

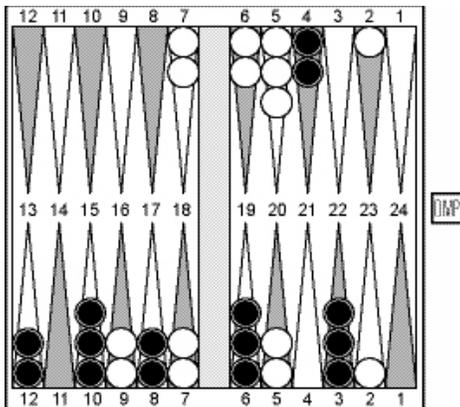
Is Clock Overuse HURTING BACKGAMMON?



By
Bill Davis

Last month's prestigious French Open Masters finals: Americans Matt Cohn-Geier and Stepan Nuniyants locked in a fierce battle for the \$44,000 first prize. Tournament DMP with Stepan on shake:

Matt Cohn-Geier



Stepan Nuniyants

Does it get any more exciting than this? Why then was Stepan playing backgammon like a monkey on crack cocaine?



Stepan Nuniyants played the French Open finals like our frantic friend.

The answer is simple. The finals were clocked and Stepan had less than ten seconds of reserve to complete the match

(MCG's reserve was under two minutes). The play that transpired from the diagrammed position wasn't world class backgammon—it was a test of finger coordination. And because of this clock travesty, Neil Kazaross's commentary to nearly 100 online viewers was reduced to time chatter and checker play afterthoughts:

```
neilkaz: time issue
cathalmurray: time time time
ekwity: I hope he's not counting pips
cathalmurray: I hope we get time updates
BillRiles: crucial roll
BillRiles: Stick is having too hard time
           staying up with play to give time update
neilkaz: u can see how fast stepan is playing
```

Clock proponents will tell you that both competitors were to blame because they failed to properly manage their reserve time early in the match. That may be true, but why did this have to happen in the first place? Neither Stepan nor Matt is excessively slow. Wouldn't an unlocked high caliber match (even if it took an extra hour to complete) have better served not only the finalists and spectators, but also the stature of the French Open itself? Can anyone imagine the Masters Golf Championship with Tiger Woods rushing his putts on the deciding 18th green?

What is the real purpose of the clock?

SLOW PLAY has been one of backgammon's biggest problems since I first started playing the game in the mid-1970s. Back then, directors would seek out volunteers to monitor tardy matches with the power to issue penalty points against habitual offenders. But it was often difficult to find a volunteer for this tedious and arbitrary job.

The Midwest Backgammon Championships did its best to curb slow play from its inception in 1984 through 1989. Then in 1990, the MBC invitation listed as a condition: "Director may require use of a chess clock at any time if a match is unduly delaying the tournament." In those days, clocks were of the analog variety. Players were given five minutes per point to complete their match.

Five years later, the 1995 Midwest

Backgammon Championships became the first ABT tournament to make chess clocks mandatory in the semifinal and final matches of both the Championship and Advanced divisions. The purpose of this experiment was to see how players would react to the clock as standard tournament equipment.



Nora Luna Righter hits her mandatory clock in the 1995 MBC Intermediate finals.

Over half of those in the Championship and Advanced divisions expressed disapproval with the new policy. We discontinued forced clock usage in 1996 only to resurrect it at the 2001 MBC under the banner "It's About Time" (with the clock rules modified to add an extra minute per point).



It's About Time! Timing clocks will be used in all rounds of the Grand Crystal Beaver and in the semifinals and finals of the Championship and Advanced divisions. A clock will also be used any time a match is unduly delaying the tournament.

This study lasted two years before a majority of players again balked at the idea. In 2003, except for the Masters and to monitor slow play, forced clock usage was scrapped.

Around 2003, David Montgomery came up with the idea of using a digital clock with a Bronstein time mechanism. It was a big improvement that better handled games of any length. Rolling and playing within the per-move 12-second deductible allowed players to save all of their reserve time (two minutes per point) for the more difficult plays. The Bronstein clock gained enough fans to be included as an alternative time-keeping method in the December 2003 rules.

[Continued on page 5]

CHICAGO POINT

A Prime Source of Backgammon Information

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LETTERS

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NICE TO HEAR FROM LEWIS

For the most part, your November issue was terrific! Great job with the graphics and text in the editorial. The "Letters to the Editor" were fascinating, especially those from Lewis Deyong.—*Carol Joy Cole, director, Flint Area Backgammon Club*

Just got the latest POINT. Thanks. It has a letter from one of my favorite backgammon authors. No, not me, though there is a letter from me. And not Danny, though he is a favorite and one of the letters is his. The author is Lewis Deyong, answering my question about the Grevita Take. I strongly suspected that *The Playboy Book Of Backgammon* was where I had read of it. It was the right era, the book was anecdotal—just the sort to tell the story of "Grevita" and his take. And finally because well read sources didn't recognize story, and unlike its contemporaries, *The Playboy*

[Continued on page 3]

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BACKGAMMON						
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.

Dec 3-5	California State Championship, Airtel Hotel, Van Nuys, California	818/901-0464
Dec 4	Springfield Series #3, Rusty's Clubhouse & Grill, Lincoln, Illinois	217/622-9447
Dec 5	Bar Point Club Sunday Tournament, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Dec 5	Cincinnati Club Monthly, Tournament, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Dec 11	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
Dec 11	New England Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Dec 11	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Dec 11	Tampa Bay Club Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/786-9133
Dec 12	Ohio Valley Challenge Cup, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Dec 12	Portland Monthly, Spring Creek Coffee House, Milwaukie, Oregon	503/515-5682
Dec 12	South Florida Monthly, Biddy Early's Pub, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	954/564-0340
Ded 14*	Teakwoods Club Monthly, Teakwoods Tavern & Grill, Phoenix, Arizona	602/762-2288
Dec 16*	Third Thursday Bonus (New Mexico) & Holiday Party, Liquid, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Dec 18*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/261-4583
Dec 19*	Bellingham Monthly, Pacific Martial Arts, Bellingham, Washington	360/733-6173
Dec 19*	Cincinnati Tournament of Champions, Max & Erma's, Sharonville, Ohio	513/807-6926
Dec 19*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly Tournament, Lincoln Center Atrium, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Dec 22*	4th Annual Maxakuli Cup, Jackson's Bar & Grill, Las Vegas, Nevada	702/458-0926
Jan 6-9	<u>New York Metropolitan Open, Hyatt Regency, Jersey City, New Jersey</u>	408/529-6769
Jan 8*	Northwest Indiana Club Monthly, VFW Hall, Porter, Indiana	219/785-2082
Jan 8*	Springfield Series #4, Ride the Nine, Bloomington, Illinois	217/622-9447
Jan 8*	Tampa Bay Club Monthly, Hampton Inn, Tarpon Springs, Florida	727/786-9133
Jan 8*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Peking Express, Berkeley, California	831/261-4583
Jan 9*	Ohio State Club Monthly, Brubaker's Pub, Akron, Ohio	330/268-4610
Jan 9*	Portland Monthly, Spring Creek Coffee House, Milwaukie, Oregon	503/515-5682
Jan 11*	Chicago Bar Point Club Awards Night, Holiday Inn-O'Hare, Chicago, Illinois	773/583-6464
Jan 14-17	<u>3rd US Open & Masters, Marriott North, Fort Lauderdale, Florida</u>	954/564-0340
Jan 15*	New England Monthly, Dockside Restaurant, Malden, Massachusetts	781/324-0892
Jan 16*	Bellingham Monthly, Pacific Martial Arts, Bellingham, Washington	360/733-6173
Jan 20*	Flint Awards Party & Bonus (Pittsburgh), Liquid Sports Bar, Flint, Michigan	810/232-9731
Jan 22*	Backgammon By the Bay Monthly, Britannia Arms, Cupertino, California	831/261-4583
Jan 23*	Pair-O-Dice Monthly Tournament, Lincoln Center Atrium, New York, New York	212/222-7177
Jan 22-29	<u>2011 Backgammon & Poker On Board, Western Caribbean Princess Cruise</u>	773/583-6464
Jan 27-30	<u>3rd New Mexico State Championships, La Posada Resort, Santa Fe, NM</u>	505/982-2729
Feb 17-20	<u>33rd Pittsburgh Championships/ABT Awards, Sheraton Four Pts, Pittsburgh, PA</u>	304/685-3214
Mar 4-6	<u>CSI-Central States Invitational, Sheraton Gateway Suites O'Hare, Rosemont, IL</u>	773/583-6464
Mar 18-20	2nd New Orleans "Sweet 16," Inn on Bourbon Street, New Orleans, Louisiana	504/366-7498
Mar 25-27	17th Ohio State Championships, Airport Marriott, Cleveland, Ohio	330/268-4610
Apr 13-17	<u>Nevada State Tournament, Bally's Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada</u>	702/218-8238
May 12-15*	First Golden Gate Open, Embassy Suites, South San Francisco, California	304/685-3214
May 27-30*	31st Chicago Open, Holiday Inn Suites-O'Hare, Rosemont, Illinois	617/699-9100
Jun 10-12*	<u>Los Angeles Open, Airtel Hotel, Van Nuys, California</u>	818/901-0464
Jul 1-4*	<u>Michigan Summer Championships, Sheraton Novi Hotel, Novi, Michigan</u>	810/232-9731

OUTSIDE USA

Dec 4-7*	12th Milan Challenge/Lombardy, Hotel Admiral, Milan, Italy	390331-923537
Dec 6-7*	EBGT: Grand Finale 2010, Golden Tulip Hotel & Casino Nicosia, Cyprus	491715-422222
Dec 8-12	2nd Meribel Tournament 2010, Hotel L'Eterlou, Meribel, France	33620-902726
Dec 9-12*	International Tournament, Arena Mall, Bacău Romania	40745-895980
Dec 18-19	TBT: 17th Istanbul Championship/WBF-TR, Armada Hotel, Turkey	905322-329228
Dec 26-27	Christmas Tournament, Somboon, Dongtan Beach, Pattaya, Thailand	6686-8187480
Jan 7-9	Bright 'n' Breezy, Barceló Old Ship Hotel, Brighton, England	441522-888676
Jan 8-9*	7th Masters Open, Café Den Bengel, Antwerp, Belgium	31653-276835
Jan 10-12	16th Thailand Open, Aisawan Resort, Pattaya, Thailand	6686-8187480
Jan 14-16	TBT: 2011 Istanbul Open/WBF-TR, Armada Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey	905322-329228
Jan 14-16*	SBTT: Zürich-Open/14th Züri-Cup, Neubühl, Zürich, Switzerland	4178-6329404
Jan 15-16*	2010 Jahresendturnier, MFC Phoenix Clubhaus, Mannheim, Germany	496204-620396
Feb 4-6	Jarvis Trophy, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Feb 12-13	TBT: 7th Ankara Championship/WBF-TR, Enerji Hotel, Ankara, Turkey	905322-329228
Feb 18-20	BBT: XII Scottish Open, Barceló Stirling Highland Hotel, Stirling, Scotland	441522-888676
Feb 25-27	EBGT: Istavder/WBA Anniversary, Green Park Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey	905324-279454
Mar 4-6*	BIBA International Championship, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, England	441522-888676
Mar 12-13*	Mokum Open, CaféTwee Klaveren, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	31611-106930
Mar 12-13*	TBT: 3rd Bursa Championship/WBF-TR, Efehan Hotel, Bursa, Turkey	905322-329228
Apr 8-10*	British Open, Barceló Hinckley Island Hotel, Hinckley, England	441522-888676
Apr 21-25*	23rd Nordic Open, Scandic Hotel, Copenhagen, Denmark	4531-392791



AMERICAN BACKGAMMON TOUR ★ 2010

Top 129 through 14 Nov. 2010 after 18 tournaments
(Upcoming events: California, NY Metro, US Open, New Mexico)



Kit Woolsey	43.04	Ray Fogerlund	10.84	Glenn Ramsey	5.17	Evan Etter	3.44
John O'Hagan	36.67	Donny Lomuto	10.57	Ernest Ho	5.17	Hideo Tateno	3.44
Richard Munitz	35.05	Patty Geoffroy	10.33	Alfred Mamlet	4.83	Steve Nelson	3.20
Rory Pascar	25.89	John Baron	10.19	Alan Grunwald	4.73	Barry Silliman	3.15
Gary Fries	25.20	Mel Rappaport	10.08	Johnny Jigamian	4.65	Al Faller	3.15
Mary Hickey	24.87	Pete Mostoufi	9.47	Mark Andrus	4.50	David Rockwell	3.11
Fred Kalantari	23.41	Justin Nunez	9.09	Elli Nache	4.49	Adrian Rios	3.06
David Rubin	21.17	George Haskour	9.09	Sergiy Rybiy	4.45	Garry Kallos	3.04
Dorn Bishop	18.60	Jeremy Bagai	9.05	Lynn Ehrlich	4.44	Damian Plesec	3.04
Ed O'Laughlin	18.31	Scott Cole	8.89	Damon Singer	4.44	Marcy Kossar	2.97
Jesse Eaton	18.26	Matt Cohn-Geier	8.80	Joe VanderWal	4.40	Don Thompson, Sr.	2.90
Bob Steen	17.33	Joe Russell	8.55	Bob Schumacher	4.40	Terry Weiss	2.83
Carter Mattig	17.04	Phil Simborg	8.50	Sal Chehayeb	4.38	Sandra Sha	2.82
Gary Bauer	16.78	Oleg Raygorodsky	8.39	Jason Pack	4.38	Steve Neidecker	2.80
Patrick Gibson	16.00	Ary Nogueira	8.00	Faddoul Khoury	4.33	Rob Reynolds	2.70
Tak Morioka	15.67	Larry Taylor	7.85	Mark Antranikian	4.33	Terry Seymour	2.70
Bill Davis	14.67	Ken Bame	7.67	Dujuan Meekins	4.20	Michael Battaglia	2.70
Eden Windish	14.34	Sasan Taher	7.33	Ken Tyszko	4.20	Neal Weiner	2.70
Gregg Cattanach	14.23	Prince Barlow	7.20	Gary Schachtschneider	4.00	Neal Rosensweig	2.67
Steve Hast	13.83	Tom Wheeler	6.93	Jim Slomkoski	3.88	Danielle Bastarache	2.67
Dana Nazarian	13.83	Dean Adamian	6.92	Roz Ferris	3.83	Kathy Weiner	2.64
Dorothy Lee	13.78	Lucky Nelson	6.83	Rick Barabino	3.78	Jesse Jestadt	2.58
Greg Cottle	13.18	Josh Racko	6.41	Michelin Chabot	3.78	Ed Johnson	2.58
Stick Rice	12.83	Jerry Godsey	6.40	Neil Kazaross	3.67	Ryan Hast	2.58
Mike Senkiewicz	12.80	Michael Flohr	6.30	Jolie Rubin	3.61	Philippe Salnave	2.50
Sean Garber	12.60	Paul Polatov	6.07	Bob Hickey	3.60	Karen Davis	2.50
Julian Fetterlein	11.70	Drew Giovanis	5.85	Joe Freedman	3.60	Sheri Peters	2.44
Lynda Clay	11.69	Masayuki Mochizuki	5.85	John Jennings	3.46	Bob Koca	2.42
Larry Yudin	11.64	Dave Pink	5.82	Steve Sax	3.46	Daniel Stroberger	2.40
Mike Corbett	11.40	Carol Joy Cole	5.42	Stacy Turner	3.46	Ben McCracken	2.29
Al Hodis	11.23	Bob Weigel	5.40	Tom Fahland	3.44	Aaron Foust	2.22
Paul Weaver	11.00	Jim McGirr	5.33	Ross Klein	3.44	R. Farmer/M. Murray	2.20

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

Book is seldom read or reread today.

It's too bad. My own inclination as a writer these days is similar to the approach Lewis took. Thirty years ago when I created the *Backgammon Scholar* for Mike Maxakuli, the magazines and newsletters of the day offered just enough technical material to tease us. *The Scholar*, with quizzes, an annotated match, an article on doubling theory, etc. stepped into the breach.

Today most backgammon writing is technical and so I find myself more interested in why Phil doubled Carter early (also in your last issue) than in the actual merits of the cube. Thirty years from now the fact that it is an early double won't have changed, and it is unlikely that players then will need instruction to alert them to it. But thirty years from now Phil and Carter and Rory might otherwise be names as familiar as Claude DeBeer and Joel Silver. Instead, reading the POINT will give future players a whiff of the legends of the past. (Actually Phil will be the Art Dickman of 2040 I am sure; 96 years old and hustling little old ladies in the nickel chouette.)

But for anyone lucky enough to own Lewis's book, people—real people who once played backgammon live on. Even if a few names needed to be changed to protect the not so innocent.—*Jake Jacobs, Singapore*

TOO SEXY FOR THE POINT

Here we go again. I just saw the November issue. While I must say, I appreciate all of

[Continued on page 4]



CHICAGO BAR POINT CLUB 2010 PLAYER OF THE YEAR

COMPILED
THRU 30 NOV.

Phil Simborg	29.48	Steve Klesker	9.44	Amy Trudeau	2.48	John Spatafora	0.96
Rory Pascar	25.76	Mike Minkovski	9.12	Ken Tibbs	2.32	Matt Cohn-Geier	0.96
David Rockwell	25.04	Lucky Nelson	8.96	Roger Hickman	2.32	Paul Baraz	0.88
Howard Markowitz	23.60	Michael Ginat	8.04	Rolf Boettger	2.28	Greg King	0.88
Bill Davis	19.20	Dave Settles	7.36	Jerry Brooks	2.16	Ken Tyszko	0.88
Tim Mabee	18.40	Mike Peters	7.20	John O'Hagan	2.08	Mihai Pop	0.80
Bill Bartholomay	17.96	Julius High	6.80	Mitch Pomper	2.00	Stefan Pop	0.72
Mike Wolock	17.12	Peter Kalba	6.76	John Gaski	1.92	Richard Stawowy	0.72
Bob Steen	16.32	Alex Aliyev	6.68	Dan Cox	1.88	Richard Pearlman	0.64
Larry Goldstein	15.96	Georgina Flanagan	5.92	Barbara Levinson	1.76	Dean Livas	0.64
Tak Morioka	15.36	Serge Bondar	5.52	Linda Rockwell	1.44	Roy Cohen	0.64
Herb Roman	15.36	Alice Kay	4.84	Jolie Rubin	1.44	Scott Richardson	0.64
Mike Sutton	14.88	Don Marek	4.64	Bob Zavoral	1.44	John Jennings	0.56
Christopher Shanava	14.64	Alex Owen	3.60	Bill Kaludis	1.32	Paul Lombardo	0.48
Bill Keefe	14.44	Joann Feinstein	3.60	Mike Terenin	1.32	Mike Pufpaf	0.48
Dujuan Meekins	12.24	Scott Casty	3.60	Wendy Kaplan	1.28	Kwong Chan	0.48
Wayne Wiest	11.92	Gary Kay	3.40	Shaw Dogan	1.28	Beth Whitney	0.48
Nora Luna Righter	11.68	J. A. Miller	3.24	Mark Murray	1.28	Randy Pals	0.48
Ken Bond	11.44	Royal Robinson	3.12	Eren Merzeci	1.24	Horatiu Birsan	0.48
Carter Mattig	10.72	Dan Weymouth	2.88	Sam Yoyen	1.20	Leslie Lockett	0.32
Reginald Porter	10.32	Adrian Rios	2.72	Maurice Barie	1.12	Les Moshinsky	0.32
Eric Johnson	10.08	Mark Ostrovsky	2.60	Joe Rafson	1.12	Oleg Raygorodsky	0.24

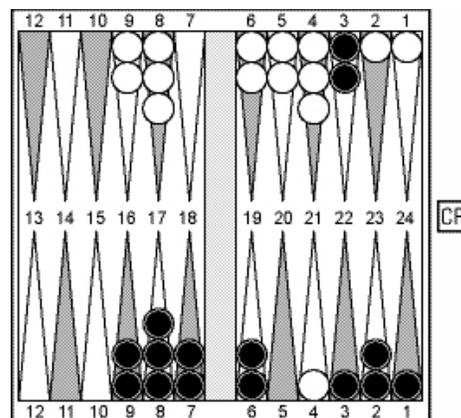
MIKE WOLOCK won nine straight matches including a Masters and Open victory to earn 5.68 points and November honors. Don Marek (4.64) and Herb Roman (3.20) finished second and third.

your move

PROBLEM #360

to be analyzed by Kit Woolsey

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



THE UNAIDED EYE



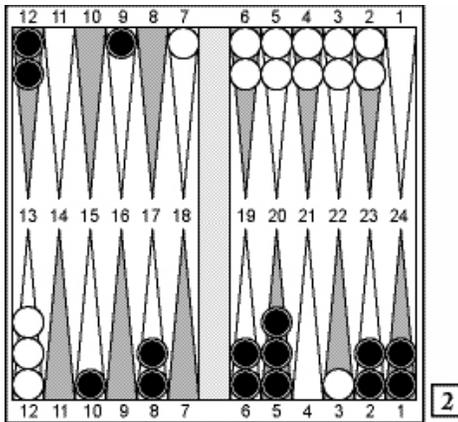
© 2010 by Danny Kleinman

DOUBLE 3s DILEMMA

Dear Danny: Here's a position I faced at our Tuesday night club. Before making the play, I thought about what I needed and what I didn't need. I needed only to win . . . and I didn't need to get gammoned. I chose a play and got G'd anyway. Bummer.

6000 Snowie rollouts confirm an error on my part. What's your over-the-board thinking on this one? —Second Best, But Close

9 point match. Black (X) leads White, 7 to 5. **BLACK TO PLAY 3-3.**



DEAR SECOND: Looking first at the race, I see that after playing this roll I will be well ahead in the race, 89 pips to 108 pips prior to making any adjustments. So my priority is bringing my men home safely, especially when White has the strongest five point board. My second priority is to avoid wasting pips and decreasing flexibility by bringing men to my 2-point and 1-point.

With my first two 3s, I would move 16/10, safetying my two blots. Then I would look at the candidates for the last two 3s, all of which are plays moving two men together. Even though it forces White's back man forward after the expected reentry, I reject the point-shifting hit 6/3*(2) because it leaves so many gaps between my four outermost points.

The natural-looking 10/7(2) closes a gap instead of creating any new gaps, so that is my first impulse. Against that, 10/7(2) leaves my midpoint in contact with White's midpoint, contact that I'd like to break, so I consider also 13/10(2). However, 13/10(2) piles four men on my outermost point and creates some awkward 6s for me next turn and afterwards. Therefore I'll stick with 16/10, 10/7(2), the play to which my fingers gravitated before my cerebrum led me to consider any alternatives. —Yours, Danny

Snowie Rollout Data

6000 cubeless rollouts were run for each play. Parameters were full, 3-ply, precise.

	BLACK			WHITE		
	BGs	Gammons	Wins	Wins	Gammons	BGs
1. R 16/10 10/7(2)	0.0%	6.5%	72.6%	27.4%	2.6%	0.0%
2. R 16/10 6/3*(2)	0.0%	12.1%	73.6%	26.4%	3.9%	0.1%
3. R 16/13 13/10(3)	0.0%	3.4%	70.6%	29.4%	1.9%	0.0%

Danny Kleinman Responds

Rollout results confirm 16/10, 10/7(2) as offering the most match-winning chances (70.0%). What is slightly surprising to me is that they show 12/10, 6/3*(2) as second best at 69.5%, ahead of 16/10, 13/10(2) at 68.7%. I thought the multiple gaps of the point-shifting hit created too much blot danger, and indeed the rollouts show it to be the most gammon-prone play of the three (a 3.9% risk), but it is also the play most likely to win the game, undoubtedly because putting White on the bar gains a further advantage in the race.

16/10, 13/10(2) is the play least likely to win the game, probably because of the pips that must be wasted to bear in safely, but it does minimize the gammon danger (only 1.9%), which is less than the 2.6% gammon risk of the best play. —DK 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

LETTERS...

[Continued from page 2]

the positive letters for the CSI, I feel you were completely out of line with the pictures. Come on, *you* who are using the CSI as a platform for bringing class back to the game then insert these, to put it kindly, *non-classy*, unnecessary photos. It's a complete contradiction. So what are you trying to say: dress up or go naked?

The cover pic somewhat went with the story but by the time I got to the last one of Jodie Fisher (whom I never heard of) with your particularly tasteless comment, it was too much to "bare." Show some class, if the readers of your newsletters were that interested in this type of sexism, they can easily pick up a *Playboy*. Heck I heard you can just go on the internet.

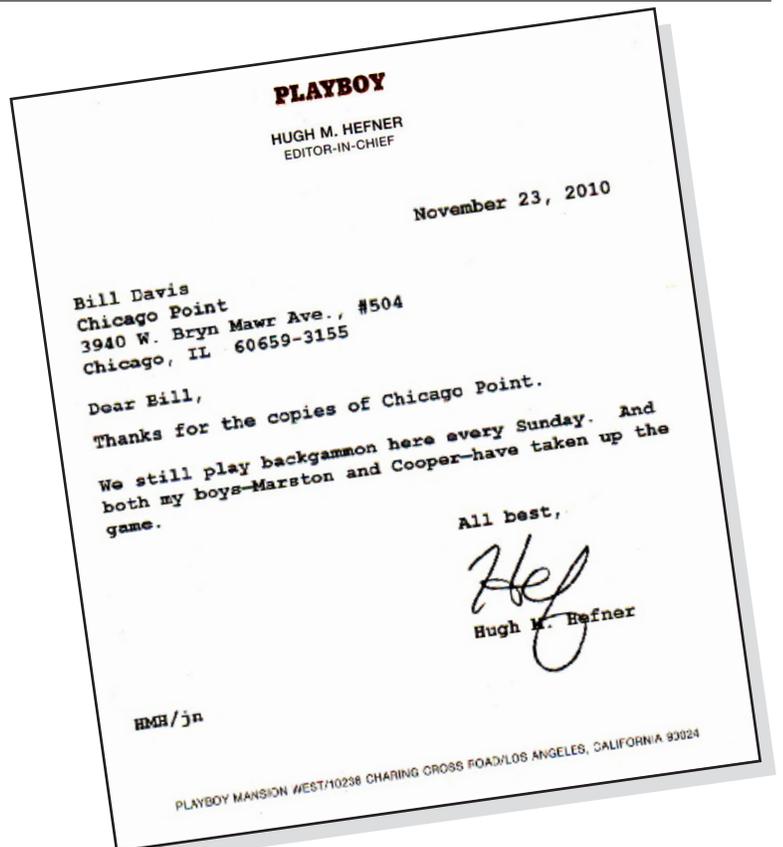
Disclaimer: The above was written as a average female BG player ☺—Amy Trudeau, co-director, CSI

Amy's tough on her partner!—Ed.

MORE DRESS CODE COMMENT

In line with Jake's November article, if you convince a geek to wear a suit, you will have a geek in a suit, not a return of charisma. Despite my skepticism, I wish you well with your plans. An idea that isn't tried will never work.—David Rockwell, Skokie, Illinois

[Continued on page 7]



CLOCKS...

[Continued from page 1]

The 2007 rule update made Bronstein clocks the only acceptable method of timing a backgammon match. Buoyed by these new rules, techies at bgonline.org started pushing for clocks to become (as in chess) the tournament standard. And they are succeeding. Clock use has been expanding for three seasons and next year, the vast majority of Masters, Doubles, and Open divisions will be either “Clocks Required” or “Clocks on [either player’s] Request.” Additionally, in three events (US Open, Golden Gate Open, and Florida Championship) clock-loving Intermediates and Beginners will even be able to put a timer on tournament newbies.

Can we state that required clock use has had a positive effect on tourney attendance?

ABT TOURNEY ATTENDANCE: 2007–2010

Year	# Events	Total Players	Avg. per Event
2007	16	1747	109.19
2008	19	1902	100.11
2009	20	1853	92.65
2010	18*	1600	88.89

*One event remains in 2010

Hardly. Other factors like the economy and our game’s aging population have likely contributed to the downturn. But we’re convinced that the new high-tech approach to backgammon including clocks, dice tubes, and overhead cameras is turning off our longtime recreational attendees and frightening away already-anxious beginners.

Take a look at the Chicago Bar Point Club—the best-attended weekly backgammon club in America. Every Tuesday, 30 to 40 players gather at the Holiday Inn O’Hare for dinner, drinks, conversation, chouettes, and exciting tournament competition. Even though clocks may be used by mutual agreement, it’s uncommon to see one in action. And the same is true at Carol Joy Cole’s Flint Area Backgammon Club, a fun-loving group of players who have successfully kept the spotlight focused on friendship and good cheer for over 30 years.

There is no argument that clocks monitor every match for slow play. They also end premature rolling and avoid dice misreading disputes. So why don’t Carol and I promote clock use at our weekly events?

I can’t speak for CJC, but my position is that clocks favor the quick thinker. They also show some bias towards manually dexterous people. And “Clocks On Request” allows one player to always dictate his

preference over another—an unfriendly beginning to any match.

But above all, I’m turned off by the feeling clocks give me. That’s one reason I don’t play in chess tournaments. Clocks help to change the flavor of backgammon from a social pastime to a technical one. Why instate clocks and risk losing our luck-oriented players who come for a drink, to talk about their week, their job, their family; even their aches and pains? And if this works at weekly clubs, why must we change our priorities for regional events?

We need to remember what used to be good. If we don’t, we won’t recognize it even if it hits us between the eyes. —Jennifer Garner in “13 Going On 30”



At the upcoming Central States Invitational (Sheraton Suites O’Hare in Rosemont, IL March 4–6, 2011), Amy Trudeau and I will use clocks for what they were originally intended: to monitor matches delaying the flow of the tournament. In all three main divisions, clocks will *not* be used unless both players are in agreement. In the Grand Crystal Beaver Masters, the rule is being eased from “Clocks Required” to “Clocks on Request.” The Doubles tournament will remain “Clocks on Request” and we will continue to seek feedback on this team event.

Obviously you can have fun at clocked events. Just give “anti-clockers” the chance to have their way, too. Presently, there will be only two 2011 ABT tourneys in the nation—Central States Invitational and Ohio State—where you can enter the main event knowing you won’t be forced to use a clock (so long as your match keeps pace). That may be “old school” backgammon to some, but we did pretty well in the (g)olden days without a chess clock. Maybe back then we had a little more “virtuous” patience for both newcomers and our aging veterans.

Backgammon’s studious contingent will always play the game—they have the edge with or without a clock. But as Baltimore Club director Vic Morawski so aptly stated in his 2009 letter to CHICAGO POINT, “[Recreational] tournament players are like retail store customers. Most never complain if they have a bad experience; they merely vote with their feet. If a player feels uncomfortable about being forced to use a clock, the director may never know that is why he stopped attending.” —Bill Davis Δ

las vegas open

KALANTARI WINS IN VEGAS

Joe Russell Captures Masters

Fred Kalantari returned to his winning ways by defeating a stellar field at the Las Vegas Open. This year the event moved from the Riviera to Bally’s (10–14 Nov.) and as a result, attendance climbed over 200. Organizer Howard Markowitz assigned Troy Longman director duties and along with his staff, they did an excellent job.

CHICAGO POINT caught up with Fred to ask him a few questions about his victory:

POINT: Congratulations, Fred. I checked and your last ABT win was the Indiana Open in 2006.

FRED: I don’t go to as many tournaments now. It’s a little harder to travel. I was 77 years old last April, but I always try to make Vegas. You know I won the Open Consolation there last year.



Fred Kalantari [photos by Carol Joy Cole]

POINT: I understand you were tooling around the hotel on a motorized scooter.

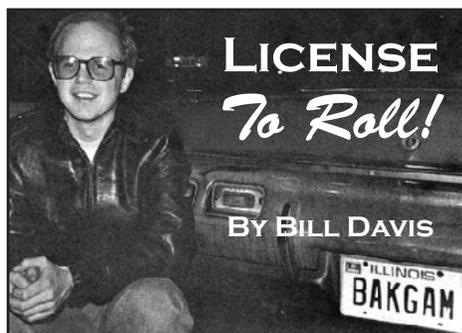
FRED: Yeah, that makes it so much easier. The darn casinos are so big. So I just fly around on that.

POINT: Any interesting matches?

FRED: Well, they were all pretty good. I did play a little psychology on some of the expert players that didn’t know me. I showed a little weakness in early plays. Like Mochy in the semifinals. I knew he’s number one in the world. And he had no idea that I can play, so I missed a couple of moves purposely. Not huge errors, but like a certain two should be moved one way and I moved it another. I did it in the first game like two or three times. But I’ll tell you the results of that. I doubled four times and he dropped all of them and three of them were takes! I had a great match with him. Of course I can’t say that I outplayed him, but I played pretty good.

Against Julian in the [17 point] finals, that was another great match. He’s a good player from England. I do remember leading 12–4. I gave him quite a double and he thought about it for over five minutes. It was a very tough double to drop. So he took it and got backgammoned and I won the match 17–4.

[Continued on page 8]

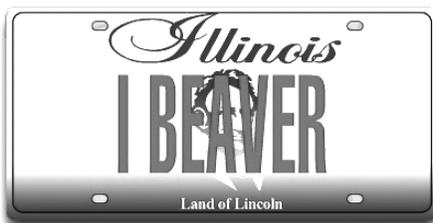
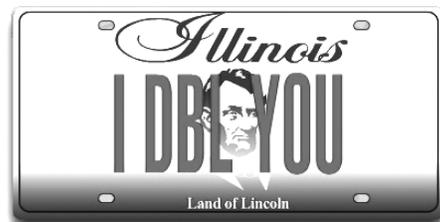
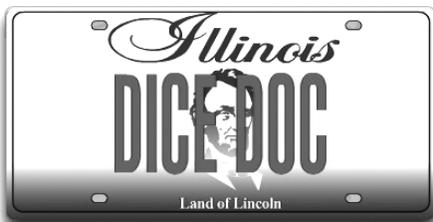


It's now been 30 years since I purchased my Illinois vanity license plate. The above photo appeared in a 1981 *Las Vegas Backgammon Magazine*. Additionally, the plate has been plugged on a Chicago radio station, and twice mentioned in the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

In 1980, six characters was the maximum allowed. Today, Illinois residents can have vanity license plates with up to seven characters (including a maximum of three numbers that must be at the end).

What follows are eight backgammon-related plates currently available in Illinois as of 1 December. If you live in my state pick one up. To check out availability, go to: www.ilsos.gov/PickAPlateWeb

Can you think of some other combinations that would make great backgammon promotional plates? Also, send us a photo of your vanity BG plate and we'll publish it in an upcoming CHICAGO POINT.—*Bill Davis* Δ



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LETTERS...

[Continued from page 4]

I can sum up my reaction to the CSI dress code in one word: Hallelujah!—*Antoinette-Marie Williams, New York, New York*

I also love what you are doing with the dress code and trying to make backgammon more classy and sociable. I have been a game player since birth and always will be. I have always said that I want to be buried with a deck of cards, a board game, a backgammon set, and money in case I lose. But most of all I want backgammon (or any game that I play) to be FUN.—*Trudie Chibnik, director, Winnetka (IL) Backgammon Club*

“WHAT IS HAPPENING TO BACKGAMMON” REACTIONS

I thought your editorial on modern day backgammon was fantastic! Obviously, I would have preferred an article that “praised” my dice tube, but I sincerely appreciate your concerns, respect your opinions, and understand that your dislike of the tube (for backgammon) is nothing personal.

Steve Sax’s comment was hilarious! By the way, who is that handsome fellow holding my tube on the cover? He looks familiar and I should know who he is . . . but I don’t.

I’ll be sending you a half-page ad for your December to promote my new and improved product. Please place it on the upper half of the front cover. HaHa!

Again, great article.—*Brett Meyer, Meyer Dice Tube, www.brettmeyer.com*

Great editorial last month!—*Harvey Gillis, Bellevue, Washington*

Congratulations on the cover article in your November issue. I couldn’t agree more. Soon we’ll have an electronic random dice generator next to our clocks! The slight inefficiency of incorrectly rolled dice is a small price to pay to keep the feel of the game alive. Does anyone enjoy playing completely electronic pinball machines? There is a somesthetic sensitivity to the actions of a flipper or the shaking and rolling of dice from a cup that must be retained to maintain one’s connection to these games. Removing that touch takes the game away from the body and even more into the head thus diminishing the pleasure of the relationship. Removing the sensitivity of touch is detrimental to any relationship.

What about how a player whose aggressive or passive dice shaking style exposes his or her personality? And what about

the sound the dice make as they gently or violently roll onto the board? Can a tube duplicate that? I guess one would no longer choose a board surface based on how it amplifies or diminishes the sound of the dice.

Also, what about the anticipation and excitement as one die spins for two or three seconds before rendering its verdict. Or at a critical moment at DMP when the perfect joker is rolled only to lay cocked against the side of the board. To me, that is like the excitement in the ninth inning of a tied world series game when a long fly ball heads towards the third tier of the stadium stands and narrowly drifts foul in the final seconds. Maybe we should disallow foul balls also.—*Ed Rosenblum, director New Mexico State Championships*

Re your “What’s Happening” November article, you have hit the nail on the head! The game must be fun, and also offer variety. Memorizing the computer’s recommended moves is not fun. If everyone did it, where is the variety?

At our local club, we will soon mandate the ingestion of special drugs that will temporarily erase your memory of computer recommendations. Everyone will be forced to think on their own.

“Yikes!! What do now? Think? Thinking am a big crime in Bizarro World.”—*Mike Weinberger, New Orleans, Louisiana*

In last month’s editorial, your analogy of a finals with a dice tube is right on, but it is more than that.

Gosh, I miss the old days, tournaments at fine clubs, fine casinos, in exciting cities with great restaurants and players and guests dressed to the nines. There was a mystery about the play. A player’s style was debated and there was a distance between the greats and others.

But the times have changed and that is all gone. The last Las Vegas tournament I was at was in a run down hotel that had only misty memories of Strip glory. Tournament locations should be exciting places to visit, with enough free time to do just that. Being in a name casino hotel is a plus (November’s Las Vegas Open went over 200 players due to the new Bally location).

Get rid of the tube. Don’t supply boards but do supply lipped cups and numbered precision dice, both of which must be used.

Since I play more poker than backgammon now, I have an idea for a poker-style backgammon tournament structure that I’ll share with you in another letter.

With sincere respect for you, your publication, and the game.—*Bart Brooks, W. Vancouver, BC, Canada*

Your November editorial has inspired another one of my “golden era of backgammon” stories. This is where players of today say, “Oh, no. Here we go again.”

We used to play \$10 tournaments at Peter Dinkel’s Restaurant Sunday and Tuesday nights in Palm Beach, Florida. The level of play was good for the 1970s. But it wasn’t just the backgammon that made it wonderful—it was the whole experience.

Being Palm Beach, everyone dressed in style. We had great fun, yet still took our backgammon (but not ourselves) seriously. And it was never mean-spirited. There was a passion for the group, not just the individual. A good time was had by all!

Oby [Prince Alexis Obolensky] and I used to play mornings at Green’s Pharmacy. Invariably a chouette would break out. This led to stories of last night’s dinner parties and such. It was always fascinating to hear about some of the world’s richest people misbehaving!

Backgammon is the greatest of games, and today’s players are the best we have yet to see. But I doubt they’re combining the thrill of the game with the thrill of the whole experience. It’s just a blood ‘n’ guts battle, a trip to the tournament to win money and increase their master point standings. They never really stop to savor the camaraderie of what has happened, win or lose.

Yes, today’s players are more skilled, but the players of my generation enjoyed making the memories we have today because we stopped to enjoy each other, not just to beat each other down and move on.—*Bob Haskell (AKA Cape Cod Bob63), Hyannis, Massachusetts* Δ



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.

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. Washburn Ave., Springfield. Randy Armstrong (217/528-0117).

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

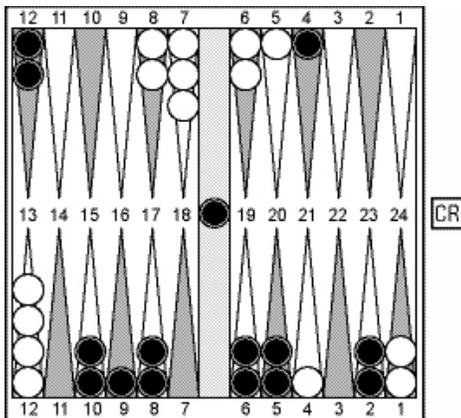
PUB CLUB: Tournaments Thurs., 6:45 P.M. at Playoffs Bar, 720 E. North Ave., Carol Stream. Tim Mabee (630/606-2388).

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

**PROBLEM #359
ANALYZED**

by Steve Sax

7-point match. White leads Black 6 to 5, Crawford. **BLACK TO PLAY 2-2.**



Whenever you are two-away/one-away Crawford, the necessity to win a gammon is equally balanced with your desire to avoid losing the game, as your gammon price is 1.00. In this position, you must play your double 2s to facilitate those opposing needs.

Your first deuce is a forced entry on the 23-point. Then you know that, based on your desire to win a gammon, the checker on your 4-point is going up in the air. So with the next two deuces, you must decide whether to play 6/4*(2) switching, or 8/4* hitting loose.

If you switch 6/4*(2), you deny White a desired reversal of tempo opportunity offered when you hit loose. That tempo reversal would dampen your gammon chances and simultaneously enhance her chances of earning a valuable advanced anchor. However, if you hit loose and are not hit back, you maintain better structure. And because White only has a one point board with a blot in it, the penalty for being hit back is greatly reduced.

If you decide to switch, you then have to decide how to play your last deuce, which comes down to the aggressive 13/11 builder, or the moderate 23/21 anchor. Playing 13/11 gives you your greatest opportunity to rebuild your board. Since White has only her 6-point with a blot on her 5-point, you can certainly afford to play wide open in an effort to regain your own 6-point.

Additionally if you play bar/23, 6/4*(2), 13/11 and your opponent fails to enter, you have good diversity to either hit the remaining blot on her 5-point or rebuild your 6-point as you have all numbers working

for you but 6s (and even those can be used to make your bar-point).

Initially, this was my choice for all the above reasons. White really doesn't have any crushing return jokers other than 1-1 and 3-3, both of which are survivable if you can quickly enter her (two or three) point board. If you are hit off the bar with less damaging shots such as 3-1, 6-1, or 6-3, Black has plenty of counter hitters to re-contain the offending White checker or at a minimum, establish the 21-point anchor.

It's true that with this wide-open play, things can get a bit messy. But if you play too conservative at this score, you might miss the opportunity to capture all White's vulnerable blots and fully capitalize on your gammon chances.

If switching isn't your thing here, you can hit loose. But "how?" is the question. You could come in on the 23-point and play 10/4*, or you could make the 21-point anchor and hit loose 8/4*. Both plays have elements of aggression, but the second play is tempered with caution as you are breaking the more valuable 8-point to hit loose in trade for making the advanced anchor in your opponent's board.

The drawback to hitting loose is that if it fails, White can quickly turn the game around with a double hit, or a hit-and-cover that occur in 12 of 36 counter-shots. But when Black isn't hit, he more quickly builds his position and is then well on his way towards winning a match-ending gammon.

An *eXtreme Gammon* rollout of the top six choices shows three plays favoring the switch and the other three opting for the

loose hit. Since they are spread out rather evenly among those top six moves, the question isn't answered that easily.

The #1 move according to *eXtreme Gammon* is bar/21, 6/4*(2) and my initial choice was third by a little more than 1% MWC. The top two plays had something in common: they both made the 21-point anchor (except that play #2 hit loose 8/4*).

I still don't see why making the anchor is such a big deal. I prefer to have my back checkers split in an effort to attack the blot on the 20-point. One possible reason is that since deuces are bad for White after being hit, they are diversified in that they make her 5-point. Additionally, if she does make her four-prime, you are very glad you have the 21-anchor as opposed to having your back men split.

Still, White would have three back checkers and no builders on top of her prime, so you could still easily move up to the 22- or 21-point and (barring a significant joker) still maneuver your pieces in an attempt to prime White in and earn that gammon.

The answer to this problem (at least according to the bot) is still a bit surprising to me as I favor attacking chances over caution, especially at this score. But wasn't it Bud Fox when confronting Gordon Gecko in *Wall Street* who asked, "How many yachts can you water ski behind?"

Perhaps the loose hit or the switch is enough, and in the end, not even the real question in this problem. Perhaps more important is how to back up your attack: with a relentless onslaught or a measured approach.— Steve Sax Δ

VEGAS...*[Continued from page 5]*

POINT: Any tournaments in your future?

FRED: Well, I'll try to make the March CSI.

POINT: Great, Fred! We have a dress code (collared shirt) and if you wear a tie and win, there's a \$400 bonus.

FRED: (*Laughs*) I heard about that. That should be good.



Joe Russell

Kudos to Joe Russell (CA) on another Masters win. Joe beat Kit Woolsey (CA) in the quarterfinals, Rich Munitz (NY) in the semi's, and Ray Fogerlund (CA) in the finals to take the title.

Partial results at right. Complete results online at chicagopoint.com/results.html Δ

CHAMPIONSHIP (79+27 rebuys): 1-Fred Kalantari (MN), 2-Julian Fetterlein (ENG), 3/4-Drew Giovanis (NV) / Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN); 1C-Kit Woolsey (CA), 2C-Larry Taylor (GA), 3C/4C-Gregg Cattanach (GA) / Tom Wheeler (TX); 1LC-Greg Cottle (NV), 2LC-Alan Grunwald (NJ). INTERMEDIATE (93+27 rebuys): 1-Dorothy Lee (ENG), 2-Charlie Raichle (CO), 3/4-Tom Fahland (CA) / Ross Klein (CA); 1C-Pete Mostoufi (CA), 2C-Evan Etter (FL), 3C/4C-Bill Devine (NV) / Andrea Quadros (BRZ); 1LC-Hideo Tateno (CA), 2LC-Josh Racko (CA). BEGINNER (29+3 rebuys): 1-Don Thompson, Sr. (NV), 2-Pat Mason (KS); 1C-Glen Chee (CA), 2C-Maria Heiner (BRZ); 1LC-Carol McGannon (Canada). SUPER JACKPOT (16): 1-Joe Russell (CA), 2-Ray Fogerlund (CA). LTD JACKPOT (16): 1-Ken Bame (CA), 2-Tom Wheeler (TX). SENIORS (128): 1-Norm Wiggins (CA), 2-Harvey Gillis (WA). DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Mary Hickey (OH) & Tara Mendicino (TX), 2-Matvey "Falafel" Natanzon (ISR) & Arkadiy Tsinis (NV). BLITZ (120): 1-Ramon Eleazar (NV), 2-Ross Klein (CA). MINI-MATCH (32): 1-Nasser Sedaghatpour (NY). \$300 SATURDAY JACKPOT (4): 1-Perry Gartner (FL). \$100 SATURDAY JACKPOT (15): 1-Steve Sax (CA). \$50 BEGINNER JACKPOT (4): 1-Michelle Andersen (CA).

WINNER'S CIRCLE



OCT.-NOV. 2010

•Nation's Cup Online Tournament

(Via Internet; Sep.-Nov.)... Gold: Israel (Falafel Natanzon, Eli Roymi, Gil Davidovich, Yuriy Krivoy, Shey Beja), Silver: Netherlands, Bronze: Greece, 4-Bulgaria, 5-Denmark, 6-Switzerland, 7-Australia, 8-United Kingdom, 9-Russia, 10-Canada. BEST PLAYER: Misja Alma (NED). CAPTAIN'S TROPHY: Mustafa Altuntas (TUR). FAIR PLAY TROPHY: Falafel Natanzon. USA finished 16th.

•6th European Doubles/8th French

Open/WBGT Grand Finale (Enghienles-Bains, FRA; 27 Oct.-2 Nov.)... EUROPEAN DOUBLES (32 teams): 1-Eli Roymi (ISR) & Kenji Shimodaira (JPN), 2-Ary Nogueira & Self (BRZ), 3/4-Peter Heitmüller (GER) & Andreas Humke (GER) / Austin O'Laughlin (USA) & Ed O'Laughlin (USA). MASTERS (99): 1-Stepan Nuniyants (USA), 2-Matt Cohn-Geier (USA), 3/4-Ricardo Malas (LEB/ESP) / Nedim Yardimci (TUR); 1C-Thierry Manouck (FRA), 2C-Michael Hansen (DEN); 1LC-Hans Capel (NED), 2-Hamza Nar (TUR). ADVANCED (16): 1-Bert Van Kerckhove (Belgium), 2-Guil Drai (FRA); 1C-Michael Abdi (DEN), 2C-Laura Monaco (Italy); 1LC-Damian Plesec (SLO). INTERMEDIATE (4): 1-Mihaela Chiricuta (ROM), 2-Joan Grunwald (USA), 3-Samira Yagoubi (DEN), 4-Oekie Kretschmar (NED). WBA BOARD CHALLENGE #1 (8): 1-Alex Gerding (GER/USA). #2 (8): 1-Alex Gerding (GER/USA). "BEAT THE CHAMP" BOUNTY WINNER: Bob Wachtel (USA). SUPERJACKPOT #1 (16): 1-Stepan Nuniyants (USA), 2-Lars Trabolt (DEN). #2 (8): 1-Henrik Veje (DEN). PRO/AM DOUBLES (21 teams): 1-Ray Foglerlund (USA) & Alex Gerding (GER/USA), 2-Alvaro Savio (BRZ) & Julianne Savio (BRZ). SASSANGAMMON FREEROLL (123): 1-Christian Liebe-Harkort (GER), 2-Alan Grunwald (USA). PRESIDENT'S DMP CHALLENGE (64): 1-Alex Gerding (GER/USA), 2-Bob Wachtel (USA). WBGT GRAND FINALE SATELLITE #1 (16): Al Hodis (USA). #2 (16): Alain Babillon (FRA). SPECIAL TROPHIES: Traveler's: Raj Jansari (ENG), Elegance: Peter Bosse (DEN), Most Pleasant: Ary Nogueira (BRZ), Unluckiest: Ilhan Koc (TUR), Loyalty: Martin Toudal (DEN), Support & Help: Jacob Rice (USA), Closest Partnership: Fuat Erdag (TUR), Best French Player: Olivier

Décultot (FRA). WBT GRAND FINALE (16): 1-Soren Larsen (DEN), 2-Masayuki Mochizuki (JPN).

•Bar Point Club Fall Trophy Tourney

(Chicago, IL; 5 Nov.)... OPEN (29): 1-Don Marek, 2-Lucky Nelson, 3/4-Howard Markowitz / Mike Wolock; 1C-Peter Kalba, 2C-Adrian Rios. INTERMEDIATE (22): 1-Barbara Levinson, 2-Ken Tyszko, 3/4-Roy Cohen / Scott Richardson; 1C-Reginald Porter, 2C-Horatiu Birsan... *Both Don and Barbara won the added money for "dressing appropriately." A last-minute Teamsters convention kicked us out of the ballroom into a satellite playing room, but we made due with help from our waitress Rose. Some matches actually were played in the hotel employee's break room! Full coverage (including lots of pix) provided by Adam Bennett (WI) at www.gammonvillage.com.*



BPC Fall Trophy winners. Open: 1-Don Marek, 2-Lucky Nelson. Intermediate: 1-Barbara Levinson, 2-Ken Tyszko.

•Springfield Series #4 (Peoria, IL; 6 Nov.)... OPEN (25): 1-Faddoul Khoury, 2-Gerry Tansey; 1C-Gerry Tansey. 1C-Jena Jennings, 2C-Sean Garber; 1LC-Scott Rudebeck.

•Ohio State Club Monthly (Akron, OH; 7 Nov.)... OPEN (16): 1-Dick Bennett, 2-Mark Murray; 1C-Mark Murray, 2C-Joe Miller.

•Townharbour Trophy (Hinckley, England; 5-7 Nov.)... OPEN (32): 1-Neil Evertt, 2-Uldis Lapikens, 3-Andrew Darby, 4-Gerry Enslin; 1C-Brian Lever, 2C-Mardi Ohannessian. FRIDAY 500 (16): 1-Paul Gilbertson, 2-Peter Christmas. POKER (11): 1-Paul Gilbertson, 2-Tony Fawcett. TEAM (11): 1-Uldis Lapikens.

•Pair-O-Dice Monthly (New York, NY; 14 Nov.)... OPEN (8): 1-Robert Rosen (NJ), 2-Vincent Reece; 1C-Ron Seaborn. INTERMEDIATE (8): 1-Gregg Aponte, 2-David Shaerf; 1C-Kyle Wittels. BEGINNER (9): 1-James Tarmy, 2-John Johnson; 1C-Nicholas Misch.

•New England Club Bonus Monthly (Malden, MA; 20 Nov.)... OPEN (21): 1-Gil Evans, 2-Greg Jukins, 3/4-Yan Friedman / Herb Gurland; 1C-Alex Zamanian, 2C-Jacob Mashak. Δ

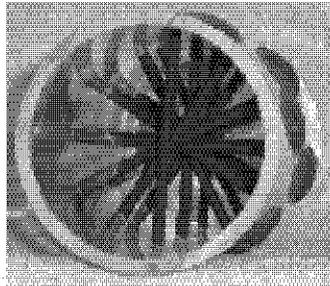
AMALGAMATION

As we go to press, we have just learned of the 22 Sept. passing of former Backgammon Club of Chicago director **Valerie Valentine**. She was 77. More on Valerie's career in the January POINT... Visiting the Bar Point Club in November: **David Burch** (WA)... **Marcy Sloan** (FL) sent us a link to an incredible dice sculpture (over five feet tall) at: tinyurl.com/2bd8lht... According to an online article in the Daily Mail, sale of backgammon sets in England have surged 131% compared to last year at this time... Congrats to **Chris Knapp** (Canada) who was decorated by the Canadian Armed Forces on 29 October...



Chris Knapp (right) receiving his medal.

We wish a speedy recovery to **Reginald Porter** (IL) who suffered a heart attack last month... Best wishes to **Joann & Jerry Feinstein** (IL) who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary 20 November... Looks as though we'll be losing our BPC waitress **Rose Gecht** (IL) for six weeks as she goes in for a knee operation in the coming weeks... With silver skyrocketing, the silver eagle coin awards for both the Bar Point Club and ABT top 20 are about \$33 each... A November *Gaming News* article writes: "The stock market crash of 1987 ended **Erik Seidel**'s career on Wall Street as an options trader and sent the one-time backgammon expert into poker..." Nevada to Chicago: **Elijah Miller**... "**Backgammon**" (a gelding) won last month's \$150,000 Myer Fashion Stakes, one of the most prominent horse races in Australia... **Sarg Serges**'s son **Tim** tells us he hopes to return to BPC play in 2011... **Phil Simborg** (BPC's leading player in 2010) has renamed his website. For a daily problem and lots of other stuff, visit: www.thebackgammonlearningcenter.com... Have you ever seen a \$25,000 backgammon board? The pieces are chiseled from gold and silver. To read about it, go to www.gizmodo.com, then search "backgammon"... "All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers or backgammon, with a slight moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong." — **Henry David Thoreau**. Joyous Holidays from CHICAGO POINT. Δ

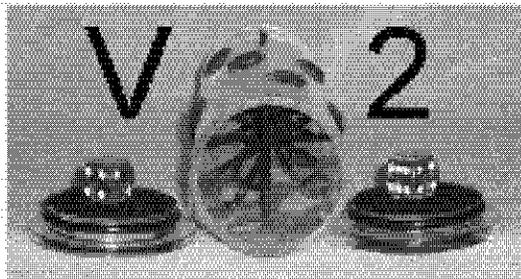
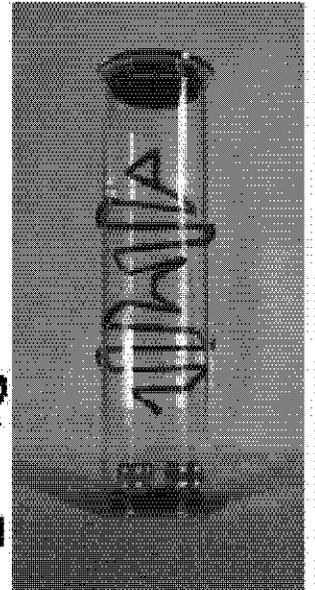


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