

Hoppe finds bridge to living well in Mesquite

By Kirk Kern

When Judy Hoppe first visited Mesquite 20 years ago, she hadn't planned on making the community home. But just exploring the area as part of a spa weekend led her and her husband to buy a condo here and become part-time residents.

I guess you could say it was in the cards.

The Hoppes eventually moved up to a single-family home and for the past 20 years have been Mesquite residents from mid-October to the end of April. The rest of the time, they live in Nebraska.

While here, the couple spends a lot of time golfing and, in Judy's case, playing bridge. She has been a regular player in a number of events, including the Mesquite Senior Games.

"It's my hobby and my passion," she said. "It's a complicated game, but you

have to have four players to play and have a partner."

Hoppe's regular Bridge partner is Sarah Bowman, another Mesquite winter visitor from Wyoming. Hoppe and Bowman have been bridge partners for the last 15 years.

This year, their game may be a little sharper.

Hoppe said she and Bowman aren't usually in contact with each other in the summer months away. But this year, primarily due to COVID-19, they connected more frequently and began playing online tournaments.

"We played a lot of good competition this summer," Hoppe said. "I think our game has gotten pretty good. The more we play together, the better we get. There's a lot of bidding, conventions and trick plays.

"But it's a good friendship too. We do a little gossip at the end."

Hoppe has also become an ambas-

sador in trying to grow the game, just like fellow Nebraskan Warren Buffett and Bill Gates. Her husband plays online on BridgeFace.com and she's taught the game to her grandchildren.

"We're doing all we can to grow the game," she said. "It's a very social game. But the game is dying a little bit because average player is about 70 years old."

Golf and bridge have helped the Hoppes confirm their decision to buy a Mesquite home.

"We hadn't even looked at a retirement place," she said. "My husband is kind of an investor and we got a good interest rate on our money. First, we bought as an investment and it sounded like a good deal.

"But we love it here. There's low traffic and Vegas is so close. In the last 20 years, we've probably been to every park in Utah. It's a cool place. It's better than we even thought."



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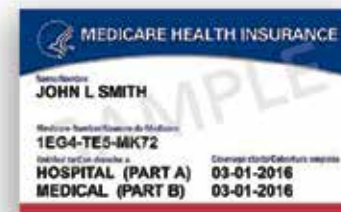
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