

District Director, Joann Glasson
March 2017

Report of the ACBL Board Meeting and the Spring NABC in Kansas City, MO

ACBL

It's been a full year that I've been your representative on the ACBL board. It takes some time to understand the mechanics of the organization, but I now feel up to speed. It's a board of 25 well-meaning directors from around the United States and Canada. Directors with different ideas about how things should be done. At this meeting, we had a breakout session with a very good facilitator that gave us a chance to look in depth at our individual and group performances. This was a very positive step towards helping us understand each other's positions and making us better able to work together toward common goals.

This year there has been considerable change in the composition of the board with new directors arriving with fresh ideas. These changes provided a better balance on the board. Probably a good argument for term limits, something that will be looked at in the summer meeting.

This year I have seen more of a focus on strategic planning and great strides in both technology and finance. The ACBL is also very focused on having better relationships with clubs and with volunteers, an area that seemed to be a disconnect. I am optimistic that the Board is on the right path.

In 2017, I am serving as Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee and also serving on the Strategic Planning, NABC, Audit and Governance Committees.

KANSAS CITY

Kansas City was a great location for an NABC – the tournament was held in two hotels, the Westin and the Sheraton, that were joined by a glass-enclosed walkway. The national events were in the Westin. The regional events were in the Sheraton. Hospitality was offered in both locations. The playing space was terrific and the tournament was very well run. Some of the recent complaints about vulnerability inserts, clean playing cards and event starting times were addressed. The complex had multiple restaurant choices and there was a free downtown tram that allowed easy access to lots more choices.

Bob and I played close attention to all the details since in just one short year we will be hosting the Spring NABC in Philadelphia – mark your calendar now for March 8 to March 18, 2018.

The Kansas City Board meetings, under our new President, Bob Heller, were held in only three days instead of the usual four in order to curb expenses. Bob has been strong in his efforts to shorten meeting times by using the time more productively and doing more work in advance of the meetings. Beginning in the summer the Board has adopted a new meeting schedule. The board will meet for four days. Two days prior to the NABC and two days during the first NABC event. This will significantly cut the costs of meetings.

Special congratulations to Jim McKeown, president of Unit 120 in State College, for two big national finishes – Jim was fourth in the 10,000 Swiss Teams and second in the 0-10,000 KO Teams. On Jim's team were two former District 4 members who have moved to Florida – Don Dalpe and Al Shrive.

FINANCE

In 2016, the ACBL showed a profit of \$520,865, largely because of a \$500,000 payment from Bridgebase, negotiated by ACBL CEO, Robert Hartman, which gave BBO exclusive rights to award masterpoints in robot games. The forecasted income was considerably higher, but the Orlando fall NABC was almost 20% below estimates.

The 2017 Budget was finalized in Kansas City. The Budget anticipates a net profit of \$62,497 in 2017, down from previous estimates since the board approved in Kansas City a possible expense of \$100,000 if the CEO search committee has to hire an outside search firm.

Save the ACBL some money by helping find a qualified candidate for the CEO position. A job description is available on the ACBL website. We are looking for someone strong in technology that can take the ACBL forward.

Robert Hartman, our current CEO, has resigned and agreed to stay on til the end of July to give the Board time to find a suitable replacement. Robert will be taking over a family business in Florida. He will be really missed!

The Finance Committee is reviewing the current funding of International and Junior Bridge to help control ACBL costs. A motion was put forth by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee to have the NBOs (the United States Bridge Federation, the Canadian Bridge Federation and the Mexican Bridge Federation) pay the \$167,000 annual dues to the World Bridge Federation. In return the ACBL would increase fund raising efforts and donate more \$\$ to these organizations. The motion was withdrawn because a deal was struck with the USBF to pay \$50,000 of the WBF dues this year while we continue to work on an agreement going forward. The conversation will be brought up again in Toronto.

The WBF is running a World Bridge Championship in Orlando in the fall of 2018. There was a commitment made several years ago for the ACBL to put up \$100,000 and the USBF to put up \$200,000 to assist in the funding of this championship. This financial commitment places a heavy burden on both the ACBL and the USBF in 2018.

The Audit Committee met with the CPA firm that performed the 2016 audit and the report was squeaky clean. Kudos to Joe Jones, the ACBL CFO, and his staff for all their work.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Good news from the technology group (finally)! The new masterpoint engine that will enable clubs to use programs other than ACBL score is being tested and will be available in the next few months. This will be the beginning of the phase out of ACBL Score. The progress is the result of hiring outside programming consultants to ensure that another Windows update doesn't make ACBL score obsolete.

A new marketing Director, Dan Storch, has been hired. His primary focus will be on increasing and the retention of members. Dan has only been on the job for a couple of weeks.

NABC

Book a room now if you are planning on attending the summer NABC in Toronto. The tournament is being held at the convention center. The hotels that are adjoining the convention center are already filled since they have fewer rooms than we have bridge players. Toronto rates to be a big tournament because of the favorable exchange rate.

The problem of room blocks at NABCs, particularly for NAP and GNT events, was discussed with the ACBL staff. Efforts will be made going forward to provide a bigger room block for these events.

A new kind of plastic playing cards were tested at the NABC and the team game cards were rotated more frequently in an effort to provide cleaner cards to the players.

GOVERNANCE

At the request of the Board of Governors, the ACBL Board reconsidered two motions. The first motion was to hold the Fall Board meetings at ACBL

headquarters in Horn Lake instead of at the Fall NABCs. This motion was defeated. I voted for the motion because it would have provided considerable cost savings.

The second motion was that the Fall of 2018 Board Meeting, currently scheduled at the Hawaii NABC, be moved to ACBL headquarters. This motion was defeated. I voted for the motion because of the cost factor. The additional expense of taking Board Members and ACBL staff to Hawaii is estimated to be \$50,000.

KEEPING THE GAME CLEAN

Bart Bramley, Chairman of the Ethical Oversight Commission, made a presentation to the Board. He talked about the need for independent counsel and asked for a CDR without mandatory masterpoint penalties, except for the most egregious crimes. He also argued that the EOC must be able to discuss the results of committees with each other for training purposes. In the current CDR, members are not permitted to discuss the facts of cases with each other. He also stated that the ACBL needs a strong bridge player in the job of National Recorder, so that they can understand the more complex ethical issues that might occur in high level competition.

Georgia Heth, Linda Dunn and Sabrina Goley are currently reviewing the CDR. One of the things that is under consideration is replacing the EOC with an arbitration panel of high-level bridge players to hear the most serious ethical accusations.

I feel this is the way to go since it could provide significant costs savings and reduced liability to the ACBL. If you interested in more information, please let me know and I will send you my detailed thoughts.

MASTERPOINTS, MASTERPOINTS

A new "All About Bridge" Committee was organized that combined many of the old committees into one group. All discussion of bridge events, masterpoints, grassroots events, NABCs, etc. are now being handled in sub-groups of this committee.

The ACBL is not making any changes in masterpoints at this time while the new scoring programs are being rolled out, so many of the motions made by this committee are deferred until that date.

There was an increase in the masterpoint formula by 40% for four-session

regional events, other than KOs, where another unrestricted event of the same type, but fewer sessions runs at the same time.

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS:

Claire Jones was re-elected as ACBL Treasurer for a term of 5/1/17 to 4/30/17.

Paul Cuneo was elected as ACBL 401K Trustee,

ACBL Hall of Fame Committee appointments: Paul Lewis, Chairman, Neil Chambers and Mitch Dunitz

New Hall of Fame procedures have been established changing the way the voting is done. In the future electors will vote yes, no or abstain for each nominee. Any nominee who receives yes votes from 67% of the total votes cast for that nominee and having at least 50% of the electors having cast a ballot for the nominee, shall be elected to the Hall of Fame.

Appointments to the Competitions & Conventions Committee: Jeff Goldsmith, Will Ehlers, Jeff Ford, Chris Compton and Dan Sprung

Appointments to the Ethical Oversight Committee: Cheri Bjerkan, Dennis Clerkin, John Fout, Bob Glasson and Kevin Wilson

Appointments to the ACBL Disciplinary Committee: Lisa Berkowitz, Michael Huston, Nagy Kamel and Tom Peters

Appointments to the ACBL Laws Commission: Allan Falk, Rebecca Rogers and Aaron Silverstein

DISTRICT 4 PLAYERS WHO MADE THE OVERALLS IN NATIONAL EVENTS

NAP – Flight A: 20 – *Martin de Bruin, David Hoffner*

Lebhar IMP Pairs: 11 – *Barry Gorski, Bill Parks*

10K Swiss Teams: 4 – *Jim McKeown*

Leventritt Silver Ribbon Pairs: 13 – *Barry Gorski, Andie Sheaffer*; 26 – *Rhoda Prager*

0-10,000 Knockout Teams: 2 – *Jim McKeown*

Silodor Open Pairs: 6 – *Miriam Harris-Botzum, John Botzum*; 41 – *Marty Seligman*

Vanderbilt Teams: 9/16 – *Eric Greco*

NABC+ Fast Pairs: 16 – *Marty Seligman*

DISTRICT 4 PLAYERS WHO SCORED IN THE TOP 10 IN REGIONAL EVENTS

Thursday Afternoon International Fund Pairs: 8 – *Donna Morgen, Howard Kahlenberg*

Saturday Compact KO 4: 1 – *John Dickenson, Bruce Lieberman, David Cohan, Milind Vaze*

Saturday Daylight Gold Rush Pairs: 9 – *Susan Kennedy, Barrie Callahan*

Sunday-Monday Side Series: 6/7 – *Jonathan Baumel*

Carol Lash Monday B/C Pairs: 3 – *Mark Bolotin, Philip Greco*

SW Arkansas Unit 247 Tuesday Daylight Open Pairs: 1 – *May Sakr*

Carroll Frogge Tuesday Afternoon Side IMP Pairs: 2 – *Joseph Rich, Jeff Nash*

Tuesday Evening A/X/Y Swiss: 3 – *David Cohan, John Dickenson*; 3X – *Michael Shuster, Jeff Nash*

Tuesday Evening B/C/D Swiss: 2 – *Richard Hurd, Eleanor O'Connor, Lawrence Kidder, Courtney Footman*

Adele Greif Monday-Wednesday Morning Side Series: 9/10 – *Ala Hamilton-Day*

Mid-Missouri Bridge Club Wednesday Daylight Open Pairs: 8 – *Judith Argento*; 9 – *Jonathan Baumel, Pat McCammon*

Wednesday Evening Swiss: 4- *Michael Shuster*

Tuesday/Wednesday KO3: $\frac{3}{4}$ - *Henry Nelson, William Lindgren*

Becky Rogers Wednesday Side Pairs: 7 - *Henry Nelson, William Lindren*

Kansas City Thursday 299er Pairs: 1 - *Susanne Coffin*

Louise Mayer Daylight Open Pairs: 2 - *Andie Sheaffer*; 9 - *Judith Argento*

Sooner Unit 167 Daylight Open Pairs: 1 - *Judith Argento*

Friday Compact KO2: 1 - *Joseph Rich*

Friday Compact KO3: 4 - *John Dickenson, David Cohan*

Saturday Morning Side Pairs: 2 - *John Dickenson, David Cohan*

Sunday A/X/Y Swiss Teams: 3 - *Miriam Harris-Botzum - John Botzum*

If you lasted this long I have a gift for you:

In order to guide you and update you along the way to Life Master, Jay Whipple has created a new link.

Log in on ACBL.org and click on the Bridge Finesse Rank-Up Helper. It will tell you how many points you need of which color to achieve your goal and will also let you know the nearby tournaments where you can win those points. Try it!