

27th pittsburgh championships

## KAZAROSS OVER SIMBORG IN PITTSBURGH

1st person report by The An-Neil-ator

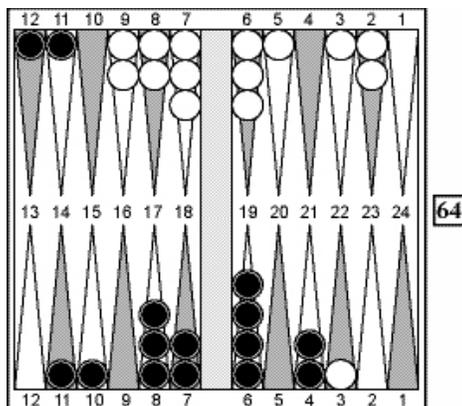
A new venue, 78-player Championship field, and record Calcutta Auction highlighted the 27th Pittsburgh Championships. Steve Hast's annual backgammon/food festival drew 167 main tournament participants to the Pittsburgh Airport Holiday Inn 18–20 February. That's a 34 player increase over 2004.

On Saturday morning, prior to the Calcutta, Auctioneer Peter Kalba awarded the 2004 American Backgammon Tour trophies to the top three finishers: 3–Neil Kazaross, 2–Ray Fogerlund, and 1–Frank Talbot (Due to a family emergency, ABT founder Bill Davis was unable to attend.) Following the presentation, Peter presided over a record Calcutta totalling just under \$20,000.

As with January's Carolina Invitational (where Phil Simborg faced Carter Mattig), Pittsburgh also had an all-Chicago finals with Neil Kazaross paired against Charlotte winner Phil Simborg. Prior to the finals, Neil had a tough semifinal battle against another Chicagoan, Herb Roman. Here is Neil's first person account of that match.—Ed.

Leading 9–8 in my 11-point Championship semifinal match vs. Herb Roman, I faced a very tough 5-1 play.

11-point Pittsburgh semifinal match. Neil Kazaross (Black) leads Herb Roman (White), 9 to 8. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-1.**



Pittsburgh director Steve Hast is flanked by Championship winner Neil Kazaross (R) and runner-up Phil Simborg.

Closing the 5-point might appear routine since even when Herb escapes with a 6 (except for 6-6), I get numerous return shots. If I close the 5-point and Herb fails to roll a 6, I probably have a good cube at this score.

However, if I close the 9-point, only four numbers hop out and they also leave many returns. And now if I can make the 5-point, I am basically gin with a 6-prime. So I felt that if I closed the 9-point, I could offer a good cube when Herb failed to hop out.

To make this difficult decision, I had to consider everything:

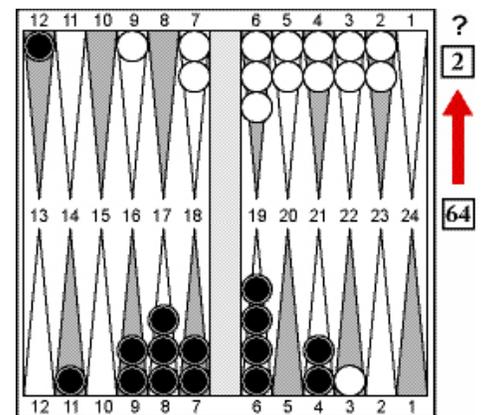
- How do I expect Herb to react to the forthcoming cube?
- What is my match equity vs. Herb at 10–8 or 9–9? (Herb's improving game is such that I'm no better than 51% at DMP. So at 10–8, I am 76% and at 9–9, I'm 51%. Therefore I felt I could send him a cube if it was technically clear vs. another world class player.)
- What are the correct cube actions after each play if Herb rolls a non-escaping number?
- What's the technically correct cubeful play?

OK. After over a minute, I determined that making the 9-point was technically best and that the typical cube decisions were “close take/pass” after either play. The position after making the 9-point is more difficult to evaluate, but I felt that Herb would be more likely to take. I also felt he was probably taking if I closed the 5-point since many non-escapes made both home board points. So I made the 9-point.

GNU program cubeful rollouts which has checker play and cube action according to score (and plays at world class level)

shows that making the 9-point is correct by 0.038. Herb replied with a 4-4 roll leading to my next decision.

11-point semifinal match. Neil Kazaross (Black) leads Herb Roman (White), 9 to 8. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Herb's 4-4 gained many pips and a threatening prime. I had to reconsider my automatic cube. Once again, with match equities 76% vs. Herb at 10–8 and 51% at 9–9, my doubling window opens at 68% cubeless. I lose my market by a mile if I make a prime in this ungammonish position, but I do need to be substantially above 68% to cube.

I call this position type “15-vs.-1.” If I contain and close-out or prime the lone checker, I win; if it escapes quickly, I lose; and if I slap it around somewhat and gain some pips, the game is up in the air. I am very comfortable playing this position at DMP where I cannot be gammoned by a joker.

I felt that I had to win this at least 72% to 72.5% of the time and that I was up to making whatever difficult checker play decisions were coming. I felt that Herb was a huge favorite to take, but might pass (10% chance) due to the prime threat.

At 72%, I think it's a borderline cube/no cube. Since that is the bottom of my estimated range here, I sent it over and after Herb took, we were “all in.” A GNU rollout says I win 73.45% after cubing and that with equal players, it is a 0.163 blunder not to cube!

I rolled boxes and made my 3- and 2-points, but never managed to make my 5-point. Herb escaped and we ended up in a

[Continued on page 8]

# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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## LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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## BG PEEVES

I enjoy Larry Liebster's "BG Peeves" column. Along the St. Lawrence River, he is known as "Larry the Jeweler" because he has cleaned so many of our clocks. I would like to warn his opponents that he is definitely smarter than he looks.—*Ed Johnson, Lyons Falls, NY*

Regarding the December "BG Peeves" column about the absence of respect in backgammon, I couldn't agree more. How do I join Larry's group?

I was in the money round of a major Jackpot last year, on my way to the finals. It was a 2-roll bearoff where we each had four checkers left, with me on roll; but I had a gap on my ace point. As I rolled the dice, my opponent said out loud in an obnoxious voice, "Let's see you roll an ace."

I did, bearing off only one man. He won the game and eventually the match, then

[Continued on page 3]

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole  
810/232-9731

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\*Denotes new or revised listing

### NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

Mar 3-6*	2005 Southern Open, Marriott Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia	770/333-1876
Mar 5	Springfield Series #5, Pizza Works, Peoria, Illinois	217/528-0117
Mar 5	Colorado State Championship, Cadillac Jack's, Denver, Colorado	719/574-5598
Mar 6	22nd Fleet Underwood Memorial & Benefit, Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Mar 7*	Kansas City Club Monthly, Harpo's, Kansas City, Missouri	816/561-4330
Mar 12	Drew McCulloch Classic, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Mar 13*	Miami Valley Monthly, Gambits Lounge-Marriott Hotel, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Mar 13	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	508/829-3283
Mar 13	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Copley, Ohio	330/268-4610
Mar 17	Third Thursday Bonus (Ohio State), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Mar 18-20	2005 Midwest Championships, Wyndham Lisle Hotel, Lisle, Illinois	773/583-6464
Mar 19*	Austin Saturday Bimonthly, JC's Steakhouse, Austin, Texas	512/261-8518
Mar 26*	Atlanta Spring Chouette Tournament, Mazzy's Sports Bar, Roswell, Georgia	770/333-1876
Apr 2*	Springfield Series #6, Damon's, Bloomington, Illinois	217/528-0117
Apr 3*	12th Annual FIBS Spring Tournament, via computer	e-mail: <a href="mailto:fibs@escocoffery.com">fibs@escocoffery.com</a>
Apr 3	Bar Point Sunday, Champs Sports Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Apr 3*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Thirsty Dog Brewery, Copley, Ohio	330/268-4610
Apr 5*	Arizona Club Monthly, Rosie McCaffrey's Irish Pub, Phoenix, Arizona	602/279-0215
Apr 8-10	11th Ohio State Championships, Airport Marriott Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio	330/268-4610
Apr 8-10*	6th Annual Las Vegas Hard Board Tourney, Fitzgerald's, Las Vegas, NV	702/240-6646
Apr 9*	Tax Refund Classic, Sansone's West Oaks Bar, Houston, Texas	281/556-0428
Apr 14*	Kansas City Club Monthly, Harpo's, Kansas City, Missouri	816/561-4330
Apr 16*	Springfield Series Grand Finale, Wildlife Sports Bar, Springfield, Illinois	217/528-0117
Apr 17*	New England Club Monthly, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Massachusetts	508/829-3283
Apr 27-May 1	21st Nevada State Tournament, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/893-6025
May 27-30	26th Chicago Open, Oak Brook Hills Resort & Hotel, Oak Brook, Illinois	847/674-0120
Jun 5	Bar Point Sunday, Champs Sports Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jul 1-4	30th Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Novi, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 29-31	1000 Islands Tournament, Pine Tree Point, Alexandria Bay, New York	585/396-0969
Jul 29-31	Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin	608/516-9109
Aug 7	Bar Point Sunday, Champs Sports Bar, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois	773/583-6464
Sep 2-5	Indiana Open, Sheraton Suites Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana	317/255-8902
Sep 16-18	Florida State Championship, Sheraton Suites, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Sep 23-25	2nd Pacific Northwest Championships, Holiday Inn, Seattle, Washington	253/856-7513

### OUTSIDE USA

Mar 5-6	Slattery Scottish Open, Hanover Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Mar 5-7*	Golden Point Tournament, Hotel Porto Belo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	55212-4845666
Mar 12-13	Gammonitis British Time Trials, Sundridge Park, Bromley, England	447900-983038
Mar 15-18	CANCELLED: 7th Abu Dhabi Championships, Abu Dhabi, UAE	613/389-4603
Mar 23-28	17th Nordic "Wide" Open, Hotel Scandic, Copenhagen, Denmark	4533-363601
Mar 24-27*	Le Trophée des Alpes, Badrutt's Palace Hotel, St. Moritz, Switzerland	4179-3205276
Apr 1-3	3rd Trofeo di Città Cavalese, Bellavista Hotel, Cavalese, Italy	393283-380725
Apr 2-3	At-A-Glance British Open, Hanover Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Apr 7-10	2nd Casino Salzburg BG & Texas Hold'em Open, Salzburg, Austria	49171-5422222
Apr 14-17*	Palmedes Challenge Cup, Puente Romano Hotel, Marbella, Spain	34626-212344
Apr 16-17	Neil Davidson's 50th Birthday, Eynsham Hall, Witney, England	447900-983038
Apr 21-24	1st Chalkidiki Tournament, Porto Karras Hotel, Chalkidiki, Greece	30697-3990985
Apr 22-25*	5th City of Jesolo Backgammon & Gin, Park Brasilia Hotel, Jesolo, Italy	3941-5211029
Apr 23-24*	Schwaben-Cup Goes Franken, Nurnberg, Germany	49711-486190
May 5-8*	11th Oslo Open, Vika Atrium, Oslo, Norway	4798-219323
May 7-8	County Cups Trophy, Hanover Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
May 12-15	Aix Les Bains Tournament, Casino Aix Les Bains, France	33142-618080
May 14-15	Gammonitis League Tournament, Eynsham Hall, Witney, England	447900-983038
May 19-22	17th WBF European Championship, Velden Casino, Velden, Austria	39269-018168
May 28-29	14th Città di Torino, Maison Musique, Rivoli, Italy	393489-001340
May 28-29*	1st Australian Championships, Legends Hotel, Queensland, Australia	617-55887888
Jun 1-5*	1st Deauville Master & Open, Lucien Barriere Hotel, Deauville, France	33672-008957
Jun 2-5	1st Bregenz Open 2005, Casino Bregenz/Mercure Hotel, Bregenz, Austria	49171-5422222
Jun 4-5	Hilton Trophy, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Jun 10-12*	DATE CHANGE: 5th Austrian Masters Finale, Cafe Heine, Vienna, Austria	436642-404285
Jun 18-19*	Liz Barker's 30th Birthday, Sundridge Park, Bromley, England	447900-983038
Jun 23-26*	1st Belgian Open, Grand Casino Oostende, Oostende, Belgium	49171-5422222
Jul 2-3*	Keren Di Bona, Hanover Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Jul 11-17	30th World Championship, Grand Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco USA contact: 212/222-7177	
Jul 20-24*	3rd Riviera's Challenge & Open, Partouche Hotel, Cannes, France	33142-618080
Jul 23-24*	10th Liverpool Open, Liverpool Bridge Club, Liverpool, England	441514-283082

# LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

went on to collect the \$5,000 first place prize money.

So you are right, the majority of modern-day backgammon players do not have any class. In some places, like London's Crockford's Club, and of course Monte Carlo, class still exists. But at most of the tournaments, there are too many rude obnoxious a-holes around for me. Fortunately, I don't play seriously any more. It's just not the same.—*Russell Sands, Boca Raton, Florida*

## SIMBORG RULE DRAWS RESPONSES

I received and enjoyed the Jan./Feb. issue of CHICAGO POINT. I totally agree with Phil Simborg that the rules of backgammon should be changed so that neither player is permitted to make a point with the opening rolls of 3-1, 4-2, 6-1, 5-3 and 6-4.

Believe it or not, I have already done extensive rollouts to determine what play should be made with these five rolls if making a point were disallowed. The toughest of these five rolls is 4-2, for which there are three very close choices. For only

\$100, I would be willing to share this info with anyone.—*Paul Weaver; Birmingham, Alabama*

I think the Simborg Rule is a great idea. I and many others (i.e. Paul Magriel) have been saddened by the revelations that so often, impure play turns out to top pure play (Snowie 4 reverses this trend to some degree).

The most interesting backgammon I observed was years ago when pure play dominated because it had the unbelievable potential for imagination. Jason Lester's imaginative style comes to mind. Phil's idea can bring this kind of creativity back to our game.—*Perry Gartner; Englewood, New Jersey*

Phil Simborg makes a useful suggestion for reducing the luck in backgammon. But we can take this further. I do hate it when my opponent rolls a double which does so many things at once. So let's say only two checker moves with a double. And it's really unfair when he rolls a 17-1 shot, so I think he should have to roll again. And surely he should not be allowed to roll more than twice the only number which comes in off the bar. And how about eight as your maximum pips on a roll in a bearoff race?—*Ray Kershaw; London, England*

*Phil Simborg informs us that at least six tournaments are going to hold Simborg-Gammon side events at their upcoming tournaments.—Ed.*

## BEAR ME IN!

Please sign me up for the 2005 Midwest Championships—"Bear-Gammon." I definitely don't want to get shut out and have to hibernate at home. To break my 21-year perfect attendance record would be un-bear-able. I'd really growl about that! I'd hate to make a grizzly scene at the tourney. What fur? I don't mean to panda you, but save me a spot and I promise not to "Smokey" my cigars at the tourney.

OK, I know that was paw humor, but it's the best I could do, so bear with me. Looking forward to another great event. They always give me warm and fuzzy-wuzzy feelings.—*Jim Opre, Downers Grove, Illinois*

For tourney info, visit [www.chicagopoint.com/mbc.html](http://www.chicagopoint.com/mbc.html)—Ed.

## WHICH DIVISION TO ENTER?

My name is Scott Johnston. Up until the Indiana tournament last year, I had been entering novice divisions in several tournaments (Pittsburgh several times, MBC once, and Michigan once). I never cashed. I was living in the Philadelphia area and did not have a local club. Last year in May I moved to Indy and have been playing in the Hoosier BG Club. Since I was getting more over-the-board play, I thought I would enter Advanced divisions and see how well I did. I tried in Indy last fall and I just tried in

[Continued on page 6]



### AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2005

Compiled through 20 February after 2 tournaments  
(Upcoming events: Southern Open, Midwest Champs, Ohio State)



Phil Simborg	29.36	Herb Roman	5.80	Lynn Lusk	3.20	Gregg Cattanach	2.22
Neil Kazaross	25.12	Mary Ann Meese	5.27	Bruce Ballance	3.19	Cole Parker	1.60
Howard Shirey	11.59	Tom Green	5.27	Steve Goldstein	2.90	Tony Garcia	1.56
Bob Hathaway	10.54	Jeff Acierno	4.94	Doug Roberts	2.90	Joe Davidson	1.41
Mark Rozans	8.64	Joe Freedman	4.67	Connie Tipton	2.80	Carmen Webb	1.41
Carter Mattig	8.64	Carol Joy Cole	4.32	Neil Garvie	2.58	Kim Owens	0.94
Carlos Azcarate	6.40	Ben Elliott	3.38	Jonah Seewald	2.58	Frank Patrick	0.80
Ray Glaeser	5.80	Karen Chung	3.20	Rory Pascal	2.22	Brenda Cohen	0.63
Malcolm Davis	5.80						



### CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB

#### 2005 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU 28 FEB.

Tak Morioka	5.88	Howard Ring	2.40	Dan Weymouth	1.04	Boris Dekhtyar	0.56
Phil Simborg	5.74	Arline Levy	2.08	Kurt Thompson	0.96	Julia Ring	0.56
Phyllis Smolinski	5.62	Alice Kay	2.00	Sargon Benjamin	0.88	Jerry Brooks	0.52
Bill Davis	4.48	Bill Bartholomay	1.84	Kwong Chan	0.88	Don Marek	0.48
Herb Roman	3.68	Paul Baraz	1.52	Ken Tibbs	0.72	Bob Steen	0.48
Carter Mattig	3.68	Oleg Raygorodsky	1.44	Greg Merriman	0.72	Roger Hickman	0.48
Larry Goldstein	3.04	Steve Klesker	1.32	Norma Shyer	0.64	Georgina Flanagan	0.48
David Rockwell	2.88	Elaine Andrews	1.28	Wayne Wiest	0.64	Mark Phillips	0.48
Gary Kay	2.80	Val Zimnicki	1.28	Royal Robinson	0.56	Bill Stegich	0.40
Tim Mabee	2.76	Bill Keefe	1.28	Mark Murray	0.56	Lisa Nelson	0.32
Lucky Nelson	2.72	Randee Simborg	1.12	Cookie Frazin	0.56		

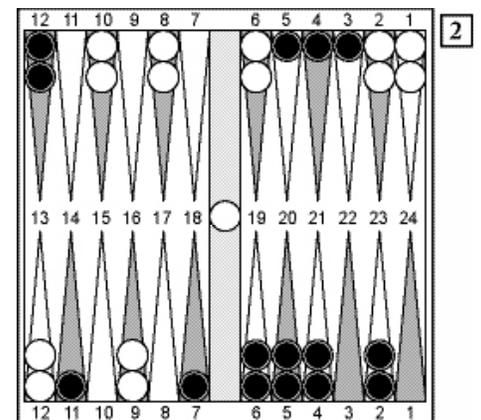
**TAK MORIOKA** cashed in every Tuesday night tournament to win February honors with 4.56 points. Phil Simborg placed second with 3.58 points and Phyllis Smolinski was third with 3.22.

*your move*

## PROBLEM #307

to be analyzed by Walter Trice

Money game. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-6.**



# ASK DANNY

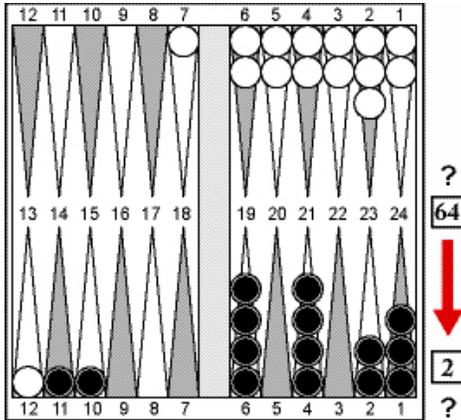


© 2005 by Danny Kleinman

## MATCH RACE CUBE

**D**ear Danny: I thought I knew something about race doubling, but apparently, there is still much to learn. This is the position that got me in trouble:

9-point match. Black trails White, 6 to 7. White on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



I have been taught that in a money game, the race leader should double if his pip lead divided by his race count is at least 8% and that the trailer can take if the figure is 12% or less. Here, White's lead is only about 6% [(68-64)/64]. Now I can see that there are some gaps in my home board, so I can't fault my opponent for doubling. However, to put the match on the line in this position somewhat surprised me. Obviously, I took and reshipped for all the marbles.

After losing a close race, I complained about my bad luck. It surprised me when my opponent was willing to bet me that I should have actually dropped the double. He is an expert player—far better than I—but I still took the wager. 1440 Snowie 3-ply, precise rollouts proved him right. My take actually increases his match-winning chances by 0.15%.

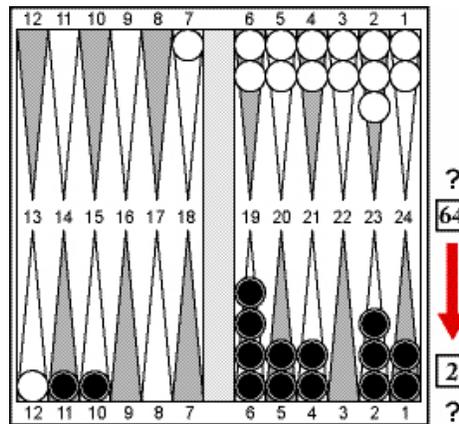
Is there some insight you can shine on this position? After this wallet-thinning experience, I'm—Thoroughly Confused

Dear Confused: You must analyze this position more thoroughly to get to the truth of it.

Let's start by obtaining a more accurate appraisal of the race. The diagram below shows the same position with three one-pip changes. I've moved the third man that you had on your 1-point back to the 2-point to

give both sides the same numbers of men on the two lowest points. Then I've moved two of your men from the 4-point back to the 5-point to fill the most dangerous gap.

The original position after three Black checkers have each been moved backward one pip.



Would you say that your actual position is better than this adjusted position? I wouldn't; if anything, it is about one pip worse. Here's why. In both positions, you remain with a gap on your 3-point, but in the changed position, that gap is only marginally harmful, as the missing 3s you may roll can be played constructively from your heavy 6-point to fill the gap. In the original position, however, you may soon run out of men to play constructively from your 6-point to your 3-point, as you will not only bear men off with 6s but also dump men on your 1-point with 5s.

Here the pip counts are 71 and 64; adjusting for the gap on your 3-point in the original position, we get 72 and 64. However, we're still not finished appraising the race. I do not agree with your rule of thumb for money race cubes. Thresholds of 8% and 12% of the pip count for doubling and taking seem arbitrary and make little sense. They ignore the additional racing advantage provided by being on shake, which is worth about four pips. To estimate the adjusted pip counts, we must subtract four pips from the pip count of the roller. So in effect, you trail in the pip count, 72 to 60.

Many years ago, in *Vision Laughs at Counting with Advice to the Dicer*, I developed a formula ("Normal Race Takes") for appraising races based on the adjusted pip counts of the players. Square the difference of the adjusted pip counts, and divide it by their sum. A ratio of 1.00 corresponds to a 24% cubeless probability of winning. Each additional 0.10 in the ratio decreases this probability by roughly 1%.

In this position, the ratio is 144/132, about 1.09, which corresponds to a cube-

less probability of winning just over 25%.

In money backgammon, that would give you an easy take, as cube vigorish—the ability to redouble advantageously if you get lucky—lowers your threshold for taking by about 3%. At this score, needing 3 points for victory in the match while your opponent needs 2 points, you will redouble automatically to put the match on the line after taking. So your threshold for taking is given by your match-winning chances trailing 6-8 in the Crawford Game.

Assuming equally able opponents, those match-winning chances are a hair over 25%, as the trailer needs to win the next two games (the undoubled Crawford Game and the doubled game following), a 25% two-legged parlay—or win a backgammon in the Crawford Game—to win the match. Should you take? Despite the Snowie rollout results, this cube action looks *too close to call*.

However, given your appraisal of your opponent as a "far better" player than you, taking is absolutely right, as your 25% chances of winning the game clearly exceed your chances of winning both of the next two games.—Yours, Danny

Address questions to: Ask Danny, c/o CHICAGO POINT, 3940 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue 504; Chicago, IL 60659-3155 or send e-mail to: [bg@chicagopoint.com](mailto:bg@chicagopoint.com)

## CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB DOMINATES 25TH CHALLENGE CUP

The Chicago Bar Point Club dominated the Illinois State Challenge Cup with an incredible 20-4 record. The 25th annual event was held at the Springfield Hilton 13 February. Five Illinois clubs participated.



BPC Challenge Cup winners from left: Tak Morioka, Carter Mattig, Gary Kay, Tim Mabee, Lucky Nelson, David Rockwell.

BPC repeated as champions for the first time since the Pub Club did it in 1992-93. Three BPC members, Carter Mattig, Lucky Nelson, and Tak Morioka, split the side pool with 4-0 records. This will be the 11th time Taki's name is inscribed on the cup since Illinois inter-club play began in 1981.—Ed Zell  
1-Bar Point Club (20-4), 2-Peoria (13-11), 3/4-Winnetka / Springfield (10-14), 5-Bloomington (7-17). Δ

## DOUBLING OUR PLEASURE

By Phil Simborg

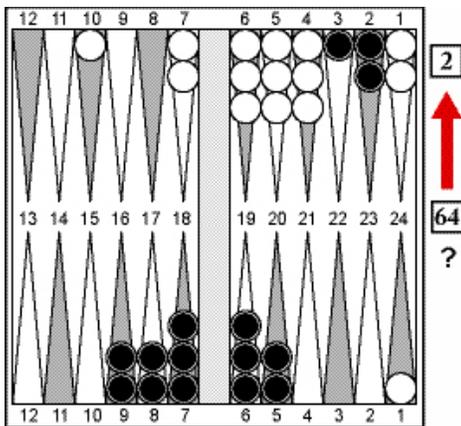
This year's Bar Point Doubles Club Championship drew 14 teams to Champs Bar in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois on Super Bowl eve, February 5, 2005.



Peter Kalba (center) awards crystal doubling cube trophies to Randee & Phil Simborg.

In the first round, my wife Randee and I faced the top-ranked team of Howard Ring and his young daughter Julia. The first game produced an interesting cube decision:

7 point match. No score. Randee & Phil (Black) vs. Julia & Howard Ring (White). Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION?**



I talked Randee into cubing against her better judgement. I thought it might be a bit early, and according to Snowie's evaluation, it was. But my reasoning was that since Julia is a very strong player and roller, we needed to gamble some and be aggressive with the cube.

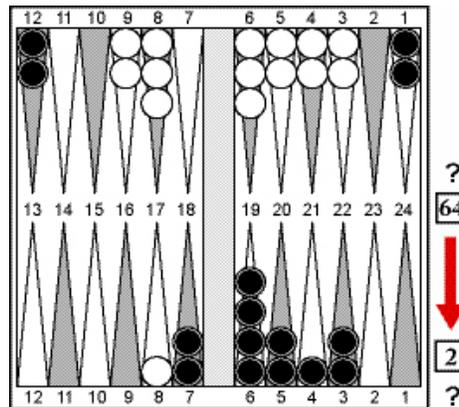
Naturally, Julia was not phased by this at all. She grinned, scooped, and a couple of rolls later, redoubled us out.

Howard's comments after the match were very interesting. It would probably be more correct to cube someone less skillful as they might have made the error of dropping. So my reasoning was exactly

backwards. Maybe we should be a little less aggressive with the cube when faced with the likes of a Julia and Howard Ring, and give lesser opponents more of a chance to make an error. Once again, I should have listened to my wife!

An interesting cube decision occurred with Julia and Howard leading 5-1:

7 point match. Julia & Howard (White) lead Randee & Phil (Black), 5 to 1. White on roll. **CUBE ACTION?**



Normally, White would double here, and Snowie says it is a clear double/drop. But Julia had studied up on her opponents before the match, and she knew that I was the kind of gamook who might well scoop a cube like this and recube immediately. Even though the scoop and recube would be wrong, Julia reasoned that since she and her Dad were the far superior team, she didn't want to see so much riding on one game. She did not cube and rolled on to win one point to reach 6-1 Crawford. It turned out to be one of the biggest mistakes of this young lady's life.

Trailing 1-6 Crawford, Randee and I decided to make extremely aggressive checker plays (that we probably wouldn't have considered against lesser players) and proceeded to win two gammons in a row to capture the match. (I am sure there was little or no luck involved in the outcome.) The good news is that with some help from her Dad, the loss put them in position to eventually win Consolation.

We went on to win the rest of our matches, two of them at DMP, earning the matching crystal cube trophies presented by Bar Point Club Champs director Peter Kalba. As for Howard and Julia, they also won the rest of their matches to take the Consolation prize.—Phil Simborg Δ

**2005 Midwest Championships**  
March 18-20 • Wyndham Lisle (IL)

Last minute info:  
[www.chicagopoint.com/mbc.html](http://www.chicagopoint.com/mbc.html)



BPC Doubles Consolation winners Julia & Howard Ring. [Photo by Phil Simborg]

### BAR POINT CLUB DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

OPEN (14 teams): 1-Randee & Phil Simborg, 2-Cookie Frazin & Boris Dekhtyar (NJ); 1C-Julia & Howard Ring.

### BAR POINT CLUB MOVES TO WHISTLER'S MARCH 1

Mark your calendar for Tuesday evening, March 1. That's the night when the Chicago Bar Point Club moves from the Clarion Hotel to Whistler's Restaurant, 3420 W. Devon, Lincolnwood, Illinois.



Whistler's is a 24-hour restaurant with a diverse reasonable menu and full liquor bar. There is plenty of parking in the adjoining lot, and proprietors Chris & Tom are backgammon friendly!

Starting March 1, we look forward to seeing you at our new home, just 5 minutes east of the Edens Expressway.

The Grand Opening event will follow our usual schedule with the Masters at 5:30 and Open at 6:30. See you at Whistler's! Δ



### ILLINOIS ACTION



Bill Davis  
773/583-6464  
Peter Kalba  
312/316-1432

Tuesday, 6-7 P.M. at Whistler's Restaurant, 3420 W. Devon, Lincolnwood. 847/673-9270.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON at Champs Sports Bar, 17 W. 517 Roosevelt Rd., Oakbrook Terrace. 630/691-1888.

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL BACKGAMMON CLUB: Tournaments Tuesday, 6:30 P.M. at Damon's Grill, 1701 Fort Jesse Road, Normal. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wed., 6:15 P.M. at Damon's Grill, 3050 Lindbergh Blvd., Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

WINNETKABG CLUB: Tournaments Wednesday, 7:00 P.M. at 620 Lincoln, Winnetka. Trudie Chibnik (847/446-0537).

PEORIA BACKGAMMON CLUB: Tourn. Thurs., 6:30 P.M. at Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Ed Zell (309/674-0557).

## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

Pittsburgh this past weekend. To be blunt, I was not competitive. I had been considering doing the same at this year's MBC, but after this weekend (I won my first match, then proceeded to drop three straight) I think I have to reconsider.

What would you advise I do? Would I be able to enter Novice this year in MBC? Should I consider doing so? I would really appreciate your advise.—*Scott Johnson, Indianapolis, Indiana*

*It sounds like you are an underdog in the middle divisions (Intermediate, Advanced), but you would be one of the better players in the lowest divisions (Novice, Beginner, Limited). Being the big fish in a little pond is more comfortable. Survival in a bigger pond requires the little fish to swim faster (and become stronger).*

*The Midwest Championships uses a panel of five regional directors to determine player eligibility. It takes three "no" votes to restrict you from playing in the division of your choice. Because you have never won a trophy, or for that matter, cashed in any ABT event, I can't imagine three directors voting you up.*

*The Bar Point Club philosophy is that players should be entitled to win in a division before they are forced to step up in class. And just because a player steps up, it shouldn't mean that he can never step back down. There are many "fence" players in our game—players that are in the top quarter of all Intermediates, yet in the bottom quarter of all Opens. For these players, varying their field play seems to be a fair and honorable approach.—Ed.*

### SARG SERGES

Sarg Serges was a great guy. I'm glad I got to talk with him on the phone at the Bar Point Club one last time before he died. Sarg was indirectly responsible for my brother Munchkin getting into the game. Munch and the late Dean Muench both played at a tournament Sarg directed up in Arlington Heights in the late 1970s.—*Jake Jacobs, Tucson, Arizona*

### WALLPAPER

Thanks for the excellent Deuce Leatherwork Backgammon/Chess wallpaper you showed in the Jan./Feb. POINT and have posted at [www.chicagopoint.com](http://www.chicagopoint.com). It is currently displayed on my computer at work.—*David Rubin, Skokie, Illinois*



**BG Peeves**

By Larry Liebster



### CONSULTING CHOUETTES

Rodney Dangerfield is dead. He got no respect. I am alive. I demand respect.

In chouette play, the Man-In-The-Box plays against a Captain and crew. The Captain is in charge of his crew. That is why he is given the title "Captain." When I am Captain in a consulting chouette, there is usually at least one crew member who will regularly blurt out a move before I have made up my mind or asked for suggestions. I consider this rude.

I have devised a questionnaire to find out where this ill-mannered crew member is coming from and to put him/her in his/her place. I ask him/her to answer the following:

The reasons that I prematurely ejaculated my move suggestion without allowing you, the Captain, to first indicate what you like, or give you the opportunity to request opinions from your crew are as follows:

- To speed up play. My time is valuable.
- Knowing the best move, to enlighten you as soon as possible.
- I think you enjoy listening to my analyses.
- I am unique and special. (*Being female, a "genius," or just having to go to the bathroom can—in their mind—put them in this category.—LL*)
- To establish respect for my superior ability.
- To have you understand that I am a force to be reckoned with.
- Because you obviously do not have as full a grasp of the candidate moves as I, you need my immediate help.
- Since your mind is not focused, I will bring you back to reality.
- To draw attention to me so you can see how cute and clever I am.
- To get you angry at me so your concentration is affected when we are on opposite sides of the board.

Please check all that apply.

Rodney Dangerfield is dead. He got no respect. Maybe that's the reason for his demise.

Join me in the crusade to eliminate disrespectful behavior in the backgammon arena and we will all be immortal.—*Larry Liebster* Δ

### BACKGAMMON ON BOARD

Thanks so much for sharing the wonderful pics you took during the cruise, play, and evening festivities of Backgammon On Board VII. We had a fabulous vacation cruise with you and the other players and spouses and will proudly display the unique trophy you thoughtfully selected for the event.

It was especially gratifying to be a part of the victorious trivia challenge team—you simply can't beat six backgammon minds when it comes to triviality! Thanks also to you and Peter Kalba for taking the time for setting up and running the tournament in your usual efficient and friendly manner.

We are already looking forward to Backgammon On Board VIII.—*Woody & Donna Woodworth; Indianapolis, Indiana*

*Looks like the next cruise tournament will be in January 2007. Plan ahead!—Ed.*

### WOODY & BARON BALL CRUISE TO VICTORY ON THE STAR PRINCESS

There's nothing more fun than playing backgammon on a cruise ship. This year's Backgammon On Board VII tournament, 23–30 January on the Star Princess, was no exception. Ports included San Juan, St. Thomas, and Tortola attracting 37 people with 22 players. A complete tourney report is at: [chicagopoint.com/bgboard7.html](http://chicagopoint.com/bgboard7.html).



OPEN (22 players/64 entries): 1-Woody Woodworth (IN), 2-Laura Pinkerton (Canada). CARIBBEAN JACKPOT (6): 1-Baron Vernon Ball (St. Thomas, V.I.), 2-Bill Davis (IL). CAPTAIN'S TOURNEY (22): 1-Michael Davis (CA), 2-Laura Pinkerton (Canada). Δ



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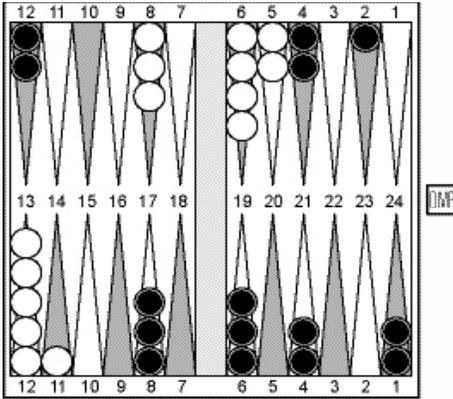
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**PROBLEM #306  
ANALYZED**

by Kit Woolsey

5-point match tied at 4-4 (double match-point). **BLACK TO PLAY 5-5.**



After the obvious 21/11\*, Black has two more 5s to play. The candidates are: 21/11, 23/13, and 8/3(2).

21/11(2)\* is very solid. It locks up the 11-point and leaves Black with just one straggler. With Black's 5-point is open, the 11-point is very valuable. If Black hasn't made the 11-point, the swing if White rolls 6-5 is monstrous. On any 5 that White rolls, or any entrance for that matter, Black will be happy to have secured the 11-point. Additionally, it lets him focus on escaping his back checker.

Black is ahead in the race, which argues for 21/11\*, 23/13. It will be easier to escape from the 21-point than from the 23-point, and escaping and winning the race is Black's main game plan. On the downside, the 4-point is the point White would most like to make. White would be quite happy to enter and hit loose there, even though Black has the stronger inner board. This would give White a chance to build a decent board

and win by priming Black's back checker. And then there is always the dangling blot on the 11-point which could come back to haunt Black in a number of ways.

21/11\*, 8/3(2) is the blitzing play. It gains quite heavily when White rolls one of the seven numbers (6-3, 5-3, 3-1, or 3-3) which don't enter but would have entered after one of the other plays. However, there are plenty of downsides to this play. The biggest downer is the blot on the 8-point. In addition to 6-5, White hits with 6-2 and 5-3. Also, Black is left with two back checkers to escape, and that is a lot more difficult than extricating one back checker. The play does have the advantage of locking up the 3-point, not only for White's immediate roll but for future blot-hitting. If gammons were of value to Black, this play would be a real contender. With gammons not mattering, it looks like the costs outweigh the gains.

Of the three candidates, 21/11(2)\* looks pretty clear. The asset of the 11-point is too important to pass up. This gives Black a very solid position. He is well ahead in the race so if he escapes his back checker he figures to win. White is on the bar, Black has the stronger inner board, and Black doesn't have any other blots to worry about. Black has to be a good favorite to bring it home.

Are we done yet? Not quite. Maybe hitting isn't so obvious. If gammons counted, it would be obvious; but with gammons not counting one certainly has to take a look at 23/13, 21/16(2). Going into this roll, Black was six pips behind, so if he plays without hitting he will be 14 pips ahead with White on roll. Since the average roll is around eight pips, being four pips ahead with the opponent on roll is roughly an even race. Thus, Black is in essence 10 pips better than an even race. That can't be all bad for the racing play.

For starters, Black freezes White on 5s

and 2s. When White rolls 5-2, 2-2, or 5-5, she can't move her lone checker on the 14-point and Black gets a double shot. That is low probability, but every bit counts. On the downside, Black has two checkers on the ace point. That will hurt in the race, as these checkers are likely to lead to some wastage. White has no wastage, and isn't likely to get any. Thus, Black's racing lead is probably a pip or two less than the pip count indicates.

The main problem with the racing play is that it isn't a race yet. Black still has to get those two back checkers home. He will have a pretty good shot to do so. Any doubles except 4-4, 6-5, 6-3, or 5-3 does the trick until he is forced to release the midpoint—then 6-3 and 5-3 don't work. That's 11 numbers out of 36, and with three checkers on the midpoint and three checkers on the 8-point, Black will have several turns to roll one of these good numbers.

Still, he might not. 11 numbers out of 36 is the same chance as entering against a 5-point board, and how many times have we failed to do that for several rolls? If Black is unable to get off the 16-point in the next few rolls, problems start. Black will be forced to bury even more checkers deep in his home board in order to avoid leaving a shot, which leads to more wastage. Eventually either Black will have to leave a shot, or it will be White who rolls big doubles and pulls ahead in the race due to the wastage forced upon Black.

The bottom line is that while the running play makes Black a favorite, he can still easily lose the game due to the contact or simply by being outraced. It is an interesting option which should certainly be considered at the match score. However, I believe that 21/11(2)\* which gains even more in the race and takes advantage of Black's stronger inner board gives Black better winning chances.—Kit Woolsey Δ

**KAZAROSS...***[Continued from page 1]*

race where I had the advantage of being on roll. With four checkers each, I ended proceedings with a double and went into the finals vs. another Chicagoan Phil Simborg.

The final match against Phil was close at the start. Then my dice took over and I won easily. But because of Phil's January win in Charlotte, my victory was not enough to overtake him in the 2005 ABT points race. Hopefully that will change by the time the April CHICAGO POINT is published. Complete results are shown at right.—Neil Kazaross Δ

**27TH PITTSBURGH CHAMPIONSHPS**

OPEN (78): 1-Neil Kazaross (IL), 2-Phil Simborg (IL), 3/4-Malcolm Davis (TX) / Herb Roman (IL); 1C-Jeff Acierno (NY), 2C-Larry Liebster (NJ), 3C/4C-Steve Goldstein (SC) / Doug Roberts (MA); 1LC-Howard Shirey (OH). ADVANCED (64): 1-Bob Hathaway (VA), 2-Mary Ann Meese (IN), 3/4-Ben Elliott (NC) / Neil Garvie (Canada); 1C-Tom Green (NC), 2C-Jonah Seewald (CO); 1LC-Bruce Ballance (PA). NOVICE (25): 1-Connie Tipton (PA), 2-Joe Davidson (PA); 1C-Carmen Webb (PA), 2C-Brenda Cohen (PA). MASTERS JACKPOT (32): 1-AI Tesoro (FL), 2-Frank Talbot (MI), 3/4-Steve Sax (CA) / Joe Sylvester (MO). AMATEUR JACKPOT #1 (32): 1-Garry Kallos (Canada), 2-Joe Miller (OH), 3/4-Michael Edge (NC) / Tom Green (NC). AMATEUR JACKPOT #2 (8): 1-Burny Tibbetts (MN), 2-Ray Reed (FL). DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Doug & Wanda Roberts (MA), 2-Carter Mattig (IL) & Jon Stephens (OH), 3/4-Jeff Acierno (NY) & Bob Bishop (NY) / Martha Ghio (NY) & John Greci (PA). LIMITED DOUBLES (12): 1-Eric Johnson (IL) & James Roston (NY), 2-Arlene Austin (PA) & Stevie Grund (PA). PITTSBURGH MEMORIAL CUP (16): 1-Tak Morioka (IL), 2-Denise Hemingway (PA). THREE RIVERS AMATEUR CUP (16): 1-Pete Townsend (PA), 2-Rock Hackshaw (NY). BLITZ (128): 1-Cem Aslan (GA). WOMEN'S ONLY BLITZ (8): 1-Karen Chung (MD), 2-Rebecca Marti (VA). QUICKIE (64): 1-Dr. Bob Hill (NY), 2-Carter Mattig (IL).

**WINNER'S  
CIRCLE**



JAN.-FEB. 2005

- South Australia Monthly KO** (Adelaide, South Australia; 4 Jan.)... OPEN (8): 1-Theo Georgiou, 2-Nick Begakis.
- Springfield Series #3** (Bloomington, IL; 8 Jan.)... OPEN (28): 1-Wally Kuester, 2-Sharon Lefferts; 1C-Mike Flohr, 2C-Jim Zimmerman; 1LC-David Rockwell.
- New England Club Monthly** (Somerville, MA; 9 Jan.)... OPEN: 1-Doug Zare, 2-Matt Reklaitis; 1C-Walter Trice, 2C-Joe Moore.
- South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 9 Jan.)... OPEN (7): 1-Perry Gartner (NJ), 2-Gokhan Gulac. INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Carlos Azcarate, 2-Mike Rezai (OH).
- Ohio State Club Monthly** (Copley, OH; 9 Jan.)... OPEN: 1-Bob Green, 2-Jim Slomkoski (MI).
- Bright'n' Breezy** (Brighton, England; 15-16 Jan.)... OPEN (91): 1-Mike Grabsky, 2-Mike Main, 3/4-Brian Busfield / Nicky Check; 1C-Adrian Jones, 2C-Dave Edwards, 3C/4C-John Hurst / Tony Lee; 1LC-Chris Bray, 2LC-Paul Lamford, 3C/4C-Lawrence Powell / John Thomas. TIDAL WAVE (64): 1-Lawrence Powell, 2-Zoe Cunningham, 3/4-Richard Biddle / Miles Ilott. JACKPOT (8): 1/2-Chris Bray / Chris Ternel. FRIDAY KNOCK-OUT (40): 1-Roy

Hollands, 2-Ron Havenhand, 3/4-Paul Lamford / Chris Ternel. **DOUBLES** (16 teams): 1-*Dick & Dum in da Bunglaow*, 2-*The Undecided*. **POKER** (30): 1-Dod Davies, 2-Amy Woodward, 3-Martin Hemming... *Michael Crane reports that £1185 was raised for tsunami victims.*

- Miami Valley Sunday Monthly** (Fairborn, OH; 16 Jan.)... OPEN (5): 1-John Crockford, 2-Gary Weiss.
- Austin Saturday Bimonthly** (Austin, TX; 19 Jan.)... OPEN: 1-Bob Sweeney, 2-Birol Kuyel, 3-Jackie Seiders-Smart.
- Third Cotswold Fireside Tournament** (Gloucestershire, England; 28-30 Jan.)... OPEN (32): 1-Julian Fetterlein, 2-Blaine Buchanan, 3/4-Mike Greenleaf / John Broomfield; 1C-Mike Greenleaf, 2C-Danny Cohen; 1LC-Dave Fall, 2LC-Andreas Giannopoulos. **TEXAS HOLD'EM** (24): 1-Myke "Mad Mullah" Wignall, 2-Ernie Pick.
- South Australia Monthly KO** (Adelaide, South Australia; 2 Feb.)... OPEN (8): 1-Angelo Ali, 2-John McLean.
- Gedigian's Super Bowl Bash** (Los Angeles, CA; 6 Feb.)... OPEN (16): 1-Norm Wiggins, 2-Paul Gedigian; 1C-Dave Williams, 2C-Azzam Masarani.—*Reported by Gammon Assoc. director Patrick Gibson.*
- Houston Columbia Memorial Tourney** (Houston, TX; 12 Feb.)... OPEN (20): 1-John Shakori, 2-Chris Stanford, 3/4-Gary Oleson / Gary Fomby; 1C-Jorge Salazar, 2C-Bill Riles.
- Springfield Series #4** (Springfield, IL; 12

Feb.)... OPEN: 1-Sean Garber, 2-Faddoul Khoury; 1C-John Jennings, 2C-Tim Mabee; 1LC-Sharon Lefferts.

- South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 13 Feb.)... OPEN (12): 1-Danielle Bastarache, 2-Murray Bryntesen.
- 1st Casino Innsbruck Open** (Innsbruck, Austria; 17-20 Feb.)... **CHAMPIONSHIP**: 1-Heimo Krainer (Austria), 2-Marcus Reinhard (Germany); 1C-Ronald Reinhardt (Germany). **INTERMEDIATE**: 1-Peter Blachian (Germany), 2C-Kristoffer Hötzeneder (Austria); 1C-Peter Winkler (Austria). **AMATEUR**: 1-Domenico Torrielli (Italy), 2-Alberto Bertot (Argentina), 3-Remus-Andrei Veres (Romania). **DOUBLES**: 1-Nodar Gagua (Georgia) & Harald Johanni (Germany), 2-Marius-Corneliu Veres & Remus-Andrei Veres (Romania). **WARM-UP**: 1-Nedim Yardimci (Turkey). **LADIES PRIZE**: Andrea Riebler (Austria). **1-POINT PRESIDENT'S TOURNAMENT**: 1-Matthias Körner (Germany), 2-Haluk Oral (Turkey). *Reported by WBA director Chiva Tafazzoli.*
- Gammonitis Peligoni Cup** (Bristol, England; 19-20 Feb.)... OPEN: 1-Brian Busfield, 2-John Slattery, 3/4-Nigel Merrigan / Ray Tannen; 1C-Jason Champion, 2C-Chris Jeans; 1LC-Jay Lewis, 2LC-Simonetta Barone. **TEXAS HOLD'EM** (19): 1-Blaine Buchanan, 2-Dod Davies. **JACKPOTWINNERS**: Jason Champion, Simonetta Barone, Chris Ternel. Δ

**AMALGAMATION**

Flash: The Palamedes Challenge Cup, an exclusive backgammon tournament with a million dollar first prize, will be held 14-17 April in Marbella, Spain. **Lewis Deyong** (UK) is assisting in the organization. You better have deep pockets. The entry fee is \$14,000. Online info: [www.marbellagathering.com](http://www.marbellagathering.com)... Visiting the Bar Point Club in February: **Paul Weaver** (AL), **Greg Merriman** (MI), **Sarah Allison** (ME), and **Joe Sylvester** (MO)... At the BPC 22 February, **Mark Murray** paid his entry at 6:30 p.m. and 15 minutes later, paramedics were rushing him to the hospital! Mark suffered a perforated ulcer requiring emergency surgery and a 3-day hospital stay... Atlanta Braves Chairman **Bill Bartholomay** (a regular BPC player) is a big supporter of Lincoln Park Zoo. At a January fund-raising auction in Chicago, he offered up the chance to be the Braves batboy at a 2005 Cubs/Braves game. The winning bid was \$3700... According to a December report in the *Persian Journal*,

Archaeologists in Iran have uncovered what they believe to be the world's oldest backgammon set (over 5000 years old). Discovered in the Burnt City, the set is made of ebony and included 60 playing pieces. Backgammon is believed to be the human race's oldest board game... Thanks to Winnetka director **Trudie Chibnik** who ran the Bar Point Club tournament 25 January while we were directing "Backgammon On Board"... On 26 March, Tyson's Corner BG director **Bill Pow** will provide backgammon demonstrations at the upcoming "Asian Games: The Art of Contest" exhibition at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute. The exhibition explores the role of games in Asian cultures historically and in the modern era... Backgammon author **Chris Bray** (England) has reanalyzed all of the positions from his 1998 book, "Backgammon—An Independent View. As a result, eight solutions were updated/changed. If you would like a Word file of the corrections, e-mail [bg@chicagopoint.com](mailto:bg@chicagopoint.com)... Backgammon On Board Caribbean Champ **Baron Vernon Ball** invited our group (gratis) to his beautiful Blackbeard's Castle and Inn on St. Thomas. If you ever dock in St.

Thomas, don't miss this beautiful property... Good news for Snowie users: According to the *Flint Area BackgammonNews*, a new version 4.2 is expected to be available as a complimentary download for registered owners within the next few months... With the recent Chicago Bar Point Club move to Whistler's Restaurant (15 minutes East of O'Hare Airport—see page 5), **Tim Mabee** is pondering the possibility of reopening the Pub Club for western suburbanites... **Phyllis Shapiro** (MO) is inviting players from both Missouri and Illinois to the reopening of the Bi-State Gateway Gammon Club. The club meets first Wednesday monthly at the St. Louis Bread Company, 6630 Delmar Blvd., University City, MO. For more info, contact Phyllis at 314/715-4876... "Incredible, But True" Department: Check out the POINT solutions for **Walter Trice's** Problem 297 (April 2004) and **Kit Woolsey's** Problem 304 (December 2004). What is incredible is that we inadvertently gave both analysts the same problem and nobody noticed! Happily, their answers are in agreement... Finally, this German proverb: "Luck sometimes visits a fool, but never sits down with him." Δ

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### NEVADA BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION

c/o Howard Markowitz, Director

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