



San Diego Unit #539

By Stuart Showalter

We know, of course, that in-person bridge is on hold, but “that’s no hill for a climber,” as one of my friends used to say. To fill the void, many of us have started playing online using Bridge Base Online (BBO). It’s easy and fun, and we’ve come to love it. Plus it can support the unit or your local club financially.

It’s free to join BBO, but you need to create a screen name and become familiar with the site. A helpful instructional video from the Sagamore Bridge Club can be found [here](#). There is a small fee to play the unit’s and local clubs’ games, and the money goes to support them during this time of uncertainty. Click on the “BB\$” tab on the BBO home page to create a “BB\$” account to pay game fees.

San Diego Unit 539 has been online since mid-April and the response from local players has been strong: 24 tables the first week, 30 the next, and 32 on May 3. Given this enthusiastic response, we know that bridge will survive the corona-virus.

Results of the unit’s virtual games are posted on ACBL Live at my.acbl.org/club-results/147744. The games will continue in this manner every Sunday until further notice, so please join us. Check our [website](#) from time to time for updated information.

San Diego Club News:

Redwood Bridge Club (www.redwoodbridgeclub.org) and *San Diego Bridge Academy* (www.sandiegobridgeacademy.com) have combined their websites, but both links remain operative and take you to the same information. During the lockdown of the building, they have had the tables refinished and the carpets cleaned, so when this crisis is behind us the place will be better than ever. In the meantime, they host virtual games Monday through Saturday at 10 a.m. Search for the “SDBA/Redwood” games on BBO.

San Diego Bridge Club (www.sandiegobridgeclub.com) also offers online games, and “everyone seems to be having a wonderful time,” according to John Lagodimos. “We hold games Monday at 12:30, Tuesday through Friday at 10:30, and Friday evening at 6: 30 p.m. We post winners and results on our website along with hand records from the common game.” Search for “San Diego/Eastlake” games.

Miscellaneous

Our bridge raconteur extraordinaire, Robert Rosenblum, sent in the following tidbit. It seems that at its peak in the mid 1960's, "Bridge Week" at the Ambassador Hotel in LA outdrew the NABC. It hosted a whopping 10,948 tables in 1965. One of the tournament's more popular features was "Brunch with Mary Jane," that being the late Mary Jane Farrell, one of the world's leading players and the *LA Times*' Woman of the Year in 1964.

At one such event she introduced radio personality Bob Hawk as the guest speaker. His topic was the danger of using too much jargon in bridge conversation, and to illustrate he mentioned having taken the elevator to his room after a game that week. A woman was operating the lift, and when some other bridge players boarded, Hawk and she overheard one asked another how his game went that afternoon with his partner. "Not bad," came the reply. "Only two misunderstandings. He endplayed me twice and I ended up with two stiff queens and two cold bottoms."

Apparently the elevator operator nearly passed out.

In a more serious vein, and despite the "coronapocalypse" (as a neighbor calls it), this faithful correspondent is weathering the stay-at-home order just fine. After all, it's the perfect time for an introvert to catch up on his reading, especially the stack of *Bridge Bulletins* that have been piling up for months.

While thus occupied he came across a discussion of doubles, the game's most versatile call, and remembered the struggle a couple of his partners used to have as advancer. They knew that if I doubled an opening bid and the responder (their RHO) passed, then they had to say something. Picking a suit wasn't the problem, but all too often they simply bid at the lowest possible level, thus leaving us in a partial score when game was in the cards.

I kept saying – tactfully and at the end of the round, of course – "If you have more than 8 hcp, you should jump at least one level or cue bid for more information." This technique met with only limited success. I thought we needed something more memorable, so I came up with this little ditty: "Nine to eleven, almost heaven / twelve or more, time to soar."

Because I'm a wordsmith and always hear music and rhythm in the language, I thought this was pretty helpful – clever even – but we still struggled sometimes. Maybe some day we'll move on to responsive doubles, when to convert a takeout double to penalty, what to do if I double then bid a second time, etc. But for now I'll just keep reciting my little poem to myself, hoping it will make it into bridge literature some day. ■