

Report of ACBL Board of Directors Meetings

New York NABC, July 2004

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New York was great and a wonderful time was had by all who attended. Even I got to take some time off from meetings and bridge to go to a couple of shows. There were so many restaurants in walking distance, even for me, that we couldn't begin to try all of the ones that looked interesting. Probably the three most famous delis in New York are all within a block of each other and were only one block from the hotel. The local hosts planned such a good schedule of tours and events that my husband stayed for the entire time and didn't miss a thing. (Usually he is there during the week of meetings and leaves the first weekend, when bridge starts.)

The predictions prior to the beginning of the tournament were doom and gloom. The playing conditions and other activities would be fine, but the hotel and New York would just be too expensive and our players would not attend. Even though the bridge rate was good for a hotel in New York, it was still considerably higher than at any previous NABC. I am happy to report that the naysayers were wrong and the attendance was much better than anyone had forecast.

An ambitious week of junior events was planned which included two new WBF Junior events. It started with the Collegiate Team Championship, then Junior Scholarship Pairs, World Schools Teams, World Junior Individual and finally the trials for the US Junior Team representatives. The teams were set prior to the NABC, but the Individual was an open competition. The organizers hoped and planned for an entry of 80. They actually got an entry of 120, which was beyond anyone's wildest imagination. They capped it off with a very nice awards ceremony and victory banquet. It is too bad they couldn't get better coverage in the Daily Bulletin. You had to hunt for any mention of these events, page 3, 4, 5 or 9, and there were almost no pictures.

For the past year and a half I have been mentioning the Bylaws Committee and our work on revising the ACBL bylaws. I am happy to report that the first step has been completed. The Board of Directors unanimously approved the revised bylaws. (Step two is a second Board approval in the Fall, then the Board of Governors approval in the Spring and finally the membership approval next summer in Atlanta.) The entire new Bylaws will be printed in the October Bulletin. I previously reported on the major changes being proposed. Three final adjustments were:

1. The quorum number for a membership meeting will be 250, difficult but not impossible.
2. No geographical residence requirements were made for any national office. We did require that each nominee be a member of a Unit within the District he represents and remain a member during his term.
3. The Treasurer was added to the Executive Committee but as a non-voting member only.

There was a first for me at the Board meetings. I actually voted for a membership dues increase. Why? The increase was only \$3.00, dues have not been raised at all for a few years, and even more importantly, there would be no need to raise sanction fees and entry fees. This will be effective January 1, 2005.

We also changed the Patron Member dues and benefits. Effective August 1 of this year Individual dues are \$250 and household dues are \$350. Most of the benefits remain the same, a few were discontinued and some added. The full list is:

Advance hotel reservations at the host hotel at NABCs.

Daily Bulletin delivered to the member's room at the NABC host hotel.

Complimentary set of Daily Bulletins from all three North American Bridge Championships.

Express entry for Patron Members only at NABCs.

Gift certificate of \$50 in merchandise (\$75 certificate for household members) for any patron member renewal or initial sign-up at the new membership rate. The certificate may be used to purchase merchandise at the NABC ACBL Product Store or from the ACBL Sales Department.

• complimentary subscription to the World Bridge News.

• special ACBL membership badge that identifies this member as a Patron Member.

• special drawing for ACBL Patron Members only to win an opportunity to play with a top bridge star at a Charity game during each NABC.

• Fifty percent (50%) discount off the price of a ticket (household 50% off of two tickets) to the Hall of Fame Dinner.

• Patron Members cocktail party in the President's Suite at NABCs.

• Free membership in Hertz Corporation's #1 CLUB Gold.

• Names published annually in The Bridge Bulletin.

A new award named the President's Volunteer of the Year was established. This is for one or two members who have exhibited the long effort and giving that makes the ACBL volunteers the best in the world. The recipient(s) will be selected by the ACBL President near the end of his term of office and will be honored at the Spring Goodwill meeting. The honorees will receive expenses for their attendance at this meeting. Also, the ACBL will supplement as needed the Norman Kay fund, which was established to reimburse the Goodwill Member of the Year for attending the Fall NABC. Speaking of the Goodwill Committee, next year will be their fiftieth anniversary. A celebration will be held at the Goodwill meeting in the Spring (Pittsburgh).

We established a new committee to review the office situation and other real estate needs presently and for the foreseeable future. There is no question that we need to get out of our present building in Memphis. The neighborhood has deteriorated to such a point that it is not safe to go to a car in the parking lot after dark. Bruce appointed me to this committee, which is fine since my 'extra' work on the Bylaws Committee is finished.

We did some positive things for the Junior program. First, we did not pass or recommend any changes to the maximum age for play in junior competition. Then we set the entry fees at NABCs for players who have not reached their 16th birthday at \$1.00 per session (except NABC-surcharged events). Fees for those players over 16 who have not reached their 26th birthday will be no more than 50% of the regional-rated event entry fee. And finally we asked Management to investigate and develop a pilot program for camps, either overnight or day camps, for youth up to 21. These camps could be run by Management, Districts, Units, individuals or in conjunction with other camps.

We created two new Life Master categories. They are Emerald Life Master upon reaching 7,500 masterpoints and Platinum Life Master for those who reach 10,000 masterpoints but do not have a qualifying win to become a Grand Life Master.

There was a committee studying special games at clubs. They recommended and we approved the following changes:

• April is designated as Charity month

• September is designated as International Fund month

• Any and all ACBL sanctioned sessions may be held as a Junior fund game, Charity game or International Fund game, except February is reserved for Junior Fund games, April is reserved for Charity games and September is reserved for International Fund games.

• The masterpoint rating for Charity games, International Fund games and Club Appreciation Pair games (October) is increased to 100% Sectional Black points.

• The masterpoint rating for the ACBL-wide Senior Pairs is increased to 80% Sectional rating and the sanction fees increased to \$4.00 per table (from \$2.25).

• The NABC Fund Raiser is now the NABC Promotional Game.

Upon recommendation from the Competition and Conventions committee, we made a couple of changes to the convention chart. The general chart is amended to permit jump responses to an opening bid of one in a suit that show one known suit with a minimum of five cards and one other known suit with a minimum of four cards. Now conventions allowed on the Mid-Chart but not the General chart will be divided into approval in events that

play a minimum of 12, 6 or 2 boards. This came about because some methods with defenses thereto are too long and complicated to absorb in a two board round pair game. There is more time in team games to handle these defenses. While we are on the subject of the Mid-Chart, it will now be allowed in the 0-5000 Mini-Spingold. This change will begin next year.

I am happy to report that the Appeals Casebook will continue to be published after each NABC in hard copy. The casebook will also be available on the web site. The expert player commentators will continue to contribute. In other words, nothing will be changed.

The NABC Scheduling committee, whose task was to study the NABC events to see if they wanted to make any changes, completed their work and made a number of recommendations. These were approved by the Board and I think they will help improve attendance. Most of the changes are to the summer schedule which needed help. These are:

- The IMP pairs at the Summer NABC held on the second Thursday and Friday will be moved to the Spring NABC on the second Thursday and Friday, and the Open Pairs II held on the second Thursday and Friday at the Spring NABC will be moved to Tuesday and Wednesday of the Summer NABC.
- The Senior Swiss on Tuesday and Wednesday at the Summer NABC will be moved to Monday and Tuesday of the Summer NABC.
- The Mixed BAM Teams and the Fast Open Pairs on the second Saturday and Sunday at the Summer NABC will be moved to the second Thursday and Friday of the Summer NABC.
- A four-session (two qualifying sessions and two final sessions) North American Swiss Team event with Conditions of Contest the same as the Spring Open Swiss will be held on the second Saturday and Sunday at the Summer NABC.
- A four-session (two qualifying sessions and two final sessions) Mini-Blue Ribbon (for players with a Blue Ribbon qualification with no more than 5000 masterpoints) will be added to the Fall NABC to run concurrent with the first two days (Tuesday and Wednesday) of the Blue Ribbon Pairs.

We elected next year's President. It will be Chuck Wilkinson from Jackson, Mississippi who has been on the Board for almost 15 years (3rd longest service of current members).

I signed up for another three-year term as your District Director and since no one else did so, I have been declared elected.