



ISPA INFO



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Message from the President:

Dear ISPA Members,

We have completed another year of ISPA tournaments and fellowship. Congratulations to all the winners over the year and a big thank you to all the presidents and their helpful volunteers that made all these tournaments a great time and experience. I am seeing more and more new faces participating in our tournaments and that means were heading in the right direction and our players are out travelling again. A big part of Skat is all about the fun and fellowship at tournaments and when they are run smoothly and well-organized new people understand why one should be a member of this great organization.

That being said let's get a jump on the 2024 calendar and book your tournament dates on the ISPA web site.

I would also like to wish all of the ISPA members, my friends, and their families a wonderful holiday season, a Merry Christmas, and fantastic cards in the New Year. Excited about Vegas and WM on the cruise ship already.

Stay safe and healthy.

Best regards,

Ron Link

President, ISPA Canada

From the Editor:

Dear Skat Friends,

The 2023 ISPA North America Skat year has ended with the last tournament having been played in Edmonton. It was very nice to see that the number of tournaments played around the continent restored to 16, a much better number compared to the pandemic and post pandemic years. Naturally, with a few clubs having had to close doors, we did not reach the olden days' numbers, but the editor feels that we overall had a good Skat year with lots of laughs, camaraderie, and, in some cases, even good cards. As a Skat addict, who tries to play as many tournaments as life allows, the editor learned this year, that staying at the homes of players adds a tremendous amount of enjoyment to the experience, while it at the same time really makes it somewhat easier on the wallet. Not to mention that one sees a lot more from the area visited, when you have a local sitting next to you.

As far as Skat travel goes, one player sticks out. He was recently crowned by some the undisputed road king of the recent Skat days. The talk is of course of Scott McCormick from Ottawa. Twice now in relatively short sequence, Scott has made his travel out to the West, driving across the country, putting significant mileage on his vehicle, that he calls home during those trips. Besides filling up the gas tank frequently at stops, he also fills up his phone camera with amazing picture documentation of each trip.



For a full picture journey, you are encouraged to check out Scott's Facebook page, where you can spend hours retracing Scott's journeys across North America.

That Scott likes to drive became evident, when Steve bought a not insignificant amount of prime liquor in Alberta, since availability seemed to have been scarce in Nebraska. He asked Scott to deliver a recent stock-up purchase of liquor to his house. Scott's comment on the ask was simply: Yeah, I can do that, that is only six hours more on the trip. Note that there was no sarcasm detected in this message, it was genuine. One thing I have not figured out is: How were you able to still sleep in the car, Scotty?



Our best guess is that we will get the answer in a future visit to Omaha while enjoying a shot of Glenmorangie, courtesy of Steve. On a related side note: That Taylor Fladgate is the editor's favourite. Well, stories like this really should make you want to travel for Skat more in the next year. We are counting on it... As for 2024, we already have four tournaments scheduled, the first of which is Las Vegas. Games are held in a new venue, the German American Social Club of Nevada. Second up is Houston, followed by the Canadian Championship in Montréal. Check out the flyers under the Tournaments 2024 page [here](#).

The other tournament announced at the time of creation of this newsletter is probably the most exciting one of 2024: The World Championship. With Poland effectively having withdrawn, ISPA World got together and decided the WM is going to be on a cruise ship, more precisely the Costa Diadema. The date has been finalized to be from the 6th to the 20th of October 2024, more details below under "The View Ahead". We suggest you check the ISPA World page frequently ([WM 2024 - ISPA-World](#)) to obtain more updates as they become available, or even better, register for this prestigious event, since the registration is open online already.

Having participated in the EM of 2019, which was also held on a Costa cruise ship (the Costa Pacifica), we can highly recommend this type of Skat experience. Quite frankly, if you are not going, you will be missing out! How much, you may ask? Well, you may want to review the pictures from the 2019 cruise [here](#).

Until then, we are going to play an almost full season of Skat tournaments, for which we invite all active clubs to think about and communicate their tournament dates and posters early, so we all can plan out our year around these dates.

Thank you kindly for doing so. Wishing you all Gut Blatt for 2024!

Gerd Reiner

Secretary and Editor, ISPA Canada

Tournament Results

In the last newsletter, we covered the combined tournaments for summer and fall. The last tournament in Edition 92 of the ISPA described the Ogoopogo Skat tournament. Unlike the friendly sea monster, the Skat travelers did make an appearance in this beautiful city in the Okanagan. Leaving the milder temperatures behind, or so we thought, some players made their way to Omaha, Nebraska, which welcomed us to a whopping 97 degrees (34 Celsius for us Canadians).

Omaha Tournament

While the tournament enjoyed only 16 players, the real party started even before the cards were dealt, but more of that a little later.

The player who won the tournament, had the second last score in the first round with only 232 points. Coming from the last table, Hans Rasing then mounted a steep comeback through the rounds, winning three of the five series and eventually passing Scott McCormick (5606 points) and Roger Beckerman (5302 points) to take the tournament trophy with 5679 points. Congratulations to Hans and all the winners!



Not often do we get the picture with the series winners having the same amount of people of the winners picture, but it happened in Omaha:



As for the winning team, the duo called "Crazy Canucks," made up by Hans Rasing from Winnipeg and Scott McCormick from Ottawa took the team crown:



From the eight available trophies, Hans took home four (50%), that was quite the Skat demonstration:



Winning a series is something special, winning three series in a tournament is an extraordinary feat. Would be nice to see that happen at the World Championship next year, Hans!

Here the complete results from Omaha (with the total points and ranking on the right):

Team Name	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Total
Cheryl Canaris	820	872	2011	2977	11079
Hans Rasing	232	1214	1901	1946	5693
Scott McCormick	388	1802	1900	1411	5499
Andreas Hilde	1294	1793	2181	2147	10017
Deafly Trismond Bread	2486	1293	2182	1888	10860
SMILAC	3272	1897	1775	1200	10266
Hans and Mikke	188	1823	2204	2212	10066
Isaac Nebraska	1935	1389	1833	1203	8861

Now for the party story, that we briefly indicated above: As you all know by now, Steve does do things on a larger scale, whether that is his whisky collection, his vehicle fleet, or his love for good food. When Helmut and I arrived at the Omaha airport, Scott and Steve were already waiting for us. As the dedicated driver, the editor was directed to the dinner venue, called Farmer Brown's. When the waitress arrived with menus, Steve proceeded to let us know that there is no need to look at the menu, as he knows the place and what is good. So, we followed the instructions, left the menus closed and ordered what Steve ordered. We should have known better, but we played along. Here is what you order, he said: Hired Hand, Extra Cut.

That sounded good, as we were indeed hungry skipping breakfast and no food in the plane. Having all put in this order with our selection of sides, we could not but overhear a gentleman mumbling something at the next table from us. Eventually the guest came over to our table and mentioned that there is likely a steer being butchered in the backyard...

Then the food arrived. We think, these pictures speak for themselves:



Oh, and if you were thinking that was one piece that was moved around for the four smiling guys in these photos, you would be, as we commonly refer to as, wrong:



As you can see, we don't simply just compete for bragging rights from the Skat table. If you want to know, who won the food competition, ask any one of us.



Calgary Tournament

After a short recovery period from Omaha, we re-assembled in Calgary for their ISPA tournament, which was held the weekend after Thanksgiving. 22 players competed in the tournament. Due to the generous donation of a turkey courtesy of Uwe Weis, plus the cooking skills of the Calgary ladies, nobody went hungry there either.

If one believes in such a thing as Karma, one would be affirmed by the fact that the turkey donor also won his first ISPA tournament! While Opa Luz held the lead from round two to round three, it was Uwe coming back with a great last round to beat Bernd (6008 points) and Peter (5967 points) with a total of 6258 points. Congratulations to Uwe and all winners!



The five series were won by Walter Schultz, Bernd Luz, Scott McCormick, Danny Ridder, and Dinah Kunst:



As for the team winners, Hugh's Hopefuls narrowly outperformed the rest of the competition with 20529 points:



Uwe also managed to achieve his first Skatsport-abzeichen (Bronze Skat Pin)!



So as a Skat player and believer in Karma, you have to ask yourself: Should I be donating the next turkey dinner?

Here the full results from Calgary:



Name	Club	Score#	ISPA#	Round1	Round2	Round3	Round4	Round5	Total
1 WEIS, Uwe	EDM	305	872	1618	951	991	1169	1529	6258
2 LUZ, Bernd	CAL	206	10	1370	1736	1206	904	792	6008
3 RIDDER, Peter	EDM	204	41	1165	1095	1722	1443	542	5967
4 HUISMAN, Kristina	EDM	302	446	1189	1386	521	1168	1307	5571
5 RIDDER, Danny	EDM	401	40	558	1180	1258	1571	765	5332
6 BELANGER, Monica	EDM	404		638	713	860	1261	1487	4959
7 McCORMICK, Scott	OTT	304		852	662	1373	1273	734	4894
8 LINK, Ron	EDM	101	33	1361	523	684	1486	670	4724
9 KUNST, Dinah	WPG	202	355	937	880	352	869	1631	4669
10 SCHEER, Christine	CAL	201	600	1381	810	557	1217	537	4502
11 SCHULTZ, Walter	EDM	303	46	1685	678	734	694	697	4488
12 BUCHMANN, Mike	CAL	106	28	968	382	478	1216	1366	4410
13 LUZ, Eric	CAL	102	11	1008	1145	77	958	1080	4268
14 LITWINIUK, Marianne	CAL	104	6	696	959	681	1175	674	4185
15 VERHAEGHE, Geria	EDM	203		693	978	893	590	877	4031
16 SCHEER, Alex	CAL	103	876	1321	392	1098	426	670	3907
17 HUNGNESS, Shelley	SK	403	287	335	1014	1183	642	716	3890
18 KORONKO, Keith	SK	402	454	412	809	734	1092	663	3710
19 REINER, Gerd	RD	301	689	373	791	1297	293	750	3504
20 SCHNEIDER, Oskar	CAL	205	808	692	979	407	1046	334	3458
21 SMITH, Tami	EDM	306	57	164	1003	520	1162	595	3444
22 KUCHER, Colin	EDM	105		338	410	415	627	19	1809



Edmonton Tournament

For the final ISPA North America tournament of the season, we headed from Calgary Flames country up to Edmonton Oilers territory. Since Red Deer is on the way, the Red Deer Skat Club flexed their style and pulled their fun Halloween tournament ahead in between the two big Alberta cities' calendar, allowing out of towners to catch several Skat events within 10 consecutive days. Edmonton enjoyed being host to 40 players, the largest Skat tournament in Western Canada in 2023. At the end of the last five rounds of the year, Ron Link came out victorious once again with 6696 points, ahead of Winnipeg's Hans Rasing (6285) and Scott McCormick (6247):



The series winners had all high scores in Edmonton with none less than 1580 points: Dinah Kunst, Eric Luz, Kristina Huisman, James (Shifty) Schaeufele, Ron Link.

It should be noted here that this was Shifty's first ISPA tournament, which makes the series win special. He was also easily the best dressed player in Edmonton!

Following the example of SaSKAToon, Edmonton also chose to build teams by drawing from every player entering their name into the draw. The winning team with a combined points score of 21189 points was the (self-proclaimed) Prettiest Team:

Christine Scheer, Ron Link, Fern Luz, and Karen Buro. The victory dance that you see below is a Can-Can.



Two players achieved their Skat pins in Edmonton: Wolfgang Paech won the Bronze Skatsportabzeichen and the editor his Silver:



Here the full results from Edmonton:

1	Link Ron, Edmonton Spree Asse	6696
2	Rasing Hans, Winnipeg Skat Club	6285
3	McCormick Scott, Ottawa Skat Club	6247
4	Lus Eric, Calgary Skat Club	5708
5	Wehr Kurt, Edmonton Spree Asse	5686
6	Reiner Gerd, Red Deer Skat Club	5674
7	Huckfeld Klaus, Edmonton Spree Asse	5583
8	Buro Michael, Edmonton Spree Asse	5543
9	Buchmann Michael, Calgary Skat Club	5502
10	Fahr Siegfried, Saskatoon Skat Club	5456
11	Bork Helmut, Vancouver	5368
12	Roselamp Werner, Saskatoon Skat Club	5255
13	Schulze Walter, Edmonton Spree Asse	5189
14	Hungness Shelley, Saskatoon Skat Club	5150
15	Paech Wolfgang, Edmonton Spree Asse	5142
16	Kunze Dinah, Winnipeg Skat Club	5023
17	O'Keefe Joe, Red Deer Skat Club	4999
18	Ridder Peter, Edmonton Spree Asse	4977
19	Scheer Christine, Calgary Skat Club	4874
20	Lus Fern, Calgary Skat Club	4833
21	Buro Karen, Edmonton Spree Asse	4786
22	Ridder Danny, Edmonton Spree Asse	4757
23	Huisman Kristina, Edmonton Spree Asse	4712
24	Weber Paul, Edmonton Spree Asse	4681
25	Hacht von Arno, Winnipeg Skat Club	4433
26	Vezhaeghe Geria, Edmonton Spree Asse	4289
27	Eckl Ed, Saskatoon Skat Club	4078
28	Grimes Steve, Omaha	4076
29	Koronko Keith, Saskatoon Skat Club	4046
30	Litwiniuk Marianne, Calgary Skat Club	3952
31	Schneufele James, Edmonton Spree Asse	3726
32	Dee Donna, Edmonton Spree Asse	3662
33	Weis Uwe, Edmonton Spree Asse	3589
34	Link Trecia, Edmonton Spree Asse	3349
35	Tewitz Wolfgang, Edmonton Spree Asse	3328
36	Thompson Henrietta, Red Deer Skat Club	3326
37	Belanger Monica, Edmonton Spree Asse	3313
38	Smith Tami, Edmonton Spree Asse	3080
39	Schoepfer Peter, Kelowna Ogopogo Skat Club	2129
40	Kucher Colin, Edmonton Spree Asse	1960

Auswertung 4-er-MANNSCHAFT

Platz	Mannschaft	Gesamt
1	The Prettiest Team	21189
2	Walters Krasy Banditos	20176
3	Skat Queens	19220
4	Sputniks	18553
5	Hooters	18287
6	No Doubt	17769
7	Shiffoys Cowboys	17718
8	52 and Under	17141
9	SMEDUSA	16551
10	Wolf Pack	16031

This concludes the ISPA tournament updates for the year 2023. On behalf of the ISPA Executive, we wish you all a heartwarming Christmas season, and a healthy and happy New Year 2024, when we hope to see you all back at the Skat table in one tournament or another.

So, you want to be a referee?

Let's face it: Most Skat players simply want to enjoy a nice round of Skat in the company of their longstanding Skat buddies. Nobody really wants to call for a referee, but sometimes, it is needed to clarify certain quirky situations occurring on or at a Skat table. Peter Ridder, Head Referee for Western Canada, sent us the following referee report:

"On Monday May 29th, A referee recertification was conducted by Hans-Juergen Steinmetz. Brett Schwartz, Eric Luz and I, Peter Ridder, were officially recertified as ISPA Referees for North America. Hans-Juergen had put in many hours of negotiations with ISPA World to allow him to re-certify the three of us, not to mention the countless hours translating the rule book into English. The three of us were also certified to teach the referee's course which in turn would give us more referees in Canada and the USA. It was decided that the referee's license would be valid for two years and that we would alternate one training session in the East and one in the West in alternate years.

We held our first training session in Hamilton on August 7. It should be pointed out that the test is not easy and it requires extensive knowledge and interpretation of the rules to complete successfully. We had seven participants and after six hours, we emerged with five new ISPA North American Referees. We will be announcing the location of next year's referee course once the dates for next year's western tournaments are finalized.

Skat tournaments bring out everyone's competitive spirits. Inevitably, situations will arise in tournaments or even at your weekly club nights that can cause arguments. Please call a referee to your table and have him/her settle the dispute amicably. Although Skat rules are basically straight forward, there are many unique situations that will arise that require a referee's interpretation. There is a great Facebook site called "Skat the Ultimate Card Game." If there is no referee or if it is a private game and you have a question, that site is a great place to seek advice. If you have never visited the site, I highly recommend it. There are occasional rule questions posted, but there are also many interesting hands posted looking for opinions on bidding, playing, etc.

Alternatively, inquiries can be sent to any of the accredited referees listed below. Gut Blatt everyone and remember, don't argue, ask someone who knows:

Peter Ridder
Eric Luz
Brett Schwartz
Bill Thompson
Scott McCormick
Frank Heuvelmans
Mandi Asbury
Kristina Huisman “

Club Updates

This section of the newsletter is dedicated to the updates that the various Skat clubs are providing. The entries are in now particular order.

Montréal

John Kretschmann from the Montréal Skat Club reports that weekly play on Wednesday night at the club produces between three and five tables. An attempt to add another round on Saturday mornings will be tried again in the new year.

Hamilton

The Hamilton Skat Club reports that 13 players meet regularly with four others appearing occasionally for the weekly game on Saturdays. As a result of the voting at the Annual General Meeting in August, Amanda Asbury was voted as President, Erwin Carl as Treasurer, as well as Thomas Rausch and Adolf Polap as Directors. The position of Secretary is currently vacant in Hamilton.

Kelowna

Manfred Grossmueller from the Ogoopogo Skat Club informed us that one of their members was hospitalized briefly but is now home again. More enjoyable news is that Sigfried Watzlawek was recently celebrating his 96th birthday. Happy Birthday

to you, Sigi, hope you were able to celebrate your special day among friends and family.

Cleveland

Bill Thompson from the Cleveland Skat Club writes that the club plays live every Thursday night at the Cleveland Maennerchor, 4515 State Road, Cleveland, OH, 44109. Another live game is played on the first Saturday of the month, morning at 9:30am at Panera Bread, 5090 Tiedeman Rd, Brooklyn, OH 44144, as well as a third live game on the third Friday of the month at 6:30pm at Aladdin's Restaurant, 6901 Rockside Rd, Independence, OH 44131.

Edmonton

Karen Buro, Secretary of the Edmonton Spree Asse Skat Club provided the updates from the last tournament of 2023 (please see the Tournament Results entry [here](#)). Besides the results, Karen and Kristina congratulate Trecia Link for winning a Grand Ouvert in round five and thanks the tournament organizers for a smooth tournament as well as the German Club for “keeping us afloat with coffee, beer, food and anything else we needed during the weekend.”

Besides the games, Paul Weber and his family hosted the Edmonton Spree Asse party, inviting everyone to their house for snacks and enjoying time even without holding cards in our hands.

The Editor would like to add a special thanks also to Paul and his family for the extended hospitality, the Webers are the most wonderful family supporting our cause. Wishing Paul (not Peter) a speedy recovery from his recent surgery.

SaSKAToon

Shelley Hungness from Saskatoon writes us:

“Hi Everyone, from the Saskatoon SKAT Club. It has been a busy fall for our members as they travelled from the west coast – Seattle to Kelowna in September; followed by tournaments in October in Calgary, Red Deer, and Edmonton. Thank-you Alberta for all the camaraderie and hospitality! We finished off October with a Club Thanksgiving Tournament. Sigi Fahr was the winner, with Ed Eckl and Rudi Laprell not far behind.



Our club remains visible in the community through participating in functions like Folkfest in August (3-day cultural festival within the city of Saskatoon) and Christkindlmarkt in November. In August at Folkfest we were successful in signing up SKAT Wannabees and following up with SKAT Schools. We hope to have around 10 new members ready for the new year! The SKAT Club will sponsor and work the kitchen at the local Christkindlmarkt November 18th. Throughout the holiday season we will be playing regularly at Sports on Tap on Wednesdays 6:30. We would like to wish everyone a safe holiday season filled with Cheer and SKAT!”



Red Deer

The Red Deer Skat Club, of which the editor is a member and president, enjoyed another successful Skat year with steady participation during their Monday night rounds. By the end of the year, we will have played 52 Mondays, with every holiday Monday having been a two-rounder. Our ISPA tournament this year enjoyed the presence of 37 players. Besides this tournament on the first weekend of June, we also played our now traditional **Luck of the Irish** tournament around St. Paddy’s Day, where green attire is always present (see newsletter edition 91 for pictures).

Upon special request from Calgary and Edmonton, we slotted our **Boo Y’all Halloween** club tourney between the last two ISPA tournaments. This fun event was a one day – three rounder, which was won by Michael Buro from the Edmonton Spree Asse, sporting an ever so very much luck bringing diamond-covered Tiara:



With the announcement of a prize for best dressed participants, we enjoyed some really nice outfits:

The winning outfit was the Queen of Spades, congratulations to Edmonton’s Geria Verhaeghe:



The Nun with her Clown came in second and third place, congratulations to Shelley Hungness and Keith Koronko from Saskatoon:



Vancouver

Erich Sedlacek from the Vancouver Skat Club reiterates that due to the loss of their event location at the Vancouver Alpen Club about two years ago, the club relocated to the Army, Navy, and Force Legion on Fraser and 49th Street, where weekly Skat events continue. “Unfortunately, with a progressively aging membership, fewer people are coming out and at times, we are lucky to get a table together. Sad but true it puts in question for how long we can still call ourselves an organized group.”

Well, Erich, the aging Skat population is a reality in every club, how Skat survives in player numbers will depend on how active we all are in spending time and effort to lead interested newcomers to this our beloved game.

The View Ahead

Now that 2023 is near completely in our rear-view mirror, let’s look at what is next up and scheduled for 2024. As hinted above, we are starting the new Skat year, as it is now tradition, in Las Vegas, however that is the only tradition that is kept for this venue. After years of playing at the Hotel California, the venue is now changing to the German American Social Club of Nevada. Be sure to check out the flyer on the Tournaments 2024 page.

Second on the calendar, also in tradition over the last few years, is the Lone Star ISPA Skat tournament, hosted by the Houston Liederkrantz in Houston, Texas starting February 16 with the warmup round. Be sure to text Horst Gebert when you are planning to attend.

Speaking of longstanding traditions: The 39th Canadian Skat Championship is taking place again in the latter part of April at the Brasserie Residence in Montréal Pierrefonds, Quebec. After some discussion, in our last Presidents’ meeting in 2023, we were able to convince Jutta Khalil to host the “Kanadische Meisterschaft” once again in Montréal. A big thank you to Jutta and Horst for their support in continuing this tradition.

As already mentioned above, the most exciting Skat event of 2024 will surely be the **23rd ISPA World Championship, which is being held on the cruise ship “Costa Diadema”. This 14-day Mediterranean Cruise will hopefully attract a substantial number of players as well as spouses and other “Schlachtenbummler”.**

From October 6 to 20, the Costa Diadema will explore 10 harbours: Starting in Savona, Italy, the cruise will target with Malaga and (passing through Gibraltar) Cadiz southern Spain first after the first day at sea. Next up after another day at sea, are the Canary Islands with shore excursions to Arrecife (Lanzarote), Puerto del Rosario (Fuerteventura), Las Palmas (Gran Canaria) and Santa Cruz (Tenerife). One, if not The highlight will be a visit to Funchal (Madeira), the wood island. After another two days at sea, we pass through Gibraltar again for visits in Barcelona, Spain and Marseille, France. The cruise then ends in Savona, the originating harbour, on October 20.

Here is the map, outlining the cruise’s route:



To read more about the details, including the available cabin options, simply direct your browser to this address:

<https://ispa-world.org/wm-2024/>

The online registration form can be found here:

[Online- Anmeldung WM 2024 - ISPA-World](#)

While the default page is in German, this site now has a **Translate »** button in the bottom left corner, where you can choose from seven other languages, English being the second option from the left.

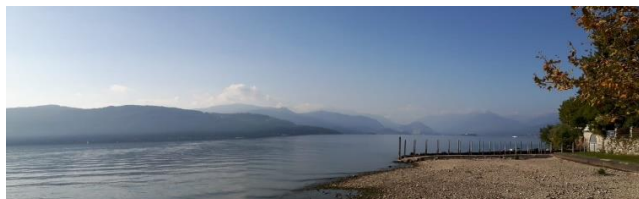
Having the Skat WM held on a cruise ship is a dream come true for many Skat travelers. The editor was privileged to partake on the 2019 European Skat Championship on the sister ship Costa Pacifica, where the whole experience was phenomenal, whether that was dining with your Skat friends, land excursions with your spouse or friends, attending one of the many onboard theatre shows, dancing to live music or simply having a drink at one of the several bars on the ship, while you can re-live some of the tricky games you played during the day.

We hope to see North America represented very well at the WM. After all, Canada will be defending our Championship title in the Nations Cup!

See you in Savona!

Oh, and if you want to catch a glimpse of what you can expect on the cruise, here are some impressions:






 WIR TRAUERN UM UNSERE
 SKATFREUNDE -
 WE MOURN THE LOSS OF OUR
 SKATFRIENDS

 Connie Vince - May 14, 2023
 Arlen Gus Leeder - April 27, 2023
 Michael Sommer - April 6, 2023
 James Stolte - April 4, 2023
 Toni Sims - January 18, 2023