

Washington Bridge League Board of Directors Candidates

September 9, 2021

President: Hadi Abushakra

Hadi Abushakra has been the vice president of the Washington Bridge League since May of 2018. Hadi retired in 2015. A lawyer by training, he worked for 26 years at the World Bank and held a number of leadership positions. Prior to that, he was a practicing attorney in New York City. Hadi holds JDs in French and Lebanese Law, and an LLM from Harvard Law School. He and his wife, Kathy Stuart, have a 28-year-old daughter. He enjoys running, reading (politics and history), travel, and bridge.

Vice President: Bob Bell

Bob Bell has been WBL Secretary for the last year. Although he has pledged never under any circumstances to run for President of the WBL, he has agreed to run for Vice President because no one else would do it. He is willing to serve briefly as President in an emergency. As the WBL looks to the future, we badly need a suitable member who wants to eventually serve as President to step forward and spend one or two years as Vice President in preparation for the presidency.

Bob has been a member of the WBL since 1985 and served two terms on the Board late last century. He has also served as the WBL Recorder, the District 6 Conduct and Ethics Appeals Chair, and as a member of the District Grass Roots Committee, which organizes the Grand National Teams and North American Pairs competitions. He would like to continue contributing to keeping bridge alive and well during the pandemic and working to ensure a smooth transition to post-pandemic bridge.

Treasurer: Herb Schulken

Herb Schulken has been the treasurer of the Washington Bridge League since 2017. He began playing duplicate bridge in 2007 following his retirement. He became a tournament assistant director in 2012 and has been a member of the WBL directing team since that time. Herb had a 30-year career as a certified public accountant with PricewaterhouseCoopers,

beginning in his native South Carolina before moving to Washington in 1993. He had assignments in Moscow, New York and London. Following his retirement from PwC, he worked with the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB), the regulator of the auditing profession, for two years, and he was an advisor to the Audit Committee of the Smithsonian Institution for six years.

Secretary: Lena Maman

I was first introduced to the game in 2017 by coworkers who have been playing rubber bridge at noontime for years. By summer of 2018, I caught the competitive bridge bug and began attending the Thursday evening 0-20 games in Maryland. Since then, I have been playing duplicate locally in both Maryland and Virginia in 0-2500 games as well as virtually (ACBL Speedball). I completed the ACBL Club Director program during the 2019 Reston Regional. I am in my 30's and work full-time at this time, but I plan on running my own game in the future. Until then, I love playing bridge competitively and learning from current bridge club managers/directors.

Professionally, I have been a Research Librarian at the Library of Congress for seven years. I am sociable, tech savvy, detail-oriented, and a natural planner. When face-to-face bridge is back in full swing, I can be found playing at Rockville DBC and Thurs Nights at WBL or NVBA. My non-bridge activities include hiking, cooking, researching anything and everything.

Member: Kathy Kopnisky

I am interested in serving on the Washington Bridge League Board of Directors. I am a B-level player who plays regularly in local club games, sectionals, regionals and national games. While my home base is the WBL, I also play in games hosted by the Northern Virginia Bridge Association.

After retiring from my career as a scientist, scientific administrator, and policy analyst, I started my first bridge lessons locally with Leslie Shafer and Charlie Williams in 2015 and have played 4-5 times a week since then. During my 3 years of lessons, a number of us started practicing each week in between classes. I organized a weekly game consisting of 2 to 5 tables. We taught each other how to keep score when playing Swiss or when using Howell movements. We took turns teaching special topics to

each other. I expect this fostered a high proportion of us to become regular bridge players.

Along this line, I would like to work with the WBL to find ways to increase the number of people of all ages learning bridge and playing regularly. I expect several approaches are necessary including increasing the awareness of online resources and working with local bridge teachers and players to identify opportunities for engagement and learning in primary schools, community and religious centers, and in adult communities. Moreover, the WBL may be able to identify effective mechanisms to inform current players of resources available for introducing their family or friends to bridge.

For example, I recently became aware of the ACBL teaching document <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/teachers/ComptonLessonsPreK1.pdf>. It is intended for teachers of **Pre-K or 1st grade** students, but I think it could be helpful to other ages. I recently tried to introduce bridge to non-playing adults of varying ages and interest, and this resource would have been helpful. It may be useful to repurpose such resources for casual bridge players to use as guides when opportunities arise to introduce people to bridge.

Having played novice, C, B and A-level games in the past few years along with fellow bridge newcomers (learning as adults), I believe I have a good sense of the novice/B/C community and its concerns. I'm pleased to be considered for the Board member position if I can be of service.

Member: Clyde Kruskal

Profile coming soon

Member: Alex Stille

I'm Alex Stille, and I'm excited to be standing for the WBL board. I rediscovered Bridge shortly after moving to the US in 2015 and deciding that I didn't want to play serious chess anymore. With some friends I developed a social bridge group through Meetup, and from there a few of us decided to go to a sectional, then the Nationals in DC 2016 - I've been hooked ever since. Bridge is definitely at an inflection point, especially after the pandemic, and I believe there are a lot of opportunities to increase the number of people who play rather than accept a slow decline.

As I've progressed I've enjoyed playing in regional and national limited events (representing D6 in the NLM GNT and NAP, getting to the Red Ribbon pairs final session in Atlanta), supporting Bridge in Schools at the District of Columbia International School, and getting more of the Meetup group into competitive bridge - at least 10 regular tournament players so far! I'm keen to help generate more interest and enthusiasm across the membership for events beyond club games and the Gold Rushes.

Away from bridge I run organizational change programs helping multinational companies and government departments reach their digital transformation goals. I'm a frequent keynote speaker and support the development of public speaking skills both through direct mentoring and support for Washington Improv Theatre, and I head for Washington Capitals games whenever there's no bridge events to play in.