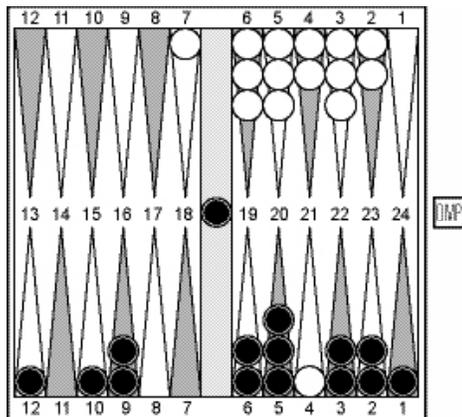


It's double match-point in the Intermediate finals of the Michigan Summer Championships. You're on the bar, scrambling for your life in a wild-and-woolly final game. Man, do you need to come in with a good number *right now!*

Tournament double match-point.
BLACK TO PLAY 2-1.



2-1. OK. It's not your best; but at least you're off the bar. Now how do you move the deuce? Do you make the tidy 12/10 play, creating a fourth blocking point in front of White's straggler? Or do you choose the bold 6/4* hitting play, exposing three potentially deadly home board blots?

If you choose to make your 10-point, White will hit you on the ace point with all 36 numbers in her cup. Of those 36, three rolls switch points (1-1, 3-3, 5-5), 13 rolls make a closed board (2-2, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 4-5,

4-6, 5-6), and 20 rolls hit loose.

You must weigh the chance of White dancing on your three-point board vs. the options you have when White has her full roll to play. So one of the first considerations is that if you don't hit, how many times does White dance? Of course you could count up every shot, but there is a far easier way to answer this question: Square-dancing.

The rule is simple:

When your opponent is on the bar, to determine how many times he will dance out of 36 rolls, take your number of home board points and square it.

In our example, Black has three closed points. $3 \times 3 = 9$. So Black will dance $9/36$ or 25%. Here's the entire dancing table:

Closed points (P)	P ²	Dancing % (P ² /36)
1	1	2.78%
2	4	11.11%
3	9	25.00%
4	16	44.44%
5	25	69.44%
6	36	100.00%

How many of your opponent's rolls dance against a five point board? 5^2 or 25. What could be easier?

The Square-dancing concept can be applied to other elements of our position. For example, If Black makes his 10-point, he will have four blocking points in front of White. How many rolls out of 36 will White be unable to escape Black's gapped prime.

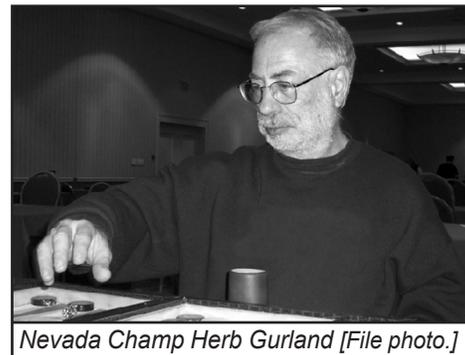
There are four closed points in front of White. $4^2 = 16$. So that means White will be unable to vacate Black's home board $16/36$. Note that White still has to move past Black's 9- and 10-points, but using the Square-dancing technique is a good first step in analyzing the position.

Lastly, the position offers us one more way to utilize Square-dancing. Check out White's side of the board following Black's entering play of Bar/1, 12/10. White might want to know how many numbers she has to close her home board next turn. Here's

nevada state tournament

NEVADA STATE TITLE TO HERB GURLAND

New England Backgammon Club president Herb Gurland (MA) has won the Nevada State Tournament. The 27th annual version of this long-running event was held at the Bally Hotel in Las Vegas 13-17 April. Only 112 players attended the tournament—a record low crowd for Howard Markowitz's Nevada Backgammon Association. Troy Longman (MI) directed.



Nevada Champ Herb Gurland [File photo.]

Although there were only 53 players in the Championship, rebuys increased the field to 66. Considering some of the big names in the field (Richard Munitz, Bill Robertie, Malcolm Davis, Kent Goulding, Ed O'Laughlin, Rick Barabino, Ray Foglerlund, and Steve Sax), Gurland's draw was fortunate to say the least. En route to his finals against Norm Wiggins (CA), Gurland defeated Mark Andrus, Saeed Karimi, Molly Anderson, Doug Mayfield, and Patrick Gibson who gave Gurland his toughest match. At the given match score,

[Continued on page 5]

the counting technique:

White has four checkers bearing down on the ace point (6, 5, 4, and 2). $4^2 = 16$. Now look at the doubles 6-6, 5-5, 4-4 and 2-2 to determine how many of those shakes fail to cover. 2-2 covers, but the other three don't. $16 - 3 = 13$. Therefore, White has 13 ways to make a closed board on her next turn.

Backgammon can be such a simple game . . . —Bill Davis Δ

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

c/o CHICAGO POINT

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Chicago, IL 60659-3155

E-mail: letters@chicagopoint.com

BEST BG PROGRAM FOR THE MAC

I just changed computers from a PC to a Mac. On my PC, I had both Snowie and Jellyfish. Can you suggest a very good program for the Mac? When I wrote you in the mid-80's (I had a Mac, then) you suggested one, but I don't remember the name. It might not even be around. —*John Lamb, via e-mail*

You want to get "Parallels" which will seamlessly allow you to run all your PC programs on the Mac. Ask a "genius" at any Mac Store. You'll also need a Windows OS (we use Vista purchased off eBay). Snowie and Jellyfish will then work fine; but we suggest you upgrade to eXtreme Gammon for \$49 which is superior to both programs in almost every way. —*Ed.*

ANOTHER COUNTRY HEARD FROM

Enclosed is my two year CHICAGO POINT

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31				

by Carol Joy Cole
810/232-9731
cjc@flintbg.com

*Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined.

May 7	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
May 8	Portland Club Monthly, Spring Creek Coffee House, Milwaukie, Oregon	503/805-1218
May 10	Arizona Club Monthly, Teakwoods Tavern & Grill, Phoenix, Arizona	602/762-2288
May 12-15	<u>First Golden Gate Open, Embassy Suites, South San Francisco, California</u>	<u>304/685-3214</u>
May 14*	New England Bonus Tournament, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
May 14*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
May 14*	Tampa Bay Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/743-0500
May 14*	Ohio State Saturday Monthly, Brubaker's Pub, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
May 14-15	Ohio Valley Challenge Cup, Wingate by Wyndham, Indianapolis, Indiana	513/807-6926
May 15*	Bellingham Club Championship, Pacific Martial Arts, Bellingham, Washington	360/733-6173
May 15*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
May 19*	3rd Thursday Bonus (LA Open), Sharky's Bar, Burton, Michigan	810/232-9731
May 22*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly, Lincoln Center Atrium, New York, New York	212/222-7177
May 26-30	<u>31st Chicago Open/1st Giants Invitational, Holiday Inn O'Hare, Rosemont, IL</u>	<u>617/699-9100</u>
May 28*	Backgammon By the Bay, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/261-4583
May 29*	Atlanta Northside Monthly, Veranda, Roswell, Georgia	770/612-0818
Jun 1*	Charlotte Club Monthly, Dilworth Grille, Charlotte, North Carolina	704/965-3573
Jun 5	Chicago Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Ruby Tuesday, Skokie, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jun 9-12	<u>Los Angeles Open/1st USBGF Invitational, Four Points LAX, Los Angeles, CA</u>	<u>818/901-0464</u>
Jun 11*	New England Club Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Jun 11*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Jun 11*	Tampa Bay Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/743-0500
Jun 12*	Cincinnati Monthly, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Jun 12*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
Jun 14*	Arizona Club Monthly, Teakwoods Tavern & Grill, Phoenix, Arizona	602/762-2288
Jun 30	Michigan Summer Warm-Up, Sheraton Novi Hotel, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 1-4	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Novi Hotel, Novi, Michigan</u>	<u>810/232-9731</u>
Jul 22-24*	<u>16th Minnesota Open, Marriott Hotel, Bloomington, Minnesota</u>	<u>612/718-2613</u>
Aug 6*	6th Annual Summer Sizzler, Ride The Nine, Bloomington, Illinois	309/662-7967
Aug 7*	Chicago Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Ruby Tuesday, Skokie, Illinois	773/583-6464
Aug 21-23	Florida Championship, Marriott North, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Sep 2-5	Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson, Madison, Wisconsin	608/354-7573
Date TBD*	Colorado State Championships, Hilton Garden Inn Airport, Aurora, Colorado	303/916-5170
Oct 14-16	Illinois State Championships, Grand Hotel, Peoria, Illinois	847/677-6852
Nov 9-13	Las Vegas Open, Imperial Palace, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Dec 2-4*	California State Championship, Four Points-LAX, Los Angeles, California	818/901-0464
Dec 16-18*	Sunshine State Classic, Hampton Inn & Suites, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/743-0500

OUTSIDE USA

May 6-8	County Cups Trophy, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
May 6-8	11th Torneo Città di Jesolo, Hotel Atlantico, Jesolo Lido, Italy	393477-938686
May 14-15	CBT: 2nd Dubrovnik Open, Hotel Petka, Dubrovnik, Croatia	385989-772316
May 14-15	New South Wales Open, Ryde Ex-Services Club, Ryde, NSW, Australia	61405-373225
May 20-22	TBT: 2nd Mediterranean Open/WBF-TR, Sealife Resort, Antalya, Turkey	905332-352555
May 20-22	Blackpool Imperial Cup, Imperial Hotel, Blackpool, England	447931-553829
May 27-29*	London Open 2011, Salt Quay, London, England	442077-001798
May 28-29	37th Annual Finnish Open, Oulun Eden Hotel, Oulu, Finland	358466-153751
May 28-29	Austrian Masters Grand Finale, Montesino, Vienna, Austria	436642-127412
May 28-29	Rotterdam Open, Café oKay, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	316535-79164
Jun 3-5	BBT: English Open, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Jun 3-5	NBT: 16th Norway Open, Anker Hotel, Oslo, Norway	4797-513941
Jun 3-5*	6th Strawberry Hill Tournament, Irish Town, Jamaica	876/999-0471
Jun 10-13	16th Kaiserbrunnen-Cup, Hotel Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	497152-3593466
Jun 10-13	Funen Open Pentecost Cup, Hotel Faaborg Fjord, Faaborg, Denmark	4520-116201
Jun 15-19	Play65/EBGT: 6th Portuguese Open, Hotel Riviera, Carcavelos, Portugal	491715-422222
Jun 18-19	TBT: 18th Istanbul Championship/WBF-TR, Armada Hotel, Turkey	905322-329228
Jun 25-26	CBT: Bol Open, Elaphusa Blueson Hotel, Bol (Brac), Croatia	385989-736414
Jul 1-3	BIBA World Championship, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, England	441522-888676
Jul 6-10	2nd Menton Open, Casino Barrière de Menton, Menton, France	390331-923537
Jul 15-23	36th World Championship & Monte Carlo Open, Fairmont Hotel, Monaco USA:	702/218-8238
Jul 30-31	BBT: 16th Liverpool Open, Liverpool Bridge Club, Liverpool, England	447931-553829
Jul 30-31	TBT: 6th Kdz. Eregli Championship/WBF-TR, Romantique Café, Turkey	905322-329228
Aug 1-5*	Play65/EBGT Gogi Bukia Georgian Open, Oasis, Batumi, Georgia	info@world-backgammon-association.com
Aug 5-7*	SAC Trophy, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Aug 19-21*	NBT: Swedish Open, Quality Globe, Stockholm, Sweden	46708-541362

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

renewal. It seems that your CSI dress code worked, and this is good. Thanks to you and your team for excellent work.—*Dr. Ulrich Armasow, Mosbach, Germany*

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

It seems to me there should be some sort of prohibition on tournament directors purchasing Calcutta fields at their own events. I mean, what if they have to make a ruling, and one of the players involved is “owned” by the TD? It could be a real

conflict of interest—or at least give the appearance of such, if the TD decided in favor of his “owned” player. Have you ever heard this discussed?—*Linda Rockwell, director, Illinois State Championships*

In general, we agree with you, Linda. However, whenever the director has a monetary interest in any competitor, either by backing a player, or winning him in the Calcutta, we believe that director should recuse himself from any and all disputes involving said competitor.—Ed.

ONE MORE BG LIMERICK

Here’s a late night backgammon limerick

to add to the collection you published in the April POINT.—*Jack Wood, via Internet*

In Pittsburgh there was a young floozy,
Whose dice were all onesie and twosie.
While downing her gin,
She soon was primed in,
Then lamented, “I’m going to losie!”

IS PLAYING ‘LEGAL MOVES’ A FORM OF COLLUSION?

The current British Isles Backgammon Association rules state:

6.2 *TESIMONY.* Spectators are required to report any suspected cheating, collusion or faulty equipment directly to a tournament official and not to the players involved.

We asked BIBA director Michael Crane if that means he considers “Legal Moves” an illegal form of collusion? Here’s his answer:

I do not support mandatory “legal moves” in backgammon. It is very hard to enforce and would lead to more problems, not fewer. Suppose two players agree to play legal moves and then one of them makes an illegal move (harming himself) that neither player spots. However, an on-looker does notice it. What happens now? Has the offended player made a genuine error in not spotting the illegal move, or is he cheating?

Within the BIBA rule “6.2 Testimony,” spectators are required to report any suspected cheating; but has cheating taken place? Who can say? Even if the offended player was cheating, he is not going to admit it. If your opponent does not notice

[Continued on page 4]

AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2011

Top 100 through 17 Apr. 2011 after 7 tournaments
(Upcoming events: Golden Gate, Chicago Open, LA/USBGF)

Ray Fogerlund	39.84	Mike Corbett	6.40	Robert Sisselman	3.33	Brent Cohen	1.96
Neil Kazaross	17.33	Lee Genud	6.40	Bill Davis	3.20	Malcolm Davis	1.96
Bill Robertie	15.70	David Rubin	6.22	Gary Fries	3.20	Mark Antranikian	1.96
Herb Gurland	15.70	Jonathan Leusden	5.33	Mark Gordon	3.20	Molly Anderson	1.96
Bob Koca	14.22	Karen Davis	5.00	Grant Schneider	3.20	Cliff Mayoh	1.92
Carol Joy Cole	13.67	Neal Weiner	4.46	Mario Sequeira	3.20	Mike Minkovski	1.92
Gregg Cattanach	13.56	Brian Scoben	4.46	Sandra Sha	3.20	Tom Duggan	1.92
Dennis Culpepper	12.80	Frank DiMaggio	4.33	Dmitriy Obukhov	3.11	Lucas Bauer	1.92
Mary Hickey	12.80	Petko Kostadinov	4.33	Brandon Macklin	3.06	Robert Ring	1.81
John O’Hagan	12.44	Tak Morioka	4.33	Jeremy Moulton	2.80	Jacques Trividic	1.81
Ben Friesen	10.86	Eden Windish	4.10	Bill Kaludis	2.80	Ron Bruns	1.81
Stewart Pemberton	10.59	Daniel Barabas	4.10	Kathleen Davis	2.67	Russ Rosen	1.81
Greg Merriman	10.55	Larry Taylor	3.93	Bob Goldstein	2.67	Juan Rospigliosi	1.80
Allen Tish	8.67	Kit Woolsey	3.93	Stuart Thomson	2.50	Kyle Wittles	1.67
Rachel Rhodes	7.85	Mike Senkiewicz	3.93	Vadim Musaelyan	2.50	Debra Oles Campbell	1.67
David Shadi	7.85	Harvey Gillis	3.93	Josh Racko	2.24	Larry Shiller	1.67
Norm Wiggins	7.85	Patrick Gibson	3.93	Richie Adams	2.23	Sybil Sha	1.50
Al Hodis	7.85	Kent Goulding	3.93	Bob Hickey	2.23	Kate Elmore	1.40
Ramez Abi-Akar	7.67	Eduardo Maciel	3.93	Alex Gerding	2.23	Gary Domenickine	1.25
Tim Lawless	7.26	Nan Feiber	3.83	Erik Sawyer	2.11	Lyle Rubin	1.13
Ed O’Laughlin	7.11	Oleg Raygorodsky	3.83	Roman Abramovsky	2.10	Mike Valentino	1.13
Peggy Neubig	6.67	John Calcott	3.63	Mike Vasilatos	2.05	Gerard Jendras	1.12
Homer Hector	6.50	Vicki Ondis	3.63	Robert Lessard	2.05	Ben Fleurant	1.12
Bill Calton	6.40	Murray Bryntesen	3.60	Omar Dessouky	1.96	Early Gardner	1.06
Alfred Mamlet	6.40	Garry Kallos	3.33	Bill Riles	1.96	Janet Genter	1.06

CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB

2011 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 30 APR.

Rory Pascar	16.64	Howard Markowitz	4.16	Tim Mabee	2.56	Eric Johnson	1.04
Carter Mattig	12.04	Steve Klesker	3.96	Wayne Wiest	2.16	Mike Minkovski	0.96
David Rockwell	9.60	Bill Keefe	3.96	Russell Head	1.92	Mark Murray	0.96
Herb Roman	9.04	David Rubin	3.76	Dujan Meekins	1.68	Matt Cohn-Geier	0.88
Bob Steen	6.96	Tak Morioka	3.76	Wendy Kaplan	1.60	Terry Weiss	0.72
Bill Davis	6.48	Linda Rockwell	3.60	Warren Barnes	1.60	Dan Weymouth	0.72
Lucky Nelson	6.48	Mike Sutton	3.52	Roger Hickman	1.52	Mike Peters	0.68
Bill Bartholomay	6.36	Peter Kalba	3.36	Leslie Lockett	1.44	Amy Trudeau	0.64
Phil Simborg	5.96	Serge Bondar	3.36	Bob Zavoral	1.36	Les Moshinsky	0.56
Christopher Shanava	5.60	Joann Feinstein	2.96	Allen Tish	1.36	Gary Kay	0.56
Nora Luna Righter	5.28	Russ Lyutik	2.88	Alice Kay	1.28	Beth Whitney	0.48
Larry Goldstein	5.20	Adrian Rios	2.80	Mitch Pomper	1.12	Dave Settles	0.48
Tobias Hellwag	4.76	Alex Owen	2.68	Kevin Berg	1.08	Jeff Fischer	0.32
Mike Wolock	4.76	Jerry Brooks	2.64				

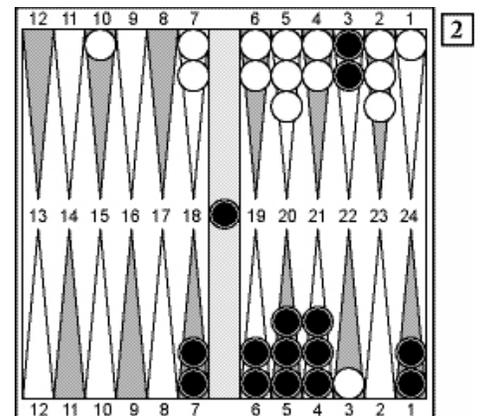
April was another great month for **RORY PASCAR** who earned 6.32 points. That’s three out of four monthly honors this year. Runner’s-up were Nora Luna Righter (3.84) and Bill Davis (3.60).

your move

PROBLEM #364

to be analyzed by Kt Woolsey

9-point match. Black trails White 4 to 7.
BLACK TO PLAY 3-1.



ASK
DANNY

© 2011 by Danny Kleinman

THE KLEINMAN COUNT

Dear Danny: At bgonline.org, Stein Kulseth used GNU to test the accuracy of your “Kleinman Count” for evaluating races. Following an extensive rollout, Stein wrote: “I was pleased to see that the KC did quite well—better than I had thought—for a wide range of pip counts.”

I am not familiar with your Kleinman Count. Can you explain what it is, how it works, and when you devised it?—Counting on you

DEAR COUNTING: In the late 1970s, when I read what others who came before me had written about backgammon, I was unconvinced by the advice they offered for cube handling in pure races, as I saw no logic underlying it. So I set about to develop a formula to estimate winning chances from *adjusted* pip counts. In most races, especially long races, the only adjustment required is the advantage of rolling and moving first, which is worth about 4 pips, but of course gaps and stacks in home

boards call for other adjustments.

Calling the roller’s lead in adjusted pip counts D , and the sum of the adjusted pips S , and taking the mean number of pips advanced by a shake as 8 (it’s actually slightly more), I estimated the standard deviation as about 4 (it too is actually slightly more). Using a rudimentary understanding of statistics (the probability of the trailer catching up in a race varies with the square root of the length of the race) and a table in the back of an old statistics textbook, I performed a few arithmetical tricks to simplify the math so that I could do it in my head, and came up with a chart relating D^2/S to the probability of winning a race. I called D^2/S the *critical ratio*; “Kleinman Count” is somebody else’s name for it.

The chapter “Normal Race Takes” (in *Vision Laughs at Counting with Advice to the Dicer*) explains the math in detail and sets a critical ratio of 1.15 as dividing passes (above 1.15) from takes (below 1.15) in money play or at the start of a match. Later, thinking that I had underrated the value of cube ownership, I set the critical ratio of 1.20 as the dividing line. The chapter “The Racer’s Edge” (in *Double-Sixes From the Bar*) develops a chart relating winning chances (W) to D and to the length of the race as measured by the lower of the two adjusted pip counts.

The chapter “Home Runs” (in *...But Only the Hogs Win Backgammons*) offers a mnemonic for doubling thresholds, redoubling thresholds, and passing thresholds in money play and the start of a match that was valid before the “Steroid Era” of Mark McGwire, Sammy Sosa and Barry Bonds. Think of the uniform number of Career Home-Run King Hank Aaron (44) for your doubling threshold (a critical ratio of at least .44). Think of the record for home runs in one season (61) set by Roger Maris in 1961 for your redoubling threshold (a critical ratio of at least .61). Think of the number of yards traversed (120) in running the bases when hitting a home run for your passing threshold (a critical ratio of at least 1.20).

Do you want a similar set of guidelines for all the situations that can arise in matches? Sorry, that was beyond my ability even when I was younger and my math was less rusty, but even in those days I did not choose *Backgammon Is An Easy Game* for one of my catchy book titles.—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: dg@chicagopoint.com

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 3]

your illegal move, then play will continue in his ignorance. “Caveat Emptor” springs to mind!

Do I consider playing legal moves an illegal form of collusion? I suppose technically, if two players agree to play legal moves (which is not covered by the BIBA rules), then yes, they are both guilty of collusion, albeit on a minor level. They would both be advised that legal moves can lead to many problems and asked to desist.—Michael Crane, director BIBA, Lincoln, England

FEISTY DAVE CRAMER

Each year, Tom Walthes and I happily donate three sets of Cubs tickets to be auctioned off for the Anti-Cruelty Society at your CSI event. I was interested to find out that Ed Zell caught a baseball two years in a row in our seats! Please remind Ed that this is Chicago and wrestling a foul ball away from a nearby kid is not only permitted, but is applauded. My last foul ball was a perfect example. I figured the kid had his whole life ahead of him.



In the Cramer/Walthes Cubs seats, Ed Zell caught a baseball two years in a row!

Let me know if you ever revoke the rule that either player can insist on a clock even if the tournament is running on time. I might be tempted to drop by at your new Ruby Tuesday weekly location, roll a couple of games, or just socialize.—Dave Cramer, Chicago, Illinois

First off, thanks to you and Tom for the tickets! It’s clocks by mutual agreement at the Bar Point Club, Dave. You almost never see them in action unless a match is really delaying the tournament. For the most part, we have a very considerate group and played a 32-draw in less than 5 hours.—Ed.

WHAT HAPPENED TO TRUEMON-
EYGAMES?

I was hoping someone could illuminate for me what is happening. I am a bit isolated from the backgammon world, living in Oregon. I had been playing BG regularly on TrueMoneyGames (TMG). Yesterday morning my connection was dropped in the middle of a match and I have been unable to connect since then. Ugh. I read about the crackdown on online Poker in the USA news; but I didn’t see any information about associated BG sites.

Is our government really able to cut off access to sites like this; or do I have a local problem and need to do something like reinstall the TMG client to restore access? Is the online BG world being shut off to US residents?—Ken Bronstein, Corvallis, Oregon

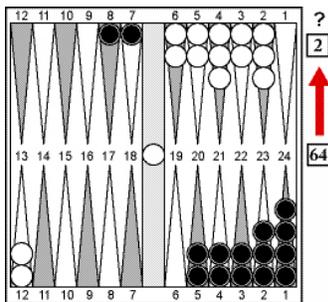
Information is at playwsob.com and it doesn’t look very good, Ken. The Melita Gaming Network (TMG Ltd.) based in Malta had “critical financial problems” following the sudden departure of senior management, including CEO Mr. Trevor Ellis and colleagues. They claim that your money will be returned. At least that is the claim. Keep us posted.—Ed. Δ

NEVADA...

(Continued from page 1)

Gibson was faced with a very difficult cube decision:

15-point match. Herb Gurland (Black) leads Patrick Gibson (White) 13 to 12. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTIONS?**



Should Patrick take and recube for the match, or should he drop the double and go down 12–14 Crawford? In fact Patrick can win nearly 26% from this position. It's fairly close, but taking is the correct action. Instead Patrick dropped. Although he fought back to DMP, Herb eventually won 15–14.

In the 17-point finals against Norm Wiggins (CA), Gurland rallied from a 0–3 deficit to knot the score at 7–all. Then his dice caught fire and he went on to win 17–9. First prize netted him over \$10,000 and his first-ever ABT title.

Congratulations to Ed O'Laughlin who bested Justin Nunez in the Super Jackpot.

This fall (9–13 November), the Nevada Backgammon Association's Las Vegas Open moves to the Imperial Palace. *Complete results at right:* Δ

2011 NEVADA STATE TOURNAMENT

CHAMPIONSHIP (53+13 rebuys): 1-Herb Gurland (MA), 2-Norm Wiggins (CA), 3/4-Ray Fogerlund (CA) / Patrick Gibson (CA); 1C-AI Hodis (NY), 2C-Kent Goulding, 3C/4C-Mark Antranikian (CA) / Malcolm Davis (TX); 1LC-Eduardo Maciel (Brazil), 2LC-Molly Anderson (WA). **INTERMEDIATE** (49+19 rebuys): 1-Tim Lawless (IN), 2-John Calcott (NM), 3/4-Rob Ring (CA) / Jacques Trividic (Canada); 1C-Vicki Ondis (CT), 2C-Ron Bruns (CA), 3/4-Josh Racko (CA) / Patti Rubin (NV); 1LC-Russ Rosen (CA), 2LC-Evan Etter (FL). **BEGINNER** (10): 1-Gary Domenickine (WA), 2-Joan Grunwald (NJ); 1C-Fred Kamgar (CA). **SUPER JACKPOT** (13 @ \$2,000): 1-Ed O'Laughlin (VA), 2-Justin Nunez (CA), 3/4-Gregg Cattanach (GA) / Fred Kalantari (MN). **LIMITED JACKPOT** (13 @ \$1,000): 1-Josh Racko (CA), 2-Kazuhiko Yotsushika (Japan), 3/4-Sasan Taher (CA) / Tom Wheeler (TX). **SENIORS TOURNAMENT** (64): 1-Jacques Trividic (Canada), 2-Faruk Perkin (Turkey). **SENIORS OVERFLOW TOURNAMENT** (16): 1-Carol Joy Cole (MI), 2-Larry Liebster (NV). **DOUBLES TOURNAMENT** (16 teams): 1-Tom Magne (MN) & Bob Schumacher (MN), 2-Austin O'Laughlin (NY) & Ed O'Laughlin (VA). **BLITZ** (88): 1-Harvey Gillis (WA), 2-Jeff Burdsall (NV). **MINI-MATCH** (16): 1-Kazuhiko Yotsushika (Japan). **\$100 SATURDAY JACKPOT** (20): 1-Carter Mattig (IL), 2-Richard Weaver (TX). **\$30 AFTER TOURNAMENT TOURNAMENT**: (26): 1-Tom Wheeler (TX), 2-AI Hodis (NJ).



I rolled the dice
And cried, "Be nice!"
And then, to my disgust,
I saw the wretched double 4,
My board was forced to bust.
And then he rolled,
And it was cold,
What happened was not nice,
He rolled the only number
That came in and hit me twice.
He closed me out
And I was dead,
My chances slim and none.
But Papa said, "Don't ever quit,"
So I pulled out my gun.
I politely asked him to resign,
He paid and it was done.
And again I was reminded
That this game is really fun!

– Phil Simborg Δ

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

"Fun and sociability are the key words here. New Orleans is 'New Year's Eve' every night!"—Bill Davis

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Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON at Ruby Tuesday, 5203 Old Orchard Road, Skokie. 847/967-8292.

BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL CLUB: Tournaments Monday, 6:00 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Michael Flohr (309/662-7967).

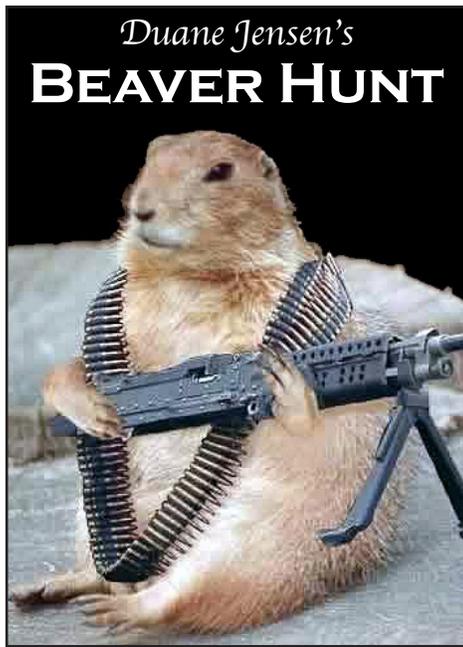
MIDSTATE BG CLUB: Tourn. Tues., 6:00 P.M. at Ride The Nine, 503 N. Prospect, Bloomington. Ed Bauder (309/830-1632).

SANGAMON VALLEY BACKGAMMON ASSOC.: Tournaments Wednesday, 6:00 P.M. at Capitol Teletrack, 1766 W. Wabash Ave., Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

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

PUB CLUB: Tournaments Thurs., 6:45 P.M. at Playoffs Bar, 720 E. North Ave., Carol Stream. Tim Mabee (630/606-2388).

PEORIA BG CLUB: Tourn. Thursday, 6:30 P.M. at Peoria Pizza Works, 3921 Prospect, Peoria. Sue Will (309/699-6005).



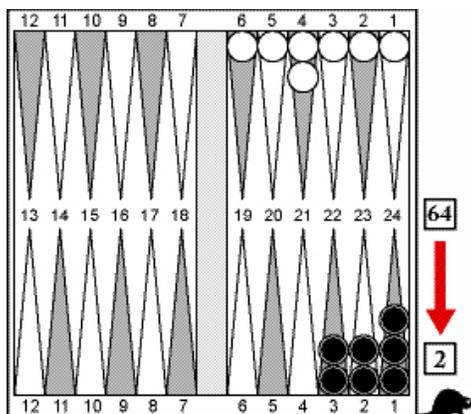
Backgammon has been played for many centuries. This extended popularity cannot be credited to tournament play. The driving force for backgammon is its appeal as an entertaining gambling game. Backgammon has enough luck to draw in many players, but demands enough skill to make winning feel like an accomplishment.

The concept of doubling (introduced to backgammon in the mid-1920s) has added spice and challenge to money games. "Beavers" add even more spice. When the player believes his opponent has doubled him with negative expectations, he should beaver the cube: flip it to the next higher level while retaining possession. Beavers are rare and usually associated with players who are compromised by fatigue, alcohol, drugs, or big egos.

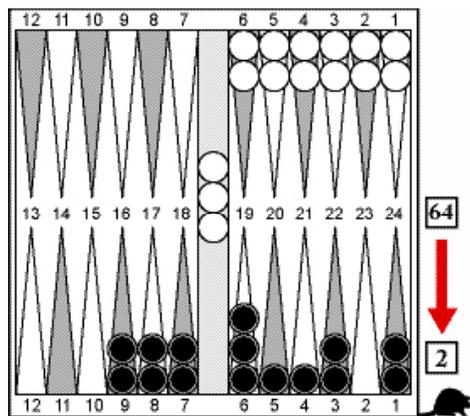
See if you can circle the six positions that are correct beavers. You're Black, playing money games with the Jacoby rule in effect and the cube centered. White doubles you. Should you beaver?—*Duane Jensen* Δ

[Answers on page 9.]

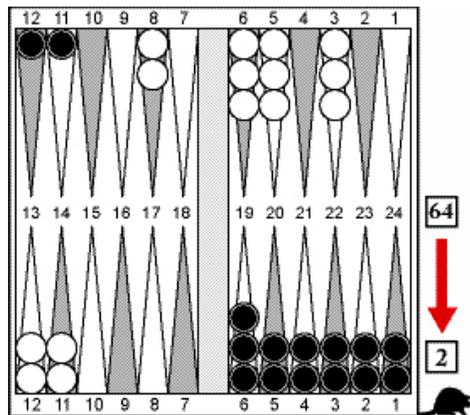
Position #1 Beaver No Beaver



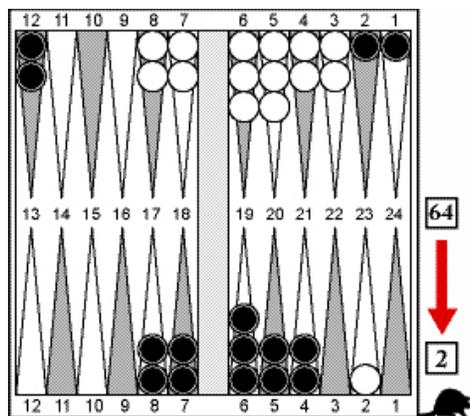
Position #2 Beaver No Beaver



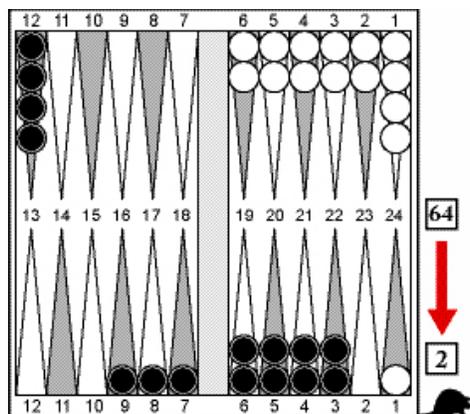
Position #3 Beaver No Beaver



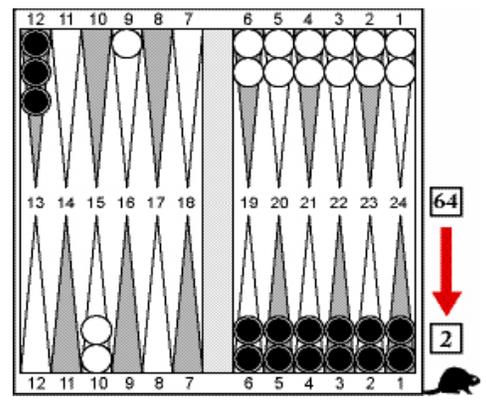
Position #4 Beaver No Beaver



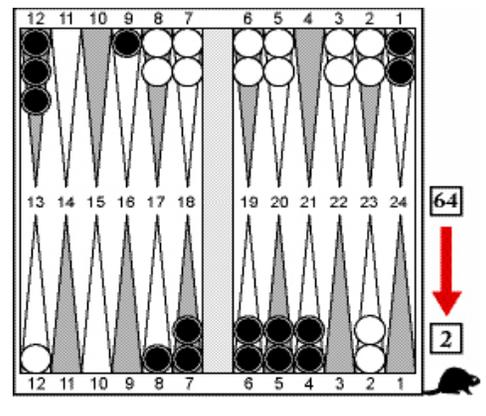
Position #5 Beaver No Beaver



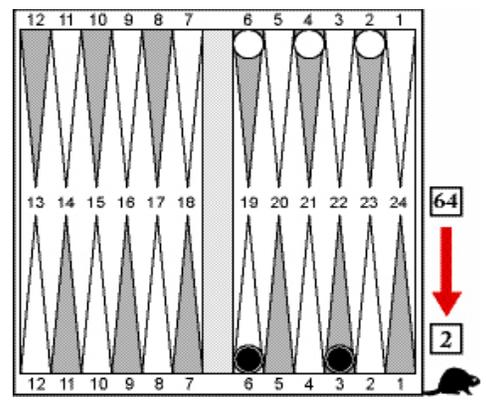
Position #6 Beaver No Beaver



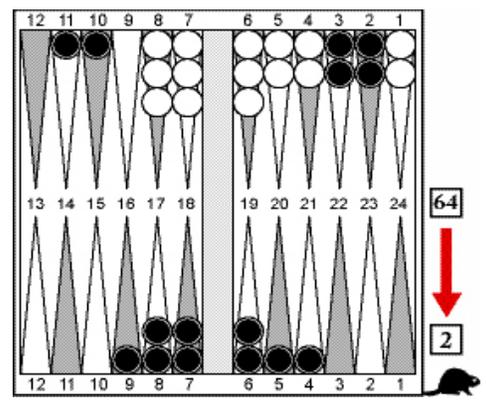
Position #7 Beaver No Beaver



Position #8 Beaver No Beaver



Position #9 Beaver No Beaver



Question #10 (Bonus). Which of the nine positions is a legitimate Double/Beaver?

Denmark vs. The World How The World Team Was Selected By Stick Rice

For the second year, the Nordic Open hosted a unique team challenge, "Denmark vs. The World," encompassing individual matches, speed play, doubles and a full team event. Denmark is one of the only countries strong enough to compete against a World superstar team (they won in 2010). Who was responsible for selecting the 2011 World team? BGOonline.org webmaster Stick Rice fills us in:

The 2010 Nordic Open "Denmark vs. The World" challenge match was very well received. Last October at the French Open, Nordic Open tournament director Steen Grønbech asked me if I would again assist in putting together a follow-up event. At the time, I saw no reason I wouldn't be able to attend the tournament and jumped onboard.

It was just accepted that certain World team players would be invited back to participate; e.g., players like Masayuki Mochizuki (Japan) and Falafel Natanzon (Israel), two of the biggest names in the game. Both have been the last two #1s on the Giants list. Additionally, "Mochy" is the 2009 World Champion. Top 15 BG Giants Matt Cohn-Geier (USA) and Michihito "Michy" Kageyama (Japan) were also no-brainers for the World team, both having proved themselves

highly capable at last year's team challenge.

With the five of us on board, we discussed with Steen any changes we would like to see in the format and amongst ourselves who should fill out the other two spots on the seven-player team. One major issue was the forced inclusion of one female on each team (the policy in 2010). The problem we had last year was finding a capable non-Danish female to represent the World team. Katja Spillum was our first choice, but originally the Danes didn't want her on our team. Perhaps because she resided in Denmark and they saw her as more Danish than "World." With few women in the world to choose from for strong representation (who were willing to attend the tournament), it was tough. Nobody fit the bill (luckily), so the World team got Katja, our first choice anyway.

This year we decided to skip the "one female mandatory" requirement. Personally I wish we did have female presence on the team, but not because she's a woman—because she's just that good. Ladies, we're waiting.

As for the other spots on the team, we chiseled out our top picks knowing some of them were sure not to attend. Among these were Nack Ballard (USA), Neil Kazaross (USA), and François Tardieu (France). Out of those three, we really only had hopes of Neil attending. Neil accepted and we were looking good until I figured out I might not be attending which opened up another spot to be filled.

I was still involved in all the planning but we acted as if I wouldn't be there. At this point, we met on GridGammon and discussed the possible participants to fill out the team. Again, we needed strong players who would be attending Nordic or who we could coax into coming. Bob Wachtel (USA) is always a candidate (of course) and we knew he was attending. Other names that entered the fray were Kit Woolsey (USA), John O'Hagan (USA), Ralf Jonas (Germany), David Wells (USA), and a few others.

Kit and John were not going to attend, if memory serves me correctly. So Ralf, David, and Bob were the ones on the mix for the remaining two spots. It was hard for us to vote on an order because not all of us knew how strong the individual players are. For example, I have seen Ralf play exactly one time, I have only played David Wells a little bit online, and Bob and I have sparred in a few matches and discussed backgammon some, but still not overly so. David was put in as a definite and then Bob and Ralf were to play three matches online with the lower PR player getting the last spot. Ralf won this and he was in.

Yada, yada, yada. Neil had to pull out at the last minute for health reasons so Bob Wachtel who was on our substitute list filled in for him.

The World Team defeated Denmark 35 to 29 in the deciding match. Team performance ratings were extraterrestrial: 1.2 for Denmark and 0.7 for the World.—Jacob 'Stick' Rice Δ

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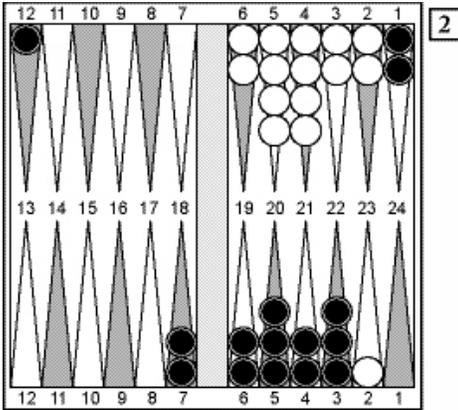
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PROBLEM #363 ANALYZED

by Steve Sax

9-point match. Black leads White 5 to 4. **BLACK TO PLAY 6-5.**



In this particular position, I see a divergence of three possible plays as each candidate attempts to win the game in a different way.

Play #1 is to run from the 24-point to your mid-point (24/13). Play #2 is to hit loose on your deuce-point (13/2*). Candidate #3 is to run off the 24-point anchor and hit loose breaking your bar (24/18, 7/2*). Let's examine the gains and drawbacks of each choice.

Play #1 gains for Black when White rolls a 5 as she is forced to break her 6-point. Not all of White's 5s necessarily benefit Black as 5-5 points him off, and 5-3 and 5-4 make the ace-point while retaining a five-point board. Even 6-5 which forces White to break her board and creates three blots, makes Black only a 20/16 favorite to hit. But among the 16 times White is missed, White's numbers play fairly well in reassembling her board giving her modest gammon chances.

The drawback for running is the fairly decent diversification White gets on her next roll. White will escape Black's board with any 6 and be able to hit Black loose with any 4 or 3. The fact that you have given up your anchor leaves you vulnerable to attack and possible closeout; but when the play works, you avoid being primed in and having to bust your side prime.

Another benefit of running off the 24-point is that when White rolls a 6, Black will possibly be able to contain White's straggler with his two checkers on the midpoint. That being said, is play #2, hitting loose from the midpoint a better alternative?

When I was asked to do this problem I gave my usual promise that I would make

a decision as to what I thought was the best play before doing an *eXtreme Gammon* rollout. My choice for the best play was hitting play #2 as I felt it gave you two ways to win. You could win if you contained White's back checker by making a prime and escaping your back men. You could also win if White came in on your ace-point and had to bust her board, allowing you to potentially close your prime and escape your back men.

Even if White comes in on Black's two-point (hitting), she might roll a 4-2 that exposes a blot in White's board. And if White rolls a 5-2 hitting (with no 5 to play), she only has a modest redouble when Black stays out.

When White fails to enter however, Black has decent diversification of numbers as 1s, 3s and 5s cover the blot on his two-point and 6s escape White's prime. But when White comes in on Black's ace-point, 5s diminish in value as they allow White to escape with 6s after Black makes his 2-point.

Additionally, whether White enters or not, Black is under some time pressure to roll good numbers quickly. He needs an escaping 6 within a few shakes to avoid breaking his side, while rolls like 5-5 and 4-4 are terrible. And even if Black escapes one checker, there is also a fair possibility that he will not be able to escape last checker, which means it can be counter-attacked giving White good chances to win via the containment gambit.

Play #3 is to run off the anchor and hit loose. This play seems most vulnerable, as you not only give up your anchor; you also break your prime in the process. If White

had a series of blots strewn in the outfield, you might make such a play to capitalize on her liability. But there are no blots to harvest and the three blots you create get you gammoned an excessive percentage of the time.

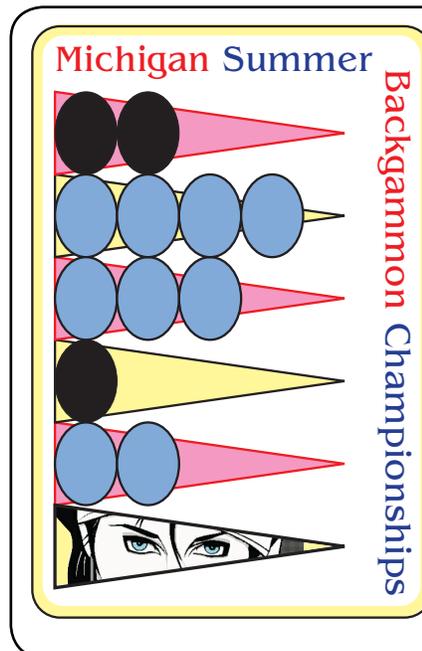
Therefore, it is down to plays #1 and #2. Since both are quite diverse in nature, it isn't such an easy position to analyze over the board. Gains and drawbacks we've discussed for both approaches don't lend themselves to easy mathematical analysis. That is for the "bots" to do.

And as long as we're on the topic, what do the "bots" say? Using *eXtreme Gammon* to analyze the position, my play (hitting loose) came out as second best by .05 over the running play. Running, while not winning as often, loses less gammons among losses and wins more gammons in Black's wins.

If however Black owns the cube, then hitting loose is slightly better as Black avoids being recubed when White hits him back. And even if White escapes, Black can win a late game as possession of the cube guarantees him that opportunity until White removes her last checker from the board.

This position is certainly an interesting one to analyze and even more interesting if you change some of the elements to better understand the overall nature of this type of game.

This problem teaches us to keep an open mind when it comes to checker moves. As you discover the gains and drawbacks of each move with practice and relentless study, you will learn how to weigh those factors to determine equity.—
Steve Sax Δ



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WINNER'S CIRCLE



MAR.-MAY 2011

28th Fleet Underwood Memorial & Benefit (Flint, MI; 13 Mar.)... OPEN (29): 1-Dean Adamian, 2-John Drexel, 3/4-Bill Calton / Gary Fritzsche, 5/6-Dmitriy Obukhov / Walt Smith. INTERMEDIATE (32): 1-Reggie Harvel, 2-Steve Grob, 3-Lorenzo Morales, 4/6-Al Branham / Gerard Jendras / Gary Tong... *Director Carol Joy Cole reports \$300 raised for the area food bank.*

•**British Open** (Hinckley, England; 8-10 Apr.)... OPEN (58): 1-Julian Minwalla, 2-Jullian Fetterlein, 3/4-Nigel Merrigan / Peter Chan; 1C-Adrian Jones, 2C-Gerry Enslin, 3C/4C-Stuart Mann / Andy Bell; 1LC-Peter Bennet, 2LC-George Hall. BLITZ (32): 1-Mick Vacarey, 2-Rachel Rhodes. DOUBLES (10 teams): 1-If We Must & Free Spirit. FRIDAY 500 (28): 1-Peter Bennet, 2-David Wallbank, 3/4-Andy Darby / Michael Home. POKER (19): 1-Myke Wignall, 2-Paul Christmas.

•**Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 10 Apr.)... OPEN (13): 1-Samuel Wang, 2-Robert Bieder; 1C/2C-Boris Dekhtyar / Dmitry Dragomeretskiy. BEGINNER (3): 1-Michael Guida, 2-John Johnson.

•**Ohio State Club Sunday** (Akron, OH; 16 Apr.)... OPEN (10): 1-Farhad Forudi, 2-Joe Miller; 1C-Stephen Trundy.

•**23rd Nordic Open** (Copenhagen, Denmark; 21-25 Apr.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (106 participants): 1-Ralf Jonas (GER), 2-Christian Sørensen (DK), 3/4-Tage Mellgren (DK) / Michihito Kageyama (JPN), 5/8-Kåre Aronsson (SWE) / Martin Birkhan (GER) / Mårten Howe (SWE) / Robin Swaffield (HK); 1LC-Tommi Haanranta (FIN), 2LC-Alain Babillon (FRA). ADVANCED (77): 1-Caglar Erdogan (TUR), 2-Börge Sundbom (SWE), 3/4-Finn Bahn (DK)/Pernille Rosendal (DK), 5/8-Omid Badieli (SWE)/Marko Hellsten (FIN)/Morten Jacobsen (DK) / Walter Meuwis (BEL); 1LC-POM Mickelsson (SWE), 2LC-Tommy Kean (DK). INTERMEDIATE (82): 1-Peter S.H. Jensen (DK), 2-Michael Bjørn Sejers Jensen (DK), 3/4-Jørn B. Andersen (DK) / Jesper Jørgensen (SWE), 5/8-Casper Andersen (DK) / Ulrik Andersen (DK) / Jeppe Eriksen (DK) / Peter Bjørn Larsen (DK); 1LC-Flemming Sørensen (DK), 2LC-Torben Sterup (DK). BEGINNER (38): 1-Tina Møller Weile (DK), 2-Regitze Wallenstrøm (DK), 3/4-Christian Hansen (DK) / Keld Thorsen (DK). WARM-UP (35): 1-Taus Bøytler (DK), 2-Frank Stepler (FRA), 3/4-Ulla Hansen (DK) / Jan Larsen (DK). LADIES (42): 1-Rie Jørgensen (DK), 2-Zhina Bergstrøm (SWE). JAPAN

CHARITY TOURNAMENT (64): 1-Ulla Hansen (DK). PORTUGAL QUALIFIERS: Allan Christensen (DK), Jimmy Sørensen (DK). SPEEDGAMMON #1 (32): 1-Catalin Bucur (DK). #2 (32): 1-Mikkel Gaba (DK). SUPER JACKPOT (16): 1-Matt Cohn-Geier (USA). TRAVELERS PRIZE: Naoya Kihara (JPN). JACKPOT COLLECTOR: 1-Catalin Bucur (ROM). MIXED DOUBLES (50 teams): 1-Lars & Anne Trabolt (DK), 2-Sara Utku & Omid Badieli (SWE). DOUBLES (44 teams): 1-Marc Brockmann Olsen & Nicki Eerslew (DK), 2-Taus Bøytler & Andreas Becher (DK), 3/4-Jan Petersen & Patrick Toxværd (DK) / Fay Kristin Danielsen & Pom Mickelsson (SWE). TEAMEVENT (25 teams): 1-Træk Vejret (Karsten Schmidt, Kim K. Jensen, Claus Steensgaard), 2-Bossen og bumserne (Claus Elken, Mads Peter Andersen, Peter-Michael Valeur Bosse). DENMARK VS. THE WORLD: 1-The World (35-29)

•**2011 USBGF National Collegiate Championship** (Online computer event; 23 April)... OPEN (9 teams): 1-UCLA (Dan Ben-Moshe, Joe Roth, Ashim Ahuja), 2- Northwestern (Naveed Heydari, Uri Magaram, Kerem Taskin, Michael Harper), 3/4-Indiana University (Benjamin Hugon, Brian Rogers, Eric Wallace) / Princeton (Kamron Saniee, Boris Alexeev, Onder Polat).

•**Play65/EBGT European Championship** (Lefkosa, Cyprus; Apr. 27-May 1)... CHAMPIONSHIP (54 + 10 rebuys): 1-Tobias Hellwag (GER), 2-Michihito Kageyama (JPN), 3/4-Bülent Bahar / Simon Pankvelashvili DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Hilmi Göchan & Oguz User (TUR), 2-Falafel Natanzon (ISR) & Burak Gören.

•**Atlanta Spring Classic—ABT** (Atlanta, GA; 29 Apr.-1 May)... CHAMPIONSHIP (25): 1-Gregg Cattanach (GA), 2-Karen Davis (OH); 1C-Carol Joy Cole (MI), 2C-Stuart Thomson (GA); 1LC-Vadim Musaelyan (NC). ADVANCED (28): 1-Homer Hector (GA), 2-Jeremy Moulton (GA); 1C-Bill Kaludis (GA), 2C-Sandra Sha (FL); 1LC-Kate Elmore (GA). NOVICE (5): 1-Sybil Sha (FL), 2-Eric Kieser (GA). GEORGIA MASTERS (13): 1/2-Mike Senkiewicz / Harvey Gillis (WA). ATLANTA CUP JACKPOT (15): 1-Larry Harbin (TN), 2-Ken Larsen (NC). DOUBLES (14 teams): 1-Jeb Horton & Harvey Gillis, 2-Rollow Mickle & Joe Nolan. MINIMATCH (32): 1-Michael Edge, 2-Jeb Horton (NC). AFTER TOURNAMENT (8): 1-Ray Fogerlund (CA), Mike Weinberger (LA). Δ



Gregg Cattanach

AMALGAMATION

Visiting the Bar Point Club in April: **Brian Barber** (NY) and **Jack Takala** (MI), **Stick Rice** and a female friend drove up from Ohio to help **Carter Mattig** celebrate his 43rd birthday at Anthony's Italian Restaurant in Chicago 9 April... Chicago to Las Vegas: **Howard Markowitz**... **Sinitta** tells dailymail.co.uk how hard it was to get over **Simon Cowell**. "When my marriage broke down, Simon was there for me. We spent a few weeks on **Philip Green's** boat, just playing backgammon and hanging out easily together, but he'd met someone else"... On the mend: **Wally Wolf** (MI) following a fall that broke his arm... Check out **Al Hodis's** (NJ) humorous article about his playing experience with the colorful "**Falafel**" **Natanzon** (Israel) online at chicagopoint.com. The link is at the top of the page... **Lorena Guitron** (IL) spotted "10 Things Every Woman Should Have" by **Tommy Hilfiger** in the May 2011 *Allure* magazine. #4 was "A backgammon set. We bring one on vacations, and my friends beat me four out of five times"... A home once owned by **John Wayne** in Big Canyon, California recently sold for near \$2 million. According to *John Wayne, American*, he played all kinds of games including poker, bridge, and backgammon at the Big Canyon Country Club... OakPark.com columnist **Marty Farmer** writes that Chicago Bulls Turkish center **Omer Asik** is known to enjoy spirited games of backgammon with **Joakim Noah** in the locker room... BPC player **Tak Morioka** (IL) is currently building two backgammon boards for **David Rennie** (NY). Mr. Rennie has worked as an editor for 20 motion pictures including *Titanic* and the upcoming *Mysterious Island* starring **Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson** and **Vanessa Hudgens**... Want to make the worst cube take of your life? Buy the 3" doubler currently offered on eBay. At the site, search: "VTG Doubling" and you'll find the cube asking a minimum opening of \$499... Not a good sign. Last month, the government seized the following sites on money laundering charges: Absolute Poker, Full Tilt Poker and PokerStars... Google "Carol Joy" and out of nearly 32 million searches, the first person to appear with those two names is **Carol Joy Cole**. Now that's name recognition!... And regarding luck, remember this quote from R.E. Shay: "Depend on the rabbit's foot if you will, but remember—it didn't work for the rabbit." Δ

BEAVER HUNT ANSWERS (from p. 6)

The following six positions are Beavers: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9. Question #10 asked which of the nine positions is a double/beaver. According to a 36,000 game eXpert Gammon Rollout, the correct answer is 5.



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