

B-E-R
BEER DUDE

The 49ers were unfortunate (if not unlucky) in the Super Bowl – more at the bottom. Now March Madness is soon to be upon us, so get ready to fill in your brackets if you join pools to try to win a few shekels. If any of you are headed to Columbus for the NABC's, take some warm clothing – it could be anywhere from 30 to 70+ – good luck if you go!

Unit games: Wed 1/26 drew 7 tables; Joanne Cobeen-Gerda Janos topped it. Chasers: Prez Joyce-Elliot Zeller 1A/1B; Sandi-Roseanne 3A; Susan Kovacevic-Carol Scott 4A; John Love-George Proper 5A/2B; the Posts 3B. Fri 2/7 also drew 8 tables, which Lamar & Dick topped, chasers being: John Love-Bob Post 2A/1B; Carrie Stoltzfus-Catherine Warren 3A/2B; Shahla-Aki 4A; Ben Grubel-Jan Kosel 3B. March games are Fri 6th & Wed 25th.

Just 2 new members – Jeremy Meza & Hung-Li Ma, both of whose addresses suggest they're Cal students. The transfer-out I got was a woman who never showed as a new member/transfer in, which means ACBL still hasn't solved the problem that's plagued me & fellow columnists for years.

At da club: Eric was the Jan MP champ; George Proper took NLM honors. Club Champ Mar game is the 21st. Best "surprise" I got recently was finding out that semi-newbie John Haptas was an Oscar nominee this year. He & his wife Kristine Samuelson were in the running for Best Documentary Short Subject. Theirs was "Life Overtakes Me" – good luck finding it (maybe John can give us a clue). I just can't imagine laid-back & casual-dressing John in a tux – but I'll bet he had a lot of fun walking down the red carpet & getting all the swag! He's a fast-improving player w/a talent we'd not heard about until recently – he didn't win, however.

Reminder: **turn your cellphones off/put on vibrate once the game starts.** It's OK to have a quick sound pulse for texts/voicemail – just don't interrupt the game to check unless you're dummy/done with the round. If you need to make a longer call to resolve something, just call me to fill in for you for a hand or 2.

Also, our game results also appear on ACBL Live for Clubs (just the standings & board-by board recaps – I can't put up the BridgePad matrix). If you go to ACBL website, there's a link @ the bottom of their home page to it – you don't have to log in to view. Just type in our club # (141689) or El Cerrito Bridge Club – you'll get the last 10 games. I've had to do this, as starting next month, that's the route I'll have to use to pay our monthly table fees to ACBL. No big deal for me, as it's a short process just like uploading to our website.

The Super Bowl was a pyrrhic victory for me, as I was in a no lose situation. Had the 49ers won, I'd have won \$200 in the "pick-em" pool I run for my friends & pub pals. KC won, so I cashed the preseason "futures" bet I made on them (@6.5-1). I won \$130, plus \$50 for finishing 3rd in my pool. It's GO A's for 2020 baseball (& I'll have preseason \$\$ on them for sure).

Tips to play faster: THINK AHEAD during the auction, & make sure you & partner are on the same page. Sure, your pard will throw you the occasional "curveball" that gives you pause, but take your best shot. When declaring, take a good look at TRICK ONE before you play, then go smoothly from there. If you're in a hopeless contract, play to cut your losses, especially after a bad trump break/side-suit break when in NT. On defense, it's OK to tank a bit before making an opening lead; in 3rd seat, it's OK to take a good look @ dummy & figure out your chances to beat the contract/limit overtricks. Again, it's wise to think ahead, especially if you're going to be discarding when declarer runs a long suit in NT – partnership cooperation via discard signals (1st trick only!) helps a lot. Bottom line is to PAY ATTENTION to the auction!

Tweak beerman1949@gmail.com to brag/gripe/suggest; Unit info & game results available 24/7 @ www.berunit497.org.