



February 2016

# Youth Bridge Blast

## Center for Bridge Education News

### CAIS Students Enchant Players at SF Winter Sectional

A NUMBER OF YOUNG PLAYERS, mostly from Chinese American International School (CAIS) impressed their more experienced competitors at the San Francisco Winter Sectional. One said, "nicely done: great defense you



Nico and Haifu study their hands with Deborah watching

two had!" They were playing against some pairs who have played bridge and taken bridge lessons for years ... literally. Hard to believe they (except for one) had just started learning at the end of October (with a 2 week holiday break!) The boys were completely focused, engaged, and polite as the East-West opponent pairs kept

coming to their table.

The enthusiasm for bridge at the school is palpable among the students, the parents, and the teachers as well. Four fourth graders, Haifu Owen, Nico Harper, Maxwell Webb, and Garrett Jensen represented CAIS at the sectional. These students join Kai Chang and Pico Gilman in learning bridge at CAIS under the tutelage of Art Quey and Deborah Drysdale. A total of twelve students at the school are trying their hand at the game including two in second grade. One student was so excited after being given an introductory

bidding book, that he apologized for only having read 18 pages in the week between classes. Parents are reporting that the kids want to play every chance they get.

Opposing players were impressed. "Wow ... I wish I had started at your age!" one player commented. Another remarked, "you are playing very, very well: I can't wait to tell the players at my club about you ..."

The tournament directors and players at all levels welcomed the students. Edmund Wu (who was introduced as a Bridge Pro and Expert) shook hands with each student; he asked if they were having fun (they said yes!) and encouraged them to work hard and enjoy the game.

Did the kids have a good time? At the end of the afternoon session, after hours and hours of



Kate sorts her cards

bridge, Maxwell asked: "Can we join the ACBL? Will we get real membership cards?" The answer is yes. CBE bought memberships for 5 young players at the sectional. Another asked, "Miss Deborah, will you teach me how to keep (Continued on page 2)



Edmund welcomes Nico to the tournament

### President's Letter by Jim Leuker

AS CBE ENTERS ITS 9<sup>TH</sup> YEAR, our mission continues to be one of bringing bridge to kids in San Francisco schools. We continue our teaching programs at two high schools, Lowell and Galileo, and one elementary school, Chinese-American International, where we're teaching bridge to 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> graders. We currently have about 24 students receiving bridge instruction. We also continue our partnerships with Silicon Valley Youth Bridge and the newer Peninsula Youth Bridge organization.



We're so proud of our kids when we see them out and about competing in local clubs and sectional tournaments. At the recent San Francisco sectional in

January, you may have seen some of our young kids competing. Not only were they eager to play, they also wanted to know how to join ACBL so they could win some of those masterpoints. They impressed many of their adult opponents with the polite and poised way in which they handled themselves. Whether their bridge results earned them points or not, the value of the experience they had can't be overstated.

We're also proud of graduates of our program who have gone on to wider fame in the world of bridge. Samuel Kuang continues to expand his skills as a player and director. Edmund Wu continues to impress us with his many wins and new masterpoint achievements.

If your friends happen to ask how they can help kids learn bridge, you can start by suggesting they become a CBE member and help out with an annual gift. And we're always open to bringing in new volunteer teachers to our schools. We'll be happy to show them how it's done.

## Sectional

(Continued from page 1)

score on my yellow card?"



Garrett studies his hand

For those of you who think young people don't want to learn the game, watch out: here they come.

### Contact Information

[Center4bridge.org](http://Center4bridge.org)

Center for Bridge Education

274 Greenview Drive

Daly City CA 94014

A CHALLENGE CBE HAS FACED is how to get a newcomer started because there is so much to learn before one can play a hand. This is particularly true with younger players with short attention spans. School children who join a bridge club have not made an informed decision about the commitment that bridge traditionally requires. Having seen how traditional methods of teaching bridge lose half the class on the first day, former CBE President Richard Bellerose sought to invent a new game that enables beginners to start playing within a few minutes.

The new game is called Hands, and focuses on play at a basic level, trick taking and simplified scoring. Players decide on their own when to progress to the next level, and we know by seeing how video games lure participants that each player is eager to progress. Third graders might play 24 hands at each level before progressing; adults might play only 3-4 deals before moving on. Move when ready.

The game has eight levels, and each time a level is understood, the players can move to the next level. At the lowest level, players know the exact distribution and point count of each hand. This gets them thinking about

## More Young Players Take On Sectional

**Editor's Note:** Jennifer Fong was the CBE president for a number of years. She brought her two children to play at the SF winter sectional. Here is her report.

IMAGINE MY DREAD WHEN the tournament director informed me that my 8-year-old daughter, Quincy, and I would be playing in the open game at the SF Sectional on Sunday. My 22 MPs made us ineligible for the 0-10 novice game, and an open pair was needed. It was actually easier to play with more veteran players as their bidding and play was more predictable than when I played in the novice game on Saturday with my 11-year-old son, Julian. Either way, bridge players are wonderful and welcomed both of my children as they played more than 4 hands in a row for the first time.

Both kids want to play again, so I think they enjoyed the experience—helped by the M&Ms and snacks. I brought a good attitude and expected bidding problems. I couldn't do anything but laugh out loud when Julian responded 2S to my 1H opener, with 0 points and 5 spades. Maybe he was thinking of weak jump overcalls (which he hadn't been taught yet). What did I do? Raise to 4H! Down 5. Quincy passed my 2NT opener, making 7NT, with 13 points. So we'll have to work on responses, though she religiously opened and overcalled if she had 13+. On Saturday, I tried some competitive bidding and kept raising to game with invitational hands. After so

many negative results, I decided on Sunday to end the bidding as low as possible and hope for a positive score. I had hoped to be the declarer more often than my children but both kids kept raising/correcting to their suit. I think I declared 5 hands out of 51.

On his own, Julian noticed a bit more about his play or defense, and started making corrections like pulling trump. Our opponents probably stretched to game, seeing their opponents, often rewarded with a top. Sometimes, Julian and Quincy each displayed moments of brilliance. Julian, finding the killing lead and, without defensive signaling, figured out the right suit to return so we could take 4 off the top of a 4S contract. Quincy would inadvertently hold up the A, frustrating the opponent's communication, to set them. Sometimes, the opponent would ask, "no heart, Quincy" as Quincy trumped and started a vicious cross ruff.

The TD (Dianne Barton-Paine) brought over a toy dinosaur to kibbitz Quincy and sorted her cards in advance to speed along play. Both kids actually played very quickly because they had less to consider in bidding. We're going to continue to play spades at home, and try to nail down some basic responses in bridge. Julian may just be old enough to play on Monday nights at QuickTricks! Watch out for us. And see you at the next sectional!

## Hands: A Bridge to Bridge

who has what cards and how to make the most of each hand. They learn about finesse, cooperation with partner on defense, transportation, and much more. As they progress, rules become more detailed, the information becomes more limited, and the inferences more difficult.

As new players master the levels, concepts that lead to bidding are introduced. When they are comfortable with the eighth level, they can continue to play Hands as a stand-alone game, but we think most will go on to learn bidding—i.e., bridge.

Learning the bidding is easier when the goals of the ideal contract and the information one needs to share with partner are clearly understood. Furthermore, a declarer who knows how to plan a hand is far more likely to bring home a 25 point game.

There's no point to good bidding that is followed by lousy play.

Hands is currently in alpha testing at CAIS and a few adult homes.

The goal of this project is to get Hands implemented on-line, but for testing and analysis, we are playing this at bridge tables. A full description of the game will soon be available at [center4bridge.org](http://center4bridge.org).

**Hands EAST**

--	--	--	--	--

**Rules**

- ★ Declarer must take six tricks + the number bid. Bid 3, take 9 or more tricks.
- ★ Highest bidder becomes declarer and names trump suit or motrump. Left hand opponent makes a lead before dummy is placed on the table for all to see.
- ★ Each player must play a card in the suit led, if possible, else any card.
- ★ The winner of each trick sets the four cards face down in a countable stack.
- ★ After winning a trick, that player leads any card to the next trick.
- ★ Bonus for making a contract is 50.
- ★ Game bonus is an additional 250 points.
- ★ Slam bonus is an additional 500 points for bidding 6; 500 more for bidding 7.

**Evaluation**

A = 4
K = 3
Q = 2
J = 1