



Community Connections

News & Notes for New England Bridge Players

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One Successful Experiment!

The World Premiere of *Bracketed Pairs* was the single largest post-Covid event in New England. Over 50 tables for **GOLD**, but only against pairs with similar masterpoint total,

Congratulations, to Bill Birkholz from Northborough, MA. (shown at left with D25 president Sue Miguel.) He'll go down in history as the world's first entry into a Bracketed Pairs event. Thanks to everyone who followed him to the registration table.



As you can well imagine, as a first time event, this was a directing challenge and our directing team rose to the occasion. They did a fantastic job of placing people in the correct brackets in record time, and players adapted to the new format with minimal confusion. We're well on our way to proving this event will become the future of bridge. Don't miss your chance to be part of history in the making. Plan to play in the next experiment when Bracketted Pairs returns in Warwick. ■

In Other Nashua News

PRO AM Nashua also saw the return of the Pro-Am Game, a favorite for many of us. The Hawaiian luau-themed event paired experts with newer players, and everyone, whether mentor or mentee, had a great time playing and



learning. Congratulations to Daniel McGuire and Graham Werner, both from NH, who topped the field of 17 tables.

New Member Joins the Team



Rui Marques, shown here with Sue, joined our directing staff in Nashua. Rui became a National Tournament Director last April and we were lucky to have him here for the week. Those who played in the Pro-Am can attest that he is as much fun as the picture implies. You

will see more of Rui at various regionals, and you can read more about him in the June issue of the ACBL *Bulletin*.

New Life Master And, we would be remiss if we did not point out that one of our players reached an important milestone during the tournament: Louise Banner from the Great Bay Bridge Club became a Life Master. Congratulations, Louise!



Ocean State Regional
September 3-8

Featuring
Bracketed Pairs & Teams

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FEST! Returns to Warwick

Bridge Fest! is a fascinating, fun and friendly approach to the game for new and advancing players. The ever-entertaining Jori Grossack will share her unique gift for improving your game while you're having so much fun you'll forget it's a lesson. Not to mention, she taught Zack and Adam to play. Her lesson on Wednesday will be titled: "Embrace Your Mistakes: Revealing the Secrets of Winning Bridge." Enjoy a free lunch and meet some new friends. There will be a one-session game with red points.



On Thursday, September 5, the topic will be "The Director Is Your Other Partner." There will be a brief lesson with a two-session game for red points. (Single session entries will be accepted.) Friday, September 6 and Saturday, September 7 will be BridgeFest **GOLD** pairs. If you don't have a partner, no worries, we will find you one. To reserve your place at BridgeFest or ask a question, please email Sue Miguel (thefairygoldmother@nebridge.org) or call 401-447-0036. ■

Bridge Players are Very Interesting People

The Vermont Bridge Association (Unit 175) is fortunate to have as its long-time president Phil Sharpsteen, a Diamond Life Master, accomplished musician, and nature lover. In addition to serving as a director, the Unit president, and an active member of the Burlington Bridge Club, Phil has been teaching newcomers (young and old alike) at a local high school for nearly 20 years. He encourages his "graduates" to give duplicate clubs a try, and quite a few of them have gone on to join the ACBL and play at local clubs.

As a musician, Phil plays the bass in an orchestra and the piano and guitar at home for pleasure. He enjoys live concerts and listen-

ing at home and in the car. He even has it playing on the computer at the club while he sets up a game or attends to club or Unit business.



Second on Phil's list of non-bridge interests is his love of the rural landscape, especially the forests of New England. "I am interested in efforts to restore the American Elm and Chestnut, and I'm partial to all the New England hardwoods, especially Shagbark Hickory and the oaks." He adds, "My best friend, Sue Morse, complements this nicely as she favors the conifers and has an arboretum of 100 species from all over the world."

The Vermont Bridge Association is proud to have Phil as its leader. ■

Director, Please!

Sometimes even the best forget the basics, even when they're awesome directors. This was evident during the Bridge Olympics team game at the recent Spectacle regional in Southbridge. In the finals of the KOs, after receiving the boards for the second half, South counted his cards and discovered he had 15. The director was called and took the board back to the other table to see if anyone could tell where the extra cards belonged.

A few minutes later, the director returned to explain the hand had been played that way. It was an exciting grand slam, declared by none

other than Horace Gower with Sue Miguel playing the dummy, *and no one had noticed!*

Don't forget to count your cards *face down* as the Law requires – even if you're having a rollicking time in the Bridge Olympics. (See Law 7: Control of Board and Cards.) ■

What Are the Odds of That?

We recently held a hand in which all 13 cards were red: seven diamonds and six hearts. You might ask, as we did: what are the odds of that?

Well, the chance that the first one would be red is of course 26/52, or 50%. The chance that the next one would be red is 25/51, about 49%. The next is 24/50 (48%), etc. down through 14/40 (35%). And the odds of *all* of them being red is the product of the individual probabilities:

$$(26/52) \times (25/51) \times \dots \times (14/40) \approx 0.00164\%$$

In scientific notation, that's 1.64×10^{-5} . In ordinary English, that's less than two one-thousandths of one percent!

No matter how you write it, don't hold your breath expecting to see another hand like that anytime soon. ■

Instant Matchpoint Winners

Many New England clubs participated in June's ACBL-Wide Instant Matchpoint Game, Digital Edition. Sixteen tables came to play at



the Viking Bridge Club and had a great time, including Alev Elci and Jeremy Shen. Little did they know they were in for a pleasant surprise. Alev was super nervous to be playing in the open game with a

fix-up partner. Not only that, traffic held her up and she arrived late and had no time to

discuss their card. You probably can guess what happened next, they won – 1st overall! Both were so excited to earn the coveted GOLD point. That's not all! When the district results were in, they topped every other partnership in New England, earning ten bonus masterpoints.

But, the best part of the story is that Alev started the game with just 5 masterpoints, and Jeremy had 250. Beginners and advancing players take heart: you can still play with the big kids and win!

In case you don't know how these games work, each board in play has a printed score sheet tucked underneath. After playing the hand, North consults the score sheet, and each pair will learn exactly their MP award (as a percentage) for that hand. At the end of the event, everyone will receive a booklet with expert analysis of the hands. The top score in each direction is awarded one full gold masterpoint, and the remaining awards are half red, half black at 81% Sectional rating.

Another Instant Matchpoint Game is on the schedule for October 30th. Ask your local club if they will participate. ■

Heard Around the Bridge Table

"They say winning isn't everything. I guess I'll have to take their word for it."

"No, those bruises on my shins aren't from playing soccer, they're from my partner."

"My idea of exercise is sitting East-West."

"Sorry, partner. I would have led my singleton, but it was so small I couldn't see it." ■



Sectional Spotlight

Unit 196 is about to host their Sectional in Great Barrington, MA on August 17 & 18. According to Sheila Ryan president of Unit 196 (Western MA), the tournament will feature door prizes donated by local merchants in addition to lots of Silver points. Sheila encourages everyone to “come have fun in the Berkshires.” It’s a great opportunity to enjoy the beauty and culture of Western MA and take advantage of the bridge rates at local hotels. Plan on making it a get-away weekend.

Players from Western MA not only have fun at their sectionals, but some of their newer players have been achieving success on the tournament trail. Anita Thompson and John Dahl attended their first regional where they won GOLD in the Bracketted Pairs and played in the Pro-Am, not coming in last. John and his other partner, Barbara, did well at both the Hartford Bridge Club I/N and Newtown 499'er sectionals. Plan on joining them at one of the upcoming tournaments in D25! ■



On the Road from Toronto

What do New England bridge players do after ten long days playing at the Summer NABC in Toronto? Why, play bridge in the airport of course!



More Scenes from Nashua

