



## Youth Bridge Blast



May 2024

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We are excited to bring you the [Silicon Valley Youth Bridge](#) Q2 newsletter! SiVY players had an exciting Spring and look forward to more events over the Summer!

THANK YOU to all of our volunteers (\* indicates a junior volunteer):

- **SiVY committee:** Amber Lin, Kevin Rosenberg, Will Watson, Kai Eckert\*, Shankar Iyer, Debbie Rosenberg, Stephanie Youngquist, and Mukund Thapa
- **Event volunteers:** Cornelius Duffie\*, Brandon Ge\*, Kayden Ge\*, Xin Ge, Serena Guo, Eugene Hung, Ed Lechner, Qing Lu, Max Schireson, Olivia Schireson, Alan Templeton (webmaster), Brent Xiao\*, Michael Xu\*, Brian Zhang\*, Qiang Zhang, Erli Zhou, Bruce Zhu\*

## Upcoming Events

We are continuing our [Casual Fridays](#) every Friday from ~6-9 pm. Stop by for some tasty pizza and bridge fun!

[Pizza Party Tournaments](#) are every two months with a fun theme. They will award prizes and ACBL masterpoints:

- **Sunday, June 16th 11am-3pm:**  
Father's Day "Parent-Child"/Family Game  
*Bringing back this popular event from pre-COVID... Intergenerational partnerships are highly encouraged!*
- **Saturday, July 6th 12pm-4pm:**  
SiVY vs. [CBE](#) Tournament  
*A new tradition where SiVY students will compete against CBE students from the San Francisco area, featuring a virtual mini-lesson from [Larry Cohen!](#)*
- **Saturday, August 10th, 3pm-7pm:**  
Summer Holiday Party

[Summer Camp](#) is going to be a 2-day boot camp on two separate weekends leading up to the Youth NABC:

- **Saturday-Sunday June 22nd-23rd, 1-6pm**
- **Saturday-Sunday June 29th-30th, 1-6pm**

Silicon Valley Youth Bridge ~ 2024 Summer Programs

### LEARN TO PLAY BRIDGE!

MAKE FRIENDS, EXERCISE YOUR BRAIN, & HAVE FUN

**CASUAL FRIDAYS**

Guided instructional play!  
For new & experienced players.  
Every Friday, 6-8PM w/ pizza  
\$5 entry fee

**PIZZA PARTY TOURNAMENTS**

Fun, beginner-friendly bridge tournaments!  
Win prizes & ACBL masterpoints.  
Sun June 16 | "Parent-Child"/Family Game [11am]  
Sat July 6 | SiVY vs. CBE Tournament [12pm]  
Sat Aug 10 | Summer Holiday Party [3pm]  
All games are ~4 hours w/ pizza & snacks  
\$5 entry fee

**SUMMER CAMP**

2 weekends of world-class instruction & fun activities!  
For new & experienced players.  
Jun 22-23 and/or Jun 29-30, 1-6pm  
\$50 per weekend "early bird" fee; register by May 18  
\$60 per weekend regular fee; register by Jun 1

ALL EVENTS AT PALO ALTO BRIDGE CENTER  
432A STIERLIN ROAD, MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94043

LEARN MORE AND SIGN-UP FOR OUR PROGRAMS AT  
[SILICONVALLEYOUTHBRIDGE.ORG](https://siliconvalleyyouthbridge.org)

Contact organizer Amber Lin ([sivybridge@gmail.com](mailto:sivybridge@gmail.com)) with any questions.

[Download our 2024 Spring/Summer flier](#)

Camp is open to brand new players and existing players, with customized lessons taught by world-class teachers. You can come for one weekend or both weekends. Each weekend's program is different, but both will finish off with a mini-tournament on Sunday. Join us for some intensive learning and competitive fun!

[The Youth North American Bridge Championships](#) will be held in **Toronto, July 25-27**. This amazing tournament is the pinnacle annual event of the youth bridge community. It is **beginner-friendly**, with special events for newer players called "Cardrook" games. Hundreds of young players attend. Prizes include \$1,000 scholarships in the main pairs and teams events. SiVY members may apply for a \$600 stipend to help with travel costs. We are looking forward to seeing everyone there!



*Big room of fun at 2023 Youth NABC in Chicago*



*N/S are SiVY kids competing in the 2019 YNABC  
(so are players wearing the same purple shirt as North)*

## Programs Recap

### Casual Friday

Casual Friday is our main event... weekly supervised play with plenty of pizza and snacks! Since November 2023, we have held 22 events with 40+ different players! Many have never played bridge before.

Casual Fridays are held on Friday evenings. The schedule has evolved: typically there is a mini-lesson from 6-6:30pm, a team match from 6:30-8pm, and then an optional hour of casual bridge from 8-9pm. Many of the kids don't want to leave! SiVY doesn't exclusively welcome youth into their doors. Parents are also welcome to hang around and join in the fun. Many stay and watch the youth as they learn bridge skills or get some work done on the other side of the club.

Casual Friday was recently featured in the **March issue of the ACBL Bulletin** (along with Olivia Schireson's Life Master celebration)! You can read the article directly [here](#) or see the full Bulletin with your ACBL membership [here](#).

Player Jayson Lee also contributed a short article describing his Casual Friday experience:

#### **"Bridge + Pizza + Mentors = Fun at Casual Fridays"**

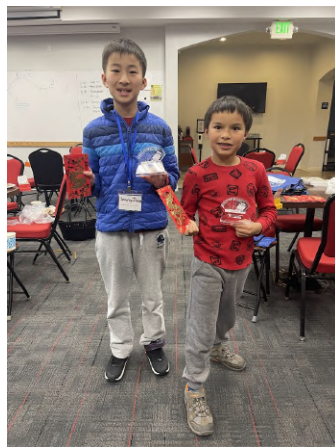
*By: Jayson Lee*

SiVY's Casual Friday is a great way to end the school week. When you walk into the Palo Alto Bridge Center, the aroma of freshly baked pizza welcomes you as if you are at home. It's food fit for bridge players—because, let's face it, pizza is the universal language of joy. Casual Fridays at SiVY aren't just about the gooey pizza (although that's a big part of it...) it's about breaking free from your comfort zone and embracing new ways to play bridge. During Casual





**1st Place:** Kate Lee  
& Jayson Lee



**2nd Place:** Jeremy Zhang  
& Demian Li



**3rd Place:** Maeve Kavanagh  
& Karl Kattermann



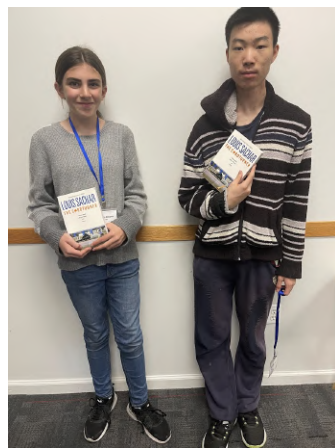
**4th Place:** Michael &  
Joseph Hoagland

The **Easter Pizza Party Tournament** was on Sunday, March 31st. This time, the lesson was titled "Don't Put All Your Eggs in One Basket: Combining Your Chances." Another six pairs attended, with the top two pairs winning masterpoints. Jayson & Kate Lee had a repeat win by just 2 matchpoints.

You can find the results and hand records [here](#). You can find photos [here](#).



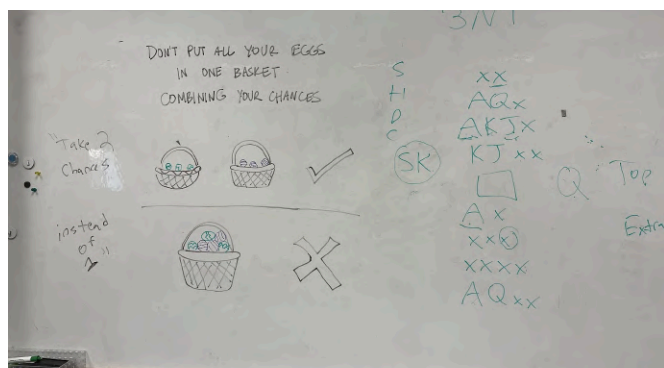
**1st Place:** Kate Lee & Jayson Lee



**2nd Place:** Beatriz Aldana  
& Liao Zhang



Prize desk included plushies, books, and t-shirts!



The lesson incorporated Easter-themed visuals



Volunteers and players review hands after the game.

## Spring NABC in Louisville

By Kayden Ge

The famous city of Louisville, Kentucky, is known for many things. For one, their delicious hot chicken is a staple of American cuisine. For another, Louisville hosts the Kentucky Derby, a classic horse-racing competition. However, from March 14-March 24, they instead hosted the annual spring NABC, with many members of our SiVY community in attendance.

In the NABC+ events specifically, several SiVY members had notable finishes. To start, SiVY alumna Olivia Schireson placed a solid 19th overall in the Smith Women's Pairs. Next, in the Kay Platinum Pairs, frequently described as the most difficult pair game in bridge, SiVY volunteers and organizers Kevin Rosenberg and Amber Lin made it to the third day of the event, finishing in 23rd place overall. Coincidentally, another SiVY volunteer, Michael Xu, finished one place ahead of Rosenberg and Lin in 22nd place. Another noteworthy result was SiVY coach Xin Ge, placing 7th overall of the Lehtar IMP Pairs. Finally, Rosenberg posted another stellar result, finishing in an impressive tenth place in the Silodor Open Pairs.

There were some top finishers from SiVY in other events as well. Coach Xin Ge won the 0-2500 Swiss Teams! On the final day of the NABC, Schireson placed 7th overall in the Top-Flight Swiss, while in the same event, two SiVY veterans, Rory Xiao and Michael Hu, finished in 12th place.

In addition to the weeks of competitive bridge, the ACBLEF hosted a "junior night" on the evening of March 23, where junior players gathered to eat, socialize and play a friendly swiss team game, where all sorts of wacky systems were welcome. Along with other juniors from all over the country and USBF mentors, many SiVY juniors took part in the casual event, which aimed to relax and unwind everybody after a long day of bridge. SiVY coach Brian Zhang, who played in the NAP B with fellow coach Kayden Ge, cited his positive experience at the occasion.

"I had a lot of fun at the junior event and goofing around with systems like 'only transfers' or 'always open 1S when non-vulnerable,'" Zhang said. "Overall, it was a great experience."

All things considered, the spring NABC was a special, fruitful experience for the members of our SiVY community. Congratulations to the top finishers, and see you all again in Toronto, Canada, for the summer NABC!

*Kayden Ge is a 9th grader from Cupertino, CA with a special interest in journalism.*



*Young players enjoy the "Junior Night" at the Spring NABC. 3 of the players are SiVY players at the table (Rory Xiao, Kayden Ge, Brian Zhang).*



*SiVY Coaches Kevin Rosenberg & Amber Lin play in the Platinum Pairs with screens.*



*SiVY players Kyra Helmbold and Michael Xu deep in thought at the NABC.*

## New LMs Feature

Two members of our SiVY family achieved Life Master this year (so far)!

### Olivia Schireson (March 2024)



*Olivia at her LM celebration at the San Antonio Sectional.*



*Olivia takes 2nd place in a National Championships (Mixed BAM) in 2022.*



*Olivia wins the sportsmanship award at the 2022 World Transnational Junior Championships.*



*Olivia wins the Junior US Bridge Championships in the U21 category; her team goes on to win 2nd place in the 2023 Transnational BAM event.*

Olivia is a rising superstar in the Bridge world with numerous big results and titles to her name, the most recent one being Life Master this past March in which she won the last fractions of silver points required. She has been playing in ACBL competition since 2015 when she was 10 and has now at age 19 accumulated an astounding 1,185.65 Master Points! She was the 2023 Queen of Bridge as proclaimed by the ACBL. Queen/King of Bridge is a scholarship awarded to a graduating high school senior who goes out of her/his way to promote Bridge and perform well in the competition. Olivia has greatly exceeded expectations in both regards!

Olivia has competed in many international competitions, the most notable being her 7th place finish in the 2023 World Youth Team Championship, 2nd place in the 2023 World Youth Team Championship Transnationals BAM, and 3rd place in the 2023 Mixed U.S. Bridge Championship. If she had placed one spot higher she would have represented the USA in the 2023 Wuhan Cup. She also won the Joan Gerard Award for Sportsmanship and Aptitude in the 2022 Salsomaggiore World Youth Transnationals. In ACBL competition, Olivia has placed 2nd in the 2022 Providence Freeman Mixed BAM Teams. More recently, she placed 5th in the Atlanta 2023 NABC+ Mixed Swiss.

In terms of promoting Bridge Olivia has done much to ensure that Bridge continues! She volunteered as a coach at our recent SiVY Winter camp helping our intermediate kids improve. Her enthusiastic teaching style kept them engaged and coming back for more! She also started a vibrant bridge club at her high school in the Bay Area. Beyond that, she has started teaching private lessons to those who want to improve their game. Finally, she has become a bit of a Bridge celebrity; as of April, she was recruited for Team Funbridge! This is a youth team with top youth players from all around the world sponsored by Funbridge to play in top-level competitions.

Olivia is currently competing in the United States Bridge Championships working to earn her spot on a USA team competing in one of the four big international events in 2025! We wish her the best of luck in the USBCs and in all her endeavors!

## Kai Eckert (April 2024)



*Phillip Mingola and Kai after coming Kai Playing in the 0-2500 pairs  
2nd in the Reno 2022 0-2500 pairs in the 2024 Louisville NABC*

*Kai in one of his Videos on the ACBL YouTube Channel*

Kai Eckert, a 20-year old college student, is a speedily improving bridge player who has been playing for nearly 7 years. He is one of the most dedicated SiVY volunteers and can be seen coaching young players at nearly all SiVY events. His grandma was his inspiration for starting bridge. While on vacation he learned bridge so that he could return home and surprise her with his new-found passion. While playing with his grandma, he met Cheryl Haines, a member of the previous SiVY board with an infectious enthusiasm for Bridge. She inspired him and introduced him to SiVY and the USBF Junior training program! From there he only went up!

Kai wanted to take after Cheryl and be a driving force for enthusiasm in bridge, so when offered a spot on the SiVY Committee, he immediately accepted! He wanted to give the same experience he got to the future generation of bridge so that they would be as inspired as he was when he first started. Further taking after Cheryl, he became an ACBL-certified club director. He directs at his local club in Half Moon Bay for all of his grandma's bridge friends. He has also started teaching private lessons for beginners and intermediates as well as teaching group classes at the Metropolitan and Francisca clubs in San Francisco. He volunteers on the Unit 498 Board of Directors as the Unit 498 Unit coordinator. He won his last .03 black points needed for his life master in the April 13th Unit game he organized. Finally, you may have seen Kai on the [ACBL YouTube channel](#). He produces biweekly videos to help show the world that bridge is great for the brain and addictingly fun!

Kai is proud of his 2nd place finish in the 2022 Reno 0-2500 Pairs and his 3rd place finish in the 2024 Louisville 0-2500 Swiss. All with partners and teammates from his tightknit online group of friends he first met in 2019 with the small rise of bridge on Twitch (the streaming platform). He claims that he has learned most of what he knows from them and is always excited to have the opportunity to meet and play with them at the NABCs.

In late June, Kai will compete in the FISU University Mind Sports Championship in Entebbe, Uganda representing Team USA. He will also be in Toronto representing District 21 in GNT C. He is looking forward to the future of bridge and all it holds: the competitions and the overall growth of the game! Kai just wants to do all he can to make bridge the best game it can be!