

## Report of ACBL Board of Directors Meetings

### St. Louis NABC, March 2007

When the decision was made to award the **Spring** NABC to St. Louis in early March, many of us thought it would really be the **Winter** NABC - snow, ice and cold weather. However, the attendees at this NABC received a pleasant surprise. The weather was very pleasant most of the time. This was especially good since there were two playing sites, one of which was a convention center across the street from the host hotel, making it necessary to go outside to get there.

Having two playing sites is never good, no matter how close they are. For one thing, they cannot be "equal" in terms of service to the players because it is too difficult and impractical to have two of everything - registration, partnership and prize desks; tables with books, cosmetics and other products for sale; entertainment and food. In St. Louis these services were divided as evenly as possible with desks and stores in the Convention Center and the food and entertainment in the hotel playing area.

Our meetings began with an educational program conducted by Board Source. The idea behind these types of meetings is to learn at least one thing that will be helpful in being a better Board member. My lasting impression is that the facilitator for Board Source was very good, much better than anyone we have had previously. Unfortunately, a month later, I can't remember anything I learned.

Even though there was one less day to conduct regular Board business, it was not a problem and we even finished a little early. It is not just that we have fewer issues to consider, the Board members are better and we no longer have to listen to many saying the same thing over and over. Overall, it was a positive meeting and we made several positive decisions.

We approved the establishment of the Albert Morehead Library Foundation for both our library and Hall of Fame. The primary purposes will be to:

1. Acquire, preserve and exhibit objects and materials related to bridge.
2. Identify and recognize those who have made significant contributions to bridge.
3. Serve as the North American repository for objects and materials related to bridge.

We first have to prepare bylaws and then apply to the IRS to obtain a 501(c)(3) designation. When this is obtained, people can donate their memorabilia and receive a tax deduction.

Exceptions to the new residency requirements for the GNT and the NAP were approved. These are:

1. "Snowbirds". Any member with seasonal residences who spends more than half of the GNT or NAP qualifying period in a district other than the district of their principal physical residence may play in the district of seasonal residence. If they choose to do so, they must play in that district's district finals to be eligible to play in the national finals and are not eligible to be augmented to or otherwise added to a team from the district of their principal residence.

2. Players who live near district borders and who are members of a unit in a district in which they do not reside may seek permission to play in the district in which they have a unit membership. Players seeking this exception must have been an active member of the unit in the district in which they wish to play for at least 5 years continuously prior to the start of the competition in the year in which they wish to play, and must not have played in the GNT or NAP in another district for that period of time. (The 2006/2007 GNT and NAP is not considered for this requirement.) Once this permission is granted, the player is eligible to play only in that district and may not change unit affiliation unless the player's principal physical residence changes.

3. Players with multiple domiciles should apply to the Credentials Committee for a one-time choice of district in which they wish to play. Players may be asked to document their time in each of their residences. A player must live at least three months each year in a district in order to have it considered as a domicile possibility. Once a player chooses a district in which to play, he must play only in that district until he no longer has a domicile in that district.

Changes were made in the North American Pairs monetary awards given by ACBL. The idea is to treat all qualifiers the same and not have to be concerned with airline travel or hotel room bills. I voted against this because I believe that when the smoke clears the awards given will be less than they are currently. Our advertising for this event has always been “win a trip to the NABC” and this will no longer apply. At least there will be no entry fee for the national finals. The new fixed amount prize in all flights is:

1. In districts with three qualifiers, the 1st place qualifiers will receive \$700 per person and the 2nd place qualifiers will receive \$300 per person. The 3rd place qualifiers will be invited to participate in the national level finals, but will not receive any prize.

2. In districts with four qualifiers, the 1st and 2nd place qualifiers will receive \$700 per person and the 3rd place qualifiers will receive \$300 per person. The 4th place qualifiers will be invited to participate in the national level finals, but will not receive any prize.

3. Invited defenders will receive \$700 per person.

4. No individual may collect two concurrent prizes.

A major change was made in the Regional regulations. They are officially up to 6 ½ days in duration, not 6 days with exceptions for beginning a knockout and holding a side game. The afternoon game before the start of a 6 ½ day Regional must be a one-session event that is run for the ACBL Charity Foundation, Educational Foundation, Junior Fund, International Fund or the Canadian equivalent of these.

The maximum carryover for the Reisinger will be 3 boards to the semifinals and 5 boards to the finals. Four session Board-a-Match teams will have a maximum of 5 boards.

For the Blue Ribbon Pairs, ACBL members who do not otherwise qualify may request an exemption from the chief tournament director in writing. This is mainly for the foreign players.

Units and Districts will no longer receive notices about hard copy materials that are available nor will any hard copy regulations be automatically sent to appropriate officials. However, hard copies of materials will be furnished upon request.

We made a couple of changes in per diem for Board members. Per diem will not be affected by the presence or absence of concierge privileges and there will be no reduction for lunches provided by ACBL except when lunches are for the entire Board and have been announced in advance of the meeting. This was particularly happy news for me because I always complained when I got breakfast deductions because I could have gone to the concierge lounge. I never did because, as a rule, they never had anything hot and I don't eat cereal or yogurt.

We approved a job description for the Director of Appeals (the Board member appointed as liaison to the National Appeals committee) who will receive one-half room night with tax for each day that he remains at the tournament.

One motion that failed was establishing a fund-raising month for the Educational Foundation. It was felt that since the Educational Foundation is the only Foundation with a check-off on the dues forms, and they are the sole recipient for funds raised at the opening day and evening of the NABC, it was not necessary to add another month to the already crowded club calendar.

We rescinded a motion which provided for ACBL members, who played and won points in tournaments held outside the boundaries of ACBL, to convert these points into ACBL masterpoints up to 50 points per year. WBF masterpoints will still be converted to ACBL points.

The motions that were deferred to the Summer meetings in Nashville are:

1. Reinstating the Unit membership rebate program. This program to reward Units for getting new members was discontinued in 2005. There were problems with this program and it may have been easier to eliminate it than fix it. It was deferred to gather more information.
2. Refining policy on when to permit members who were expelled, or who resigned to avoid possible disciplinary action on charges of cheating, to apply to represent the ACBL at WBF events.
3. Changing the bracket seeding for the finals of the Grand National Teams, all flights.
4. The masterpoint committee expects to present a number of changes. Some of these are:
  - a. Award overall masterpoints to all pairs that qualify for the finals of the 6 session Life Master Pairs and the Blue Ribbon Pairs.
  - b. A new formula for knockouts based on strength of field rather than the number of tables in the event.
  - c. Brackets of 12-16 teams will be given full awards. Brackets with 9-11 teams will receive 85% of the award.
  - d. Knockout match awards will be increased slightly for the first match and decreased for winning the second match.
  - e. Match awards for Swiss teams will be increased.

Last and perhaps most important, we anticipate that closing on the sale of the building in Memphis will happen soon. There have been some delays in the closing date, which is not unusual.