

Club News – Bridge Bulletin – 2015

Home, sweet home

BY JIM WALLACE

In 1968, the first long-term home for the Red Deer (AB) Bridge Club was established in the basement of a building in downtown Red Deer. We were forced to move in the summer of 1994 for a number of reasons.

In our search for a new venue, we found some fixer-upper space in a commercial condo near the Red Deer River. We realized that we could pay a mortgage with the amount of rent being asked. Of course, we had no money, so we went to the membership and proposed that the club pay 8% interest (the market rate at that time) on a promissory note, which said little more than we would pay when we could. Within about 20 minutes, we had the \$100,000 needed to buy one bay of our present facility and renovate it to our needs. The size was a bit small, but we decided to give it a shot. One member was a builder by trade and became our foreman. Another member handled all the electri-

It soon became apparent that we needed an additional source of revenue to pay off the promissory note. We tried a large yard sale and hosted some ethnic dinners, but those efforts left us well short of our goal. Then we came up with an idea. In Alberta, registered nonprofit organizations can work with the provincial gaming commission to raise funds. So we became registered and helped run a lot of bingo games, in addition to helping run casino events every three years. It worked! We paid off the note and interest in five years and then bought the bay next to ours, this time with a regular mortgage that we paid off in four years.

By 2003, we owned a 2500-square-foot playing area that had lots of parking and was wheelchair accessible. Last fall, we celebrated 20 years in our facility. We are truly proud of what we have accomplished. We can fit 20 tables easily, but 25 tables is a “squeeze.” ■



From humble beginnings, members have transformed the Red Deer Bridge Club into a spacious and comfortable playing area.



The Red Deer Bridge Club – Progress 1994



The area gets gutted



The first board installed during construction



A little more recognizable



Starting to take shape



Arranging furniture for the FIRST Night



Welcome to our new "home" – The First Night