

Responses to Rank-Change Letters—October 2015-April 2016

Thanks for your e mail. My story is unremarkable so doubt that it would be inspirational. I started playing duplicate in the late 60s. Family and career intervened and I did not play again for 20 or so years. Since then I played maybe 12-25 times a year and the points slowly added up to 300. My wife has been my primary partner and we won enough gold points at the Chicago nationals for me to achieve the status. She became a life master 2 or 3 years ago. I enjoy bridge but in terms of priorities I play 100+ rounds of golf per year and 12-25 bridge games per year.

I have no suggestions for District 11. I will say the restroom facilities at the Chicago nations were very inadequate.

Jack Shaw

I received an e-mail congratulating me on my accomplishments. I became a gold life master because I played a lot, spent a lot of money.

I became a good director because Jay Albright mentored me. I rarely direct that someone doesn't say "glad you are here". I owe my success in the bridge world to Jay Albright. Thank You Jay!

Joanne Westinghouse

Concerning Mary Ann Seng, recent silver life master.

Duplicate bridge began in Jasper in 1962. In Tampa, FL, in 1985 I became a life master--in a big way. Forty five gold points. Playing with Julia Bomalaski (now a diamond life master) from my hometown, we won a woman's session and won 30 gold points. We ranked high in a Flight A Swiss and got 15 points. Now, 35 years later I am silver.

I am known as a teacher, never for pay. I am proud of the three daughters and five grandchildren I have taught. My daughter Carol Olinger is the youngest person from our club to become a life master. We are pictured in First Quarter Midwest Monitor, 2014, in a three generations photo.

Carol's son Phil and his first cousin Mike Olinger (my student also) have won several times in Evansville, Louisville, and Owensboro. Their recent win was an overall at Cincinnati-Owensboro regional, June 1-7, 2015.

Note to all: I am SO sorry it has taken so long to post some of these letters. There was a snafu when I changed my email address and I didn't receive your responses for a couple of months. The geniuses at the ACBL were able to recover the emails, but if you attached a bio or picture those were NOT recovered. If your bio or picture is missing, please let me know and if you resend I will post it. Among the emails lost were those I sent to our webmasters with updated letters, so I have had to go back several months and recapture the info. So there are a lot of letters below, but as always, I think you'll find them a delight to read!

Best,
Beth



The youngest of my playing grandchildren, Eli Seng, and I had a 79.17% game, named in Bulletin, JUNE 15, 2015. He was playing less than a year. Another grandson, Phil Olinger, and I have a 76.3 % game not yet recorded in Bulletin.

I send an email taken December 24, 2014, of the five grandchildren and their grandma.

The grands organized the first annual Seng tournament on July 26, 2015. I email a photo showing the five grands, two daughters, and me.

I'll email a recent picture of myself. I am 88 years old. I began play as a freshman at I.U. in 1945.

Beth,

Thank you for the congratulations on achieving a new masterpoint threshold and for the opportunity to post this note. Bridge has been a great passion and joy of my life. I learned how to play as a child at the urging of my parents, who grew tired of my constant requests to play lesser games with me. I didn't get many opportunities to play then, but I read every bridge book I could get my hands on.

It was in college that I started playing regularly. I became part of a large circle of bridge-playing friends that continued well beyond college. We would meet up at sectional bridge tournaments on weekends and spend our vacation time at regionals and nationals. Careers, weddings, and children eventually broke that group apart, but I will always treasure those years. If I tried to list all the names I would leave someone out inadvertently, but my regular partners in that group were Greg Oetjen, Ransone Price, and Mark Kistulinec. I also had the privilege of being Brian Platnick's partner when he made life master (in spite of me!).

I have moved around the country several times for work – Chattanooga TN, Richmond VA, Lincoln NE, and now Cincinnati OH. At each of these places, bridge has given me an immediate way to plug into the local community and make new friends. My regular partners over the years include Jody Plummer, Jamie Radcliffe, A.J. Stephani, and Ryan Schultz.

When I was about to turn 40 years old, my wife Ann came up with a crazy idea for a birthday gift. She wrote a letter to Warren Buffett (we lived in Nebraska at the time) asking if he would consider playing bridge with me as a birthday gift from her. To her surprise, the Oracle of Omaha wrote back immediately -- "Dear Pete: Ann tells me you are having a 40th birthday soon. Why don't you and a partner take on Sharon Osberg and me on OKBridge to see whether advanced age is hurting your game. Ann says you're hooked on the game, so it would be nice to meet a fellow addict." Ransone and I played for a couple of hours against a former world champion (Sharon) and one of the two wealthiest men in the world, with over 100 people watching online. What a thrill!

Another great bridge memory also involves Mr. Buffett. I was playing in a knockout event at the Omaha Regional a few years ago, and we were in a three-way match that included his team. We started against Warren and Sharon and had a delightful time. Then my partner and I moved to the other table to play against the third team. The ladies there were starstruck, as they had just completed the first half of their match against Buffett's teammates. "You'll never guess who we just played – Bob Hamman! I'm

not sure who his partner was; we didn't recognize him." Trying to keep a straight face, I replied "Uh Ma'am, that's Bill Gates".

I will close with a top ten list of reasons I love bridge:

- 1) The opportunity to spend time with wonderful people who share my interest;
- 2) The logical foundation (the power of 13!);
- 3) The partnership aspect; there's nothing more satisfying than finding a winning defense or navigating a difficult auction through partnership collaboration;
- 4) The science of bidding theory; developing an elaborate bidding system with my partner and constantly tinkering to make it better;
- 5) The psychological element (false cards, bold bids, etc.);
- 6) You play about two dozen hands per session, and each one is a new adventure;
- 7) The more talented pair or team doesn't always win;
- 8) The abundant literature that helps me work on my game even when I'm not playing (Kelsey and Kantar are my favorite authors);
- 9) Traveling to national bridge tournaments with my friends and immersing myself in bridge 24/7 for a few days;
- 10) There's always more to learn; the game is too complex for any human to completely master.

Peter Whipple

Hey Beth,

Thanks for your kind remarks!!

I guess "my story " is just that I have been loving the game of bridge since I was about thirteen years old. I even joke that I "majored in bridge in college."

I played "party bridge until just a few years ago when I joined The Lexington Bridge Club. I have taken several classes, and will be signing up for more soon!! I love learning, and everyone at LBC has been kind and helpful in sharing their wisdom!

Thanks again for your message!!

Eleanor Stone

I have only played with my husband. He likes to review the hands ; whereas I get board. We have played in 6+ Regionals where I got 28 colored points out of 50. I enjoyed these games. At a recent Regional we had a 67% in our first round(Gold Rush Pairs) ; all hands seemed to go so smoothly-what a good feeling-makes me want to play more bridge. Judy Muhlada

Dear Beth,

October 24, 2015

My Story: Contract Bridge was introduced to me during my time at college. I continued to play socially with family and friends for many years. When I retired a good friend and I decided to try Duplicate Bridge at the Lima Bridge Club. Unfortunately, he and his wife moved to Columbus, Ohio which made our Bridge partnership impractical. I was about to give up on Duplicate Bridge when I met a new friend, Tom Faulkner, who was working on his Life Masters. He needed a regular partner that was willing to travel to sectional and regional tournaments to earn his "colors". He taught be how to play better

Bridge and was very patient with my many mistakes. Although I would get “the look”, he was always constructive with his corrections. It was a great occasion when he obtained his Life Master status.

In 2009, I activated my ACBL membership which was most fortunate for me. It was prior to the master point requirement change in January 2010. Besides having an excellent partner, we play against a very competitive group of Bridge players, which includes several regular, Bronze and Silver Life Masters. Ruth Odenweller, the Director of the Lima Bridge Club superbly administers the club activities and nurtures new players. She organized and included me in a Bridge team of Elaine Altstaetter, John Hoffman and herself to play in the 2013 and 2014 Gatlinburg Regionals, where I was able to earn all of my gold master points. I set my personal goals of obtaining my “colors” by 2014 and my 300 master points by 2015. Success!

I am very grateful for my regular Bridge partner, my Bridge team, the Director and my good friends at the Lima Bridge Club. They have provided me with many hours of enjoyment and good times. I look forward to pursuing my Bronze Life Masters.

Very Truly Yours,
Roy Baldrige



Dear Ms. Reid



Thank you for asking me to share my bridge story. I have started playing bridge about 2 and half years ago. My regular partner is my twin elder brother Johnny Xu. People always ask if we are related because we have different last names. I am named after my mom's side of the family and he is named after my dad's side of the family. In the attached picture I am in the yellow shirt and he is in the blue shirt.

We decided to start playing because we were looking for a fun activity to do together and we knew that our high school Spanish teacher, Mr. Charles Dean, was an excellent bridge player. We decided to learn the game from him. Growing up we have always played different card games and strategy games together. After a few lessons we walked into our first duplicate session at our club in Lexington and scored a whopping 25%. We had no clue what we were doing and in fact we tried doubling each other on one board. Fortunately, everyone was very nice and forgiving of our mistakes. We liked the game but we were not sure we were good enough to play competitive duplicate bridge. Since my brother is a graduate student and I work, we also did not have time to take a lot of the courses that the club teaches.

We got a copy of the book 25 Conventions you should know and we started learning some of these conventions by ourselves and also played BBO online. After a while, we felt confident enough to try playing another competitive duplicate session. The first time we earned a little bit of master points we were surprised we did so well and ever since then we had the confidence to continue playing and to improve on our game. We have been fortunate in that a lot of the top players in our club took an

interest in helping us improve our game and often would take the time out to show us what we did right or wrong after we played the session.

In general, our bridge experience has been a very positive one. We would like to try playing regional tournaments but due to my brothers course load and my job obligations, we cannot play as much as we would like. Hopefully, in the future we could try to find some regional closer to Lexington and try to play in a few events.

Thank You,
Lanny Cai

Dear Beth,

Thanks for letting me know that I have reached Sectional Master Status. I am glad to have attained this level. I enjoy playing bridge and learning as I am playing. The Cincinnati Bridge Club is a great place. Everyone in charge at the club and all of the bridge players go out of their way to be friendly and to make sure that you are aware of what the club provides to help you improve and this alone keeps me coming back because I am improving. I just wish that it did not take so long to accrue points. It is a slow pace. I do not know how long I have been a member, but I have been playing since then. Maybe once a week, and sometimes twice a week.

Thanks for the support,
Patt Olexsey

Laurie Herchenroeder – My Bridge Story



My bridge story starts in March of 1984. My future husband came home with me for spring break and we sat around our kitchen table each evening and he taught me the basics of bridge. Upon returning back to Purdue, we played in the student bridge club. At best there were 2 tables so we played an individual. Jim graduated in 1984 and went off to grad school at Iowa State in Ames, Iowa. I concentrated on graduating that year and shelved bridge until after we married and I joined Jim in Iowa. There we played two or three times a week against very good players. The three years I spent in Ames we went to a National and three Regional's. There were only three kinds of points then, Gold, Red and Black. I accumulated about 100 points. (A few red, no gold)

Fast forward from 1988 to 2013...two careers and three kids; we took a 25+ year hiatus from bridge. What prompted us to get back in was our oldest daughter could drive and that left us with a lot of free time. So we looked up the nearest club and that happened to be The

Lexington Bridge Club. We started to play regularly after Thanksgiving. Jim still works and travels quite a bit so I began to play with other players. In 2014 I played in the Tuesday 199 game with Rohit Patel until I reached 200 and had to move on. Still 0 Gold Points. On top of that, the requirement for Life Master changed during our hiatus. I am now in the 500 point needing 50 gold category. Yikes! I'll never make Life Master.

Well our luck changed and we became Chuck Dean's and Peggy Pace's project. They asked us to play in the knockouts at the Horseshoe Regional in November of 2014. We wound up winning about 12 Gold. At this rate it will take 5 Regional's. Not bad. In 2015 Laura Guthrie and Paul Moss asked us to play at the Flying Pig Regional in Cincinnati. We picked up another 11 there. We are right on schedule. Horseshoe comes around again in 2015 and we make our date with Chuck and Peggy. We won 28 Gold's, WOW! So now I can say what every bridge player longs to say; "I've got all my gold's, I just need black points to get my Life Master." I needed a few more black points and got them at the club games in November and December. Since Jim still works he is about 100 black points behind. Maybe 2016 will be his year.

Bridge – a great card game!



Some form of bridge, that great card game, has been a part of my life since my growing up years in the late 1940s and early 1950s. My parents taught me a game called "Honeymoon Bridge" designed for two people. From then on I played it with whichever parent was willing to spend time with me!

In the summer of 1959, I began my first job as a bench chemist where many of the folks in the lab played bridge at lunchtime. Because the lab was not located close to any eateries we all brown bagged it for lunch eating and playing bridge. I watched intently. After several months of watching a spot opened up in a foursome. The fellow who had lost his partner asked me if I would be interested in playing. He gave me a small laminated card that folded out three ways and told me to "follow the rules" and if I did we would win. This group kept a running score. The first couple of weeks were shaky. So many rules to learn! My roommate Bonnie was a dedicated duplicate player and she eagerly answered/discussed all my questions. She also had a device that she called "Autobridge", which was a helpful learning device for me. Eventually, the scores in our lunch bridge sessions began moving in favor of my partner and me. We forged ahead and never lost our positive scores. I have remained faithful to the "rules" of the card ever since. Eventually, Bonnie decided I was ready to try duplicate bridge and so we played duplicate together for several years before leaving the area for another job.

Each place I worked, there was a lunchtime game! The dummy shuffled and dealt the next hands so that we got in a satisfying number of hands in a short time. In the late 1960s when I was employed at Union Carbide in Charleston, West Virginia, there were two fellows at our bridge table who were fantastic players and I credit them for sharing many valuable tips to my partner and friend Kathy and I.

At some point, my husband decided he wanted to play bridge too. Eventually we both played in in the Carbide Duplicate Bridge Club and in several couples' social bridge clubs but with other partners! That was better for keeping family harmony.

While we lived in Charleston I really became almost "addicted" to the game. There were plenty of duplicate bridge games in town then. There was probably an average of one every day and a couple of good tournaments each year too. I continued to play a few tournaments with Bonnie when I would visit my parents in Texas. Unfortunately Bonnie passed away tragically at a young age from heart problems.

In 1972 our son Rick was born. That changed lots of things in my life. I played bridge a little, but very little. I never let my membership in the ACBL lapse because I knew I would come back to bridge one day. Becoming a Life Master was permanently on my “to do” list. As Rick reached an age when he was interested in games, my husband and I devised a bridge game for “three people”. I don’t remember how we did it, but the three of us enjoyed numerous hours of this kind of bridge. In time we found a fourth and Rick learned quite a bit more about the game.

In 1998 I retired as a high school chemistry teacher and began participating in all those things I had dreamed about for years. Another retired teacher, Sylvia, suggested that we try the duplicate game held in Ashland, Kentucky once a week. We played together for several years until she moved to Florida at about the same time that that the game in Ashland folded due to the death of the director. The closest game was in Huntington, West Virginia. I got my courage up and asked another retired teacher, Opal, to partner with me. She and I played as a team until her health would no longer permit it. By this time, I had come into contact with lots of people in Huntington who were willing to be my partner!

As my bridge interests grew and grew I began looking for local tournaments. At one point, I even conned Rick into going to a couple of sessions for beginners that were held at the Nationals in Cincinnati, Ohio and even placed a couple of times. I continued to play in the biweekly games in Huntington and also sponsored a couple of tournaments in Huntington. Sadly, our club director had a serious heart attack and I feared the club might go under. At this time, I learned how to enter scores into the computer. Another bridge player, Joline, asked if I would join her in studying for the director’s test. We spent many, many hours studying together and finally took the test. We both passed! Today we take turns directing the biweekly game in Huntington.

In 2003 my dream came true. I got the points necessary to become a Life Master. I really did not think too much about other levels of Life Master but it was not long after 2003 that I became a Bronze Life Master. Then Silver Life Master dangled out there on the horizon, but I felt like I might not be able to get there due to my age. A bridge friend achieved this milestone and that gave me a little more motivation. Several of my Charleston friends volunteered to help me out by going to local tournaments with me. After I passed the 900 mark I was a “driven person”. In November 2015 I saw that I only needed a few points to achieve Silver Life Master and when a Huntington friend agreed to go with me to the regional tournament just outside Louisville, I succeeded in getting the points for Silver. Wow!! I was floating on a cloud. What a celebration at our local Huntington Bridge Club for me!! My bridge friends in Huntington surrounded me with their good wishes and it was lovely.

Bridge has been a part of my life for more than 60 years. There were long periods in there when I did not play at all – probably 25 years – but I kept my ACBL membership active for 57 years. I joined when I was 21 and I am now 78. I have thoroughly enjoyed bridge and the wonderful family traditions it has inspired. In this digital age, my son has now set me up so that I can play bridge with him occasionally on the computer. Over the years, I have given lessons in my home, played socially, played in national tournaments, played in regional tournaments, played in a number of sectional tournaments, and played in a LOT of duplicate club games. I even had the opportunity to take a bridge cruise. Becoming a director was humbling. Becoming a Silver Life Master is extremely humbling. Let’s face it – I think I am addicted to bridge!

Bennie Shields

Thanks for the nice note Beth. I'm afraid there is not much of a story. I started at duplicate in 2000, when my hips gave way, and I had to give up tennis. I've been playing mostly at our club, and as you can calculate, averaging about 100 points per year. So I am at 1500 now. The only thing you can do to help me reach the next bridge goal is to pray that I live to be 89(another ten years). At my rate of progress that's when I will attain the Gold Life Master status.

Marty Seltzer

Dear Beth,

What a lovely note you sent to me. I can truthfully say that becoming a life master has taken the entire village!

It is absolutely impossible to think there could have been any more encouragement, education or enthusiasm in helping me. The Louisville group of instructors and friends have created the most inclusive and welcoming atmosphere possible. As always, any endeavor is all about the people, and among Verna, Tony, Mike, Brian and Gary, I have had the most spectacular experience possible.

Concerning writing "My story"... That would be a difficult task since it would be more like a great Russian novel; lots of very dreary losses highlighted by unexpected and spectacular wins. Someday, it would be fun to have everyone tell their individual tales of how they got their last points. Along the way, I heard some really funny, nail-biting stories, and it seems many players at the bridge center had a difficult time getting those last points which were Very comforting to hear as I was closing in on the last 4.15 gold points. Brian helping me across the finish line is bound to be quite memorable for him for a long time as well.....

Thank you so very much for your kind note.

Most affectionately,
Lois Louis

Sorry to be so late in responding to your email. I was looking for a picture to send and never found one. I decided to go ahead with your question about how I got interested in duplicate bridge leading to my joining a group here in Muncie. Jack Madsen started a group for novices who wanted to learn how to play duplicate. This then led to a group meeting every Thursday morning for official play. If it hadn't been for Jack I would never have started playing duplicate bridge. The group that meets on Thursday is for beginners and everyone is very kind about mistakes that are made. I am so glad that I found this group and thank Jack so much for getting it started. Jane Duckworth

I just got over 20 MP's and you ask me to tell how I did it. At first I thought you were kidding, after all, 20 MP's is not much compared to the hundreds and even thousands some people whom I have played against have.

Nevertheless, I will say that after starting to play duplicate last August or July, I went weeks without much result, then months, picking up a piece of a point here and a piece there. Then I was paired with a young man who also did not have a regular partner and from there it was easy. We played together 14

times (I think that's about right) and only once did we not get at least a piece of a master point. While playing together we won 2 club championships, one with our 0-20 group and one with the 0-100 group. During that time he won rookie of the month and helped me win my rookie of the month. Perhaps what made it work the best was that I told him to teach me how to bid the conventions he liked. There was no bickering or complaining about it, he said he wanted to play a certain convention, like Roman Key Card Blackwood (not 1430) and so that's what we bid. Responses to 2 club openers involved the conventions where 2 diamonds means partner has an ace or a king, 2 hearts is neither an ace nor a king, you know the drill. So that's what we did. In other words, I agreed with whatever he chose. So I think that helped us pick a way to go and go that way. Of course it also helped that this young man (in his 20's) attacked bridge with a fervor. He wanted to learn and he wanted to win. If I may say so, we both play a hand well. More than likely, if it can be made, declarer will make it. But mostly, I think it was my decision to let him decide the convention and we went from there. The old expression "not the right way or the wrong way, but my partner's way" (paraphrased a little) is what we did, so we were consistent.

Robert Dombrow

Dear Beth, How kind of you to send a congratulatory email for my reaching the Junior Master "milestone"! It has been a fun journey with Jo Anne Casen at the Country Club of Florida. My goal has never been points as much as trying to hold my own with the many good players in our duplicate games. I'm curious to see if this will whet my competitive appetite to attain more and more. Right now, I am a happy camper with the progress my partner and I seem to be making and love, love, love the game! Thanks again for your encouragement and welcome.

Sincerely, dani kannapell

Best and most helpful to me: #1 bridge classes , especially those taught by Dallas Moore -he is best instructor I have ever had in any subject!!!!!!

#2 friendliness and helpfulness of nearly every member I have met and/or with whom I have played bridge.

#3 the physical facility is outstanding in every way imaginable.

Discovering your organization has enhanced my life immeasurably! (And if you are in a position to do so, please extend my special appreciation to Dallas and Donna Moore and Stu Peterson who seem to have gone far "beyond the call of duty" to make Bridge the joy of my life.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Dawn Schiller

My Journey to Life Master
Cynthia Kluemper, Jasper, Indiana

Growing up in England, I learned how to play Whist (the fore-runner of bridge). Our little village even held whist games in the village hall.

It was fun. I would have liked to have learned bridge, but my mother hated bridge because she had been forced to play with her grandmother and old aunts when they needed an extra player.

A few years after I came to America, my sister-in-law and I took bridge lessons. We loved the game and soon formed a social bridge club. We had heard of duplicate, but thought that was for the high-falutin players.

Fast forward twenty-five years, and I went from full time employment to part time. Mary Ann Seng, manager of the Jasper Duplicate Bridge Club, asked me to come to duplicate games. I was hesitant at first. I had heard horror stories about duplicate. I thought players were so serious and could get so emotionally upset that they might throw the cards at you. Mary Ann assured me that that kind of behavior was not allowed and that players were polite and friendly.

Mary Ann said they had mentors for the Monday night game. Mentors? Why would I need an mentor? I thought I knew how to play bridge. Gosh, I soon found out that I practically had to relearn everything. But, I loved it. I loved the new bidding system, and was so proud when I learned a new cue bid or something new. I soon became hooked on duplicate. I loved the discipline and the "post mortems". (Trying how to puzzle out how others made the contract). I took a little note book with me and wrote down any advice people gave me. I would re-read those notes every time I went to play.

I thought Life Master was out of my reach. But, slowly, slowly, I started earning some master points and then started going to tournaments. I loved the atmosphere of the tournaments. It's a whole different community. It's exciting to meet people from all over the county and other countries, too.

A few years ago, I started helping with bridge lessons. It's so rewarding to help people learn this incredible game. But I felt I wasn't really qualified to give lessons when I hadn't earned my Life Master. So that's when I started to kick it into high gear. It was at about that time that my husband and I started to go to The Villages in Florida for a couple of months in the winter. The Villages has a huge bridge club. This helped immensely. There were a lot of strong players. Strong players are more difficult to play against, of course, but those players have a wealth of knowledge and advice to give.

I believe going to larger clubs and playing against stronger competition will improve one's game. Obviously, strong players like to partner with an equally strong player, but let them know that you would like to play with them if they are ever without a partner. You'd be surprised. Good players just want to play the game and if they don't have a partner, they will call you. I'm sure playing with stronger partners always helped my playing.

Over the years, I have been with four people when they earned their Life Master. I started joking that I was always the bridesmaid and never the bride. I was envious of them and thought they were so lucky. But we know it's not all luck. You have to read bridge books and study conventions and plays. You have to be a good partner. Sometimes you may not like some of your partners bidding conventions, but at least you should try them if you want to be a good partner.

I have enjoyed my journey to Life Master. I have met so many interesting people--people from all walks of life. People with such varied careers and totally different backgrounds, people I probably never have met if I hadn't gone to bridge tournaments. I will continue to go to tournaments because my son now plays bridge and loves it. I've also met some rather eccentric individuals, and have some funny stories to tell. I may have to write a book!

I don't know how to attach a picture of myself, so will have to have one of my children or grand children show me how to do it later.

I hope this if of interest and help for other bridge players.

Thank you for your congratulations. My story is a tribute to two people, Nancy Sachs and my wife, Marlene Pierce. In 2004, Marlene and three of her friends were taking lessons from Nancy Sachs. She and Nancy convinced me to take lessons also, and to play duplicate bridge with Marlene at the Cincinnati Bridge Center(Tom's 0-50MP Game). From these lessons, a friendship grew between Nancy, Paul, Marlene and I that lasted until the day she tragically died. During the intervening years, I never quite devoted the time to the game I should have, but managed to find the time to accompany Marlene to Nationals, Regionals, and Sectionals. She became a Life Master about two years ago. She was my also my taskmaster, and that explains why I obtained my gold, silver, and red points long before I had the total number required. I want to thank all the members of District 11 for helping me.

Sonny Pierce

Beth:

The Bridge Master award was a surprise. I assume it means 20+ master points. I was enjoying the game and the fellow players at Evansville Duplicate Club so much it came quick. Thanks to great instruction by Jan Tucker in E-Z Bridge, top-notch Directors (all of them), and patience from fellow players it has been a great experience. I was also able to fit in with the duplicate club in St. Augustine and continue the experience for 1 month. It has been a unique experience to develop a working partnership and I have learned the game is about sportsmanship and patience with other players.

Bob Messick

Thx Beth. No special story. Just love to play. Glad my dad introduced the game to me when I was about 11! My older brothers....not so much....

Cliff Pleatman

SILVER LIFE MASTER

When I earned my first masterpoint I could not envision ever earning 1,000 masterpoints, but it happened.

Unlike some bridge players who always do the right thing at the right time, I usually do wrong thing at the wrong time. Consequently, becoming a Silver Life Master was mainly the result of grinding it out: taking lessons, reading about bridge, and playing a lot of bridge?a whole lot. It was very rewarding, because along the way I had many enjoyable experiences and met many very nice people.

Robert Jiobu

All of the members of the clubs in my area are incredibly friendly & helpful. I owe whatever success I have to a great partner, Jim McCool, to super lessons & advice from John Groben & Pete Lambert. I absolutely love this game when I don't hate it!!
George Baumgardner

Dear Beth,
Thank you for your note of congratulations. There was nothing special about my achievement except perhaps the help I got from my many different partners. Like many current players, it took an almost 50 year hiatus before I started playing again. It's a great way to keep your mind sharp during retirement.

I also appreciate the time and effort that you and the others on the District Board put into making the game enjoyable for the rest of us.

Yours truly,
Dennis Dewey

Thank you Beth for the congratulations. My journey to life master began many years ago when I played in a weekly small duplicate game in a small city in Michigan. Life happened, and I was away from the game for many years until we relocated to another small city in the South in 2004. I picked up duplicate there, and two years later arrived in Louisville with 30 masterpoints and time on my hands. Thank goodness I was able to rejoin ACBL under the 300 point life master requirement! I started playing once or twice a week in Verna's games, but really got enthused after the NABC here in Louisville. My journey has been slow but steady, and all of my points have been earned with my peers. I have several regular partners and also some great teammates who helped in getting that gold! My immediate goal is to become a more skilled and confident player and to keep learning. To paraphrase Verna "when you become a Life Master you find out how much you really don't know!"

Joanne Traver

Hi Beth

Thank you for the email. I do not have much of a story to tell. It was a long journey which started after I came to Syracuse, NY, in 1977 to do graduate studies. I have been in West Lafayette since 1981. Of course I enjoy the game immensely but could not play competitively as much as I would have liked. Our local club is very small and shrinking. It is very unfortunate, but that is the reality. These days I play exclusively on Bridge Base On-line. The ACBL speedball tournaments are a great way to spend an hour, convenient, fast and high quality bridge. Plus you get to play with long lost friends from all over the world. Judging by the number of people logged in at any time and playing in tournaments, I think it is a winner. Does ACBL give some of that money to the districts?

Hope you have a great regional in Indianapolis. I will try to make it.

Thank you again.

Girish Joglekar

Thank you, Beth. A high school teacher taught me when I was in high school. I played for awhile through college then didn't play for 30 years. I'm in my 50s now so - not much of a story!

I'm happy with the ACBL. No complaints!

Best regards,
Will LaRu

Hi Beth,

Belated thanks for this email. I meant to respond earlier but life ran away with me. I wish I had a story worth sharing - but the truth of the matter is that I earned the points in spite of myself - not for particularly trying! I don't think that's going to inspire anyone! :-)

I work full time and therefore don't get too many opportunities to play. I can play only on Wed. evenings as the Northern KY center has only one evening game. My partner travels a lot and I've been away some too, so I get to play perhaps two weeks in a month. I recently found out that there are players on standby for when I don't have a partner, so I've taken advantage of that a couple of times. I used to forget to take my ABCL number with me. I've added it to my phone, and now always have it at hand. I thought these two points were worth mentioning.

I'm waiting to retire so that I can play more bridge!

Thanks for your interest and your lovely email.

Swarna Mohan

This is a highlight of some of the most exciting moments in my quest for becoming a life master. You can delete items as you wish. I will try to send a picture later this week. Please acknowledge receipt of this note.

Thanks so much for your compliments on my achieving the life member status. Per your request, I will talk about several significant events that helped me achieve this goal. The first is my first ever bridge lesson was (Jan 2011) with Noel Helmick, a very patient and knowledgeable teacher that put up with what probably seemed like an endless series of questions at all of her classes.

After this class, my partner and I decided to enter the Indy regional in June (2011). We tried to play in the 0 to 5 Master point strata but there were not enough teams in that group so they put us into the 299 strata. To our surprise we won that event and earned 3.06 red points. WOW, what a turn on that turned out to be. After several more classes and some practice time at the Indy Bridge center we entered the Nashville regional and had a 75.3% game and won 11.3 gold points. More practice and then the Fort Wayne Regional and our team won the Swiss team event and 12+ gold points

To me, the basic challenge turned out to be that each hand we played or talked about was like a puzzle where you needed to bid properly and play the hand properly to make all the parts fit together to make a winning combination. The game of bridge is very unique in that way because there are so many possible hand combinations. It is almost impossible to see to identical hands. To me, this is what keeps me studying and learning the game. It has been said that the more you learn, the more you realize that there is so much more to learn.

As a very pleasant side benefit is the fact that you get to meet so many interesting people all with stories of their own and desire to learn the game. It would be remiss of me not to thank all my teachers, Lois Scott, John Fosnaught, Jamie Hodge and Sharon Austin for putting up with me in their classes. I look forward to the next step in the bridge world, the silver level life master.

Perry Olsen

Thanks for the update Beth.

I made my first attempt into duplicate while living in the east. I would play a game and it would take weeks to get up the courage to try again. This was long before zero tolerance. I moved to Cincinnati and took many lessons from Nancy Sachs, who became a good friend.

Everyone in the Midwest was so welcoming, encouraging, and kind partners. I was on my way and encourage friends, family, coworkers, to give this game a try. See you at the table.

Margaret Young

Beth

Thank you for recognizing this. My story is simple. I have been a member of the LBA for over 40 years. However, I have been too busy with work and family to play duplicate bridge on a regular basis.

In my earlier bridge years, I primarily partnered with Nelly Coleman. Later, I partnered with Nelly's son in law, Jimmy Johnson. With Jimmy's help, I made Life Master. Recently, I semi-retired and began partnering with the Professor, Dorsey Brown, who has the patience of Job. With his tutoring, I made Bronze Life Master. In the future, I hope to play often enough to make Silver Life Master. I hope it does not take me another 40 years.

Dennis O'Brien

My wife, Kathleen, also just achieved the same rank (we have < 1 MP difference). Here's our story:

I discovered bridge as a child, when browsing library books on games. I played duplicate for a while, then more or less forgot about it until just after Kathleen and I were married, over 6 years ago. We saw a sign for a duplicate club at a mall, and inspiration struck: we could learn bridge together! So we did, and I taught some of our friends at the University of Nebraska---Lincoln as well. Virtually all of our masterpoints were earned through our partnership. We now live in Kathleen's hometown, Lexington, and are gunning for Life Master.

Jonathan Crosmer

Hello,

I have found the Lexington Bridge Club extremely welcoming, and it is the encouragement and mentoring of more seasoned players that keeps me playing. The group makes a special effort to reach out to newcomers and novices, and provides a positive and sociable experience (even when we're being crushed by the skill of expert players!). I can't say enough good things about the leadership of the group. I know they have intentionally worked to build this atmosphere, and it is paying off with

the new players who keep coming back.

--Eve Podet

Dear Beth,

I do apologize for taking so long to reply to your kind message! My "story" about getting my Life Master status is one I shall never forget. A former partner, Cy Long, invited me to go with him to play in the Ft. Wayne Regional Tournament in September. I agreed a bit reluctantly because of the 5-1/2 hour drive to get there AND because he wanted to play in a Swiss team game for which we had no partners. But he said he'd call the partnership desk and see if we could team with another pair looking to complete their team. We were set up with the most wonderful Ken Bisson and his partner Chet (last name???) from Angola. Cy and I played in three pairs games before we it came time for our Swiss game?and I recall that our scores on those three games were a high of 44%! But we didn't lose hope, and something just clicked in the Swiss; plus, Ken was SO optimistic that his enthusiasm and encouragement just buoyed us all the way to our first place over 28 other teams. It was one incredible experience! The four of us hope to reunite in Gatlinburg come April 2015.

Thank you for asking!

Warm regards and Merry Christmas!

Patti Lodato

Dear Ms. Reid - Thank you very much for your congratulatory e mail. I began my bridge career here in Indianapolis in 1979. One of my more memorable experiences in the bridge world was the opportunity to play with the legendary Easley Blackwood. (This had nothing to do with my bridge prowess!) I am a physician and helped care for his wife. Being a very intellectually curious individual Mr. Blackwood had many questions about his wife's medical situation. He wanted to know all about the results of her blood tests, x-rays, EKGs etc. etc. I was only too happy to give him in depth explanations. So each day I would stop by her room to answer all of his questions. Then I would have a bridge hand that I needed some help with. This symbiotic relationship continued for several weeks. One day he invited me to play with him at the club. Naturally I accepted. After we had played a few games, he invited me to go to the National Bridge Tournament in Niagara Falls. I think that was in 1980 or 1981. I think I had about 5 master points!

This was a memorable occasion. He introduced me to many greats in the bridge world - I distinctly remember meeting Mike Lawrence, Amalya Kears, Paul Soloway, and Eddie Kantar among others. The first evening we were playing east-west. As we came to one table Mr. Blackwood shook hands with North - saying "Ozzie I'd like you to meet my partner Gil Herod." Oswald Jacoby of course. His partner was Alan Sontag. And so it went. As we would walk down the halls, players would come up to him saying, "Mr. Blackwood I want to shake your hand!" And he would say -"And this is my partner Gil Herod."

Mr. Blackwood (he insisted that I call him Easley) did have one bad habit. As dummy he was prone to facial expressions indicating disapproval if I made a bad play. He had what I would describe as a large "mournful" face. So if I made a bad play, it was like the wrath of God was coming at me across the

table! When I made the occasional good play, I was greeted with a distinct wink from Mr. Blackwood. I had to stop and think - "Am I dreaming or is Easley Blackwood winking at me at the National Bridge Tournament?" We didn't do very well, but I think we did come in fifth one afternoon. I remember getting a couple of good boards against Paul Soloway and Malcom Brachman.

Everyone who play with or against Mr. Blackwood remembers him as being a wonderful teacher. As a frequent partner I was indeed fortunate to have been treated to many helpful comments. I have become a teacher now.

Hardly a lesson goes by that I don't invoke Mr. Blackwood. (Some might accuse me of name dropping!) But to this day I can hear him saying, "Gil, keep length with dummy!" or "if the opponents have a fit, so do we." On one occasion I can remember that it was clear that I could not let RHO get the lead. So I finessed the 8 or some middle card so that LHO would get the lead. Mr. Blackwood said, "Nice avoidance play Gil!"

To which I said, "What is an avoidance play?" He then said - "The play you just made - keeping RHO from getting the lead."

Later I was fortunate to have Dennis Clerkin as a partner. We wracked up 315 gold points playing in Kalamazoo, Gatlinburg, and Indianapolis.

Dennis was an excellent partner and teacher.

Due to extraordinary demands on my time from my practice of medicine I dropped out of bridge from 1997 until 2004. There came a time when I "retired" from the daily practice of medicine but remained on call "24-7" as they say. I continued to fly around the country to "harvest" hearts and lungs and bring them back to Methodist Hospital to be transplanted. So I spent most of my time at home. (DONT PRINT THIS!) After a while I was told that I was hanging around home too much! It was suggested that I spend time away from home. "Why don't you go play bridge?" I felt like Brer Rabbit being thrown into the Briar Patch!

So back to bridge I went. I was the only bridge player that was allowed to have my i phone "on" all the time so I could respond quickly when needed. All directors and fellow players went along with this plan. On several occasions I had to leave in the middle of a game and a director or other player would complete the game. (Incidentally according to the president of the International Heart and Lung Transplant Association, I performed this procedure, i.e. the extraction of hearts and lungs, more than anyone in history.)

When I returned to bridge, I contacted my old friend Sharon Austin who was now assistant manager of the club. She and I had started as rookies at the same time back in the late 70s and early 80s. She helped me find appropriate partners. Bob Harding and I developed a regular partnership and traveled to several regionals. We played several times in Gatlinburg, Louisville, Indianapolis, and Detroit winning or placing high in several events.

Several years ago due to dwindling attendance at our Monday evening game, Sharon (who has become manager as you know), called me up and invited me to play with her regularly on Monday evenings and try to increase attendance. So we have played virtually every Monday evening for 5 or 6 years. She is an excellent partner and is especially adept at teaching me in a very low key manner so that I am not embarrassed. Many of my master points have been achieved with this Monday evening partnership. Under Sharon Austin's leadership, the Indianapolis Bridge Center has developed a very active teaching program. Sharon encouraged me to take the ACBL training course and I have become an active teacher.

In addition to teaching formal classes, I have participated in our mentoring program. A few years ago Sharon asked me to mentor one of our rookie players - Dee Dee Watson. I was happy to do so. She progressed nicely and became one of the only 2 rookies to ever have achieved "Player of the Month" status. Several months later after I had a change in marital status, I called Dee Dee up to see if she wanted to play bridge - and also have dinner. One thing led to another and we were married in May of 2010. She had several friends who wanted to improve their bridge. So we started a Friday evening gathering known in some circles as "Gil's Bridge Salon". We would have dinner and then play several hands. From that group 4 have become life masters and 2 more are close.

Here is a list of the significant events in which I won or placed:

8/8/1992 KLAMZOO Regional Open Pairs Gold 34.85
8/7/1992 KLAMZOO Regional Swiss Teams Gold 35.18
8/5/1992 KLAMZOO Regional Swiss Teams Gold 16.84
8/4/1992 KLAMZOO Regional KO Teams Gold 28.42
1/12/1992 INDNPLS Sectional Swiss Teams Silver 17.87
Gilbert Herod

I have been playing bridge with my husband for over 45 years. Until about four years ago, we played party bridge and our bidding was based on the Goren system. Then we joined the Terre Haute Bridge Club and began taking lessons in the newer bidding systems. With time and patience on both our instructors and our part, we began to feel confident enough to play in the more competitive local games. The challenge of competing against the many Life Masters in our club encouraged us to compete in near-by sectionals and regionals. All of the local club directors and Life Masters have been very supportive and have continued to give us valuable aid. We look forward to playing several times a week at the local club and attending sectionals and regionals when possible.

Mary Lynn Siefert

Dear Beth, Thanks so much for your congrats. Never thought I would achieve this level in this lifetime (Am sure we will all be playing bridge still in heaven, don't you?). My story is pretty standard for one of my generation - early on, no TV(or tech of any sort) so the whole family played lots of card games. My parents had very little disposable money so their entertainment was to have friends over on Friday night to play bridge with - that's where I learned(not exactly the game we play today). Ray and I first met when we were college students and again the 'cheap' date was a game of bridge with fellow students. So after we married and moved around this country we always looked for bridge players to help us get acquainted with the city(usually through a Newcomers organization in the new city). Contract bridge became Duplicate Bridge in New Jersey newcomers and then we were really hooked(no longer just the luck of the cards, usually). This continued in Lexington with Newcomers of Lex. in 1973 but we didn't get into sanction games until kids were grown and we retired in 1999. (Just as a side note-we got our Life Masters in a Louisville regional in a KO with Rae Ann Eastwood and Reva Bhrem as our partners in which we lost to you and Marsha in the finals but coming in 2nd gave us the red points we needed.) We celebrated our 50th Anniversary this year in Sept. and people asked all of the time what made this work for 50 years. Maybe I should have said 'playing bridge together all these years was the glue'.

Our club, our Unit and our District have been very good to us over the years and I have nothing to suggest for changes and I think you are doing a wonderful job as representative to the National. I love your reports and read them all very carefully. Thanks for all the time you spend on our behalf. Again, thanks for letting me expound. The memory trip was fun

.Kathy Linck

Dear Beth,

Thank you so much for taking the time to congratulate me. I am a relatively new bridge player. In 2009 I had to retire from teaching at age 52 because I was in end stage liver failure and needed a liver transplant. I had an auto-immune disease that destroyed my liver. My recovery was slow after the transplant with two rejections that required major steroids to control. The first year I basically stayed home and away from everyone so I wouldn't catch anything, since I was so immune compromised. The second year I was very lonely and bored at home all day when my friends were still working. Daytime television is really bad!

A close friend of mine learned to play bridge and a few short months later decided that was what I needed to pull me out of my funk. She came to my house on Sundays for several months and brought 2 other friends with her. Although she was a beginner herself, she taught all three of us the basics at the same time. That was in the spring of 2012. In June of 2012, I played in my first ACBL sanctioned duplicate game. I was hooked immediately. I typically play 1 evening and 2 days a week. I have developed a good partnership with a person I am happy to say is my friend named Tom Kempf. I was luck enough to play in a mentor-mentee game with a very advanced player just a few months after I played in my first duplicate game. Susan Christian taught me so much about duplicate. I am very grateful. Bridge has given me something to look forward to and I have made a whole new group of friends. I still need about 75 points to reach the 500 level and Life Master. I am sure working toward that goal will continue to be as much fun as the last 2 years have been. Again thank you for being interested in a novice like me.

Marianne Thomas

Dear Beth,

Thank You for your kind note congratulating me on my attaining Advanced NABC Master status! I remember doing an "all-nighter" playing bridge in college and watching the sunrise! I partnered with a girlfriend in graduate school but we'd often got into heated arguments and had to quit. Then came the move to a new career and raising a family so bridge took a back burner. Four years ago during retirement, I downloaded Fred Gitelman's bridge course from the ACBL website and my enthusiasm for bridge was rekindled. I located my local bridge club here in Lexington, asked for and got a Mentor during our Tuesday 299er games. Kristi stuck with me for over a year and a half until I got 50 Masterpoints! I think I only transferred her into a four card major maybe two or three times! My excitement, enthusiasm and desire to learn bridge has been increasing these past few years. I did make a vow to myself, however, and that was if I ever got into a heated argument about bridge with anyone, that I would quit the game. So far, my promise to myself has served me, and I'm sure my many partners, well.

Being a former teacher, I will give back to bridge by getting accredited to teach the game. I enjoy participating in our Learn Bridge in A Day program and our Mentor-Mentee games. Us retirees need a lot of socializing, and bridge more than provides a great arena for it.

Cordially yours,

Edgar Iwamoto
Retired professor
Lexington K

My interest in Bridge began when I was around 13 years old when I used to watch my parents entertain their friends and play bridge. I would fill in once in a while when someone needed to leave the table. I learned the basics, about the thirteen points needed to open a hand and how to take tricks.

In the 1970's when my children were infants my in laws would come over several nights a week and we would play kitchen bridge. I will never forget my father in law Murray with his love of three no trump.

In the 1980's I started playing duplicate at the Clintonville bridge club in Columbus with my friend Ann Kay. It was challenging playing duplicate but I won a sectional and received a bridge trophy. Upon the arrival of my third child I decided to forgo the duplicate bridge games. I decided social party bridge had to be it.

A few years ago, thanks to my friends Betty Ann and Sandy, I started playing duplicate at the Jewish Center. I got hooked and was soon playing several times a week and travelling to tournaments until I became a Life Master.

I couldn't have done it without the support of my wonderful husband, children, sister, partners, friends and directors. They helped me accomplish my goal. My 92 year old mother patiently sat waiting to hear if I had finally received enough points to be a Life Master. It took me away from visiting her but I know she is very proud of my achievement.

Ricki Rosen

Thank you for your kindness. I would prefer to wait for further accolades if, and when, I attain life master status. This milestone is minor compared to most of my bridge colleagues here in Dayton. Again, many thanks.

Sincerely,
Joann Findlay

FYI ? and you said it was impossible!!!! Whoopee Doo ? I'm now over 5 master points! Next level 20 pts = club master. I'm rolling now!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Judy Bratton

I have played bridge for 40+ years, but very little duplicate until the last few years. The decisions with every new hand have always exciting. I try to make the most logical choice in my play but many times I am surprised at the unusual distribution, then I have to rethink for the next play. The game is fascinating. The bidding gets more complicated the more you learn, especially with better competition. I am driven to play twice per week ,at least, and to attend an occasional out of town tournament. After 50 years of marriage, I got my wife to play duplicate with me (not always easy). She now has 27 MPs , 13 of which are colored/ 6.3G,5R.1.4S. The wonderful people at the Indianapolis Bridge Center have made our bridge experience especially rewarding. Thanks for the opportunity to share my thoughts.
Miles Muhlada

I am 84 yrs old and have played "fun" bridge since I was in college. My parents used to play. In fact, I came across a pin recently that was in a small box that my father kept on his dresser along with cuff links. I looked at it and it had in scripted on it "American Duplicate Bridge 1933 First Place". I had no idea that my father, who has been deceased for many years, played duplicate bridge.

3 years ago I decided that I wanted to bring myself into this century re bridge and bidding so I took an "Easy Bridge" session. I loved it and met so many nice people. I was invited by many to be their partner and found that this was such a good way to keep my mind active and continue learning. Currently I am still working. I run professional tennis tournaments and assign officials to top level events. In fact, this year I will once again be Chief Umpire of the US Open, a Grand Slam event and one of the 4 largest tennis tournaments in the world. It will be my last year as I've been doing it for 45 years.

I have found that duplicate bridge uses my mind in a different way than just sitting at the computer. It also involves logical thinking which I love. My goal is very simple. I want to continue to play and learn. You at ACBL just continue to do the good work you're doing and continue caring for those who play this marvelous game. I really enjoy the bridge players in our local group. They do a fantastic job and work hard to make things fun and pleasant for everyone. I couldn't ask for a nicer group to spend time with.

Thanks for caring. I look forward to many more years of fun and bridge.

Woodie (real name Phyllis) Walker

MS Reid

I achieved the NABC Master milestone because of the Indianapolis Bridge Center. I had last played duplicate in the 1980's. One day in 2011 I had an impulse to play duplicate again. I called the IBC and partnership leader Deanna Nesbit arranged for me to play with Miles Muhlada. We hit it off and started regularly playing in the Monday and Friday Mornings NLM games. When Miles was not available , I often played with Mike Suit and with Harley Hoyt. Once in a Swiss Teams event , I even got to partner with the IBC Manager Sharon Austin ! In April 2012 I made Rookie of the Month and in May , Miles made Rookie of the month. The IBC threw big parties for us on both occasions ! The photo I enclose is of Miles and me (I'm in the blue striped shirt) front of the Rookie of the Month plaque at IBC. Miles and I and Mike and Harley went to Sectionals and Regionals in Indiana and in Ohio. Eventually I got enough points of the required colors to Make NABC . I continue to play regularly IBC. With IBC's encouragement and help, I feel I feel I will get to the next rank of Life Master.

John M. Burns

Beth:

It's a pretty good story. Checking on ACBL.org in early March, I have 998.3 master points including pending February master points, so Gloria Bridges and I traveled over the river from Evansville, IN to a special Wednesday night game in Henderson, KY (March 5th -- 1st time we made it over there in about a year due to illnesses). It was a five table game that night against a number of excellent pairs (including a diamond life master, gold life masters and several silver life masters), so I knew we needed to first overall to make it that night. We played great bridge except for one bad 3 board round but still finished 1st overall against great competition for an 1.75 master point award. That gave me exactly 1000.05 master points to get my silver life masters in style against great competition!

I had been ill during the summer and fall of 2013 and basically stopped playing bridge for about 5 months while Gloria had been ill off and on after I started getting better.

Thanks for your email!

Sincerely,
Steven A. Early

Hi Beth,

There's not much of a story, really. My dad has been trying to get me into Bridge forever, and I finally got hooked late last year. My goal for this year is to make Club Master, so I'm going to be playing a lot more in person - so far we've been playing mostly online. Wish me luck!

Tim Kington

Hi Beth,

On a "big" birthday, my son gave me a present of a week at a Regional with a team of Pro's. He contacted Verna Goldberg and she gave him a list of Pro's to call and to interview. My son called Mark Lair, and the rest is history!! I had been playing previous to that - studying with Brian Ross, and playing in both Louisville, Ky and Sarasota, Fl. An old friend, Anna Howell, tutored me and really got my game going in the right direction.

Mark got together a team of Pro's and me - to play in a Regional in Everett, Wa in 2008. I was very hesitant because I had never done anything like that. I had only played a few days in a Regional in my life. Mark and I practiced on BBO for hours preceding the Regional, and my son, unknowingly, had created a "bridge monster"!!! It was, honestly, a world that I didn't know existed!!

Since that time, I've become very competitively, not always winning, but always enjoying the game. I've played with Mark once a year, sometimes twice, since that birthday, and now plan to play twice a year. Thanks for your interest. I'm really excited that I reached 2500 MP's and my next goal is 3500. Don't know if I'll ever make that!!!

Hope you see you sometime in Ky.

Nancy Abrams

Thanks for the kind words of congratulations! I would be happy to share my story which ended on a bridge cruise with Larry Cowan given to me as a Christmas gift from my husband. My next goal is to support him in his quest for master. He currently has around 70 points. He needs a silver piece to get to regional master (100) plus any other color to reach his next goal. Edbc has several opportunities throughout the year for special games which we participate in.

Jeanne Hines



For me, achieving Club Master status is all about Sharon Austin, Manager of the Indianapolis Bridge Center (IBC). Most of my points were earned in the Tuesday night 0-20 game designed to allow newbie's to play and learn. Sharon is the director/mentor. Game after game you hear sage advice from Sharon: "Listen to your partner", "What is your partner telling you? Are they showing extra values?", "Do you have support for partner's suit? Then let them in on your little secret". The atmosphere is a perfect balance of learning, competition and fun.

In fact, that is a good description of the IBC under Sharon's leadership. The monthly calendar promotes a range of opportunities for learning, social settings to meet new players and competition at all skill levels. Most importantly, the culture of the club is positive and friendly. Master players make new players feel welcomed. Game directors run a tight ship with a light touch. And as the calendar shows, Sharon is constantly looking for a reason to celebrate something with a party. Thank you Sharon and IBC for making my formative year in duplicate bridge memorable in a positive way!

Tim Jackson

Dear Beth,

This is very kind of you to acknowledge my achieving Sectional Master, but it is such a long way yet to Life Master that I don't think it is worth a story. There are so many in our Bridge Center that have thousands and thousands of points and my 50 points feels quite paltry. However I do enjoy the game and I appreciate your encouragement.

Sincerely, Nancy Donaldson

Hi Beth,

Thank you so much. I wish I had an inspiring or even interesting story to tell!!! For what it's worth here it is.

My father was an outstanding bridge player. He learned to play bridge as an engineering student at Guindy College, Madras, India during World War II. When he came to the US as a graduate student in mechanical engineering at Harvard University in 1947, bridge helped him to make friends and become part of a community. He returned to India in 1951 and his passion for the game continued until he passed away in 2012. I got my love of the game from him. I learned to play from him but I didn't play regularly and for many, many years, I didn't play at all. I came to the US in 1980. We moved to KY from NJ in 2004. I didn't know anyone here and I thought it would be a nice way to meet people, so I went to play bridge one evening at the Northern KY Bridge Club. My husband was my partner. My husband

found it difficult to sit through 24 hands of duplicate bridge - but I was hooked! As a result of that first game, a neighbor who was running bridge classes and looking for people to join, invited me to the games. This was party bridge, but because of these games I met so many lovely ladies, some of whom have become good friends. Once I started playing, it wasn't difficult to find other games. I joined a couple of local bridge clubs and continued to play mainly party bridge but also played duplicate sporadically. I play for the love of the game, and for a long time I didn't bother to register with ACBL. Eventually, at the duplicate games, I got tired of saying I don't have an ACBL number, so I decided to register. I work full time and because I haven't been able to play duplicate bridge more than 2 or 3 times a month, it's taken me a while to reach this milestone. I'm going to retire this year, and am looking forward to playing more duplicate bridge. My next goal is to become a Sectional Master.

Sincerely,

Swarna Mohan

Bridge Biography 2016—Jim Buffington

I spent the first 18 years of my life in a tiny town in Nebraska (population 1,600). Growing up in the 1950s, this little town had a number of party bridge groups, and my mother belonged to three of them. I learned how to play (badly) when I was ten years old, and have played from time to time since then. I always read the bridge column in the local paper, and even played a little duplicate with the Indiana State Duplicate Bridge Club (not affiliated with ACBL) for a few years.



When I retired from Indiana State in 2014, I learned that my across-the-street neighbor, who had been attending our Thanksgiving and Easter dinners for 25 years, also played bridge. So in December, 2014, we began attending the Terre Haute Bridge Center. My neighbor and I played once a week on Monday Fun Night, and did pretty well. Finally, in February, 2016, I joined ACBL, and now play twice a week—the Wednesday morning bridge has some pretty darn good players. I've been blessed with three pretty good partners during this time, and am now enjoying racking up a few Master Points every now and then. I definitely wished I had joined ACBL a little earlier, as I've left about 24 club points on the table.

Dear Beth,

Thank you very much, for your wishes. My story in how I got into bridge is a little different from many others that you may have heard. I was working for Pfizer, Inc. in Terre Haute, IN. In year 2008 Pfizer decided to shut down this plant after completing all of the obligations of supply of product to the market. Finally it came down that the plant would be shut in October 2010. With the economic instability and my age I knew that it would be difficult to get another job and also I did not want to move, hence I decided to retire when the plant would close. My wife and my children were worried as about depression setting in and what I would do with my time. My wife found out about a bridge center in Terre Haute. She coaxed me to try and learn to play bridge by joining them and a game I had never played in my lifetime. In September my wife called the bridge center and asked if there was a way I could learn to play bridge. The information they provided was that yes on Monday evening's they have a

half hour session for beginners after which they have a game. I decided to join and learn to play bridge. On 9/6/10 I went to the bridge center in the evening to know and learn more about the game not knowing if I would survive. I did stick around and decided to learn and keep playing, and also talked with one of my Pfizer colleague who had played bridge before if he would join and we could play as partners. This was the beginning. Soon to my benefit the Terre Haute Bridge Center decided to start a beginners class on Thursday's from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Mary Lunsford a good bridge player and a good teacher herself started this class and we continued to learn from her for more than a year and in the process I purchased and learned from 3 books of the ACBL Bridge Series which were,

1. Bidding in the 21st Century
2. Play of the Hand in the 21st Century
3. Defense in the 21st Century

Besides these 3 books I brought many more books from the library and read and learned from them. Since September 2010 I have not looked back and have been hooked on playing bridge and so much so that I have become a member of BBO and have been playing bridge online since year 2012.

In year 2015 I did not play bridge as I was working as a consultant for a Pharmaceutical company but since March 2016 I am back at it and I play on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

My goal is improve my game and to get better at playing bridge and would love to take bridge lessons from a reputed teacher, and I would appreciate if I could get some help from ACBL in this regard.

Also please see attached a photo of mine.

Regards,
Shafaat Dalal



When I semi-retired, I was introduced to bridge by a friend. I then took several lessons at our bridge center and then started playing at our bridge center regularly. I traveled to some of the tournaments that were no more than a couple hours from home and in a little over five years, I had earned my life master. Most of my points were earned playing with 2 partners. I have found that playing regularly with the same partners increases your ability to communicate better with your partner.

Chuck Fassler

Thank you so much for informing me of Club Master status. I am thrilled. I set a goal in September that I hoped to achieve that status by May. I joined a wonderful new group called Cavendish and have played on Tuesdays and on Wednesdays at Cincinnati Country Club. I think playing in 2 groups of that caliber twice a week helped me meet my goal.

Mary Ellen Slauson

Thank you so much, Beth. It has been quite a journey. After playing bridge in college in the 60's, I started back in 2007, playing duplicate at the local club, Indianapolis Bridge Center. Having no knowledge of master points and achievement levels, I played only once a week in the 0-20 game for about 5 years.

A year ago a 30 year friend and I decided to "get our gold". We each had just a couple gold points. I had all black, silver and red necessary for Life Master. We went to the Gatlinburg Regional and won about 4 gold. We had the bug. Playing in Regionals close by, I had 19 by the time Gatlinburg rolled around 2016. We played in the Gold Rush pairs game on Mon of the tournament this year. 69.35% in the afternoon session and 56% in the evening. We got 11.92 gold points--all I needed for LM.(she still needs a few black which we're working on). We have had so much fun and it is very gratifying to reach my goal.

I think if I'd known about different color points and levels, it may not have taken so long. I did not know two sessions were necessary to achieve gold points until after 5 years of playing.

Great teachers at IBC and support from better players were instrumental in this achievement.

Along the way I have made many new friends, both at our club and at tournaments.

Again, thank you and I look forward to many more years of bridge.

Joan Flynn

