

**Report of ACBL Board of Directors Meetings**  
**Las Vegas NABC, November 2001**

If you hold a bridge tournament in a place where players like to go, they will come. The last time an NABC was in Las Vegas (Summer 1991) the all-time attendance record was set, probably never to be broken. This time, despite being in the fall over Thanksgiving, a schedule that started Sunday instead of Thursday, and being the first NABC following the 9/11 disaster, a new Fall record was set by almost 2000 tables. At least we have another Las Vegas NABC on the schedule, Summer 2008 at regular dates.

Because of the mixed-up schedule, the Board meetings were held after the tournament. I certainly hope that is never repeated. I felt like a zombie. The first thing we did was meet and approve the appointment of our new CEO, Jay Baum. In my opinion his credentials are vastly superior to those we have had the past few times, and while we are rolling the dice again, perhaps this time they are loaded in our favor.

**MEA CULPA!!** In my haste to get the shortened version of this report to Memphis for printing in the District 6 supplement with the February *Bulletin*, I accidentally listed as passed a proposal that has been deferred to the Houston meetings. (You might understand our confusion because a motion to defer to Houston was defeated at least two or three times during the course of discussion before one was finally passed.) This proposal was on senior events and is in two parts. 1. Senior events may be stratified by age (55-65-75) or masterpoints but not both. If stratified by age, the masterpoint awards will be 80% for 55+ and 70% for 65+ and 75+. 2. Senior events may be held with age restrictions of 55, 65 or 75 and may be stratified by masterpoints. Any two-age limited events may be held simultaneously. If you could spread the word that this is a proposal and has not yet been passed, I would appreciate it. By the way, those at the District 6 Board meeting in Williamsburg thought that number 1 was ridiculous but that number 2, giving sponsors the option to choose the age limit, was reasonable. Send me your opinions.

After Toronto we publicized and solicited opinions on the new proposed alert procedure. We got about a two inch high stack of comments and after a review of these by the Competitions and Conventions Committee, a few improvements were added to what was originally proposed, namely:

1. A natural 2NT response that is invitational or better to any one-of-a-suit opening bid does not require an Alert.
2. Announcement of transfers to hearts and spades after opener's natural NT rebid.
3. A 2NT response to an opening two-bid does not require an Alert unless it is natural and non-forcing.
4. Except for a direct cue-bid of a natural opening bid that is played as natural, no cue-bids are Alertable.
5. An introductory paragraph has been added, as well as definitions of Alert and Control-bid.

These improvements, together with the original proposals (listed below for your convenience) were passed by the Board and will be effective March 1st.

1. All opening 1NT ranges will be announced.
2. Announce 1C and 1D non-forcing opening bids which may be shorter than three cards by stating "may be short."
3. Doubles, redoubles and passes will no longer require an Alert except for those with highly unusual or unexpected meanings.
4. No alert for jump raises except those played as weak in non-competitive auctions (1-P-3=weak).
5. No alert for all natural three-level responses to notrump openings or overcalls whether a jump response or not.
6. No alert for natural but limited openings (e.g., Precision 1 and 1).
7. No alert for 1NT responses and rebids showing a balanced hand, even if a four-card major may be bypassed.

Undoubtedly the worst thing the Board did was to cancel the Collegiate Bridge Championship that we reinstated just last year. We learned a lot from last year and had planned a few things that we were confident would greatly increase participation. We had already begun advertising the event for next year (the initial competition was going to be in February) and had already signed up four schools for the competition. The Educational Foundation had approved funds for this year's event. The only cost to the ACBL was a little staff time. Those few of us who are working hard to entice young people to our game were stunned. We seem to take little steps forward and giant leaps backward.

At least things are going very well with our Bridge At Schools program. We have filled the position of Executive Director with Beth Refaie of Wilmington DE and also hired David Idleman of Odenton MD to be the Marketing and Research Director. An excellent article about the project and David and Beth will be in the February *Bulletin*, so be sure to read it. One thing they are working on now is obtaining information from those who have been involved in any school bridge activity. If you know of any, please let me know. And of course, we do need more funding to carry on the program past May. Let me know if anyone has any connections to a potential corporate sponsor.

Two NABC sites were approved. The Spring of 2006 will be held in Dallas TX at the Hyatt Regency from March 29 to April 9. The Boston MA Marriott Copley Place and Westin Copley Place will hold the Fall 2008 NABC from November 20 to 30. Both of these sites previously held successful NABCs.

The annual budget is always approved at the fall meetings and usually generates a great deal of controversy. It seems like program cuts and fee increases are always proposed and I continue to vote against the budget. Last year the budget was projected with a 350,000 loss. Since the figures are going to show a plus of about \$400,000 drastic moves were not made. In fact the stipend paid to Board of Director members and the Chairman of the Board of Governors was returned to \$750 per trimester starting January 2002. This was the amount that had been in effect for several years. In addition a free play is now a free play. Except for Educational Foundation night at the beginning of the NABC, anyone entitled to free plays will receive totally free plays for the entirety of each NABC, which means no surcharges and no charity days.

There were, however, two items were passed that resulted in cost savings even though they were not done strictly for budget purposes. The first is new member rebates for the first and second year are canceled. The Education Department declared that this program was a failure because the number of new members has not basically changed since the rebate program began. They have promised to institute a different program.

The second cost-saving item is student coupons will be given to those who have not had their 22nd birthday or those that have offered proof that they are full-time students and have not reached their 26th birthday. Such proof shall be given in advance of entry purchase to the office of junior affairs. The cost of entries purchased using student coupons will be a \$5.00 discount from the regular per-session entry fee. Some believed that Juniors between 22 and 26 are working, with a few playing professionally, and making a reasonable living well able to pay their share. In addition, by making the coupons \$5.00 and the increase in entry fees, they are now worth less than the 50% off originally intended.

Following the success of the new Mini-Spingold event in Toronto, we made a couple of adjustments which will be in effect next summer in Washington. The restriction that the event be completed in five days is removed and will end as dictated by the total number of entries. The masterpoint awards are set at 100 for first place in the 0-5000 category and 75 for first place in the 0-1500 category. The Red Ribbon pairs will be held on the second and third full day of the Summer NABC in 2002. This is concurrent with the second and third day of the Life Masters' Pairs.

Another proposal that we will be considering in Houston is to add two Mini-Life Masters' Pairs to run concurrent with the six-session Life Masters' Pairs held at the Summer NABC. One event would be limited to LMs with no more than 1500 masterpoints and the other would be limited to LMs with no more than 5000 masterpoints. Except for the masterpoint restrictions, the conditions of contest will be identical to the unrestricted Life Masters' Pairs. I am not sure about this event. It is not the same as the Mini-Spingold which was a very good thing to do. Let me know your opinions.

Members that have had memberships in other bridge organizations or continue to hold membership in other bridge organizations MUST report both that affiliation and the rank achieved. Failure to report these will result in loss of any points or titles won that were not won in open events. Such members will not be eligible for events or races that are below the comparable rank that they have achieved in other organizations.

We had a proposal from the American Duplicate Gin Rummy organization who want to become strategic partners with the ACBL. They want us to provide record-keeping capabilities presently programmed and in place to track the standings and accomplishments of their online duplicate gin rummy membership. We are going to look into it, but I am not sure whether or not it is a good idea.

There were a couple of motions affecting clubs:

Instant Matchpoint Games meeting open standards will be considered in the open contest. (This includes ½ table games.) Minimum boards to be played by any pair is 20. Howell movements meeting open standards will award a Gold Point for first place.

Inter-Club Championship games which are administered online but played "live" are authorized. The masterpoint awards for this event are the same as inter-club championships administered manually. In addition to a club's regular club championships, the club may participate in an additional four inter-club championships administered online. A club may not use one or all of its regular, quarterly club championships to participate in inter-club championships administered electronically.

The annual senior masterpoint race will be determined by points won in regionally-rated or higher senior events for which any portion of the masterpoint award is red, gold and/or platinum.

Management will actively publicize a snowbird's option to remain a permanent member of one of the units in which he resides. A simple procedure for recording this choice will be provided and publicized.

Members of the Board of Directors may not represent their Districts at the National level of the GNT while they are actively serving at the Board meeting of an NABC. Such restriction is waived for the evening sessions of the event when the Board of Directors has no official scheduled function where attendance is expected.

We passed a motion on correcting masterpoint recording errors. This seems ludicrous that it wasn't being done and we had to have a motion. Anyway, now as soon as an error is discovered (within 36 months of notification), corrections will be made. This will not affect masterpoint races already completed or rank achieved and already recognized. A letter to the player(s) involved will accompany the change if the adjustment is greater than ten masterpoints.

Now to a happy note. I am pleased to announce that the goodwill appointments for next year are Kathryn Kiley, Don Hennings and Jim Allen. The charity members are Fletcher and Linda Smoak. Congratulations also go to Kay Afdahl for being appointed Goodwill Member of the Year. The announcement was made at the Goodwill meeting in Las Vegas and she was truly surprised.