

District 21 Unitscope

Jungwirth & Trelle Uhl reported a 72% game recently.

David Machado was in the hospital for surgery, but he returned to bridge promptly.

The games during the week of December 7-13 will be Great Western Holiday STAC games. The December 13 unit game will be a potluck Christmas party, and the annual general meeting will be held.

Dear Santa, I've been good all year

So now that Christmas will soon be here,

Help me get some bridge fame

By improving my game.

And thank you since you are such a dear!

Merry Christmas

Monterey

By Maja

The digital age is fomenting a revolution in bridge. *OKbridge.com* was the first web site to offer online duplicate bridge, in 1992, and now has 18,000 members in 90 countries around the world paying \$99 a year to play bridge with each other day and night. Other web sites, like E-bridge at *acbl.com* and *swan-games.com*, also report heavy traffic.

Although some people learn to play bridge from instructors at local clubs, others teach themselves the game. One woman taught herself the game three years ago and now plays online 15 hours a week with regular partners from the United States, Canada, Sweden, England, Bulgaria and Croatia. Another player in his late 50s used to run marathons and now plays bridge 10 or 11 hours a day in tournaments. He says he gets that same feeling he used to get at the end of 26 miles when his endorphins were running. The initiated often portray bridge as a lover that continues to seduce you, even into old age, and is never boring.

Bridge has a language all its own. At minimum, it takes four players, two pairs of partners, to play. Play begins by dealing out a 52-card deck, 13 cards to each player. The players evaluate their hands, and the

auction then begins, with each player making a series of bids, which are estimates of how many four-card tricks their partnership can take. Points are then awarded based on their success or failure.

One sign of bridge's re-emergence is the World Bridge Federation's push to make it an official sport in the Winter Olympics. While it's doubtful that there will be Olympic-class bridge clubs with retractable roofs to let natural light onto the card tables, the International Olympic Committee has officially recognized the bridge federation, which is the first (of many) steps in the formidable process of making any sport an Olympic event.

One wrinkle might be that doping controversy. A top player, Disa Eythorsdottir, was denied her silver medal in the 2002 world championships in Montreal after she refused to take a drug test. She said that she had recently taken diet pills and feared they would lead to a false positive in the test for a variety of performance-enhancing drugs. Since drug tests were introduced to World Bridge Federation tournaments in 2000, two players have failed, though no medals were involved in those cases.

And now to the news: Jill and Lyde's Easy-bridge! ten-week program ended recently. There are continuing workshops offered twice a month on Thursday evenings. These will continue after the holidays in January. Call Lyde or Jill for more information.

Plans for the Holiday Party are moving ahead; be sure to sign up at the Bridge Center. Also, plan ahead for the annual Early Bird New Year's Eve Party at the Bridge Center. Appetizers and wine at 4:30, followed by bridge, break for supper, and then more bridge followed by champagne and home to bed by 9:30. Sign-up at the Bridge Center as reservations are necessary.

Recent Club Appreciation winners: Non-Life Master games: Bill & Betty Prunty; Jean Engvall & Suzanne Snyder; Joan & John Chambers; Maria Gussner & Suzanne

Klein. Tuesday evening Pairs, Sharon Larson & Maja. Wednesday Pairs, Joan Mack & Joseph Howell. Friday Pairs, Pat Thomas & Sarah Stern. Sunday Pairs, Ronald Loiacono & Martha Hawley.

Napa/Solano/Sonoma

By Joe Freeman

Four Unit 512 players recently achieved Life Master milestones.

First, Britt-Marie Eldred is our newest Life Master. Also, Ann Smith has reached the level of Gold Life Master; Gloria Exline is now a Silver Life Master and Richard Tebay is a Bronze Life Master. Congratulations on these achievements.

Clubs in Unit 512 hold games on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In addition, the unit has games every first and third Sunday starting at 1:00 p.m. at the Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson, Napa. The Sunday games almost always offer "triple points" and a table fee of \$6.00, which includes food. If you haven't been lately, check us out.

Our Holiday Party/Sunday game is Dec. 6, and it is rated a unit championship.

Complete information about our clubs and games can be found on our web site at www.acblunit512.com/

Earlier this year, Sue Votglin started a game on Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in Rio Vista. Elsewhere in the unit, open games are held at noon on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Vintage House Senior Center in Sonoma and on Fridays at the senior center in Napa. There is a Student-Novice game at 1:00 p.m. in Sonoma on Tuesdays at the Vintage House. Currently, there are lessons and classes at various levels in Napa, Sonoma and Vacaville.

At all our clubs, we work hard to make new players feel welcome and to find partners for those who come. See our web site for complete information about all this and our parties for the holidays.

In celebration of Club Appreciation month, we had a couple of team games in Sonoma. Anastasia Loban & Randall Hoyle were on the team that won each time.

The unit NAOP was held in Napa on October 18 with Clyde & Kathleen Smith being the top scorers for both A & B and Kathleen Gilmour & Barbara Lemme were the top qualifiers in C.

At our November 1 unit championship, Bill Wells & Ed Sutcliffe were the overall winners in A & B while Lynn Dahm & Barbara Lemme won in C.

Our clubs are participating in the Great Western Holiday STAC week in December, which brings to mind the feat of Dan Harp in the August Great Western Summer STAC where Dan accumulated over 22 points making the Western Conference leader board twice.

Palo Alto

By Marian Kelly

The Palo Alto Unit's lecture series continues this year after a highly successful 2008-09, when an average of 60 persons attended each of 19 lectures. Lectures (actually, mini-lessons) are held two Thursday mornings per month, each lecturer giving two consecutive lessons. Last year's instructors were Dave Bernstein, Sherie Greenberg, Kathy Harper, Geeske Joel, Sue Johnston, Ron Karr, Jim Leuker, Eric Mayefsky, and Lori Spaeth, and many of those savvy folks are lecturing on different subjects this year. Consult the unit's web site, www.paloaltobridge.com

This series is made possible by tax-deductible donations from unit members.

And speaking of bridge education, the unit is experiencing unusually high interest in beginning and intermediate bridge classes. For example, enrollment for the 2009 Intermediate class, which started on September 17, maxed out at 90 students with another 20 on the wait list. The unit will repeat this course starting in February. Those interested in future classes are invited to consult the web site, www.paloaltobridge.com

The unit board election just concluded has added six new members to the board. They are: Mike Atherton (incumbent) Steve Barasch, Terry Lancaster, Lu Issacs, John Mattis and Sue Griswold. They join current

board members Phyllis Gaffney, Eric Mayefsky, Jeanette McNeil, Grant Spaeth and Dave Wheeler to form the 2010 board.

Reno

By Bud Brewer

Reno Youth Bridge's after school activity classes at the Washoe County Middle Schools for the 2009-2010 school year are under way with possibly as many as ten schools participating. Kathy Lane, president of Reno Youth Bridge, a non-profit company organized last summer to administer the bridge teaching program, has announced that following the conclusion of their classes this fall, the company is planning to offer several inter-scholastic duplicate bridge tournaments next spring for the student's participation. This year, returning students will have the opportunity to learn and practice playing at the "Teaching Table" on the Bridge Base Online software on Saturday morning beginning after the Christmas Holidays.

Reno Youth Bridge operated a pilot program last year culminating with an all participant duplicate tournament held at the Reno Bridge Center on June 6. The students enjoyed the event and expressed the desire to have more such competition in this year's program. Making it possible to bring this wonderful game to a new generation is the volunteering of 20 or more members of the ACBL Reno Unit to teach or assist in teaching the 16 week after school activity classes. No small amount of help is also given by faculty members and parents who provide snacks and car pooling to take students home. Of course being a fully funded activity by Reno Youth Bridge, the generous financial support by bridge enthusiasts in the area is essential.

The October unit game at the Reno Bridge Center was won by Satish Gupta & Donna McCloud who held off the challenge of Conrad Evans & Nels Erickson who were sprinting at the finish but got punished making an overly aggressive sacrifice bid on their last hand and fell just short in second place. Only three points back in 3rd place were Mona Fleischmann & Lillian Johnson, followed by Marie Johnson & June Lucas, Sheila Wimer & Lin Goldstein, and Dan Green & Virginia Ewick.

Several members of the Reno unit have volunteered to assist District 20's Holiday Regional to be held at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno beginning December 26 and finishing on New Year's Eve.

Always a popular event especially for those competing in unit or national McKenney races, the event this year will be a warmup for the North American Bridge Championships to be held at the same hotel on March 11-21, 2010. Reno holds the record for the most tables at any of the [Spring] NABC events and next year should be no exception. Priced right and with major room renovation completed, excellent dining options and no charge for parking, this venue is one of the best for any major bridge tournament.

Sacramento

By Bob Olsen

The October 18 new member educational forum for people who play rubber bridge and would like to learn duplicate was a great success. The morning session featured four speakers, followed by an excellent lunch and the afternoon game with 15 tables of duplicate. Hand-records were also available. Several participants joined the ACBL and everyone were given a list of the local clubs.

The Halloween party and unit game on Oct. 25 was also well attended with 22 tables. The costumes were very imaginative. For best costume Linda Rancourt was voted first prize, with a pumpkin head witch's costume. Harris Levin was second, dressed as a sheriff. Third was a pair "Thing One and Thing Two," dressed alike in red clown costumes with blue hair (sorry I don't have the names).

Fourth place was a tie: Ann Hill as a nun and Linda Gorski as Marilyn Monroe.

Mark your calendars for Dec. 4, 5, 6 for the unit Winter Sectional at the Orangevale Community Center. Again, a separate

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