

ALLEN NITSCHELM



Hi Everyone! I am interested in serving on the EMBA board to get more involved in the leadership of our bridge association.

For my background, I am 58 years old and semi-retired from a publishing career. After a long hiatus since college, I started playing about five years ago during frequent trips to Orlando to visit my Mom, who played several times a week and became a tournament director. It was a lot of fun playing again, so I found a regular partner locally and started playing at a weekly game in the Worcester area. I occasionally play in Woburn, and have also played in Belmont, Newton, and Westwood, not including regional and sectional tournaments plus two nationals. I represented our region at the Philadelphia nationals in the GNT event for Flight C about three years ago, and our team tied for third. It was a great trip and we can't wait to do it again, this time in Flight B.

I am interested in learning more about the structure of the regional tournaments and making sure the rules keep in mind the limitations of some of our aging players. A year or so ago, I volunteered a couple of times at a retirement community and enjoyed it very much, and would like to see more outreach to former players as well as helping to introduce new players to the game (although I admit, that is an uphill battle these days.) I have made some inquiries about teaching bridge in schools and would be interested in pursuing this further as a board member if others agree.

Another idea would be to try to recruit new players who are looking for social outlets to meet people. There seem to be far fewer social gatherings with so many people addicted to their computers or their TV streaming services. Perhaps there are adults who would be open to picking up this great game instead of waiting until they are retired.

I also play bridge online at Bridge Base Online (BBO), and while I have found it a great learning experience, I am somewhat concerned that some of these tournaments use "robot" players and then give out gold points. While online play may be how the game further evolves, I do feel that this is somewhat of a different playing challenge and maybe we should keep some distance between the two playing options until we get more data and feedback.

As a learning tool, however, BBO is pretty good. You can replay hands and see how your opponents played them. You also learn about different bids based on the conventions used, which are usually explained. I have discussed several online hands with my regular partner to compare notes. Maybe getting younger kids to learn and play online is one way to rebuild the number of bridge players.

From a personal perspective, I live in Acton and have two kids who are in college or graduate school. I have talked with a current board member and feel I have the time to take on this activity and be more involved in developing bridge in the area. I also enjoy working on committees! If anyone has any questions, they can email me at Allen@TheHomesteader.com. Thanks!