

# Albuquerque Bridge Player

*Unit 374's Quarterly Newsletter*

## President's Column

One of the purposes of Unit 374, according to our ACBL-originated governing bylaws, is to support charities. Outside of promoting bridge in New Mexico and Albuquerque which, of course, is the reason we exist at all, this is probably the next most meaningful thing that we do. There are two major ways that we make charitable contributions. First, the ACBL designates charitable activities in which each club participates. Participation is transparent - a part of your entry fee from 'Charity Games' is sent to the ACBL. The ACBL has established a Charity Foundation which manages these contributions. Our clubs contributed more than \$2100 to this fund in 2012 and this is included in the club contributions shown a couple of paragraphs below. Other ACBL funds in which we participate are the ACBL Junior Bridge Fund, the ACBL International Fund, and funding for NABC games. Members, by playing in club games within Unit 374, contributed about \$8700 to these funds in 2012.



The second way that we make contributions, and in my opinion the most important, is to contribute directly to local charities. These contributions are made purposefully and thoughtfully.

Earlier this year, Jan Evans, on behalf of DCBC, assembled a list of 50 local charities that were candidates for bridge club contributions. Cheryl Mitchell, the Unit Board Charity Committee Chairperson, used this list, her own research, and recent unit history to recommend the charities that the Unit Board selected. Cheryl also collected the contribution data from the clubs in the unit. This level of organization requires a lot of work and both Jan and Cheryl deserve thanks for their contributions.



## BUDDHA SAYS

In October the medicos found a large tumor on (in) my pancreas, and they operated at the end of the month. Ordinarily I wouldn't share my medical happenings but this time since 15% of patients don't survive the operation I told my friends and students what was going on. The operation was a success. It turns out the tumor was benign, very good news. But the recovery was a failure. Four days later they operated again to see if they could free up some of the vital frozen systems, and for the next three or four days it was touch and go. Since then I have made what feels like a rapid and complete recovery, and I'm writing this from the rain forest in northern Argentina on a fabulous birding trip with Cindy. During those darkest hours I was amazed by the overwhelming number of cards, calls, prayers and well wishes that you offered me. Thank you! It really made a difference. I have known that we have a wonderful bridge club - great playing space, tough competition, super directors and all the rest. Lying in my hospital bed, I realized that we have a greater "bridge" community. A community that is vulnerable because of our advanced age, but caring and close knit.



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The contributions by club within the unit were: Unit 374 - \$9646, Casa de Amigos BC - \$7314; DCBC - \$5808, Sandia West (includes Placitas) - \$2037, and Four Hills BC - \$200. The total is about \$25,000! The source of these funds is almost completely from entry fees. The unit runs regional and sectional tournaments and generates most of its funds from 'profits' from those tournaments. Casa de Amigos holds one game a week and donates all those proceeds to Casa Angelica. Remarkable! DCBC and Sandia West use part of the entry fees from multiple weekly games to make their contributions.

Which local charities do you support? I have listed them alphabetically below and the totals may include contributions from multiple bridge clubs in the unit.

Albuquerque Christian Children's Home - \$300; Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless - \$300; Alzheimer's Organization - \$300; Animal Humane Society - \$612; APS Title I Homeless Project - \$1700; Barrett House Foundation - \$1600; Casa Angelica - \$7314; Casa Rosa Foodbank, Placitas - \$716; Habitat for Humanity - \$612; Joy Junction - \$612; Meals on Wheels - \$1912; NM Society for the Blind - \$200; PB&J Family Services - \$1700; Roadrunner Food Bank - \$1698; St. Martin's Hospitality Center - \$1700; St. Vincent de Paul Society, Bernalillo - \$147; Toys for Tots - \$500; Women's Housing Coalition - \$612.

The grand total of contributions to charities and ACBL funds from Unit 374 bridge clubs for 2012 was more than \$33,000- \$25,000 to charity and \$8700 to ACBL programs. Congratulations to us all and special thanks to those individual members who gave over 400 toys to the Toys for Tots program and brought food and supplies to the APS Homeless Project.

*-Bill Kass*

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Unit 374 Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Pam Himes and Mal Wilhelmi will be joining the board as new members. The complete board for the 2013 years is as follows:

- Jo Atkins
- Jill Burtram
- Pam Himes
- Bill Kass
- Susy Law
- Cheryl Mitchell
- Felix Moore
- Jerry Shinkle
- Mal Wilhelmi
- Bob Zipp

## DUKE CITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWS

This has been a relatively quiet period for your DCBC Board. We did spend a good deal of time considering redecorating the club, including recarpeting. This planning was done with the help of Sharon Berry. However, we concluded that more planning and evaluation were necessary and that the club's financial status might not support such major expenditures at this time, in spite of how tired we are of the old carpet and its stains. Therefore, no decisions were made.

This is not to imply that the club is having financial difficulties. We continue to break even between income and expenses or even have a small surplus almost every month, and we do have a modest cushion that continues to grow, although slowly. It is just that such a major expense might put us too close to the line for prudence so we need to consider various options more carefully than we have been able to do so far.

It is also comfortingly true that our participation levels, reflected by the monthly table-count of players, is holding steady on year-to-year comparisons. Our recruiting and education efforts, coupled with the attractive atmosphere of the club, seems to balance the loss of a number of old friends in recent months. Maintaining our membership levels will require continuing efforts to attract and maintain members. I'd like to add here that we are really going to miss Norma Johnston. Her cheerful, friendly presence at the club, where she helped out in many ways, over many years, contributed to making it the attractive place that it has been. This has been especially true in recent years during her long, inspirational battle with cancer.

By the time this is published, there will be a new Board of Directors. Our Nominations Committee, headed by Hong Hai Dubroff, found 11 highly qualified candidates to run. It was a good sign for the future of the club, as well as a reflection of the diligence and good judgment of the Committee, that finding willing, attractive candidates was not particularly difficult this year.

My own tenure as President ends at the end of January, a decision I had made when I began as President. These two years have been interesting, and for by far the greater part they have also been a pleasure. This has been made possible by two excellent sets of board members and by the committee chairs who are not Board members, not to mention the good will of the membership. I wish the club continued success in the future.

When you forget a convention, may your partner forget at the same time.

*-Norman Cliff*

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## UPCOMING BRIDGE LESSONS - SPRING SCHEDULE

Saturday morning, March 2 at 9:30, Bob Zipp will offer an Intermediate Class designed to follow his very popular 2 Over 1 Class. This will deal with forcing bids and other special topics.

Saturday morning March 2 at 9:30, Bob Kingsley will offer an Advanced Beginner Class

Tuesday morning March 5 at 9:30, Cliff Hill will begin an 8-week session called "How to Think at the Bridge Table."

Wednesday March 6 at 6:30pm, Eugene Smith will teach a class for Absolute Beginners.

*-Kathleen Church  
Chair, Education Committee*

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 RULES OF THE GAME
**To Announce/Alert or Not To (that is the question)****Part 3—Procedures.**

There are proper ways to alert, announce, use the Stop Card and ask questions about bids. It seems to me that when alerting or announcing you should assume that one of the opponents is hearing impaired and the other is sight impaired.

**PROCEDURE ON HOW TO ALERT**

Using bidding boxes, an Alert is made by tapping an Alert card on the table or by tapping the Alert strip on the side of the bid box. In addition, the Alerter must say "Alert." <http://www.acbl.org/play/bidboxes.html>

**PROCEDURE ON HOW TO ANNOUNCE**

When bidding boxes are being used, an Announcement is made by tapping an Alert card on the table or by tapping the Alert strip on the side of the bid box and by making the appropriate spoken announcement. [www.acbl.org/play/alertProcedures.html](http://www.acbl.org/play/alertProcedures.html)

**THE STOP CARD**

Players should protect their rights and the opponent's by placing the stop card on the table, prior to making any subsequent bid that skips one or more levels of bidding. It should be placed so that LHO sees it (the skip bidder is responsible for gaining LHO's attention). The skip bid is made. The stop card is replaced in the bidding box. NOTE: If a player forgets to replace the stop card there is no penalty. It is each player's responsibility to maintain appropriate tempo after a skip bid.

Note the stop card should be used (or not) consistently. Also, whether the opponents use a stop card or not, you should pause about 10 seconds (not appreciably more or less) after the skip bid before bidding.

**HOW TO ASK & INAPPROPRIATE ASKING**

The appropriate way to ask about an alert is to wait until it is your turn to bid and then say, "Please explain the alert." It is not appropriate to ask the meaning of an alert when it is not your turn to bid and it is not appropriate to ask the meaning of a bid that is not alerted (When it is your turn to bid, you may consult your opponent's card to determine the meaning of a bid.)

By asking a question before your partner bids, you may affect your partner's bid. For example by asking out of turn, your opponents might suspect an unethical agreement that this means something special (like don't bid partner, I want to defend or whatever).

If a conventional bid was not alerted and you were damaged, the director will protect you. One reason why it is inappropriate to ask about an un-alerted bid is that the phrasing of such a question could convey unauthorized information. For example, unethical opponents could ask about a weak-two bid "Is that strong?" when they have 15+ HCP, ask "Is that weak/anemic/puny/etc.?" if they have 11-14 HCP, and ask no questions if they hold 0-10 HCP!

Also, you probably should not ask about alerted bids during the auction unless you intend to bid—sometimes the opponents may have some confusion over their conventions and your asking questions may help them. It is usually best to wait until the auction is over to ask about any alerted or conventional bids made by the opponents. Furthermore, you should ask questions then only when it is your turn to lead, after your partner makes a face-down lead and asks if you have any questions, or when it is your turn to play to the first trick.



**FAILURE TO ALERT**

At the end of the auction if you are the declarer or dummy you should announce any failures to alert and any conventional bids needing announcement (such as those made above the level of 3NT). For example, if you are using Roman Key Card Blackwood, 1430, a delayed splinter bid, or other such convention, you should announce it before the opening lead is made.

If you are on defense and a conventional bid by you or your partner was not alerted you should not announce it until the play of the hand is over (announcing it might inappropriately alert your partner).

*-Larry Bertholf*

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## Newer Players Page

### SLAM BIDDING

To bid a small slam, the generally accepted guideline is to hold at least 33 points. A grand slam requires about 37 points. It is possible to make a slam with fewer points if your hand has other features which might make it more powerful. Some examples of these features are extra trumps and short suits (for ruffing) or long strong side suits (for discarding losers). In addition to the strength requirement, having enough "controls" in each suit is necessary. A "first round control" is an ace (or a void in a suit contract). A "second round control" is a king or a king-queen combination (or a singleton in a suit contract). A requirement for a small slam is first round controls in at least 3 of the 4 suits, and second round control in every suit. A grand slam requires first round control of all 4 suits.

The two primary conventions used to determine if a slam is possible are the Blackwood convention and the Gerber convention. The Blackwood convention is used to determine your side's holdings when a trump contract is indicated, and the Gerber convention is used when a notrump contract will be the final contract. As in previous columns, at first we will review the basics as they are explained in the "21st Century" series textbook. In the second part of this column we will discuss some techniques for advanced players.

#### **The Blackwood Convention**

Once the trump suit has been determined, the Blackwood convention can be used to find the number of aces held by your side. The bid of 4NT asks partner "How many aces do you have?". Responses are: 5 Clubs = 0 (or 4), 5 Diamonds = 1, 5 Hearts = 2, and 5 Spades = 3. The person who uses this convention is the captain of the auction (the person with the most information). If you, as captain, wish to stop the auction, a 5 level bid of your agreed-upon trump suit says: "Pass partner, I don't think we can make it!". However, if you do have all of the aces between you, a bid of 5NT asks partner "How many kings do you have?". Responses are 6 Clubs = 0 (or 4), 6 Diamonds = 1, 6 Hearts = 2, and 6 Spades = 3. Only ask for kings if you have all of the aces (first round

controls) and you are interested in trying for a grand slam.

One important thing to consider before asking your partner about his holdings is whether his response will force the level of the auction too high. This happens most often with the minor suits, and makes bidding minor suit slams even more difficult. For example, if your trump suit is clubs, and you use the Blackwood convention, every response (except 5 Clubs) will force you to bid to the six level.

#### **The Gerber Convention**

If the final contract will be in notrump, the Gerber convention allows you to ask partner about his holdings. A bid of 4 clubs asks partner "How many aces do you have?". Responses are 4 Diamonds = 0 (or 4), 4 Hearts = 1, 4 Spades = 2, and 4NT = 3. If you wish to explore for a grand slam (holding all four aces), 5 clubs is the bid which asks "How many kings do you have?". This convention should only be used when the final contract will be in notrump. To avoid confusion, the 4 club bid should only be used as Gerber when the opener's first bid is notrump, or the last bid in the sequence is notrump (1C-3NT).

If you use both of these conventions, it is possible to memorize the responses, but I prefer to deduce my bid in terms of "steps". If my partner asks for aces, a bid one step up indicates 0 or 4, two steps up is 1, three steps up is 2, and four steps up is 3. If you ever see me using my fingers after my partner asks--this is what I am counting! It is also important to use the appropriate convention in the correct situation; if you use Blackwood in a notrump situation, there is no escape bid, since the 4 notrump bid is used to ask about your point count, not controls.

#### **The 1430 Convention (RKC or Roman Key Card)**

Advanced players prefer to use a slightly different version of the Blackwood convention, which involves asking about keycards. There are five keycards, the four aces and the king of the trump suit. There are many variations of how to respond, but the most common system is 1430. This is an easy number to remember since a vulnerable small slam is worth 1430 points. After the 4NT asking bid, partner responds 5

Clubs with 1 or 4 keycards, 5 Diamonds with 3 or 0 keycards, 5 Hearts with 2 keycards but not the queen of trump, and 5 Spades with 2 keycards holding the queen of trump. This system packs a lot of information into one bid. The assumption is that the king of trump is just as important as the aces. This turns out to be a pretty good assumption. You also might get some information about the queen of trump if your partner holds two keycards; the queen of trump can be a pretty important card as well. A 5NT bid would then ask for kings, as in standard Blackwood; just remember that since the king of trump is a keycard, *it is no longer counted as a king*.

### **Cuebids**

Advanced players have another option for exploring a slam contract - the control-showing cuebid. For hands where you can't use Blackwood (or 1430), and for hands where it is important to find a specific ace, you bid suits to indicate first round control. Each partner should bid the cheapest suit in which they have the control; bid up the line. If the suit is skipped, you know your partner does not have that ace. Let's look at an example: you hold AK964 Void Q53 AKJ102 and open the bidding 1 Spade; partner responds 3 Spades (a limit raise). If partner holds the ace of diamonds, chances of making a slam are very good, but if partner holds the ace of hearts without the ace of diamonds, chances of making slam are very slim. To find out, you bid 4 clubs. Partner is then required to bid his cheapest ace. In this case, if he bids 4D, you've found the ace you want, and you bid 6 spades. But if he bids 4H, he denies the diamond ace and you settle for a 4S contract. It is important that you understand that control-showing cuebids are only used after the trump suit has been agreed upon by both you and your partner (1S-3S; 1D-1H-3H).

*-Bob Zipp*

# Odds & Ends

## TNR NEEDS YOUR HELP

HELP! Beach towels, bath towels, and hand towels are needed for the TNR (trap, neuter & return) feral cats program sponsored by the "Best Friends Animal Society." Any questions, please call June Willging @821-8416; 269-2703. There is a box labeled for donations in the South Room at the DCBC.

Thanks!

*-June Willging*  
jwillging@comcast.net

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## DIRECTORY CHANGES

As is always the case, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mails change the minute the new membership directory is issued. If this happens, please let Susy Law know, and she'll print the corrections in the next newsletter, and then people can make the changes in their directories.

Shirley Gardner  
520-271-1578  
e-mail: shirley2688@gmail.com

Macauley & Lorraine Taylor  
1512 Silver SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87104  
505-243-1210

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## SUNDAY HOSPITALITY

- Have a favorite bridge snack?
- Need to try out a new recipe?
- Have an urge to bake/buy a goodie and don't want to admit you "ate the whole thing"?

Call Susan Zimmerman at 366-7965 to donate snacks or to volunteer hospitality services for any Sunday game.

P.S. All surprises welcome!!!

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**Changes in Unit 374 Membership**

**RANK PROMOTIONS**

**NEW JUNIOR MASTERS**

Elissa Thompson  
 Louise Belanger  
 Jeanette Brenholdt  
 Rebecca Gaston  
 Pat Newman  
 Karen Soutar  
 Marilyn Stark  
 Stanley Stark

**NEW CLUB MASTERS**

Cynthia Brill  
 John Thorson  
 Gerald Wellman  
 Michael Hannah  
 Audrey Ross  
 James Willson  
 Tracy Woolever

**NEW SECTIONAL MASTERS**

Edwina Andrews  
 Margaret Johnson  
 Carmelita Pruett  
 M J Wolfersperger  
 Maureen Rizzoli  
 Georgia Smith

**NEW REGIONAL MASTERS**

Diane Brewer  
 Eugene Smith  
 Donald Wunsch  
 Phyllis Hendrickson  
 Steven Sorenson

**NEW NABC MASTERS**

Lynda Burch  
 Patricia Gallacher  
 Gary Scrivner  
 Mary Scrivner  
 Alice Valdez  
 Mal Wilhelmi  
 Pat Zick  
 Terry Moynihan

**NEW ADVANCED NABC MASTERS**

James Fisk  
 Kat Tiano

**NEW SILVER LIFE MASTERS**

Patricia A Durgin  
 Ray J Woodbury  
 David G Hetteema

**NEW LIFE MASTERS**

Kay Fahy

**NEW BRONZE LIFE MASTERS**

Kay Fahy  
 George Soto

**NEW SILVER LIFE MASTERS**

Wilma Morris  
 Ben Franz

**NEW GOLD LIFE MASTERS**

Jill Burtram

**NEW DIAMOND LIFE MASTERS**

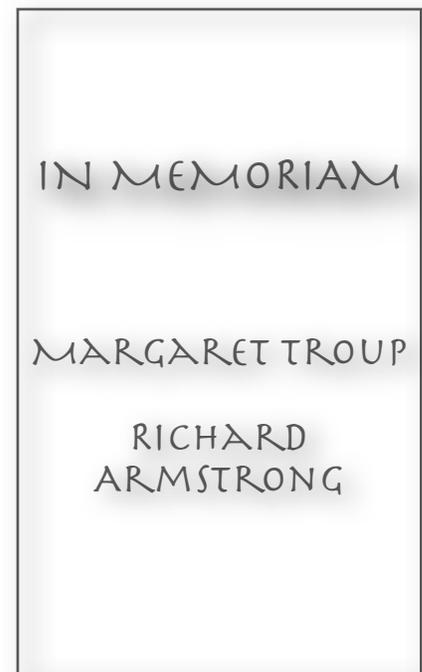
Jay Armstrong  
 Larry Bertholf

**NEW MEMBERS**

Jane Butel  
 S. Queue Metts  
 Francine Cogen  
 Richard Metts  
 Charles Price  
 Connie P Blanton  
 Oliver W Larson  
 Arthur T Shirley  
 John Witkowsky

**TRANSFERS INTO UNIT**

Jeannine White  
 Pamela Williams  
 Susan Anderson





c/o Susan Law  
 13101 Summer Place NE  
 Albuquerque, NM 87112

Return Service Requested

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### UPCOMING UNIT GAMES SCHEDULE

Sunday games at 1:30p are hosted by Unit 374.

#### January

- 6<sup>th</sup>: Pairs Championship
- 13<sup>th</sup>: Board-A-Match Teams
- 20<sup>th</sup>: Pairs Championship
- 27<sup>th</sup>: No Game: ABQ Regional

#### February

- 3<sup>rd</sup>: GNT Teams Qualifier
- 10<sup>th</sup>: Junior Fund Pairs
- 17<sup>th</sup>: Pairs Championship
- 24<sup>th</sup>: Pairs Championship

#### March

- 3<sup>rd</sup>: GNT Teams Qualifier
- 10<sup>th</sup>: Mixed Pairs
- 17<sup>th</sup>: Pairs Championship
- 24<sup>th</sup>: Charity Pairs

### UNIT 374 BOARD OF DIRECTORS CONTACT LIST

Jo Atkins: 892-2224; [jzatkms@msn.com](mailto:jzatkms@msn.com)  
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