

The Colorado Springs Bridge Center

... A Dream Comes True



In the mid-1970's, Colorado Springs was home to about a dozen duplicate bridge games. They were held in a variety of locations, from church halls to the Air Force Academy Officer's Club, and were scattered across the entire city. At the same time, a group of members of Unit 360 had a dream. They wanted a building designed just for duplicate bridge that would be located centrally in the city, and could host bridge games seven days a week. In 1974, they purchased land in the shadow of Pike's Peak, with plans to construct their Club. Twenty-two members signed their names to the note for what was then an unheard of business venture! In 1978, the Colorado Springs Bridge Center hosted its inaugural bridge game with a whopping 38 tables!

Many of the duplicate games quickly moved to the new location. In those early years, there were fund raising events: everything from car washes and bake sales to quilt raffles.

All proceeds were used to pay off the mortgage. And it worked. A deed-burning dinner and bridge game were held in 1993, five years before schedule.

Today it's still a success story and this year the club celebrates its 25th anniversary. Now, there are seven club owners who run games at the Colorado Springs Bridge Center. They're quite an eclectic group and they support each other and work together. As a result, they're able to offer

a wide spectrum of events. This year, for example, they ran a collaborative bridge marathon as part of the first Bridge Week celebration hosted by ACBL. They broke all attendance records and won first prize in the ACBL's competition among clubs for Bridge Week.

The club owners share the common infrastructure of the Bridge Center. The Unit provides: the facility, with its playing area, kitchen, restrooms, and storage areas; the furnishings; a well-lit parking area; and bridge supplies like the bidding boxes, and a computer. Major renovations completed over the last two years have resulted in a fresh and modern club with excellent playing conditions. The club owners pay rent to the Unit, and all proceeds go back into building maintenance and upkeep.

In addition to the sanctioned games, the Bridge Center is home to many bridge teachers. It's a growing club. The Bridge Center's table count rose to over five thousand tables in

2002, an increase of about 10%. Easybridge! was added this year and new duplicate games are in the offing. They invite you to visit. The updated schedule is on their site:

www.coloradospringsbridge.com

The group of seven clubs in the Colorado Bridge Center offers a wide variety of wonderful bridge activities. Here's a closer look.

Colorado Springs Bridge Club

This is the oldest continuously running duplicate bridge club in Colorado Springs. Now owned by Judi Vineyard, the club hosts 18 to 22 tables each Monday afternoon. Judi's motto is "make it fun."

A retired engineer and college professor, Judi was drawn to bridge directing as a way to better learn the game. She enjoyed the experience so much that she jumped at the chance to own a regular game. As well as running her club game and teaching bridge, Judi directs bridge games on cruise ships, plays golf and is an avid amateur astronomer — but she has failed miserably in trying to teach her three cats to play!

Bridge the Gap Club

Jan Musser instructed beginning players in her home and saw a need for a novice game at the Bridge Center. She started the game in April 1999 with her husband Lee and the able assistance of a long-time director, Polly Berger.



The name was selected by Jan's players to signify starting as a beginner and advancing to a more experienced player. It's grown from an initial seven tables to an average of 15 tables. More than 30 players have "graduated" to become regular players at other games offered at the Bridge Center — a testament to Jan and Lee's winning game formula.

JJJ Bridge Club

Judy Marvin, who owns the Tuesday night franchise, has had great success with her game, building it from three tables to as high as fourteen ... and she is still pushing to enlarge it! She took the ACBL's Teacher Accreditation Program and is a certified teacher. Judy feels a close relationship with her players — they're like her second family. She's proud of helping the unit by being responsible for one of the club's games.

Mountain State Bridge Club



Kay Leiker learned to play in college and played at every opportunity. When she moved to Colorado Springs a friend introduced her to duplicate bridge ... it was instant addiction! One of the Unit's directors asked if she would be interested in becoming a director. She decided to try it and ten years later, she's still running bridge games.

Four Aces Bridge Club

After many years as an elementary teacher, **Shirley Scott** decided last year to pursue her second love as a bridge director/teacher. She'd taken the Teacher Accreditation Course and the Director Certification and was well qualified.



The Thursday evening game was struggling to keep enough tables to make it viable. Last fall she decided to help players go directly from work to the game by providing a complete dinner before the game. She feels it's important to the Unit and to the future of bridge everywhere to offer strong games at night as well as during the day. Unit 360 has offered support to make this possible.

Canon Bridge Club

Joyce Truitt began directing about ten years ago in Fort Myers, Florida. When she moved back to Colorado Springs, she began playing at the Bridge Center. The Friday game became available and Joyce was delighted to have the opportunity to direct again.

Her game includes a potluck lunch; players meet at 10:30 am, break for lunch at about noon, and continue the game after lunch. She never organizes the potluck or assigns food categories to the players, but



there's always plenty of variety. The break for lunch allows ample time for socializing, and players enjoy the relaxed atmosphere.

People's Bridge Club

Sue Moore was recruited as a bridge director by a long time Unit 360 club owner, Dick Dutcher, who was looking to "slow down a bit."



A newcomer to the game, Sue quickly blossomed as a player and director under Dick's tutelage. Her Saturday afternoon game struggled in the early days, but Sue found a winning formula. She serves lunch before the game, and her players use her game as a chance to try out their new recipes ... and Sue's own recipes have shown up on many a bridge player's own dinner table.