

# District 21 Unitscope

did an equally great job of feeding the masses. All went very well and the Saturday game even started on time ... which is very rare. There were no complaints that I know of. The game directors also did a great job of keeping things moving. There are many reasons that all went as well as it did, and those reasons are the people that worked very hard to help in making this sectional a success. Joe Freeman, our behind the scenes guy that knows all the details of running a sectional; George Gordon, who made the boards and brought needed supplies in; Don Powell, who worked the partnership desk; and Steve Mercer, Sonoma President, were all great helps. The kitchen help was outstanding with many people working three days. Most of them were from George's 499er game. They are (in alphabetical order): Mary Bevins, Renate Bialy, Helen Bohl, John Coulston, Marilyn Edwardes, Brooke Farkas, Eileen Holsten, Marsha Horowitz, Trish Rodimer, Marge Sheridan, Donna Skolund, Theila Smith, Robin Struven, Harvard & Susan Staggs, Adrienne Varin, and Kelsy Woodward. Suzie Davis & Dolores Jaquez helped with the sale of food tickets.

The setup and tear down of the Vintage House was a huge undertaking! Roger Bohl, Carol Fraser, Steve Mercer, Harvard Staggs, Gordie Stedman, and Tina Yesson did a great job of putting it all together on Friday. Putting it all back together again was equally difficult, and thanks to Rick Davis, Suzie Davis, George & Wayne Gordon, Barb Lemme, Gordon Macnevin, Pat McLaughlin, John & Patty Shribbs, Joanne Wegsten, and Eileen Holsten's grandkids, the job was finished in an hour. We're very lucky to have the people we have in our unit that always help out. We couldn't have done it without each of them. I hope I didn't miss anyone in the confusion. How about Doris Leckie! 99 years young and she played a double session on Saturday and 49 more boards on Sunday!

We were the perfect hosts as we allowed our guests to win most of the events. Clyde & Kathleen Smith, 6th overall Open Pairs; John & Patty Shribbs, 2nd 299er; Knud Rasmussen & Anastasia Loban, 2nd Pairs; Sunday Swiss Teams: Gerry Fox, Tom Jacobson, Kate Hill & Lynn Blumenthal, 1st top bracket; 2nd in other brackets, Al Iapicca, Randy Hoyle, Theila Smith & Nancy Rude, Barb Lemme, Sheila Malinowski, Rick Davis, & Susan Cook, and Dennis Sturdevant, Brooke Farkas, and Joe & Priscilla Naworski.

What a great unit we have part II: A Western Conference STAC week was in August, and what a great showing we had! In the Monday game, Marsha Horowitz & Sherry Shone, 22nd overall as a C pair out of 1210; Dennis Sturdevant & Brooke Farkas, 1st overall 499er - 220 pairs, 71%; Alan Morris & John Shick, Tuesday 1st out of 171 pairs; Gerry Fox & Tom Jacobson, 2nd Friday out of 1090 pairs 73%. The team of Adrienne Varin, Gordie Stedman, Nancy Rude, & Nancy Johnson won the Sonoma Swiss Teams game. Very well done by all!

Quickly, other winners: in Sonoma it was Steve Mercer & Brooke Farkas, Martha England & Bob Thomson, Bruce Emmons & Lee Grams, Dan Harp & Bill Wells; Don Powell won twice, with Phil Shoemaker and with Jeffery Reid, Gerry Fox & Tom Jacobson, and a tie with Tom & Betsy Bolen and Anita Pensler & Pat Frenaye.

In Rio Vista it was Larry Epner & Xiao Gong, Joyce Vass & John Mount, Sue Vogtlin & Bob Lohse, and John Krebs & Betty Magnoli.

499er game winners were Brian & Kay Aabel, 71%, Malcolm Scott & Susan Hoffman, Harvard & Susan Staggs, and Dennis Sturdevant & Carol Fraser, 72%. Napa winners were Joanne Wegsten &

Larry Page, Molly Johnston & Preston Shackelford, and Doug Keller & Louis Lipset.

## Palo Alto

By Carolyn Chaney

Last call to register for the Non-Life-Master Sectional (silver points!), happening October 15-16. There will be both Pairs and Swiss Teams, with hand records available. Sign up at [PaloAltoBridge.com](http://PaloAltoBridge.com), pre-registration required by October 10. ACBL members \$12.00, and for students age 25 or under, table fees are only \$6.00 (such a deal!). Sandwich lunch available for \$10.00 on Saturday, and a free light lunch for Swiss Teams players on Sunday. Our website offers a way to request partner(s), and you can even have a peek at the competition by viewing the sign-ups.

*Unit News:* Thanks to Paul Davis, we have established a non-profit education foundation, the Peninsula Bridge Education Foundation, so that donations are now tax-deductible. To make a donation or to ask questions, or if you want to help or develop new programs, contact Val Baldwin at [valbaldwin@gmail.com](mailto:valbaldwin@gmail.com)

A unit pairs game is scheduled on October 8 and a unit Swiss Teams on October 9; all include a limited MP section; lunch at 11:30 and game at noon. Our lecture series continues this month: September 27 at 9:30: Frank Smoot will discuss (and lead play) on Cuebids; October 11: Brian Samuels on Quantitative 4NT, and October 25: Lynn Yokel with six hands. All are welcome.

If you want to feel a stab of pride in our SiVY bridge players, check out the Washington, D.C. Youth NABC results at: [acbl.org/juniors/youth-nabc/](http://acbl.org/juniors/youth-nabc/) Twenty four (yes, 24!) local youth played in the 4-day tournament; there is a nice picture of them at the NABC website. Although I don't usually like to spend this little column congratulating individual players, I do make an exception for youth, but nearly all of those 24 players earned MPs, and the list is just too long. But let's congratulate Cornelius Duffie & Sarah Youngquist (72%) and Michael Hu & Arthur Zou (69%) on their great games in Thursday's pairs. And here's a special shout-out to Kevin Huang & Brent Xiao, who brought home a huge trophy as winners of the Baron Barclay National Youth Open Pairs, with a 66.4% game.

Media covered the tournament and two of our players were featured in *Sports Illustrated* "Kids - Connecting Kids though Bridge."

Interviewer: "Like other team sports, it is important to form a good partnership and work well with your teammate."

Britt & Olivia D'Arezzo: "You can develop a really good partnership and friendship with a person through all of your wins, mistakes, and your losses."

Interviewer: "Throughout the day, I began to see the similarities that bridge shared with sports such as basketball, tennis, and soccer. Although there is less physical work involved in bridge, the mental game is incredibly vital to success in both bridge and other sports."

Britt & Olivia: "If you do badly on a board, you have to reset your mind, go into the next one and play the next one. Don't dwell on the board that you did badly on." Thanks, Britt and Olivia; that's good advice for us all!

## Reno

By Diane Todd

*Eight, ever; nine, never.* "Five, five, come alive." "Six, four, bid some more."

In the August STAC games, these adages seemed to run through my mind (and my hands) as my partners and I played many hands with just such dis-

tributions in the morning games. They seemed to be reliable, old saws that are still effective today. For newer players, the first one is finesse if you have eight trump; don't finesse if you have nine. This one is learned in early basic bridge classes, but often forgotten in the play of the hand.

Regardless of your point count, but keeping in mind the vulnerability, when you have five-five distribution, bid or overcall. After all, you have ten cards in two suits. Your opponents may have the same in the other two suits, or maybe, just maybe, your partner may have their suit.

The last, a six-four distribution hand, can be opened with less than opening high card point count. You can overcall with the same knowing you have ten cards in two suits. Bid the six-card suit first, then the four-card suit, and then the six-card suit again. Partner may have three of the major and two of the minor. Either way, partner can pass having nothing, or continue the bidding. Of course, the opponents will probably be bidding either of the other suits, so partner can take suitable action.

At the Reno Sectional in August, 249 tables were played; 208 players earned 987.88 points. Top Reno Club winners were (A) Charlotte Falk, 27.19 points; (B) Don Parsons, 13.82 points; and (C) Kathryn and Dave Welch, 10.51 points.

High percentage players for August were: (A) Lin Goldstein & Charlotte Falk, 71.53%; (B) Elizabeth & Bob Underwood, 66.91%; (C) Susan Powell & Raymond Yue, 61.98%.

Lastly, congratulations to Bob Robbins, our newest Gold Life Master, and Joanne Onstine-Dill, our newest Bronze Life Master. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!"

## Sacramento

By Miriam Steinberg

As many of you may already know, John McMurdie, a Sacramento bridge icon, passed away at his home on August 15 after a lengthy battle with serious health issues. "A Celebration of Life" was held to honor him on August 21 at one of his favorite restaurants, the Asian Pearl. John's contribution to the community was way more than about just playing bridge; he was also an amazing person, husband, father, friend, teacher and mentor.

When I first started playing duplicate, I had the good fortune of being one of the first to attend a weekly class he held before the Tuesday 299er game. Over time, I became the one student who attended without fail, and the morning evolved into many a session devoted to my problem hands from the previous week as well as his problem hands from the previous week. Our mentor-student relationship evolved into a close and meaningful friendship.

In the last 20 months of John's life, he was very frail. The community knew he was living on the edge and honored him with a dinner in May, 2015. Although I knew he was declining rapidly, I always saw him as a vibrant spirit. Ronnie, my husband and I would continue to drag him to bridge games, concerts, dinner and other activities. I would shower him with surprises I knew he would delight in: reading material on physics, biographies, Shakespearean insults, cookies and brownies. When he was unable to attend a concert, I got him a CD featuring the soloist. Gratitude motivated my presents, for his gift to me was greatest, he was still alive. And I wanted him to feel my love and appreciation.

Dave Vidaver, my husband and I accompanied him to his last live musical performance, "Carmen," at the San Francisco Opera. Barbara Wheeler thought-

fully lent us a wheelchair and we made it up to the dress circle. John was so exhausted all the time that he kept dozing off, but I promised to wake him during the "good" parts. (I made the executive decision to let him sleep through the climax; a murder scene). He was delighted and so appreciative that he could still attend one of his beloved operas.

I was in contact with John 2-3 times a week. We always had meaningful discussions and I also used to joke that he was my "bridge therapist," often using him as a sounding board for my experiences at the club. "My partner/opponent/other player did - today, can you believe it?" I would exclaim. Or I would confess my transgressions and ask his advice. Gossip was also fair game. Although John was very serious about playing bridge, he could also let loose. One day between rounds we were laughing so hard, that an opponent from across the room came over to scold us from distracting her from her declarer play. John was the most patient teacher. Sometimes when we were partners I would make some crazy reckless bid, he would try hard not to flinch and then the contract would miraculously make. He would exclaim, "Partner, you are a genius!" and then gently explain the folly of my bid. He was also the first to point out his own mistakes, for which I thanked him, because it gave me permission, too, to be less than perfect.

John had a sense of humor. When we were going over our card at our last game, he suggested we play Inverted Minor raises. "But John," I questioned him, "Ronnie (his partner, wife and my current mentor) hates Inverted Minors. Even the mere mention of them sets her off." "Well, Ronnie's not here," he interjected. "So then, shall we try the cross-cross variation?" he said with a twinkle in his eye.

John loved playing with Gary Soules (in spite of some distressingly loud interchanges). He was always ready and open to learn new things and delighted in Gary's ideas. And of course, he played with Ronnie until the end, although not as frequently. He was just crazy about Ronnie and the ways she made him laugh. They were so devoted to each other. He felt it was his job keeping Ronnie happy and was constantly on the phone setting up bridge dates for her until the end. He really wanted her to continue playing, even as he was slipping away, and he told me 3 days before he died that he was looking into nursing care because he really wanted her to attend the tournament in Reno (of course she stayed by his side). I believe that Ronnie's love, persistent care and pushing him to keep doing things prolonged his life longer than anyone expected.

I feel so fortunate to have had John in my life. I will always feel his presence on some level and hear him resonating through my head at the table. My only regret is that I didn't meet him sooner, his presence so enriched my life. I can only hope to pay it forward with his example as a teacher, mentor and friend. And in that way he will live on.

## San Francisco

By Kimberly Fanady

It's bridge night! You've been eager to play all day. Your excitement and anticipation builds as you finish dinner and head out the door. And where are you going? To the best game in town at your favorite club! In October we celebrate our clubs with ACBL club appreciation month. Tournaments are always fun and challenging, but we love our clubs. They are where we all learned to play, became familiar with the rules and rituals of the game, met our friends, applauded successes, commiserated over

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