



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

ALERT – April 15, 2024

Click [here](#) to access our regular game schedule.

Looking Ahead

- ♥ **Our Inaugural online 19er game** will launch on Sunday, April 14 at 9:45 am.
- ♥ Malkin Howes will be giving a mini-lesson on **Bid One More? Again?** at the Monday morning bridge lab on April 15.
- ♥ **The April 19 Friday night game has been cancelled due to the Gatlinburg tournament.**
- ♥ Cindy Mahn will be giving a mini-lesson on **Slam Bidding (Suits)** at the Monday morning bridge lab on April 22.
- ♥ During the week April 22-28, all BBO and most F2F games will be **Stardust games**.
- ♥ **[Buffalo Spring Sectional](#)**, April 26-28
- ♥ Lynda Burnett will be giving a mini-lesson on **No Trump Declarer Play** at the Monday morning bridge lab on April 29.
- ♥ As of April 29, **the Monday afternoon open game will switch to F2F**.
- ♥ **A new 299er F2F game** will be launched on the same afternoon (April 29).
- ♥ **POP UP GAME**, Friday, May 3
- ♥ Susan Lawton will be giving a mini-lesson on **Opening Leads (Suits)** at the Monday morning bridge lab on May 6.
- ♥ Liz McDowell will be giving a mini-lesson on **Balancing** at the Monday morning bridge lab on May 13.
- ♥ **Barbara Seagram** will be giving a workshop at the Guelph Bridge Club on Tuesday, May 21. Mark your calendars.
- ♥ **[The Grand River \(Cambridge\) Sectional](#)**, May 25-26



Belated congratulations to the following new life master.

- **Lissa Lowes**

Calling All 499er and 749ers – Want to Improve Your Game?

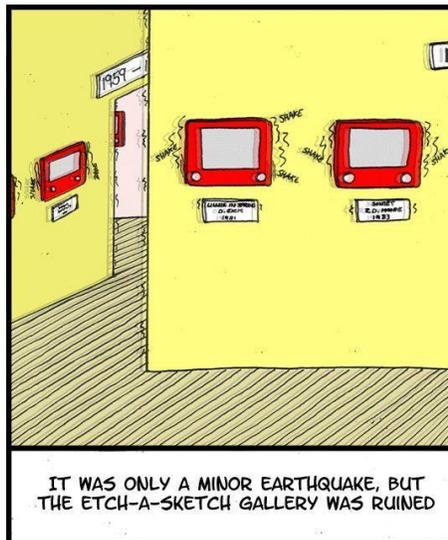
Contributed by Kathy Russell, Co-Manager

What's the best way to become a better bridge player? In the *Bridge Bulletin*, all the good players have credited "playing up" with improving their bridge game! GRBC is moving its small Monday afternoon online open game to in-person starting April 29. This is an ideal game for the 499ers and 749ers to play up! Why, you ask?

We expect that it will be a smaller game - meaning you'll get to know the open players better. This more relaxed setting should also make you more comfortable, when waiting to move to the next round, to ask the open players "What could I have done better on that hand?". (Zero Tolerance rules mean that the open players won't offer up tips unless you ask.) And, during the half hour before game time, many of the open players are just hanging around waiting for the game and socializing, so this is a great time to ask them for advice on that hand that gave you problems (just bring the hand diagram with you). Then stand back and watch other open players drift over to see what you are talking about (they love to look at tough hands).

We are very fortunate to have many high-calibre open players at our club who will generously share their time to talk bridge with you - don't miss this opportunity! It might surprise you how quickly you'll be comfortable enough to ask an open player to keep you in mind for a game when they have a break in their schedule. And on top of those perks, the Monday afternoon open game is stratified and there are even more masterpoints available because the open game gets credit for the tables in the concurrent 299er game!

So, grab your partner and come out to the Monday afternoon open game, starting April 29. If you don't have a partner, let [me](#) know and I'll tell you who else is looking for a partner.



The following digital lessons are available for only \$10. If you are interested, contact [Malkin](#).

- **Playing in Our Online Games** (Jack Cole) 27 minutes
- **Scoring Matters** (Jack Cole) 2 hours, six minutes
- **Opening Leads** (Stephen Carpenter) 2 hours, 35 minutes
- **Third-Seat Play** (Stephen Carpenter) 39 minutes
- **Defensive Signals** (Stephen Carpenter) 1 hour, 49 minutes
- **Second Seat Play** (Stephen Carpenter) 1 hour, 21 minutes
- **Discards and Strategies** (Stephen Carpenter) 1 hour, 7 minutes
- **Get That Extra Trick by Playing Card Combinations Correctly** (Stephen Carpenter) 2 hours, 9 minutes



An Enthusiastic Class of Beginner Graduates

As of last Saturday, 16 new bridge players have been unleashed upon the world. They are so enthusiastic that they are petitioning teacher Sue Moses for yet another round of lessons! In the meantime, they will be playing in our Saturday morning F2F game and our new Sunday morning online 19er game, as well as the Monday morning bridge labs. Please welcome them. They are the future of our club!

Photo Credit: Cheryl White

危机与机会并存/机遇与挑战并存

This is a Chinese expression that means “opportunity accompanies crisis/challenge”. Next week, our club’s intermediate players will have an excellent opportunity to test the waters of the open games, as many of our best players will be away all week at the Gatlinburg tournament. Those who do decide to take the plunge will be pleasantly surprised at how much they will be welcomed and how much fun they will have. (It might be a good idea to bring earplugs, as the open games can be pretty raucous.)





Who is Sharon Osberg?

Contributed by Lissa Lowes

If you answered that she is the bridge buddy and bridge tutor for Warren Buffet and Bill Gates, you are right!

Osberg grew up near Philadelphia in an upper-middle-class family of Italian immigrants. She learned to play bridge at Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA, where she graduated with a political science degree in the early 1970's. Quoting Sharon: "Somebody a couple of doors down in the dorm said, 'We need a fourth for bridge.' I said, 'I will do it.'" And that was that. A bridge addict was born.

Osberg started out at the Bank of America and eventually spent 18 years at Wells Fargo, where she rose to executive vice president for technology and retired in 2000. Her years running technology at Wells Fargo brought her into contact with Gates and other technology big wheels. Buffet and Osberg met through bridge, 15 years ago at the Empire State Building. I was with Wells Fargo. He said, "The next time you're traveling east, stop in Omaha and we'll play bridge." And she did! And they are still playing together.

She has been a bridge teacher and partner to both billionaires. Recently, she partnered with Gates — the founder of Microsoft — at a Toronto bridge tournament (2017) where they took second and then relaxed over a glass of wine and chips.

She calls Gates and Buffett "solid" bridge players and plays with them regularly. "They are not in the upper echelon of national or world players," she said. "They are very solid, everyday players.... There's a big difference between Bill's and Warren's approach to learning the game. Bill is very scientific. He reads and studies on his own. Warren enjoys playing. Warren has good instincts."

"I love the game and I love my partner," Buffett said. "She's a fabulous teacher, extremely smart, and very patient. They talk about bridge partners who were asked how they should have played their hand, and the partner says, 'under an assumed name.' Sharon doesn't do that."

Osberg even makes money from the game. She owns a piece of an online bridge company you might have heard of – it's called Bridge Base – which earns her a dividend and increases her interest in the game's popularity. My guess would be that COVID helped this little venture along.....

*The brain is a wonderful organ.
It starts working the moment
you get up in the morning and
does not stop until you sit at the
bridge table.*



Bean There Done That

Contributed by Steve Allen, Treasurer (GrandRiverBridgeClubTreasurer@gmail.com)

We recently signed a renewal contract with Bell for our internet and landline telephone.

We now have free unlimited long distance calling to Canadian or USA destinations (free is a good price to pay). Internet speeds are now 10x faster than they were last week (fast is a good speed).

Want to use the club's WIFI? The password is the 10-digit phone number ... but no checking it during the game. For BBO players, the WIFI password is taped to the wall in the room where you play.

The Grand River (Cambridge) Sectional (May 25/26)

Contributed by Moira Hollingsworth, Partnership Chair

- Do you need a partner for May 25 or a team for May 26?
- Are you able to be a spare for one or both days?

Please contact [me](#) with your masterpoint total and a brief description of systems played: eg Standard American, 2/1, Precision, etc.



Today, there are about 300 bodies frozen in liquid nitrogen in America in the hope that science will one day be able to bring them back to life.



**We Let Them
Eat Cake!
Happy 12th
Birthday GRBC!**



Golden Bridge

The latest *Bulletin* lists the ACBL's 2023 high fliers in various categories, and several members of our club are included.

- In the 2023 Ace of Virtual Clubs race, **Shelley Metcalfe** placed 15th in the 300-500 points bracket.
 - In the 2023 Ace of Virtual Clubs race, **Peter Peng** placed 23rd in the 2500-3500 points bracket.
 - In the 2023 Ace of Virtual Clubs race, **Liz McDowell** placed 16th in the 5000-7500 points bracket.
 - In the 2023 Ace of Virtual Clubs race, **Cindy Mahn** placed 5th in the 7500-10,000 points bracket.
 - In the Richmond Trophy race, **Bob Griffiths** placed 9th.
 - In the Richmond Trophy race, **Cindy Mahn** placed 13th.
 - In the Richmond Trophy race, **David Baker** placed 14th.
 - In the Richmond Trophy race, **Adrian Record** placed 18th.
 - In the Top Masterpoints Holders race, Canada, **David Baker** placed 23rd.
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Letter to the Editor - Opening Bid Requirements

Contributed by Mike Peng

Back in the 1970's, opening bids had to have 13+ HCP regardless of distribution. By the 1990's, opening bids had to have 10+ HCP and Rule of 20. Now for tournament play, ACBL allows opening bids with 8+ HCP or Rule of 17. Times have certainly changed!

In last week's Alert, the Dear David article cited an opening bid of 1♥ by West in first seat with:

♠ (void) ♥ AT9xxx ♦ x ♣ QJxxx. That's only 7 HCP!

It's worth asking whether the ACBL allows its players to open with so few points. For those who are interested, the ACBL does publish [charts for allowable conventions and bids](#). Since the bid in question was made in an open game, we should look at the Open Chart where we find that it's allowed to open a hand that has at least eight HCP or meets the Rule of 17. The Rule of 17 determines hand strength by adding the hand's HCP to the number of cards in the two longest suits. In our example, West has 7 HCP plus 12 cards in the two longest suits = 19, so it is well within the ACBL's criteria.

In order to make sure that you and your partner are on the same page, you should have a partnership discussion regarding your opening bid requirements. If you do decide to open light (say using the Rule of 17), please make sure that you tick the Opening box for Very Light in the General Approach section of your convention cards and, if you do this, pre-alert your opponents. This will avoid misunderstandings later.

**A dung beetle
walks into a
bar and asks,
'Is this stool
taken?'**

FOR INTERMEDIATE PLAYERS



King Sacrifice

Contributed by Robert Griffiths

Here's another board from the Toronto Regional.

Board 12					
North Deals				♠ J 6	
Both Vul				♥ K 8 7 3	
				♦ J 5	
				♣ A J 6 5 4	
					♠ K 7 4
♠ A 5					♥ A Q J 9 6
♥ 5 2					♦ 8 3
♦ K Q 10 9 6 4					♣ Q 8 3
♣ K 9 7					
					♠ Q 10 9 8 3 2
					♥ 10 4
					♦ A 7 2
					♣ 10 2
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>		
	Pass	1 ♥	2 ♠		
3 ♦	Pass	3 N	All pass		

North Passed and East opened 1♥. I was South and pushed my vulnerable luck with a 2♠ overcall, not quite disciplined. West bid 3♦, North passed and East bid 3NT, followed by all passing. On lead, I tried to find partner's suit with the ♣10. Everybody else at the table seemed to have a suit, so why not North?

East considered the club lead, then played low from Dummy. Now my partner had to consider. Should he win his ♣A to return the ♠J? He decided that our best hope of beating 3NT lay with my hand having both an outside entry and another club to set up his club suit, so he played his most encouraging club card, the 4.

Declarer won his ♣Q and led a small diamond towards Dummy. I could have beaten the contract immediately by winning the ♦A and returning my other club, but I didn't know how good partner's clubs were, so I ducked.

Declarer won Dummy's ♦K, then guessed to lead the ♦Q, smothering North's jack. This time I won my ace, returned my other club and Partner took four club tricks to set the contract. It looked as if my club lead had given East no hope for nine tricks, but he could have done better. I had made a vulnerable overcall with a suit likely headed at best by the queen and jack, meaning that I was a favourite to hold one of the two outstanding aces. My lead of the ♣10, without holding the king, queen, or nine was evidence that I was searching for club cards in partner's suit, in favour of working on my own second suit. So, the danger in the hand was that North held five clubs headed by the ace and jack.

East can survive that holding by playing the ♣K at Trick 1. Now, North has to win his ace, as ducking will give Declarer a second club stopper and the timing to set up his diamonds. But if North uses his ace at Trick 1, he will never have an entry to his club suit. With the danger of the club suit gone, East can take nine easy tricks by playing me for the ♦A.

Here's another example of an exception to the rule of "Second Hand Low".



Dear David

Just Another Tuesday at the Club – Part 2

A pesky rabbit has been chewing up your garden, so you try to capture him by using the box-propped-up-by-a-stick method. The next day, you see the trap has worked because the stick is gone. If you lift the box to make sure you have got him trapped, he will run away. In life, as in bridge, don't give the "wascally wabbit" a chance to escape.

Dir: W	
Vul: EW	♠ A 8 2
15	♥ A Q 7 5
7 14	♦ Q 4
4	♣ K 6 5 2
♠ J 9 3	♠ K 4
♥ K J 10 6 2	♥ 4 3
♦ 2	♦ A K 10 8 6 5
♣ Q 10 9 7	♣ A 8 3
	♠ Q 10 7 6 5
	♥ 9 8
	♦ J 9 7 3
	♣ J 4

16 After West passes, North opens a strong NT. East overcalls 2♦, which only promises a diamond suit in our system. South chose to pass rather than introduce his moth-eaten five-card spade suit because he thought he had a modicum of defense against the vulnerable opponents. North was quite unhappy when it got back to him because it felt as if the opponents were "stealing" his strong hand. In the situation where you have opened a strong NT and either of the opponents have overcalled a suit, a double by the NT opener shows shortness (singleton or void) in the opponents bid – in other words, it is a takeout double. You obviously cannot have a perfect takeout double after opening 1NT, but letting the opponents play a low-level contract usually scores badly for your side. So, North's balancing bid was 2 HEARTS!!!

So now we get to the part of the hand that relates to the introduction. South reasonably assumed that his partner had a five-card heart suit for his balancing 2♥ bid and he worried that correcting to 2♠ could make things worse. After South reluctantly passed, the spotlight fell on West. He might offer a penalty double as he has a good defensive hand against 2♥, especially since his partner made a vulnerable overcall, but it might not be enough. A double might induce the opponents to run to a better spot (2NT or, in this case, 2♠). Don't give the "wascally wabbit" a chance to escape. 2♥ was down three – a top score.

One of the things I go on and on (and on and on, as my partners would say) about is counting your high-card points as the starting point of a hand. After that, forget about your points and determine whether you like the looks of your hand. If you hold: QJx QJx QJx QJxx (12 HCP), you will usually take somewhere between one trick (on a bad day) and three tricks (on a good day). If you hold: Axx Axx Axx xxxx) also 12 HCP, you will take three tricks most days. Which hand do you like better?

I am not suggesting you play my system. I just want to explain hand evaluation to you.

Board 23

South Deals
Both Vul

♠ J 5 3
♥ A 6 3
♦ 10 9 5
♣ Q 9 4 3

♠ A Q 10 7
2
♥ 2
♦ A J 2
♣ A K J 7



♠ K 9 8 6
4
♥ Q J
♦ K Q 8 3
♣ 10 6

♠ —
♥ K 10 9 8 7 5 4
♦ 7 6 4
♣ 8 5 2

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 NT ¹	Pass
3 ♥ ²	Pass	4 ♠ ³	Pass
4 NT ⁴	Pass	5 ♣ ⁵	Pass
5 ♦ ⁶	Pass	6 ♦ ⁷	Pass
6 ♠	All pass		

2NT is **modified** Jacoby and 3♥ shows shortness. Even though the East hand has been reduced to eight “working” HCP (don’t count the ♥QJ of heart as points because they are no longer “working”), the five-card spade support and ruffing values in two suits make it worth jumping to game. Even though East denied a great hand by jumping to game, West loves his aces and distribution, so he tries Roman Key Card Blackwood. When asked about the ♠Q, why did East say he had it? When you have a 10-card (or longer) fit, you should *pretend* you have it because the suit will split 3-0 only 22% of the time – an acceptable gamble. As an added bonus, when partner is holding the queen himself, he knows you must have five or more spades. When you are replying to the queen ask and you don’t have it, you sign off at the five-level. When you do have the queen, you bid your cheapest non-trump king. If you have the queen with no side kings, you jump to slam.

West has 19 HCP and East has eight “working” HCP – a 27-point slam. Only two of six tables bid the slam and everyone led the ♥A, so no overtrick. Aces and kings and shortness and length are positive values.



Top Master Point Earners at our Club

Contributed by Allen Pengelly

This table lists the individuals who have earned the most master points at our club in each of three master point bands since the beginning of March.

Open Players			749er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	25.47	1	Susan Durance	9.03	1	Andrew Widdis	8.47
2	Ted Boyd	15.76	2	Kim Wakeford	8.46	2	Brian Gaber	7.90
3	Edith Ferber	14.67	3	Rick Arthur	6.70	3	Sheila Charters	7.67
4	Mike Peng	14.25	4	John Kip	6.33	4	Paul Raymond	7.07
5	Robert Griffiths	12.73	5	Judy Beauchamp	5.98	5	Randall DeKraker	7.01
6	Stephen Young	12.59	6	Cheryl Kip	5.93	6	Mark Sherwood	6.90
7	David Wilson	11.64	7	Jack Cole	5.91	6	Doug Fickling	6.90
8	Kathy Russell	11.26	8	Renate Boucher	5.83	8	Peter Gaasenbeek	5.24
9	Roy Dandyk	10.58	9	Louise Dawdy	5.46	9	Robert Darby	4.80
10	Suzanne Edwards	9.79	10	Molly Worden	5.45	10	Pet Pietrek	4.03
11	Malkin Howes	9.65	11	Jim Dalglish	5.37	11	Richard Rybiak	3.49
12	Lori Cole	8.17	12	Kevin Latter	4.95	11	George Rybiak	3.49
13	Steve Carpenter	7.98	12	Bob Giilck	4.95	13	Debbie Miethig	3.32
14	Neil Jeffrey	7.47	14	Carolyn Baechler	4.86	14	Phil De Montigny	3.31
15	Thea Davis	7.40	15	Joe Blake	4.73	15	Russel Kerr	3.14
16	Tony Verhoeven	7.39	16	David Dennis	4.66	16	Sharon Nesbitt	3.09
17	Sharon Boyd	7.33	17	Martin Jones	4.38	17	Pat Northey	3.04
18	Barbara Arthur	6.30	18	Cheryl White	4.28	18	Don O'Bright	2.76
19	Margot Stockie	6.15	18	Paul White	4.28	18	Richard Wehrle	2.76
20	Shelley Metcalfe	5.78	20	Elinor Girouard	4.13	20	Chris Beck	2.74
21	John Hanemaayer	5.76	21	Marlene Dopko	3.76	21	Marianne Dziarski	2.69
22	Lynda Burnett	5.42	22	Steve Allen	3.69	22	Wendy Duff	2.67
23	Dave Quarrie	4.65	23	Janice Pengelly	3.62	23	Jacques Druart	2.33
24	Dave Embury	4.47	24	Andy Martinek	3.57	24	Louise Bell	2.08
25	William Christian	4.30	25	Peggi Rieger	3.55	24	David Bell	2.08

If you would like to play in a particular game but lack a partner that day, you can either:

- For both online and F2F games, log on to [Pianola](#), click on Partner Finder, and create a Partner Finder advert. This needs to be done at least a few hours in advance of the game. *When you use Partner Finder, it will allow folks to see your contact information. If you have posted a Partner Finder ad, kindly remember to check your phone and email and, when you've found a partner, delete your ad. Someone who replied to your ad may be waiting for a response.*
- For online games only, log in to the game in question and register yourself on the Partnership Desk tab (or look to see if someone else has already registered there).

If you are looking for a regular partner, contact [Joan Slover](#), our membership lead. Please let her know what sort of game/partner you are interested in – your playing level, your available time slots, F2F and/or online, and any other pertinent information.

We have fun in **spades**.

We play with all our **hearts**.

We treat our members like **diamonds**.

We have a new crop of beginners at our **club**.