

## RANK CHANGES IN DISTRICT 10

**Miki Cook** of Birmingham on achieving Silver Life Master - My bridge interest started at Verdun American High School, Verdun, France when my dorm counselor introduced me to Goren Bridge. As the years passed I was only able to play a few times because of relocating. Then upon retirement in 2003 a friend told me that I was needed in the bridge class at the Senior Center; so, I went and could not stop learning fast enough. I have taken many lessons from several people and stayed quite confused for a few years. Then in April of 2011 Allison Howard started helping me to really understand the game. I am still learning from her and from reading.

I became an accredited ACBL Bridge Teacher a few years ago after completing Pat Harrington's TAP class in Birmingham, Alabama. I now teach beginning bridge at the University of Alabama Gadsden Center in Gadsden, Alabama. for their OLLIE program which is a Life Long Learning Program meeting in the Fall, Spring and Summer semesters. I teach my class in our downtown Senior Center which is a multi-million dollar facility that allows us a Bridge Room on the second floor. Most of my students are retired teachers. I am strictly a volunteer bridge teacher; however, the University Center does run off copies of my lessons for me to give the students. I am using Bridge in the Twenty First Century (ACBL) that I acquired in my TAP class. The ACBL has not helped me in any way. I pay my dues and I have done everything on my own.

The Gadsden Bridge Club, our local duplicate club has a Director whom we pay. I would like for Club Directors to take a class in treating people fairly and somehow get through to players who have been playing for decades not to be condescending to new players or even to newer players in the club. Most folks just want to be treated fairly and learning occurs much easier in a comfortable environment. I must love the game because I can't seem to get enough of it, and BBO is really great. I do treasure the friendships that I have made through duplicate bridge

**Quinn Bates** of Louisiana on achieving Junior Master - I have played bridge socially, off and on, for many years and enjoy reading the bridge column in the newspaper. A year or so ago I joined the People Program West Bank and the intermediate bridge instructor is Cily Winkeler, a member of the Bridge Association in Metairie. Cily requires us to use modern bidding methods. She also suggested we might enjoy playing in the 99er game on Friday mornings at the Bridge Center. Initially I was the only one brave enough to go and I really enjoyed it. I was soon joined by Dabney Jacob of the People Program, a lady with fortitude who enjoys competition. Suzanne Cliffe runs the 99er game. She is a good, no nonsense instructor who requires that we play by the rules- and we learn. Dabney and I are good partners because we get mad at ourselves, not each other. I sometimes also play with other partners. I am slowly continuing to learn. Bridge is challenging and that's what makes it fun, I hope to play more often this summer. I may need to find other compatible partners when Dabney is unavailable.

**Sara Riddle** of Little Rock on achieving Junior Master - I joined the Little Rock Bridge house about two years ago. Although I played bridge in college I soon realized I did not know a lot. I learned to play duplicated Bridge by taking lessons starting with Bidding in the 21st Century. I

contribute by knowledge to good instructors, Jane Dickie, Dick Heil, and Richard Kalkbrenner. Let's not leave out members of the club who are not afraid to correct you while you are playing. I also played with a young partner that was conscious and kept me focused.

**Brookie Walker** of Louisiana on achieving Club Master - I am so happy to have some success at bridge. I am a History Professor at Bossier Parish Community College who is just on the cusp of retirement. My parents played bridge, and I started playing in college. My friend, Debbie Grand started a teaching and playing game a few years ago. A number of players in that group have graduated to the Shreveport Bridge House. My favorite thing about bridge is the many wonderful friends I have made. All of the players at the bridge house are genuinely courteous and most generous in providing advice to novice players. I have taken classes from Bonita Hays and Randy Kenyon, and both are excellent teachers. We could use a few more like them. An online help feature which would provide answers to bridge problems might be helpful also. I have been so engaged and gratified by my experience at the Shreveport Bridge House. I commend those who have worked to make it such a great place.

**Sherrie Goodman** of Louisiana on achieving Bronze Life Master - Let me start by saying that I have been a party bridge player most of my life starting with grandparents and aunts as a child to friends in high school to girlfriends as an adult. After raising four children over 36 years, and caring for two ill parents following Katrina, I had a pretty busy life. When my children were all grown and my parents passed away, I found myself with a lot of time on my hands. I had done a lot of community work through the years, and was tired of chairing so many fund raisers. But this was different. I had taken care of people all my life, and I missed this. Then I found a program where they pair you with a "home-bound" person to visit or take out and entertain every couple of weeks. My new "friend" had two things she enjoyed, shopping and bridge. I quickly learned that we didn't enjoy the same kind of shopping, so I decided to explore the Bridge with her. I couldn't really bring her to my party game as we already have 6 of us for 4 spots at the table. I had heard about EZ bridge at the LA. Bridge center, so I took her there. It wasn't long before we were both hooked. Her health failed and she was unable to go for a while, but I was hooked. Not only was I doing something I love, I was getting to know a lot of wonderful people who enjoy the same. 2 1/2 years later I earned my life master, and now 3 1/2 years later I have earned my Bronze. My next goal is to keep learning more about this wonderful game and hopefully keep my brain working!

**Shirley Jackson** of Nashville on achieving Sectional Master - In March, 2015 I moved back to Nashville after having been gone twelve years. In Dayton, Ohio I started playing Duplicate Bridge in 2004 but never played with a group who gave Master Points. When I moved home to Nashville, TN. I found Vanderbilt Bridge Center on White Bridge Road. In the Middle of April I started playing there and took advantage of mini classes that took place 30 minutes before a game for 0-50 IMP's. All during that time until today I have played a lot of Duplicate Bridge and now have a little over 50 IMP's. It has been quite a ride and I have met some very nice people during this past 13 months.

Being a retired person I am on a limited income which limits the number of times I can play during a month. It is rather costly as you know. I play as often as I can because I just love this game! Now another issue has come along which I will share with you. If you choose not to use this in my story I will understand because it is a different kind of look at the game. There are many lessons at the Vanderbilt Bridge Center and because of my fixed income I am unable to

participate in those classes. I just plain cannot afford them. As a result I have not been able to connect with other people and have a regular partner. I believe that it is good to play with others, however, over the long haul one has to play with a regular player or players. Most of the players I know play with the same player all of the time or maybe one other person. This is my own personal opinion that because I have been unable to connect with a player in a class and because of my age, which is significant, most people prefer a partner near the same age as they are and I understand that. It is so hard to be trying to find a partner for every time I can play. My family has encouraged me to play as much as I can but they do not play the game and so it is hard for them to understand my problem. When I think of not playing I feel kind of sad because it is such an important part of my life.

**Gary Teel** on achieving Club Master - I learned to play bridge by watching my mother's bridge club, circa '60s. I went on to college, LSU then Tennessee, where bridge was popular in fraternity houses when not partying or studying. After graduation I didn't play for several years. Finally when stationed in Korea I played for a few months, 1973. I did not play another hand for years except against a robot hand held and also reading the bridge columns. All this was Goren Bridge.

Fast forward to 2015, after being retired for 2 years, I had health issues that put me in hospital for five weeks during which my only grand daughter was born while I was in ICU. In February at a reunion party, I talked to a friend that had health problems himself and had turned to bridge as an outlet for something he could do. He recommended duplicate club. I had never played before; much less the modern bidding points system. I showed up, bought the book, and started off playing with a variety of partners in the "little room". The people I met could not have been more welcoming for this newbie. It took some time to not blurt out "pass" or reach across and play dummy's cards! The play of the hand had not changed though and It has always been my forte. I have a permanent partner now who excels at bidding.

The rest is future history. I'll be playing as long as I can walk and count cards. I only have one minor suggestion. When I started I knew exactly two players by name. I'm terrible with names; and simple peel off name tags that were used at the tournament would be nice. Please give all the people in charge of the minions kudos, especially Tom Thomas who is best "cat herder" in town!

**Mary Beth Walker** on achieving Regional Master - I think more novice players would enjoy games specifically geared to their level. Our club is a friendly one, but newbies don't always hang in there. We have 2 excellent teachers, so I'd like to see more of the students feel comfortable enough to play at the club as they finish their lessons. Many give it a try, but either give up bridge altogether or find a party bridge group. When I took lessons 4 years ago, I was able to play in a 0-99 game. Many of my classmates played in this & are still playing. Now our lowest level game is 0-299. Our club really needs new members & growth begins at the bottom.

**Gail Seale** of Florence on achieving Junior Master - A member Dawn Kimberling was responsible for introducing me to the club and subsequently mentoring my progress. Dawn and all the members provided an environment and assistance in the learning process from the very beginning. In late Feb 2016 I became a member of the ACBL. Since November 2015 I have

played at the club two days a week and I attended my first tournament in Huntsville earlier this summer.

I have found duplicate bridge to be challenging and most enjoyable and look forward to competing for many more years. Again my thanks to all the members of the ACBL club in Florence for introducing me to a game I can participate and enjoy for the rest of my life. **Jeanne Taylor** of Brandon, Mississippi on achieving Club Master - My parents played bridge when I was a child, so I would watch them on Friday nights. I found it intriguing as a child. When I went to college I had three friends that knew about what I did about the game but together we learned enough that we could play two or three times a week, instead of studying. What laughs and fun we had together trying to learn the game. As an adult I have played for years and continued to love the game, I started playing duplicate a few years ago but didn't get very serious until a year ago, I love my partners, the staff, and other players at JBA. It is a real treat for me to play there. I have much to learn and hopefully, will continue to have opportunities to do so.

**Jackie Childress** on achieving Junior Master - Your recent email regarding my junior master status has me smiling. Three years ago I retired from my profession. Soon thereafter my sisters signed me up to join them for a beginning bridge class. The complexity of the game both frustrated and fascinated me. I have been blessed to have the most talented teachers at the local bridge center that I have frustrated! Happily I have loved both the game of bridge and the people I have encountered at the local bridge center. It has become a second home.

**Nancy Rosenburg** of Memphis on achieving NABC Master - Discovered bridge in 2008, thanks to my good friend, Ann Caldwell. Became addicted to bridge and have been plugging away ever trying to master this game! Not sure the District can do anything more than they are doing other than to stop people from getting older and aging out of the game! I know we are doing quite a bit in trying to attract the younger generation to the game, and it seems to be working.

**Frances Smietana** of Lafayette on achieving **Life Master** - I play from a small club, currently 38 members. Got enthralled when a partner from Lafayette and I garnered over 12 gold points in Biloxi, MS. Her intent was to be a life master, and I went along for the ride. Joined ACBL in 2005, played the local tournaments, met wonderful people at both the local level and all the tournaments. My effort became one to let others know you too can advance with planning and the willingness to go out of your comfort zone. In the journey, I became a director at our local club, served as President (currently Secretary), and also President of Unit Board 221. It's all there for anyone who wishes to commit. By the way I have found the greatest resource at the tournaments are the wonderful people on the staff, many times they have helped me make a more intelligent decision as to what event to play and explained decisions that were beyond my experience. Thanks for happy memories.

**Pete Marvin** of Little Rock on achieving **Life Master** - Started playing bridge in college in the late 60's...played hell with my grade-point, but it sure was fun setting up IMP games with 8 guys in the dorm. Put rubber bands around the hands, couldn't afford trays. Didn't play from 69-71, time spent in the Peace Corps in Borneo. Resumed duplicate at the LR Bridge Club on Durwood Road from 1971-75. Then got married, went to med school. Realized that bridge on

the only occasional basis that career and family would allow, would not be satisfying: you have to play regularly or you won't play competitively. So I quit entirely...for 38 years. With retirement came the desire to have at it again. Called the ACBL...they still had a record of the just under 100 MPs I had, and so reinstated them. Called the LR bridge club, and dropped by cold one day, picked up a partner, and started back around Thanksgiving of 2013. With the new red and gold point requirements, and new threshold of 500 points, I didn't really think I'd make Life Master. But with a good attitude, good partners with similar goals, and some READING\*, things went well.

**Maria Hawkins** of Alabama on achieving Gold Life Master - I cannot tell you how happy I am. This is truly beyond my expectation! I learned to play bridge when I first came to this Country 62 years ago, as a young bride of a US Air Force Officer. I had heard of the game, in Italy back then, it was the game for rich Italian Men. I moved into an apartment complex with many newlyweds. I made friends immediately, in spite of warnings that I would be discriminated against because I was Italian and Catholic. This wonderful group of ladies thought me to play Bridge. Of course it was Goren social Bridge. I played for over 45 years, and at one time, I belonged to 5 Bridge Clubs. In 2002, a member of one of my Bridge clubs, Mary Havill, talked me into trying to play at the local Duplicate Bridge Club. I was reluctant to do it, because of stories I had heard about duplicate Bridge players. I finally agreed. It took some getting used to it, most players were nice, but some had no patience with social Bridge players, and there were many Directors calls. Mary and I started playing 2 days a week and immediately became members of ACBL. Shortly after we joined, Birmingham hosted a Regional, and Mary and I decided to go play a couple of times. One of the Directors asked for a couple of volunteers to play in the open game. Not knowing what we were doing, we agreed. We came in first overall in our section! This is when we became addicted (lol) to Duplicate Bridge. Our first out of town Regional Tournament was in Gatlinburg. We played in a 0-5 game, and got our first trophy. You would have thought we won a million dollars! We went on to win 14 more, which I proudly display in my Study, along with the framed Life Master, Bronze Life Master, and Silver Life Master! I cannot wait to get my Gold Life Master certificate.

Mary and I continued to play together for 10 years, at our local bridge club they called us the M&Ms. We did very well together, but decided to expand our horizons and play with other partners, some of the time. We never took a lesson, but learned some of the conventions from other players. I have been a big fan of Frank Stewart, who is a member of our Bridge Club, and follow his philosophy to keep it simple, and so I do! I play Standard American. Then a few years ago I decided to try internet playing. At first it was for fun in another site, but when I heard of BBO, I became immediately interested. I played with a nice gentleman, Dave Spang, from Bangor Maine, 2 speedball games every night. Unfortunately he died this past February. I have tried to find a compatible partner, but no one seems to live up to Dave. So I have been playing with Robots. I have been a Widow for the past 23 years, and I must say Bridge helped me tremendously in my grief. I have 2 sons, one is a physician, who encourages me to keep playing Bridge, he is convinced that keeping my brain active helps avoid becoming senile! (I am 83 years old) My other son is an Engineer like his Dad and Granddad And works for the same Company they did! I know that this message is longer than you wanted, feel free to edit it. I failed to mention that during the time that I played Bridge, I was an Italian interpreter for 33

years for families who came from Italy to UAB Medical Center in Birmingham for Cardiac Surgery!

**Jean Karr** of Mississippi on achieving Junior Master - We started playing party bridge in 2015 at Adrian Senior center. It was the spring board to duplicate when we became snow birds in ocean springs last yr. We started with lessons with Rick Logan at gulf port. We have had fun learning & playing bridge we did our first tournament in Jackson MS where on Sat we came in second. We play 3 days a week & wer have decided to do a tournament every Mo. Jan is Sinabel island GA. Thank you for email.

**Owen Lynch** on achieving Diamond Life Master - I started playing duplicate bridge in college (a long time ago). I have played pretty much continuously since that time. When I was working and raising a family I played mostly nearby sectionals and sometimes regionals. In my early playing days points were harder to come by. After I retired I have played in more regionals and some nationals and have picked up a significant number of points thru Knockouts and larger pairs events. I recently achieved one of my goals by qualifying for the Platinum pairs. I like to play against top competition and my goal is to win a NABC title with no masterpoint limits. Currently I play regularly with several good partners (a big key to my success). Besides tournaments I usually play 2-3 times a week in the local game.

**David Coe** of Nashville on achieving Club Master - As someone who played social bridge for many years I finally got over my nervousness and tried my hand at duplicate bridge last March and it's extremely gratifying to see a small amount of success at such a difficult but fun game. Of course having a great bridge partner makes all the difference and I certainly have that in Kay Gray. She loves the game as much as I do and is always ready to head over to the Vanderbilt Bridge Center and play a few boards and like all good partners she also bails me out with her good play after I make one of those terrible plays that I remember for the rest of the week. Every bridge session provides us all with many opportunities to completely mess thing up! I am a professional musician (fiddle & mandolin) here in Nashville which luckily leaves me time to play bridge during the week. Kay and I started out playing duplicate on Monday nights in the 0-50 game and the folks at the Vanderbilt Bridge Center couldn't have been nicer or more welcoming. Besides all the fun people to play with our director, Larry Hayes, provides a very relaxed atmosphere for us to play in and teaches a great class before each game so that we improve each week. We are now playing in 0-199 and 0-299 games and enjoying them just as much. We are anxious to try a tournament sometime and my only complaint is that tournaments always seem to fall on weekends which is when I work but of course I realize that's not the norm for most people. One week when Kay and I had done particularly well I was bragging to one of our other great directors, Mary Margaret Hamlett, about our numbers and she said "that's how bridge hooks you!" and she was so right. Kay and I are both happily hooked and continue to enjoy our time playing this great game with great people. Our thanks go out to all the folks whose dedication and hard work keeps the Vanderbilt Bridge Center up and running for us to enjoy every week.

**Jerry Bigner** on achieving Silver Life Master - Ten years ago after losing my wife and due to health reasons I could no longer play my loved game of golf, I started playing duplicate bridge to fill hours in my day. I now direct a non-sanctioned duplicate game at a local church for retirees like myself averaging 9 tables. I am also a member of a men's duplicate club that has

been in existence for fifty-plus years. I am grateful for the many friends I have made since starting this phase of my life.

**Cherry Whipple** so achieving Junior Master - I don't really have anything worthwhile telling. It took me quite a while to get here. But I do give thanks to Karen Haik, Martha Young, and Bobbie Williamson for making this a pleasant experience. Karen, especially, has made our bridge group so much friendlier and welcoming. Martha is also very warm and friendly. Not feeling intimidated is the key.

**David Albrecht** of Tennessee on achieving Ruby Life Master – I am recently retired and moved to Tennessee. I live out in a small country village of 50 people, 70-80 miles away from the nearest bridge clubs which happen to be in Nashville and Franklin. I make the trek three times per week. I became a Ruby LM in a top bracket KO in Chattanooga. I was playing with three tough women from Nashville who needed a token male and a designated scapegoat. I was fortunate they played really well and didn't need a scapegoat. I started playing bridge 16 years ago, which coincided with increased job related travel. Although bridge conventions change from state to state, bridge personalities don't. It's a good thing I like bridge players.

**Steve Filipowski** of Birmingham on achieving Silver Life Master - It is a privilege to be a member of ACBL, District 10 and especially The Birmingham Duplicate Bridge Club. I want to thank all of my playing partners who helped me achieve Silver Life Master Status.

**Ken Williams** of Little Rock on achieving Club Master - What do you do when golf gets rained out? You go to the bridge house with the hope of not finishing last and trying something new. Night one was stressful. Little problems popped up such as a racing heartbeat, rapid shallow breathing, and hands with more than four suits, one with six. Aces became fours, hearts became diamonds. Having a challenged attention span, I didn't read or take lessons. Instead, I listened to my opponents and heard their comments and watched their play. It was obvious that the room was filled with intelligent people, each with considerable skills. Everyone had something to teach me, even if they didn't intend it. Every person you will ever meet knows something that you don't. Very shortly I recognized that there was precious little difference in the precision of the players. The margins were paper thin. Everyone has tendencies, expressions, "tells" that help spell the difference between the 40's and the 60's. Eliminating mine is a work in progress. Although I have played with other partners with some success, I am fortunate to have a regular partner who is a true student of the game. What success we have had is primarily rooted in keeping it simple. We don't do anything fancy. We have gradually formulated our partnership rules through trial and error and, as long as I am able to ward off intuition, they serve us well. I congratulate the people of the bridge house of Little Rock for making my first year memorable and fun.

**Sue England** on achieving Silver Life Master - I never thought I would make it, due to health issues and the small club locally. However, I was introduced to BBO and I was finally able to get those last points I needed to put me over the top! I made it!

**Andy Kramek** of Hot Springs Village on achieving Junior Life Master - My wife and I moved to Hot Springs Village from Akron, OH last July and although we are not yet retired, we

planned to retire in another year or so – which is why we built a new house and moved here. I had played bridge as a young man at University, and also in my days in the Royal Navy, in the 1970s, learning the then current version of ACOL. My wife had never played. Last August we saw a “Learn Bridge in a Day” advertised by the Village Card Club and decided to go along. We both enjoyed the day and signed up for the EasyBridge classes (which ran on Saturday mornings – so we could attend) and began to go to a very useful Wednesday evening “Play and Learn” session. My wife and I continued with the Easybridge classes and are now half way through EasyBridge 3 and we played in the Saturday Morning 0-20 game, as well as in the Sectional Tournament last fall (we actually won our flight somehow) and will be playing in the Silverlode tournament next week. We also bought Pat Harrington’s “Introduction to Bridge” computer game and have been working through that at home in the evenings. So now we are pretty comfortable with basic bidding including (1 and 2 NT opening and responses, Takeout Doubles and the Stayman, Jacoby Transfer, Gerber and Blackwood conventions). The play of the hand is where we are weakest right now but that is just through lack of opportunity (we have to work 40 hours a week and almost all of the play opportunities here are during working hours – this is, after all, primarily a “retirement community”). So to get to 5 MP has taken me just about a year playing once a week and in one tournament.

**Elaine Luartes** on achieving Bronze Life Master - Ring the Bell, Raise a Flag. When I became a member of ACBL, it filled the void left when my husband passed away. Since then many new friends near and far helped me achieve this status. Now I am trying to give back and partner as a mentor with newcomers to the game and to ACBL.

**Larry Adler** of Memphis on achieving Silver Life Master - Played in Tunica with Ann Adler ,Terry and Janice Van Dyke ; we won the 2nd Bracket knockout ( 14 gold ) and that pushed me over 1000. Thanks to my regular partners, Steve Lightman , Ann Adler , and Jerry Seessel for putting up with me.

**Lalit and Leela Sheth** of Franklin, Tennessee on achieving Club Master - My wife, Neela, and I have been very happy that we earned a Club Master status. It was very nice of you to recognize us for this accomplishment. We have been playing bridge for a very long time, even before we moved to the USA in 1976. There were only very few occasions to play bridge with some friends here until I came to know about the American Contract Bridge League through one of our friends who participated in an international tournament in Nashville. And once I read in our local newspaper for any players who wanted to play or learn the game of bridge, we began participating in our local ACBL club here in Franklin, Tennessee. We have been primarily calling and playing bridge by the Culbertson System with some modifications. This is different from the ACBL calling system but we will explain the meaning of our calls anytime to anyone who wants to know and learn.