

A COMMUNITY EFFORT  
HUALALAI ACADEMY MULTIPURPOSE FACILITY  
AND  
THE RELOCATION OF THE KONA BRIDGE CLUB

**Hualalai Academy** - Since 1985, Hualalai Academy has served the rural community in West Hawaii on the island of Hawaii with award winning private education. There are 150 students from kindergarten to grade eight. Hualalai's mission is to prepare students for a future of cultural, environmental, and technological changes. It offers an enriched curriculum in a nurturing and supportive environment that encourages exploration, positive self-awareness, respect for others, and a lifelong love of learning.

Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the school approaches learning holistically and provides enrichment programs which benefit not only the students but also parents and the community. Educationally integrated hands-on activities with local charities and organizations allow students an early opportunity to give back to the community in which they live.

Hualalai Academy out grew its original facility and is in the process of constructing a complete new campus on 14.9 acres of leased property located in the Honokohau area, adjacent to Kealakehe. Construction began in spring of 1999 and staff and students moved in at the end of the year. Classrooms for the current enrollment are built. The anticipated facilities include six classroom buildings, a restroom building, an administration building, and a multipurpose facility. A playing field and hard court are also included.

**The Kona Bridge Club** - The Big Island Unit of the American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) first formed around 1970. Beginning with approximately 12 members, the group met at a local recreation facility, Hale Halawai, one evening a week. The Big Island membership as of January 2001 is 135 duplicate bridge players. Twenty-eight are life masters, twelve members new to bridge, and the rest wanting opportunities to play more often to reach life master status. The largest club within this unit is the Kona Bridge Club with 119 members. Separate clubs meet in Hilo, Waikoloa, and Mauna Lani. Over the years as membership grew, the Kona club moved to larger facilities and is now playing at the Kona Outdoor Circle (KOC) in the multi-purpose room. Open division players may participate in a match twice a week at the KOC, there are generally between seven and sixteen tables in play at one time. Many members in the open division travel several times a week, thirty miles north to the Kohala Coast, for additional opportunities to play bridge at the clubs located in Waikoloa and Mauna Lani.

In 1998, a novice division began and continues to encourage beginning players to join and participate. Players in the novice division alternate weekly between the KOC and a private home for Easybridge lessons and to play. Currently, there is only one opportunity a week for the novice players to participate in a match. The novice players may move into the open division, as they gain confidence in their ability to play and compete with the more advanced players. Currently there are between six and seven tables of novice players at each match. These players



play bridge on the lanai outside the multi-purpose room of the KOC. As membership grows, space is becoming very limited and parking a growing problem.

In January of 2001, free Easybridge lessons were offered to new players advertised through the local newspaper. These lessons were provided for six weeks, once a week, for three hours. Sixty players attended the first lesson and at the conclusion forty-eight were still attending. These new beginning players are now playing together once a week and will move into the novice division as their confidence grows. Plans are underway for another session of beginner lessons.

In 1866, Mark Twain called Hawaii "the loveliest fleet of islands that lies anchored in any ocean." Truer words were never spoken, and those of us fortunate enough to live here in Kona share our island with close to one million visitors each year. Visitors come for summer vacation and many come for as long as six months to avoid the winter cold. Currently, by word of mouth, many of these vacation visitors and "snowbirds" become welcome participants of our bridge group. The Board of Directors of the Kona club estimates that over 200 visitors and winter residents participate in the opportunities offered by the Kona club each year.

Limited space, limited opportunity, and limited parking are preventing the Kona club from providing a program to meet the needs of the bridge playing community. A core group of members is seeking to improve this situation by locating a facility to meet our needs now, and one that will meet the needs as we continue to grow in the future.

Within the past month, our search has narrowed and now two groups are excited about the possibilities offered by joining together. Hualalai Academy plans to build a multipurpose room to serve as an auditorium, recreation room, and cafeteria. Members of the Kona Bridge Club and school administrators have met twice to explore the possibilities of building a facility that will meet the needs of the school and the bridge club. Both groups are excited about this joint effort and eager to begin formal planning.

The school and bridge club are asking for funds to build a facility to be used by both groups, for furniture to equip the room, six computers, one laptop computer, a printer, one video projector, software, and books related to the game of bridge. The six computers will be used for students and members to improve their bridge skills. The laptop and video projector will be used as teaching tools to improve bridge skills and for projecting results during tournament play.

**Goal -** It is the goal of the Kona Bridge Club to provide increased opportunity for the community to learn and play the game of bridge. This goal will provide opportunity for school age children, working adults, and senior citizens to participate and interact through a common interest.

**Activities and events that will take place each year.**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Daily Bridge Matches	All Players All Levels	Afternoon Evening Weekend	Board of Directors Bridge Match Director



Easybridge lessons for beginning levels of play.	School Age Players Working Adults Senior Citizens	New groups, twice each year for 4-5 months.	Board of Directors Bridge Teachers
Mentoring programs by life master and more advanced players.	School Age Players Beginning Players Intermediate Players Advanced Players	Special mentoring games thorough out the year.	Board of Directors Life Master Players
In-depth workshops on specific topics and guest speakers.	All players	Workshops once each month and guest speakers twice each year	Board of Directors Bridge Teachers
School age bridge club.	School Age Players	Once each week during the school year.	School Administrator School Teacher Bridge Teachers
Special bridge events and tournaments	All players	Holiday events Regional Tournament	Board of Directors

Within six months of moving into the new facility, a club for students enrolled at the private school and students at another nearby public intermediate school, Kealakehe will be formed. Easybridge will be used to train new young bridge players. This program introduces the concept of adding a new “Mental Sport” to the school curriculum. It stresses that bridge helps in the development of logic and deductive skills. It presents bridge as an activity that helps students develop social skills and establish a good relationship with a partner.

Easybridge consists of twenty hours of beginning bridge lessons given on a weekly basis by professionally trained bridge teachers. At the completion of the course, a mini-tournament is held for the participants. The bridge teacher will work under the authority of a school administrator, who will help develop a bridge club at each school for the students taking the lessons.

Upon completion of the lessons students will receive prizes. A trophy for the winner of the mini-tournament and special bridge T-shirts presented to all students. Students are offered ACBL student membership for \$12.75. Each spring a School Lesson Instant Matchpoint game provides students the opportunity to win a \$500 scholarship prize awarded by the ACBL Education Foundation. Once this program is in place the Kona club will establish an additional scholarship program for the students participating in the school club program.

The positive opportunities for the school community and this group to interact are endless. Other programs that will involve both groups will be explored to provide opportunities for young player to improve their skills.

The average age of the members on the Big Island Unit is conservatively around 68 years young. These active “seniors” participate because they recognize that bridge is a lifetime sport that can be enjoyed by everyone regardless of age, gender, or physical limitation. Bridge provides increased social opportunities, improved memory, improved concentration, improved ability to

develop and modify plans, development of judgement and logic skills, growth of imagination. And all these benefits at a low cost.

“Bridge players plan ahead, they use working memory, they deal with sequencing, initiation and numerous other higher order functions with which the dorsolateral cortex is involved” said Marian Cleeves Diamond, a professor of integrative biology at the University of California at Berkeley, in a study done this past year, 2000. She further concluded that the playing of bridge stimulates the production of disease-fighting immune cells. In her study which included 12 players – women in their 70”s and 80”s - all of them revealed changes in the levels of CD4 positive T-cells, the white blood cells which patrol the body in search of viruses and other invaders. So it not only helps our memory and higher thinking processes, it also boosts our immune system.

According to a study done at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and presented at the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences by Dr. Robert P. Friedland. Dr. Friedland reported that adults with hobbies that exercise their brains; such as reading, puzzles, or bridge; are 2 1/2 times less likely to have Alzheimer’s disease. While leisure limited to TV watching may increase the risk. Furthermore, the protective effect of the mind-exercising hobbies against Alzheimer’s comes from this activity between the ages of 20-60. Therefore, it is important to introduce bridge at a young age thus development of programs with school children is essential to give them an option to better their quality of life not only now, but also later in live.

The International Olympic Committee has already recognized the World Bridge Federation and prospects are that bridge will soon be an official competition at the Olympic Winter Games. Bridge may first appear as an “attraction” at the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, in Salt Lake City. It is hoped that the final step of bridge becoming a sport discipline will be achieved at the 2006 Olympic Games in Torino, Italy. Perhaps at future USA Olympic trials, the Kona Bridge Club will have Olympic hopefuls from our older group of members and from our well-trained youth as well.

### **Budget**

Item Requested	Cost	Total Cost
Facility	500,000	500,000
Furniture	5,000	5,000
6 Computers	3,000	18,000
Laptop computer	3,000	3,000
Printer	400	400
Video Projector	5,000	5,000
Software	5,000	5,000
Books	2,000	2,000
Totals	523,400	538,400