

Steel City Bridge

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 11

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EDITED BY CRAIG BIDDLE

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NOVEMBER 2022

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LORRAINE HANNA

Regional We are pleased to have had a total of 129 tables playing over the Labor Day Weekend Regional. Thanks to Ron Franck for Chairing the event along with Carol Bolen and Mary Lou Flach who kept us fed in grand style. Barbara Balardi Chaired Partnerships and had standbys in case someone showed up without a partner. Thanks to the many volunteers and players who helped make this event a success.

Mark your calendar now for next year's Regional. We will be at the Masonic starting Wednesday, August 30 and running through Labor Day.

Up the ladder Congratulations to all who moved up the ranks. Jim Gump on achieving status as Ruby Life Master. Silver Life Master status goes to Jeanne Baseman and Sue Blackburn. Bronze Life Master status for Genevieve Novak, Sandi Bross, Fran Steger and Douglas T. Sterrett.

Congratulations to **Cecelia Powell** who has received the Ann McGilvrey Award. This prestigious award is presented to a player District wide who epitomizes ethical behavior and good sportsmanship at the bridge table.

Ann McGilvrey was one of three Bridge players who died in a boating accident. Ralph Vichill and Lee Caito also perished in this accident. The Cleveland Whist club has Honored Ralph officially by naming a tournament after him. The Vichill league has moved its year long tournament to an online platform. More information on Vichill League is in column re Stan Dub.

Article in the Bridge Bulletin by Stan Dub Stan Chairs the online Wednesday evening Vichill League Swiss Team Tournament. His article is on page 7 of September's Bridge Bulletin regarding online and face to face bridge and the Vichill League Tournament. I have played in this tournament since Covid hit and have thoroughly enjoyed it. You can register a team of 4-6 players. Team up with friends from across the country and beyond. Teams are divided into 9 team brackets so you will be playing against

those within your masterpoint range. Registration ends October 7. If you didn't get in the Winter Tournament, think ahead for Spring to join then. whistclub.org

Mentoring. Free games to Mentors and Mentees are available until the end of the year playing face to face in Units 142 and 229. Now's your time to team up. See our Website and click onto Mentor/Mentee tab to register. Looking for a Mentor or Mentee, let me know.

Free Games 0-5 MPs. Take advantage of this program by playing free face to face at our local games. For more information, check our website.

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Membership Directory. Bill Holt sent out a revised and updated directory . It's so cool, all you have to do is press on the number in the Directory and it dials the person directly. It's not too late to sign up for the directory. Just go onto the Clubs Results page, Opt In, and send your information on the link. You will be included when the Directory is updated again.

Bridge Whiz

Free online bridge classes for students grades 4-12. More info on our website or go to Bridge Whiz.

Live for Clubs

Live for Clubs shows each hand you played at your Club game with results for each board. <https://live.acbl.org/>

The Common Game

The Common Game is offered to clubs to play the same hands as other clubs. Go to link below for an explanation. Experts analyze some of these hands. It's so interesting to read how the bridge professionals approach the hand. Here's a link to explain the Common Game

<https://thecommongame.com/CGTutorials.html>

ACBL

The ACBL has increased overall Awards by 20% for Sectionals and Regionals until 5/28/2023...so come out and get EXTRA points at our Sectional!

ACBL Educational Foundation: As you may have read in the October Bridge Bulletin, a pilot program has been initiated between the ACBL and the ACBL Educational Foundation to increase ACBL membership and to provide support for face-to-face bridge teachers and clubs. Selected teachers must have access to f-f bridge club where students take lessons then advance to in person supervised play. Students will be offered free 120 day ACBL Guest Memberships. "The ACBL will use digital marketing channels to generate and

furnish leads to teachers and prospective students.." If the pilot program is successful, an ACBL wide program will be implemented in 2023.

Fall Sectional:

Thank you for attending our Fall Sectional. A special thanks to our team; Craig Biddle for Chairing the event; Lonnie Carey and Ann Plunkett for the delicious meals each day; Darlene Mannheimer for partnership building, John Doyal, Caddy Chair. In addition to our Chairs, we had a slew of volunteers who gave their time and effort in making this a great tournament. Thank you all..

Project Boost

[editor's note – Lorraine forwarded this as a link. It needs to be text, right here, so I've brought it in. Note that the ABTA is the American Bridge Teachers Association.]

As an ABTA member, you are a possible candidate for the joint ACBL and ACBL Education Foundation initiative. This program looks to boost in-person bridge through supporting beginning

bridge teachers (and their partnered clubs) by running social media ad campaigns on their behalf to generate leads for an upcoming in-person course.

Some of you may have communicated with Robert Todd in the first round of our pilot. The task force is getting ready to line up teachers for another round of ad campaigns for courses beginning in January and February and we hope you will apply.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please review the attached overview of the program – and if you would like to be considered please use the embedded link in the document to complete the google form application (note the link may not work if viewing document in a web browser or preview pane – recommend downloading and saving it first if that is the case).

Please complete the application as soon as possible. We hope to have teachers selected in early November and have ads up and running in early December.

If you have any questions please contact Blakely Meyers, blakely.meyers@acbl.org

[Overview of Project Boost](#)

Regards,

Henry Meguid

CONVENTIONS

CRAIG BIDDLE

First, a very quick apology for not getting this out in the month on the masthead. September and October were a whirlwind for me, with my business meeting in Atlanta and the preparations for the Sectional. As this was my first Sectional as the Chair, I wasn't terribly efficient with my time. But I knew that the Sectional was my first priority, so here we are.

And now... Here's my feature article.

Barbara Seagram has authored a very popular book with the title, *25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know*. Larry Cohen is in the process of writing a new book on conventions, basically suggesting that you should reduce the number of conventions you play. His point is that a misunderstanding about a convention in a matchpoint session usually lops 2% or more off your session score.

Here's a quote from a message he posted on BBO. "Unless you're trying to win major championships, bridge should be for fun. Sure, you want to do well, but memorizing dozens of conventions is not the formula. Less is more. If your head isn't clogged with artificiality and code, it is easier to focus on basics."

With that in mind, I'm [this is me, not Larry, speaking] going to categorize Barbara's list here.

Essential: Stayman, Negative Doubles, Responsive Doubles, Cue-Bid Raises, Fourth Suit Forcing, Takeout Doubles, Jacoby & Texas Transfers, Splinter Bids, New Minor Forcing, RKCB.

Situations you must understand: Reverses, Balancing, Game Tries, Weak Two-Bids, Control Showing Cue-Bids (Barbara calls these conventions, but I quibble with using that term for any of these.)

Useful: Jacoby 2NT, Reverse Drury, Ogust, Lead Directing Doubles, 2♣ Forcing Opening, Unusual NT, Michaels Cue-Bids, Lebensohl

Not Useful: Gerber, Pick a Slam 5NT

Other conventions that I find relatively poor:

- Bergen Raises – among other things, you preempt yourself out of having any sort of game try when you have a single raise with 4 trumps.
- 1 of a minor-2NT invitational – This is pretty universal, and you probably should keep playing it, but I just hate it. Why should I have to bid 2NT over your 1♦ opening when I have ♠xxx ♥xxx ♦AKx ♣KJxx? And how are you going to find out that we have no spade stopper?

Notrump defenses: You should use one. From worst to best, in my opinion: Natural, DONT, Meckwell, Cappelletti, Landy, Woolsey (AKA Multi-Landy).

My beef with playing natural is that I can't see any reason to want to play in 2 of a minor when they open 1NT. If you have a good hand, pass and lead your suit. If you have a mediocre hand, pass and lead your suit. If you have a terrible hand, pass and try to guess what partner's suit is and then lead THAT.

My beef with DONT and Meckwell is that you have to bid 2♥ to show both majors. So your partner shows both majors and you have two doubletons. There's a real chance you could end up trying to make 8 tricks with a trump suit of Kxxx opposite 10x. Good luck with that - you'd much rather your trump suit was Kxxxx opposite 10x. Why play a convention where you have to give away a board every now and then. Worse, your partner can grump at you for not guessing which suit he had. Ugh. Just as bad as forgetting an agreement is an agreement that forces partner into a blind guess.

My beef with Cappelletti is much as with the above two. Partner has to bid 2♦ to show both majors, and you have the same problem, except that once in a blue moon you have enough diamonds to pass. A secondary problem with Cappelletti is that when you overcall 2 of a major to show that suit and a minor, partner can't rely on you to have 5 of the major. If you've played a lot with the GIBs, you know that this is a problem.

Landy is a really basic convention, double is a strong hand, a 2♣ overcall shows both majors, and everything else is natural. The good news is that when you are 2-2 in the majors, you can bid 2♦ to ask partner to pick the suit. No more 4-2 fits unless partner is one of those who bids 2♣ with 4-4 in the majors, but even then you don't have to play it. That's a big advantage in my book.

A simple modification of Landy is to make the 2♦ overcall show long diamonds and a 4-card major. This is much better than just bidding diamonds to show diamonds in my book – finding major suit fits is the key to winning bridge. A simple follow-up plan – 2♥ just says I can play in hearts if you have them, otherwise you bid 2♠, I fit one of spades or diamonds, 2♠ is I want to play in spades if you have them or otherwise diamonds. 2NT is I have a good hand, then overcaller bids 3♣ with a bad hand and hearts, 3♦ with a bad hand and spades, or 3 of their longer or better major with a good hand.

Woolsey is a version of Landy where the 2♦ overcall shows a one-suited hand with a major. This is slightly more complicated than what I suggest above. But it lets you better define your two of a major overcalls, since they now guarantee 5 cards in the major along with a biddable minor. And Woolsey uses a double of 1NT to show a 4-card major and 5+ card minor. If partner makes this bid, you can bid 2♣ to play in the minor, 2♦ to play in the major, or 2 of a major to show a 6-card suit of your own.

There is (I think) a version of Cappelletti called “Hello,” where the 2♠ overcall is both majors, and the 2♦ overcall is a one-suited hand – but why bother? This is just a bad version of Woolsey. You’re forcing yourself to bid your minor at the 3-level and, as I said above, you should just pass and lead your suit. If they get out of notrump, you can bid your minor later if your hand and suit are good enough. But mostly you should pass. Maybe partner can get a couple of ruffs.

REVERSES

CRAIG BIDDLE

“We don’t play reverses.” I’ve heard new players say this many times over the years. But of course they were, they just didn’t know how to continue after they made one. What are you going to bid, after all, if you open 1♦ and partner responds 1♠, when you hold ♠K4 ♥AK32 ♦KQ10943 ♣2? You’re going to bid 2♥, of course. The problem is, those players also think it’s right to rebid 2♥ on this auction when you hold ♠K4 ♥A832 ♦KQ1043 ♣42. It’s not.

What’s the difference? The first hand is practically certain to make 3♦ when responder has ♠Q8763 ♥Q75 ♦865 ♣K93, the second hand might not make even 1NT. The reason you can afford to rebid 2♥ with the first hand and not the second is precisely that. The first hand has reasonable safety at the 3-level opposite a nondescript minimum response, the second doesn’t.

Who says partner can’t pass your 2♥ rebid? Logic does. Playing reverses as nonforcing caters to the very frequent minimum hands, at the expense of the important game and slam deals. It’s a bad tradeoff. So now we have to figure out how to continue. There are three schemes that I know of. All three schemes have one thing in common – responder rebids his suit with 5 or more cards regardless of his strength. So this 2♠ is 100% forcing. Responder is simply saving room for investigation.

After 1♦-1♠, 2♥-2♠, for example. opener rebids:

2NT – minimum (about 16-17 points), club stopper, fewer than 3 spades.

3♦ – minimum, no club stopper, inadequate spade support. Now responder may pass or rebid 3♠ to sign off. To rebid 3♠, responder should have something like a weak two-bid with a good suit, otherwise he should just let partner play 3♦, even with a singleton. If responder wants to force to game with spades, he can now bid 3♥; this delayed “raise” denies 4-card support. This is logical, with 4-card heart support responder would raise hearts immediately, simultaneously promising 5 or more spades.

3♠ – minimum, 3-card spade support. Now responder may pass, bid game, cue-bid for slam, or just take control with 4NT depending on how strong his hand is.

Other rebids by opener after 1♦-1♠, 2♥-2♠:

3♣ is not necessarily natural, opener makes this bid when he has no other descriptive bid. For instance, he could have ♠4 ♥AK32 ♦AKQ10743 ♣4 where it's obvious that he can't raise spades or rebid 2NT, and he doesn't want to rebid 3♦ because partner is allowed to pass. So this rebid is game forcing.

3♥ shows 5♥ and 6+♦, responder should choose one of opener's suits to play in. I don't think this should be forcing, but I think that's a minority position.

3NT – this should be at least 18 points and some hope of taking a lot of diamond tricks. Responder will rarely disturb this.

4♠ - this is more than a minimum but without much slam interest, likely a hand with a lot of points, 3 spades, and a diamond suit like AKxxx where opener can't see enough trick-taking potential to look for slam.

Responder's rebids after 1♦-1♠, 2♥ when he doesn't have five or more spades. Here is where the different ways of handling reverses show up. Essentially, you and your partner have to decide what your weak rebid for responder will be. You have 3 choices:

1. You can use 2NT to show weakness (5-7 points).
 - a. Now opener can rebid his first suit to allow responder to pass, or rebid anything else to force to game. Note that responder is denying 5 or more cards in his suit. This is crude, but probably fine for intermediates.
 - b. You can use this as lebensohl (some people call this Ingberman), forcing opener to rebid 3♣ if willing to stop below game. If opener has a really giant hand, he can bid anything else. Again, responder is denying 5+ cards in his suit.
2. You can return to opener's first suit to show weakness. This takes a leap of faith after, say, 1♦-1♠, 2♥ if responder has ♠Q983 ♥J72 ♦2 ♣K10843. But that's something that happens rarely, and opener often has 6 in his first suit. This also requires opener to rebid 2♣ rather than 2♥ with ♠J ♥AK96 ♦AQ75 ♣KJ72 to avoid playing a 4-1 fit at the 3-level. This was the standard way to rebid after a reverse in K-S. The advantage of this method is that it lets responder rebid 2NT with 8-10 points and a stopper in the 4th suit, which is a considerable gain since it forces to game and allows opener plenty of room to describe his hand further.
3. You can use the cheaper of the 4th suit or 2NT as the weakness bid – this was from a later iteration of K-S. It's a compromise between methods 1 and 2, and allows responder lots of natural game forces.

HELPING PARTNER DEFEND

CRAIG BIDDLE

This deal came up in the Sectional. I was playing against a pair of newer players, and was dummy as partner declared 1NT.

Dummy: ♠10642 ♥K92 ♦J982 ♣43

LHO: ♠AK3 ♥QJ1073 ♦1073 ♣J9

RHO: ♠9875 ♥A54 ♦KQ5 ♣752

Declarer: ♠QJ ♥86 ♦A64 ♣AKQ1086

Against 1NT, LHO led the ♥Q (as would we all) and it held the trick. Next came the ♥J, again holding the trick. Who has the ♥A? Partner, of course. If declarer has it, he has blundered horribly. So our defender continued with the ♥3 to the K and Ace, as declarer discarded a diamond. Now partner returned the ♦K, declarer won the ace and ran his clubs to make 1NT.

The opening leader asked me how they could have told partner they had the ♠AK. I suggested that, similar to when you lead something you expect partner to ruff, you lead a suit preference card, high for the high suit, low for the low suit, and middle for the middle suit if there is one, otherwise a middle one is “I don’t care.”

“We don’t play suit preference,” was the answer. If you don’t, you need to learn right away. Taking away partner’s guesses on defense can win you lots of matchpoints and IMPs. This is miles more important than adding another convention to your convention card. Phil and I have a very elaborate set of carding agreements designed to help partner to know what to do. And it shows; we have pulled off some really fine defenses since we adopted all our bells and whistles.

But in this case, because the opening leader had the ♠AK, there was another way. Lead the ♠K at trick 3, then play your heart. Partner will know you have the ♠A, and you will set 1NT. Note that this only works when you have a side AK. Suit preference will work dozens of times more often than this.

ADVANCED RKCB

CRAIG BIDDLE

Bernie Fudor and I had a very advanced auction to a laydown grand slam in the Friday morning session. Here were our cards, and our auction.

Bernie: ♠KQ52 ♥AJ3 ♦J972 ♣J6

Craig: ♠AJ10984 ♥K9 ♦-- ♣AK1094

Our auction (I was the dealer)

1♠ 2NT

3♦ 3♠

4♣ 4♥

4NT 5♠

6♣ 7♠

All pass

We both had decisions to make during the auction. Bernie’s first decision was whether he had a limit raise or a game force. The minor suit jacks argued for a downgrade, but the good spades and holding a doubleton rather than a 4333 hand argued for aggression. As you all know, it’s pretty easy for Bernie and I to decide on aggression.

Then I had to decide whether to show my side 5-card suit (by bidding 4♣), or my shortness (by bidding 3♦). I decided to show the shortness because my hand was VERY slammish and I thought having the extra level of bidding might come in handy.

Now Bernie had to decide whether to express disinterest by rebidding 4♠, show lots of interest by cue-bidding 3♥, or choose a middle ground by bidding 3♠. He chose the middle ground, since although his shape and high card location meshed well with my hand, he still had a minimum.

The next round of bidding was easy, I cue-bid 4♣ and Bernie cue-bid 4♥. This excited me greatly, since I now knew that Bernie didn't have the ♦A. So I bid RKC despite my void, and Bernie showed two key cards and the Queen. We were almost there.

We play that 4NT by me now would ask for specific kings. I had no need to worry about kings. But a corollary of that treatment is that new suit bids now ask for third round control in the suit I bid. So I bid 6♣ and Bernie bid the grand slam. As you can see, there was no particular difficulty to the play, with the ruffing finesse in clubs being marked after the 2nd round of clubs.

Only one other pair bid this grand slam, Fred Schenker and Frank Cymerman. But they weren't able to diagnose the club situation in the auction, so their grand slam was an educated guess.

There are a lot of lessons hidden in this short article. In addition to the 3rd round control ask, the decision whether to show the 5th club in response to 2NT or the diamond shortness was key to enabling the rest of our auction. If I had been 6=1=1=5 I would have shown the 5th club, because I could have bid RKC at my next turn regardless of Bernie's reaction to learning that I had 5 clubs.

STREAKS AND BIG GAMES

CHRIS WANG

Big Games:

Robert Park & William Holt 72.00 Glenshaw Wed
Paul Caplan & Catherine Caplan 70.37 Glenshaw Sat
Ronald Sain & Ed Collins 77.78 Export Mon
William Holt & Constance Hoechstetter 70.83 Edgeworth Wed
Marcella Retetagos & Arlene Port 70.37 Rodef Thurs
Paul Caplan & Catherine Caplan 75.00 Wilkins Fri
August Costanzo & Ildiko Baxter 70.00 Glenshaw Sat
Richard Katz & Patricia Katz 73.81 Greensburg Fri

Streaks:

2 in a row:

Martin Kumer Export Mon
Deborah Shoup Greensburg Wed
Bob Flynn Temple Emanuel Wed
John Doyal Temple Emanuel Wed
Sandra Brand Rodef Thurs
Esther Sain Greensburg Wed
Leroy Hackenberg II Greensburg Fri

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Bud McElhaney Temple Emanuel Wed
Sandra McCall Temple Emanuel Wed
Doug Sterrett Greensburg Fri
Peggy Shivetts Greensburg Fri

3 in a row:

Judy Haffner O'Hara Tues
Harold Haffner O'Hara Tues
Doug Sterrett Export Mon
Arlene Port Rodef Thurs
Richard Finberg Concordia Sat
Bharat Shah Concordia Sat
Kenneth Eichler Export Mon
Kenneth Eichler Greensburg Wed
Leroy Hackenberg II Greensburg Wed

4 in a row

Marcella Retetagos Rodef Thurs

5 in a row:

Ronald Sain Indiana Tues

PEOPLE

MARILYN PAINTER

Once again, am saddened to report recent deaths of members (or previous members):

Lila Margolis died 9/18 at age 92. She had been a regular player at Rodef. Many of you may also know her sister, Madeline Kramer. I guess those bridge genes ran in the family! Lila was well known as a teacher/educator.

Janet George died 8/29 at age 87. She lived in Sewickley and played at the Edgeworth Club/Allegheny Country Club game. Overcoming polio at age 6, Janet became a swimming instructor and lifeguard, volunteering 53 years with the American Red Cross, including as a manager of the National Response Team. She was also a kindergarten teacher and program specialist.

Natalie Klein died September 11.

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Tony Malpede died September 15 at age 91. A graduate of Duquesne University, Tony worked for USSteel as a buyer for 35 years and later with Eichleay Engineering. He was a wonderful addition to the bridge world.....considerate, kind and gracious.

Bruce Brennan had a tumble. Those nasty stairs!!! Speedy recovery, please!

Janice Lee Neil Hoffmann died 9/22 at the age of 81. Janice lived in Plum borough.

Jean Busis Simon died October 16 at the age of 96. Jean was a teacher in the Pittsburgh Public School system for 25 years.

Herbert Heller died October 15 at the age of 92. Many may also remember his wife, Phyllis, who died in 1998.

In addition, there was an obituary for Fredric Leigh Melman who died Oct. 20. The obituary noted that he was a professional bridge player and teacher.

It's getting close to ice and snow time and the need to be even more careful as to falls.

I don't want to have to report such!

I continue to urge members to attend our games and play in person. Kudos to our directors who are keeping the games going and to the players that support the games.

Please send any member news to me. I hope some is GOOD news!!

Marilyn

Online Bridge Lessons for Advanced, Intermediate and Experienced Players

Managing Trump Contracts

Learn how to keep control of the trump suit. When to ruff, when to duck, establishing side suits, maintaining communications and more. Avoid the *7 Deadly Sins of Bad Declarer Play (self-inflicted errors)*.

Practice correct play at your own individual virtual table using **Shark Bridge** with the expert advice of Richard Finberg.

5 weekly 75-minute lessons for \$48 starting

Wednesday, Nov. 2 at 10:00 a.m. EST

(We will work around Thanksgiving so you get all 5 lessons).

To **register** or for more information or a different lesson time, please call me at (412) 304-9254 or email me at doublemenot@gmail.com.



Free Lesson

**The 1st Monday of every month at 4:00 p.m. on Zoom –
coming Monday, Nov. 7 at 4 p.m. EDT**

The mystery topic is a belated Halloween surprise!

Everyone is welcome to join. Use the following Zoom link (or feel free to call me for more information):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5664734334?pwd=Ui9vc1FBcVpZby9MRfZ6eiswUWR0T09>