

## All's Well That Ends Well

Well, it's over!!

I don't know about all of you, but I'm one of those persons who can hardly wait for a tournament to start. As the starting date draws near, I find myself excited and antsy in anticipation of playing some good bridge. I'm also anxious to see my friends and enjoy time with them once again.

Then it starts and the week flies by. Suddenly it's over and I'm glad to have some time to myself once again. The winding down and the exhaustion keep me subdued for a couple of days, but soon I start thinking about the next tournament. Even if it's a long time off, the planning and anticipating begin once again.

The tournament that I'm referring to....the Nebraska Regional... was at "home" for me. So traveling was not involved....except back and forth to the playing site. It's called the Nebraska Regional because a few years ago the two Nebraska Units (184 and 241) joined forces in order to hold one terrific regional each year. However, it's actually held across the river in Council Bluffs, Iowa because that's where the casinos are.

It was topnotch once again this year and grew about a 30% from last year's tournament. The tournament staff did an excellent job of finding extra room and adding events so that all players could get their fill of bridge. Already the tournament chairpersons, Jan Loftin and Cookie Hoberman are investigating ways to expand the playing facilities for next year's tournament.

We were very privileged to have some extra special guests.

First and foremost to us here in the Heartland was the presence of Bill Gates and his teammates. And what good teammates they were..... Sharon Osberg, (Warren Buffett's favorite partner?), Fred Gittleman, (the founder and entrepreneur behind Bridge Base Org.) and Bob Hamman (surely you know who he is?). Warren himself had been planning on playing with this team but unexpected personal reasons kept him sidelined for this year. While efforts were made to keep the media away from these distinguished guests and let them enjoy their bridge, the local bridge players all had curiosity questions so they did not go unnoticed.

Along with Bob Hamman and fresh from their team's "come from behind" victories in the Spingold and the USA Team Trials, Eric Rodwell was here for the

week and spent two Q & A sessions with all who wanted to participate and/or listen. In addition, Billy Miller, Mike Passell, Mildred Breed and Shaun Quinn helped to educate those in attendance at between session events. All of their efforts were greatly appreciated.

Eric gave me a hand that his partner Carol Sibbernsen had played during one of their sessions of bridge: Contract was 3NT but no bidding given.

Eric  
♠ A82  
♥ AK106  
♦ QJ943  
♣ J

Carol  
♠ KJ9  
♥ 972  
♦ A5  
♣ KQ653

Carol let the opening lead of the ♥5 float around to her ♥7. She then played a club to the ♣J which held. Now she played a small ♦ to her ♦Ace and a small ♦ back towards the dummy which was won by West's ♦King. Still trying to set up his hearts, West now led the ♥Queen which was won by dummy's ♥King with East pitching a small ♠. Carol now ran her diamonds in dummy pitching clubs out of her hand. She then led a ♠ to the ♠Jack and finessed West's ♥Jack and cashed the remaining tricks to make 12 tricks in total. Well done, Carol.

Some facts about the tournament:

- (1) Table count was 1833.
- (2) Attendance was 1046
- (3) Leading masterpoint winners were the Jim Nash, Alan Stout, Pierre Flatowicz, Don Stack team with 154.85 apiece. (That's a lot of winning.)
- (4) Total masterpoints awarded were 11421.59
- (5) 960 players won masterpoints

Thanks to all who made this tournament so very successful. I don't know about you but I can hardly wait until the first week of August in 2005!

Marilyn Hemenway 2004

