



BRONZE LIFE MASTER

Bill Birk has advanced to the rank of Bronze Life Master having accumulated the required 500 masterpoints and the necessary pigmented points. Bill writes on this auspicious occasion — Although the ACBL has just declared me to be a Bronze Life Master, I feel that I have not qualified for being a Life Master yet — although I am really there in my mind. I was a member of the ACBL decades ago and let my membership lapse. When I rejoined in 2015, I received a query if I were the W. E. Birk from years ago. Having established that I was, my previous 37 mp were credited to me. This became the basis of my being placed on the old 300 mp requirement for achieving a Life Master designation. I am about a dozen masterpoints shy of 500 since rejoining.

I owe much thanks to my passionate partners. For example, several of my most memorable successes have come from playing with Daryl Fraley. I was awarded gold in the first regional event I played in during the 2015 NABC held in Chicago when we placed 5th out of 152 Gold Rush pairs. In 2016 Daryl and I were awarded champagne at the Illini Regional for having the highest score of the day in all events played.

I have also been blessed to have had many memorable games with Larry Dunford — our best being a 67.05% tournament game in 2018. The team that placed second in our section of 24 teams scored 58.52%. Snap! Our photo was included in the Chicagoland Kibitzer for that feat. Thank you, Larry!

My best tournament results have been achieved with Terry Bauer, a student of the game who is always improving his play and knowledge base. At the 2018 St. Louis Regional we won a three-evening KO event that qualified us for the Blue Ribbon Pairs at the NABC. Our overall tournament was a success as we finished first in three events, second in a fourth and sixth out of 60 teams in the final event we played. Thank you for being a blessing to me, Terry!

One of the great things about competing at our local clubs is the encouragement and advice offered by expert players. My game is being refined through helpful hints, comments and the like received by players such as Carol Osgerby, Joe Chin, Steve Watson, Diane Martin, Lou Nimnicht and many others. Thank you for the encouragement. A future goal I have is to play in a North American Bridge Championship Red Ribbon Pairs event — God willing.

Bill is such a bridge scholar! He is always aware of the bidding and the cards already played. He is level-headed and never gets upset when I go off the reservation and make an oddball bid. Playing with Bill has improved my game immensely. This award is well-deserved.

~ Larry Dunford

Congratulations, Bill, on making Bronze Life Master! You are a fine player and able to compete with the very best players. Thanks for all of the insights of bridge that you gave me. Good luck as you aspire to greater heights.

~ Daryl Fraley

Bill is a well-deserving bridge master who has helped me so much in learning bridge conventions and how to play in tournaments. I appreciate his studious approach to the game and his ability to never lose his temper or show too much discouragement with my many errors.

~ Terry Bauer

Food for thought — The well-played game is an experience that provides access to the emotion of joy, beside which the delight of winning is almost pale. The well-played game conveys the notion of excellence. It is excellent because of the way it is played. When we are playing well, we are at our best — innovative, magical and fully engaged.

Winning is not the measure of excellence — playing our best is. Playing our best with the hope of winning is inherent in the well-played game — having to win is not. Winning and losing end the game — the experience is timeless. What an ideal experience it would be to play in a game where everyone was playing well!

CONGRATULATIONS
*Let joy be your guide,
Bill — on your excellence!*