



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Delegate Magazine 1984

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In addition to sponsoring competitive duplicate Bridge tournaments, awarding and recording points and trophies...the ABA has over the years contributed thousands of dollars to the NAACP, the National Urban League, SCLC, the United Negro College Fund and other worthy causes. The ABA has also given many more thousands of dollars to deserving youngsters through it's own scholarship program.

Although the other larger bridge organizations also give charity games, they give to their charities...not ours...but with our own organization we are able through our hobby to raise funds for those organizations we cherish and to assist hundreds of our own children in their quest for higher education. The idea of an organization for our youth in which they never need to fear being discriminated against because of race, appeals to our sense of racial pride.

The ABA has strict prohibitions against playing for money or cash awards in tournaments which it sanctions. The ABA sponsors two national tournaments a year, one in the spring and one in the summer. Local tournaments pay smaller point awards than sectional or national tournaments. The more points one acquires the higher ranking or classification he attains. Players are classified from Novice to the Diamond level...and usually the players are separated according to their rank.

WHO PLAYS BRIDGE WITH THE ABA?

Just about everybody from a wide variety of fields and professions. The number one ranked player (the person with the highest number of points in the association) is Bob Price...a very well to do real estate man from Chicago. He travels freely and often to major tournaments across the country in order to maintain his Number One status. Another top player is Lionel Barton...he's number five tank and has risen in the ranks faster than any other ABA player. Lionel is a Geo-Physicist with Chevron, a company engaged in Geo-Science and related to the oil industry. Al Bishop of Pittsburg is a consulting Nuclear Engineer, Sara McArthur of Denver is a Computer Scientist in much demand, Marshall Hanson...a top player for many years is in the diplomatic service for the State Department of Labor. The President...Arthur Reid, is a prominent attorney in Washington, D.C. and is a former city councilman from Cincinnati. There are a lot of other prominent members...educators, a priest, physicians, housewives, business people etc. One who has been great importance to the ABA during it's formative years and one of the most brilliant minds to ever play the game is Dr. Joe Henry, Chairman and Professor of all Diagnosis at the Harvard University School of Dental Medicine. Although he seldom plays now...he set records which are still to be envied by today's top players. Many postal employees, school teachers, housewives, retired people, educators, social workers and people from such diverse fields as a former Rock & Roll Disc Jockey to Federal Judge all share in one of the world's most popular indoor sports.

IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?

Dr. Clarise Reed of Bethesda, Maryland (and wife of the President) Dr. Felix Dunn of Biloxi, Mississippi, Dr. Noah Wills of Lansing, Michigan, Dr. Arthur Flowers of Memphis...are almost always in the house at our summer nationals. When that question is asked they and other

physicians have often had their games interrupted and rushed to minister to some stricken player who may have buckled under the stress, passed out, fell out or knelled over. Sometimes they have treated heart attacks...high blood pressure...too much excitement...epileptic seizures and occasionally some one who has made a wrong bid at a crucial time and would rather faint than face their partner's wrath. Yes, fortunately there are usually at least one physician in the house and a number of other... Dentist... Optometrist, Psychologist, etc. so when the question is asked most often the answer is yes. Bridge Players often play as much as 12 hours during the national tournaments when there are midnight games scheduled in addition to the usual eight hour hours(two four hour sessions divided by a break for dinner) everyone plays in. Many times we have seen some one pass out during one session of a game and leave the game only to be back at the bridge table for the next session.

There are over 20 million bridge players in the United States according to a recent publication by the ACBL. Only a fraction of these players play duplicate...but even that fraction is still a large number of people. The others are known as social bridge players or "party bridge players". The big difference in duplicate and social is that in duplicate as the name indicates...the hands are duplicated and all of the players play the same

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