

**DRAFT MINUTES OF ACBL DISTRICT 4 LANCASTER BOARD MEETING  
November 4, 2022**

Voting Member Attendees:

At-Large: Jeanne Gehret (President), Betsy Cutler (Vice-President), Meyer Kotkin (IPP)  
Mary Miller (Presidential Appointee) (4 of 5).  
Unit 112: Betty Youmans (Unit President), Jerry Manioci, Phil Geibel, Lynn Ackerman,  
Jim Patton (5 of 5).  
Unit 120: Walter Mitchell, Fran Hofherr (2 of 2).  
Unit 121: (0 of 2).  
Unit 133: Betty Abrams (1 of 2).  
Unit 141: Jay Apfelbaum (Unit Pres.), Ellen Berkowitz, Joann Glasson, April  
Apfelbaum, Estelle Ronderos, Bob Glasson, Al Ronderos, Pat Civale, Susan  
Morse, Bill Raverby, Robbee Perlman (11 of 11)  
Unit 168: Bridget Whitely, John Klinger, Carl Fahnstock, Ron Orr (4 of 4).  
Unit 190: Tom Tully, Bill Herdle (2 of 3).  
Unit 217: Jim McKeown (Unit President), Carol Reitz (2 of 2)

Also Present: Bill Bauer, D4 Board Secretary

Excused:

Tom Weik (Presidential Appointee) Bharat Rao, NAP/GNT Coordinator  
Kim Holm, Rehoboth Beach Regional co-chair

**CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS**

A meeting of the ACBL District 4 Board of Directors was held F2F being called to order by President Jeanne Gehret at 6:55 PM, a quorum being present (31 of 36 voting members representing 7 of 8 units). Jeanne requested the Secretary to introduce Board members attending their first meeting. They are: Estelle & Al Ronderos, Robbee Perlman and Bill Raverby, all of U141.

**DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Joann stated that ACBL is working on detecting on-line cheating using a tool called EDGAR that will identify pairs cheating on BBO. Brian Platnick and Franco Baseggon are collaborating on developing the program.

As a way to address the membership decline, the ACBL has initiated an advertising subsidy for teachers. The ACBL will provide \$500 in digital advertising on Facebook and Instagram for teachers who are associated with a face-to-face bridge club and offering beginning bridge lessons.

Jay Whipple and a volunteer committee of experts have developed a technology plan for the ACBL that will be implemented in 2022 and 2023.

Joann concluded by saying that she is seeking a 2<sup>nd</sup> term as ACBL President.

**SECRETARY’S REPORT & APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF July 1, 2022**

The Secretary requested approval of the minutes of the July 1, 2022 Valley Forge Board meeting. The minutes were emailed prior to the Board meeting and appear on the District website. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Bill then presented the membership by Unit as of October 1, 2020, 2021 and 2022 per the ACBL as follows:

| <u>UNIT</u> | <u>10/2020</u> | <u>10/2021</u> | <u>10/2022</u> | <u>2021-2022</u> |             | <u>2023 REPS</u> |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|
|             |                |                |                | <u>CHANGE</u>    | <u>%</u>    |                  |
| 112         | 1,108          | 1,038          | 959            | -79              | -7.6        | 5                |
| 120         | 234            | 201            | 186            | -15              | -7.5        | 2                |
| 121         | 160            | 142            | 122            | -20              | -14.1       | 2                |
| 133         | 254            | 242            | 231            | -11              | -4.5        | 2                |
| 141         | 2,708          | 2,460          | 2,343          | -117             | -4.8        | 10 (lose 1)      |
| 168         | 901            | 790            | 775            | -15              | -1.9        | 4                |
| 190         | 578            | 521            | 503            | -18              | -3.5        | 3                |
| 217         | <u>96</u>      | <u>85</u>      | <u>81</u>      | <u>-4</u>        | <u>-4.7</u> | <u>2</u>         |
| TOTALS      | 6,039          | 5,479          | 5,200          | -279             | -5.1        | 30               |

The number of voting representatives for each unit remains the same except that U141 loses one representative (from 11 in 2022 to 10 in 2023).

Joann noted that while our membership loss is substantial, the District is 3<sup>rd</sup> best in retention of members.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Pat Civale noted the Secretary had emailed her report covering June 1, 2022 to date in advance of the meeting.

The fiscal year loss to date is \$20,742. Total assets are \$172,337 with \$117,115 being in the Nationals Fund. The primary income item was the proceeds from Grass Roots games held at D4 clubs. Pat noted that NAP event income was not available in time for her to include it in her report.

The Board then approved Pat’s motion to have Jeanne Gehret, Board President, and Betsy Cutler, Board VP, added as authorized signers of our checks. (Note: The President is authorized to sign checks per the bylaws.) The motion was unanimously approved.

The Board unanimously approved the Treasurer’s report.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Jeanne recognized Bob Glasson for all his work with the Regional Tournament Chairs primarily in the area of contract negotiation with the playing site providers.

Jim Patton was recognized for his managing of Constant Contact. Also, Bill Herdle for the monthly Silver & Gold monthly email to promote our Regionals, Sectionals and STaC's.

Regarding new members, Jeanne provided the following:

| <b>DISTRICT 4 - New Members - 2022</b> |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |                        |              |                              |                                  |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Unit</b>                            | <b>Jan</b> | <b>Feb</b> | <b>Mar</b> | <b>Apr</b> | <b>May</b> | <b>Jun</b> | <b>Jul</b> | <b>Aug</b> | <b>Sep</b> | <b>Unit</b>            | <b>Total</b> | <b>Total Mbrs<br/>Oct 31</b> | <b>New Mbrs as<br/>% of Unit</b> |
| <b>112</b>                             |            | 3          | 1          | 4          | 1          | 5          | 5          |            | 3          | <b>112</b>             | 22           | 959                          | 2.3%                             |
| <b>120</b>                             |            | 1          |            |            | 1          | 1          |            | 2          |            | <b>120</b>             | 5            | 186                          | 2.7%                             |
| <b>121</b>                             |            |            | 1          |            |            |            |            |            | 2          | <b>121</b>             | 3            | 122                          | 2.5%                             |
| <b>133</b>                             |            | 1          | 4          | 4          | 2          |            |            | 2          | 2          | <b>133</b>             | 15           | 231                          | 6.5%                             |
| <b>141</b>                             | 13         | 2          | 8          | 4          | 13         | 3          | 10         | 7          | 17         | <b>141</b>             | 77           | 2343                         | 3.3%                             |
| <b>168</b>                             | 2          | 5          | 8          | 4          | 2          | 4          | 3          | 1          | 1          | <b>168</b>             | 30           | 775                          | 3.9%                             |
| <b>190</b>                             |            | 6          |            |            | 3          |            |            | 1          | 1          | <b>190</b>             | 11           | 503                          | 2.2%                             |
| <b>217</b>                             | 1          |            |            |            | 1          | 1          |            |            |            | <b>217</b>             | 3            | 81                           | 3.7%                             |
| <b>Grand<br/>Total</b>                 | <b>16</b>  | <b>18</b>  | <b>22</b>  | <b>16</b>  | <b>23</b>  | <b>14</b>  | <b>18</b>  | <b>13</b>  | <b>26</b>  | <b>Grand<br/>Total</b> | <b>166</b>   | <b>5200</b>                  | <b>3.2%</b>                      |

## **RATIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIONS**

No actions to ratify.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **PUBLICITY**

Jeanne noted the Silver & Gold monthly report that promotes our Regionals, Sectionals and STaC's sent out by Bill Herdle. Robbee Perlman reported that she does not receive the email and had to change settings on her computer to correct the problem with Constant Contact's help. Others present, such as Ellen Berkowitz, have also not been receiving the Silver & Gold report although they are receiving the 4Spot. Jim Patton and Bill Herdle were tasked to look into the problem.

### **DISTRICT 4SPOT**

Susan Morse stated that she has enjoyed her first year as editor and getting to meet the various contributors face-to-face. The open rate is still greater than 50%. There are some computer compatibility problems with Constant Contact. To get around this Susan added a link to open the 4Spot in the recipient's computer's browser.

**TOURNAMENT COORDINATOR/D4 STaC COORDINATOR**  
**STaC COORDINATOR REPORT**

Attendance at our regularly-scheduled STaCs is running at 30-40% of pre-pandemic levels (see attached spreadsheet). Net income to the District, and therefore to the Units, is running at or below 30% of earlier levels. This shortfall is due not only to the decrease in table count, but also to the fact that ACBL raised the sanction fees 25-27 cents per table in April, 2020. The shortfall was slightly mitigated by the fact that we ran two Royal STaCs in addition to the 4 regularly-scheduled STaCs. Currently, we plan to keep table fees and District percent of revenue as they are. If attendance continues at this decreased level, I will work with Pat Civale and Jeanne Gehret to prepare a list of possible actions to the Board next year.

**TOURNAMENT COORDINATOR REPORT**

2022 saw a large number of tournaments cancelled, primarily during the first half of the year. Most Units have already scheduled their sectionals for 2023; I expect the GNTs and NAPs to be added to the calendar soon. Calendar will then be pretty full, so please get any additional sanction requests in soon.

There was some discussion of the STaC coinciding on a week of upgraded club championship games offered to clubs by the ACBL.

**CHARITY**

Lois Fuini did not attend and had no report

Jeanne Gehret acknowledged the great fundraising done by Mary Miller's Club in Canandaigua, NY, which raised over \$10,000 last June, 25<sup>th</sup> highest in the ACBL.

Bridget Whitley was present to address the Board about promoting more club participation in the Longest Day Alzheimer's Association Fundraiser.

Bridget pointed out that November is Alzheimer's Awareness month. To date, the ACBL has raised over \$6.2M for research which has produced a promising new treatment which is undergoing clinical trials.

A club registers to participate at [acl.org/acbl](http://acl.org/acbl). Bridget encourages clubs to raise money from associated events like silent auctions and raffles using donated unwanted gifts as prizes.

**FINANCE**

Bob Marsh was not in attendance and had no report.

**NAP/GNT**

Susan Morse read Bharat Rao's report since Bharat was unable to attend the meeting..

## NAP

District 4 held our NAP Finals face-to-face after 3 years, and viewed from a pandemic lens, we had a decent turnout.

- Flight A: 19 pairs, Oct 22, 10 pairs Oct 23 at North Wales
- Flight B: 33 pairs, Oct 8 (21 at North Wales, 12 at Canandaigua)
- Flight C: 52 pairs, Oct 23 across 4 sites (played as a STaC).

Card fees for A & B were \$60/pair/day. Flight C pairs were charged from \$48/pair (Rochester & Elmira, NY), \$60/pair (King of Prussia), with Unit 168 generously subsidizing Flight C players (\$10/pair).

As a first time NAP Director, I needed a lot of help, and got it. Thanks to Dave Dodgson, Pat Andrews and Mary Miller who stepped up to host the A's and B's, Bruce Toder, Pat Stadelmaier, Mark Cohen and Bob Priest for hosting the C's, and Jim Patton, D4 Communications Director, who helped spread the word, and sliced the District membership in every way possible, as we sent out targeted emails. Kudos to the ACBL who responded promptly and proactively to address "bugs" in their processes, when the D4 qualifier lists were not completely accurate, and to our own Rob Maier, Tournament Director extraordinaire. And other District and Unit leaders too numerous to name.

I must especially thank two people without whom this task would have been impossible. The previous D4 NAP Coordinator, John Dickenson, generously provided all previous documents, and was always ready to answer a question or connect me with the right person at the ACBL. And Jeanne Gehret, D4 President, is a tireless worker who patiently considered every scheme we came up with to try to increase participation and provided consistently great and timely feedback.

The NAP Flight C Finals played as a STaC proved quite popular. 52 C pairs was a great return thanks to the club managers' efforts. Next year, I'd like to challenge us all to get the word out earlier and more often, and with everyone's help, we can try to get to **100 pairs for Flight C**.

One thing that would be of great help – can the Unit Presidents help us get a list of all the clubs in their Units that host NAP Qualifying games (either face-to-face and online) and send us monthly updates that we can post on the D4 website. This could help increase participation.

Pre-registration at Bridge Winners was also very helpful and helped alert us to poor registration numbers early and target our efforts. Recommend we continue this practice.

### Upcoming GNT Finals:

We sent out emails to D4 players who played in past D4 GNT Finals to get their feedback regarding online versus face-to-face (overwhelmingly favored online) and ask for feedback on convenient dates – this led us to avoid dates that clashed with NFL playoffs, leaving Feb 4/5, Mar 4/5, and Mar 25/26 weekends for the GNT events (May 20/21 was deemed to be too close to Jul 13, Summer NABC). The plan is to use all 3 weekends for

the online D4 GNT Finals and double up the Championship and Flight C Finals on the same weekend. All finals will continue to be 2-day events. The fees will change from \$60/team/day to \$15/player/day, and full-time students will continue to play for free.

Please provide ideas to increase participation including encouraging players to “play up” (e.g., providing discounts for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> event a player participates in, or creating a partnership desk to help put together teams). We plan to provide fliers for clubs to inform their members once the dates are finalized.

A request: If you know of people who are somewhat tech savvy (email, Excel), and are willing to contribute a few hours/month to help, please ask them to contact me (Bharat Rao [d4.napgnt@gmail.com](mailto:d4.napgnt@gmail.com)).

### **EDUCATION**

Mary Miller announced that she has asked Jeanne to find a replacement Education Chairperson as she does not have the time to devote to the job.

Mary reported that she is keeping the teacher list current. She would like to request that the District continue to reimburse D4 members for teacher accreditation courses at future NABC’s as we did for the Providence NABC.

The Board approved a motion to continue to reimburse D4 teachers for the fee to obtain accreditation, such as we did for the Providence NABC.

### **INTERMEDIATE/NEWCOMER**

Betsy Cutler indicated that the Allentown I/N Regional may change to a Sectional I/N tournament.

### **TOURNAMENT**

Jeanne Gehret is the Acting Chairperson. Jeanne noted that on an ACBL-wide basis, Regionals were running about 50% and Sectionals 60-70% of pre-COVID attendance.

### **TOURNAMENT REPORTS:**

- Valley Forge**  
(6/27 – 7/3/22)  
(6/26 – 7/2/23) - Meyer reported that the 2022 Regional made a nominal profit. The profit was due to Meyer securing a \$4,000 subsidy from the Valley Forge Convention Bureau proving once again that he is a veritable “Chick Magnet”. There are rumors circulating about what Meyer had to do to get the grant. But the minutes never report on rumors. Mark Cohen & Betsy Cutler will co-chair the 2023 tournament which will return to the Doubletree (now Alloy) Hotel. The hotel has undergone renovation including an elevator to reach the lower level playing space.
- Lancaster**  
(10/31 – 11/6/22)  
(10/30 – 11/5/23) - Jeanne reported that the Spooky Nook Regional has about 850 tables so far which equates to 72% of pre-COVID attendance. Gold Rush is at 70%. Notably, a number of players made LM. Jeanne will look to have the food service at break improved.

**Rochester** (8/7 – 8/11/23) - Betty Youmans reported that the food service cost at the casino in Waterloo now rules out that site. The best option is now the Rochester Jewish Community Center, suggested by Jerry Manioci, which has a hotel 6 minutes away offering a 20% discount. The tournament will run from Monday-Friday. Betty noted that players in the Syracuse area are only slowly returning to F2F play. Phil Geibel will co-chair the Regional.

**Wilkes-Barre** - Meyer would like to see the Regional come back. Walt Mitchell, W-B Regional Chairperson, would like to see the Regional come back. Jeanne said that she would form an ad hoc committee to evaluate the various Regional playing sites and make a recommendation to the Board. After the meeting, Bill Bauer volunteered to put together a history of District 4 Regional playing sites from 2007 to 2023. Look for it shortly.

**Delaware** (5/1 – 5/5/23) - Kim Holm & Caroline Hughes were not in attendance. On their behalf, Bill Herdle reported on the Rehoboth “Bridges at the Beach” Regional. Bill reported that preparations are proceeding smoothly including adding playing space should the tournament grow as expected. The same venue and hotel, used very successfully last year, have been secured again. This tournament will occur before the busy beach season begins, so the hotel rate is acceptably low and is already available for those making plans early.

**Allentown (U133) I/N** (12/14 – 12/16/23) - Betsy Cutler arranged to hold the event at the Active Life Active Life facility. As Betsy reported under her I/N Committee report, the Tournament may change to an I/N Sectional.

**Harrisburg I/N** - Carl Fahnestock read Bob Priest’s recommendation. The proposal is for the event to be held at the Harrisburg Bridge Club from Nov. 22-24, 2024. Meyer commented that he does not like to see a Regional tournament held at non-hotel sites. By a show of hands, no one else shared Meyer’s opinion that a hotel site be a requirement, even if some members prefer hotel venues. There is a hotel ½ mile away. Bob Glasson noted that hotel space is expensive. Jeanne commented that there is uncertainty about how many will attend.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Jeanne reported that Philadelphia will host the Summer NABC in 2025 at the Marriott. Joann supplied the dates: July 24 – August 3. Betsy Cutler, John Dickenson and Mark Cohen will co-chair the NABC.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT & ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Meyer, as Immediate PP, chairs the Committee. He reported that he obtained the consent of Jeanne, Betsy & Pat to serve out the third year of their three year terms. Meyer had to use his incredible persuasive skills to obtain each officer's willingness to serve.

### **REMARKS & APPOINTMENTS BY INCOMING PRESIDENT**

Jeanne nominated Bill Bauer to be Secretary. The Board concurred. Jeanne next nominated Mary Miller and Bob Glasson to serve on the Board. They were unanimously approved by the Board. Jeanne then appointed Mary & Bob to the Executive Committee along with John Dickenson representing the ACBL Advisory Council.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The Board will next meet Friday evening, June 30, 2023 at 7:00 PM which is the Friday of the Valley Forge Regional at the Alloy Hotel (former Doubletree Hotel).

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Respectively submitted by: William L. Bauer III  
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