

New ACBL Silver Life Master Larry Pizzey



Larry learned the rudiments of bridge in high school from two good friends, Gerald Perry, the current president of the Lethbridge Bridge Club, and Wayne Winter, a former member. Over the years he managed to play a hand or two with these two excellent bridge players. They noted that he may be good at cribbage and poker but the real thinking game is bridge.

We moved to Red Deer in the 1976 and within a few years became involved in a social group and the eight of them played bridge once a month. It was good bridge in their opinion but Larry thinks the term may have been good kitchen bridge. They kept stats and there were some payouts of some sort after games and at the end of the year.

In 2001 his personal life changed and he and Rita, his wife, went to the Red Deer Bridge Club for lessons. Rita had never played before and when they got to the club Larry directed her to go to the beginner lessons and he would go to the advanced lessons. Logical choice he thought with his experience as a social bridge player. Doug and Crystal Mann were teaching the lessons and Crystal noticed his suggestions. She had a hand over at her table and asked him to come and bid it with her. She asked Larry to open and he suggested 1NT. She said good and continued with 2 hearts. Larry went four hearts and ended the game. She quickly suggested that he should join his wife in the beginner lessons. No offence taken.

They liked the game and joined the Bridge Club. There were no beginner level games in that era and they had to go up against the better players to learn the game. Some personalities were to say the least not easy to play with but it did not take long to fit in and even had a good game once in awhile. A special memory for them was at a Sectional tournament in Red Deer. Playing against two of the elite players, they noted that the only way they made game was due to a rookie error. They finished the game with 58% and tied for third. Rita took the score sheet and went over to their table and noted "not bad for rookies." Their score was 54%.

After a few years they started to go to tournaments in Calgary, Edmonton, Victoria and once to San Diego and Ottawa. Larry was getting closer to Life Master and went to Penticton one year. He always garnered a few points more at the tournaments and noted after a few that team games got more points. He noted this to Steve Bates and contacted

the ACBL. He thinks there have been some minor adjustment in tournament scoring to give pairs more points for good placements.

Lessons taught by Lorna Deschner and Bryant Hawthorne were very helpful and playing with some elite players on occasion certainly helped. But, to be honest playing 18 years at an average of 2 times a week does allow one to accumulate a few points toward the goal.

Suggestions for the District are few but Larry believes a committee should be formed very soon to explore ways to get youth and even 30 to 60 year olds involved in the game. We may not have bridge clubs in ten years if we are not active in getting this going. Larry heard that some Calgary clubs have started to get involved in some high schools. This needs to be a District or World goal.