and spread on your favorite crackers or bread.

Practice & Play

Mondays at 9:30 a.m., except the week when 4 is Enough is held.

Contact Susan Eagle for Info.

“Live...From the Bridge Club, it's Monday Morning!”



Counting with the Count

It goes without saying that skillful and constant COUNTING is a crucial part of bridge. Do the hands we're dealt have 13 cards, how many are there in each suit, and how many are potential winners or losers? How many trump cards have been played, or in no-trump hands, how many in each suit? And then there are the rules of 9, 11, 17, 20, etc., etc., etc.



When designing a play-of-the-bridge-hand class, David Kopper, Mary Beck, and Susan Eagle came up with this charming "bridge player" version of the classic Sesame Street Count von Count song titled "Counting With the Count." To hear the Count sing the original, go to YouTube and type in "Song of the Count." If you want to hear David, Mary and Susan sing their version, you're out of luck. David said, "We tried it, but it didn't come out well."

The Count

David Kopper, Mary Beck, and Susan Eagle

You know it's all about "the count."
Because you really love to count.
Sometimes you'll sit and count all day,
But, it will help you with the play. Ha!

You'll count slowly, slowly, slowly, getting faster.
Once you start counting, it is very hard to stop, hey!
Faster, faster, it is so exciting.
You'll count forever, when the offside king you drop, ha!

One-two-six-four.
One-three-five-four. One-one-seven-four.
Contracts to surmount, ha ha!

One, two, six, four, hey, ey, ey, ey, hey, ey, ey, ey,
One, three, five, four. Hey, you! That's the song about "the count."

You will count |
the diamonds
as they fall,
Club, hearts,
spades – you
will count
them all.
You'll count
the points of
your opps.
You'll count
your cards and
call the cops.
Oh, yeah!



You'll count slowly, slowly, slowly, getting faster.
Once you start counting, it is very hard to stop, hey!
Faster, faster, it is so exciting.
You'll count forever, when the offside king you drop, ha!

One-two-six-four.
One-three-five-four. One-one-seven-four.
contracts to surmount, ha ha!

One, two, six, four, hey, ey, ey, ey, hey, ey, ey, ey,
ey,
One, three, five, four. Hey, you! That's the song about "the count."
Hey!