

**District Director, Joann Glasson**  
**August 2016**

**Report of the ACBL Board Meeting & the Summer NABC in Washington, DC**

**BIG NEWS FROM DC**

The Ethical Oversight Committee found Fantoni-Nunes and Fisher-Schwartz guilty of collusive cheating. Both pairs have been expelled from the ACBL and all their titles and masterpoints have been forfeited – sending a strong message from the ACBL that cheating will be dealt with severely.

District 4 made great contributions to this effort. Meyer Kotkin provided all the mathematical and statistical analysis necessary to prove the cases and Bob Glasson served on the Ethical Oversight Committee in both cases.

**WHERE THE ACBL IS GOING – STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

The Board of Directors has established four strategic priorities for the year. At the meeting there was a review and update on the progress that has been made on these priorities. The news was good.

1. Increase membership acquisition and retention. The focus here is on baby boomers with a goal to increase membership from this market by 7-10% by year end. Membership is up 1,000 from this time last year and club games are up 2%.
2. Develop & accelerate the training of tournament directors. A familiar face, Doug Grove, gave a report on the increased effort in training for tournament directors. Dan Plato and Doug are heading a program to provide ongoing training for tournament directors, both new directors and those moving through the ranks.
3. Build membership confidence. This encompasses two areas – cheating and a balanced budget. Efforts are being made to increase ethical awareness with new recorder regulations and the work of the Anti-Cheating Commission. The Balanced Budget will be demonstrated using a new dashboard of Financial and Organizational Metrics.
4. Upgrade technology and secure our infrastructure while establishing the future architecture of ACBL score. Modernize the existing programming languages and develop software.

## **BRIDGE APPS**

Early in the meetings, a suggestion was made that the ACBL begin creating APPs for I-phones and other devices to learn to play bridge, something that I was hoping to hear more about. By the end of the meetings, I saw a plan being formulated on how that could be accomplished.

The reason bridge apps don't exist now is that there is no financial incentive for software developers to invent such things. The ACBL IT people are already overloaded and they are not equipped to take on this task. It's a different kind of creative skill, so we need to move outside the ACBL for the creative minds to do this kind of programming. Which leads into the new restructuring of the ACBL Educational Foundation to fund these kinds of learning tools.

## **ACBL EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

The ACBL Educational Foundation is a 501(c)3 tax-deductible corporation that does mostly small grants to support bridge education. The largest project they have funded is the "Learn Bridge in a Day" program that we have used in District 4. The Foundation currently doesn't solicit donations. The money for the grants comes from ACBL (about \$100,000 a year) and small donations. The Education Task Force is proposing a complete restructure of the Foundation.

This restructure will establish a new membership (the ACBL Board are now the board members). Trustees will be chosen, not from the ACBL Board, but from outside. The Educational Foundation and ACBL management will draft new bylaws.

The new foundation will have a "dream team" honorary trustee board, hopefully including Bill Gates and Warren Buffet. It also will have professional staff to administer the fund. It will still give grants, but with major resources. The goal of the restructured Foundation is to raise \$1,000,000 each year for bridge education from 2017-2020.

This would allow bigger grants and more separation between the ACBL board and the Education Foundation. This would also allow financial incentives to programmers outside the ACBL staff to create educational apps.

The vision for the ACBL Education Foundation will be to provide major funding and support for bridge education in North America and to serve its stated purpose:

1. Increase the number of bridge players.

2. Engage in educational activities for the purpose of instructing the public as to the fundamentals, study and location of clubs playing bridge.
3. Increase the pleasure of playing bridge.

## **EXCITING NEW STUFF FOR CLUBS AND PLAYERS**

Jay Whipple, District Director from Florida and Chair of the Technology Committee, is running a night-time 2-session pilot Gold Rush Game at the Palm Beach Regional and concurrently at clubs in Florida. It will be an all-electronic Gold Rush Pair Game at 7:00 to 9:30 on August 23-24. Participating clubs will charge their normal entry fee. In addition, players will pre-register online and pay online the current two session regional entry fee of \$52.

When this pilot program turns into a reality, our players will be able to get gold points at convenient local sites without the cost of travel and hotels to regionals. It will also promote more participation for night games that are not well attended with the new 10am and 3pm schedules and provide an exciting new opportunity for our bridge clubs.

More than 100 tables are expected to participate in this pilot event. Clubs must pre-qualify their ability to participate and support this game by playing in practice games prior to the event to ensure they can support internet and players on BridgeBase.

## **GOOD NEWS ON THE FINANCIALS**

Joe Jones, the CFO of the ACBL, presented new, updated financial reports which provided an extensive breakdown of revenue and expenses. The bottom line news was good with net income at mid-year higher than anticipated due to many expense categories coming in under budget. Capital expenditures for migrating ACBL Live to the Cloud were also lower than anticipated.

A new set of metrics was introduced, with input from the membership on Bridgewinners, to give the Board a snapshot glance of all the important financial statistics needed to judge trends in the organization. The ACBL and Bridge Base ("BBO") have entered into a four year agreement giving BBO exclusive right to issue masterpoints for online and robot games. Other sites currently issuing masterpoints will be grandfathered. The ACBL will receive \$125,000 quarterly for 4 years for a total of \$2,000,000 over the length of the agreement.

Since the ACBL is projecting strong financial gains this year, there was Board agreement to move from an active to passive investment allocation and to increase reserves to strengthen the balance sheet.

Approval was given for a net increase in the capital budget of about \$25,000 for new card tables to be used at NABCs. These 34" black card tables have been bought in bulk by the ACBL and are available to clubs, units and districts for purchase at discounted prices. Baron Barclay will be handling the fulfillment of orders. The following prices do not include the cost of shipping, which will vary with the number of tables ordered.

4-9 tables @ \$42.46 each; 10-19 tables @ \$37.47 each; 20-49 tables @ \$34.97 each; 50-99 tables @ \$32.47 each; 100+ tables @ \$29.97 each.

Let me know if you are interested in purchasing tables and I will get contact information for you.

## **OTHER STUFF THAT HAPPENED IN DC**

### **NABC OVERSIGHT**

The 2021 summer NABC will be held in Providence, RI. Room rates will be expensive - just under \$200 a night. Summer is "in season" for Providence, so the hotel rates are much higher than the Fall 2015 Providence NABC. It seems like the choices are to go to Denver in the winter, Las Vegas in the summer or pay a premium room rate during peak season.

Updated screen procedures have been adopted in an effort to control any possibility of cheating as part of continued efforts in this area.

The conditions of contest for the Machlin Women's Swiss have been amended to allow the Director-in-Charge to choose movements and permit replays in the final matches to make a fairer event because of the small size of the field.

The upper masterpoint limit of the Bruce LM Pairs has been changed to 6,000 MP (previously 0-5000). The Mini-Spingold has been changed to 0-6000 (previously 0-5000). The masterpoint limits of the Young pairs and the Mini Spingold were changed to 0-2500 masterpoints (previously 0-1500).

A motion was passed to start the 0-6000 Mini-Spingold and the 0-2500 Mini Spingold on Tuesday of the summer nationals in order to allow players a chance to play in the Spingold before entering these events.

### **TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

Mitch Hodus, ACBL head of technology, reported on the current efforts to remove all ACBL data from the antiquated AS-400 server to the Amazon Cloud. This is clearly a big project and will take 18-24 months to complete as membership data, masterpoint records and ACBL financial records are moved

off the old server onto the cloud.

ACBL Live has been moved to the Amazon Cloud. This migration will allow third parties to display the data from bridge games. There is a clear change in philosophy to take the ACBL out of the "it has to be built here" mode into allowing other vendors to produce scoring products to work with or instead of ACBL score.

The technology team has fixed the financial reporting portion of ACBL score and is now turning to running a pilot to have "ACBL Live for Clubs", similar to ACBL for tournaments.

All are part of a migration to open source products. Open source products mean that outside vendors will be able to create bridge game scoring mechanisms. Clubs will be able to send their game files through ACBL score or other programs to the "trust but verify" mechanism that has been created and all will be done with open standards that other developers can use.

## **BRIDGE INTEGRITY TASK FORCE**

Howie Weinstein reported on the work of the Bridge Integrity Task Force which is charged with working to clean up cheating in bridge. Out of this task force came a revision of the rules for the Recorder position. The most important part of the revised regulations is that those who submit recorder slips will not be identified when the recorder discusses the event with the player who has been recorded. The hope is that this will make more players come forward when they witness inappropriate conduct.

The Task Force also made changes in the Screen Procedures to increase security considerations. The procedures deal with alerts, tray passing and removal, hesitations and explanations.

A motion was approved that if a player, found guilty by any bridge organization that results in a 1-year or longer suspension, is able to play again that player will never be able to play with another player who has been found guilty of a disciplinary action that results in a suspension of one year or longer. Only the CEO of the ACBL can grant a waiver. This motion was withdrawn to be rewritten and will be revisited in Orlando.

A person can be suspended, pending hearing, if there are significant delays caused by the person charged. If the charges have been brought by another National Bridge Organization or the World Bridge Federation, a person so charged may play in an ACBL sanctioned event pending hearing unless otherwise directed by the CEO of the ACBL. A suspension pending a hearing

may not be appealed. In ACBL disciplinary hearings, the chairman has the right to suspend a player when hearings are delayed.

## **APPEALS AND CHARGES**

In the future, if charges are brought against a player for an ethical violation that could result in expulsion from the ACBL, the details of these charges will be published on the ACBL website in the disciplinary section. The following information will be included: Player Name and ACBL number; CDR section alleged to have been violated, entity hearing the charges and the hearing date.

If the player is found not guilty of the charges, this finding will be added to this information and kept on the website for 90 days unless the player asks to have it removed sooner.

The additional information on the ACBL website is to increase transparency by informing the membership about ongoing and concluded disciplinary actions involving ethical issues.

## **TOURNAMENTS**

A discussion item was introduced by Bob Heller, Chair of the Tournament Committee, stating that there are too many regional tournaments and that this might be responsible for the drop of attendance at regionals. He suggested a complex plan to adjust the guaranteed minimum number of regionals from four to three in each district with some adjustments for geography and population. Another part of this plan was that the District hosting a national in any year, would lose one regional in the city closest to the NABC, but the District would receive \$.50 per table revenue from the NABC as compensation for the loss of income. This was a discussion item. No motion was presented.

Tournament sponsors may choose to hire a tournament assistant to work at their tournament. In order to be eligible to be hired, any certified director should take the tournament assistant examination. The tournament assistant exam is a proctored take-home test that costs \$50.

## **MISCELLANEOUS BRIDGE STUFF**

- A change in KO events was passed effective January 1, 2017. For any overall award, a player must play at least 50% of each match of a KO (excluding first round play) and 50% of the total boards played by the team. No member of

the team can play in any match after it becomes mathematically impossible for him/her to play at least 50% of the boards (excluding play-off boards) played by his team or failed to play in at least half of each match other than the first.

- New Collegiate Conditions of Contest were passed to bring eight, instead of four teams, to the summer NABC. Instead of \$20,000 in scholarships to the winning team, the prize money will be \$12,000 to the first place team and \$8,000 for the second place team.
- Active members of the American Bridge Association will not be charged the extra fee (\$3 for sectional; \$4 for regional) that non ACBL members pay until January 1, 2018. This motion was passed hoping to attract ABA members to ACBL tournaments.
- The definition of a notrump opener or overcall has been modified. A notrump opening or overcall is natural if, by agreement, it contains no void, at most one singleton, which must be the Ace, King or Queen and no more than 2 doubletons. If the hand has a singleton, it cannot also contain a doubleton.
- Effective January 1, 2017, there will be a \$5 Junior membership in the ACBL available for any player under the age of 26. The membership will only include the online version of the ACBL bulletin, not a mailed printed copy. The ACBL estimate of the cost of the bridge magazine to a member is \$8.00 a year.

## **BOARD REVIEW COMMITTEE**

At the end of every calendar year, each Committee Chair will be required to submit a committee report on the committee's progress for the year. The report will contain information on the goals of the committee, progress made that year and thoughts of future tasks and undertakings.

This will be very helpful as there is a practice of changing board committee members each year. It will allow new committee members to review what has been done in previous years.

A motion to change the term of the ACBL president from one year to two years was defeated. Although a valid argument was presented for this motion, the Board decided that there is nothing preventing a president from running for a second term, although this has not been the practice. My guess is that this will be revisited.

## **BOARD RESTRUCTURING COMMITTEE**

After attending four days of committee and Board meetings, I found the ACBL Board to be a group of hard working members that genuinely care about the game of bridge. Like most organizations there are systemic problems in the organization and there is an ongoing effort by newer board members to affect changes. The Board is very large – 25 members representing the US, Canada and Mexico. It's an unwieldy number, but provides representation from all regions within the ACBL. Board members are elected by their local units and bring a variety of different skill sets to the ACBL Board.

One of the difficulties is that there are many committees, some over-lapping. In the past, the appointment of committee chairs and committee members has been political. As the organization is evolving, with five new members this year, I am hopeful that substantive changes will occur and the committee composition will be based primarily on skill sets. A reorganization plan was introduced and will be further studied going forward.

It was wonderful to see so many of our local players competing at the Summer NABC in Washington DC.

### **Congratulations to the District 4 players finishing in the overalls in National Events:**

**0-10,000 NABC Pairs:** 13 – Al & Estelle Ronderos; 40 – Richard Popper; 47 – Andrew Stayton, Jeff Ruben

**Von Zedtwitz Life Master Pairs:** 42 – Eric Greco

**Bruce LM-5000 Pairs:** 27 – Karl Barth; 32 – Mike Zeller; 33 – Ross Spiro

**Truscott Senior Swiss Teams:** 7 – Marty Rabinowitz, Rick Rowland, Bob & Joann Glasson; 8 - Arnie Fisher; 30 – Meyer Kotkin, Tom Weik

**Wernher Open Pairs:** 25 – Meyer Kotkin; 41 – John Jemmott, Kenneth Shatoff;  
43 – Ken Chatzinoff, Paul Zebrowski

**Spingold K/O Teams:** 5/8 – Eric Greco; 9/16 – Connie Goldberg

**0-5000 Mini-Spingold KO Teams:** 5/8 – John Dickenson, David Macrae, Christina van Leeuwen

**0-1500 Micro-Spingold KO Teams:** 3/4 - William Chen; 5/8 – Howard Wachtel



**Bean Red Ribbon Pairs:** 10 – Bruce Williams; 25 - David Venetianer

**0 – 10,000 Mixed Swiss Teams:** 12 – Bill Parks; Estelle and Al Ronderos, Donna Morgen; 13 – David Legrow

**Roth Open Swiss Teams:** 3 – Connie Goldberg; 18 - George Krizel; 19 – Miriam Harris-Botzum, John Botzum; 26 – May Sakr

**Congratulations to All Top 10 Finishers in 2+ Session Regional Events:**

**Thursday Gold Rush Pairs:** 5 - Jack Rudy

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**Educational Foundation KO – Bracket 2:** 1 – Ross Spiro, James Rachiele

**Educational Foundation KO – Bracket 3:**  $\frac{3}{4}$  - Gino Lenaz, Bruce Young

**Saturday Flight A Swiss Teams:** 2 – Miriam Harris-Botzum, John Botzum

**0-3000 Swiss Teams – Bracket 3:** 1 – Robert Miller, Ricky Boyer, Kathleen & Kevin Harter

**Pierzchala KO – Bracket 3:** 1 – Arnold Kritz

**Pierzchala KO – Bracket 4:** James Rachiele;  $\frac{3}{4}$  - Ian Milnes, Bridget Whitley

**Pierzchala KO – Bracket 5;**  $\frac{3}{4}$  - Bruce Young, Gino Lenaz

**Wealth Transfer Gold Rush Pairs:** 3 – John Barton III, John Barton IV

**Wealth Transfer A/B/C Open Pairs – Flight B:** 1 – William Chen

**Preemptive Planning A/X Swiss Teams:** 6/7 – Arnold Kritz

**Retirement Safety Play Gold Rush Pairs:** 2 – Jack Rudy

**Finessing Taxation KO Bracket 3:** 2 – Kevin and Kathleen Harter, Ricky Boyer, Robert Miller

**Finessing Taxation KO Bracket 5:** 1 – Bruce Young, Gino Lenaz

**Monday Daylight Gold Rush Pairs:** 7 – Mary Ann Regan

**Monday Daylight Open Pairs:** 8 – Steven Blomstedt, Deepak Khanna

**Tuesday Daylight Round Robin Teams – Bracket 1:** 3 – Sarah McMerty, Barbara Schaefer, Jean Ann Dockray, Janice Copeland

**Tuesday Daylight Round Robin Teams – Bracket 4:** 1 – Mordecai Schwartz, Kathy Fisher

**Tuesday Daylight Round Robin Teams – Bracket 5:** 1 – Jack Rudy, Mary Ann Regan

**Tuesday Daylight A/X Pairs:** 7 – David Hoover, Barbara Mateer

**Tuesday Daylight Gold Rush Pairs:** 3 – Lisa Mita, Mollie Slattery

**Tuesday Flight A/X Swiss Teams:** 8/9 – Dick and Donna Morgen, Deepak Khanna, Howard Kahlenberg

**Military Appreciation A/B/C Open Pairs:** 6 – John Gassenheimer, Jill Fisch

**Wednesday Daylight Gold Rush Swiss Teams:** 6 – Loretta Westler

**Skywalker Mentee A/B/C Open Pairs:** 4 – Peter & Marie Filandro

**Wednesday Gold Rush Pairs:** 3 – Susan and R. Shenkin; 4 – Norman & Randee Braslow

**Thursday Daylight A/X Swiss Teams:** 3 – May Sakr; 4 – David Hoover & Barbara Mateer

**Thursday Gold Rush Pairs:** 4 – Lewis and Ruth Ellen Maddock

**Friday Daylight Swiss Bracket 4:** 2 Mordecai Schwartz – Kathy Fisher

**Saturday Daylight B/C Pairs:** 4 – Christina van Leeuwen; 5 – Gary Hillenbrand, Arnold Kritz

**Boss Lady Thursday-Saturday KO – Bracket 1:** 2 – Michael Zeller, Malin Castronuovo, Susan Kennedy

**Saturday Compact KO Bracketed 2:** 2 – Brad Barry, David Amsterdam

**Saturday Daylight Gold Rush Pairs:** 4 – Bruce Young, Helen Walker

**Saturday Daylight Flight B Teams – Bracket 3:** 3 – John Strange, Caroline Hughes, Karen Pollak, Jane Beck

**Sunday Fast Pairs:** 2 Richard Popper; 9 – Jill Fisch & John Gassenheimer

**BEST HAND OF THE TOURNAMENT – IF YOU READ THIS FAR YOU DESERVE A CHUCKLE:**

North-South Vul

Auction: 1 NT - Pass – 3NT

Opening lead: Jack of Clubs

Declarer asks the opening leader about their honor card leads.

Response: Good news – we lead 4th best. Bad News – I have 8 of them