

New Gold Life Master – Jason Larrivee



I grew up on a farm in rural Saskatchewan and that meant I grew up playing [Old Maid](#), [Uno](#), [Cribbage](#), [Hearts](#) and [Whist](#). When I went to University in 1994, I learned how to play [President](#), [Rook](#) and [Euchre](#) and was even good enough to win a Euchre tournament at our residence. Shortly after that I read an article about duplicate bridge (something I had never heard of before) that touted it as the “ultimate” card game and mentioned that the game was very popular in Alcatraz prison. These two facts and my previous success at cards were enough to convince me to take bridge lessons at a duplicate club.

After finishing lessons in Regina, I moved to Nanaimo in 2000 and showed up at the local duplicate club. I discovered that they only had open games and I needed to get lucky just to break 50%. I also began to see bridge as a very cut and dry game. (If your hand has this distribution then you have no choice but to open 1NT unless you have 5 spades in which case you must open 1S.) This combination of constant losing and rigid conformity caused me to quit playing after about a year.

In 2005, I retired from my job and moved back to Regina. I was looking for an engrossing hobby so I decided to give bridge another try. Fortunately, the Regina Duplicate Bridge club featured a Monday night 0-99 game and when I showed up there for the first time they partnered me with a woman in goth style makeup and we managed to finish in first place. As I began playing regularly with Pamela on Mondays, I came to realize that I did not have to conform to the standards of the bridge world. If I wanted to open 1H with 3 hearts and 4 HCP then nothing in the rules prohibited me from doing this.

This combination of success and creative engagement turned bridge into a major part of my life and has led to a large number of positive side benefits. From a bridge perspective, I have been able to travel around North America and amass 2,500 masterpoints (1,200 of which are Platinum, Gold and Silver). From a mental perspective, I have increased my capacity for constructive thought, analysis and memory by trying to answer bridge questions from players better than me. From a personal growth perspective, I have learned how to remain calm and focused despite all the distracting things that can happen at the bridge table. Finally, and more importantly than everything else, I have been married to Pamela for seven wonderful years.

Thank you duplicate bridge.