

Inside the Boardroom
with
Barbara Nist
Pittsburgh, Spring 2005

While no one from the district won a National Championship, two pairs from District 19 finished second Bryan Maksymetz and Dan Jacob in the Flight A North American Pairs and Helen Abbott and Polly Dunn in the National Women's Pairs. Our congratulations to both pairs for great games.

The Powell River Duplicate Club, Powell River, BC has been selected as the 1 Star Jane Johnson club of the year. The club manager is Gail Fennell. Recipients of the Jane Johnson award are clubs that demonstrate the kind of extraordinary member service which was the essence of Jane. How members participate in their clubs is a precursor to how they will act at sectionals and regionals. It is not merely the activities offered that make one club rise over the next, but it is in the attitude of its participants. Our congratulations to the members of the Powell River Duplicate for bringing this honor to our district.

In my opinion Pittsburgh was a below average tournament location, the local committee did a great job with hospitality, but there were problems with players having to walk in freezing weather and then having to fight for space in the 2 elevators or walk up 2 double flights of stairs to get to the playing site. There was a huge convention center, but I believe that the regional events were held in sub lighted space. We had over 9,000 tables, a relatively low turn out for Spring NABC's. The Board of Directors are again looking into ways to prevent future problems such as these and possibly changing some of our contracts to move to more favorable locations.

The board meetings were rather uneventful as more and more debate is being done by email prior to the meetings resulting in a number of motions being withdrawn or management offering to make the changes without legislation.

Linda Mamula assumed the seat of Chairman of the Board of Governors. District 19 to continue provide leadership to ACBL and the National Board of Representatives can certainly benefit from her advice to our board.

Jerry Fleming, District 17, was again elected Treasurer.

Presidential Appointments:

Jan Martel, Cecil Cook, and Amalya Kearse were appointed to the Hall of Fame Committee.

Jade Barrett was appointed to a three year term and Bob Hamman, Chip Martel, Peggy Sutherland, Steven Weinstein, and Bob Swartz were appointed to one year terms on the Competitions and Convention Committee.

Mildred Breed, Paul Soloway, Dick Budd, Rose Meltzer and Jo Morse were appointed for three year terms to the Ethical Oversight Committee.

Lisa Berkowitz, Tom Peters, Martin Caley were appointed for three year terms to the Disciplinary Committee.

Real Estate:

It was recommended that we actively pursue the sale of our current facility. The building is too large for our use, and due to the decline in the neighborhood environment, renters have moved out of our space to safer locations. Since the meeting ACBL has received an offer to purchase which the real estate committee has turned down as not being attractive enough.

Regional Tournament Allocations:

A sub committee has been appointed to review the Regional Tournament Allocations. This committee has requested that we:

1. Provide a list of our priority dates.
2. Define how our district identifies conflicts.

Century Club:

A Century Club will be established for our members that reach 100 years of age and an appropriate mention will be made in the Bulletin of the achievement.

Uniforms:

ACBL will request each Zone 2 NBO establish an appropriate dress code for teams representing the NBO's country in international competition.

Youth Camps:

ACBL is working with several national organizations to add bridge to their camping venues. Management has been requested to provide an updated report in Atlanta.

Junior Fund Games:

Monies raised from Junior Fund games will be available for all Junior activities. The first \$50,000 or the amount collected annually, whichever is less, will be given in July of the following year to the USBF to fund Junior Team activities.

Board Operations:

The President will make the official response to any correspondence addressed to the BOD. BOD should not individually reply to correspondence directed to the BOD.

The President should immediately implement the policy passed last year that a Board Oversight Committee be appointed to address issues of conflict within the board.

Code of Disciplinary Regulations:

Several amendments were made to the code mostly in verbage. There were no substantive changes.

Redistricting and Unit Size:

I am pleased to announce that management has decided after much discussion that membership numbers should not be the criteria for units. There may be future requirements for unit status, but the minimum number of members will not be reconsidered.

I am serving on the committee evaluating the needs to redistrict and where, if necessary, the district boundaries should be established.

Bridge Is Booming:

The ACBL had a record-setting year in 2004 with the highest number of tournament tables of all time—463,409. Membership continues to rise with a final 2004 number of 168,380, the highest number since 1996. Retention of first-year members has increased from 62 to 66 percent—the ACBL will work this year to improve this number.

Goodwill Anniversary:

2005 will be a special year for the ACBL as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Goodwill Committee. We're launching a number of special promotions, including a poster with these Top 10 Goodwill Gestures:

Greet and Welcome Opponents
Always Say, "Director, Please"
Lead or Place Dummy *before* You Write
Mentor a New Player
Say, "Thank You, Partner"
Compliment Opponent's Play
Discuss Hands *after* the Game
Accept Defeat *and* Victory with Grace
Leave a Tidy Table
Smile Often!

2005 Goodwill Days

Monday, March 14

Monday, July 25

Monday, Nov. 21

Club Support for North American Pairs:

With lower costs and strong promotion, clubs hosted a whopping 66% more North American Pairs tables in 2004—with a total of 38,224 for all local events. The number of clubs participating increased from 1430 to 3099. Even with the lower costs, the increase enabled the NAP budget to remain stable.

Support for Clubs and Teachers:

Teachers signed up 1079 new members during our special ABTA recruitment drive during October, November and December—110 more than during those three months in 2003. As a

result, the ACBL is delighted to send the American Bridge Teachers Association a check for \$5395. These funds will be used to enhance the summer convention and for other programs.

The Cooperative Advertising Program rebates will continue in 2005. Our clubs and teachers received \$113,834 in advertising rebates during 2004--\$48,075 more than the previous year.

As of Jan.1, club officials and teachers who recruit 25 new members during a calendar year will receive a \$100 gift certificate to the ACBL Product Store. Gift certificates in the past were for \$50.

Encourage members to take advantage of the ACBL's support for local events—senior games, health fairs, etc. We will send a variety of promotional items, including an ACBL display. The ACBL supported zero of these special events in 2002, seven in 2003 and 22 in 2004. We also now exhibit at major national events such as the AARP Convention.

Support for Units:

The ACBL Board of Directors recently approved an increase in the quarterly rebate units receive for their members. Units will receive 11% of full dues payments and Life Master service fees. Instead of \$3.50 per full dues member and \$2.75 per service fee member, units will receive \$3.85 and \$3.52 effective Jan. 1, 2005, increasing the total unit rebate program from approximately \$493,000 this year to \$560,000 in 2005—a \$67,000 increase. As a result, the ACBL has discontinued the Unit Marketing Incentive Program. This program rewarded membership growth by percentage. Last year, this program distributed \$54,000 to only about one-third of the units—so, in fact, there will be more funds for all units in 2005. Qualifying units will receive their 2004 incentive program funds.

Bridge Benefits:

The benefits of bridge are documented. For example, the Washington Post reported on the results of a study released by Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York in 2003: "Playing chess, bridge or a musical instrument significantly lowers the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, according to the most comprehensive study to examine the benefits of challenging intellectual activity among the elderly." Parade Magazine followed up in 2004 with a report that: "To be sure you have a 'full deck' later in life, play bridge."

Here's to a great tournament in Victoria.

Barbara