



SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY BRIDGE CENTER

Newsletter March 2025

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Richard Picheny

SOCBC ANNUAL CLUB SECTIONAL

Our Open Sectional was a smashing success. Players and game directors lauded us with praise for running a "wonderful", "fabulous", "best", "favorite sectional", "a positive and joyful event."

We reached capacity with 35 tables Saturday morning, consisting of 21 tables of Open Pairs and 14.5 tables of 0-500 Pairs. Saturday afternoon we had one fewer table, with 20.5 Open Pairs tables, nine 0-500 pairs tables and five 0-100 Pairs tables. On Sunday we had 30 Open Swiss Team tables for both sessions and two and a half 0-500 tables during the morning session.

A total of 559.04 masterpoints were earned by 183 players. Cathy Bauer amassed the greatest number of Silver Master Points (SMPs) (17.63) with Susan and John Kissinger a close second (15.44). Susan Froome and Sylvia Srigley won the Saturday Morning 0-500 pairs event with a 61.53% game (2.86 SMPs). Rose Gong and Sara Liu finished second with a 59.58% game (2.17 SMPs). Hongsa Situ and Weishu Wu won the Saturday Morning Gayle Andrews Open Pairs Event with a 65.96% game (10.54 SMPs). Robert Shore and Kent Hartman finished second with a 61.92% game (7.91 SMPs). Stacy Harrison and Barry Fortlage won the Saturday afternoon, 0-100 Pairs with a 71.88% game (1.38 SMPs). Eileen Mackenzie and Melinda Konopisos finished second with a 56.88% game (1.04SMPs). Rose Gong and Sarah Liu won the Saturday afternoon, 0-500 pairs event with a 60.71% game (2.17 SMP). James and Kellie Almy finished second with a 56.85% game (1.65 SMPs). Susan and John Kissinger won the Saturday afternoon Open Pairs with a 66.5% game (10.31 SMPs). Giacomo Beretta and Robert Corey finished second with a 63.87% game (7.73SMPs). Steve Sturm, Denny Seltzer, Joan Kaye

and Cathy Bauer won the two session Swiss Teams event, with Gale Senter, Subba Ravipudi, Wirt Gilliam and Judy Elbogen finishing second. Judy Brown and Michael Vernia won the Sunday morning 0-500 pairs with a 75% game (1.49 SMPs), followed by Beverly Germain and Carole Gabos with a 70% game (1.14 SMPs).

PRO AM GAME

Congratulations to Patricia Jennings and Jeff Rocklin for their winning 61% game among 17 tables at the February Pro Am. Right behind them were Barbara Smith and Leslie Levine with 60%. If you don't know Leslie, she is one of our very strong pre-Covid regulars who then became an online player. Welcome back, Leslie! We have missed you, and when you are ready for more F2F you will have no trouble finding lots of willing partners. The booty prize went to way too many AMs who signed up but did not show up. John Jonas and Sharon Donoff worked hard recruiting PROs for all the AMs and creating perfect pairings. Janie Matlaf worked hard on publicizing the game, and she ended up having to go home because her NLM partner was among the No Shows. Please see John's article about the game on page 6 of this newsletter. Our next Pro Am game is tentatively scheduled for Thursday May 15th. Goal: 100% turnout of all who register.

VOLUNTEERS

Trisha Silverberg is our vivacious, exuberant, tenacious Volunteer to recruit Volunteers. She is fired up and ready to recruit. See her report on page 6 of this newsletter.

ACE OF CLUBS & MINI-McKENNEY AWARDS

The "Mini-McKenney" and "Ace of Clubs" awards are competitions that recognize bridge players who earn the most masterpoints during a calendar year, with the key distinction being that the Mini-McKenney

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President's Message, from page 1

focuses on overall masterpoints earned across all face-to-face sanctioned events, while the Ace of Clubs specifically recognizes achievements in club-level games only; both awards are categorized by masterpoint level, meaning players compete within their respective skill brackets.

SOCBC will present awards to our 2024 winners on Friday, April 11th at noon. We will serve light appetizers and dessert to those playing in our games that afternoon and those receiving awards. Come celebrate with us.

EDUCATION

I want to highlight some of the key topics scheduled for Friday mornings in March. While they offer valuable subjects every week, this coming month will have a slightly different focus.

The first Friday will be about scoring. Those who are aware of the score for making or setting various contracts have the advantage of knowing when to bid boldly, when to sacrifice, and when to push opponents beyond their comfort zone. If you are not clear on how scoring works, be sure to attend.

The second Friday morning is about results. After your games, are you using the hand records and online results page to review and learn what went right and what went wrong?

The third Friday will be about completing a convention card. We don't require players to have convention cards in the limited games, but they are required in the Open games and at Sectionals, Regionals and Nationals. When open players prepare for a game with a new partner, they always go through the card to identify what partnership agreements they will be using. Many of the basic conventions you learn in beginning bridge, such as weak twos, ace-asking bids, and Stayman may evolve into more complex treatments as you gain experience. Completing a convention card at any level of experience is a wonderful way to make sure that you and your partner are on the same page.

We don't often hold classes beyond the beginner level because most of our advanced players learn from each other and from reading. In February John Kissinger gave a class for intermediates and advanced players on why he plays Bailey Weak Twos. He explained that the class title was a bit of a misnomer since Bailey isn't really a weak two, rather a light opening bid. Another of John's favorite bids is the topic for his upcoming March 12th session on Suction. It's a valuable way to interfere over the opponent's open of No Trump or Two Clubs. If you are playing in the Open game, you know that interference is critical if you want to be equal to or above the field.

The September beginners wrapped up in February, and were fortunate to have Lisa and David Merenbach offer three extra weeks of supervised play on Monday morn-

ings. Now with the start of a new beginner's series on the first Monday in March, we hope to see the class of February 2025 moving on to Tuesday mornings, Friday mornings, and all afternoon games. Please welcome them into the SOCBC community and help them along.

PARKING

The leasing office has asked us to please be more conscientious about parking in our allowed areas. Our allotted number of spots is based on the number of square feet in our suite. Because we drive so many cars compared to other businesses in our complex, we must park slightly further away. The leasing office and other tenants require that spaces be available for their customers. As a reminder, we are **NOT** to park in any spaces along the row directly in front of our entrance, or in the row across from our entrance. We are **NOT** to park on the side of the building directly across from us. We are **NOT** to park in the spaces directly in front of the leasing office or the businesses adjacent to the leasing office. You may park on the side of our building, leaving at least four spaces for the leasing office. You can park behind our building and across from there. You may park facing the cemetery.

Handicapped parking is an exception if you have a valid handicapped permit. We will be preparing a new parking map to share with our members shortly.

MARSHALL PEARLMAN

Please join us Monday, March 3rd to celebrate with Marshall as he turns 95 years young. Marshall has been playing bridge longer than just about everyone reading this and is the consummate master of the game. With over four thousand masterpoints, he has played every convention you have ever heard of, including his own variation of slam bidding which he cleverly titled 'Marshallwood.'

PASSINGS

• **Frank Grossman**

We will be remembering Frank Grossman on Tuesday March 18th at noontime. Carol Pangburn is helping provide lunch before the game, and we will take this time to pay tribute to our friend who passed away much too young on January 6th. Bring your special thoughts about Frank to share with all of us.

• **Orson Dee**

Orson, a long-time member and friend, passed away in late February, at the age of 93. Orson, a friendly, warm, humorous person was the life partner of Hal Binder, a former board member, bridge teacher and mentor to many of us.

DISTRICT 22

Our newer members may not know that SOCBC is part of a bridge community that extends far beyond San Juan Capistrano. We are part of a national organization, the American Contract Bridge League, or ACBL. The ACBL

has 25 districts throughout the United States. SOCBC is in District 22 which extends from the northern cities of Bishop and Visalia to the southernmost city of San Diego. I am serving as President of District 22 for 2025 and am honored to collaborate with representatives from throughout the district. We organize and promote tournaments, and we work with ACBL and the units on education, ethics, finances, and much more. Please speak with me if you have questions or concerns about our club, our district, or our national organization.

District 22 publishes a monthly newsletter called the **D22 Connection** which is delivered to your inbox. Many of you open it each month and go straight to the report from SOCBC Unit 538. Many thanks to Carol Pangburn who was our most recent reporter, and Gary Waldron who filled in and wrote the piece on page 38 of the February D22 Connection. Going forward, David Merenbach has volunteered for the spot. With all his extensive traveling, he will be our much-appreciated roving reporter.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON OPEN GAME

Come on players, support our club by playing in the Saturday afternoon game, which has grown to five and six tables. REGISTER EARLY!! Larger games encourage greater participation. Some players are attracted by the higher masterpoint awards and enhanced socialization of larger games. We will continue to offer special games with higher masterpoint awards and serve pizza and salad.

FRIDAY NIGHT BRIDGE

Our newly-initiated iterations of Friday Night Bridge exceeded expectations. We offered open games and social tables. The social game is a relaxed duplicate format that awards masterpoints. There was an abundance of delicious heavy appetizers and wonderful desserts. The cost is \$10.

Please join us on Friday, March 14th for "Heavy Appetizers," desserts and Open and Social Bridge. Join me in thanking Lisa Buchner for leading the effort to make this game a success.

SWISS TEAMS GAME

We will hold our March Eight-is-Enough Swiss Team

games on Wednesday, March 12th, and a regular Swiss Team Game on Sunday, March 23rd. We will be serving pizza, salad and dessert or more exotic fare on Sunday. Please sign up early at the club or email me and I will sign you up. Include the names of your players and total master points.

For those of you not familiar with Eight is Enough Swiss Teams, teams are formed based on the magical number 8. **A** players are assigned three points each, **B** players two each, and **C** players one each – all based on their number of masterpoints. Even if you are not a CPA you can see where this is going. Two A players would have to team with two C players to keep within the magic number, eight. Four B players could team up, or one A, two B's and a C could team up. Any combination below eight works for 'Eight is Enough.' Sound like something you want to try? Team Games are played on the second Wednesday and fourth Sunday of the month.

UNIT GAME

We will hold our March Unit Game on Sunday, March 16th. This month's food theme will be Italian, so it will be **DELIZIOSO!** Register early.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON 0-20 GAME

Players with 0-20 masterpoints please play in our Wednesday Supervised Play game beginning at 12:30 PM. Our goal is to provide the opportunity for you to practice with the benefit of more experienced players on hand to help answer your questions.

All players and students in the 0-20 range are welcome. The cost is \$10. If you can come with a partner, that will help, but if not, just show up and we will pair you with anyone else looking for a partner. In the event of an odd number, you may stay and kibitz for free.

Please sign up at the Club or contact Mary Dee Kienstra if you can help on any Wednesday afternoon. You don't need to be an expert level player; anyone who plays in NLM games will be perfect.

Please volunteer.



KIBITZING AT THE CLUB

If you're a beginner, as I am, you've probably heard our wonderful Education Coordinator, Janie Matlaf recommend *Kibitzing* as an excellent way to learn more about the game.

Well, on a recent Friday I had the opportunity to kibitz with Life Masters Sunny Foster and Gary Waldron! They both were so gracious and offered many tips and reasons for their bidding, and insight into their play of the hand.

Kathleen Owens

It was fun sitting at their tables and seeing all the other Life Masters play their hands so smoothly. Everyone was so warm and welcoming. It was helpful to watch how Sunny or Gary bid and played those difficult or big hands we all get and made me feel a little more at ease with the game.

If you are available or want to kibitz, just check-in with the Director and ask if you can kibitz with someone.

Thank you, Sunny and Gary!

BOOK REVIEW, MARCH 2025

Janie Matlaf

Since becoming strictly a Kindle reader, holding a real book in my hands is a rarity. I make an exception for bridge books, especially one of my all-time favorites, Marty Bergen's Points Schmoints.

Bergen's non-playing mom gave him some books while he was recovering from a tonsillectomy at age 14. One was a bridge book, which he devoured, and it became the impetus for his eventual career.

Fast forward 30-plus years, and his goal was to write a book that was very practical and at the same time very readable. In addition to a plethora of spot-on tips, there are many entertaining passages. He tells the story of Mr. Bridge who instructed Mrs. Bridge to point to her ring finger if she likes diamonds. After he went down doubled in 4 hearts he asked her, "What were you thinking? You had no points and only one heart." Taken aback, Mrs. Bridge explained that putting her hand on her chest was not a signal for hearts. It was a signal for a bust.

The book covers just about every aspect of the game, from the auction to declarer play, defense and etiquette. He presumes you know the basics of bridge and offers insight to help enhance your decision-making skills.

When I first read the book as an aspiring beginner, I had so many 'Aha' moments. One was page 72, entitled 'Stand Tall After a 1NT Overcall.' Do you and your partners have an agreement for responding after opponent interferes with 1NT? After reading this chapter, you will see the value of making an agreement.

Page 85 was another 'Aha' moment. Your partner opens 3 Hearts or 3 Spades and you have a huge hand with a void in partner's suit. His comment: You may be wondering about 3NT... In all the years I have been playing bridge, I have never responded 3NT to partner's 3-Heart or 3-Spade bid. Does that give you an idea of how rarely the perfect hand comes along?"

As the title implies, Bergen emphasizes the benefit of looking beyond high card points. Distribution and continuous reevaluation during the auction are often much more important. Each suggestion is supported with examples and clear hand comparisons.

As far as I'm concerned, Bergen accomplished his goal. Advancing beginners and intermediate players can learn a great deal from Points Schmoints, and should find it an easy read. Let me know if you agree.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Susan Bristol Co-Chair, Membership

We presently have 458 members in our club. As we didn't have a newsletter last month, I'm including new additions and changes since last year. It's quite a list!

The following individuals are the newest members to our club:

- Jackie Lewis
- Alexis Thorpe
- April Bruckmann
- Briande O'Hara
- Sharon Blain
- Peter Leyenaar

We have many reinstated members and we are pleased to welcome them back:

- Duke Canell
- Kimberly Zebot
- Joyce Bartel
- Maureen Nath
- Sharon Maloney

We are pleased to welcome Jon Busse as a transfer into our Unit.

There are lots of rank advancements to celebrate:

Junior Master

- Trish Levine
- Carol & Chris Spencer
- Ruth Strickland
- Kathleen Owens

Wishing you good cards and making slams to all continuing on their bridge journey. And thanks to everyone for continuing to support our club and making it the great organization that it is!

Club Master

- Lisa Buchner
- Marilyn Jensen

Sectional Master

- Ed Miller
- Barry Fortlage
- Trish Hernandez

Regional Master

- Tamra Bowan

NABC Master

- Deborah Powers

Advanced NABC Master

- Sylvia Srigley

Silver Life Master

- Frances Krause

Ruby Life Master

- Haroon Sorathia

MANAGER'S CORNER

Gail Schneider

We had a wonderful turnout for our sectional. A total of 70 tables on Saturday. Thirty teams on Sunday and 2 1/2 tables of 0-500 in the morning. WOW! Great job to Frances and Richard for the planning, execution and results. Frances and her group of helpers did an amazing job Cooks, shoppers, bakers and servers, plus clean up and reset. 140 people were fed and done in a very short time, amazing. Many thanks to all. The helpers who moved furniture before and after the sectional, the game directors, Brandon and John, and our new caddy, Marie. This was her first time caddying and did a wonderful job.

March will bring more specials. A pop-up game on the first for red and black points. Plus Club Championships, Eight-is-Enough, unit game, and Sunday Swiss. Please come and join us.

Our Saturday game is growing! It's a great game for our newer players. It's very laid back and fun. We all answer questions and try to help you bid and play better. Come and try it. You will like it.

One rule all players must remember, don't argue with the game director! If you think an error was made, discuss it with the director after the game. During the game at the table is considered game director harassment and you can be told to leave the game!

I hear lots of coughing in the room. I know that the current cold/virus going around is leaving a cough that is lingering for a while. Please do not come into the room if you are not feeling well.

See you at the tables



"WHEN YOU ARE A DEFENDER, THERE IS SOMETHING YOU SHOULD ALWAYS DO WHEN THE DUMMY COMES DOWN. THINK ABOUT THE BIDDING AND SEE IF YOU CAN TELL HOW MANY POINTS YOUR PARTNER HAS . . . KEEP A [MENTAL] RECORD OF THE POINTS PARTNER SHOWS AND YOU WILL ALWAYS KNOW HOW MANY MORE HE HAS."

Mike Lawrence - *Insights on Bridge: Book 3.*

MARCH SPECIALS AT SOCBC

March 1	Pop-up - Red & Black Points Lunch at 12 Noon, Game at 12:30 PM	\$13 per person
March 3 - 8	Club Championship Games	\$12 per person (\$13 on Saturday)
March 12	Eight-is-Enough Unit Club Championship	\$12 per person
March 15	Upgraded Club Championship Lunch at 12 Noon, Game at 12:30 PM	\$13 per person
March 16	Unit Game Lunch at 12 Noon, Game at 12:30 PM	\$13 per person
March 17 - 22	Club Championship	\$12 per person (\$13 on Saturday)
March 23	Swiss Team Club Championship Lunch at 12 Noon, Game at 12:30 PM	\$13 per person
March 24 - 29	NABC Fundraiser Games	\$12 per person (\$13 on Saturday)

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Frances Krause

I want to extend a special thank you to everyone who helped make the Sectional a great success. Cooking, shopping, bringing tables and equipment, setting up, serving, cleaning up, the list is endless. I want to give my heartfelt thanks to those who are always there to help. We couldn't have done it without you.

VOLUNTEERS AT SOCBC

Trisha Silverberg, Volunteer Coordinator

As you've been hearing all month - with great excitement I might add - I have implemented a more official approach to fitting the right people with the right volunteer position at our fabulous Bridge Club.

The goal is to have 100% of our open positions filled, and we are starting with great success!

The positions we have filled this month are:

- Bidding Box Organizer - thank you, **Betsy Hartley**
- Holiday Decorations Organizer - thank you, **Winifred Jacob**
- Auditor - thank you, **Greg Hanson**
- Ethics - thank you, **Greg Hanson**
- Purchasing Food & Provisions - thank you, **Kathy Rocheleau**

WOW!

A position which we would love someone to step up and fill:

- Computer Guru - help us when we have questions and issues with our computers (software & hardware).

Please take a look at the bulletin board for a complete list of filled and open positions.

A special shout-out to **Victor Fitzsimmons**, he is doing the banking for the club and is greatly appreciated!

Thank you to all of you who help silently! Each person that takes on a lead role to fill a needed volunteer position recruits helpers so they can get the job done.

Please come see me if one of our open positions is calling you!

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much" Helen Keller



REPORT ON PRO-AM GAME OF FEBRUARY 20, 2025

John Jonas

We just had our first Pro-Am of 2025. It was successful in that we had a good-sized game. I am pleased to run these Pro-Ams and get a lot of positive comments about how much everybody enjoys the game. Below is a description of what went wrong, and I now must consider having people pay ahead of time so we do not have no-shows. I hope everyone will understand that signing up for these games is a commitment that must be honored by showing up or notifying me that you cannot play at least a day in advance.

Up to Wednesday we had 19 tables with all pairs being a LM and an NLM as intended. Unfortunately, eight NLMs did not show up. One was a last-minute emergency cancellation; two cancelled via email or call and one left a message on the Club's phone Wednesday night which no one could pick up until Thursday morning, too late to adjust pairs. Therefore, four people signed up but did not call or show up.

As a result, two NLM players who were on a wait-list did not get to play. Also, six LM players had to play with other LMs to fill out the tables and allow them to play as they planned. These LMs formed five pairs who became ineligible for master points. For the actual game we had 14.5 Tables of mixed pairs; 2.5 tables of all LMs for a total of 17 tables.

I know we can do better. I will have to decide how best to stop this from happening again. I will let you know how I intend to do that.

Thanks to everyone who showed up as they promised.



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

We start new students March 3rd for Part 1, a series of 10 lessons. Our trio of teachers includes Bob Levine, Susie Mays, and David Merenbach, and they are supported by our Monday volunteer Ross Anderson. 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 MORNING: MARCH 12, 10 - 11:30 AM. John Kissinger teaches SUCTION

Suction defense allows you to bid all one-suiter and all six touching and non-touching 2-suiters against NT and strong 1C or 2C openings. John finds this to be superior to other defensive conventions like DONT or Hamilton because you specifically identify both of your two suits when showing a two-suiter. Whether or not you play Suction, come and learn what to do when opponents use suction against you.

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 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: BIG HANDS & SLAMS. with Gary Waldron. 9:30 - 11:30 AM

Starting March 20th, Gary begins a six-week series for advancing beginners and intermediate players.

1. Big Hands - 2 Club and 2 NT Opening Bids + Jacoby 2 NT and More
2. Approaches to Bidding - When to Start Thinking About Bidding a Slam
3. Exploring for Slam with Big Hands
4. Control Bids - the Key to Slam Bidding
5. 1430, Blackwood, Gerber - Asking bids for Aces, Kings & the Trump Queen
6. When to explore whether slam is in the cards - To Slam or Not to Slam? That is the Question.

Sign up at the club or reply to Gary at lagunajhawk@icloud.com

FRIDAY MORNINGS: FOR NEW PLAYERS (0-200 MPs) 9:00 ~ 11:45 AM

Attendance is booming! Come and see why it's the place to be.

Trudi and I would like to thank each and every one of you for your support of our Friday morning game. Your response and attendance is very rewarding. We appreciate you!

Here's the schedule for March:

- 3/7 - How to keep score? Why is it important? Help understand when to make a sacrifice bid
- 3/14 - How to read the results - The results sheet contains a lot of information, find out all it says.
- 3/21 - How to fill out a convention card. Did you know each pair should have matching cards? Find out how to complete one.
- 3/28 - TBD

The lesson starts at 9 AM, followed by a game. 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 for more information.

THE VOLUNTEERS WHO MAKE IT ALL HAPPEN!

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