



THE KIBITZER

A NEWSLETTER OF THE CONNECTICUT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION



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HIDDEN CLUES TO FIND THE QUEEN

by Harold Feldheim

Very often, the success or failure of any contract depends on the location of a particular card. Sometimes, it's a straight guess but, usually, there are clues to guide the perplexed. As an example, if you determine that the missing suit divides 4-2 and there is no other mitigating circumstance, it's right to play hand with four cards for the missing card. No guarantee, but you've twisted probabilities to your favor. This hand, from a Swiss Team competition, is an example of this type of problem

NORTH	
♠ 5	
♥ AK5	
♦ KJ98642	
♣ J4	
SOUTH	
♠ AK6	
♥ Q984	
♦ A3	
♣ 10862	

Dealer: South
East-West Vulnerable

South	North
1NT*	3NT
*12-14	

West led the club deuce and struck gold. East took the ♣KQ and led back the ♠5, trapping South's ♠10-8

with the ♣J9, collecting the first four tricks. On the 4th club, East played an encouraging spade. West dutifully returned a middle spade (suggesting no values in the suit), South winning the ace in hand.

Clearly, the hand hinged on the diamond suit. South cashed the ace; both defenders followed suit. He continued with the ♦3, West following with the 10 and there he was. Who had the ♦Q? Was there a clue to the right play? South thought forever and, with nothing to go by, played the king. When East showed out, he had to concede a diamond for down one.

Post mortem: South was right; he had nothing obvious to go by. But sometimes, we must work to find clues. Correct would be to find out something about the defender's shape. With this in mind, South should cash the ♥AKQ of hearts. As it happens, West shows out on the third heart. Now we know that West started with two hearts and four clubs, with the seven remaining cards divided between spades and diamonds. This bit of information is enough to lead to the right play.

Do you see it? The answer is elegant. If the diamonds are 2-2

then West must be 5-2-2-4. If so, why didn't he lead from his 5-card spade suit? The answer is that West held only four spades and led from the stronger of his four-card suits. Therefore, West had to be 4-2-3-4 and thus, finessing the diamond becomes the odds-on winning play.

The complete hands:

NORTH		
♠ 5		
♥ AK5		
♦ KJ98642		
♣ J4		
WEST		EAST
♠ 9732		♠ QJ1084
♥ 73		♥ J1062
♦ Q107		♦ 5
♣ A973		♣ KQ5
SOUTH		
♠ AK6		
♥ Q984		
♦ A3		
♣ 10862		

By cashing three hearts, you take a real risk of going set an extra trick (if East wins the ♦Q he will also cash the ♥J for down two). But it should be clear that risking an extra 50 points to improve the chances of gaining 400 points is sound mathematics and winning bridge. 🤖



From the President

Bridge players at the top tier of duplicate bridge are pretty stoic. They don't say a lot at the table, nor express much of anything about what's going on. Given the gamut of expression, some bridge players on their way up are more apt to be moaners and groaners than gloaters. Of course, that might be a ploy; don't let the opponents know where the good stuff is by being too obviously pleased with your hand. It's a good thing to remember that a poker face works well at the bridge table. Your groan gives away information, telling opponent how to take the finesse, where the cards lie.

The moaning and distress over a less than spectacular hand is more prevalent in those not-quite seasoned duplicate players. They tend to want action, tend to want control, and feel that the glory lies only in declarer play. Defense just doesn't do it for those players who are disheartened

if they are not part of the declaring pair. They get restless if they can't bid, bored if they're not part of the action.

But they're missing the point. The beauty of duplicate bridge is that everyone is playing the same hands, and looking at the same cards. The important and fascinating part of duplicate is how those hands are played, not what the cards are.

The adage, "You play the cards you're dealt" which applies to life in general, should resonate deeply with duplicate bridge players. It doesn't matter what your 13 cards are; what matters is your handling those 13 to achieve a better result than anyone else sitting in your direction at that game holding exactly the same cards against exactly the same cards.

Players who complain when they don't see pictures in the hand, look again. Really learn and relish defense. If declarer's bid is on target

and can't be beat, it is that way for everyone in the room unless there's a wild error somewhere along the line. But if you can use your miserable hand to make it less easy for declarer, or even defeat the contract, that's a huge plus for your side.

Speaking about moaning and groaning. We've listened to those sounds from many players and now have three terrific new sites for our Connecticut Sectional tournaments. They're clean, with good lighting and ample parking. We've already played at the new site in Wethersfield, and we can look forward to Hamden, and Stamford. After Guilford, March 3 -5, we'll be at the new site in Hamden May 19 - 21, and at the new site in Stamford Aug. 18 - 20. Hopefully we will all be respectful in these lovely new locations that are in churches and remember to pick up wrappers, cups, napkins, empties, etc. and make excellent use of the trash bins.

Esther Watstein



Upcoming Tournaments (March-May, 2017)

March	3-5	Fri.-Sun.		Connecticut Winter Sectional	Guilford, CT
March	9-19	2 nd Thurs.-4 th Sun.		ACBL Spring Nationals	Kansas City, MO
March	21-27	Tues.-Mon.		STaC with North Jersey	Local Clubs
March	27	Mon.	Afternoon	ACBL-wide Senior Game	Local Clubs
April	22-23	Sat.-Sun.		New England GNT	Sturbridge, MA
April	27	Thurs.	Morning	ACBL-wide Charity Game	Local Clubs
April	25-29	Thur.-Sun.		District 24 Regional	Hauppauge, L.I., NY
April	26-30	Wed.-Sun.		New England Senior Regional	Hyannis, MA
May	19-21	Fri.-Sun.		Connecticut Spring Sectional	Orange, CT
May	24-30	Wed.-Sun.		District 24 Regional	New York, NY



BRIDGE WITH THE BOTS

by Geof Brod

Today we'll take a break from the normal morning duplicate and instead play bridge with the bots. That's bots, as in robots. They're available at Bridge Base Online where you can play bridge online in a number of different formats with a partner of your choice or one randomly selected for you or, as in this case, a robot, i.e., a bridge playing computer program.

You can even play mini-tournaments with the robots. Everyone who enters gets a robot for a partner and plays against two other robots who sit E/W. In the tournament you have entered you get to play eight boards at matchpoints; all for a \$.25. If you do well, you may even earn masterpoints; however they only have currency in the context of Bridge Base Online. Typically anywhere from 10 to 30 people enter a tournament. Scoring is barometer style so you can see how you are doing as you complete each board.

You've played five boards and you've been doing reasonably well. On board six they deal you: ♠AJ93 ♥Q6 ♦AKQJ96 ♣8. Your RHO passes and you start with 1♦. LHO passes as well and partner bids 1♥. You have a normal 1♠ rebid and now partner calls 2♣, artificial and forcing to game. To bid just 2♦ now would be inadequate so you jump to 3♦ to express your playing strength. Partner continues with 3NT. The auction to this point has

been:

East	You	West	North
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	?		

Partner has shown game going values and you have considerably in excess of an opening bid. It is likely there is a slam somewhere. It would be nice if you could assure yourself that you are not off two aces. You mouse over the possible menu of calls and determine that your bot partner would treat 4NT as a quantitative slam invitation. It looks like you will just have to take your best shot. Since clubs could be a problem at NT you leap to 6♦ and await the opening lead. The ♥7 appears on your left:

NORTH
♠ K10
♥ AJ9432
♦
♣ A10973
SOUTH
♠ AJ93
♥ Q6
♦ AKQJ96
♣ 8

It certainly could be worse. You have a good play for your contract. The heart lead is worrisome however and smacks of a singleton. You elect not to take the risk and rise with the ace. After you draw trump, assuming a normal 4-3 diamond split, you can lead the heart queen from hand and develop 12 tricks if the suit splits 3-2. If they should duck the queen you can

play on spades to get the tricks you need. In the meantime you need to get to your hand to draw trump. In order to keep flexibility in spades you play ♣A and ruff a club.

You start diamonds from the top. Ominously, East plays the ♦10 under the king and fails to follow to a third round. West started with 5♦. Since you elected to ruff a club to get to your hand by the time you finish drawing trump, if you then try to drive out the heart king, the opponents will be able to cash clubs to beat you. Your 11th and 12th tricks are going to have to come from the spade suit. Furthermore you will have to play East for the queen since your only remaining entry to hand is in spades. Let's look at the six card ending:

NORTH	EAST
♠ K10	♠ Q654
♥ J94	♥ K
♦	♦ K
♣ 10	♣ K
SOUTH	
♠ AJ93	
♥ Q	
♦ 9	
♣	

You lead the diamond 9 from hand drawing West's last trump pitching a club from dummy. What's East to do? He's squeezed in 3 suits. He can't release the ♥K; that would

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DESPERATION IS A GREAT MOTIVATOR

by Brett Adler

In a recent pairs event I ended up as declarer in what initially looked like an ugly contract. Some fortunate card placement and clues from the bidding gave me a winning line.

Dealer West: All Vul

Me	WEST	NORTH	EAST
	2♠	X	P

3NT¹ all pass

¹3NT: Many people play the convention called Lebensohl, and 3NT would show values, but deny a spade stopper and deny four hearts. Larry Lau and I were playing an alternate version of this convention and my 3NT showed a spade stopper and denied four hearts. If only I had more points...

How would you play the hand after ♠10 lead to East's ♠K, a spade returned to West's ♠A, and a third round of the suit to your ♠Q?

NORTH
♠ 85
♥ AJ108
♦ K94
♣ AQ63
SOUTH
♠ QJ2
♥ 64
♦ A652
♣ 10872

I chose to discard dummy's smallest heart on the third round of spades and East discarded ♣9. I hoped they weren't playing natural systems as I needed some club tricks and was relieved to discover they played Laventhal discards (the high club actually meant East liked hearts).

I led my ♣2 and was pleased to see West play ♣J and dummy's ♣Q win the trick. It now looks like West has the fortuitous holding of the doubleton ♣KJ, and on further inspection of their convention card you learn that the 2♠ opener shows 5-9 high-card points. The ♠A, ♣K, ♣J held by West is eight points, so East must have everything else with the possible exception of the ♦J.

When you play the ♣A your "adventurous" bidding shows some promise as West does indeed play the ♣K. Now you play a club to the South hand and finesse the heart even though you know it will lose.

After winning the ♥Q, East returns a diamond to West's ♦J and dummy's ♦K and you are now in control of the hand. Play the ♦9 towards your hand and when East covers with the 10♦ you duck. This rectifies the count and sets up a squeeze. East now plays the ♦Q and you win the ♦A as West pitches a spade. Now playing the fourth round of clubs squeezes East in the red suits. East nonchalantly pitches a heart but you know he has a diamond left in the two-card ending so you can confidently play a heart to dummy's ♥A. As this drops West's ♥K, the ♥J is your ninth trick – who says you need 25+ points or a long running suit to bid 3NT?

Of course, an opening heart lead wouldn't have been good for me as here is the full hand:

	NORTH	
	♠ 85	
	♥ AJ108	
	♦ K94	
	♣ AQ63	
WEST		EAST
♠ A109764		♠ K3
♥ 753		♥ KQ92
♦ J3		♦ Q1087
♣ KJ		♣ 954
	SOUTH	
	♠ QJ2	
	♥ 64	
	♦ A652	
	♣ 10872	

This next hand is from the Sunday Teams event at the recent Autumn Sectional Tournament in Wethersfield. I was playing with Jeff Goldman and sometimes it pays to be lucky when an auction comes up that you and your partner haven't discussed before.

Dealer North: All Vul

Me	WEST	NORTH	EAST
		1♦	P
2♣	P	2♥ ¹	P
2♠	P	3NT ²	P
4♣ ³	P	4♠ ⁴	P
4NT	P	5♣ ⁵	all pass



NORTH

♠ 94
♥ AQ65
♦ AQ76
♣ 1094

WEST

♠ QJ1083
♥ 109732
♦ 82
♣ K

EAST

♠ A6
♥ 84
♦ K109543
♣ 752

SOUTH

♠ K752
♥ KJ
♦ J
♣ AQJ863

¹2♥ The first undiscussed difference in opinion came when Jeff “reversed” in hearts (bidding a low suit then a higher suit typically shows extra values), so I got excited and was immediately thinking about slam. After I had shown game-going strength by bidding 2♣, Jeff of course was just showing me he also had a four-card heart suit and did not think he was showing any extra values.

²3NT The slower a forcing auction goes, the more power you show since you are leaving room for slam exploration. I use this in bidding suits, but typically bid NT at the appropriate level to show values. In this case, I thought Jeff was showing 15-17 points and must be unbalanced because he hadn’t opened 1NT. In this sequence, I would use 2NT to show 11-14 points or 18-19 points. Jeff’s style is different than mine because he thought jumping to game showed a minimum hand since he had taken away a full round of bidding.

³4♣ Clearly this bid is forcing, but I wasn’t sure if I was asking for key cards with clubs as trumps, or just showing club length.

⁴4♠ Either this showed two key cards without the Q♣, or it showed a cue bid in spades. Either way slam was now out of the question, so I bid 4NT to play.

⁵5♣ It took me a long time to pass over this “sign-off” bid to make sure I hadn’t missed something in the bidding, but, I finally thought I would go for a “safe” positive.

The play: After 6♦ lead, I won ♦A and unsuccessfully ran the ♣10. After a second round of diamonds, I ruffed in hand. I cashed a top trump, played my two heart winners and then crossed to dummy’s ♣9. I could now throw two spades on the ♥AQ, and lead up to my ♠K. Fortunately, with the ♠A on side, I was able to score up +600. Of course, if I had seen through the cards I could have made a slam as I didn’t need to lose a club.

One interesting thing about his hand is that the contract at the other table was 3NT by South on the lead of Q♠ to the A♠ and a spade continuation. South ducked and won the third round with the ♠K. He then crossed to dummy by overtaking one of his heart honors and when he finessed in clubs, the defense made they scored up -100 as four spades and a club trick.

If you are playing for matchpoints, this line of play makes some sense as overtricks can be worth their

weight in gold, but at teams, and in a vulnerable game, the big priority is making your contract. After analyzing the lead, it isn’t clear yet if spades are 5-2 or 4-3, but West clearly has the length. Therefore, declarer should win the K♠ on the second round of the suit.

If you lose a club to West’s ♣K then you are going down if spades are 5-2. If you lose a trick to East’s ♣K then you are always making the hand: If he has no spades left you can make the rest of the tricks, and if he has a spade left, at most the opponents can cash two more spades before you claim your nine tricks and the contract.

Based on the logic above, there is a slight extra chance of making the hand if West has a singleton club and it is the king, so the best play at trick three is to lead the ♣A. If the ♣A doesn’t drop the king, then play another club and cross your fingers.

If the ♣K is on side, then you give up some overtricks but gain a major vulnerable game bonus. On the lie of the cards on this deal, you would now score up +690 instead of -100. Looks like a good investment to me.

Some of the readers might have thought of ducking the second spade, but if West wins the second round of spades and switches to a diamond, you risk going down if West has the ♣K and three diamonds to the eight (or higher) and East has the ♦K, even if the spades are 4-3.



ENTRIES

By Karen Barrett



One of the most important aspects of declarer play is maintaining entries between your hand and the dummy. There are many hands where there seem to be enough tricks at the start but when it's all over, you end up with fewer tricks than you had planned on. Where did those "sure tricks" go? How many times have you heard someone say "I was stuck in my hand"?

Entry problems seem to come up most frequently when you are playing a no-trump contract and your source of tricks is in the dummy. Before playing to the first trick the no-trump declarer must make his plan. He starts by counting the sure winners, those that he could take off the top before letting the opponents in. When he falls short of his goal the next step is to decide where he will develop the needed tricks.

Often it's a long suit in the dummy that will give you the tricks you need, once the opponents' high cards in that suit have been knocked out. The declarer must make sure that an entry remains in the dummy once the long suit is ready to run. The first thing you must do is figure out how many entries you have and how many entries you need. Once you have identified them, make sure you don't squander them away.

You all have heard the playing tip "high card from the short side" but is that always right? In the following deal, South is declarer in 3NT and West has led the ♠10.

NORTH
 ♠A4
 ♥J65
 ♦QJ54
 ♣J497
 SOUTH
 ♠KQJ3
 ♥A872
 ♦AK
 ♣6532

If you count the suits on their own you have four spade tricks, four diamond tricks and one heart. That's nine tricks, **but** if you won the first trick with the ♠A (high card-short side) you won't make your contract. There will be no way back to the diamonds after you play the ♦AK. You must save that ♠A entry! So win the first spade in your hand. After unblocking and running the diamonds, you can always get back to your hand with the ♥A for the rest of the high spades.

Sometimes, you may have to overtake one good card with another. Instead of thinking of it as "wasting a trick" it may be the only path to collecting enough tricks to make your contract.

Again you are in 3NT and West has led the ♣Q.

NORTH
 ♠J63
 ♥96
 ♦K10976
 ♣A73
 SOUTH
 ♠A84
 ♥AK73
 ♦AQ
 ♣K854

There are eight winners off the top: two clubs, three diamonds, two hearts and one spade. The diamond suit is the obvious place to get your needed trick but you must be careful. If you win the first trick with the ♣K, play the ♦AQ and go cross over to the dummy with the ♣A you are down one! East holds the ♦J842 and you never get that fourth diamond trick set up. Instead you must overtake the ♦Q with the ♦K and then knock out the ♦J. When you get in again you have the ♣A to get to those winning diamonds.

Always keep your eyes on the goal. Sometimes you may have to win a trick in your hand with a card higher than necessary in order to later win in the dummy. LHO leads a spade and this is your holding: ♠K85 in the dummy and ♠A10 in your hand. RHO plays the ♠9 and you win with the ♠10 and realize too late that you have made a fatal mistake. The ♠K was your only entry to the dummy and you have just taken it away. If you have to get to the dummy later and have no sure entry, better to forgo your cheap trick and win with the ♠A. Now you have the ♠10 left to play to the ♠K.

When playing in a suit contract, often the trump suit is your only way to get back and forth. In the following hand you are declarer in a 4♠ contract.

PLAY OR DEFEND?

By Paul Burnham

Some hands are routine. Easy to bid. The contract is likely to be the same at nearly all tables. Probably the play will be the same at every table. Nothing to do but score up your average and move on to the next board.

But sometimes appearances can be deceiving. Would you rather be East (the defender) or South (the declarer) on this hand:

Halfway through the first session of a Regional pairs you pick up,

♠Q82
♥QJT92
♦9752
♣3

...and hear your right-hand opponent (the dealer) open with a 15-17 1NT. You pass and lefty bids 2♣ (Stayman). Partner also passes, dealer denies a four-card major by bidding 2♦ and after your pass, responder closes the proceedings with 3NT. Your ♥Q hits the table at the same time as opener's pass card, and your thoughts turn to your plans for dinner.

Dummy puts down a minimum hand for her bidding:

♠1096
♥K875
♦4
♣AQ1074

Your ♥Q is ducked all around. Well that's interesting, but not enough to keep you from continuing with the one-eyed red jack. This is ducked again to partner's ♥A, declarer following. Partner comes back with the ♠7, declarer covers with the

jack and you win with the queen. Your hand is now dead. Returning a spade seems routine. Snore.

Partner takes his ♠A (under which declarer drops his king (making the ♠10 an entry to the dummy), and leads her third spade, declarer following. Declarer takes three top clubs ending in dummy. You must find two pitches. One heart is easy, but not two, so you must throw a diamond. Declarer now plays the ♥K, leads a diamond to his jack, partner's queen falls on the third round, and declarer takes the last trick with his remaining diamond. Nine tricks, one of each major, four diamonds and three clubs. Next board.

Do you notice partner is silent? While you were considering the Patriots' chances to make it to the Super Bowl, he had worked out the winning defense. You need to return a diamond at the fourth trick. His hand:

♠A754
♥A6
♦Q108
♣J865

Partner remembered the bidding and knew that Declarer had at most three spades. He assumed that Declarer had only two hearts.

He knew you had five or fewer high-card points and after you played the queen and jack of hearts on the first two tricks, your remaining useful cards could be, at most, the ♠Q or the ♦J.

Partner saw that there was no defense if declarer had four clubs to the king (he could play the suit to guarantee no losers), so assumed he held only three. He figured out that there was no way Declarer could take more than three club tricks without allowing the ♣J to take a trick, unless declarer took a first round finesse in that suit. But that that would be impossible because, if the assumptions about declarer's doubleton heart were correct, declarer could not get to dummy except by leading clubs.

So, he hoped, as he had to, that you held either the ♠Q and four diamonds headed by the nine, or even better, four headed by the jack. If the latter, declarer had no entry to the board except in clubs, and would be limited to two spades, one heart, two diamonds and three clubs regardless of what card Partner now led. If the former, though, Partner foresaw you would be subject to a triple squeeze unless you scored your ♠Q and returned a diamond.

So, he purposely led the ♠7, his highest spade spot as you should surely have realized. If you had only noticed the spot, trusted him, and led back the low diamond he was requesting, partner would have ducked declarer's next lead of the ♠K, giving you a spade and a heart discard on the run of the clubs, and thereby breaking the squeeze.

But he's a good partner, and lets you later figure your failures out for yourself.

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BRANFORD BRIDGE CLUB

The Branford Bridge Club has changed to an “afternoon” starting time of 12:30. The evening game in Branford ended with a party on August 29, 2016.

Games are held every Monday (except for Monday holidays) at the Branford Community House, 46 Church Street in Branford. Entry fee for games is \$6.00 per person. An extra player is always available if you need a partner.

Game results are posted at cuebid.com/branford, where you will also find the club schedule and directions to the Branford Community House.

TUESDAY BRIDGE IN DARIEN

The winners of the fall series of Tuesday Bridge at the Country Club of Darien were:

1. Meredith Dunne and Joan Bergen
2. Carolyn and Tony Halsey
3. Donna Christensen and Lindy Beardsley

HARTFORD BRIDGE CLUB NEWS

The Hartford Bridge Club recently presented a donation of \$4,100 to the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center at Hartford Hospital.

On hand to receive the check was Dr. Andrew Salner, director of the center. The first donation to the center, for \$3,500, was made in 2014, in memory of Dixie Mastrandrea, a beloved former president of HBC who died after a twenty-year struggle with the

disease. This year the HBC Board of Directors felt that supporting the Gray Cancer Center would be a good way for members to commemorate the club’s 85th birthday by contributing in memory of the many who have been lost to this terrible disease and in support of those who are currently battling it. The monies collected will be used for a cancer patients’ assistance fund.



NEWTOWN BRIDGE CLUB

Sixty-six tables participated in October’s Team Week at Newtown Bridge Club. The games were so popular that, in response to players’ requests, a monthly Sunday Swiss has been added to the 2017 schedule. The games run from 11:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. The games are fun – four rounds of seven boards and a light lunch about 1:30 after the second round. Experienced teams as well as players trying their first team game are welcome. For newer players, an explanation of scoring plus some

team strategy tips will be presented 30 minutes before the game. For reservations or information, contact director@newtownbridge.org. The next team games are planned for February 26, April 9 and May 14.

Newtown Bridge Club plays regularly Monday through Thursday and occasionally on Sunday at Edmond Town Hall, 45 Main Street, Newtown CT. Directions and information about games and lessons may be found at the club’s website, newtownbridge.org.



WEE BURN NEWS

The following players did well in the Fall Series which ended November 17:

1. Janet Soskin-Betty Hodgman.
2. Marilyn Tjader-Barbara Johnson.
3. Joan Hoben-Kathie Rowland.
4. Susie Nix-Mary Ellen Mcguire.
5. Jim Metzger-Donna Doyle.
6. Audrey Cadwallader-Mary Richardson.

The December charity game was won by Linda Green and David Blackburn with Joan Hoben and Kathie Rowland as runners-up.

Sixteen tables were in play for the December 8 Swiss team game.

Winners were: Bill Hayes, Gail Schulz, Gloria Hayes, and Susan Schroeder.

Congratulations to our Player of the Year for 2016: Belinda Metzger. Runners-up were Kathie Rowland and Mary Richardson.

THE SEVEN NO-TRUMP BRIDGE CLUB

Congratulations to Linda Gordon and Melissa Bissell who put up the top score at our club in the February 7 ICC game. Well done!

We have a lot going on at Seven No-Trump! First, we are pleased to announce that the Unit 126 Summer Sectional will be held at our club's great location in Stamford. The dates for the tournament are August 18-20.

The full schedule of events will be available on the CBA and on our website soon.

We are adding a Wednesday evening game starting on March 1. This will be an open game and the start time is 6:45 pm. Snacks and coffee included.

Website: www.7ntgames.com

Mobile: 979-218-7428

E-mail:

Joseph.Grill@7ntgames.com.

COME PLAY BRIDGE

Things are heating up at Come Play Bridge this winter with the addition of more games and more classes. This fall we were asked to teach Beginner and Advancing Beginner classes at Staples High School in Westport's Continuing Education program. The class attendance attested to the fact that there is growing interest in the game (great for the game and great for all of us) and our classes will continue for the winter and fall terms.

To accommodate our budding bridge players, we added a Tuesday afternoon Newplicate 0-20 to the schedule. It runs concurrently with our Tuesday Open game at 12:30.. We also added an Open section to our Monday evening 0-499 game. Starting in late January 28, we'll be adding a Saturday game with both a Limited and Open section at 1:00 PM in Westport.

As we begin 2017, we want to thank all our players for a great year and congratulate our club Top Ten Masterpoint Winners for their accomplishments:

1:	Jonathan Jankus	29.73
2:	Leonard Messman	29.43
3:	Linda Green	27.01
4:	David Benjamin	26.75
5:	Rebecca Jacobson	25.91
6:	Doug Pratt	25.09
7:	Janice Dean	24.89
8:	Evan Dean	24.12
9:	David Blackburn	22.48
10:	Nancy Starr	21.73



BRIDGE FORUM (HAMDEN) YEAR-END NEWS UPDATE

Tuesday

Leading Pairs: Kevin Hart-Jeff Horowitz set a new performance record and lapped the field, while Rita Brieger-Harold Miller edged Alan Milstone-Gernot Reiners for second. Abhi Dutta-Paul Johnson were fourth and Hank Banach-George Levinson fifth

Player of the Year: The top six finishers came from the three top pairs. Jeff finished ahead of Kevin for first and Harold ahead of Rita for third. Alan and Gernot tied for fifth, as neither ever played without the other.

Van Dyke Cup - Kevin and Jeff had a huge lead throughout, with Kevin winning the cup because his qualifying group scored more group points than Jeff's. Harold finished third and Kay Howe fourth.

Friday

Leading Pairs: Erik Rosenthal-Jim Uebelacker had the second-best year for a Friday pair. Alan Milstone-Gernot Reiners were second, Rita Brieger-Aniko Richheimer third, Helen and Tracy Selmon fourth, and Steve Grodzinsky-Hank Voegeli fifth.

Player of the Year: Rita's strong autumn put her first or second in all three categories, with Harold Miller second. Erik finished third, Alan fourth, and Gernot and Jim tied for fifth.

Reynolds Cup: Rita's big carryover lead and strong first half

in the final were enough to keep her in front at the end. Gernot finished second, Jim third and Harold fourth.

Combined

Overall Player of the Year: 1 Jeff Horowitz; 2 Kevin Hart; 3 Alan Milstone; 4 Rita Brieger; 5 Harold Miller; 6 Gernot Reiners; 7 Erik Rosenthal; 8 Jim Uebelacker; 9 Louise Wood; 10 George Levinson.

Champions Cup: None of the contenders in the final won more than three of the six rounds. Rita Brieger held the lead at the start of the game and through two rounds, with the absent Alan Milstone ahead at one point and Jeff Horowitz leading heading into the last round. Jeff lost his last round after scoring 18.5/22 on the first two boards but scoring only one point each on the second pair. Rita's last round was a tie, while Norma Augenstein's near-top on the third board enabled her to win the round and claim the cup ahead of Rita, Alan and Jeff.

Yearly Statistics

Conversion Rates: Small slams 63.38%; Grand slams 62.04%; Doubles 73.72%; Redoubles 50.00%. Fourth seat scored 51.58% on passouts.

George Levinson finished fifteen HCP above average for the year, averaging 10.008 HCP per hand. Hank Voegeli had the highest attendance of the sixteen players who played at least once a month

and never had a late board.

Blitz Leaders: 1 Erik Rosenthal-Jim Uebelacker; 2 Hank Banach-George Levinson.

Best Defenders: 1-2 Rita Brieger-Harold Miller and Rita Brieger-Aniko Richheimer; 3 Kevin Hart-Jeff Horowitz; 4 Lucille Alderman-Ann Drabkin

Most Optimistic Bidders: 1 Breta Adams-Karlene Wood; 2 Linda Bradford-Hara Dobyns; 3 Abhi Dutta-Paul Johnson

Double Wins (only eight all year): 1 Hart-Horowitz; 2 Milstone-Reiners; 3-4 Hill Auerbach-Tracy Selmon and Linda Chaffkin-Lucy LaCava

Passout Leaders: 1 Ann Drabkin; 2 Susan Smith; 3 Vicki Rethy; 4 Joyce Handleman; 5 Pat Rogers.

Kevin Hart-Jeff Horowitz also led in 70% scores, scoring the most tops and avoiding zeroes, while Jeff had an 8-0 record and Kevin 7-0 on four-figure penalties. Breta Adams-Karlene Wood set two new records, bidding and making fifteen grand slams (of only eighty total) while also accumulating a 2-14 record for four-figure penalties. Jeffrey Blum-Nancy Horn had the most placid games without any tops or bottoms.

The largest penalty of the year had been a score of +2000 for Shirley Fruchter-Arlene Leshine on May 27, until, on December 27, Jane Mathias-Doug Tendler racked up +2600. Norma Augenstein-Louise Wood had the only game of the year to top 80%, scoring 80.21% on January 22.

Play or Defend?

Continued from page 7

The full hand:

NORTH	
♠1096	
♥K8754	
♣AQ1074	
EAST	WEST
♠Q82	♠A754
♥QJT92	♥A6
♦9752	♦Q108
♣3	♣J865
SOUTH	
♠KJ3	
♥43	
♦AKJ63	
♣K92	

But wait. Why didn't partner play ♥A at trick one and follow with the ♥6 – unblocking the heart suit. It looks like he can later get you back in with the ♠Q to get the rest of the hearts. I leave it to you to figure out why Declarer has a counter and will always come to nine tricks (and even ten, if the defense isn't careful).



Bridge with the Bots

Continued from page 3

just concede the rest of the tricks. He must hang on to a club so that if you play on hearts he has a trick to cash. He must hope that you don't have the ♠J and that his partner can guard the suit.

Alas, his partner can't help him. East correctly discards a spade but to no avail. You lead to the ♠K, finesse the jack on the way back and take the last two tricks with the ♦A and ♦9. And that ♥7 lead: yes, it was a singleton.

It is of interest that while it was somewhat unusual for one opponent to be squeezed in three suits, no special expertise was required of declarer to take advantage. The squeeze developed naturally during the play of the hand. The real expertise that might have been required would have been to recognize that a heart could have been conceded safely had East discarded a club in the six card ending. Maybe East's spade pitch wasn't correct after all.



Entries

Continued from page 6

NORTH
♠10987
♥KQJ109
♦56
♣76
♠AKQJ2
♥2
♦KJ4
♣KJ54

LHO leads a heart and RHO wins the ♥A and leads it back. (He thought his partner was short). What card did you trump with? If it was the ♠2 then you no longer have an entry to those winning hearts and your contract is in jeopardy. If you trumped with a high spade and preserved the ♠2 as a link card to the dummy your contract is secure and you might even make an overtrick.

So much to think about!





Achievements

MILESTONES

Life Master*

Susan Byron
Rufus Cole
Sandra Gould
Mu Zhang
Linda Kesselman
Patricia Shimkus

Silver Life Master

(1,000 MP)
Dorothy Hulme
Elaine Haut
Sally Kirtley
Lawrence Stern
Theresa Waltz

Gold Life Master

(2,500 MP)
Debbie Benner
Karen Barrett
Marilyn Caissy

Diamond Life Master

(5,000 MP)
Allan Rothenberg
Doris Greenwald

Bronze Life Master (500 MP)

Martin Arnold
Katharine Goodman

Ruby Life Master (1,500 MP)

Esther Watstein
Dinesh Gupta
John Scheuermann

Sapphire Life Master (3,500 MP)

Maeve Lucey
Sonja Smith
Natalie Cohen

**300 MP if you joined the
ACBL prior to 1/12/010,
otherwise 500*

IN MEMORIAM

As listed in the ACBL *Bulletin*

Frances Bilmes

Anthony Longo

Joann O'Connell

THE KIBITZER

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