



BOARD MEETING REPORT

Summer 2015
Chicago

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The Chicago Committee, headed by ACBL Board Member and 2015 President Suzi Subeck, doing triple duty, ably assisted by husband Stan and a great team of Chicago volunteers put on a great NABC. Table count was 13,685 up 5.3% over the estimated 13,000 and the second NABC in a row over estimate...despite a relatively high hotel rate. Congrats to all! I grew up (mostly) on the north shore of Chicago so had a great time revisiting the sites of my youth...especially the Art Institute and the glorious Lake Michigan. The weather cooperated to make the ACBL's return to Chicago after a long absence a great success.

DISTRICT 11 TRIUMPHS!!!



Bob Fisk, Darin Campo, Peter Whipple, Ryan Schultz, John Meinking, and AJ Stephani

For the second time in 3 years, our GNT B team took the national title. All four of our teams, Championship, A, B and C made it into the second round, but our B boys persevered through some tough matches to bring home the title. Just so you know...these pics are taken before the finals, so AJ's wearing his game face not his winner's smile. The GNTs, together with the NAPs are our chance to go face to face with the other 25 districts and once again, District 11 has done itself proud.



Our own Pam Granovetter (far left) and her teammates Kerri Sanborn, Irina Levitina, Lynn Baker, Karen McCallum, and JoAnna Stansby won the Wager Women's KOs, a national championship event.

Diane Travis and Frankie Trieber won the 0-10,000 NABC Pairs event! This is the second time since the inauguration of these 0-10K Events a few years ago that a District 11 pair/team has brought home the title.

CONGRATS TO ALL OUR FINE PLAYERS!!



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

Through the end of June, total membership stands at 167,756. Membership is 30 members higher than at the start of the year. Retention continues to be a key focus for the organization. Clubs and Membership have embarked on a telephone campaign to win back lapsed members and better understand the reasons for not renewing. Full membership statistics can be found at: [June 2015 Membership Trend Report.pdf](#)

It should be noted that as of August 1, we have set a new record for membership since the counting methodology began in 1997. Prior to that date, we included unpaid inactive Life Members in our figures who did not pay dues and did not earn master points. This greatly overinflated membership numbers prior to 1997. Where are our new members coming from? Overwhelmingly, from retiring baby boomers...a population segment of 75 million. The questions facing the ACBL are how to continue attracting these folks, how to retain them, how to allocate resources, e.g., do we want to continue spending on school programs and juniors when we know the payoff, if any, can't be measured for 20 or 30 years? Always happy to have your thoughts as the Board faces these strategic issues.



BOARD ACTIONS

WBF MOTION

As some of you who wrote me prior to the Chicago meeting noted, there were a few controversial motions before us. One of them was a motion to have the ACBL stop paying dues to the WBF (World Bridge Federation) and have the USBF (US Bridge Federation) and CBF (Canada) pay them instead. As these two "NBO"s (National Bridge Organization) were formed to meet the requirements of the WBF that international teams be selected and sent to WBF Championships by nations rather than "Zonal Authorities" (the ACBL for Zone 2---essentially North America) this would seem to make some sense. The dues are currently assessed at \$1/member, which means around \$165K annually for the ACBL. One problem with the motion is that the combined membership of the USBF and the CBF is less than 2000 as they essentially exist only to run the qualifiers and don't provide the wide member services for our Zone as the ACBL does, thus the motion would essentially wipe out the dues to the WBF. This would be like saying that the US has decided that its dues to the UN will now be paid by NY State based only on NY's size and population because

that's where UN business gets done. In my view, the ACBL is a key member of the WBF and US players' key participants on the world stage. The motion was deferred to Denver, but its makers indicated that they would withdraw it if the WBF dues were clearly broken out in our financial reports, a condition I assure you we can meet.

6-PERSON KO'S

Many of you over the years have asked me why the Board can't "do anything" about the fact that all members of a larger than 4 KO teams receive full awards, regardless if they have only played 50% of the matches. In New Orleans, the Board passed the First Reading of a masterpoint change that would have corrected this inequity. Between New Orleans and Chicago, sponsors of pro teams, who are the chief beneficiaries of the current rule, and others launched an intense lobbying effort to convince the Board that such a change would result in decreased attendance by pros at Regionals thus disproportionately damaging room night counts and attendance. I am sorry to say that this effort succeeded. Enough Board Members who had previously supported the motion changed their votes on the Second Reading and it was defeated 10-15. One member who

changed his vote actually acknowledged that the proposed change represented the fair and correct treatment to the benefit of the majority of players, but that he believed the risks to attendance to be genuine and thought fairness should take a back seat to economics.

BOARD TERM LIMITS

This issue came before the Board for the second time in 3 years, this time in the form of a by-law amendment. The makers added a "grandfather" clause that wouldn't have started the 4-term count until 2016 hoping to assuage those they believed were voting out of personal interest, but the motion was again defeated. I voted against (again) not because I don't believe that new blood is essential and that 4 terms is enough (I do) but because, unlike a self-electing Board, ours is a representative Board elected by our Districts---and different Districts have different needs and circumstances. In my time I have seen several sitting members challenged and defeated and many more "self-limit". I see no reason to preempt the rights of the voters.

NEW APPROACH BY APPEALS COMMITTEES

The Board has amended the ACBL Handbook for Appeals Committees. Effective immediately, Appeals Committees will use the Tournament Director's ruling as their foundation rather than starting their ruling from scratch. In this scenario, appellants will be asked to explain the grounds on which they believe the TD's ruling ought to be overturned. Most often, this will have little or no effect on the outcome of the case. When the Appeals Committee decides that the TD's ruling was misjudged or simply incorrect, the ruling will be overturned. In close cases, however, where the TD ruling is reasonable and the decision could go either way, the committee will be more likely to rule with the TD than in the past. The grounds for bringing an appeal have not changed. If you believe the TD was mistaken as to the facts of the case, or the TD has applied the law incorrectly or was mistaken on a matter of bridge judgment, you can and should appeal.

**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 DAYTON!
BETH**

Other News

2015 TOURNAMENTS

Regional table count is up slightly for the first half of the year, with one additional tournament in 2015. There has been a 1% increase in total tables (93,914.0 v. 94,597.0), but average table count is down 1% (1,422.9 v. 1,411.9). Sectional tables are down 4% on eleven fewer tournaments (80,958.5 v. 77,850.6), with average tables running a 2% decrease (165.2 v. 162.5). STaC Tables show a decrease of 6% while holding six additional tournaments (62,028.0 v. 58,132.0), with average tables down 19% (1676.4 v. 1352.0). Through June, total table count is essentially flat with last year (up .07%). Face-to-face club table count is down 1.5% with online table counts showing an increase. The overall table count for club games for the first half of 2015 is 1,592,256 of which 513,443 are from online games. June table counts do not include one online club. The full report can be found at: [July 2015 Club Tbls Report.pdf](#)

THE LONGEST DAY

It appears that 2015 has been our most successful year to date for both fundraising and media exposure with 206 clubs holding games to support The Longest Day on either June 21, June 22, or both.

As of July 16, \$604,693.58 has been turned in to the Alzheimer's Association. Clubs in Canada have donated \$16,601 to the Alzheimer Society of Canada (or their local Province chapter). Combined with the donated sanction fees, it is estimated that our total raised for The Longest Day will top \$650,000.

This year more quality media placements were generated from The Longest Day than years past. At the beginning of May, the ACBL CEO went on a media/club tour to promote bridge and our partnership with the

Alzheimer's Association. The tour went to Atlanta, New York, Chicago and San Diego. In each city, members of the media and local players met with Robert. The tour generated stories with The Huffington Post, San Diego Union Tribune and Chicago Tribune – Pioneer Press.

FINANCE

The June financial results are complete and have been reported to the Finance Committee. Year to date, the decrease in Net Assets from Operations totals \$158,866, \$156,825 worse than budget and \$78,534 better than the same period last year. Tournament revenues for the first six months have been weaker than expected and the recruiting fees for several IT positions were not budgeted. Keep in mind that the first 6 months is nearly always behind forecast for the year because there is only one NABC in the first half of the year. The second 6 months brings us into line.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Mitch Hodus has joined the ACBL as the new Chief Information Officer (CIO). Mitch had come to us from Vining Sparks, a local Financial company that specialized in Fixed Income products. Prior to Vining Sparks, he held a senior IT role for Harrah's Entertainment, where he was responsible for Technology Operations for all of Harrah's Casinos, domestically and internationally as well as their 24x7x365 Help Desk and Data Center Operations. Mitch has conducted a top to bottom assessment of the ACBL technology infrastructure as well as a review of our key technology initiatives. He has found urgent infrastructure and security

needs. Accordingly, we have added \$100,000 to the capital budget to address these needs. The software projects funded for this year are not affected. The Management Technology Committee that includes our outside experts are very impressed with Mitch and agree completely with the need to address our infrastructure issues before massive software changes to ACBLScore. At their public meeting in Chicago they actually expressed relief at having some time pressures eased so they could continue the complicated work on Score and get it right. Nevertheless, they have promised a plan for 2016 in time for budget this fall.

SPLIT REGIONALS

A motion to eliminate split regionals was withdrawn. A motion to modify the rules for these regionals so dear to our District was also withdrawn for more tinkering. The makers were concerned that splits simply awarded one more regional to big Districts. Those of us in smaller Districts with only 4 allocated regionals pushed strongly for the split concept that allows our smaller units a chance to service their members. I think all will be well.

