


# CONTRACT BRIDGE

## Forum



Volume 85 Issue 8—August 2010

## Tucson Great Chiefs Regional



October 4-10, 2010

It's the final District 17 regional tournament of the year, October 4-10 at the Holiday Inn Palo Verde. A beautiful city, moderate temperatures, and an excellent schedule of

events await you at this tournament. Please check out the ad this issue for the complete schedule and information on the host hotel, and make sure you set aside a little time to see some of the great

tourist attractions this southwest city has to offer.

This tournament isn't on the schedule every year, so don't miss this one. Bridge and sun; it's a fine combination.

### NAP Update

can Pairs (NAP) qualification season is off to a good start. While we haven't had quite as many qualification games as we had at this point last year, we are only a game short and attendance is slightly up. When you read this, there will be one month left in the qualification period.

Recently one of our members contacted me to say that none of the clubs in his unit are planning qualification games. His question? What should he do? Another player called to say he missed the qualification game for his club which was held during his vacation. His question - is there any way for him to qualify?

The answer in both cases is a simple yes, but it may require some travel and a bit of your time. As long as you play in a qualification game in any unit in District 17 and qualify, you are eligible to compete in the district finals which will be held in Albuquerque January 21 and 22, 2011. For

example, if you live in Pueblo, Colorado, you could qualify by playing in Colorado Springs.

Another example would be for players in Yuma, Arizona, where I have been told there will be no qualification games. They can get qualified by playing in Tucson, Mesa or Phoenix.

If you are seeking a qualification game, check the web sites of neighboring units in District 17 to obtain their club schedules. If you can't seem to find the information you are seeking, contact me at [d7hconsult@cox.net](mailto:d7hconsult@cox.net) or by phone 480 326-7665 and I will help you.

If you do go outside your unit to qualify, ask the club director to provide you with proof of qualification. If you forget to do that, all is not lost.

Just remember where you played and their report to me will have you listed so you will be covered.

Don't forget, there is only one month left in the qualification period. See you in Albuquerque.

### Phoenix Reminder



August 9-15, 2010

Just a reminder - the Phoenix Regional is upon us but there is still time to make plans. The dates are August 9-15 at the DoubleTree Resort in Scottsdale, and the last two issues have stories and ads. This is the place to be this August, check out the great new hotel rates!

### Sectional Calendar Corrections

In last month's *ScoreCard* the Mesa Kachina Sectional in Mesa Arizona was listed in October, but is in fact will be held November 18-21 and is played at Grace Inn in Phoenix. Please plan

accordingly.

Also, the Taos Sectional, October 1-3, was listed as being held at the Kachina Lodge, but it is really in its new home at the Sagebrush Inn in Taos.



### A Rocky Mountain Hi!

By John Van Ness  
District 17 President

Bridge surges A recent article in the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* touted the resurgence of contract bridge in America. The statistics certainly back this up. ACBL membership is now more than 164,000, compared to close to 150,000 just 20 years ago. Tournament and club attendance continues to increase.

And then there is the Internet activity. At 7:00 a.m. this morning almost 8,000 people were playing on Bridge Base Online which is only one of several Internet sites. Many of these players were competing for ACBL masterpoints, but a large number were not counted among ACBL members, and hopefully they'll eventually join us.

District 17 has been surging also. Our ACBL membership is up a solid 15% since the 1980s, and our tournaments continue to set attendance records.

Most importantly, our tournaments are almost always profitable and everyone involved enjoys financial viability. It wasn't more than 15 years ago that the constant refrain was that, "bridge is a dying game."

Indeed, in 1991 the district organization was effectively bankrupt, and there was talk of downsizing. We now have a \$150,000 treasury. In the mid-1990s the Western Conference was living off borrowed money, but they now have a net worth of roughly \$50,000.

We are one of only three ACBL districts still providing a free monthly newspaper mailed to all our members. This is not only a benefit to our members, but an effective means of promoting regional tournaments and all bridge activity in our district. Statistics demonstrate that Western Conference regionals are on average 35% larger than the ACBL average, and this converts to money.

The Internet is still not as effective as direct mail for advertising purposes. Our newspaper has been posted on the Internet for about seven years, and the "hits" are nowhere close to the printed circulation. Nationwide, expenditures for direct mail are still double those for Internet ads. Maybe someday, but not today.

District 17 regionals are the result of a partnership between the district and a host unit. It takes a lot of work by a lot of volunteers to produce a successful regional, and our host units are often, but not always, rewarded by profits up to \$10,000. All our players benefit from first class regionals, which pay for the newspapers and other district benefits. District 17's entry fees and hotel prices continue to be well below the national average.

Although most ACBL districts are allowed but four annual regionals, we currently get six. In addition, we'll have an NABC in Phoenix in 2013, another in Las Vegas in 2014, Denver in 2015 and plans for a 20 day world championship in Las Vegas in 2018 are in the preliminary stages.

### The District's Role

The ACBL's grand scheme gives each district the right to run and profit from regional. (Units get sectionals.) While most district organizations operate their allocated regionals without the involvement of any unit, in District 17 we have always relied heavily on a host unit. Basically, the district allocates our six regionals to our various units, sets the standards, reviews and approves a schedule of events, and is always standing by ready to help.

The usual formula for success is that our playing space is (mostly) paid for by bridge players renting rooms at the host hotel. About 65% of our regional players come from out-of-town, so it's essential that their interests are recognized. Occasionally their needs and preferences are slightly different than those of the locals.

Schedules of events are reviewed by a district committee composed of those board members with the most knowledge and experience in this area, and then approved by the full district board. We are fortunate to have the expertise of director-in-charge Gary Zeiger.

We also try to make our decisions based on the huge amount of information posted on the Internet. We can closely monitor the success or failure of new events that have been tried in other districts, or in other regionals within our own. A phone call or e-mail usually results in useful information and/or advice, since we all face the same problems.

The district's finance committee closely scrutinizes proposed budgets and financial reports. Comparing costs from one tournament to another is an effective way to help control expenses. And the emphasis on accurate financial reporting increases everyone's awareness of the constant need to pay attention to the dollars.

### The Bridge Rate

Hotel contracts have recently become an area of major concern. Most include a room-night guarantee, and in most cases if bridge players don't buy all the guaranteed rooms the tournament does. One hundred rooms short can easily result in a \$10,000 penalty. And two or three hundred short ...

In these economic times the "bridge rate" isn't always what it used to be. Players can shop on the Internet and find rates substantially less. Often a hotel or motel in the area can be found for half the price of-

(See Rocky on page 12)



By Dale Sweetwood  
D17 NAP  
Coordinator

The District 17  
unit level  
North Ameri-

### Forum Deadline

The deadline for *ScoreCard* articles and ads remains the fifth of the preceding month; however, earlier submissions are encouraged!

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Please email all ads and copy to:  
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### Change of Address



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