

# SPRING 2018 ACBL Board NEWS

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## ACBL Board Member Notes

### Philadelphia NABC

The Philly NABC and Board of Directors meeting in March is in the books, and like all NABCs, it had its ups and downs. Ups: NABC table count (3% over estimates- Yay!); MP awards in selected events (more on that later); 2017 ACBL final budget numbers (a surplus of \$586K). Downs: early NABC snow (causing several Flight A NAP Pairs to miss their planes and the event itself); the 2018 ACBL budget (a projected deficit of \$471K); ACBL membership (net total down in 2017); and District 11 success in high level events (with a few exceptions – see below).

Many of you will be reading this while playing in or returning from Gatlinburg. Our District supports Gatlinburg more than any other outside its home District, and it's an annual tradition for many of you. But there's something unique about our North American Bridge Championships, and I was happy to see many of you in Philadelphia. If you missed it, that's OK – you'll have another chance this July 26-August 5, 2018 for the 2018 Summer NABC in Atlanta. It's within driving distance for most of us, and the \$149 host hotel room rate is the lowest we'll probably see ever again.

Our Board meetings in Philadelphia had a lot of what I would call "ticky-tack" motions, and I'll provide a bulleted list of the highlights. As usual, I'll maintain an approach that balances the informational content (what did the Board decide?) with opinion (why did I vote a certain way?). However, instead of an exhaustive discussion of these motions, I want to spend some time talking about the current role of the ACBL Board of Directors, discussions about how that might change, and how that body fits into the larger ACBL "ecosystem."

## New Convention Charts

Effective the start of November's Fall NABC in Honolulu, we will have 4 new convention card charts, replacing the current General Chart, Midchart, and Superchart. These aren't our convention cards, which are designed and printed by private companies, but the charts that govern which conventions are legal in different events, including tournaments and games at your local club. In its place will be 2 streamlined charts for MP-limited games and newer players (the **Basic Chart** and **Basic+ Chart**) and 2 charts for all other games (the **Open Chart**, and **Open+ Chart**).

In my opinion, this is, BY FAR, the most consequential action taken by the Board of Directors in Philadelphia. Expect articles in the Bridge Bulletin summarizing the changes, so I won't attempt to detail them here.

Conceptually, the biggest change is that the Open and Open+ Charts will be "Blacklist" charts. This means that all bidding agreements will be allowed unless they are specifically disallowed. This is different from the current convention chart structure, all of which are "Whitelist" charts (bidding agreements disallowed unless specifically allowed). Make sure you're reading the charts properly when you use them.

### TOP DISTRICT 11 MP WINNERS AT PHILADELPHIA NABC

1. Douglas Simson, Columbus OH	78.03
2. Suman Agarwal, Columbus OH	59.84
3. William Higgins, Cincinnati OH	58.52
4. Yauheni Siutsau, Loveland OH	58.52
5. Anita Torrence, Bexley OH	57.39
6. Cheryl Schneider, Westerville OH	54.67
7. Toni Bales, Pickerington OH	44.27
8. Marshall Lewis, Bloomington IN	31.43
9. Stephen Moese, West Chester OH	26.91
10. Suanne Blair, Morehead KY	26.13
11. John Jensen, Maysville KY	26.13
12. Bill Cook, Louisville KY	24.62
13. Charles Kopp, Columbus OH	22.22
14. Gregory Potts, Portsmouth OH	22.22
15. E Bruce Neikirk, Louisville KY	20.83
16. Joseph Rice, Winchester KY	20.83
17. Matt Granovetter, Cincinnati OH	20.41
18. Mary Jane Gladfelter, Columbus OH	20.26
19. Michael Gladfelter, Columbus OH	20.26
20. Larry Jones, Pickerington OH	19.96
21. John Bishel, Columbus OH	19.65
22. Tom Bishel, Columbus OH	19.65
23. Thomas McDow V, Bexley OH	17.92
24. Mike Ma, Cincinnati OH	17.54
25. Tim Kington, Dublin OH	17.51
26. Corey Sanders, Hilliard OH	17.51
27. A.J. Stephani, Cincinnati OH	16.48
28. Alex Khrakovsky, Columbus OH	16.08
29. Mike Marlin, Versailles KY	13.41
30. Sandra Marlin, Versailles KY	13.41
31. Shirley Mueller, Louisville KY	13.25
32. Judith Zimmerman, Columbus OH	12.81
33. Shan Au, Westerville OH	12.49
34. Terry James, Upper Arlington OH	12.09
35. Henjin Chi, Terre Haute IN	11.40
36. Michael Miedema, Terre Hautw IN	11.40
37. Beth Dlutowski, Louisville KY	10.08
38. Don Byrkett, Oxford OH	9.72
39. Paula Byrkett, Oxford OH	9.72
40. Stuart Ray, Louisville KY	9.42
41. Judy Ruehl, Batavia OH	9.15
42. Peggy Ammon, Burlington KY	8.95
43. John Taylor, Burlington KY	8.95
44. Pamela Granovetter, Cincinnati OH	8.47
45. Michael Purcell, Loveland OH	7.06
46. Linda Bodien, Columbus OH	6.87
47. Melissa Warheit, Columbus OH	6.87
48. Judith Auer, Dublin OH	6.78
49. James Liacos, Columbus OH	6.72
50. Betty Murdock, Cincinnati OH	6.38

Once we got through the slush of the first few days' snow, **Philadelphia** did a great job hosting the 2018 Spring NABC. Table count was robust the entire tournament, and many of us enjoyed the fabulous Reading Market across the street for meals in between sessions.



Our Men's Board of Directors walking group braved the brisk Philly mornings most days, and of course, we had to make the Philadelphia Art Museum (site of the famous Rocky steps) one of our stops.



(A.J. with fellow BOD member Mark Aquino)

Philadelphia holds fond memories for me, as it was the first NABC attended by my son, Isaac, back in 2012. He will tell you that, more than anything else, the social aspects of that NABC was the reason he got hooked on bridge. If you have a child or grandchild that even knows a little bridge, do yourself a favor and invite them to the [2018 Youth Summer NABC](#) on August 2-4 in Atlanta (click the link for the flyer). The full NABC runs from July 26-August 5.

- **Masterpoint Awards at Sectionals with Concurrent NLM Regionals.** This allows tournaments to count 65% of the tables at NLM Regionals towards the MP awards of sectionals held concurrently and at the same location (20-4-1). Many Districts hold NLM Regionals in conjunction with Open Sectionals. Like all motions that change the MP award of an event, this will require a second reading in Atlanta. I voted in favor of this motion.
- **MP Awards for NAP/GNT District Finals.** Increases District stage awards for NAP and GNT Finals and increases the percentage of MP awards in Flight C events that are paid in gold (22-3-0). I voted in favor of this motion.

I know how much work went into the new charts by our terrific Competition and Conventions (C&C) Committee, one of our Committees that is NOT populated by members of the Board of Directors (more on that in a minute). I was both slightly amused and tickled that the motion to adopt the new Charts, discussion on the motion, and the vote itself (25-0-0)\*, took, maybe, 45 seconds. Moving on, as it were . . .

\* Where votes of the Board are noted, the tally will be given with the Ayes first, then the Nays, then the Abstentions (e.g., 15-9-1 would be 15 in favor, 9 opposed, with 1 person abstaining).

## NAP Results

The Grass Roots highlight for the Spring NABC are the Finals for the North American Pairs. Our District finalists will uniformly tell you that you that the competition is stepped up a notch at the National Finals, so even making the second day of the Finals is quite an accomplishment. By my count, 6 of our 11 pairs qualified for the second day, including all 4 of our Flight B pairs, so we did quite well. Alas, Day 2 did not turn out as well as hoped, as our best finish was Greg Potts and Charles Kopp, who finished 13th overall in Flight A. Michael Miedema and Henjin Chi finished 17<sup>th</sup> in Flight B, and John Taylor and Peggy Ammon finished 23<sup>rd</sup> in Flight B.

In other NABC overall finishes, Suman Agarwal (with teammates Mac Busby, Vladislav Isporski, and Yatindra Sahae) finished 3/4 in the Mini-Vandy (the 10K KO), Cheryl Schneider and Anita Torrence finished 5th in the Smith Life Master Women's Pairs and then 32nd in the NABC Fast Pairs, Toni Bales (with partner Kamla Chawla) finished 6th in the Smith Life Master Women's Pairs, and Steve Moese and Mike Ma (with teammates Molly O'Neill and Michael Wolf) finished 14th in the 10K Swiss Teams.

## ACBL Board Actions

Here's a truncated summary of the action taken on some of our motions from Philadelphia, with my vote indicated.

- **Unit 154 Transfer.** The Board approved the petition of Unit 154, our neighbors in Northern Indiana, to transfer from District 8 to District 12 (Michigan and the Toledo area) (17-6-2). I voted in favor of this motion.
- **Gold Points in NLM Regionals.** This motion increases the percentage of MP awards in NLM Regionals that are gold from 25% to 33%. (22-1-2). I voted in favor of this motion.

• **NAP/GNT Qualifiers in Limited Events at Clubs.** This motion would have allowed clubs to count the tables playing in limited NAP/GNT club qualifying games in the MP formula for concurrently-running Open club events. I thought it odd that this was not already allowed, and didn't see a good reason not to do it. However, the motion failed (4-21-0). I voted in favor of this motion.

• **STaC Event Adjustments.** Two motions came back to us after being voted down in San Diego. I didn't feel that the motions were at all clear or well-thought out last fall, and the resurrected motions weren't much better. If we can't easily understand what a motion achieves, I don't think it should become policy. The first motion allows clubs some daily schedule flexibility when running STaC games, which seems fine in theory. However, we spent considerable time parsing the language of the proposed rule, and I'm still not sure I understand it as written. It passed anyway (22-3-0). I voted against the motion.

The second STaC motion requires common hands to be played by all participating clubs and will theoretically require matchpointing across the entire field. Clubs who do not use pre-duplicated hands will receive a reduced 65% STaC award. This motion also passed (17-8-0). I voted against the motion, for several reasons. First, several experienced directors expressed doubt that the mechanics of the policy could even be achieved using ACBLScore. Second, I believe that the pre-duplicated hand requirement gives STaC events a false veneer of fairness. I won't go into much detail here, but, in short, the variance produced by the uneven field strength of STaC events FAR outweighs the variance produced by playing different hands. STaC events were conceptualized poorly, in my opinion, and we have never addressed the problem of the large/small club problem in STaC events.

• **Spring NABC Schedule Adjustments.** We voted (21-3-1) to move the IMP Pairs from the first Friday and Saturday to the first Sunday and Monday, with a correlative change of the Silver Ribbon Pairs from the first Sunday and Monday to the first Friday and Saturday. This solves the "NABC gap" problem for players under 60; before this fix, there were no NABC events available on the first Monday and Sunday (I went to New York to visit some friends for these days during the Philly NABC). The result is that, for the first NABC weekend, eligible players will have the option of playing in the Kay Platinum Pairs, the 0-10,000 Swiss Teams, or the Leventritt Silver Ribbon Pairs. That should accommodate almost everyone. We also voted unanimously to move the NAP B and C Finals to the final weekend of the NABC, where it was held for many years before being moved to avoid a conflict with the Red Ribbon Pairs. The Red Ribbons were moved to the Summer NABC several years ago, obviating the conflict. I voted in favor of both motions.

• **Bylaws Amendments.** A second vote on the much-discussed (and much-anticipated) term limits amendment was postponed until Atlanta, in part to coincide with a package of bylaws amendments addressing a wide variety of technical and legal issues. An Executive Summary of these amendments can be found in the May issue of the Bridge Bulletin. We passed the new package of Bylaws amendments (24-0-0-1).



Steve Moese and Mike Purcell were on one of the 153 teams entered for the Jacoby Open Swiss!

## Some Thoughts on Governance



I was thrilled to play in the NABC Fast Pairs with Penn student and Cincinnati Junior JD Kurtzman!

I've already spent a lot of the between-meeting Committee work in 2018 on the questions surrounding the ways the ACBL should govern itself. I know it's not the most interesting subject, but it does affect the long-term health of the organization, and the choices we make about our governance reflects our values.

The ACBL Board of Directors has long been an "active" Board; the scope of issues we routinely address is enormous. We decide all manner of questions involving masterpoints: how many should be awarded, their pigmentation (gold, silver, etc.), whether online points should be included, etc. We decide the schedule of NABC events. We decide questions surrounding the myriad of Conditions of Contest for all sorts of events. We act as the final arbiter of all disciplinary and ethical violations. Just within the last 5 days, we have been asked to look at questions involving: (1) how to fix a programming error awarding Blue Ribbon Qualifiers to the wrong people; (2) how to transition from the Districts' and Units' reliance on

Pianola for e-mail messaging to some other platform; (3) Canadian tournament surcharges for lapsed members; and (4) how to move forward concerning serious financial problems of a Unit out west. I could go on and on, but you get the point.

With 25 members on the Board, it's possible to take on such a large range of issues, but no one feels that having such a large Board makes us efficient at doing so. More importantly, assuming responsibility for all these tasks leaves us without ample time to ask ourselves whether these issues are best addressed through some other mechanism. We have several Committees, such as the Competition and Conventions (C&C) Committee that developed the new convention charts discussed earlier, that do really fantastic work. The expertise of the members of these Committees is tremendous; the C&C Committee includes the likes of Jeff Meckstroth, Chris Compton, Tom Carmichael, and many other top players. Our Ethical Oversight Committee acts upon charges brought by ACBL Management as the ACBL disciplinary body in cases of alleged cheating. The ACBL Disciplinary Committee is the body charged with hearing less serious charges. The Laws Commission prepares the laws under which both duplicate and rubber bridge games are governed. We have a Goodwill Committee, a Charity Committee, an NABC Tournament Committee, and an NABC Tournament Appeals Committee. And this doesn't even begin to scratch the surface; think of how many Committees exist at the District, Unit, or club level.

Of course, ACBL management should be empowered to address most of these questions. When needed, Committees can supplement management's decision making process by providing needed expertise and experience. Arguably, they are much better suited to this task than the Board of Directors. Our Board President, Jay Whipple, has formed a joint Board of Directors/Board of Governors Task Force to examine these kinds of issues this year. I hope we can offer a path forward.

I hope to see you at Cincinnati's Flying Pig Regional coming up June 11-17 at the Ramada Inn Sharonville, directly across the street from the Sharonville Convention Center. Until then, I am always available by phone (513-313-0488) or e-mail (AJStephani@gmail.com) with questions or concerns.

May At Least Half Your Finesses Work,

A.J.

What's Next?