

SPRING 2012 – Newsletter JOURNEYS OF THE WORLD

Barbara & Alex (and the wonderful Patti Lee) recently returned from escorting their final bridge group of 68 people, after a travel career of 30 years. The trip started in San Diego, then we sailed to Cabo San Lucas & Puerto Vallarta where we taught bridge at the local clubs. In Cabo at a beautiful country club and in Puerto Vallarta at a club on the beach. When we were dummy, we took off our shoes and went for a walk on the beach and paddled in the ocean!

Many people donated suitcases and clothing and school & personal supplies for our trip. In Guatemala, we were met by Jorge Nuila who is a coffee plantation owner in Guatemala. He brought with him four wonderful Mayan men, teachers and organizers of various schools and villages 200-400 km away from the port. We gave them four large filled suitcases, full of toothbrushes, toothpaste, exercise books, pens, toys & clothing for children, reading glasses...you name it. They were thrilled. The Mayan men took Patti and I in their truck and off we went for a tour of the area. We ended on the beach. Huge and lovely. Of course the truck got stuck in the sand but no-one cared, everyone just got out and pushed! Using a lot of sign language and really bad Spanish, we learned a lot about their life and culture and villages. It was fantastic.

In Panama City, we also donated four more suitcases for the schools and villages. The reception here was more formal but

everything was
equally
appreciated.
Panama is a
fabulous city.



We visited
Trujillo, Peru
and then on to
Lima where
half the group

stayed on to enjoy the city for five days and the other half headed off to Machu Picchu.

For those who do not think that Lima is a great tourist destination, think again! It is a beautiful city. The waterfront is spectacular, restaurants outstanding, excellent museums and it is clean and quite safe, patrolled by police at all times. We were blown away. They also own the most elegant, excellent bridge club that we have ever visited in the world. A private home, converted. A walk-out to a private garden. None of us wanted to leave Lima.

Machu Picchu, also known as the Lost City of the Incas, was everything we knew it would be. The Incas were thought to have inhabited a beautiful city in the Andes for about 100 years (13-14th Century). Then they simply disappeared. Hiram Bingham rediscovered the city in 1905. Machu Picchu is isolated in the Urubamba jungle at 8000' altitude. One must get there by flying to Cusco at over 11,000' altitude. But we all took our Diamox (essential) and drank lots of coca tea and managed the altitude issues well.

The ancient city is huge, covers 20 hectares and has about 120 stone buildings. The area is susceptible to earthquakes. No damage takes place from earthquakes. The massive stone structures were constructed in a method called "dry stone" technique. Stones are fitted together without mortar of any sort. They are cut precisely enough to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. How did the Incas split the granite? The stones are smooth. In many cases, a razor blade would not fit between the stones. NO wheel technology was used during construction.

Agricultural terraces exist throughout Machu Picchu. These are on steep slopes. It became valuable farm land that would have been otherwise useless. The irrigation system for these is intricate and fascinating. The entire place is an engineering marvel and a mystery.

Flooding had occurred in the surrounding valley for three days prior to our arrival. The trains were not going to Machu Picchu. Trains and hiking are the only ways to enter Machu Picchu. On Thu, Fri and Sat, the trains were shut down. Sunday (our day), off we went, had our expedition that day (and the following a.m. for the dedicated trekkers!) and managed to take the train out on Monday. A miracle. We were lucky. Machu Picchu is a mystical experience and has to be seen. We had two Mayan guides (One was a professor) who were very knowledgeable and we loved the whole thing. Inkaterra in the local village, Aquas Calientas, is a sensational eco-hotel.

If going to Machu Picchu intrigues you, call Liz Gibb, Barbara's partner in the travel industry at Vision 2000 Travel. 416-915-2808. She's terrific.

At the end of March, Patti & Barbara will fly to Cambodia with 5 enormous suitcases of supplies for the new schools that we are building and supporting. Thank you one and all for the generosity and goodwill that you have all provided. We will then fly on to Laos and Thailand. More details to follow later on that journey! Our brand new school that we have all built opens on March 29th. It will be a wonderful ceremony! We are taking Canadian flags, Canadian beach balls and lots of ensignia. Patti will give them a lesson about Canada as well. We are planning a few more fundraisers for our Cambodia efforts and will keep you posted on dates for those.

MARK LIBERMAN

Hearty congratulations to **MARK LIBERMAN**, one of the favourite people in the Toronto bridge community. Mark is the winner of the KATE BUCKMAN award for 2012. This is an annual award, presented to the person who has contributed most to others' enjoyment of the game of bridge.

Mark is a great choice of recipient. He has close to 9000 master points and is always a total gentleman at the table. He always makes helpful constructive comments and is fun to play against. He is kind and caring and is always approachable when asked for help, whether you are an expert or a novice, seeking that help.

Mark is a Pharmaceutical Assistant at Medi-Place Pharmacy in Little Italy, his father and uncle having both been pharmacists. Mark plays regularly with Jan Stewart on Monday evenings at our club and with Max Mendelson on Wednesdays evenings (in the summer.)

Mark has not an enemy in this world. He is loved and respected by everyone. His bridge skill at the table and with people is so appreciated.

There will be a big celebration of his Award on **MONDAY MAY 7th** at our club at 5 Glen Park Ave. Refreshments and lots of excitement will be underway. Do mark this date on your calendar. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Please join us in congratulating Mark on this great occasion.

This award was created by ACBL Unit 166 in honour of a great lady, Kate Buckman, back in the early 80's. Kate was the first recipient of the Award. Kate knew Mark well. She would have deemed this a most fitting tribute to this fine gentleman.

BRIDGE IS A LANGUAGE

Language is so very important. If you go to South America and ask how to get to the church ¿Dónde está la iglesia? is what you should say.

If instead you ask: ¿Cuánto dinero hace usted? You have just asked someone how much money they make.

If partner opens 1 Spade and you have 13 points and you now bid 2 Spades, she will think you only have 6-9 points. That is what you have communicated to her.

In bridge, we bid. This is also a form of communication. We advertise what we have in our hand, using a vocabulary of only 15 words. It is imperative that we use a language that partner will understand. You both have to be on the same page! Don't race in to play bridge at the last minute without any discussion. Partner cannot read your mind. You have to discuss style and bidding agreements. If you bid just on gut instinct (bidding by the seat of your pants), it simply cannot work.

Here are some examples of how the train can go off the tracks. What would you bid with the following hands: (RHO stands for Right Hand Opponent)

1. 1S by RHO & you have
AQ5 K76 A987 QJ8
2. 1S by RHO & you have
AQ5 KQ7 AQ98 QJ8
3. 2 S by RHO & you have
KQ8 AQ9 K76 K942
4. 1S by RHO & you have
9 83 AJ765 K10987
5. 1H by RHO & you have
AQ7654 9 743 972
6. 1H by RHO & you have
AK876 76 Q98 A97

Answers to quiz:

1. If you were the opener, you would open with 1NT. As an overcaller, you will now overcall 1NT. This shows 15-17 HCP (some believe 15-18 HCP...either is fine) and a stopper in opponent's suit. (A double stopper is best but sometimes you aren't dealt such luxury.)

2. Now you have 20 HCP. You cannot overcall 1NT as you are too strong. Nor can you overcall 2NT as that will mean something altogether different (we will cover that momentarily). Thus, you must double first and then bid No Trumps. This shows a hand that was too big to overcall 1NT. It will show 19-21 HCP and a Spade stopper.

e.g.
S W (you) N E

1S dbl Pass 2C
Pass 2NT

3. Overcall 2NT. This will show 15-18 HCP and at least one S stopper. Note that this is not a **jump** to 2 No Trump. After a weak 2 opening bid by opponents, your bid of 2NT is never the **Unusual 2NT**.

4. There is a special convention designed to show this hand which is 5-5 in the minors, when the opponents have opened with a major. This is called the **Unusual 2NT**. On this hand, it is perfect, bid 2NT and advertise both your minor suits immediately, all in one breath.

If instead you choose to overcall 2D first, what would you do later if LHO now bids 3S or 4S. You will never have a chance to show your second suit (C) at a cheap level. Suppose your partner has xx Axx xxx Axxxx

If you bid 2NT, then if LHO bids 4S, your partner can now happily bid 5C, knowing that together your partnership has a 10 card C fit. This is a wonderful sacrifice against 4S which likely makes.

Note that if opponents open 1 of a minor, then if you bid 2NT, it will show at least 5-5 in the two lowest unbid suits. i.e. If opponents open with 1 C and you as an opponent bid 2NT, then you are promising at least 5-5 in D and H. If opponents open with 1 D and you as an opponent bid 2NT, you will be promising 5-5 in C and H.

5. If you were the dealer, you would open the bidding with 2S. It would show a weak hand: 6-10 HCP and a 6 card suit with 2 of the top 3 honors or 3 of the top 5 honors. As an overcaller, you should make exactly the same bid. Bid 2S.

6. Bid 1S. This shows 8-17 points (including distribution) and a 5 card suit. If you have only 8-12 points, then you must have a sterling quality suit with 2 of the top 3 honors or 3 of the top 5 honors. It will show a suit you are proud of that you wish partner to lead. With 13 or more points, then lesser quality is acceptable.

Less experienced players often have a burning urge to say "double" first on this hand versus overcalling 1S. If you were to double instead and if your partner were to respond 2C to your double, you are not strong enough to now mention your S. (To double first and then bid your suit should show 18 or more points and a good 5 card suit.)

Talk to your partner and try to stay behind at the end of the game to go over hands on which you had misunderstandings. This will go a long way towards preventing the same problem occurring again.

The full enjoyment of bridge comes from the satisfaction of being able to communicate successfully with your partner. If you can't communicate with partner, you're virtually playing against three people – and you'll never win at this game on your own. Bridge partnerships are rather like marriages – you have to work at them, but the rewards are very worthwhile.

Author unknown

A MISFIT? QUIT!

Less experienced players sometimes pick up their hand, count their points, find they have 13 points and no matter what happens during the entire auction, they continue to have 13 points. A bridge hand is like a living and breathing thing. When partner bids a suit that you like, your hand blossoms and gains in value. When partner bids a suit in which you have a shortage, your hand wilts and loses much of its lustre. We must learn how to evaluate our hand at all times and bid accordingly.



Take the following scenario:

			S KJ109753		
			H 7		
			D K632		
			C 3		
S Q42				S A8	
H K84				H J532	
D AJ4				D 10985	
C K1094				C Q82	
			S 6		
			H AQ1096		
			D Q7		
			C AJ765		
S	W	N	E		
1H	P	1S	P		
2C	P	2S	P		
3C	P	3S	P		
4C	P	4S	Double		
P	P	P			

This wasn't an auction, it was a fight! Indeed, without the use of bidding boxes, the auction would get louder and louder as each player insisted on the right to play in their choice of trump suit!

(Tip to the opponents: Always penalty double such an auction!) On a Diamond start by East, followed by a shift to a S by West whenever he gets in, declarer will be down 2, losing three D and two trump tricks.

What went wrong? Whose fault was this? Who should have quit first? The first person to recognize that there is a misfit should quit once they have adequately described their hand. In this case, South should bid H's first and then bid her C's next. South cannot really be faulted for bidding C's twice but after that, enough's enough. Let partner play this in 2S or 3S.

Now let's look at a much rosier situation!

DIANE WEBB

Diane Webb has been our right arm at Regal and now at Habonim for the past five years. Diane broke her upper right arm in late January and has been unable to get out. She is now on the mend and would like to thank everyone for their cards and calls. Diane hopes to soon be back at the bridge table.

BRIDGE PLAYERS

There are three kinds of bridge players. Those who can count and those who can't.



A FIT? IT'S A HIT!

S 2 H A1084 D Q1092 C Q432	S K987 H K7 D 8543 C 765	S Q10 H 9632 D AKJ C J1098	
	S AJ6542 H QJ5 D 76 C AK		
S 1S 3S	W P P	N 2S P	E P P



This hand always makes 4S . What happened? Back to hand evaluation. Those who count their points using the long suit count will come up with 17 points (always count some form of distribution unless you are bidding No Trumps). Those using the short suit method of counting distribution will also arrive at 17 points. BUT the minute partner supports your long suit, you should be glowing. Gone are the feelings of despair that we experienced on the last "misfit" hand! Your hand increases in value.

Whenever partner supports your long suit, regardless of which method of counting points you have used, always add one extra point for the fifth card in the suit that has been supported and two extra points for each remaining card in that long suit. This is IN ADDITION to all the points you started with. Now you have 20 points. Partner promised you at least 6 points. Add this together and away you go! Your side has 26 points, South should have bid 4 S , instead of inviting partner with 3S . (*This method of revaluing has been around for many, many years and was popularized by Charles Goren. It is a very useful tool at all times.*)

As newer players, you don't need the Law of Total Tricks or the concept of Losing Trick Count in order to make these bids. We don't need fancy gimmicks. Just add those extra points every time partner raises your long suit and you'll always get to your games and slams.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ACE OF CLUB WINNERS IN UNIT 166 ACBL

The Ace of Clubs Awards are presented annually to those receiving the most master points while playing in CLUBS (i.e. not including tournament play)

The following play at our club and have ranked in their specific category, stated below. Treat these players with more respect and congratulate them on their accomplishment!

0-5:	Andre Desmarais	55 pts
	Hilton Greenberg	37.33
20-50:	Dianne Ness	46.23
50-100:	Trish Ungaro	69.96
	Lynne Jacobson	46.24
100-200:	Sarah Hillel	55.04
1000-2500:	Jan Stewart	157.02
7500-10,000	Mark Liberman	158.08
	Dudley Camacho	106.63