

Directing in the Virtual World
By Felix Moore, Unit 374
Albuquerque, NM
(Continued)

Initially, I thought that our members would like to play multiple times per day. This proved to be invalid as our members tend to play online about the same or a little more than they did face-to-face. The “addicts” can “feed their habit” in the SYC (Support Your Club) games and through other online opportunities.

It took a few days to sort out a workable schedule to suit as many members as possible. We have now settled into a routine, two concurrent games (one limited) every day at about 1pm and our Tuesday night face-to-face game that has transitioned easily to virtual and is popular with our younger (not retired yet) members. I have found that novice and intermediate players are more engaged. Many of our expert members have little interest.

Our daytime games attract between 80 and 100 members and about 135 members are engaged and participate. I feel it is important to keep the momentum going, so I send an email every night to every one of our online members. This email gives news, results, tips and partnership requests.

Directing an online game is very different. No revokes and nothing out of turn. Mis-clicks (sometimes reported as psyches) are the most problematic. I implore everyone to turn on the “confirm bid” and “confirm card” settings to avoid too much heartache. Failure to alert is another thing that causes problems.

My experience during the last month has been very positive, I have enjoyed every minute and it is getting easier or at least less time consuming! A highlight was when a nonagenarian member joined us on her new iPad.

Online bridge is providing occupation and engagement for our members. I think that they can even hear my voice when “Bridge is a Timed Event” appears in the chat box!

I encourage all District 17 members to get involved with online bridge. Nevertheless, I hope to see all D17 members in person as soon as it is safe to do so.

Thank you to the ACBL, to BBO and to Jay Whipple of The Common Game for getting this project off the ground so quickly.