



Larry Cohen to Run the Regionals at Sea for ACBL Read this interview by Unit 141 for FAQ's

No bridge teacher in the world combines more playing triumphs, teaching experience, and publishing success than Larry Cohen. Larry is a 25-time National champion, author of best-selling books on 2-over-1 bidding, doubles, and opening leads as well as the classic *To Bid or Not to Bid*. His decades of teaching and lecturing have made him a most beloved teacher around the globe.

Now all players have a great opportunity to become one of Larry's students. After trying other options, ACBL has requested that Larry Cohen return to run the Regionals at Sea. We had the great pleasure of interviewing Larry to discuss this change and the opportunity it provides for players to earn gold points, have a great time playing bridge, and enjoying all the amenities of a cruise.

Michael - U141: What exactly is a regional and what is a Regional at Sea?

Larry: Besides club games, ACBL sanctions sectional, regional, and national tournaments. Sectionals are local within a Unit and award silver points. Regionals are much bigger and award gold points. There are typically an average of over twelve regionals around the country each month. With the popularity of cruises, it makes sense to run three or four Regionals at Sea each year. The events and structure are the same as a regular regional and award gold points.



Michael - U141: What are some advantages of a Regional at Sea?

Larry: Aside from the obvious -- the opportunity to see beautiful ports, try local/exotic foods, meet interesting new people -- the biggest advantage, I think, is having everything included under one roof. On a Regional at Sea, it is a much more relaxed and social atmosphere. It's a better opportunity for the teacher to get to know the students and pinpoint where they might need to concentrate on their game. The teacher is much more available for questions and guidance.

Michael - U141: Who seems to especially enjoy or benefit from playing in a Regional at Sea?

Larry: Regionals at Sea are ideal for all players, but especially for newer players who are trying to combine learning with playing. After every afternoon pairs session, there is an analysis of hands and opportunity to ask questions. It is also great for players with spouses who are trying to get into the game and want a more relaxed atmosphere or have spouses who don't play and want other things to do.

Michael - U141: How does your role as both administrator and teacher offer advantages to the Regionals at Sea program?

Larry: I ran the first-ever Regional at Sea in 2009, so I have a lot of experience. Alice Travel (who manages the bookings) and I have "been there and done that" so many times that we really know how to run these events. I'm loading up with a knowledgeable staff so that I can focus on the teaching part. Everyone knows my penchant for detail -- I want everything to be perfect -- and we will work very hard to make sure that everything runs smoothly.



Michael - U141: Tell us a little about the logistics. Can people come without partners?

Larry: Of course. We use wonderful, experienced partnership people on-board and they make sure everyone has partners and/or teammates. We even have a pre-tournament electronic partnership desk.

Michael - U141: Can non-playing family or friends come? What would a family member or friend do while their travelmate is playing bridge?

Larry: The non-playing friends don't have to pay the add-on fee for bridge, and there is certainly plenty for them to do (unlike a land regional). It's a cruise -- so of course there are many other things to do besides bridge. Think spa, pool, on-board activities, sight-seeing...



Michael - U141: What is the schedule for 2015?

Larry: Our first Regional at Sea is March 1-8, 2015 on Royal Caribbean from Florida. Also, we plan on October (New York) and December (Texas). Anyone can visit their website and see all of the

amazing extra-curricular activities that they offer, from famous guest lecturers to classes on cooking, dancing, languages and wine tasting. All of the booking for bridge must be done through Alice Travel. ACBL would like us to run four Regionals at Sea a year, starting with ports in the Northeast, Florida, Texas, and West Coast. I will lend my administrative knowledge to all of them. Even though I won't be able to be the lecturer on every Regional at Sea, everyone can expect that I will have an experienced, excellent teacher on board and it will be a great time.

Michael - U141: What's the best way to learn more about this new Regional at Sea program?

Larry: Just click this link or log on to my website at www.larryco.com and click "Bridge Cruises." All of our Regionals at Sea will be listed there. **But, please remember to book through Alice Travel to be part of our group.**

Michael - U141: Thank you. I'm sure many of our readers will find this information interesting. I'd like to remind them that your website has many great learning features as well as the cruise information.

Larry: I look forward to seeing all of your readers at both the website and on our cruises!