



New Life Master

Susan Mittelstadt

Three years ago Susan spotted a notice for free Bridge lessons in Todos Santos, Mexico. Susan and Bert, her husband, are full-time RVers. They winter on Baja and spend summers working as carpenters all over the western United States. They leapt at the chance to learn Bridge. Within a month the Todos Santos Bridge Club had them playing duplicate. Burt and Susan played a few games with more experienced players but quickly decided to commit to playing as partners. It was tough going at first. We try to always remember 'it's just a game.' We don't always succeed.

With the basics only tenuously lodged in mind they headed north for the summer. They boldly visited Bridge clubs up the west coast as we made their way from job to job. The beatings continued. Eventually they landed in Virginia and found Kevin O'Brien. Kevin took us in, signed us up to the ACBL, and started teaching us discipline and reminded us to have fun. The DC area offered beginner games and free lessons. It was a dream come true.

That winter they returned to Todos Santos with our newly minted ACBL cards and took first in the first game they played. It was a turning point. After nearly a year of wandering from game to game they'd come back to where they started and realized they could be competitive. The Bridge Beauties, a women's duplicate game, took Susan in and continued pushing her to advance my skills.

Since then they've continued summers playing all over the western US. This year they finally played at their home club in Butte, MT. Despite their never having been 'home' Butte took us in and made us feel like we were part of the team. Much to my surprise they handed her the 2017 0 to 5 Mini-McKenna and Ace of Clubs awards. I had no idea I was even in a points race or that I had won.

Susan would like to thank her partner, Burt, and Kevin, Lorna, Donna, Janna, and all the Bridge Beauties, and Karen for helping her on this journey. Susan loves winning but the social connections are what make this game the best for her. People everywhere have reached out to make them welcome and share their knowledge.