



### District Dispatches

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### Climb Every Mountain



In thinking about reaching Regional Master after years and years of playing duplicate bridge, I thought of this.

You climb every mountain one hill at a time. As in most hikes, the path is well trodden and often even goes down for a while but never at the rate that it goes up. After a long plateau which seems endless and tiring, you take a sudden turn and you are back on the ascent. You reach a hilltop, and the view is stunning because you see clearly how much more you have to do. It may also be sad as several who walked along with you are gone. But there are rewards. You face

many challenges at each twist and turn and rely on the advice of many who have been there, done that, and shared their knowledge. You find good partners and the joy returns ... and the way forward is clearer.

Bridge is a competitive sport. Getting master points is the recognition players receive for proving their skill at the game. Sometimes the points come falling to your partner and you because your skill out matches your opponents. Sometimes you study a hand record and focus on board 13 where you got a zero causing you to fall flat, all because you didn't take the spade finesse on trick one.

ACBL is a great supporter of its members' needs, offering an abundance of ways to enjoy the game, get better at it, and win master points that recognize your ability. The thrill of playing at tournaments is indeed unique. It combines a total focus on the game. You play each hand as if world peace was at stake; plus, you enjoy the social interaction of getting to know and enjoy your opponents, complete strangers ... while scoping out their partnership agreements and communication skills.

It took me way longer to get to the unimpressive rank of Regional Master than it takes most folks who play the game. But then, most folks don't keep stopping during their climb to smell every single flower along their path.