

Dear AJ,

Many many thanks for sending your nice note. I feel so good to receive it. I wish my own Easy Aces Club here would have given this news. They did not know about it.

For me to get to this level was extremely hard. I joined this Club in 2003 after my retirement. I found that all good players refused to play with me. I then found one who was a novice like me. I played with her for more than 2 years and improved my game. But she got sick and stopped playing. Once again I started asking people to play with me. Luckily, I found that a 90 year old day needed a partner. She agreed to play with me and taught me how to play. But she could play with me only twice or three times per month. I started looking and slowly found other 5 ladies to play with me. But no male person asked me to play with him.

Best players in our Club have their own partners. It is so difficult to beat them and get master points.

All of my lady partners died or got very sick 3 years back. I lost all of my partners. I have found 2 only so far for 3 or 4 times games per month. I cannot find any one for other days.

I enjoy duplicate bridge. I wish its rules change to make life of beginners more easy.

Tim A Agarwal

Hi AJ, I'm glad to have the Sapphire rating in the rearview mirror. I won the "turtle" award for taking the longest of any of my contemporaries. I do have an excuse, I have been directing and lecturing on cruise ships 150+/- days/year for more than 10 years. Seriously cut into my playing time. Anyway, thanks for the email.

Mel Ward

Dear AJ,

Thank you for your very nice E-mail. Sorry I haven't responded sooner. I have attached a brief bridge history. You may use that as you see fit. I do not have a picture file readily available but there is a picture of me and my partner Joyce Dennis in the April Midwest monitor.

BRIDGE HISTORY

I learned how to play bridge in 1947 while a student at the University of Nebraska (BS in Chemistry/Mathematics and MA in Mathematics/Physics) . My first ACBL duplicate bridge experience was in 1951 -52 when I played in two sectional tournaments in Hampton Virginia but did not play in any local clubs. Moved to Long Island NY in late 1955. From 1959 until 1978 I played once a week in local duplicate clubs when work and home responsibilities did not take priority and played in several area tournaments each year. In 1964 I was the non master player of the year for the Greater New York Bridge Association.

In 1978 my family and I moved to Tennessee where I took a position as an executive of an engineering and government operations contractor. Starting in the fall of 1979 I played in a small once a week. I became a Life Master in 1979 while playing in a sectional tournament held in Huntsville AL.

My wife started playing in the late 1980's and I retired in January 1991. We moved to Florida in July 1991 and started playing there together about 2 or 3 times a week. My wife became a Life Master in 1996. (It is interesting to note that she never played in a non life master game). In 1998 my wife started to have health problems and we played rather sporadically afterwards. In 2004 Hurricane Charley destroyed the playing sites for our two local clubs and that further reduced our bridge participation . Then in 2005 my wife had a serious stroke. I stopped playing bridge to help care for her.

In 2008 we moved to Ohio to be near our daughter and her family. My wife passed away in October 2011 . In February 2012 I started playing again at the Miami Valley Bridge Club. I had a little less than 1250 points at that time. I have been playing regularly about 4 or 5 times a week and at local tournaments.

Unit 136 accomplishments

- 2014 and 2015 Ace of Clubs winner in the 1000 to 2500 group.
- 2014 Mini -McKenney winner in the 1000 to 2500 group
- 2016 Mini -McKenney and Ace of Clubs winner in the 1500-2500 group.

As a piece of trivia - I have played in GNT finals in four different districts.

One is never at all successful at bridge without good partners .In NY I played with George Mott . In TN I played with Bob Boyer and in Florida with my wife Annette. I would be remiss to not mention Ron Babcock and Joyce Dennis . Ron was one of the first to play with me when I returned to bridge in 2012 and helped me to get up to date after a long layoff. He and I continue to play as a regular partnership. Joyce is my other multi year partner in both pairs and team games. Both have made big contributions to my master point totals. While in NY my partner and I played Kaplan Sheinwold and then Precision. Since then I have played Standard American with varying amounts of conventions.

Thanks,

Conrad Rennemann

Thank you, it came faster than I thought. Encourage players to go to tournaments as well as club game. Tournament play really is a great venue to improve ones game. Would like some consistency in eight is enough brackets. The one coming up caused two teams to drop out as 400 is a really low threshold.

Peg Ammon

Thank you for the recognition.

After a break following college, I returned to duplicate bridge in February 2016. I took advantage of the free classes, supervised play and the encouragement and tips from more experienced players to learn how to play modern bridge. In April 2016 I found a regular partner who was interested in improving her game, and we worked together to up our game. We review hand-records after playing, and at our club Bob Fisk reviews the bidding after the Friday morning game and comments on-line about the Monday night hand. This has been very helpful, as has reading the monthly ACBL magazine. The support and comradery I have received from my partner and the bridge community has been wonderful, and whether or not I play well during a giving session, always makes bridge enjoyable.

Kind regards,
Steve Messinger

Thanks for sending the news about becoming a Ruby Life Master. I do not think there is much of a story to this. As an older bridge player told me many years ago, the points accumulate if you stick your legs under the table frequently enough. I have been playing duplicate a long time!

Judy Krasnoff

Dear AJ Stephani,

Thank you for your support. I had written a note to my local group on my getting life master, but maybe not an inspirational piece so much as a feeling. I'm going to try to attach it anyway. I started playing duplicate in a community center here in Dublin in 2008. The game was directed by Clayton Rose who plays in the Columbus club as well. My first partner who helped me for years was Jeanette Burton; however, she no longer plays. I shortly joined the larger group and with everyone's help, including formal teachers (Cheryl Schneider, Joyce Penn, Larry Jones), I stumbled into life master, but late in life (now 81). Happy to be here.

Hugh McCracken



Hmmm, yet I went to the ACBL site and it shows "Diamond."

Who knew?

I got there by very sound bridge judgment - i.e. selecting partners who would carry me. Another clever strategy was to play a helluva lot of bridge. The key, in essence, is attendance and good partners.'

Wagner Van Vlack

Dear Director A.J.

Thank you for your kind words. The pressure is off for getting more gold points now. I have to be in debt to my mentor and patient partner Iris Libby for taking me under her wing to go to Gatlinburg regional, Indianapolis regional, and this time to San Diego National for getting my gold points to meet my Life Master requirement. The thrill and excitement, however, is short lived, because i came home and encountered the difficulty of finding available and compatible Life Masters to play with in the open session. I was told that in the open sessions, most players have their fixed partners. what a dilemma! I will need to start to use your " imessage" to search for partners.

I began to play bridge seriously in year 2008 when Tom Deddon was conducting Tuesday nigh's bridge games. He urged me to become an ACBL member or I would lose a lot of points earned.. For a while, I was scared to come to the bridge Center because I was told by a member that there were some old men who call the director on you frequently. But I found out that was not true. Most players were nice and willing to share their secrets with you. I learned a lot and became addict to it. As years go by , I began to play more , about 6 to 7 times a week. Many players have to baby sit their grandchildren, mine were on the other side of the Pacific ocean , in Hong Kong. So I have been totally free to play bridge. I like challenges to become professional in any field I do. Thirty years ago, when I managed apartment buildings, I took courses and became a **Certified Apartment Manager**. Few years later, When I invested in and managing commercial properties, I took courses, exams and wrote a thesis and became a **Certified Property Manager** in the Institute of Real Estate Management, the highest professional designation available in the real estate business. So when I learned about the **Life Master** designation, I decided I would like to try that. But I could not find a partner who would travel out of town with me to play in tournaments until Iris moved to Cincinnati from California. Thank you so much , Iris! I like to learn, learn and learn, then play, play and play! No, that's not it. I want to play bridge so I do not develop Alzheimer disease! In the mornings, when I leave to play bridge, I told my husband that I am going to get mental therapy!



I enjoyed playing in the NLM section and feel at ease, Now I have to embark to the new territory with caution and courage. Wish me luck! Another challenge!

Thanks, A.J. for listening.

Liz Lin

Dear AJ,

Bridge has been a big part of my life since 1990 when I walked into the bridge club in Lexington, Kentucky on a Monday evening to play in the game for beginners. Jerry, the director, had paired me a partner after I had assured him that I knew how to play. Of course, the game they were playing that night was very different from the one I played in my previous neighborhood. But in time I found some mentors and bought some books and was hooked. Within a couple of years, I was accredited as a teacher and, using the Audrey Grant series, started a class of 12 on Wednesdays. My little group grew and completed all three books, and we formed a bridge plus game. As points were acquired, we had to get a new sanction with a higher maximum, and I had to take the director's test. The Wednesday game

grew into the largest in the club. Meanwhile, I served as treasurer of our club several years and president one year. Much later, I joined the unit board and served as treasurer a few years. I have backed away from all responsibilities since 2015 when I became a part year resident of Kentucky.

I became a Life Master in 2000, having played neither in a Knock-Out (Did they exist then?) nor in a Gold Point session in a Regional (I know they did not exist.) What a thrill to hold that title! Then in 2009, playing with a pick-up partner in the nationals in Washington, DC, I realized another goal of Silver Life Master. This was the ultimate! Now I could just play for fun and forget points. BUT, points started getting easier to earn with more knock-outs, more special games at the club and, especially, BBO. Don't get me wrong, I am very proud of this achievement. I never imagined until a couple of years ago that the ranking would be possible. But it was so much easier than the first two achievements.

When I get my Gold Life Master certificate, I will frame it and hang it with my beautiful Life Master and Silver Life Master certificates and praise the benefits of being a part of the worthwhile ACBL organization.

Anita Pettus

Hello, I was very surprised to receive your email of congratulations. I am a member who qualified for life master status under the 500 points plan. To have qualified as a bronze life master I assume this is a mistake, or this is part of the amnesty program recently discussed since I joined ACBL prior to 2010, but let my membership lapse. If it is the later choice, will I follow the 300 points plan or the 500 points plan for any future rank changes in the course of my bridge playing?

Thanks!

Pat Birbiglia

Thank you. Just play on Tuesday mornings with a good partner

Tom McCalley



Thanks for the congrats on my making Gold Life Master! My wife and I are planning a party for Friday, May 25th at 11:30 AM at the Evansville Duplicate Bridge Club, 1551 S. Green river Road, Evansville, In please come and help me celebrate!

Ray Andersen

(A.J. with Ray Andersen during his Gold LM Party in Evansville)

I really don't have a story. I get my points at the Anderson Bridge Club.

Iris Shaw

Thank you for the congratulations, AJ. Achieving Silver Life Master was indeed a goal of mine.

Also, let me thank and congratulate you for your volunteer work with the ACBL. The time and effort I know you put in to making the ACBL work as well as it does is very much appreciated by me.

Finally, I encourage the ACBL to continue supporting internet games and tournaments. These allow folks like me with limited resources of time and place to continue playing this great game as ACBL participants. A master point is truly a thing of value for many of us.

Regards,

Steve Ford

Dear AJ:

Thank you for your note of congratulations when I obtained the rank of Silver Life Master.

After raising my family of eight children, I became an avid bridge player. Sitting at the bridge table was the place I could relax and sharpen my skills.

In April, 2018, I will also achieve another milestone when I become 89 years old. These years have allowed me lots of time with my bridge friends, and in addition to my ACBL Silver status, I have also achieved Silver Diamond status (8,900 points) with the ABA. I have worked hard over the years to bring the players of both groups together so that we can support each organization's events, and so that we can increase our bridge friendships. It is a blessing to be part of both organizations, and my hope is that I will live to see the day when a system can be devised to let us receive points from both organizations when we play in each other's games. I want to thank all those from whom I have learned by partnering (or just watching) over the years including ABA friends Imogine Boyd, Maxie Davis, Sam Jones (all deceased) and Harold Bickham, as well as ACBL Diamond LM, Bob Lyon.

See you at the table,

Betty Markey, Indianapolis