The Phantom Strikes Again!

by Harold Feldheim

An important area of bridge tactics revolves around sacrifice bidding. The concept is to take advantage of a good trump fit and become declarer rather than letting the opponents fulfill their contract. Thus, if the opponents can make a vulnerable slam (+1430) and you can play in your suit and go set only -800, you’ll net a substantial gain, in this case 1430 – 800 equaling 630 points or 12 IMPs. But when a sacrifice turns out to be ill-judged and you go set but the opponents cannot fulfill their contract, this is known in the parlance as a phantom save. A point of strategy, especially in a short match, is to determine whether a sacrifice is a good result or a bad result since this information might influence later decision-making.

While not terribly remarkable, the following is an interesting example from a Swiss event and exemplifies the possible pitfalls in this type of analysis.

Dealer: North
Vulnerability: North/South

North
♠ J 10 7 4
♥ 7 6 5 4
♦ K 3
♣ J 9 4

East
♠ 4
♥ 10 9 8
♦ Q J 10 9 5
♣ 10 5 3 2

West
♠ A 6
♥ K J 3
♦ 8 7 6
♣ A K 8 7 6

South
♠ Q 8 5 3 2
♥ A Q 2
♦ A 4 2
♣ Q

North’s 3♥ was intended as preemptive. Knowing this, East decided to pass, hoping that the N-S pair would languish in a part score. But South, holding a good 6-card suit and a 5-loser hand, had no problem carrying on to game. Now East, with favorable vulnerability, four trumps, and shortness in the opponents suit, decided to sacrifice in 5♣, and was doubled by his opponents.

The defense was +300, scoring two diamonds, one heart and one club. And East was unhappy because it looked like N/S could not make 4♠. With the nasty heart position, South figured to lose one club, one spade and two hearts. East assumed his teammates would also be in four spades, down one. So instead of pushing the board, East thought the “sacrifice” had cost nine IMPs.

Trying to get the “guestimated” IMP loss back, East-West indulged in some over-aggressive action on the next board and were doubled for -500. As it turned out, their team lost a close match.

At the other table, South declared 4♠. West led the K♥ and switched to the A♠ and another spade. Declarer won in dummy, ruffed the small club, cashed two high diamonds ruffing the third diamond in dummy to reach the following 6-card ending.

Post-Mortem: East-West were 100% at fault for at least two reasons. First, the opponents at the other table may have indulged in the same sacrifice and second, their analysis might be wrong. Here, they erroneously believed the sacrifice had cost them IMPs, and thereby lost the match trying to win back IMPs they hadn’t actually lost. In this case, it was wrong by 17 IMPs (instead of losing 9 IMPs, they won the board by 8).

Probably the most important point is to trust your teammates; they may come back with some surprising successes. Don’t ruin their triumphs. It’s bad karma and it’s bad bridge.
**From the CBA President**

We all go to a club or tournament game dreaming we will win, hoping we will “scratch” and, most of all, having faith that at the very least, we will enjoy ourselves and the experience of playing bridge.

Unfortunately, sometimes that doesn’t happen. But there is help for some of those unpleasant situations.

One of the least understood positions on the CBA Board of Directors is that of Recorder. According to the ACBL, our national organization, the role of Recorder is a required responsibility in all unit, or district, organizations.

Essentially, the Recorder is the go-to person to receive, investigate, and evaluate player’s memos, which might be questions about another player’s behavior during a club or local tournament game. Other issues might be in the form of complaints or a request for clarification of something general that occurred during the course of a game or scoring process and which is not clearly understood.

Issues, questions or complaints may be filed by players or directors of the CBA, as well as by non-members participating in ACBL sanctioned events.

The Recorder evaluates the issue and decides if filing a formal charge (with the ACBL) is in order or not. Most often, these issues do not require such a filing. Many are not that clear cut and are only implication of a wrong-doing and lack enough evidence to bring formal charges.

Lenny Russman is the Recorder for the CBA. He can be reached by phone 203-245-6850, email (lbrussman@sbcglobal.net) or regular mail. Lenny follows the practice of most recorders and will usually ask for a written description of the issue or question. He will talk with the person and then, if the issue is a complaint, he will communicate with the subject and if the circumstances require, speak with witnesses as well.

He will make a determination as to whether the complaint is of a very serious nature and necessitates being referred to a disciplinary body. Lenny does not engage in any form of discipline, nor does he recommend such action.

Assuming it is not a matter requiring referral, he will attempt to mediate, arbitrate and educate. The Recorder always notifies - in writing - the results of the investigation to the complainant as well as the subject of the complaint. Records are kept of all communication with the parties involved in the Recorder’s administrative file. One of the purposes of keeping records is to establish patterns of behavior. This is particularly important if a frequency of behavior or complaint becomes evident. Confidentiality and privacy are always maintained.

Directors and club managers have the right, and it is considered an essential part of the job, to control and deal with behaviors that may disrupt a game or annoy and distract other players.

Directors also have the right to conduct the process of the game.

Knowing ACBL bridge rules is part of a director’s obligation. But issues about rulings are NOT part of the Recorder’s job description. If a player disagrees with or doesn’t understand a director’s ruling, he or she may request a “committee” usually composed of one’s peers, or more experienced players, to hear the issue. Players may also directly contact the ACBL.

We assume that most directors deal with behavioral situations in a just manner to ensure the comfort and enjoyment of everyone at the game. If dissatisfied with the director’s handling of a behavioral issue or some other circumstance, players have the right to contact the Recorder for a fair and non-biased adjudication of the issues.

It is a primary goal of duplicate bridge that people have a good time. Players are expected to compete fairly, to be considerate, to follow the rules, and have a pleasurable bridge experience at all of Connecticut’s club games or tournaments.

*Esther Watstein*
President, CBA

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**MILESTONES AND CONGRATULATIONS**

Congratulations to Grand Life Master and Kibitzer Contributor John Stiefel who has passed 20,000 masterpoints!

- **New Life Masters**
  - Larry Bowman
  - Roger Crean
  - Carolyn Halsey
  - Rebecca Jacobson
  - James Larson
  - Nancy Matthews
  - Doris Nussbaum
  - Joseph Pagerino
  - Jackie Stone

- **Emerald Life Master (7500 MP’s)**
  - Faye Marino

- **Gold Life Master (2500 MP’s)**
  - Jay Force

- **Silver Life Master (1000 MP’s)**
  - Lea Berla
  - Roger Crean

- **Bronze Life Master (500 MP’s)**
  - Audrey Cadwallader
  - Lee Herdle
  - Carol Kosmodel
  - Joseph Pagerino
  - Jackie Stone
  - David Wright

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**Wanted: More Youth Bridge Groups**

How can you help?

If you know of a school faculty member or other school-connected individual who would help recruit students to learn to play bridge, New England Youth Bridge, Inc. (NEYB) will assist by supplying lesson plans and – if you do not want to teach the students yourself – by recruiting a bridge player to teach the lessons. Just contact a board member of NEYB (names are listed below) to talk about how to proceed.

NEYB is a tax exempt charitable organization. NEYB, which charges no fees for teaching youth to play bridge, offers not only lesson plans, teaching tips, cards, boards, and bidding boxes, but also, as necessary, financial assistance to help the youth bridge club succeed.

NEYB board members are Adam Parrish, Murthy Ayyagari, Pam Miller, Jeff Lehman, Jim Rasmussen, Lisa Allison, and Adam Grossack.
S
ome very fine players will tell you that duplicate bridge is a
totally different game when
scored at matchpoints versus IMPs
or rubber bridge. This is certainly an
exaggeration, since the mechanics of
the game are unchanged and bidding
methods and techniques of play
generally apply to either method of
scoring.

Yet there are significant differences in
strategy, and matchpoint scoring surely
presents a much more difficult challenge.
The two scoring methods imply different
objectives during the play of the hand.
In IMP scoring, as declarer your
objective is generally clear cut. Make
your contract.

If the contract is a good one, and
requires only normal breaks, play
as safely as possible. Overtricks are
unimportant.

If the contract is shaky or doubtful,
take chances. Play for whatever
holding of the opponents’ cards will
enable you to succeed, no matter
how unlikely.

Likewise, when defending at IMPs, go all
out to defeat the contract.

With matchpoint scoring, the objective
either declaring or defending is to do
better than the pairs who hold the same
cards when the hand is replayed at other
tables. In bidding, this leads to close
doubles of partscore contracts, unheard
of in IMP scoring.

Good matchpoint players talk of “the
magic +200,” since +200 beats the
common partscore in the range of
110 to 170. When the opponents are
vulnerable, beating them one trick for
+100 is not a good result when your side
could be making a partscore for 110 or
more. But +200 is likely to be a very
good result. Hence the close doubles.

In the play, as overtricks are very
important, a good declarer may even
jeopardize a contract to go after them.
Defenders often have a difficult time
deciding that defeating a contract is
not likely. They must instead focus on
limiting overtricks.

In determining how much risk to take,
declarer often has to make a judgment
about what the rest of the field will be
doing on a particular deal. Two issues
are particularly important.

1. Is the contract normal? If yes,
declarer may still take some prudent
risks to try to beat the field. But,
if the contract is unusual, declarer
must go all out to try to beat the
field, taking great risk if necessary.

2. Has the defense been effective
against you, opening lead in
particular? If the defense has been
especially good, you may need to
take extra risks to make up ground.
If on the other hand, the defense has
been sloppy (perhaps a gift on the
opening lead), then you can afford
to play conservatively, since you’re
already ahead of the game.

The following is an example. This hand
was played by Minna when she was new
to duplicate (matchpoint) bridge, and
did not understand these subtleties.
Instead, she believed based on her
rubber bridge experience, that making
the contract was always paramount.

Dealer: North
Vulnerability: North/South

Majorca
(North)
♠ K J 9 4
♥ K 10 5
♦ 10 7 3
♣ A J 9

Professor
(West)
Minna
(South)
♠ Q 8 7 5 2
♥ A 9 2
♦ A K
♣ Q 10 4

Warren
(East)

Even with the five card major suit,
Minna elected the 1NT opening, and
Majorca, with a perfectly flat 4-3-3-3,
raised to 3NT, not exploring for a major
suit fit. Thus the partnership failed to
find their 9-card spade fit. It happens.
The play was not very difficult, or for
that matter very interesting, except for
the match-point implications.

The professor led a fourth-best ♦ 4,
onto which Warren played the Jack as
Minna won with the King. She now
forced out the ♣ A, won by Warren, who
continued diamonds. The professor
followed with the deuce, so that surely
looked like an original 5 card holding.

Minna could now count nine winners,
four spades, two hearts, two diamonds
and a club.

She could see the possibility of a club
finesse, which if it worked would have
her making five. But if the finesse lost,
she would likely lose five tricks, the ♠ A,
the ♦ K, and three diamond tricks, for
down 1 in an ice-cold contract. So, she
eschewed the finesse, and settled for
making 3NT.

In the post-mortem, the professor
gently helped Minna to understand
the implications of matchpoint scoring:
surely many pairs in the room would
find their way to a Four Spade contract,
either with a 1♠ opening bid or thru use
of Stayman following a 1NT opening.

In that contract, declarer would not be
concerned with diamond losers, and so
would be able to take the club finesse
with impunity, making 4 or 5. Thus
taking the club finesse was absolutely
indicated. If it won, she would beat
out the 4♠ contracts, and if it lost she
would get the same terrible matchpoint
result as 3NT making 3. As it was, 3 NT
making 3 salvaged half a matchpoint, as
she tied for bottom with one other pair.
You’re playing in an elevated pair event. That is one that carries a national rating. It’s four sessions played over two days. You’ve qualified for the second day but you have a relatively low carryover. Fortunately, your third session was good so you are in contention for a high overall placing.

Midway through the fourth session you encounter one of the seeded pairs. Both your hand and partner’s are unexceptional so the opponents have the auction to themselves. After three passes your LHO opens 1♣ and it goes 2♣ Drury on your right. This promises at least three spades and limit raise (or perhaps even better after reevaluation) values. You still have nothing to say so it goes pass to LHO. He thinks for a little bit and then being something of a garrulous sort slaps the 4♥ card on the table muttering to the effect that to do anything else would create jeopardy.

The hand proves to be routine and declarer is soon claiming five. What in the world was all the chatter about? Well it’s matchpoints. Overtricks have far more importance than they would in a Swiss or KO match. He had a hand where after Drury there was the possibility of slam but he finally judged that there was simply too much risk in exploring for what was likely to be a marginal slam and in the process providing the opponents with a lot of information that might well cut down on the overtricks. At IMPs, where overtricks are of less meaning, he may well have risked an informative auction in order to explore for slam.

Fast forward to the final weekend (this is the recent Dallas NABCs). It’s the two day nationally rated North American Swiss. Once again you’ve qualified for the final day. Once again your carryover ain’t so hot (you were in the middle of the pack of the qualifiers) but once again things seem to be picking up as you have a small loss and the two solid wins (scored at Victory Points) so you have chances of a decent overall finish.

It’s the fourth match of the day and you sit down against two quite accomplished players. Note that it is players, not pair. That’s because it is an ad hoc partnership formed just the day before for this event.

You have a very good result on the first board stealing the contract in 3♥ making after the defense goes astray when the opponents are on for 4♠. On the second board your LHO (East) picks up a fine hand. Take his seat and see how you think it should be handled:

- ♠ 6 5
- ♥ J
- ♦ A K 10 9 4
- ♣ A K J 9 8

Everyone is not vulnerable and your RHO (North) opens 1♥ in front of you. You elect to call 2NT showing your hand. Take his seat and see how you think it should be handled:

- ♠ 6 5
- ♥ J
- ♦ A K 10 9 4
- ♣ A K J 9 8

What’s South’s (partner’s) double all about? One thing that it is not about is a string of small hearts. It shows a card in the suit: an Ace, King or Queen. Since you expect dummy to have a maximum of three cards in the majors and since your hand suggests that it would be advantageous for pard to gain the lead and put a spade through you put a small heart on the table. If you didn’t hold the ♥Q there would be a fair amount of jeopardy attached to this but since the double shows one of the three top honors there is little risk.

Voilà! Pard wins the King and instantly understands what is expected of him. Since he holds the ♠Q you collect two more tricks, plus 50.

So what went wrong here? Your opponent’s lack of partnership hurt. West thought that his jump to 4♦ was clearly preemptive denying a good hand. In his methods if he had been interested in game he would have cue bid 3♥ before bidding 4♦. East on the other hand expected West to have invitational values. Since so little in the right spot would have been enough to make a slam, he felt compelled to make a try. But alas, it was a case of bid more, make less.

At the other table, your teammates had the same auction up to 4♠. They however had much firmer partnership understanding. The 4♠ bid was clearly preemptive so East was not tempted to make a slam try and simply bid a direct 5♣. Not surprisingly your hand did not find the underlead of his heart honors and spade losers went away on clubs.
In this recent deal from a recent Regional Swiss Teams, South played well to overcome bad splits in 2 suits to bring home his grand slam.

Dealer: South  
Vulnerability: Both

North
♣ A K J 6 4  
♥ A 10 8 3  
♦ A 9 8 7  
♠ - -

South  
♣ Q 3 2  
♥ K Q 9 7 4  
♦ J 8 3  
♠ A 6

North  East  South  West  
Pass  1♥  5NT  Pass

Opening Lead: ♦K

A few notes about the bidding. North’s 5NT bid was the “grand slam force” and asked South to bid 7♥ if he held two of the top three honors in that suit. Otherwise, North was supposed to sign off in 6♥. (Some pairs play other additional responses to the grand slam force, but these require careful discussion.) North reasoned (correctly in my opinion) that a grand slam would have play regardless of what South held – as long as he had the KQ of trump – but it would be difficult or impossible to determine with assurance that the grand slam does not have good play if South has KQ of trump. Another advantage of North’s direct approach is that it gives little information to the opponents. (See more about this below.)

At any rate, how would you play this hand after winning West K♥ with North’s Ace? (Hint – the hand will be trivial if there are normal splits in the major suits, so planning the play should involve how to handle bad splits in one or both of the majors.)

South’s first play was to cash the K♥ (i.e. following the “double honor first” rule when holding all 3 top honors in the combined hands). This allowed him to pick up Jxxx in either opponent’s hand.

Sure enough, West showed out, marking East with Jxxx.

South now could count 13 tricks (he thought) via five spades, five hearts, two minor suit aces and one club ruff. So he ruffed his ♦6 with dummy’s ♥10. This allowed him to continue with the ♥A and ♥8 and to overtake the ♥8 with the 9 when East didn’t cover. Then he drew the last trump, discarding a diamond from dummy. This was the position after seven tricks had been played.

North  
♠ A K J 6 4  
♥ - - 9 8  
♦ - -

South  
♣ Q 3 2  
♥ 7  
♦ J 8  
♠ A

It seemed like South had the rest of the tricks via five spades, a trump and the club ace; but South realized that it “couldn’t cost” to lead the last trump to trick 7 and the ace of clubs to trick 8 (discarding dummy’s losing diamonds on each of these tricks). West discarded a diamond to trick 7 and then “went into the tank” at trick 8, finally discarding a spade. Sure enough, West’s last six cards were 10-9-8-x-x of spades and the ♥Q; so he had the unenviable choice of discarding the ♥Q to set up South’s J (East had played a discouraging diamond to trick 1) or to set up dummy’s ♦6 for the 13th trick.

Now let’s go back to North’s 5NT bid and say that he had instead responded 1♠ to South’s opening bid and then eventually bid to 7♥. East, who started with a void in spades, would have presumably doubled 7♥ to ask for “an unusual lead, often dummy’s first bid suit” and trumped the opening spade lead to set the contract. (North might have run to 7NT, but there are only 11 top tricks in that contract and perhaps a 12th via a “squeeze/end-play” against West.) In the actual hand, I think East should have nonetheless doubled the final contract to ask for an “unusual lead” and hoped that West would have figured out to lead a spade for him to trump. In the actual hand, West started with five spades, four diamonds and four clubs; so he would presumably have “gone with the odds” and led his longest suit for his partner to ruff.

True – there are hands where doubling 7♥ might induce North to run to a makeable 7NT – and there are other hands where West will not guess correctly which suit East is void in. I nonetheless favor the bold double of 7♥ rather than the “safe” pass hoping that somehow the Jxxx of trump or something else will be enough to set the grand slam. Sitting quietly and going for -2210 is not going to be a good result at any form of the game.

Finally, note that South goes down if he carelessly ruffs his ♦6 with dummy’s ♥8 at trick 3. (After the ♥A wins trick 4, East doesn’t cover dummy’s ♥10 at trick 5 and South is forced to lead a spade at trick 6 to try to get to his hand to draw the last trump.)

IN MEMORIAM
Connecticut residents as listed in the ACBL Bridge Bulletin
Bobbi B. Jacobs, Stamford, CT
Peter M. Kilbride, Branford, CT
Gary F. Seckinger, Wethersfield, CT
Playing in the Grand National Teams in Sturbridge recently, I had a tough defensive problem, and an interesting bidding problem that almost gave me a headache.

Here is my defensive problem:

Dealer: South  
Vulnerability: North/South

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<th>West</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
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<tr>
<td>♠ A J 10 7 6 2</td>
<td>♠ 5</td>
<td>♠ 10</td>
<td>♠ K</td>
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<tr>
<td>♥ A 6</td>
<td>♥ 6 4 3 2</td>
<td>♥ Q 9 8 2</td>
<td>♥ A K J 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ 6</td>
<td>♦ A</td>
<td>♦ Q 5 4 3 2</td>
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I now bid 3♥ to confirm the double fit showing first round control, and my bid of 3NT was a waiting bid, denying first round control of clubs and inviting partner to make another cue bid.

I'm now at the cross roads and I have options as to how to continue the auction. In a bridge auction, the objective is to communicate your values and distribution to your partner until one of you knows enough about their partner's hand to take control of the auction – to become the captain.

When I look at my hand I have a 6th club, a singleton A♥, and the Q♠, all of which would be hard to describe to Larry if I didn't take control of the auction. As a result, I now bid 4NT which was Roman Key Card for hearts. The auction continued:

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<th>West</th>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
<th>South</th>
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<tr>
<td>4NT</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>5♥</td>
<td>Pass</td>
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And I had to make another decision as to how to continue, partner's 5♥ showed 0 or 3 Key cards, so I knew that partner had the ♦A, ♥K and ♥A, and a grand slam was looking a distinct possibility.

If I now bid 5NT telling partner we had all the key cards and asking for kings, the risk is that we might end up in a grand slam with a heart loser. As a result I decided to ask Larry if he had the ♦Q by bidding 5♣. Larry's response of 5NT showed the Queen, but also denied the Kings of clubs and/or diamonds (no surprise about clubs as I was looking at this King in my own hand). Without the Queen, Larry would have returned to the trump suit as cheaply as possible and bid 6♥.

Larry's style is not to show Kings in suits higher than the agreed trump suit, so Larry may also have had the ♦K, but I now had to place the final contract:

<table>
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<th>West</th>
<th>North</th>
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<tr>
<td>5♠</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>5NT</td>
<td>Pass</td>
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Based on the assets between the two hands, I decided to bid a Grand Slam, but which one? In clubs we had a 9 or 10 card fit with no losers in the suit – if we were missing four clubs including the Jack I could play the King from my hand and then finesse either opponent to avoid a loser in case they broke 4-0. I also knew that we had at least an 8 card heart fit with at least the top three honors, but it was possible that there would be a deep heart loser. I was also worried that as we had so many clubs there might be a club lead and a ruff, if hearts were trumps.

7NT was also an option and if I could make five tricks in hearts I could count 13 tricks, but if hearts didn't run I could be in trouble. Playing teams they say that you should only bid a grand slam if you can count 13 tricks so now I gave partner different hands in my mind and bid the Grand Slam in clubs as it had a higher probability of success:

The hearts might run; partner might have a 6th heart and I can set up the suit; partner might have the ♦K; partner might have the singleton ♦A and I can ruff spades in dummy; and even if none of these is in play, I still have chances if partner has a holding such as ♦Ax, ♥KQxx, ♥QJx, ♦Ax. I can ruff the last heart good for one spade pitch, and try to get rid of the other spade loser on a diamond ruffing finesse. If partner's holding is the same with only ♦Qxx or ♥Jxx, I would also have the chance of playing a spade/diamond squeeze against my left hand opponent (so long as they don't lead a spade at trick one and force me to commit to a line too early).

continued on next page
Bridge Forum
(Hamden)

TUESDAY
Leading Pairs: Kevin Hart-Jeff Horowitz are about one win ahead of Rita Brieger-Harold Miller with Hank Banach-George Levinson well back in third place. Bob Hawes and Simon Rich are both in two of the top ten partnerships.

Player-of-the-Year: Jeff and Kevin have taken a significant lead for Player-of-the-Year, leading in two of the three categories and second in the third. Fredda Kelly, Jon Ingersoll and Vera Wardlaw are closely bunched for third place.

Leonora Stein Cup Early Rounds: A few new faces reached the sixteenth-player knockout rounds, most notably Jeffrey Blum, who eliminated defending champion Louise Wood. This proved to be a good omen for the men, who claimed seven of the eight quarterfinal places. Quarterfinal winners were George Levinson, Jon Ingersoll, Rita Brieger and Jeff Horowitz over Harold Miller, Kevin Hart, Bob Hawes and Jeffrey Blum.

FRIDAY
Leading Pairs: Norma and Stan Augenstein recovered from a slow beginning to move about one second-place finish ahead of Steve Grodzinsky-Hank Voegeli. Janice Bruce-Carl Yohans, Helen and Tracy Selmon and Lucy Lacava-George Levinson complete the top five. Breta Adams-Karlene Wood are the top women’s pair.

Player-of-the-Year: Tracy Selmon has the slightest of leads over the Augenstein at the end of the first quarter. Larry Stern is within reach of the top, with Shirley Fruchter and Helen Selmon heading the chasing pack further back.

Aldyth Claiborn Cup Early Rounds: Seven of the eight top seeds were eliminated in the round of sixteen. In the quarterfinals, Arlene Leshine held off a late rally from last man in Hank Voegeli, guaranteeing that this cup’s first male winner would not appear this year. Lucy Lacava squeaked past Rita Brieger, while Norma Augenstein and Janice Bruce won by wide margins over Karlene Wood and Emma Q Antonio.

TUESDAY/FRIDAY COMBINED
Overall Player-of-the-Year: Early leaders Larry Stern and Harold Miller were overtaken by Louise Wood in late February, with Rita Brieger and the Hart-Horowitz partnership joining Harold in a chasing pack.

Slam Challenge: After the two were exactly tied in mid-February, George Levinson opened up a big lead over Joe Pagerino and held on for a 53.48%-49.21% win. Geroge takes on new challenger Vera Wardlaw in the spring. We have had 58 passouts for the year so far, with fourth hand scoring 50.39%. Jeffrey Blum has passed out most often, followed by a tie between Billie Hecker and Simon Rich.

continued on page 9

Tough Defense continued

For the record, I got a club lead and immediately claimed 13 tricks as partner did indeed have the ♥K: ♥AKx, ♥KQxxx, ♦xx, ♥AQx and I could count three spades, three hearts, one diamond, and six clubs.

Once I saw dummy I wished we had been in 7NT. Lucky you didn’t bid the heart grand slam said one of the opponents, as the hearts were breaking 5-0 – just as well we “right sided” the contract and didn’t get a heart lead I thought, and we picked up on this hand as opponents only played in the small slam in clubs at the other table.

This next hand is the defensive hand at the start of this article, so see if you can find the winning defense looking at all four hands:

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<th>North</th>
<th>South</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠</td>
<td>Q 8 4</td>
<td>Q 9 6 5</td>
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<td>♥</td>
<td>A K Q</td>
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<td>5 3</td>
<td>A J 10 7 6 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>♥ A 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦</td>
<td></td>
<td>♦ Q 9 8 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣</td>
<td></td>
<td>♣ A K J 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partner led the 5♣ at trick one, and if you take dummy’s King with your Ace what do lead at trick two to beat this contract?

The answer to this is that there is nothing that will now beat the contract, so long as declarer plays on diamonds to set up two winners in the suit as a priority. If you play the ♦J at some stage, declarer can eventually set up a second spade trick to go with three hearts, two diamonds, and two clubs.

If you don’t play a spade holding declarer to one trick only in the suit, once declarer has set up the diamonds declarer can play on clubs and make 9 tricks via one spade, three hearts, two diamonds, and now three clubs. The problem in setting up your spade suit is that you only have two entries (one of which is used at trick one), and declarer has two stoppers in the suit.

I said this was a tough defensive problem, so the only way to beat the contract is to actually duck the ♠A at trick one, and let the singleton ♠K win (which seems counterintuitive). Now declarer is stranded with 8 tricks whether he plays on diamonds or take the club finesse – assuming declarer plays a diamond now, East can win it with their King and lead the second spade. This allows you to win your Ace of spades and lead the ♦J setting up tricks in spades whilst you still have the ♦A available as an entry to enjoy them. If declarer takes the club finesse then you can set up spades the same way.

On this board our teammates declared 3♠ which made in comfort, but they expected to lose IMPs rather than gain on the hand.
Bidding is a language by which we convey information to partner. If we could physically show our hand to our partner, he would know where to place the contract, whether to declare or defend. When we open 1NT, we convey certain information broadly, 15-17 points, relatively balanced hand. It puts responder in the ballpark, and there are further conventions and bids by which we elicit additional information. For example, responder bids 4NT to ask opener about his point range, looking toward slam.

What meaning should be assigned to a bid of 4♦ by responder over an opening 1NT? Surely such is not necessary to show spades; that is what Jacoby and Texas are for. But it is a bid that is available to convey information. Let’s say that I assign it the following meaning. It is exactly the same as a raise to 4NT as to point-count, slam invitational, but also conveying a hand with at least four cards in each minor, and suggesting that perhaps a minor suit slam would be better than no trump.

Consider: ♠Axx, ♥Kx, ♦AQxx, ♣Kxxx and ♠Kx, ♥Axx, ♦KJxx, ♣AQx. Twelve tricks are pretty much certain in diamonds, even on a 4-1 diamond break and 13 tricks a live possibility; while 6 no trump depends on clubs breaking 3-3 (36%).

Over the history of bridge, the meaning of bids is constantly being reassigned. At one point, every one played four card majors; soon enough every one moved to five card majors. There was a time that all two bids were strong. Players soon came to realize that there was a great advantage to getting into the auction early to interfere with the opponents, but the hand fitted neither as a three-level preempt, nor a one-level opener.

So the bidding structure needed to be adjusted; it became convenient that an opening bid of two clubs could show a variety of strong hands. After partner’s inevitable two diamond response, opener could bid two hearts (or spades), and very little was lost on the strong hands, but there was now a great advantage in being able to open a weak two bid instead of passing. This was an advance in bidding for two reasons. First, it took bidding space away from the opponents. Second, by bidding, and for any bid that you would make, partner would have information about your hand. Passing would leave him in the dark. Passing and then entering the auction at a higher level is demonstrably more dangerous, and less disruptive, since the opponents have had a round of bidding to exchange information.

And so, I would like to turn to the modern game of bridge, and some recent adjustments, all simple in nature, but that reflect the ability to bid more accurately in competitive situations, which is what the game has become. In each case, when a bid is reassigned from its prior traditional meaning, something can be lost, but the benefits clearly outweigh.

Two technical points. The partner of the opening bidder will be called the responder, and the partner of an overcaller will be called the advancer. For ease of description of auctions, bids in parentheses are used for the opponents’ bids.

1. Using an opening 2♥ bid two to show a really weak two bid in either major.

Consider whether to bid or to pass the following hand in first seat, nobody vulnerable: ♠87, ♥A9532, ♦Q982, ♣75. Bear with me for a second, as I consider the hand’s good qualities. First, the two honors are in the long suits. Second, the hand has some distribution, i.e., it is not 5-3-3-2; and it does have some spots, again in your long suits. Looking at bridge theory, we hear from Jeff Meckstroth: “In my experience, when faced with a choice between bidding and passing, I have found that bidding is inevitably the right choice.” And, from Sabine Auken: “He who bids first, bids twice.”

So why not open this hand 2♥? The problem is not that the hand is too weak and the opponents can punish you. This is just a risk you have to take in order to interfere with the opponents. The problem is with partner; if you could open 2♥ on this hand and also on ♠76, ♥KJ1076, ♦K54, ♣87, he will be pretty much in the dark on every hand and, inevitably, demoralized under the recurring pressure.

So what is the solution? How can you have your cake and eat it too? As follows: a bid of 2♥ or 2♠ show a traditional weak two bid in the 7-11 range. An opening of 2♥ shows a weak two bid in either major: vulnerable 4-7 points, nonvulnerable 0-7; an increasingly prevalent convention at the expert level. I won’t go into the further mechanics of this convention as to how the partnership can bid constructively, but it has been worked out; most of the time responder will bid 2♥, pass or correct.

2. 2NT in competitive auctions is never (ever) natural.

We have one example, already, Lebensohl. At one point in the history of bridge, if partner opened 1NT and the next hand bid 2♥, 2NT by responder was natural (whether competitive or invitational). Admittedly, a hand could still come up where you would want to use 2NT for its prior meaning, but everyone now agrees that Lebensohl is a better idea.

The change in the nature of the game, bid early and often, has served to make the 2NT call more useful as a form of raise of partner’s bid/overcall in a variety of contexts.

Take the following common auction: (1♠) 2♥ (2♣) and you are next to speak. Back in the day, opener could be counted on to be solid, say 13+ points. Partner’s 2♥ overcall would be something near an opening bid, say 12+ points, and the spade raise would show 6+ points. As a result, Advancer could be expected to have little. He would rise to 3♥ with 6-8 points and a fit; with no fit, he would pass. Nowadays it is Katie Bar the Door. Opener, particularly playing a strong
Wee Burn

Wee Burn players were fortunate in that only one game of the Winter Series was canceled due to bad weather.

Winners were:
1. Mary Richardson–Betty Hodgman
2. Audrey Cadwallader–Joan Hoben
3. Linda Cleveland–Karen Barrett
4. Mary Beach–Ann Towne
5. Dave Mordy–Joe Holmes
6. Marilyn Giannos–Donna Christensen

Sixteen tables participated in the March 27 ACBL Charity Game. Winners were:
1. David Blackburn–Warren Williams
2. Doug Thompson–Karen Barrett
3. Dave Mordy–Joe Holmes

Woodway

Winners of the Woodway Country Club Winter Series are:
1st Janet Soskin–Mary Richardson
2nd Betty Hodgman–Linda Cleveland
3rd Marilyn Tjader–Gail Schulz
4th Millie Fromm–Betsy Philips

Darien

Darien Country Club’s Winter Series winners were:
1. Dorothy Baker–Liz Dwyer
2. Nancy Matthews–Carol Taylor
3. Carolyn Halsey–Tony Halsey

Modern Game continued

club system, could have as few as 10 high card points, perhaps less in third seat. Partner’s overcall covers a wide range and the spade raiser can have who knows what? Thus, in the Modern Game, advanced can have a variety of hands with real strength–as much as, say, ♥xx, ♥Axx, ♦Kxx, ♣KJxx. How can advanced convey that strength to partner, to allow partner to make an intelligent decision? The normal cue bid of 3♣, takes one beyond 3♥.

The answer is 2NT, to show a limit raise or better in support of partner’s suit.

In both situations, and in others similar (even if advanced is a passed hand), partner’s overcall can carry a wide range, and the use of 2NT to show a certain level of strength, but without a fit, is not a useful treatment. In both cases, better if advanced asks the overcaller about his strength, which will allow advanced to determine the likelihood of game, in partner’s suit or in notrump.

3. Bidding one spade to deny four spades.

Your partner opens 1♠, the next hand overcalls 1♥, and you hold: ♠Axx, ♥xxx, ♥Kxx, ♦KJxx. These hands come up with a fair frequency. You want to bid, but no bid is available. Perhaps you compromise and raise to 2♦, not an unreasonable choice. But if the opponents continue to compete, as they always do, partner is likely to misread the partnership’s prospects. Furthermore, doubling here allows partner to bid 1NT.

So, a little rearranging/reassigning is in order. A double here would show four or five spades. Opener can now become the declarer at spades, and the overcaller is put on lead, both great advantages. A bid of 1♣ by responder would show the values for, and an interest in, competing, but without four spades, much like the hand above. To take it a step further, if opener has three spades, he can respond one spade to the negative double (allowing the partnership to play in spades while still considering its other options) and opener bids 2♣ with four spades and even a minimum hand. If opener has stronger hands with four spades, he can cue bid the opponents’ suit. I don’t want to take any more time discussing the nuances, only to point out the general notion that bids can be reassigned, to advantage.

There is more, of course. But note one common feature of all of the above. They are all in competitive situations. Everyone bids more nowadays. Consider the following. In standard bidding, an opening one-level suit bid is roughly in the 12-19 point range, an 8-point spread. Now consider a strong club system, where a one club bid shows 16+ points. Thus, keeping the same eight-point range, an opening suit bid could be between 8 and 15 points. OK; maybe 8 point openings are stretching things a bit, but 10 point suited openings, with some distribution are not. Such an approach will be alerted, but the opponents will have much more to deal with than against standard bidders.

And, if so, they need to fine tune their own methods in the Modern Game.
RESULTS

UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIP
Tuesday AM, February 25, 2014
FLIGHT A EVENT LEADERS
1. Simon Kantor–Franklin Merblum
2. Muriel Dane–Myrna Butler
3. Gary Miyashiro–Beth Schweitzer
4. Morris Feinson–Wayne Lubin
5. Virginia Naugler–Bob Grusky
6. Joan Brault–Michele Raviele

UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIP
Tuesday AM, February 25, 2014
FLIGHT B EVENT LEADERS
1. Muriel Dane–Myrna Butler
2. Gary Miyashiro–Beth Schweitzer
3. Joan Brault–Michele Raviele
4. Doris Reeves–Linda Kesselman
5. Sarah Hart–Anthony Gardner
6. Paul Norman–Irving Rosenthal

UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIP
Tuesday AM, February 25, 2014
FLIGHT C EVENT LEADERS
1. Gary Miyashiro–Beth Schweitzer
2. Joan Brault–Michele Raviele
3. Doris Reeves–Linda Kesselman
4. Sarah Hart–Anthony Gardner
5. Paul Norman–Irving Rosenthal
6. Inara Larson–Irene Rivers

UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIP
Thursday AM, April 3, 2014
FLIGHT A EVENT LEADERS
1. Jill Fouad–Harold Feldheim
2. Richard Wieland–Jean Chiarardi
3. June Hearrell–Carol Minor
4. Donna Feir–Lois McOmer
5. Margaret Mason–Cynthia Michael
6. Robert Lahey–Michael Carmiggelt

UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIP
Thursday AM, April 3, 2014
FLIGHT B EVENT LEADERS
1. June Hearrell–Carol Minor
2. Robert Lahey–Michael Carmiggelt
3. Adish Jain–Asha Jain
4. Donald Brueggen–Jon Clarke
5. Peter Solomon–Stephen Shamroth
6. Bonnie Murphy–Kurt Hummel

UNIT-WIDE CHAMPIONSHIP
Thursday AM, April 3, 2014
FLIGHT C EVENT LEADERS
1. Adish Jain–Asha Jain
2. Peter Solomon–Stephen Shamroth
3. Bonnie Murphy–Kurt Hummel
4. Eric Vogel–Irene Rivers
5. Scott Butterworth–Rebecca Jacobson

WINTER IN CONNECTICUT
Hamden, CT, March 7-9, 2014
FRI AM OPEN PAIRS
A B C Names
1 1 1 Richard Lebel–Barry Buehler
2 2 2 Irene Rivers–Eric Vogel
3 3 3 Richard Seren–Elizabeth Stump
4 Richard DeMartino–John Stiefel
5 Susan Seckinger–Donna Feir
6 David Blackburn–Linda Green
7 Robert Rising–Jean Schiaroli
8 George Levinson–Lucy Lacava
9 Margaret Molwitz–Rodney Aspinwall

FRI PM OPEN PAIRS
A B C Names
1 1 Richard DeMartino–John Stiefel
2 1 1 Irene Rivers–Eric Vogel
3 Margaret Mason–Cynthia Michael
4 Gloria Seren–Laurel Koegel
5 Sarah Corning–Richard Blair
6 Dean Montgomery–Allan Clamage
7 2 Barry Kaplan–Jay Kaplan
8 Susan Frapolli–Richard Frapolli
9 3 Evan Dean–Janice Dean
10 5 Muriel Brown–Ann Small
11 6 5 Garson Heller Jr–Mario Sa Couto

FRI PM 0-300 PAIRS
A B C Names
1 1 Moaiz Daya–Nurjehan Daya
2 Donald Muller–Betty Kerber
3 Mark Moskovits–Peter Carroll
4 Jonathan Clark–Bonnie Murphy
5 Woody Bliss–Leonard Messman
6 Marlene Myers–Maxine Cevhala
7 2 1 Gillian Hall–Lewis Clark
8 3 Scott Butterworth–Howard Cohen
9 4 David Foster–Stacey Weiss
10 5 Linda Bradford–Joyce Handelman
11 6 3 Susan Glassiegel–Leon Weir

SAT AM 0-300 PAIRS
A B C Names
1 Peter Carroll–Arjun Chaudhuri
2 Myra Goldberg–Sherrill Werblood
3 Bonnie Murphy–Jonathan Clark
4 1 1 Paul Hannah–Carol Boyle
5 Jan Rosow–Betty Kerber
6 2 Vijender Goel–Kamlesh Goel
7 Cynthia Anderson–Patty Read
8 4 Mayank Mehta–Aarati Mehta
9 5 Karlene Wood–Bretta Adams
10 6 3 Tony Mortimer–Robert Pauker
11 4 Nancy Horn–Jeffrey Blum

SAT PM A/X PAIRS
A X Names
1 1 Jeff Horowitz–Kevin Hart
2 Richard DeMartino–Lloyd Arvedon
3 Jill Fouad–Harold Feldheim
4 2 1 1 Joan Martin–Jerry Jacobs
5 Shirley Derrah–Robert Derrah
6 David Rock–Sonja Smith
7 4 Eric Vogel–Irene Rivers
8 3 Barry Buehler–Lawrence Eppler
9 4 Michael Wavada–Michael Dworetzky

SAT PM B/C PAIRS
B C Names
1 1 Liz Brian–Richard Roth
2 Louise Wood–Fredda Kelly
3 Mary Connolly–Janice Bruce
4 2 1 1 Eric Vogel–Irene Rivers
5 3 Barry Buehler–Lawrence Eppler
6 5 Karlene Wood–Bretta Adams
7 5 Nancy Horn–Jeffrey Blum

SAT PM 0-300 PAIRS
A B C Names
1 Arjun Chaudhuri–Peter Carroll
2/3 Arthur Layton–Lou Filippetti
2/3 1 1 Aarati Mehta–Mayank Mehta
4 Carlu Sharp–Jacquelyn Fuchs
5 2 1 Paul Hannah–Carol Boyle
6 3 3 Nicholas Miller–Polly Miller
7 4 Peter Nicoletti–Stuart Westphal
5/6 Karlene Wood–Bretta Adams
5/6 5 Nancy Horn–Jeffrey Blum

SUNDAY SWISS TEAMS
A B C Names
1 Victor King, Douglas Doub, Richard DeMartino, John Stiefel
2 Cynthia Michael, Constance Graham, Sarah Corning, Richard Blair
3 Glenn Robbins, Lloyd Arvedon, Steve Becker, Larry Babbush
4 Richard Wieland, Sonja Smith, David Rock, Harold Feldheim
5 1 Lee Herdle, Mark Stasiowski, Carmela Marcella, Peter Amedeo
6 Allan Clamage, Dean Montgomery, Bernard Schneider, Frances Schneider
7 2 Susan Rudd, Helen Pawlowski, Norann Coggins, Cynthia D’Arrigo
continued on next page
The Non-Playing Director
Director Appreciation Day
by Gloria Sieron

Is being a non-playing director at a local club a stress-free assignment? Usually, yes. Everyone comes in with his own partner. When highway traffic or an appointment interferes, the director is asked to fill in “until my partner gets here.” Sometimes, the non-playing director is asked to fill-in at the end of the game for (1) I have to leave early for a medical appointment, (2) to catch a train, (3) for the theater or whatever.

Most of the time, you haven’t ever played with the partner. You really don’t want to be responsible for wrecking their game. Players somehow believe that directors are automatically good players and have unwarranted expectations.

Recently I was asked to sit-in for the last round (two boards). These were the hands that were dealt:

**Dealer: South**
Vulnerability: All

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ K Q J 7</td>
<td>♠ J 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ J 8</td>
<td>♥ A Q 8 7 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♠ A J 9 6 4 3</td>
<td>♦ K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♣ 4</td>
<td>♣ A 10 9 8 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**West**
| ♠ 9 8 5 4 2 | ♠ ♦ J 9 7 5 4 3 |
| ♠ A K Q 9 3 | ♠ J 5 |
| ♦ K 2 | ♦ A 2 |

**South**
| ♠ A 10 6 3 | ♠ K 7 |
| ♥ 10 | ♥ K 10 6 4 2 |
| ♦ 8 7 5 | ♦ 10 8 6 |
| ♣ ♦ A J 10 6 2 | ♣ ♦ K 6 2 |

After a pass by South, West bid 1♥. Filling in at North, I felt justified in overcalling 2♦. With his law of total tricks hand, East bid game in hearts. Pass, pass to me.

Bridge is a bidder’s game. Let’s participate in the fun and excitement of duplicate bridge. I bid 4♠. 4♠ was passed out and looked pretty good until the spades split five-one. Actually, E/W make 4♥ so 4♠ down one was a pretty successful sacrifice.

The second board was just as exciting.

**Dealer: West**
Vulnerability: None

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North</th>
<th>East</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♠ J 3</td>
<td>♠ ♦ J 9 7 5 4 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♥ A Q 8 7 3</td>
<td>♠ A 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ K</td>
<td>♣ ♦ Q 4 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**West**
| ♠ Q 8 | ♠ A 10 9 6 5 4 2 |
| ♥ 9 5 | ♥ J |
| ♦ Q 9 7 5 4 3 | ♦ A 2 |

**South**
| ♠ K 7 | ♠ K 10 6 4 2 |
| ♥ 10 8 6 | ♥ K 6 2 |

West opened 3♦. North remembered “Bridge is a Bidder’s Game.” North also had heard the expression “five/five come alive.” North overcalled 3♥. East now bids 3♠. South made the law of total tricks bid - he bid 4♥ which was passed out. This time, the law of total tricks worked, game was made with 23 HCP. The director went on to score the game.

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**2014 CALENDAR**

**MAY**
21-26 Wed.-Mon. New York City Regional, New York, NY

**JUNE**
2 Mon. (Eve) Local (Split) Championship, Local clubs
6 Fri. (Eve) Worldwide Bridge Contest #1, Local clubs
7 Sat. (Aft) Worldwide Bridge Contest #2, Local clubs
9-15 Mon-Sun New England Summer Regional, Nashua, NH

**JULY**
2 Wed. (Day) Unit-wide Championship, Local clubs
11 Fri. (Aft) ACBL Int’l Fund Game #3, Local clubs
15 Tues. (Day) Unit-wide Championship, Local clubs


**AUGUST**
1 Fri. (Day) Unit-wide Championship, Local clubs
5 Tues. (Eve) Unit-wide Championship, Local Clubs
8-10 Fri-Sun. Connecticut Summer Sectional, Hamden, CT
12 Tues. (Day) Unit-wide Championship, Local clubs
18 Mon. (Eve) Local (Split) Championship, Local clubs
26-31 Tues.-Sun. New England Fiesta Regional, Warwick, RI

**SEPTEMBER**
5 Fri. (Day) Unit-wide Championship, Local Clubs

Due to space limitations, the full 2014 tournament calendar could not be included. You can find it on the CBA website: http://www.ctbridge.org
Two dynamic new features have been added the NEBridge.org website. They are certain to enhance the experience of attending sectional and regional tournaments in New England.

The first is the Online Partnership Desk program. I first used this software before embarking on a bridge cruise in December of 2012. I was very impressed with how professional the system’s design was and how easy it was to use. I have been on both sides of partnership desks many times. Occasionally you can find a partner or teammates with whom you really hit it off. Just as often, however, the match is not ideal. In any case there is no time to go over the convention card in any type of detail. The worst case scenario is that you end up as the odd person out and don’t get to play at all. This has happened to me, and the drive back home was not pleasant.

One of the first things that I did when I joined the district’s website committee one year ago was to lobby for the inclusion of the Online Partnership Desk as a new tab on the left side of the main page of NEBridge.org. Detailed instructions in New England Bridge Tournaments

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All comments, news, items related to the bridge world and of interest to our readers are welcome. Please send all items for the next Kibitzer by July 15, 2014.

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You can see The Kibitzer in blazing color at the CT bridge site: http://www.ctbridge.org

If you would like to receive The Kibitzer via e-mail, let us know. Email Tom Proulx at twproulx@optonline.net

District 25 has taken great strides in making the experience of attending sectional and regional tournaments more enjoyable and rewarding. In addition to the technological breakthroughs, a new program of presentations by expert local players will debut at the Cape and will continue at subsequent regionals – Nashua, Warwick, etc. New events have also been designed to increase competitiveness and enjoyment.

In short, those who confine their bridge-playing to the kitchen table or even the club are missing out on a great new experience.

-Mike Wavada

New ACBL Ruling on Senior Bridge

Bridge players who turned 55 years of age on or after January 1, 2014 must wait until they turn 60 before being eligible to play in an ACBL senior event. Those players who were born before 12/31/58 are eligible to play in senior events.