CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

President Betsy Cutler

Voting Member Attendees:

At-Large: Betsy Cutler (President), Ala Hamilton-Day (Vice-President), Jeanne Gehret (Immediate Pat President), Bob Glasson (Presidential Appointee), Mary Miller (Presidential Appointee) (5 of 5).

Unit 112 Jim Patton, Elizabeth Patton, Lynn Ackerman, Tom Andrews (4 of 5).

Unit 120: Ellen Preece (Unit Vice President) (1 of 2).

Unit 121: William Buskirk (Unit President) (1 of 2).

Unit 133: Lee Stanley, Betty Abrams (2 of 2).

Unit 141: John Dickenson (Unit President), Jay Apfelbaum, April Apfelbaum, Elaine Weintraub, Cathy Strauss, Joann Glasson, Helen Lebowitz-Hoyer, Pat Civale, Ken Chatzinoff (9 of 10)

Unit 168: Bridget Whitely, Dennis Shaub, Bill Even, Ron Orr, Carl Fahnestock (5 of 5).

Unit 190: (0 of 3).

Unit 217: Jim McKeown (Unit President) (1 of 2)

Also Present: Joann Glasson, Region 3 Director

Bill Bauer, D4 Board Secretary Lou Glasthal, NAP/GNT Coordinator Linda O'Malley, I/N Chairperson

Excused: Betty Youmans, U112 President

CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Betsy Cutler

Betsy called the meeting to order early at 6:40 PM as all were present or accounted for. Betsy called on the Secretary to introduce 1st time attendees as follows:

Unit 112: Elizabeth Patton & Tom Andrews

Unit 120: Ellen Preece (Vice-President)

Unit 121: William Buskirk (President)

Unit 133: Lee Stanley

Unit 141: Helen Lebowitz-Hoyer

Unit 168: Dennis Shaub & Bill Even

REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Joann Glasson

Joann informed the Board of changes coming to the ACBL Tournament Deppartment staff. Details will be forthcoming. Joann then accepted questions. The new 5/5/5 Plan to share member dues payments with units is potentially beneficial to units. John Dickenson said U141 got 12.5% of the 15% possible.

SECRETARY'S REPORT/

Bill Bauer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 20, 2024 (Zoom Meeting)

Bill reported that a quorum was present: 7 of 8 units represented and 28 of 36 voting Board members present.

A motion to approve the 2024 Valley Forge minutes was unanimously adopted.

The membership by Unit as of October 1, 2022, 2023 and 2024 per the ACBL was:

			<u>2023-2024</u>			
<u>UNIT</u>	10/2022	10/2023	10/2024	CHANGE	<u>%</u>	2025 REPS
112	959	928	868	-60	-6.5	4
120	186	181	161	-20	-11.0	2
121	122	111	91	-20	-18.0	2
133	231	221	226	5	2.3	2
141	2,343	2,316	2,268	-48	-2.1	10
168	775	744	761	17	2.3	4
190	503	480	472	- 8	-1.7	3
217	_81	82	80	- 2	<u>-2.4</u>	_2
						<u></u>
TOTALS	5,200	5,063	4,927	-136	-2.7	29

Unit 112 lost a representative; the other units remained unchanged for 2025.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Patricia Civale

See attachment

Pat added that cashless tournaments made the Treasurer's job easier.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Betsy Cutler

The district has had a good year of regional tournaments with attendance mostly up and most of them made our goal of making at least a profit. Despite making only a small profit, the Finger Lakes Regional needs to continue running since it serves an underrepresented area of our district. I truly believe that the timing this year with the conflict of the Toronto NABC being so close the attendance was affected negatively. We should be proud of our regional tournaments – they provide great bridge and give everyone a nice lunch included in the entry fee.

The monthly online games are not performing as well as I had hoped. I think we finally have a hack in place that will actually keep non D4 members out of the game but the damage may already be done. I think it would be nice to continue these games next year but with a few revisions including none in the months with a district 4 regional, only offer games paying silver, red or gold points and maybe start at 6:30 instead of 7.

All unit Presidents have been asked for nominations for the ABCL Goodwill Committee and the ACBL Charity Recognition. The district may nominate 2 members for each award. Nominations are due to me by November 10 – they should include specifics on each potential nominee's accomplishments.

Thanks to all committee and tournament chairs for all of their hard work this year – we really have some amazing people on the board. I am hoping that all of them plan to stay in place for the next year.

As we move into 2025, we will all be busy with the summer Philadelphia NABC. I hope all of you will answer the call when asked to volunteer for this event. Our reputation for an amazing NABC is on the line and I know you all will keep that stellar status afloat.

Betsy expressed her appreciation for your comments and help during her first term as President.

RATIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE COMM. ACTIONS Betsy Cutler

No Executive Committee actions have occurred since the Valley Forge Board meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

PUBLICITY Jeanne Gehret

The publicity team of Susan Morse, Jim Patton, and Bill Herdle work closely with their constituents to create quality communication pieces that are delivered via the District 4 member e-mail list. In the case of Regionals, we also continue to utilize the ACBL "pay for" service, Pianola, that can reach ACBL members beyond our District borders. Utilizing a mix of Pianola, Constant Contact, and Fast Results email platforms provides varied and substantial coverage of the bridge playing community during the months/weeks leading up to a Regional.

DISTRICT 4SPOT Susan Morse

The 4Spot continues to be happy and healthy. Thanks to all the contributors who submit well before the deadline - this really helps!

TOURNAMENT COORDINATOR

Elaine Weintraub

Since the last Board meeting, we've done a lot of shuffling of dates for some of our regionals. Because Philadelphia is hosting the 2025 summer NABC, there will be no Philadelphia Regional next year, but the Rochester Regional will be held in June instead of the usual August slot. In 2026, the entire Philadelphia area will be overrun by tourists because the city will be celebrating the 250th birthday of our country, as well as hosting the FIFA World Cup soccer games in June; hotel rates for June/July have already skyrocketed, so the Philadelphia Regional was forced to move to August instead of the usual late June week. This caused the Rochester Regional to forgo it's traditional August date again and was rescheduled for June 2026.

The schedule for weekend sectionals in 2025 is quite full, and most Units have already obtained sanctions for their 2025 sectionals. However, the shuffling of regionals has opened up two weekends in late June that are usually not available, in case any Unit still needs to find a tournament date. Each Unit is permitted to have 4 open sectionals a year.

Elaine emphasized that finding calendar space is becoming increasingly difficult. She urged Sectional tournament Chairs to make their tournaments attractive so as not to lose attendees to units in other Districts.

D4 STaC COORDINATOR

Elaine Weintraub

Attendance at each of our quarterly STaCs has continued to show modest increases over the corresponding StaC from the previous year. I hope this upward trend is an indication that club attendance, in general, is increasing.

Per the Board's decision in June, we have managed to schedule two joint STaCs with D6 in 2025; this required more shuffling of schedules to find two weeks that worked for both Districts, but we succeeded in agreeing on a week in July and a week in November. One of these will be a Royal StaC, the other a regular StaC. After both are completed, I will do a comparison of size and number of awards to players for the joint STaCs compared to our stand-alone STaCs, so the Board can decide whether to continue holding joint STaCs.

Elaine added that we will have two joint StaC's with D6 in 2025.

CHARITY Lois Fuini

No report

FINANCE Ala Hamilton-Day

I have reviewed the tourney reports for Lancaster from 10/31/22 - 11/6/22 and from 10/30/23 - 11/5/23, the tourney reports for the Finger Lakes Regional from 8/7/23 - 8/12/23 and from 8/5/24 - 8/10/24, and the Valley Forge tournament reports from 6/27/22 - 7/3/22, from 6/26/23 - 7/2/23 and from 6/24/24 - 6/30/24. I have reviewed the Short Form Tax Return from 2023, as well as Income Detail from June 2023 to May of 2024. Pat Civale will be sending me the Tourney reports for Rehoboth Beach. We are planning on meeting on 10/23/24 at her house, so that I can review the bank account statements and other financial records. From my review, the Treasurer is doing an excellent job and the records appear to be in order.

I forgot to add that in learning what the duties are of the Finance Chair, I reviewed the minutes for the last 17 District 4 Board meetings from 11/1/14 to 6/20/24. in those 17 Minutes, there was only one report of the Finance Chair. On 7/1/16, David Kresge said that he had received all the tournament reports and that there was a program by Jay Whipple which was supposed to increase attendance. That's it. Not a lot of guidance.

Ala added that she went to Pat's home on Oct. 23 to review financial records.

NAP Louis Glasthal

NAPs concluded on October 6 with a slight increase in attendance over last year (73 tables vs. 69.5).

Starting in 2025, the NAP will be expanded to 4 flights to mirror the current structure of the GNT. Masterpoint limits for the flights will be consistent, and redefined as follows:

Open – No limit

A – Under 6000

B – Under 3000

C – Non-LM under 750

One of the goals of this restructuring is to open Flight C to a greater number of players while continuing to exclude Life Masters (so that newer players are not intimidated away from participating).

In recent years, the Flight B NAP was held at exactly 3 locations around the District, while Flight C was held at any clubs willing to hold a game that could provide at least 5 tables. I am not familiar with the history of this arrangement and would appreciate some guidance from the Board as to its preferred structure under the new 4-flight arrangement. It has also been suggested that the Open Flight be played as a 4-session playthrough event instead of a qualifying/final, to increase revenue and ensure that the field is not reduced to a number so small that random results distort the matchpoint totals. Discussion of this proposal would also be welcome.

Sept 13-14 and October 4-5 have been set aside for the 2025 NAPs. Thanks to Elaine Weintraub for working proactively to ensure that dates are available for both the GNT and NAP into 2026.

Lou requested guidance on the structure of the new 4-flight NAP. Various aspects were discussed. Betsy requested that Lou and his Committee members -- Richard Popper, Bob Priest, Jay Apfelbaum and Bob Glasson prepare a plan to be reviewed and approved by the Board at a Zoom meeting in the Spring. Issues such as number of sessions, play through or not, which flights to hold on the same day, how many and where to play each flight. Should the NAP "piggy-back" on a Sectional particularly for a 4-session event with qualification?

GNT Louis Glasthal

The 2025 GNTs have been scheduled for Mar 1-2 (Flights A and C) and Mar 8-9 (Open and Flight B). Conditions of Contest have been approved and are available on the ACBL website (or can be obtained from Lou Glasthal). At least one club within the District has been holding GNT "qualifying games" (so-called even though they are not required for qualification) in order to increase visibility for the event and raise additional revenue. Other clubs are highly encouraged to do the same. Locations for the District finals have not yet been determined. I am hoping to work with our I/N Chair to find ways of increasing awareness and participation in this event among newer players.

EDUCATION Mike Kohler

The Education Committee now has 6 members, one each from units 112, 121, 133, 141, 168 and 190. Input was received from all members regarding local, successful teaching experiences. A meeting is planned at Spooky Nook on Wednesday evening, October 30 at 7:30 PM, to share these experiences.

Mike met with Committee members Mary Miller & Dennis Shaub this past Tuesday evening. A new club has been formed at Lehigh University with faculty member. Lee Stanley, facilitating the formation.

INTERMEDIATE/NEWCOMER

Linda O'Malley

Emails were sent out to the different unit representatives. The compilation of the feedback is as follows:

Tournament feedback:

- The sectionals have been well-attended and well-received
- At the June Regional, a free 0-20 game was offered and had a large turnout and several returned to play in the 199er game
- Some tournaments offer (or plan to add) an educational session for newer players
- Players appreciated a longer time-frame for each round

Successful programming at different clubs targeting I/N:

- Beginner lessons at least twice a year
- Shuffle and deal opportunities with a mentor (both in-person and online)
- Duplicate games that ease new players into playing
 - o 0-50 section within a larger game
 - o 0-500 or 0-1500 games
 - Duplicate game combined with a learning opportunity (discussion of the boards)
- Regularly scheduled mini-lessons
- Organized opportunities to play with more experienced players

Takeaways:

• Communication

- Welcoming new players to the area
- Reaching out to the I/N audiences to give information about the playing/learning opportunities
- Utilizing surveys both for improvement and to make people feel heard

• Positive experiences

- Variety of learning opportunities
- Limited games both at the club level and at sectionals and regionals

Moving forward

• Several units have no opportunities for the I/N group. Should this be a focus in the future?

TOURNAMENT Jeanne Gehret

New to the TC role this year were Rex Saffer, John Dickenson, and Harold Jordan. Each brings unique talents and ideas to the role... Welcome Rex, John, and Harold.

Board approved guidelines were in play for 2024 - those being tournament-determined entry fees (up to \$25), and a profit target for tournaments. Entry fees ranged from \$22 to \$25. There has been some... but minimal... push back about the increased entry fees.

Food pricing and Director costs (as expected) have significant impact on a tournament's bottom line. Attendance is also a factor with comparisons to 2023 being up, flat, or down. Predicting actual attendance requires more than a little luck, and there are presently no ACBL tools that can help us there.

Overall Regional profitability is the best it's been post-pandemic. While our Regionals have higher entry fees than many, the inclusion of food in our session pricing is a huge draw. District 4 Regionals are sought out for their "bridge camp" feel (we play together, eat together, just plain have fun together!). As Regionals in many other areas are struggling, D4 Regionals are doing quite well by comparison.

Jeanne reminded us to value our tournament chairpersons.

TOURNAMAENT REPORTS:

The 2024 tournament took place 06/24 - 06/30 as scheduled. Here is a summary of the major points of interest:

- Attendance growth did not live up to expectations. In 2023 we returned to the Alloy Hotel, where our total F2F table count of 1064 represented a 17% increase over the 907 F2F tables in 2022 at the Valley Forge Casino. In addition, there were 34 online tables in 2023.
- We prepared budget forecasts for potential growth in 2024 of 5%, 10%, and 15%. These predicted modest to sizeable profit margins on a table fee of \$23.
- Monday attendance was up 16% over 2023, but the rest of the week proved disappointing, especially on Sunday.

2023 Tables (F2F Mon– Sun)	Projected 2024 Tables (+15%)	Actual 2024 Tables	Daily %Δ Over 2023
140.5	161.5	163.0	16.0
200.5	230.5	201.0	0.2
186.0	214.0	193.5	4.0
178.0	204.5	171.5	-3.7

144.5	166.0	148.5	2.8
131.5	151.0	125.5	-4.6
84.0	96.5	62.0	-26.2

Total 2024 F2F attendance was 1065 tables, exactly the same as 2023. There were 33 online tables, one less than in 2023. So zero growth, with Sunday really disappointing. Still, we made a modest profit.

- We had a handful of reports of COVID mid—to late—week, no real surprise there, but on Sunday these were announced to arriving players outside the playing area and at the team entry sales point, and several teams turned around and left. This is a controversial issue; should these have been announced or suppressed? On the one hand, I am not aware of any ACBL COVID guidelines that make provision or requirement for announcing incidences of COVID. We would not do that if someone reported any other type of common viral infection. On the other hand, some players such as those with compromised immune systems no doubt would want this announced. We should have a serious discussion about this.
- Otherwise, the tournament was very successful in terms of player feedback on satisfaction. The Alloy is a great venue with wonderful, attentive staff. The lunches were among the best we have experienced at recent regionals. There were a few small glitches with things like water stations running momentarily dry and restroom supplies running out early in the week, but hotel staff promptly attended to replenishment and conducted more frequent monitoring later in the week.
- We did have two very satisfying successes with the reintroduction of a free Monday 0–20 game, at which we drew 12–1/2 tables! Several of these players went on to participate in 0–199er games later in the week, at which we drew 5–1/2 tables on Monday, 4 tables on Tuesday, 6 tables on Wednesday, and 7 tables on Friday.
- We will not be conducting the tournament in 2025 due to the Summer NABC in Philadelphia, but we have secured our 2026 sanction. We are unable to hold the tournament on our usual dates in the last week of June, 2026. The World Cup and FIFA will be in the region during that period, and hotel rates, even at group discounts, will be prohibitively expensive. We are grateful to have been able to trade tournament dates with Rochester, and we will hold our 2026 tournament the week of August 3–9.
- We are currently in negotiations with the Alloy hotel on our 2026 contract. The hotel significantly changed the structure and provisions of the contract, and we have been working with Bob Glasson to iron out a few problematic wrinkles. We hope to be able to report on progress towards a final contract by the time of the Lancaster regional. At the F2F Board meeting, John reported that the negotiations led to the signing of a contract for 2026.

The matter of COVID alerts by tournament officials was raised. At this point, it was felt that the bridge players were sufficiently aware of COVID risk factors and whether their own health situation warranted refraining from playing. We will follow any ACBL guidelines when any arise.

Lancaster (10/28 – 11/3/24) (10/27 - 11/2/25) Jeanne Gehret

Jeanne noted the new and improved lecture room. In past surveys food was ranked as good by 24%, subsequently increasing to 64%. Still not high enough, the facility brought in a new chef and a new manager and staff. A big improvement but at a higher cost. Attendance through Friday was up 3% with Monday down, Tuesday and Wednesday up and Friday down vs. 2023 attendance,

Rochester (8/5 - 8/11/24) **Betty Youmans** (6/9 - 6/14/25) (6/8 - 6/13/26)

The Finger Lakes Regional was held on August 7-11 (Monday -Friday) in person and on August 12 online. The event venue was the Rochester Jewish Community Center, the same location as the prior year. There were 401 face-to-face tables and 34 online tables, for a total of 435 tables. Overall attendance dropped 15% from 2023, proportionally split between the face-to-face and online games. One factor that could account for the drop in attendance was the proximity to the NABC that had concluded in Toronto a week before our tournament.

The tournament net was a profit of \$783 on a gross revenue of \$36,773 (2% of proceeds). This compared to a net of \$359 on a gross of \$40,775 the prior year. The District paid an additional \$617 for VIP free plays and hotel accommodations. Hospitality was our largest expense item. The venue changed its food vendor from the prior year; although the number of lunches served was less, there were added costs compared to the prior year.

The net was positively helped by raising the session cost from \$20 to \$22. Director expenses were reduced as only 3 directors were used compared to 4 directors in 2023.

Gold Rush Pairs (50% of the loss in table count) and Team games accounted for the table loss. An unexpected turn of events hurt the team games. Four strong teams from Toronto attended our regional and dominated the field early in the week. This resulted in other players opting not to participate in the team events. For the last 2 days, the Director in Charge divided the team games into A and X, but the damage had been done. Team tables were 70 fewer than last year with virtually all the drop in the last 3 days.

The post-tournament survey results gave comparable grades (compared to all Regionals and to District 4 Regionals) for most attributes except for the food. Due to costs, we opted for boxed lunches daily, compared to the buffets that the other vendor had supplied the year before. Food was the most mentioned item in suggestions for improvement.

Next year, the Finger Lakes Regional will be held on June 9-13 (face-to-face) and June 14 online. The date change (from August to June) is due to the upcoming NABC in Philadelphia next summer and to avoid conflict with Regionals in nearby districts. There is no hotel at the playing site, so we have been using a host hotel a few miles away. The hotel has already advised that the daily rate will be higher. We also anticipate higher hospitality costs to address the negative feedback for the boxed lunches. Raising the

session cost from \$20 to \$22 this year resulted in some consternation. Although our attendance is small, our players are happy with our venue and the friendliness of the event.

Wilkes-Barre (7/7 - 7/12/25)

Ellen Preece

Ellen Preece (Unit 120 Vice-President) reported that the Unit 120 Board has approved holding a W-B Regional. Dave Meyer has taken on the responsibility for planning the tournament. He is proposing to hold the Regional at the University of Scranton's Naples Center. Players could choose University dormitory housing (\$37/night) and a meal plan (breakfast & lunch for \$31/day). Lunch is on your own but there are fast food selections on site including Chick-Fil-A. Parking nearby and air conditioning in the dorm. This format was popular years ago and promoted as "You can't afford to stay home".

Betsy directed Ellen & Dave to work with Jeanne Gehret to come up with a budget which will help make sure that the tournament is viable. Approval consideration will follow likely by the D4 Executive Committee.

Note that the District is only allocated 4 regionals/year, but sine Valley Forge will not be held in 2025 due to the NABC, there is room.

Rehoboth Beach (4/28 - 5/2/25)

Kim Holm & Harold Jordan

The 2025 "Bridge at the Beach" Regional is scheduled for April 28-May 2, 2025. All information and details can be found on the ACBL website.

Harrisburg/Camp Hill I/N (11/22 - 11/24/24)

Bob Priest

Philadelphia Summer NABC (7/23 - 8/3/25)

John Dickenson & Ala Hamilton-Day

The logo has been finalized to the satisfaction of ACBL and the co-chairs.

A site visit to the Philadelphia Marriott and Convention center was made with ACBL representatives Montie Hamblen, Christina Goldsby, Chris Wiegand, John and Ala. We planned where the Registration Desk, Information/Prize Desk, Partnership will be sited.

Fundraising is going well. Rusty Krauss of Krauss Investment Group has pledged \$15K and will sponsor the entire tournament as well as name three days, he will also be given a double desk on the 4th floor and use of one of our suites for 2 evenings to entertain clients. Unit 190 was first unit to pledge to sponsor a day, and Unit 141 has also agreed to sponsor another day – each for \$2500. Susan Morse and John Dickenson will sponsor a side series in remembrance of Arnold Selig. Another party has expressed interest in sponsoring an event in remembrance of Carl Berenbaum. Total committed to date is over \$20K, and we are certain more sponsorships will be coming in. We are hoping the other Units will step up to the plate and sponsor some days or events. We will also be getting

funds from the online NABC fundraising games – Montie Hamblen says this has been averaging around \$14K per NABC.

We still do not have a discounted parking scheme in place. We plan to encourage local players to obtain a SEPTA senior pass for regional rail, as around 95% of our local players meet the age requirement. Jefferson Station is connected to the venue and we feel SEPTA will be a key modality for local players now that play has moved to 10 and 3.

The committee chairs are in place, see below. Susan Morse is giving us prime real estate in the monthly 4spot for publicity. A call for volunteers has gone out and our Volunteer Chair, Cathy Strauss is collecting names.

The next steps are to create a budget and decide on registration gifts and prizes. We can not offer the \$5 gift card for Reading Terminal Market that was immensely popular in 2018, as the minimum is now \$25.

John emphasized the importance of event sponsorships. They may be used as memorials or advertisements. A flyer promoting sponsorships is attached to these minutes.

Tournament co-chairs John Dickenson and Ala Hamilton-Day

Finance Pat Civale

Registration Mary Miller and Lynn Ackerman

Partnership Dan Boye

Restaurant Guide Ellen Berkowitz and Robbee Perlman

Publicity Susan Morse

Fundraising Mark Bolotin

Volunteers Cathy Strauss

Prizes Lisa Mita

I/N Program Brendan and Linda O'Malley

OLD BUSINESS Betsy Cutler

None

NEW BUSINESS Betsy Cutler

1. EDGAR – District and Unit officers received a notice today of reduced penalties on certain suspended players.

2. Mary Miller raised the question why U112 (New York) was denied a 5th Sectional. U112 used to hold as many as 9 sectionals as their geographic area is about equal to the rest of the District. A month after our meeting and after a lot of attendees weighed in on the matter, the Executive Committee approved the following wording: "U112 may have a 5th sectional in any given year with the understanding that it may fall on the same weekend as another District 4 sectional that is deemed far enough away to avoid conflict."

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT & ELECTION Jeanne Gehret OF OFFICERS

These officers will serve their 2nd (last) year of their 2-year terms:

President – Betsy Cutler Vice President – Ala Hamilton-Day

Treasurer – Pat Civale

Remarks & Appointments by Incoming President

Betsy Cutler

- 1. Betsy decided the D4 game would be once/month for the first 3 months of 2025, perhaps once/quarter thereafter if we're not getting good participation.
- 2. Betsy nominated Bill Bauer as Board Secretary to serve until the next election meeting. The nomination was confirmed by the Board.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FUTURE MEETING &

ADJOURNAMENT

Betsy Cutler

Betsy announced a Zoom meeting sometime in June.

Also, a special Zoom meeting in the Spring in order to approve a plan for the NAP District finals.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Submitted by: Bill Bauer D4 Secretary