

SUMMER 2017 ACBL Board NEWS

A.J. Stephani, District 11 Director@acbl.org

ACBL Board Member Notes

Toronto NABC

Hi All! The Toronto was a terrific NABC all around (except, at least for some of us, our performance at the bridge table). Uniform acclaim for the tournament venue and organization, higher than expected attendance, and a productive set of meetings for the ACBL Board of Directors produced a fun-filled 2 weeks north of the border. We had fewer motions than normal, which thankfully reduced the overall formality of our meetings. As I mentioned in the Spring, I want to keep these newsletters focused on decisions that matter most to our players while maintaining a reasonable length. I also want to balance the informational content (what did the Board decide?) with opinion (why did I vote a certain way?). Of course, I will continue to give shout outs to wins and high level finishes at NABCs by players from our District.



New CEO

I'm thrilled to introduce Bahar Gidwani as the ACBL's new CEO! Bahar succeeded Robert Hartman, who resigned to manage his family's business in Florida, on July 1st.

Bahar's credentials are impressive (a full bio can be seen here: <http://www.acbl.org/gidwani-accepts-position-as-acbls-top-executive/>), but his passion and enthusiasm for our great game really stand out. He was also born in Columbus, OH, further enhancing the reputation of District 11 as the birthplace of bridge greatness! One of my colleagues noted the remarkable speed with which he has understood the entire complicated ACBL ecosystem – we're lucky to have found him. To me, he takes a long-term view on the role of the ACBL and the future of bridge that we desperately need. I suspect that changes are afoot at ACBL HQ in Horn Lake, and though you may not notice them at the club level right away, keep an eye on developments. They may affect you more than you suspect.

In the meantime, if you have the pleasure of meeting Bahar in person, I'm sure you will find him as charming, witty, and brilliant as the rest of us have.

TOP DISTRICT 11 MP WINNERS AT TORONTO NABC

1. Pamela Granovetter, Cincinnati OH	59.19
2. Mary Jane Gladfelter, Columbus OH	38.02
3. Michael Gladfelter, Columbus OH	38.02
4. Bob Fisk, Cincinnati OH	35.17
5. Jerry Clerkin, Bloomington IN	32.50
6. Douglas Simson, Columbus OH	31.24
7. Dennis Clerkin, Bloomington IN	30.50
8. Reeta Brendamour, Cincinnati OH	29.67
9. Larry Jones, Pickerington OH	28.07
10. Douglas Millsap, Columbus OH	28.07
11. A.J. Stephani, Cincinnati OH	27.85
12. Isaac Stephani, Cincinnati OH	27.59
13. Jon Brissman, Indianapolis IN	24.28
14. Suman Agarwal, Columbus OH	22.76
15. Kevin Henry, Cincinnati OH	22.50
16. Barry Wauligman, Hamilton OH	22.50
17. John Williams, Cincinnati OH	22.50
18. Kimberly Music, Lewis Center OH	19.39
19. Russell Shoup, Dayton OH	18.03
20. Bill Cook, Louisville KY	17.86
21. Toni Bales, Pickerington OH	17.34
22. Howard Sanders, Hilliard OH	17.26
23. Ryan Schultz, Dayton OH	14.75
24. Peter Whipple, Mason OH	14.75
25. Marc Low, Centerville OH	12.77
26. Peggy Saunier, Lexington KY	12.42
27. Judy Wright, Georgetown KY	12.42
28. Matt Granovetter, Cincinnati OH	11.94
29. Bobby Carter, Cincinnati OH	11.53
30. Carolyn Lewis, Louisville KY	11.36
31. Sandra Forsythe, Centerville OH	10.75
32. Steven Forsythe, Centerville OH	10.75
33. Craig Satersmoen, Huber Heights OH	9.81
34. John Bishel, Columbus OH	9.67
35. Tom Bishel, Columbus OH	9.67
36. Judith Auer, Dublin OH	8.47
37. Alex Khrakovsky, Columbus OH	8.44
38. James Bishel, Columbus OH	8.22
39. Martin Gibler, West Chester OH	8.20
40. Stacy Vanstone, West Chester OH	8.20
41. Sarah Sentman, Scott Depot WV	7.22
42. Pam Campbell, Fairfield OH	7.17
43. Judy Barron, Cincinnati OH	6.98
44. Stephen Moese, West Chester OH	6.59
45. Terry James, Upper Arlington OH	6.52
46. Cheryl Schneider, Westerville OH	6.52
47. Joyce Penn, Columbus OH	5.74
48. Gail Slater, Louisville KY	5.31
49. Katherine Zimmerman, Louisville KY	5.31
50. Michael Hill, Columbus OH	5.09
51. Mae Hill, Columbus OH	5.09

Future NABC Locations

You may have noticed that the response to the hotel and venue at the Orlando NABC last fall was underwhelming, to say the least. Restaurant choices were very limited, and Disney pricing was in full effect. Parking was a nightmare for local players, and it all added up to attendance figures well below estimates. Unfortunately, we were scheduled to return to the same venue in 2022 (contract negotiation with large hotels is complicated, and often involves a multi-year commitment). However, ACBL Management heard the concerns from our Orlando NABC attendees and set about canceling the contract with the Orlando hotel.

I'm pleased to announce that we unanimously approved a new contract for the Fall 2022 NABC with the Phoenix Convention Center and the Hyatt Regency Hotel. ACBL Tournament staff are really excited about the growth and development in downtown Phoenix, and we expect to easily recoup the cancellation fee we paid to get out of the Orlando contract. We also approved the Summer 2023 NABC to be held at the Sheraton Grand in Chicago – this is a different venue from the last time we were in Chicago, but it's a terrific waterfront location just north of Navy Pier. You'll love it.

“Stop” Card Gone

The Stop Card (and the skip bid warning) is now gone (21-4-0)*, effective January 1, 2018. The Board agreed that it was used inconsistently, and quite often for inappropriate purposes (*i.e.*, to alert one's partner that they are making a skip bid).

* 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).



Three notes:

1. This does NOT change the requirement to wait 10 seconds after an opposing player's skip bid. The rule advises the person waiting the mandatory 10 seconds to give "the appearance of studying his hand and not in excess time to determine a choice of bids."
2. The rule will be in effect in all ACBL tournaments, but clubs remain free to use the Stop Card. I recommend slowly phasing out its use over a period of time.

3. The Board took this action based largely on the near-unanimous recommendation of the Competitions & Conventions (C&C) Committee, one of the many Committees and task forces that the Board of Directors uses to investigate complex or technical questions. I believe strongly that the Board should defer to these Committees whenever possible, as they are typically much better situated to determine the appropriate course of action. In this case, the C&C Committee is a fantastic resource (the Committee has many national and world champions), and vastly more qualified than the BOD to balance the pros and cons of decisions like these. We on the Board of Directors should respect the process we've established. The C&C Committee is working on a complete re-write of our convention charts, so look for news on that front in coming newsletters.

LIFETIME MASTERPOINT LEADERS - ACBL DISTRICT 11

1. Dennis Clerkin, Bloomington IN	27,449
2. Norman Coombs, Brookville IN	25,737
3. Jerry Clerkin, Bloomington IN	25,196
4. Matt Granovetter, Cincinnati OH	19,715
5. Russell Shoup, Dayton OH	17,279
6. Ulker Mutlu, Dayton OH	16,381
7. Pamela Granovetter, Cincinnati OH	14,454
8. Jim Bachelder, Columbus OH	14,229
9. Robert Sulgrove, Centerville OH	13,430
10. Marc Low, Centerville OH	12,595
11. Dennis Hesthaven, Louisville KY	11,096
12. Vickie Sebastian, Beavercreek OH	11,009
13. Anita Torrence, Bexley OH	10,826
14. William Higgins, Cincinnati OH	10,592
15. Douglas Simson, Columbus OH	10,423

CDR Revisions

Anyone who has needed to use our Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR) understands how complex our disciplinary processes are. The Board passed (24-0-1) a number of changes that will hopefully clarify and simplify the process in some situations.

Some of the most significant changes include:

- Negotiated resolutions, commonly known as plea bargains. If a reasonable agreed resolution can be reached, we can reduce the work on our committees and eliminate all appeals.
- Simplified procedures, including the elimination of formal motion practice
- An expanded “Definitions” section that clarifies some ambiguous terminology
- More flexibility for sanctions involving the removal of masterpoints

Club Game Lesson Hands

Regular club games with a masterpoint limit of 20 or less (0-5, 0-10, 0-20) are now allowed to use prepared lesson hands for teaching purposes. A prepared hand is one set up to allow students to practice a specific skill. The game must consist of at least six but no more than 12 boards and be held in conjunction with lessons. The Board unanimously believed that our first ACBL masterpoints often serves as the bait for the ACBL membership hook. We’re not talking huge numbers of MPs here (.12 might be typical for the winner), so reports of masterpoint inflation because of this measure are greatly exaggerated.

WBF Dues

Perhaps the most complex, and controversial, motion before the Board in Toronto was the question of whether we should continue to pay dues to the World Bridge Federation (WBF) and how to manage our relationship with our National Bridge Organizations (NBOs). The ACBL is the largest bridge organization in North America, but not the only one: The United States Bridge Federation, Canadian Bridge Federation, and Mexican Bridge Federation, as NBOs, are responsible for selecting and supporting their respective countries’ teams in international competition. They also must pay dues to the WBF proportional to their membership (which is substantially the same as the ACBL membership). It’s a complicated tangle of relationships, with a complicated history. As ACBL members, our support for bridge played in international settings comes from different sources, pays for different kinds of expenses, and has different levels of support among the members of the ACBL Board of Directors.

Through last year, the ACBL effectively paid the WBF dues on behalf of our NBOs (totaling around \$155,000). The motion in Toronto gradually reduced ACBL support for these dues over a period of years, zeroing out in 2022. We had a spirited debate, soliciting input from both Presidents of the USBF and CBF. The motion passed by the narrowest of margins (12-11-2).

I voted against the motion, for several reasons. First, I have concerns that the NBOs will have the tools and capacity to raise the funds necessary to pay these dues. The ACBL created these

Toronto was a blast! Including BOD meetings, I was there for 2 full weeks, so it became a home away from home. I saw many of our players, and I think most everyone came home with lots of great memories (if not lots of MPs).



The Blue Jays were in town the second week of the tournament, and many of us got away from the bridge tables to take in a game or two. The Rogers Centre (also known as the Skydome) was about 20 steps away from the tournament venue! Toronto has a surplus of fantastic restaurants, and it proved to be an ideal location to blend bridge and some sightseeing.



If you haven’t seen it already, check out this clip from CBC’s The National, Canada’s flagship news show:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/thenational/for-card-loving-bridge-players-attracting-youth-is-ultimate-puzzle-1.4230018>

It’s perfect for re-posting on your Facebook page or forwarding to your non-bridge playing friends. I’ve already had 4 people tell me they want to learn bridge after seeing this!

Next up on the NABC schedule is **San Diego**, which takes place November 23-December 3. SoCal’s famous weather promises a respite from our late fall blues, so make your reservation today!

organizations at the behest of the WBF in 2001, and now it seems a little like we're hanging them out to dry. Supporters of the motion spoke about how we would assist the NBOs with fundraising opportunities, but I was not convinced there would be any kind of concrete plan put in place. Most critically, I believe the WBF funding question is inseparable from the WBF governance question (the ACBL currently elects all the members to its 5 allocated spots on the WBF Executive Council). The motion did not address the question of who would elect these representatives going forward, and I thought that both issues must be addressed at the same time.



Lexington Players Top WorldWide Bridge Game

Despite the absence of District 11 players at the top of National Championship leaderboards in Toronto, I want to give a shout out to Lexington area players Blaine Mullins and Morgan Schreffler, who topped the entire ACBL in the Worldwide Bridge Contest held on June 2-3 with a 74.47% game! This year's game had a little extra incentive, as the top 24 pairs in the world won a trip to China to play for a \$20,000 prize in the 2017 World Wide Bridge Finals in September. Four of those pairs are ACBL members, and Blaine and Morgan head the list. Way to go, guys!

Personal Thoughts

I'm now a couple of meetings into my term as member of the Board of Directors, and I'm acquiring a sense of the culture of the Board. Culture is a largely a product of its people, and though 25 people is a large group, I've gotten to know most of them quite well. For the most part, I'm impressed by their dedication to our great game and the hard work they put into our Board and Committee meetings.

One idea that's starting to crystallize is how our Board of Directors thinks about itself in terms of NABCs. We talk about "the Washington meeting," or date Board actions as "in Seattle" . . . you get the idea. One of the more outlandish motions we decided in Toronto would have changed the meeting schedule of the Board to twice per year: once at the Summer NABC and once in January at a location near ACBL Headquarters. Everyone knew the motion was doomed – it was outlandish because it would have required the Board to completely re-think its work flow, its structure, its relationship to the rest of the organization, and, in essence, its identity. I voted for the motion (it failed, 3-22-0), in large part because I believe this kind of soul-searching is exactly what we need.

We are privileged to host ACBL President Bob Heller at the Louisville/Lexington Regional in November, so make a point of introducing yourself if you see him. We've got the Dayton Regional coming up September 4-10, so I hope to see you there. 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.