

December 2006

Report of ACBL Board of Directors Meetings

Hawaii NABC, November 2006

After a 23 year-absence, we finally made it back to Hawaii with its perfect weather, beautiful beaches, gorgeous and abundant flowers, luaus, wonderful fish and many other attractions. The Hilton Hawaiian Village is like a small city with many stores, shops, restaurants and other attractions. The local hosts arranged tours every day, had great entertainment and food functions, and were extremely helpful to all. All of this was so much fun that many people played very little bridge. I know some people who were there for the entire tournament and didn't play one single hand which, of course, hurt the table count. I understand where they are coming from. In the 23 years since I made my first trip to Hawaii for the 1983 NABC, I have been to Hawaii about 16 more times. Still I did not feel like playing bridge or going to meetings. I just wanted to enjoy Hawaii.

At least our Board meetings were especially light for a Fall meeting -- no long fights over the budget. Perhaps the most significant thing we did was authorize the CEO to continue negotiations and to complete the sale of the Headquarters building. If it goes through, the disagreements will then begin over where to relocate and whether to buy or rent.

There were several motions that failed that, in my opinion, we should have passed. One was to grant the European Bridge League (EBL) a sanction to issue ACBL masterpoints to ACBL members attending an open European Bridge Championship. The points that would have been issued were to be sectionally-rated red points. In addition, a higher sanction fee was proposed -- \$500 or \$5.00 per table of ACBL players, whichever is greater. We issued such a sanction a couple of years ago when the EBL had its first open tournament. I guess now the majority thinks that if we don't give ACBL masterpoints, then our players won't attend and will go to regionals instead. Guess again!

Another motion that failed was to help sponsor Junior players participating in Junior Fund Games by deducting \$3.00 per eligible player from the funds remitted to the ACBL. The money deducted must reduce the junior's entry fee in that game. Overall, we are talking about a small amount of money. The idea was to encourage clubs to make it easier for our youth to play more frequently. Perhaps it might also give the clubs an opportunity for a little PR.

We now have three fund-raising months for clubs on the books -- Junior, Charity and International Fund. The Educational Foundation now wants a month designated for them with the same fees and masterpoint awards. In addition, any sessions held at clubs may be held as an Educational Foundation game except for those months reserved for the Junior, Charity and International Funds. This motion has been deferred to the Spring meeting in St. Louis.

We revised the Charity Game requirements for clubs beginning January 1, 2007. These are:

1. Clubs are not required to run a charity game.
2. If a club chooses to run an ACBL sanctioned charity game, the first game held in a calendar year must be for the ACBL Charity Foundation or, in Canada, the CBF Charitable Fund. For the rest of that calendar year, charity games may alternate beneficiaries; one game for the benefit of any governmentally-recognized charity, charity foundation or charity fund--but then the next one must be for the above ACBL charities; and so on, in alternating sequence. Basically, at least half the games must go to the ACBL/CBF charities and the other half may go elsewhere.

A motion to establish an ACBL Foundation to fund educational, charitable, social, scientific and historic endeavors that either promote bridge or are for the benefit of bridge players or bridge entities was soundly defeated 13 to 12. This would not have replaced either the Charity or Educational Foundations, but many were

afraid it would--at least eventually--so they voted negatively. I think replacing these Foundations for one that benefits bridge in some way is a good idea.

Another motion that failed and rightly so was a motion to permit part-time ACBL Tournament Directors to serve as elected or appointed unit, District Board or Conference Board members.

The new sample bylaws for Districts was approved and may be found on the ACBL website. Sample bylaws for Units were approved at the Summer meeting and also may be found on the ACBL website. IRS rules for non-profit organizations are changing so it is important that everyone review their current bylaws for compliance. For example, all organizations whether or not they are incorporated will be required to file a form with the IRS every year. Actually the important thing to read in the sample bylaws is the commentary that goes along with each sample Article.

The conditions of contest for the mini-Life Master pairs was set so that each event will consist of six sessions: two qualifying, two semi-final and two final. Previously, the length of the event was determined by the number of pairs entering the event.

The Board of Governors asked the Board of Directors to reconsider eliminating the day at the NABC's designated for the Educational Foundation or International Fund. After expenses, the funds generated from the games are not significant, so the Board made no change in the original motion.

The ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations regarding a District's jurisdiction was expanded and includes:

1. Persons participating in a sanctioned event or other activity sponsored by a Unit, District or ACBL held within its geographical boundaries (District Disciplinary Committee)
2. Decisions of a tournament disciplinary committee from a tournament held in the district's geographical area, a member unit's disciplinary committee and the district's disciplinary committee and the charged person or persons in each for appellate purposes only.
3. Cases involving alleged violations by Units.

The budget for 2007 was approved and I did not even vote against it. For starters, there were no fee increases and no programs reduced or cut to fit the budget. The per session sponsor fee for tournament directors was increased, but the sanction fees per table were decreased so the net should be close to the same.

The proposal to conduct an educational program for the Board of Directors at the March 2007 Board meeting in St. Louis was approved. The program will last one day and will be conducted by Board Source. We have had various meetings with outside consultants in the past for one, two or three days. In general they were a waste of time because they were mostly conducted by someone who knew nothing about bridge or our organization. Undoubtedly, this will be the same, but we can always hope for the best.

Congratulations to the deserving people appointed to the Goodwill and Charity committees. The Goodwill appointments are Will Williams and Jack Buchanan, Richmond, VA; Dick Wegman, Bethesda, MD; and Lorraine Holub, Blacksburg, VA. The charity appointments went to Barbara Shaw, Laurel, MD and Elizabeth Ruehl, Waynesboro, VA.