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Bridge: Spanning Generations

Written by [Jeffrey Allen Federowicz](#)

Saturday, 26 November 2011 11:58



Lady Luck favors no one— she plays no favorites, nor casts a winning glance. In this game, it comes down to a handful of cards that are played for all its worth. Bridge elicits skill, thought, and enjoyment. In the world of card games, it is envisioned as poker's intelligent uncle.

Some folks might see the game as an old-fashioned pastime. Afterall, the Riccardos and the Mertzes played it often on "I Love Lucy"; and, Woolworth's created bridge mix, a chocolate and nut candy assortment, in honor of the game.

"The idea that bridge is for 'little old ladies' is way off base," said Beth Rosenthal, of Shavertown. "You may not see young players at weekly games, but they have a presence at tournaments and play live, competitive bridge online."

"I have been playing bridge for 33 years, and running duplicate games for 17," she added. "I love the game because it keeps your mind active, every hand and opponent presents a new challenge, and I have developed great friendships."

In the realm of bridge there are two types of bridge clubs: party and duplicate. Party clubs tend to be noncompetitive and consist of friends who get together regularly, most often at a member's home or at local clubs, and the atmosphere is relaxed and conversational.

At the other end of the spectrum are the duplicate bridge clubs, run by the American Contract Bridge League. In this form everyone plays the same hands. The luck of the cards is gone and, in turn, the games become highly competitive. In duplicate bridge, winners accumulate master points, which accumulate toward the goal of becoming a Life Master.

For Jeff Dreier, of Dallas, and several friends, fun is always in the cards when it comes to playing party bridge with the all-male bridge group.

"We're not competitive," he explained. "We joke around a lot and talk, which is something you don't really do while playing duplicate bridge. Our group has been playing together for the past 30 years or so, and we tend to get together every three weeks to play, taking turns at each other's homes."

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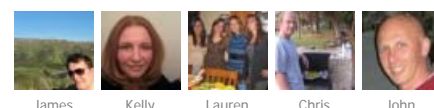
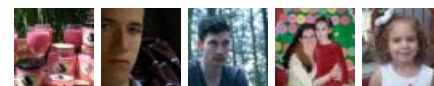
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Although Dreier noted the average age in their 10-player group is mid 60s, there are many younger people, including college students, who are avid players.

“What I like most about playing bridge is that it’s always a challenge, and you are learning something new or a different approach, whether it be from a new player or someone that has played for many years,” Dreier explained. “Every time I sit down to play bridge it’s just as interesting and a challenge that I never grow tired of.”

No matter what form of the game people play, the opportunity to join a team or play a few hands is easy since the area is home to a wealth of bridge clubs and talented players.

“In the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton area there are duplicate games six days a week. The Wyoming Valley Duplicate Bridge Club holds games at the Wilkes-Barre JCC, and the Bridgelady Duplicate Bridge Club holds games in Dallas and Exeter,” Rosenthal said. “There are more than 200 active duplicate players in the area and more than 500 in our local Unit 120, which covers Northeastern Pennsylvania.”

Games are held across the Valley at various locations, including Wednesday mornings at Irem Country Club, in Dallas; Monday and Thursday afternoons at the Jewish Community Center (JCC), in Wilkes-Barre; a special beginners game on Monday afternoons at the Association for the Blind, in Exeter; and a mentoring game on Friday afternoons at the JCC, in Wilkes-Barre.

For competitive players, highlights of the local bridge season include three sectional tournaments held in March, June, and October.

For the novice player or someone totally new to the game, Dreier suggests a prospective player undertake some research and then join or sit in a group– but always keep an open mind.

“I think some people who would like to play bridge might feel a little intimidated or worry they won’t know what is going on in the game and make a mistake,” Dreier explained. “We all make mistakes and you learn from them. Bridge is a fun game that is challenging and keeps you sharp. Once you learn the basics you get hooked, and the more you play the more you want to keep playing. “

For more information on the men’s bridge team that meets in Dallas, contact Jeff Dreier at (570) 675-5696 or visit Beth Rosenthal’s website at www.thebridgelady.com.

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