

2009 midwest backgammon championships

1960s THEMED 2009 MBC CHAMPION IS HIGH

Steve Sax bags his 2nd Beaver

The 2009 Midwest Backgammon Championships let its hair down in celebration of the 1960s and the winner was High: New Yorker Julius High who captured the Championship title. The 26th annual charity event, directed by Bill Davis, was held 20–22 March at the Wyndham Lisle in Illinois with 180 players in attendance. \$4500 was raised for the Anti-Cruelty Society.

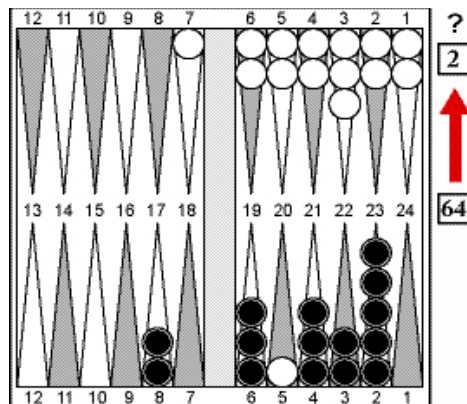


Champ winner Julius High (L) pictured with director Bill Davis and Advanced winner Brandon Macklin.

Last year, Julius High became serious about the game, recording and studying all of his matches. Recently, he flew out to California to study the finer points of tournament play with the ABT's #2 all-time player: Ray Fogerlund. Apparently, the lessons were money well spent as Julius rolled over Gerry Tansey (MO), Petko Kostadinov (SC), Stick Rice (OH), Lucky Nelson (IL) and Rod Covlin (NY) before facing Adam Bennett (WI) in the finals. Adam, another up-and-comer defeated a tough lineup of players as well: Chuck Bower (IN), Phil Simborg (IL), Fred Kalantari (MN), Greg Merriman (MI), and Steve Sax (CA).

The 15-point finals commenced Sunday at 3:00 p.m. Both players were newcomers to a Championship final table, but didn't appear overly nervous. An interesting sequence developed in the second game with Julius leading 1–0. According to Snowie, Julius had just missed five doubling opportunities prior to this position where his double is clear. Do you take this?

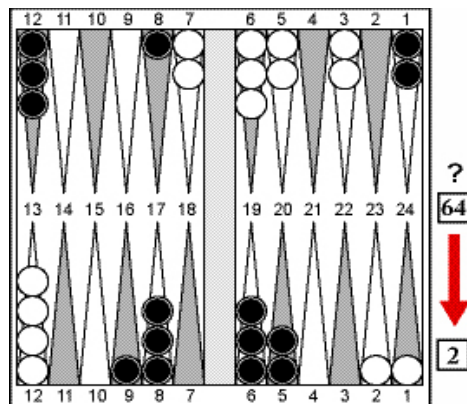
MBC 15-point finals. Julius High (Black) leads Adam Bennett (White) 1–0. Black doubles. **SHOULD WHITE TAKE?**



Adam counted the position and found himself trailing 72 to 62 in the pip count. He dropped which according to Snowie rollouts, is a .80 error. Adam can still win this position 24% of the time. (That's plenty with cube possession.) In addition to the race, White benefits from six rolls that leave immediate shots (6-1, 6-3, 5-5, 6-6) and eight additional rolls where Black will not hit, nor will he bring in any checkers from his 8-point (4-1, 5-1, 3-4, 3-5).

The key doubling position occurred with the match tied at 4 to 4:

MBC 15-point finals. Julius High (Black) and Adam Bennett (White) tied at 4–4. White on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



Trying to make something happen, Adam doubled here and Julius took. A quick 3-ply analysis shows the cube to be a 0.056 error, but a long rollout reduces the

[Continued on page 6]

2009 ohio state championships

HICKEY AND KAZAROSS BIG WINNERS IN OHIO

Gammon Village reporter Mary Hickey (OH) has something really fun to write about—her victory in the Ohio State Championships. Over 70 players attended Joe and Fran Miller's well-run event, held at the Airport Marriott Hotel in Cleveland 3–5 April.



Neil Kazaross battles Mary Hickey in the Masters semifinals as Director Joe Miller (seated) looks on.

Mary bested Stick Rice (OH) in the undefeated bracket of the double elimination event. Canadian Neil Garvie then edged Stick to gain a shot at Mary in the finals. The opening 11-point match was close, but at 8-all, Mary took charge and captured her first Ohio State title in the 11 year history of the event.

In the 16-player Masters event, Neil Kazaross (IL) topped Mary Hickey in the semifinals, and then “a-Neil-ated” up-and-comer Rod Covlin (NY) in the finals to add another trophy to his overcrowded case. Δ

2009 OHIO STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

OPEN (30): 1-Mary Hickey (OH), 2-Neil Garvie (Canada); 1C-Stick Rice (OH), 2C-Frank Talbot (MI). ADVANCED (28): 1-Ed King (OH), 2-Mike Hendrickson (OH); 1C-John McDonald (Canada), 2C-D.J. Oles (NC). NOVICE (13): 1-Irv Taylor (OH), 2-Lorenzo Morales (MI); 1C-Ian Kane (PA), 2C-Suzy Jazwa (OH). OHIO MASTERS (16): 1-Neil Kazaross (IL), 2-Rod Covlin (NY). AMATEUR JACKPOT (8): 1-Tom Hodous (WV), 2-Stephen Benjamin (OH). DOUBLES (14 teams): 1-Neil Garvie (Canada) & Chris Knapp (Canada), 2-Ryan Hast (PA) & Steve Hast (PA). MICRO-BLITZ (16): 1-Dick Bennett (OH). QUICKIE (32): 1-Holly Brososky (MI).

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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RULING QUIZ

I enjoyed the March rulings quiz but was left wondering if the rulings Danny explained were the ones actually made.—Art Grater

In fact, they were. All of these rulings were made at the Chicago Bar Point Club over the past year.—Ed.

I read your ruling quiz and now offer you one from our club.

Your opponent has two checkers on the bar facing a closed board, thus unable to make any moves, yet still able to turn the cube. You have a checker in his home board that is facing a 5-prime, thus needing a 6 to escape.

You roll 4-4 and leave a blot; however, you forget he is on the bar and roll again prematurely. He then tells you that prior to

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



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

*Denotes new or revised listing

NATIONAL

American Backgammon Tour events underlined

Apr 11*	3-Man Team Tournament, Bridge Stars Bridge Club, Northbrook, Illinois	312/543-0522
Apr 11*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Apr 11	New England Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Apr 11	Springfield Series #6, King Pin Lanes, Springfield, Illinois	217/622-9447
Apr 11	Tampa Bay Club Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/786-9133
Apr 12	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Apr 15-19	25th Nevada State Tournament, Riviera Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Apr 16*	Third Thursday Bonus (Chicago Open), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Apr 18*	Kansas City Double Points "60s-theme," Granfalloon, Kansas City, Missouri	816/916-6599
Apr 19*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Apr 25*	Springfield Series Grand Finale, King Pin Lanes, Springfield, Illinois	217/622-9447
Apr 26*	Colorado Monthly Tournament, Old Chicago, Denver, Colorado	303/791-0271
Apr 26*	Dayton Club Monthly—USBL, Barnes & Noble, Beavercreek, Ohio	937/864-1748
Apr 26*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly, Cosi Restaurant, New York, New York	212/222-7177
May 1-3	Atlanta Spring Classic, Crowne Plaza Ravinia, Atlanta, Georgia	678/441-1005
May 3*	Miami Valley Club Monthly, Panera Bread, Dayton, Ohio	937/864-1748
May 4*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Spaghetti Warehouse, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
May 9*	New England Bonus Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
May 9*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
May 9*	Tampa Bay Club Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/786-9133
May 10*	South Florida Monthly, Northridge Raw Bar, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
May 15-17	2nd Annual Atlantic City Tourney, Best Western, Pleasantville, New Jersey	732/608-7100
May 21*	Third Thursday Bonus (L.A. Open), Days Inn, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
May 22-25	29th Annual Chicago Open, Holiday Inn Select, Rosemont, Illinois	702/218-8238
Jun 4-7	US Open—Wash. DC, Doubletree, Arlington, VA ckt@world-backgammon-association.com	
Jun 7*	Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jun 12-14	Los Angeles Open, Airtel Plaza Hotel, Van Nuys, California	818/901-0464
Jul 1*	Michigan Summer Warm-Up, Sheraton Hotel, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 2-5	Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton, Novi, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jul 24-26	14th Minnesota Open, Courtyard by Marriott, Bloomington, Minnesota	612/718-2613
Aug 6-9	Florida State Championships, Sheraton Airport, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Sep 4-7	Wisconsin State Championships, Radisson Hotel, Madison, Wisconsin	608/516-9109
Sep 25-27	Colorado State Championships, Hilton Airport Hotel, Aurora, Colorado	303/791-0271
Oct 9-11	Illinois State Championships, Ramada Inn, Peoria, Illinois	847/845-3579
Oct 16-18	Mid-Atlantic Championships, Marriott Berkshire, Towson, Maryland	954/564-0340
Nov 4-8	2009 Las Vegas Open, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/218-8238
Dec 4-6	California State Championship, Airtel Plaza Hotel, Van Nuys, California	818/901-0464

OUTSIDE USA

Apr 9-13	21st Nordic Open, Marienlyst Hotel, Helsingør, Denmark	4533-363601
Apr 15-19	21st WBF European Championship & 8th Velden Open, Velden, Austria	390331-923537
Apr 23-26*	9th Torneo Città di Jesolo, Hotel Atlantico, Jesolo, Italy	393477-938686
Apr 24-26	4th Strawberry Hill High Stakes Tournament, Kingston, Jamaica	876/999-0471
Apr 24-26	WBF-Türkiye 1st Antalya Open, Santa Marina Hotel, Antalya, Turkey	905332-352555
Apr 25-26*	Istavder Club Monthly, Green Park Hotel Bostanci, Istanbul, Turkey	905324-008211
May 8-10	County Cups Trophy, Barcelò Hotel, Hinckley Island, England	441522-888676
May 14-17	EBGT: TMG Portuguese Open, Casino Estoril, Estoril (Lisbon), Portugal	491715-422222
May 22-24	14th Oslo Open, Bridgesenter Vest, Oslo, Norway	4797-513941
May 23-24*	Istavder Club Monthly, Green Park Hotel Bostanci, Istanbul, Turkey	905324-008211
May 29-Jun 1	14th Kaiserbrunnen-Cup, Hotel Kaiserbrunnen, Brakel, Germany	49711-486190
Jun 5-7	Austrian Masters Finale, Montesino, Vienna, Austria	436642-127412
Jun 5-7	Barcelò English Open, Barcelò Daventry Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Jun 11-14	3rd Braunlage-Harz-Cup, Hotel Hohenzollern, Braunlage, Germany	495204-880305
Jun 19-21*	1st Torneo del Mediterraneo, Siracusa, Italy	393388-022946
Jun 27-28	3rd Geneve Club Open, Casino, Geneva, Switzerland	4178-7685569
Jul 3-5	BIBA World Championship, Barcelò Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Jul 8-12	3rd Nice Casino Ruhl Open, Casino Ruhl, Nice, France	390331-923537
Jul 12-19	34th World Championship, Fairmont Hotel, Monte Carlo, Monaco	USA: 212/222-7177
Jul 25-26	14th Liverpool Open, Liverpool Bridge Club, Liverpool, England	447931-553829
Jul 29-Aug 5	EBGT: 3rd Gogi Bukia Memorial & Georgian Open, Tbilisi, Georgia	491715-422222
Jul 31-Aug 2	Studio Anne Carlton Trophy, Daventry Hotel, Daventry, England	441522-888676
Aug 15-16	Stavanger Bymesterskap, Resept AS, Stavanger, Norway	47916-22655
Aug 21-23	Offene Deutsche BG-Championship, Penta Hotel, Wiesbaden, Germany	49711-486190
Aug 28-30*	Swiss Championships 2009, Casino Barrière, Montreux, Switzerland	4179-3584825
Aug 31-Sep 6*	18th Mitteleuropa Championship, Park Hotel, Nova Gorica, Slovenia	390331-923537

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

your premature roll, he was going to cube you but you rolled so quickly that he didn't have time to stop you.

What is your decision and why?—*Michael Crane, Director, British Isles Backgammon Association*

This would have been a tougher ruling if your opponent had no legal moves (e.g. was still closed out on the bar). But when the player rolls completely out of turn, he must suffer the consequences: the offended opponent can take his turn from the start (even doubling if he so wishes). The player must then act on the cube knowing that his premature roll will be treated as such following his cube decision.—Ed.

KIM KNOWS

I know the name of the mystery person pictured in the March POINT. I'm her daughter!—*Kim Messina, via e-mail*

Your mom is identified on page 7 of this issue, Kim.—Ed.

MIDWEST THANKS

Thanks for another great Midwest Champs. You still have the best Calcutta "event" with all the costumes and entertainment. I can't even think who has the second best Calcutta but it isn't close.

Everything went smoothly for me so I don't even have any suggestions for improvement.—*Chuck Bower, Bloomington, Indiana*

To Bill and staff: I want to thank you so much for a great weekend. It is such a treat

to be able to play in your tournament. And whether you win or lose, you know that it is going to be enjoyable with all the fun and creative things that you do. My personal favorite was "The Magic Bus" at the Calcutta.—*Trudie Chibnik, director, Winnetka Backgammon Club*

SHOULD CHOUETTES BE CLOCKED?


Whilst the Battersea Chouette is undoubtedly the best game in London, it has recently been beset by very slow play with long discussions on plays, cube decisions, buy-outs, settlements etc., especially when we are 7- or 8-handed and the box has a partner. Whilst debate is healthy and promotes learning, things have possibly gone too far when the play of an (admittedly complex) 6-3 took nearly 10 minutes the other evening.

So here's the question: does anyone regularly use a clock in chouette play? If so what time limits, rules etc. are/should be applied?—*Chris Bray, London, England*

IPHONE SOFTWARE SUGGESTIONS

Does anyone have an opinion as to what the best backgammon software is for the iPhone? I would love to hear any input from your subscribers including both playing software and utilities.—*Brad LaPratt, via e-mail*

We can suggest a chess clock for timing backgammon play, and the backgammon scoreboard (now with scoring history built in). As for game-playing software, we have no recommendations.—Ed. Δ



ABT
AMERICAN
BACKGAMMON
TOUR ★ 2009

AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2009

Compiled through 5 Apr. 2009 after 5 tournaments
(Upcoming events: Nevada State, Atlanta, Chicago Open)



ABT
AMERICAN
BACKGAMMON
TOUR ★ 2009

Neil Kazaross	28.50	Neil Garvie	6.67	John McDonald	3.11	Luciana Abes	1.67
Julius High	21.33	Ed King	6.22	Mike Hendrickson	3.11	D.J. Oles	1.56
Bob Glass	21.00	Tom Hodous	6.00	Bill Pow	3.00	Terry Seymour	1.50
Victor Ashkenazi	17.00	Lucky Nelson	5.33	Joe Eckert	3.00	Harry Georgiou	1.50
Petko Kostadinov	15.00	Al Faller	5.25	Frank Frigo	2.57	Irv Taylor	1.44
Rod Covlin	14.33	Ray Fogelund	5.25	Bill Schragel	2.54	Sean Garber	1.29
Mary Hickey	13.33	Herb Roman	5.25	Larry Buckingham	2.54	Jon Hochberg	1.00
Stick Rice	12.00	Matt Reklaitis	5.25	Scott Casty	2.54	Bob Pondelicek	0.94
Adam Bennett	10.67	Rob Maier	5.14	Patty Geoffroy	2.54	Jerry Woods	0.94
David Rubin	10.67	Ramez Abi-Akar	5.08	Wanda Roberts	2.50	B.R. Hall	0.94
Brandon Macklin	10.17	Sal Chehayeb	5.08	Bob Hathaway	2.50	Michael Auer	0.94
Ed Johnson	10.00	Jesse Eaton	5.00	Peter Carcieri	2.50	Jeff Moretti	0.83
Steve Sax	9.58	Jon Viotor	4.50	Jason Switzer	2.50	Ian Kane	0.72
Philip Smith	9.00	Boris Dekhtyar	4.25	David Hamill	2.00	Lorenzo Morales	0.72
Charlie Silverman	8.60	Pernille Rosendal	4.25	Tim Johnson	1.89	Joan Grunwald	0.50
Falafel Natanzon	8.50	Richard Munitz	4.25	Sheri Peters	1.88	Jacki Singleton	0.47
Rick Barabino	8.50	Robert Regan	3.60	Robert Sisselman	1.80	Suzu Jazwa	0.36
Majid Jahanbani	7.20	Frank Talbot	3.33	Beverly Flowers	1.80		



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB
2009 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 31 MAR.

Rory Pascar	9.18	Dave Settles	3.08	Jeff Fischer	1.64	Paul Baraz	1.16
Lucky Nelson	8.44	Mike Pufpaf	2.80	Richard Stawowy	1.56	Sonja Peacock	0.88
Howard Markowitz	7.36	Albert Yakobashvili	2.72	Linda Rockwell	1.52	Roz Ferris	0.80
Bob Steen	6.60	Wayne Wiest	2.60	Tim Mabree	1.44	Dustin Lindgren	0.80
David Rockwell	6.20	Gary Kay	2.56	Nora Luna Righter	1.44	Roy Cohen	0.68
Herb Roman	5.76	Larry Goldstein	2.48	Steve Klesker	1.44	Jacob Moreno	0.64
Mike Wolock	5.00	Michael Minkovski	2.40	Roger Hickman	1.36	Eric Johnson	0.60
Bill Bartholomay	4.64	Alex Owen	2.04	Scott Casty	1.36	Bob Pondelicek	0.60
Bill Davis	4.48	Oleg Raygorodsky	2.00	Jerry Brooks	1.36	Lindsay Mattig	0.56
Alice Kay	4.24	Peter Kalba	1.92	Bill Keefe	1.28	Barry Miller	0.56
Carter Mattig	4.22	Alexander Medvedev	1.92	Christopher Shanava	1.20	Dan Cox	0.32
Tak Morioka	3.36	Michael Ginat	1.68	Adrian Rios	1.20	Georgina Flanagan	0.32
Mike Sutton	3.20						

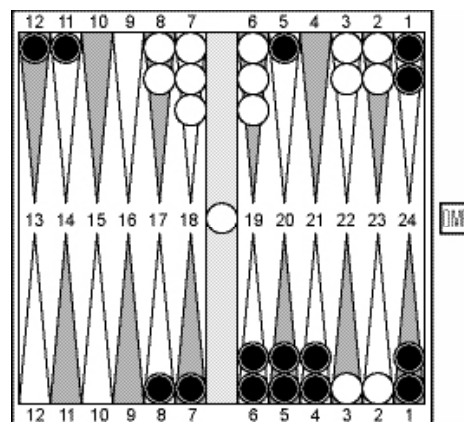
RORY PASCAR won back-to-back Masters events in early March to win the bulk of his winning 4.56 March point total. Runner's-up were Bob Steen (4.20) and Bill Davis (3.68).

your move

PROBLEM #344

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

5-point match tied at 4 to 4 (DMP).
BLACK TO PLAY 3-3.



ASK
DANNY

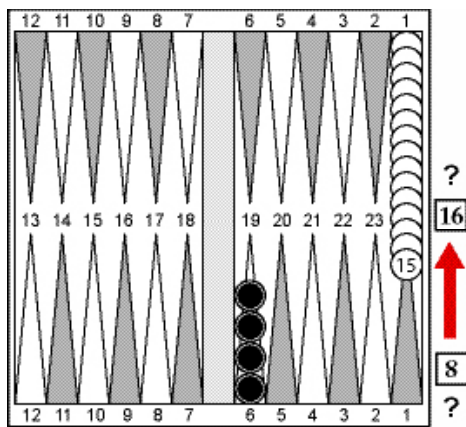
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BIZARRE DOUBLING PROBLEM

Dear Danny: I was playing online with a player from Italy. He showed me this bizarre fictional position and then asked me the proper cube actions for Black and White:

Match to 15 points. Black leads White, 6 to 0. Black on roll. **CUBE ACTION(S)?**



I didn't spend much time with it. I don't know the number of times that White wins from here, but it can't be more than a fraction. So I would simply recube to 16 and expect White to pass, unless he was playing such a superior player that trailing 0–14 Crawford was too overwhelming for his patience.

I responded to my Italian friend with this opinion, but before he could answer me, our connection dropped. I have not been able to reconnect with him, so I am at a loss as to why he even presented the setup.

Have I missed something, Danny? Isn't the proper action simply redouble/drop?—*Just Making Sure*

DEAR JUST: White can win this game by getting off in four rolls while Black fails to get off in four. White will get off in four rolls one time in 1,296, or roughly 772 times in 1,000,000. Black will fail to get off in four rolls about 15% of the time, so White will win the game in this way only about 115 times in 1,000,000. White can also win this game by getting off in five rolls while Black fails to get off in five. White will get off in five rolls slightly more than 3% of the time, but Black will require six or more rolls to get off only about 1% of the time. As a rough estimate, this

sequence of events will let White win about 315 times in 1,000,000. All in all, I estimate, White will win the game about 430 times in 1,000,000.

In contrast, even if she can never gammon or backgammon Black, White can win a 15-point match trailing 0–14 against an equally skillful opponent one time in 256, or about 3,091 times in 1,000,000. The possibility of White's winning gammons after the Crawford game provides greater match-winning chances still.

That said, Black should still *not* redouble. Why? Because he is *too good to redouble*. He can win a gammon with double-6s, and he cannot lose the game. After his worst roll (2-1) and White's best (any doublet), Black will still be able to cash with the cube, as he will be a 99.5% favorite to win the game (if rolled to completion). That's a heavier favorite than he would be leading 14–0 entering the Crawford Game, so White cannot afford to take and redouble to 16.—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



BG Peeves

By Larry Liebster



AN INVITATION TO MY CHOUETTE

I have moved to Las Vegas and am renting a house centrally located near the strip that is furnished with a backgammon table as well as pictures, books, and other memorabilia of my life. I am hosting a chouette every Thursday and Saturday from noon on until everyone wants to stop—usually in the late afternoon. Three to five players

of Advanced to Championship caliber have been attending. The stakes are adjusted for the players.

This is something I have wanted to do my whole life. I get to set the rules (with player input) and we have had few problems. Everyone is welcome; however, I will not allow anyone to play with whom I have had any “BG Peeves” in the past. I will not bar anyone from coming who has reputed to have had small problems in the past or who has a personal problem with another player. I will not pass judgment in these situations; rather, I will let the problem resolve itself. Presently, we have an interesting cast of characters.

I guess this is not as much of a “BG Peeve” as it is a publicity release announcing the presence of my chouette. It will be interesting to see how this develops. Up to now, we have had a maximum of five players. We have discussed what to do if a sixth man comes in. In that case we will break into two 3-man “interlocking” chouettes. This approach allows all players the ability to play all others. The loser of one 3-man chouette goes to the bottom of the ladder of the other chouette. Each chouette has a score sheet with all the player's names. The names of the players in the other chouette have boxes about them which disappear when they be-

come active. I have heard this has been done in California and will let it develop.

There is a weekly BG tournament every Tuesday night at Jackson's Bar & Grill at 7:00 P.M. Previously directed by the late Michael (Max) Maxakuli, it is now very ably run by Tony Anton and Jason Lee. I participate and in no way want to deter its prospering. Like in Chicago, I would like to see efforts to expand backgammon in the Vegas area. I would like to see beginner's lessons. With all the schools, senior centers, and housing developments with community centers, I am sure we can find someone, somewhere who would like to learn backgammon. I have my PowerPoint presentation just waiting to be unfurled again.

Here are the facts: My chouette meets every Thursday and Saturday at noon when I am in town. Every effort will be made to provide a game of your liking. My phone number is (201) 233-2221. Just call and you will be given all the information. There is no charge for playing.

With Howard Markowitz's Nevada State Tournament coming up this month, I am hoping that my chouette will have an international flavor. I look forward to seeing you on your next trip to Las Vegas.—Larry Liebster Δ



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Backgammon Championship
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HIT Casino Park
Nova Gorica
(Slovenia)



XII Austrian
Backgammon Open
& Double Consulting Challenge
(30th September - 4th October, 2009)

Hotel Veronika
Seefeld
(Austria)



New

Backgammon Spring Challenge
(20th - 24th May, 2009)

Hotel Veronika
Seefeld
(Austria)



2009 MBC...

[Continued from page 1]

error to 0.036. We like this cube. Adam gives up very little match equity with his early double (about one-sixth of one percent) and if Julius mistakenly drops this double, the slightly early cube turns into a genius coup gaining nearly 2% of match equity.

Julius went on to turn the game around and win a gammon to leap ahead 8-4. He never looked back winning his first major title 15-5. Congrats to both Adam and Julius for being class acts throughout the event.

Grand Crystal Beaver XI

20 players (12 at the \$600 level and 8 at the \$300 level) entered the Friday night Master's Jackpot known as the "Grand Crystal Beaver." That's because the trophy is a beautiful Swarovski crystal beaver valued over \$150. The finals were a "cross-country" battle: California's Steve Sax vs. New Yorker Rod Covlin. In the previous 10 years, nobody had every won the GCB twice. Now Steve Sax had the chance to make history and did just that winning an incredibly exciting 11-point DMP victory with a 6-6 roll on his last shake. [See Steve's side bar on page 7 for details.]



Rod Covlin (L) is stone-faced as Steve Sax receives congratulations after rolling 6-6 at DMP in the Crystal Beaver finals.

Calcutta Auction

The Calcutta is always a fun show and this year was no different and the director and staffers Peter Kalba, Carol Joy Cole, Amy Trudeau, Dru Heggen, and Mark King all took part in a Laugh-In Skit in 1960s garb:

Peter: "Say Mark, what's the difference between roast beef and pea soup?

Mark: "I don't know, Peter."

Peter: "Anyone can roast beef."



The Laugh-In skit at the Calcutta.

The opening skit can be viewed online at: chicagopoint.com/2009skitmbc.mov, or you can buy the Calcutta DVD by sending \$10 to Chicago Point; 3940 W. Bryn Mawr #504; Chicago, IL 60659.

The puzzle in the brochure asked players to bring the lead singer photo to the Calcutta and 14 players figured out that this rebus represented "Ermine-Sir-Mitts = Herman's Hermits. Those bringing Peter Noone photos received \$10 each.



Other Events

Congrats to the other Main event winners: Rob Maier (WV) in the \$125 Open, Brandon Macklin (MD) over Ramez Abi-Akar (IL) in the Advanced, and Tim Johnson over Bob Pondelicek in the Limited.

Lyle Rubin captured his third Children's Tourney title in four years, this time defeating Phillip Ring. Kelly Rooney defeated Jake Epstein in the Children's Consolation.



The kids from left: Mason Rubin, Krista Rooney, Main winner Lyle Rubin, Caillie Marek, Zack Rudebeck, Cons. winner Kelly Rooney, Director Bill Davis, Cons. finalist Jake Epstein, and Stephen Brice.

Alan Gold powered past Jacki Singleton in the all-Wisconsin Battle of the Sexes finals. Jesse Eaton (MN) won the Nackgammon. Rob Maier won the Purple Haze Blitz and Stacy Turner (FL) grabbed the quickie.

In the fun side events, Rob Covlin's (NY) \$500 donation to the ACS gained him a spot in the final four playing for the Taki Groovy board. He took advantage of his position and won the \$1300 bakelite board.

Henry Gray (IL) won BG Blockhead and Scott Rudebeck won two fun side events: Pig Rolling and BG Shuffleboard earning him a Tom-Tom GPS and \$100 cash.

Thanks

Thanks to all those who helped to make the 2009 MBC a success. Our all-time MBC donation to the Anti-Cruelty Society now stands at \$58,000. Thanks to Barb Levinson of Barbara's Balloons for the beautiful



The MBC staff from left: Amy "Moonbeam" Trudeau, Peter "Puff Daddy" Kalba, Director Bill "Guru" Davis, Carol "Sunshine Joy" Cole, Mark "Doobie" King, Drusilla "Morningstar" Heggen.

room decorations, Tom Walthes and Dave Cramer for donating three pairs of Cubs tickets, Dru Heggen for making two blankets, Ed Zell for filming the Calcutta, and Arnold Zousmer for his usual generous pre-tourney donation. Complete results Δ:

2009 MIDWEST BACKGAMMON CHAMPS

CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-Julius High (NY), 2-Adam Bennett (WI), 3/4-Rod Covlin (NY) / Steve Sax (CA); 1C-David Rubin (IL), 2C-Stick Rice (OH); 1LC-Lucky Nelson (IL). ADVANCED (61): 1-Brandon Macklin (MD), 2-Ramez Abi-Akar (IL), 3/4-Larry Buckingham (OH) / Bill Schragel (IL); 1C-Sal Chehayeb (MI), 2C-Scott Casty (IL); 1LC-Patty Geoffroy (MA). LIMITED (17): 1-Tim Johnson (IL), 2-Bob Pondelicek (IL); 1C-Jerry Woods (IL); 1LC-Jacki Singleton (WI). \$125 OPEN (9): 1-Rob Maier (WV); 1C-Frank Frigo (KY); 1LC-Sean Garber (IN). CHILDREN'S TOURNEY (11): 1-Lyle Rubin (IL), 2-Phillip Ring (IL); 1C-Kelly Rooney (IL), 2C-Jake Epstein (IL). GRAND CRYSTAL BEAVER (16): 1-Steve Sax (CA), 2-Rod Covlin (NY). BATTLE OF THE SEXES (32 men & 11 women): 1-Alan Gold (WI), 2-Jacki Singleton (WI), 3-Ray Fogelund (CA). NACKGAMMON (32): 1-Jesse Eaton (MN), 2-Stick Rice (OH), 3/4-Mary Hickey (OH) / Lucky Nelson (IL). OPEN DOUBLES (29 teams): 1-Steve Brown (MN) & Susan Randail (FL), 2-Carter Mattig (IL) & Lindsay Mattig (IL), 3/4-Chuck Bower (IN) & Frank Frigo (KY) / Mary Hickey (OH) & Rob Maier (WV). LIMITED DOUBLES (16 teams): 1-Vinton Knarr (IL) & Cliff Mayoh (IL), 2-Farhad Forudi (OH) & Barbara Levinson (IL). PURPLE HAZE BLITZ (72): 1-Rob Maier (WV). 2-POINT QUICKIES (128): 1-Stacy Turner (FL), 2-Eric Johnson (IL), 3/4-Rod Covlin (NY) / J.A. Miller (IL). TAKI FLOWER-POWER TOURNEY (16): 1-Rod Covlin (NY). First prize was a Taki-Groovy Bakelite board. BG-WHEEL OF FORTUNE: 1-Bob Koca (MD). PIG-ROLLING: 1-Scott Rudebeck (IL). BG BLOCKHEAD GAME: 1-Henry Gray (IL). BG SHUFFLEBOARD: 1-Scott Rudebeck (IL). BEST '60s/HIPPIE COSTUMES: 1-Jeff Kane & family (WI), 2-Julius High (NY), 3-Tim Johnson & family (IL), 4-Greg Tomlin (IL).

Where's my Phone?

By Steve Sax

Having failed in the pig-rolling, BG shuffleboard, and blockhead stacking contest, I decided to institute a new event at the 2009 Midwest Backgammon Championships while competing in the finals of the Grand Crystal Beaver XI Jackpot event: "The Phone Toss." Having failed to do the obvious (and courteous thing) of shutting my cell phone off during the GCB finals, I received three phone calls from a friend of mine who wanted instant match updates.

The first time he called, I answered quickly as not to disturb my gracious opponent, New Yorker Rod Covlin, and handed the phone to Gammon Associates director Patrick Gibson who gave a quick and whispered rundown of what was happening. The second time the phone rang, I simply hung up without responding, and when the phone rang for the third time, it was DMP in the final position: I had a checker on my 6-, 4-, and 3-points and Rod had a checker on his 6- and 3-points.

I didn't want the moment spoiled by distractions, so I tossed my phone through a gap in the crowd of 30 or so spectators, past the "Children's Tournament," banking off the far wall, narrowly missing Peter Kalba's whiskers, and coming to rest at the base of "The Beatles" poster that I had just purchased.



The cell phone that Steve Sax tossed just prior his winning a second Crystal Beaver trophy.

I regained my composure and after the crowd's laughter subsided, I shook the dice nearly 20 times and rolled them against the rail of Rod's newly won "Taki-Groovy Bakelite Board" in the "Flower Power" tourney. They came to rest on a very unexpected set of "boxes" ending the tournament and making me the only two-time winner in the 11 year GCB history.

Thanks go to Bill Davis and his wonderful staff. His event is the most innovative and fun tournament on the tour, win or lose. I plan to call Bill after finishing this article to thank him; but does anybody know: Where is my phone?—Steve Sax Δ



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(818) 645-6284 or pgibsonmfc@gmail.com

A complete listing of tournament information is posted at our tournament website:

gammonassociates.com/ga_next-event.htm

WHO WAS THAT LADY?

Last month, we printed a picture of this woman who: (a) once dated Rodney Dangerfield, (b) appeared on Oprah Winfrey's old TV show, and (c) was a two-day champion on the "Concentration" game show.

The woman pictured is well-known player and South Florida director Elayne Feinstein. Elayne is running two events this year: (1) Florida State Championships in Fort Lauderdale 6-9 August, and (2) Mid-Atlantic Championships in Towson, Maryland 16-18 October. For more info, call Elayne at: 954/564-0340.



ILLINOIS ACTION



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

Tuesday, 6:30 P.M. at Holiday Inn O'Hare, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago. 773/693-5800.

Sunday Bimonthly, 12:00 NOON at Holiday Inn O'Hare, 5615 N. Cumberland Ave., Chicago. 773/693-5800.

CHICAGO BACKGAMMON ASSOCIATION: Tournaments Monday, 6:30 P.M. at The Parthenon; 314 S. Halsted Street, Chicago. Carter Mattig (312/493-2911).

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

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).

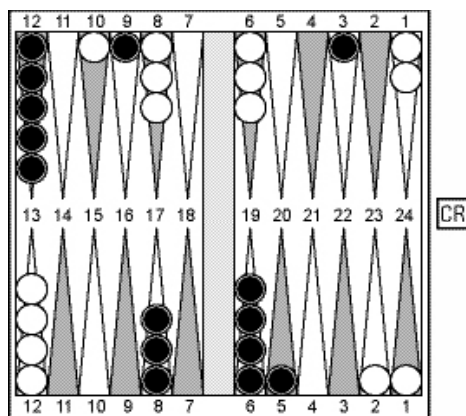
PUB CLUB: Tournaments Thurs., 6:45 P.M. at Playoffs Bar, 720 E. North Ave., Carol Stream. Tim Mabree (630/606-2388).

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

PROBLEM #343 ANALYZED

by Jake Jacobs

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



When Bill sent me this problem he remarked that it was a tough one because there were three choices. Unfortunately, the problem he sent called for the play of 5-2, but I misread it. That problem has exactly three plays worth considering. Of course there are more than three plays here—we will focus on four—but there are three distinct sorts of plays. That may or may not make the play tough, but it does make the position interesting.

I trust everyone has realized that it is possible to hit White's blot on the 15-point? That is one candidate, the play that sends a third checker back while making a bid to escape the back checkers. Making the deuce is also a candidate: it strengthens our board, sends one of White's men to the roof, and in doing so, protects our blots. Last but not least, we may cover our 5-point, and then choose among 4s. There are other possible plays such as 16/13, 5/1* or the simple 16/9, but I'm sure everyone reading this has rightly dismissed them.

There is an important principle that applies here. More than one, but this will be the first. Black trails 2-away, Crawford, the primary gammon-go score. Knowing that you need a gammon may be very helpful or it may not, since it depends upon whether you know which play wins the most gammons. Here is the first important principle: the play that wins the most gammons is almost always the play that wins the most games. Put another way: the play you would tend to make for money is usually the play you should make at this score. There are plays where that isn't true, instances where one play will obviously win many more gammons than the alternatives.

But none of our candidate plays is obviously more gammonish than any other. And since I know which play wins the most games and which wins the most gammons, I can tell you now they are the same.

Another important principle is that primes and blitzes tend to be more gammonish than holding games. That is one of the problems with 22/15*. We'll come back to that in a second, after noting the other problem with hitting outside: a hitting contest favors the side with the better board, and so it favors White. She has 27 return shots from the bar, including seven numbers that hit twice. Besides the fact that you may be opening yourself up to a quick knockout, the likelihood that White will end up with an advanced anchor is high. This will more than offset sending a third man back. Hitting outside comes in fifth place, and is a double whopper.

Making the deuce is a much better play than hitting outside. It is a blitzing play, and thus more gammonish than hitting outside. White has far fewer return hits, no double hits, and a quarter of the numbers that do hit, she will instead use to make an advanced anchor. The downside is that making the 2-point is highly committal; you will be either blitzing or trying to scramble home when the blitz fails. Making the deuce isn't quite a whopper, but it is a sizable error.

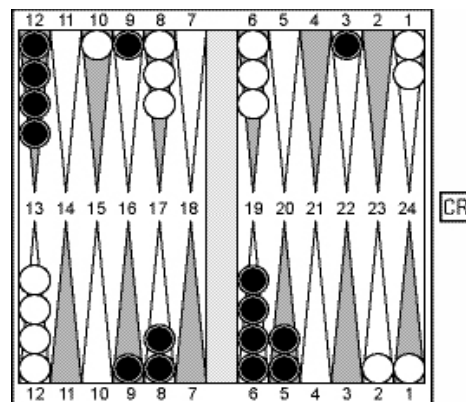
So it is the 5-point. Which brings us to one more principle: making the 5-point is a strong play in every game plan. Your game is still undeveloped, so you can't properly be said to have a game plan yet. But if you do wind up blitzing, you will be thrilled to have the 5-point. If you wind up priming, you will be thrilled to have the 5-point. Even if you are only running for home, you will still be happy to have the 5-point.

Having made the five, there are four ways to play the 4, and since one of them requires you to break the 8-point, there are only three. Of those we can also eliminate 22/18. This play is still better than 22/15*. If you played 22/18 first, and then looked around for a 3, you would cover your 5-point in preference to hitting. But playing out to the bar leaves White too many hits. She has 33 total hits, 14 of them hitting twice, and none of them leaves a direct return shot.

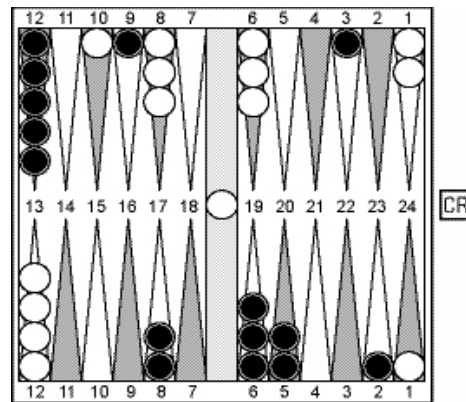
Here are the top two plays:

Jake Jacobs' two books:
Can a Fish Taste Twice as Good? & A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Four-Point! both available at:
www.flintbg.com/boutique.html

After 13/9, 8/5



After 8/5, 6/2*



I confess that I like the first one. I came of age in the era of "pure" plays, and 13/9 is the purer play. It starts a new point for the prime, while providing a builder than may be useful for an even better point, such as the 4-point, or for a blitz. Meanwhile hitting on the deuce puts a man where you don't particularly want it, while stripping one of the builders that might be used for better things.

Nonetheless, hitting is the higher rated play. It provides protection for the other blots and might score a quick knockout, sewing up a gammon and thus a match win. Because 13/9 is so much better positionally, even though 6/2* is tactically better the difference is less than 2%.

There is one other factor to examine when the plays are this close: will one play force harder choices on the opponent? It is hard to say for sure; there are at least a few very interesting rolls after either play, with the potential for making a blunder. But after hitting it is very unlikely that White will make a serious mistake if she rolls a 5 or a 6. If over half the rolls are effectively forced, or offer equivalent choices, then 13/9 is the play that makes life harder for the opponent. Against a weak opponent it is probably enough to swing it.

Verdict: Play 13/9, 8/5 against a weak player, and 8/5, 6/2* against a strong player.—Jake Jacobs Δ

AMALGAMATION

Recent Bar Point Club visitors: **Sonja Peacock** (IA) and **Mark Murray** (OH)... Congrats to **Alexander Medvedev** who won the 24-player BPC 24 March Open event on a first timer *free entry!*... Two new iPhone apps that are getting a lot of attention are



Two new iPhone BG apps: Top: BG Scoreboard. Bottom: Trileet chess clock.

the Backgammon Scoreboard (with scoring history) and the Trileet Chess clock. Both cost just a few dollars... Playboy founder **Hugh Hefner** was interviewed in front of



Top: Hefner interviewed on Entertainment Tonight. Bottom: Holly Madison displaying a POINT on "The Girls Next Door."

his backgammon board on Entertainment Tonight about how he felt regarding his ex-girlfriend **Holly Madison** competing on "Dancing With The Stars." Obviously he was supportive. We have an affection for Holly as she displayed a CHICAGO POINT on one of the early "Girls Next Door" TV shows. According to an article in the UK *Mirror*, British actor/singer **Robbie Williams** likes playing backgammon as much as he likes hunting UFO's. Another Brit, **Daniel Craig** (aka **James Bond**) is also a big BG fan. There was a lot of BG action between takes on the set of his most recent picture *Defiance*... Protect your valuables! **Stick Rice** reports on his bgonline.org forum that there have been three major thieveries at recent ABT events: (1) **Petko Kostadinov** (SC) had his board stolen, (2) **Rod Covlin's** (NY) camcorder was taken, and (3) at the recent Ohio State Championships, **Julius High's** (NY) computer, camcorder and tripod disappeared from the playing room... World Series of Backgammon Enterprises founders **Andy Bell** and **Eric Guedj** will announce Season 3 at the Nordic Open 9-13 April. Many of the events will be televised on Eurosport 2... **Patrick Gibson**

has purchased an easy-to-remember website for his club: www.gammonassociates.com... **Charles Darwin** (who along with **Abraham Lincoln**, celebrated his 200th birthday on 12 Feb. of this year) was a big backgammon aficionado. He and his wife **Emma** used to play two games every day and Darwin kept a running score for 40 years... US Open director **Chiva Tafazzoli** informs us that Iranian-born **Ali Zehpour**, South African resident, is heavily promoting backgammon in South Africa. Not only does he stage a yearly tournament in March on Persian New Year Day (beginning of Spring), he also is fighting for backgammon to be taught at schools, tries to make the game be part of the Olympic committee, and gives free lessons to editors of newspapers, publishing their bg-experience... Congrats to **Michael Crane** (England), whose next *BibaFax* issue will be #100. Michael will include a hard copy version of our doubling cube investigation that is posted online at chicagopoint.com/bgdoubling.html... Finally, this quote about luck from **Eric Butterworth**: "There is only one way in which you can 'change your luck' and that is by altering your thoughts." Δ

who did what WINNER'S CIRCLE FEB.-APR. 2009

- **New England Club Monthly** (Malden, MA; 15 Feb.)... OPEN (14): 1-Alex Zamanian, 2-Mark Houser, 3/4-Eric Wicklund / Tom O'Riordan; 1C-Gil Evans, 2C-Walter Trice.
- **Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 15 Feb.)... OPEN (14): 1-Victor Ashkenazi (NJ), 2-Boris Dekhtyar; 1C-Steve Elkin. INTERMEDIATE (4): 1-Karen Michele, 2-Kevin McCarthy.
- **Istavder First Anniversary Tournaments** (Istanbul, Turkey; 28 Feb.-1 Mar.)... CHAMPIONSHIP (72): 1-Cem Duran, 2-Hakan Ertekin, 3/4-Gürkan Derin / Kemal Erdem. WBA-TURKIYE ISTAVDER 1st DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP (27 teams): 1-Ali Serif Rende & Nihat Sorguven, 2-Mehmet Karabiber & Selahattin Mermertas, 3/4-Yalkin Erk & Süleyman Sahin / Erkan Demirtas & Handan Erdag. 1st ErBenGL CHAMPIONSHIP (64): 1-Sedat Bicakçi, 2-Haluk Oral, 3/4-Ulvi Cangazi / Omer Gökay Sahin. ONE-POINT #1 (64): 1-Haluk Oral, 2-Süleyman Sahin. #2 (64): 1-Erdem Hunu, 2-Metin Erikler. #3 (64): 1-Arzu Akincioglu, 2-Ahmet Nar. ARTGAMMON JACKPOT (16): 1-Hilmi Göçhan, 2-A. Kamil Baykalogullari. KINGGAMMON JACKPOT #1 (16): 1-Oguz User. #2 (8): 1-Kemal Erdem.

- #3 (8): 1-Kemal Erdem. #4 (8): 1-Ali Serif Rende. 869 TAVLA JACKPOT (8): 1-Necati Doganaslan. MINI JACKPOT #1 (8): 1-Hasan Yargan. #2 (8): 1-Tolga Akbaytug.
- **Ohio State Club Monthly** (Akron, OH; 1 Mar.)... OPEN: 1-Mark Murray, 2-Mike Hendrickson; 1C-Donna Davenport.
- **Arizona Club Monthly** (Phoenix, AZ; 2 Mar.)... OPEN: 1-Doug Amenda, 2-Ben Cohen, 3-Pete Campbell.
- **Springfield Series #5** (Springfield, IL; 7 Mar.)... OPEN (27): 1-David Rockwell, 2-Jim Zimmerman; 1C-Randy Armstrong, 2C-Ed Zell; 1LC-Michael Flohr.
- **South Florida Monthly** (Ft. Lauderdale, FL; 8 Mar.)... OPEN (12): 1-Perry Gartner, 2-Bob Howayceck.
- **Pair-O-Dice Monthly** (New York, NY; 15 Mar.)... OPEN (15): 1-Ben Jacobson, 2-Steve Elkin; 1C-Nasser Sedaghatpour. INTERMEDIATE (7): 1-Vincent Reece, 2-Peggy Neubig; 1C-John Krasner. BEGINNER (6): 1-Julia Somers, 2-Donna Ruskin; 1C-David Shaerf.
- **New England Club Monthly** (Malden, MA; 21 Mar.)... OPEN (10): 1-Alex Zamanian, 2-Eric Wicklund, 3/4-Greg Jukins / Tom O'Riordan; 1C-Herb Gurland, 2C-John Smidt.
- **Bar Point Sunday** (Chicago, IL; 5 Apr.)... OPEN (14): 1/2-Peter Kalba / Steve Klesker, 3/4-John Jennings / Wayne Wiest; 1C-Rory Pascas, 2C-John Jennings.

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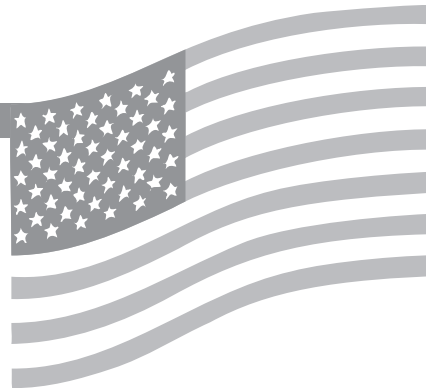
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