



FRAN BENNETT

What do you do with a degree in library science and a love of bridge: of course, you join a bridge club, play as often as your busy schedule allows, and become one of the club's ace librarians. Fran Bennett has shared this responsibility with Valerie Baldwin for the past 6 years, and has gained a wealth of information about bridge books ... and about bridge. Palo Alto Bridge Club is very lucky to have so many bright and giving people as members. They are the ones who keep this club running so well. Fran is one of those special volunteers.

Fran learned to play bridge at her first job in 1963. Her boss was an avid player and gave instructions to his employees. Everyone played. She left the East coast and ended up in Palo Alto, where she worked as a system programmer. It wasn't until she retired in 2002 that she joined the bridge club in Palo Alto. Like so many of our players, she started in Walter's Wednesday game for beginners. She appreciated the fact that he took time to instruct and help new players learn both the play and the etiquette of bridge.

Fran was born and raised in Philadelphia and went to the University of Pennsylvania. When she moved west to California, she left many friends and family behind, including her twin sister, Hannah, with whom she had always been very close.

Integrating into her new community in Palo Alto involved lots of other activities in addition to bridge. Fran is a member of the Palo Alto Environmental Volunteers, an organization dedicated to inspiring a love of science and nature in children. In addition to their EcoCenter in the Baylands, the group takes students on field trips and offers a variety of fun experiences to help youth develop a love of nature. She also became a member and then board member of Hadassah. The organization's motto is "The power of women who do." I would say that well describes Fran. Her book club keeps her reading about subjects other than bridge as well.

With both she and her husband, Alan, retired and their children grown, travel became a frequent shared activity for them. They have journeyed to Eastern Europe, South America many times, Indonesia and much of Europe. An upcoming trip they are anxiously anticipating is a tour of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, which sounds pretty adventurous.

Fran and Alan are the parents of 3 children (two daughters and a son) and grandparents of 5 grandchildren. Only one of their children, a daughter, is in the Bay Area (in San Francisco.) At least that means that the Bennetts have two grandchildren nearby! Her other daughter is in South Bend, Indiana and a son is living in Seattle. Good reasons to travel around the US.

Back to the bridge club library: Two to three times a year Fran enjoys the challenge of selecting new books for the library. That means that we have access to the latest and best books on the topic of the game we love. How fortunate for all of us! By the way, a number of new books were purchased last month. A list of them is on our website. Be sure to check them out.