

Center for Bridge

The Newsletter of Nonprofit Duplicate Bridge Education

Kids Learning Bridge

Issue # 13 — Spring 2012

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A year of strong support from the bridge community.

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President's Corner

SPRINGTIME SIGNALS THE END of the school year. Perhaps only educators like me and those of us with school-age children pay attention to the school calendar. For CBE, June means a hiatus for our school programs and the beginning of intensive preparation for the Youth NABC, taking place in Philadelphia this summer. Instead of attending Chemistry and US History classes, our budding bridge students will get an education at the duplicate table.

You play an integral part in helping these youngsters. From your annual donations which make the school programs possible and your special contributions to fund the travel costs to Philly, to your willingness to partner with a high school student or be a generous opponent as our lucky beginners play surprisingly well, you help. Thank you for supporting CBE and our students.

With a range of ages in our programs from 2nd grade to high school seniors, we wish there were more opportunities for young people to play against other young people. Sending large numbers of young children requiring parental supervision to another state is costly and logistically prohibitive. Fortunately, the Fall NABC brings an opportunity for our students to at least play against other beginners. It was five years ago when I teamed up with a CBE student in the Fall NABC and we both earned our first red masterpoints! I hope to play with some of our students this Fall and we can take the 0-20 MP by storm!

As you might imagine, today's generation is fascinated by online games and you can catch our students on BBO. Yet, teenagers are inherently socially motivated at that age, so the face-to-face interactions are critically important, even if a bridge player can go three hours with little more spoken than "Thank you, partner."

Hope to see you at the table!

Jennifer Fong



Our Youngest Champ

CBE IS FINISHING our first year at the elementary Chinese American International School (CAIS). We had expected fourth graders and older but most of the students are first and second graders. This, we are assured, is the only way to establish a club, as the veteran students establish habits after a year or two that are unbreakable. As is our experience elsewhere, the boys and girls quickly seek their own—Eric Groves ended up with the boys; Jim Leuker and Martha Ehrenfeld, two tables of mostly girls.

Eric feels he is the lucky one, as he has been working with a group of boys who show talent and a love of the game. They are eager to learn something new each week and enjoy being challenged.

One exceptional bridge student is a boy named Pico, whose two favorite things, before learning bridge, are math and the Giants. Pico is precocious in many ways. He has traveled to Europe and Japan, and being a first grade CAIS student, speaks both English and Chinese. He likes sports, plays chess, and now has added bridge to his activities.

His father told Eric a story of the first time he took Pico to work with him, when the boy was barely 3 ½ years old. Pico asked how many miles it was to work to which his father told him two miles. Pico then asked how many stops it was on the underground Muni—four stops. Pico calculated "Oh, that's ½ mile a stop." Natural math skill has proved useful in bridge.

Besides being exceptionally bright, Pico shows remarkable card sense. He has an amazing memory coupled with math and logic skills that belie his age (*he just turned seven*). He has quickly developed skills in counting points and cards. His father says that Pico came home from bridge class explaining the advantage card counting and remembering



every card played. To practice this skill, he plays bridge online.

Though he still has much to learn before taking on the Kaplan Blue Ribbon Pairs this fall, he has the mental skill, competitiveness, and love of the game that could make him a world class player one day.

Pico is one of several talented young players at CAIS. Based on their interest and ability, these boys, with some special attention, could quickly get to a point where they are ready to compete. CAIS is eager to have CBE return in the fall.

There are plans for mentoring the most promising youths this summer (*page 2*) by one of our previous high school players, now in college. Maybe the incentive of getting to compete in a national competition at the fall San Francisco NABC will encourage these kids even more. 🍀

Samuel on GNT

WHEN A UC BERKELEY TEAM was looking for a sixth player for its GNT qualifier, held in Walnut Creek over a weekend this winter, they chose wisely—Samuel Kuang, a spirited competitor from CBE's Galileo High School club. In the final round, Samuel sat out the first half, only taking his seat with the team behind 21 IMPs. When the dust settled, his Berkeley team had won a trip to Philly by 1 IMP! Samuel is reluctant to take credit, but we are not. 🏆

Unit Board Renews Support

THE SAN FRANCISCO UNIT BOARD unanimously voted to help CBE with the summer NABC. This year the board approved a \$1000 donation, which will be immensely helpful.

The Unit Board represents its membership in encouraging new members and young members. Many club members have approached this contributor (I mean *me*) about how wonderful it is to see so many young faces at the table. Also, these players add significantly to the competition. 🍀

Brandon Wong

THE FIRST TIME Brandon played in a duplicate tournament was at the estimable Pro/Am game held each spring at Quicktricks Bridge Club. He and his partner, Jeannette Shinsako, who met only minutes before the game, ended first in section. That was not a fluke.

Brandon has since won games at Cardology, San Mateo Sectional Bracketed Swiss, Chinese American Club, and was on the second place team at a SF Unit Swiss in April, all with different partners.

These four wins and one second place compose more than half the games he has played at duplicate tables...a record to catch one's attention.

Asking Brandon to join the team in Philadelphia was an easy choice; he has a passion for the game and has integrated smoothly with our other stars. Each year CBE has raised the profile of San Francisco's contingent of juniors and this young man will help sustain that trajectory.

Like so many other bridge players, Brandon excels in math, tutoring friends to whom the subject comes less easily. (*He could do the same in bridge.*) He found chemistry a bit more difficult, but not a man to shirk from a challenge, Brandon absorbed the subject and intends to major in Chemical Engineering at UC Davis in the fall.

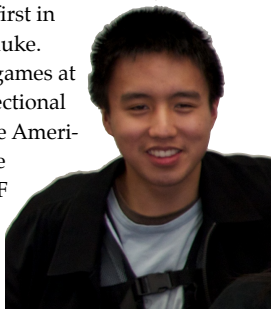
We are (*not too secretly*) delighted with his choice of schools as two other players, both featured in this newsletter issue, are also at UC Davis, which makes a promising start for the North American Collegiate Championships to be held in Atlanta next summer—a contest twice won by a team that included another CBE player, Kendrick Chow at UPenn.

Brandon is a tall, husky voiced 17 year old, who seems considerably more mature and self-confident than one expects from a teen. He enjoys hiking and running as these are well-tailored to a man with a naturally long stride. The cool, sunny days of San Francisco suit him just fine.

When asked about what he likes best about bridge, his answer was a bit of a surprise because he is known for watching all the spot cards, never miscounting, so we expected "dummy play." But, like all juniors, he is intrigued with bidding, especially the use of conventions to describe shape and values. He says, "The means of communication that are invented for this game are clever, often subtle, and overall brilliant."

Few of our readers have seen Brandon as school comes before card games—and we agree—but now that summer is here, he will be a regular at the club games and local sectionals, getting practice for the NABC. Take him for an easy mark at your peril.

Special thanks to Clifford Louie who has tirelessly run a successful club at Galileo High School for the past three years, where Brandon learned the game. The Galileo Bridge Club, together with the Lowell HS Club, are the core assets of our high school bridge programs. ♣



Sutherlin Trophy

THIS YEAR THE SUTHERLIN TROPHY, housed for three years straight at Lowell Alternative High School, is moving to Galileo High School, where it will carry the names of two winners of the single high school tournament held this year, Brandon Wong and Tim Chung.

The Lowell HS club lost their fine lineup last year when nearly all members graduated. We doubt it will be long before the bench is rebuilt. ♣

Summer Program

CBE IS PROPOSING A SUMMER PROGRAM for the year 2013 in conjunction with SF Recreation & Parks Department. We are piloting the program this summer with a growing number of current students from various schools. The program will be headed by CBE junior ace, William Zhu, and aided by various other volunteers.

William had a long spring break from Vassar College in March, which allowed him to play in several duplicate games. In less than two weeks, he posted three wins in open games and a first in section in a unit game. ♦

Chris Chen

CBE RECENTLY SELECTED our Youth NABC team to play in Philadelphia. In preparation, the juniors have been playing at local clubs. Chris Chen, a recent Lowell HS graduate home on spring break from UC Davis, finished first in the open game at Concordia in March with 61.31%, playing with a CBE Board Member. Chris executed several wonderful plays including a complex 6C contract that no one else found, nor made. Three months away from the table had not left him rusty.

Here is a hand that helped Chris earn a top score. Chris was East:

♠ Q	N	♠ Ax
♥ AKxxx	W E	♥ xx
♦ AKJTx	S	♦ xxx
♣ Ax		♣ QJT9xx

The bidding started to Chris's right, North

North	East	South	West
2S	pass	pass	X
3S	4C	pass	4D
pass	5C	pass	6C(?)
all pass			

COMMENTARY: *Sane players are welcome to question West's slam raise (everyone else did).*

South led low spade, ♠Q, covered by the ♠K, ♠A. Chris ruffed a spade in dummy and then cashed the ♠A. A less cautious player might have taken a finesse in diamonds, but that risk he put off. He cashed the ♥AK, all followed. A third heart he ruffed with the ♣9, overruffed by the ♣K. The spade return was ruffed in hand. The trumps were pulled in two more rounds, pitching two diamonds from dummy. A diamond was played to the ♦K, the and he ruffed the fourth heart. Trumps were then exhausted, but the dummy's ♦A and ♥2 gave him 12 tricks. Yes, South could have ducked the club ruff,

then Chris would have been forced to try the diamond hook.

Chris played for 10 days in Toronto last year, so he was excited to learn that CBE had chosen him for the Youth Team one more time to play for 9 days in Philadelphia. ♣

St. Stephen Catholic School

LOCAL PLAYER AND CBE VOLUNTEER, Ron Goodman, has been coaching middle school students at St. Stephen School in the Sunset to play mini-bridge. Ron's class is a great success and several parents want their children to learn more this summer.

Ron has said that spending a little time with the kids has been exceptionally rewarding. We know that the players feel the same way about him. ♣

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Visit our web site for credit card donations ♣

Smolen Joins CBE Board

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE that Steve Smolen has joined our board. Steve already serves on the board of Quicktricks and the SF Unit, where he has made several contributions.

Steve has been a friend to many of the junior players, giving time and bridge advice, as well as transportation and a free lunch here and there. We are delighted to have Steve's experience, advice, and enthusiasm to make next year's plans a reality. ♦

Local Clubs Are a Big Help

THE SAN FRANCISCO BRIDGE CLUBS have been consistently supportive of our full-time student players, giving them half-price table fees, or in the case of the non-profit clubs, free plays. The same is true for the Unit games and Sectional games. While it is the case that many of the mentors pay the junior's fees, the cost of full fees, food, and transportation adds up quickly. ♦

Special Fund

LAST SUMMER Lenore Cavallero set a wonderful and effective precedent, matching donations from others for NABC expenses in Toronto. This year another member of CBE has offered to match donations for Philadelphia up to \$1000. Just note on your donation "Philly" and we will collect the matching sum.

The general fund is used to send a group to the Youth Games and other events. This special fund is to help a few other of our past players, still full-time students, by defraying just enough of their costs to make the trip viable. ♦