

Steel City Bridge

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4

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EDITED BY CRAIG BIDDLE

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DECEMBER 2021

BREAKING NEWS!

Lorraine reminds me that STAC Week is the first full week in December (the 6th to the 12th). STAC games are a good source of those hard to come by silver points. Check with the unit's web page to see which games are holding these special games! Rodef is having two games. Also Karl Sokalski will be directing a **Thursday** game at Rodef starting the 20th.

Clevelanders Ken Kranyak and Phil Becker won the Life Master Pairs at the Austin Nationals, they're now both Grand Life Masters, joining our own Jan Assini and Richard Katz in that ranking. Well done, guys!

THOSE PESKY PREEMPTS

CRAIG BIDDLE

Preempts can be difficult to cope with. Not only do they cause problems if your side has not yet bid, but they can also create problems after both of you have bid.

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Here's a deal that caused much consternation among the readers of bridgewinners. (www.bridgewinners.com) I recommend this site highly to all of you. And if you choose to register, please use your own name. There is no bashing of others allowed, and it can be handy because it has a partnership page and other goodies. You can also use it passively, just reading the posts and comments from many of the world's top players. There's even an I/N page for building basic skills. It's like a free bridge library.

A few weeks ago, a user from Hungary posted the following bidding problem: ♠-- ♥K52 ♦AKJ874 ♣AJ53. This hand was the dealer with none vul, and opened 1♦. LHO passed, and partner responded 1♥. But RHO now stepped in with 3♠. What a mess! What would you bid?

Double is certainly possible, if partner will read it as takeout; it would lead to disaster if partner passed for penalties with

♠Q102 ♥QJ973 ♦103 ♣Q94.

Bidding 4♣ is possible, but partner might have ♠Q1072 ♥QJ973 ♦3 ♣Q94 and raise to 5 (4♣ must be forcing). Pass and 3NT are unthinkable. 4♥ is possible, but partner may well have ♠J32 ♥J743 ♦3 ♣KQ942 and how would you like to have to make 10 tricks with that trump suit? A tough problem. Of the 49 votes to date, 42 are for double and 7 are for 4♣.

One long-time reader of the site was dissatisfied with this answer and posted the following bidding problem. None vul, you deal and open 1♦ with ♠A73 ♥K2 ♦AK87 ♣A853. The auction proceeds as above; Pass-1♥-3♠ back to you. Here there seem to be only two sensible choices; double and 3NT. To date, 40 votes are for 3NT and 17 for double. Several good players have doubled with both hands. But the majority seems to have done a good job differentiating between the two hands. The votes are in and the majority double with the first hand and bid 3NT with the 2nd. All quite reasonable.

But wait, there's more! None vul, you deal and open 1♦ with ♠1073 ♥A2 ♦AK87 ♣AQJ3. The auction proceeds as above; Pass-1♥-3♠ back to you. We know what double looks like, and we know what 3NT looks like, but this hand is neither of those and passing would be extremely timid. Should we double anyway? What if partner has ♠93 ♥K8753 ♦Q2 ♣K954? Is he supposed to bid something? They might well MAKE 3♠ when you have every reason to believe that 5♣ is cold. But partner has lots of defense and no reason to think that we are not off two spades and a slow trick or two in whatever trump suit we choose.

Phil and I talked about this hand for about half an hour when it first caught my eye, and we came to the conclusion that, as is frequently the case, when you are short in their suit you just have to bid something. So our take on this set of hands is that we would bid 4♣ with the first hand, 3NT with the 2nd, and double with the 3rd where we have the values to want to get back into the auction but nothing sensible to bid. I think that the hand opposite this one was something like ♠3 ♥A10xxx ♦xxx ♣Kxxx and several games are likely to make. But it was matchpoints, and the game you want to bid is 4♥.

Many good players sneer at this sort of double, and they have contemptuously termed it the DSIP (do something intelligent, partner) double, but this style seems to me to be gaining ground. Aficionados of doubles like this refer to this sort of double as a "power" double. It makes sense to me; sometimes there are hands (like hand #3) where you know that passing is wrong but you don't know what to do, and the power double is the only sensible way to deal with that sort of problem.

IMPROVING YOUR CARD PLAY

THIRD HAND PLAY AT TRICK 1

Third hand play to the opening lead is often the key to the defense. And, continuing with an idea I mentioned in passing last month, the key to good defense is to focus on the cards you can't see and where they might be.

Here's a fundamental defensive idea that most new players have trouble with. I think the main cause of this is that it is never explained right. The bidding goes 1NT on your left, 2♣ on your right, 2♦ on your left, and 3NT on your right. Partner leads a 4th best ♠2 and dummy is:

♠Q63 ♥A1054 ♦75 ♣K873.

Your hand is ♠AJ10 ♥J963 ♦Q982 ♣94.

RHO has bid a game with a hand that many people would consider to be worth only an invitation. Can you make him pay for stepping out of line?

What is declarer's shape? From the opening lead, you know declarer has 3 spades. And from the bidding you know he has either 2 or 3 hearts. The minor suits you can't tell about right now, since you can see six of each. But if declarer has a doubleton in a minor, then partner would have 5 and might have led that suit. So declarer has exactly 3 spades, 2 or 3 hearts, and at least 3 cards in each minor. He could be 3=3=3=4, 3=3=4=3, 3=2=3=5, 3=2=4=4, or 3=2=5=3. (Spades, hearts, diamonds, clubs in order when I put in the = sign. If I just say 4333, that's any hand with one 4 card suit and 3 tripletons.)

You can see 16 points, and declarer has 15-17. So partner has 7-9 points and has chosen to lead a spade. If partner doesn't have the ♠K, he will probably have at least 2 entries. What if he doesn't have two entries because all his cards are in front of dummy's honors? Then you're probably not beating 3NT.

OK, which spade do you play? I hope you played the 10 – it's the right card. If partner has the ♠K, you'll take the first 4 tricks by playing the 10 and following up with the ace and jack which partner will overtake with his King. And if partner doesn't have the ♠K, when you play the 10 partner will be allowed to hope that you started with AJ10 and, when he uses his first entry he will play another spade and you will gobble up dummy's queen and cash your other spade. Then if partner has another entry, and it can be used before declarer takes 9 tricks, he will have a long spade to cash.

Some general points.

- If you were declarer, and dummy had xxxx in a suit opposite your AJ10, you would go to dummy and take a finesse, because you know that it's the best way to develop an extra trick. Here, you KNOW the finesse will develop an extra trick, and you know that partner is likely to be able to get in again to repeat the finesse and likely a second time to cash his long card. So you know that finessing at trick 1 gives you your best chance to set the hand. If partner has the ♠K, you will take the first 4 tricks and hope that one of partner's other high cards will get you a 5th. And if he doesn't, you know you have a good chance to take 3 spades and two more tricks somewhere.
- Winning the ♠A at trick 1 and shifting to a diamond is wrong because it only works when partner has strong diamonds. Finessing the spade works whenever partner has two side entries, or one side trick and the ♠K.

- There are dozens of suit combinations where finessing against a card you can see in dummy is clearly right, even if declarer has a touching honor. The key is to look at the hand to see if you think partner will have some entries. Defenders, unlike declarer, are allowed to look at one of the opposing hands during the play! Take advantage of that right.
- This same general principle explains why it is right to lead the J from AJ10x or KJ10x – you can more or less guarantee that if partner has the ace or king that you are missing, you can obliterate declarer's Queen no matter which hand holds it!

MAKING SENSE OF THE BIDDING

JACOBY TRANSFERS

If you ask 1000 players why we use transfers after partner opens 1NT and 2NT, 994 of them will tell you it's to protect the strong hand on lead. I asked a partner once how much he thought this mattered, and he said, "A trick and a half per hand." Funny, someone once asked Oswald Jacoby that question and he said, "1/4 trick a hand." Even a trick a hand is laughable, most of the time the opening lead doesn't cost a trick (not even when your partner is on lead), either because they have a strong sequence like KQJ, QJ10, or J109 to lead or because they have chosen to lead from a worthless holding and declarer was going to take the finesse through 3rd hand anyway.

But the idea is sound, you are more likely to get a favorable lead when they are leading up to the hand with more high cards. Nevertheless, that's not the primary reason why we use transfers, and if it were, transfers would have been invented by someone other than one of the greatest declarers ever. The primary reason is that it extends the range of hands that responder can show, which means that it gives opener a better idea of how well his hand fits partner before choosing a final contract.

If you don't use transfers, and you pick up a hand like ♠7 ♥A10854 ♦Q63 ♣KJ87, you have to bid 3♥ to show your 5-card suit and force to game (or, if you're using 2-way Stayman, 2♦ followed by 3♥ when partner doesn't have 4 hearts). So partner only focuses on hearts when deciding whether to play 3NT or 4♥. The rest of us can transfer to hearts and then bid clubs (forcing to game); sometimes partner has ♠A84 ♥K4 ♦KJ5 ♣AQ1032 and we get to the laydown 6♣. And even 5♣ is good enough at matchpoints because when they lead the inevitable spade against 3NT, you're going down most of the time.

The structure of auctions after 1NT and a transfer to a major is as follows:

- Accept the transfer – for newer players, this should be the only option. As you progress, you're going to want to have ways to show exceptionally good hands with support; we call those super acceptances.
 - Now you can rebid 2NT to invite with only 5 cards in your suit. Usually you want to have no short suit for this, but sometimes you just do it anyway. But if you are 5-5, it's better

to bid your other suit and force to game. And 1NT-2♦, 2♥-2♠ is commonly played as invitational with 4 spades and 5 or more hearts.

- To invite with a 6+ card suit, you just raise to 3 of the suit. Simple.
- With 5332 and enough to force to game, you next bid 3NT, partner will correct to your suit with support.
- New suits at the 3-level below 3 of your suit are natural and game forcing. As you can see from the example hand above, this is a powerful advantage.
- Jumps in new suits are slam tries with shortness in the suit you jump in, usually with no 4-card side suit. You should always have at least 6 cards in your major to do this.
- Transferring and jumping to game is a mild slam try with a 6+ card suit but no shortness. But this applies ONLY if you play Texas transfers. Otherwise, this is just the end of the auction.
- Basic principles for further bidding
 - Opener must show 3+ card support for the major responder showed at his next bid.
 - Opener's new suits at the 3-level are stoppers, asking for stopper help in the other suit.
 - Raising a new minor shows slam interest.
 - With 5-5 in the majors, you transfer to spades and bid hearts. Although you can bid a new 4-card minor here, you need to be able to distinguish between 5 spades 4 hearts and 5 spades 5 hearts.
 - With a game force and a five card major and 4-card major, use Stayman and then jump to 3 of your longer major (standard) or your 4-card major (Smolen) depending on your agreements.

ERNIE PLAYS BRIDGE

ERNIE RETETAGOS

I am pleased to welcome a new columnist to our team. You all know him, he's been a long-time contributor to the Unit newsletter. Here's his first contribution.

Dummy	♠ A 7 5 3	♥ K Q 6 2	♦ 9 5	♣ A 10 8
Declarer	♠ K 9 6 4 2	♥ A 5 4	♦ A 4	♣ Q 6 5

At a matchpoint game, South received the Jack of hearts lead against their 4 spade contract. Declarer won the Queen, and both followed to the Ace and King of spades. Next came the Ace and King of hearts, as East followed once and then discarded a high diamond. How should South continue to make an overtrick?

The percentage play with the card combination in clubs is to lead toward the Queen, and finesse the ten if the Q loses. This will work three times out of four. But, declarer should not be playing on the club

suit in this hand. Ruff the last heart, and play ace and another diamond. No matter which opponent wins, they have to break the clubs or give a ruff and sluff.

Because the red suits have been stripped from each hand, the defense is end played upon winning the diamond. This technique is also known as an elimination and throw in. By eliminating a suit in both hands, you have limited the defensive options and removed safe exit cards. Anytime you want to endplay an opponent, you have to remove their safe exits. When playing a suit contract, it is generally sound technique to eliminate a suit with the aid of a ruff, if you have enough extra trumps to do so.

Editor's note – suits like the clubs above are called “frozen” suits because whichever side leads it first loses. Other examples are Jxx opposite K9x, J10xx opposite A8x, Q86 opposite J75. Sometimes a suit is frozen to one side but not the other. For example, the last suit combination would not be frozen if one defender has the AK and declarer knows from the bidding which opponent that is. But, in general, when you have a suit lacking intermediates your first thought shouldn't be, “How should I play this suit?”, but “How can I force them to play this suit?” And Ernie has done a nice job of showing you all how to answer that question.

YOU BID WHAT???

COMMENTARY, SCORING AND ABUSE BY RICHARD FINBERG

(doublemenot@gmail.com)

Today's problem is easy. Only two actions are permitted: You may “Pass” or make a “Negative Double.” But the reasons why one is clearly right, and the other clearly wrong, apply to all competitive auctions. You will also learn a thing or two about IMP strategy. Here is the problem:

IMP Knockout Match. NS: VUL; EW: NV.

You are half-way through a long KO match and are losing to a stronger team. At unfavorable vulnerability, your partner, North, deals and opens 1♦. RHO overcalls 2♣.

You hold: ♠ Q7xxx
 ♥ Q8xx
 ♦ Jxxx
 ♣ ----

The auction:
 W N W S
 1♦ 2♣ ?

Do you **pass** or do you make a **negative double**? No other choices are allowed for purpose of this problem.

Negative doubles were a popular choice. Here are excerpts from the panelists (usually shortened and sometimes edited for clarity):

Steve Nolan: Double. We have a big fit somewhere, and this is the way to find it. If partner does not bid a major, I will bid diamonds.

Bernie Fudor: Yes, double. If not now, when? Even if I were ahead!

Richard Katz: “Yes, negative double.”

Ernie Retetagos: Double seems obvious. Would not consider passing. We could have play for game opposite minimum hands with an 8-card major fit.

Gail Carns: I make a negative double since I would have no idea what to bid if partner reopened with a double.

Connie Hoechstetter: Double. Hand is useful for anything but NT.

Craig Biddle: Whatever partner's long suit is, we have at least an 8-card fit, and I will raise if he picks my 5-bagger spade suit.

RF: I discuss bidding continuations below.

Bill Holt: Although short in HCP, my hand has the right void and will play well in either major. And, I can always ‘Circle Back’ to diamonds.

RF: Circular reasoning and proud of it! Meanwhile, at least three panelists who doubled are not happy about it:

Robert Zimmermann: Double. It's IMPS, and a double part score swing will cost us 6 IMPs. Plenty of good reasons to look for a major suit fit. Heaven help us if CHO converts.

RF: Bob says *The Bridge World* coined “CHO” to mean the “Center Hand Opponent” (that guy sitting between LHO and RHO).

Distrusting your partner is common among bridge players and is known by psychologists as “CHOPhobia.” But Bob's call for celestial aid seems over-the-top.

Bob is within his rights, but personally, I would not waste the Divine Intervention Card on a hypothetical bridge hand.

Frank Cymerman: I unhappily would make a negative double and hope partner doesn't pass. S/he certainly should expect more from me, but I don't know how to recover after passing.

RF: Relax, Frank. I have a technicality just for you. It goes like this: "The plain meaning of "negative double" is that you are not doubling the contract. No. Not. Never. Nada. **Neh'-ga'-tiv'** ." So, just enter your score as minus 90 or whatever, and give E-W an offsetting bonus against CHO's score (to keep the recap sheet in balance). This is no time for chivalry – Masterpoints are at stake! "S/he" who blundered must pay, but why should you suffer? (But if Jan is your partner, just fall on the sword yourself – it is time for chivalry).

Paul Caplan: Negative double. "Might be the only chance for me to compete. I hope my partner doesn't Pass."

RF: No one said it, but what Paul, Frank and Bob really want to know is whether they should call 911 or make an SOS redouble? If you do redouble, be sure to do it out-of-turn, *before* RHO passes. If your redouble comes after the final pass, as I understand it, your redouble is carried over to the next hand – and it may not be pretty.

If your redouble is on time (out-of-turn), and LHO accepts it by passing, you are out of the woods ... well, unless your CHO passes too (again). The second time around the table, it is best to just accept your fate and let RHO Pass. Redoubling out of turn a second time is just too obvious. Someone might call the Director (or the Police).

Mind you, intentionally redoubling yourself, out of turn to boot, is somewhat unorthodox – okay, highly unethical. But a good lawyer may be able to help. If CHO's penalty pass leaves you gasping for breath, you are now in a real emergency. So, making an SOS redouble seems like a perfectly reasonable way to ask for help! What else can you do? Wait for RHO to mull over all his bidding options while you are gasping for breath? The ACBL specially designed the Redouble Card for this

very situation. Wave it vigorously by your face so its blue reflection highlights your dilemma. With luck, the Conduct and Ethics Committee may allow you to play in ACBL events, someday.

Most panelists have little concern that partner might pass:

Webb (Jack) Hawthorne: Negative double — yes, because I can stand a 2♦ rebid. I have little fear that partner will pass for penalties.

Trudy Cohn: I absolutely make a negative double. I have a great playing hand for a major suit and excellent support for diamonds. Point count doesn't matter when you have great distribution.

Stanley Ruskin: It doesn't matter who is VUL or if this is IMPs or MPs. I make a negative double. You have to get into the bidding early or partner will be flying blind. **Partner cannot convert this and pass**, unless he doesn't want to continue the partnership.

RF: Wanna get away?

Stanley shows the way.

It's not much trouble,

Just pass his double.

There are 50 ways to ~~Love Your Liver Leave Your Lover Loser~~

Part with Partner:

“♫♫♫ Make a new plan, Stan. Get on the bus, Gus ♫♫♫”

The other Song is just plain Wrong:

“♫♫♫ Breaking up is [not] hard to do ♫♫♫.”

Bonus Question: If Stanley played 80 sessions of bridge per year for 50 years, and averaged 1.2 negative doubles per session, and 1.5% of the time his partners passed the double out of position, how many new partners would Stanley need to find in the 50-year period?

By my estimate, Stanley gave up bridge by the late 1980's. To be fair, Stanley may have exaggerated a little to make his point. I suspect Stanley is okay with converting negative doubles if you are in position or when the vulnerability conditions are more favorable.

Finally, we hear from the passers. It is no accident we meet them here in the column basement. Meet the Maytag Repairman and the Lone Ranger (you can decide which is which):

Herb Sachs: Pass. Double is scary; hope partner will reopen.

Gus Costanzo: Gus prefers 2♦ to buy the contract or push his opponents higher. Since 2♦ is not allowed, Gus passes fearing his hand will “disappoint.” Gus will “be glad” if North reopens with a double.

RF: Let’s see. Herb and Gus pass as South for fear North will convert a negative double. So, North must now guess whether it is safe to balance (though *you* know it is not only safe but essential). From North’s point of view, South may not fit his hand at all – South may not have North’s major or could have all the remaining clubs (with West having a stiff or void in clubs). Shouldn’t North auto-pass East’s ♣ overcall so EW cannot run out to their major suit fit? This is just one of many ways South’s timid pass might screw up the entire auction. CHOPhobia seems to be contagious.

South’s fear that North will pass a negative double assumes North is an IMP-ish fool. North sits “under” the 2♣ bidder. The best penalty doubles are usually when your trump stack lies “over” your opponent. North knows and understands this. He also knows he is vulnerable, is playing IMPs, is losing, and his team is outclassed. With the potential for +620 or +600 just around the corner, why would North even consider defending? To *hope* for plus 100 to 300 if pass is right, instead of minus 180 or more if pass is wrong? The *real* money is at 4♥, 4♠ or 3NT. With ♣KJ8x, North won’t even think about passing. He will bid 2NT (or 3NT with running diamonds). With weak clubs, North instead tries for 4♥ or 4♠, knowing there are plenty of safe rest stops along the way. Only a suit like ♣KQJT8 could justify a penalty pass red on white at IMPs.

This seems to be a “Reverse Stanley” situation. That is when you fire the guy who refuses to make the negative double, not the guy who might pass it. Just make your obvious double. Don’t be a CHOPhobe.

I put this bidding problem on the bridgewinners.com bidding forum. Two responders who voted for the negative double also commented. Richard Reitman (a retired doctor with two wins in ACBL National events) said:

Underweight, sure, but this hand becomes difficult/impossible to show after passing. Vulnerable at IMPs, why can't the ♣ void be just what the doctor ordered for [4 of a major]?

Kieran Dyke (winner of multiple Australian and English events and 2015 Bronze Medalist in European Teams) minced no words:

Pass is hopeless. 2♦ just seems like it makes it harder to reach our most likely games.

Rebidding After Your Negative Double

I will raise 2 of a major to 3 or rebid 2♠ over 2♦. I evaluate this hand as 10-11 supporting points (5 for the void, 5 in HCP, and 1 for promoting a trump honor, leaning downward because of all the queens and jacks). Bidding to the 3-level has some risk but is necessary.

If partner jumps to 3 of any suit, I will bid again. As Ernie points out, game in a major may be easy opposite perfect minimums (such as, 1-4-5-3 or 4-1-5-3 shape with HCP mostly in the long suits). The same is true for imperfect or flat North hands with extra values.

The Two Big Take-Aways

1. Always describe your hand as well as possible, ASAP.

Few hands will fit your system perfectly. On the problem hand, you prefer more defense, but making a negative double tells the main story at once and assures partner he can safely compete further. Not making the negative double risks getting shut out, and even if you can bid later, your partner will never read you for this hand.

More broadly, by showing support (or denying support), partner at once learns if it is safe to compete further, especially when you can also limit your hand, all with a single bid. Similarly, a splinter raise for partner's major is much more informative than bidding Jacoby 2NT. The latter is a fine convention to learn about partner's hand, but the splinter bid tells your story, including the location of your singleton or void and that you have 4-card trump support and about 10-12 HCP. Partner will know what to do next.

2. Think strategically, paying attention to the big picture.

How will your team overcome its scoring deficit and inferior skill and experience? The answer is surely *not* by sitting back hoping your well-meaning teammates stayed at a Holiday Inn Express last night, or that your smug expert frenemies, Mr. West and Ms. East, will do something really dumb. You can beat them by taking maximum advantage of every good opportunity and lying low whenever trouble is afoot. Today's hand has excellent potential. Your ♣ void will be a nasty surprise for your opponents. Yes, you may only win a part score swing, but you must at least *explore* for a major suit game. With luck, you may make a doubled contract, courtesy of the ♣ void and a double fit.

I am certainly not suggesting wild play, random jumps to game or nutsy preempts with J98xxx or the like. To the contrary, at IMPs, overcalls and preempts should be in good (double-resistant) suits, especially when playing strong opponents who know how to double and defend. Hope may spring eternal, but good luck at bridge starts with recognizing and exploiting good opportunities while minimizing losses in bad situations.

Scoring

Voters at bridgewinners.com were given the same instructions as the SCB panel that only passes and negative doubles are allowed. Nevertheless, about 25% of online voters bid 2♦. The only logical reason for this is they were afraid of a penalty pass but wanted to “do something.” But 2♦ is by far inferior to a negative double and is scored accordingly.

Bid	SCB		BW		Score	Comments
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.		
Double	13	86.7	26	63.4	100%	It's the right bid at the right time.
Pass	2	13.3	5	12.2	0%	Fails to describe hand. Wrong at IMPs or MPs. Gives up w/o a fight.
2♦	(1)	--	10	24.4	20%	Better than pass, but far too likely to lose the major fit.
Total	15	100	41	100		

Take an extra 25% for reading this far to improve your game. Happy Holidays, and please have a healthy and happy New Year.

STREAKS AND BIG GAMES

CHRIS WANG

STREAKS

2 in a row

Judy Haffner	Rodef	Mon
Ron Franck	Rodef	Mon
Harold Haffner	Rodef	Mon
Gus Costanzo	O'Hara	Tues
Doug Sterrett	Greensburg	Wed
Sue Dillon	Greensburg	Wed
Kenneth Eichler	Greensburg	Fri
Leroy Hackenberg	Greensburg	Fri
Martin Greenberg	Glenshaw	Sat
Sandy McCall	Concordia	Sat

3 in a Row

Arlene Port	Rodef	Mon
Barbara Belardi	Export	Mon
Denise Dufour	Edgeworth	Wed
Celine O'Neill	Edgeworth	Wed

BIG GAMES

Arlene Port & Judy Haffner	71.88	Rodef
Bud McElhaney & Sandy McCall	70.24	Concordia

BRIDGE IN PITTSBURGH

LORRAINE HANNA

We appreciate our Directors for their effort in bringing back Face to Face Bridge in the Burgh. Our games are small and we hope to see them growing. Thanks to the Directors for giving their time and energy to keep Bridge Alive in the Burgh. Do you have a solution to grow our games? We'd love to hear from you. Here's a link to the PBA Board Members page with a link at the bottom for emailing the Board. Thank you for your suggestions.

<http://www.pittsburghbridge.org/board.htm>

Congratulations to the following: **Club Masters:** Wallace Clements, Debbie Collins, Kirk Fabel, Ronald Kust, Marilyn Sittig, Lenora Traficanti, Marcia Wolk; **Sectional Masters:** Cate Andrews, Albert Exton, Susan Gibson, Montie Rea, Ralph Schmeltz, Steven Thomas; **Regional Masters:** Nancy Gusky, Ginny Volponi, **NABC Masters:** Jean Chess, Denise Dufour, Marcia Taylor; **Bronze Life Masters:** Madeleine Frizzi, Hugh McMaster, Karen Piper, Tom Piper, **Silver Life**

Masters: Ron Ambrose, Jim Gump, Susan Portnoy; **Ruby Life Master:** Bob Flynn, **Diamond Life Master,** Ron Franck

ACBL DISTRICT 5 Regional Tournament is on: The 2022 Rock and Roll Regional will be held from January 5 through the 9th. Proof of Vaccination required and Masks are required. Deadline for booking a room at a reduced rate is 12/8. Here's the Flyer. <http://web2.acbl.org/Tournaments/Ads/2022/01/2201108.pdf>

Teaching Bridge

If you're teaching bridge and not on my email list, please let me know. Teaching bridge has been a rewarding experience for me. I have met many wonderful friends. Consider teaching...you'll enjoy it too. You can become a teacher with online certification...here's the link

<https://acbl.org/teachers-lounge/#incent>

Bridge players need to think about Vulnerability and Position at the table prior to making a bid. Here's an article by Robert Todd to discuss these decisions.

<https://bridge-tips.co.il/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Vulnerability-and-Position.pdf>

You can sign up for Robert Todd's free newsletter on his website. Scroll to the bottom of the page.

<https://www.advinbridge.com/>

The PBA would like to extend our best wishes to you and your family for a Happy and Healthy New Year; Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, and Happy Kwanzaa

I hope one of your New Year's Resolutions is to play more Face to Face Bridge

Lorraine C. Hanna

OUR PEOPLE

PHYLLIS GEINZER

Unfortunately, we have multiple obituaries this month. The first was written by Ron Franck for the family's inclusion in Jane's public obituary.

Jane was an avid bridge player attaining the level of Sapphire Life Master. She shared her bridge ability as a mentor to many in the Pittsburgh area. She was dedicated to promoting bridge. She spent much time helping others to find partners for the Unit game, Sectionals, and Regionals. Jane served on the Unit board for many years, and was our treasurer for much of that time. Jane displayed high degrees of sportsmanship, ethics, and ability. She was recognized at various levels of our organization, receiving the Jane McIntyre Award, Milt Frazier Award, Distinguished Service Award, and the Ann McGilvrey Award.

Other notices:

Phyllis Toby Genszler became an ACBL member and active in the Pittsburgh bridge community not that long before the pandemic shut down the world. However, she accumulated just short of 100

Steel City Bridge

DECEMBER 2021

master points in that short time. Phyllis was an active PPG retiree, involved in not just bridge but also gardening, her beloved dog and quilting. The community will miss Phyllis and her enthusiasm. Our sympathy goes out to her family and friends both within and without the bridge family.

Wilbur (Bill) Moore has passed away in Florida. Bill was an active participant in Pittsburgh games for several years prior to his relocation.

(Advertisement)

Expert-level Bridge Lessons *for Advanced Players*

Richard Finberg is now offering bridge lessons for individuals or small groups at affordable prices. If you wish to significantly improve your game, or just want to occasionally play bridge with an expert partner, these lessons are guaranteed to be fun and to provide sound bridge advice. I teach advanced play technique, ranging from basic suit combinations to avoidance plays, trump management, deception, squeezes and everything in between. I can also improve your bidding without overloading you with conventions.

You can choose the lessons topics or let me. Lessons are on Zoom. I put written material on the Zoom screen and email copies to you for later reference. I also give playing lessons on BBO followed by a review of the hands. Live games and lessons are also possible, but take more time so would cost more.

I am offering an introductory package for \$99. You get:

- ♠ 5 hours of Zoom lessons (typically, in 5 one-hour lessons).
- ♠ An 18-Board playing session with me on BBO, followed by a review of the hands.
- ♠ And, copies of my three most popular handouts: *Swiss Team Tactics*, *The 7 Deadly Sins of Bad Bidding*, and *The 7 Deadly Sins of Bad Declarer Play (Unforced Errors)*.

That is 7+ hours, without counting my preparation time. I would normally charge \$140 or more for this package. This offer is good through December 31, but the lessons can be completed later, as you wish. Bridge playing couples in the same household can share the lesson at no added cost. Please contact me at 412-304-9254 (cell) or doublemenot@gmail.com for more information.

**Bridge lessons are wonderful presents for bridge players.
Is someone looking for a present for you?**