

We are developing a history of ACBL Unit 174. This will be an ongoing effort and will benefit from the memory and work of all Unit members willing to participate. Current plans are to update the document three to four times per year.

We started with a history of eight clubs within our Unit and now have eleven. If your club is not listed, encourage them to send a club history to David Henke at dhenke46@comcast.net. The next step is a random group of remembrances from various members of our Unit. Included in the initial publication were remembrances from three of our members. We now have remembrances from twelve. I hope many of you will contribute to this.

We also plan to include biographies of many unit members. The fourth update of the Unit History will be issued close to the time of the traditional announcement of the Oswald and James Jacoby Service Award by District 16. Twelve Unit 174 members have been recipients of this award. In the fourth update we plan to begin including biographies of these award winners. Volunteers to help with these biographies will be greatly appreciated. We should begin with the 1983 recipient and work our way forward. If you are willing to help with this project, please let me know at dhenke46@comcast.net. The previous Oswald and James Jacoby Service Award winners from Unit 174 are:

- 1983 Joyce Cook,
- 1988 Jim Downs,
- 1989 Dan & Joan Morse,
- 1995 Barry Hagedorn,
- 1998 Eric Snow,
- 1999 Arlene Weingarten,
- 2004 Betty Starzec,
- 2005 Toni Snow,
- 2009 Bert Onstott,
- 2012 Lew Levy,
- 2016 Paul Cuneo,
- 2019 Nancy Strohmer

Pictures will eventually be included in the effort, but we have not yet determined how best to accomplish this. I would appreciate any clearly labeled pictures you are able to send me by email.

The following is our third update of the Unit History. For this issue new items are put at the front. In the next update these two remembrances and the new club history will be integrated into the rest of the History.

The new club history is for April Sound Duplicate BC by Mavis Warren using recollections by Henry Gurley.

April Sound Duplicate BC

Marguerite Byrnes of Montgomery, Texas founded the San Jacinto Duplicate Bridge Club in the mid to late 1960s - despite the skepticism of quite a few of the local players- with a playing site at the Moran Gas Company in Conroe, Texas (Texas Hwy. 75). At this location an office and showroom were on site. A unique feature of the building was the "Bowl-ARama" area, a recreational area open to all charity and church organizations, as well as civic groups for meetings, etc. This building's facilities were exceptional for duplicate bridge. It later moved to the Sam Houston Hotel/Motel at the intersection of Highway 105 and Highway 45 in Conroe. It made several moves after that . . . to a local church (which one is unknown) and then to the Lutheran Church in Conroe. From there it was relocated to April Sound Property Owners Association Building in Montgomery where it operated under different owners: Norm Gautier, Joan Miller and currently Mavis Warren (under the name April Sound Duplicate BC). The club played on Monday evenings for many years, but in 2010, Mavis Warren changed it to a Wednesday day game. Among the players who played when the club first opened were: Davida Word, Lee Green, Mavis Respass, Dorothy Ballew, Billie Quinn, Lyndon Phelps, Linda Lou Tiemann, and David McElwain. Players drove to Conroe from Houston and Bryan-College Station. Students from Sam Houston University (State Teachers College then) in Huntsville participated.

The first new remembrance is by Joe Quinn about playing duplicate bridge in Unit 174 during the 1970's.

Unit 174 Bridge Recollections from the 70's

I moved to Houston on March 14, 1974 when I took a new job with Fluor Corporation. As luck would have it the Houston unit had a tournament that started that day. It was a Wednesday and in those days 5 day tournaments were not uncommon. That evening as the first event of the tournament there was an individual event (my first and last event of that type). I only had 70 masterpoints at that time and had only been playing for a year or so. Anyway I got very lucky and won the event (my first sectional win) along with 5 masterpoints.

I quickly settled into the Houston bridge scene and played 3-4 evenings per week at the Bridge and Games Studio (now Westside Bridge Academy) which at that time was on the top floor of a 6 story building on the Southwest Freeway just south of Hillcroft on the south side of the freeway. I lived and worked in the nearby community and so it was very convenient. At that time the evening games were very large with perhaps 60 tables or more on a typical Thursday and 20 or more the other evenings. I never played during the day but understood that the daytime games were not large.

I played against some very strong players in the local club in those days and learned quickly as they took one good board after the other from me. Among those that I played against were several National and World Champions including John Gerber, Dan Morse, Curtis Smith, John Zilic, Mary Williams, Garner McDaniel, George Dawkins, Marilyn Johnson, Eddie Wold, Mildred Breed, Bobby Nail, Chris Compton, Ira Chorush, Sally Wheeler, Georgina Gates, Joan Jackson, Tom Peters and others. Aside from these players there were also many strong players with numerous regional wins and high overall national championship placing such as Marty Arndt, Lorand Tritter, Barry Hagedorn, Esta Van Zandt, Virginia Zilic, Bill Granberry and Jack Wolff. Playing at the club in those days was like going to school. In particular I remember John Gerber who played with Carol Klar (mom of Robin Klar). They played 2-3 times per week at the club.

There were also many up and coming younger players on the Houston bridge scene in those days. These players had immense but as yet undeveloped talent. This group (which I humbly include myself) includes Steve Toplansky, Gary Oleson, Bob Fiske, Don Olson, Glenn Wright, Micky Finch, Tom Allan, Jim Griffen, Gary King, Guss Ginsberg, Blair Fedder, Buddy Hanby, Richard Love and others. Some of the players from this group still play. Some of them are sadly deceased and others have left the game to pursue other interests.

There were many very interesting personalities that frequented the bridge scene in Houston in those days. I will never forget Jessie Heim (she had red hair and was always drinking) or Eric Hilton (son of Conrad Hilton), Jo Sykes, Charlene Anderson and many others. I also played once with an older gentleman who psyched frequently. He would rather cheat you out of a good board rather than earn it honestly. I only played with him once. I also remember a lady who had a superstition about the 8 of diamonds. She got rid of it as soon as possible on each hand. If necessary she would lead this card against 3NT even though it might be a singleton. This did not prove to be a winning strategy as she consistently achieved poor results.

There are many interesting bridge stories from that era however my most vivid memories are the first GNT in 1975 where I and three other non-life masters played in the District 16 Championship in Dallas. The event had 50+ teams to play in a swiss qualifying event to reduce to 8 teams on the second day and finally 4 teams for the final day of knock-outs. Anyway, we got through to the round of 8 but ended up finishing fifth narrowly missing the last qualifying position. A Houston team won the event. This team included Barry Hagedorn, Micky Finch, Brad Gentry and George Dawkins.

Later that year there was a Houston regional at the old shamrock Hilton which in those days was played without flights as everyone was in the same event with no brackets. On the last day I had a chance to make Life Master if we could win more than 3.5 gold points. Going in to the last match we had 6 and a quarter wins (Win Loss format) so my gold points were assured but my partner need 15 gold points to go over so we needed to win the event for her to make it. We played against a team

with Mark Freedman (son of Betty) and going in to the last board we were ahead by 3 imps which would have been sufficient but on that board my opponents played in 3 spades. Unfortunately my partner misdefended this hand to allow declarer to make the contract as my team mates in the same contract went down 1. We lost the match by 3 imps for a full loss and failure once again for a first regional win. Anyway, our 7th place finish was considered good for our team with limited experience. Two of my team mates were Oren Moore and Jim Winfield.

As mentioned earlier I would typically play 3-4 times per week. Thursday night was a big night at the club with many good players and usually 50-60 tables in play. Friday was more relaxed with perhaps 15-20 tables in play with a mixture of players and skill levels. The Friday games were very popular with the younger crowd including myself, Wayne Stinnett, Jim and Pat McMullin, Nancy Richardson, Vicky Evans, Len and Ann Silver, Marge Smith, Eric Snow, Gary King, Jan Elkins and many others. We would usually have an early breakfast after the game which usually did not end until 11 PM. We would quite often play Acquire or backgammon after the game.

I got assigned to the Fluor European division a few years after that and did not return to Houston until 1996 where to my mild surprise many of the people I played against in the 70's were still very active in Bridge. There are too many to mention any names but it was a pleasure to see them again after so many years.

The second new remembrance is from Mimi Hagedorn about a most interesting character from the Houston Bridge Scene, both duplicate and rubber bridge. There is an internet link at the end of this remembrance that will let you see what the Count looked like and give you some other information about his life

Alfred de Marigny remembered by Mimi Hagedorn

I first played tournament bridge in the mid-1960's. At that time I lived in Dallas, and with three small children, it was a rare event that I played, let alone go to a tournament. There were four of us who played together and someone got the idea we should leave our kids with our husbands and drive to Austin for a Sectional. Upon our arrival in Austin, someone told us that Freddy de Marigny was playing, that he was a Count and had been banished from many countries where he had lived. Not only that, but at the time, he was rather handsome, dashing, and quite a celebrity in the Bridge World. I met him first at that bridge game – quite an exciting moment for me!

After my husband passed away, I became more involved in bridge and a couple of years later, met and married Barry Hagedorn. We moved to Houston and I learned that Barry and Freddy were good friends and we spent many hours with Freddy and his wife, Mary, in their grand home in Hunters Creek.

When I learned of Freddy's past, I was intrigued with the story; especially the part of his being accused of the murder of his former father-in-law in the Bahamas, his home at that time. After his

lengthy trial and acquittal, he was banned from ever returning to many of his former residences: Mauritius, Canada, and, of course, all of the Bahaman Islands.

Freddy was quite wealthy without having to work, so he played bridge every day at Nail's rubber bridge game and occasional duplicate at Paul Hodge's Studio. He had married his fourth (and final) wife some years before, and was the father of three sons.

In those days, there was always a party after a tournament where lots of alcohol was consumed. One night I was sitting at a table with Freddy and another (rather well-known) player named "Pidgeon" Davis were discussing life and bridge. All of a sudden, Pidgeon asked Freddy, "Did you kill Sir Harry Oaks?" All of us were astounded, because it was well known that any discussion of this murder charge was forbidden around Freddy.

He answered "No" got up, walked away, and I never saw him again.

Despite a brief encounter with Omar Shariff in his hotel room (a nice story for another time – *editor's note: I hope to have this in the 4th update*), Barry Crane and Alfred de Marigny were the only big celebrities in the Bridge World I knew well (other than the Dallas Aces, who were of a different ilk.) Unfortunately, they both shared an unhappy end.

For a short history of "Freddy" see the following: https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Alfred_de_Marigny

The rest of this document is essentially the same as the previous edition. There are a few corrections. If you spot the corrections without using a software tool, let me know. I will be impressed. Punctuation does not count. Thanks to those of you who have helped to find and correct errors.

New remembrances will be very much appreciated. Many of you may have some extra time now. Perhaps you could use some of it to write down some things you remember about bridge in Unit 174. It doesn't have to be earth shattering news. Please share with the rest of us.

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CLUB HISTORIES as of Jan 2020

ACE OF CLUBS

The only element of history for the Ace of Clubs available at this time is that it was the first non-smoking club in Unit 174. Any additional information anyone would like to provide would be welcome.

TRACY GEE DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

APPLE dbc

Sometime in 1997 Betty Hatley organized a duplicate bridge club at Tracy Gee Community Center.

She setup two sessions; one on Monday mornings at 11:45 am - limited to 30 tables and one on Friday mornings at 11:45 am, - limited to 54 tables. She named these two clubs "Apple duplicate bridge club" and managed both sessions for 10 years.

In October of 2007, due to illness, Betty transferred management of these two sessions to Marcella Thomas and Joyce Gore.

It was decided, by Marcella and Joyce to split the two sessions into two separate clubs Marcella managed the Monday morning club and retained the name "Apple dbc" while Joyce took over the Friday morning club and renamed it "Apple Two dbc".

In 2010, Joyce led the way to purchase bridge pads for the clubs and electronic scoring became a reality. In 2012, Joyce purchased a dealing machine for the clubs and was reimbursed by a \$1/player surcharge.

Primary directors during this time were Kerr Godfrey, Gil Micheletti, Bruce Slomka, Chuck Duran, Aubrey Farb, Brigitte Sandifer and Joyce.

Marcella and Joyce ran these clubs for 8 ½ years, and upon retiring turned the Monday "Apple dbc" over to Youssef Youssef, and the Friday "Apple Two dbc" over to Brigitte Sandifer.

Betty Hatley did a lot of hard work and a very big service to the Houston community of bridge players in organizing this club! Joyce and Marcella also deserve thanks and recognition for their long tenure and bringing the clubs modern technology!

In July, 2016 Youssef turned the Apple club over to Paul Cuneo and Paul has been active since then. In 2017, the Apple clubs launched their own website with the help of Tom Romz. Tom is greatly appreciated for his volunteer efforts.

APPLE 2 dbc

Betty Hatley was the first Manager/Founder of the club, See the history of Apple dbc for the early history. Apple and Apple 2 had the same early history so it won't be repeated here. The Friday game was originally at 12:15 pm,. When Bridget Sandifer took over the time changed to 11:45 to help the crew at Tracy Gee and all players with Friday rush hour.

The current directors are Kerr Godfrey, Wolf Schroeter, Youssef Youssef and myself. Joyce fills in as manager in Bridget's absence.

Average table count is 40 weekly, depending on parties or tournaments held elsewhere.

The reason most players use my club is a small entry fee and convenience.

Richard Grammer is one of the players that comes to mind as well remembered, congenial, happy and jolly.

Bridge Club of Houston

Over the years many bridge clubs have formed in the 1960 Spring area. Bridge Club of Houston (BCOH) was established in 2002. At the onset there were 32 Founders of the Bridge Club of Houston. Initially, the club met at Denny's Restaurant on 1960 for about two months. Following that, the Club located to a 2,200 square foot space at I-45 and Spring Cypress, calling that home for fifteen years. Expansion occurred to 4,300 square feet in 2007.

The Club, financed in the beginning by the Founders who were eventually paid back, is a Non-Profit membership club. All funds are put back into the club.

The first Club Manager was Sherry Gerdes who was assisted by JoDene Bond and Jeanne Childe. The first President was Al Cupps; Julie Halperin was the Vice-President. Games were held twice each week with one evening game scheduled. Table count averaged 3 – 8 at that time. Players most liked the friendliness and hospitality of the games. Especially remembered was Judy Cupps who decorated the club's first space. Sherry Gerdes and JoDene Bond are also remembered because they somehow made it all work. Margaret Roe attended every game. JoDene contributed greatly by teaching classes while Julie Halperin made countless telephone calls to build up the game.

Amusing anecdote: One night the power went out in the Club's temporary space at Spring Cypress. A majority of the players present lined up their cars and turned on the headlights and continued playing the game by the "light of the moon" and, of course, the headlights.

In 2008, one of the Club's fund-raising 299er Tournaments was cancelled by a hurricane. The Club was affected financially by that occurrence, and a Gala Event was held which raised sufficient funds to keep the Club on an operational basis. Since then the Club has shown ongoing growth and welcomed development. In 2011, Beverley Cheatham became Club Manager. The Club now holds events Monday through Saturday with a Thursday Evening game and a once-a-month Mentor/Mentee Night game. The Club also holds I/N games on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. One of those games is a Newcomer Game. The Club holds four 299er Tournaments and has Beginner classes twice each year, along with Intermediate classes year-round. Julie Halperin and Barbara Phillips are the Teachers for these classes.

In 2018, the lease at 1609 Spring Cypress was not renewed. For a period of six months the Club was housed in a temporary location until a move was made on September 15 of that year to 4688 Louetta. This location provided 5,960 square feet.

Bridge Club of Houston is still experiencing growth. Thanks to the many “Wonderful Volunteers”, we are known for our “Play Friendly” atmosphere and great food.

CLEAR LAKE BRIDGE CLUB

The Clear Lake Bridge Club, CLBC, was started by Ed Allen as a private club in the late 80s. Ed directed the games. He started with one game/week in a rented room, and gradually increased the number of games and began leasing full time space. The club’s first full-time space was in the strip center a few blocks north of its current location. He moved the club to its current location, 16614 Sea Lark Rd, Houston TX 77062, in the mid-90. He leased the north side of the building, and the building owner ran a beauty shop on the other side.

Ed retired in 1998 and a group of about 30 frequent players got together to take over the Club’s operation. They purchased the club’s assets, took over the building lease, and kept the CLBC name. Initially, it was an unincorporated members owned club. Nelson Brown played a pivotal role in financing the club’s purchase and was the first Club President/Manager. Since then, the Club has had many President/Managers including Rose Cleveland, Jim Lambert, George Wieland, Chuck Ensor, Peggy Naughton, Rick Burkhart, Bob Dowlen, Claudia Parr, and Jim Ochsner, the current P/M. The Board and about 30 other positions, except for directing and teaching, are performed by unpaid volunteers. This allows the Club to charge very low fees, for a Club operating in a dedicated facility.

Dave Glandorf and George Wieland started a teaching program, after the Club was purchased from Ed. Eventually, George stopped teaching, but Dave continued and has expanded the program over the years. Dave won the ABTA Teacher of the Year award in 2013.

Shortly after the Club was purchased, the Pasadena Bridge Club, PBC, lost their lease and worked out an arrangement to hold their games using the CLBC facilities. The PBC was a similar members-owned and operated club run in a not-for-profit manner. Over time, most players became members in both clubs and eventually PBC was merged into the CLBC in late 2011. At the time of the merger, CLBC ran 6 games per week and PBC ran 3. The CLBC was converted to a federal not-for-profit association in 2010, and the merged club was incorporated in Texas in 2013.

In 2013 the building owner retired, closed her shop and sold the building to CLBC. This was very fortunate timing, because the club had been steadily growing and was starting to need more space. Having the whole building increased playing space by more than 50% which allows having two activities at the same time. The club currently holds 11 weekly games, 1 bi-monthly game and there are classes or learning labs on most days.

The Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings open games average around 18 tables. The Saturday 1pm open game averages around 10 tables, as does the Sunday 1pm open Swiss Team game. There are also small open games Tuesdays at 7 pm and Thursdays at 2 pm. In the early days, the Tuesday evening game was the club's biggest game, but as the baby boomers retired, the day games have become much bigger.

The club also has a very active intermediate-novice, IN, group. IN games are held Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 10 am and Monday and Wednesday afternoons at 2 pm. And, there is a bimonthly IN Swiss Team game the first and third Fridays of each month at 2pm. The morning games are a little larger than the afternoon, but on average the IN games have around 10 tables.

The Club has grown fair steadily at about 6%/year over the last 10 years. Total memberships currently stand at about 300, and total tables played was a little over 5,000 last year.

Lone Star Bridge Club

Lone Star Bridge Club, a not-for-profit club, was founded October 24, 2017 when 33 players met to exchange ideas for the establishment of a club. The Core Committee of players at that meeting consisted of eight players: Vicky Martinez, Pat Horsley, Jeane Crumpler, Jody Henry, William Lindner, Bob Frederick, Jeff Kroll and Mary McDonald.

The nine current Board Members were elected in March of 2018 and are: Mary McDonald, Pat Horsley, Jeane Crumpler, Anita Rothfuss, Bill Gemas, Helen Wren, Vicky Martinez, Gene Levy, and Jeff Kroll. Mary McDonald is President of the Board.

Primary Game Directors for the club are: Mary Anne Woessner, Linda Sutton, Allen Wolf, Julie Halperin, Mavis Warren, Herb Warner and Vicky Martinez.

Lone Star Bridge Club holds two games each week: Monday, 12:00 noon, and Thursday at 10:30 AM. The games are held at the Fellowship Hall of St. Paul United Methodist Church located at 1100 W. Semands Street, Conroe, Texas 77301.

In the beginning stages of the club, the average table count was 9 – 10 tables. Currently, the club is averaging 12 tables per game. Players come from Houston, The Woodlands, Spring, Huntsville, Montgomery and Conroe. Nancy Gray, Membership Chairman, reports that 114 players joined as members of the club the past year. Paying members are allowed voting privileges in all elections. Money collected from membership fees is designated for the members for special events.

As a rule, players appreciate the overall friendliness exhibited at the club. In addition, they are realizing the plusses of the excellent rapport the club has with St. Paul's Pastor, The Reverend Cynthia T. Hinson whom many players now refer to as "Pastor Cindy". The Outreach Program of the church to include appropriate community-based activities meshes well with having the two weekly bridge games. Two other plusses for players are the reasonable \$5.00 game fee (even for the special games) and the club management's inclusion of as many special games as allowable by the ACBL. A side benefit of these special charity games is that management can contribute the maximum as outlined by ACBL guidelines.

Players are quite receptive to the club's original idea of "player involvement". Each game has a Day Manager, a Hospitality person and a couple in charge of set-up and clean-up. These positions are on a volunteer basis, and a Crew Chart lists the names of those who have volunteered.

A final plus is the free lessons held each Thursday at 9:30 AM and led by Jeff Kroll, a Diamond Life Master.

Pebble Creek Duplicate Club

Founding of Club: May 2004

Location: Pebble Creek Country Club (College Station, Texas)

Founders: Nancy Beard, Richard Double, Shirley Double, Rita Floeck, Zo Granberry, Sue Lee

Club Managers: Sue Lee, Shirley Double

Primary Directors: Richard Double, Sandie Murphy, Nick Pace

How often do you meet: 2 – 3 times a month

Table Count: In the beginning: 3 – 4 tables Currently: 5 – 6 tables

What players liked about the club: Friendliness and Location

Players remembered for their friendliness: Nancy Beard, Oscar Beard, Richard Double, Shirley Double, Nick Pace, Sheryl Pace, Betty Mahoney, Patsy Boedeker, Sue Lee, Rita Floeck, Dan Turner, Jane Turner

Star Duplicate Bridge Club

Founding of Club 1970

- a. Location Star Furniture Store (thus the name Star DBC)
 - b. Founding person(s) Betty Mahoney, Billie Elmendorf, Joyce England, Joyce Gorzycki, Joyce Greinert Kaye Schulz, Joyce Weedon, Ann Fleischer
2. History of Club Managers Barbara Petty, Richard Duble
 3. Primary Directors Barbara Petty, Alan Bachman, Ed Booker, Richard Duble
 4. How often did you meet? Mondays and Fridays
 5. Change of Location
 - a. When? Moved many times after Star Furniture Store became too crowded
 - b. Where? Kaye's Bar & Grill, Carter Burgers, Denny's, College Station Conference Center, Briarcrest Country Club and finally Brazos Center on Mondays and Pebble Creek Country Club on Fridays
 - c. What was the playing area like? crowded until we moved to current location
 6. What size were the games – typical range?
 - a. In the beginning 3-4 tables
 - b. Over time 10-12 tables
 - c. Now 9-10 tables
 7. What did the players most like about your club? friendliness
 8. Were (Are) there a few players everyone knew (knows) and remembered?
 - a. Who were they? Betty Mahoney, Billie Elmendorf Joyce England Joyce Gorzycki, Kaye Schulz, Barbara Betty, Ann Fleischer
 - b. Why were they remembered? Friendliness

Spring Branch Duplicate Club

By Judith Hoffing

In the spring of 1990, I was taking Tai Chi lessons at Spring Branch Community Center, 1721 Pech Road, in Houston. I met a woman in my class who, upon finding out my name, asked if I knew Ed Hoffing. I told her I was married to him. She asked if he could start a duplicate game at the Center, since she had the boards and she knew he was an experienced bridge player. She had checked with the Director of the Community Center and told me we could have a room every Monday at 12:30 PM. Since Ed was retired, he agreed to run the game. We met on the 1st Floor and started with twelve tables, playing only each Monday.

Ed wondered why we couldn't get the game sanctioned, and he thereby contacted ACBL. The sanction was approved by ACBL on October 7, 1992, and Ed became Director and I became the Club Manager. And so the first sanctioned duplicate bridge club in Houston at a community center became official.

The first year of operation each game was \$.25 per person. After that the games were \$.50. Meanwhile, the Center moved from the 1st Floor to the 3rd Floor. That move provided more available space and larger rooms. The game was showing growth, and we needed two rooms to accommodate all the tables, about 26 at that time.

Two years later, we moved to a larger room and added a Thursday game. A benefit of the move was that we now had a kitchen for our use. The upside of having such a facility was that we could now have Life Master parties as well as holiday and birthday parties. I became a Director to be able to assist my husband. Without the benefit of the ACBL Scoring Program, we scored the games by hand, and I personally called the winners to congratulate them!

In August of 2010, we moved to Trini Mendenhall Community Center at 1414 Wirt Road. The regular game fees are \$1.00 per person. We celebrated our 25th Anniversary in October 2017. We still have two games a week.

My husband, Ed, passed away in 2008, but at least he was able to see all the duplicate players earning their Masterpoints. Many friendships have survived, and a few marriages have evolved from the games started at Pech Road. The games have since spread to other community centers in Houston with marked successes.

Westside Bridge Academy, ACBL Unit 174

HISTORY OF Westside Bridge Academy, ACBL Unit 174

The club began January 7, 2015

Founding person(s): Bert & Katherine Onstott, Jimmy & Jennifer Breihan. Bert is the club manager.

The primary directors are Bert Onstott, Jennifer Breihan, Wolf Schroeter, Tom Jahnke, Susan Banks, Susan Kaplan, Katherine Onstott

Westside meets every day in a renovated playing area containing 5,148 sq. ft. with two playing rooms, a refreshment area, and two small offices

Games are available 11 times per week, some with both restricted and open sections. The table count has increased from the 2015 average of 166 per week to the 2019 average of 199 per week.

The players primarily seemed pleased with the club because of the way it is run.

There have been many memorable players at Westside, but Ed Groner is the one most remembered. He was a nice guy and accomplished player.

REMEMBRANCES

REMEMBRANCES FROM BRIDGE STUDIO OF HOUSTON AND OTHER HOUSTON BRIDGE VENUES

By Henry Gurley

I played at the Bridge Studio when I first started playing bridge in 1959. The Studio was located on Norfolk Street, near Kirby Drive and Richmond Avenue. I have many memories of that club, some now dim but still an integral part of my bridge-playing experiences. I do not know the precise chronology of the following Owners/Directors, but I do remember them all quite well.

Paul and Lucy Hodge: I think were from Abilene. Both were Directors. Paul was a very steady influence on the club and was well-respected in the local and national bridge communities, a true gentleman's gentleman. I seem to recall that our major game was what was known as League Night (Thursday nights) when one could win a whole Masterpoint if placing first in your section. There was no stratification. You played against the big boys and somehow dreaded Tables One, Seven and Twelve (where, as a rule, the big boys sat North - South). There were games on other days: Saturday, Sunday. I think there was a large Ladies' Game each Friday morning. I am unsure of the other events. The Thursday night game was quite sizeable, filling the large open area as well as a back room. I would guess that there would have been 18 – 20 tables. On other games there would be six or seven tables. I know winning first on one of these off nights would garner one only a fraction of Masterpoints (.14, I recall) for first place. We gladly accepted these fractions and watched them slowly, ever so slowly, inch toward the magical 300 needed back then for Life Master (250 Black and 50 Red).

I think we paid \$1.00 entry for a long time and perhaps the League Night Game increased to \$1.50 at a point in time. It was always an inexpensive evening out, however. We had a beer bar (beer on tap) located behind the front desk. There were a few stools at the bar and a table or so located in the bar. I think a big mug of beer cost 20 Cents or 25 Cents. You could take your drink to your table while playing. There were at most four ash trays at each table, and a huge cloud of cigarette smoke filled the playing area quickly. We did not have bidding boxes back then, so the room(s) resounded to the conviviality of ample beer, cigarettes, loud bidding and general ripostes among the players.

At the end of the game, Paul or Lucy Hodge would manually score the game on a wide spreadsheet. We all crowded around to see if we got a red number by our name. That meant we had placed!

At a point in time Bunny and Julie Anderson took over the club. They were young and energetic, though their arrival did not see many changes in the overall game. I do recall that Julie used a comptometer to score the games. She was quite a whiz on that machine as she entered the scores. Also, at some point in time Steve and Charlotte Honet took over the game. As I indicated earlier, I do not remember the chronology. I do recall that the Studio moved to the Southwest Freeway location (7777, I think was the address). Much of the ambience and charm we experienced at the Norfolk

Street location disappeared through no fault of the Honets. Some of us were fortunate to be able to partner with Chris Compton, just a kiddo then. That is one of my fond memories, a game I had with him when Charlotte Honet arranged the partnership to make an even table count. At some point in time the Houston Bridge Studio relocated to a Harwin address. I recall that Jo Sykes was mugged at that location after a night-time bridge game.

We had some quite illustrious players at that club. Among them: Betty and Bobby Nail, Lorand and Marilyn Tritter; Davida Word from Conroe, John Gerber, Carol Klar, Mary Williams, Mary Matthews, Arlene Weingarten, Dottie Ann Goodloe, Beth Stuart, Bernice Burns, Peg England, Dan Morse (he was dating Joan Suza at that time; of course, he married her during that time. Joan's nickname was "Suza-Q", Players from Huntsville: Clara Jones, Cornelia Davis, Ernestine Felder, Hazel Clements, Edna May Beckham, Robert T. Burns, Hank Schroder, Pat Gaedcke, Stephanie Martin, Margaret Hastings, Carrie Jones Wingfield (Jesse Jones' niece), Eddie Wold, Glenn Wright (infamously involved in the kidnapping/ransom demands of Mrs. Rosenkranz in Washington, DC), John "Spider" Harris, Mary Pat Gentry, Brad Gentry, Eric and Pat Hilton of the Hilton Hotel family, Hal Stewart, Carl F. Buttelmann, Jr., Lyndon Phelps, Colonel Tim Willis, Fran Willis, Elaine Piwetz, Loretta Boughton, Linda Lou Tiemann, Bill Mulhausen, Toni Troxell, Betty Autrey, Hazel Erdmann, Garner McDanie, Roy Bates, A. C. Evans, Janet Fox, Lee Green, Donald Timko, Phyllis Timko, Mickey Finch, Al Finch, Etta Palme, Barry and Mimi Hagedorn, Georgiana Gates, Mike Gates, Curtis Smith, Phil Granberry, Gwen Granberry, Jo Sykes, Jessie Heim (known for her brilliant red hair and her unforgettable laugh). We had several players from Galveston who drove up on Thursday nights, among them Mary Vanderwall. I think Mary may have had a club in Galveston at one time. I do know that every October Galveston held a Sectional tournament, quite popular among all of us. Nacogdoches also held an annual Sectional at the Fredonia Hotel in Nacogdoches. I don't know what Unit they belonged to, but the tournament was very popular because the Fredonia Hotel served homemade, country-style biscuits at breakfast!

An anecdote relating to Carrie Jones Wingfield and Margaret Hastings (mentioned above): Carrie was a rubber bridge player and had no experience at duplicate. Margaret Hastings, a duplicate player and Life Master, talked Carrie into playing in a Women's Pair Event at a Regional held at the Shamrock Hotel. Reluctantly, so the story goes, Carrie agreed. As it turned out, they won the event going away. When Margaret told Carrie that they had won 45 Red Points, Carrie asked: "What do I do with Red Points? Are they worth any money?" Someone asked her after the game how their game had gone. Carrie responded that she always tried to make her bids and when the opponents took the bid away from her, she doubled them straightaways. How simple bridge is!

Colonel Tim and Fran Willis operated Kings 'n' Queens Bridge Club in the Spring Branch area for many years. It was a low-key club welcoming newcomers as well as experienced players to bridge. I can't remember the exact street location, but it could have been Hammerly, Silber or Longpoint. They conducted several games each week.

Elaine Piwetz also ran a club in Pasadena for some years.

Clara Jones, from Huntsville, Texas, ran a bridge game from the Elks Club in Huntsville on Monday nights.

Where I Played Bridge in Houston – Eddie Wold

1970

When I started playing duplicate, I played at the Houston Bridge Studio on Norfolk just off Kirby Dr. This location was very convenient for me as I was going to Rice University at the time. The club had a back room for the novices, and including the front room and bar area could hold about 45 tables which it usually had on Thursday nights which was the Unit game. The club was managed by one of Houston's great players of all time, Paul Hodge. Paul won many nationals and teamed with Charles Goren on the international stage. I was successful in getting Paul inducted into the Hall of Fame as his equally successful partners and teammates, John Gerber and Bobby Nail, were already members. This was my favorite club in Houston, probably because it was my first.

1975

It was at this time that I discovered Bobby Nail's rubber bridge club. This was probably the most life changing event for my bridge career. First of all, I met and played with many of Houston's absolutely best players. I also learned to play for money which is probably the best teacher a serious bridge student can get. Learning to focus on making and setting contracts when \$ are on the line really gave me the discipline I needed to take my game to new heights. It was also here I met Esta Van Zandt and Curtis Smith, who were well established bridge professionals and showed me the ropes of professional bridge.

1980

Paul semi-retired and his equally nice partner, Steve Honet, took over and moved the club to a bigger and more accommodating location on the SW freeway between Fondren and Hillcroft. This was a very nice location on top of a small office building with a wild Country and Western bar on the bottom floor. The name was now Bridge and Game Studio. During this period, I also found a couple of clubs that were open during the day. Tim and Fran Willis ran a very friendly neighborhood club on Westview Rd in Spring Valley and Elaine Piewitz ran a game in Pasadena that I frequently attended. The Studio mainly held nightly games at the time, and for the diehard bridge addict who wanted to play all the time, these other games allowed me to play during the day.

1985

From this point onward, I rarely played local duplicate. The Bridge and Games Studio had eventually moved to another location at Harwin. Also, around this time, I invested in a new club in the Spring Valley area. John and Virginia Zilic ran the club called the Ace of Clubs. One of our most successful efforts was starting a bridge league with A and B divisions that was run much like a bowling league.

1990

The Honets eventually sold their club to Wayne Odom and he moved the club to the current location of Westside Bridge Academy. I actually never played at the club when it was run by Wayne, so I'm not sure if the location is exactly the same or if it was in a different room in the same strip center.

1995

I was spending most of my time on the bridge tour. My home time was spent in Las Vegas.

2000-2005

I moved back to Houston in 2003 and started playing local bridge at the club that was now owned by Terrie Currie and Sue Williams. It was at the current location of Westside Bridge Academy. It was here that Betty Starzec, Dianna Gittleman, and Marsha Bernstein convinced me to start teaching and I started my teaching career. I gave many classes at the club, in people's homes, held seminars, and then did cruises.

2010-now

I currently play mostly at the new WBA under management of the Onstotts and the Breihans. I also occasionally play at the Clear Lake club and the Bridge Club of Houston in North Houston. All of these clubs are very well run and offer many games and teaching for all levels. I also occasionally play at games that are held at the Jewish CC and Tracy Gee's CC.

I hope this gives everyone some historical perspective of the local bridge club scene in Houston from 1970 to the present.

P.S. All dates are approximations remembered to the best of my ability.

RANDOM MEMORIES - Betty Freedman

The first place that Milton played "organized" bridge was at a club somewhere near where the old Uptown theater was. The man who ran it was named Jack Levitt. It was a money bridge club. He came home one day and said he heard that there was a bridge tournament in town at the old Shamrock and since we played better than anyone he knew, he thought we should just go and win everything. Had a very rude awakening. We played our own system which we had no idea was illegal. This was long before Alerts were even thought about so this pair from Florida made me cry. Surprised I ever came back. The first event I ever won was the Junior individual. Haven't seen an individual played in years!

Bennie Fain and his wife Dodie had a bridge club in a house on West Alabama right off Montrose. The house is still standing. They had duplicate games (probably about 8 or 10 tables) every morning and money bridge games in the afternoon. Johnnie Gerber was a regular! He smoked a foot long cigar! Bennie fell and broke his neck so they cut out the duplicate games and just ran a money game in their apartment somewhere near Westheimer. After that they moved to Lamar Towers where they operated a bridge club with the help of Bobbie Nail.

The first time I ever saw Bobby Nail was at a Shamrock tournament. Bobby was under 5 feet tall and was sitting at table with a giant cigar. He married Betty Graves and after the ceremony at the courthouse, Milton and I went to their house to celebrate with them. Bobbie and Betty were really close friends. Bobby asked me to play with him in a pairs event at a tournament and I REALLY did not know how to straighten my hand. I will NEVER forget a hand probably close to 70 years ago. I knew when partner led an ace or king against NT, you should play high to let them know you loved it. Bobby led the K of Hs so looking at my QJ xx, I played my J! When he led the Ace, I liked that too so I played my Q! Declarer happily won the 3rd round with his 10. Believe it or not, Bobby played with me again

There was not enough business to support two families so Bobby and Bennie split up and Bobbie opened a club somewhere near Main St. Since we were close friends to both couples, it was really awful making a decision which one to support.

Milton was President in 1960 and we started the first bridge "newsletter". This was before computers.

The most exciting phone call I ever had was " Betty, darling, this is Charlie!" It was Charles Goren in town for some medical appointments and he was looking for a ride to the med center!!!! Milton took him to the doctor and then to the bridge club.

Twice a week in the Chronicle, the bridge results were published. Prizes at tournaments were engraved silver trays. Milton won bunches of them but I gave most of them away.

I recently found an old letter to Bennie Fain that lists many of the people playing duplicate bridge in Houston in 1960. See how many you remember. The letter is copied below.

Houston Bridge League

2432 Dryden Road

Houston, Texas

MILTON FREEDMAN
ex- PRESIDENT

Feb. 7, 1960

Dear Bennie,

It's pretty lucky that there's a flu epidemic! If there wasn't, I don't think the Shamrock could have held all the people who came to play bridge in your honor. Honestly, there were people who haven't played in five years and there were others who haven't played duplicate but a few times and of course--all the regulars.

I thought you might like to know who was there, so in no particular order, here goes.

Della Rodgers	Julie and Mervin
Estelle Spaulding	Merrill Lott (Pt. Arthur)
Corrine Dexter	T. A. Cooper (Pt. ")
Otto	Alex and Verne
Mary Porter	Norman Kirk
Celeste	Robert Ables
Jennie Seddon	Shirlee and Spider
Cindy Sloan	Paul Mengden
Dorothy and Henry Hagen	Bill and Helen Cash
Carl Mulvey	Bill Hurdle
Mrs. Robert Baker	Bill Mulhausen
Mrs. C. B. Truitt	Betty Stevens
Annie Lee Morris	Arthelia Snyder
H. B. Monday	Winetta Wilcox
Bert and Arline Bock	June and Jim Sikes
Holbrook Brown	Katheryn Howland
Vernon Garrett	Hilda and Louis
T. D. and Mrs. Howe	Capt. Welsh
Lucy and "euben	Coleman Currie
Merle Wood	Donald Walsh
Dottie Ann Goodloe	Francess Maxwell
Eltonette and Bob Barnett	Clara Bell
Bernard Wiss	Bob Bradley
R. J. LaPorte	Bob Park
Mary Rose Eisenrath	Myrtle and Walter
La Ressa Rowe	Dave Straus
Elizabeth Nilson	Guy Howard
Kay Smolensky	Bill Easley
Thelma Sima	Maude Dobbins
John Crumb	Irene Calhoon
Cleo	Bit
Tom Behr	Pidgeon
Betty and Bobby	Pat Aston

Houston Bridge League

2432 Dryden Road

Houston, Texas

MILTON FREEDMAN
PRESIDENT

That's about 252 people, and I forgot me. Of course, Jerome was busy with the scores and Kenneth was busy directing. And there was Vic and a few other kibitzers.

Milton was home with the flu; Cyrelle was taking care of Kenny; Evelyn had a previous engagement; Carrie is next door to you at St. Lukes; the Stones were out of town.

Anyway, it was one heck of a crowd!

And, as usual, I lost another two session event.

Please hurry and get out of there! Milton is getting awfully smug without you around to tell him how bad he plays.

Much love,

Betty

P.S. My kids said to please tell you hello.

Kidnapping at Washington DC Nationals - Georgiana Gates

It was the middle of the night in July of 1984 when I heard someone knocking on my door at the Shoreham Hotel across from the Washington DC Sheraton where the Nationals were being played... It was the FBI. They told me there had been a kidnapping and my name had been found in connection with the suspect. They wanted to ask me some questions. The FBI told me they found some code sheets in the suspect's room. There were entries like "3 NT" and "W" and "+ 430" and "- 200". They wanted to know what those codes meant. Later I learned they asked Steve Robinson (one of Washington's top players), to look at it and he confirmed it was normal bridge notations. They wanted to know more. I must have told them we flew to Washington together and they wanted to know what we had talked about. I told them we discussed our responses to Flannery but I don't think that meant a lot to the agents. They asked if anything unusual had happened and I told them he wanted to rent a van when we got here and I thought that unusual because Washington has an excellent public transportation system.

The kidnapping of Edith Rosenkranz was done by one of my regular partners, Glenn Wright. Glenn had been a regular Houston bridge player for some time. He was Eddie Wold's first regular bridge partner. They were regular teammates of the Zilics. As a friend of Eddie's, Glenn knew that George and Edith were attending the Washington NABCs, and may well have gotten information from Eddie about their habits.

I had wangled a business trip at the same time, and we agreed to play in a secondary Swiss event with pickup teammates. We only played one day, since I was on business. Anyhow, when he was arrested, he had our convention card with him. They interviewed me, but I remember little about the interview.

In December of that year, I testified at his trial. Glenn was convicted, and served about 15 years, being released in 2000 or so. He played only one session of bridge afterwards. He was unfamiliar with bidding boxes, and was worried that he would run into people who knew him previously.

I'm not sure just when he died, but it was before 2010, when I retired. I think perhaps about 2008 or so. He was a steady smoker, which surely contributed to his death.

Tahlequah Deuces at the 1966 Houston Regional –David Henke

It was 1966 and I was at my first Houston Regional. It was held at the Shamrock Hilton. My brother, Ron, and two of his friends from Northeastern State College in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, needed a fourth so they recruited me from The University of Oklahoma. It was exhilarating! The hotel was very plush. The playing room was impressive with all of those tables set up for bridge players. I had been to one sectional tournament in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and one sectional in Oklahoma City. Both looked like club games compared to this. It was my first regional. A few years later, Ira Corn would establish the Dallas Aces. Ira was probably staying in a suite at the Hilton. I was one of the

Tahlequah Deuces. We were staying – 4 to a room – at the cheapest hotel in the area, but it was within walking distance of the Shamrock.

We entered the knockout event. The director selling entries wanted to know how many masterpoints we had. My brother was team captain and told them we had about twenty-five. They told him they needed a team total, not just his, and he told them twenty-five was the right number, perhaps it was rounded up just a bit. He told me later we had less than twenty-three.

In those days they set up the knockout teams by matching the team with the most masterpoints with the team with the fewest masterpoints for the first round. We started out against the team with the most masterpoints. I don't remember the 4th member of their team, but I do remember two fairly young players, Gaylor Kastle and Gary Hayden. I think the third member was Curtis Smith.

What an exciting day this was. I remember seeing expert players I had read about in the Bridge World, but had never seen in person. We played the twenty eight board match in two halves. I vividly remember comparing scores at the end. I don't remember all of the details of each board, but I do remember adding up the scores of those 14 boards. We were 8 imps ahead. "We won," I almost shouted. I'm sure the folks at the next table could hear me clearly. My brother spoke in a much softer voice when he said. "David, you have to count both halves. They won the first half by 18 imps."

The Tahlequah Deuces didn't win their initial knockout match, but we had quite an introduction to big time bridge in Houston, Texas.

An Introduction to Gerber Phyllis Timko

When Don and I first married, he took me up to Paul Hodge and Steve Honet's duplicate bridge club. I had never played bridge but had always wanted to learn. At that time, there were no Flight A,B,C's or 299er games. Everyone played against everyone else I had taken a few lessons from Don, enough to learn that if he or I bid any level of NT that 4 clubs was called Gerber and you had to answer the # of Aces you held. We sat down against a gentleman and his partner whom I had never seen before. The auction proceeded where the gentleman's partner bid some level of NT and he bid 4 clubs. I was so proud of myself for recognizing what the bid probably meant that I turned around and asked him if he played Gerber. The table erupted in laughter and I was told I had asked John Gerber if he played Gerber. True story!

The First Non-Smoking Sectional

by Buddy Hanby based, in part, on the memories of Sally Wheeler

In the early days, a bridge club or tournament resembled a pool hall or a casino. Thick clouds of cigarette, cigar, and smoke hung in the air and saturated the room. Non-smokers could barely

tolerate it and often had to run outside between rounds in search of oxygen. I know that some potentially great players were lost to bridge because they simply could not take the smoke. I know not how many divorces happened because a bridge player repeatedly came home reeking to a non-bridge playing, non-smoking, spouse.

In about the mid-70s, the non-smokers began to rebel. The issue of smoker versus non-smoker became almost as contentious as religion and politics. The Sixteenth Century wars between the Catholics and the Protestants undoubtedly spilled more blood than the fight between the smokers and the non-smokers, but the latter probably involved more loud arguments and broken friendships.

When the cause and effect relationship between tobacco smoke and heart disease, lung cancer, and various other types of cancer became more widely known, the smokers made a concession. Tournaments would now include non-smoking sections. Sometimes this worked quite well. I remember a National in Atlanta where the smokers were in an entirely separate ballroom from the non-smokers. Ah, the joy of playing bridge in fresh, clean air! Often, however, the directors weren't quite on board with the program. Entries in the non-smoking section were sold to smokers. The non-smokers went to the directors demanding an explanation. "We didn't want to mess up the seeding," said the chief director, a chain smoker. On another occasion, a lone non-smoking section was placed in the far corner of a room in the basement of the fabled Shamrock Hilton. Five or six smoking sections were in the same room. Complaints to the directors were rebuffed with the explanation that "the ceiling in this room is so low that even the smokers couldn't handle it if we made it all smoking sections."

By 1982 the non-smokers were frustrated, but some had an idea. They realized that the Unit was not utilizing all of its allotted sectionals. Why not schedule one of the unused sectionals as non-smoking? My wife, Sally Wheeler, was at that time a newly-elected member of the Unit Board of Directors. She made a motion for a non-smoking sectional. It was a brutal, uphill, battle against the smoking members of the board. "People can't possibly play bridge without nicotine!" they said. "Almost no one will attend, and the Unit will lose thousands of dollars," they predicted. It was also a battle against the club owners. "There are already too many tournaments. It will be another weekend without revenue," they complained. Against all odds, the board voted to hold the non-smoking sectional.

Sally did not attend the next meeting of the board. Our daughter was born about an hour before the start of the meeting. The board voted to cancel the non-smoking sectional. Rebellion! Many non-smokers threatened to boycott *smoking* sectionals. A group headed by Ann Faget worked hard to obtain signatures on a petition to hold a non-smoking sectional. I believe that she convinced almost 25% of the Unit membership to sign, including many smokers. Tom Peters did a miraculous job of persuading some board members who were sitting on the fence. I stayed home with our one-month-old daughter. The board reinstated the non-smoking sectional.

The sectional was well-attended. I don't think that the Unit lost money. The clubs survived.

It seems like yesterday, but thirty-seven years have come and gone. Non-smoking tournaments gradually became more common. Hotels developed no smoking policies and cities passed no smoking ordinances, making it difficult to find a venue for a smoking tournament. By the mid-1990s, as I recall, non-smoking tournaments were the rule rather than the exception. Smokers were accommodated by having two 10-minute smoking breaks per session. Some directors complained about 20 minutes of extra "work," but when they realized that this helped with the slow

play problem, they complained less. The smoking break evolved into the Hospitality Break (but usually only one per session). Today, thick clouds of tobacco smoke are found mostly in pool halls and casinos.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY

Duplicate bridge has made several improvements over the years. This section of the History of Unit 174 will focus on stories about those changes

Back in the 1950's it was common to have a team game on Sunday, but the game was a type where each team played very short (usually two or three board) matches against several other teams. The movement was similar to what we use today in pair games. Each board was scored as a win (1 point), a loss (0 points) or a tie (1/2 point). In the sixties and seventies, we began playing a form of the game with matches of six to nine boards played imp style. One big change was that the teams were paired after each match and you played against another team that had a record similar to yours. This new "Swiss Team" game became very popular.

Computer dealt hands have made it much easier to duplicate the boards so that every section plays the same hands and is the only practical way to provide hand records which are so popular with most players. Things have progressed so that the hands are truly random today. However, there were a few bumps in the beginning as clubs began to utilize the new technology. Our second story is about the initial effort at the Bridge Studio in Houston.

We occasionally hear things from other tables as we play bridge today, but it is not constant and the noise is much less than it used to be at least at the start of each round. Before we began using bidding boxes there was a constant murmur throughout the room as all bids were announced orally. I think we all agree the bidding boxes make for a better atmosphere in the room and help to prevent inadvertent emphasis indicating the strength of a single raise. However, it was a change and our third story deals with one player's first use of bidding boxes.

I hope we are able to capture more stories about these and other topics in future editions.

Swiss Teams

I was a lightly seasoned player playing in a Swiss Team Game at a Houston Regional. We had played against a very competent team the first round and had been blitzed. One really nice thing about Swiss Teams is that if you are not doing well at first, you play against other teams in the same situation. Ah well, I thought, at least we will get an easier team next round.

We had our new assignment and went to table 4A... I noticed that Paul Soloway had evidently played there the first round and had not yet vacated the table. He must have been waiting for his team mates to compare scores. Pretty soon Eddie Wold came to the table and I thought it would not take them long to compare. They looked around for a second or two, I assumed for their partners to appear. No one else showed up. They began shuffling the boards and I realized one of us must be at the wrong table for the second round. So I rechecked my assignment and asked if they were at the correct table. They said they were playing against team number x. It was us. They had also been blitzed the first round.

Computer Dealt Hands.

Cliff Rice originally told the story of Steve Honnett's first attempt to use computer dealt hands at the Bridge Studio. It has been confirmed by a few others. Steve Honnett was an adventurous soul and knew it would be good to start using randomly dealt hands at his bridge games. It would allow them to provide handouts after the game to help people go over the hands. The programming he used was quite advanced, but there was one little slip up. The "normal" bridge hand was defined as one containing a six card suit. The computer dutifully followed directions and the results as reported by Cliff were exciting. He said there was more bidding that night than any night he can remember. Most folks had a wonderful time, but agreed the slip up needed to be corrected before the next attempt at computer dealt hands. It was and today we have truly random hands provided by the computers.

Bidding Boxes

This story was told by Jack LaVigne after a glass or two of fine wine. He may deny the accuracy and if any of you were witnesses, I would appreciate verification. Jack was playing in a North American Pairs game in Austin. They were using bidding boxes which were just beginning to be widely used in the duplicate bridge world. He said the game was much quieter and he didn't notice the bidding at the surrounding tables. He worked diligently to use the bidding box without undue emphasis and all was going well for the first few hands. In the middle of the second round he heard a fairly loud "TWO HEARTS". It startled him momentarily and then he tried to shrink into his chair when he recognized the voice as his own and found quite a few people staring at him. He has been a careful user of bidding boxes ever since.