

CONTRACT BRIDGE

Forum



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The Albuquerque Navajo Trail Regional



Old Town Plaza

Begin your 2009 tournament bridge season at the Navajo Trail Regional in

Albuquerque, January 18-24 at the Albuquerque Marriott Pyramid North at 5151 San Francisco

Road NE. The ad this issue will provide the full schedule of events and hotel information.

Albuquerque is in a scenic location at the foot of a mountain range with a plenty of local attractions. Old Town is probably the number one must-see, but you can also check out the Indian Pueblo Cultural Museum, the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, the Albuquerque Museum of Art, History and Science, and the Albuquerque Biological Park (zoo and botanical gardens).

You can also expect top-notch hospitality at this tournament. Make your plane reservations before the airlines hike those fares again. And again.

And, of course, the tournament is within comfortable driving distance for many District 17 players.



Rocky Mountain Hi!

By John Van Ness
President District 17

Coordinating tournaments is one of the most important functions of the district organization and the job of district tournament coordinator has got to be the most thankless. The problem is how to schedule District 17's 53 sectionals and seven regionals without them unnecessarily competing with each other. We don't even have 52 weeks to work with, since the ACBL uses six of them for NABCs, the Western Conference STAC uses another three and we have agreed that our regionals will avoid conflicts with another nine or ten in the Western Conference. We also try to avoid competition from a half-dozen or so mega-regionals that would clearly cost us customers. And there are various religious holidays that need to be avoided. Then we need to take into consideration the fact that it's hot in Arizona in the summer, and room rates tend to be high in the winter, and it snows in Colorado in the wintertime.

Regionals have impacts throughout our district and even beyond, and are treated differently than sectionals. When and where we hold our allotted regionals has always been the responsibility of the district board. While we certainly consider the preferences of individual units, we are required to act in the best interest of all our members. Since the supply of regionals is limited by the ACBL, the first question is which of our 23 units gets a shot at our four regionals per year.

Although we are entitled to hold six regionals per year, Mesa (technically "Southern Arizona") and Las Vegas are designated by the ACBL as "Permanent Site Regional," which means that these sanctions can only be used at the permanent sites. If we don't use one of these in a given year, we can just toss it in the trash and live with one less regional that year. Most of our 23 units simply do not have adequate facilities at the price required for a successful regional. The economics are such that smaller regionals don't have much chance at a significant profit unless they find an exceptional hotel deal or an anonymous benefactor. Smaller units often lack enough people to devote the required time and energy.

Most players would just as soon drive an extra half-hour to somebody else's regional and let somebody else do the work and worry.

One of the objectives in doling out our regionals is to give all our members a reasonable opportunity to attend a regional in their neck of the woods, and I think we're close. Other factors include the number of ACBL members in the area and the popularity and success of a regional site as measured by table-count and dollars. I would note that our district is number two in the ACBL in regional attendance and our host units manage \$10,000 profits more often than not. Our players enjoy excellent regionals at first-rate facilities for entry fees that are below the national average.

We are among only three ACBL districts that mail a bridge newspaper to all our members every month. And the district and the Western Conference are in solid financial condition so nobody has to worry about any emergency assessments or surcharges.

We currently hold our annual regionals in Albuquerque, Denver, and Phoenix with the fourth slot rotating between Colorado Springs, Tucson and Ruidoso. This will change because Ruidoso is quitting the regional business. Despite a lot of work they were unable to produce a profit for the unit. Ruidoso has been a great regional for the customers, but it just isn't worth it for the local workers.

Adding the "permanent" Mesa and Las Vegas regionals brings us up to six regionals per year. And of course Tucson hosts a Non-Life Master Regional every February.

We have not always enjoyed enough regionals and enough money for everybody. In the 1970s and into the 1980s we, like all districts, were allowed but three regionals per year.

There was no such thing as the annual Albuquerque Regional or the Denver Regional, or Phoenix or Las Vegas.

According to the *Official Encyclopedia of Bridge*, we had the Navajo Trail Regional every year, which alternated between Colorado Springs, Albuquerque, Salt Lake City, and Las Vegas. The second annual regional was the Desert Empire, which alternated between Phoenix, Tucson, and Las Vegas. Then we had the Rocky Mountain, which was usually in Denver, but had occasional stops in Casper, Cheyenne and Rawlins, Wyoming, as well as Colorado Springs.

Nobody had an annual regional until the mid-1990s. The 1980s saw the birth of the Mesa Senior Regional, which started as an experiment and has become a permanent and successful annual regional. Back in those days the district placed regionals on the basis of a unit or area's ACBL membership, which converted directly to voting power on the district board. Thus, if one unit had three times as many votes as another, you could count on it having three times as many regionals. This system resulted in Las Vegas hosting but three regionals in all of the 1980s. In the late 1980s we managed to convince the ACBL to give us a regional in Las Vegas that would not

(See Rocky on page 12)

New Year, New Venue for Tucson

By Barry Abrahams

Starting in January, 2010, Tucson will be holding at least three tournaments a year at the brand new Desert Diamond Hotel, Conference Center and Casino located adjacent to the

Tucson International Airport.

This native American and southwestern influenced hotel and casino boasts rich bold desert colors rising up out of the Sonoran Desert. The hotel offers guests the very best in superior accommodations and exceptional guest service with no taxes.

All accommodations offer a complete array of modern amenities including a flat panel television, large work desk, complimentary Internet access, in-room safe, refrigerator and continental breakfast. Dining at the Steak House, The Buffet, the Diamond

Wok, the Diamond Grill and the hotel café is just moments away from the conference center playing area.

This combined with the spacious facilities provides players a relaxing and diverse environment to spend their day and evening.

We hope you all enjoy our new venue and that it helps make your bridge play in Tucson memorable. Dates for the Tucson Winter Sectional are January 7-10, with the Tucson Non-Life Master Cactus Flower Regional February 25-28.

Look for the ads in this, and forthcoming, issues of *ScoreCard*.

Tucson Cactus Flower 299er Regional



Desert Diamond Hotel and Casino

By Barry Abrahams

One of the few regionals limited to Non-Life Masters will be held in Tucson from February 25 to 28, 2010. The tournament is being held at the new Desert Diamond Hotel Conference Center and Casino which offers beautiful accommo-

dations, a variety of dining choices, and all without any taxes.

Unit 356 offers players free coffee and tea, morning pastries, plenty of candy, pre-dealt hands and hand records and a free buffet lunch at the Swiss Teams event on Sunday.

Come join us at this new venue and get your red points.

Bridge and Friday the 13th

By Jared Johnson
ScoreCard Editor

Want to play bridge on Friday the 13th? This past year had two Friday the 13th's in a row, which is an infrequent occurrence. Of course, February 13 has to be a Friday and it must not be a Leap Year. So, it's more like one year in nine that has two Friday the 13th's in a row. And, another

Friday the 13th rolled around in November, making a total of three in 2009.

Several District 17 sectionals included that fateful date - Denver (twice), Phoenix, El Paso, and Pueblo.

Of course, both home and tournament bridge are basically zero sum games. A good score (raw score or matchpoint score) for

(See Friday the 13th on page 12)

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:

jaredjohnson@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.