

VALLEY TALLY

MIAMI VALLEY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Editor: Gary Hatten

June 2008

President's Corner by Wayne O'Connor, MVBA President

As you may know, our unit has for a number of years been selling passes for \$20 which granted admission to most Unit games for the year. Two factors have led your Board of Directors to change this policy for 2008; first, the entry fee for all games has increased to \$5, and; second, four more Unit (Charity) games have been added to the schedule. The pass could previously be used for 14 games at \$4 each for a total of \$56. The cost to the Unit would therefore be \$36. For 18 games at \$5 each, the cost to the Unit would be \$90 minus the cost of the pass. The combination of these factors would have required a substantial increase in the price of the passes.

Rather than try to sell passes at a much higher price, the Board decided to place a moratorium on the sale of passes in 2008. The original purpose of the passes was to increase participation in the Unit games. We will monitor attendance throughout the year and then make a decision whether or not to continue the passes in the future. I certainly encourage all members to play in the Unit games. A number of them have special themes (e.g., Medallion Game, Mentor-Mentee Games, New Year's Party) and I challenge all of you to suggest themes for others that would be fun.

On a different topic, the Dayton Club has begun an initiative to advertise bridge and our club by a method that has proven successful elsewhere. Old copies of the Bridge Bulletin magazine are being collected and labels added (a member prints these) that give information about the Club and the MVBA website. These are being placed in various reception areas around town such as doctors' and dentists' offices, beauty parlors, barber shops, and anywhere else you'd like. Please do your part throughout the Unit by bringing in magazines, putting labels on them and placing them in locations like those mentioned above. It doesn't take much effort and these magazines have brought new members to other clubs that have tried it. Good luck and let me know how it works.

Finally, an update on the move to the new club. The Board and other interested members have worked diligently to ensure we have the best possible facility and I believe you will all applaud their efforts when you see the results. After a delay due to the terrible construction weather we have over the past several months, the building is expected to be completed in the middle of July. While we plan to be moving and begin playing our regular games there before the Flying Buckeye Regional begins, we will delay the Grand Opening ceremonies until after that tournament. Stay tuned for more information.

Emergency Medical Forms

One of our members playing in a recent club game was stricken with a serious medical problem and had to be rushed to the hospital. Fortunately, he had the foresight to complete an emergency medical form which was stored at the director's desk. The emergency medical personnel who arrived at the scene were extremely relieved to have such useful information on hand.

All members are encouraged to fill out an emergency medical form and update it as needed. It could mean the difference between life and death. Ask any director for a form.

The Son Also Rises

Jason Parker

Jason Parker is fast becoming one of our newest stars. Playing under the watchful eye and tutelage of Papa Terry Parker (GLM), Jason has won two of the four regional team events he has entered, placed third in another and won a pairs event at a recent sectional tournament.

Jason's bridge career began during Christmas break in 2005 while he was home from Ohio State where he was completing work on his Master's degree in Electrical Engineering. During break, Terry rendered a two-day crash course on his complicated version of the 2/1 Gameforce system. They began to play immediately and because of his dad's bridge rank, Jason has competed almost exclusively against Flight A fields ever since.

Since receiving his Master's degree in May 2006, Jason has returned to his home area and is currently employed at WPAFB. At our last Christmas Party, Jason was twice honored by being the recipient of the annual Charlotte Falkowski Award for best performance by a beginning player as well as the Rookie of the Year award.

Jason is a fine young man and destined for great things in bridge. Terry has every reason to be proud of his son.

Monster

Joyce Dennis and Pat Hoffman

How often do you rack up a 60% game? a 70% game? How about a 78% game? Well, that's the exact score Joyce Dennis and Pat Hoffman achieved during a recent club game much to the amazement of everyone in attendance. Relative newcomers to our club, Joyce and Pat rolled over the competition to record the highest score in recent memory. Congratulations, Ladies...what an accomplishment!

The Piehole Problem

Unsolicited Lessons

After witnessing a fatal error committed by an opponent or partner, many of us instinctively want to "help" that player by offering free advice at the table. Unfortunately, it is just as natural for the player on the receiving end of this lesson to become embarrassed or angry at having his goof highlighted in a public forum.

So, what is one to do when the impulse to teach another player becomes overpowering at the table? Three things come to mind: stop, think and then...**don't do it!**

It's a different matter if players ask what they could have done on a given hand. Only then should you impress them with your bridge expertise and offer an alternative solution to their problem without belaboring it.

Newcomers and inexperienced players are especially sensitive to unsolicited lessons. Indeed, they are often driven from the game because of them. They would much rather be commended for a nice try. Wouldn't you?

Barry Crane Top 500

Bob Sulgrove and Vicki Sebastian

In case you missed their names in the March edition of the Bulletin, our very own Bob Sulgrove and Vicki Sebastian placed in the Barry Crane Top 500 race for the year 2007. For those of us who have to scratch and peck for every masterpoint, Bob's total of 698 masterpoints and Vicki's 484 masterpoints represent quite an achievement. Only three other players from Ohio made the list in 2007. To put their accomplishment in perspective, they were competing with all 160,000 members of the ACBL to make the Top 500 list. Congratulations, Bob and Vicki, and best wishes for an even greater 2008!

MVBA Investment Account

by Tom Coyle, Club Manager

As many of you know, the MVBA has an investment account which has a present value of approximately \$140,000. Some members have questioned why such a relatively large amount is necessary for a non-profit organization. Fortunately, the funds are there and the following will explain the necessity.

This account has built up over the years from investments in mutual funds, money market certificates of deposit and from profits earned at our regional and sectional tournaments. However, those profits have been declining over the years to the extent the overall net gain for the Unit was a very modest \$1300 for 2007. In rough numbers for 2007, the breakdown for the Unit cost centers were as follows:

Regional.....	\$4,900
Sectionals.....	\$2,100
STaCs.....	\$1,500
Bridge Center.....	(\$3,600)
Unit Game, Org, Christmas Party & Amortization.....	(\$3,600)
Net.....	\$1,300

As an example of the decline in profits from our regionals, the peak was in 2004 when our regional earned a profit of \$8,170 and has declined steadily each year. Table count declined from 1336 in 2004 to 1149 in 2007.

For the 1st Quarter of 2008, the cash flow from operation of the Bridge Center was a negative \$4301.00. Extraordinary expenses of \$2,155 for property taxes and \$1,250 for snow removal were incurred that will not be applicable with the move to the new Bridge Center this summer. To cover these costs, \$4,500 from the Unit's Investment Account was transferred to the Bridge Center to maintain cash flow in our monthly operations during the 1st Quarter of this year.

The need for this investment account becomes apparent since \$70,000 will be required when the new building is under roof. This money will be necessary to "build out" and furnish the interior. We will also very likely need to draw on the investment account in the future to subsidize normal operations of the Bridge Center, Unit games, Christmas Party and other functions. In addition, our rent will increase from \$2600/month to \$3300/month at the new 5000 sq. ft. site.

While we will be saving money by not paying "outside" rent of approximately \$2,700 annually for sectional tournaments, the Bridge Center will still operate at a moderate loss. We must recognize that our membership rolls have been in a state of decline for years which underscores our need to increase our table count by whatever means at all levels of operations.

Charity Games Proceeds

Virtually every club game during the month of April was a sectionally-rated charity game in which \$1423 was raised for charity by our unit. Of that amount, \$700 was donated to the local Hospice chapter with the remaining going to ACBL's Charity Foundation. Many thanks to participating club directors and players as well as Tom Coyle for organizing these events.

When We Build it, Will They Come?

Editorial by Gary Hatten

Our struggling efforts to recruit new playing members during a recent membership drive should give us pause to reflect on the state of the MVBA. With hundreds and perhaps thousands of social bridge players in the Dayton metropolitan area, it is a shocking revelation that our organization cannot persuade more than a tiny percentage of these players to play in our club. Is it possible that our club's reputation among many prospective members is responsible for keeping them away?

It takes only one bad experience to drive newcomers away once they've given our club a try. Furthermore, when these same disenchanted players relate their less-than-happy experience to their fellow social bridge players, a swell of negative feelings can be transmitted easily throughout the entire social bridge network in our area over time. What might be a major cause of this alienation?

In a word...intimidation!

For the most part, our members are courteous, friendly people. We must go overboard, though, and treat our new players and visitors like royalty. When we greet them at the table, we should take a personal interest in them by engaging them in conversation. Making sure to introduce ourselves first, we might ask if they have questions or concerns about playing in our club. We need to help them feel comfortable and welcome.

Every now-and-then, an angry outburst of frustration will transform a relatively tranquil game into one so heavy with negative vibes that it detracts from enjoyment of the game for everyone within earshot of the foul. We should remember that innocent bystanders can be just as upset by a diatribe as the intended target of a self-serving flare-up. These problems do not occur often in our club but when they do happen, they can send a nasty message to tentative newcomers.

Many of our regular players have been playing bridge for 30-40 years or more. Some players have developed sophisticated bidding systems which can simply overwhelm opponents. Imagine the bewilderment of new players as they bear the brunt of such acquired skill and knowledge. Instead of ignoring their discomfort, we must go out of our way to assure them that most of our better players utilize fairly standard bidding systems.

It can be a lengthy process to learn the rules, regulations, procedures and laws governing duplicate bridge. Rigid expectations and enforcement can drive newcomers away unless experienced players and game directors are especially sensitive and tactful.

Our unit's only invitational game held on Tuesday mornings tends to support the notion that many players avoid playing in the potentially more intimidating open games. While I've never seen the criteria for invitations to the Tuesday morning game, it seems apparent to even casual observers that the comfort level of players in that game is a primary consideration. It is revealing that it is also one of our most heavily attended games. Many of the Tuesday morning regulars rarely if ever play in an open game.

According to the ACBL, the average age of the MVBA membership is approaching 69 years of age. Our membership numbers have declined dramatically the past few years. The financial viability of the MVBA at our club's new location may well depend on our ability to attract new members. Again, where will the MVBA be ten years from now if we fail in our endeavors to increase our playing membership? You do the math!

Dayton Regional

The MVBA is once again gearing up for its annual Flying Buckeye Regional being held as usual at the Hope Conference Center from July 29-August 3. Directions to the tournament and schedule of events are available at the Bridge Center and online at <http://mvba.com>. Call Gay Miller at 475-5876 or contact her online at gaysmiller@aol.com for partners. All ACBL members with 0-5 masterpoints play free. Come and enjoy quality bridge in a relaxed setting. See you there!

Middletown Sectional

The Middletown Bridge Club is holding its summer sectional this year from August 22-24 at Christ Methodist Church located at 700 S. Marshall Rd. in Middletown, the site of last year's tournament. Players in need of a partner should contact Bruce Walker at 937-766-0777 or e-mail him at b2swalk@juno.com. Directions to the tournament and a schedule of events can be found at the Dayton Bridge Center and online at the ACBL bridge site www.acbl.org. Come and enjoy!

Science Is Golden

As if these guys weren't scary enough at the bridge table, Bob Sulgrove and Wayne Penrod during a recent club game embarked on a highly scientific bidding sequence to arrive at their final contract. At the completion of their pas de deux through the bidding and before making the opening lead, Jane Ashworth made several inquiries about their various bids. Finally, Jane asked Bob if there was anything else he could tell her. Bob replied matter-of-factly, "he has the four of clubs". Without missing a beat, Wayne nonchalantly plopped the four of clubs on the table! It goes without saying that such a feat would have been doubly impressive had they managed to break par for the day.

Never Too Late

by Bonnie Papini

Ellen Jellison, a regular at Tuesday morning's game, started playing duplicate bridge at the center in 2001 at the invitation of Jim Malas whom she knew from square dancing. Since that time she has earned 200 points, won the Ace of Clubs award twice and the Mini-McKenney once. In February of this year, Ellen and partner Joanne Tuttle placed first overall in Strata A, B and C in a Tuesday morning International Fund Game.

Ellen was born in Canton, Ohio and moved to Cleveland where she worked for R.L Ireland, the president of the Hanna Coal Company. She shared an apartment in Cleveland with two roommates and married the brother of one of them after he retired from the navy. Her husband hailed from West Alexandria, Ohio so it was only natural they gravitated to the Dayton area. After the move, Ellen worked as a legal secretary for E.H. and W.B. Turner, attorneys in Dayton.

Besides square dancing, Ellen enjoyed ballroom dancing until a broken ankle forced her to quit. Widowed in 1974, today she enjoys flower gardening as well as bridge. Ellen is proof that it's never too late to start something new and challenging. Here's wishing her many more points and awards!

Newcomers

By Georgia Banziger

As chairperson of the Membership Committee and on behalf of the MVBA, I would like to welcome the following new members who have joined or transferred into our unit since the beginning of 2008: Jeffery Blackburn, Joanne Deutch, Paula Macilwaine, Karen Whal, Mary McClain, Pauline Kash, Patricia Voydanoff, Edgar Collins and Mark Tyler. It is a pleasure to have you among us.

MVBA Ace of Clubs Winners for 2007

The Ace of Clubs awards are given out every year at our annual Medallion Game, held May 18th this year. These awards are given to players who amass the most masterpoints at club games throughout the calendar year. Masterpoints won at certain special games such as the North American Pairs and STaC's are excluded. Categories are determined by a player's masterpoint total at the beginning of the year. Winners in each category for 2007 are:

0-5 mp

Kyle Johnson (14.66)
Janis Gimbrone (12.47)
Natalie Boesch (9.81)

5-20 mp

Bonnie Papini (61.50)
Ryan Schultz (39.80)
Jason Parker (35.66)

20-50 mp

George Kirby (28.88)
Beth Duncan (20.99)
Eva Izenon (15.26)

50-100 mp

Lynda Walker (38.80)
Joan Reeves (32.30)
Ester Feldman (24.88)

100-200 mp

Mark Kellerman (36.10)
Tom Kerns (35.92)
Ann Levy (31.93)

200-300 mp

Thomas Kaple (37.35)
Barbara Leese (33.94)
Thomas Surd (32.12)

300-500 mp

Arlene Seppelt (39.97)
Jo Anne McDowell (37.17)
Janet Dixon (35.59)

continued

continued

500-1000 mp

Georgia Banziger (68.41)
William Hartung (61.08)
Wayne O'Connor (60.30)

1000-2500 mp

Scott Smith (124.13)
Joanne Coyle (90.32)
Shirley Lee (86.88)

2500-5000 mp

Wayne Penrod (145.01)
Tom Coyle (132.16)
Janet Lee (93.56)

5000-7500 mp

Bobbi Johnson (132.17)
Vicki Sebastian (90.73)

7500-10,000 mp

Bob Sulgrove (91.43)

10,000 plus mp

Russ Shoup (65.00)
Sandy Low (21.30)
Marc Low (19.59)

Unit Game Champions

Individual Unit Game Champions for 2007 were presented with awards at last year's Christmas Party. Champions are determined by averaging the percentages of their two best performances in Unit games for the year. Contestants must compete in at least 5 of the 14 Unit games to qualify. The champions for each of the 3 strata were Lynda Brown Walker (C), Janet Lee (B) and Tom Coyle (A). Congratulations and a high five to each of you!

MVBA Mini-McKenney Winners for 2007

The Mini-McKenney awards are given to players in each category who have won the most masterpoints during the calendar year. Winners for each category in 2007 are:

0-5 mp

Jan Schepp (26.18)
Kyle Johnson (19.55)
Janis Gimbrone (15.41)

5-20 mp

Bonnie Papini (111.81)
Ryan Shultz (93.87)
Jason Parker (79.22)

20-50 mp

Beth Duncan (41.80)
George Kirby (32.84)
Linda Fadely (25.41)

50-100 mp

Lynda Walker (105.21)
Joan Reeves (69.99)
Leah Rexford (48.55)

100-200 mp

Mark Kellerman (91.67)
Jerry Grogan (85.05)
Peggy Grogan (79.16)

200-300 mp

James Berglund (102.21)
Thomas Surd (94.26)
Barbara Leese (74.90)

300-500 mp

Earnest Dalton (104.01)
Judith Dalton (95.09)
Emma Stewart (81.04)

500-1000 mp

Georgia Banziger (219.72)
Wayne O'Connor (210.85)
Marilyn O'Connor (204.64)

1000-2500 mp

Scott Smith (225.80)
Joanne Coyle (181.50)
Matthew Bone (158.11) continued

continued

2500-5000 mp

Wayne Penrod (277.46)
Pat Moran (248.79)
Janet Lee (223.15)

5000-7500 mp

Vicki Sebastian (484.46)
Bobbi Johnson (251.23)

7500-10,000 mp

Bob Sulgrove (698.30)

10,000 plus mp

Sandy Low (229.54)
Marc Low (226.36)

Wishing You Well

Many of our members have been ill or undergone surgeries the past few months. A few of the more recently ill are Janet Huddleston, Judith Dalton, Roger Dybvig, Pat Kramer, Harry Kreitzburg, Anita Kohler, Pat Griffiths, Sara Cox, Jerry Grogan, Howard Mitchell, Bill Schleman and Vicki Sebastian. If not well already, we wish them a speedy recovery.

Passages

Sadly, several of our members have passed away the first half of this year. Our condolences and well wishes go out to the families and friends of Rosalie Carter, Frank Murphy, Paul Pierce, Henry Kent and Margaret Phillips.

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Schedule of Up-coming Events:

Sunday June 1-Sunday August 31: NAP Qualifiers
Sunday June 1: Kickoff Mentor/Mentee Game 1:30
Friday June 5: Worldwide Bridge Contest 7:00
Saturday June 6: Worldwide Bridge Contest 1:00
Monday June 30-Sunday July 6: District 11 STaC
Sunday July 13: Mentor/Mentee Game (Swiss Teams) 1:30
Tuesday July 29-Sunday August 3: Dayton/Columbus Regional
Sunday August 17: Mentor/Mentee Game (final game) 1:30
Friday August 22-Sunday August 24: Middletown Sectional
Saturday August 6: Unit Game 1:00
September: International Fund Month
Thursday September 11: ACBL Instant Matchpoint Game 7:00
Sunday September 14: Unit Charity Championship Game 1:30
October: Club Appreciation Month
Saturday October 4: Unit Game 1:00
Sunday October 12: Unit Game 1:30
Saturday November 1: Unit Game 1:00
Sunday November 16: Unit Game 1:30