

Center for Bridge Education



Teaching us to hold hands

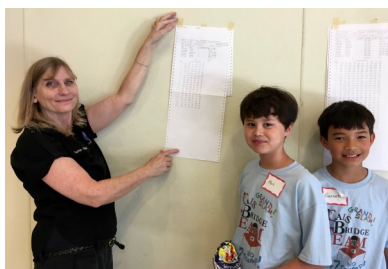


August 2016

Center for Bridge Education News

CAIS Students Hit the Tournament Trail

TWO MIDDLE-SCHOOLERS FROM THE Chinese American International School, Pico Gilman and Kai Chiang, spent their summer playing in bridge tournaments, including the Youth NABC in Washington, DC. A year of after-school bridge lessons allowed them to hold their own playing in advanced games and to enjoy competing in pairs and in team games with their teammates from the Silicon Valley Youth Bridge. In Pico's own words:



Maxwell and Haifu Check Scores

"I had an amazing time! The best part was meeting new people, but playing bridge was also very fun...The one thing I can probably improve on is knowing when to sacrifice and when not to."

That's a message even we adults can relate to!

Are bridge skills genetic? Kai has a younger brother, Lucas, who is also learning the game. He joined the San Francisco contingent at his first national event and was even brave enough to travel partnerless. His best match was with a group of high schoolers from Thomas Jefferson High School in Virginia. When they first met, Lucas could tell the high schoolers were hesitant to



Lucas with High School Teammates

play with a much younger child, but once they started talking about their bridge experience and conventions, they were impressed and admitted that Lucas knew more than most of them. They were a good fit, and even made Lucas their team captain!

The San Francisco youth group all felt that the competition was tougher at this Washington DC tournament, perhaps due to a large number of teams attending from China. But even though they may not have been victorious at the table, Kai and Pico experienced some validation from the Chinese players when they were called upon to translate English into Mandarin. Bi-lingual education is a definite plus at these bridge tournaments!



Pico and Kai Team with SiVY

Earlier in the summer, Maxwell Webb and Haifu Owen, two 4th graders from CAIS competed at the San Francisco Sectional in the 0-10 masterpoint bracket. Their opponents were impressed at they had taken up the game at such a young age and marveled at the attention span of the 4th grade boys. They are still looking forward to earning their first masterpoint, but in the meantime are busy memorizing from their "Tips That Often Help" sheet.

Kai and Lucas were partners at the Palo Alto Firecracker tournament in July. Although this was Lucas' first tournament, they entered in the 0-99 pairs and held their own, keeping up with the pace of the game. They were the youngest in that bracket. Maxwell and Haifu also enjoyed the Firecracker, playing in the 0-10 bracket.

The CAIS bridge club is expanding this year, as parents have been invited to attend with their children. It will definitely be CBE's largest club.

President's Letter by Jim Leuker

THE END OF SUMMER MEANS that our young players have returned from the Youth NABC in Washington DC. Each summer CBE helps several of our kids with the cost of attending this tournament. This year three of our budding players participated and had a great time competing against other young players from around North America. This always proves to be such a good outing for our kids in so many ways. It lets them have a great experience at the same time it expands their horizons. Well done, Pico, Kai and Lucas!



CBE is in the 9th year of our mission to bring bridge to kids in San Francisco schools. We continue our teaching programs at Galileo High School and at Chinese-American International School, a private elementary bilingual school. One of our CAIS kids came up with a de-

lightful design for a T-shirt and we had shirts made up for the players there. They wear them proudly. We are working on reinvigorating our program at Lowell High School. We're reaching out to a new school, Sacred Heart, an elementary school that consists of two parts, Convent school for girls and Stuart Hall for boys. We're hoping to have a program starting in September.

The new game of Handz™ is getting a lot of attention, with articles in local and national bridge publications. This clever approach to introducing the concepts of bridge has been developed by Richard Bellerose, the person who was the founder of CBE nine years ago. The game of Handz™ has had a number of field tests. Those who have played it all report back that it's lots of fun. Richard and team hope to hook up with a game manufacturer in order to get wider distribution for Handz™. I'm very pleased to say that Richard has also agreed to return as a member of our CBE board. The timing is auspicious as the board collaborates in the rollout of Handz™. Welcome back, BMR (Bridge Master Richard)!

Wu & Crew Win Mini-Spin

ABOUT A MONTH BEFORE the Washington DC NABC, CBE alum Edmund Wu decided he wanted to put a team together for the Mini-Spingold (0-5000).



Jess, Jimmy, Alex and Edmund

Rather late to be assembling a team for this grueling event, Wu approached William Zhu, another CBE alum, who played with him in the 14th World Youth Team Championship in Istanbul in 2014. They invited Zhou “Jimmy” Wang, another veteran of the Istanbul team, and Jesse Chou, an outstanding young San Francisco player to join them. There were two problems. Zhu had another commitment for the final two days of the event, and the only two of the four who had ever played together before were Wu and Zhu. So they needed a fifth. They decided to bring on Alex Dezieck, who Edmund had only met online. Jess had played with him once in Taiwan. So they had only one practiced partnership. Because they had new partnerships, they spent most of their non-playing time working to cement their meth-

ods.

The Wu squad entered the event seeded 50th out of 52, so they played the 3 seed, a strong squad from Marin county. They prevailed as they did over every other team they faced.

A hand that Edmund found interesting, although not profitable is below.

N/S Vul Dealer E

K3
AKJ6
AK
AKQJ3

T4	QJ97652
Q9542	-
T853	J94
95	T72

A8
T873
Q762
864

At Wu’s table, the auction was as follows:

West	North	East	South
	(Chao)		(Wu)
		3S	P
P	X	P	4H
P	4N	P	5C
P	5D	P	5H
P	6H	P	P

At the other table, the auction went

West	North	East	South
		(Zhu)	
		4S	P
P	6N	P	7N
P	P	P	

Our EW heros started to put away their bidding cards after 6N, but south stopped them.

7N is easy as there are 13 tricks. 6H takes a strip endplay to succeed, which it did, but rack up a 13IMP loss. Though Wu’s team lost imps on the board, they thought it an exciting and rare hand, specifically North’s hand, that require good bidding judgement with NT being the superior strain and precise play by South in the less optimal heart contract.

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Old Handz™ Lag Behind New Ones

IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR, CBE held a “Train the Trainers” session to help the teachers learn to teach the game of Handz™ to beginning bridge players. At the session, there were two tables: one table of teachers, the other of beginners.



Father and Sons Study Fact Sheets

The beginners took right to it. Eighth grader Nathan commented, “It was really competitive. It was fun to sit there and try to see what was going on with all the players and to try to take control.” The beginners moved quickly to the second level of the game. The experienced players were a bit more chal-

lenged.

Handz™ is played by each player filling out a “fact sheet.” On it, they indicate hand strength as - -, -, 0, +, or + + corresponding to very

weak, weak, average, strong, and very strong, respectively. They also write down how many cards they have in each suit. Then, beginning with the dealer, they bid. The bidding is simply 1, 2, 3 ... No strain is mentioned. The strain, or “super-suit or no super-suit” is determined by the highest bidder (declarer) after winning the contract.

In the first two levels, there is no incentive to bid past 1. There are no game or slam bonuses. But there is an incentive for a partnership to sacrifice by bidding the opponents up if they think they might lose less that way. In addition, doubles and redoubles are introduced in level 2. It’s fun to get a bigger score. Game bonuses come in level 3.

Handz™ players use the fact sheet to help them decide how to “play the hand” in much the same way that bridge players listen to the bidding to help them decide what to do. If one opponent is ++ and the other - -, for example, it helps the player to decide how to take a two-way finesse. But to experienced bridge players, looking at the fact sheet seems like cheating and they forget to do it. Thus, advantage newcomers.

But the newcomers have to learn some things well known to the experienced players. Nathan learned the importance of getting rid of the opponents “super suit” (trump) cards. He said, “that makes TOTAL sense ... It’s no fun to get my aces taken by their little super-suit cards!”

All in all, both the beginners and teachers had a great time. Now on to the schools.