

database online and sell subscriptions. Their business now has the largest database of medical implant MRI safety information in the world, and is used in 17 countries. They provide free access to the US Navy, US Air Force, 71 Veterans Administration imaging sites and St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Gary's background is in engineering where he worked for several consulting engineering companies, designing control systems for wastewater, liquid oxygen, copier paper, paper towels, feminine products, packaging, boilers and many other manufacturing projects. Retired from consulting engineering now, Gary supports their business as a Magnetic Resonance Safety Officer.

Jan and Gary moved to The Village of Winifred ten years ago from Green Bay, Wisconsin. They walk, swim, bike, golf and play duplicate bridge. A fun fact - their property had three pineapple plants left by the previous owner. By replanting small pineapples and tops, they now have over a hundred plants and last year had 80 pineapples. People will say these are the best pineapples they ever had, largely because they are ripe. Regardless of what you may have read, a pineapple is ripe, when it is gold from top to bottom, and they do not ripen further after they are picked.



Patty Tucker Bridge Seminar



On Saturday, February 22, the VDBC hosted a Patty Tucker bridge workshop at Lake Miona. It was a terrific seminar with close to 50 attendees. Patty is a member of the ACBL Hall of Fame, and is an amazing teacher. She covered topics such as Cue Bidding in Competition, Re-opening & Balancing Doubles, and Endplays. Lunch was catered by the Honey Ham Company. Many thanks to our Education Coordinator Harry Messenheimer for organizing this wonderful opportunity for our bridge club members.

Bridge Cruise

By Nancy Tessier

On February 9th, 48 bridge club members boarded the bus headed for the Tampa port and an eight day voyage on the Celebrity Constellation. The goal: play bridge. We had two sessions a day, morning and afternoon with silver points awarded. John Sobel, owner of Go Away Travel organized our event with Marilyn Williams. Our director was Nicole Dupuis. Friendships were made and renewed. Festive dinners together added to the fun.

The ship made port at Belize City, Belize and Costa Maya, Mexico. Many tours were offered to learn about the Mayan ruins or to just a stroll around the ports where there were a variety of local wares for sale. The weather was perfect, the seas calm and we look forward to another adventure next year.

Marilyn Williams says she has 32 people who are already interested in a bridge cruise for next year. If you are interested, you can email Marilyn at marilynwms63@earthlink.net

See a few pictures from the cruise below:



Less than 500 Masterpoints?

By Bonnie and Don Orris

This article is for you! In 2023, my partner Don and I each had less than 500 Masterpoints. We played regularly in the limited games in The Villages but knew very little about the world of bridge beyond. In January we ventured to Orlando to play in the Regional, a big tournament sponsored by District 9 (our district). We learned that there was an event called The North American Pairs C Flight, and we were qualified to enter the session.

Why were we eligible? We each had less than 500 Master Points as of the preceding May 2022. We were not Life Masters. We were listed as residents of District 9 by ACBL. We had played in a qualifying game in The Villages.

Through word of mouth we heard that finishing 1st, 2nd, or 3rd that Saturday in Orlando would land us an all-expense paid trip to The National Bridge tournament in New Orleans. It would be held in March and winners would represent District 9 in the C Flight of the North American Pairs. We decided we had nothing to lose and entered. Everyone in the game had less than 500 masterpoints. At the end of the day, we were in 3rd place. Sure enough we would be reimbursed for a trip to New Orleans. After receiving confirmation from District 9, we booked our plane tickets and made hotel reservations.

It was such an exciting adventure to travel to the National Tournament. We flew to New Orleans and stayed at the ritzy host hotel on Canal Street. We connected with other District 9 winners and made new friends. The North American Pairs C Flight was a two-day weekend event. To play on Sunday, one needed to finish in the top 50% on Saturday. The large ballroom was filled with bridge players from all over the United States. All were non-Life Masters with under 500 masterpoints just like us. We did accomplish our goal of making it to Sunday. If you have never been to a tournament outside of The Villages, set your sights on playing in the Orlando Regional next January. Who knows? Maybe the top three pairs could be from our club.



Bonnie and Don Orris

P.S. There is also a four-person team event called The Grand National Teams. There is a C-flight of that event for teams with players under 500 masterpoints. You also qualify for that at the club level then advance to the National tournament by winning at your District Tournament. The District then gives a stipend to send you to the National event. In a bit of local bridge trivia, our own Bob Fashingbauer's team won first place in the Grand National Pairs C flight in 1991 when Bob had less than 500 masterpoints. Even the best bridge players have humble beginnings.

Book Review: The Women, by Kristin Hannah

By Buck Buchanan

Kristin Hannah is one of my favorite authors, and *The Women* is probably the best of the 100 odd books I read last year. While the subject doesn't sound that intriguing, the book is one of the most memorable and exciting books to come along in a long time. Many books cover our Vietnam experience: combat injuries, deaths, PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), rejection by civilians after their return, unemployment, and so on. Almost none of these books deal with experiences of women in Vietnam.

Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances “Frankie” McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing. But in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path.

As green and inexperienced as the men sent to Vietnam to fight, Frankie is overwhelmed by the chaos and destruction of war. Each day is a gamble of life and death, hope and betrayal; friendships run deep and can be shattered in an instant. In war, she meets—and becomes one of—the lucky, the brave, the broken, and the lost.

But war is just the beginning for Frankie and her veteran friends. The real battle lies in coming home to a changed and divided America, to angry protesters, and to a country that wants to forget Vietnam.

The Women is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm's way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often been forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, *The Women* is a richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose idealism and courage under fire will come to define an era.

Have you read a book you'd like to tell us about? Please write us a similar article and we'll try to publish it.

The Lighter Side

By Mary Jo Johnson

Perks of reaching 60 or being over 70 or heading towards 80!

1. Kidnappers are not very interested in you
2. In a hostage situation you are likely to be released first
3. No one expects you to run – anywhere
4. People call at 8 PM and ask - Did I wake you?
5. People no longer view you as a hypochondriac
6. There is nothing left to learn the hard way
7. Things you buy now won't wear out
8. Your supply of brain cells is finally down to a manageable size
9. And you notice these are all in Big Print for your convenience

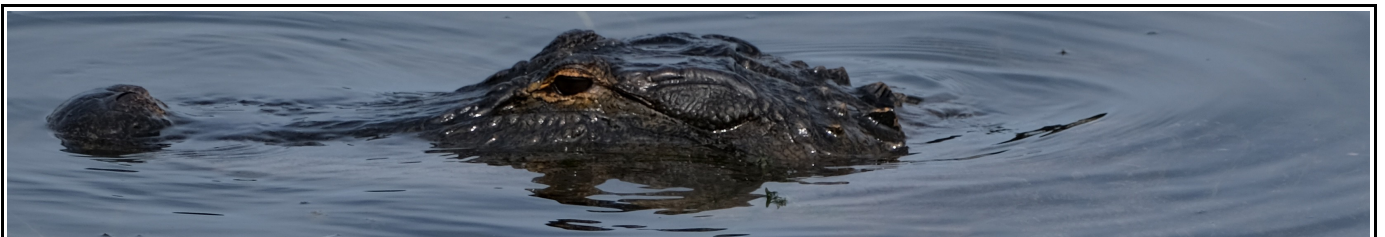
Photo Corner



My Cat Bob – by Nancy Tessier



Mothers and Chicks – By Patricia Skelton



Gator on Lake Sumter – By Jennie Cleary

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 Jennie Cleary at wkc44@comcast.net or Nancy Tessier at NancyBrooks2020@gmail.com Buck and Jennie are also able to help with write-ups if you send us the basics.