

## **My Story – District 11 Rank Promotion Perspectives**

Here are the stories of our members as they reflect on a recent rank promotion.

**9 August 2023**

### **Ryan Schultz – Gold Life Master**

Larry,

Thanks for reaching out.



My first ever bridge game was a NLM pairs event at a sectional tournament in Columbus, OH in late 2005. I started learning bridge from my roommate that morning and we cobbled together a 50% game. I remember using the Bergen convention correctly on the very first hand. I've played card games all my life, mostly euchre, poker, and hearts, so I was already comfortable with trick taking games. The bidding systems grabbed my interest initially and I was hooked on bridge pretty quickly. I didn't join the ACBL until after I finished grad school in spring 2006. Since then I've played in numerous tournaments at all levels mostly with two partners, David from 2006-2011 and Pete from 2011-Present. Having long term partnerships has been an important part of my success as a player. I've taught at the local club, serve on the District 11 board, and I am currently a member of the ACBL Advisory Council. I'm most proud of my national wins: GNT Flight C in 2010. GNT Flight B in 2015, and NAP Flight B in 2016. I became a Gold LM in Chicago after placing 4th in the 10K pairs.

-Ryan Schultz

## **Terry Maguire – Ruby Life Master**



Thank you...as for this most recent achievement, there is somewhat of an interesting story to attach to it. It started in the District 11 GNT qualifying event held in Cincinnati in April. Our team (including Matt Just, Blaine Mullins, and Charley Seelbach) qualified 1st in the B division, and thus were invited to the National GNT finals in Chicago. Excited to participate, our team joined together in Chicago and began play on Wednesday, July 12. On the first day, we qualified 7th of the 30+ teams, and therefore made it to the final 16. We went on to win Thursday and Friday, making it to the the final four. On Saturday, we played the eventual winner, a team we had beaten in the qualifying round, and except for one poor quarter (-51 points) on this day, we played well, eventually losing by 25 points.

Now, for the interesting part of this story: Finishing in a tie for 3rd, we received 35 points, and this total elevated my masterpoint total to 1520, just enough to earn me the Ruby Life Master status. So as you can see, I have District 11 to thank!

That's it...

Terry



## **Nick Curott – New ACBL Junior Master**

Dear Larry,

Thanks for the invitation. I feel like District 11 is doing about everything that it is realistically possible to do to support the bridge experience of new players given the wide range of peoples' backgrounds, interests, and abilities. There are a ton of creative ideas and programs being thought up and implemented at Indianapolis Bridge Center. The only things I could even dream up are possibly thinking creatively about getting younger people playing and possibly having an accelerated way or option to learn for the rare individuals who have high ability or have a lot of time to spend learning. Feel free to share my story below and the attached picture.

Bridge is an amazingly fun game! I've known about it for a long time because my dad introduced me to bridge at the age of five, when my hands were still too small to hold the cards. He thought it was a funny party trick, and it unnerved the couple my parents played rubber against to have a small child rapidly counting hands over their shoulders and offering critical commentary.

I was always interested in learning more about the game, but I never had anyone to play with until I moved to the Indianapolis area and joined an introduction to bridge class this summer. I was amazed to learn how many people play this wonderful game. And I had no idea of its depth and complexity.

Everyone at the Indianapolis Bridge Center has been wonderful and incredibly inviting, from the instructor Tom Frank, to the club manager Sharon Austin, and all my classmates. So far I've learned that bridge is a game that provides a lifetime of enjoyment, and you're never too old or too young to learn. It's entertaining on whatever level you want to engage with it, and you can take it as seriously or as casually as you like.

Earning Junior Master status is a really neat first step on my own personal journey. I've had some amusing adventures trying to learn how to play duplicate bridge, including a few epic flops that might reassure new players and amuse experienced ones. For instance, the third game I ever played in was an under 500 game, which

I was invited to play in because I was looking for a partner. I had done well in an under 200 game the day before, so I thought it would be fine.

The problem was, although I had read the first three books in Audrey Grant's series, none of them cover realistic competitive bidding, and I had no experience playing in competitive games. So there I was, and every hand there's aggressive doubling, overcalling, sacrificing, preempting, you name it, and I hadn't learned that yet, and got a 36% score. That didn't affect me at all, I just went to the library immediately afterwards and read a book on competitive bidding.

So, the next day, the fourth game I played in, I drove to Louisville for an under 200 game. The only problem there was that they didn't have a partner for me. But since I drove all that way the director was nice enough to let me play in an open game. My partner had over 500 masterpoints, and I'm sitting there playing pair after pair of masters with thousands of points. We got crushed, of course, but I was actually pretty happy and kind of amused with a slightly under 50% score. Then, two days later, I played in the under-50 game back in Indianapolis and scored 73.56%.

My first week of duplicate bridge taught me a lot. First, I learned that club managers, directors, and most of the players are really kind and tolerant of new players trying to learn bridge, so there is no reason to be intimidated or scared. It seems to me the best way to get better is to challenge yourself by playing the best players that it is reasonable and socially acceptable to play with given one's knowledge and ability.

Also, there is no reason to get discouraged by a bad score. Instead, it is a learning opportunity to figure out what's missing from your game and to figure out how to correct it. I also learned not to get obsessed with acquiring masterpoints. The goal should be to have fun, first and foremost, then to challenge yourself to get better at the game. If you do that the points will take care of themselves.

My advice to newer players is to relax, understand that it is going to be a process, and enjoy learning and playing bridge at whatever stage you are at. Don't get frustrated that you haven't learned or can't remember everything, because nobody can ever fully master everything and there is always more to learn. That is precisely the beauty of the game, and why it will be enjoyable for a lifetime.

Personally, over the last two or three months I've read probably 15 books on bridge and watched more bridge on YouTube than I'd like to admit, and I still have no idea how to play well.

My advice to experienced players is to continue to be so welcoming to newer players, and to never forget what it was like when you were a beginner yourself. Also, invite people to play, and teach your family and friends how to play. There is a beautiful bridge culture that is unique and wonderful, and there isn't anything else quite like it. Enjoy it, maintain it, foster it, grow it, and share it with others.

Best regards

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