



# The Future Life Master



Volume 2, Issue 2

Austin, Texas ACBL Unit 207

April - May 2010

## The Many Layers of Bridge



*This is the fifth in a series of articles written by newer players, kindly detailing some of their experiences learning bridge.*

When I retired from teaching high school math, opting to teach part-time at ACC, I did not know what I'd do with my spare time. Upon making a list of potential hobbies, I remembered that I had learned what I *thought* was bridge from informal classes offered at a local university.

by Sandy Potts

Later I googled "contract bridge" and found a bridge class at the Senior Activity Center. My husband, Bill, and I partnered. I was a happy camper until he decided he needed to go back to beginning bridge rather than stay in the intermediate class. Luckily for me, Leona Rieger made the class fun and a group asked me to stay for lunch and play afterwards. If it had not been for this lovely group of newfound friends, I would probably have quit since I didn't have a partner.

The more bridge classes I took, the more I was "hooked" and the more I learned how little I knew! Reading about bridge and mingling with others who loved the game encouraged me to keep going. I will always remember going to practice bridge on Sunday mornings at the BCA where Scott Humphrey introduced me to more players and more laughter. These sessions showed me that there was so much more to learn about bridge than I had ever imagined. I met my partner, Marlene, on a Wednesday night when each of us attended Sally Sekac's Bridge Plus class/game. Little did we know that we'd continue this journey. When we finally won our first masterpoints, we were elated. I laughed again when I found out that we had won 0.11 masterpoints for our efforts. I called Bill and let him know he had to get the carpenter to our house and widen the door. My head might not make it through!

As we continued to crawl in the small group at the Bridge Center, Scott let me know that I was a

(cont on page 2)

## A Fool's Errand

Two strangely unique customs in many parts of the world...April Fools Day and Cuckoo Day...are both a tad zany and more than fitting for this April/May article. The modern-day game of bridge and its proprieties are in vogue and finely tuned. Yet, proprieties in bridge and its forerunner, Whist, have not always been ethically bound. Or, so it seems.

During the days when Whist was all the rage, bets were placed on the outcome of games. Gambling with cards had become a passion among card players, creating the profession of card shark. The hand below was first described and published by Mr. Thomas Matthews in 1804. It represents a rigged hand that Mississippi riverboat card sharks would use to sucker innocent victims into losing their money. Such hands became very popular among card professionals and card cheaters during the era of Bridge Whist. More simply...the target of the ruse was on the hopeless mission of A Fool's Errand with no way to win.

### THE MISSISSIPPI HEART HAND

♠ 10 5 4 3 2

♥ void

♦ 5 4 3 2

♣ 5 4 3 2

♠ void

♠ J 9 8 7 6

♥ 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

♥ void

♦ A K Q J 10 9

♦ 8 7 6

♣ void

♣ 10 9 8 7 6

♠ A K Q

♥ A K Q J 10 9

♦ void

♣ A K Q J

(cont on page 2)

## *The Many Layers of Bridge (con't)*

"tadpole." This struck me as particularly funny because I was just learning about the great white sharks that played as well. Later I became a "minnow" and realized I had just begun to take baby steps in terms of understanding the game.

Larry Davis has so encouraged my learning and the other teachers have been quite a help as well. I am most appreciative of the development of more bridge players in our community!

It's wonderful how many interesting and encouraging players I have met over the past year or so. I have now discovered that it's much more fun to go play with a new convention, with the potential of going down due to a misunderstanding, than to play "party bridge" and zone out.

No matter where I play, I am finding folks who do not mind me asking questions. The old timers seem to value my efforts. They keep telling me that they, too, are still learning. I am beginning to realize that bridge has lifelong learning potential. When I began the journey, I had no idea the layers of knowledge that I would uncover. Counting points is the beginning. Knowing how many high card points defenders could have, how many cards in a suit have been played, how hand shape matters, and how to have good social/table manners are all part of this game.

I want to say a special thanks to those folks who've let me ask questions. It is a wonderful place to be when one can learn, ponder, and explore new ideas and perspectives. I am grateful to many others for their assistance. I thank Donna Williams for letting me know I am "no longer a deer in the headlights." This shows growth! Small, wonderful, in the right direction growth...and it feels good!

I cannot do this journey "without a partner," as John Nichols says. I hope to continue to grow and develop as a partner. One day I hope to give it back as my mentor has done. May my partners and I continue our journey. Let's make room for some laughter and some communication as we explore this game together.



## *Fool's Errand (con't)*

**South**, the declarer and/or **sucker**, would bid game, if not slam, on his holding. However, as the cards lie, South is unable to make a game contract, much less a slam in any strain. The best South can do is to take 9 tricks in a Spade contract or 10 tricks in a Club contract. Of course, the lead by West would always be a Diamond. The sucker bet would be made on the guideline set forth by

Bridge Whist that any contract could be doubled and redoubled ad infinitum, or until a point the card professionals thought would be the upper limit of the paying ability of the victim. It is worth noting again...looking a gift horse in the mouth is sometimes merely running A Fool's Errand.

**The moral of this story**...similar to the (previously) popular Virginia Slims ad depicting women having "come a long way baby", so too have the proprieties of bridge. When once upon a time...anything goes...is no more. Principles in bridge that govern correct behavior are vital. A new player is well advised to treat them as just as importantly as the rules governing the mechanics of the game. Indeed, less experienced players sometimes develop behavior that, unknown to them, is unethical or illegal. This may lead to serious issues when a budding player is ready to take on more experienced opposition or perhaps compete in tournaments. The principles of correct behavior at bridge are much, much simpler than the rules of play. Anyone who learns them correctly at the outset (and thus avoids developing bad habits at an early stage) should have no trouble whatsoever in this area.

The Laws of Bridge have a special section devoted to the proprieties that can be summarized by the following general principle: communication between partners should take place only through the calls and plays that are made. You should not employ any question, gesture or comment that might convey information to your partner. Vigorous efforts should be made to insure that equity and enjoyment remain benchmarks of bridge.

*Article by Tom Clark, BCA Club Manager*

Resource...Mississippi Heart Hand from The Bridge Guys



The month of March had **three** tournaments dedicated to the newer player. Here are the first-place overall winners:

**Unit 207 99er Sectional**

Saturday, March 6-- **Robert Williams and Chuck Fatino**  
 Sunday, March 7--**LizAnne McDaniel and Margaret Bennett**

**Unit 207 NLM Sectional**

Saturday, March 20 Afternoon--**Priscilla Baker and Jo Pennington**. Evening--**Patsy Martin and Marlene Golden**  
 Sunday, March 21 Afternoon--**James Glather and Bob Foster**

**BCA Spring Sectional, 199er Games**

Thursday March 25 Morning--**Michele Abriol and Robin Tucker**. Afternoon--**Allan and Marcia Kohm**  
 Evening--**Linda Griffith and Esther Ellis**  
 Friday, March 26 Morning--**Steve Hollahan and Julie Valentine** Afternoon--**Gwyn Petersen and Geneva Berg**.  
 Saturday, March 27 Morning--**Dolline and Robert Burton**. Afternoon--**Adrienne Watt and Dixie Richardson**  
 Evening--**Janice Koenig and Sharon Glassman**

## Novice Game Schedule

Novice or limited games refer to those games in which players holding more than a certain number of masterpoints may not play. Novices are invited to play in **all** games throughout the Unit, however those games that cater specifically to the newer player are:

**Monday, 7:00 p.m.** \* BCA 0-200 points

**Tuesday, 10:30 a.m.**\* BCA 0-50 points (Bridge Plus) and 0-200 points

**Wednesday, 11:30 a.m.** BCA 0-300 points

**Thursday, 11:30 a.m.** BCA 0-750 points

**Saturday, 1:00 p.m.** \* BCA 0-500 points, NLM

\*Free lesson before these games

A complete schedule of games in Unit 207 may be found at: <http://www.austinbridge.org>

## Countdown to Mike Lawrence!

Premiere bridge author Mike Lawrence will be teaching a series of workshops at the Bridge Center of Austin **May 21-23**. The following is a continuation of our three part series of Mike Lawrence articles on the Takeout Double. These articles were originally written by Mike for the "ACBL Bridge Bulletin."

**Mike's Bidding Quiz – Part III**

Reprinted from "ACBL Bridge Bulletin," June 2007

**What do I do with a good hand when partner makes a takeout double?**

**How do I make the most descriptive bid?**

When partner makes a takeout double, one of the things that you must do is make a descriptive response. I have seen nightmare auctions like the following. Here are three deals from actual play. Judge who made the correct bids and who made bad bids. You may laugh at one or more of these hands, but I promise they came from actual play, and some of the players had more than 100 masterpoints.

|         |          |      |       |
|---------|----------|------|-------|
| 1. West | North    | East | South |
|         |          |      | 1C    |
| Dbl     | Pass     | 1S   | Pass  |
| 2S      | All Pass |      |       |

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>West's hand</i> | <i>East's hand</i> |
| S: A Q 6           | S: K 9 8 7 3       |
| H: K Q 10 8        | H: A 4             |
| D: A 10 6 3        | D: J 8             |
| C: 6 3             | C: Q 9 8 2         |

The defense was poor and East made 11 tricks. But 10 tricks were cold. Both East and West complained that their partner should have bid more. Who was right?

|         |       |      |          |
|---------|-------|------|----------|
| 2. West | North | East | South    |
|         |       |      | 1D       |
| Dbl     | Pass  | 2S   | All Pass |

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>West's hand</i> | <i>East's hand</i> |
| S: K J 7           | S: A Q 8 4         |
| H: K J 8 3         | H: Q 10 4 2        |
| D: 9               | D: 10 8 6          |
| C: A 10 6 5 3      | C: K 9             |

(con't on page 4)

## Countdown to Mike Lawrence (con't)

East made 10 tricks. East said West should have raised spades. West had a few choice words too. Who was right?

| 3. West | North    | East | South |
|---------|----------|------|-------|
|         |          |      | 1C    |
| Dbl     | Pass     | 2S   | Pass  |
| 4S      | All Pass |      |       |

West's hand

S: Q 9 8 3  
H: A J 3 2  
D: A Q 8 2  
C: 9

East's hand

S: A K 10 7 6 2  
H: K 6  
D: K 3  
C: 6 5 2

This one made six. West said he had bid enough when he bid game, but East complained that he had no way to know if there were two club losers. Who was right?

### Answers

1. There were a lot of errors made on this sequence. East should have bid 2S, not 1S. He has five nice spades and around 10 support points. A jump to 2S would show this hand. West then made a bad bid of 2S. He had a little bit extra in high card points, but he was missing a fourth trump. West should have passed 1S. Then East, given a second chance, failed to go to game. West's double and then raise to 2S should have shown four trumps with at least 16 support points. He did not have them, but that is not the point. If West had what he was supposed to have, East should have bid a game. Bad bidding all around.

2. East used the wrong bid to show his hand. He was right not to make a one-level bid, but he was wrong to bid 2S. He should have bid 2D, nominally showing both majors with at least 10 points. West was right to pass 2S. If East had bid 2D, the heart suit would have been found and game might have been reached.

3. East thought that 2S showed this hand. It does not. A jump to two of a major shows 10 support points, give or take, and East had almost twice that. Bad bidding by East and acceptable bidding by West. East should have bid 2C and then bid his spades, which would have promised game points or more. A 2C response might or might not lead to a slam, but it has a better chance than the 2S bid, which was not even forcing.

*Don't forget to register for the Mike Lawrence Workshops on Friday evening, Saturday morning and Sunday morning, May 21-23. Just fill out a registration envelope and drop it in "The Box" at the Bridge Center, to take advantage of early registration pricing.*

## Tourney Calendar

Be sure to mark your calendars for these upcoming tournaments, featuring sessions for the newer player:

### Unit 207 May Sectional, 199er sessions

**Thursday, March 13 - Saturday, March 15, 10:00, 2:30 and 7:00**

Partnership Chairs, Vivian Thompson  
(512)258-7919 [genevivianthompson@hotmail.com](mailto:genevivianthompson@hotmail.com)  
and Jan McLaurin, (512) 589-3301

### Austin Regional, 299er sessions

**Monday, June 28 - Sunday, July 4.**

Check the Unit website for a complete schedule:  
<http://www.austinbridge.org> (Click on "Tournament Calendar" under the blue District 16 bar.)

## Spring Bridge Lessons

**Beginning Bridge (Club Series)** Mondays, 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. April 26 - June 28. Jack Lacy, instructor. \$90 for eight lessons includes text and one play session.

### Defense (Heart Series)

Thursdays, 7:00-9:00 p.m. May 6 - June 24.  
Laura Delfeld, instructor. \$90 for eight lessons includes text and one play session.

### More Commonly Used Conventions (NT Series)

Tuesdays, 7:00-9:00 p.m. April 13 - June 1  
Scott Humphrey, instructor. \$90 for eight lessons includes text.

All of the classes listed above are held at the Bridge Center of Austin. Call 300-2743 to register.

**Monday Workshops** 4/19, 5/10, 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
Rosemary Kelley, instructor. \$12 per workshop.  
Call 837-6586 to register. Please check the Unit website for more details on this class and others as they are scheduled:

<http://www.austinbridge.org>

**"The Future Life Master"** is a bi-monthly publication of ACBL Unit 207. Laura Delfeld, editor. Please forward information regarding Novice games or lessons to: [delhan@swbell.net](mailto:delhan@swbell.net)