

## District 1 / ACBL Incentive Program

### DO YOU PLAY BRIDGE? WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY BRIDGE? WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS?

In May 2023, Alice Lukacs published in the Montreal Gazette an outstanding article "The Game of Life" that resonated tremendously. The subtitle "Bridge teaches plenty of lessons for the living" and the sub-subtitles (Why the game is called bridge, Have a plan, What is your long suit? Why not try a finesse, In case you are vulnerable, Be a risk- taker) are all designed to create interest and comparison between arguably the greatest card game ever devised and life.

Clearly what also accounts for the popularity of bridge is that it can be a lifelong hobby played from the age of five. It is an entertaining tool for deduction, inference, mathematics, partnership building, cooperation, memory testing and even deception. No wonder bridge is called the king of card games.

What can I tell you about bridge? It is a social game, that can be played at home with friends, at clubs, or even at challenging tournaments in various categories such as youth, open, seniors, women, mixed: pairs and teams. It can be organized such that one plays against people on the same skill level, or against highly experienced players. A person can even play with or against robots on the internet in the comfort of one's home.

What Montrealer can forget the year 2002? That was the year when I served as President of the American Contract League (ACBL) and secured the rights to host the Bridge World Championships in our city, where the tournament organization was led by Tibor Bertalan and Jean Castonguay. More than 5000 bridge enthusiasts, including Bill Gates, participated making our beloved city the bridge capital of the world for two weeks. Peace and Friendship was our slogan.

How does one start to play bridge? Fortunately, many programs are available, and some of them are free, or have minimal cost. Basic information can be found at "[ACBL.org](https://www.acbl.org)" (Follow: Play bridge/ Just play bridge/ Menu/ Learn bridge/ Learn to play/ The basic) Most of the information is in English. Fortunately, the Montreal Bridge League (Ligue De Bridge De Montreal-MBL) under the expert guidance of President Denis Ouellette ([denisouellette@videotron.ca](mailto:denisouellette@videotron.ca)) organizes training courses for Francophone bridge teachers who in turn conduct training courses for anyone who is interested. Please contact Mr. Ouellette, or the MBL website for further information.

What about the incentive program that makes hundreds of dollars available? Here is the great news. The ACBL presently has incentives to increase its current membership of 130,000 by providing \$30 US (appr. \$40 CA) to people who sign up new members. In addition, District One (Maritimes to Kingston)) will award \$50 CA to each of our District ACBL members (that is altogether \$90) who recruits new members to our organization (details and conditions apply). Your friends will be glad to learn of this opportunity.

The most often heard question is: How long will it take to learn how to play bridge? One can learn the basic moves and definitions in less than two hours. Depending on one's interest it can be followed by a series of 6 to 12 two-hour lectures. Many newer players take advantage of watching experts play either in person or on the Internet. Many learn about the game in daily newspaper articles and books. A player's skill will be dependent on the time invested learning.

Personally, spending time with friends playing or defending a bridge hand will bring immense satisfaction. After playing bridge for sixty years, I can confidently say: There is not a single person on earth, who can rightfully claim knowing everything about bridge. We can all decide on what we place importance in our life. It is said, that a bridge player often does not remember who the first person was whom they kissed, but they will always remember the name of their partner when they won their first bridge trophy. (George Retek)