



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

ALERT – May 13, 2024

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

Looking Ahead

- ♥ Effective immediately, our **Saturday afternoon BBO game will be returned to 499er.**
- ♥ Through Monday, July 8, all BBO games will be part of our **lottery contest.** Big big big prizes!
- ♥ Friday, May 10: Our F2F games will be **Royal STaC games.** \$2 surcharge. ¼ **black**, ¼ **silver**, ¼ **red**, and ¼ **gold** points.
- ♥ Friday, May 10, Saturday, May 11, and Sunday, May 12: Our BBO games will be **Grass Roots Charity games.** \$1 surcharge, extra masterpoints
- ♥ Monday, May 13: Liz McDowell will be giving a mini-lesson on **Balancing** at the morning bridge lab
- ♥ During the week May 13-19: Our BBO games will be **NABC Fundraiser games.** \$1 surcharge, extra masterpoints
- ♥ Tuesday, May 14: First day of **Basic Bidding/Beginners 3 course**, 9:00 – 11:30
- ♥ May 17: the **Friday night open game is cancelled.**
- ♥ May 20: There will be **no bridge lab on Victoria Day**
- ♥ May 25 and 26: **All of the BBO games are cancelled.**
- ♥ May 25-26: **[The Grand River \(Cambridge\) Sectional](#)**
- ♥ From May 27 – June 1: all F2F games will be **Club Championship games** – extra black points, no extra cost
- ♥ Friday, May 31 – Sunday, June 2: **[Niagara Sectional 0-750 Tournament](#)**
- ♥ June 3-9: all BBO games are **NAP games** – extra half red points, \$1 surcharge
- ♥ Saturday, June 8 – Sunday, June 9: **[Toronto 0-500 Sectional Tournament](#)**
- ♥ Saturday, June 8 – Sunday, June 9: **[Goderich \(Seaforth\) Sectional](#)**
- ♥ From June 10 – June 15: All F2F games will be **Membership games** – extra black points, no extra cost. Non-ACBL members can play in these games but will not be eligible for masterpoints...
- ♥ From June 10 – June 15: all BBO games will be **Silver Linings games.** \$1 surcharge, extra **silver** points

Congratulations

*to the following local players who won extra masterpoints in the **STaC games** so far this week...*

- **Phil De Montigny and Andrew Widdis**, 1st in A, Monday Afternoon 299ers
- **Maryllynn Benjamins and Aggie Udvari**, 2nd in A, Monday Afternoon 299ers
- **Mary Joan Hartleib and Joan Hartviksen**, 6th in A, Monday Afternoon 299ers
- **Malkin Howes and Ron Van Der Zwaag**, 5th in A, Tuesday Afternoon Open

Click [here](#) for full results.



Beginners 3 Course/ Basic Bidding

LAST CHANCE SALOON

Our lessons are fun, instructive, and an excellent way to make new friends and find new bridge partners.

Instructor: Cindy Mahn

Dates: Tuesday mornings, May 14, 21, 28, June 4, & 11, 9:00 am – 11:30 am

Venue: In our club's teaching room

Level: **Novice**

Fee: \$75 members/ \$85 non-members

Current Enrollment: 12

Click [here](#) for more information and to register. **It's not too late! But now's your last chance!**



On Track...  ...To Online



AND THE WINNER IS... Week 2 of our latest **online playing draw** has dealt our next winner, and it is **CINDY MAHN!** Congratulations! Cindy (and her partner, plus five other pairs) competed for **Red points** in our Open game on Sunday morning, May 5.

We had **128** entries this week, to win a \$25 gift card from Timmies. **Every time a current GRBC member plays in one of our online games, their name goes into the draw.** Play with us on BBO by Tuesday, and the next winner could be you!

Letter to the Editor

I would like to suggest that future Alerts include a series of columns on alerts/ announcements. I find there are differences of opinion on their required use even among players far more experienced than I. Sometimes, but I'm sure not always, I know when an opinion is incorrect. For example, on more than one occasion I have been told it is adequate to just have a Convention Card that records a partnership agreement regarding how many HCPs are needed to open 1NT. Thank you. Jim Weir

We are more than happy to provide the requested series of columns on alerts/announcements (see what follows). In the meantime, however, there are two ways to think about answering the opponents' questions about your agreements.

- 1. **In terms of ACBL laws**, opponents are obliged to fully answer questions about their bidding and play agreements. Just saying "Oh that's Drury" or "Look on our convention card" is insufficient. If your opponents don't give you the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about their bidding and play agreements, you should call the director.*
 - 2. **In terms of being normal human beings**, opponents should welcome questions and answer them calmly, completely, clearly, and cordially, leaving the door open for follow-up questions. We are talking about club games, for heaven's sakes. These are our friends and we're all there to have fun!*
-

Tell Me About It - Alerts and Announcements

We all remember how hard it was to both learn to play our game in the first place, and then to find the partners and the courage to start playing at a bridge club. As if this weren't enough of a barrier, piled on top are the requirements to have a convention card and to make alerts and announcements. This column aims to make the latter a bit less daunting.

Most new players have trouble wrapping their minds around the need to "Alert" some of their partner's bids or to "Announce" what they mean.

- You have to **Alert** when your partner makes an artificial bid that might mislead the opponents.
- You have to **Announce** certain bids.

You can tell **Alertable** and **Announceable** bids because the Alertable ones are in red on the convention cards and the Announceable ones are in blue on the convention cards.

Next week, we will talk about the announceable bids. We will start with them because there are only four of them.

We're #22!

The latest *ACBL Bulletin* lists its top 50 clubs on the basis of most table counts in 2023. That's out of 1773 entries. At #22, we are the second highest in Canada, after the Richmond Hill Bridge Club. Right now, we are sitting at #20 for 2024....

**A TERMITE WALKS INTO A
BAR AND ASKS, 'IS THE
BAR TENDER HERE?'**

Another Letter to the Editor

My partner and I signed on for the April 27 749 game at the 12:30 mark and waited for our game to start. When it got to be 12:45, we began to worry that we weren't going to get enough pairs to play the game. I asked the director how many pairs we needed and he said five. We were at four. So, we continued to wait. Meanwhile, we had friends tell us about the Knox game that was starting a minute before ours, and it was a 499er game. This is the level of game where we prefer to play. So literally, at the three-minute mark before game time we jumped games, cancelled out of our GRBC game, and signed on to the 499er Knox game.

I felt bad! Not sure whether a fifth pair ever did show up or not. At the same time, I noticed that there were six GRBC pairs that normally play in our GRBC games playing in the Knox game. Too bad they didn't all sign up for our game.

So, after the game, I did a little survey asking them why they hadn't signed up for our game. They answered that they have not been happy with the fact that there are no longer any 499er games left to play with our club. All of the previous 499er games have turned into 749er games. This includes both F2F and online. These players feel more comfortable playing at the 499 level. My partner and I have felt the same way when we were told our games were all changing to a different level. We want to support our club, so we have been willing to try out the 749er games, but yesterday we really did want to play in a game. And it wasn't looking as if we were going to get the numbers that were needed.

Now that there is a 299er game being planned for Monday afternoons, I am planning to participate in them and no longer play Friday afternoons, since that game has changed to 749.

So, my question is: Have we gained more players by making all 499er games 749er ones? Or have we lost some 499er game players to other alternatives?

I greatly appreciate all the work that our club members put into trying to keep our club current, accessible, and of interest to a broad community of players. But I did want to give some feedback to all involved in making decisions.

Sincerely, Debbie Miethig (Sectional Master, 92 points)

Thank you for supporting our GRBC games! It is members like you that make our club a community. Our Games Committee (GC) is grateful for the effort you made to gather information and share it for the benefit of the club - we truly appreciate it. The GC had a robust discussion about this, considering your feedback as well as feedback from other members. It probably won't surprise you to hear that the feedback is quite varied.

After much discussion, the GC has decided to return the Saturday afternoon BBO game to 499er effective immediately. This game's attendance was dwindling because some players had passed 500 masterpoints. However, when we increased it to 750, they did not come back to our game.

So, we'll try it back as a 499er and hope enough players will register for the game. We hope you and your fellow players will choose to play in the GRBC game.

Kathy Russell, Chair, Games Committee





Bean There Done That

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

We are a few weeks away from the annual membership drive (2024-2025 year). Mister Beano wants to leak some BIG news. This announcement directly affects the players and students who are currently paying extra for games and lessons and labs. Yes – those non-members and visitors who have yet to swallow the Kool-Aid.

Any person who pays the \$70 2024-2025 membership fee in full between May 11 and June 30 inclusive will be recognized as a member for the remainder of the current **2023-2024** year (and next year, of course).

To join at the club: ask your friendly game director for the membership form

To join online: click [here](#) and follow the breadcrumbs

Benefits during this early bird period

- No more spending the extra \$2 for lessons and games (for example, the Beginners 3 class and the 99er game)
- Maybe you have a friend or relative hiding in the shadows ... waiting to become a GRBC member after June. You can be rewarded for recruiting them (you get a voucher for two free games)
- You are eligible to win the vast riches of the BBO lottery

Benefits to paid-up members

- You can be rewarded as a recruiter if it was you who convinced them to drink the Kool-Aid (two free games)

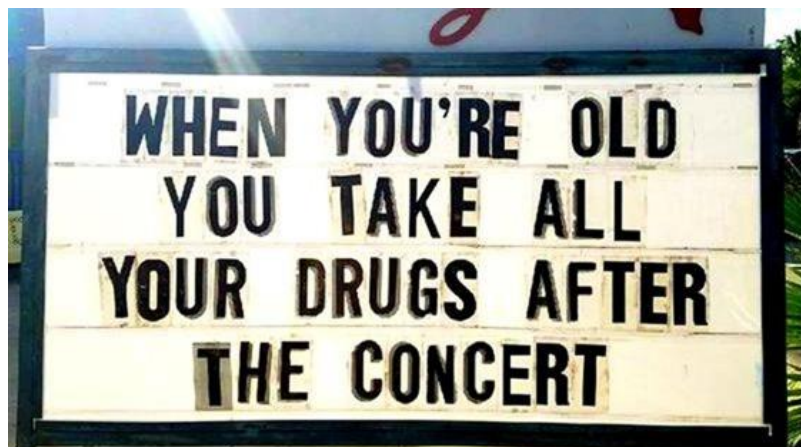
The early bird can catch the worm!

You Don't Need to Come with a Partner on Tuesday Afternoons Anymore...

The Tuesday afternoon open game now has a designated spare, thanks to **Elinor Girouard** who comes in to deal some boards every Tuesday around noon, and then hangs around to see if anyone has come without a partner.

So, if you come without a partner, Elinor will play with you. And if two people turn up without partners, they can play with each other. You never know, this might be the start of something big!

So please feel free to turn up partnerless on Tuesday afternoons. We'd love to see you!





Player Profile – Bev Hitchman

Contributed by Lissa Lowes

Meet Bev Hitchman! Many of you know her already as she has played at GRBC since it was on Gage St. She was also a member of OTTO, helping to build support for the club's online games. Mentoring new players is one of her many skills.

Like many of us, Bev got her start when her parents commandeered her and her brother to play bridge with them. Her parents loved bridge, and in their late 70's they found duplicate and loved it even more.

Bev was born in Lucknow Township and one of her two sisters still lives there. She is married and has three kids, two boys and a girl, and four grandchildren, ages 6-12. Pippi, a whippet, has recently joined the family. Bev's daughter lives in Switzerland, so Bev travels there often. She has been all over Europe and is now turning her eyes to the Pacific for her next adventures.

Bev is an amazing lawn bowler and plays here and in Lakeland, Florida where she winters. And like always, she volunteers to help out with the many needs of the organization. Before we did this interview, Bev was busy washing the chairs at her lawn bowling club.

This generous attitude also shows up in what a great ambassador Bev is for bridge. In Florida, she gathered a group of 12 Canadians, found a teacher, and arranged for guided lessons. When the lessons were done, she organized a practice session every Saturday morning, which the instructor attended to answer questions. There was a topic for each practice, and boards were prepared to help with the learning. Lately, it has been harder to get bridge going there, but Bev keeps trying. One of her group came to the Barbados bridge tournament with her and they still play online so that worked out well!

Bev and her family have a cabin near Parry Sound where they have been cottaging since 1981. The whole family loves to visit as often as they can. Bev frequently plays at the Parry Sound Duplicate Bridge Club, and is a welcome addition. And Parry Sound is a place where Bev can enjoy swimming - which she loves. For those who went to the Barbados tournament, you will remember that Bev was a faithful member of the early morning swim team!

Bev's BBO handle is csmdg. She plays many times a week, F2F and on BBO. I am one of her regular partners. Bev has 375 MP's now, and needs only .35 gold to reach her next rank of Advanced NABC Master. I think we should all help out (especially when I am her partner lol).

Bev's bridge tip is to plan the play of the hand as declarer. If you don't do it, you are actually planning to lose. Wise words!

Tales from Gatlinburg ... How I Bid a Slam

Contributed by Kathy Russell

Playing in the Saturday Teams Bracket 4 with Edith Ferber I had an interesting hand.

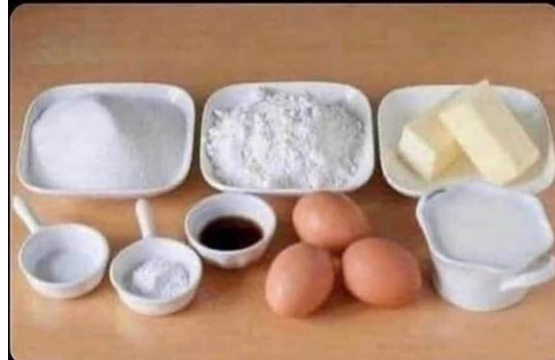
- ♠ Qx Edith opened 1♦ which in our system promises at least five diamonds. Edith had
 - ♥ AKxx opened and I had 17 HCP, so I knew we needed to be in game and maybe slam. I
 - ♦ Jxx responded with 1♥. Edith then jumped to 3♦. I thought "Wow! I can't believe Edith
 - ♣ AKxx jumped, but I am definitely thinking slam now!". Edith hadn't bid 1♠, so I doubted
- she had four spades, meaning we might have two quick spade losers.
- I needed more information, so I bid 4♣. I knew I couldn't go wrong with this bid – it was a new suit by an unpassed responder, I had a club suit and I had a club control (cue bid). It didn't matter what Edith thought 4♣ meant, I knew she wouldn't pass it, and her next bid would give me more information. Edith bid 4♠.

Yay! Edith had something in spades! It had to be the A or K. Between us, we definitely had a spade stopper and therefore not two quick losers. What to bid now? I'd really like to know about aces and kings. But we hadn't agreed on a suit (or had we?). If I were to bid 4NT, I wouldn't know if this was showing a key card in diamonds (because Edith jumped in her suit) or plain Blackwood or something else. So, if I bid 4NT, I wouldn't know what her answer meant. It is silly to make an asking bid if you don't know how to interpret the answer – so I just bid what I thought we could make ... 6♦.

We might be able to make 6NT, but I didn't know how to find out and since this was teams (not matchpoints) I bid the safer slam contract. At the other table, they also bid to 6♦, so it was a push board after all that.

So, what did my 4♣ bid mean? Dave Baker says that you don't look for a new suit to play in at the four-level. Therefore 4♣ is a cue-bid in support of diamonds – and since I didn't bid 3♠ over 3♦, it meant that I did not have a spade control. Edith knew all that and that's why she showed her spade control.

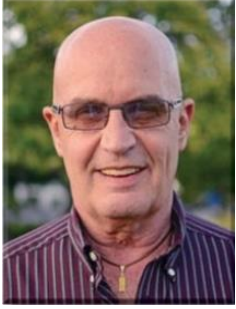
The manager at the local IKEA is retiring,
so I sent him a cake.



From the Archives - Not Necessarily the North Star

At our club, we choose to designate North to be in charge of the table - handling the boards, keeping the score, etc. - and this is a commonly-used practice at most bridge clubs. But it doesn't have to be this way. In fact, there are no ACBL rules or laws setting out the supremacy of the north player, and any North who gets shirty when you touch "his/her" boards is treading on thin ice indeed. If you happen to be sitting north at our club, please use your position of authority to make people welcome at your table - as opposed to trying to reduce them to jelly by virtue of your awesome power.

FOR OPEN PLAYERS



Dear David

Barbados Tales

Another frequent destination for Fran Chivers and myself was the Barbados tournament. The games were so small (18 tables was the largest game they had all week) that they didn't hold it in a hotel. We would usually find a different place to stay almost every year. Here is how a typical day progressed for us:

We would typically wake up around 6:00 am. At home, I rarely go to bed before 1:00 am, but every night I was exhausted by 9:00 pm. I would go down to the pool and put towels on a couple of chairs in order to reserve them. By 7:00 am, there would be no unreserved chairs for the rest of the day. We would then perform our morning ablutions, have breakfast, and head down to the pool. We always went all-inclusive, so there would be waiters circulating to ask you if you wanted another drink. When you got too warm, you would wade out to the pool bar for more drinks. This was heaven to us, as we were not sightseers. We enjoyed sitting, reading, drinking and an occasional walk on the beach. At noon, we would go back to our room to get ready for bridge. Then we would head out to the street to get a ride. You couldn't spend 5 minutes on the street without a passenger van driving by. When the driver saw you walking, they would slow down, and their helper/money collector would roll open the side door, put his foot on the car step-up, and almost beg you to get in. I repeat – the van would not stop unless someone was getting on or off! I am pretty sure they didn't know what a seatbelt was. They would typically cram at least a dozen people in the van and it was about a 10- to 20-minute ride for \$2 or less. They would cram more than a dozen people in the van. Their route ended up dropping you right in front of the playing site.

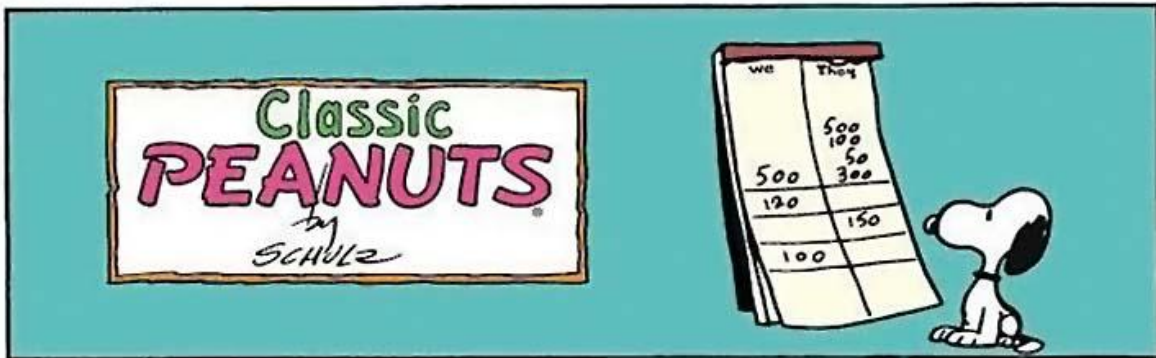
When we got to the playing site, all the locals treated you like you were long lost relatives. I have never met such warm people in all my travels to bridge tournaments. Lady Burton (who I believe was at least 90 years old), was a founding member of the Barbados Bridge Club. She would be sitting in a chair just inside the playing room to warmly greet the players. On our early trips, many of the islanders played a distorted version of Precision that you could not understand. When you asked them a question, they seemed shocked that you were asking. It eventually became clear that no one ever asked questions about the auction or their agreements. When they got over their shock that a player would ask questions, they still couldn't answer! Oh, well. At the end of the game, we would often search for different places to eat. Our favorite was the second story of a bar that had an open view of the street. We could hear people singing in the church across the street. We then headed back to the main drag, quickly caught a van back to our hotel, and stumbled into bed. The next day, we did it all again.

At the end of the tournament, they had a dance and handed out trophies, artwork, and cash to the winners. One year Fran and I won about \$700 each! They were still happy to see us the next year...

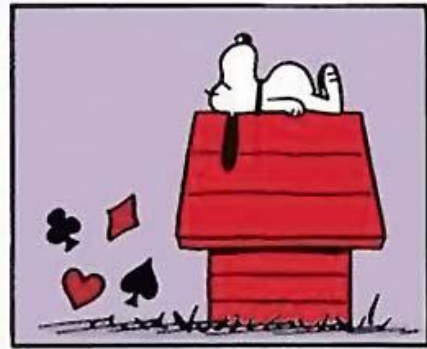
After attending a number of years, I just stopped going. After about 20 years had passed, I expressed a desire to go back again, but I got very little feedback from our members who like to attend tournaments but were somewhat influenced by the lingering threat of Covid. I vowed to go the next year, no matter what. In 2023, about 20 of us went there. This year, about 25. Next year, there will be at least 30. The tournament is now big enough to be held in a host hotel.

The dance has morphed into a lovely dinner with a copious supply of alcohol (the tournament picked up the tab) with a seemingly endless supply of prizes for the winners. There are no more big money prizes because they use their profits to support Bajan youth in tournaments in other countries. Bravo! Finally, shout outs to Roglyn Hinds, President and tournament problem solver who was always available, and Barbara Seagram for her very helpful emails and organizational skills.

Finally, one of the highlights for me was a group of about 10 of us would venture down to the sea and frolic in the waves at 7:00 am. The water was relatively warm and the waves kept us on (and off) our toes. A full list of those who suffered cuts after falling on hidden rocks will be made available on request.



ORDINARILY, I FROWN ON CARD PLAYING, BUT BRIDGE IS A PRETTY GOOD GAME, AND AFTER ALL, THEY DO NEED A PLACE TO PLAY...



NORTH
 ♠ 7 6 2
 ♥ 10 9 8
 ♦ A J 9 8
 ♣ Q 8
 WEST
 ♠ A K Q 9
 ♥ A 2 5 4 3
 ♦ K 10 4 3
 ♣ -
 EAST
 ♠ J 10 5 4
 ♥ K Q
 ♦ Q 2
 ♣ J 10 9 3 2
 SOUTH
 ♠ 3
 ♥ J 7 2
 ♦ 7 6 5
 ♠ A K 7 6 5 4
"PASS"?!



SOME PEOPLE JUST SHOULDN'T PLAY CARDS TOGETHER!

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 April.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	24.37	1	Cheryl White	8.12	1	Andrew Widdis	16.62
2	Margot Stockie	15.17	2	John Kip	7.21	2	Mark Sherwood	14.07
3	Ted Boyd	14.61	3	Renate Boucher	7.19	2	Doug Fickling	14.07
4	Roy Dandyk	12.32	4	Jack Cole	7.08	4	Sheila Charters	13.35
5	Kathy Russell	11.70	5	Andy Martinek	6.90	5	Randall DeKraker	11.57
6	Cindy Mahn	11.46	6	Martin Jones	6.84	6	Paul Raymond	8.98
7	Mike Peng	11.16	7	Brian Gaber	6.61	7	Peter Gaasenbeek	8.73
8	Pat McMillan	9.79	8	Molly Worden	6.38	8	Robert Darby	7.90
9	Suzanne Edwards	8.28	9	ML Benjamins	6.37	9	Phil De Montigny	7.26
10	Dave Embury	8.10	10	Nanci Phelan	6.30	10	George Rybiak	6.77
11	John Hanemaayer	7.80	11	Jim Dalgliesh	6.22	11	Richard Rybiak	6.49
12	Lori Cole	7.40	12	Marlene Dopko	6.20	12	Debbie Miethig	6.47
13	Moira Hollingsworth	7.06	13	Susan Durance	5.92	13	Sharon Nesbitt	6.20
14	Edith Ferber	6.83	14	Elinor Girouard	5.75	14	Pat Pietrek	6.18
15	Robert Griffiths	6.45	15	David Dennis	5.45	15	Russel Kerr	5.76
16	Tony Verhoeven	6.40	16	Rick Arthur	5.37	16	Pat Northey	4.98
17	Malkin Howes	6.22	17	Sue Peterson	5.19	17	Audrey Cook	4.05
18	Neil Jeffrey	5.71	18	Bev Hitchman	4.97	18	Stu Cowan	3.71
19	Thea Davis	5.67	19	Kim Wakeford	4.72	19	Chris Beck	3.61
20	Diane Jamieson	5.30	20	Nancy Cattanach	4.23	20	Louise Bell	3.59
21	Lynda Burnett	4.82	21	Judy Widdecombe	4.17	20	David Bell	3.59
22	Stephen Young	4.77	21	Vivian McLellan	4.17	22	Carla Laubach	3.56
23	Barbara Arthur	4.71	23	Janice Pengelly	3.97	23	Marianne Dziarski	3.48
24	Liz McDowell	4.48	24	Cheryl Kip	3.86	24	Pauline Copleston	3.34
25	David Longstaff	4.43	25	Glenn Mockford	3.31	25	Kathy Chandler	3.13

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're #22 at our **club**.