

Bridge History Milestones

1925 - Harold Stirling Vanderbilt, a Harvard Law School graduate and a member of the wealthiest family in American, developed a scoring system that revolutionized bridge and that still stands today. He also developed the strong 1C bidding system, strong 1NT openers and weak two bids. Mainly due to his efforts and those of Ely Culbertson, a rapid expansion of bridge occurred in the USA. As an aside, he was also an avid yachtsman, winning the America's Cup of sailing three times.

1927 - The American Auction Bridge League was incorporated and claimed to be the son of whist and the father of contract bridge.

1928 - The first team-of-four National Championship for the Vanderbilt Cup was held in New York City, an event that Harold Vanderbilt's team won in 1932 and 1940. Also, the first open pairs National Championship for the Cavendish Club Trophy was held in 1928 in New York City.

1931 - The masterpoint award system was first introduced at the World Master Individual Championship event.

1933 - In Saskatoon, a group of men working at the CNR started playing duplicate bridge at the train station. They played with boards they had made out of cardboard. The bridge program consisted of a weekly team-of-four game and an annual open pairs championship.

1935 - Jimmy Harris, a U of S graduate, who could not find employment during the Depression, started teaching bridge and writing press articles. He established the first official Saskatoon Duplicate Bridge Club.

1937 - The American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) was created, replacing the American Auction Bridge League.

1956 - Doug Scott, Mona Scott, Hazel Larson and Jess Drinkle attended a tournament in Winnipeg and learned that masterpoints, rather than prizes, were awarded, and that the ACBL kept track of accumulated points.

1958 - The Saskatoon Duplicate Bridge Club joined the Manitoba Unit of the ACBL. Ken McGuirl was elected President and promoted bridge throughout the province on his travels connected to his regular, non-bridge job. This led to the formation of clubs in Regina, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Price Albert and North Battleford.

1959 - The first ACBL tournament in Saskatoon was held in the Memorial Union Building on the U of S campus on April 17 & 18. Future summer tournaments for the resort village of Waskesiu were announced.

1960 - The Saskatoon Duplicate Bridge Club obtained a franchise from the ACBL for Unit 575 and left the Manitoba Unit.

1965 - Ken McGuirl became the club's first Life Master.

1974 - Mona Scott became the first club member to accumulate 1000 points, followed by Doug Scott and Ken McGuirl in 1975 and 1976.

1976 - The grand opening of the new member-owned, non-profit, Saskatoon Bridge Club building was held from November 19 to 21.

2005 - Major renovations were made to the SBC building, including the addition of another playing room, thus allowing the club to host Sectional Tournaments at the club.

2011 - As of December 31, 2011, about 225 players have obtained the Life Master designation, while being members of the Saskatoon Bridge Club. This compares to a total of 46 in 1975. There were 6081 tables of club games played in 2011. The club, presently has about 365 members.

2012 - The ACBL, with over 3200 clubs and 165,000 members is celebrating their 75th anniversary this year. Let's contribute.

Longer narrative articles on the history of the club exist. These are available at the club, along with 16 photo albums on the club's history, member achievements, events and celebrations. The most notable written historical accounts are as follows:

- * Saskatoon's Bridge Club - All the Aces by Vivian Campbell, 1975.
- * Saskatoon's Bridge Club - A Dream Come True by Ken McGuirl, 1977.
- * The Saskatoon Bridge Club by Douglas A. Schmeiser, January, 2005.

This article was prepared by Lyle Elmgren on January 25, 2012.