

UNIT 131
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:
Hong Chen

1st Vice President:
Lynne Wenski

2nd Vice President:
Alan Hierseman

Treasurer:
Trisha Pitts

Secretary:
Beth Malone

Past President:
Aline Zimmer

At-Large Members

Term Expires 2026
Jill Ferrel
Jim Feimster
Chad Fisher
Marge Rion
Shawn Tate

Term Expires 2027
Wynne Begun
Bill Cue
Gail Haar
Jana Larson
Marlin Rueb

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Article	1
Rising Stars	2
Notice of 2026 Election	2
Officer Candidates	3
At-Large Member Candidates	4
Election Ballot	5
March Tournament Flyer	6
May Tournament Flyer	7

THE DECLARER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF UNIT 131 OF THE AMERICAN CONTRACT BRIDGE LEAGUE

April 2026



From the President



Closing Out My Presidency: Declarer Play Reveals a Hidden Agenda

My term as Unit President is nearing its end. As this is our election edition, you will find thoughtful and inspiring messages from many promising candidates who desire to continue our unit leadership. As for me, I want to share with you something more personal: the "hidden agenda" I carried with me when I first accepted this role.

As a first generation immigrant, I came to this country in search of opportunity—a nation that promises freedom for all and a chance for everyone willing to work for it. I left the country of my birth after the pro-democracy dream of my generation (in which I was actively involved) collided with brutal reality. After living here for more than a quarter century, the opportunity to participate in a democratic process, to run for office and serve as president, even on a very small scale was a temptation too rich to pass up. That, in truth, was my hidden agenda.

Though the position of Unit President may seem insignificant to some, it contains all the "nuclear cells" of a functioning democracy. For those who have always lived in a free society, the routine of running a board meeting or carrying out an organization's succession plan and the peaceful transfer of power might be taken for granted. To me, and to many of my countrymen, these are not just administrative tasks; they are sacred practices.

Because I value this process so deeply, I have one final request of you. Exercise your right to vote! Democracy only breathes when its citizens or in this case, its members participate. Whether it is a national election or our small bridge unit, the act of casting a ballot is a privilege that many around the world still fight for. Please read the candidate statements carefully and make your voice heard. It is the highest honor you can pay to the office I am vacating.

In closing, I want to thank each one of you for your support and allowing me to add this "shiny feather" to my hat. If this is to be the pinnacle of my "political life," I am thrilled to bank that memory as I sail toward my golden years with many more bridge games left to play.



email all submissions/requests to:

Declarer Editor — Jana Henderson jlhtenor@kc.rr.com

Layout Designer — Beth Malone bdawson1346@gmail.com

Our Rising Stars



NEW LIFE MASTERS



New Bronze Life Masters

Gene Covington
Robert Hartline
Catherine Terry

New Silver Life Master

Joyce Zeldin

New Platinum Life Master

Stephen Stewart



RISING STARS



New Junior Masters

Timothy Armstrong
Blake Cooper
Louis Huber
Steve Klein
William Stafford
Susan Welsh

New Sectional Masters

Gautam Bhadbhade
John Vering

New Advanced NABC Masters

Tom Cranshaw
Beth Malone

New Club Master

Helen Scheid

Notice of 2026 Election Voting Procedures and Annual Meeting

The annual election of the Unit 131 Board of Directors will be completed by 9 AM Friday, May 1st. You can vote using any one of the following methods:

In-person voting: at the Kansas City Spring Sectional, all day Thursday, April 30th and before 9 AM Friday, May 1st at the First Church of the Nazarene in Kansas City;

Electronic voting: members who have an email address listed with the ACBL will receive an email notification and can fill out the electronic ballot;

Mail-in voting: print and complete the ballot included in this issue of the Declarer and follow the instructions in boldface. All mail-in ballots must be postmarked by April 26th and mailed to Aline Zimmer, 430 Navajo Lane West, Lake Quivira, KS 66217.

The Unit 131 Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, May 1st at 1:30 PM between sessions of the Spring Sectional at the First Church of the Nazarene in Kansas City. Sessions at this tournament start at 9:30 AM and 2:30 PM.

Agenda:

- President's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- 2025 Awards
- Election Results

2026 Board Candidates



Susan Ulrich
President

I am looking forward to working as President of the Unit 131 Board of Directors for the upcoming term. I learned to play bridge while living in Boulder, CO. A friend and I enrolled in bridge lessons at the local community center. The instructor happened to be Dick Reed, who was an avid duplicate player and he taught us how to play duplicate bridge. He sent us to play in a Regional/National Tournament in Denver. We played in the game for beginners and we won. I was hooked! Over the next few years we moved several times. Due to family and working, my bridge playing was limited.

I moved to the Kansas City area in 1980 and shortly thereafter started playing at the Ranch Mart facility. Over the years I have served many years on the local Board of Directors, served as Secretary-Treasurer of the District, served as District Tournament Coordinator for the District for the last 12 years and my husband (Jim) and I had the opportunity to co-chair and chair the Kansas City Regional for many years. I love the game and am so grateful for all the friends I have made along the way.



Bill Fromm
1st VP

I grew up in Kansas City, MO where I continue to live a little over 6 months a year. After graduating from Northwestern University in 1964 I started Barkley, an advertising and public relations company and sold it in 1997 to my employees.

I co-founded the Service Management Group (SMG) with Len Schlesinger, former Dean of the Harvard Business School, and his son, Andrew. I also founded KC Rink Management, a company that operates ice rinks. I am also a co-owner of Tickets for Less – the largest independently owned secondary ticket broker that owns their own season tickets to all NFL, MLB, and major concert venues in the U.S.

I am married to the former Jackie Hadl. Fun facts: I have appeared on Oprah and the Today Show and have been featured on an episode of CBS 48 hours.



Jill Ferrel
2nd VP

I will be serving as 2nd Vice-President for the upcoming term. I have an interest in building the membership in Unit 131 particularly among players new to or returning to the game. I have played bridge off and on for my entire adult life beginning with (very) bad bridge in the basement at KU Law school in the '70's.

Now that I am retired from the corporate world, I have the time and energy to devote to several volunteer activities—among them bridge and animal welfare. While life master status is probably within reach, I am more interested in helping build and develop relationships with all players in the bridge community.

I am particularly interested in helping with new member initiatives and chairing successful sectional and regional tournaments. I appreciate your support and am always open to hearing from you.



Anita Hempy
Secretary

I grew up on a farm outside Circleville, Kansas, and graduated from Baker University. My professional career included work with a finance company, a bank, and as a floral designer. Much of my life has been devoted to volunteer service with my sorority where I have served as both an advisor and a national officer.

Currently, I am president of a housing corporation at Baker University, as well as Regent of a DAR chapter and a DAR State Committee Chair. I began playing bridge at age 17, initially in casual games.



Trisha Pitts
Treasurer

I have served one term as treasurer of Unit 131 and am willing to serve again. I am a retired CPA and have used my accounting knowledge to help small businesses in international development work. Bridge has become my favorite pastime in retirement. I really enjoy the game and helping the unit.

2026 Board Candidates

Members at Large - Vote for 5



Stephen Coates

Since the age of 5, Bridge has been a part of my life. There was always a game at my parents' and grandparents' homes. Marriage and starting a family took me away from the game but now I am back. I have highly enjoyed being once again surrounded by people with the same love of Bridge.

I would like to give back to the community that has welcomed me and that is why I would like to run for the Board. I believe my work experience in organizing, promoting, and marketing in the adult beverages field lends itself to what the Boards' mission is; to make sure the Unit has the resources it needs, running the best tournaments, and growing the game of bridge. We need not just retain our current players but attract new players.

Bridge is a challenging game, and we need to help all feel welcomed and encouraged. I would be honored to serve on the Board and help continue the work.

I discovered bridge while studying marketing at Iowa State University. With relentless patience and a touch of persistence, my uncle taught me the basics of the game. I soon reached out to the local club in Ames, where I found not just a place to play, but an immediate sense of community.

When my time in Iowa came to an end, I returned to Kansas City and was grateful to find the same warmth and camaraderie at the Bridge Studio. Since then, my love for bridge—along with its frustrations—has only grown, shaping both a personal passion and a meaningful social outlet.

I truly believe bridge thrives when it is welcoming, social, and shared across generations. That is why I am committed to growing the game and strengthening the community that surrounds it.

I began playing bridge in college, then work got in the way. I started playing Duplicate just before COVID arrived. I am finally understanding the game and earning Master points.

I have served on the board of directors and as executive officer of several organizations and could use that experience at Unit 131. I believe in giving back, and would be honored to serve, if elected.



Mike Davis

I am a 78-year-old retired widow. I have two sons, two (2) granddaughters (from the oldest son) and two (2) grandsons (from the youngest son).

My work history includes three (3) years in the Army Security Agency, one (1) year in Vietnam, 26 years with Accountants for Marion Laboratories, and 20 years in Collections for the IRS. I play a lot of Bridge in several clubs in the metro. It is time for me to take my turn to help out.

I remember when my mom used to watch "As the World Turns" while dealing out bridge hands to herself. I wish she had thought to teach us five kids; we weren't distracted by video games in those days. Fast forward to 1981 when I was newly married and guys at my husband's work were playing Precision Bridge during the lunch hour. John and I signed ourselves up at the J on Holmes for bridge lessons with Jean Joseph. I was easily hooked, but children came along.

I eventually started playing bridge again with friends and in a monthly church group. My eyes were opened to competitive bridge by attending Bob Kleban's lessons at the J in Johnson County a few years before COVID. I now play with my husband John on Tuesday nights, arriving early for Shawn's enlightening lessons.

A couple summers ago, I met up with Dr. Marlin Rueb, who was my first boss working in downtown Kansas City as a dental hygienist. He offered to be my partner at the Wednesday game and was, as many know, a wonderful and patient mentor. I have a strong work ethic, and I look forward to working toward the goals of Unit 131 as a board member.



Ann Vering

I am running for the board because I love bridge and it has given me so much. I would like to give back, if I can. I have met many good friends through bridge and enjoy playing and being around people who are fun and friendly.

I want to see bridge grow and attract players of all ages. I think our current board has tried to do this and I commend them on their efforts.



Lynne Wenski



Kevin Foley



Jim Kirby

2026 Unit 131 Election Ballot

Unit Officers (Automatically elected)

President	Susan Urich
1st Vice President	Bill Fromm
2nd Vice President	Jill Ferrel
Secretary	Anita Hempy
Treasurer	Trisha Pitts

Voting for Members-at-Large to serve on the Unit 131 Board of Directors is now open.

The list of candidates and their backgrounds are published in this newsletter. There are five (5) open positions for two-year terms. Please support the Unit by casting your vote.

Members-at-Large (vote for no more than 5)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stephen Coats | <input type="checkbox"/> Jim Kirby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mike Davis | <input type="checkbox"/> Ann Vering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kevin Foley | <input type="checkbox"/> Lynne Wenski |

Return the ballot to the address below postmarked no later than April 26, 2026. Alternatively, you may drop it off at the KC Spring Sectional by 9 AM on Friday, May 1, 2026 or vote electronically if you receive a ballot by that method.

**ACBL Unit 131
c/o Aline Zimmer
430 Navajo Lane West
Lake Quivira, KS 66217**

All mail-in ballots must be postmarked no later than April 26, 2026



Overland Park, Kansas
0-500 Non-Life Master Sectional Tournament

March 27-29, 2026

Overland Park Bridge Studio

7115 W. 95th St., Overland Park, KS 66212

Tel. 913.648.1900

Schedule of Events

Friday, March 27th

6:00 p.m.: Stratified NLM Pairs

Saturday, March 28th

9:30 a.m.: Stratified NLM Pairs

2:00 p.m.: Stratified NLM Pairs

Sunday, March 29th

9:30 a.m. & TBD

Stratified NLM Swiss Teams:

Stratification base on average

C: 0-50, B:50-200, A:200-500

Entry Fees

Friday & Saturday: \$15 per session

Sunday: \$168 per team (Includes lunch)

Cash or Credit Cards Accepted

**Players with 0-5 MPS,
2nd Session played is FREE**

Note: Unpaid ACBL members pay \$4 extra per session

EARN SILVER POINTS!!

Hospitality All Three Days Includes

Coffee, tea and snacks all sessions

Lunch on Sunday

Tournament Chair & Director: Joan Paradeis (940-642-3788)

Partnership Chairs: Pati Chasnoff (913-244-6843) patichasnoff@gmail.com

Jana Henderson (816-392-2013) jlhtenor@kc.rr.com

Sanction #2603902

Kansas City MAY Sectional

April 30th — May 2nd, 2026

First Church of the Nazarene
11811 State Line Road
Kansas City, MO 64114

Score
Silver

Annual Membership Meeting
Friday May 1st at 1:30 pm

Tournament Schedule
Thursday, April 30th & Friday, May 1st

9:30 A.M. Flight A - No restrictions (Unlimited/3000)

Flight B - No player over 1500 (1500/750)

Flight C - No player over 300 (300/100)

2:30 P.M. Flight A - No restrictions (Unlimited/3000)

Flight B - No player over 1500 (1500/750)

Flight C - No player over 300 (300/100)

Saturday, May 2nd

10:00 A.M.
& TBD Open Bracketed Swiss (Bracketed by Attendance)

Stratification within flights based on average masterpoints

Hospitality

Coffee, Donuts, Soft Drinks

Lunch to
Purchase

Available Thursday & Friday

Cash only

Entry Fees

Flighted Pairs: \$15 per person per session*

Student (under 25): \$8

Swiss Teams: \$168 per team for 2 sessions (includes Lunch)

Credit Cards Only

Tournament Contacts

Co-Chairpersons: Beth Malone 913-492-7170

bdawson1346@gmail.com

Alan Hierseman 913-484-6647

alan26482648@yahoo.com

Partnership: Tom Cranshaw 816-225-1813

tomcranshaw58@gmail.com

Director-In-Charge: Joan Paradeis

Unit 131 Website

www.acbl-unit131.org



Sanction # 2605305

**ACBL Unit 131
c/o Aline Zimmer
430 Navajo Lane
West Lake Quivira, KS
66217**

