

**Thank you, everyone!!**

Please, bear with me – I know I stand between you and playing cards --but please allow me to thank you properly.

Thanks, first, go to the members of the Board and the members of the Unit for creating this honor and then bestowing it on me.

I am so **touched** by your **recognition**.

To me there is **no greater gift** – than to be **recognized and appreciated by your friends and peers**.

These earrings –these **extraordinary** earrings-- will be an **extraordinary reminder** of this day that may have worked to make so special for me.

Those of you who know me know I am a “Volunteer” with a capital “V” – and if you asked Lee he would say I have a full-time job volunteering.

He may be right, but it is NO sacrifice. What I give, I receive back a hundred-fold. The number one thing I am most grateful for is the friends I have made --- working with dozens of you who’ve been on the board over the years.

AND, on the side, I have learned a LOT about websites!

Since I started playing bridge in 1976, I have been **in awe** of the **many REALLY TALENTED people in our unit who ALSO happen to play REALLY GOOD BRIDGE**.

Serving on the board **has made me feel accepted as part of this talented ---and maybe a bit “wacky” community!**

You know, it may sound a bit weird, but one of MY **passions in life is to “document and record”**. **Yep!**

So, for our organization, I wanted to **create a something to for ALL OF YOU:**

- ◆ **remember and honor the past –**
- ◆ **to celebrate the present, and**
- ◆ **shape the future of the Unit.**

**AND I wanted everything in one place – So, VOILA! – We have a website!**

I get a **great sense of joy looking back** at recruiting the original design team of :

- ◆ Sheryl Finkenstadt and her son Andy,
- ◆ Bill Kauffman,
- ◆ Milt Zlatic, my dear and constant friend,

and now, today, **Helene Siegfried** has joined us – I refer to us as our well-oiled, crack web team who happily work for you almost 24/7.

I receive great satisfaction seeing **what we have accomplished** with the website and –**Hey!**-- with **over a 1 million 700 thousand hits ---I think we must be doing something worthwhile.**

I believe we are **all so fortunate to be part of this Unit ... and if it takes a village to keep bridge thriving, then Unit 143 is a metropolis.**

On a final, more personal note: I've read that **Volunteering is a way of “paying it forward”** – and I am **convinced** that this is the case. **Because my dedication to serving you has, in turn, served me very well:**

- ◆ I have survived the trials of multiple serious illnesses and am blessed with good health **today.**
- ◆ So, I stand before you **grateful for your honor** and acknowledgement and also

- ◆ Extremely **grateful for the opportunity to have been of service**, all because someone asked me to serve on the board!

And, lest we forget, it was a bridge tournament in Champaign that brought Lee & me together – so my final thanks **MUST** go to Lee who **puts up with it all**.

**Everyone, Thank you so very much!**

**NOW... LET'S PLAY BRIDGE!!!**