



The Villages Duplicate Bridge Club Member News

August, 2026

Notes from the Editor: We have some great human interest stories this month submitted by our members. To start things off, we enjoy meeting lovely Ria Ainess. Jan Masterson and Maury Fjestad attended the NABC tournament in Minneapolis and shared their experience. Dave Michaleson and his son attended the NY Knicks basketball final, an experience of a lifetime. And Marilyn Williams shares info on The Little Dog Ranch, for all our pet lovers, as well as info on a new bridge cruise in 2027. Mary Jo Johnson and Dale Angione share highlights of their riverboat cruise in Columbia, South America. We enjoy our monthly trivia from Nancy Tessier, humor from Mary Jo Johnson, and a book review from Buck Buchanan. And if you see Buck and Mauri Buchanan this month, wish them Happy Birthday AND Happy Anniversary!

Meet the Players By Nancy Tessier



Who is the pretty lady that always has a smile on her face? Ria Ainess. Originally from Indonesia, she met her husband who worked for an oil company at age 22. The oldest of 7 children and oldest of 38 grandkids, Ria comes from a big close knit family. They had a big traditional Indonesian wedding and celebrated after receiving her fiancée visa. She and husband have one daughter who lives in Texas. She loves bridge and plays almost every day. Her other passion is traveling and she does this a lot....months at a time. She is a people person with an open mind - inquisitive and ready to try anything. (And she laughs, an opposite of her much more serious husband who enjoys gardening, photography and biking).

I asked her what surprised her about first coming to the US. The answer simple - freedom, human rights and the convenience of everything. A very positive impression.

Tournament Roundup

Jan Masterson and her husband Maury Fjestad recently attended the North American Bridge Championships (NABC) for two days, which was held in Minneapolis. They have shared their experience below. How exciting to attend a national championship! Congratulations to all our VDBC members who attended this prestigious event. Note: To see final tournament results, click on this link: [NABC Final Results.](#)

NABC Tournament By Jan Masterson

While visiting family in Minnesota, Maury and I, along with Maureen and Mike Kiernan, for just two days experienced the NABC tournament in downtown Minneapolis. The field was HUGE and it was fun for us to see friends from the Minneapolis clubs and for Kiernans to see many friends from the Fargo club. In all honesty I wasn't optimistic but what the heck, I thought. It's the experience.

Imagine our surprise when we saw Lois Sherwood, Larry Sumner, and Pam Campbell who'd just flown in for four days with a partner from Cincinnati. And, this morning we noticed that Jon Greenspan was also in our midst (the rooms were HUGE on different floors).

Thanks to the St. Paul club, we found parking that was both convenient and reasonable, avoiding our earlier plan on taking the bus downtown. Both days ended at Bunny's, a neighborhood bar/grill that was right on the route home.

Amazingly we placed in both team events! A "semi-pro" from the St. Paul club advised us to avoid the Truscott Senior Swiss event and we played instead on his advice in Mid Flight Swiss on 6/13 and the bracketed round robin on 6/14. See below for our Villages representatives' awards for the short time we were there and before. (We hope anyone else who went, will too share).

July 10: Lois Sherwood and Larry Sumner, bracketed round robin. 7.82 gold

July 12: Lois Sherwood and Larry Sumner, bracketed round robin 6.71 gold

Jon Greenspan, NABC pairs. 2.71 platinum

July 13: Maureen and Mike Kiernan, Maury Fjestad and Jan Masterson, mid-flight Swiss. 8.51 gold (against 53 tables).

July 14: Jon Greenspan, Truscott Senior Swiss, 23.53 PLATINUM

Maureen and Mike Kiernan, Maury Fjestad and Jan Masterson, bracketed round robin. 4.85 gold

And the tournament continues...

So glad we went despite my worries. What an experience!

VDBC Member Rank Achievements

Congratulations to those who have achieved a new ACBL ranking as of July, 2026!

NABC Master	Susan Bry Marjorie Miller	Regional Master	Joseph Bray James Buckert David Busam Robert Christensen Ray Delp George Ford Julie Golub Ray Holzworth Karen Jessey Alan Pawlow Mari Peters Crista Stouffer
Sectional Master	Karen Brennan Joan pate Cynthia Freeman Deb Hebert-Kabat MaryAnn Jelson Mary Kleinman Kathleen Sachs	Club Master	George Geros Greg Meyer Tom Olsen
		Junior Master	Deborah Nunes

NY Knicks June 10, 2026 Game 4 Victory By Dave Michaelson

I had always been a New York Knicks basketball fan since I was a kid. I followed them religiously and was at Madison Square Garden as part of a group that had season tickets for the Knicks championship runs in 1970 and 1973. My son developed my love for basketball and the NY Knicks. However, the years following the two championships only produced a few times where they again played for the NBA title, and they were defeated each time. My son and I still followed the Knicks

every year and we would express our frustration to each other with how the team was not doing well. Then, in recent years, they improved significantly and were a threat to win it all, although they fell short each time.

When the playoffs started this year, it looked like the Knicks had a good chance to make it to the finals. I said to my son that if they did make it to the championship round, I would buy tickets for the two of us and we would go to see a finals game at Madison Square Garden. And then suddenly they had won the first three rounds of the playoffs and were in the finals. I went on StubHub to purchase tickets as I promised my son, but gulped when I saw that the lowest prices for tickets started at \$3,600 per ticket. I said to him that I wasn't sure we would go because of the high price. However, twenty-four hours later, I changed my mind. My thinking was that this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and that I could afford the exorbitant ticket prices. I bought two tickets for \$8,100 and made arrangements with my son to go to the game.

StubHub did not provide the tickets until 1:45 pm on the day of the game. It took an hour on the help line with StubHub to get the tickets onto our phone so that they could be scanned properly at the entrance to the game. I was tense that we would be turned down at the entrance because of some error in the ticket process. When we arrived, I didn't recognize the area around Madison Square Garden. Seventh Avenue and 34th Street were closed. There were cops every few feet. When we finally got into the building, we had walked several blocks away from MSG in order to come back and be admitted.

We finally were admitted into the building (no ticket problem thank goodness) and found our seats, which were really far back but at least between the two baskets. The atmosphere was electrifying. The game started and the Knicks fell far behind very early. I said to my son what a waste of money this was since it was obvious that they were not going to win. At one point they fell behind by 29 points and were down 24 points at the half. Even though I knew that they were going to lose, I said to my son early in the second half that the whole atmosphere was special and that it was still worth it even though I had conceded defeat.

Then the second half started. The Knicks began playing better and the San Antonio Spurs played poorly. Slowly, the Knicks cut into the big lead and with a few minutes to go in the game had cut the Spurs lead to one point. Then with a few seconds to go, the Knicks took what would be the shot to give them a lead with almost no time remaining. The shot missed but OJ Anunoby, a Knick player, flew in and tipped the ball into the basket with just 1.4 seconds to go to give the Knicks a one-point lead. Madison Square Garden went crazy. The Spurs called a timeout to set up a play for the winning basket but it failed. There was total delirium in the arena as the game ended. My son and I just stood there for 20 minutes after the game taking it all in. The 29 point comeback was the greatest in finals history. The Knicks went on to take game 5 and win the series and the National Basketball

Association championship 4 games to 1. It had been 53 years since their last championship title.

I am so glad that I decided to go even though the ticket prices were outrageous. It was an experience that my son and I will never forget.



David and his son Jeff



Madison Square Garden

The Villages Sectional at Sea 2027

A new Sectional at Sea will be taking place February 15-21, 2027 on the Sky Princess. Ports of call are in the Eastern Caribbean, including Celebration Key, Amber Cove, and Grand Turk. See flyer at the end of the newsletter for details.

Birthday & Anniversary Wishes



August is a big month for Buck and Mauri Buchanan. Mauri turns 85 on August 9th, Buck turns a big 90 on August 22nd, and they celebrate their 63rd wedding anniversary on August 24th. We congratulate them on these milestones!

August Trivia By Nancy Tessier

We celebrate many things - birthdays, Thanksgiving, Christmas. But there are some very special “days” in August. Here are just a few.

Water balloon day, spider man day, sand castle day, mustard day, doll day, bow tie day, hair glaze day, chocolate chip day, white wine day, underwear day, mosquito day, thrift shop day, bad poetry day, matchmaker day, daffodil day (but they bloom in February???), ugliest dog day, garage sale day, tooth fairy day, toilet paper day, Smokey the Bear’s birthday, bagel day, hip hop day, middle child day, sewing machine day, milkman day, lizard day, calligraphy day, Navajo code talker day, roller coaster day, honey bee day, banana day, beer day following by hangover day...but the most important one is August 21, Senior citizen’s day.

Take time to celebrate each and every day.

Condolences

The club is saddened to hear of the passing of several VDBC members recently:

Jeff Koltenuk. Details may be found here.

<https://www.pagetheusfuneralhome.com/obituaries/jeffrey-koltenuk/obituary>

Jim Gould. Obituary details may be found here:

<https://neptunesociety.com/obituaries/summerfield-fl/james-gould-12931325>

Dave Stentz. Dave passed away in Chicago on July 11 following a brief illness. Sympathy cards are appreciated by his surviving daughter: Leslie Stentz, 3643 North Harding Street, Chicago IL 60618.

Important August Dates

By Nancy Tessier

History - the story of the past. Here are some August events to remember.

79 Mount Vesuvius erupted

1492 Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos, Spain

1776 The Declaration of Independence was officially signed

1945 The first atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima Japan

1933 First sighting of the Loch Ness Monster

1978 The first balloon trip across the Atlantic

1920 Women were given the right to vote (with caveats: full electorate equality was decades away for many women of color, native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latino women. It took years for each of these groups to gain access to the ballot.)

The Little Dog Ranch

By Marilyn Williams

As a lifelong dog lover, after losing our last little pooch, I am very frustrated at not being able to rescue another. Due to health issues for both Jon and me, we are just not able to properly care for another dog. So, I have begun volunteering at The Little Dog Ranch in Fruitland Park. The Little Dog Ranch is home to about 20 senior dogs with medical challenges, many of them blind, deaf, or with other health issues that make them unable to be adopted. Ranch founder Cheryl Garrity, a former Villager, bought the home to care for the dogs. Cheryl doesn't call the ranch a shelter. She doesn't even really call it a hospice. "It's a nursing home. This is their final home. This is their "forever home for however long forever is."

I am writing this for the VDBC Newsletter to appeal to our members who are dog lovers. Please consider donating to this non-profit charity. Contact me if interested. Thanks! Marilyn Williams, 352-561-6196

Trip Report

By Mary Jo Johnson

Dale Angione and I enjoyed an AMA Waterways cruise on the Magdalena River in Colombia, South America. Although the river is 900 miles long, this 7 day cruise was between the cities of Baranquilla and Cartagena (or vice versa) but only a 2 hour drive by automobile.

We spent an additional day in Baranquilla, a bustling seaport known for its enormous Carnival, second only to Rio de Janeiro. It is an industrial city with a metropolitan area population of 2.4 million. We booked a “food” tour.....FOOD being the calling card plus it advertised an English speaking guide with hotel pick up and drop off included. Much to our surprise, we weren’t dropped off at a bus but taken on a personalized tour with a guide and a driver who took us to all the major tourist attractions and treated us to many food specialties. Among the sights were the Glass Monument; the 116 acre urban ecological project where we were served the juice of the coco which was still in the coco (the Spanish name for coconut); ate a flavored ice cone at the Port of Colombia; tasted mango slices sprinkled with paprika at the Shark Fin statue; saw the bronze statue of Shakira which is the 2nd largest pop icon only behind Forever Marilyn; and dined at a restaurant with the locals. There we were served Empanadas, Papa Rellenas, Arepa de Huevos, Carimañolas and Buñelos cheese fritters which are various fried foods and treated to a Soursop drink (which is not at all sour) and made from the fruit of the Guanábana.

Be aware that very few speak English, even in the hotels, malls, taxi drivers, etc. Even the menus are entirely in Spanish so it is very helpful (actually necessary) to have Google Translate or some AI device if you aren’t fluent in Spanish. The next day we went to the AMA dock to get checked in and meet our fellow travelers, which turned out to be only 31 other passengers even though the boat could accommodate 60 cruisers. Once we were greeted by the staff, we could partake of drinks, small sandwiches and sweets in the main lounge to give us time to mingle while our luggage was taken to our rooms. Before long, it was time for cocktails and a buffet prior to a private performance of CARNIVAL in the AMA pavilion on the grounds. AND what a performance it was.....OUTSTANDING.

Colombians are a proud people who say that they are a mix, of a mix of a mix (Indigenous, Spanish and Black). Since we were traveling between two major cities our other stops were small historic river towns. Calamar which was the first free town of former African slaves; Santa Barbara featuring local fishing and a traditional dance demonstration; Mompox a UNESCO World Heritage colonial town where we took part in a silver filagree jewelry workshop; El Banco with walking tours; Magangue with nature walks or bird watching in boats at either sunrise or sunset; and Nueva Valencia a stilt village where local fishing is the primary way of life. In all of these quaint towns we were treated to more dancing demonstrations and lots of colorful clothing. AND I must add that these folks, although abjectly poor, were clean, hospitable and so HAPPY.

Our last stop was Cartagena the former Spanish colony that was key in the export of Bolivian silver to Spain but also key in the import of African slaves. It’s population is just under a million and the old downtown is a walled city with mainly colonial style architecture but Republican and Italian style buildings such as the cathedral’s bell tower.

Other notable places to see are the San Pedro Claver Square where the body of the Jesuit Saint Peter Claver (Saint of the African slaves) is kept in a casket as well as the museum of Modern Art. Nearby is the Plaza De Bolivar and the Palace of Inquisition which is essentially a small park with a statue of Simon Bolivar. Another interesting spot is the Santo Domingo Square with the sculpture “Reclining Woman” by Colombian artist, Fernando Botero where tourists rub the breast of the statue for good luck. Getsemani, once a district characterized by crime, has become Cartagena’s “hippest” neighborhood and one of Latin America’s newest hotspots. Across from the walled city is BocaGrande known for its skyscrapers, hotels, shops, restaurants, night clubs and art galleries. What an enlightening experience we had....from the terrain and the river, to the people, the food, the hands on excursions, to all the wildlife, the joy seen in the eyes of the children and their parents, and to the pampering done by the staff of AMA.

Below: Dale and Mary Jo in party mode, ready for Carnival.

Dale



Mary Jo



Book Review – A History of Nearly Everything, by Bill Bryson By Buck Buchanan

All the books I’ve reviewed so far have been fiction. For a future review, I’ve been mulling which of three fiction books I’ve read lately I could use. Then BookBub offered me a \$1.99 book; “A Brief History of Nearly Everything” by Bill Bryson. I figured “What the Hell. What’s the worse that can happen? So I bought it, thinking it would be a dry text book. I started it and couldn’t put it down. Did all 600 pages in a weekend. Fascinating!

First off, don’t think this is a dry text book. It reads as easy as an Elin Hildebrand book. Easy. Here’s what one reviewer said about this book:

“From primordial nothingness to this very moment, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* reports what happened and how humans figured it out. To accomplish this daunting literary task, Bill Bryson uses hundreds of sources, from popular science books to interviews with luminaries in various fields. His aim is to help people like him, who rejected stale school textbooks and dry explanations, to appreciate how we have used science to understand the smallest particles and the unimaginably vast expanses of space. With his distinctive prose style and wit, Bryson succeeds admirably. Though *A Short History* clocks in at a daunting 500-plus pages and covers the same material as every science book before it, it reads something like a particularly detailed novel (albeit without a plot). Each longish chapter is devoted to a topic like the age of our planet or how cells work, and these chapters are grouped into larger sections such as “The Size of the Earth” and “Life Itself.” Bryson chats with experts like Richard Fortey (author of *Life and Trilobite*) and these interviews are charming. But it’s when Bryson dives into some of science’s best and most embarrassing fights--Cope vs. Marsh, Conway Morris vs. Gould--that he finds literary gold.”

The Lighter Side

By Mary Jo Johnson

Witty One Liners

Why did the chicken cross the playground? To get to the other slide.

Why do ducks have feather on their tails? To cover their butt quacks.

How does a Vampire start a letter? “Tomb it may concern...”

What kind of math do birds love? Owl-gebra

A plane crashed in the jungle and every single person died. Who survived? Married couples.

Why can't you ever tell a joke around glass? It would crack up.

What do you call a Star Wars droid that takes the long way around? R2 detour.

A big thank you to all who participated with their articles. If you have member news to report, have an interesting background or experience you'd like to share, have been involved in a fun activity or have a trip report, we'd love to hear from you. Pictures would be great! Do you enjoy a fun hobby? What's the most interesting thing that has ever happened to you? A significant day or experience in your life? What's the one place you'd like to see? A special birthday or anniversary coming up? Please send your articles to Jennie Cleary at **wkc44@comcast.net**, or Nancy Tessier at **NancyBrooks2020@gmail.com**. Nancy and Jennie are also able to help with write-ups if you send us the basics.



GO AWAY TRAVEL PRESENTS:

THE VILLAGES DUPLICATE PLAYERS SECTIONAL AT SEA

February 15-21, 2027

Please join us as we sail round-trip Port Canaveral to the Eastern Caribbean on the Sky Princess. You will have the opportunity to play and earn Silver Points two times every day in a card-playing area reserved exclusively for our group.

Itinerary:

**Port Canaveral • Celebration Key • Day at Sea • Amber Cove
• Grand Turk • Day at Sea • Port Canaveral**



**SPECIAL OFFER ONLY FOR
RESIDENTS OF THE VILLAGES:**

**THE FIRST 50 TO SIGN-UP WILL GET
FREE ROUND-TRIP TRANSFERS
TO PORT CANAVERAL!**

Contact: John Sobel at Go Away Travel
Call/Text: 954-349-2800
E-Mail: BestBridgeAtSea@GoAwayTrav.com

CAT	CABIN	DOUBLE	SINGLE
MB	MINI SUITE	\$2,800	\$4,275
Mini Suite is 243 sq. feet with a 36 sq. foot balcony and a tub/shower combo.			
BB	BALCONY	\$2,250	\$3,250
Balcony is 174 sq. feet with a 36 sq. foot balcony and a stall shower.			

*Prices are per person, cruise only, based on either single or double occupancy and include the following:
Unlimited beverages, unlimited casual and specialty dining meals, Wi-Fi (4 devices), \$100 per person shore excursion credit, crew appreciation (gratuities), unlimited digital photo images, and travel protection.

Valid passport required. A deposit of \$500 per cabin is required and is fully refundable until the final payment due date of October 31, 2026. Cancellations made between November 1-30, 2026 will be subject to a 50% penalty. Cancellations made between December 1-31, 2026 will be subject to a 75% penalty. Cancellations made on or after January 1, 2027 will be subject to a 100% penalty.

If you do not reserve your cabin from Go Away Travel, you must register with us prior to the cruise. A \$750 per person, non-refundable bridge fee will apply.