

SUNNY IN SAN FRANCISCO
Report from District Director Margot Hennings

Special Awards:

The ACBL each year, based on nominations from its members, selects a national Goodwill Member of the Year, a national Honorary Member of the Year, and a national Volunteer of the Year. This year District 6—your district—is honored to count among its members two of this year’s four award recipients.

Please join me in congratulating **Joe Olivier** from Chesapeake, VA (Unit 146) for being selected as the **2013 ACBL Goodwill Member of the Year**. Dozens of nominations are received from throughout all of ACBL—the US, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda—by the National Goodwill Committee each year, and this year Joe stood out as the ACBL member who has exhibited unselfish dedication to the causes of good conduct, worthy participation and ethical behavior” in his local area. Joe will be honored at the upcoming Spring NABC in St. Louis—be sure to look in an upcoming issue of TableTALK to read more about Joe and the reasons for his successful nomination.

Following closely on the heels of this exciting news about Joe is the selection of **Millard Nachtwey** as one of two co-recipients of **this year’s national ACBL Honorary Member of the Year award**. Together with Audrey Grant, a nationally known teacher to whose introductory bridge classes aspiring players flock by the hundreds every year, Millard (whose activities in support of bridge are especially well-known in our district and were detailed in a special article in the recent October/November issue of TableTALK) embodies the characteristics that define an Honorary Member of the Year: A person who has given freely of time and ability, without thought of reward, in the interest and welfare of the ACBL as a whole.

Susan Kroning from Seaside, OR was selected as the Nadine Wood ACBL Volunteer of the Year.

Congratulations:

San Francisco proved once again to be a vibrant location for an NABC. Despite attendance falling just short of projections at 13,410 instead of 14,000 (analysis shows that more players are playing fewer sessions while at an NABC and that can hurt table count—if only one of three players had played just one session more, the 14,000 table estimate would have been met), your NABCs continue to be terrific venues for top-notch competition and for new players alike. Players from around the world turn up in droves to compete against the best for national event titles and increasingly, the names you see in the winner’s circles are from outside North America, so an NABC win is truly a win against the best in the world. At the other end of the spectrum, fresh faces appear at every NABC in the Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) Room and thanks to the warm welcome and great hospitality provided by the I/N hosts, many of these players return again and again and form the basis for a new “generation” of players.

Speaking of NABC titles and winning against the best, two national titles currently reside with D6 players: Congratulations to Steve Landen of Ellicott City, MD, who with partner Pratap Rajadhyaksha, won the prestigious three-day Blue Ribbon Pairs with a come-from-behind win of less than ½ a board; and to Steve Robinson and Peter Boyd of the DC area (together with

teammates Kit Woolsey, Fred Stewart, Larry Kozlove, and Gaylor Kastle) who narrowly held on to victory in the final quarter to win the four-day National Senior KO.

Administrative News:

Don Mamula of District 19 (Alaska, Washington State, British Columbia) was elected ACBL President by the 25 members of the ACBL BOD. Don will succeed current ACBL President Sharon Anderson for the calendar year 2013. One of the duties of the ACBL President is to travel to tournaments throughout ACBL-land—to be the League’s Ambassador and to “take the pulse,” if you will, of the League’s members. Many of you had the delightful opportunity to meet Sharon when she attended the Bethesda Regional here in D6 over this past 4th of July and if you attend the Chesapeake Regional in Cambridge, MD November 11 – 17, 2013, you will have an opportunity to meet Don.

Strategic Plan Initiatives for 2013:

The BOD received a number of reports from ACBL HQ staff responsible for strategic projects for the coming year that will help bring a technologically backward ACBL into the 21st century. Most notable among these projects are updates to ACBLScore (called ACBLScore+), updates to the software that will be used to track tournaments—schedules, attendance, participation by masterpoint level, etc.—cleverly called TourneyTrax, and outreach to Baby Boomers and Youth/Juniors. In addition, ACBL has formed a partnership with the Alzheimer’s Association and will be celebrating this partnership in a “Longest Day” bridge event to be held in clubs on June 21, 2013, the longest day of the year. You will be reading lots more about these projects and special activities in the ACBL Bulletin in the coming months, and many of management’s reports are available online together with the minutes of the San Francisco Fall NABC at www.acbl.org/about/bodmeetings.

New Events for Players with Fewer than 10,000 Masterpoints

As mentioned above, competing successfully in NABC events is getting tougher due to the high skill level of the players entering these events. While many of us still like to experience the adrenaline rush of competing (and sometimes even beating!) the best of the best, others of us would like to have a great, competitive event that we feel we could win or in which we could place high in the overalls. In response to this growing sentiment primarily among players with 5,000-10,000 masterpoints as expressed in recent ACBL surveys, a task force was asked to suggest a way to attract these players back to the NABCs and the result is a new event that will be held on a trial basis in St. Louis at the Spring NABC this coming March. It is the “10K Swiss”—a two-day qualifying event that will be held opposite the Platinum Pairs and the IMP Pairs on the first Friday and Saturday. All players with fewer than 10,000 masterpoints may play and the overalls will pay a small amount (10%) of Platinum points. Get your teams together now and plan to head on over to St. Louis—we need the debut of this event to be a success since we plan to institute more in the future if it is viable—a “10K Vandy” opposite the “real” Vanderbilt KO in the Spring is the next event being considered.

Atlanta Hosts the 2013 Summer NABC, Youth NABC, and World Youth Congress

The Summer NABC in 2013, held unusually late from August 1–11, will be in Atlanta along with two very special youth events—the Youth NABC, which is held annually at the same time as the Summer NABC, and the World Youth Congress sponsored by the World Bridge

Federation (WBF). This latter event is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the participants in our very active middle and high school bridge programs to compete in a world event on US soil against other youngsters (a separate competition for those under 21) and juniors (those under 26) from around the world. I will be asking each unit for its suggestions as to how we can run a district-wide competition with generous subsidies to attend the World Youth Congress in Atlanta as prizes! Anyone is welcome to attend (pre-registration required online in the spring), but each district is working to meet the challenge to encourage at least one team of four to attend. Oh, and for those who heard that the “early start times” for Atlanta were being reconsidered, these will not change for the 2013 Summer NABC and will remain as currently scheduled, at 10 and 3:30.

Electronic Devices

The regulation prohibiting electronic devices in the playing areas of NABC and NABC+ events has been replaced with the regulation allowing such devices **BUT** retaining all current sanctions if the device is operable or operated during a session of play. The rationale for this will allow ACBL to be able to offer better customer service to you, the players—for example, to accept entry fee payment online and send seat assignments directly to you, and to post results electronically immediately after the conclusion of the session. Although these activities are not imminent they are in the planning stages and could not move forward with the former electronic device restrictions in place.

Other News

- Grass Roots FUNd month will be moved from December to January, starting in January 2014. There shall be no Grass Roots FUNd Month in 2013.
- All Sectionals must be at least two days in length—a much-discussed motion to allow “limited sectionals” (e.g., Non-Life Master), Junior sectionals, and STaCs to be fewer than two full days was defeated, but there will be a revised motion in St. Louis to address this again.
- A controversial motion to require all participants of ACBL tournaments to be ACBL Members whose Membership Dues are current, or ACBL Life Members whose Member Service Fees are current, was deferred until the Spring BOD meetings in St. Louis.
- Beginning in January, ACBL Student Memberships will no longer be an option. ACBL will upgrade all current Student Members to Junior Members (anyone up to age 26 and currently attending school) at no cost to the Student Members, and Students will receive all applicable benefits of Junior Membership. At time of renewal, students will pay and receive the benefits of the current Junior Membership rate (currently \$15).
- The ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations was amended to include the mandatory removal of masterpoints by a Conduct and Ethics Committee that has found a Member guilty of a conduct or ethical violation. Please see the San Francisco minutes online (www.acbl.org/about/bodmeetings) for the complete list of violations and corresponding sanctions.