

## Valerie Valentine 1932-2010



Valerie Valentine, former director of the prestigious Backgammon Club of Chicago died peacefully under hospice care 22 September 2010. She was 77.

Valentine came from famous roots. Her great, great uncles on her father's side were the Wright Brothers. Her grandfather on her mother's side invented the formula for Jurgens Lotion. And her father John Valentine played trumpet with Paul Ash's 1920s jazz band.

Valerie began her career as one of the early female stockbrokers in Chicago. At the same time, she was an integral part of the Greek Heritage Foundation enabling her to travel around the world as a representative of the organization.

Her connections with the Greek elite (including Aristotle Onassis) exposed her to high society. After playing backgammon in the fashionable circles, Valentine was encouraged by Prince Alexis Obolensky to organize a Chicago club which she did around 1970 with the help of Faye Schwimmer, another prominent Chicagoan. The club met Tuesdays and Thursdays in a room adjacent to Maxim's de Paris' main dining room on Astor Street in Chicago's gold coast neighborhood. Jacket and tie was the dress code.



A matchbook from Maxim's, home of the Backgammon Club of Chicago for 10 years.

Valerie's elite social club attracted many of "Chicago's 400" including Bill Bartholomay, Lillian Florsheim, Armen Avedisian, Homer Hargrave, A. Bradley Eban, and others.

Bill Bartholomay, Alanta Braves Chairman Emeritus remembers the night Lucille Ball was a guest at Val's club. "Valerie could attract players like Lucy because she had a certain savoir-faire. Not snobbish; just stylish and elegant. She was comfortable with people and treated everyone she met with kindness. She was always beautifully dressed for any occasion and a good player in her own right."



Current BPC members Bill Bartholomay (R) and Richard Stawowy were regulars at the Backgammon Club of Chicago in the '70s.

In 1973, when backgammon was starting to soar in popularity, Valentine organized her first Chicago Cup Invitational, a charity backgammon tournament that drew name players and celebrities of the day including Prince Obolensky (who often conducted her Calcutta Auctions), Paul Magriel, Gino Scalamandre, Tony Goble, Christie Hefner, and Tim Holland. Tom Gilbert won the first event. Her regular coordinators included close friends Eve Heffer and Arlynn Simon who were with her for a decade.



Valerie and Prince Obolensky award the 1977 Chicago Cup to Tim Wisecarver (L).



L to R: Chicago Cup staffers Eve Heffer & Arlynn Simon with Valerie Valentine.

The Chicago Cup continued through the 1970s and was briefly preempted when Valerie was offered the opportunity to host a Chicago stop on the prestigious Black & White Scotch backgammon circuit. London's Lewis Deyong directed the event in 1979 and 1980 with Valerie acting as the tourney organizer. And what a terrific job she did beginning with a memorable pre-tournament cocktail party at the Chicago Playboy Mansion and ending with a relaxed post-tourney knockout at Faces nightclub on Rush Street.



L to R: Paul Magriel looks on as Valerie Valentine and a Black & White Scotch rep present Barbara Glazer her 1979 trophy with director Lewis Deyong at her side.

Deyong recalls: "I certainly enjoyed working with Valerie on those events. She possessed many good qualities, among them a sense of humor, a benevolent attitude to her peers, and a "get it done now" approach to work. No wonder she ran a successful club and was immensely popular with all the players."

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# CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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## LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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## 'CAPRICIOUS' CLARIFICATION

We have a weekly chouette here in New Jersey, usually with seven to ten participants. The other night one of the players made a legal play. Although the player had not yet picked up his dice, the opposing player reached towards the centered cube and actually touched it. Upon seeing this action, the player picked up his dice.

Apparently the opponent who touched the cube had second thoughts and said that he wasn't going to double. Since the ABT New York Metro tournament is coming up, I reminded my players about the dangers of capricious cube handling and said "Do you realize that in tournament play, you could be forced by US Rules to cube?"

At that point we had a fairly heated discussion as to how this rule might be applied. Several of the players said they thought that it would not apply if the player's dice were still on the table, since

[Continued on page 3]

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



by Carol Joy Cole  
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\*Denotes new or revised listing

### NATIONAL

*American Backgammon Tour events underlined*

Jan 6-9	New York Metropolitan Open. Hyatt Regency. Jersey City, New Jersey	408/529-6769
Jan 8	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Jan 8	Springfield Series #4, Ride the Nine, Bloomington, Illinois	217/622-9447
Jan 8*	Connecticut Monthly, TD Homer's Sports Grill, Southington, Connecticut	860/887-5052
Jan 8	Tampa Bay Club Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/786-9133
Jan 8	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
Jan 9*	Cincinnati Club Monthly Tournament, Max & Erma's Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Jan 9	Ohio State Club Monthly, Brubaker's Pub, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Jan 9*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Jan 9	Portland Monthly, Spring Creek Coffee House, Milwaukie, Oregon	503/515-5682
Jan 11*	Arizona Club Monthly, Teakwoods Tavern & Grill, Phoenix, Arizona	602/762-2288
Jan 11	Chicago Bar Point Club Awards Night, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jan 14-17	3rd US Open & Masters, Marriott North, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Jan 15	New England Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Jan 16	Bellingham Monthly, Pacific Martial Arts, Bellingham, Washington	360/733-6173
Jan 16*	Ohio Valley Challenge Cup, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Jan 20	Flint Awards Party & Bonus (Pittsburgh), Liquid Sports Bar, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jan 21*	BG On Board Pre-Cruise Warm-up, Marriott North Hotel, Fort Lauderdale, FL	954/249-1416
Jan 22	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/261-4583
Jan 22-29	2011 Backgammon & Poker On Board, Western Caribbean Princess Cruise	773/583-6464
Jan 23	Pair-O-Dice Monthly Tournament, Lincoln Center Atrium, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Jan 27-30	3rd New Mexico State Championships, La Posada Resort, Santa Fe, NM	505/982-2729
Feb 2*	Charlotte Club Monthly, Dilworth Grille, Charlotte, North Carolina	704/965-3573
Feb 5*	Bar Point Doubles Championship, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Feb 5*	Connecticut Monthly, TD Homer's Sports Grill, Southington, Connecticut	860/887-5052
Feb 6*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Brubaker's Pub, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Feb 12*	Tampa Bay Club Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/786-9133
Feb 12*	Springfield Series #5, Capitol Teletrack, Springfield, Illinois	217/622-9447
Feb 13*	31st Illinois State Challenge Cup, Capitol Teletrack, Springfield, Illinois	217/622-9447
Feb 13*	Cincinnati Club Monthly Tournament, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Feb 13*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Feb 13*	Portland Monthly, Spring Creek Coffee House, Milwaukie, Oregon	503/515-5682
Feb 15*	Arizona Club Monthly, Teakwoods Tavern & Grill, Phoenix, Arizona	602/762-2288
Feb 17*	Third Thursday Bonus (CSI/Illinois), Liquid Sports Bar, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Feb 17-20	33rd Pittsburgh Championships/ABT Awards, Sheraton Four Pts., Pittsburgh, PA	304/685-3214
Feb 18-20*	Sunshine State Regional, Hampton Inn & Suites, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/743-0500
Feb 20*	Bellingham Monthly, Pacific Martial Arts, Bellingham, Washington	360/733-6173
Feb 27*	4th Annual Ohio Doubles Tournament, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Mar 4-6	CSI-Central States Invitational, Sheraton Gateway Suites O'Hare, Rosemont, IL	773/583-6464
Mar 13*	28th Fleet Underwood Memorial, Holiday Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Mar 18-20	2nd New Orleans "Sweet 16," Inn on Bourbon Street, New Orleans, Louisiana	504/366-7498
Mar 25-27	17th Ohio State Championships, Airport Marriott, Cleveland, Ohio	330/268-4610
Apr 13-17	27th Nevada State Tournament, Bally's Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Apr 29-May 1*	Atlanta Spring Classic, Crowne Plaza Ravinia, Atlanta, Georgia	770/633-0001
May 12-15*	First Golden Gate Open, Embassy Suites, South San Francisco, California	304/685-3214
May 27-30*	31st Chicago Open, Holiday Inn Suites-O'Hare, Rosemont, Illinois	617/699-9100
Jun 10-12*	Los Angeles Open, Airtel Hotel, Van Nuys, California	818/901-0464
Jul 1-4*	Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Novi Hotel, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731

### OUTSIDE USA

Jan 7-9	Bright 'n' Breezy, Barceló Old Ship Hotel, Brighton, England	441522-888676
Jan 8-9	7th Masters Open, Café Den Bengel, Antwerp, Belgium	31653-276835
Jan 14-16	TBT: 2011 Istanbul Open/WBF-TR, Armada Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey	905322-329228
Jan 14-16	SBBT: Zürich-Open/14th Züri-Cup, Neubühl, Zürich, Switzerland	4178-6329404
Jan 14-16*	Torneo Giacomo Casanova, Casinò di Venezia, Venice, Italy	393283-380725
Jan 15-16	2010 Jahresendturnier, MFC Phönix Clubhaus, Mannheim, Germany	496204-620396
Feb 4-6	Jarvis Trophy, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Feb 12-13	TBT: 7th Ankara Championship/WBF-TR, Enerji Hotel, Ankara, Turkey	905322-329228
Feb 18-20	BBT: XII Scottish Open, Barceló Stirling Highland Hotel, Stirling, Scotland	441522-888676
Feb 25-27	Play65/EBGT: Istavder/WBA Anniversary, Green Park Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey	905324-279454
Feb 25-27*	20th Torenno Città di Torino, Hotel Sitea, Torino, Italy	393356-557556
Mar 4-6	BIBA International Championship, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, England	441522-888676
Mar 5-6*	2nd Sântis-Cup, Restaurant Bierhof, St. Gallen, Switzerland	4171-8773241
Mar 12-13	Mokum Open, CaféTwee Klaveren, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	31611-106930
Mar 12-13	TBT: 3rd Bursa Championship/WBF-TR, Efehan Hotel, Bursa, Turkey	905322-329228
Apr 8-10	British Open, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Apr 8-10*	9th Torneo Città di Cavalese, Hotel Bellavista, Cavalese, Italy	393283-380725
Apr 15-17*	TBT: 3rd Antalya Open/WBF-TR, Sealife Resort, Antalya, Turkey	905322-329228
Apr 21-25	23rd Nordic Open, Scandic Hotel, Copenhagen, Denmark	4531-392791
Apr 27-May 1*	23rd WBF-European Championship & 10th Velden Open, Velden, Austria	390331-923537



# AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2010

Final Standings of top 123. 204 players earned points  
(Upcoming 2011 events: NY Metro, US Open, New Mexico)



KIT WOOLSEY	43.04	Mike Corbett	11.40	Masayuki Mochizuki	5.85	Neil Kazaross	3.67
JOHN O'HAGAN	36.67	Al Hodis	11.23	Dave Pink	5.82	Jolie Rubin	3.61
RICHARD MUNITZ	35.05	Paul Weaver	11.00	Carol Joy Cole	5.42	Bob Hickey	3.60
Rory Pascar	28.21	Ray Fogelund	10.84	Bob Weigel	5.40	Joe Freedman	3.60
Gary Fries	25.20	Donny Lomuto	10.57	Jim McGirr	5.33	John Jennings	3.46
Mary Hickey	24.87	Patty Geoffroy	10.33	Glenn Ramsey	5.17	Steve Sax	3.46
Fred Kalantari	23.41	John Baron	10.19	Ernest Ho	5.17	Stacy Turner	3.46
Ed O'Laughlin	22.95	Mel Rappaport	10.08	Ali Avcioglu	5.05	Tom Fahland	3.44
Jesse Eaton	22.46	Pete Mostoufi	9.47	Alfred Mamlet	4.83	Ross Klein	3.44
David Rubin	21.17	Wayne Jeffcoat	9.27	Alan Grunwald	4.73	Evan Etter	3.44
Dorn Bishop	18.60	Justin Nunez	9.09	Johnny Jigamian	4.65	Hideo Tateno	3.44
Malcolm Davis	18.55	George Haskour	9.09	John Rockwell	4.64	Steve Nelson	3.20
Joe Russell	17.82	Jeremy Bagai	9.05	Daniel Stroberger	4.50	Barry Silliman	3.15
Bob Steen	17.33	Scott Cole	8.89	Mark Andrus	4.50	Al Faller	3.15
Carter Mattig	17.04	Matt Cohn-Geier	8.80	Elli Nache	4.49	David Rockwell	3.11
Gary Bauer	16.78	Phil Simborg	8.50	Sergiy Rybiy	4.45	Adrian Rios	3.06
Patrick Gibson	16.00	Sean Taghani	8.40	Lynn Ehrlich	4.44	Garry Kallos	3.04
Tak Morioka	15.67	Oleg Raygorodsky	8.39	Damon Singer	4.44	Damian Plesec	3.04
Bill Davis	14.67	Ary Nogueira	8.00	Joe VanderWal	4.40	Marcy Kossar	2.97
Eden Windish	14.34	Larry Taylor	7.85	Bob Schumacher	4.40	Don Thompson, Sr.	2.90
Gregg Cattanach	14.23	Ken Bame	7.67	Sal Chehayeb	4.38	Terry Weiss	2.83
Steve Hast	13.83	Sasan Taher	7.33	Jason Pack	4.38	Sandra Sha	2.82
Dana Nazarian	13.83	Prince Barlow	7.20	Faddoul Khoury	4.33	Steve Neidecker	2.80
Dorothy Lee	13.78	Tom Wheeler	6.93	Mark Antranikian	4.33	Rob Reynolds	2.70
Greg Cottle	13.18	Dean Adamian	6.92	Dujuan Meekins	4.20	Terry Seymour	2.70
Stick Rice	12.83	Lucky Nelson	6.83	Ken Tyszko	4.20	Michael Battaglia	2.70
Mike Senkiewicz	12.80	Josh Racko	6.41	Gary Schachtschneider	4.00	Neal Weiner	2.70
Sean Garber	12.60	Jerry Godsey	6.40	Jim Slomkoski	3.88	Neal Rosensweig	2.67
Julian Fetterlein	11.70	Michael Flohr	6.30	Roz Ferris	3.83	Danielle Bastarache	2.67
Lynda Clay	11.69	Paul Polatov	6.07	Rick Rababino	3.78	Kathy Weiner	2.64
Larry Yudin	11.64	Drew Giovanis	5.85	Michelin Chabot	3.78	3 tied with	2.58

## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

you are not allowed to double when the dice are down. I felt that it was not really relevant where the dice were, as any movement towards or touching of the cube could be interpreted as a double.

My understanding is that the purpose of this rule is to avoid players from feigning cube action in order to garner a reaction from their opponent prior to actually making an official double. The actual rule has been left somewhat vague, specifically to allow tournament directors the discretion to apply it leniently, depending upon all circumstances.

So the question is not what ruling you would make as a director, but rather what the meaning and purpose of this rule is, and how the position of the dice might affect it's potential application.—Alan Grunwald, director, Mid Jersey Backgammon Club

We are in agreement with your penultimate paragraph as to the reason for not allowing capricious cube handling. We also approve of the US Rules wording for 5.4 CUBE HANDLING: "...The cube should not be handled capriciously; verbal or physical acts may be interpreted as cube actions."

"May" is the key word here. In nearly every instance, an experienced player who touches (or in certain cases reaches for) the cube should be required to double.

A beginner is better served receiving an initial warning followed by an explanation of the rule.

[Continued on page 6]



## CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2010 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED  
THRU XX XXX.

Phil Simborg	33.04	Mike Minkovski	9.12	Ken Tibbs	2.32	Paul Baraz	0.88
David Rockwell	29.56	Lucky Nelson	8.96	Ralf Boettger	2.28	Greg King	0.88
Rory Pascar	25.76	Michael Ginat	8.04	Jerry Brooks	2.16	Andy Bittman	0.84
Howard Markowitz	25.68	Peter Kalba	7.56	John O'Hagan	2.08	Mihai Pop	0.80
Bill Davis	21.04	Dave Settles	7.36	Mitch Pomper	2.00	Stefan Pop	0.72
Herb Roman	19.92	Mike Peters	7.20	John Gaski	1.92	Richard Stawowy	0.72
Bill Bartholomay	19.56	Julius High	6.80	Dan Cox	1.88	Roy Cohen	0.64
Tak Morioka	19.44	Serge Bondar	6.80	Barbara Levinson	1.76	Scott Richardson	0.64
Tim Mabee	19.12	Alex Aliyev	6.68	Bob Zavoral	1.44	Richard Pearlman	0.64
Mike Wolock	18.88	Georgina Flanagan	5.92	Linda Rockwell	1.44	Dean Livas	0.64
Bob Steen	18.84	Joann Feinstein	4.92	Bill Kaludis	1.44	Tom Meier	0.64
Larry Goldstein	17.96	Alice Kay	4.84	Mike Terenin	1.32	John Jennings	0.56
Christopher Shanava	16.92	Don Marek	4.64	Wendy Kaplan	1.28	Kit Cabello	0.56
Bill Keefe	16.08	Dan Weymouth	4.32	Shaw Dogan	1.28	Horatiu Birsan	0.48
Mike Sutton	15.44	Royal Robinson	3.80	Mark Murray	1.28	Paul Lombardo	0.48
Dujuan Meekins	15.36	Alex Owen	3.60	Eren Merzeci	1.24	Mike Pufpaf	0.48
Nora Luna Righter	13.44	Scott Casty	3.60	Sam Yoyen	1.20	Kwong Chan	0.48
Ken Bond	12.16	Gary Kay	3.40	Maurice Barie	1.12	Beth Whitney	0.48
Wayne Wiest	11.92	J. A. Miller	3.24	Joe Rafson	1.12	Randy Pals	0.48
Reginald Porter	11.20	Adrian Rios	2.72	John Spatafora	0.96	Leslie Lockett	0.32
Carter Mattig	10.72	Mark Ostrovsky	2.60	Matt Cohn-Geier	0.96	Les Moshinsky	0.32
Eric Johnson	10.08	Amy Trudeau	2.48	Ken Tyszko	0.88	Oleg Raygorodsky	0.24
Steve Klesker	10.08	Roger Hickman	2.32				

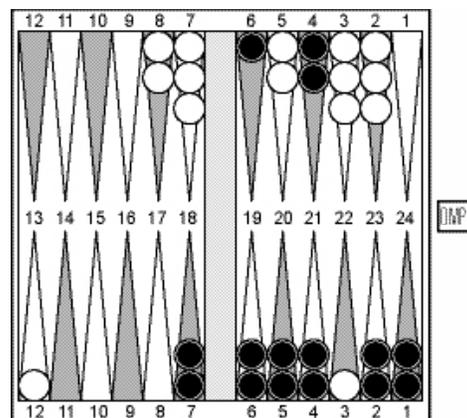
HERB ROMAN rallied to take December honors with 4.56 points, moving him from 12th to 6th in the final standings. David Rockwell (4.52) and Tak Morioka (4.08) finished a close 2nd & 3rd..

your move

### PROBLEM #361

to be analyzed by Neil Kazaross

7-point match. Black and White are tied at 6 to 6 (DMP). **BLACK TO PLAY 3-2.**



ASK  
DANNY

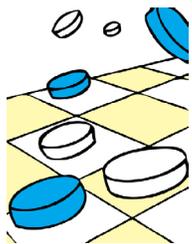
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## LUCK VS. SKILL IN VARIOUS GAMES

**D**ear Danny: I'm a young poker player who is interested in exploring other games with the possibility of participating in organized tournaments in 2011. Someone told me that you are very knowledgeable in both bridge and backgammon (having directed and played in tournaments, as well as written many books on these two games). I think you have also played chess but I'm not certain of your credentials.

What is your opinion regarding the luck element in each game (please evaluate both duplicate and rubber bridge), which game requires the most study time to master, and in general, how the complexity of each game ranks from a standpoint of both skill and psychology.—Ready for a Change

**DEAR READY:** Chess and checkers do not involve luck at all. In 1950, when I played



both excellently, I thought checkers the more difficult of the two, as checkers was all tactics but chess-players had principles to guide them (I won't list any here, but you can find many of them

in Reuben Fine's *The Ideas Behind the Chess Openings* and my favorite book, Aron Nimzovich's *My System*). Some thirty years later, long after I had played either game seriously, I reversed that opinion. My favorite defense to a King's Pawn opening had been the *Dragon Variation of the Sicilian Defense*.

Two of my bridge students had a 19-year-old son, coincidentally also named Danny, who was a very serious chessplayer. They gave me a tour of their Hollywood Hills mansion and walked with me through Danny's chess library, a room filled wall-to-wall with shelves housing chess books. I glanced at one shelf and saw three volumes, each by a different author, with just that as their title. Recalling that Reuben Fine's *Practical Chess Openings* devoted only about three columns on a single page to the Dragon, I was thankful that circumstances had compelled me to abandon serious chess, which now demanded prodigious memory work to compete at high levels.

Bridge and backgammon both involve

much luck, so much that we can aptly call them both *games of luck-handling skills*. However, the kinds of luck are different. Backgammon players must cope with the luck of *future events* (dice that have not yet been rolled). Bridge players must cope with the luck of *past events* (cards that have already been dealt). Both involve probabilities.

Except in endings, probabilities in backgammon are well-nigh impossible to calculate, as there are 441 possible sequences of one roll for each player and many more than 441 positions that an exchange of rolls can produce as nearly every dice roll can be played in multiple ways. Therefore backgammon players must rely on general principles, such as those outlined in classic backgammon books like Barclay Cooke's *Paradoxes and Probabilities* and Paul Magriel's *Backgammon*.

Excellent as those books are, they are nonetheless shot full of errors, as Jeremy Bagai detailed decades later in his *Classic Backgammon Revisited* . . . while mercifully sparing my books, which are subject to error for the same reason: general principles are merely general, and in many backgammon positions they conflict with each other. So we must weigh one principle against another, or against several others. "Build your board!" against "Send an enemy man back!" "Don't leave blots!" against "Spring a back man!" Who can judge, much less calculate, how important each merit or drawback of a play is?

Meanwhile, throughout each game priorities are changing. The prime and board it was so vital to build early in the game later becomes a liability that must be dismantled safely to complete the victory.



That makes backgammon more difficult than chess, and success, just as in current-day chess, dependent more and more on prior knowledge (benchmark positions with equities determined by voluminous rollouts), less and less on insights and intuitions at the table. There's no storehouse of backgammon knowledge comparable to Danny's chess library, but with their book devoted exclusively to opening 3-1s, Nack Ballard and Paul Weaver have made a good start in that direction.

In some ways, and I would say on the whole, contract bridge is easier than backgammon. The relevant probabilities certainly are. Though the enormous *Official Encyclopedia of Contract Bridge* contains some tables of probabilities that few players

would try to commit to memory, some probabilities are easy to remember and not much harder to calculate. *Expert Bridge Simplified* by retired math professor Jeff Rubens shows some ways to calculate slightly more difficult bridge probabilities.

However, bridge is more complex than any other game even though not technically more difficult. Its complexity, and a large part of its appeal, stems from its social and linguistic dimensions.



I don't mean to compare the social behavior of bridge players favorably to that of other game players; indeed, when I played on both the bridge team

and the chess team of a large corporation in New York some fifty years ago, I found my chess teammates much more sociable than my bridge teammates. After a match, instead of "You stupid idiot, how could you bid *six clubs*?" it was, "Look at this position and tell me whether you think I'd have done better to have castled queen-side." No, the social element of bridge is embedded in the game itself, the cooperation between partners in both the bidding and the defense.

Some of that social element is also present in pinochle, which has two defenders collaborate against whichever player buys the contract; but it is the linguistic element that makes bridge different from all other games. Each call in bridge has a meaning, but that meaning is not fixed. Though there are natural meanings for most bids, these natural meanings can be overridden by partnership understandings called *conventions* and *treatments*.

What makes bidding so difficult for many otherwise very bright people is the dependence of the meanings of bids on *context*. A bid of three hearts does not show a fixed number of hearts. In one context, it may show seven hearts; in a second, one heart; in others, three hearts; and in some, it says nothing about hearts at all. And that's all within one system (or set of partnership understandings).

Contract bridge has more than one form of contest, rubber bridge (and its "Chicago" variation) and various forms of duplicate bridge. Rubber bridge has largely died out among serious players: the last club that featured it in my town folded in mid-1993.

Duplicate bridge may be considered an improvement upon rubber bridge in that it eliminates some of the luck: holding

good cards no longer is a main component of success, as your score is now based on comparisons with others who hold the same cards. Nonetheless, a large dose of luck remains, as probabilities govern the results of bids and plays on most deals. A 23% grand slam can succeed, rewarding an error of the player who bids it. There are often two ways to play a suit, and an expert who makes a 60% play may fail while a duffer who makes a 40% play succeeds; this happens (surprise!) 40% of the time. Luck can also take the form of which deals one plays against which opponents; you don't want to play routine deals against weak opponents and challenging deals against strong opponents.

Like chess and backgammon, perhaps even more so, bridge has become more complicated over the years, largely because of the proliferation of conventions and treatments, but for the same reason it has become more fascinating. In my opinion (a minority one among bridge players), most of the modern bidding methods are needlessly complex. If you do learn bridge, you will face additional difficulties: acquiring and retaining capable and compatible partners, and resisting their entreaties to play complicated conventions that they haven't even mastered themselves. ("I know I didn't get it right this time, but maybe I will eventually if I keep trying!")

Good luck to you in whichever new game you try. On second thought, maybe you should stick to poker. In Chapter 1 of *Why You Lose at Bridge* (the best bridge book ever, despite having been written 65 years ago), S.J. Simon says, "Don't let anybody tell you Poker is a game of chance. Poker heads the list of card games of skill; it is not as interesting as Contract Bridge, but the element of chance is smaller."



Simon goes on to say that poker offers the professional maximal opportunity to exploit his skill, a skill that is mainly mathematical,

despite the acknowledged value of "psychology" (knowing that "Mrs. Winklestein always fiddles with her diamond ring when she is bluffing"). Simon concludes, "A great game, Poker. I must learn it some time." — *Yours, Danny Δ*

*Questions for Danny Kleinman should be addressed 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*

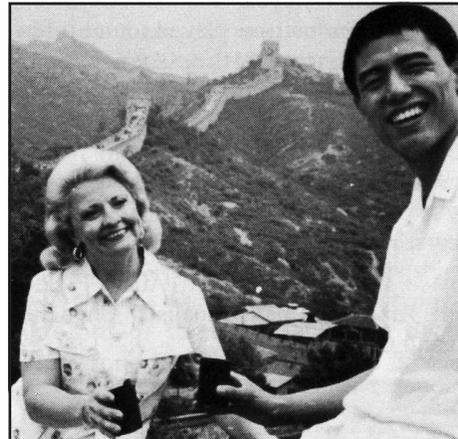
## VALENTINE...

[Continued from page 1]

Valerie was friendly with Zorine Morton (restaurateur Arnie Morton's wife) and in April 1980, she move her Backgammon Club of Chicago to Zorine's nightclub. Six months later, the BCC returned to Maxim's.

In 1981, after Black & White had ended its backgammon sponsorship, Valerie resurrected her Chicago Cup tournament and chose Gammon's of Chicago owner Howard Markowitz to direct. Together they conducted a number of major regional and national events.

"I specifically remember directing my first Nevada tournament—the Las Vegas Open at the Tropicana in 1983 with Valerie and one other staffer," said Markowitz. "While the one staffer kept asking 'When can I be excused?' Valerie's attitude was always 'What can I do to help?'"



*Valerie was one of the first U.S. women admitted to the People's Republic of China through the Greek Heritage Foundation. Here she is in the 1970s playing backgammon with Chien Kuo Chang on the Great Wall of China.*

Chicago nightlife was changing and Maxim's closed its doors in 1982. Valerie relocated her game, first to Brandy's on North State Parkway, and then to the Gaslight Club on Huron Street, but the era of stylish backgammon was winding down. She disbanded the Backgammon Club of Chicago in 1984, about the same time she took on a job as volunteer coordinator with the City of Chicago Department of Aging.

Valentine's partnership with Markowitz ended in 1985 when they last teamed to run the Chicago Classic over the Memorial Day weekend. (That event would later be renamed the Chicago Open.) Other than actively promoting and playing in a few upscale events such as the North American Championships at Paradise Island in the

Bahamas (where she won a team event), Valerie retired from organized backgammon.

In later years Valentine spent more time with her companion of many years Christopher Janus, a jet-setter and author whose book, "Miss Fourth of July, Goodbye" was made into a Disney movie in 1988. Valerie, who was elected secretary of Friends of the Chicago Public Library in 1991, assisted Janus in editing that book.



*Valerie with her companion Christopher Janus. Janus was described as "A Greek Somerset Maugham."*

Christopher Janus passed away in February 2009. During that period, Valentine suffered a stroke. Then her mother Muriel died in August 2009. It was another difficult blow for Valerie who moved from the Chicago area to McHenry, Illinois to live with her sister Melody Peckos in the fall of 2009. Melody remembers her being in fairly good spirits. "She even considered the possibility of starting a backgammon club in the area." But heart issues continued to plague her and she died the next year.

Valerie, who is survived by two sisters, a brother, and many nieces and nephews, was profiled by Bob Herguth in the May 26, 1991 Chicago Sun-Times. In his last question, Herguth asked her about her philosophy towards life. Valerie responded: "Look for new opportunities. Do better than you think you can."



*Valerie at the premiere Midwest Backgammon Championships in 1984.*

Valerie Valentine certainly achieved those goals for Chicagoland backgammon. — *Bill Davis Δ*

## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

Where we differ is how to rule with regard to the position of the dice. When the opponent touched the cube and then withdrew his hand, the player's dice were down. This was the time for the player to call for a ruling on whether a cube turn would be required. Once the player lifts his dice, he loses his chance to request a ruling on any premature action, whether it be a capricious cube touch or premature dice roll. Here's why.

Following the opponent's cube touch, assume the player picks up his dice and the opponent immediately rolls. If it is a good roll for the opponent, the player will say nothing about the premature action; but if it is a bad roll, the player can call over the director and argue that his opponent must double. To have it both ways is unfair.

Therefore, our ruling is that a player cannot ask for a "premature actions" ruling against his opponent once the player has completed his turn by picking up his dice.—Ed.

### STILL MORE ON CSI'S DRESS CODE

Your recent cover stories on the dress code of the backgammon players, then vs. now, was spot on. The modern players may be more talented, but they are clearly less sophisticated.

CHICAGO POINT rocks.—Baron Vernon Ball, Bonita Springs, Florida

I am absolutely with you and love your decision regarding a backgammon tournament dress code. It is sickening to all decent players to see bare, obese bellies hanging out through stretched-out and rolled-up ugly T-shirts. Nauseating, to put it another way.

With gratitude and relief in what you are doing.—Mike Rezai, Pataskala, OH

Re the CSI dress code. How about a Great Gatsby theme for your next tournament?—Bob Glass, Northridge, California

This isn't just a one time, gimmicky idea, Bob. We truly believe that the game of backgammon would be better served if all players dressed in a manner that respects the game.—Ed.

I wanted to applaud you for your efforts on dress code and your upcoming CSI tournament. Though I am unable to attend, the dress code for me is a very attractive call to attendance. In our own New Orleans tournament here in the Spring, I was the only player in coat and tie. In every way, your focus on deportment raises the quality of the experience for everyone.

In full disclosure, I suffer with Americans' sense of casualness. The national dress code seems to be blue jeans, a tee shirt, and

white tennis shoes. Also gone are the manners at a restaurant table, and much more. There was a time when shoppers wore coat and tie to walk along world-famous Canal Street here in New Orleans. And remember getting dressed up to take a flight?

Anyway, good for you, Bill and Amy; good for the CSI; and whether they realize it or not, good for the players who attend your event in March.—Joe Kight, New Orleans, Louisiana

I LOVED your dress code article! We plan to put that idea in play at the New Mexico State Championships. I'm a ski instructor, and thus not likely to make your March event, but good luck with it. I will make sure our members get a copy of your invitation!—Barbara McIntyre, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Yesterday, I was at Sears department store and saw some T-shirts with big CSI letters on them. Below were the words: "Can't Stand Idiots." Any ideas about having T-shirts for the CSI Backgammon Tournament in March?—Adrian Rios, Buffalo Grove, Illinois

No T-shirts are allowed in the playing room, Adrian! However, we will be selling black collared CSI golf shirts which are completely acceptable.—Ed.

This is Matt Cramer, son of David Cramer who you've known for many years. All is well. I'm simply trying to find info on the upcoming dress code CSI tourney that is apparently taking place this coming March. I believe the new location is at the Sheraton Suites in Rosemont.

Any links or info you can send is appreciated. Dan (my older brother) and I are probably going to be playing in it.—Matt Cramer, via Internet

You can get all the info on our 4-6 March event at [www.chicagopoint.com/csi2011.html](http://www.chicagopoint.com/csi2011.html). Hope you two guys can make it . . . and to share in the \$700 added money, wear a tie!—Amy & Bill

### GOODBYE 1000 ISLANDS TOURNEY

We have decided to close shop on the 1000 Islands Tournament. Our working relationship was excellent and our fondness for each other and the 1000 Islands region kept us going; but after over 25 years, it is time.

On one hand (to quote Tevya) it took us a while to decide to give up a wonderful weekend with friends we have made over the years. On the other hand it was an easy decision. Tournament attendance had dropped and the Pine Tree Point Resort has

[Continued on page 9]

## The verdict is *IN* on the first New Orleans "Sweet 16" Backgammon Tournament

"A very fun and friendly event."—Scott Rudebeck

"An excellent tournament and very well organized. The directors were friendly, helpful, and made sure that all the players had a good time."—Alan Epstein

"The level of play was excellent. Everybody I talked to had fun."—Scott Ward

## March 18-20 SOLD OUT!

Call Will Hunn (504) 366-7498 to reserve a spot for our October 2011 "Sweet 16" tourney or visit [NolaBackgammon.org](http://NolaBackgammon.org)



# Backgammon Clubs in North America

Information for this listing has been obtained directly from the featured backgammon clubs. Changes are inevitable and we suggest that you always call before attending. CHICAGO POINT would like to maintain an accurate listing of USA Backgammon Clubs online at: [www.chicagopoint.com/usacclubs.html](http://www.chicagopoint.com/usacclubs.html). Please send club information, including new clubs and club closings and updates to: **CHICAGO POINT; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr #504; Chicago, IL 60659. 773/583-6464. E-mail: [bg@chicagopoint.com](mailto:bg@chicagopoint.com)**

## WEST

CLUB NAME	LOCATION	CITY & STATE	MEETING DAY & TIME	CONTACT (E-MAIL)	TELEPHONE	MAIL INQUIRIES TO
Arizona Backgammon Club	Teakwoods Tavern & Grill	Phoenix, AZ	2nd Tuesday monthly-6:30 PM	Doug Amanda ( <a href="mailto:doug@amendainsurance.com">doug@amendainsurance.com</a> )	602/762-2288	15230 N. 75th St. 2031; Scottsdale, AZ 85260
Phoenix Backgammon Club-USBL	Baseline Sports Bar	Tempe, AZ	3rd Thursday monthly-7:00 PM	Joni Brummer ( <a href="mailto:jonibrummer@hotmail.com">jonibrummer@hotmail.com</a> )	623/206-1450	8613 N. 50th Lane; Glendale, AZ 85302
Backgammon By The Bay	Peking Express Restaurant	Berkeley, CA	2nd Saturday monthly-12:00 PM	Ted Chee ( <a href="mailto:ted@bgbythebay.com">ted@bgbythebay.com</a> )	831/261-4583	137 La Mesa Drive; Salinas, CA 93901
"	Britannia Arms Pub	Cupertino, CA	4th Saturday monthly-1:00 PM	"	"	"
Gammon Associates	El Torito	Burbank, CA	Wednesday-5:00 PM	Pat Gibson ( <a href="mailto:pgibsonmfc@roadrunner.com">pgibsonmfc@roadrunner.com</a> )	818/901-0464	7641 Orion Avenue; Van Nuys, CA 91406
"	A.R. Private Club	Los Angeles, CA	Sunday-3:00 PM	"	"	"
Backgammon Club of San Diego	Coast Cafe/Embassy Suites	La Jolla, CA	Tuesday-6:00 PM	Tom Fahland ( <a href="mailto:tom_fahland@yahoo.com">tom_fahland@yahoo.com</a> )	858/472-1516	10153 Camino Ruiz #18; San Diego, CA 92126
Boulder Backgammon Club	Roadway Inn & Suites	Boulder, CO	1st, 3rd & 5th Thurs.-7:00 PM	Richard Siebold ( <a href="mailto:rsiebold7@gmail.com">rsiebold7@gmail.com</a> )	720/233-5690	4644 Ashfield Drive; Boulder, CO 80301
Denver Backgammon Club	Smug's Grill	Denver, CO	2nd & 4th Thurs.-7:00 PM	Lynda Clay ( <a href="mailto:info@coloradobackgammon.com">info@coloradobackgammon.com</a> )	303/791-0271	5516 Samuel Peak; Highlands Ranch, CO 80130
Las Vegas Backgammon Club	Jackson's Bar & Grill	Las Vegas, NV	Tuesday-7:00 PM	Tony Anton ( <a href="mailto:tonyanton@earthlink.net">tonyanton@earthlink.net</a> )	702/458-0926	2894 Casa Mia Lane; Las Vegas, NV 89121
Nevada Backgammon Association	Bally's Hotel & Casino	Las Vegas, NV	Event dates: <a href="http://www.nvbg.com">www.nvbg.com</a>	Howard Markowitz ( <a href="mailto:howard.114@live.com">howard.114@live.com</a> )	702/218-8238	1201 N. Mitchell; Arlington Heights, IL 60004
Backgammon Club of Santa Fe	La Posada Hotel	Santa Fe, NM	Tuesday-6:00 PM	Barbara McIntyre ( <a href="mailto:b@barbaramac.com">b@barbaramac.com</a> )	505/820-1815	3101 Old Pecos Trail #707; Santa Fe, NM 87505
Portland Backgammon Club	Spring Creek Coffee House	Milwaukie, OR	2nd Sunday monthly-4:00 PM	Rob Ingram ( <a href="mailto:rob.ingram@yahoo.com">rob.ingram@yahoo.com</a> )	503/805-1218	1802 SE 35th Place; Portland, OR 97214
Bellingham Backgammon Assoc.	Pacific Martial Arts	Bellingham, WA	3rd Sunday Monthly-6:15 PM	Michael Cain ( <a href="mailto:backgammon@pacificmartialarts.net">backgammon@pacificmartialarts.net</a> )	360/733-6173	1308 N. State Street; Bellingham, WA 98225
Puget Sound Backgammon Club	Wizards Casino	Burien, WA	Tuesday-7:30 PM	Kristina Vig ( <a href="mailto:justgammon@ymail.com">justgammon@ymail.com</a> )	253/230-6561	1415 S. 17th Street; Tacoma, WA 98405

## CENTRAL

Pub Club	Playoffs Sports Bar & Grill	Carol Stream, IL	Thursday-6:45 PM	Tim Mabee ( <a href="mailto:Timmabee1@gmail.com">Timmabee1@gmail.com</a> )	630/606-2388	224 Split Oak Road; Naperville, IL 60565
Chicago Bar Point Club	Holiday Inn-O'Hare Hotel	Chicago, IL	Tue.-6:30 PM, Sun. bimonthly-12 PM	Bill Davis ( <a href="mailto:bg@chicagopoint.com">bg@chicagopoint.com</a> )	773/583-6464	3940 W. Bryn Mawr #504; Chicago, IL 60659
Bloomington-Normal BG Club	Ride The Nine	Bloomington, IL	Monday-6:00 PM	Michael Flohr ( <a href="mailto:michael.flohr@frontier.com">michael.flohr@frontier.com</a> )	309/662-7967	707 Broadmoor Drive; Bloomington, IL 61704
Midstate Backgammon Club	Ride The Nine	Bloomington, IL	Tuesday-6:00 PM	Ed Bauder ( <a href="mailto:edbauder@yahoo.com">edbauder@yahoo.com</a> )	309/830-1632	24949 E. 1900 North Road; Towanda, IL 61776
Peoria Backgammon Club	Peoria Pizza Works	Peoria, IL	Thursday-6:30 PM	Sue Will ( <a href="mailto:cruiserbag@comcast.net">cruiserbag@comcast.net</a> )	309/699-6005	147 Field Grove Court; East Peoria, IL 61611
Sangamon Valley BG Association	Capitol Teletrack	Springfield, IL	Wednesday-6:00 PM	Randy Armstrong ( <a href="mailto:randya1@comcast.net">randya1@comcast.net</a> )	217/622-9447	2012 N. 20th Street; Springfield, IL 62702
Springfield Series	Various locations	Central Illinois	Sat. monthly/Oct. to Apr.-11:30 AM	"	"	"
Winnetka Backgammon Club	Winnetka Community House	Winnetka, IL	Wednesday-7:00 PM	Trudie Chibnik ( <a href="mailto:winnbackgammon@aol.com">winnbackgammon@aol.com</a> )	847/446-0537	740 Ballantrae Drive; Northbrook, IL 60062
Hoosier Backgammon Club	Buffalo Wild Wings	Indianapolis, IN	Wednesday-6:30 PM	Sean Garber ( <a href="mailto:seagar1824@yahoo.com">seagar1824@yahoo.com</a> )	317/241-0605	1824 N. Auburn Street; Speedway, IN 46224
Northwest Indiana BG Association	VFW Hall	Porter, IN	2nd Saturday monthly-12:30 PM	Charlie Halberstadt ( <a href="mailto:chbug@yahoo.com">chbug@yahoo.com</a> )	219/617-5566	P.O. Box 84; Westville, IN 46391
Grand Rapids Backgammon Club	Victory Club	Ada, MI	Tuesday-7:00 PM	Bob Kamp ( <a href="mailto:4thekamps@comcast.net">4thekamps@comcast.net</a> )	616/956-1910	322 Clements Mill Court; Ada, MI 49301
Plymouth Backgammon Club	TC Gator's	Canton, MI	Wednesday-7:30 PM	Dean Adamian ( <a href="mailto:deanadamian@gmail.com">deanadamian@gmail.com</a> )	734/981-5706	42954 Barchester; Canton, MI 48187
Flint Area Backgammon Club	Liquid Sports Bar & Grill	Flint, MI	Thursday-7:00 PM	Carol Joy Cole ( <a href="mailto:cjc@flintbg.com">cjc@flintbg.com</a> )	810/232-9731	3719 Greenbrook Lane; Flint, MI 48507
Metro North Backgammon Club	Crash Landing	Warren, MI	Monday-7:00 PM	Paul Berg ( <a href="mailto:p.berg@att.net">p.berg@att.net</a> )	313/330-7803	921 Winchester; Lincoln Park, MI 48146
Twin Cities Backgammon Club	Chester Bird Amer. Legion Hall	Golden Valley, MN	Thursday-7:00 PM	David Minikus ( <a href="mailto:dminikus@comcast.net">dminikus@comcast.net</a> )	612/718-2613	6300 Phoenix Street; Golden Valley, MN 55427
Kansas City BG Club-USBL	Lew's Grill & Bar	Kansas City, MO	1st & 3rd Tuesday-6:30 PM	Eric Barr ( <a href="mailto:mister.eb@gmail.com">mister.eb@gmail.com</a> )	816/237-8089	7637 Bellevue Ave.; Kansas City, MO 64114
Ohio State Backgammon Club	Brubaker's Pub	Akron, OH	1st or 2nd Sun. monthly-2:00 PM	Joe Miller ( <a href="mailto:osbc@neo.rr.com">osbc@neo.rr.com</a> )	330/268-4610	1066 Winston Street; Akron, OH 44314

(Continued on opposite side)

**Backgammon Clubs In North America***(Continued from opposite side)***CENTRAL (continued)**

CLUB NAME	LOCATION	CITY & STATE	MEETING DAY & TIME	CONTACT (E-MAIL)	TELEPHONE	MAIL INQUIRIES TO
Dayton Backgammon Club-USBL	Barnes & Noble	Beavercreek, OH	Last Sunday monthly-12:45 PM	Teresa Wonderly (BackgammonMV@aol.com)	937/233-5786	5400 Pitcairn Road; Huber Heights, OH 45424
Miami Valley Backgammon Club	Parera Bread	Dayton, OH	2nd Sunday monthly-12:30 PM	Roger Foster (MVBackgammon@woh.rr.com)	937/864-1748	4151 W. Enon Drive; Enon, OH 45323
Cincinnati BG Players Club	Max & Erma's	Sharonville, OH	2nd Sunday monthly-12:00 PM	Peter Carcier (pac471@arcybg.com)	401/286-7336	6926 Jerry Drive; West Chester, OH 45069
Dallas Backgammon League	IHOP	Addison, TX	Wednesday-8:00 PM	Tom Wheeler (zwhelc1@sbcglobal.net)	972/484-3038	3705 Pageant Place; Dallas, TX 75244
Austin Backgammon Club	Doubletree Hotel	Austin, TX	Monday-7:00 PM	Lessye Joy DeMoss (lessye@isp.com)	512/251-3719	1609 Wetherfield Road; Austin, TX 78703
Madison Backgammon Club	Basie's-Radisson Hotel	Madison, WI	Tuesday-6:30 PM	Bill Minser (billm@madisonbg.com)	608/354-7573	2416 Bydawee Trail; Fitchburg, WI 53711
Milwaukee Backgammon Club	John Hawks Pub	Milwaukee, WI	2nd Wednesday-7:00 PM	Bob Holyon (bholef4@yahoo.com)	414/530-9283	911 S. 11th Street; Milwaukee, WI 53204

**NORTHEAST**

Backgammon In Connecticut	TD Homer's Sports Grill	Southington, CT	1st or 2nd Sat. mthly-11:30 AM	Rob Roy (robroy810@gmail.com)	860/887-5052	3111 South Street; Coventry, CT 06238
Connecticut Backgammon Club	Various locations	www/meeplus.com/CT-Backgammon-Club/calendar/list		Ross Gordon (ross@rossrunners.com)	203/521-7866	42 Overton Avenue; Milford, CT 06460
Baltimore Backgammon Club	The Charred Rib	Timonium, MD	1st & 3rd Tuesday-7:00 PM	Vic Morawski (vmorawski@juno.com)	443/570-0400	3358 Hickory Ave.; Baltimore, MD 21211
New England Backgammon Club	Dockside Restaurant	Malden, MA	Saturday monthly-12 PM	Herb Gurland (herb.gurland@gmail.com)	781/324-0892	62 Newman Road; Malden, MA 02148
Mid Jersey Backgammon Club	Town & Country Inn	Keyport, NJ	Thursday-7:30 PM	Alan Grunwald (agwald@gmail.com)	732/598-2988	205 Doe Trail; Morganville, NJ 07751
Midtown Backgammon & Chess Club	Club Room	New York, NY	Daily-12 PM. Side play	Bev Flowers (flowers_beverly@hotmail.com)	212/575-2003	142 West 35th Street; Room 402; New York, NY
Pair-O-Dice Backgammon	Rubenstein Altirun/lincoln Cir.	New York, NY	Sunday monthly-12:00 PM	Antonette Williams (noncaridamm@gmail.com)	212/222-7177	135 W. 106th Street #C; New York, NY 10025
Karawha Rifles Backgammon Club	Larobi's Pizza	Saint Albans, WV	4th Monday monthly-7:00 PM	Edward Burgess (edchessman@gmail.com)	304/444-6302	851 Hughes Drive; Saint Albans, WV 25177

**SOUTH**

Northwest Alabama BG Club	O'Charley's Restaurant	Florence, AL	Monday-5:45 PM	Tad Smith (tad.smith@yahoo.com)	256/712-5634	506-A Howell Street; Florence, AL 35630
New Orleans Backgammon Club	Flora's Cafe	New Orleans, LA	Wednesday-6:30 PM	Willi Hunn (willihunn@cox.net)	504/366-7498	180 Willow Drive; Gretna, LA 70053
Northern Virginia BG Club	Bailey's Pub & Grill	Arlington, VA	Monday-6:45 PM	Bill Pow (bill_22003@hotmail.com)	703/577-1927	9310 Hedgerford St.; Manassas Park, VA 20111
Beltway Backgammon Club	O'Malley's/Crowne Plaza Hotel	McLean, VA	18± Sundays/year -12:15 PM	Barry Silliman (sillybaz@belwaybg.org)	240/674-7222	P.O. Box 612; Walkersville, MD 21793
Suncoast Backgammon Assoc.	New York, New York Lounge	Clearwater, FL	Monday & Friday-6:30 PM	Bob Carpenter (gammon167@yahoo.com)	727/771-6544	1801 Eastlake Road 12E; Palm Harbor, FL 34685
South Florida Backgammon Club	Biddy Early's Irish Pub	FL Lauderdale, FL	Saturday-1:00 PM	Elyne Feinstein (BiginFLa210@belsouth.net)	954/249-1416	649 W. Oakland Park Bl. 108A; Oakland Park, FL 33311
Tampa Bay Backgammon Club	Hampton Inn & Suites	Tarpon Springs, FL	Thursday-7:00 PM	Dimitur Alipiev (bgchump@yahoo.com)	727/786-9133	450 Hadley Drive; Palm Harbor, FL 34683
The Villages Backgammon Club	Chula Vista Rec. Center	The Villages, FL	Friday-12:00 PM	Michael Shedoff (teriffic2001@comcast.net)	352/750-4914	1851 E. Schwartz Blvd.; The Villages, FL 32159
Atlanta Northside BG Club	Crown Plaza Hotel-Ravina	Roswell, GA	Wednesday-7:00 pm	Jerry Godsey (jerrygod2000@hotmail.com)	770/612-0818	1795 High Trail; Atlanta, GA 30339
"	Varies. Contact director	Greater Atlanta area	Last Sunday monthly-2:00 PM	"	"	"
Louisville Backgammon Club	Fox and Hound Pub & Grill	Louisville, KY	1st & 3rd Tuesday-6:30 PM	Quint McTyeire (inm@gdm.com)	502/587-3672	4906 Crofton Road; Louisville, KY 40207
Charlotte Backgammon Club	Dilworth Neighborhood Grill	Charlotte, NC	Mon-7 PM, 1st Wed. mthly-6 PM	David Rogers (dashro@bellsouth.net)	704/965-3573	1701 Bonnie Lane; Charlotte, NC 28213
Durham/Chapel Hill BG Club	Jason's Deli	Durham, NC	Monday-6:00 PM	Ken Larsen (klarsen1@nc.rr.com)	919/942-8635	807 Emory Drive; Chapel Hill, NC 27517
Charleston Backgammon Society	Smokey Bones Bar & Fire Grill	N. Charleston, SC	Sunday-5:00 PM	Brett Meyer (mbmeyer@comcast.net)	843/532-5426	8058 Long Shadow Ln.; N. Charleston, SC 29406
Music City Backgammon Club	Embassy Suites Hotel	Franklin, TN	Thursday-6:30 PM	John Westerlund (westerlundstocrete@hotmail.com)	615/507-4270	P.O. Box 1128; Franklin, TN 37065
Nashville Backgammon Association	Edgelfield Sports Bar & Grill	Nashville, TN	Monday-6:30 PM	Rollow Mickle (rollmick@comcast.net)	615/942-9979	1518 Compton Ave. #C; Nashville, TN 37212

**CANADA**

Natl Capital Backgammon Club	Buster's Bar & Grill	Ottawa, ON	1st Sun. mthly except Jul. & Aug.-10 AM	Eden Windish (Eden.Windish@hc-sc.gc.ca)	613/741-2530	396 Bangs St.; Ottawa ON, K1K 2N6; Canada
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## LETTERS...

*(Continued from page 6)*

become a tired lady.

We want to thank all the backgammon players who have been with us at Pine Tree for their friendship, support and loyalty to the 1000 Islands Tournament. Hopefully, we'll see you as players at an upcoming event.—*Renée Rosenbloom (Canandaigua, New York) and Eden Windish (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada)*

### CLOCK FEEDBACK

Due to the way Patrick Gibson clocks matches at his biweekly Gammon Associates tournaments, I have stopped playing in them. The current policy works this way: If one match delays the tournament, the next match must be clocked. So I patiently wait for the winner of a long match and then I get punished by being forced to use a clock. That's unfair.

At our events, only a handful of people play slow enough to cause a problem. And because the director is one of those players, the current weekly clock policy has as much chance of being changed as I have being drafted by the Los Angeles Lakers. (I'm 63 years old, 5'-6", and have no tattoos.)

At Gibson's two regional tournaments, clocks are mandatory in the Open, Jackpot, and Doubles events (and now he's even forcing players to roll for cups or dice tube preference). Because I wouldn't stoop to playing in the Intermediate division (no comments about that's where I'm qualified to be, please), my tournament playing days are probably over.

Personally, I find clocks and dice tubes distracting. Sure, I could get used to them—I got used to the insane Minnesota winters for awhile, too. But at this stage, why bother?

One big complaint is that the tournament is running too late. Want more time? You could gain two hours by eliminating the Calcutta Auctions. Yeah, I know how that would affect the tourney profit, so how about expanding the tourney hours, shortening the matches, or monitoring the early rounds and putting a clock on the slower players in the middle of their match?

Good luck getting rid of the clocks and thanks for the insights you provide.—*Art Moore, Burbank, California*

*Except for Patrick Gibson's "roll for dice tube or cups" rule, we run our Bar Point Club tournaments in the same manner he does—with minimal clock usage except when necessary. Why don't you give a G/A weekly event one more try?—Ed.*

I personally like the clock in tournaments. Clocks cut out all the BS posturing, repeated pip counts, and agonizingly long pondering over whether to take or drop. I would say for me, the single thing about backgammon tournaments (even your MBC) I disliked the most was the length of time the matches took, and the long waits between matches. It's probably part of the reason I haven't entered since 2004.

Would everyone enjoy a "great match" regardless of the time it took? NO, not everyone would. A match doesn't have to be played perfect to be great, or exciting! The clock adds tension, which is exciting in itself. Any contest that has a "deadline" is more exciting than one that can go on forever (e.g. football, basketball, hockey). Can you imagine football if they could take all the time between plays they wanted? And long games in baseball have generally hurt TV ratings.

Clocks are the way to go.—*Jeff Henry, Geneva, Illinois*

*Good news, Jeff. You can play your Open matches with a clock at every ABT event in the country except the CSI and the Ohio State Championships. Hope to see you at an upcoming tournament.—Ed.*

Thank you so much for sending me your last few issues. Even though I haven't played in decades, unbelievably, I knew at least half the names of the people you wrote about! I agree on both your editorials about the good in instituting a dress code and the bad in overuse of clocks. One of these days, I will show up at one of your events.—*Kathy Posner, Chicago, Illinois (Daily blog at [www.kathyposner.com](http://www.kathyposner.com).)*

For 2011, the Golden Circuit Tour has instated the policy that clocks will only be used by mutual agreement and to monitor slow play. That's because last year we had a professional expert impose a clock on a social player. The social player was new to the game and had no experience with the clock. He lost the match (and his 700 euro entry fee) in 30 minutes. We decided that clocks give too much advantage to an experienced pro and don't want to discourage the entries of casual competitors.

Maybe we will have some clocked Jackpot or Kickoff events as a training ground for our players. Personally, I have more pleasure playing backgammon without a clock.

On another point, I am in total agreement with you regarding a dress code at backgammon tournaments and we have tried to follow that policy at Golden Circuit events. With your permission, I want

to copy your CSI dress code policy and include it in future invitations. Poker players look like beasts. Maybe we have less players than they do, but at least we will be better dressed!—*Marco Fornasir, director, WBF Golden Circuit*

I do not like electronic Blackberries (natural ones taste great), GPS units, smart phones (the dumb ones are OK) and other techno-toys that seem to mesmerize so many. Granted, they are mildly amusing to simpletons, and they make you feel important when the buzzer goes off, but they offer no real advantage to everyday life 90% of the time.

For similar reasons, and because I do not see the need to tether everyone to a battery operated device, I do not welcome a clock five inches from my right hand while I play a game of backgammon. After all, the game is supposed to be fun. Clocks, cameras and automatic dice gizmos do not add to the fun, and they can scare away beginners.

I applaud your effort to resist clock usage except when required in matches that are specific delaying the tournament.—*Mike "19th Century" Weinberger, New Orleans, LA.*

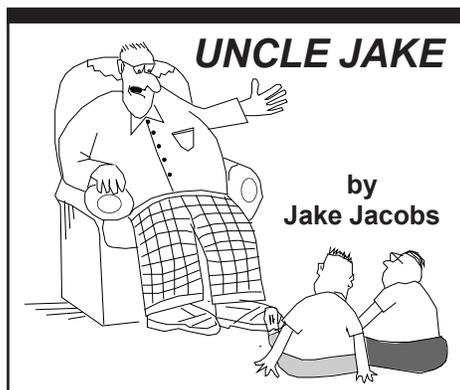
Thanks for the excellent article about clock overuse in the December POINT. I agree with you that they should be used to monitor slow play, or only when both players agree.

I play at a pretty swift pace and had never used a clock before I was "forced" to do so during the Peoria ABT Tournament a few months ago. During one of my Jackpot rounds, my opponent requested that we use a clock stating that it eliminated dice misreading and that he felt very comfortable with a clock. I am not sure if the tournament rules required my acceptance of the clock for the Jackpot (I know some events were advertised as "Clocks on Request"), but I decided to try it, in part to gain experience using a clock. That was a mistake as I found myself rushing my plays and not spending enough time considering doubling when I should have, among other errors.

I cannot blame the clock use on my poor play, or my loss in that match, but I know it did affect my concentration. Perhaps it would have been smarter of me to get experience using a clock in a less crucial match, and I will try to do that in the future.—*Tony Siegel, Fort Collins, Colorado*

Although we are ending the 1000 Islands Tournament, Renee Rosenbloom and I have always supported your philosophy

*(Continued on page 13)*



## ANGEL RAPS A PRESENT

**A**i! Dio! Are you ready for a bedtime story?"

"Papa, it's only noon!"

"Yes Honey, but if they keep climbing on me they'll spill my beer. Ai, Dio, sit down and Uncle Jake will tell you a Christmas story."

"Papa, Christmas is finished."

"Honey, they use the Thai calendar; even your mom doesn't know what day it is half the time. So help your papa and translate as I tell the tale.

"Once upon a time there was a backgammon player; we'll call him Joe."

"I want to call him Oliver."

"Okay, call him . . ."

"No, wait! I want to call him Alex!"

"Honey, call him something and let's get on with the story. Anyway, Joe, I mean Alex, was secretly in love with a player in his chouette named Angel but she wouldn't give him the time of day."

"Papa says man named Alex like a lady who wear his shoes but she have no watch."

"One day Alex was at the boat in Hammond transferring the contents of his wallet into a video poker machine when he hit a royal. So he was in a good mood that night when he got to the Tuesday tournament."

"Alex hit something with his boat but turned anyway."

"As soon as he lost in the tournament—which for Alex was usually pretty quickly—he joined the chouette, and his favorite Angel was in it. She was in a very bad mood, complaining about how tight money was. Angel always complained about how tight money was, even when she was winning in the chou, which was most of the time, but when she was losing—and when Alex peeked at the scoresheet he saw she was stuck over twenty points—she complained a lot more."

"Lady still wearing Alex shoes, but says they are too tight."

"Alex tried to liven things up: 'Rose, Champagne for the table.' But when it

came, Angel sniffed: 'I only drink Crystal.' They didn't stock Crystal at the tournament; the closest any wine they had got to France was French Lick. Alex decided he needed a new plan. Quietly, he slipped over to Rose and said: 'I'll pick up the lady's tab tonight.'

"Really?" said Rose. 'Is she going to break her streak and actually order something for once?'"

"Alex doing something with flowers. I don't know what, but maybe find out in a minute."

"Then, inspiration hit Alex: he would find a way to lose to Angel. He could afford it tonight, after all. But how could he arrange it without being obvious? Hours passed, and Angel was stuck over thirty points. It wasn't that she needed the money. It was for a good cause. She hinted darkly of relatives—close relatives—on death's door. Why even her Pekinese was peaked. Then, she won a game as Captain, and was in the Box against . . . Alex. His golden opportunity was at hand but . . . now what?"

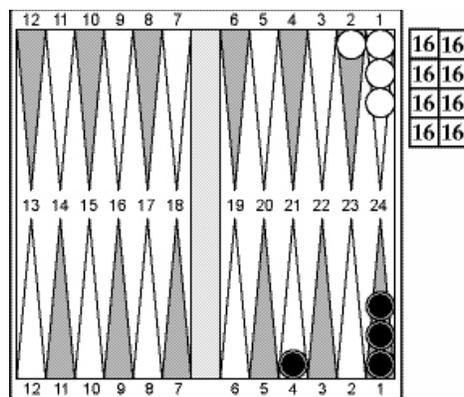
"Lady have many family sick, maybe even sick water buffalo. They put her in box; how she going to get out?"

The game was a swingly game. If Alex didn't know better, he'd think his angel, Angel, was a trifle crispy. She was on track to lose an awful lot of points when opportunity knocked, and Alex was alert enough to answer the door."

"They play swing set, but then have to stop because somebody come to door."

"How they play swing if lady in box?"

### ALEX (BLACK) TO PLAY 5-3.



"Maybe Alex push for lady."

"Alex seized his chance and played 4/1, 1/off! Quickly he picked up his dice as pandemonium erupted.

"Legal moves! Legal Moves!" Screamed his partners, led in the screaming by Philander Phelps.

"Shut up, Philander," said Angel, not looking very angelic. 'The move was legal! Don't try to claim it wasn't.'

"Everything you know about legal you probably learned in night court" said Philander. He and Angel did not get along.

"Oops! Did I goof?" said Alex, as innocently as he could muster.

"What?"

"Papa said Alex put dice in a pan. Then somebody moved and everyone yelling and lady say something bad and Alex eat some mustard."

"Angel promptly redoubled. 'I take!' said Alex. The others now demanded that he take extras. According to the rules—even though Philander was rewriting them as we speak to include retroactive extras for all players at the current level of the cube—according to the rules there was nothing compelling him to take any extras on a redouble. But Alex knew that he had cost his partners a lot of money, so: 'I take all extras on 32.'

"Angel couldn't believe it, but she could take advantage of it: 'Wouldn't I be winning all those 32-cubes if you hadn't gotten them to drop?' She asked. Of course she was lucky to collect all of the 16-cubes but she wanted more: 'Will you take seven more 32-cubes if I pay sixteen points each?'"

"Alex thought for a second, and realized that he would just be able to cover that from his royal winnings. 'Sure,' he gulped. So there he sat with fifteen 32-cubes as Angel rolled a non-double.

"What!?"

"Okay, papa talking about arithmetic. Later when you go school you learn about this. First take away thirty-two and then thirty-two and then have thirty-two and then add sixteen and then take away seven and divide by sixteen and then what you have? Give up!?! Twenty-thirteen!"

"Wow!"

"Now Alex hurriedly dumped his dice and got ready to write -256 next to his name and +256 next to Angel's, but the dice took a funny little hop. Funny, but no one was laughing as they landed on 4-4.

"Angel turned white, leapt from her seat, and ran out the door without saying a word.

"Wait, Angel" cried Alex. 'Here, for the check,' he said to Rose, and threw down several hundred dollar bills. He ran out the door, but Angel's '74 Barracuda was laying rubber out of the parking lot.

"Alex writing something, then everybody run around, then fish come and bite rubber."

"Story finished?"

"Papa, Ai wants to know if story finished?"

[Continued on next page]

“Almost. When he saw Angel peel out, Alex went back into the restaurant. ‘I’ll pay her loss,’ he said. Of course after everyone else lost thirty-two points that game all of her losses, over 280 points, were owed to Alex. But he was still collecting from everyone else in the chou. After the bizarre turn of events the others, lead by Philander, barred him forever as a suspected dice mechanic. Angel, not knowing that her losses were covered, was not seen for several months. Not many months after she returned she married . . . Philander Phelps.”

“Angel lady married someone else?”

“That’s right.”

“Poor Alex!”

“It worked out okay, Honey. Angel would have made him miserable. Just ask Philander what it was like being married to ex-wife number three. Meanwhile, Rose had never gotten a \$204.73 tip before. It made her see Alex in a whole new light. She and Alex became a couple, then a married couple, and they and their seven children lived happily ever after. Happily, once she explained to Alex that there would be no more chouettes, especially if Angel was playing, and no more trips to the boats in Hammond. It took awhile for the explanation to sink in, but once the black eye healed Alex agreed with her, and what do you think, Honey?”

“*They lived happily ever after!*” —*Jake Jacobs* Δ

## PHIL SIMBORG IS BPC'S 2010 PLAYER OF THE YEAR



Phil Simborg

Phil Simborg combined hard work with steady play to become the 2010 Chicago Bar Point Club Player of the Year. Phil led right from the start, becoming January’s Player of the Month. Tim

Mabee, then Bill Bartholomay, then Rory Pasciar overtook him to lead at various times up through August, but Phil was back on top in September where he remained for the duration of the year.

Phil was candid about his win: “Unlike most who achieve this most prestigious honor, I refuse to be humble. I deserve it. I bet I put in more time than 99% of all backgammon players . . . and I mean worldwide, not just at the Chicago club.

“Even though I have been playing the game for some 50 years and studying it seriously for the past 20, there is always more to learn. I have been very lucky to have incredible teaching partners in Perry Gartner, David Rockwell, Stick, and John O’Hagan—four amazing players, and clearly four of the best teachers in the world. If I were to list the many things they

have taught me in just this past year to improve my checker play and cube decisions, you would be shocked at the list length.

“Thanks to Bill and Peter for running a club that week after week, year after year, provides the highest level of competition in the world in a most fair and friendly way.”

Phil and runners-up David Rockwell and Rory Pasciar, along with all of the Top 20 will receive their honors at Chicago Bar Point Club Awards Night January 11 at the Holiday Inn-O’Hare. Δ

## 2010 ABT PLAYER OF THE YEAR IS KIT WOOLSEY



Kit Woolsey

Bridge Hall of Famer Kit Woolsey of Kensington, California can add another backgammon feather into his games cap. Kit earned 43.04 total points to take the title of 2010 ABT Player of the Year. Woolsey earned his points at the following three events:

US Open (CA): 1st Last Chance  
Michigan Summer Championships: 1st Main Flight  
Las Vegas Open (NV): 1st Consolation

Following his July victory in Michigan, Kit leaped ahead of John O’Hagan and Richard Munitz. But August changed the standings. A win by O’Hagan in Florida coupled with Munitz’s runner-up result at 1000 Islands dropped Woolsey to third when the September newsletter was published.

Nothing changed until Kit captured the Championship Consolation event at the Las Vegas Open. It was enough to hold up giving Kit his first-ever ABT trophy.

Second place goes to John O’Hagan of Valparaiso, IN. O’Hagan earned 36.67 points, his second year in a row over 35 points. John placed in three events including two state titles: New Mexico and Florida. He was runner-up at the Central States Invitational.

The third place finisher with 35.05 points is Richard Munitz of Suffren, NY. Richard earned points in four events including a win at the LA Open. He has now won a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ABT trophy since 2006 and is clearly the hottest player on the circuit earning over 182 points in the past five years. [See final standings on page 3.—Ed.]

All three finishers will receive their marble ABT trophies at the upcoming Pittsburgh Championships during the Calcutta Auction on 19 February. In addition, the Top 20 finishers will all receive solid silver eagle coins courtesy of CHICAGO POINT, Alan Grunwald, and Ed Bennett. Δ

## BACKGAMMON IN 1956



When people think of backgammon, they remember the boom in 1930 and then a lull during the war years with a rebirth starting in the late 1960s. But this picture proves that the game was popular enough for Playboy to use it as a prop in the 1950s. Here is Miss January 1956 Lynn Turner showing us a glimpse of her set. Δ

*You won't believe your eyes!*



**MEN'S DRESS CODE:** Collared shirts requested in the playing room. No T-shirts, sweatshirts, or shorts. Women should dress appropriately. Any man who wears a DRESS SHIRT & TIE for all of his main event matches and wins first place shares in \$700 added money. Appropriately-dressed women are also eligible.

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## LETTERS...

[Continued from page 9]

about reducing (or even eliminating) clocks at tournaments. Keep up with your efforts.  
—Eden Windish, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Regarding your March CSI event. As you know, I love your dress code and hate your clock policy. But I do respect that you are trying to provide an event for players who dislike clocks and don't even want to try them. If I play (and I likely will), can I still use a clock if my opponent agrees?

I trust that you and Amy will do your best so that play doesn't go too late Saturday night nor start too early on Sunday morning. After all, it's only a five minute trip to O'Hare Airport, so out-of-town players can stay later on Sunday afternoon.  
—Neil Kazaross, Barrington, Illinois

The main events will be "Clocks by mutual agreement" or at the Director's discretion. And yes, we'll be all over slow play!—Ed.

I returned to college teaching about two years ago and for the last week-and-a-half have been running around like (if you'll pardon the expression) a monkey on crack cocaine trying to get all of my ducks in a row for final exams and the end of the semester. But I did want to make a few comments on your clock article.

In one sentence, your editorial was "A thoughtful article making a compelling case for why clock overuse may problematically infect backgammon at even its highest levels; and which strongly supports keeping recreational backgammon recreational by limiting clock usage at ABT events and local clubs."

I shared your newsletter with some of my players at our December 7th tournament. They were entertained by the picture of the monkey on crack. You use it in part to subtly raise a point that has been a chief concern of mine: that clocks can detract from the overall quality of play, even at the world class level.

Your counter to the clock proponents' possible comeback—that both players in the illustrated match are responsible for their own plight as both are guilty of time mismanagement—makes it your most hard-hitting paragraph. Indeed, the question isn't "Why did this happen to Stepan and Matt?" The question is "Why should this happen at all?"

To be fair, PGA events are timed. A course marshall can clock excessively slow players—even awarding penalty strokes

where necessary—to keep play moving at a reasonable pace. But your main point remains valid. Marshalls know when to just stand back and forget the clock, as when a player like Tiger Woods is taking time lining up a crucial match-deciding putt on the 18th green of a major tournament. In your illustrated French Open match, no one was going to step in and say, "These players are now at a crucial, decisive juncture in this match, so let's just turn off the clock and let them play"—nor could anyone have done so, which is perhaps the problem.

I also enjoyed the Midwest Championships history lesson regarding clock usage since 1990. Very impressive that you were flexible with your clock experimentation throughout the years, not taking any one policy as set in stone, but rather gaining feedback from your players.

We both seem to agree that clock policies may be contributing to a decline in ABT tournament attendance in recent years. That has been my suspicion but the figures you cite seem to lend solid statistical support to it. The correlation between attendance declines and more rigid clock policies from 2007 to the present is hard to ignore and I agree that it can't be explained away by the current economic downturn.

While I still think that there is merit in my suggestion that clock use in a match be determined by high dice roll (like checker color and direction of play), "Clocks by Mutual Agreement" is the policy I prefer, especially for local clubs. The other—my "high dice" compromise between "Clocks on Request" and "Clocks by Mutual Agreement"—can still make a player use the clock against his will if he loses the dice roll.

When you say "But above all, I'm turned off by the feeling clocks give me," I am on board with you 100%. For me that is the bottom line. I have had good success in the matches that I have played on the clock, probably winning about 70% of them—some against solid Open-Class players like Bob Koca and Joe Friedman. Yet, I can't say that I enjoyed even a one of those clocked matches. And as someone who is essentially in it for the fun, that is the bottom line for me. Yes, I can play on the clock, and quite successfully to judge from my results; but I don't like doing it because I don't appreciate the feeling of being rushed every move I make.

Like letting the air out of a balloon, playing on the clock empties the game of enjoyment for me. And, as a recreational player, if you are not playing the game primarily for enjoyment, then what are you playing it for?—Vic Morawski, director, Baltimore Backgammon Club Δ

## 2010 WORLDWIDE PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

### NATIONAL (Alphabetized by State)

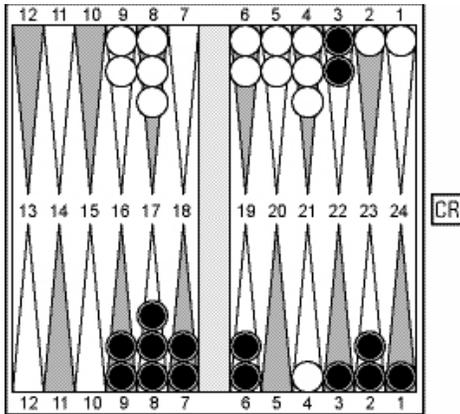
American BG Tour: Kit Woolsey (CA)  
NW Alabama BG Club (AL): Tad Smith  
Arizona Backgammon Club (AZ): Doug Amenda  
Gammon Associates (CA): George Haskour  
Backgammon By the Bay (CA): Ken Bame  
Colorado Backgammon Assoc.: Rich Siebold  
South Florida BG Club (FL): J. P. McGirr  
Suncoast BG Assoc. (FL): Stacey Turner  
Tampa Bay BG Club (FL): Bob Carpenter  
Atlanta Northside BG Club (GA): Stuart Thomson  
Bloomington-Normal BG Club (IL): Scott Rudebeck  
Chicago Bar Point Club (IL): Phil Simborg  
Midstate BG Club (IL): Scott Rudebeck  
Pub Club (IL): Don Marek  
Peoria BG Club (IL): Faddoul Khoury  
Sangamon Valley BG Assn. (IL): Jena Jennings  
Winnetka Backgammon Club (IL): David Rubin  
Hoosier BG Club (IN): Sean Garber  
Hoosier BG Club—USBL (IN): Jim Curtis  
NW Indiana BG Assoc.: John O'Hagan  
New Orleans(LA): Paul Sanchez & Larry Smith  
Baltimore BG Club (MD): Larry Cecchetti  
Beltway BG Club (MD): Barry Silliman  
New England BG Club (MA): Eric Wicklund  
Flint Area BG Club (MI): Carol Joy Cole  
Grand Rapids BG Club (MI): Chris Haviland  
Plymouth Backgammon Club (MI): Dean Adamian  
Metro North BG Club (MI): Paul Berg  
Twin Cities BG Club (MN): Steve Brown  
Kansas City BG—USBL (MO): Phil Franklin  
Sante Fe Backgammon Club (NM): Ed Bennett  
Durham/Chapel Hill BG Club (NC): Ken Larsen  
Las Vegas BG Club (NV): Ramon Eleazar  
Ohio State BG Club: Farhad Forudi  
Cincinnati Player's Club (OH): Daniel Pehoushek  
Charleston BG Society (SC): Brett Meyer  
Nashville BG Assoc. (TN): Rollow Mickle  
Dallas BG League (TX): Rich Weaver  
No. Virginia BG Club (VA): Frank Raposa  
Bellingham BG Assoc. (WA): Michael Dodson  
Puget Sound BG Club (WA): Harvey Gillis  
Madison BG Club (WI): Brad Andersen

### INTERNATIONAL

World Champion: Lars Bentzon (DEN)  
WBF Golden Circuit: TBD  
EBGT European Champ: Stepan Nuniyants (US)  
European Champion: Eli Roymi (Israel)  
Danish Champion: Henrik Løber  
Italian Champion: Vincenzo Riceputi  
BIBA Grand Prix Champ (UK): Peter Bennet  
BIBA Ranking Champ (UK): Phil Tutchings  
Nat'l Capital BG Club (Canada): Eden Windish

**PROBLEM #360  
ANALYZED**

by Kit Woolsey

5-point match. White leads Black 4 to 3, Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 5-4.**

There are only two possible themes here. Either Black breaks the anchor or he attacks. We'll first find the best play for each theme, and then decide which theme to adopt. This is good methodology for deciding on a move when there are several apparent candidates.

If Black chooses to break the anchor, his choices are 22/13 and 22/18, 8/3. Between these, 22/18, 8/3 looks better. Black needs to put his board together quickly, and making the 3-point is a big improvement. The blot on the 18-point isn't in too much danger since White has those two inner board blots. It is the blot on Black's 3-point

which is in danger, and it is important for Black to cover it now.

If Black chooses to attack, he will certainly be hitting with the four since he has three checkers on his 8-point. Then he can cover either the 4-point or the 3-point. It looks more natural to make the 4-point. The 4-point is a better point, and if White hits back on Black's 3-point, at least Black will have a return six at White's checker.

Thus, we have narrowed our candidates down to two choices: 22/18, 8/3 and 9/4\*, 8/4. It is possible that the weaker of these moves isn't even the second best play, but that is not important. We need only to find the best play, and if the previous analysis is accurate, it must be one of these two plays.

Black's back checkers are stuck behind a broken five-prime. They move only with a four, and Black has thrown a four. This argues for moving one of them, particularly since the rest of the roll plays quite conveniently. White has two inner board blots, so it may not be convenient to attack.

There are several problems with 22/18, 8/3. It is a racing-oriented play and Black is behind in the race. If White's back checker escapes, Black doesn't have a decent winning plan. Suppose White doesn't escape or attack, but simply covers one of her inner board blots. What then? Black is badly placed to attack White's blot with all Black's point stripped and the blot on his ace-point remaining. Unless Black rolls a four, all he can do is keep moving the checker on the 18-point and pray.

White might not be able to attack conveniently right now, but White figures

to cover one of his inner board blots after which White will be able to attack Black's remaining back checker. Black's four-prime won't contain White's back checker forever. It is a difficult position for Black to win after playing 22/18, 8/3.

Making the 4-point is more thematic. This prevents White from escaping immediately, builds a valuable inner board point, and starts an attack. A blitzing approach is more consistent than a priming approach with Black's position, since he has made his 2-point and started his 3- and ace-points. Also, White has only one man back and it is usually right to attack a single checker rather than try to prime it. The inner board blots are liabilities, but White also has two inner board blots, so if Black is hit, he might be able to send a second checker back which will greatly increase his winning chances.

Even when White hits and Black doesn't hit back, Black still has his 3-point game in reserve. If White doesn't hit back, Black's builders will be well placed to make points quickly and carry out the blitz. Black will still have to worry about escaping the back checkers before he crunches, but he will have a couple of turns to roll a four.

A final factor in favor of the attack is the match score. Black can use a gammon, but White cannot. Making the 4-point is clearly more likely to lead to a gammon for somebody than 22/18, 8/3. Taking that factor into account along with everything else, it seems clear that making the 4-point is the best play.—Kit Woolsey Δ

**MALCOLM DAVIS RETURNS  
TO WINNING WAYS IN CAL.**

Malcolm Davis of Dallas, Texas topped a 51-player field to capture the California State Championship. The final 2010 ABT event, held December 3–5 at the Airtel Hotel in Van Nuys, CA, drew 100+ players.



Malcolm Davis

John O'Hagan (IN), Mary Hickey (OH), Richard Munitz (NY), and Rory Pascas (IL) were all in attendance, trying to overtake ABT point leader Kit Woolsey. But it was Malcolm who had the right stuff.

CHICAGO POINT had the chance to talk with Malcolm following his win:

**CP:** Congrats, Malcolm on your big win.

**MD:** Well, thank you. I lost my second match [against Karam Ashoo] and needed eight victories in a row to win that thing. Recently, I've been a little disappointed with my game, but except for one match, I actually played pretty well.

**CP:** I heard that prior to this event, you considered retiring from tournament backgammon.

**MD:** I've thought about it because I have so many other things going on. But I always enjoy seeing my friends in the backgammon world. I may not be quite as active as I've been in the past, but I'll try not to become a total stranger.

**CP:** I see you had to get past John O'Hagan and Ed O'Laughlin in the Second Chance bracket. How easy was that?

**MD:** It's easy if you've got the right numbers. I felt a little sorry for John—but not real sorry [laughs]—because he's a great match player. I just outrolled him something awful.

Ed O'Laughlin was tough, too; but I got good dice against him as well. You really don't win one of these tournaments without

rolling good numbers.

**CP:** And what about your final match against Wayne Jeffcoat?

**MD:** He plays OK. He's a little conservative, though. I beat him 4-3 and he wasn't too happy about it. [One match between the once-defeated and undefeated decides Pat Gibson's double elimination format.]

**CP:** You're recognized as one of the most studious players on the circuit. Is there still more to learn and if so, what would that be?

**MD:** There's more to learn, but my problem is more about execution than learning.

Recording matches shows me how much I'm slipping. It's dangerous if you can't play very good, but it's a lot worse if you don't know you can't play very good.

**CP:** Are you going to a January event?

**MD:** I've very busy, but there's a chance I'll get to the US Open in Florida.

**CP:** Great, we hope to see you there.

Tourney results are on page 15.—Ed. Δ

**WINNER'S  
CIRCLE**



NOV.-DEC. 2010

•**EBGT 3rd Cyprus Open / EBGT Grand Finale** (Nicosia, Cyprus; 2-7 Dec.)... CONSULTING DOUBLES (26 teams + 6 rebuys): 1-Sasan Taherzadeh (IRN/USA) & Self, 2-Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN) & Walter Meuwis (BEL), 3/4-Michihito Kageyama (JPN) & Anna Mielech (POL) / Peter Valeur Bosse (DEN) & Michael Hansen (DEN). MASTERS (44): 1-Haluk Oral (TUR), 2-Oguz User (TUR), 3/4-Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN) / Paul Zoghbi (LEB); 1C-Sabri Büyüksoy (TUR), 2C-Zafer Tas (TUR), 3C/4C-Stepan Nuniyants (USA) / Ali Serif Rende (TUR); 1LC-Konstantin Mitrelis (GRE). INTERMEDIATE (37): 1-Walter Meuwis (BEL), 2-Ahmet Ercan (TUR), 3/4-Mehmet Hulusi (TUR) / Nuri Kaya (TUR); 1C-Sedat Bicekci (TUR), 2C-Tabet Tabet (LEB); 1LC-Damjan Plesec (SLO). BEGINNERS (10): 1-Ismael Yildiz (TUR), 2-Enrico Agostini (AUS). 1-POINT TOURNEY (64): 1-Sedat Bicekci (TUR), 2-Umut Sari (TUR). FM-GAMMON BOARD CHALLENGE (16): 1-Chiva Tafazzoli (IRN/GER), 2-Sasan Taherzadeh (IRN/USA). SPECIAL PLAYER AWARDS *Bad Beat, Fair-Play, Gentleman*: Peter Valeur Bosse (DEN). *Encouragement*: Tabet Tabet (LEB). WBA MEMBERSHIP OF HONOR: Management of Golden Tulip / Pacha Casino, Lefkosa. EBGT GRAND FINALE (16): 1-Stepan Nuniyants (USA), 2-Dmitri Harutyunyan (ARM).

•**ABT-California State Championship** (Van Nuys, CA; 3-5 Dec.)... OPEN (51): 1-Malcolm Davis (TX), 2-Wayne Jeffcoat (CA), 3-John Rockwell (CA); 1C-Joe Russell (CA), 2C-Ed O'Laughlin (FL), 3C/4C-Sam Ahmed (CA) / Rory Pascar (IL). ADVANCED (42): 1-Sean Taghani (CA), 2-Ali Avcioglu (CA); 1C-Jesse Eaton (MN), 2C-Daniel Stroberger (WA), 3C/4C-John Calcott (NM) / Randi Sachar (NY). LIMITED (10): 1-Joan Grunwald (NJ), 2-Garrett Smith (CA); 1C-Michelle Andersen (CA). SUPER 32 (32): 1-Ralf Jonas (GER), 2-Alfred Mamlet (MD), 3/4-Andranik Safarian (Argentina) / Steve Sax (CA). DINGWELL AMATEUR (16): 1-Ed Rosenblum (NM), 2-Jerry Jabaghourian (CA). DINGWELL OVERFLOW (15): 1-Sam Ahmed (CA), 2-Todd Crosner (AZ). 2-POINT QUICKIE (16): 1-Ray Fogerlund (CA). BLITZ (64): 1-Mary Hickey (OH), 2-Bob Glass (CA). DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Jerry Jabaghourian & Christian Stoddard (CA), 2-Alan Grunwald (NJ) & Mary Hickey (OH). \$50 JACKPOT #1 (8): 1/2-John O'Hagan (IN) / Mario Savan (CA). #2 (8): 1/2-Harvey Gillis (WA) / Tom Horton (CA).

•**Springfield Series #4** (Lincoln, IL; 4 Dec.)... OPEN (19): 1-Vinton Knarr, 2-Jena Jennings; 1C-John Jennings, 2C-Dan Eatherington; 1-LC Roger Hickman.

•**Cincinnati Players Club Monthly** (Sharonville, OH; 5 Dec.)... OPEN (8): 1-Jim Mieske, 2-Peter Carcieri, 3-Tony White.

•**Bar Point Sunday** (Chicago, IL; 5 Dec.)... OPEN (22): 1/2-Tak Morioka / Herb Roman, 3/4-Larry Goldstein / Serge Bondar; 1C-Nora Luna Righter, 2C-Mike Wolock. INTERMEDIATE (5): 1-Christopher Shanava, 2-Andy Bittman

•**2nd Meribel Tournament** (Meribel, France; 8-12 Dec.)...MASTERS (43): 1-Chris Ternel (ENG), 2-Michel Serrero (FRA), 3/4-Raj Jansari (ENG) / Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN); 1C-Miki Suzuki (FRA), 2C-Loïc Jallu (FRA), 3C/4C-Pernille Rosendal (DEN) & Alexis Vincent (FRA); 1LC-Christian Plenz (GER), 2LC-Klaus Rydeng (DEN). MID FLIGHT (20): 1-Genesis Naylor (FRA), 2-Giselle Ardisson (FRA), 3/4-Nadia Danckof (FRA) / Denise Kaiser (GER); 1C-Dan O'Farrell (IRE), 2C-Patrick Martel (FRA); 1LC-Valérie Touvet (FRA), 2LC-Alan Beckerson (ENG). SUPER JACKPOT (8): 1-Michihito Kageyama (JPN), 2-Thomas Jespersen (DEN). DOUBLES (22 teams): 1-K & J, 2-Michy & Greg, 3/4-Beaverchop / Jokerdice. GANG TOURNAMENT (24): 1-Michel Serrero (FRA), 2-Sandra Peskin (ENG). FREE WARM-UP (48): 1-Raj Jansari (ENG), 2-Malcolm Robertson (ENG), 3/4-Giselle Ardisson (FRA) / Peter Bennet (ENG). HIGHEST LITTLE TOURNAMENT IN THE WORLD (48): 1-Jose Rodriguez (SPN), 2-Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN), 3-Charles Lecomte (FRA). AFTER TOURNAMENT TOURNAMENT (8): 1/2-Peter Bennet (ENG) / Christian Plenz (GER). SPEEDGAMMON WINNERS (groups of 8): Franck Stepler (FRA), Chris Ternel (ENG), Simon Pankvelashvili (GEO), Malcolm Robertson (HK), Henning Frick (GER). GOOD SPORT AWARD: Bob Wachtel (USA). GENESIS NAYLOR BG BOARD TOMBOLA: Rassoul Rasti (SWZ).

•**New England Club Monthly** (Malden, MA; 11 Dec.)... OPEN (17): 1-Alex Zamanian, 2-Karl Von Laudermann, 3/4-Dave Brown / Tom O'Riordan; 1C-Phyllis Seidel, 2C-Jim McKenna.

•**South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 12 Dec.)... OPEN (6): 1-Philippe Salnave, 2-Danielle Bastarache... *Due to lack of player support, Elayne Feinstein has cancelled further South Florida monthly events. The club still meets every Saturday at Biddy Early's Pub.*

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 19 Dec.)... OPEN (10): 1-Alan Grunwald (NJ), 2-Ron Seaborn; 1C-Mike Pustilnik. INTERMEDIATE (5): 1-David Shaerf, 2-Bernie Gallagher; 1C-Baron Barber. BEGINNER (4): 1-John Johnson, 2-Scott Rademaker; 1C-Rochelle Hasson (NY).

•**4th Annual Maxakuli Cup** (Las Vegas, NV; 22 Dec.)... OPEN (8): 1-Dennis McFarlin, 2-Ramon Eleazar, 3/4-Steven Diano / Cy Yeros.

•**Colorado State Championship** (Wesminster, CO; 26 Dec.)... OPEN (13 + 3 rebuys): 1-Richard Siebold, 2-Lynn Lusk; 1C-Ed Gazvoda. NOVICE (2): 1-Kathey Kurrell. Δ

**AMALGAMATION**

The next newsletter (in March) will mean that CSI is just days away (4-6 March). Book your \$83 two-room suite now. For details, see the ad on page 12... Here's a "wow": Google the the words "Mark Your Calendar" and **Carol Joy Cole's** backgammon calendar site comes up number two in the world! Speaking of Carol, condolences to her on the loss of her mother **Amy Mitoma**. Together, Carol and Amy formed the Flint Area Backgammon Club in 1978... The new *Tron: Legacy* movie is full of 1980s memorabilia including a backgammon set. In real life, Tron star **Garrett Hedlund** says he prefers backgammon to video games... Kudos to **Reginald Porter**, who despite receiving two stints and a defibrillator following his November heart attack, returned to the Bar Point Club 14 December. Sitting in the #21 position, Reggie needed just 0.41 points to overtake **Carter Mattig** to earn a Silver Eagle coin. He got his points and more the last play date of the year. That's dedication!... Did you read the 14 Dec. *New York Times* article "Why Isn't Backgammon More Popular?" by **Stephen Dubner**? Surprisingly, one sentence implies that "the renaissance is perhaps underway." We can only hope... Gameroom.io is planning a virtual get-together for backgammon players across the country. They integrate videochat with their online board games to help you feel like you're across the table from your opponent. To join the private beta, go to <http://gameroom.io/beta> and use invitation code CHICAGOPOINT... Our deepest condolences on the passing of **Alyce Wallen** (IL) on 14 Dec. Alyce along with her daughter **Connie Sychowski** and **Betsy Miller** were instrumental in the growth of the Bar Point Club during the late 1980s... Play65 has partnered with the **Chiva Tafazzoli's** European Backgammon Tour for 2011. Play65 co-founder **Daniel Mester** said that the collaboration "...will bring together the online and offline backgammon worlds, plus provide exceptional value to our players..." New England Patriots wide receiver **Wes Walker** on quarterback **Tom Brady's** fiery competitiveness: "He's throwing anything that we're playing. We were playing backgammon and I thought he was about to toss it off the plane." Δ



*Atlanta Braves Chairman Emeritus Bill Bartholomay, along with Chicago Cubs Chairman Tom Ricketts (L) and Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig (R) share a laugh as Pat Hughes delivers Cubs player/announcer Ron Santo's eulogy Dec. 10 in Chicago.*

*WBF wishes you and your family a great 2011  
full of achievements, happiness, and backgammon!  
A big "thank you" to all of our agents and supporters worldwide  
who devote so much of their time towards the effort  
to make backgammon a true sport of mind.*

*Marco Fornasir – General Secretary*

1986-2011



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