

CHANGE FOR FUTURE E-DECLARERS

The January issue of e-Declarer will be the last one in its current format. Since Unit 499 now has a very robust website which contains detailed information about our clubs, teachers, classes, etc., the Unit 499 Board feels that e-Declarer is largely duplicative of existing information on the website.

The Board extends its everlasting gratitude and thanks to Judy Keilin (Editor) and Mary Krouse (Publisher), who have worked so hard for the past many years to produce the e-Declarer each month. It was a time-consuming task, and they did a wonderful job in creating, editing and formatting the issues, all without having a position on the Unit Board. We congratulate and thank them for an outstanding effort.

The Club News and Class Sections will be updated on the website under the existing information for clubs and classes. We will work with the contributors of the other articles and sections to provide a way for them to continue to contribute if they so desire. That information will also be posted on the website.

More details will be provided prior to the end of January. If you have any questions or comments about this change, please email the Board at diablovalleybridge@gmail.com.

Michael Kruley (on behalf of the Unit 499 Board)

President's Message



First of all, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks and admiration to Sam Earnhardt for his dedicated service to Unit 499 as our Board President the past several years. Sam has brought a bushful of energy and a very creative approach to that position. He particularly was focused on welcoming our newer bridge players to the game and making them feel welcome.

I hope that I can sustain that energy and focus to the best of my ability.

The current Board for 2026 is:

Mike Kruley – President

Wayne Rechnitz – VP (and Membership)

Chuck Silva – Treasurer (and Webmaster)

Sheila Wong – Secretary

Lisa Assoni

Suzanne Friar

Regina Hartwig (focusing on newer members and mentoring program)

Max Hinkle

Anne Hollingsworth (District 21 Rep)

Jackie Zayac (ACBL Region 12 Director)

Future events and details are posted on unit499.com home page.

Monterey Clambake **January 5 to January 11**

Unit 499 Annual Membership meeting **March 7**

Michael Kruley

Unit 499 Board President

Diablovalleybridge@gmail.com

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...from the Editor

For quite some time, Mary and I have felt that eDeclarer duplicated much of what is already on our website. Until now the board disagreed, and eDeclarer continued. It's now time for you, our faithful readers, to learn to access our very comprehensive website for information on club game schedules, lessons, upcoming events, tournaments, etc.

We hope our contributors will continue to submit challenging hands, mini-lessons, and human interest articles. There will be a procedure for getting these posted on the website.

Both Mary and I have enjoyed our years as Editor and Publisher. We look forward to something different and hope you do, too.

Judy Keilin

Editor



Unit 499 eDeclarer

Published monthly

Editor: Judy Keilin

Publisher: Mary Krouse

Submit articles to jkeilin@gmail.com

Volume 173

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Final Edition



Mary Krouse, Publisher

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

<https://www.unit499.com/>

Milestones and New Members

MILESTONES

NEW JUNIOR MASTERS (5)

Mark Stull

J B P Viral

NEW CLUB MASTER (20)

Elizabeth Sanders

NEW SECTIONAL MASTERS (50)

Peter Wickens

Maxine Winer

NEW LIFE MASTERS (300/500)

David Niver

Judy Niver

PLATINUM POINTS

Another note from the Nationals: Marj Russell decided she wanted to get some platinum points so she and Carroll Brooks played in the Keohane Swiss Teams with the top players. They won at least one match and got almost 1 1/2 platinum points. Hooray for them!

Submitted by Lilah Newton

NEW MEMBERS

Yvonne Lalane

Mark Stull

Gerald Zwirn

Joanne Baumgardner

Let's greet these folks when you meet them at the tables.

BUILDING BRIDGES

New Years, New Years, please help me stop my fears. I'll try and do my best to focus on the good things, and dispel the bad. News can make us very sad.



Resolutions are made, foundations are laid, but by two weeks or so, you'll forget the promise you made. Of course bridge is near, hoping to add some cheer. It doesn't matter if you win or lose, as bridge is near to help us socially connect with others.

The truth be known, as we age isolation comes upon us.

Building bridges to meet others is an important factor to maintaining social contacts, without much trouble.

And we did. Our Christmas party was near perfect. Tables were full as Mark and Lynne Humphreys gathered us all together.

Their usual hospitality was shared by all attendees. Food was wonderful, as most plates were filled to the brim.

Thanks to our dear hosts who made it possible. See a few photos below.

So start your New Year filled with good things you can recall, and you're grateful for. Don't remain amiss and don't resist meeting others. If you can't get out to play, there are ways to fill our bridge needs online.

I hope you will play in-person bridge, and what a good day it is.

Happy New Year to all!

Lisa Assoni

ShortCut Cook tm

A NEW PLAYER

Below is an article that appeared in the Daily Bulletin from the San Francisco Nationals about Tina Smith.

Tina was Bob Campbell's caregiver at the Reutlinger's, a senior living facility near Blackhawk in Danville.. When Bob died the family decided to keep Tina as a companion for Jan, who now lives there.

The whole family loves Tina, who is from Nigeria. They tried to teach her how to play bridge and she has taken a few lessons from Katherine Loh at Rossmoor. She accompanied Jan to San Francisco to play in the Nationals with her son-in-law, Brian. Tina decided to go to the partnership desk and look for a partner. She is the bravest person I know. She played every day that Jan and Brian played. She usually played in the 299er game but one day played in the 750 game.

Lilah Newton



JUST FOR NEW PLAYERS (from the San Francisco Nationals Daily Bulletin)

Tina Smith is a medical companion. Her client, Janet Campbell, is eighty-nine, and has been playing bridge since she was eight.

“Her whole family plays bridge,” said Tina.

They encouraged Tina to take some classes and learn how to play, and Janet teaches her too. They told her about the recent National Tournament and that there were classes and seminars there. Tina went to play on both weekends.

“Bridge is motivational,” said Tina. “It activates numbers in your mind. Your memory is working, as you play, and your eyes have to keep up with what’s going on. It’s giving me a lot of morale boosting. I love it.”

HAND VALUATION

How valuable is your hand?

Hand value has two elements: High-card Points and Distribution Points.

There are forty high-card points in the deck: four aces (16 hcp), four kings (12 hcp), four queens (8 hcp), and four jacks (4 hcp).

Distribution Points (DP): void – 3DP, singleton – 2DP, and doubleton – 1DP.

The combination of hcp and DP is considered hand value. This value is the usual determination in your decision to bid.

However, during the auction, the valuation may change!

High card values are shaded based on the bidding gaining value in suits bid by partner. Suit length cards held in partner's suit adds points for 4th, 5th, etc. of their trump.

Your void, singleton or doubleton gains value as long as you have three or more trump!

Lee Haze

Play a Hand with Me

Play A Hand With Me

January , 2026

North

S K82

H 10752

D K105

C 975

West

S 4

H K864

D AQ862

C AQ6

East

S J3

H J93

D J943

C J1032



South

S AQ109765

H AQ

D 7

C K84

P 1S X 2S

P 4S P P P

Here's another deal where you as declarer need to pay attention to the bidding and picture the cards in the defender's hands.

After my partner raised my spades I went to game and West led his trump which I won in my hand.

From the bidding and the lead you can guess that West holds almost all of the important outstanding high cards.

I then led a diamond and West played the Q which I covered with the K and that held. I had expected West to win with the A and exit a diamond, but he was trying to get his partner in to lead through my strength. When my diamond won, I ruffed a diamond back to my hand and played a spade to dummy to ruff my last diamond. Now I played the A hearts and the Q hearts noting that East played the 3 and 9 hearts. It's important to visualize the potential of the 10 hearts in dummy.

At this point West is truly endplayed. If he leads a heart it will make my 10 good so I can discard a losing club and if he leads a club my K will take a trick so I am always making this contract. It wouldn't have mattered if West had won the A diamonds and exited a diamond because I would take my club discard here and trump a diamond and do the same again making 4.

Results wise making +620 was 70%. Going down 1 was 18% (This would happen if you take either the club or heart finesse without eliminating the diamonds). Making +140 was 30%.

Jerry Weitzner

jweitzner@sbcglobal.net



CAROL'S LESSONS

In Orinda: 925 254 2445 (26 Orinda Way)



The Heart Series - Part II January 13-March 17 Tuesdays 10 am - noon

Part I is a ten-week course that concentrates on defensive bidding and play. It encompasses Signals, developing defensive tricks, interfering with declarer and making a defensive plan. There will be 8 pre-dealt hands every other week to bid and play demonstrating the lessons from the prior week.



The Diamond Series/Play of the Hand Jan 13-March 17 Tuesdays 1 pm - 3 pm

Is the ACBL intermediate ten-week course that focuses on "Play of the Hand". The main objective is to develop a "Plan by Declarer" including the counting of winners and losers, developing extra tricks thru promotion, length and finesse, considering entries, and avoiding the "dangerous" opponent. Each class will start with a lecture including exercises and then play and analysis of four pre-dealt hands.

2/1 Two over One March 24--May 26. Tuesdays 10 am - noon

Is a popular addition to the Standard American bidding system. This system helps the players to get to the best game contract or explore Slam possibilities at a lower level. We also introduce the response of 1NT as a forcing bidding to improve the part score contracts. Each class will have practice hands to help experience this modification. The textbook that is used is Audrey Grant's 2 over 1 Game Force which can be bought on the internet.



+ Diamond Series Supervised March 24--May 26. Tuesdays 1 pm-3 pm

The Diamond Supervised course was developed to give the student lots of practice based on making a plan, revisiting the lessons from "Play of the Hand" course. This course gives the students a chance to review the counting of winners and losers, developing tricks, finessing, eliminating losers, managing the trump suit, considering entries, and avoiding the "dangerous" opponent. Each class will start with a brief review lasting approximately 15 minutes, followed by at least 8 hands to play.



 + Rusty Bridge Part I January 14-March
18 Wednesdays 1pm - 3pm

This course is for those who want to update their bridge game and covers solid basic bidding, leads against NT contracts vs. suit contacts, Stayman, 2 Clubs opening and responses, and the Blackwood and Gerber conventions. There will be 8 hands to practice with each class. One must have a basic understanding of bridge bidding. A booklet is available from the instructor for \$15 which covers Rusty Bridge I, II and even III.

In Lafayette: 925 284-2232 (500 St. Mary's Rd.)



The Club Series/ Beginner Bridge Thursdays, January 8 - Feb 26 1 pm - 3 pm

This is the official ACBL beginner's bridge course on the basics of bidding and play. It is also useful for rusty players to update their game. The course includes hand evaluation, opening 1NT, opening bids, and responses, rebids by opener and responder, overcalls, takeout doubles and responses, and basic play concepts. Each class includes "hands on" practice in bidding and play. The textbook, *Bidding in the 21st Century* by ACBL is required.



 The Diamond Series Thursdays, January 8–February 26 10 am - noon

Is the ACBL intermediate course (10 weeks) which focuses on "Play of the Hand". The main objective is to develop a "Plan by Declarer" including the counting of winners and losers, developing trick thru promotion, finesse and length, considering entries, and avoiding the "dangerous" opponent. Each class will start with a lecture including exercises and then play and analysis of four pre-dealt hands. The textbook, Play of the Hand in the 21 Century by ACBL is required.



+ Diamond Series Supervised Thursdays, March 12 - April 30.
10 am - noon

The Diamond Supervised course was developed to give the student lots of practice based on making a plan, using the lessons from "Play of the Hand" course. This course gives the students a chance to revisit the counting of winners and losers, developing tricks, finessing, eliminating losers, managing the trump suit, considering entries, and avoiding the "dangerous" opponent. Each class will start with a brief review lasting approximately 15 minutes, followed by at least 8 hands to play.



+ Rusty Bridge Part I & II Thursdays, March 12-April 30.
1 pm - 3 pm

This course is for those who want to update their bridge game and covers solid basic bidding, Leads against NT contracts vs. suit contacts, Stayman, 2 Clubs opening and responses, and Blackwood and Gerber conventions. There will be 8 hands to practice with each class. One must have a basic understanding of bridge bidding. A booklet is available from the instructor for \$15 which covers Rusty Bridge I and II and even III.

PLUS:

(also, at the Lafayette Community Center)

Drop-in Social Bridge

This is open *all year round* on Wednesdays from 10 am - noon. This is a social gathering of bridge players to practice what they have learned from their classes in a friendly manner with help, if asked, by the teacher. There is a 15-minute lesson before playing. One does need a good basic understanding of bridge bidding to attend. Buy a book of tickets at the office. You are always welcome, and no partner is needed.

Carol also teaches at Country Clubs, and Retirement Communities and offers private classes on request.

Email her for more information: nobidd45@gmail.com

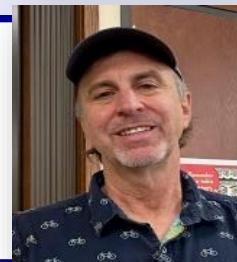
Club News

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. <https://www.unit499.com/>**

Blackhawk Duplicate
Bridge Blackhawk Country Club
1st and 4th Wednesdays



Danville Duplicate Bridge Club
Veteran's Hall
Hartz Ave, Danville
Fridays at 9:30



Overtricks by the Bay
193 Griffith Lane
Brentwood



Diablo Bridge
Diablo Country Club
1 Country Club Drive Diablo
3rd Tuesday at 9:30



ROSSMOOR DUPLICATE BRIDGE CLUB

Gateway Club, Rossmoor

ROSSMOOR NEWS

The week of January 12-17 will be Junior Fund Week at Rossmoor. All games will be an extra dollar. January 13 will be an ACBL-wide Junior Fund game since as of January 1 Rossmoor will be an ACBL Open Club.

Effective January 1 the Rossmoor Duplicate Bridge Club is changing from an Invitational Club to an Open Club.



A Bridge Basics Two Class will begin on Tuesday, January 6. This is an 8 week class taught by Kathrine Loh. It will be held between 10am and noon in the Oak Room at Gateway. Cost is \$50 for club members and \$100 for others.

Kit Miller

Contra Costa Bridge Center

ccbridgecenter@gmail.com

<https://www.unit499.com/clubs/ccbc>

January News

CCBC will continue its efforts in 2026 to provide the maximum number of games offering extra MPs to our players.

CCBC is announcing a change in pricing for 2026, beginning January

1. For all games (**regular and special**), the table fee will be **\$10 per player**. Relative to recent pricing, this is a \$1 increase for regular games - and no change for special games. If you purchase tickets – the cost will be \$95 for 10 tickets, i.e. \$9.50 per player per game (regular and special).

Here is the January schedule of special games:

No game on Thursday, January 1 – New Year's Day

Week of January 12 – Junior Fund Game (extra MPs)

Week of January 19 – Club championship games (extra MPs)

Week of January 26 – Junior Fund Game (extra MPs)



Thank you for your support of CCBC! Michael Kruley

Lamorinda Bridge Club

Lamorinda Bridge Club (LBC), January 2026



GAME SCHEDULE:

Tuesdays:

Game: 2:00-5:00pm **Limited 799** Game; 18-21 boards; \$10 table fee.

Optional Light Supper (Entrée & Salad): 5:00-5:45pm, \$5

Game: 6-8:45pm **Open** Game; 18-21 boards; \$10 table fee.

Fridays:

Game: 10am - 1:15pm, **Limited 799** Game; 18-21 boards; \$10 table fee.

Our next Class on Play of the Hand in the 21st Century will begin on Monday, January 12, 2026, 9:30am-11:30am and continues for 9 sessions at a cost of \$200/person and includes the Textbook.

This series is ideal for "rusty bridge players" and also beginners. We also have a number of returnees who often get more out of the series than the first time around. Winnie and I often hear from return attendees "I didn't realize how much I did not know. It is making more sense to me now".

We use the ACBL textbooks to teach bridge from beginning to intermediate and advanced. All Series meet once per week for two hours. The Cost is \$200 which includes the Textbook. Any student wishing to repeat a series can do so for \$100. contact information at the end).

Specialty Subject Seminars Monday afternoons from 1-3pm will resume on January 12. January 12, at \$20 per session. You may opt for any or all of the subjects you wish to attend. The dates and topics will be posted on the Lamorinda Bridge Club Website for Unit 499.

Please sign up in advance for any future classes with Winnie by phone or email or text (see contact information at the end).

As in the past, reservations will be required for all Face-to-Face duplicate games. Wearing masks will be optional. (All games are awarded Master Points and Pair Games have hand records available and posted on the results page at [www.acbl.org/club-results/271973](https://my.acbl.org/club-results/271973).)

Winnie Jasper & Jerry Chamberlain

Lamorinda Bridge Club

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(Home) 925-376-1125

Winnie: (Cell) 925-683-1908; winnie@wjasper.com

Jerry: (Cell) 925-766-5228; jerry@wjasper.com

Please make your Class and Game Reservations with Winnie