

**District Dispatches**

June 2026

Three D21 members have reached new milestones and have passed on their comments and journeys to Jackie Zayac to share with our readers.

**Ted Pyle, Unit 506,  Bronze Life Master**

I'm very excited about achieving Bronze Life Master status!

I joined the ACBL in 2009 after taking lessons available at QuickTricks in San Francisco. I met a wonderful group of people through that class who were also interested in learning the game. I eventually started playing in the 299er game at QuickTricks. I took my lumps early on, of course, but was determined to improve. I began looking for other opportunities to play and was soon playing regularly at other evening games in San Francisco. I also began attending tournaments in the quest for silver, red and gold points. I achieved Life Master status in 2017 by playing as much as I could handle. Bridge was more than just a hobby. I had a few amazing regular partners and several others I played with when opportunity arose. I appreciated the community and the fun challenges of the game.

In 2020, after the pandemic, I focused on other things for a few years, such as increasing responsibilities at work. In 2025, I learned that there was an evening game at the Fuldek club in Marin where I currently live. I contacted one of my previous regular partners who also lives in Marin to see if he would like to get back into the game. Sure enough, he had missed playing as well and we've been going to that evening game when we are able. Since rediscovering the game last year, I am very happy to be back at the tables. I'm working out some rust but having a great time.

I achieved the Bronze Life Master title with nice results at a recent sectional. At the same event, I also met the requirements for Life Master for those who joined in 2010 or later. For years I've been saying that I was a Life Master, but I wouldn't be if I'd joined the ACBL just a year later than I did. It's a minor victory for me that I don't have to use that caveat anymore!

**Mary Warner, Unit 508, Life Master**

It has indeed been a journey to become a Life Master. I started playing bridge at my parent's bridge table and have played social bridge throughout my life. My first masterpoint was earned in Hawaii in 2002 while visiting a good friend and avid bridge player. She found me a partner who asked what conventions I played. I said "Goren, and I read the daily bridge column." That was good enough for her and we earned a fraction of a point! I was encouraged to join ACBL as I was told it's hard to earn masterpoints. That was good advice as I'm "grandfathered" in. I didn't really learn duplicate until 2017 when I went on a bridge cruise to Alaska run by Director Peggy Strong. Peggy was very supportive and always found partners for me in the Terra Linda games.

During Covid I played a great deal online with many different partners. Now my morning starts with a cup of coffee and the 7:45am free mini-lesson, run by Play Better Bridge. I'm also a devotee of Barbara Seagram's 25 Bridge Conventions. I've taken many lessons whenever they are offered. I love to read the monthly Bridge Bulletin and always learn something to store in my brain.



Earning Silver points was more easily accomplished by attending Sectionals closer to my home in Marin County. Earning Gold points involved greater travels to Regionals: Hawaii, Monterey, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Sacramento. I didn't always earn Gold but did earn Red points. I finally earned the much-needed Gold points at the Sacramento Regional last month. I almost cancelled when my partner had to pull out due to health concerns. But I contacted John Stremel, who handles the Partnership Desk, and he encouraged me to sign up anyway. I wound up winning seven Gold points with partners I'd never met before. I sure got lucky!

I enjoy working at the Welcome Desk when I attend Regionals and have found the Directors, caddies and all to be kind and supportive.



Attached is a photo taken at our Awards party June 6 of the 3 new Life Masters in Terra Linda. I'm the one in the middle.



Don Peterson, Unit 465, Life Master

mowed yards for \$0.25.

I was first exposed to bridge in about 1956 – 57 when my parents would host duplicate games in our little 900 sf home in Nocona, Tx. They would average 7 – 8 tables, which is pretty remarkable for a small Texas town with a population of 3,287 ... counting both graveyards. I had a good first impression of cards when my grandmother took me to her weekly lady's Canasta game, and I walked away with the winner's pot. I think it was about \$8.00. Not bad for an 8-year-old kid who

We moved to Ft. Worth, then Houston. My two sisters weren't interested, but I paid attention to my mom's lessons, and by about 1966, at 15 years old, I was playing duplicate. My mom and I would go to the Spring Branch bridge center for the day games a couple of times per week, and when my dad wasn't traveling, we would grab an evening game. I learned about 50 years later that we were both attracted to the night game for similar reasons. Friendly ladies. I'm sure he enjoyed more slam contracts than I did.

My freshman year at Georgia Tech was derailed by finding their bridge club. Physics and Calculus are not improved by playing cards late into the night. And those engineers can count!

For several years, earning a living got in the way. I had many distractions from the more sedentary sports; flying airplanes, racing Italian cars, playing in musical theatre and rock and roll bands. The latter actually paid the best and bought my first house in Houston. I returned to the Spring Branch bridge club sporadically, mostly in the evenings.

For several years while I was still living at home, I would bring back little white pieces of paper with small numbers written on them. Rarely 1.0 or higher. Most typically 0.23 or so. No one explained to me what they were, so I tossed them into the bookcase at the top of my bed. When I moved out in 1970 to mimic the behaviors of adulthood, I tossed them in the trash. I'd heard mention of Life Master, but no one bothered to explain the term.

Forty plus years passed, with only the occasional family game at Thanksgiving. We sold our company in 2010, and I retired. Much of my time, and all my focus, was spent raising my young grandson. He had



come into my care just before he turned 3 and brought with him a small container full of special needs. Nevertheless, he was in school for much of the day, and the Carson City club played in the early afternoon. I made it work. Bob T, my first partner after retirement, never responded to a single takeout double for the two-plus years we played together. Meanest man I ever knew but was a dear friend and business mentor.

Gary, the club principal, asked me if I would join the ACBL?

“Why? I have enough plastic trophies from years of more exciting bad habits.”

“Some of your money to the ACBL is returned to help our club.”

“Does the club need some money? How much do you need?”

Gary.... Spluttering.

A couple of years later Bob A, a retired pro, offered to mentor me. After one of our games, he asked why I wasn't a member of ACBL? ***“Some of your dues go to fund a youth Bridge development project.”***

“Oh. OK. I can do that.”

After Bob T died, sparing the world from his over-the-top bombast, I moved around between partners. Imogene, a classy octogenarian, asked me to play with her, and it was a great delight. An excellent player, with a constant smile and sharp wit. I would pick her up in a 1950s Alfa Romeo convertible, she would be dressed and coifed, we would enjoy a lunch and close the day with bridge. Eventually, old age dimmed her lights, but although mostly uncommunicative, she remained a competent player.

When Imogene saw her sunset, I began playing with her daughter, Beverly. I'd lost my main partner, and she was wrapping up things with her aging and ill husband. We fit well and enjoyed some success. For a couple of years, I suggested we take my small, very old airplane, and attend the better tournaments within a reasonable range of Carson City. The Regional at Jackpot, NV was unique experience. We needed to go down low to avoid freezing clouds and had to dodge a military drone that whizzed by just overhead. I think we won all the gold points I needed in a Jackpot team game. We attended a Regional in Monterey and might as well have jumped in the ocean and drowned, judging from our scores. We had a hoot in a couple of sectional events in the Central Valley. At one, we grabbed two bottles of white wine, laid them on the table, and won the event.

Many people knew Imogene and Beverly from their years playing in tournaments. Routinely we would be asked how we knew each other, and I would share that we met while I was dating her mother. Beverly got used to it, but the first couple of times we got a spit-take. For the record, we were never a couple. However, I was an advisor. I think she never paid off that bet.

The CUBE Bridge Club offered many friends and inspirations. I played with several and learned from them all. For me, bridge is a human game, and I have zero interest in online gaming.

In 2021, at 17 years old, my grandson moved back in with his dad; an experiment not yet complete. However, this meant I was no longer shackled to the USA.



D I A M O N D I N T H E R U F F

January 1, 2022, Maria and I set foot in Bogota, Colombia, and a lovely mountain valley in the Andes has been our home for nearly 4 ½ years.

But.... No bridge.

Although I might have joined the ACBL 60 years ago, and registered some unknown quantity of MPs, and qualified under the 300-point standard....

I was too busy. The last 50 - 100 points required flying back to the US for important household necessities (cough cough) coincidentally with a game or tournament nearby. I did well in Gatlinburg and Indianapolis, plus Reno, Phoenix, and Las Vegas.

What next?

I have found only one Bridge Club in Colombia. It seems that, unless your father was a founder many generations ago --you're not invited. So, we've decided to start a bridge club here in our little community draping the top and sides of a substantial ridge. The Volcan del Ruiz, at 17,700 feet, can be seen 14 miles away, smoking vigorously.

PS. Enroute to the Sacramento Regional a week or so ago, the owner/driver/bridge partner of the mobile home I was riding in failed to navigate a tight left turn coming down Hwy 50 from Tahoe. We rolled up on our right then the left side, lurched back upright, straightened out, headed down a steep hill knocking over trees and boulders, and crashing to a sudden stop at the bottom. Aside from a little soreness and her expensive towing bill, we both made it to the game on Tuesday. Bridge players do have some adventures. Or should create them.