
Welcome to the Northern Virginia Bridge Association



Congratulations!

You have joined the Northern Virginia Bridge Association, Unit 218 of the American Contract Bridge League, part of ACBL District 6 and Region 4. We are one of the larger ACBL units, with about 1,350 members. Our area is home to a lively bridge scene, with a Unit Game every Thursday evening, a large schedule of club games, and three sectional tournaments every year. You'll find more about these and other activities in the rest of this booklet.



The NVBA area is defined by the Potomac River and the western boundaries of Loudoun and Prince William counties, and includes the densely populated cities and suburbs of northern Virginia.

On the other side of the Potomac is our sister unit, the Washington Bridge League (WBL), ACBL Unit 147, which includes the District of Columbia, Maryland suburbs, and Southern Maryland. We are part of ACBL's District 6, which covers Washington DC, most of Maryland and Virginia, and the outer banks of North Carolina. The whole region has a strong contingent of enthusiastic bridge players, and each year there are numerous sectional and regional tournaments within easy reach.

Whether you are new to duplicate bridge or an experienced player who has moved to this area, we hope this booklet provides a helpful guide to the local bridge scene. Please feel free to introduce yourself to members of the NVBA Board, listed inside, and don't hesitate to phone or email any of us with questions and comments.

Keeping in touch...

We send out a weekly NVBA email that keeps you up to date with the local game schedule, upcoming tournaments and special events, plus news of local players and occasional gossip. If you provided ACBL with an email address, you should be automatically added to the circulation list for the NVBA email (it may take a few weeks). If you aren't getting the email, send a note to announcements@nvba.org.

The NVBA website (<https://www.nvba.org>) provides all sorts of updates including contact information for all of the volunteers who help run the NVBA.

NVBA Welcome Booklet

The NVBA Website

www.nvba.org is the place to go for information, results, updates and other news. The site adapts to the device you are using — computer, tablet, or smartphone.

The home page carries the latest NVBA news and events, with clear navigation to every other page:

The screenshot shows the NVBA website home page with several callout boxes highlighting key features:

- Main navigation:** Calendar, Clubs, Tournaments, Unit game, Novices, NVBA Board, and Partnerships are always one click away.
- This Week's Unit Game:** Shows where and what's happening at Thursday's game, plus quick links to RSVP or find a partner.
- Announcements:** Timely club and schedule news — room changes, cancellations, and special events — posted right on the home page.
- Improve your game:** New mentorship programs, lessons, and classes are announced here as they come up.
- Upcoming Tournaments:** Every sectional, regional, and NAP/GNT event within reach, with dates and flyers — click any listing for details.
- Zero Tolerance & ethics:** Notices link straight to NVBA's Zero Tolerance policy, ethics articles, and the Alert Guide.

The website layout includes a top navigation bar, a main content area with a featured unit game, announcements, and upcoming tournaments, and a footer with contact information.

It also links to a wide range of online resources for playing and learning bridge, taught by well-known and well-regarded teachers.

Ideas for NVBA, or questions or comments about the website? Let us know — use the Contact Us page.

The NVBA Unit Game

Each Thursday evening, NVBA holds its Unit Game at Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church, 4000 Lorcom Lane, Arlington, VA 22207. We have been playing bridge there since early 2026, and we urge everyone to respect the building as a place of worship.

The Unit Game starts at 7:00 pm. There is always an open A/X game (unlimited/3000 masterpoints), and, if attendance permits, a limited B/C game (2000/500 masterpoints) as well.



The current Unit Game Director is Jim Gerding (pictured at left). If you are showing up at the Unit Game for the first time, please introduce yourself.

The usual entry fee is \$16 per person for the Open and B/C games, \$9 for ACBL Juniors (U26) and those with under 100 masterpoints. Your first visit to the Unit Game is \$2, and anyone with less than 5 masterpoints plays for \$2. Special event games may have a \$1 or \$2 surcharge.

You can find the upcoming schedule for the Unit Game, along with results of previous games, on the NVBA website, www.nvba.org.

ZERO TOLERANCE!

The NVBA practices Zero Tolerance policy (see www.acbl.org/zero-tolerance/). The basic idea is simple: be nice! Greet players arriving at your table, compliment good play, and don't make snarky remarks about what they could have done better. And be nice to your partner too — don't rehash bidding and play at the table and don't tell them off!

If you are disturbed or unsettled by behavior at the table ... Director, please!

Get Involved!

NVBA no longer runs a formal Guaranteed Partner program, but we try to match up players who need a partner whenever we can. See the Partnership Desk page on the NVBA website for how to contact the partnership chairs.

We rely on volunteers to make NVBA a success. If you would like to volunteer, see a director or board member. There are many opportunities to serve!

NVBA Welcome Booklet

The ACBL Website

acbl.org is your entry point for access to information about the game of bridge in North America, including searchable pages on clubs and tournaments, your own history of masterpoint and rank achievements, and a wide variety of teaching and learning materials. The home page has news of current tournaments and other events.

If you haven't already done so, set up a personal login to the ACBL site (MyACBL) so you can check your masterpoints, access the Bridge Bulletin online, and find a variety of other resources. Once you're in the MyACBL area, you can see your masterpoint total and personal information. If you change your address or other contact information, be sure to update it here.

Where are my masterpoints?

The ACBL updates its masterpoint count for members at the beginning of each month, usually on the 6th. By that time, club directors should have reported all their results for the previous month. You can see your own masterpoint tally at the MyACBL area of the website, along with

a historical record of all your awards and the games and tournaments where you won them. You can also see how you are doing in the Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney races for your Unit and District.

Each month's Bridge Bulletin publishes the names of new Life Masters and those who have reached higher ranks. Publication delays mean that it may be a month or more after you've collected the required points for your name to appear in the Bulletin.

The NVBA website maintains a page listing rank achievements each month. It's updated when ACBL issues the official numbers.

NVBA Sectionals — Here is Where You Win Silver Points!

New players are often told that the hardest part of becoming a life master is acquiring the necessary silver points. That's not true if you're an NVBA member!

Each year we hold three sectional tournaments, awarding silver masterpoints, usually in February, April/May, and September. These tournaments run for four days, from Thursday through Sunday. During these sectionals, the Unit Game on Thursday evening is part of the tournament. From Friday afternoon through the weekend, sectional tournaments continue at the Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Boulevard (aka Route 50), Fairfax, VA 22031. The location is less than half a mile west of the Beltway, is easy to reach from all directions, and has plenty of parking.

WBL also holds its Unit Game on Thursday evenings, and by longstanding agreement the results of the two Unit Games are combined during sectionals. This makes for a large table count and big silver point awards for pairs who do well.

NVBA no longer runs a formal Guaranteed Partner program, but we try to match up players who need a partner whenever we can. If you're new to the area, this is a great way to meet new partners — see the Partnership Desk page on the NVBA website for how to contact the partnership chairs.

But wait, there's more! WBL has its own slate of three annual sectional tournaments, which are also four-day events, and there are other sectionals within easy reach of our area (check the 'Tournaments' tab on the website).

On top of that, we hold four Sectional Tournament at Clubs (STaC) weeks each year, with most of our local clubs (including the Unit Game) participating. These games offer the chance to win silver points at your regular club games, and the awards can be large because many clubs throughout District 6 also participate.

Flyers for NVBA and WBL sectionals are posted on the NVBA website, and the tournaments are mentioned well in advance in the weekly NVBA email. Keep an eye on your masterpoint count — you may be closer to your next rank than you think!

New to Duplicate?

Throughout this booklet we'll provide a few words of explanation for those who are unfamiliar with some of the terminology of the duplicate game. First up: what's with all the Masterpoint colors?

Ordinary club games award black points and Sectionals give out silver points. To get red or gold points you typically have to go to a larger Regional tournament, but there are exceptions: qualifying events for two national competitions, North American Pairs and Grand National Teams events, award points that are half red, half black, and occasional club games award

‘gold dust’ — black points with a tiny percentage of gold thrown in. You can win platinum points in some events at the NABCs (North American Bridge Championships, aka Nationals), but if you get that far you will be well beyond your novice days!

You can also get colorless points by playing ACBL-sanctioned online bridge games at www.bridgebase.com, okbridge.com, funbridge.com, and swangames.com. Except for occasional tournaments, most online games are fairly short (12 boards, often) and masterpoint awards come in small amounts.

Special NVBA Events

The Thursday evening Unit Game is usually a Unit Championship or Club Championship, both of which award masterpoints at a slightly higher rate than ordinary club games. There are also occasional charity games, qualifying games for the North American Pairs and Grand National Teams competitions, and sectionals and STaCs (see page 5). Four Thursday evenings each year are reserved for special events:

- The NVBA Annual Meeting takes place in May. We provide an informal dinner at no cost to NVBA members (\$10 for others), starting at 5:30 pm. Before the game, we hold an election to fill vacant NVBA Board positions (see p. 10) and we recognize the Unit’s Mini-McKenney and Ace of Clubs winners, along with new Life Masters. We also present four annual awards: NVBA Man and Woman of the Year, the Rush Buckley Award, and Rookie of the Year (see p. 9).
- Our most popular event of the year, held in May or June, is the Life Master–Non-Life Master game. Conceived many years ago as a way to allow experienced players to pass on their skills to those who are still learning, the game routinely attracts 45-50 tables. We ask players to register in advance, and we match LMs with NLMs about a week before the game, so they can discuss a convention card. The goal of the LM-NLM game is for players to learn something or teach something, but above all to have fun!



A packed house at the Life Master–Non-Life Master game

- A newer event is the Leo Cardillo team game, generally scheduled in the fall. As with the LM-NLM, the idea is to mix experienced and newer players, but in a team format that allows established pairs to play together. The game is held in honor of Leo Cardillo (pictured at right), who died in 2019. Leo was a long-time NVBA member who contributed a great deal of his time and energy to the local bridge scene, and who always emphasized the importance of encouraging newer players.
- We hold a Holiday Party in December, with a catered dinner to which we ask members to contribute side dishes and desserts. Eggnog and soft drinks are provided, and we present three awards: the Sara Goodwin Award, the Dave Murray Award, and the Ron and Mary Ann Kral Award (see p. 9). When appropriate, we also present the Leo Cardillo Award to a deserving volunteer.



Regionals and Nationals

District 6 now holds two regional tournaments each year:

- The National Capital 4th of July Regional, held every year at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly, VA — the closest regional to home, and a longstanding NVBA-area tradition.
- A second regional that rotates each year among Richmond, Virginia Beach, and Baltimore.

Beyond the region, the ACBL holds three North American Bridge Championships (NABCs) every year, rotating among cities across the continent. NVBA and District 6 co-host an NABC in the Washington DC area roughly once a decade; there is no fixed schedule for when the next one will return here, so watch the Bridge Bulletin, NVBA's weekly email, and quarterly newsletter for developments.

Flyers and full schedules for upcoming regionals and NABCs are posted on the NVBA website's Tournaments page, alongside the sectional and STaC listings.

New to Duplicate? Different types of game

An Open game is one that's open (of course!) to players with any number of masterpoints. Limited games impose a maximum masterpoint count: 0-499 means that you can't play if you have 500 or more masterpoints. You'll often see such a game described as a 499er event.

Keep in mind that you can always play up — there's nothing to stop you from playing in an open game even if you have only 15 masterpoints! In fact, once you've found your footing in the world of duplicate bridge, playing up is the best way to improve your game.

Pairs games are most often stratified, meaning that players are sorted into ranks depending on how many masterpoints they have. Everyone plays against everyone else, but in the final scoring you may still scratch (win masterpoints) if you are among the top finishers in the group with, say, 500 to 1,000 masterpoints. Some games are stratiflighted, which means there are separate games for players in different masterpoint ranks. Team games can also be stratified or stratiflighted.

New to Duplicate? Matchpoints, Percentages, IMPs...

Today, many clubs use electronic BridgeMates for scoring. North operates the machine, entering the contract for each deal, or board, after the bidding concludes. At the end of play, North enters the result, asks East or West to hit the 'accept' button, and the score is displayed and recorded. You don't have to know how the score is determined. But you should...

Points per trick are the same as in rubber bridge, but there is a 50-point bonus for a partial game score and a bigger game bonus, 300 points (not vulnerable) or 500 points (vulnerable). For example: EW bid 2S, make three, score $3 \times 30 + 50$ for 140; NS bid and make 3NT, vulnerable, score $40 + 30 + 30 + 500$ bonus, for 600.

Most club competitions are pairs games. Say there are ten NS pairs and ten EW pairs. If you are sitting NS, your board results are tallied against those of all the other NS pairs; same for EW. You score one matchpoint for every pair you beat, half a matchpoint for every tie. Suppose you bid 4H and make five, not vulnerable, for 450. Three other pairs do the same; four bid 4H and make four; and the other two don't reach game, bidding 2H and making four. For that board you get 6 matchpoints for the six pairs you beat plus 1.5 for three ties, giving you 7.5 out of a maximum of 9 matchpoints. That translates to 83.33%—a very nice result. If

you were one of the two pairs that failed to reach game, you would get only half a matchpoint, for 0.06%. Not so nice!

In matchpoint scoring, making overtricks is crucial. If you make 450 when every other pair made 420, you would get all 9 matchpoints—that's a top. If every pair bids and makes 4H exactly, everyone gets 4.5 matchpoints—a flat board.

At the end of the game, your final score is the percentage of matchpoints you won out of the maximum. Most scores tend to be between 40% and 60%. If you hit 75%, that's very good and very unusual. The Bridge Bulletin has a page every month recognizing pairs who scored 75% or better. Out of the many tens of thousands of games played each week, the "Big Games" report usually has no more than a couple of dozen entries.

The other common format is Swiss teams, in which you are a part of a foursome, one NS pair and one EW. You play a match of several boards (often six or seven) against another team and compare your scores against that team alone. Suppose that on one board, your NS pair bids and makes 3NT, and at the other table, the opposing NS pair does the same. The scores are identical, and if you want to sound sophisticated, you say 'that's a push.' But now suppose your NS pair stops at 2NT and makes three, for 150, while the opponents bid and make 3NT (vulnerable) for 600. That's a deficit of 450, and if you look at the International Matchpoint (IMP) Scale on your score sheet, you'll see that a difference of 450 translates into 10 IMPs for the other side. For each match in a team game, you add up the IMPs on each side to see who wins (sometimes it's a tie). There's another step, translating the IMP difference into victory points, but the game director will take care of that.

Important strategic point for team games: Bidding and making game, especially when vulnerable, is essential. Overtricks are good but not nearly as valuable as in pairs games.

There's much more to scoring under the "Learn" menu at the ACBL website.

NVBA Awards and Trophies

Each year, NVBA presents a number of awards and trophies to local players. You can find a full description of these awards, along with lists of past winners, at the NVBA website, but here's a brief summary. Several trophies are presented at the NVBA Annual Meeting in May:

- NVBA Man and Woman of the Year: These trophies, presented at the Annual Meeting, go to the players who won the most masterpoints during the previous calendar year in NVBA-sponsored events.
- The Rush Buckley Award goes to the NVBA player who started the year (or became an NVBA member) as a non-Life Master with more than 20 masterpoints and won the most masterpoints in NVBA-sponsored events.
- The Rookie of the Year trophy goes to the player who started the year (or became an NVBA member during the year) with less than five masterpoints and won the most masterpoints in NVBA-sponsored events during the year.
- The NVBA also presents medals and/or certificates to those members who won the Mini-McKenney and Ace of Clubs contests for their rank. The Mini-McKenney race is determined by all masterpoints won, excluding online points. The Ace of Clubs race is for masterpoints won only at local club games.

Three awards are presented at the Holiday Party in December:

- Sara Goodwin Memorial Trophy: Sara Goodwin was an avid bridge player and NVBA member who passed away unexpectedly in August 2009. To honor her memory, the NVBA awards this trophy to the person who participates in the most NVBA events from December of one year to November of the next.
- Dave Murray Award: Dave Murray was a longtime NVBA member who was everyone's favorite partner—and opponent! The Dave Murray award, begun in 2003, goes to an NVBA member who exemplifies the ideal bridge player—an expert player who is friendly and courteous at the bridge table.
- The Ron and Mary Ann Kral Award, first presented in 2015, is modeled on the Dave Murray Award but goes to a 199er/novice player who embodies the same ideals of friendliness and humor, along with eagerness to improve their game.



The Margot and Don Hennings Trophy (replacing the Poissant Pairs Trophy) goes to the winners of a two-session open pairs competition played on the Saturday of the NVBA Winter Sectional. With the help of her husband Don, Margot Hennings (pictured at left), currently ACBL Director for District 6, has organized the running of three NABCs in Washington D.C. and been NVBA Sectional Tournament Chair for over 30 years.

The Leo Cardillo Volunteer award was instituted in 2018 and first presented to Leo himself in recognition of his huge contribution to bridge in our area. Since then it has been presented by the NVBA Board to a person who has gone above and beyond in supporting bridge in Northern Virginia.

The NVBA Board of Directors

The Northern Virginia Bridge Association is run by a volunteer board of directors, elected to two-year terms by the membership at the Annual Meeting (see p. 6). Feel free to introduce yourself when you see any of the directors at a game, and call or email with any questions or comments.

President *(through 2027)*

Georgette Weiss is a retired schoolteacher who, with her Air Force husband, has lived in many different places. She started playing bridge in college but, like many people, didn't get serious about duplicate until after her children had grown and she had retired. Before joining the Board, Georgette made herself indispensable by taking charge of drinks and refreshments at the Unit Game. She currently serves as Unit Game manager and NVBA Caddy Master. Email: georgetteweiss@hotmail.com Phone: (301) 292-8112



Vice President *(through 2028)*

Jay Simon retired from Verizon in 2018 after almost 40 years in the telecommunications industry. He has been active in the bridge community for several years, including managing the partnership desk for sectionals and regionals, managing the I/N desk at regionals, supporting registration at nationals and as an active Director at clubs, including Camp Springs, Beth El, Army Navy and JCC.



Treasurer *(through 2028)*

Ann Atcheson has been keeping NVBA's finances in perfect order since 2014. After retiring from a career in administration and accounting, Ann returned eagerly to the world of duplicate bridge, and has combined it with her love of travel, playing regularly in tournaments throughout North America. Email: aappaa@verizon.net Phone: (703) 476-4793



Secretary *(through 2027)*

Since becoming an NVBA regular in 2018 and winning a slew of Mini-McKenney and Ace of Clubs awards—once a national second for his level—David Goldfrank has invariably helped with clean-up at live games and supplied pizza from his son's pizzeria whenever so asked. His only previous special service to NVBA was to coordinate the record keeping, outcome, and delivery for the 2019 Longest Day silent auction, and so he is delighted to take on the task of Board Secretary in 2025.



Past President *(2019-2023)*

Martha (Marty) Bley is a retired music teacher. An enthusiastic player since 2003, she and her husband, Ross, direct several weekly club games. They have also been in charge of partnerships for NVBA sectionals and have helped run the I/N program at the 4th of July Regional. Email: campspringsduplicatebc@gmail.com Phone: (301) 292-4103.



NVBA Board Members (continued)

Jason Carter *(through 2027)*

Jason Carter is an Associate Director in the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs (OIA), managing transnational cooperation in criminal matters involving Europe and Eurasia. As a teenager, Jason learned to play bid whist, a game akin to bridge, with his family. He started playing bridge in his late 20s, and over a year or so earned fewer than five masterpoints. He then didn't play for about 20 years, but eventually rediscovered the Northern Virginia Bridge Association. He is training to become a bridge director and looks forward to helping his fellow bridge players enjoy the game as a member of the Board.



Hal Hindman, MD *(through 2027)*

Hal Hindman, MD is a recently retired OB-GYN physician who has lived in Northern Virginia since 1988. He "caught" the bridge bug in junior high and started playing duplicate bridge back in high school. He has been active in club games and our unit game for over 25 years, representing our district at the national level, winning the 0-1500 NAP in 2000 and the 0-5000 GNT in 2004. His other interests include playing golf (4+ times a week now that he is retired), rooting for NY sports teams (growing up in NJ so he came by it naturally), racquetball and travelling with Amy Brisson



Terry Jones *(through 2027)*

Terry Jones is a CPA and Personal Financial Specialist with her own practice, focusing on tax and financial planning. She founded the Falls Church Bridge Club, whose motto was "The Fun, Friendly Bridge Club!" Whether running games or lessons, it is always her desire to create a safe and relaxing environment for all players. Terry is a Gold Life Master, as well as an ACBL Director and Accredited Teacher with several programs including ACBL Best Practices, Audrey Grant's Better Bridge, Easy Bridge and Learn Bridge in a Day, and a member of the American Bridge Teachers Association.



Joe Hertz *(through 2028)*

Joe Hertz is a software engineer and enthusiast of card, board, and computer games since childhood. He lends his technical expertise to NVBA, helping to maintain and improve our website and organize the Life Master–Non-Life Master game. He is a Silver Life Master, a certified bridge teacher, and is actually quite proud of how many masterpoints he does NOT have, believing, "I thought we had more than that!" to be one of the most sincere compliments you can ever receive from another bridge player.



Daniel Morgan *(through 2028)*

Daniel Morgan joined the NVBA board in May 2026. He learned to play bridge as a graduate student in Texas in 1987. After completing a Ph.D. in physics, he moved to the DC area in 1991. He played a few NVBA games in the late 1990s, but family and career obligations kept him from playing regularly at clubs or tournaments until about 2014. He has served as editor of the NVBA's weekly email newsletter since September 2024 and has run the NVBA mentorship program since July 2026.



Ron Kral *(Webmaster)*

Ron learned to play bridge as a freshman at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and played in the school's student duplicate game for several years. After graduating in 1972 with a BS in Systems Analysis (computer science), he played little bridge for the next 20 years while work and family took priority. He worked as a systems programmer until the mid-1990s, when he took on a Y2K remediation project. Ron started playing seriously again in 1995 and began teaching bridge after 2000. He has been active in the NVBA community ever since — serving as Vice President, President, and Publicity Chair, authoring Bridge Etiquette, and serving as Webmaster since 2012. He has also been Intermediate-Newcomer chair for four DC NABCs and numerous District 6 regionals, and has lectured at NABCs, regionals, and sectionals.



NVBA Welcome Booklet 2026



When you make Life Master in Northern Virginia, you get your name on a cake at the Annual Meeting—and you'll play for free if you come to the meeting!



You never know who'll show up at the Halloween Party...



Dinner before bridge at the Annual Meeting