



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

ALERT – February 5, 2024

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

Looking Ahead

- ♥ Dave Quarrie will be giving a mini-lesson on **Declarer Play (Suits)** at the Monday morning bridge lab on February 5.
- ♥ **Online Swiss Teams game**, 7:10 pm Tuesday, February 6
- ♥ **The Friday night open games on February 9 and February 16 are cancelled.**
- ♥ **Niagara Sectional**, February 9-11, St Catharines
- ♥ **Both BBO games on Sunday morning, February 11, will be special games with a \$1 extra entry fee and yielding 50% red points.**
- ♥ **Pop-Up 499er F2F Pairs Game**, Sunday, February 11, 1:00 pm, \$1 surcharge, 50% red points
- ♥ George Pepall will be giving a mini-lesson on **Slam Bidding (No Trump)** at the Monday morning bridge lab on February 12.
- ♥ **STaC Week**, Tuesday, February 13 – Friday, February 16, silver points, \$1 surcharge
- ♥ **There will be no bridge lab on Family Day, Monday, February 19**
- ♥ Lynda Burnett will be giving a mini-lesson on **Play of the Hand (No Trump)** at the Monday morning bridge lab on February 26.



to the following local players who have advanced to the next ACBL level.

Junior Master

- **Andrew Widdis**

Club Master

- **Andrew McNaught**

Regional Masters

- **Jasia McKeague**

Ruby Life Master

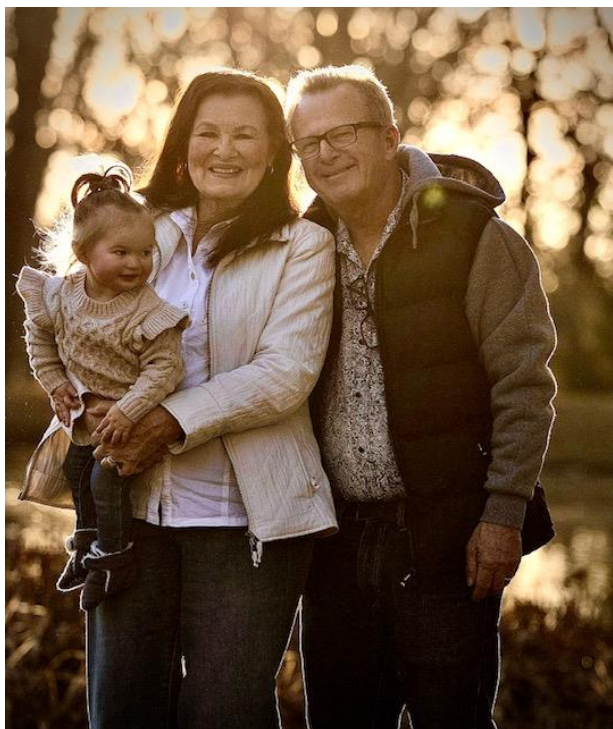
- **Stephen Carpenter**

Here are the names of our new ACBL members.

- **Jane Cowan**
- **John Erling**
- **Bill Holmes**
- **Sandra Stone**

And a very warm welcome to the following new club members....

- **Mary Karchemny**
- **Doug Kippen**
- **Pat Costigan**



Player Profile – Valirie Binkle

Contributed by Anita Hanson

Today's profilee has come to us from afar. Valirie Binkle is originally from Nanaimo, B.C., although K/W has been home for quite some time. She came here for a youthful three-month adventure 50-odd years ago, but then "met a guy". These things happen.

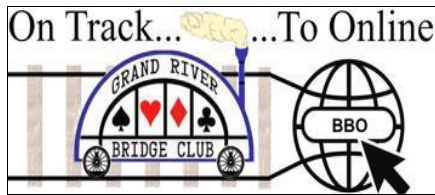
Valirie has not been playing bridge all that time, though — despite growing up in a family of card and board game players, she did not start bridge until 10 years ago, after retiring from her work as an insurance adjuster. She took a chance on the Guelph club's Learn Bridge in a Day, and it took only that one day for her to decide, "Yes, this is for me." Lessons at GRBC on Gage Street followed, and she has been happily playing at our club ever since, having found an easygoing regular partner who makes the game pressure- and stress-free.

It is the valuable brain workouts and social connections that keep her coming back — meeting new people, making new friends. Valirie has recently discovered a love of out-of-town tournaments, a wonderful opportunity for both learning and bonding. February will take her to another over-nighter in St. Catharines.

When not playing bridge, Valirie spends her summers in the garden, and in the winter loves to curl up in front of British murder mysteries on TV. Year round, she bakes. A lot! (Note — this is valuable information for GRBC event planners.) She shares her home with husband Ron and cat Grizelda and, since both her grown daughters and her lone grandchild live in the US, spends a lot of time away from us, down there.

Valirie is a regular at our Wednesday and Friday afternoon games (usually at Table 1, for some reason...), and a valuable and big-hearted member of our club — always there to lend a helping hand when volunteers are needed. Thanks, Val! On BBO, Val's handle is valirie8.

GRBC is known for being a welcoming and friendly place, making Valirie's favourite bridge tip an easy one for us to follow. It is simply: "Enjoy!"



AND THE WINNER IS... Week 4 of our online playing draw has dealt our next winner, and it is **Jeannie LeForge**! Jeannie and her partner played in our Thursday morning 199er game. Congratulations! This week we had 168 players eligible to win a \$25 gift card. The "L'Otto" draw encourages our members to play online in GRBC games when they can. There are many other options on BBO, and we need member support to keep our games healthy. It's also a way to show appreciation to our members who play online - many of whom cannot come to the club - who are missing the FREE coffee, cookies, camaraderie, cheese, Christmas socials, club pot lucks, and more. This was the final week of our online contest. Thanks to everyone who joined us. We could be back, and then it might be **your** lucky day!

Conventional Wisdom

This is the first of a series of columns on filling out a convention card. Let's start with the basics. Every partnership is supposed to have an identically-filled-out convention card.

- In **online games**, this is accomplished by logging in to BBO, clicking on the **ACCOUNT** tab along the right-hand side, clicking on the **CONVENTION CARDS** tab along the top, clicking on **NEW ACBL CONVENTION CARD**, and then filling it out. In the **PARTNER** slot, type your partner's BBO username. Now, whenever you play in an online game, your card will be easily accessible by everyone at your table.
- In **club games**, you and your partner need to fill out an identical paper version of this convention card. You will find a stack of blank convention cards at the club on the table beside the game director's desk. You should always make your filled-out convention card easily accessible to your opponents during every game.

ANNOUNCEABLE BIDS

"Announceable" means somebody has to say something when an announceable bid has been made. You can know a bid is announceable because it is coloured blue on both the online and paper convention cards. There are only four announceable bids.

One No Trump Opening Bid

A typical announcement would be "15 to 17"

Transfer Bids

A typical announcement would be "spades"

One Club Opening Bid

A typical announcement would be "could be short"

One No Trump Response

A typical announcement would be "forcing"

It is important to note that when you're playing **online**, the person who makes the announceable bid is the same person who has to make the announcement. This is done by typing the announcement on the line underneath the bidding box. The partner of the person who makes an announceable bid does not see his partner's announcement, but the opponents both do.

In club games, it's the *partner* of the person who makes an announceable bid who must make the announcement. Furthermore, the person who made the announceable bid must act as if he didn't hear his partner's announcement (ethically he must not be "woken up" by his partner's announcement if it turns out that they are on different pages).

When I was young, I decided I wanted to be a doctor - so I took the entrance exam to go to medical school. One of the questions asked to rearrange the letters PNEIS into the name of an important human body part which is most useful when erect. Those who answered "spine" are doctors today. The rest of us are sending jokes via email.

When the Sharks are Away....

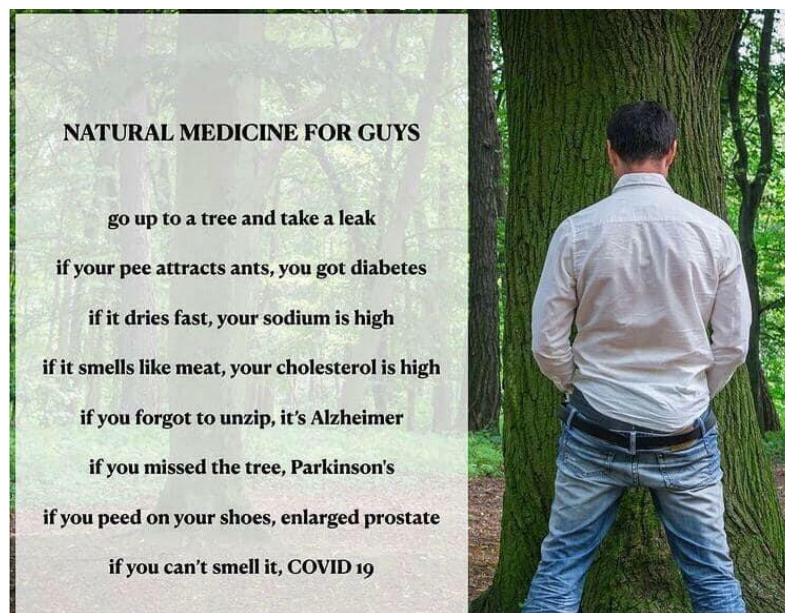
About 30 of our members, most of them open players, will be in Barbados during the week of February 11. If you have been thinking that you might like to stick your toe in the water of an open game, mid-February would be an excellent time to do so. That week, there are online games on Monday afternoon and Sunday morning, and F2F games on Tuesday and Thursday afternoon.

Toronto Easter Regional

Just a reminder that the deadline for discounted hotel rooms (\$145 plus tax) for the Toronto Easter Regional is February 26.

Are Your Friends Alerted?

You do not need to be a member of our club to receive the Alert. If you would like someone (or several someones) to be added to the list, just email Malkin with the person's or persons' name or names.



RED MASTER POINTS on Sunday, February 11 **– BOTH on BBO and at OUR CLUB**

Contributed by Lori Cole

Sunday, February 11 is **RED POINT DAY** (50% black and 50% red) for all sanctioned BBO games at virtual clubs. Also, clubs are allowed to designate a F2F game to reward red points, so GRBC did just that.

On Sunday, February 11, GRBC has three games in which you can earn red points. At 10:00 am, we have two online BBO games (499 and Open), and at 1:00 pm we have a F2F 499 game at our club - all games rewarding 50% red points. (If none of these options works for you, consider SE Carolina games on BBO at 9:30 am, 1:00 pm, and 7:00 pm.)

Our GRBC games, both at our club and on BBO, have just a \$1 surcharge – a very good deal for RED POINTS! So don't miss this opportunity to get a few more red points into your bridge purse - playing at the club or playing online - or both!



Bean There Done That

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

January 2024 was a really good month - best combined table counts since March 2022!!! Our bridge club made money this month! Hoot! Hoot!

Howie Doooin'? (January 2024)	Compared To		Why % Change Since Last January?
	Last Month	A Year Ago	
BBO table counts	Up 44%	Down 23%	January was the highwater mark for 2023
F2F tables counts	Same	Up 73%	More F2F game offerings now (weather?)
Income	Same	Up 28%	BBO rebounded + SEC + more F2F offerings
Expenses	Down 17%	Same	
Current Assets	Same	Up 8%	GIC interest + game income up
Paid-up memberships	Up 11 mbrs	Up 5 mbrs	More ½-year memberships 😊

Which games generated the most profits this month?

1. Gold medal: 499er (41%)
2. Silver medal: 299er (23%)
3. Bronze medal: Open (15%)

Small Acts of Kindness and of Love

Here are a few things that individual players can do to show consideration to their fellow players and volunteers.

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before game time. If everyone would do this, it would give the Director some much-appreciated breathing room.
- Don't wear perfume or after-shave lotion. Some players are allergic to scents.
- Bring in your nut-free baking – bridge players are always hungry and very appreciative.
- Stop talking while the director is making announcements. You might actually learn something! (If you're the director, keep your announcements short, snappy, and infrequent.)
- If you're on lead, make your lead *before* you write down the contract in your personal record. The declarer is dying to see his or her dummy.
- Refrain from snapping your cards. The sound is distressing to players who wear hearing aids. And please mute your phone: your cute ring tone, while cute, is distracting.
- Clean up your coffee spills and crumbs and dispose of all the dirty crockery and other assorted debris at your table before you head for home. It's the maid's day off.





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.

Last week a reader posed several questions after opponents opened 1NT showing 15-17 HCPs and Responder bid 2♣, with only four HCPs and a five-card heart suit. The column provided guidance on Responder's bidding choices using a Jacoby transfer. The reader asked additional questions related to that 2♣ Stayman convention bid.

Questions

When using the Stayman convention, is it all about shape? When do points count? Don't you need at least eight or nine HCPs to use Stayman?

Answers

Like the Jacoby transfer outlined in last week's column, both points and shape play a role in any Stayman Convention bid. Unlike the Jacoby transfer, Responder is showing a minimum of eight HCPs. That point count is critical, as it commits the partnership to playing at least as high as 2NT. There is no similar point count requirement for Jacoby transfers. Stayman allows players to find a four-four major suit fit after a 1NT opening bid. Major suits usually play better than NT when the partnership has at least an eight-card fit.

Barbara Seagram and Marc Smith in *25 Conventions You Should Know*, 1999, pp.13-20 outline the requirements for a Stayman convention bid. Responder needs:

"8+ HCP, i.e. at least invitational points + 1 or more 4 card majors + shortness in one suit (you would not use Stayman with a 4-3-3-3 shaped hand)."

Opener has three response choices after Responder's 2♣ bid:

1. 2♦ = I do not have a four-card major;
2. 2♥ = I have a four-card heart suit and *may* have a four-card spade suit; and
3. 2♠ = I have a four-card spade suit, but I do not have a four-card heart suit.

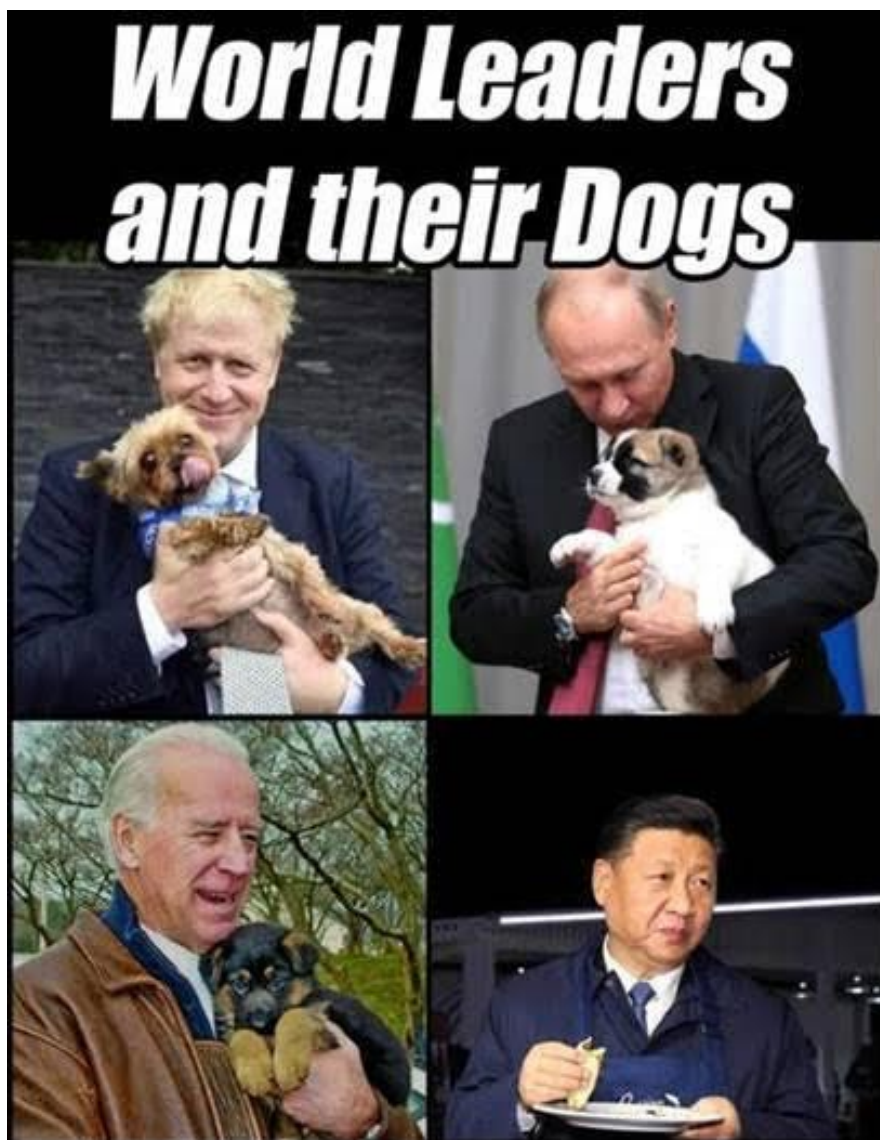
Note that with both four-card majors, Opener bids up the line, mentioning their four-card heart suit before any four-card spade suit. After Opener's bid, Responder can now bid based on their point count and any fit with Opener's major suit. With invitational values (8-9 HCPs) and a four-card fit, Responder will bid either 3♥ or 3♠. With no four-card major fit, Responder will bid 2NT. With game-going values, Responder will bid either 4♥ or 4♠ with a four-card major fit and 3NT with no four-card fit.

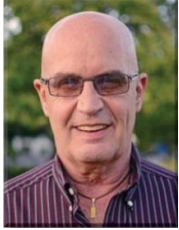
In the latter case (when Responder has bid game), Opener will pass. In the former case, (after Responder's invitational 2NT, 3♥ or 3♠ bid), Opener will pass with minimum values but bid game in one of 3NT or 4♥ or 4♠ with maximum values. If Responder bids 2NT or 3NT after Opener's 2♥ bid, Opener knows that Responder's four-card suit is not hearts but spades and may correct by bidding 3♠ or 4♠ with four spades in their hand. Such is the intricate communication available using the Stayman Convention.

Time You Learned our Lessons!

Newcomer bridge labs most Monday mornings, 9:00 am – 11:30 am, except on holiday Mondays. Upcoming mini-lessons include more **Play of the Hand (Suits)** with Dave Quarrie on February 5, **No Trump Slam Bidding** with George Pepall on February 12, more **No Trump Play of the Hand** with Lynda Burnett on February 26, **Responses to One No Trump** by Diane Bourdeau on March 4, and **Playing in our F2F Games** with Ted Boyd on March 11. NO EXTRA CHARGE

Our Pre-Emptive (Weak) Twos Workshop has been cancelled due to insufficient enrollment.





Dear David

Killing Me Softly with his Bid

South Deals	♠ 75		
EW Vul	♥ A10854		
	♦ A3		
	♣ A1098		
♠ Q92		♠ AKJ6	
♥ 763		♥ KQJ9	
♦ J105		♦ K8	
♣ J543		♣ K76	

♠ 10843	
♥ 2	
♦ Q97642	
♣ Q2	

East	South	West	North
dbl	pass	pass	1♥
3♠	pass	1♠	2♣
	pass	pass	pass

East has a happy problem after North opens the bidding – one of his two majors has been eliminated and North has the lion’s share of the remaining HCP. He makes a reasonable take-out double, planning to bid some number of NT after his partner chooses a minor. He is thrilled that partner has four spades (oops) and rightly decides to only bid a strong invitational 3♠, which his partner quickly rejects. West wins the opening spade lead with the queen and tries a heart, even though the opponents can negotiate a ruff or two, because he has no other source of tricks. Many defenders would grab their ace, but that would give declarer three heart tricks if he started with only one or two hearts. After winning a heart trick, declarer drew all the outstanding trumps from South and now had to play the rest of the hand from dummy. ♦K, 4, 5, A -- ♦3, 8, Q, 10 -- ♦6, J, ♣9, ♣6. Below is what’s left.

If West leads a heart, North grabs the ace and leads another heart, making declarer lead away from the ♠K. If he instead leads a club, once again he is endplayed when North wins the ace and leads another club to dummy. Whether or not you followed this rather complicated retelling of the play, there are two issues to remember for future reference. More often than you might imagine, grabbing a winner “before it gets away” will often cost you two tricks when declarer easily sets up the suit. The other point is West’s response to his partner’s take-out double. Sometimes you have to bid a three-card suit because you have 4333 distribution, with your four-card suit being opener’s suit. It is frequently better to bid a minor rather than lie about the other major because bidding the major excites partner too much. Bidding 2♣ will probably elicit a 2NT bid.

South Deals	♠
EW Vul	♥ A10
	♦
	♣ A10
♠	
♥ 7	
♦	
♣ J54	

♠	
♥	
♦ 97	
♣ Q2	

♠	♠ K9
♥	♥
♦	♦
♣	♣ K7

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 December.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	29.38	1	Lori Cole	17.45	1	Peter Gaasenbeek	8.99
2	Edith Ferber	19.56	2	Denis Williams	14.57	2	George Rybiak	8.66
3	Mike Peng	19.41	2	Regina Williams	14.57	3	Brian Gaber	7.59
4	Moira Hollingsworth	15.71	4	Jack Cole	13.97	4	Richard Rybiak	7.53
5	Cindy Mahn	14.62	5	John Kip	13.93	5	Russel Kerr	7.42
6	Neil Jeffrey	13.74	6	Kevin Latter	13.81	6	Audrey Cook	7.40
7	Steve Carpenter	13.17	7	Cheryl Kip	12.72	7	Stu Cowan	7.29
8	Malkin Howes	12.68	8	Nancy Cattanach	11.90	8	Debbie Miethig	7.27
9	Dave Quarrie	12.41	9	Louise Dawdy	11.16	9	Mark Sherwood	7.12
10	Roy Dandyk	10.04	10	Martin Jones	10.18	9	Sharon Nesbitt	7.12
11	John Hanemaayer	9.94	11	Susan Durance	8.93	9	Doug Fickling	7.12
12	Kathy Russell	9.59	12	Elinor Girouard	8.73	12	Casi Zehr	7.09
13	Dianne Aves	9.27	13	Jim Dalgliesh	8.72	13	Andrew Widdis	6.59
14	Stephen Young	9.23	14	Cheryl White	8.43	14	Randall DeKraker	6.38
15	Neil Coburn	8.19	15	Judy Beauchamp	8.20	15	JP Fraresso	5.56
16	Ted Boyd	8.12	16	Rick Arthur	8.12	16	Robert Darby	5.53
17	Margot Stockie	7.84	17	Renate Boucher	8.09	17	Sheila Charters	5.26
18	Bob Griffiths	7.69	18	David Dennis	7.98	18	Jane Wilson	5.00
19	Sharon Boyd	6.70	19	Glenn Mockford	7.92	19	Paul Raymond	4.98
20	David Wilson	6.69	20	Tony Verhoeven	7.57	20	Pat Northey	4.05
21	Susan Lawton	6.63	21	Joe Blake	7.48	21	Andrew McNaught	3.76
22	Adriaan Kempe	6.62	22	Lynda Burnett	7.15	22	Joan Stroud	3.70
23	Wayne Schroeder	6.24	22	Lynda Burnett	7.15	23	Jeanie LeForge	3.66
24	Paul Latimer	5.88	24	Andy Martinek	6.85	24	Phil de Montigny	3.65
25	Suzanne Edwards	5.83	25	Molly Worden	6.12	25	Sandra Kendall	3.07

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 all arrive early for games at our **club**.

We are thinking of our friend and club member Thea Davis at this very sad time. Thea had been very worried about Reid's declining health, but his passing so quickly has been a shock to all who knew him.

Click [here](#) for Reid's obituary.

