



South Orange County Bridge Center

SOCBC Newsletter - January 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard Picheny

2024 IN REVIEW

Profitability

We recorded a net profit of \$40,400 for our fiscal year ending November 30, 2024, a 12% improvement over our prior fiscal year. Major contributors to the gains were donations from our Members, Game Directors, Club Manager and Teachers in the form of cash contributions and waivers of directing, management and teaching fees. The Increase in our table count from 3,640 to 3,948 also contributed to our gain. On another positive note, our NLM games were a major contributor to the increase in our table count. The Wednesday 0-20 game has been a key factor in NLM growth with new students coming out to get their first taste of a game setting.

Passings

During 2024 we lost five members. Let's take a moment to remember those we lost and some of the wonderful experiences we shared with them. Our condolences to their families and friends. Those we lost include Al Bongarzone, Norma Underwood, Phil Foster, Evelyn Crook, and Pat Dolphin. We hope that they are all dealt two-club openers and bid and make seven no trump frequently.

HOLIDAY PARTY, SILENT AUCTION AND DONATIONS

Holiday Party

We started our new fiscal year with a bang. Our Holiday Party was successful with many

attendees expressing positive feelings about the event. Breakfast, appetizers and desserts were provided by our member volunteers. We had a capacity crowd of 30 tables for bridge and 120 who had dinner and dessert. Maggie and Frances and their great volunteers did a spectacular job as always.

First overall in the NLM game were Judith Frant and Gary Fong with a 67% game. Sitting EW, the top spot went to Laura Jones ~ Stacy Harrison. In the open game Laverne Marano and Steve Rakower were first overall with a 68% game. Second overall leading EW were Mark Itabashi and Brian Gilbert. Winner of the best dressed outfit of the day goes to George Bahti. If you missed his festive card suit attire, be sure to catch it on our homepage. Speaking of homepage, kudos to our volunteer photographer Susan Kissinger and website guru Jeremy Chao for the fun slideshows.

Silent Auction & Donations

Our silent and live auction and raffle included over 35 items donated by our members. We are so grateful for the generosity of all who donated and bid on so many fabulous items. We offered a plethora of beautiful handmade crafts, opportunities for games with top notch players, wines, outings, lessons and so much more.

Despite donations, contributions and purchase prices not being tax deductible, our members

Continued on next page

donated and bid generously. Thanks to Janie Matlaf for browbeating, twisting arms and otherwise cajoling our members and guests to buy raffle tickets, we sold a record number of tickets.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Please thank SOCBC's 2024 Board of Directors -- Maggie Briskie, Susan Bristol, Tricia Jennings, John Jonas, Mary Dee Kienstra, Trisha Silverberg and Richard Picheny. Maggie, Susan, Tricia, John, Trisha and Richard are joined by Steve Rounds on SOCBC's 2025 Board. The Board elected Richard Picheny as President, John Jonas as Vice President, Trisha Silverberg as Treasurer and Maggie Briskie as Secretary for 2025. Please offer them your full support.

AWARDS

Peggy Dakin and Frank Grossman were the recipients of the Sally Pelmeare and Open Player Sportsmanship and Citizenship Awards, respectively. Sunny Foster was honored with the District 22 Goodwill Award. These honors are awarded to deserving individuals who display great sportsmanship and volunteer and contribute their leadership, time and effort to our Club. Congratulations Peggy, Frank and Sunny.

GOOD WORKS

Our members donated generously to our Toys for Tots and Food Drive. We donated a carload of toys and a bin full of food to these programs. Thank you for your generosity.

I usually remind you monthly to please volunteer, please sign up to mentor on Wednesday afternoons, please don't come to the club if you are ill, please attend our Saturday games and Unit games. So, consider yourself reminded.

Cheers to a healthy, peaceful, and happy new year!



Something I did when I was playing, which was easy and surprisingly helpful, is to repeat the cards played to the first trick to myself before quitting the trick - sometimes once, sometimes twice. I found that got me in the mode of paying attention to which spots had been played for the whole hand.

Jan Martel

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

In the beginning of 2024, our club had 445 members: at the start of 2025, we are up to 459 members. While not quite the number seen pre-pandemic, I am pleased to report that our membership is now stable and growing slightly. Not surprising when you know how friendly and wonderful our bridge club is.

We welcome Terry Liebman, the newest member of our club. Please introduce yourself when you see him.

There are three transfers into our Unit this month, and I am pleased to say they are all Friday morning regulars:

- Barry Fortlage
- Linda Lacher
- Ron Lacher

Janie Matlaf, our Education Chair and Newsletter Co-Editor is starting out the year as a

Susan Bristol Co-Chair, Membership

GOLD Life Master. She is one of only 14 in our club. Congratulations Janie!

Others ranking up as we start the new year include:

Junior Master

- Simi Allen
- Mona Chiumento

Club Masters

- Melinda Konopisos

Sectional Master

- Maryam Choobineh
- Ray Jankowski
- Jeff Oberholzer

NABC Master

- Peggy Dakin

Wishing good luck to all continuing on their bridge journey. Thanks to everyone for continuing to support our club and making it the great club that it is!

TREASURER'S MESSAGE

Trisha Silverberg

I've been SOCBC's Treasurer for three years and I just signed up for another year. I got to thinking that many of you likely don't know or haven't even thought about what the club treasurer does.

They say if you want to get to the heart of something, follow the money, and I'm the gal who follows our money. Here is a brief overview of what a month looks like in my treasurer-accounting world. Pretty scary, I'm not an accountant!

1. Everything starts off each day with our Directors' preparation of the cash report for each game. They break everything down between NLM and Open players along with several miscellaneous debit/credit entries. This must balance and go into the safe each day. Directors who don't give me favorable rulings in a game may get challenged on their cash reports
2. We have a volunteer who empties the safe twice a month and makes the bank deposit (roughly the 1st and 15th). Each cash report is balanced and recapped for the deposit.
3. The cash reports are delivered to me for entry into our accounting system. We use Quickbooks. There are many detailed entries along with the many miscellaneous entries that find their way to me.

Our largest expense is our Rent payment of \$9,042 and our monthly average expenses are \$18,000. The majority of income comes from game fees, averaging \$15,000 each month and our averages monthly income is \$21,000.

The majority of our bills are paid through direct bill pay at our bank with a few that are manually written by me. I do not have the authority to sign any checks. We have a couple of people who sign the checks and oversee what is paid through the bank. This is all geared toward maximizing security.

Additionally, I tally the table counts for each day, tracking am/pm between NLM and Open players.

Each month end I prepare three reports that are presented to all board members for review, and place them on the bulletin board.

- Profit and Loss report that lets us know what income and expenses we had for the month with our net profit or loss, lately more profit than loss, thankfully!
- Balance Sheet that reports our assets and liabilities, basically amounts to our cash in the bank.
- Table Count report detailing the number of tables for the current month compared to previous months.

At the end of each year, I prepare our tax returns and 1099 forms for the many people who have worked at SOCBC throughout the year. Thankfully Richard keeps me straight!

So, that's about it, piece of cake!



THE LIBRARY SHELF JANUARY 2025

Gill Jeffrey

I hope everyone had a wonderful Holiday Season, full of family, friends, warmth and love. A few nicely wrapped presents always cheers the spirit too.

January brings us back to reality. And what better to do on those long, dark, cold (California definition) nights than snuggle up with a bridge book from our library.

For our advancing beginners what about Bergen's Best Bridge Tips. (Bergen, Marty 2004, reprinted 2013). Like a lot of his books this is a quick read, less than 70 pages. Covering such topics as hand evalu-

ation and whether to open using the rule of 20 combined with the evaluation of quick tricks. Whether you should rebid your minor after opening in third seat and how to respond as partner. How, and when to respond to preempts. Giving plenty of examples and quizzes, you will get to practice the concepts covered and rate yourself against what 'Marty Sez'.

I love the term used by the author about the phrases he makes up as – A Bergenism – a concise sentence to help readers remember important concepts.

Wishing everyone a very happy 2025!

ETIQUETTE AND THE BASICS OF PLAYING BRIDGE

Janie Matlaf

The Wednesday 0-20 mentored game began over a year ago. The initial purpose was to offer beginning students a stress-free game where they could practice what they were learning. The game has grown to include current students, past students, and others in the 0-20 range.

Recently some of us involved in mentoring and teaching met to discuss and prepare table tips for beginners. We are sharing them here for the benefit of our newest players. We also welcome additional feedback from more experienced players.

Welcome to the South Orange County Bridge Center! We have assembled some tips and insights that we hope will help you and your opponents have a more pleasurable experience.

Getting started

If you are seated North:

- You are responsible for the BridgeMate. This means waiting for the director to alert the room when the pad is ready, following the first prompts on the pad to register, entering your ACBL number and handing the pad to South to enter their number.
- You are responsible for making sure the opponents and board number match those displayed in the BridgeMate.
- You are responsible for entering the contract, the opening lead and the outcome for each hand in the BridgeMate. After you enter the outcome for each board you will hand the BridgeMate to either the East or West player and they will verify the score.

If you are seated South:

- You are responsible for managing the boards. This means ensuring the boards are in the correct order and direction, flipping each board once it has been played and then passing all the boards to the appropriate table once the round is completed. Most often the boards are moved to the table one number lower than yours (if you're table 4, boards go to table 3).
- Either East or West must review and approve the score after each board is played.

Starting each hand

When it's time to start, pull the cards facing you out of the board and, keeping them face down, count them to make certain you have 13.

Once you confirm you have 13 cards, turn them over and sort them. Most people separate cards by suit, put them in order & alternate red/black to decrease the chance of confusion.

Try to play in tempo meaning that there should be about the same amount of time between each person's bid. In this game, the rounds are not timed but, as you move up, 7 minutes per board is common. Striving toward this goal will help you in the long run.

Wait to pull your bid from the bidding box until you are certain you know what you plan to bid. Hesitating or lingering over the box can be considered a way of giving your partner information.

If you have a question about an opponent's bid during the auction, you may inquire about it when it is your turn to bid. Ask the partner of the person who made the bid to please explain any partnership agreement they may have about the bid.

If you are making the opening lead, choose your card, place it face down on the table, confirm the final contract and ask either "my lead?" or "any questions, partner?" This prevents leading when it is not your turn and allows for questions about the auction. (IF it is not your turn to lead, then you can return the card to your hand.)

Make your opening lead before you write it down on your private score sheet. If North is on opening lead, make the lead before entering the contract in the BridgeMate. After you lead, the dummy will come down and you will have a few minutes to make your notes.

Alerting/Announcements

- When your partner bids 1NT, announce your range (usually 15-17)
- When your partner makes a Jacoby transfer after your 1NT bid, you announce the suit you're transferring to (i.e. , partner bids 2D showing 5+ hearts in their hand, you say "hearts.")

Etiquette, continued

If there's any kind of problem at the table, it is appropriate and strongly encouraged to call the Director. Do so by raising your hand and saying, "Director please".

More tips & tricks

- Don't rearrange your hand when you run out of a suit as this gives information to the other players at the table.
- When you are Dummy, you may not call the Director or touch a card before Declarer calls for it.
- If Declarer calls for a suit but does not state which card in that suit, Dummy must play the lowest card in that suit.
- Dummy may warn Declarer that they are about to lead from the wrong hand before a card is called.
- Everyone, including Dummy, may ask if partner is out of a suit when they do not follow suit. For example, "No spades, partner?" This helps to avoid a Revoke, where a player does not follow suit when they had a card in that suit. You may not call attention to your opponents ruffing or sloughing.
- Do not turn your card over after a trick until the person winning the trick does so. They are entitled to re-view the cards played before they plan and make their next lead.
- Don't snap your cards when counting them or laying them on the table.
- At the end of each hand, before gathering your cards, wait to make sure all four players agree on the outcome. This helps to avoid confusion.
- When the hand is over, place your cards back in the board prior to recording the outcome. This way South can flip the board and everyone can get ready to play the next hand.
- If you need help from a mentor during the auction, show them the bid you think you should make and ask them to weigh in on whether your bid looks accurate.
- **Most importantly, be courteous and have fun!**

MANAGER'S CORNER

Gail Schneider

We had a very busy year. Lots of new players and returners. Hope we continue the trend in the new year. We are planning as many specials as ACBL will allow. Hope to see you for all the fun and games.

We start with every game in January being special. Lots of extra points. We've moved the unit game to the 2nd second Sunday due to the Saddleback Sectional. Join us for our wonderful lunch and fun game.

Congratulations to all our players who moved up in Rank during 2024. Hope more of us do the same in 2025. Please try to think of a way that you can help our club by volunteering. Even consider coming in early or staying for a while after the game and checking our bidding boxes to make sure that they have everything they are supposed to have or even sharpening pencils.

There are a bunch of different kinds of illnesses going around. We don't want to spread germs.

DON'T COME INTO THE ROOM IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING WELL.

See you at the tables!

JANUARY SPECIALS AT SOCBC

For the month of January, All Regular Games will be Junior Fund Charity Games at \$12 per person. Saturdays: Lunch at Noon, Game at 12:30 PM \$13 per person

January 12 Unit Game \$13 per person
Lunch at 12 Noon, Game at 12:30 PM

January 18 & 19 CLUB CLOSED FOR SADDLEBACK SECTIONAL

January 26 Swiss Teams Game \$13 per person
Lunch at 12 Noon, Game at 12:30 PM

EDUCATION NEWS

Janie Matlaf

It has been an awesome educational year at SOCBC. Attendance has exceeded 1650 encounters, and class fees have exceeded \$25,000. This does not include Tuesday and Friday mornings which fall into the games category.

BEGINNERS

A year ago, we were working with a class of about 25 beginners who had started the previous fall. Many of those beginners are now our favorite kind of bridge aficionados and are playing regularly. Some already prefer the open game, playing with each other or 'playing up' with Open players. Our trio of beginning teachers, Bob Levine, David Merenbach and Susie Mays, are doing an amazing job, splitting the schedule, and presenting unique perspectives. We are enormously appreciative of our volunteer assistant, Ross Anderson, who comes each week to help with attendance, collects fees, fill in at the tables, and whatever else may need attention. Thank you, Ross!

About 20 beginners joined us in March, then another 19 in September. The fall group has a few classes left in January. Lisa and David Merenbach have volunteered to continue with those students throughout February offering Monday morning Supervised Play. Then we will start new students again March 3rd.

We urge each of you to refer people to our classes. We advertise through our club emails, on Facebook and Instagram, through OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) and on Nextdoor. We try to get articles into the local papers when they are willing to publish them, but that is challenging. We have flyers available to post if you have places to display them. Our best source of students is word of mouth from our players, so please keep them coming. Why do we need to keep starting over? As you know, bridge is HARD – to learn and to play. We are not Bunko players here. Those of us who stick with it welcome the challenge; others decide it's just too tough or not their thing. Thus, we will only thrive as a club by providing ongoing introductory classes to our community.

ADVANCING BEGINNERS, INTERMEDIATES and BEYOND

Sharon Rippe retired from the Tuesday morning slot recently, and we now have the team of John Jonas, Dae Leckie and Linda Ryder on Tuesdays. They are focusing on making sure our beginners have a solid foundation in the basics.

Thursday mornings have become the lesson time for advancing beginners and intermediates. Bob Levine and Gary Waldron rotate series covering every subject imaginable, and they have a full schedule of offering for Thursdays in 2025. One great thing about Thursday morning lessons is that they usually stand alone, so if you cannot attend all, you can still benefit from those that fit your schedule.

Susan Bristol and Trudi Hanscom continue to host Friday morning games for 0-200 with mini lessons. Did you know you can check the calendar on our website to see what the topic of the week will be?

Susan Kissinger provided some great lessons for intermediate and advanced players on End Plays and Lebensohl. Coming up in the New Year, John Kissinger will be sharing why he plays Bailey and Suction, suitable for intermediate and above. Save the dates: February 12th and March 12th for John's favorite things.

PLAY UP & LEARN

We remind you that many Open players are ready and willing to coach NLM players in the Open game. Contact Joyce Potter to be paired up. We don't have any formal requirements, you can just let Joyce know that you would like to 'play up' – or – coach someone who would like to 'play up.'

A very sincere thank you to everyone involved in education as a teacher, a volunteer, or a student. We hope you will keep learning and use what you have learned to become frequent players@SOCBC!



SALLY PELMEAR AWARD - PEGGY DAKIN

In recognition of her stellar dedication and contributions, Peggy Dakin has been awarded the esteemed 2024 Sally Pelmeare Award for Non-Life Masters (NLM) members. This prestigious honor highlights individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the South Orange County Bridge Club.

Throughout 2024, Peggy demonstrated a remarkable commitment to the 0-20 Beginner Mentoring program. She volunteered over 25 times on Wednesday afternoons, dedicating nearly 100 hours to nurturing and encouraging new bridge players as they prepared to participate in their first bridge tournaments. Despite her passion for skiing during the season, Peggy managed to carve out significant time for volunteering. Her super friendly demeanor and focus on making the sessions fun have truly made a difference. She also provides valuable feedback to the Education Committee, helping to enhance the program further.

Peggy was genuinely taken by surprise and brought to tears when her name was announced as the winner of the award at our holiday party.

Congratulations to Peggy Dakin on receiving the Sally Pelmeare Award. Her achievements are a shining example of how advancing bridge players can nurture and inspire newer players in the community.



MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD - FRANK GROSSMAN

Congratulations to Frank Grossman, our 2024 honoree for Outstanding Member of the Year among the Open players. Frank was Vice President of our Board of Directors that fateful Friday the 13th of March, 2020 when we and the rest of the globe were gobsmacked by the Covid shut down. Quickly Frank took the initiative to pull us together by organizing a daily SOCBC game on BBO. Initially he single handedly directed the game without taking compensation. When Richard and Marshall volunteered, he trained them to be online Directors as well. The small stipend from BBO helped toward our continued rental expense. The ability to connect with each other during isolation, priceless.

Back F2F, Frank is responsible for a lot of calories at the club. As our volunteer Purchasing Manager he keeps us supplied with sinful snacks in addition to ancillary supplies. He is also one of our handymen, doing fix it tasks on computers, furniture and such.

Frank is a wonderful partner and always a cordial opponent. He has been our President and Vice President, Director, Goodwill Ambassador, and is the ideal individual to honor as Outstanding Member of 2024.



CLASS SCHEDULES

Janie Matlaf is our Education Chairperson. Contact her at jmatlaf@gmail.com for all questions relating to courses and schedules. Refer to the website for our course timetables.

MONDAY MORNINGS: BEGINNING BRIDGE - 9:00AM - 11:30AM

- January 6: Takeout Doubles
- January 13: Preemptive Bids
- January 20: Strong 2 Club Bids
- January 27: Putting it All Together ~ Convention cards, Etiquette, Scoring
- February 3: Grand Finale ~ Barometer Game

Please note: Lisa and David Merenbach will be holding Supervised Play for three weeks from 9:30 to 11:30 AM on February 10, 17 & 24. All 0-20 welcome, Fee \$10.

Contact Janie at jmatlaf@gmail.com for more details.

TUESDAY MORNINGS: 0-20 SUPERVISED PLAY WITH MINI-LESSON

Tuesday Mornings 9:00 - 11:30 AM

Our Tuesday morning team teaching trio consists of Linda Ryder, Dae Leckie and John Jonas. They will focus on helping new players get a solid foundation in the basics. Watch our weekly Sunday morning emails to see the topic of the week for their mini-lessons or check the calendar on our website.



WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS: 0-20 MP SUPERVISED PLAY 12:30-4:00PM

This should be the first step for all our beginners. You may bring your notes, ask your questions, and start practicing in a stress-free environment. Come with or without a partner, and no reservation is required.

Plan to stay for 12 to 15 boards, which can run until approximately 3:15 to 4 PM. Late arrival makes it challenging for us to arrange the table movement and partnerships, so try to be there with time to spare. This is a learning game where you can practice with volunteer mentors at the tables. Masterpoints are awarded to the top scorers.

Game fee: \$10.



THURSDAY MORNINGS: *Good, Better, Best Bidding* with Bob Levine. 9:30 - 11:30 AM

- January 23 – Two-suiter overcalls
- January 30 – Responding to Takeout Doubles
- February 6 – New Minor Forcing
- February 13 – Weak Two Bids
- February 20 – Jacoby 2NT
- February 27 – Reverses

Sign up in advance \$75 for the full series or \$15 per class.

Contact: rslevine@cox.net



FRIDAY MORNINGS: FOR NEW PLAYERS (0-200 MPs) - 9 -11:30 AM

The holidays are over. The menorah or tree put away for another year. Winter is here. The shorter and colder days are perfect for improving your bridge game. We are back to a full schedule of lessons in January.

- 1/3 – Leads. You are making the opening lead, which card do you choose? What card will help your partner?
- 1/10 – Discards. Another way to signal your partner during play is to choose the right card when you can no longer follow suit.
- 1/17 – Finesses. Need an extra trick to make your contract? Come learn how to do that.
- 1/24 – Michaels. An overcall that tells partner exactly what's in your hand
- 1/31 – Unusual No Trump – Another overcall that perfectly describes your hand.

No partner needed. We guarantee you will play. This is a very fun and friendly group. The more you play, the more comfortable you will become with the bidding and the play of the hand.

Contact Susan Bristol at bristolsg949@gmail.com or Trudi Hanscom at t.hanscom@live.com

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday Mornings from 10 – 11: 30 AM for Intermediate and Advanced Players

John Kissinger will teach two conventions he recommends. These conventions are probably more suitable for those playing in Open games.

- February 12th – Why I play BAILEY Weak Twos: how to play and defend.
- March 12th – Why I use SUCTION Defense to NT and Strong 1 or 2C. How to play and Defend.



SAVE THE DATE

New class for beginners starts again March 3 for 10 weeks. Start spreading the word. We will need your referrals to help fill the class. If you know people who might be interested in learning, please refer them to Janie Matlaf at:

jmatlaf@gmail.com



THE VOLUNTEERS WHO MAKE IT ALL HAPPEN!

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