

August 2010

Report of ACBL Board of Directors Meetings

New Orleans NABC, July 2010

So much has befallen upon New Orleans since the last time we were there, I was anxious to see the changes. Since I basically did not get out of the French Quarter, everything looked the same to me, structurally, including potholes in the sidewalks where I drove my scooter. All the well-known fabulous restaurants were still here and many new ones as well. What was missing was people and traffic. The only restaurant line ever was at the Acme Oyster Bar (I understand their oysters are best and reasonably priced). Also, the streets were clean – not littered with trash or garbage. I spent too much time going to meetings and playing bridge to do anything other than eat well and even then I missed some of my favorites.

The attendance turned out to be disappointing from the original estimates. Since we were also disappointed by the attendance in Reno, I think this may be a general trend and not indicative of any problems with a specific site. Certainly, it was not known in advance that the bathroom situation on the third floor was a terrible problem (one with 5 working stalls to service a 30,000 square foot ballroom). Add to that the temperature on this same floor was cold, colder and coldest. There were some areas worse than others and I had to wear a tablecloth on at least two different days. The other playing area on the second floor was fine.

As for the meetings everything went pretty well. The first thing that occurs is receiving the minutes of the Executive Committee if it has met since our last meeting. I mention it now because some significant decisions of interest were made:

1. The Spring 2016 NABC will be held at the Silver Legacy in Reno on March 10-20. This is a relatively new hotel in downtown Reno.
2. The Fall 2016 NABC will be held at the Swan & Dolphin in Orlando on November 24-December 4 for a rate of \$119.
3. The Fall 2 022 NABC will be held at the Swan & Dolphin in Orlando on November 24-December 4 for a rate of \$169.

I mentioned the Regional Allocation Committee in my last report and our many meetings. The phone conferences increased between meetings and we set a new record – 4 hours. For most of us it ended at 1:00 a.m., or it might have gone on longer. We did manage to put together a revised Regional scheduling and sanctioning section that has several major changes, and it passed the Board with only one nay vote. The significant changes are:

1. An annual Regional held at or near the same site that reaches 3,000 tables for the tournament three out of four consecutive years will not count against the District's base allocation.

2. One more category for increased membership was added – A District with 18,000 or more members is allowed four additional Regionals.
3. Membership qualifications for additional Regionals will be based on a calendar year's average of the four QUIP reports of 3/31, 6/30, 9/30, 12/31.
4. One Regional per year per District may be split. This is a change from two.
5. No District may be awarded more than nine Regionals in a calendar year.

We changed the name of the Goodwill Committee to the Aileen Osofsky ACBL Goodwill Committee.

We also honored Richard Freeman by naming the Mixed Teams the Richard Freeman Mixed Board-A-Match Teams. The Chicago Trophy, now awarded to the winners, will be retired and replaced by a new trophy.

A new event will be added to the calendar next year at the Fall NABC. It is the Senior Mixed Pairs. There will be a two-session qualifying day followed by a two-session finals. The award for first place will be 80 platinum points. It will be on Wednesday and Thursday opposite the second and third day of the Blue Ribbon Pairs.

One of the biggest controversies that we have had for the last few months, a subject of numerous emails as well as part of our committee meetings, is Regionals at Sea. (At Sea means held on a cruise ship.) Innocently, we tried to assign the responsibility to ACBL Management. This seemed reasonable since they have total responsibility for all Sectionals at Sea. Other things were brought up, and now the motion has been deferred to the Fall. A committee is being appointed to work on resolving some of these issues, and then report in Orlando. In addition, the Board declared a moratorium on future sanction requests for Regionals at Sea. It is perfectly reasonable to get it right before passing a motion, but declaring a moratorium, even temporarily, seems a bit much. However, the really outrageous thing the Board did was pass an "emergency" motion to double the sanction fees of the Regionals and Sectionals at Sea that are already on the books. What is next? Assess the Mid-Atlantic because their bank account is too high and their entry fees are too low?

The Slow Play Committee prepared new Appendices for all of the NABC+ Knockout Events. We had to defer passage until the Fall because the Laws Commission wished to review and discuss whether or not they were legal. The Commission does not meet until after the Board meetings. They subsequently told us they couldn't find anything illegal. In the meantime the directors are working on slow play in the general conditions of contest. (I am on this committee, but the directors on it do all the work of writing conditions)

Now for the bad news. Approval was given to the Philadelphia hosts to have starting times of 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. for the Summer 2012 NABC. The request was made to accommodate their commuters, and they will probably attend in better numbers. However, those of us from out-of-town, especially attendees in Atlanta when they tried this “experiment,” may stay away in even larger numbers. Some of the biggest complaints then was that not enough time was given between the main two sessions. It was a battle to fight the crowds going a very short distance to a large food court, line up, try to eat, and get back in time. That was without having to get on an elevator or escalator, which won’t be true in Philadelphia. I note the times are the same, and the distance to travel is slightly further. I think Management decided that most of the “extras” – meetings, seminars, and classes would not be held, and those that are required like Board of Governors would be at night. If there is no quorum, so be it.

The 0-5000 Blue Ribbon Pairs is now a midchart event as is the 0-5000 Mini-Spingold Flight. The 0-1500 Mini-Spingold Flight remains a General Chart event, but the restriction that the event will last no longer than five days has been rescinded.

It seems that when we recently allowed legal club games to be just a minimum of 12 boards, we “forgot” to indicate that these short games were excepted from StaCs and certain other games. We took care of the problem by stating that, “in order to be eligible for overall awards in a StaC or any event that is scored across more than one club, the minimum number of boards played is set at 20.”

Unless instructed otherwise by a tournament director, a member of each side must be present and seated before cards are removed from a board.

The North American Pairs Flight B & C finals (at the National level) will be a four-session event, with between 52 and 78 pairs competing in two sessions qualifying approximately 50% of the original entry to a two-session play-through final.

Finally, I want to publicly thank everyone who had a hand in the celebration honoring my 18 years of service as District 6 Director. The party was held after the Friday evening session at the Regional in Bethesda. I never could get a straight answer on whose idea it was (I do have some suspicions) and always got the reply “they” want to give you a party. I do know special thanks go to my good friend Mari McColl, who was the M.C., Margot Hennings, who was in charge of several things but I could never find out exactly what, Bill Cole our District 6 President, Eldon Clayman, President of the MABC, and Rich DeMartino, President of the ACBL. And then there is Ed Chow. He happened to call me a few days before the event and I invited him to come to the party just to see us since I knew he did not have time to come and play. The next thing I know, there he is with a State of Maryland Governor’s Citation made out and properly signed for me.

As long as I am thanking people, I would be remiss if I didn’t mention two groups of people who help me out at the Regionals and Sectionals. One group are those who help with food either by coming to my house to help cook in advance or helping at

the site like cutting something (vegetables, cake, bagels), arranging or stirring – whatever needs to be done. The other group are those who tote and carry. This also includes two hour shopping trips to Costco and other grocery stores. I am not naming names because I know I would forget someone, and I don't want to do that. In my younger days, I could do it all myself, but I can't anymore. I appreciate all of you.

Thank you everyone.