



District Dispatches

October 2024

Joanne Cornbleet, Unit 507



Here is my bridge story:

I never thought of playing bridge until 2016 at age 69, when some of my Mah Jongg friends took me to a beginning bridge class. When I arrived at the last class, the instructor, Kathy Harper, called me over to sit at the tree outside the Palo Alto Bridge Club and told me she wanted me to play with a new bridge partner, Jeff Stallings. The problem was that neither of them knew I had hardly played bridge before the class!

Shortly after the class, I started playing duplicate bridge with Jeff, and I was pretty nervous! I had a single page of bidding notes on the side table and was thankful that the 99ers were very patient with me when I stole an occasional glance. I found that my background as an academic pathologist actually helped me with bridge. I could apply the same skills that I used on the job. The pattern recognition and flow chart techniques I used in tissue diagnosis were similar to quickly deciding on the playing strategy as declarer, accumulating more patterns of play with experience. Decisiveness, integrating judgment with rules, and organizing large amounts of information were things I learned in my career that translated well into learning bridge. Thanks to the excellent lectures, classes, post-game reviews from my local bridge centers, and the Bridge Bulletin, my one-page bidding summary has turned into over 100 pages of indexed bridge notes!

I'm so grateful that our District has such great bridge clubs, teachers, and dedicated volunteers. Thanks also to my partners at the San Jose and Palo Alto Bridge Clubs, who were willing to play with me as a beginner and intermediate player and encourage me along my journey to become a Life Master in December 2021 and a Silver Life Master in August 2024. You're never too old to start playing bridge!