

August 2023

Members of District 18 and District 19,

Bronia Jenkins, our new ACBL Executive Director, brings tremendous commitment, passion, enthusiasm and energy to her position and to bridge administration. She is innovative, inclusive, collaborative and doesn't shrink from difficult issues. The ACBL Board's summer meetings in Chicago in July were a great opportunity to spend time with Bronia as a board and individually. At this link you can find a report on matters taken up by the ACBL Board during its summer meetings: https://wasumi.org/BoardInformation/2023_Summer_ACBL_Board_Report.pdf

I found NABC Chicago quite enjoyable and, in my view, a substantial improvement over the Summer 2015 NABC in Chicago. Playing areas in the Sheraton were excellent and restrooms were not a 10-minute hike from the table. Excellent restaurants are within easy walking distance. There is a nice river walk along the south side of the hotel and the weather was conducive to frequent strolls.

2023 Spring and Summer NABC table counts at New Orleans (7,124) and Chicago (8,343) were each up about 900 tables from 2022 spring and summer NABCs. Overall, face-to-face bridge is coming back and online play is declining a bit. Year-to-date F2F club table count is up on the order of 40% over 2022; virtual club games are down about 50%; and BBO play is down about 15%. The number of regional and sectional tournaments has been increasing to a large percentage of that pre-COVID. Tournament table counts vary widely – most within 45-60% of pre-COVID numbers, but some reaching counts near or at their pre-COVID numbers. Attendance of intermediates and newcomers is down substantially from pre-COVID; this appears to reflect the substantial drop in new members joining during the pandemic and recent new members not having a longer term experience of F2F tournament play.

Regina Regional

In May I headed to the Regina Regional. What a fantastic experience! Jan Carter and her crew of volunteers planned, organized and ran an exceptional tournament. Saskatchewanians are a most welcoming and friendly folk. Hospitality was off the charts. I joined the Regina Duplicate Bridge Club's pizza and beer party on Friday evening. Saturday dinner for all was arranged by the tournament organizers. Don Norman graciously agreed to be my partner and we had a great time before, during and after sessions of play. Everyone reminded me that Jordan Eberle, a Seattle Kraken captain, is a native son of Regina. It was an unforgettable experience!

GNTs and NAPs

Jeff Ford, Kevin Bolan, Kim Eng and Eric Sieg, representing D19, won the GNT Flight A

championship in Chicago. Well done and congratulations!

A work group of Board members is taking a look at policies, plans and financials related to Grass Roots events and plans to bring forward information and proposals for the Board's review and consideration during its fall meeting in Atlanta. The work group has been gathering information and input from the districts on GNT and NAP attendance at the district finals stage, F2F vs online district finals and associated security provisions, grass roots funds, district policies on subsidies to those who represent the district at the finals held at NABCs, retaining or revising the current number of flights, and the approach to conditions of contest. Thank you to the D18 and D19 officials to whom I reached out and who have provided valuable input for this project.

2027 Fall NABC

By 2027 it will have been 16 years since an NABC was held in the Northwest – the Seattle Fall 2011 NABC. After exploring several Northwest site alternatives, the NABC Site Selection Committee recommended Seattle, WA as the location for the fall 2027 NABC. A site visit to the Summit Convention Center and Hyatt Regency (host hotel) was conducted on June 21-22, 2023. The tournament's financial projection looks solid and there are many other positives – excellent playing space, many nearby restaurants, bars and attractions, a high walkability rating and an affordable host hotel room rate of \$189. The Board unanimously supported Seattle as the site for the fall 2027 NABC.

Policy concerning ACBL's listing of top lifetime masterpoint® holders

ACBL maintains and periodically publishes a listing of top lifetime masterpoint® holders. That the listing is published annually in the *Bridge Bulletin* is an acknowledgement of the significance of – and broad interest in – the achievements of players on the list. At a recent sectional tournament, I was in a conversation with players who pointed out that apparently some players have been removed from the listing as a result of not being current in remittance of dues, or possibly for other reasons. Diminishing players' achievements by removal from the listing should only be done based on a clear, well-reasoned policy.

It may well be proper to remove players from the listing as a result of certain disciplinary violations, expulsion, or other circumstances. At the same time, there should be acknowledgement and consideration that members' ages, infirmities, changes in life circumstances, and other factors might contribute to an inability or lack of capacity to remit dues or to otherwise fulfill criteria required for inclusion on the listing of top lifetime masterpoint® holders. Accordingly, I brought forward in Chicago a discussion item to address the situation. This led to the board's decision to review existing criteria for inclusion or removal from the list. The review, to be conducted by management and the Bridge Committee, may result in policy changes and/or modifications to the Codification.

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