

Bad advice

By Nick Hughes

One particular bugbear of mine is the tendency of writers to ignore the nature of the game their readers play. At least 90% of organised bridge in Australia is matchpoints, so players should be given advice to improve their duplicate scores.

Often I see a quiz with a line like "Your aim is to make your contract, overtricks are unimportant." This is teaching the wrong skill.

For instance:

♠ A Q 10 7

♠ 9 8 6 3 2

Playing in 6♠, the expert matchpoint line might be to take a finesse in some other suit to see whether you need to consider a safety play in trumps, then decide how popular 6♠ will be around the room, etc. Only super-experts do this and writers rightly ignore subtle matchpoint considerations.

In some books you might get, "The safest way to play this suit is to cash the ace then return to hand to lead towards dummy's ♠Q-T. This ensures you don't lose to a stiff king offside,"

Blah, blah. The correct way to play duplicate is to take as many tricks as you can! The normal play is to finesse the queen, making 13 when West has Kx or Kxx. Telling them to cash the ace is to see them doing something unnatural, against the warm feeling engendered by a successful finesse.

"Hang on" you say, "We're not teaching safety plays to beginners!"

But you are! If you give novice declarers a trick target in each contract, they will

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Annual ABTA membership is \$20.
Joining fee \$10. Exam fee \$10.

Ad rates: page \$30, ½ page \$20

score badly for decades to come. Take this:

♠ AKQ	♠ J 7 3
♥ A 7 6 2	♥ K 5 4
♦ AK 4	♦ 9 8 3
♣ K 9 8	♣ A J 7 5

Another routine 3NT with 9 top tricks and beginners will take 9. Well done? They saw their 9 top tricks and grabbed them as required. The die is set and they won't crack 50% for years.

In the next stage, they might learn to "count their losers" in a trump contract. This is terrible advice, akin to "draw trumps as soon as possible". The way to make suit contracts is to build your trick total, for instance by a cross-ruff.



Australian Bridge Teachers' Association Quarterly Bulletin

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Editor: Nick Hughes

President's Report

June 2003

At last I put pen to paper (or fingers to keys!), having emerged from an outrageously busy first five months of the year, which included moving home twice and living out of boxes, suitcases and those irresistible green garbage bags! So apologies for this being my first ABTA report for 2003. And so much has already happened...

In January, the AGM for the ABTA was held at Rydges, Canberra, and the 2003 Committee was re-elected as follows:

Lorraine Harkness	President
Nick Hughes	Vice-Pres
Jean Rennick	Secretary
Colin Mitchell	Treasurer

I wish to thank these members of the executive committee for their hard work over the past year. I also wish to thank Arnold Volframs for his efforts as Editor of the ABTA over the past four years.

Meanwhile, discussions at the AGM were held about the two successful Seminars held in Sydney in 2001 and Melbourne 2002. Members were generally disappointed by the lack of financial support by the ABF, as the teachers believe these Seminars are of immense value to both active teachers and prospective teachers by providing

encouragement, confidence, lesson structure and the latest teaching methods, particularly for beginners. After all, if we can improve the quality and standard of bridge teaching in Australia, the country's bridge community benefits by having more players coming into its ranks.

In addition to the AGM, a teacher's panel, consisting of such illustrious talent as Ron Klinger, Paul Marston and David Lusk, was held on Tuesday January 21 at Rydges. The event was well received and provided attendees with impressive material for teaching beginners and conducting supervised session, as well as the problems associated in retaining and encouraging new players.

The ABTA hopes to continue hosting such valuable Seminars for members and interested parties, despite its financial restraints - an issue we also plan to address in the near future, hopefully with the cooperation, encouragement and full support of the ABF.

One of the highlights of the AGM, of course, was Ron Klinger's successful nomination as Hon. Life Membership of the ABTA. A delighted Ron was presented with a plaque celebrating the occasion before play at the NOT at the

Rydges ballroom on Tuesday January 21, and the response from all present was wonderfully enthusiastic.

I particularly make an appeal to all our members to contribute to the Bulletin. Letters to the Editor provide an excellent forum for discussion and benefits us all in our endeavours in teaching bridge - not an easy task, especially when you have to explain what a trump is!

Happy bridging!

Lorraine Harkness, President

From the Editor ...

As you'll see, I've grabbed a lot of material from the web for this issue. At the moment, this is not a prestigious publication but if we plan 4 issues of year with contributions from all over.

Learning from America

It used to be said that American trends reach our shores in about five years. That lag is getting shorter so we have less time to prepare for the problems faced by bridge in America - increasing age, declining numbers. Read on to see how they're coping. - NH

Next issue

Easybridge in America and Minibridge in Europe have their supporters and detractors. They have been tried here with mixed success.

In Europe, minibridge courses have apparently produced lots of mini-bridge players who did not move on to bridge.

In the States, the ACBL withdrew support for Easybridge but that has recently been restored. Go figure.

The deadline for the Spring issue is 1 September.

In this issue ...

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How Young for Youth?

Nick Hughes

A Senior in bridge is Over 55, which is strange when you consider that the average age of registered players in Australia and America is over 60 (I've read this but can't vouch for it). It would make more arithmetic sense to refer to Under 55s as Youth players. The current generation of school and uni students may be unavailable. There are so many competing past times and many of them never play cards. Add to this the image of bridge as an older person's game and there's not much hope.

What of their parent, the baby boomers? Here we still have a chance though we are not doing well. As teachers, we should aim to lower the average age of players. This is tough because people are living longer and remaining active. Around Sydney, the daytime scene is full of sprightly 70-year-olds. (Cont page 3)

PAUL LAVINGS POSTFREE BRIDGE BOOKS SOFTWARE UPDATE



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FABC (Federation of Affiliated Bridge Clubs of NSW)

Underwriting Teaching and Director Training

Some years ago, the FABC decided it would be advantageous to allocate Country areas of NSW into regions and to appoint a Country Representative to act as the liaison point between those clubs and the FABC. We believed that this would be beneficial as a more efficient means of communication and to address the specific needs of local areas. Details of appointed Representatives are located in the FABC Handbook, which is updated each January and sent to all clubs.

We implemented a scheme where we could assist groups of clubs in Country regions to provide Teacher and Director training sessions and courses for Novice through to Advanced players. Sessions are to be provided by an accredited teacher and approved by the FABC, through the local Country Representative, prior to their conduct.

We have in place a form for underwriting such events if clubs incur losses. A budget of the event needs to be presented to the FABC, through the local Representative, prior to the date of the event. (Forms are available through your Country Representative.)

Many country regions have taken up this opportunity to assist with losses incurred and thus allowed their bridge play to advance to greater heights!

Bus Subsidies

The FABC also assists with hiring of buses to transport members of clubs from one region to another to attend Congresses. This also contributes to

boosting numbers and supporting the host club in their Annual events. As a guide, the FABC has subsidised past events up to \$15.00 per person to help defray costs. (Forms available through your Country Representative)

Youth Players

Special assistance is also given to 'Youth' players showing promise in developing their skills. The NSWBA support every effort clubs make through their Youth Committee and we would consider assisting with financial support for travel and billeting.

New Clubs

New Clubs and Clubs experiencing financial difficulty are also a situation where we endeavour to assist. If you believe your club may require such support, the FABC will consider providing equipment or limited financial help on a case by case basis.

Postal Address:

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ARTARMON NSW 1570

MATT BLACKHAM, President
02 4950 2086

Fives or Fours?

by Lorraine Harkness

One of the most asked questions that seem to crop up is: Is it better to teach 5 card majors or 4 card suits up the line? Having taught both ways over the past 13 years, initially the easiest I have found is 4 card suits up the line. The main problem arises later when the players try to assimilate into the main game and the regular players, who are all playing 5 card Majors, regard 4 card Major as inferior. This naive attitude has a detrimental effect on the new player trying to cope with time constraints as well as different systems etc. As a result the teacher is obliged to change the Beginner over to 5 card Major openings *before* they join the regular game. This can appear contradictory to what has been taught previously. Everything

sorts itself out, but it creates unwanted and unnecessary problems for the new player.

The concept of *better minor* guaranteeing 3 plus cards in the minor and *five card major* does not need to be alerted, whereas the Short Club does. Teaching short club and having to alert adds to the number of things the new player has to remember. I personally find it easier to emphasise Majors—either 4 card or 5 card and then No Trump. This tends to stop the bid e.g.

1♣ – 2♣ before a major has been bid.

Of course all this a personal preference and whatever system you are most comfortable with is the one to pursue.

I welcome any discussions on this approach & other ideas in our letters to the Editor page for the next Bulletin.

Night time numbers dwindle slowly as the older people curtail their movements at night; their seats are not being filled by the under 50s.

Here is a sad fact. The way to encourage younger people to play at night is to discourage older people. I see my youngish students look a bit disappointed when they see the average age of the others. They complete the course and do well, play a bit of supervised then drift away. This is not what they signed up for – conversations centred around health, grand children, national security, etc. What can we do to encourage young / discourage old?

- Get a young teacher at night
- Forget advertising on community noticeboards, retirement homes, etc. Spend a bit on display ads in local papers, target letter drops to younger suburbs, etc. Set up a web page and build a list of email contacts.
- Charge a bit for the course, have decent table fees, a kitchen that sells proper coffees and alcohol, ideally with a pretty waitress!. Younger people don't mind spending a bit.

(Cont page 10)

Surfing

with Nick Hughes



The Other ABTA

The **American** Bridge Teachers Association is a large organisation – 430 members. I came across their home page at <http://www.abtahome.com>.

They have a list of members on the web. Presumably for privacy reasons, they don't list addresses or phone numbers but they DO have email addresses, for about half of them. The idea may be that people who want to learn bridge and stumble upon the page can contact a teacher in their area. In America (and England), there is more bridge teaching outside clubs.

On line chats

I've never been to one of these. You need to go to Fred Gittelman's Bridge Base Online (www.bridgebase.com). They have a list of topics. You might like to join in and tell us what it's like.

On June 22, the topic was *Team teaching anyone? Does it work for you?* It was at 9am EDT, which I reckon is 11pm Sunday night in Sydney but nobody was there when I went.

There is also a discussion group at Yahoo but they wouldn't let me in because I'm not an AmBTA member.

Benefits

For US\$35 you get 4 issues per year of their glossy quarterly



magazine, with these sweeteners:

Reviews – New book and software reviews in every issue of the Quarterly. Find out what your students want and help provide it to them.

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Networking – Networking with other bridge teachers is a very important part of your growth as a professional bridge teacher. New methods, ideas, and aids are constantly being developed. Make sure you keep up to date. Also, maybe you have a problem that somebody else has already solved! Let's compare notes and become the best that we can. You also get subsidised access to seminars and conventions

Annual Convention

I pasted the following direct from their web site. Just so you can compare with what we've been doing. Or you could get cracking and go there! It's in California in July, during the Summer Nationals, which run 7 - 17 July.

The Convention runs from Wednesday afternoon, July 16 (registration at 1 PM), through Friday noon, July 18.

With only one extra night's stay at the hotel, you can also enroll in our Business and Professional Seminar on Tuesday afternoon, July

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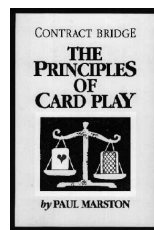
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Weak twos, Multi twos & strong 2♣

Course Length

I use mini-courses because it provides flexibility in most of the places I teach. A four-week course can start any month of the year. It's easier to get clients – especially men who have been convinced to try bridge lessons for the first time – to commit to four weeks. Some teachers are doing festival-style lessons once a month: two hours in the morning and two in the evening, or two days a month. Jean Joseph in Kansas City has found this very successful. As you know, I'm on the road constantly using this format. The notes for a four-week course can be used and the students get "extra value" in the notes if only a one-day program is offered.

Style of Teaching

For about five years, I've been teaching with the focus on play of the hand. Pat Harrington saw this method and said she immediately went and rewrote her course; she hasn't looked back. It works well, because as we know the students like to play the hands.

The lesson plans are written putting play first followed by the bidding, using a tool from the Joy of Bridge series called the Contract Card. Here's an example from Lesson Two when the students know about the game bonuses and the Bidding Ladder. They are directed to turn all four (pre-dealt) hands face up on the table. They talk among themselves to decide, as a group, which partnership has more combined points. If this is East-West, I direct them to turn the North-South hands face down. Now they look at both partnership hands and decide WHERE and HOW they would play the hand. They decide the contract. For example, when they've settled on 4♥ – because

there are ten tricks and eight hearts – we talk about which partner might suggest hearts as the trump suit. They agree it would be the player with the long hearts. (Minibridge has the player with more points declaring the contract which often results in the player with the short trump suit becoming declarer, which I feel is a disadvantage.)

As a group, we discuss the play of the hand and Declarer's Plan. Then they pick the hand up, the player to the left of the declarer leads, the dummy comes down, and the hand is played duplicate style. Playing the four hands is the focus of the first hour of the class. The bidding is the focus for the second hour. I go over exactly the same four hands, this time discussing how the auction might proceed.

The focus throughout the series is on play of the hand. There are 32 pre-dealt hands, four in each lesson and 16 additional hands for supervised play. The first book in the series, Bridge Basics 1 – An Introduction, covers bidding without competition. Bridge Basics 2 covers competitive bidding and also includes 32 hands. These will be followed by books on the Play of the Hand, Defence, and More Bidding (preempts, weak two-bids, strong 2♣, Stayman and Blackwood.)

The series gives teachers who want to use the more updated point count an alternative. I've had a lot of success with this overall approach in my most recent beginner classes.

I look forward to your comments.

15, from 1 until 6 PM and Wednesday morning, July 16 from 8:30 until noon.

Our Seminar chairman, Chuck Hodel, has planned a fabulous program centred around the business of teaching. Continuing on Wednesday morning, Audrey Grant presents Wide Range Teaching - how to successfully present to a group having wide range of skill levels. Those who attend the Seminar always come back eager to implement the ideas that have been presented.

The cost for the Convention (Wednesday afternoon through Friday noontime including our Thursday evening banquet and continental breakfasts on Thursday and Friday mornings) is \$150.

An early bird registration fee of \$125 is in effect until June 15. Reserve now and save \$25! Send an additional \$40 to register for the Seminar.

If you are bringing a spouse or guest to the banquet only, the cost is \$50. ABTA membership means so much more when you attend our Convention to share ideas and make friends with your fellow members. Whether you are a first time or returning member, we look forward to seeing YOU in Long Beach! Let's make this our best Convention yet!

Convention Host, Ed Layton, will plan group lunches during our Convention. We have a fun optional activity planned for Wednesday evening - a sailing barbecue. Dress casually, bring a sweater and join us for a sail and dinner aboard a private yacht.

APPLEBASKET TIPS: *This is a Contest for AmBTA members. Contestants sent in a one page teaching tip, judged by a panel. The winner gets a crystal apple!*

Leslie Shafer presented some phrases to encourage declarers to set up suits before grabbing their aces. He uses phrases like "No dessert until you eat your vegetables" and "Dig up your buried treasure." I like it!

Applebasket Chairman, Carol Griffin is eagerly awaiting your entry in this year's contest. Entries must be typewritten and limited to about 300 words. Take a tip from many past winners which were only a single paragraph. Entries will be voted on by ABTA members attending the Convention and the winner will be presented with a crystal apple at our banquet. You need not attend the Convention to win but winning is more fun when you are there.

VENDORS: Any member wishing to sell or display bridge products (for a single manufacturer or product line only) is asked to contact the Business Secretary by June 15 (contact information appears in letterhead). Space may be limited so tables can only be guaranteed for those who reserve in advance.

BOARD MEETINGS & INTERVIEWS: Officers, Committee Heads, and Board Members should plan on meeting on Tuesday evening and on Friday during the dinner break between bridge sessions. Teaching Credential Committee members should be available for Tuesday morning interviews. More specific meeting information will be e-mailed to you closer to the Convention dates.

BECOME A MASTER TEACHER:

In America, to get a star you need to apply and have ABTA membership for three years, 100 hours of teaching experience, attendance at a major

AmBTA seminar, do an interview and an intermediate bridge problem.

This is only useful if the award means something. It doesn't in Australia, since our Association lacks status. We wouldn't ask our top teachers to jump through these hoops.

It's easy to make a list 20 or so auto-qualifiers, starting with the Presidents. To jolt your memory, they were Ron Klinger, Paul Marston, Paul Lavings, John Roberts, Derrick Browne, Nick Hughes, Linda Cooper & Lorraine Harkness.

More from their web site:

If you are not already an ABTA Master Teacher, fulfill the requirements at this year's Convention. New Master Teachers will be honoured at our Convention Banquet. Submit application by June 19 to

Your application letter should include: a summary of your background as a bridge teacher; teaching materials (textbook name, course outlines, samples of own materials, etc.); a description of your teaching style including who, when, and where you teach. Ed Gentino will notify you of the time of your personal interview. Master Teacher interviews will be scheduled on Tuesday morning, July 15 beginning at 8:00 AM and ending in time for you to attend the Seminar.

Seminar schedule 15 July

Tuesday afternoon - The focus is on teaching and the business of teaching.

- 1 PM Registration
- 1:15 Introductions
- 1:30 Teaching Using The Internet
Mike Nistler, Petaluma, CA
- 2:30 Ray Lee from Masterpoint
Press, Toronto, ON

3:05 Tried and True Techniques -
Norma Sands, Denver, CO
(A successful teacher and author discusses what works best for different levels of students as she demonstrates proven techniques for teaching.)

4:50 Break

5:00 Teachers' Business Panel:
(Dee Berry, Pat Harrington, Harry Lampert, Norma Sands, Ginny Schuett, Dennis Scott with Ed Gentino as MC - make a list of questions to ask our panel of experts)

Wed 16 July

Wednesday Morning with Audrey Grant

AmBTA Convention Wed 16 July

- 1 PM Registration
- 1:30 Welcomes and Business
Mary Jane Von Moss
- 2:30 Teaching Practical Competitive
Bidding - David Lindop
- 3:00 Formula For Fun in the
Classroom - Marti Ronemus
- 3:30 Break
- 3:45 Dennis Scott
- 4:15 ACBL Marketing Tips -
Linda Grenel
- 4:45 Closing announcements
- Evening Sailing Barbecue - be sure to
send in reservation and \$45 payment

Thurs 17 July

- 8 AM Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 Dee Berry
- 9:30 Judi Shulman
- 10:00 Break
- 10:15 Troubleshooting Techniques -
Workshop With Pat Harrington
and Leslie Shafer
- 11:15 New Books For Teachers -
Randy Baron
- 11:45 Announcements and lunch

What I'm Teaching – My Absolute Beginner Classes

By Audrey Grant, Ontario

Reprinted from a recent AmBTA Quarterly

The System

We've witnessed, through a show of hands, changes in the game. About eight years ago the Better Bridge team embarked on a 26,000 mile, 70-city tour of the United States working with many ABTA members and meeting their students. In one section of the presentation I asked these questions which were answered with a show of hands:

How many use a 16-18 point range for their notrump opening?

How many use a 15-17 point range?

There would be many more using 16-18 than 15-17.

The next sentence would be:

"You probably want to know which range is correct; it seems so calming to have the right answer! So today, I'm going to share it with you. (Pause) Play with someone who had his or her hand up the same time you do."

This always resulted in a wave of comfortable laughter.

We've continued to travel and to meet thousands of players. I still ask this and similar questions, but the answers have changed dramatically. Most players in any room, even at those golf clubs where social bridge is the focus, use a 15-17 point range for the opening 1NT. We have changed from teaching 16-18 to 15-17, not only from the show of hands, but from your comments and stories from players.

The answers to questions about strong

and weak two bids have also changed. Most players have incorporated weak twos into their bidding system.

The Internet is likely to have more of an impact in the future.

Do you have an E-mail address? What a change in the past couple of years! Few had E-mail five years ago. Today I've stopped asking the question. It's almost insulting ... a bit like saying, "How many have a telephone?" Now the question is, "Do you use the Internet to either get bridge information or play online?" The answers to this question show that most still are not participating in chat lines, online bridge, and lessons online; nor do they make use of the Internet to get information. But that's changing too. I suspect that five years from now we won't be asking that question either.

We know that the majority of experienced players on the Internet are using 2-over-1, (*where responder's 2-over-1 response is forcing to game and a forcing 1NT response is used with some of the weaker hand - NH*) so if we could take our binoculars and look to the horizon, would we see 2-over-1 looming as a possibility for classes for the absolute beginner? Maybe. Should we now be teaching this system? Probably not, because it's not here yet; but the lessons I give my absolute beginners are compatible with 2-over-1. The student notes acknowledge there are different ranges for a 2♣ response to 1♠. We'll use 11 or more points at this point (*usually 10+ in Australia? - NH*) with a footnote that there are those who prefer 13+ when there is no interference.

idea to use them.”

“I’m your partner, sitting North, and I open 1♦”

“Use the same hand with five different auctions. South holds:”

♠ Q 9 5 3 ♥ 7 4 ♦ K J 10 2 ♣ A 8 6

(Audrey calls this the perfect hand because it has one of everything)

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	No	?
	1NT	No	?
1♥	Dbl	No	?
	3♥	No	?
		1♥	No
2♥	No	No	?

You fill in the gaps. You can do something with this, not possible in a book.

AmBTA Teacher Poll

Each issue features a question, usually from a member, and people are invited to respond. And they do!

The topic was: Mini lessons: How long? Can you have more than one presenter? Do they all have to teach the same topic?

Kantar’s suggestion was “The beginning player needs to be exposed to the four positions round the table. They should never become set in their thinking of just the bidder’s hands ... My suggestion is to start with the play and save the bidding to last. It will help them understand how to evaluate their hand & appreciate the value of length.

Roberta Salob: “I suggest you do a 1-page hand-out that the student can follow along with you and then take it

home for reinforcement. It’s a lot more work than just showing up but the rewards are great.”

Attracting the young (cont)

- Run a short course, 4 weeks is ideal. If 8 weeks, the parents of school children won’t sign up.
- Make the classes fast and fun. 2 hours maximum. Not much talking by you, plenty by them (hopefully not just bridge!) When they get to supervised, keep it short! Make sure they’re out of there by 10pm, they probably have to get up early next morning. Likewise encourage your open duplicates to finish earlier. Start at 7.30 sharp, finish at 10.20. (19 x 9 = 171. If that’s too fast, play fewer boards!) Play Howell movements with 7 tables or less (not sure about this one!).
- Use modern equipment. No more hand written notes, hand scoring. Your club needs a dealing machine, there are good second hand ones available. Use Deep Finesse hand records. It’s important to provide a modern service, such as they get from competing activities.

Does encouraging the young mean discouraging the old? Most will throw up their hands in horror – “bridge is game for all ages.” Yes but not at the same time of day?

- 1:00 Allan Mazer
- 1:30 What’s New At ACBL
Julie Greenberg
- 2:00 Millard Natchwey
- 2:30 How to Think at the Bridge
Table - Dennis Dawson
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 The Real Deal
Larry Cohen
- 3:45 Third and Fifth Best Leads
Steve Beatty
- 4:15 Jerry Helms
- 4:45 Closing Announcements
- 6:30 Cocktails with cash bar
- 7:30 Banquet

Awards and Expert Panel: Alan LeBendig MC, Jerry Helms, George Jacobs

Friday 18 July 18

- 8AM Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 Steve Robinson
- 9:30 Alan LeBendig
- 10:00 Break
- 10:15 Mike Passell
- 10:45 Grant Baze
- 11:15 Eric Rodwell
- 11:45 Closing Announcements
- 6:00 Closing and optional
dinner together

They pay US\$125 for this plus \$40 for 2-day seminar. Clearly something on this scale needs a lot of organising and active support from the ACBL.



AmBTA Quarterly

This 32 page A5 (same page size as this) magazine is mailed to 430 American teachers, four times a year. Colin Mitchell sent me the last few issues, which have some interesting stuff in them.

We can learn from them, not too much perhaps, because bridge in America is in decline as the players age and the number of registered players is static. Still, we have similar problems and can learn from their suggested solutions.

Display ads

From their Winter 2003 (January) issue, there are a large number of display ads – books & holidays – with names and products such as Baron Barclay, Masterpoint Press, Shirley Silverman, Roberta Salob, Bridge Baron 13, Audrey Grant, plus a few little-known self-publishers. I counted seven A5 pages of ads.

Why do they do it? They all offer discounts of around 40% to AmBTA members. To some extent they depend on teachers to market their product lines, not just beginner books. Even Bridge Baron 13 is up to 50% off to teachers (ok, for 50+ copies!).

Our teachers and booksellers offer

similar deals. For some teachers, that alone is worth the \$20 annual fee. (AmBTA members pay \$35 and get more for their money)

Officials

There are 18 of these, all listed with addresses & emails. That includes regional directors and we would have about that number if you include our state councillors.

There is also a membership roster available – a list of members by state, again with addresses and edresses. It seems that half their members have edresses, wonder what our percentage is.

In Australia there are privacy issues. When you rejoin in January 2004, we'll ask you whether you permit us to circulate your address to other members. This would allow our leading teachers and booksellers to mail you special offers.

They list all new members in their Quarterly, complete with addresses and edresses.

Seminars

Their main seminar is during the summer nationals in July, which moves around the country. Our ANC is not so well attended, being in winter, so we have usually held Seminars with the AGM in Canberra each January.

They emphasise camaraderie, rubbing shoulders with the great teachers and writers. Yes, that would be nice.

Book reviews

We get these in the ABF Newsletter but the Quarterly could reviews of books for teachers

Players sometimes ask teachers to recommend books and we should be

able to say "The new Kantar Book & CD on Defence is very good."

Software reviews are important and we should know the merits of Bridge Baron, Jack, GIB, Bridgemaster, etc.

The AmBTA has a prestigious Book of the Year award, which authors are keen to earn. Ron Klinger won it in 1991 for *Guide to Better Card Play*.

System

American teachers push their intermediate and advanced textbooks, such as *2-over-1 in a Nutshell* by Dee Berry.

The equivalent here might be a modern method incorporating Benjamin Twos, Stayman, transfers, splinters, etc.

It's surprising in a way that there is no Modern Standard Australian, though there are candidates such is AB Standard, as used in *Australian Bridge* magazine. Ron Klinger, Paul Marston and Derrick Browne have books that do part of the job but keen players are more likely to look to Americans like Marty Bergen & Mike Lawrence for a complete modern method.

Letters to the editor

Every good magazine needs reader feedback. There is a regular *Bridge from Down Under* by Greg Quittner.

Membership drive

Their 430 members is not such a lot in a country 10 times our size. The AmBTA Quarterly competes in a friendly way with a product from the ACBL, *The Bridge Teacher*, an 8-page A4 quarterly for ACBL Accredited Teachers, that is, those who have passed the Teacher Accreditation Program.

They are available online as pdfs at www.acbl.org. Go to Information, then

Education/Teachers. The direct link is <http://66.147.103.154/education/thebridgeteacher.htm>

The same writers appear in both publication and they promote each other's seminars. Compare this with the *ABF Newsletter* and *Australian Bridge* magazine ...

The ACBL also has a list of Accredited teachers on their web page, with location and phone numbers! I counted about 430 for California, making around **3,000 for the USA**, a useful number!

Local seminars

There was a report of a seminar in Nova Scotia, with invitations sent to all local teachers, directors, club owners. Of the 27 who turned up, 4 were ABTA members. They covered the usual topics:

Why are table numbers down? What are you doing to improve lesson and game attendance? What can your unit do to promote bridge? How can the whole community work together for the benefit of all?

The unit (= State Association / FABC) supplies discounted materials to teachers and potential students, a library of teaching material. They subsidise & house the annual local AmBTA meeting. They agreed to employ a bridge ambassador to promote bridge in schools and promote restricted events.

All good ideas that should have been implemented decades ago. Some years ago the ABF produced a nice glossy brochure featuring exciting youngish players (Khokan, Kylie, etc). Whatever happened to that?

They have workshops at their regionals.

Bidding boxes

There was an article on bidding boxes for bridge classes. Remember that the alternative for Americans is spoken bidding. Reminds us how lucky we are to have written bidding, which is great for beginners.

Teaching techniques

The most important articles are the (slightly dull) ones on non-bridge techniques, such as

whiteboards, homework, lesson format, class size, textbooks, comic relief, advertising, fees, computer use

Members enjoy articles on bridge hands and conventions, & articles directed at students (eg Audrey Grant in ACBL) but non-bridge articles are valuable

Surveys

They survey their membership with questions like:

- Are you a full time bridge person?
- How many students?
- How many classes?
- Do you run a supervised session?
- What materials?
- Do you design your own courses?
- How do you advertise?
- What topics would you like to see addressed in future issues (included with membership forms)

Mini-lessons

These are successful. Audrey Grant presented one from her *Play Bridge* Magazine. Another competing publication! Here are some snippets:

"Sort the cards into suits, then pull out the cards called"

"If you have bidding boxes, it's a good