

District Director, Joann Glasson
December 2016

Report of the ACBL Board Meeting and the Fall NABC in Orlando, FL



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Congratulation to District 4's Richard Popper of Wilmington, DE, who was elected Chairman of the ACBL Board of Governors.

Richard will serve a two-year term acting as liaison between the Board of Governors and the ACBL Board of Directors. Richard has been Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors for the past two years.

Richard has been a longtime volunteer for bridge in Unit 190 and District 4.

TECHNOLOGY

If you run a bridge game, you are certainly aware that a Windows 10 update this year changed the way that the function keys in ACBL Score work. This prompted a real concern that ACBL Score and it's outdated technology is extremely vulnerable to yet another Windows update and that ACBL Score would not function if that happened.

Last year the ACBL announced its decision to stop trying to fix ACBL Score and to transition into using already existing scoring programs (EU score, Pair Score, Magic Score) for scoring ACBL club games. In order to implement this change, the technology department, with assistance from Greg Humphries, is developing software that will take the game files, done in Usebio format, from these external programs and run them through a masterpoint engine that would put our unique requirements - strats, special games, etc. - on the files and then masterpoint the games and post the results to the ACBL database.

The ACBL technology department has been working on this project, but there is a strain on the existing staff to get it done as quickly as it is needed so the ACBL board authorized the expenditure of \$300,000 for additional temporary staff to have this process accelerated and completed by the middle of 2018.

DUES STRUCTURE

A new dues structure was adopted in Orlando, allowing membership signups and renewals for either 1, 2 or 3 year terms. Your membership dues will not increase if you opt for the three year term – but rates will be higher for one or two year terms.

Since most bridge players can do the math and hopefully still buy green bananas, this will be a very effective change. ACBL now spends \$85,000 a year in billing statements. If billing is done less frequently, the costs savings are big. This structure will also help the retention rate – when members stay for 3 years the retention rate is 95%.

For current ACBL members, the dues are \$39 and will continue to be \$39 if, upon expiration, you renew your membership for three years (\$117). If you renew for two years (\$94) you will pay \$47 a year and if you renew for one year you will pay \$49 a year.

New ACBL members currently pay \$29. Starting in 2017, new members will pay \$39 for one year, \$74 for two years and \$87 (\$29 per year) for three years.

The new structure will not only save money, but will help with membership retention.

MEMBERSHIP & TOURNAMENTS

1. ACBL Membership at the end of October 2016 is 168,352. This is 91 fewer members than at the beginning of the year. New members increased by 1.3%, but we lost a few more than that. Management is budgeting 2% growth in 2017, fueled by a stepped up marketing program. New programs are being designed that will offer an additional \$50,000 annually in club and teacher recruiting incentives.

2. The number of club games held, including online, is flat. The ACBL has contacted club managers and owners to discuss their suggestions and concerns and a task force is being organized to make the ACBL and clubs more effective partners.

3. The average table count at regional tournaments is down 4.5% as of October with sectional attendance flat.

4. STAC tables decreased 3.9%.

ACBL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

New bylaws were passed that will restructure the ACBL Education Foundation.

The newly structured foundation will have professional administrative staff. The goal is to have professional fund-raising in order to attract the big bucks needed to advance bridge educational projects.

At this meeting, the Educational Foundation awarded a \$20,000 grant for development of a "learn to play bridge" app for iPhones and tablets to two young brothers, Eric and Tim Lou, from Morganville, New Jersey. The pair won a competition in which 20 different ideas for new learn to play bridge apps were submitted.

EXCITING PLANS FOR CLUBS AND PLAYERS

Pilot events for online bridge at the clubs will continue in 2017, spearheaded by Jay Whipple, District Director from District 9. I have put in a request to have an event run in District 4.

Districts will be able to run on-line events at their regional bridge tournaments with remote sites in other bridge clubs across the country.

Bridge clubs will be able to act as remote sites for other regional tournaments, earning red and gold points for their players without having to travel to regionals.

FINANCIAL STUFF

The projected income for 2016 is \$701,051. Good news in light of the past few years.

The budget passed for 2017 – projecting \$234,283 in excess of revenues over expenses (non-profits are not supposed to talk about making money). The 2017 Capital Budget is \$355,750. The largest item included was the JD Edwards accounting software and CRM (Marketing) software which will remove the current processes on the antiquated AS-400 and move them to the cloud. In addition the capital budget includes \$91,250 in IT Equipment purchases, \$32,500 for the purchase of new card tables and other small projects.

In 2016 \$500,000 will be added to the reserves – the 2017 goal is to put another \$500,000 into reserves. This is part of an effort to strengthen the balance sheet of the ACBL from the damage inflicted by the ACBL score fiasco.

A \$1.00 fee increase in sanction fees to STACs that was passed last year was reversed this year. It seems the prior intent was to increase sanction fees only for club games and special games, not STACs, and somehow this increase also snuck through. I voted against the motion, not on the merits, but because I think that passing things and then changing them a year later just causes confusion and the appearance of disarray.

The ACBL Board of Directors tightened their belt with some cost-savings motions. The major one was a motion that was passed to move the meeting days of the spring and summer board meetings. In the past board meetings were held for four consecutive days prior to the beginning of each NABC. Since the members of the Board of Directors were required to stay to attend the Board of Governor's meeting on the first Sunday of the NABC, they were provided lodging and per diem for two additional days between the end of the board meetings and the BOG meeting. Beginning next summer, the board meetings will be held in the three or four days immediately preceeding the Board of Governors meeting. This change will save the ACBL \$28,152 for each four day meeting.

Another motion was proposed regarding the relocation of the Fall board meeting to ACBL headquarters in early November instead of at the Fall NABC. There is a real burden on ACBL staff required to be away from their families at Thanksgiving to attend board meetings. There is also a huge expense to take board members and staff to remote locations over Thanksgiving. This motion would have saved an estimated \$45,000 for San Diego in 2017 and \$80,000 for Hawaii in 2018 in the cost of board members and staff. The motion failed.

I was strongly in favor of this motion. The cost savings to the ACBL and the boost to employee morale were key factors in my vote. I think this will be discussed further at the next board meeting in Kansas City and hopefully we will be able to move the Hawaii board meeting to Horn Lake.

\$7,500 a year that was previously spent on excursions for spouses of board members during the board meetings has been removed from the budget. I supported this motion.

OTHER STUFF THAT HAPPENED IN ORLANDO

NABC MOTIONS

Women's team events at nationals have been in a slow decline for the last five years. The ACBL codification states that any national event that is drawing fewer than 30 tables should be reviewed. The women's team events have had attendance of fewer than 30 tables for the last five years. The BOD voted to

remove the Wagar KO Teams from the calendar effective in the summer of 2017 and replace it with a two-day Women's Pair event. The BOD also voted to remove the Machlin Women's Swiss Team from the calendar effective in the spring of 2018.

The BOD voted to eliminate the position of NABC Tournament Appeals Director, since tournament appeals are now being handled by the directing staff. Conduct issues at national tournaments will be referred to the ACBL Disciplinary Coordinator (Sabrina Goley) and ethical issues will be sent to the Ethical Oversight Committee.

A motion from the Conditions of Contest Committee to add a Soloway 7-day knockout event to the summer schedule was defeated. The feeling was that this would dilute the other events and make the fall schedule the same as the other NABCs (dominated by a week long team event).

In an effort to increase security, hand records used in any NABC and NABC+ events will be different than hand records used in regional events. There have always been different hand records in the finals – this only effects the qualifying rounds of NABC events.

A New Orleans site was approved for March 9 – 19, 2023. The room rate is \$214.00. This is the first NABC with an advertised rate of over \$200, but it is 2023...

MISCELLANEOUS BRIDGE STUFF

There was a report on the experiment of allowing “drop ins” from the GNT into the Open LM Pairs. Most agreed that there is a problem of team members dropping into pair events or 3-day Swiss Teams from an extended team event like the Spingold. The arguments are that a team that has a sponsor can reconfigure itself to qualify and also that players may have only played half the boards in the longer event and then can drop into the pair event. A motion was carried that drop-ins will not be allowed from team events to premier pair events.

New Electronic Devices Penalty Guidelines were adopted:

Except for health-related equipment, any electronic equipment - phones, Ipads or any communication devices are forbidden to be on or visible in the playing area. The following penalties will be mandatory and enforced at all NABC events:

First offense of any kind, in the same session: one full board, 12 IMPs or 20% of the maximum available VPs per match, at the respective form of scoring.

Second offense, in the same session or third offense in the event:
Disqualification of the pair or team from the event.

Regional and sectional events can carry a lesser penalty.

NAP - GNT

A motion was presented for a \$200 subsidy per player to all third place NAP District Final finishers in each flight and a \$100 subsidy per player to all fourth place NAP District Final finishers in Flight B and Flight C to help offset expenses associated with participation in the NAP Finals.

I initially voted for these subsidies in committee, since I am generally in support of giving back to the players, but then changed my mind – the amounts conflicted with things that are being done in other districts and caused problems of uneven awards for many districts. It was also pointed out that the amounts were too small to offer any effective incentive. In states like Florida, financial incentives have been used with no effect on attendance.

District 4 is currently providing a \$200 subsidy for third place and a \$100 subsidy for fourth place.

A motion was presented asking that an additional Flight B and Flight C GNT Team be added if the number of teams competing at the District level of Flights B and C were 8 or more in either flight. In District 4 that would have allowed one additional Flight B team to attend. Motion failed. I voted for the motion.

BRIDGE INTEGRITY TASK FORCE

If someone in your unit or district is found guilty of cheating he can now be replaced in masterpoint races. All others will be moved up in rank after the cheater is removed.

ORLANDO NABC



It was wonderful to see so many of our local players competing at the Fall NABC in Orlando, FL.

Special congratulations to District 4's Eric Greco for winning the Player of the Year in 2016 and the Goren Trophy. The Player of the Year is the bridge player who wins the most platinum points in the year. Eric won over 800 platinum points in 2016.

The Goren Trophy is awarded to the player who wins the most masterpoints at the Fall NABC. Eric won 382.88 masterpoints in Orlando - 150 for his second place finish in the Reisinger, 78.75 for his third place finish in the Mitchell Open BAM and 106.88 for his third place finish in the Kaplan Blue Ribbon Pairs.

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

Nail Life Master Pairs: 38 - Eric Greco; 42 - George Krizel

0-10,000 Swiss Teams: 5 - Michael Zeller; 10 - Albert Shrive, Jim McKeown, Donald Dalpe

0-10,000 IMP Pairs: 2 - Donald Dalpe

Kaplan Blue Ribbon Pairs: 3 - Eric Greco

Reisinger Board-A-Match Teams: 2 - Eric Greco, 3 - Connie Goldberg

Mitchell Open Board-A-Match Teams: 3 - Eric Greco

Senior Mixed Pairs: 12 - Arnold Fisher, Jane Ball; 23 - Barry Gorski, Andie Sheaffer

Super Senior Pairs: 7 - Arnold Fisher, Jane Ball

Mixed Swiss Teams: 14 - Arnold Fisher



**Carol Foley, Claire Kern
Carole Craig and Peggy Coe in
front of the Christmas tree in
Orlando**

Congratulations to All Top 10 Finishers in Regional Events:

International Fund Pairs: 7 (A) - Christina van Leeuwen

Friday Side Game: 6 (A) - Michael Zeller

Friday Swiss Teams: 3/4 - Benito Garozzo

Sunday A/B/C Swiss Teams: 6 - James Carroll

Sunday B/C/D Swiss Teams: 10/11 - Gary Hillenbrand, Arnold Kritz

Marty Chait Open Pairs: 4 - Joann and Bob Glasson

Sunday Evening BAM Teams: 1 - Benito Garozzo (Yes, the great Benito Garozzo is a District 4 member!)

Sunday Evening Side Game: 7 - Dennis Wick

Saturday-Sunday Ko - Bracket 1: 3/4 - Benito Garozzo

Monday Evening A/X/Y Swiss Teams: 7 - Claire Kern, Margaret Coe, Carole Craige, Carol Foley

Monday IMP Pairs - 8 - Brandon Fong

Valencia Oranges Compact KO Teams - Bracket 2: 3 - Martin de Bruin, Betty Scull

Monday Midnight ZIP KO Teams: 2 - David and Karen Hoffner

Wednesday Side Game: 1 - Harry Nuckols, Mary Poplawski

Tuesday/Wednesday KO Teams - Bracket 7: 1 - John Barton, Prem Premakumar, Cheryl Stark Abrams, Judith Repp

Wednesday Evening BAM Teams: 3/4 - John Dickenson, Alison Shoemaker, Susan Morse, David Cohan

Wednesday B/C Swiss Teams: 4/5 - Gary Hillenbrand

Lynn Berg 299er Pairs: 3/4 - Cheryl Shields, Barbara Augustson

Thursday Afternoon Side Game: 4/5 - David & Karen Hoffner; 4 - Rui Marques



Martin de Bruin and Betty Scull

Winners of the Thursday Compact KO Teams

Thursday Compact KO Teams - Bracket 1: Martin de Bruin, Betty Scull, Jay Korobow

Fort Lauderdale A/X/Y Swiss Teams: 9/10 - John Dickenson, David Cohan, Alison Shoemaker, Susan Morse

Friday Gold Rush Pairs: 5 - R. Shenkin, Susan Shenkin

Friday Side Swiss Teams: 3 - Dennis Wick

Babs Dun Open Pairs: 3 - Judith Argento, Kingston, PA

Friday/Saturday Morning Compact KO Bracket 1: 1 Patricia Andrews, Helen Walker

David Babcock A/B/C Open Pairs: 7 - Kenneth Chatzinoff

Saturday Daylight Gold Rush Pairs: 4 - Prem Premakumar, John Barton III

Vero Beach Bridge Club Stratified Open Pairs: 4 - Meyer Kotkin

Saturday Evening B/C/D Swiss Teams: 2 - Helen Walker, Patricia Andrews

Friday/Saturday KO Bracket 3: 3/4 -George Mansour

Rick Larkin Fast Pairs: 2 - Meyer Kotkin; 8 - Kenneth Chatzinoff

Saturday-Sunday KO Teams – Bracket 1: 3 – Carol Foley, Margaret Coe, Carole Craige, Claire Kern

Saturday-Sunday KO Teams – Bracket 3: 2 – Michael Zeller

Harry Falk B/C Swiss Teams: 8 – George Mansour