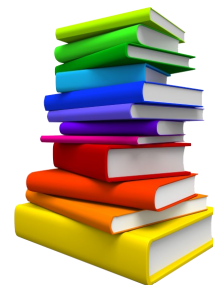


Library Corner



Gaining the Mental Edge at Bridge

by Kim Frazer (2019)

Looking up Ron Klinger online, the reader will find that he is considered one of the world's leading bridge authors and teachers. Among other things, Klinger is an Australian Grand Master and a World Federation International Master. So, for Klinger to comment on the cover of this book of Frazer's, "I would just like to bar all of my regular opponents from reading this book," should make the average bridge player take notice. In the introduction, the author stresses that this book is not about conventions, or play of the hand, or defense or any of the other common topics for bridge books. Her focus is on mental preparation before the game even begins. She is all about preparation before play including developing positive mindsets and overcoming negative thinking. A champion at target shooting, Frazer knows that concentration is necessary to be successful at both competitive shooting and bridge. "This book offers simple, practical techniques to improve your mental approach to the game, allowing you to enjoy your time at the bridge table even more."



ALERT!!

A publication of ACBL Unit 206

September, 2023



Editor: Sandy Cervantes

Features Editor: Cheryl Whitfield

A message from the president...

Fall is just around the corner, and we are excited to be kicking off our always popular *Learn Bridge in a Day*. Dan Chandler will teach this 6-hour course on Saturday, September 9. If you have some free time, Dan could use your help as a table monitor. Dan plans to follow-up the one-day seminar with a series of classes designed to help the novice player traverse the labyrinth of bridge. Our other September course, Mike Holmes has had to cancel his course *Play of the Hand in the 21st Century*, but hopes to reschedule soon.



I wanted to remind those of you who qualify about our Tuesday morning "Under 50" game. Dan directs this game and starts each session with a short lesson. Also, I would like to highlight that John Friedl's defense class debuted on August 23 with over 20 participants. Amazing!

As you can see, there are lots of opportunities to learn and enhance your game. Please get the word out about these opportunities. We appreciate your support!

Richard Spangler



Chattanooga Fall Sectional October 20-22, 2023



How timely it is that our Blast from the Past photos this month come from our 2013 Chattanooga Fall Sectional. Looking at these familiar faces, it's hard to believe that ten years have passed. Pictured to the left and above are **Ian and Corinne Madden**, and below are **Linda and Johnny Burns**.



The 2023 Fall Sectional is just around the corner. The sectional will be held at the Chattanooga Bridge Center, so space is limited. Please make your reservations early so you won't miss out on any of the fun. There will be morning and afternoon pairs games on Friday and Saturday (October 20 and 21) and a two-session Swiss team game on Sunday, October 22. You may not believe it, but the cost for all this fun is only \$12 per session. Call, text or email Margie Moses at 910.620.4582, or margie.moses1@gmail.com to make your reservations.



How To Be A Better Partner



Admit it when you make a mistake. Partner was just about to say something when you say, "Darn, I should have cashed the good spade while I was on dummy. I got one trick ahead of myself." This removes the temptation from partner to say something he'll regret. Own up to your errors before partner points them out. In particular, it's VERY bad form to pass the blame for your own mistake onto partner. Nothing will send your game into a tailspin faster.

Thanks to the District 6 Bridge Newsletter



Learn Bridge in a Day

Space is filling up fast, but we still have some spots left in our upcoming *Learn Bridge in a Day* course. Why not let your friends and family know about this unique opportunity. On Saturday, September 9, Dan Chandler is offering a six-hour course to introduce new players to or reacquaint former players with the fundamentals of bridge. They can test the waters and see if they might find bridge just as challenging and addictive as we do.

The course flyer is on the following page. Materials and lunch are provided. For those who pay in advance, the price is \$50. The price for those waiting to pay at the door is \$60. If you need further information, contact Dan at DanLChan@hotmail.com or 423.400.6999.

Learn Bridge In A Day!

- ❖ Do you want to find out about this game that all of your friends are playing?
- ❖ Did you play bridge in college?
- ❖ Did you take lesson and never find time to play?

If you answered "YES" to any of these questions,
we have just the thing for you...

One Day, Five Hours of Bridge

\$50.00 in advance and \$60 at the door

- ❖ Learn the fundamentals.
- ❖ See if this game is for you.
- ❖ Refresh your skills.
- ❖ Join the fun with your friends who play.
- ❖ Exercise your mind.

Join us for a great time!

Lunch plus book will be provided.

Sept. 9TH ❖ 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Registration is limited to the first 60 to reserve a space.

Chattanooga Bridge Center

1103 Dayton Blvd - Chattanooga 37405

North Chattanooga, at the border of Chattanooga & Red Bank.

To register or for more info, email or call **Dan Chandler**

DanLChan@hotmail.com | (423) 400-6999

Leave a message if need be.

Sponsored by

Chattanooga Bridge Center, Unit 206, ACBL

Materials provided by Whirlwind Bridge





Dear Unit 206 Bridge Members:

It is with a very grateful heart that I, on behalf of those we know and love whose lives have been turned upside down by the horrific effects of Alzheimer's disease and dementia congratulate you on the most successful *The Longest Day* campaign on record for our group. Our goal was \$10,000. You generous and thoughtful bridge players donated a whopping total of **\$15,592**. Wow and wow and another wow!

I hope that you enjoyed playing bridge and the refreshments provided during the one week that all our Chattanooga clubs came together to honor *The Longest Day*. I want to say thank you to Sandy Cervantes for sharing her personal story as a loving wife of someone with Alzheimer's. Thank you to Jan Alexander for keeping track of our donations and submitting them to the Alzheimer's Association. Thank you, Jim LaFevor, for being our raffle coordinator. And those of you who pitched in with the logistics to keep things moving along smoothly—I appreciate your support.

This is a great reminder to keep playing bridge as one of the ways to keep our minds as sharp as we can. I am honored to be part of such a generous group of smart people!

Hugs to you all
Mary Robertson

Note: *Mary would like all to know that she was recently contacted by the Alzheimer's Association who informed her that our little unit ranked the highest in fundraising of all the ACBL groups in Tennessee. Kudos to Mary Robertson and her team. They headed up this worthy cause with enthusiasm and compassion. Their commitment and hard work obviously show up in the final count!*

PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Fall is just around the corner, and the weather is starting to cool down. No need to panic though. If you are looking for something to do that will give you the same excitement and thrill as your award-winning water skiing, as usual, we've got the answer: bridge! We've made it so easy you have no excuse. If you can't find a partner, we'll find one for you. Email Partnership Committee Chair **Jan Alexander** (janalexander@epbf.com). The Partnership Committee matches players looking for partners, so before you can say, "Betty Boop bids badly," you'll be having the time of your life at the bridge table.



For What It's Worth...

A Novice's Point of View

About 6 months ago, I attended Dr. Mike Holmes' beginner bridge lessons. Having played some 22-23 years before, I enjoyed the lessons and learned needed basics that I did not know. But, even with the lessons, I still felt a little lost! No worries I soon learned. Many players introduced themselves and made me feel welcome.



I jumped right in and tried to play. It was fun, but the other players were so much better than I. There was a language they were using which I knew nothing about. How could I, being an older player, ever begin to understand this "new" bridge bidding.

After a few weeks, I was told about a mentor mentee program. Wow! I couldn't believe that there were strong, experienced players willing to play with me and other new players. How nice especially since they could have been playing with their peers and earning masterpoints.

Playing with several different partners along my journey furthered my knowledge as all were helpful and shared the information they had.

One day, I arrived at the bridge club and my partner could not play. To my surprise, I learned that Chattanooga had an ambassador program--someone available to play with you should this occur. Nooga Bridge also has found partners for me when needed. It was hard for me to believe all these conveniences were offered.

I have played with several mentors and very slowly gained valuable knowledge. It has surprised me that these seasoned bridge players are willing to volunteer their time and talent to help new players improve their bridge skills.

If I asked a question (at the proper time, of course!), I found that players gladly would explain a term or convention that was Greek to me. Chattanooga bridge club players gave me confidence that I could become better the longer I played. Some mentors with whom I played took the time to review hands with me after we played and this was very helpful.

Then I was shown the lovely library of very interesting bridge books that I could check out and study. What a wonderful resource to have. The library is another program established to help beginners and more experienced players seeking to add to their bridge knowledge.

Starting soon, Mike Holmes and John Friedl will be teaching new lessons at our club. We are so fortunate not to have to search for lessons. They are available at our club and taught by very competent instructors.

I have found that Chattanooga welcomes all new players with genuine sincerity. I believe I belong to the best club in the USA.

Donna Bloemker

Fairyland Duplicate Bridge Club

Fairyland welcomes everyone to come play, so why not make plans to join us at the Mountain City Club. We meet every Thursday at 10:15 a.m. The game starts at 10:30 a.m., and we break midday for a delicious buffet lunch. To make it even sweeter, someone usually brings an incredible dessert to share. You can count on the game to be over by around 2:30pm. We have a great time, so give us a whirl. All you need to do is contact Susie Crouch at susancrouch54@gmail.com to reserve your spot.

Our Marvelous Member for September is Shayna Scott. She has a very generous heart and is always willing to step in when needed. She's also quite an excellent bridge player, so beware! Her hidden talent is baking the most delicious fruit pies on this planet (and she claims not to like pies). As long as she keeps them coming, we're good with that! Thanks, Shayna, for being an asset to our club.



September Special Game Saturday, September 23



It's time to grab your favorite partner and make a team so you get a chance to compete and earn extra points in our *Grand National Team Qualifier*. Who knows? It just might be your team that takes the district championship and goes to the Summer NABC in Toronto! Donna Cart and Leigh Broadway are the hostesses this month and ask that you bring an appetizer or dessert to share. The fun starts with lunch at 11:30 A.M. followed by the game at 12 noon.

TUESDAY ONLINE 399er GAME

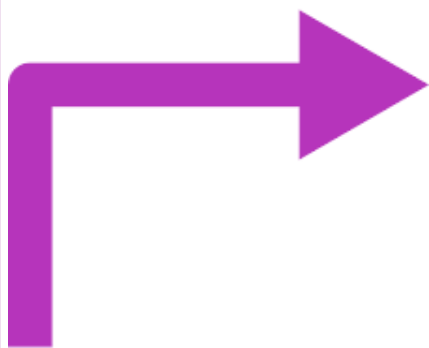
It's a marvel of today's technology that from the comfort of our homes, we can enjoy a great game of bridge and earn ACBL masterpoints in the process. If you have fewer than 400 masterpoints, you are eligible to play in our limited Tuesday evening online game. All you need to do is sign on to BBO (bridgebase.com) at 6:45 P.M. The game starts at 7:00 P.M. and is usually over by 9:00 P.M. so you can still get a good night's sleep. Don't have a partner? Not a problem. Text or call either **Anne Donnovin (423.605.2996)** or **Stewart Lawwill (423.718.0791)**, and you'll get help to find a partner.



Bridge Etiquette



Dummy is not allowed to call attention to anything except if Declarer is about to lead from the wrong hand or to ask if she is out of the suit being played. Also, Dummy may not play or touch any card in dummy (even a singleton) until Declarer calls for the card.



Arnie's Angle

By Arnie Meagher

Reflections on Growing Old

Old age is a gift not given to everybody. I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be.

Oh, not my body! I sometimes despair over my body, and my poor feet, but I don't agonize over them for long. With age comes an increased awareness of life's mortality and the importance of cherishing each day. So I get up each morning determined to make the best of what the day brings.

I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be. For the first time in my life, I don't have to have a reason to do the things I like to do and also I have the time to do such things as write blogs on my Facebook page; play bridge twice a week with a group of wonderful people and enjoy delicious snacks while doing so; reading in my favorite chair while listening to classical music on Chattanooga FM 88.1; and the invigoration of workouts with Seniors-on-the-Go also twice weekly.

As I've aged, I've become more appreciative of my family and enjoy on FaceTime for free the company of family in person in Sacramento, California; Dublin, Ireland; London, England; and Cardiff, Wales. I have also become more kind to myself, and less critical. I've become my own friend. I have seen too many friends leave this world too soon before they enjoyed the great freedom that comes with aging. Whose business is it if I choose to sleep until noon? I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten, and I eventually remember the important things, the bridge, the workouts, the doctors' visits and the pills I have to take.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair disappear from the top of my head, turn gray and then white. So many have died before that happens. As I get older, it is easier to be positive and I care less about what other people think of me. I am also so blessed to have retained the ability to think, yes even think outside the cultural and religious box that I grew up in and where I have spent most of my adult life, sheltering inside a thought control box largely of my own making. Only in recent years have I ventured outside that box—to do some big picture thinking—to think what others have not thought or are reluctant to think—not the crazy off-the-wall extreme stuff, but thinking that is for the most part evidence and science based.

And I no longer feel jealous of the young. They face a more difficult world than I knew growing up with so many choices and not enough understanding of what is involved. I am not sure that in my youth I would have been able to handle the much more complex world that is provided by smart phones, computers, the Internet, and artificial intelligence with their multiple attractions and pitfalls. I am grateful to have been born when I was, into a much slower paced, kinder, gentler world. Yes, I like being old! I will die that way.



MANNERS ARE IMPORTANT!



Respect the time of others

- ♦ We recommend that you arrive at least 15 minutes before starting time.
- ♦ Watch the timer and be considerate of others; move when the round is called. Don't move early or late; move only after the round is called.
- ♦ Have a completed Convention Card (both you and your partner).
- ♦ Make your opening lead or table the dummy before you enter the contract in your private score sheets or the BridgeMates. Remember the opening lead is to be led face down to allow for questions!
- ♦ Bid and play in a timely manner.
- ♦ When moving to a new table, make sure you are at the right table with the right opponents.
- ♦ Also check to see that Bridgmates and Place Card agree.

How would you fill in the blank? "To me bridge ____."

Thanks to Richard Spangler who filled in the blank this month.

To me bridge is camaraderie. What I enjoy most about the game is meeting the broad range of people who play bridge throughout the Chattanooga area. I first learned bridge while living in Europe during parts of grade school and middle school. Back then, there was no such thing as English based TV or the internet, so besides traveling (A LOT!), my parents took advantage of the down time to teach us bridge. The first sense of the strong bonds that can be created with bridge was in high school, when my brother and I taught 4 other "nerds" to play, and we would rotate throughout the year playing games on Friday nights until 2:00 in the morning.



After moving to Chattanooga and after our daughter graduated high school, I joined the CBC through *Learn Bridge in a Day*. I wanted to see if bidding and playing the game had changed—which it did! From Day 1, it was the friendships and camaraderie that developed playing the game that has brought me back. We have quite a range of personalities at the bridge center, and I truly enjoy and appreciate each one. Some people are VERY serious, wanting nothing less than walking out of the club with some master-points. Others are more interested in what you did over the weekend. Some continually want to try new conventions to improve their game. Some come for the food. (Maybe that's all of us!) Life would be SO boring if we were all the same—and thank goodness we aren't even close to that. Thanks to all who have volunteered to play with me. Hopefully I haven't tried your patience based on what your particular goal may be. Looking forward to future encounters!

Bridge Tip for September



When a bid has been made to show a certain range of points, there is no ensuing bid which can change that range. Later bids can only describe additional bits of information within the already announced range.

Mike Lawrence

Myra's Box

Hi all,

Reminder that September through March is GNT season. We will be having team games scheduled so hope you can get together a team of four and play in these fun-filled Swiss team matches.

Also, we have several new players who might be joining us on BBO. If you have an account on BBO already, I just

need your player name. If you don't have an account, you will need to set that up first. Please remember whatever name you choose is with you forever and not changeable. You will need to have money on your account to play. We welcome everyone.

As most of you know, I am directing at the High Hampton Country Club in Cashiers, North Carolina. This has been a fun experience for me that is giving me some new areas to grow. Last Monday, I had a funny thing happen. The hurricane was gearing up, heading towards Tampa, and some players had family there and needed to keep their cell phones on. I asked them to please silence phones unless they needed to keep them on. Well, one phone in a purse kept ringing. No one seemed to know whose it was. All of the sudden, this player ran to me with the ringing phone and said, "Oh my goodness, can you please answer this? I have stolen this phone". I believe that was a first in my life. She had accidentally picked it up at a business from another customer who had laid it down in front of her. I talked to the other person and we arranged a pick up and she came mid game and got it from me during the game. I believe that's the funniest call I've ever had as a Director.

Myra

Nooga East Bridge Club

Every Monday at 12:30 P.M., there's a bridge game at Christ United Methodist Church located at 8645 East Brainerd Road across from Hurricane Creek Shopping Center. You are asked to arrive no later than 12:15 P.M. so the game can begin promptly. For those of you in Cleveland or North Georgia, we are just a hop, skip and a jump away. We are a very welcoming, fun group and are always looking for new players of all levels. Interested? Just email noogabridgeeast@gmail.com to make a reservation. Need help finding a partner or have a question? You can text or call **Sue Riddle (423.509.3583)** or **Sharon Lewis (423.240.5360)**. We are happy to help, although we do hope for some extra time to help you find a partner.



On Monday, September 4, in honor of the holiday, we'll have fried chicken and all the fixin's. Food will be served at 11:30. Please bring your own drink. Watch your email for food and fun days. If you are not receiving our emails, please let us know by emailing us at the above address. We have lots of special games planned for the rest of the year—remember special games mean extra points. Hope to see you there.

Online Mentor/Mentee Game

Every 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, we have an online Mentor/Mentee game at 7 P.M. on BBO. If you are interested in playing, let **Anne Donnovin** (aaddonovin@bellsouth.net) know. She matches partners and sends out assignments with plenty of time for you to develop a convention card. You are asked to sign on to BBO (bridgebase.com) by 6:45 P.M. This month the games are on September 11 and 25.



This is the perfect opportunity for more seasoned players to provide on-the-spot, useful, constructive suggestions to help our newer players develop their game. Everyone has a chance to come out on top, so it might be you earning those masterpoints.

Friday Face-to-Face Mentor/Mentee Game



From the guffaws and giggles heard all afternoon, it was easy to know that everyone had a wonderful time at our August Mentor/Mentor team game. This month our F2F game returns on Friday, September 15, when we hold a pairs game. Please sign-up early on one of the two sign-up sheets (Mentor or Mentee) at the CBC.

Also, remember that you are not guaranteed to play with a partner of your choice. If you are unable to sign-up in person, text or call **Sandy Cervantes** at 423.315.1953 by Monday, September 11, if you would like to play.

Congratulations to the August winners:

First	Larry Reneau, Marty Hershey, Betsy Caldwell, Sam Cox
Second	Suzanne Atchley, Lee Atchley, Myra Reneau, Allison Webb
Third	Tom Trivers, Myra Tatum, Suzy Bryant, Beverly Richards

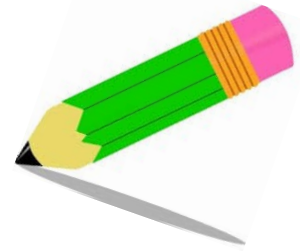
Bridge Hand Pattern Probabilities

Is this another night of random numbers swimming in your head? Are you nervous and anxious because you glanced over at the clock at it's already 3:30 A.M.? Is all this discomfort because you're worried about the probability of common bridge hands? No need to reach for the melatonin. As usual, we have the answer.

Pattern (any suit order)	Probability (%)
4432	21.55
5332	15.52
5431	12.93
5422	10.60
4333	10.54
6322	5.64
6421	4.70
6331	3.45
5521	3.17
4441	2.99
6430	1.33
5440	1.24



dates to Remember



September 7-9
Thursday-Saturday

Huntsville Open Sectional
Huntsville, AL

September 11 & 25
Mondays

Online Mentor/Mentee Game
7:00 P.M. BBO

September 13-15
Wednesday-Friday

Lakeside Sectional
Tellico Village, TN

September 15
Friday

Face-to-Face Mentor/Mentee Pairs Game
Noon CBC

September 23
Saturday

GNT Qualifier Game—Appetizers & Desserts
11:30 Food/12:00 Game CBC

September 23-24
Saturday-Sunday

Gainesville 0-750 Sectional
Gainesville, GA

Hats off to...

This month, we wish to thank **Susan Kimm** for her ongoing support of the club! Susan is always helping where she can with snacks or food during special games. But, a key contribution is helping us manage the recycling effort each week so that we aren't tossing into the trash items that can be easily recycled. We consume a lot of soft drinks, bottled water and tea, so great to see that these items are being properly taken care of by Susan.

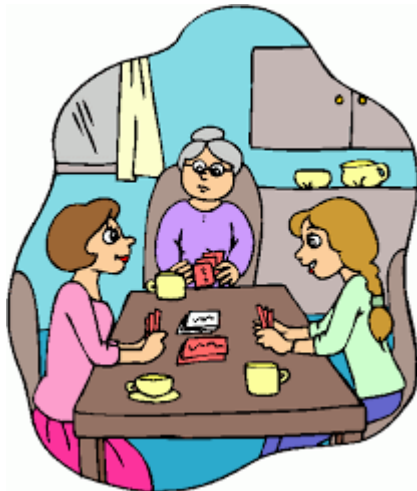


In Deepest Sympathy



We send out our most heartfelt sympathy to Pat and Jim Snyder on the loss of their son, Chip. Chip was taken far too soon, and we know that your hearts are broken. We hope you know that in your grief, you can count on our strong shoulders and warm embraces to help you through these dark times.





One Last Thing...

By John Friedl

Playing Bridge Online

I began playing bridge online more than ten years ago. It was a fun way to spend an hour or two at times when a face-to-face game was not available at our local club. But when Covid entered the scene and local club games shut down, online bridge became the only way we could play in a sanctioned duplicate game.

Now that the Covid restrictions have been relaxed and we're back to playing at the club, online bridge has become part of our regular bridge routine. We have club games online that complement our face-to-face activities. And, we also have the opportunity to play in ACBL games online that are open to all players, as well as some limited games for players below a specified masterpoint level.

For those of you who have recently completed Learn Bridge In A Day and are looking for ways to ease into the game of duplicate bridge, playing online can offer an excellent opportunity. In this column I'll give you some guidelines on how to get started. This is in no way intended to be a complete set of instructions on how to navigate the online bridge website, but once you get into that website, you'll find tools and contacts that can bring you up to speed.

To begin, type into your browser bridgebase.com. That will take you to a page for Bridge Base Online (commonly referred to as BBO), and you'll see a red button that says "Login/Register". Click on that and follow the instructions to register as a new player.

To register you will need to select a username and password. Your username can be anything you want. Some people use their name; others a nickname, a random word, a word with numbers or symbols—anything you want. But remember, once you've established a username, you'll find it difficult, perhaps impossible, to change, so don't choose something you'll regret later.

Your password should be selected the way you would choose a password for any site that requires one. When you login to the site you will have the option of asking to have the login page remember you – that way you don't have to enter the same information repeatedly.

Once you've registered, you should set up your account and create a personal profile for yourself. It's mostly self-explanatory, asking you for your location, your name (optional), ACBL number, your skill level, and general information about conventions you use. It is important to note that ACBL membership is not required to play in BBO games except for the limited games (0-20, 0-299, 0-499). You can upload a photo if you wish, but it's not required. Under the Settings page you can choose what you want to see and hear when you play. You can also create a convention card using the standard form provided by the website.

Next, if you're planning on playing in either a club game or an ACBL game, you'll need to put some money into your account to cover the entry fees. If you click on the three bars in the upper right, you'll see an option for "BB\$". Click on that and you will be taken to a page that asks for a credit card number (the best option), and you can select how much you want to load into your account. (BBO likes to start at a higher amount than I do, so I select what I'm comfortable with.)

Depending on whether you are playing on a computer/laptop or a tablet, you'll see a list of options either on the right side or the bottom of your screen. (I recommend using a device with a mouse, because it's too easy to tap on the wrong card using the finger-to-screen method.) These include Messages, People, History, Account, and Play. The Account tab shows the information you've entered

One Last Thing...continued

about yourself. The People tab shows the other players that you have added to your list of partners or potential partners (more on this below). History is a link to the records for recent BBO games in which you have played. Messages includes communications from other players and from BBO. And Play gives you a screen where you can choose what you want to do - enter a tournament, participate in a lesson or a "teaching table," or practice your play. Under the Settings page you can choose what you want to see and hear when you play. You can also create a convention card using the standard form provided by the website.



The People tab is the way you create links for partnerships. You can click on this button and at the bottom of the screen you'll see a place to "add a Friend." You can type in that person's BBO username (not their real name or ACBL number) and he will be added to your list of Friends. That way you will always know when a Friend is online, and you can chat with him. You can also create a different convention card for each Friend or use the same card for more than one partner.

Once you have created your online persona and loaded your account with BBO dollars, you're ready to play. You can play in a club game whenever one is scheduled, by going to the Play page and clicking on the button for "Virtual Clubs." That will take you to a page with a list of club games that will begin within the next hour or so. Click on the game and a screen will pop up for you to invite a partner. Type in their BBO username and after they accept your invitation, you're registered. Or you can play in a sanctioned ACBL game that is not affiliated with any club, by clicking on the button for "ACBL World." This will take you to a list of ACBL games scheduled to start within the next hour. Generally, there is a game available every hour, and the typical 18-board match lasts about two hours.

Of course, you'll need a partner to play in these games, and if you're just beginning, I'd recommend playing with someone who has done this before. After a few games, you'll get the hang of it and gain confidence.

You can also explore other options, especially on the Play page. Click on the "Practice" button and try Bridgmaster, starting with Level 1 for beginners. You will be given a hand to play and if you fail to make your contract you can get an explanation for how you should have played the hand to succeed against perfect defense. Another option on the practice section is Minibridge. You will see your hand and dummy and you select the contract you wish to play. This exercise will help you plan the play in advance, counting the tricks you could take and figuring out the correct strategy for success. Both Bridgmaster and Minibridge are free and can be played repeatedly.

I don't recommend Solitaire for beginners, because unfortunately the program that BBO uses is, in my opinion, one that will lead you to develop bad habits, especially in declarer play. You play Solitaire with three robots whose bidding style is, to say the least, unorthodox. More importantly, the deck will almost always be stacked against you. Normally a finesse should succeed 50% of the time; in BBO Solitaire you can expect maybe 10% if you're lucky. A suit missing five cards should split 3-2 roughly 68% of the time; in BBO it won't be half that often. I don't know why they created a program that does not faithfully reproduce what you can expect at the bridge table, but my recommendation is that you avoid Solitaire until you have gained more experience, so that you don't fall into the habit of making decisions that are against the odds.

If you run into trouble or have a question that you can't work out on your own, you'll find a "help" button at the top of the screen. That will connect you to a chat with a person who can usually give you the answer you're seeking.

There's a lot more to know about playing online, but this should be enough to get you started. Just register, load your account, add some friends, and start playing.

One last thing - online games are strictly time-controlled. If you don't complete the round within the allotted time, you automatically will be kicked off into the next round, and your score will be adjusted. If it happens frequently, you may be penalized, and you can count on your opponents getting angry. They don't want to be penalized for an opponent's slow play. So, before you join a "real" game, be sure you are going to be able to bid and play in a fairly quick tempo. This may require some practice.