



Hartford Bridge Club

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May 2022 Newsletter

Hello, Everyone.

This month, we thought we would focus on our beginner players. Although the pandemic has repeatedly caused us to change our plans, we have tried very hard to recruit and nurture new players for the club. As we are constantly reminded, it takes considerable effort and perseverance on the part of folks to become duplicate bridge players who feel confident enough to venture forth and compete when the scoring counts and competence is on display. This year, we held free beginner lessons on December 4 and 11. We had more than forty folks express interest in participating, but fear of Covid reduced that number to 30. After beginner lessons, we followed up with a series of six lessons on essential conventions and tools they will need, i.e., Stayman, Jacoby, takeout doubles, negative doubles, and 2NT and 2 Club openers. These lessons were delayed until February because of Covid. Accompanying the lessons, as we have indicated in the past, was more than an hour of assisted play where table buddies patiently helped participants at each table with bids, declarer play and defense. The predealt hands were ones that illustrated the lesson of the day, e.g., Stayman. The lessons, which ran from February to April, ranged from seven to four tables and attracted a number of people who wanted to refresh their bridge knowledge and skills after a hiatus from the table. Preceding assisted play, short talks were given on a number of topics. At the last lesson, the topic was ethics and demeanor at the table.

This last Thursday, April 28, we held a "graduation" exercise. Twenty-eight people had registered, but alas the flu and Covid struck many, so a hearty group of 18 attended the ceremony, which, to be sure, had a tongue-in-cheek aspect to it. Throughout the lessons and assisted play, our aim had been to emphasize that bridge is fun so we wanted to cap assisted play with a fun event. Graduation Certificates of Achievement were awarded and were given "for enthusiastic participation in HBC's Introduction to Duplicate Bridge classes and Assisted Play. Proving once again that duplicate bridge is the most fun you can have with your clothes on!"



A graduation exercise was held where short commencement-like remarks were made about the journey that the graduates had been on and what awaits them in the future. That talk appears later.

The graduates came up to receive their certificates with "Pomp and Circumstance" playing in the background. The graduates then assembled for a group photo. Prior to the graduation talk, the table buddies, who provided invaluable assistance throughout the lessons, were recognized and applauded for their efforts. A small, but vibrant, token of appreciation, a long stemmed red rose, was given to each table buddy.

After the graduation exercise and photos, a cake and sparkling cider were served. And a good time was had by all. Photos from the graduation, courtesy of John Calderbank, appear later in this newsletter.

We highlight and emphasize all this for several reasons. As a club, we need to continue to work hard to get new members. We try to target the newly retired and the about-to-be retired, but are delighted when younger folks show interest. It takes time to develop duplicate bridge

players and so we need a constant pipeline for the club to remain vibrant. Covid has clearly hampered our efforts but we hope and expect many of the beginners we have nurtured will play in Supervised Novice and then in our limited masterpoint games.

We hope to start beginner classes again in September and follow up as we have with this beginner class. If you know of someone interested in learning bridge, be sure to refer them to one of us. Every potential duplicate player is precious to the club.

We wanted also to thank those who have contributed to honoring Victor King's memory at the Providence Nationals in July. The cutoff for contributions is May 5 and we hope, if you haven't yet made a contribution, you do make one to honor the memory of one of the club's finest members. More about Victor and donating can be found on our website—hartfordbridgeclub.org.

This month, we again recognize those who have done well at the club's bridge tables. We list those who have achieved 70% games or where "C" strat players have placed first overall or first in their section in games with six or more tables. Kudos to all of them. The list of honorees appears at the end of the newsletter. Stay healthy and play often.

All our best,
Donna and Felix

Graduation Speech on April 28

"We are so glad that you all could make it today. Linda, I and all the table buddies want first and foremost to try to make bridge a fun experience for you. It is a game that can give you endless enjoyment if you let it.

We are calling this a graduation because in a very real sense it is, all tongue-in-cheek aside. All of you have been on a journey. Many of you had no or very little idea of duplicate bridge before you came to the Hartford Bridge Club. You have all learned a lot and should take considerable pride in your accomplishments to date.

That being said, we hope today marks a jumping-off point to where you all try to become more self-reliant and confident bridge players. You will have no better opportunity to do so than in a Supervised Novice game starting next week under Bill Watson's tutelage.

Since this is a graduation, I want to leave you with some traditional and aspirational graduation thoughts that are particularly apt for bridge players:

From Winston Churchill: "Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm." Every bridge player, even the most expert, makes mistakes regularly. Get used to that, learn from them and put them in the rearview mirror.

From Art Linkletter: "Things turn out best for people who make the best out of the way things turn out." You are going to get bad breaks playing duplicate. So is everyone else. How you handle them will mark you as player.

From Thomas Edison: "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." Counting at bridge is work, but opportunities present themselves when you count. Keep counting.

And finally **from Alfred Lord Tennyson:** "Arise, Go forth and Conquer."

Good luck to you all!!!"

Our Graduation Photos



The Cake!



The Graduating Class



Table Buddies at Work



Finding a Bid



Smiles and Roses



Table Manners Lesson



The Graduate

Member Achievements

Strat "C" Winners in Open Games- First Overall and Section Tops

4/12: Barry Zitzer—Michael Belzer—65.05%—First Overall

4/26: Jerry Hirsch—Sally Kirtley—61.11%—Section Top

Strat "C" Winners in Limited Masterpoint Games-Section Tops

4/12: Maxine Kates—Phyllis Nova—58.33%

4/14: Marianne Tapp—Cheryl Phillips—59.52%

70% Games

4/2: Lester Lipsky—Deborah Walsh—72.22%

4/5: Michael Shore—John Pelegano—70.65%

4/26: Tom Archembault—Doug Eitelman—71.27%

4/30: Joanne Amenta—Barbara Fletcher—72.22%