

WESTERN CONFERENCE CONTRACT BRIDGE Forum

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ScoreCard

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Denver Rocky Mountain Regional



Denver's annual Rocky Mountain Regional is May 25-31 at the Renaissance Hotel by Marriott venue, 3801 Quebec Street, right across from the old Denver Stapleton Airport site. The ad elsewhere in this issue has all the details on the schedule of events. You'll find your favorites, pairs, Swiss

Teams, and Knockout Teams, plus a full schedule for Newcomer/Intermediate players.

Flying is faster, but driving can provide some amazing scenery coming from other parts of our district. The Denver area itself has many attractions, including our fairly new world-class Modern Art Museum designed by Daniel

Libeskind. Several Colorado mountain towns have limited gambling.

As for the bridge, the Denver Unit will be doing its best to provide its famous "Mile High Hospitality." See the ad inside.

For Renaissance hotel reservations call 303 399-7500 or toll free at 1 888 238-6762.

Marsha Helton – Goodwill Member of the Year!

By Bonnie Bagley
ACBL Goodwill CoChair

Marsha Helton from Sedona Unit 355 Northern Arizona is the ACBL Goodwill Foundation's 2010 Goodwill Person of the Year. Aileen Osofsky, Goodwill Chairman, awarded Marsha the coveted honor at the Goodwill Reception in Reno during the Spring NABC. Dozens of members from Sedona



Chairman Aileen Osofsky (center) and Marsha Helton (to her left) plus guests from Sedona, Ariz. attended to honor Marsha as legendary bridge teacher Audrey Grant introduced her to the 150 players attending the reception.

Marsha has been involved with all aspects of bridge at the unit level - board member, and as club manager. She recognized the need to revitalize bridge in Sedona, an Arizona community of [11,500] with a unit membership of 366, and did something about it.

Marsha started a campaign in 2009 to recruit new players - she taught bridge classes and has had 120 newcomers participate, 60 of which have become ACBL members. Marsha played in a Knockout Teams at the recent Albuquerque Regional with three of her students — they won!

Marsha's husband, Darryl, is the D17 Arizona at large representative. (more on page 9)

Las Vegas Regional



June 7-13, 2010

Get ready for the annual fun-filled week of tournament bridge in Las Vegas. The dates are a little earlier than usual, it will be June 7-13 at the Riviera Hotel & Casino on The Strip. As always, you will find the widest variety of events you could ask for. Check the ad in this issue for all the details. And of course, if the bridge tables don't treat you right, you can al-

ways try your luck at all the other "tables" in town.

For those of you who have attended this spectacular tournament before, you know what to expect. For first-timers, you will find everything about the tournament and the city, dazzling.

You can never find yourself with "nothin' to do" at any time, day or night, in Las Vegas. Catch up on your sleep before you come.



A Rocky Mountain Hi!

By John Van Ness
District 17 President

When our regular District Director Jerry Fleming was told by his doctors that he couldn't travel until his recent eye surgery had healed sufficiently, I was suddenly called upon to represent District 17 at the four-day meeting of the ACBL's National Board in Reno. We all wish Jerry a speedy and full recovery. Except for the Reno meeting Jerry is District 17's full-fledged representative to the national board and his e-mail works just fine.

Whenever I'm seated between two non-bridge playing strangers on the flight to a tournament, I'm inevitably asked why thousands of people would spend thousands of dollars to travel thousands of miles to a bridge tournament when there is no money prize if you win. I don't want to explain the powerful allure of masterpoints, so I simply say "prestige."

Although they're not the same as money, I have found that masterpoints can make people think you're smart, give you a feeling of accomplishment, and at least in the old days, get you girls. I'll never forget a cute young bridge player who politely told me that she just didn't talk to novices. And when I got enough points to qualify me for talking, she proceeded to tell me exactly what I'd need to win to reach the next plateau. This went on for years and I think my highest ranking was "Kiss on the Cheek Life Master."

This was before we had Gold and Diamond LMs.

The first mention of the term "master point" seems to be in 1934, three years before the American Contract Bridge League was even invented. (At times "master point" was two words, but the modern usage is only one.) In 1934 the American Bridge League (no "Contract") decided to hold an event called the von Zedwitz Master Pairs. The first problem was that nobody knew how to define a "master." Tournaments were held by not only the ABL, but also the American Whist League and the United States Bridge Association. To further complicate matters major tournaments such as the Vanderbilt and the "Easterns" were run by independent organizations. In fact it was not until the early 1950's that the Vanderbilt became an official ACBL NABC event.

Each organization quickly established its own requirements for the rank of "Master," and the situation in 1935 was described as a "rapid and somewhat haphazard inflation of Masters." In response the ABL created the concept of "Life Master" in 1936. The ten players with the best tournament performances were designated as the original Life Masters. After that, only masterpoints won in national championships (or the equivalent) counted, and the awards were tiny.

One more player was added to the list in 1936, and in 1937 the number of new Life Masters was again one. In 1938 there were two more, with one of them named Charles Goren. Despite his huge contribution to the game Ely Culbertson never became an ACBL Life Master.

According to a 1991 *New York Times* bridge column by Alan Truscott, all but one of the original ten lived in New York or New Jersey. The odd man out started out in Philadelphia, but moved to New York a few years later. It wasn't until 1946 that the first LM from west of Chicago joined the club, and he was LM Number 56.

There were lots more people who had won an Academy Award or an Olympic Gold Medal.

In 1935 masterpoints were extended to clubs by the USBA, but only to their affiliated clubs. Club points were called "City Masterpoints" and ten of those could be converted into one "State Masterpoints," which could be converted into "National Masterpoints," also at a ratio of 10 for 1. The net result was that 100 club points were worth one National Masterpoint, which were the equivalent of modern red points.

In addition, there was a scheme for deducting masterpoints points each year, so that if you wanted to keep your Life Master rank you had to keep playing -- and winning. Deductions were discontinued in 1944, by which time the ranks of Life Master had swelled to 45. I'm not aware of anybody losing their rank, but further research might turn up an interesting story.

In contrast to the ACBL's success in absorbing (and eliminating) the competing bridge leagues in the East, they had less luck in rounding up the mavericks in the West. The Pacific Bridge League was founded in 1933, four years before the birth of the ACBL. At the top of page one of this newspaper you will see "Volume 85," which means it began publication in 1935.

The ACBL did not include the territory of the Pacific Bridge League, which covered eleven western states, plus the territories of Alaska and Hawaii, plus British Columbia and Alberta.

In 1940 the ACBL and the PBL reached an agreement whereby West Coast points would be recognized by the ACBL. The west coast certificates were identical to the rest of the ACBL except for a small PBL symbol in the upper-left corner. In 1941 it was announced that the PBL would be operating "under the banner" and as the western division of the ACBL, although other sources indicate this did not become

(See Rocky on page 8)

Deadlines

ScoreCard no longer accepts hard copy ads. All ads must be e-mailed directly to the publisher Ken Monzingo (see e-mail address right hand column on page two), with a copy to Jared Johnson, the ScoreCard editor.

Stories and all other articles of any sort still get e-mailed directly to the ScoreCard editor at: jaredjohnsonco@aol.com

Just regular e-mail, no attachments please.

Deadlines are the fifth of each month for the following month's issue. Deadlines are firm, exceptions for only the most pressing and unusual of circumstances.

Stories past deadline still go to the editor, not the publisher, for inclusion in the following issue.

So now it's all e-mail. Ads to the publisher (with a copy to the editor, okay for attachment on ad copy), stories and all else to the editor. Thanks for your help.