



# THE MICHIGAN BRIDGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

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Winter, 2019

*A Happy and Healthy New Year to All of Our Players*

## BRIDGE CONNECTION SCHEDULE

**ACBL-wide Jr. Fund Game:** Tuesday Jan. 22;  
64% sectional rating; black points.

**ACBL-wide International Fund Game:**  
Sat. Feb. 2 12:30pm.

**Sectional at the Connection:** Closed for all  
games Th. Feb. 7 – Sun. Feb. 10.

**ACBL-wide Charity Game:** Wed. noon Feb.  
20.

**ACBL-wide Senior Pairs:** Monday noon  
March 11.

**Club Championships:** Mon. March 25 – Sun.  
March 30. Higher masterpoint awards for  
overall finishers in all strata. Regular entry fee.

**ACBL-wide Charity Game:** Wed. noon, April  
3.

**Sectional at the Connection:** Closed for all  
games Th. April 4 – Sun. April 7.

## LIFE MASTER MILESTONES

Please join us in congratulating the following  
Bridge Connection players for achieving new  
Life Master Milestones:

Platinum Life Master (15,000)  
Ed White

Silver Life Master (1,000)  
Steve Kaplan

Bronze Life Master (500)  
Jane Gardner

New Life Master  
Song Lin  
Carrie Osborne

## HEALTH REMINDER

Do your part to keep our club healthy!! Out of  
courtesy to your fellow players, if you have a  
cold, as much as we'd like your business, STAY  
HOME! While at the club, wash your hands and  
use the hand sanitizers around the club  
frequently. If you need to cough, that's what  
elbows are for! ♠

## PSYCH BIDS

Robb Gordon, the ACBL National Recorder and a former Detroiter, had an article in the Hawaii NABC Daily Bulletin on psychs. Here are some excerpts from it:

A psych bid in bridge is a gross distortion of one's hand in an attempt to fool the opponents. Of course, you are also distorting your hand for your partner and this is not without risk! However, some bids that players think are psychs, are in reality tactical bids.

As our bidding methods have become scientific, the risk/reward of psyching has made the practice generally undesirable – but they still exist.

The ACBL prohibits psyching of artificial opening bids and responses thereto. Psych “controls” are also banned. These are responses that allow the psycher to confirm if he has psyched. The ACBL also prohibits:

1. Frivolous psychs that are not an attempt to be successful.
2. Overly frequent psychs that create an implied agreement in a partnership.
3. Risk-free psychs that prohibit partner from acting.

**IMPORTANT:** While legal, it is frowned upon for an experienced or strong pair to psych against an inexperienced or weak pair. Such actions create bad feelings and may cause an inexperienced pair to give up competitive bridge.

The Bridge Connection's policy is to permit a maximum of one psych per session. So, if you believe your opponents have psyched, it is your obligation to call the director at the end of the hand and report it.

If a player is psyching frequently, so as to be disruptive or is doing so in a predatory way against newer players, we will warn and then discipline the disruptive player. ♠

## 2018 MBA TROPHY WINNERS

Congratulations to Steven Winokur who won the MBA's Beverly Bluth Trophy (B) and Henry and Yanping Zhang who won the Winokur Trophy (C). Sheldon Kirsch ran away with the Stein Trophy (most masterpoints in overall placings in the unlimited events at MBA tournaments). His total of 144.45 was more than 40 mps ahead of Owen Lien. Sheldon's frequent partner, Mike Alioto won the Mouser (most mps at the Motor City Regional) for the second consecutive year. The Marsee (most mps by a Michigan player) goes to Owen Lien. ♠

## BIDDING FORUM

Here's a hand from our Wed. afternoon game that had old-timers shaking their heads. They had never seen a hand like this:

South deals and holds vul. v. non-vul.: void; AKQ9874; AKQ982; void. What's your opening bid? The popular choice was two clubs – but there was support for a one heart opener. AND, one player actually opened seven hearts!

I held this hand and thought of opening seven hearts since I was sure the opponents had a seven-spade sacrifice and wanted to make it difficult for them to find it – but I chickened out and opened two clubs. Sure enough, the opponents began bidding spades.

Partner came in with six no-trump and most folks settled for 7 hearts. Partner had only a singleton heart 3. However, partner also held the J10x of diamonds which makes 7 diamonds ice cold regardless of the heart distribution. But matchpoint scoring drove pairs to a heart or no-trump contract – both of which made only because the hearts split 3/2.

By the way, my concern was correct: a non-vulnerable seven spade contract goes down “only” 2,000 – less than the score for a seven contract vulnerable in any strain. ♠

**PLAYER PROFILE:  
MIKE GIORDANO**



I was born in Paterson, New Jersey and moved to Michigan about 60 years ago. I attended Oakland University and the University of Michigan where I learned to play bridge when I wasn't majoring in English.

I worked as a newspaper reporter and eventually as Director of Public Relations for the Oakland County Road Commission. In the evenings I taught backgammon and directed backgammon tournaments at the Cavendish North which was owned by Jeffrey Starr and later by Bert Newman.

I was introduced to duplicate in Ann Arbor where the local stars were Dick Huggard and Chuck Said. I developed a partnership with Chuck Sepessey from Milwaukee and we both went from having a shoebox full of fractional points\* to becoming Life Masters in one summer. Our timing was not ideal since that was the year the ACBL stopped giving free memberships to Life Masters.

That year we went to the Nationals and in the final session of the Life Master Pairs were at the table adjacent to the legendary Al Roth and Barbara Rappaport. I think we finished 15<sup>th</sup>.

I have always had an interest in photography and had my first darkroom when I was ten. While I love photographing birds, since I have an interest in all wildlife, I shoot a variety of animals whenever the opportunity arises.

I have always been an avid bridge player although I did take a 22-year hiatus while I was

married. I have had the good fortune to play with some of the area's finest players. In the process have won many sectional and regional events. I now play several times a week, mostly at the Bridge Connection.

I'd like to share with newer players that the challenges the game offers are easier to overcome when you have a positive attitude toward both your partner and the opponents. The most important thing to remember is to *count* both points and distribution in the opponents' hands. Counting and a review of the bidding are the keys to making most of the advanced plays.

\*(Ed. Note: In the "good old days" before electronic submission of masterpoints won at a club, fractional masterpoints won at club games were issued to players on paper forms. The players had to mail in the slips to the ACBL to be recorded.) ♠

**MONTHLY MASTERPOINT  
LEADERS**

**OCTOBER:**

A. Sheldon Kirsch	13.14
Bob Webber	11.01
B. Nancy Finkel	5.07
C. Steven Kaplan	4.26

**NOVEMBER:**

A. Bob Raf	8.05
Bob Mendelson	7.99
B. Sandy Birnholtz	7.78
C. Dave Dursum	4.55

**DECEMBER:**

A. Bert Newman	22.67
Sheldon Kirsch	20.02
B. Julie Arbit	10.49
C. Song Lin	7.40

## DOUBLE DUMMY PUZZLER

Here's hand from a Wednesday afternoon game that posed real problems for declarers.

	♠ 94	
	♥ QJ6	
	♦ 10972	
	♣ K1087	
♠ J1072		♠ K8
♥ 954		♠ AK873
♦ AJ3		♦ K6
♣ Q54		♣ AJ62
	♠ AQ653	
	♥ 102	
	♦ Q854	
	♣ 93	

The contract in all instances, save one, was some number of hearts, usually four, after a spade overcall by South. Yet, despite Deep Finesse saying in the hand record four hearts was cold, 11 of 15 declarers managed to go down. Take a look at the layout and decide how the hand should be played against perfect defense.

The opening lead is immaterial, but the two popular ones were the D4 or C9. It appears as though there are four losers: two spades and a trump and a club. While there are several ways to make the hand, East needs to appreciate the value of the spade J and 10 in dummy. If a diamond is led, declarer lets it ride to her king, preserving the diamond for an entry to dummy. Now take the top two trumps. Then comes the spade king (after the overcall, it's useless to waste a vital entry to lead up to the king). South wins and plays another diamond, declarer finesses the jack and dumps a CLUB on the top diamond (declarer needs the spade eight to drive out the queen). Now take the club finesse, winning the jack and playing the club ace.

Now the spade eight. South wins but has no good return. If he returns a spade for North to ruff, declarer pitches another club while North ruffs with the high trump. If North doesn't ruff, South still pitches a club and plays another spade. If South returns the fourth diamond, declarer ruffs in dummy and plays the spades until North ruffs. In all cases, declarer loses two spades and a trump – the losing clubs going on the diamond and a spade. Nothing to it, eh? At least once you realize the value of the spade J/10.

By the way, the hand also makes if the club nine is lead – work it out!

## 2018 BRIDGE CONNECTION TROPHIES

Bert Newman won the Bolton-Crafton-Melander Trophy for the most masterpoints earned at the Connection during 2018. Elie Chidiac won the Bloom Trophy for the player who began the year with fewer than 25 masterpoints and earned the most during 2018. Congratulations! ♠

Ron Horwitz, Editor