

Prelude to my report.....

Who knew that when I started writing this report shortly upon my return from Toronto, my staunchest supporter and most severe critic—Nadine Wood—would not be here to proof it before it went into print? I didn't get it finished before Tuesday, August 9, when Nadine passed away and have been struggling to complete it ever since—it all seems so trivial now. But she would have wanted everything to be reported just as she did so faithfully for the past 18 years, so I can't let her down. However, forgive me if I refer you to the Toronto Board minutes that will be posted on the ACBL website once they have been approved instead of detailing every motion. I have tried to highlight the important ones and promise to always keep you in the loop when what the Board does is likely to have a direct impact on *you*.

Administrative Note:

In addition to the body of this report, I have also included an attachment that details, according to the *Draft* Toronto Board Meeting Minutes, the changes recorded in specific motions concerning:

- The Code of Disciplinary Regulations
- President's Expenses
- Regional and Sectional Tournament Scheduling, Sanctioning, and Allocations
- Special Game at Sectionals
- Small Children and Pets in the Playing Area
- NABC+ Seeding and Subjective Seeding in the Spingold
- Conditions of Contest for Women's KOs, KO Teams, Swiss Teams, and GNTs

If anyone has a special interest in these topics, the attachment will give you what the Final Board Meeting Minutes (cleaned up for editorial changes) will contain when posted online. This just saves you having to go online and find them and search through them to find the detail you might want.

HOT TIMES IN TORONTO

Report from District 6 Director Margot Hennings

I thought I was getting away from the devastating July heat wave in D.C. only to find myself in Toronto on the hottest day of the decade! Temperatures significantly higher than "normal" continued for the full two weeks during the Board meetings and the tournament, and echoed the often heated debates among Board members on a number of issues. More on that in a bit, but, first.....

By far the most exciting news to come out of the first few days of meetings was the recommendation by the CEO Search Committee of a new CEO to replace Jay Baum who is retiring. The board unanimously approved the recommended replacement—Robert Hartman, currently Vice-President and General Manager of Golden Gate Fields, a

thoroughbred race track near Oakland, CA, will start with the ACBL on November 7. Jay Baum will continue in the role of Consultant through June 30 of 2012, and has been tasked to prepare several special reports for the ACBL—more on these after the Fall Meetings in Seattle.

Robert was the unanimous choice of the CEO Search Committee after receipt of over 80 applications, telephone interviews with approximately 50 potential candidates, and face-to-face four-hour-long interviews with the top 12 candidates. In his position as the Vice President and General Manger of Golden Gate Fields, Robert found that one of the toughest issues was finding ways to introduce a new generation of fans to the sport. He also knew that it was critical to retain its current customers. These same challenges are present in our bridge environment, and Robert hopes to use the same successful methods—accumulation of data through the conduct of research among frequent players, occasional players and non-users—to better understand each target audience and develop appropriate outreach programs. He believes the ACBL database, which already contains much of the needed data, can be an extremely powerful tool in furthering the organization's goals.

In addition to his formal activities with Golden Gate Fields, Robert is Chair of the Board of Directors, Visit Berkeley (www.visitberkeley.com) and Chair of the Board of Directors, California Race Track Marketing Committee (www.calracing.com). Robert is a Life Master and also currently serves on the three-member Board of Directors of Quicktricks, a non-profit bridge club in San Francisco. Over the past three years, the club has embarked on an ambitious and successful program based on offering the Easybridge lesson series to targeted groups of new players, and then transitioning those players to compete in the 299er game. His experiences with this club will prove invaluable as he moves forward with his marketing and education ideas for ACBL.

A Transition Team comprising Board Treasurer Bill Cook as Transition Team Chair and four major Committee Chairs (Governance—also chaired by Bill Cook, Finance, Marketing/Juniors, and Bridge) has been named and will begin working with Robert in early September. It will be an invigorating year as the new CEO puts his plans in place to Analyze, Communicate, Build, and Lead.

The second most exciting piece of news was the tournament itself, with attendance just missing the 14,000 table mark (keeping Washington's 2009 NABC of 14,115 tables as the first time Washington NABC attendance has surpassed that of Toronto) and pleasantly surprising the nay-sayers, myself included, who predicted attendance under 12,000 due to the weak American dollar, high air fares, and expensive accommodations and restaurants. So, I am pleased to say that I and so many others were wrong! There were many folks attending not only from Canada, but also from Michigan, Wisconsin, New York, and New England for whom it was a relatively easy drive and who very much appreciated the proximity of an NABC to their places of residence. Clearly, it is right to go north of the border for an NABC every eight – ten years or so (the last Toronto NABC was in Summer 2001, and prior to that in 1992). Also, since there are issues with the hotel in Vancouver where the previous NABC was held and Montreal is prohibitively expensive and too far north for any NABC except Summer, Toronto appears to be one of

the only possible locations. Despite the many challenges—and there were many and not all quickly or easily solved—of a two-site tournament, those who went enjoyed themselves and that, after all, is the purpose of holding an NABC.

A quick aside and not Board news, but I would be remiss in not congratulating the D6 GNT team of Steve Robinson, Peter Boyd, Bill Cole, Beth Palmer, Bill Pettis, and Steve Landen) for their second-place finish in the Championship Flight GNT competition. The finals were a hard-fought battle against the District 9 team, which boasts such star players as Jeff Meckstroth, Eric Rodwell and David Berkowitz.

OK, back to the Board meetings.....

Starting with NABCs, a subject near and dear to my heart: The NABC Advisory Committee (of which I am a member) met on the second day of four full days of meetings. No contracts for future NABCs were presented by management, but lots of issues and ideas were discussed. Although not as early as the Fall NABC in Seattle, plans are to have pre-duplicated boards for *all* national and regional level events by sometime next year, hopefully in time for the 75th anniversary of the ACBL, which will be celebrated in grand style at the Spring NABC, appropriately, in Memphis. Jeff Johnston, head of ACBL Operations, has also been tasked with figuring out the cost and logistics of introducing screens in NABC+ events at earlier stages than those when they are currently used. In addition to increased costs--which will be significant, not only for the manufacture of the tables that accommodate the screen inserts and the screens themselves but also for storage, transport, and set-up on-site—there are major logistical issues to consider including whether there is enough space at the venues already under contract for future NABCs to allow expanded use of screens. Given that entry fees even for regional events, are more expensive at an NABC than at a regional (especially an MABC regional! ☺), the ACBL Board considers service to the players at NABCs to be of primary importance. Those of you who attended the Summer NABC in Toronto or any recent NABC, please be sure to share your thoughts on how we can improve service for you when you are at NABCs.

Another item related to NABCs, of interest especially to those of us residing in District 6, is management's consideration of Baltimore as a potential site for a tournament in the Summer of 2018 or 2019. Believe it or not, almost all slots are already filled for the three annual NABCs until then, and one of those two summers is the first available. Summer 2017 is not yet booked, but since DC is contracted for Summer 2016, we want to wait a year before bringing a Summer NABC back to almost the same location. Bill Cole (D6 President), Jennifer Koonce (Maryland Bridge Association President), Pat Wilson (current regional and sectional MBA Tournament Chair), and I visited the Hilton and convention center in Baltimore in late June together with ACBL NABC planners Jeff Johnston and Wendy Sullivan. There would have to be at least one additional hotel designated as a "host" hotel for a Baltimore NABC and the new convention center adjoining the Hilton would also have to be used for many of the events. There are many, many considerations for an NABC, and holding a lot of events at a convention center is not optimal but is certainly being done (coming right up in Seattle, for example), and the

attached hotel was lovely and afforded magnificent views of Camden Yards, right into the stadium, from every hallway, meeting room and guest room on that side of the building. Jeff has promised serious negotiations with the hotel and convention center with proposed contract conditions for the Committee's consideration in advance of Seattle. Stay tuned!

As far as the Marketing/Juniors Committee is concerned: ACBL continues to make progress in marketing bridge to youth and to Baby Boomers, although there is still a ways to go in seeing measurable results. Some of the best news was that plans are in place to tap key non-Headquarters folks who have shown great skill in developing programs to entice new players into the game—Audrey Grant, a well-known and admired teacher from Toronto for Boomers; Patty Tucker from Atlanta for youth and juniors; and D6's Ron Kral, who developed and ran "Bridge University" at the 2002 and 2009 Washington, D.C. NABCs as part of the Newcomer/Intermediate Program. These are all hopeful signs that there will soon be lots of actions and not just words to move bridge to the forefront of selected, target groups of our population. Progress is also being made to gain insight into the monies raised through Junior Fund games and given by the ACBL to the United States Bridge Federation (USBF) to support our Junior teams in international competition.

A number of special committees have been in existence for the past months, looking at how masterpoints are allocated across all levels of events at sectional and regional tournaments and across clubs. Two committees--Masterpoints and Strength-of-Field (SoF)--presented detailed reports in advance of the tournament that were discussed at length during the Board meetings in Toronto. [Note: In the motions discussed below, the nomenclature used will be number of districts *in favor: against : abstentions, followed by a listing of the specific districts that voted against the motion when it passed and for the motion when it did not pass.*]

The first reading of modifications to the Masterpoints Chart was completed. The second reading will be at the fall NABC in Seattle. These modifications were to (I) NABC Championship events and to (II) the number of tables required in club games for full rating awards:

- (I) Open Pairs (no other event, four sessions) changed from 130 to 125.
- Red Ribbon Pairs changed from 70 to 60.
- Canadian Open Pairs Championships changed from 75 to 65.
- Women's KO Teams changed from 140 to 120.
- US Women's Bridge Championship changed from 140 to 120.
- Senior Team Trials changed from 50 to 120.
- Canadian Senior Teams Championships: Changed to 60 masterpoints, instead of being computed by the general formula.
- Super Senior Pairs: Changed to 50 masterpoints, instead of being computed by the general formula.
- Senior Mixed Pairs (new): An initial award of 60 masterpoints for Seattle, to be reviewed.

(II) The Reduction Factor for 18 board games is changed from 80% to 67%.

The minimum number of boards for a club game not restricted by masterpoints is changed from 18 to 20 boards (the tournament minimum is 21). Also, the Reduction Factor for club (& on-line) games not restricted by masterpoints of fewer than 20 boards will be 60%. Currently the minimum for club games receiving a full award is 18 boards and the reduction factor is 80%.

Motion carried. 22:3:0. Nay: 8, 19, 24.

The first reading of a “new” proposed concept for masterpoint awards called “Strength of Field” (SoF): This is by far the most complex and controversial concept that we discussed. First, let me give you the motion:

A Strength of Field (SOF) formula will be implemented for Regional and Sectional Pair and Swiss Team games. Implementation of the SOF formula will be subject to full board approval of detailed specifications to be delivered to the Board on or before November 1, 2011 meetings.

The Strength of Field committee will continue the development of an SOF award system. This system is to be implemented as early as January 1, 2012, subject to necessary changes being made to the current or new ACBLscore program.

The Strength of Field committee is directed to deliver a full set of specifications no later than November 1, 2011.

The first year after implementation, the Masterpoint committee may make adjustments to the formula if and when it becomes clear that the new formula is having an unintended effect. Such adjustments are approved by within this motion and do not require additional Board action.

Motion carried. 17:7:0. Nay: 7, 10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22. Absent: 9

Ok, so what’s the problem you ask? Not many of us understand the way our current MPs are calculated and therefore comparisons with any new, proposed formulae are even more difficult. Last year, the Board voted to establish a committee to review the method by which MPs are awarded based on the belief that there are some major problems in our formulae today.

The SoF Committee has described the issue as follows: *One of the main reasons these problems exist is that when the concept of stratified games was introduced many years ago, one of the underlying principles of these games is that the top bracket had to get the same level of award as previously. This was accomplished by allowing the top stratum to get credit for all the other games of the same type being held concurrently. Simply put, if there were an Open Pairs with 80 tables that paid 30 MPs, the concept was that the top stratum still had to pay around 30 MPs, even though lower flights (B/CD) were often in a separate game.*

*Unfortunately, instead of developing formulae to produce the desired results, rules which said that the top flight got credit for all tables were implemented. Over the years, this simple concept has evolved so that now events can receive credit for tables played at a different time. A 10:00 am game can count in the overall table count for a 1:00 pm game, or even worse, the games don't even have to be the same type; a Pair game can get credit for tables played in a Senior Swiss. Finally, many years ago, no one anticipated that a simple promotion like Gold Rush games could ever draw in excess of 60 or so tables. Giving a tiny Flight A game total credit for **all** the tables in the large, limited game beneath it cannot be what was intended.*

District 6 voting and non-voting members attended a special SoF meeting at the Hunt Valley Regional to discuss this concept and our D6 representatives to the Mid-Atlantic Bridge Conference (MABC) carried forward our district's thoughts to the MABC meeting at the Atlanta Regional. This is being written to meet a publication deadline prior to Atlanta, so I cannot report on the outcome at this time. However, I can say that all aspects of the proposed formulae are being reviewed thoroughly and that any perceived and actual "unintended consequences" of the good intentions of the revisions to masterpoint awards are being discussed. Rest assured that I will take the MABC concerns to the Fall Board meetings in Seattle together with D7 Director Bob Heller. If any of you have questions or comments that you would like to bring to my attention in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me at margot10bridge@cox.net.

As is standard procedure, many issues are discussed first in Committee and then brought forward to the full Board during the final two days. Although not an exhaustive list, I have included below by Committee those additional items I thought would be of most interest—as you can see from the votes I have included both above and below, the Board was generally in unanimous agreement or split almost down the middle with one or two votes often the margin of victory or defeat:

Regarding tournaments, codification revisions to the chapters on Regionals and Sectionals were made and accepted. Changes included scheduling and sanctioning of both sectionals and regionals, sectional allocations, and special games at sectionals. All of these motions carried unanimously. In addition, at the request of the local organizers, starting times for the "prime time events" for the Summer 2013 Atlanta NABC—those regionally and nationally rated events that normally start at 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.—are changed to 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. with screened events starting later for the second session. This was discussed at length and the *motion carried with six districts casting "nay" votes: 5, 12, 15, 17, 19, 21.* These are the same times the Summer 2012 Philadelphia NABC "prime time" events will be held, again at the request of the local organizers. Many factors are taken into consideration, with local club player habits, modes of available transportation, and perceived trends for earlier games throughout the country high on the list.

World Bridge Series Championship: The ACBL Board of Directors supports a World Bridge Series Championship in North America in 2018 and authorizes a \$100,000 payment, provided no title sponsor(s) pays \$300,000 or more, in support of the championship. Payments to be made as needed, but no sooner than January 1, 2018.
Motion carried 22:2:1

Goodwill and Charity: Members of the Board of Directors, the Chairman of the Board of Governors and ACBL Goodwill Members of the Year will automatically become a member of the ACBL Aileen Osofsky Goodwill Committee. Also, a task force was formed to develop strategies to raise the National Charity Committee to a similar level of recognition as the ACBL Aileen Osofsky Goodwill Committee.
All motions carried unanimously with the exception of the one concerning Charity, for which there were two “nay” votes from Districts 1 and 22.

Ace of Clubs Race: The name of the Ace of Clubs race will be changed to The Helen Shanbrom Ace of Clubs Race. The Ace Of Clubs Award goes to the player who wins the most masterpoints playing in clubs during a calendar year. There are awards for each of the ACBL masterpoint categories. Helen Shanbrom, who is in her eighties, has won her category (10,000 plus masterpoints), an unbelievable 19 times out of the past 22 years.
Approved by acclamation.

Appeals and Charges: The **ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR)** was amended by the addition of a section to allow ACBL management to impose an administrative suspension on a person who has caused damage to any facility associated with an ACBL tournament during the conduct of such tournament without adequate reason or justification and failed to make reasonable compensation therefor. In addition, the ACBL CDR was amended to include changes concerning “Direct Complaints” and “Recorder Complaints.” *These motions carried unanimously.* A motion allowing attorneys to be present during hearings *failed 13:12:0. Aye: 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 12, 13, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25.* For complete language of all these motions, please see minutes of the Toronto Board meetings posted on the ACBL website under “*Administration, ACBL Administration, Board Meeting, Minutes.*”

Bylaws and Governance: The ACBL Bylaws were amended concerning qualifications for ACBL President and Chairman of the Board; election term for ACBL Treasurer, and codification of minutes. Regulations were amended to update ACBL Presidential allowances for expenses in the performance of presidential duties (for example, current President Craig Robinson’s “100 Clubs in 100 Days” adventure, which is being extremely well-received across the country). *All motions presented were carried unanimously.*

Player Conduct / Misconduct at Clubs: Player conduct and/or misconduct occurring at any ACBL Club should be subject to actions by Units, Districts, or the ACBL to enforce any violations of the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations. This is applicable to any actions and/or conduct in violation of the Code.
Motion failed: 10:15:0. Aye: 2, 3, 4, 7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 22, 25.

Peter Pender Memorial Vugraph: When there is a Vugraph presentation at an NABC, the room of the presentation shall be called the Peter Pender Memorial Vugraph Theater. *Carried unanimously.*

Regarding Conditions of Contest, motions were passed concerning seeding and modifications to Conditions of Contest for NABC+ Knockout events (i.e., the Vanderbilt and the Spingold); a trial subjective seeding method for the 2011 Spingold in Toronto in addition to seeding using the changes of the motion mentioned just previously (in an attempt to more accurately seed the foreign players who come to our NABCs but do not have many ACBL masterpoints); modifications to the score correction and appeals periods allowed by the general Conditions of Contest for Knockout teams (basically, the score correction period for player and scorer errors will expire 30 minutes after the completion of the segment, at the start of play at either table of a playoff, or at the announced starting time of the next match, whichever is earlier, although when practical, the Director-In-Charge may make a score correction before the announced starting time of the next match in the interest of fairness/equity); changes in player scoring errors in Swiss team matches (no increase in score need be granted unless the Director's attention is called to the error prior to the announced starting time of the next match or thirty minutes after the completion of the match whichever is earlier); and restrictions on small children and pets ("working service dogs" and "emotional support animals") in the playing area based on guidelines used by airlines and Government regulations. *All of these motions carried unanimously.*

Regarding GNTs: There were a number of motions considered by the Board concerning the rules and regulations for the Grand National Teams. One motion to waive all entry fees for the NABC final GNT events *failed 12:13:0. Aye: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.* A second motion to change the upper limits of the 0-2000 and 0-5000 GNTs to allow for average rather than absolute numbers of masterpoint holdings by team members also *failed 6:15:0. Aye: 8, 9, 14, 16, 20, 21.* However, a motion to permit GNT District Finals on the Internet, complete with detailed Conditions of Contest, including security requirements, *carried unanimously*, effective immediately. In the one district where Internet GNT District Finals were allowed this past year on a trial basis, participation in the event doubled. District 18 covers Alberta, Saskatchewan, and the northern portion of Manitoba. Those of you in D6 who think it unfortunate that you have to drive 100-200 miles to compete in a GNT or NAP District Finals event can consider yourself lucky you don't live in D18 where drives of 800-1000 miles are often required! You can see where Internet Finals make a great deal of sense in locations such as that. The trial was very successful this past year and several other districts will be using the Internet in that way this year for their Finals. Conditions of Contest for this Internet event can be found in the full minutes for the Toronto meeting (see link given above under "Appeals and Charges") and will be included in their entirety in the full report I send out via email to anyone who requests it.

Changes to the Alert Chart: As suggested by the Conventions and Competitions Committee, the requirement to Alert a cheapest club bid response over a NT opener or overcall, regardless of response structure was eliminated. Rebids by notrump bidder

which are different from standard (such as “Puppet Stayman”) would still be Alertable. In addition, the definitions of natural openers were amended to include a 1♣ opener on specifically 4432 with 2 clubs and 4-4 in the majors. *This motion carried 22:1:2.*

Starting times for Vanderbilt and Spingold team events: Once the screens are implemented in the Vanderbilt and Spingold Knockout Teams, the starting times for the events will be 12:00 (noon) and 7:00 PM. This would not apply when the entire NABC starting times are scheduled to commence before noon (as in Philadelphia in 2012 and Atlanta in 2013). *Motion carried unanimously.*

In addition, oral reports (where issues are not covered in the motions I have summarized above) were given by the Committee Chairs for Finance, CEO Review, NABC Advisory, Internet Bridge, Ranking, and Technology. Oral and written reports were provided by the ACBL CEO and the League Counsel. Written reports were provided on status of Education and Intermediate/Newcomers.

I look forward to hearing YOUR ideas. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help you, your club, or your unit in any way. Margot10bridge@cox.net, or 703-560-0245.