

eDeclarer

January 2021

ACBL UNIT 499 NEWSLETTER

President's Message



Greetings Unit 499!

January brings a new year with lots of hope for the future.

Bridge is still on the radar, on BBO and trickstercards.com. It is a challenge to play online—simpler than in person—but still deeply satisfying. I miss the daily challenge of in-person play and the camaraderie of the game in real time with real live people across the table. The fix, of course is either BBO or trickstercards.com. The satisfaction of a game well played is not as intense as a live-person game. Game recaps and discussion are more labored than previously noted. How to win those elusive points from ACBL is a challenge that I am still confronting. Other things come to mind, reading, walking, and being out in the fresh air. The times we are in make one grateful for the small triumphs of the day.

This month saw the addition of three newly-elected board members to the Unit 499 board. They are: Suresh Gadad, Ed Lichtig, and Pat Torres. Congratulations to those three as well as all of the current board members.

May the New Year find you happy, healthy and playing bridge in your favorite online game. The weather is getting colder, but the sun is still shining, and the vaccine is here. It shouldn't be too long before we are able to see each other over the table at bridge. I look forward to those times and wish you well.

Lyn Sacco

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| President's Message | 1 |
| From The Editor | 2 |
| Unit 499 Milestones | 3 |
| Contributions | 4 |
| Club News | 13 |

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To submit a letter to the editor,
send it to Judy Keilin at

jkeilin@gmail.com

Mary Krouse, Publisher

...from the Editor

We are fortunate to have two new regular contributors to eDeclarer - Kathrine Loh and Mel Chaplin, both of whom have included background information in their first submissions. I hope their lessons will help to improve your game!

Congratulations to Lyn Sacco on receiving the Goodwill nomination! She's a fine example of giving back to the game we love.

It's January of a new year! It promises to be a much better one, and I wish all of you the best in accepting what is and will be for our futures. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Judy Keilin
Editor



Be sure to visit the unit website for more information on our clubs and events, as well as archives of our newsletters.

diablovalleybridge.com/ccbc

Milestones and New Members

MILESTONES

NEW JUNIOR MASTERS (5)

June Bechtel
Robert Kahl
Rick Pyle

NEW CLUB MASTERS (20)

Dennis Corburn
Paula Krauss

NEW SECTIONAL MASTERS (50)

Cathy Adams
Joe Fuchs
Mike Ghosh
Terry Rowe

NEW NABC MASTER (200)

Carla Shockley

NEW BRONZE LIFE MASTER (500/750)

Diane Simpson

NEW RUBY LIFE MASTER (1500)

Krishnan Thondukolam

NEW GOLD LIFE MASTER (2500)

Barbara Fendel

NEW MEMBERS

Anna Duncan
Jeffrey Duncan
Robert Waggener
Mary Jo Aitkenhead
Brett Casper

Please welcome these folks when you “meet” them at the tables.

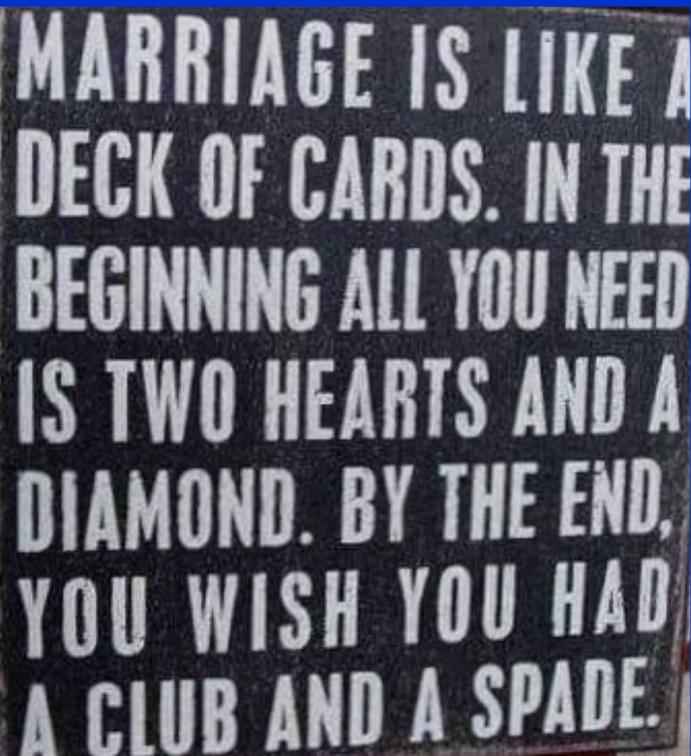
GOODWILL AWARD

Lyn Sacco, Unit 499's President, is the recipient of a 2020 District 21 Goodwill Award. Each fall, Units in our district can submit nominations for outstanding individuals in their unit who display goodwill qualities and have made contributions to the unit and bridge.

Lyn has served as our Unit's President for the past two years (and is still President), and was the Unit's Secretary for seven years. She continually volunteers to help without being asked. At our sectionals, she assists with hospitality, set-up and clean-up, and as a ready bridge player for anyone who comes without a partner, or whose partner failed to show. As the Unit President, Lyn brings a thoughtful approach to building consensus. She always has a smile at the bridge table.

The awards are given at the January meeting of the District 21 Board. This year, the meeting will be virtual. When we can once again play face-to-face, look for Lyn to be sporting her Goodwill pin. As a celebration, the Unit traditionally hosts a lunch/game for our Goodwill recipients. We are hopeful we can have this event sometime in 2021 to congratulate Lyn on her award.

Anne Hollingsworth



MARRIAGE IS LIKE A
DECK OF CARDS. IN THE
BEGINNING ALL YOU NEED
IS TWO HEARTS AND A
DIAMOND. BY THE END,
YOU WISH YOU HAD
A CLUB AND A SPADE.

New Year/Say goodbye to 2020...Yes, Yes, Yes

In past years traditionally most folks stay home for New Year's Eve and begin to take an inventory about their lives and make resolutions. We try and make new changes for the better, and look back on the past and say farewell.

So what sprouts up for American's? We make 1.8 million New Year's resolutions each year. If you take into account the whole world, the number of people making resolutions skyrockets to hundreds of millions. And, the number one resolution is-- *drum roll please*-- losing weight, exercising more, and making good, healthy food choices. For us bridge folks, we can be sedentary group. OMG, especially now with this Corona Virus. Even my dog is gaining weight. Yes, we all try to eat well. However, sometimes our food choices fall flat as a pancake. So let the sun and bread rise, as we hope to lighten our load. This can be done, even when playing from home. Walking is a good thing, so if you can, exercise too. Try to eat light and think right!

Exciting News Flash: With great respect and admiration, Diablo Valley Unit 499 is pleased to nominate Lyn Sacco for consideration as a member of the D21 Goodwill Committee. As President of our Unit, Lyn has approved her nomination by the Unit 499 Board of Directors for the D21 2020 Goodwill Award. Doing an exemplary job for the Unit, Lyn Sacco served as the Unit's Secretary for seven (7) years and two years as the Vice President of our unit in 2017 and 2018. During 2018, she volunteered to take over a lot of the work that our President was handling during her cancer treatments. Lyn stayed in close touch with our President and was proactive about performing any duties necessary to help her. In 2019, Lyn Sacco became the President of our Unit and she is strongly leading our Unit through the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Lyn's been nominated to continue as our President and the Board was unanimous—Congratulations.

AND, a fun comment from Andy Fine, who noted that playing on-line brings a whole new menu to our tables. We play with folks from other countries, some we aren't familiar with, but it's nice to engage from people around the world. That's one way to travel!!!

In closing, the vaccine lurks in our future, wondering when our turn will come. I look to my Maker for guidance from above, praying for miracles that may or may not come. It's been said time and time again. - May your New Year be a renewal for a brightly lit future. And remember; to always keep the light on.

Well wishes to all!
Lisa Assoni/Short Cut Cook



Play a Hand with Me

Play A Hand With Me

January, 2021

North

S Q6

H 2

D J102

C AQJ6432

West

S 1097432

H QJ84

D K

C K10

East

S AJ5

H K107653

D 93

C 87

South

S K8

H A9

D AQ87654

C 95

3C P 3N P

P P

This deal came up in a team match in July. We were both vulnerable and after my partner opened 3C in first seat I decided to try 3N hoping to run one of our suits. The opening lead was the 10 of Spades and I played the Q from dummy hoping it would hold and then I could take the Diamond finesse and if it lost, maybe West couldn't tell that I had only one Spade left. However, East won the A and returned the J and now it's possible that I am going down a bunch. I decided that I needed either the Diamonds to work or the Clubs but I didn't need both so with that in mind I cashed the A of Diamonds hoping that I could drop the K or if not that the Club finesse would work. When the K of Diamonds dropped I sighed a big sigh of relief and ran off the rest of the tricks making 6.

In the other room the declarer also decided to go for one suit but instead played the A of Clubs and when that K didn't drop they took the Diamond finesse and went down 3 for minus 300 and a loss of 14 imps.

Was I lucky? Yes, I was but the odds of a singleton Diamond K is quite a bit higher than a singleton K of Clubs. This type of play is called "combining your chances" and for me it worked.

Jerry Weitzner

jweitzner@sbcglobal.net



ANALYZE YOUR BRIDGE HAND

With Kathrine Loh

I am Kathrine Loh and I am grateful and fortunate to be asked by our Rossmoor duplicate bridge president to be your “author” to our bridge column.

I retired from the Library of Congress as a Data Base administrator and moved from the East Coast about five years ago to be with my mother and sister in Rossmoor. About fourteen years ago I was an empty nester, and my sister encouraged me to learn bridge. I did not know anything about bridge since I was a single parent and was totally involved with my kids and their activities. But since that day I have been playing duplicate bridge and I really enjoy playing in team games in tournaments. So my perspective will be more focused on team bridge. I have never played party or rubber bridge. My plan is to write articles to help you analyze, improve, refine and learn new conventions and to perfect the intricacies of duplicate bridge. Hopefully I can help some of you analyze your bridge hands and for those who are “gold-diggers”, reach your “bridge” goal of Life Master.

WHEN TO OPEN 1NT

Today, in duplicate bridge one of the most frequent opening bids should be 1NT- a 15-17 HCP balanced hand.

ACBL has, in the last couple of years, approved opening 1NT with a singleton honor A/K/Q. I will try to list all the REASONS that I personally will open 1NT instead of 1 of a suit.



Any balanced 15-17 HCP. By balanced I mean any of the following distributions 4432, 5332, 4333, 6322 with the 6-card suit being a minor, occasionally 5422 15 HCP hand with 4S and 5H and not strong enough to reverse.

1NT opening makes it difficult for opponents to come in. And the opponents need to have a good defensive system and a distributional hand to bid after your 1NT.

You do not need to have every suit stopped, if I waited till I have a stopper in each suit I can very rarely open 1NT

In one bid I can tell my partner my shape and HCP and I may not necessarily have a good rebid if I had opened 1 of a suit.

I do open 1NT with 5-card major 5332 shape with 15 HCP because I do not have a good rebid.

There are standard bidding systems after partner opens 1 NT that will bring you to the right contract. e.g. Stayman, Jacoby Transfer, etc.

When I open 1 of a suit, I have to plan ahead on what my rebid is going to be to describe my hand.

I am not a fan of opening 1NT with a singleton honor. To me it is better to describe your shape.

Remember 1 NT opening is a limited hand and shape so as a responder, I can then determine where the contract should be.

When I open 1 of a minor and partner bids 1 of a major and I rebid 1NT, this bid is LIMITED to 11-14 HCP max, because if I have 15 HCP I should have opened 1NT instead of 1 of a minor.

e.g. 1C- (p) - 1S - (p) -1NT this is limited to max of 14 HCP.

HAPPY ANALYZING!

Kathrine Loh can be emailed at ladyrossmoorbridge@gmail.com



BRIDGE CONVENTIONS & GADGETS

THE TAKE-OUT DOUBLE

By Mel Chaplin

melchaplin@comcast.net



Hi. My name is Mel Chaplin. I live in Brentwood and play most of my bridge in Brentwood, Discovery Bay & Concord. I'm a relative newcomer to the game of bridge since I re-started in the fall of 2012, after a forty-two-year hiatus. That fact is a bit ironic because the Founder & Chairman of Syntex Corporation., the company I worked at for twenty-eight years, was George Rosenkrantz, a World Expert bridge player who won many major titles with several partners. While I knew George pretty well from a scientific point, I never had the opportunity to talk bridge with him. But, I wouldn't have understood what he was saying anyway back in those days!

Roche Corporation, a large Swiss pharmaceutical firm, purchased Syntex in 1996 and by 2000, I was completely out of science. Marilyn and I moved to Brentwood in 2002. We traveled extensively and I played golf, hiked a lot in the Regional Parks, played more golf, travelled some more, and played more golf. Still no bridge in sight. It wasn't until August 2012 that my world changed big-time when I severed an Achilles tendon. Soon after getting out of that cast, a series of major surgeries and chronic illnesses came along that prevented me from doing the physically active things I had enjoyed for several years.

That's when I discovered an ACBL-sanctioned game on Wednesday evenings in 2012 in Brentwood, directed by Carmen Meuter, long-time Director of sanctioned games in Brentwood. I was hooked after one session. After a few months of playing and reading a lot of bridge, I had the opportunity to play with an advanced player, Dudley Alexander. Dudley has a deep interest in the game of bridge, particularly bidding aspects. We eventually became regular partners and Dudley, my mentor by now, every week would bring me old articles by Eddie Kantar (his favorite) or a copy of some topic from one of Max Hardy's books (another favorite). The net effect of this constant bombardment of new information (to me, at least) from Dudley was the development of an intense interest in the scientific aspects of bridge and the desire to learn more about the game. And that's where I am today. Thanks Dudley, my 'ole buddy!

I chose the topic of this column to be "BRIDGE CONVENTIONS & GADGETS" because the topic is of great interest to me. I briefly considered a column titled "HOW TO MISS-PLAY A HAND", with the subtitle "HOW TO GO DOWN IN 3NT WHEN EVERYONE ELSE IS MAKING 5". I have a lot of expertise in the area of bad declarer play. But then I thought, no, I should try to do something positive. And, I didn't want to step on Jerry Weitzner's toes! So, "BRIDGE CONVENTIONS & GADGETS" it is.

I plan to emphasize "PAGE 2" & "PAGE 3" aspects of many of the conventions on my list. It is my hope is that this information will provide some guidance and stimulate interest in the game of bridge in newer

and developing players. You bridge “old-timers” will just have to endure many of these columns but I have a few gadgets in mind that may interest you, too.

First up for this column is a review of perhaps the most valuable conventions used in bridge, the topic of Doubles. This month we look at Take-Out Doubles, the most commonly used bridge bidding convention.

But let’s agree on some terminology first. Sitting on Opener’s left is the Intervener, followed by Responder and, in fourth seat, the Advancer. The DIRECT seat is that seat immediately following a seat making a bid, and the BALANCING seat is the fourth seat after the bidding proceeds Opener (makes a bid) -P-P-BALANCING seat.

There are two main hand types considered suitable for calling a Take-Out Double. The first is called the “classic” form and the second is referred to as the “Big Double”. Both types of Doubles can be made in the DIRECT or BALANCING seat. An important point to remember is that the requirements for making a Take-Out Double in DIRECT seat are relaxed a bit (about a King less) in the BALANCING seat. A concept known as “borrowing a King” (from partner) is often used by Advancer to bolster his hand to a point where he can call a reasonable Overcall or Take-Out Double.

Guidelines to Call a “Classic” Take-Out Double in the DIRECT Seat Are:

An opponent has bid and you don’t have an appropriate overcall.

Opening, or near-opening, hand values. You need about a King less in the BALANCING seat.

It’s important to have near opening values to call a Take-Out Double in the DIRECT seat. I had this situation recently with a pick-up partner on BBO.

Pard’s Hand: ♠K1097 ♥AJ76 ♦J108 ♣105 (9 HCP).

Mel’s Hand: ♠Q85 ♥K95 ♦752 ♣KQJ8 (11 HCP).

| <u>West</u> | <u>Mel</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>Pard</u> |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| P | P | 1C | Dbl |
| 1D | 1NT | 2D | P |
| 2NT | All Pass | | |

I took Pard to have near-opening hand values. I suspect he was overly impressed with his two 4-card majors. Since I had multiple stoppers in East’s suit I bid 1NT, then 2NT, relying on Pard to have in the neighborhood of 12 HCP. Didn’t happen. Down 2.

3+ cards in all un-bid suits.

Shortness in the opponents’ suit.

As we will see later most of these guidelines are often “stretched” in the real world of competitive bridge bidding.

Requirements to call the “Big Double” are:

An opponent has bid and you don’t have an appropriate overcall.

18+ HCP.

A strong 5+ card suit OR a strong balanced/semi-balanced hand consisting of 18-21 HCP, that is, a hand too strong to open 1NT.

A third hand type of Take-Out Double that is used much less extensively is known as the Equal Level Conversion Double. We will examine this type of Take-Out Double later in this series.

PAGE 2:

●●●●PERCEPTIONS & MISCONCEPTIONS●●●●

Common PERCEPTIONS on the hand types needed to call a Take-Out Double.

#1) A Take-Out Double of a major suit always promises 4-cards in the other major.

Intervener’s Hand: ♠AJ9x ♥x ♦Jxxx ♣AKxx (13 HCP).

The Bidding:Opener/Intervener

1H Dbl

No problem. Intervener has 4 Spades & the “classic” shape and values for a Take-Out Double.

But what if Intervener had: ♠AJ9 ♥x ♦Jxxxx ♣AKxx(13 HCP)?

Intervener should still call a Take-Out Double. His hand still meets the basic requirements needed to call a “classic” Take-Out Double, namely:

opening hand values

3+ cards in all un-bid suits and

shortness in the opponent’s suit.

A common MISCONCEPTION is that a Take-Out Double of a major suit promises 4 cards in the other major. (Robert Todd, BB, June 2020). Note that other authors state you must have 4 Spades to use the Take-Out Dbl. For sure, partnership agreement is needed in this situation.

#2) A Take-Out Dbl of a minor suit always promises 4-cards in both majors.

Intervener’s Hand: ♠AQJx ♥KJxx ♦Kxx ♣xx (14 HCP).

The Bidding:Opener/ Intervener

1C Dbl

No problem. Intervener holds 4 Spades, 4 Hearts and the “classic” shape and values for a Take-Out Double.

But what if Intervener had: ♠AQJ ♥KJxx ♦Kxxx♣xx (14 HCP)?

Intervener should still call a Take-Out Double. His hand still meets the basic requirements needed to call a “classic” Take-Out Double, namely

- (a) opening hand values,
- (b) 3+ cards in all un-bid suits
- (c) shortness in the opponent’s suit. (Jerry Helms, BB, January 2020).

Again, other authors insist that two 4-card majors are required to call a Take-Out Double in this situation. And, again, partnership agreement is needed.

#3) Distributional hands require fewer HCP to call a Take-Out Double.

Advancer’s Hand: ♠Axxx ♥____ ♦Kxxx ♣Kxxxx (10 HCP).

The Bidding: Opener/ Intervener/ Responder / Advancer

1H P P Dbl

This hand qualifies as a reasonable Take-Out Double. Advancer can “borrow a King” from Pard.

#4) It’s usually best NOT to call a Take-Out Double holding a 4-3-3-3 distribution.

Advancer’s Hand: ♠AKQ10 ♥K10x ♦Qxx ♣xxx (14 HCP).

The Bidding: Opener/ Intervener/ Responder/ Intervener

1H P P 1S

Advancer might choose to bid 1S. Treat the 4-card Spade suit consisting of 4 top honors as a 5-card suit.

TAKE-AWAY:

Words like “always”, “never”, & “must” should NOT apply to the game of bridge. Better to use words like “generally”, “usually”, and “tends to be”. (Jerry Helms, BB, January 2020). **“LIFE ISN’T PERFECT & NEITHER ARE TAKE-OUT DOUBLES”**. Mike Lawrence. “Judgment at Bridge 1”

Suggested Reading:

Max Hardy. pp 206-207. “Standard Bridge for the 21st Century.”

Jerry Helms. Bridge Bulletin, January 2020.

Robert Todd, Bridge Bulletin, June 2020.

Mike Lawrence. “Judgment at Bridge 1.”

Next Time: Responding to Partner’s Take-Out D

Club News

This section is for club owners and managers who wish to submit news about their games. Please go to our website for information about all our clubs, game times, and to check on the latest results. Diablovalleybridge.com

Until further notice all bridge clubs in Unit 499 are closed due to the coronavirus. Stay home, stay safe! Visit our website for information.

Also visit ACBL.org to find information about on line classes and places to play.

ROSSMOOR DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

Gateway Club, Rossmoor

For the past five years David Terris has been publishing bridge hands in the Rossmoor News, our weekly newspaper. Duplicate club members and other residents alike have enjoyed David's columns. We all thank him for the time and effort that has gone into this project. His hard work is greatly appreciated.

Kathrine Loh will be writing the column in the future. We are fortunate to have players of David and Kathrine's caliber who are willing to take on this project.

Kit Miller



Thanks for all your work and for your educational columns, David.

Contra Costa Bridge Center

News

Regular schedule around New Year's Day and January.

New 0–20 Newcomer Game, Tuesday afternoons, [2:00](#), \$3, 12 boards, gentle pace, lifelines. [Starting January 5.](#)

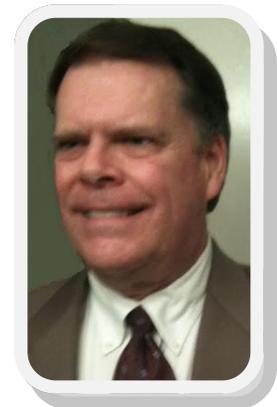
Silver Linings Week, [January 18–24](#), all Silver masterpoints, all games, 1/3 extra masterpoints (twice regular), extra \$1.

Sundays are Special Game, [Sunday afternoon](#), January 10, 1:00. Planning to hold a Sunday game the second and fourth Sunday of each month.

Virtual Pro / Am, [Sunday afternoon](#), January 31, 1:30. Register with Mark Humphrey, markhumphrey@comcast.net. No NFL football that day.

Thank you for your support of CCBC!

Online Game Schedule



Grant Robinson

Lamorinda Bridge Club

Schedule Change for 2021! Experience is indicating to us that our players seem more interested in morning games than afternoon games, so our Thursday games will now be in the morning. Please note the schedule change in your calendars!

Online Game Schedule:

Tuesday 7pm Open Game \$5

Wednesday 10am Open Game \$5

Thursday 10am Limited Game (299) \$5

Thursday 10:15am Open Game \$5

Friday 10am Limited Game (499) \$5

Saturday 10am Open Game \$5

Sunday 10am Limited Game (299) \$5

Sunday 10:15am Open Game \$5

To participate you have to:

1. Join BridgeBase.Com (no charge)
2. List a User Name and Password
3. Enter your ACBL #
4. Buy BB\$ with a credit card, to play in the ACBL Virtual Games

Jerry can walk you through this process if you wish to contact him.

The master points you will earn in regular tournaments will ultimately be increased by 50% over the normal Bridge Base Points once the results are posted to the ACBL Live for Clubs Website.

Jerry has recorded a Shark Bridge session which will show you how to set up parameters for practice. For example, 1NT - P - Jacoby Transfers. This can be set up and saved with a veritable infinite number of permutations as responder. (Robots are free so you can practice for hours.) Shark Bridge has a \$20/year fee at this time. You can set up and save multiple practice situations for use at a moment's notice.

Jerry also can give instruction as to how four friends can go together online to play bridge and enable speech so that you can all communicate with each other.

We wish to acknowledge the tremendous efforts made by a small group of key people over the last eight months in forging a partnership between ACBL and BBO and training and supporting Directors to make online bridge a reality enabling all of us to play within the protection of our own homes. This keeps us safe during the pandemic and is saving our bridge clubs. But, nothing can fully replace seeing you all socially.

Jerry Chamberlain & Winnie Jasper

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