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## Former dean leads Bridge tournament host committee

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

When Ron Horwitz retired from teaching and serving the School of Business Administration in 2002, he wanted to do something completely different from his former career. So he made a past hobby, Bridge, into his work. Currently, he's serving as co-chair for the Compuware Spring 2008 North American Bridge Championships, which will be held in Detroit March 6-16.

Horwitz has been playing Bridge for more than 40 years. His interest in the game was started by his parents. When Horwitz came to teach at Oakland University, he participated in the noontime game that many faculty and staff played in.

For 16 years he was chairman of the Motor City Regional, a Bridge tournament that was held at Cobo Hall in Detroit. When his responsibilities at Oakland became too great, Horwitz stepped down. When he returned to Bridge, he was asked to co-chair the upcoming championships and he agreed. Horwitz is mainly responsible for the fundraising, sponsoring, publicity and financial aspects of hosting the championships.

"When I decided to go back to Bridge, I didn't know Detroit had been awarded this tournament," Horwitz said. "It really isn't much different than the job of dean of the School of Business. I have always had a knack for administration."

It has been 27 years since Detroit has been selected to run a North American Bridge Championship. The tournament is put on by the American Contract Bridge League, which has 170,000 members.

"The sites are selected based on a few different requirements. The first is the ability to have facility can house the many players that will be coming in from around the world. The facility must have a playing area that is big enough and bright enough," Horwitz said. "They also look for sites that will be attractive enough that people would want to come."

Horwitz said Detroit's recently hosting of the All-Star Game and the Super Bowl, along with the three casinos in downtown, provided proof that Detroit was a good place for the tournament.

The championships will be held at the Marriott Hotel in the Renaissance Center, which will be marked as one of the top three playing facilities in the country.

"The players are really here for the competition and the fun, not to win money. There is no cash prize at the tournament. Prestige yes, money no," Horwitz said.

The tournament has sold out the hotel and has begun to offer housing at off-site locations.

Horwitz said many in the Bridge community view the national championships as a vacation and it's up to the host committee to showcase the city and also provide the players with things to do. The host committee has arranged for Motown performances by The Contours and The Miracles. In addition, they will have Sanders Hot Fudge and Vernor's Ginger Ale, Detroit-area staples, for the participants. A representative from Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick's office will be at the opening ceremony on March 6 at Compuware. There will also be an exhibition match with Peter Karmanos, Compuware CEO.

Just because it's a national championship does not mean new players are left out. Horwitz said half of the event is geared to new players.

On Friday, March 7, new players go to the Rec Cen at 11 a.m. for a free lesson and participate in free games beginning at 1 p.m. Bridge novices can also participate in tournament play.

Those not ready to learn the game can come down and watch the participants play throughout the tournament. The matches will be held on the third, fourth and fifth floors of the Marriott from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. from March 6-16.

"Our players range from doctors and lawyers, to college professors and postal workers, to factory workers. Bridge is a game for people who like cards, like competition and are fascinated with the intricacy of the game. You can play your entire life and never have the same hand. Each hand is a new challenge," Horwitz said.

For more information on the tournament, visit the [Compuware Spring 2008 North American Bridge Championship](#) Web site.

### SUMMARY

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