

District 21 Unitscope

Sacramento

By Dave Vidaver

I'm resuming writing this column in spite of popular demand after a long hiatus and have yet to think of anything clever to say. As such, I have decided that I will mention a player's name and accomplishments in this column for a small fee; just send \$1.00 and a blurb not to exceed 75 words to me care of the Sacramento Bridge Club. Please keep submissions upbeat or be prepared to dig deeper; you should send \$2.00 if you want something like "the 37% game on Tuesday night was entirely due to [enter partner's name here]'s gross incompetence."

And please keep it bridge related; that Lisa DeCarlo is sleeping with Bill Chamberlain or Sandra Bartok had some "procedures" done last month is not appropriate for my column (and it's not like these are big secrets in any case).

It is with great sadness that I report Jacque Todd's passing a couple of months back. A regular at the Sacramento Bridge Club for more years than I, her table presence was marked by serenity, a calm demeanor, and a twinkle in her eye no matter the state of her game or of mine.

I never thought that one could play too much bridge until returning from 11 days at the Reno Nationals, picking up the first hand in the Tuesday night club game, and involuntarily gagging at the sight of playing cards. Of course the feeling of nausea seemingly went away with the first top (only to be transferred to my partner when I misplayed a dummy a few minutes later). I played in the Charity Pairs that kicked off the Nationals and thanks to a substantial package of gifts from the opponents, we won our section, edging out Bob Hamman in the process. This is the second time I've played in the same section/direction as the

umpteenth-time world champion – in the same event in Long Beach several years back, my partner and I managed to eke out a section win with something like 58%. So the evidence is in – *I own Bob Hamman*.

Now if only the rest of the bridge community would stop spanking me like a rented mule.

The last two-three years have witnessed a large number of newcomers to duplicate in the Sacramento area (although I can hear club owners asking "Where the #\$\$%@ are they?"). Like their predecessors they are unflaggingly enthusiastic and unlike some of us, they are uniformly upbeat and polite. Do as I say and not as I do in forgiving them their occasional procedural faux pas and auction or line of play that hands you an undeserved zero.

"You just fixed us," I icily commented one afternoon to a novice, who had the presence of mind to calmly reply with, "Well, at your age, you probably weren't planning on having any more children anyway."

I play with a partner who frequently reacts to bad trump splits and honors offside as if the position of the cards has been changed just for the current round and will return to its declarer-friendly state as soon as the board is passed to the next table. This has led to a philosophical discussion regarding the existence and nature of a Bridge God; my partner insists that he exists (it must be a "he" as a feminine deity could not be so cruel) and punishes him, as witnessed by adverse lies of the cards that are at the far extremes (according to him) of mathematical probability.

I don't believe that an omnipotent entity governs my fate at the bridge table, but have noticed the following: the chances of the "best" line of play being the most successful one are directly proportional to the caliber of the field, i.e., Qx is only offside when you are the only one to take the finesse.

Corollary: if you are the only pair in the room to bid a slam that requires nothing more than a 3-2 trump split, trumps will split 4-1.

If you do one really stupid thing during a session, it will be against the one person you really want to impress with your card-play. If you take two-way finesses through the opponent you dislike, their partner will always hold the card you are finessing for. Corollary: If you don't, they won't.

As you read this, the Sacramento Sectional is likely imminent. April 30-May 2, with travel-friendly starting times, and great hospitality (at the buffet, if not always at the bridge table). Meals between sessions on Saturday and Sunday (donations gratefully required), but remember to bring a pillow; the chairs at the playing site elicit confessions of having committed capital crimes, in Sacramento or elsewhere (why is Sacramento the state capital, but the legislature works [sic] in the capitol building?).

And if you can't make it this weekend, put the regional in the first week of June on your calendar, if you haven't done so already. And, as summer nears, remember that your local bridge club is the best place to save energy and reduce your carbon footprint; they'll have the air-conditioning on so that you don't have to.

San Francisco

By Kim Fanady

Spring is here at last! The Run for the Roses is the first Saturday in May, Bay to Breakers is the third Sunday in May, and it's almost time to run on out to the San Francisco Summer Sectional. Join us at our usual great location, the Janet Pomeroy Center next door to the zoo, for lots of bridge, food and fun on June 12 & 13. Look for our ad elsewhere in this issue.

Hope to see you there.

May also brings us the Great Western Spring STAC (Sectional Tournament at Clubs), starting on Monday, May 3, and continuing all week. STAC is your chance to win silver points at your regular club game. Post a big score and you'll make the Western Conference overalls and win double digit silver points! All the local clubs are participating, so go prospecting for some precious metal.

Later in May, the unit game will be a pairs event on the 15th, at the Masonic Temple, 855 Brotherhood Way. All are welcome.

Speaking of prospecting, many Unit 506ers struck the mother lode at the Reno NABC in March. A very special mention goes to Betsy Marcus & Vicki Lerner, who placed third overall in the national Women's Pairs, beating out a slew of famous world and national champions. Terrific! Check out all the winners on the ACBL website; lots of names say San Francisco.

Congrats to all.

Partner & I went, saw, played, didn't exactly cover ourselves in glory, but had a terrific time. We got to play against living legend Bob Hamman, a great thrill. His partner, Shawn Quinn, another world class player, went down in a makeable contract against us. "Oops!" happens to the champs too. We broke out of the bridge cocoon to visit the Nevada Museum of Art, which was exhibiting a gorgeous painting by Renaissance master Raphael, on a very rare loan from the Pitti Palace in Florence, Italy. Who would have expected to see one of the treasures of Western civilization, right there in Reno? Another thrill.

Found some good restaurants and one very hip coffeehouse called the Hub, staffed by totally rad twentysomethings who made great French press coffee. And I got in a few high altitude training runs on the pretty Truckee River bike path.

All in all a very fun NABC!

After a veritable flood of new members over the last few months, we had none this month. Hopefully lots of eager newcomers are out there just waiting to sign up. Welcome to our transfers: Tom Adams (So. Indiana/W. Kentucky), Kevin Castner (East Bay), Leonard Epstein (Diablo Valley), Shailasa Mandpe (Santa Clara), and Cecile

Segal (San Mateo).

Be sure to say hello to these transplants when you meet them at the table.

Finally, congrats to all those climbing up the masterpoint ladder this month: Junior Masters Christine Boyd, James Boyd, David Jamison, Terry Levin, Eve Thompson, Vivian Tsai, Barbara Voss; Club Masters Kay Edelman, Judith Weil; Sectional Masters Daniel Banks, Linda Bucklin, Bruce Rutan; Regional Master, Kayoko Miki; NABC Masters Jim Estes, Jane McLaughlin, Jean Wildberg; Bronze Life Masters Louis Lipset, Jeffrey Reid, Martha Rosenberg; Silver Life Masters Ken Lockhart, Andy Straus.

Good going all!

San Mateo/Redwood City

By M.C. Hevener

Spring Break has come and gone, but did you notice the activity it brought to our unit? Menlo High School in Atherton offers a pre-break curriculum of 16 electives during the week, and about 18 students selected; duplicate bridge!

After a crash course (three days intensive study) students came to our Thursday morning 299er game and ventured into the world of bidding boxes, convention cards and director calls. Gabe Lucas, Director of Instructional Technology, has been offering bridge during the week before spring break for several years and he joined his students. As I arrived, all were listening to Ted Richmond's hand analysis at the end of the game. It was such a pleasure to have them join us!

At the end of March we offered a Pro-Am Swiss Teams game to our unit. For many of our amateurs, it was a first ever exposure to playing "teams" and certainly an introduction to challenging new scoring methods. After fueling up on a fabulous buffet lunch (thank you, Sandra Tilch), 28 teams went head to head at the tables, happily ignoring the rain outside.

First place in Flight A went to the team of Arlie Lamb, Ed Hornung with amateur partners Dena Fisher & Lolly Donovan who cashed in with over five masterpoints for the afternoon. Capturing second: Eugene Sor & Marcus Ballinger playing with Jerry Scott & Douglas Ulrich who each won over four MPs.

Also in March, we went up to the Nationals in Reno for a few days of fun. Some of our locals were in the Daily Bulletin on a regular basis. Eugene Sor & Marcus Ballinger led the Red Ribbon Pairs at the halfway point; they did not win this year, but I predict it's only a matter of time and this talented pair will win it all!

Another interesting feature at the Reno NABC was a daily listing of the top 100 I/N (Intermediate/Newcomer) masterpoint winners. Locals Eleanor Battaglia (Foster City) & Frank (San Mateo) were right up top the leader board all three days we were there, with over 12 points for the tournament. Well done!

Unit Milestones: ACBL reports ten new members have joined our unit this month. New Junior Masters include Joan Berger, Linda Frye, Dave Hakman, Helen Larash, Olga Longstreet, Logue Malouf, Jayne Scallion and Nancy Soltau.

We recognize new Life Masters Nancy Finney and David Silber, new Bronze Life Master Mary Jane Armacost and new Gold Life Master Tony Baranski.

Our next event will be the unit's annual meeting and Barometer game, scheduled for Sunday, May 16. This is our yearly election party and award night, including a full dinner of tri-tip with all the fixings.

If you have never experienced a Barometer game, this would be a perfect time to try one, to meet the new board members and to find out who our annual award-winners.

Please check out our website, www.unit498.com for any changes and all details. In the meanwhile, I'll see you at the tables.

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web site: www.eastbayunit-502.com



East Bay Spring Sectional

HOLY REDEEMER CENTER
8945 Golf Links Rd., Oakland

May 28-30, 2010

Friday May 28

at 1:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. (single sessions)

Stratified Open Pairs 0-500/500-1500/1500+

Stratified 299er Pairs 0-50/50-100/100-300 (Attendance Permitting)

Saturday May 29

at 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (single sessions)

Strati-flighted Pairs A/X 3000+

Strats B/C/D 1000-1500/500-1000/0-500

Stratified 299er Pairs 0-50/50-100/100-300 (Attendance Permitting)

Sunday May 30

at 11:00 a.m. and approx. 4:30 p.m.

"BARBARA HARMON Bracketed Swiss" -- 20VP scale

The top bracket will consist of the highest ranked teams plus any teams that opt to be in the top bracket.

Teams must play both sessions.

All brackets except the bottom will play 7 rounds, 7 boards;
Bottom bracket plays 7 rounds, 6 boards.

Table fees \$9.00 per Session (non-ACBL & unpaid \$10.00)

Mid-chart allowed in Flight A/X and top bracket of Swiss Teams.

DIRECTIONS:

From 580 (from the north) take Golf Links Rd. exit, Right
(from the south) take Golf Links Rd. exit, Left

From 880 take 98th Ave. exit – East, Left onto Golf Links Rd.
(just before Hwy. 580)

From Golf Links Rd: Approx 0.3 miles north of 98th Ave.
Left into Parking Lot (Castlewood Rd. on the right)

Information: call (510) 842-6267