

December 2010

Report of ACBL Board of Directors Meetings

Orlando NABC, November 2010

This is my last report as your District Director. Orlando was my last official meeting and my term of office was over December 31, 2010. Margot Hennings was elected to fill my position representing our District beginning January 1. When I was first elected over 18 years ago, it just so happened that the fall meeting, before I officially took office, was in Orlando. I was there the whole time of the meetings because a friend and I wanted to get our fill of Disney before the tournament started. I was not invited to any meetings or social events or even the President's suite and would have been barred from entering had I tried to do so. Now, I am proud to say Margot, and all new Board members, are not only welcomed and invited to everything, they get their hotel room and travel expenses, plus per diem, paid for.

This trip to Orlando I did go a day early to get at least one Disney day in. It seems that a large number of players "forgot" to go early and took the first two or three days of the tournament off to do the fun parks. The attendance started out way below projections, but then grew to what was expected. The free orange juice and coffee provided throughout the tournament, a tradition at Florida tournaments, was a big hit, as well as their other hospitality. People were even dancing!

The meetings went well. After a year of arguing over Regionals at Sea, the special committee appointed to resolve the issues (I was a member) put forth its motion. It was accepted with only one negative vote. The highlights are:

1. Only ACBL may sponsor Regionals at Sea (RAS).
2. Beginning in 2012 up to three RAS may be sponsored, each departing from a different geographic area.
3. RAS are limited to a maximum of 21 bridge "tournament" sessions red/gold points per cruise which will pay 80% of land-based Regional point awards.
4. ACBL may hire an independent operator on a fixed fee or fee per player basis and an approved tournament chairman.

This committee also submitted a motion on Sectionals at Sea which the ACBL has been managing for a couple of years. In essence it is what they have developed and are doing currently with a little tweaking from the committee. It also passed the Board.

Another special committee that was appointed was Succession Planning. We have had a lot of turnover in CEO's, but we have never had a plan in place. We now do and it is relevant because Jay Baum plans to retire in June of 2012. Part of the plan includes appointing a CEO Search Committee, probably early next year.

If anyone keeps a calendar of upcoming NABCs, you might notice there are some holes in 2015 and 2016. They have now been filled. Of particular interest to District 6 was the awarding of the Summer 2016 to Washington, D. C. It will be held on July 21-31 at the Marriott Wardman Park. No guarantee that the name of the hotel will remain the same – all NABCs held in Washington DC since 1960 have been held at this property, but there have been several different names – but there is a guarantee that the parking will be capped at \$28 or 25% off the 2016 rate, whichever is lower. In the Spring of 2015, March 12-22, we will be back at the Marriott in New Orleans. The hotel room prices will be more than a summer rate, but it was felt that the nicer time of year was worth it. The Summer of 2015 will be held at the Hilton in Chicago, August 6-16. Yes, these dates were further into August than we would have liked, but we felt it was a relatively small price to pay to be able to have a tournament in Chicago at a reasonable hotel.

We also approved finalizing a contract for the 2018 Fall NABC in San Francisco at either the Hilton or Marriott hotels. At least the last three tournaments have been at the Marriott, however, the Hilton has been in contact with what may be a better offer. Our meeting planners went there recently and along with the local officials met with both hotels. The result is that we are going to the Marriott in the fall of 2019 with a good deal plus they have reduced the room price for 2012.

Another of my many committees this past year was the Slow Play Committee. This was a pretty easy committee because the three directors on it (Millard was one) did all the work of writing the new regulations, both general for all events and the Appendices for all of the NABC+ Knockout Events. This was passed and put into effect immediately. The biggest complaints I observed were from the slow players in the Reisinger.

One more condition of contest put into effect immediately (no complaints) was qualifying all ties for the last qualifying position of an NABC+ Swiss event. In the North American Swiss, I don't know if this resulted in an odd number of teams, but if so, one additional team was selected per the new rule.

We gave Invitational Clubs a little boost. Now if they participate in ACBL-wide games that have overall awards for open games, there will be overall awards for invitational clubs. These games include the charity and international fund games, the ACBL-wide Senior Pairs and Instant Matchpoint game.

Another struggle that was partially successful (we would have liked more) was on allowing Bridge Teachers in Schools to receive larger stipends. Currently the ACBL program gives the teachers \$350 per program – not including supplies. If they get anything from another source, ACBL will pay them nothing. The Junior committee and Bridge at Schools wanted this restriction lifted and Management did not. Management and the Board agreed to the following compromise:

No one will be denied the teacher stipend from the School Bridge Class program solely because he receives payment from another source; however, the amount he

receives from the School Bridge Class program when added to his compensation from other sources shall not exceed \$500.

Since this was the fall meeting, the budget for the following year was presented. For about the second time in my 18 years, I voted for it. When the nay vote was called for, they wanted to know why I wasn't raising my hand. The answer was simple. If there was something objectionable there – like increased entry fees or last year's 8% increase in director session fees instead of 4% – I couldn't find it. I was well-known for always voting against the budget, but I always had a reason.

There was a bylaw amendment that passed unanimously which now states that the President of the ACBL may **not** serve his term of office if he is not re-elected to the Board of Directors. The Chairman of the Board of Directors will be the immediate past President of the ACBL if he is the elected director from his district. If he is not, the most recent past President serving as an elected director will be the chairman. This must pass the Board again in the Spring and then go to the Board of Governors for approval.

There were some changes involving the World Bridge Federation. As you know, the World Championships last October in Philadelphia marked the end of the Presidency of Jos Damiani who chose to retire after 16 years at the helm. The new President, Gianarrigo Rona, proposed major changes in the meeting and expense structure of the WBF. Our Board of Directors at this meeting approved the initial proposals requested from us.

1. The administrative costs of the representatives attending the annual WBF Executive meeting (travel, accommodation, per diem) will be paid by the WBF.
2. The ACBL will host, when held in Zone 2 during an NABC, a WBF Management Committee or Officers Meeting. No more than one such meeting will be hosted per year.
3. ACBL will provide up to 50 room nights including one junior suite for up to five nights; light refreshments during the meeting; up to four lunches for ten people during the meetings; and appropriate meeting space for up to four days.

In addition, the Executive Committee met in August to approve appointments from our zone to the newly formed WBF High Level Players' Commission. Our "own" Beth Palmer was designated along with Nick Nickell and Eric Kokish for a three year term.

Before I finish, I do want to announce my last appointments to the Goodwill and Charity Committees. My Goodwill appointees are Tom and Melinda Dow from Newport News, VA; Peggy Ward, Richmond, VA; and Shawn Springer, Silver Spring, MD. The Charity committee appointees are James Summers of Silver Spring, MD and Katharine Feiock from Reisterstown, MD. Congratulations and thank you for all the work that you do for bridge.

At the end of each meeting, the Board member who has the most years of service closes the meeting and reads a statement thanking the District and its units, and naming the District Director, NABC Tournament Chairman or co-chairs and the hotel. It is a standard statement. At any rate, our oldest continuing member, George Retek, who will be starting his 34th year, has had this job for a long time. At the suggestion of our President and enthusiastically approved by

George, they asked me to close the meeting in honor of my years on the Board. I was touched. I don't remember this happening before.

I have certainly enjoyed my 18 years of service on the Board. In my reports I have tried to keep you informed, although admittedly giving you my opinions, especially when I think matters go "off-track." I am pleased that I am leaving you in Margot's very capable hands. And finally, thank you all for your years of support.