



THE DISTRICT 20 TRUMPET

www.ACBLD20.org



Vol. 19, No. 0

Bridge Across the District

Spring 2023

District 20 discontinues the Trumpet

The District 20 board voted in December to discontinue publication of the Trumpet after 18 years. A new, short-form email newsletter, The Declarer, was launched in February.

The Trumpet was founded in 2005 with editor **Sue Kroning** of Seaside. Before that, members of District 20 received the Western Conference Forum, a publication whose history goes back to 1933.

The Forum initially served the Pacific Bridge League, whose area would constitute seven ACBL districts when it merged into the ACBL in 1956, and three remain-

ing districts in its later years. Its 85-year history came to an end in 2018.

The cost of mailing copies of the Forum to all ACBL members in its constituent districts ultimately doomed the Forum in each of those districts. For District 20, that time came in 2004, when the board voted to pull out of the Forum and launch the Trumpet. (See story below.)

The Trumpet introduced a new, cheaper model of distribution: sending copies in bulk to bridge clubs in the district, anywhere from 10 to 150 copies depending on the size of the club.

The total print run was less than half of the district's membership, and the number of mailings was reduced to about 50 packages. The frequency of publication also reduced from monthly to initially bimonthly. It went quarterly in 2015.

Kroning served as editor for five years, through 2009. **Christine Orchard** of Yachats, Ore., then served for three years from 2010 through 2012. The reins were next handed to **Chip Dombrowski** of North Bend, who would continue until the end. He also took over design from **Peggy Coquet**, hired **Susan Chambers** to design

ads and **Jen Smith** to write features.

In 2016 **Amy Casanova** of Portland became managing editor, with Dombrowski continuing to design and transitioning to a role he called editor at large. A copy editor position was added, held by **Martha Maroney** of Portland in 2016 and **Jim Flint** of Ashland from 2017 to 2021.

In 2020 printing was suspended, eliminating printing and shipping costs, with hopes of resuming print when feasible.

Casanova resigned in late 2022 and Dombrowski was reinstated about six weeks before the plug was pulled.

The birth of the Trumpet

By Sue Kroning

The Trumpet

In 2004, District 20 decided it could no longer afford **Ken Monzingo's** Western Conference Forum newspaper, which was mailed to every D20 player monthly. **Paul Gabalis** thought we could do our own publication, and on the flimsy basis of my yearbook advisor experience, I volunteered to be the editor.

The old Forum was mostly ads for tournaments in all four districts, and the meat and potatoes of the new publication still had to be promotion of upcoming regionals and sectionals, advertising NAP and GNT events, and recording tournament results. All of which could be boring.

So I asked the Seaside players, "What would you like to see in the new newspaper?" "Recipes," said my friend **Gayl West**. This was my ah-ha moment; the newspaper must have items of interest to everyone, short and concise, colorful and eye-catching. A recipe – a cartoon – a photo. On every page.

A competition was held for the name of the new bimonthly newspaper, and "The Trumpet" by **James Cumins** was chosen on the basis of the charming card symbols he depicted steaming from a trumpet. The runner-up – "Bridge Across the District" – was also incorporated into the flag (the front page heading). Photos and graphics were a big part of making the publication more attractive and **Jude Goodwin** created all the delightful card characters. It was all black type then, but one spot color was allowed, and of course it had to be "fire engine red" like playing cards.

All 26 of D20's units were persuaded to appoint a Trumpet reporter who sent me news from their clubs, and I was fortunate to recruit **Peggy Coquet** of Desktop Publishing Services for the layout and Oregon Lithoprint in McMinville for the printing. Together Peggy and I sweated deadlines, sometimes past 2 a.m., but never missed one.

One of the huge perks of the job was going to all the regionals for eight years to take photos, gather information and conduct interviews. The life stories of the district's prominent players were particularly



Founding editor Sue Kroning holds the first edition of the Trumpet, published in March 2005, at her home in Angels Camp, Calif., in January 2023. Kroning, the ACBL's 2012 Volunteer of the Year, was active in District 20 throughout the 25 years she lived in Seaside from 1996 to 2021.

fascinating – **Ross Rainwater** was the first. He said: "I thought I was really hot stuff and decided to become a pro" but it was more difficult than he'd thought and he ended up sharing hotel rooms and sleeping on the floor. He ended with sage advice: Bridge is not easy; being good requires concentration, calculation and courage.

I did have one bad moment. I featured another pro and quoted the Encyclopedia of Bridge – no less – which said he had an agricultural qualification, but it turned out he'd been busted for growing marijuana.

The publication ended with the popular "Ask John" column with **John Ashton's** witty and wise advice on bidding, playing and director calls – John was always on time and was often an important source of other information. After five years at the helm, I handed the reins over to **Christine Orchard**. My years with the Trumpet were richly rewarding and I treasure all the good memories.

Sue Kroning served as Trumpet editor from 2005 through 2009.

Honoring a great newspaper

I didn't always think I'd be the last editor of the Trumpet. When I accepted the job in October 2012, I figured whether I chose to do it for 10, 20, 30 years – by which time I'd still be younger than a lot of those just starting to get more involved in the bridge world – that it would continue, as institutions generally do.

I realized in the past year or two that I'd be the one to keep it going as long as I could – whether that was one, five, 10 more years – but that eventually it would end. In October Amy let me know she was resigning and less than two weeks later I was officially reappointed editor.

The Trumpet's future was in doubt at the time, but still I was optimistic about keeping it going at least a couple more years, long enough to celebrate a 20th anniversary. I had offered to slash the Trumpet's budget by nearly half, down to 30% of what it cost in 2019, intending to buy some more time and make clear my motives for lobbying to continue it were not self-interested.

Little did I know my second term would be measured in Scaramuccis – the running Twitter joke about unexpectedly short terms of office, after Anthony Scaramucci, who served as White House communications director for 11 days in 2018. It was three and a half Scaramuccis between the board meeting where Amy resigned and the vote to abolish the publication.

In the event that it was canceled, I had offered to produce a final issue for free. I would have done a complete issue if they wanted it, but that wasn't necessary with the launch of the D20 Declarer on Feb. 18. There's a new home for news in D20, though with much different ambitions.

What was necessary, for me and others who loved this publication, was the opportunity to say goodbye to it. I wanted this farewell issue not to criticize the decision that was made but to celebrate the greatness of what the Trumpet achieved in its



Chip Dombrowski
Editor



Final editor Chip Dombrowski holds the last official edition of the Trumpet, published in November 2022, at ACBL headquarters in February 2023.

18 years of publication.

The Trumpet was unlike any other bridge publication in the world. It was the jewel of the ACBL district publications – attested by having its two most recent editors both go on to editing the Bridge Bulletin.

Most bridge publications have a lot in common in that they have the kind of content you expect to find in a bridge publication: results of past tournaments, promotion of future tournaments and North American events, educational content, recognition of achievements and administrative news. The Trumpet had all that too, but what set it apart was its focus on community journalism.

You didn't need to be a top player to be profiled in the Trumpet. We understood our bridge world was full of people with interesting stories to tell, and aimed to forge a sense of community across the district by sharing as many of those stories as we could, with depth and quality presentation.

I like reading publications like The Atlantic and The New Yorker, known for their longer articles. I wouldn't call anything the Trumpet published "long" – they were about what you'd expect for a feature

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Chip

What I'll miss most about the Trumpet

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in a small local newspaper – but I understand how that came to be viewed as long in the modern world of digital publishing.

The Declarer will prize shorter, more timely content. I think it can serve the district well. I hope, for the sake of bridge in District 20, that it does.

But I'll miss the Trumpet. The content we created was special, and I don't think you'll find anything like it.

The concept of treating an area as wide and disparate as District 20 as a community was ambitious. People often feel intense loyalty to their bridge clubs, which form real communities of people who see each other every week or several times a week.

But the district had only four regionals – back when there were four – and two online events as opportunities to bring people together. Sectionals helped tie smaller areas within the district to a circuit, but only the most active players were going to more than half a dozen tournaments a year in the district.

The central challenge of the Trumpet was to bring readers in our far-flung units together in articles that would be interesting to them. Our main solution was panel features, where three to 10 players from different parts of the district would discuss whatever topic we had chosen that quarter: careers, pets, sports, fashion, family, hobbies, etc.

My goals in selecting these panels were to find ever new subjects with interesting connections to the topic at hand from all over the district. The idea was that every reader should know someone on the panel, but nobody should know all of them. Everyone would have a personal connection to the story and everyone who read it would be exposed to some new people they might meet at a bridge tournament.

My sister, **Jen Smith**, was the primary writer of these features for the past 10 years, and it was a pleasure working with her. We've lived hundreds, often thousands, of miles apart throughout that time, and working on The Trumpet brought us together.

For me personally, the work of laying out the pages was something I especially enjoyed. I've loved designing news pages since I did it for The Daily Northwestern in college – don't tell anyone – 25 years ago. I had the opportunity to do that work as a career for three years at the Arizona Daily Star in Tucson and seven years at The World in Coos Bay.

When my job at The World ended, newspapers were moving to outsourcing their design operations to "design sweatshops" where designers would simultaneously work on several client publications. The job as I knew it was disappearing. And then the Trumpet came along and gave me the opportunity to keep doing it as a side gig for another 10 years.

I'm grateful to District 20 for providing that opportunity these past 10 years and proud of the work I've done for the Trumpet.

This paper has kept me tethered to an area I left in 2015. I am once again preparing to move, starting a new chapter in life, back in Ohio close to my family. While I'll continue to design tournament flyers for District 20 and whatever else I'm asked to do, I'm planning on joining and maybe getting involved in a new bridge community in Cincinnati and District 11. I won't be coming back to Oregon as often.

So this is goodbye, to District 20 and the Trumpet.

Chip Dombrowski can be reached at chip.dombrowski@acbl.org.



TOURNAMENT CALENDAR

DISTRICT 20 REGIONALS & SECTIONALS

MARCH 2023

3 – 5	Heart of the Valley Sectional	Corvallis Community Center, Corvallis OR
3 – 5	Honolulu Sectional	Ala Wai Clubhouse, Honolulu HI
25 – 26	Grand National Teams – Open	Online
31 – 2	Seaside Sectional	Seaside Convention Center, Seaside OR
31 – 2	Golden Clam I/N Regional	Seaside Convention Center, Seaside OR

APRIL 2023

12 – 13	McCall Sectional	McCall RV Resort, McCall ID
15 – 16	Vancouver Spring Sectional	Washington School for the Deaf, Vancouver WA
29 – 30	Grand National Teams – Open	Online

MAY 2023

5 – 7	Honolulu Sectional	Ala Wai Clubhouse, Honolulu HI
8 – 14	District 20 STaC	Local clubs

JUNE 2023

2 – 4	Eugene Sectional	Bushnell University, Eugene OR
2 – 4	Eugene I/N Regional	Bushnell University, Eugene OR
23 – 25	Portland Sectional	Portland Bridge Club, Portland OR

JULY 2023

7 – 9	Honolulu Sectional	Ala Wai Clubhouse, Honolulu HI
31 – 6	District 20 STaC	Local clubs

AUGUST 2023

11 – 13	Vancouver Summer Sectional	Washington School for the Deaf, Vancouver WA
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SEPTEMBER 2023

8 – 10	Honolulu Sectional	Ala Wai Clubhouse, Honolulu HI
8 – 10	Portland Sectional	Portland Bridge Club, Portland OR

OCTOBER 2023

Oct. 2–8	OREGON COAST REGIONAL	Seaside Convention Center, Seaside OR
14 – 15	Vancouver I/N Sectional	Vancouver Bridge Club, Vancouver WA
20 – 22	Gold Country Sectional	St. Canice Center, Nevada City CA
26 – 28	Caldwell Sectional	Caldwell Elks Club, Caldwell ID

NOVEMBER 2023

10 – 12	Honolulu Sectional	Ala Wai Clubhouse, Honolulu HI
11 – 12	Vancouver Fall Sectional	Washington School for the Deaf, Vancouver WA

DECEMBER 2023

4 – 10	District 20 STaC	Local clubs
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NORTH AMERICAN BRIDGE CHAMPIONSHIPS

March 9–19	Spring 2023	Marriott/Sheraton, New Orleans LA
July 13–23	Summer 2023	Sheraton, Chicago IL
Nov. 23 – Dec. 3	Fall 2023	Marriott Marquis, Atlanta GA
March 14–24	Spring 2024	Galt House, Louisville KY

10 years of big news



We covered big awards and accomplishments, impactful events and fun features.

So long and thanks for all the human interest articles

Many of you probably know me from the articles I've written over the years, but what you may not know is that I've never played a game of bridge in my life! My brother, Chip, asked me to write the occasional article for the Trumpet 10 years ago.

As a creative director in advertising, I rarely get to use my journalism chops. Writing for the Trumpet gave me an outlet for my writing passion, but also a glimpse into this world my brother was so ingrained in and the chance to get to know so many fantastic people over the years. For that I'll be forever grateful.

Even though I never met any of you in person, in some ways, I feel like we're old friends. And I'll miss getting to know you, your stories and your travels the most. Thank you for letting me be a part of your community for the last 10 years.

Jen Smith has been writing for us from Cincinnati. She has two kids, Teddy, 2.5, and Poppy (pictured), 4 months.



Jen Smith
Senior Writer