



Hartford Bridge Club

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September 2022 Newsletter

Hi everyone,

As you may have noticed, we have tried in these newsletters to be relentlessly upbeat and optimistic about our club throughout this pandemic. There were and remain many reasons for being upbeat. We have a strong, loyal and committed membership who continually steps up when needs arise. Many of our members readily give of themselves to volunteer and serve the club in many ways.

Nonetheless, as we near the end of this fiscal year (September 30, 2022), now two and one half years after the pandemic started, it is time for a hard look at some of the realities that face the club. Looking at this year's table counts, particularly the last three months, the Board has projected a \$30,000 deficit in the next fiscal year. To deal with that deficit, the Board prudently voted to increase table fees at live games by \$1 to \$8 a game (non-member table fees will go to \$12) and to raise membership dues to \$40. Both the cost per game and dues remain low for our area and region. These increases are intended to meet half of the projected deficit. The hope is that if we can increase table count by 10% over this fiscal year, we will meet more than 3/4s of the deficit. Our table count for fiscal year 2022 will likely decline in the range of 35% from fiscal year 2021's 6881 table count. We simply need more people playing at our games, particularly our live ones. Through a lot of effort on many people's parts, the club has managed to keep the club's projected deficit in the \$5,000 range this year, but we need to do more to meet next year's challenges.

In next month's newsletter, we'll talk about how we intend to meet some of the fiscal challenges facing the club, beyond raising live game fees and membership dues. But for now we simply ask that you continue to support your club—it always helps to remember we are member-owned—by sending in your membership dues promptly and coming to your club's games as often as you can.

Our situation is not unique among clubs. In the rest of the newsletter there is commentary on what is going on around the rest of the country.

Take good care and see you at the tables,

Donna and Felix

Some thoughts on how clubs are doing Nationwide and in Connecticut:

Below there are three charts which show the top 20 clubs by table count for 2019 (prepandemic), 2021, and 2022 to date.

There is much that is noteworthy about these charts. We will just make a few points. Many of the most prominent clubs in the country in 2019 have fallen on hard times. Honors, for many years the #1 club by table count in the country, had only 5189 tables in play in 2021 and none so far in 2022 as it searches for suitable premises. Jourdan's Bridge Club, #3 in 2019, at which many of us have played in Florida, essentially has shuttered its live game operation and had no tables in play in 2021 or 2022. The Hartes Club in White Plains, #14 in 2019, had only 390 tables in play in 2021 and 480 so far this year.

If one looks at the list of top clubs in 2022, it is readily apparent that the top 8 are all alliances and only one was in the top 10 (at tenth) in 2019. But except for the obscenely large Gryphon II DBC in the Southeast, it is hard to know how well these alliances are doing. Certainly some are down from 2021 and down considerably. Take, for example, 7NT, the alliance that wanted our club to join it last year. Even if 7NT doubles its table count during the remainder of the year, (highly unlikely), it will be down 20%.

Nonetheless, these alliances combined with BBO's inexpensive online games, have no doubt seriously hurt other top clubs, who are not part of alliances. Vero Beach, Naples and St. Louis (now at #26 in table count in 2022 with 3289 tables so far this year) all will likely be down 30-40% from their 2019 table counts. Further, there were 2665 clubs reporting table counts in 2019; there have been only 1857 in 2022, a decline of 30%. Moreover, table counts throughout the country are down considerably at almost every club that remains in existence.

In Connecticut in 2019 there were 30 clubs; there are now 18. Every club has suffered declines since 2019, if they are still in business. Many will likely decline by more than 50% from 2019.

We do not do this analysis to say misery loves company; rather we want to emphasize the plight of clubs in our area and across the nation. Hopefully this fall and winter you can find the time to play more at your club.

2019

	Club			Table Count
1	Honors	New York	NY	18883
2	The Villages DBC	Lady Lake	FL	16236.5
3	Jourdan's Bridge Club	Delray Beach	FL	13247.5
4	Vero Beach Bridge Center	Vero Beach	FL	11866.5
5	Essex Bridge Center	Livingston	NJ	11733.5
6	Laguna Woods DBC	Laguna Woods	CA	10833
7	Naples Bridge Center Inc	Naples	FL	10823.5
8	St Louis Bridge Center	St Louis	MO	10554
9	Westside Bridge Academy	Houston	TX	10278.5
10	BAND Online	Dallas	TX	10067
11	Sagamore Bridge Club	Port Washington	NY	9806.3
12	Boca Raton DBC	Boca Raton	FL	9204.5
13	The Hartes' Club	White Plains	NY	9090.5
14	Bridge Club Of Atlanta	Atlanta	GA	8870.5
15	Ft Lauderdale Bridge Club	Fort Lauderdale	FL	8493
16	Duncan Bridge Center	Palm Desert	CA	8402
17	Temple Sinai DBC	Delray Beach	FL	8348.5
18	South Orange County Unit	San Juan Capo	CA	8314.5
19	Indianapolis Bridge Center Inc	Indianapolis	IN	8167.3
20	Shakespeare's Elbow BC	Cote St Luc	QC	8125

2021

	Club			Table Count
1	Gryphon II DBC	Knoxville	TN	40563.5
2	Alliance Bridge Club	Manhasset	NY	32280
3	Duncan Bridge Center	Palm Desert	CA	31387
4	BAND Online	Dallas	TX	25932
5	7NT World Bridge Club	Newton	MA	22487
6	LA Bridge Assn	Metairie	LA	17010.5
7	Bridge 21 DBC	Ottawa	ON	15411.5
8	The Villages DBC	Lady Lake	FL	14855.5
9	Bridge Boardroom	York, PA	PA	12225
10	Palm Beach DBC At St Catherine	West Palm Beach	FL	12199
11	St Louis Bridge Center	St Louis	MO	11593.5
12	Brunswick Bridge	Saint James	NC	10851
13	Vero Beach Bridge Center	Vero Beach	FL	10263
14	Ft Lauderdale Bridge Club	Fort Lauderdale	FL	9640
15	Bridge Club Of Houston	Houston	TX	9412
16	Naples Bridge Center Inc	Naples	FL	9314.5
17	Bridge Club Of Atlanta	Atlanta	GA	8736
18	Duke City Bridge Club	Albuquerque	NM	8733.5
19	Lee's Bridge Club	Toronto	ON	8617
20	Viking Bridge Club	Portsmouth	RI	8308

2022 (7 Months)

	Club			Table Count
1	Gryphon II DBC	Knoxville	TN	44205
2	Alliance Bridge Club	Manhasset	NY	18844
3	Duncan Bridge Center	Palm Desert	CA	18757.5
4	BAND Online	Dallas	TX	13845
5	LA Bridge Assn	Metairie	LA	10362
6	Brunswick Bridge	Saint James, NC	NC	9446
7	7NT World Bridge Club	Newton	MA	9084
8	Bridge 21 DBC	Ottawa	ON	7394
9	The Villages DBC	Lady Lake	FL	7044
10	Palm Beach DBC At St Catherine	West Palm Beach	FL	5719.5
11	Shore Bridge Club	Atlantic City	NJ	4532.5
12	Naples Bridge Center Inc	Naples	FL	4280.5
13	Lee's Bridge Club	Toronto	ON	4263
14	Vero Beach Bridge Center	Vero Beach	FL	4148.5
15	Unit 128	Delray Beach	FL	3847
16	Stephen Bridge	Toronto	ON	3702.5
17	Bridge Club Of Houston	Spring	TX	3636
18	Viking Bridge Club	Portsmouth	RI	3589.5
19	Bridge Boardroom	York	PA	3571
20	Duke City Bridge Club	Albuquerque	NM	3527