

**DRAFT MINUTES OF ACBL DISTRICT 4 VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING
June 26, 2020**

Voting Member Attendees:

- At-Large: Meyer Kotkin (President), Jeanne Gehret (Vice President) Dan Boye (IPP), Joann Glasson (DD), Mary Miller (Presidential appointee), Tom Weik (Presidential Appointee) (6 of 6).
- Unit 112: Pat Stadelmaier (Unit Pres.), Mary Kay Quiggle, James Carroll, Jerry Manioci, Betty Youmans (5 of 6)
- Unit 120: Bill Orth (Unit Pres.) Walter Mitchell, Jr. (2 of 2)
- Unit 121: No representative (0 of 2)
- Unit 133: Mike Kohler (Unit Pres.), Betsy Cutler (2 of 2)
- Unit 141: Howard Kahlenberg (Unit Pres.) Susan Morse, Joan Warren, April Uhlenburg, Jay Apfelbaum, Everett Young, April Apfelbaum, Elaine Weintraub, John Dickenson, Janet Johnson, Pat Civale, Ellen Berkowitz (12 of 12)
- Unit 168: Linda Ivanoff, John Klinger, Ed Scanlon, Bob Priest, Carl Fahnestock (5 of 5)
- Unit 190: Ala Hamilton-Day (for Howard Jordan, Pres.), Mark Henderson, Caroline Hughes (3 of 3)
- Unit 217: Jim McKeown (Unit Pres.), Judy Stein (2 of 2)

Also Present:

Bill Bauer, D4 Board Secretary
Lou Glasthal, D4 Recorder
Bob Glasson, D4 Negotiator Extraordinaire
Dave Kresge, D4 Finance Committee Chair
Richard Popper, D4 1st Alternate District Director

CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

A meeting of the ACBL District 4 Board of Directors was held on-line via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic forcing the cancellation of the 2020 Valley Forge Regional. Meyer Kotkin, President, called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM, a quorum being present (37 of 40 voting members representing 7 of 8 units).

Meyer led off the meeting noting the passing of well-regarded Philadelphia Unit teacher and player, Bobbie Gomer (and also her husband, Roy). Next, Meyer informed the Board of the death of Ray Raskin, noted Philadelphia Unit player and a former District Director. Meyer requested a moment of silence to remember these bridge luminaries.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The ACBL has accomplished a lot since the pandemic forced clubs to close and for all tournaments to be canceled. First clubs were given the option of running virtual games using the BBO platform. Regionals have been introduced with the avowed purpose of raising funds for the ACBL. Note that BBO keeps about 25% of the card fees. Clubs also pay regular ACBL table fees.

To reduce costs, 40% of the ACBL staff was furloughed, the ACBL not being eligible for the Payroll Protection Program. Initially, the ACBL projected a 2020 loss between \$1M and \$2M. Now, with revenues from virtual club games and their own Regionals, the ACBL projects a profit of \$200K. The ACBL Regional that is now underway (Endless Summer) had about 3,000 tables on Thursday.

Joann noted the impact the Regionals have on club attendance. That is the reason that Regionals are scheduled for every other month and not more frequently. Bob Priest reported that the South Central PA Consortium virtual club game had half the normal attendance at today's 0-750 game due to the Regional. The loss of attendance during the Regional erased the gains in attendance at the Silver Linings club games last month.

Players are concerned about players that cheat either by conferring with their partner's or another player in the same event playing the same hands. BBO professes to have software to detect cheating. However, players are advised to report unusual happenings.

Richard Popper thanked the ACBL Board of Directors, Finance Chair, Joann Glasson, and ACBL CEO Joe Jones for their exceptional performance.

Ed Scanlon acknowledged the service to bridge by Jay Whipple, ACBL staff and BBO.

Joann reported that many social players on BBO have joined the ACBL in order to play in ACBL club games and tournaments. Their joining has resulted in increased ACBL membership even considering the attrition due to non-renewals and deaths of current members.

SECRETARY'S REPORT & APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF November 1, 2019

The Secretary requested approval the minutes of the Lancaster Board meeting of November 1, 2019 that were emailed to the attendees. The minutes were unanimously approved. Bill reminded the Board that the minutes appear on the District website.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Pat Civale noted the Secretary had emailed her May 31, 2020 fiscal year end financial report to attendees prior to the meeting. The fiscal year loss was \$6,859.

The Valley Forge Convention Center returned our \$18K deposit for the 2020 June Regional that was not held. In the case of the canceled Wilmington Regional, the hotel carried over the \$5K April 2020 deposit to Wilmington 2021.

Mary Miller questioned why the August 2019 Rochester (Henrietta) Regional income was not shown. Pat thought that she may have combined the Rochester income with the Wilkes-Barre Regional since they were held the same week as a split-site Regional.

UPDATE: The next morning, Pat informed the Secretary that she was going to revise her report since she determined that the Rochester (Henrietta) Regional was not combined with Wilkes-Barre as she had supposed. The revised report was subsequently

approved by the Executive Committee. The fiscal year net loss above was taken from the revised report.

Pat then noted that six of the 66 clubs participating in the February D4 STaC had not sent in their \$7.00/table sanction fee. A total of \$1,253 is outstanding. This tardiness on the part of clubs is interfering with the District's ability to pay out the Units' share of the profit. The only leverage we have is to prohibit those clubs that haven't paid up from participation in future D4 STaCs or the ACBL/BBO silver linings games. Some Board members were of the opinion that certain smaller clubs may not reopen.

The Board approved the Treasurer's report unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Meyer used his report to thank various individuals and groups for their extraordinary efforts to overcome the effect on clubs and the ACBL from the pandemic. He acknowledged:

1. District Director, Joann Glasson for all her work as ACBL Finance Committee Chair and for participating in a multitude of Board and Committee meetings with ACBL leadership.
2. Bob Glasson for conducting negotiations with the facilities hosting our canceled Regionals to secure the return of deposits or the application of our deposit to the following year.
3. Unit Boards for their efforts to deal with the pandemic.
4. Club owners who went virtual.
5. Janet Johnson who never fails to publish our District 4Spot.
6. Tournament Chairs for their work a large part of which went for naught when their Regional had to be canceled.

RATIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTION

The Board unanimously ratified the following resolution adopted by the unanimous Executive Committee. The resolution reads: The March 30 – April 5, 2020 Delaware Regional is canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Bob Glasson to negotiate the return of deposits.

The Secretary explained that the bylaws require Board approval at the next board meeting following the Executive Committee action. While the Board could not overturn the decision because the action already occurred, a "no vote" would "send a message" to the Executive Committee that the Board felt the action to be unwarranted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

PUBLICITY

Joann Glasson thanked Janet Johnson for keeping us connected by publishing the 4Spot each month. She also recognized the contributors including Pat, Howard, Ala, Jim, etc.

Joanne also thanked Susan Morse for contributing an entertaining article about her online bridge experiences which appeared in the June Bridge Bulletin.

An article about the ACBL will appear soon in The AARP Magazine.

DISTRICT 4SPOT

Janet Johnson reported that the 4Spot is sent to 3,550 email addresses utilizing Constant Contact. Over a 12 month period the 4Spot open rate is 58%, which is 43% above the industry average.

TOURNAMENT COORDINATOR

Elaine Weintraub noted that all traditional face-to-face Tournaments have been canceled for 2020 by action of the ACBL Board of Directors and ACBL Executive Director, Joe Jones. There have been no cancellations announced as yet in 2021. Elaine requested that Tournament Chairs send her any changes to your 2021 tournament schedule.

CHARITY

Mary Miller advised that 2020 was not our District's turn to receive an allocation from the ACBL Charity Foundation to distribute to local charities. Note: 2021 is scheduled to be District 4's turn.

Meyer informed the board that the ABA holds a virtual Saturday game in which Meyer and partner play. He urged meeting attendees to join him in playing to support the ABA.

It was reported that U133 (Lehigh Valley) donates 50% of their virtual game profit to a local food bank and 50% to a local senior center where their face-to-face games were played.

FINANCE

Dave Kresge had no report.

NAP

John Dickenson reported that since the 2020 Spring NABC in Columbus was canceled, those players who would have played in Columbus will instead be invited to play in the national NAP finals at the 2021 Spring NABC in St. Louis. Therefore, there will not be NAP club qualifying games in 2020 or a District Finals.

GNT

John Dickenson reported that the 2020 competition was canceled.

However, Districts can still run a District final for masterpoints only. John does not know of a safe way to run a face-to-face game and if we wanted to run a virtual game then each playing location must have a proctor. Because proctoring at multiple sites is not practical, John does not propose holding the event.

EDUCATION

Jerry Manioci reported that he has written to 500 middle and high schools to invite them to show the youth bridge movie, “Double Dummy”, to their students.

INTERMEDIATE/NEWCOMER

Ala Hamilton-Day noted that I/N interest remains high even in the virtual world of bridge play. In a recent event, Meyer reported that 500-600 tables participated in a gold rush event out of 800 tables total in play. Side games are also attractive to players as they tend to award more points than the open pairs.

TOURNAMENT

Meyer Kotkin is the Acting Chairperson.

Meyer invited attendees to share their opinions of the future of face-to-face (F2F) club and tournament play.

Bob Priest said that he is not in favor of resuming face-to-face play until social distancing is no longer required due to the availability of a vaccine. Joann Glasson added that the Hilton Head Island Bridge Club has reopened with players wearing masks and gloves as well as positioning players behind shields.

Meyer attributed the lack of interest in discussing what it will take to resume F2F play and what it might look like, because the attendees feel resumption of F2F is too far off.

Joann has received the ACBL’s suggested guidelines for reopening clubs and will provide the Secretary the guidelines to forward to those in attendance. (Note: the guideline dissemination was accomplished the morning after the meeting.)

Meyer believes that if we start to think about the possible scenarios, the better prepared we will be if and when we resume F2F events. Meyer asked rhetorically what are reasonable expectations for Tournament Committees. Meyer, as the Valley Forge regional TC does not want to ever run a tournament where he has to take temperatures, interview players, worry about cleaning cards, bidding boxes and bridgemates, and provide hospitality. Meyer would not like to see D4 resume tournaments until a vaccine and/or cure for COVID-19 is widely available. Even the legal issue of a player claiming to have contracted COVID-19 at a bridge event looms over us. While the lawsuit might not succeed, it will make life hell for the tournament Chair and the D4 Board members.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON DISTRICT – CLUB COOPERATION

Betty Youmans of U112 proposed the following resolution which appeared on the advance meeting agenda.

RESOLVED: District 4 will set aside a \$20,000 fund to be used to assist bridge clubs within District 4 that incurred losses due to the pandemic.

It was noted that there were 86 clubs in District 4. There was some sentiment for studying the matter although some felt that \$20,000 could not even to begin to replace the financial losses of this number of clubs. However, some clubs do not pay rent and some clubs are reportedly doing almost as well financially by hosting BBO/ACBL virtual games. Given all the unknowns, Jay Apfelbaum moved to table the motion. The motion to table passed.

Meyer will see if there are people willing to form a committee to look into this matter further before bringing up this resolution again.

TOURNAMENT REPORTS:

- Valley Forge**
(6/21 – 6/27/21)
(6/27 – 7/3/22)
- Meyer reported that 2019 was very successful. Nevertheless, the Committee decided to move to the Valley Forge Convention Center. The playing space is a lot like Spooky Nook's except somewhat larger. Meyer informed the Board that he has requested U141 to find a successor Tournament Chairperson. Meyer will be available to consult with the Committee.
- Lancaster**
(10/26 – 11/1/20)
(10/25 – 10/31/21)
- Jeanne reported that Spooky Nook understood the need to cancel and will carry over our deposit until 2021.
- Rochester (split)**
(8/2 – 8/8/21)
- Mary Miller had no report.
- Wilkes-Barre (split)**
- Walt Mitchell had no report. Walt awaits guidance as to whether WB will continue as a split Regional with NY or stand alone again.
- Syracuse**
(8/10 – 8/16/20)
(8/8 – 8/14/22)
- Mary Miller reported that the contract was canceled without penalty. Mary informed U112 that this would be her last year as Tournament Chairperson. Later in the meeting, Joann presented Mary with a card stating how much the members of District 4 appreciated her service as Syracuse Tournament Chair. A gift accompanied the card. The presentation would have taken place at the Syracuse tournament in August.
- Delaware**
(4/5 – 4/11/21)
(4/4 – 4/10/22)
- Mark could not get his microphone working to give his report. So his report appears verbatim as he later sent it to the Secretary. "It was heartbreaking to cancel the Diamond State Regional in 2020. All indications suggested it would have been an overwhelming success. The hotel has retained the initial deposit in anticipation of holding the event in 2021. That is unlikely to happen. We see no path that would lead us chairing a face-to-face bridge event in 2021. Meyer captured our feelings well. If and when face-to-face bridge returns, it will start at the club level. Clubs will experiment

with reopening, with successful methodology expanding to other clubs... Sectionals?, etc. The ACBL and the districts should be both interested and involved in the Club reopening process. The initial efforts, and successes are likely to look vastly different from the past. More spread out playing spaces, larger tables, plexiglass barriers, electronic play, etc. For instance, the next time I play face-to-face bridge, I do not want to be close enough to others to pull cards out of a board. Clubs need our help with both vision and execution.”

King of Prussia I/N - Joan & Bill Goldstein were not present. After the meeting, 8/10/21 – 8/12/21 Joan emailed that the 2020 tournament has been rescheduled to the dates shown to the left..

Allentown (U133) - Betsy Cutler had no report (2022)

OLD BUSINESS

The matter of whether to have WB continue to split with NY vs. standing alone with Harrisburg splitting with NY was not resolved.

NEW BUSINESS

Bob Priest felt that Betty Youmans’ suggestion to provide financial support to distressed clubs should be studied. As mentioned elsewhere, Meyer will see if a committee can be formed to study the matter of club subsidy.

NEXT MEETING

The Board will meet (virtually) Friday evening, October 30, 2020 at 7:00PM during what would have been the Lancaster (Manheim) Regional.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectively submitted by: William L. Bauer III
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