



# THE BRIDGE TEACHER

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## The Spring NABC Is Just Around the Corner

**ACBL's 75th Anniversary Celebration** — Friday, March 16, 10:30 p.m.–1:00 a.m., at the Memphis Marriott Downtown. There will be entertainment, live music and a champagne toast, so make plans now!

**ABTA Convention** — In honor of the ACBL's 75th Anniversary the ABTA Convention will meet in Memphis.

**Click here** for more information.



**TAP** — Any ABTA member may take the ACBL Teacher Accreditation Program (TAP) free of charge at the Spring NABC. (ABTA dues and ACBL membership must be current.) Email [education@acbl.org](mailto:education@acbl.org) for more information.

**Reception for Teachers and Club Officials** — This is ACBL's "thank you" reception for the teachers and club officials who work so hard to recruit and retain Members. All teachers, club managers, directors and owners are welcome to attend.

**FREE** — Friday, March 16, 4:30 p.m.–6:00 p.m. at the Memphis Marriott Downtown, Heritage Ballroom 1 & 2.

**Club Manager and Teacher Q & A Session** — This interactive information session will be hosted by Carol Robertson, Director of Club and Member Services. Carol will be joined by Vicki Campbell, Director of Marketing and Education; Dana Norton, Education Coordinator; Jim Miller, National Recorder & Director of Elections along with a special visit by our new CEO, Robert Hartman. We will be there to answer your questions and share thoughts about club games, marketing tools and programs. Bring your best ideas and hear from others about growing the game of bridge.

**FREE** — Saturday, March 17, 10:00 a.m.–noon at Room 202, Convention Center.

## For Your Information...

**Online Teacher Listing** — You now have the option to add a phone number and additional city to your ACBL online teacher listing! To make changes to your online listing, go to [http://www.acbl.org/teachers/OTL\\_register.php](http://www.acbl.org/teachers/OTL_register.php) and submit a new application.

**Youth NABC** — The 2012 Youth NABC will be held during the Summer NABC in Philadelphia. The dates will be July 19-21. Go to <http://www.youth4bridge.org> for more information.

**Youth Bridge Teacher Stipends** — During the Fall NABC in Seattle the ACBL Board of Directors passed the following motion:

*Effective January 1, 2012 – A teacher must be a current ACBL Member in good standing in order to receive the ACBL School Bridge Program Teacher Stipend.*

**King/Queen of Bridge** — Nominations are now being accepted. See page 7.

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## The Business of Bridge

# Practice, Practice, Practice

By Lynn Berg



I remember the teachers I admired in school and college because they made what they were doing look so *easy*. The best used few notes, fielded questions gracefully, knew how to keep us on topic—and knew when to let the class wheel away from topic. When I watched Arlette Schutte, Audrey Grant, or Alan Cokin teach, I tried furiously to remember everything so I could try to make their skills my own. I realized, eventually, that good teachers may begin with people skills and personal magnetism, but a solid foundation of information, preparation and practice enhanced the depth and satisfaction provided in the presentation of good teachers. When you get the chance, watch Pat Harrington, Dee Berry, or many of the Master Teachers of ABTA in action. Think about what you are seeing and hearing, and you'll confirm for yourself what I'm saying.

**Sad to say, not everyone should be a teacher.** If you don't like people and aren't willing to cope with the frustrations and disappointments of teaching, you shouldn't teach. We have to remember Edith McMullin's advice: judge yourself not by what the pupils seem to learn, so much as by whether they keep coming back for more.

**Get a solid foundation in bridge.** Do you really understand everything in the class materials you're using? Sure, you can stay

a page ahead of the class with presentation skills and maybe get away with it, but aren't students entitled to more from you? They've paid with money and their time for what you're offering, and assume you're an expert. If you're not, for heaven's sake, be honest about it. Don't fake answers or guess about anything unfamiliar. It's cheating. I'm a pretty good player and an experienced teacher and director, and often I say, "Sorry, I'll have to look that up."

**Keep on learning.** Right now, Two-over-One is the latest rage. If you don't know it, you should at least learn enough to answer questions. You'll get them. An example of out-of-date teaching: In the late eighties, my mother decided to learn to play bridge. She managed to find the last teacher in Florida who taught four card major openings. The second series of her class taught five card majors as an "advanced" course. What a disservice! You can do better.

**If you have the opportunity, take classes yourself:** You'll get information and the chance to see another teacher in action. If you are the only teacher in your area (often the case), try to get to Regionals or a NABC where there are lots of free lessons and seminars for teachers. Browse the books reviewed in the *Bulletin*. If you like the presentation of a columnist, see if they sell text materials. Keep

your offerings current. Of course, you also have to make sure the level of material is appropriate for your audience.

**Practice—on your friends, at the local bridge club, at the local country club.** Offer to do a free lesson before the limited game at your club. It should be between 15 and 20 minutes long, limited drastically in scope, and leave time for a few questions. Save everything you prepare. I have files and files of essays and lesson handouts. Sometimes when I call one up to use, I realize that it's out-dated or needs editing. As you acquire experience, you'll become your own best source of material. Please remember to give credit where it's due when you use another other teacher's materials. Plagiarism isn't just a horrible habit—it's stealing.

I remember being lucky enough at an NABC to watch one of Larry Cohen's "Real Deal" presentations. He had someone shuffle and deal a deck, put the hands up on the board, and talked about whatever was pertinent to that deal. Wow! He has the depth of understanding and experience to do this, but few of us can think so well on our feet. As they say about some stunts in advertising, "Don't try this yourself." At least not without a lot of practice, practice, practice. ♦

# Try A New Approach to Teaching Beginning Bridge

## *Learn Bridge in a Day?*

By Patty Tucker



The majority of my students are women and many of them are anxious for their husbands, friends and children to learn this game they love. The problem? Time.

As many of you know, I am the founder of Atlanta Junior Bridge, and one of our most popular offerings is our series of summer camps. “Campers” come for two hours each day for one week and are completely hooked at the end of camp. I thought ‘can I condense this 10-hour camp into a shorter period of time for adults?’ Voila, the concept of *Learn Bridge in A Day?* was born.

The five-hour course starts at the very beginning with ‘this is a deck of cards,’ and quickly takes learners through roughly the first six weeks of a beginning class: play of the cards, rank of the suits, high card points, the basics of scoring points, the concept of trumps, opening the bidding, responding to the opening bid, No Trump (not Stayman or Jacoby.... simply not enough time), a rough idea of their rebids, and in some classes, overcalls and takeout doubles. The typical *Learn Bridge in a Day?* student is someone who knows nothing about bridge, took beginning bridge and never continued and a few players who learned in college, but haven’t played in 40 years.

Through *Whirlwind Bridge* (a company I formed with Melissa

Bernhardt which creates practice workbooks for students), we’ve held the workshop a dozen times with groups as few as 12 and as large as 150. Regardless of the size, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. People like the commitment of only 5 hours out of one day of their life. Obviously these students haven’t really learned bridge in one day — just like they don’t learn bridge in six classes. What it does do is give a ‘taste’ of what bridge is about. It gives the confidence to walk into a beginner class and feel like they are near the top of the food chain, instead of the bottom.

### Here are just a few examples of our success stories:

♥ One group of ladies took the course as a private class at the end of spring — to my surprise they walked into an Open Bridge class at the beginning of summer to play! They are still taking classes and playing.

♦ Another group attended *Learn Bridge in a Day?* at our local regional. Two tables came back the next day to play in the novice game!

♠ One lady took her *Learn Bridge in a Day?* Participant Manual to the beach during summer vacation. Her college son read the book, said he knew how to play and promptly beat her and her friends.

♣ We offered the program to 20 school teachers in the Memphis area through ACBL last September. This event was the pilot of the School Teacher’s Version of *Learn Bridge in a Day?*, we are continuing to develop.

♥ We designed a unique College Version of *Learn Bridge in a Day?* and piloted our first seminar at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, VA in January 2012.

♦ To evaluate the effectiveness of all versions of the course, we have been tracking the number of participants who continued taking lessons — and have been thrilled to see 70% of all LBIAD ‘graduates’ have continued with lessons either with us or with other local teachers.

Melissa and I presented the first workshop of *Learn Bridge in A Day?* in May of 2009, and have spent an extensive amount of time, energy and effort developing and refining the program materials. *Whirlwind Bridge* has created a turnkey program other teachers can use to reach more prospective students or promote bridge in their local area. At the ABTA conference in Memphis this March we will present the *Learn Bridge in a Day? Teacher Toolkit* which contains everything you need to conduct your own successful seminar. Included in the Toolkit will be the Participant Manual, Handouts, and Sample Hands — as well as a PowerPoint® Presentation, Leader’s Guide and Administrator’s Guide for program leaders.

We hope to see many of you there. If you can’t make it to Memphis, please check out our website at [www.whirlwindbridge.com](http://www.whirlwindbridge.com) or email [melissa@whirlwindbridge.com](mailto:melissa@whirlwindbridge.com) or [patty@whirlwindbridge.com](mailto:patty@whirlwindbridge.com). ♦



**I just spent a delightful 104 minutes having a chat with Larry Cohen.**

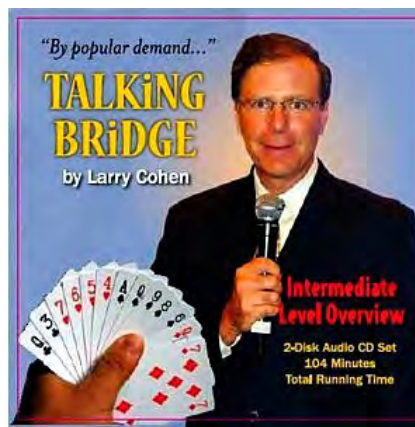
Well, actually he did all the talking since I was listening to his new audio CD's, *Talking Bridge*, but it was like Larry was right in the room talking to me. Don't expect to hear about bridge hands or even details on bidding specific hands. In his discussion aimed at intermediate players, Larry provides practical advice on what to play – advice that we bridge teachers should consider when planning what to teach. To paraphrase Larry, too many teachers are guilty of teaching conventions because they're easy to teach. It doesn't take a lot of work to prepare a lesson with notes for a student to study and memorize, but learning conventions isn't a good use of student learning time. He advises keeping our students' brains less cluttered so they can concentrate on what's really important — taking tricks. Except for serious players who want to spend hours of work with a partner really learning conventions, Larry recommends a simple system using only a few conventions: negative doubles (very important in his opinion), Stayman, Transfers, some kind of Blackwood, weak twos and maybe features.

# THE BRIDGE TEACHER'S BOOKSHELF

By Pat Harrington

I'm planning to teach a series on the convention card next year, and I'll be sure to review Larry's advice before writing those lessons. I'll also recommend this set of two CD's to my students. It's convenient to use either in the car or at home — perhaps to make housework more pleasant. But don't vacuum — you won't want to miss a thing!

Priced at \$20 plus shipping, *Talking Bridge* is available from Larry's website ([www.larryco.com](http://www.larryco.com)) or from Baron Barclay ([www.baronbarclay.com](http://www.baronbarclay.com)). Both sites offer you the opportunity to hear a free demo. Speaking of Larry's website, there's a wealth of articles for bridge teachers and players to use as a resource. Check it out.



Baron Barclay has just published *The Impact of Opening Leads Against Notrump Contracts* by Audrey Grant. The book focuses on defense in notrump contracts with the focus on opening leads and how the defender and declarer often use the same play techniques. When I heard the title I thought it would be good for my beginner graduates,

but the play is more difficult than what I generally give that level student. I wouldn't advise teachers to use this as a follow-up to *Bridge Basics I and II*. At a minimum, a good declarer play course would be in order first. Audrey approaches leads starting with the oldest maxim, fourth best, and presents other lead alternatives (partner's suit, unbid suit, top of various types of sequences, and top of nothing) as exceptions in subsequent chapters. Students' success definitely depends on thought and planning, something I've found my advancing students really enjoy despite the fact that they're terrible at it. There are four practice deals at the end of each of the four chapters, and there are over twenty additional complete deals discussed in the body of the text. Teachers could easily use them for extra classroom practice deals. Unlike many of Audrey's books, South is always declarer so hands need rotating for classroom use unless you use the method of rotating the table card instead. Baron Barclay does not carry a teacher manual for this book but, since it's all play and defense with little to the bidding — all contracts are in notrump — teachers can easily create lesson plans from the deals provided. The price is \$9.95 but there are good discounts for quantity orders with the price going under \$5 per book for orders of 20 or more copies. This could be the new course you need for your spring classes for advancing students. ♦



# Bridge by Candlelight

By Marti Ronemus



Well, just when you think you've seen it all, something new happens. Wait 'till I tell you about this one! My husband Gary and I run 4 and 5-day bridge seminars in various locations. Over Halloween week, we participated in a Road Scholar (aka Elderhostel) week at Warwick Center in New York State. This was right smack dab in the path of the year's early blizzard. (Remember that?)

Everything was fine Sunday when we and our 36 participants checked in. Sunday night we lost some power to the bedroom wings of the resort, but all was still well.

Monday, things started to get exciting. We lost all power in the entire resort. The power company promised we'd have all our modern conveniences back by evening, but they lied. And they lied the next day, and the next one, too.

I had no idea bridge players were so tough. Of the original 36,

24 people wouldn't go home. The folks running the resort found a local hotel that still had power, and they bussed us there in the evenings so we could sleep in warmth and have hot water, but our days were spent at the resort teaching and playing bridge.

Picture this: The bridge room had a big fireplace at one end, so we had a roaring fire going all day. Unfortunately, it provided more ambience than heat. In the morning, we moved all the tables to the east side of the room to get what little daylight came in. Afternoons, the process was reversed and tables were shifted to the west side.

Each day, people were offered the opportunity to go home and every day they voted to stay. We played bridge in coats and mittens. We could see our breath. There were fat candles on each table to provide light. Bridge by candlelight? Hardly romantic!

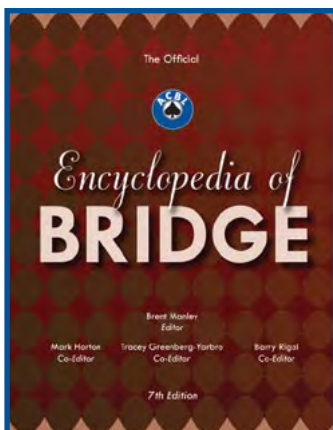
Gary and I held our breath each

morning, praying they would vote to go home. Nope. They wouldn't leave. I had trouble holding the marker for the white board because my hands were so cold. Shuffling was an ordeal. Words froze on my lips on their way out of my mouth, but those players wouldn't go home. All I can say is they come from much sturdier stock than I do. I was ready to leave Monday morning.

Now the confession... as much as I complained about the conditions, I can't think of a week where I had more fun. Our "hardships" brought us together. The people were simply a hoot, and morale couldn't have been higher. One evening in particular is unforgettable. The Center scheduled a pianist to play for us. Picture the roaring fireplace, candles everywhere, the most glorious music, and the audience bundled in winter coats and mittens.

Everyone was so eager to learn more about our game that the cold and dark were no obstacles to pleasure. While I wouldn't want to do it again, it will go down as one of the best weeks I've ever had. I'll never take hot water or electric light for granted again. I learned, though, that we can survive without them...briefly.

[mronemus@comcast.net](mailto:mronemus@comcast.net) ♦



## Hot Off the Press: New Bridge Encyclopedia

**The 7th edition of the Official Encyclopedia of Bridge is now available at Baron Barclay Bridge Supply.**

The 634-page book was redesigned and is now in a larger format with larger print and organized by chapters. Topics range from History to Conventions to Card Play and lots more, including an interesting section on "Rules" by the number. There are dozens of photos and bridge-related cartoons.

Visit Baron Barclay Bridge Supply at [www.baronbarclay.com](http://www.baronbarclay.com) or phone 800-274-2221 to order your copy.



## Youth Bridge is Alive, Well and Soon to Get Much, Much Better!

There are a number of excellent Youth Bridge programs in North America, but we still have an uphill pull ahead of us. One Member, Bill Fritsch of Kingsport, Tennessee (Unit 165) was interested in creating some interest in his unit and found the information available, albeit time consuming, and hard to digest. Bill decided to do something about it.

During the Gatlinburg Regional a Youth Bridge Workshop is scheduled. The workshop offers practical information, advice and material to individuals, unit and districts interested in building youth bridge membership in their area.

Bill hopes the workshop will map a variety of paths to inspire ACBL Members and teachers to work on the promotion of youth bridge.

The seminar will be on Tuesday, April 17th. Patty Tucker, founder of Atlanta Junior Bridge, is working closely with Bill on the presentation of the seminar and the materials. They welcome contributions of information, material and participation from those who have ongoing youth programs.

Attendance to the seminar is free thanks to the generosity of District 7, the ACBL Educational Foundation and Unit 165. Seminar materials will also be distributed at no charge to those who pre-register for the event. To register please visit the website at

<http://www.gburgyouthbridgeworkshop.com/>

**For more information contact:**

Bill Fritsch, 4116 Fox Run Court, Kingsport TN 37664 or call 423-967-9061 or e-mail [financewrf@charter.net](mailto:financewrf@charter.net)



## ACBL Mobile Applications – Now Available

### Find a Teacher

The “Find a Teacher” mobile app is now available for iPhone users. The app works like the “Find a Club” app. Users will be able to conduct searches for bridge teachers by using the device’s GPS tracking capability or manually by city/state or zip/postal code.

If you are currently listed in the ACBL online teacher directory your information is automatically available on the mobile app. If you are not currently listed in the online directory but would like to be listed, go to the following link and fill out the online teacher listing application: [http://www.acbl.org/teachers/OTL\\_register.php](http://www.acbl.org/teachers/OTL_register.php)

Teachers also have the option of adding their phone number and web sites to the directory. If you would like to make your phone number available, you will need to submit a new application.



### Club Finder for Android!

The ACBL is pleased to announce the release of the ACBL Mobile app for Android phones! Thousands of users have already downloaded the app for the iPhone platform. Using the app, you can search for bridge clubs with ACBL-sanctioned games near you by city/state or province or by postal code; or, alternately, you can let the app detect your location via GPS.

The app is free to download and requires Android 1.6 or higher. To get the app, search for “ACBL Mobile” in the Android Market, or use this link: [https://market.android.com/details?id=com.acbl.main&feature=search\\_result](https://market.android.com/details?id=com.acbl.main&feature=search_result)

Remember, those of you with iPhones, iPod Touch and iPads may download this app by going to the App Store and searching for “ACBL” and downloading the “ACBL Mobile” app. ♦

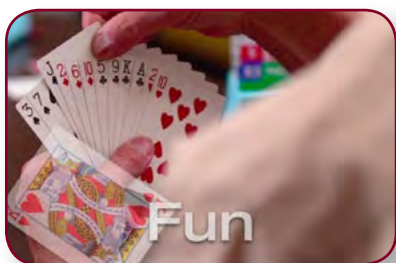
## Customizable TV Ad Now Available!

*We are excited to announce that a TV ad, targeting the baby boomer/recently retired audience, is now available for clubs and teachers!*

This ad is available in two versions — 15 seconds or 30 seconds. The ad may be customized it with your personal contact information included at the end of the ad. Just like the radio ads available for clubs and teachers, there is a media buyer to help you negotiate your media purchase(s), handle getting the TV ad to the station(s), and arrange for insertion of your customized contact information.

**Click here** to learn more, watch the ads, and request to use the ad to market your club or bridge class.

*We can't wait for you to take advantage of this brand new marketing tool!*



## ♥ King/Queen of Bridge ♥

Do you know a graduating high school senior who is an ACBL Member who plays and promotes bridge? They could become the **2012 King/Queen of Bridge**. Recent winners have been cited for outstanding tournament performances plus administrative, recreational and promotional activities related to bridge.

This competition was established in 1973 by longtime youth advocate Homer Shoop, and is administered today by the ACBL Educational Foundation. The ACBL Educational Foundation will present a \$1,000 scholarship to the King/Queen of Bridge.

A partial list of previous winners reads like a who's who of bridge: Jeff Meckstroth, Bobby Levin, Steve Weinstein, Brad Moss, Martha (Benson) Katz, Joel Wooldridge and Eric Greco.

To enter the contest, applicants will need to send an e-mail with personal information and qualifications, along with the name of their school and school principal, the school address and phone number to **education@acbl.org** no later than May 16.



## Tips & Tricks

It's always helpful to know what makes other clubs and teachers successful in recruiting new Members, and the Marketing Department has compiled a list of a few Tips & Tricks for you.

Visit <http://www.acbl.org/marketing/tips.html> for advertising tips, campaign ideas for introducing new players to duplicate, increasing class/workshop attendance, publicity tips, event ideas and advice on creating player satisfaction and loyalty. Many of these Tips & Tricks even qualify for the Cooperative Advertising Program!

If you would like to share your campaign/marketing ideas that have been successful, please send them to **marketing@acbl.org** with the subject of "Tips and Tricks."

*We'd love to hear from you!*