



Members of the Metrolina Duplicate Bridge Club discussing strategies at the Greenville Center. (From left to right) Julian Pyles, Edward High (standing) Vietta Neal, Bill Haygood.

Metrolina Duplicate Bridge Club To Conduct Regional Tournament

By Russell Clark
Post Staff Writer

If you stumble in a back room at the Greenville Center on a Tuesday night, you will probably face the ABA. No, not the American Basketball Association, but loyal members of the American Bridge Association.

Formed in 1932 by a group of black bridge players who wanted to protest discrimination, the ABA has more than 200 clubs in 37 states.

The Metrolina Duplicate Bridge Club is Charlotte's local unit and they are rebuffing the proud tradition of the ABA. "We will be conducting a Southeastern Regional Tournament next month," announced George Johnson, immediate past ABA president. "The tournament will be held at the downtown Marriott Hotel, and will attract players from Atlanta to Washington, D.C.," added Johnson, one of the best players in the ABA.

The average age of bridge players is about 55, but the Metrolina Duplicate Bridge Club invites anyone to join.

Each session costs about \$4 and there are usually seven in one weekend. A typical round trip to a bridge tournament costs about \$200 to \$300 per person.

"Since most of the bridge tournaments are out of town, many young people can't afford to attend them regularly. We are planning to start a youth movement in high schools and colleges. By the first of next year, we plan to start a club at Johnson C. Smith University," noted Johnson, a native of Albany, GA.

Introduced in 1976 by Johnson and Dr. Spencer E. Durante, the Metrolina Duplicate Bridge Club has been a force in the ABA.

"Last year, we won first place in the Modified Round Robin Tournament in Norfolk, VA," reminisced Bill Haygood, who's team has been recognized nationally.

"In 1982, my partner Tennyson Johnson and myself teamed up with the late Dr. C.W. Williams and his partner, John Cutliff, to win the Spring National Knock Out Tournament in St. Louis," Haygood recalled. "My goal is to put another successful team together like that one."

There are five approaches to the game and they are just like defensive or offensive strategies in

sports. Most beginners start out with the Standard American. Then there is the Standard International Shanks, Kaplans-Sheinwold and Precision bridge which is employed by the Metrolina Club.

The card game comes from Russia and there is no money awarded to tournament champions, but they do get trophies. As you go through the years of winning, you are rewarded with master points.

Here is how the system operates. The novice player starts from 0-24 points, the master goes from 24-100, life master is 300-599, senior life master 600-900 and the diamond level is above 900. Bridge is similar to the card game bid whist, but it requires quick decisions and time consumption.

"I like playing it because I get to sit down," added George Johnson.

"It's challenging because you have to remember card suits and you try to out-guess your opponents."

The ABA was featured in the October, 1985 issue of EBONY magazine recognizing the organization's 52nd Annual Summer Conference.

Former President Johnson concluding the article, said, "For years the ABA has contributed to the development of our people to the extent that we are financially able to do so," says Johnson. "It's true we do, but we realize that there is more to life than a grand slam."

Hearts, trumps, diamonds and spades are card jargon voiced by players, but the ABA is committed to more than winning hands - they're touching lives.

Three Charlotte Youths Selected

Howard Brooks, Blair Tyler, and Becky Johnson of Charlotte have been selected to participate in Operation Raleigh, a youth leadership development program initiated in 1984 by Great Britain's Prince Charles. They were selected from 31 candidates at an Operation Raleigh selection weekend held September 26-28 in Raleigh.

Brooks is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he studied economics and political science.

Blair Tyler, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James D. Tyler, is a 19-year-old student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She's an experienced camper. Her interests include hiking, climbing, basketball and running.

Becky Johnson, daughter of Mr. James Johnson, is a 22-year-old experienced sailor and downhill skier. She is interested in anthropology. "In my classes we studied how other countries have been westernized. Through Operation Raleigh I would like to help other countries maintain their traditional values," she said.



Homecoming is over at Appalachian State University but Debi Phifer still reigns as the college's homecoming queen. A senior at Appalachian State Debi is a native Charlottean. Her major is speech pathology and she is active as a resident assistant, head choreographer of the dance group, Appalettes, a member of Ladies' Elite and the Black Student Association. After graduation Debi plans to pursue a master's degree in speech and eventually work in the area of speech therapy in a hospital or clinic. In her bid for "Miss Homecoming" Debi competed against 37 other young ladies. She was escorted by her uncle, Bill Palmer. Debi's mother, Dianne Phifer has also been a big supporter of hers. Debi was also homecoming queen at her high school alma mater, Garinger and recently returned there on the school's "College Career Day."

Portrait of Judge Sarah Parker.

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