



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

ALERT – December 25, 2023

Merry Hanukkah
Happy Christmas



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

Looking Ahead

- ♥ The Tuesday afternoon BBO 199er game is now a **299er game** and the Wednesday afternoon F2F 649er game has become a **749er game**.
- ♥ **Three-Chip 99er Game**, Saturday, December 23, 9:00 am
- ♥ **There will be no bridge labs or games on Christmas Day, December 25 and New Year's Day, January 1, 2024** (although there will be the 8 is Enough Game on Jan. 1).
- ♥ **New Year's Day 8 is Enough Swiss Teams**
- ♥ **Cleveland Rock and Roll Regional**, January 3-7, 2024
- ♥ **Toronto Non-Life Master Regional**, January 5-7, 2024
- ♥ **Toronto January Sectional**, January 5-7, 2024
- ♥ **The Friday night open game on January 5 has been cancelled.**
- ♥ Dave Quarrie will be giving a **mini-lesson on Play of the Hand (Suits)** at the Monday morning bridge lab on January 8.
- ♥ Our BBO games during the week of January 8 – 14 will be **NABC Louisville fundraiser games** = double black points, \$BBO1 surcharge
- ♥ Saturday, January 13, **Learn Bridge in a Day**
- ♥ Barbara Arthur will be giving a **mini-lesson on Counting Trump** at the Monday morning bridge lab on January 15.

A Warm Welcome to our Newest Members

- **Becky Blake**
- **Bruno Richter**

Just a reminder that half-year memberships are now available for the bargain basement price of only \$35. And this low low offer includes a free nametag!



Please welcome our latest batch of beginner 2 graduates (seven of them are missing from the photo unfortunately). That's their proud teacher Sue Moses in red.

We hope to see these new players at our Monday morning bridge labs and Saturday morning 99er games. Please make a point of saying hello!

Update regarding CPR and Defibrillator Training

Contributed by Barbara Arthur

Thanks to the 16 club members who have indicated an interest in becoming more up-to-date about how and when to use these techniques. I have enlisted the help of my daughter Karen Arthur, a registered nurse for 10 years, who is certified in Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support. She recommends the following link on the Heart and Stroke Foundation website which talks about signs of a heart attack as well as cardiac arrest, and when to use both CPR and a defibrillator (AED).

I am including the link here (below) since all members may wish to check it out at some point. For those who have indicated their interest in CPR and Defibrillator training, you will receive a poll to find possible dates in January for a face-to-face session (2–2.5 hours) providing demonstrations, practice, and Q&A.

<https://www.heartandstroke.ca/heart-disease/emergency-signs>

- I grew up with Steve Jobs, Johnny Cash and Bob Hope.
 - Now there's no jobs, no cash, and no hope.
 - Please don't let anything happen to Kevin Bacon.
-

Friday Afternoon Christmas Party

There were 14 tables last Friday afternoon as our 499er players enjoyed a fabulous Christmas spread and a fun game après.



Photo Credits Cheryl White



"Come to think of it, have you ever actually seen this guy at a bridge table?"



The Answer Lady

Contributed by Susan Lawton

As the "The Answer Lady" I have been responding to questions from "newer" players over the past several weeks. A request has been made to share those players' questions and my responses in the Alert, essentially a column for the beginner player! You can write to me at suzan2420@yahoo.ca.

Question

My partner and I played this hand in a recent online game. I was sitting South and with six spades, considered opening 2♠ but chose to pass. My partner, North, overcalled 1NT after West bid 1♣ with only nine points. We ended up bidding to game after I transferred to spades. My partner successfully made 4♠+1 for a top score.

I checked the results and several pairs opened the bidding with 2♠ with the North partner raising to 4♠. Another pair also didn't open in South but passed after transferring North to 2♠. Most made at least 4♠, except one pair who went down one. Answer Lady, did we do the right thing? I know there seems to be a tendency to bid aggressively, but are there sometimes drawbacks with that approach?

Signed, an online player

		N				
		♠ Q93 ♥ AKJ105 ♦ Q3 ♣ KQ8	W	N	E	S
					P	P
			1♣	1NT	2♣	2♥
			P	2♠	P	3♠
			P	4♠	P	P
W			E			
♠ K102 ♥ Q862 ♦ A10 ♣ 9543			♠ J ♥ 973 ♦ J9652 ♣ A1076			
		S				
		♠ A87654 ♥ 4 ♦ K874 ♣ J2				
		4♠ N		NS: 0 EW: 0		

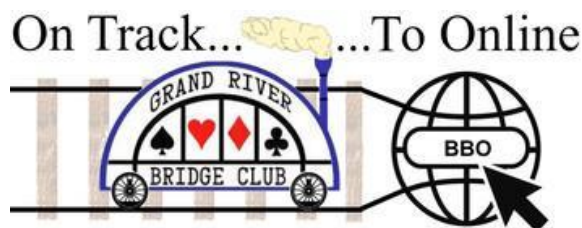
Dear Online player: Yes, there are some drawbacks to opening with a pre-empt - and no more so in that second seat. Robert Todd (click [here](#) for the full article) recommends the most *conservative* approach if you are bidding second. His reasoning: *in first seat, you are pre-empting two opponents, but in second seat one of those opponents has passed, increasing the likelihood that your partner has a good hand.* This approach is also supported by “Consults with the Doctor”, *Bridge Bulletin*, December 2023, pp. 63. “*If you have a poor hand in second seat ... you could be pre-empting your partner.*”

On this hand, 4♠ should comfortably make, and either bidding approach 2♠-4♠ or 1NT to 4♠ can work. Most times the hand was played in the South. Your pair received the top score after a heart lead captured the ♥Q on the first trick, setting up your hearts.

The pair who ended up in only 2♠ making 4♠ did so because South failed to recognize the strength of their hand after North opened 1NT. South's hand has that singleton heart and six spades, not just five. The pair that went down one experienced a declarer-play error.

Two articles by special contributor, Dr. James Marsh Sternberg, in the November and December 2023 *Bridge Bulletins*: “Consults with the Doctor” provide further reading.

Novice players looking to increase their knowledge and expertise in this area of pre-empts can also sign up for an online module by Jack Cole on Friday, March 1 and Friday, March 8. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.



L-OTTO Returns In 2024!

‘Tis the Season, and GRBC is celebrating by re-introducing **random draw prizes for our BBO games!** This contest period will run for four consecutive weeks (or maybe more), from Wednesday to Tuesday, starting January 3. We’ll randomly pick the winner on each Tuesday night. Your bragging rights will be announced in Friday’s ALERT.

Who can enter? All GRBC members in good standing are eligible. How do you enter? Every time that you join a **GRBC online game**, your name will automatically go into Santa’s “hat”. The more times you play, the more chances you have to win, and you can win every week!

The weekly lucky winner will receive a \$25 LCBO* gift certificate! The fun starts Wednesday January 3. Join our BBO games early, and play often!

* Gift certificates for other local retailers available upon request.



Player Profile – Lissa Lowes

Contributed by Anita Hanson

Please meet this week's profilee, Lissa Lowes. You might not recognize her from the photo, as she is a bit of a phantom member of our club — Lissa has never played in a game at GRBC. Living in Parry Sound, she limits her GRBC involvement to BBO. First playing virtually during Covid with the Sudbury club, she made the switch to ours because 1) it is such a well-organized club, and 2) one of her sisters is our very own Malkin Dare.

Lissa began her bridge career as a kid, learning from her parents... but in a bit of a fragmented way. They first taught Malkin and an older brother, so had the required four, and did not usually need her — it was only when times were desperate that she was called upon. This resulted, she says, in many years of playing “casual bad bridge”.

That ended in her 50s, when her mother found herself in need of a partner. Although not keen, Lissa gamely stepped in and began playing duplicate... and was soon completely addicted. She now plays virtually three or four times a week, and is also manager and director of the small Parry Sound club (where this photo was taken) which has one F2F game per week. And since this is clearly not nearly enough bridge, Lissa has taken on the task of teaching local “bridge newbies” as well.

Lissa trained as a teacher, but quickly realized that this was not her dream vocation and switched to software development, spending 14 years with the Toronto Public Library and then moving on to Toronto Hydro, at that time an independent software company. When retirement time came, she left Toronto and moved back to her home town of Parry Sound, into what has been the family cottage since 1952.

Looking after this waterside property takes a lot of her non-bridge time, and she is also a devoted cat owner. Lissa enjoys travel as well, spending time each winter in Hilton Head, where one of her brothers has a place. (Lissa has four full siblings and three half siblings. She suggested that it would probably be a bad idea to mention that Malkin is the oldest.)

Her favourite bridge tip is very valuable advice: Concentrate, focus, take your time, and think about: what are you trying to tell your partner? and what did your partner just tell you?

BTW, Lissa is .91 silver away from lifemaster. Wish her luck!

Treasure Hunt

Because the fire department is requiring us to move the shelving in the passageway to the teaching room, Margot and Kathy will be displaying everything currently stored on those shelves at the back of the club.

Please take or set aside anything that our club needs to keep, pending the installment of new storage facilities. The leftovers will be discarded.



Boca Raton Adventures

Contributed by Margot Stockie

Twelve members of the Grand River and Guelph bridge clubs travelled to Boca Raton to attend last week's regional.

The weather was terrible - so perfect for playing bridge inside!

To our "horror", the top bracket was filled with clients and their professional teams. Mere mortals had their a@#\$%es kicked!! For newer players, wealthy clients hire professionals to play in Knock Outs and the clients are required to play only 50% of the time. Dave Longstaff and Dave Baker got the thrill of their bridge lives when they beat a pro team in the Niagara Regional in November, but they were not even close this time. Many bridge professionals live in Florida, and it seemed to us that every single one of them was playing this week.

However, success was ours in Bracket 2. The team of Dianne Aves, Bruce Roberts, Diane Bourdeau, and Bob Griffiths won the Wednesday/Thursdays KOs, and Diane Bourdeau, Bob Griffiths, Adrian Record, and Jenn Verdam won the Friday/Saturday KOs playing against Dianne Aves, Bruce Roberts, Thea Davis, and Margot Stockie. Many jokes were made about travelling that far to play against each other.

Undeterred, the next group trip is to Cleveland for the Rock and Roll Regional.

Tournaments are not just about the bridge. We have lots of fun socializing, touring new cities, and making new friends. There are brackets for all levels, so don't let the "bridge gods" frighten you. I had a lovely conversation with Jeff Meckstroth riding up in the elevator....

Contributed by Dave Baker

"The Group" has just returned to our cold but beloved country from a tournament in Boca Raton, Florida. There were a great many pros there and some of us got to play against (and crushed by) Meckstroth and Rodwell. There were many successes and some failures (yeah, me), but there was one notable success I want to relate to you.

Two teams of our players were in a two-day Bracketed Knockout, On the first day, you play all of the teams in your bracket and the top four teams qualify for the next day. Jennifer Verdam, Adrian Record, Diane Bourdeau, and Bob Griffiths were sitting in first place after the first day with Dianne Aves, Bruce Roberts, Margot Stockie, and Thea Davis sitting in fourth place. The first-place team usually plays the fourth-place team, but they do have the option of choosing their opponents. In order to give their friends a chance to play in an all-Canada final, the first-place team chose a higher-ranking team for the semi-finals -- and both teams won! In the finals, the Aves team had a slight advantage at half-time, but the Verdam team stormed back in the second half and finished first.

Good drinks, good food, good friends. That's bridge.



Bean There Done That

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

Now is the time to spend Grandma's early Christmas cheque. May I suggest a GRBC membership? It's only 35 bucks for January-to-June 2024. And unlike an ugly Christmas sweater or tie, you can wear it all year.

If you are already a club member, try to seduce/trick/blackmail someone else to join. If they do, you will receive two free plays (online or F2F). This reward system will continue until June 2029, if not extended further.

Merry merry...



Lorraine Catherine Cullen

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Lorraine Cullen on December 11 at the age of 73. Click [here](#) for Lorraine's obituary.

Lorraine was an educator and avid golfer who joined our club when she retired and played at Gage Street until five years ago when she was hospitalized at University Gates.

Contributed by Cindy Mahn



COME JOIN US NEW YEAR'S
DAY

COST IS \$20 (INCLUDES
LUNCH)

10 O'CLOCK STARTING TIME

ENTRIES CLOSE DECEMBER 30

Time You Learned our Lessons!

Continuing

- **Newcomer bridge labs** every Monday morning, 9:00 am – 11:30 am, except on holiday Mondays. Upcoming mini-lessons include **Play of the Hand (Suits) Part 2** with Dave Quarrie on January 8, **Counting Trumps** with Barbara Arthur on January 15, **Responding to Pre-Empts** with Stephen Carpenter on January 22 and **Filling Out Your Convention Card** with Malkin Howes on January 29. NO EXTRA CHARGE

Our bridge labs are a great place to make new friends and recruit new partners, as well as get better at our game!

Learn Bridge in a Day?

Instructor: Stephen Carpenter

Date: Saturday, January 13, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Cost: \$35

Venue: In the teaching room at our club

Current Enrollment: 15

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Beginner 1 Lessons

Instructor: Sue Moses

Dates: Saturday, January 20, 27, February 3, 10, & 17

Cost: \$85 (includes the cost of the text)

Venue: In the teaching room at our club

Current Enrollment: 5

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.



Starting Signals – Attitude

Over your bridge career, you will probably be playing defence twice as often as you declare a contract. Defensive signals allow the two defenders to collaborate to make things difficult for the declarer.

Defenders can signal whether they like the suit partner has led (Attitude), how many cards they hold in a suit (Count), or in which suit they are interested (Suit Preference).

This lesson is aimed at players with a bit of playing experience who want to raise the level of their defence by using signalling. This lesson introduces Attitude signals. A subsequent lesson or two (after some months) may be offered to handle Count and Suit Preference signals.

Regular partners may find it advantageous to attend as a pair.

Instructor: Neil Jeffrey

Cost: \$20 for members and \$25 for non-members

Location: In person in the teaching room of the Grand River Bridge Club

Level: **Novice**

Date & Time: Tuesday, January 30, 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.



Dear David

Bidding Facing Known Parameters

♠ K 10 9 7 6 5	♠ J
♥ 6 4	♥ AK 9 8 5 3
♦ A Q 10 9	♦ 7 6
♣ 2	♣ AK 10 5

West has a quite decent weak 2♠ bid. East has an exceptional hand for game or slam in hearts or clubs, until he is faced by a partner who has limited values, most of which will be unsuitable for a heart or spade contract. What to do? I have found that the best remedy in this situation is to play a new suit as invitational. Standard bidding suggests that a new suit should be forcing, but what should you bid over 2♠-3♥ if you held something like: ♠AQ9865 ♥6 ♦ QJ5 ♣432? A 3♥ contract may or may not make, and any other contract (such as 3♠) could be worse.

If you play (as I do) that a new suit over a weak two is natural and non-forcing, you have a chance to play in a better suit than your own, with an option to bid a reasonable game in one of partner's suits. I have a maximum for my weak two, a ruffing value in clubs, exquisite values in diamonds, and even some potential in spades. A bid of 4♥ seems warranted on this hand.

In a nine-table game, we were the only pair in 4♥ (making), for a 75% score on the board.

Here is the whole hand:

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

Since I am composing this on Hallowe'en night, I might suggest you come over to the dark side.

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 November.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	19.14	1	Jim Dalglish	14.06	1	Debbie Miethig	7.00
2	Cindy Mahn	16.31	2	Lori Cole	10.02	2	Brian Gaber	6.79
3	Stephen Young	15.06	3	Kevin Latter	9.84	3	Sheila Charters	6.51
4	Mike Peng	14.94	4	Judy Beauchamp	8.62	4	Peter Gaasenbeek	5.80
5	Malkin Howes	14.23	5	John Kip	8.22	5	Don Slowinski	5.19
6	Moirra Hollingsworth	12.84	5	Cheryl Kip	8.22	6	Paul Raymond	4.74
7	Ted Boyd	12.16	7	Jack Cole	7.92	7	Stu Cowan	4.31
8	Edith Ferber	11.81	8	Regina Williams	7.51	8	Russel Kerr	4.29
9	Bonnie Kains	9.67	8	Denis Williams	7.51	9	Audrey Cook	4.05
10	Suzanne Edwards	9.39	10	Martin Jones	6.92	10	John Aldridge	3.97
11	Pat McMillan	9.04	11	Rick Arthur	6.87	11	Ben Cornell	3.93
12	Neil Coburn	8.90	12	Bob Giilck	6.58	12	JP Fraresso	3.92
13	John Hanemaayer	8.44	13	Lynda Burnett	6.41	13	Louise Dawdy	3.88
14	Neil Jeffrey	8.33	14	Cheryl White	6.29	14	Andrew Widdis	3.63
15	Margot Stockie	8.19	15	Glenn Mockford	6.20	15	Jane Wilson	3.51
16	Dave Quarrie	7.59	16	Elinor Girouard	6.13	16	George Rybiak	3.50
17	Kathy Russell	6.74	17	Nancy Cattanach	5.92	17	Larry Brooks	3.40
18	Bob Griffiths	6.67	18	Lissa Lowes	5.89	18	Pat Northey	3.26
19	Liz McDowell	6.44	19	Tony Verhoeven	5.88	19	Pat Gascho	3.23
20	Paul Latimer	6.19	20	Janice Pengelly	5.57	20	Sandra Kendall	3.16
21	Adriaan Kempe	6.12	21	Bob Livermore	5.32	21	Sharon Nesbitt	3.03
22	Dianne Aves	6.07	22	Molly Worden	5.11	22	Carla Laubach	2.70
23	Dave Embury	5.64	23	Renate Boucher	4.92	23	Richard Rybiak	2.68
24	Sharon King	5.59	24	Sue Durance	4.80	24	Jeannie Leforge	2.57
25	Steve Carpenter	4.79	25	Judy Widdecombe	4.68	25	Yvonne Weppler	2.35

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**.

Merry Christmas and Happy Hannukah from our **club**.