

**It’s summertime!** Traffic. Warm weather (hot???). Days on the beaches. Friends and family visits. And of course, bridge. The bridge games are getting large. In fact, on Friday June 29, we had our largest game ever. Twenty-six (26) tables of play. All players with less than 200 masterpoints! How exciting to have so many newer players. Thanks to Allison and Bernadette and all the team for volunteering their Fridays to teach and mentor these players.

**2018 Regional Tournament** – Yes, it’s a month away. Hopefully you’ve got it on your calendar. Here’s a chance to win gold masterpoints without having to travel downstate, or out of state, because it’s right here in Petoskey. We’ll be at the casino again this year starting on Monday August 13. You can play morning, afternoon or evening (or all of them!) every day that week, ending on Sunday August 19 with the Swiss team event. ACBL national president Jay Whipple has made plans to come as have many other professional players (you know, those folks you read about in the monthly Bridge Bulletin). Contact tournament chair Mike Sears (mmsears@sprynet.com) if you have any questions regarding the event. Contact Julie Kennedy (tandjken@centurylink.net) for partnership info.

**Improving Your Game –** It’s pretty obvious that many of you are really focused on improving your game. Our Friday lessons and game for players under 200 masterpoints has become one of our more popular days of play. As mentioned above, we had so many players the last Friday in June that we utilized our “overflow” room to accommodate everyone. The “Ask Mike” session on Tuesdays, which is held in the “overflow” room, has overflowed the room into the hallway. Players are coming early to be sure to get a seat. The spring Hearts-Diamonds event drew 66 players for the opportunity to partner newer players with more experienced players . . . a great learning experience. And our Future Life Master tournament (non-Life Master players with less than 500 masterpoints) drew 62 tables over two days of play with those players putting in practice what they’ve learned. You know what they say about bridge . . . it’s a life-long learning experience!

**Rank Progression** – Isn’t it great to finish the game in the top 40% of the field in your stratification and win some masterpoints! And many of you have won a lot! So many in fact that you’ve progressed to the next level. Kudos to our new . . .

* Club Master – Carl Luepnitz
* Sectional Master – Marlene Warzecha, John Warzecha, Margaret Onkey
* Life Master – Nancy Colbert, Ginny Braidwood
* Bronze Life Master – Allison White
* Silver Life Master – Mark Hess
* Ruby Life Master – Betsy Howe

**Mike Sears *Sez*** – Last month we discussed four elements that should be in everyone’s toolkit to help move you to the top of the game results list:

* No-trump interference
* Negative doubles
* Balancing
* Re-evaluation

Well, if you have those four **firmly** in your toolkit and are looking to add to it, you might consider adding:

* Michaels 2-suited overcalls
* Jacoby 2NT
* Bergen raises
* New Minor Forcing
* Roman Key Card

The **Michaels** cuebid — brainchild of the late Mike Michaels — allows a player to describe a two-suited hand in one bid in competitive auctions. It is typically reserved for hands with a 5–5 (or longer) pattern. Read about it here: <http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/Commonly_Used_Conventions/michaelscuebid.pdf>

The **Jacoby 2NT** is a conventional forcing raise in response to a one-of-a-major opening bid. It shows a game-forcing hand with four-card (or longer) support in the major. Read about it here: <http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/Commonly_Used_Conventions/jacoby2NT.pdf>

The **Bergen Raise** convention was devised by Marty Bergen to enable partner to show overall values and actual trump length with one bid. Read about it here: <http://bridgeguys.com/Conventions/bergen_raises.html>

**New Minor Forcing** enables Responder’s second bid (after Opener’s 1NT rebid) to clarify that he has a 5-card major and a good 10 HCP. Read about it here: <http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/Commonly_Used_Conventions/newminorforcing.pdf>

The phrase “Key Card” in **Roman Key Card** refers to the way in which this method improves on traditional Blackwood by counting the four aces and the king of the agreed trump suit as “key” cards — a total of five. Additionally, this method allows the partnership to check on the queen of the agreed suit. Read about it here: http://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/Commonly\_Used\_Conventions/romankeycard.pdf