



The Villages Duplicate Bridge Club Member News November, 2024

Our player profile series continues, introducing one of our new members Tony Habash.

Tony Habash

Tony Habash recently joined TVDBC. Tony has an interesting background - he was born in Palestine back in 1942. When the State of Israel was established in 1948, his family along with thousands of other families were driven out and relocated in neighboring countries. Tony's family went to Jordan where he spent his youth and received his high school education.

In 1961 Tony came to the United States to pursue his college education and did that in the state of Ohio. He obtained his degree in Mechanical Engineering and went to work at Dresser Industries. He started off as a Design Engineer and held a variety of positions at Dresser, until he retired in early 2002.

In the 1980's Tony began playing bridge, competing at the bridge centers in Oxford and Cincinnati Ohio, and occasionally attending bridge tournaments at the Tri-States. He continued to study the game, improving his skills through competition and by reading bridge books, achieving the rank of Life Master in 1996.

When it came time to retire, Tony looked at various senior communities, ultimately choosing The Villages because of the bridge playing opportunities that are present. Tony moved to the Villages in April 2024, and resides at Watercrest Buena Vista Senior Independent Community. He says he is really enjoying the lifestyle at Watercrest, and the opportunity to play bridge with highly competitive players. Welcome Tony!



Tony Habash

Happy Birthday Babs Fischer

Babs Fischer will celebrate her 92nd birthday on November 3. It is important that you not call her on Saturday afternoon to congratulate her, because she will be watching Ohio State football. She and her late husband, Lou, were avid Ohio State boosters.

Lou played football for Ohio State, and is in the Ohio State Hall of Fame. After graduation, Lou and two other football players started a fast-food restaurant, and this grew to a chain of 450 restaurants, with Lou as President.

What was Bab's function while Lou was running the business? Babs says she was "in production". The "product" was ten children! Six boys and four girls! The boys all had tattoos on their necks to designate their birth sequence; The oldest was designated "1" and the youngest "10".

Babs' 90th birthday was a major event. It was held two years ago at Evans Prairie and was attended by most of her children, her in-laws, several grandchildren, and dozens of bridge player friends. Babs was for several years a popular VDBC director. She always brought in freshly-baked cookies. She always made an announcement before the game, and she always told a joke (some risqué) at the end of her announcement. Happy birthday Babs!



Babs Fischer

The World Series

There was a very happy bridge player when the Dodgers won the World Series! You may be wondering how a guy from Minnesota became their biggest fan. It happened back in first grade when Maury Fjestad got his first baseball cards. The Twins weren't even in existence yet. Add to that, he liked the color blue. He's been a loyal fan ever since.



Maury Fjestad

Bridge Tips for Newer Players

1. My mother always said, "Diamonds belong on a woman's finger, not on the bridge table". If at all possible, don't bid 5D or 5C. If you can, bid 3NT or four of a major, even if the fit in the major is inferior to the minor suit fit.
2. If partner shows opening bid values and you have opening bid values, make sure your side reaches game. "He who knows goes". If your partner opens and you have game-going values, it is your responsibility to make sure you get to game.
3. Don't make ambiguous bids.

4. Another one of my Mother's rules... When you are on lead, there are three reasons for not leading your partner's suit: 1. you don't have any of his suit; 2. you've forgotten the bidding, or 3. you're looking for a new partner.

Trip Reports

Africa - Sara Godleski

Sara and Ray Godleski just returned from their 50th wedding anniversary trip. They went on a Natural Habitat Safari in Southern Africa. Sara tells us: The hardest part was the length of time it took to get to the starting point in Kasane, Botswana. Once the tour began it was quite the thrill! At our first day journey inside Chobe National Park, a leopard went right under Ray's seat sitting over the rear axle of our open air jeep. There is definitely no shortage of elephants as we saw about 2000, and maybe 500 hippos and another 500 antelope.

Our second part was staying on a houseboat in Lake Kariba, the largest man-made lake in the world. The third segment was at a luxury tent camp in Zimbabwe near the Kalahari desert. This time I had the thrill of a female lion going right underneath my seat. She was full of Cape Buffalo however so no threat to me. The only thing that scared me just a little was an adolescent elephant was about 10' away when he trumpeted with his trunk and flapped his ears at me. I wasn't sure if he was going to charge our jeep with me as his target.....apparently he was just trying to get a charge out of me.....he succeeded!

We also saw many species of birds, a pack of wild dogs, a jackal, an ostrich, a herd of Cape buffalo, herd of wildebeest, several giraffes and zebras and prides of lion, and a couple of hyenas and baboons. About the only thing we didn't see was a cheetah or a rhino. The food was awesome and our guide was great, just one guide and 13 total guests. And we really enjoyed the happy hour sunsets. I highly recommend this trip.



AROUND THE WORLD – Dick and Mel Stieglitz

Dick and Mel Stieglitz recently travelled around the world by private jet, visiting ten countries on six continents in 26 days. The Boeing-757 plane itself was a destination with ultra first-class seating, a top-notch staff from Iceland Air, two chefs, and a sommelier. Once they cleared US airspace, the cockpit was open-door for the entire trip for passengers to visit with the captain and flight crew. We stayed at luxury hotels each night during the expedition.

Their special memories from the trip are: spectacular Four Seasons accommodations and Pad Thai cooking class in Chiang Mai, Thailand; cruising and sipping delicious port wine in the scenic Douro Valley near Porto, Portugal; and visiting the Grand Mosque and all-white marble Royal Opera House in Muscat, Oman.

The itinerary included short stays in hard-to-get-to places like the 2.5 mile wide Iguassu Falls on the border between Brazil and Argentina; Easter Island which is over 1,000 miles from the nearest other inhabited island in the Pacific; and Giza, Egypt where a National Geographic archeologist delivered an enlightening lecture literally between the feet of the Sphinx.

The Moai at sunrise on Easter Island were an unforgettable sight

They also saw kangaroos, koala bears, and blue penguins in Melbourne, Australia; orangutangs and sun bears in Sandakan, Malaysia; and the “Big Five” (lions, elephants, leopards, rhinoceros and water buffalo) during a 3-day safari in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania.

Dick and Mel plan to do another around-the-world-by-jet trip in the near future with a new itinerary. Dick liked the trip so much that he has offered to be the sommelier on a future flight around the world!



Mel and Dick

Mahjongg

If anyone is interested in learning Mahjongg, give Jan Masterson a call at 763-360-0296. Details: most are ready to play after 4 lessons (lessons are 1.5 hours, specify if you prefer Tuesday or Friday). You'll just need a 2024 card available from the Natl Mahjongg website, nationalmahjonggleague.org.



The Longest Day

By Nancy and Tom Tessier

This year's kickoff Alzheimer fundraising event was held on October 27th at the Seabreeze Recreation Center. It was a 'Spooktacular' Game, a Halloween-themed party, with a sellout crowd of goblins, ghosts, and other scary critters and creatures. We had plenty of food and fun. Many people said they had a really nice time. There was lots of participation in the raffles and 50-50 drawings. In her preliminary report, Nancy Turner, our Committee Chair, estimated we raised \$762 to donate to the Alzheimer's Association from this event, and there is likely more to come from people who were not present at the game. She said our three Alzheimer fundraising events last year brought in just over \$6,200. Maybe we can beat that amount in 2024! A big thank you to Nancy, her committee – Russ Pearly and Merle Erlich, and all the helpers – Bonnie and Don Orris, Anita Piotrowski, Linda Briggs, Marc Rissman, and Marie Figueiredo for their outstanding work on behalf of this worthy cause.

The Longest Day[®] is the day with the most light — the summer solstice. The Longest Day participants fight the darkness of Alzheimer's and all other dementia through a fundraising activity of their choice on a day that works for them. With sports tournaments, card games, parties, baking and more, participants raise funds to advance the care, support and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association[®].

For the first time, we have **treatments that can change the course of Alzheimer's**. While this is a tremendous step forward, our work is far from done. We won't rest until everyone living with the disease — at any stage — can get the treatment, care and support they need and deserve.

- **Alzheimer's kills** more than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined
- **Nearly 7 million** Americans are living with Alzheimer's
- **Over 11 million** caregivers provide unpaid care to people with dementias in the United States
- **1 in 3** seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia

Alzheimer's is an epidemic

VDBC SUPPORTS THE FIGHT AGAINST ALZHEIMER'S





Interesting Bridge Story

By Alan Zahm

In 1997 Christina and I went cruising, and in the dining room we were asked to join 4 others at their table for 6. We were told no one likes to eat alone. Since we were having a great time with the other couples the first night, we decided to join them every evening.

The gentleman of one couple was the golf instructor and the lady of the other couple was the bridge instructor. I quickly discovered each couple was cruising for free, and they had part time jobs on the ship. This got my attention, free cruises.

The golf instructor was funny. He grew up with Arnold Palmer and was owner of Fiesta Ware. Had had some great stories, however, I couldn't envision myself as a golf instructor.

The bridge instructor told us she, Gisela, and her husband, Robert, were parents of a good bridge player, who represented the United States in tournaments. Robert said he taught his son to play bridge at a very young age. Bridge sounded interesting and if I became a director, free cruises. Sometime during the week Gisela said she never went to the shows on the ship. We made a deal, if she went to a show, I would take a bridge lesson. She enjoyed the show, and I had my first bridge lesson.

We agreed to exchange emails (that was new to me in 1997) and departed.

I began playing bridge in Orlando.

I had my doubts about how good a player her son was and knew nothing about representing the United States. On Christmas day I read a story about their son in "Goren on Bridge" and sent Gisela the article. Gisela responded that Robert always likes to read about his son's accomplishments. The "Goren on Bridge" column convinced me their son was special.

And now for the rest of the story - their son is Jeff Meckstroth, who last November passed 100,000 master points and has represented the US numerous times and is a contributor in the Bridge Bulletin "It's your Call".

Halloween

Bridge club members at 2nd Honeymoon Club Halloween party



The Lighter Side

By Mary Jo Johnson

Thinking back to when
a new hip joint meant
someplace I wanted to
go on Friday night.



A big thank you to all who participated with their articles. If you have member news to report, have an interesting background or experience you'd like to share, have been involved in a fun activity or have a trip report, we'd love to hear from you. Pictures would be great! Do you enjoy a fun hobby? What's the most interesting thing that has ever happened to you? What's the one place you'd like to see? A special birthday or anniversary coming up? Please send your articles to Buck Buchanan at BuckandMauri@aol.com or Jennie Cleary at wkc44@comcast.net. Buck and Jennie are also able to help with write-ups if you send us the basics.