



# BOARD MEETING REPORT

Summer 2011  
Toronto

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*The Toronto Committee put on a great NABC, drawing 13,914 tables. The weather, however, was horrific. All hopes for some relief from the Louisville summer were dashed as Toronto broke all records in a massive heat wave. The Volunteer Dinner was held at a Blue Jays game in Rogers Centre (where the Mariners managed to make the Jays look like professionals) and I was a LOT hotter there than I'd been at a Nats/Cubs game in DC on July 4<sup>th</sup>! Ah, well. Toronto's a great city no matter what the temperature—or the exchange rate. But more than one person commented to me that they missed the Galt House. ☺*

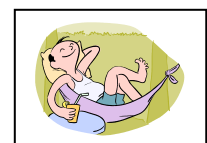


## New ACBL CEO Selected

We've known for some time that Jay Baum, who has served the ACBL as its CEO since 2002 planned to retire next July. The Board agreed that arguably the most important job most of us would perform during our tenures was the selection of a new CEO. A committee was formed last year to draft a job description (based in part on surveys of both Board and staff) and set the parameters for the work of a formal search committee. The latter was appointed by Craig Robinson in January and worked diligently through the first half of this year to bring the Board an outstanding candidate. In addition to Board members, the Committee members also included two top national CEOs (bridge players both) who contributed incredible amounts of time to the process. The Committee reported that it was overwhelmed by the high quality of the candidates and was unanimous in its final selection, brought to the full Board in Toronto. We were able to review the candidate's CV and background before the meeting, meet the candidate, hear a presentation and question the candidate at length. The Board unanimously and enthusiastically approved making an offer and negotiations are currently underway to bring the candidate on Board by Seattle. I can hardly wait to tell you more and will do so as soon all the requisite "I"s are dotted and "t"s crossed. All I will say is—ay, carumba, wow, gee willekers, Gloriosky Zero...what a fabulous selection. I am buoyed with hope and optimism by what I feel sure this new leadership will bring to our organization.



Meanwhile, thanks to Jay Baum for nearly 10 years of great service to the ACBL—hardly the easiest organization in the world for which to work—and he's done it while maintaining (mostly) a smile. Enjoy your retirement, Jay!



## STRENGTH OF FIELD PROPOSAL

For years there has been discussion and debate about a) whether there exists a problem with masterpoint awards based on strength of field and b) if so, how to solve it. With the help of a couple of actuaries, a proposal was brought to the Board to adjust the formula to more accurately reflect the strength of the players in a given game. Obviously, the underlying assumption of the proposal is that there IS a problem—weak fields are getting benefits (awards) disproportionately large to their actual strength and vice-versa for stronger fields. Such a major change requires two readings so, in order to assure that the formula would be ready to be incorporated in the new ACBLscore slated for next year IF it passed a second reading, the Board overwhelmingly passed the formula as a first reading. There is a minority (for now) of Board members who feel that nothing's broken and there's no need to fix it. They acknowledge the fairness problems, but consider higher masterpoint awards for newer players to be a significant marketing tool. Their mantra is that under the new formula, "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer". Although I voted to approve the first reading for practical reasons, I am reserving judgment on final approval. I am including a link to a pdf presentation of the formula here, as well as posting it on the District website. [Strength of Field Award System VI.pdf](#) If you are interested in this issue, please review the presentation and let me have your thoughts. Please note: the new formula would apply **ONLY TO SECTIONALS AND REGIONALS—NOT CLUB GAMES.**



## GNT'S

As I'm sure you all recall,

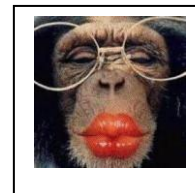
District 11 had an extraordinary showing last year in New Orleans. Our teams won both the Championship and the "C" divisions and our "A" team did very well. This year, our defending Championship team (Doug Simson, Walter Johnson, Jerry and Denny Clerkin) made it to the semi-final round of 4 only to lose to the Rodwell/Meckstroth team out for vengeance—they went on to win. Our "A" team (Siraj Haji, J. Adams, Daniel Neill, Tim Crank, Bob Lyon and John Hinton) also made it to the semi-final round. Way to go guys! But, sadly, after winning the entire event last year, our District did not even have a "C" team in attendance in Toronto. Decline in GNT participation is a League-wide problem. There was a motion before the Board to offer free entries to participants at the NABC level. It was defeated on the basis that it would have very little impact (would you decide to play or not based on receiving \$32?) for a big cost

(GNTs, unlike NAPs don't collect extra entry money during the qualifiers). A lot of concern about this issue was expressed at the BOG meeting as well. Coming out of that discussion, the GNT/NAP coordinator from District 25 has agreed to work with Patty Taylor in Horn Lake to contact all the District coordinators so that they may work together and share ideas on building the event. This same approach was taken several years ago with the NAP and has had tremendous results. If you have ideas about how to increase participation in our GNT please let our coordinator, Bill Higgins [bhiggins@swrw.com](mailto:bhiggins@swrw.com) or me know—we'd love to hear from you.

One terrific addition to the GNT Conditions of Contest passed by the Board in Toronto is permitting a District Final to be run on the Internet. District 18 (huge parts of Western Canada and the US) ran it this year as our "laboratory" and it was a great success. Don't worry, LOTS of protections and supervision are built into the new C of C. Although this option is of less interest to geographically smaller Districts like ours, to the huge ones (sparsely populated) it's a godsend.

And, BTW, Bob Lyon of our "A" team joined forces

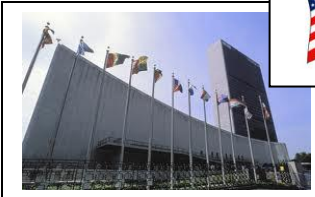
with "B" team members Brad Bartol, Matt Cory and Zach Brescoll in the Mini-Spingold and, once again, made it to the semi-finals. This is a grueling event (especially for a 4-person team and after the GNT) and we are VERY proud.



## FINANCE

As chair of the Finance Committee this year, I have good news and bad news. The bad news is that the 6-month financials show us nearly \$450,000 off budget. The good news is that it's in the right direction. Naturally, we're pleased to be in this position, but, to staff's annoyance, are still distressed that we can't forecast better. Who can blame the staff? I mean, what do those demanding prima donnas on the FC want, anyway? We come in under budget and they complain....wait—who leads those people?





## WORLD BRIDGE—CON'TD

The controversy over the ACBL's place in world bridge continues—but the naysayers, though vocal, appear to be a significant minority. The Board agreed, in principle, to contribute \$100,000 (with strings) toward a 2018 WBC in North America. This is consistent with past practice. This engendered much passionate discussion at the BOG meeting but, when a motion to reconsider funding was put to a vote, it was defeated overwhelmingly. The ACBL is a member of the WBF. Members pay dues of \$1 per head of THEIR members—that's around \$165,000 for us. It's not optional. Think of it as the U.N. or the IOC—you may not be happy about everything it does, but the U.S.—and Canada and Mexico—NOT being members or fielding teams on the world stage is unacceptable—to me and most others. I raised this issue at my "town meeting" at the Indy regional and the attendees agreed. I will continue to vote to support our membership, but, as I've stated before, I will insist on a detailed accounting of the use of funds by both the WBF and the USBF. As always, if you have thoughts you'd like to share with me on this, please do so...

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EMAIL ME AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS OR SUGGESTIONS OR HEYHOWAREYAS YOU WISH AND I'LL DO MY BEST TO RESPOND PROMPTLY! SEE YOU IN DAYTON!!**  
*BETH*

## Other News

### MEMBERSHIP

The count through June was 165,245—around 250 fewer than last year. But so far calendar year 2011 shows a gain of 192 members. New members continue a very good trend—6,283 for the first 6 months—up 7.5% over last year.

### TOURNAMENT MOTIONS

Just as at Regionals, **Charity Games at Sectionals** may now be for the benefit of the ACBL Charity or Educational Foundations or the International or Junior Funds. As I am a trustee of the Ed Foundation, let me put in a plug to you Sectional and Regional Chairs to make the Ed Foundation the beneficiary of your opening Charity Games. But of course the choice is yours. No problem. Fine. ☺



A motion originating with the Board of Governors asking that **player misconduct occurring at clubs** be made subject to the

ACBL Disciplinary Code was defeated. 15-10. I voted with the majority as I strongly believe that behavior (other than cheating) at clubs should remain under the exclusive control of the club manager—nearly always a for-profit person or entity—and that the ACBL (a non-profit entity) should not second-guess the club managers on how to run their businesses. Club managers have impelling reasons to keep players happy and are perfectly capable of handling behavioral problems in their own games. Players can make their feelings felt (and do) and, if unhappy, can vote with their feet. The ACBL should simply not be in the business of policing LOLs cell phones during their morning bridge. Nothing, of course, prevents a club from adopting ACBL behavioral rules—it's just up to the club to enforce them.

**Starting times at the Atlanta NABC** in summer 2013 will be 10 and 3:30—like Philly

in 2012. This is the trend as our players age—we can see it with Regional schedules as well. I don't much like it but I'm bowing to local option...

**The minimum number of boards for a club game** not restricted by masterpoints is changed from 18 to 20 boards (the tournament minimum is 21). Also, the Reduction Factor for club and online games not restricted by masterpoints of fewer than 20 boards will be 60%. Currently the minimum for club games receiving a full award is 18 boards and the reduction factor is 80%.

### **Changes to the Alert Chart:**

Cheapest club bid responses over NT openers are no longer alertable (e.g., Puppet Stayman) but the responses by opener are. 1NT-3C as P.S. would still be alertable.

A short club opening is no longer considered a "convention". It still must be announced ("could be short") but defenses permissible only over conventional bids (e.g. Crash) are barred.

