

Message from Region 13 Director Tim White

Happy New Year Members of Districts 18 and 19,

I'd like to offer a few thoughts as I embark on a three-year term serving and working with members of Districts 18 and 19 as Region 13 Director on the ACBL Board.

Thank you to those who share views, concerns and suggestions, including those who did so in the course of the Region 13 Director election last summer. Input is appreciated and helps inform understandings, views and thinking on challenges confronting bridge.

While addressing challenges of the effects of COVID on bridge; cheating in online play; viability of clubs, units and districts; and membership decline; it's important to recognize and thank club owners/managers, teachers, officials, administrators, and the thousands of bridge volunteers whose dedication and contributions enable our game to function. I appreciate the opportunity to meet and work with many of these folks across Districts 18 and 19.

Our region is unique. It's the only one of the thirteen with territory in Canada and the US. It comprises one-third the geographical area of ACBL's regions. It has 46 diverse units – large and small – more than any other region. And our districts operate in two currencies. These characteristics bring challenges that administrators and organizers must contend with and must be accounted for in ACBL's policies and processes.

Connecting with constituencies across Region 13 is a top priority for me. I will be traveling throughout Districts 18 and 19 to meet with members, officials and volunteers; play bridge; and attend district board meetings and other events. I don't claim to have solutions to all our problems, or foresee optimal policies for all our complex issues. However, dialog with constituencies will help me account for the interests of all stakeholders in my approach as a board member whose fiduciary responsibilities include formulating organizational objectives, strategy, and policies, and reviewing and overseeing functions and performance of ACBL Management.

I've had requests to discuss the reorganization of the ACBL Board of Directors now underway. The 25 ACBL districts will remain as they are and function as they have, each with its own bridge operations, finances and administration. ACBL's regions, groupings of contiguous districts with consideration to membership totals within each, are entities for selection of members of the reduced-size board. Regions are not an addition layer of administration. In route to a 13-member board, elections during 2021 seated 8 Region Directors in 2022. Elections will seat 4 more regional directors in 2023 and one in 2024. Varying initial lengths of term will yield three "classes" of directors with staggered three-year terms upon the conclusion of the transition period. In accordance with New York State corporate law, District Directors in regions that have elected Region Directors are entitled to serve out any unexpired portion of their terms. In 2022 the ACBL Board is decreased from 25 to 20 members. Further decrease in

2023 will be a function of 2022 Region Director elections and the resulting number of District Directors who will serve remaining portions of their terms.

As the Board decreases in size, its focus will narrow to matters of organizational goals & objectives, strategy, finances, and policy. Responsibilities related to bridge play, operations and even some disciplinary matters will transition to ACBL Management and to committees and work groups comprised of officials such as members of the Advisory Council (formerly Board of Governors) and other volunteer ACBL members. As one example, plans are underway to create an Institute of Bridge Arbitration, composed of volunteers, to which high-level ethical charges would be referred.

In 2022, my board committee assignments are Appeals and Charges, Strategy (Vice Chairman) and Finance. These committees are central to the Board's functions and afford me the opportunity to actively contribute to its work. Among the matters ACBL Management and the board will continue to work together are policies related to face-to-face and online play. As circumstances and conditions evolve, I support continuing review and adjustment of these policies toward the objective of providing enduring opportunities for both forms of play, with consideration of the interests of all stakeholders.

I would like to share a thought on dealing with cheating. While striving for disciplinary processes and bodies that serve justice and apply discipline in a timely way, there is something all of us should be doing to help combat cheating. If bidding, card play or other actions of a player or pair are unusual to the point of arousing suspicion of the possibility of unauthorized communication and/or unauthorized information, please fill out and submit a Player Memo (PM). PMs are reviewed, evaluated and may lead directly to an investigation or become part of a record that can become the basis for initiating an investigation. The Appeals and Charges Committee and ACBL Management continue to improve visibility into dispositions of disciplinary cases. Please take a moment to look around this area of the ACBL website: <https://www.acbl.org/ethics/>

For D19 members, a report on the Fall 2021 ACBL Board meetings is posted on the D19 website <http://www.d19.org> David Johnson advises he is distributing a report within D18.

Here's hoping for a return to greater normalcy in bridge in 2022.

Tim
region13director@acbl.org
206-979-9041