

Minutes of ALACBU Board Meeting of July 2, 2016

In attendance: Unit 551 (Clinton Lew, Tom Lill, Penny Barbieri), Unit 556 (Ruth Baker, Paula Olivares), Unit 557 (Janet Logan, Diane Sachs), Unit 559 (John Jones, Peter Szecki), Unit 562 (Candy Scott, Barbara Nusbaum, Peter Benjamin, Roger Clough), Unit 564 (Marcie Evans), Unit 568 (Kim Wang, Gerri Soffa Carlson, Stan Greengard). President Mike Marcucci, Treasurer Joe Viola, Secretary Robert Shore, District Director Kevin Lane, Tournament Chair Stan Holzberg, ABA Liaison Stephanie Young. Guests: Billy Miller.

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Marcucci at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Billy Miller expressed his disappointment in the long-term decline of District 23 regionals and expressed his views on policy and schedule changes that he believes would prompt a recovery. Billy criticized our earlier use of the Marina del Rey Hotel and in 2016 he chose to attend the Vancouver Regional rather than our February regional, due to a playing schedule that didn't suit his needs. Billy believes that most professional players share his preferences as to schedule. He suggests that pros carry disproportionate economic weight because their presence at a tournament usually includes a large number of hotel nights by multiple people. A team event every day is essential. Billy prefers a 1 and 7 schedule so that pros can play three sessions per day. Many pros change clients for the weekend, so he suggests that a Swiss (rather than the start of a two-day knockout) be scheduled for Thursday. Billy also suggests that the District take advantage of the end of the Reno tournament to hold its own year-end tournament. It would be the only tournament west of Kansas City.

Mike Marcucci reported that there will be an opening for the Second Alternate District Director position because the current incumbent, Bob Kent, is applying for the First Alternate District Director position. There are potential District Officer positions available as well. Candy Scott is under consideration as Membership Chair, Barbara Nusbaum is under consideration as the Charity Chair, and Elaine Moore is under consideration to take charge of Special Events. The position of Finance Chair remains vacant.

Peter Benjamin reported that preparations are underway for the February 2017 regional at LAX. The price for parking will increase by \$2.00, but it will include in-and-out privileges. Ballroom lighting will be renovated and supplemental lighting will be available. The hotel will have extra food stations available. Room price is holding steady.

Kevin Lane gave the District Director's report. The ACBL has reached a deal with BBO that will result in payments of \$500,000 per year to the ACBL for four years. Final figures from the Grass Roots Fund are now available. Because of District 23's relative lack of participation in these games, the District owes the Fund \$200. We are approximately five months ahead of the curve in determining how to allocate our charity funds this year. The Scholarship Fund will receive something less than half of our allocation. During the last two cycles, the San Fernando Valley Unit did not receive any allocation. Kevin intends to change that this cycle. Kevin plans to prioritize support for clubs as an issue for the Board. Fees have increased, and the increase for special games, such as unit games and STACs, may be problematic.

There was nothing to report from the Board of Governors.

Mike Marcucci reported that job descriptions are still in progress. Nancy Heck has assumed responsibility for the District Web site. People are encouraged to assist her in keeping it current by flagging outdated items and adding new information. Peter Gelfand has generously agreed to donate \$1000 to replace the Stoddard Trophy, awarded to the top master point winner at our summer regional.

Peter Szecsi reported on behalf of the Scholarship Committee. Funding of scholarships for next year is in doubt. The Committee expects six returning recipients and would like to select three or four new recipients. Joe Viola reported that the Scholarship Fund's balance as of May 31 was \$9880.65, which does not include a recent \$1000 donation.

Joe Viola gave the Treasurer's report. Joe is stepping up collection of amounts requested from the Units to defray costs of publishing the *Southern California Bridge News*. The written report he distributed did not include deposits from Grand National Teams, because those deposits had not yet been made by May 31. The February regional lost approximately \$4000. We spent about \$3000 on advertising expenses for the Long Beach Regional. Grand National Teams earned a profit of approximately \$1800. After debate, the Board voted to continue for 2016 our historical practice of subsidizing our District's representatives to Grand National Teams in the amount of \$1000. The Board cautioned that advertising for 2017 should not promise this subsidy.

Peter Benjamin reported as the Tournament Manager. We sold out our entire block of rooms, obtained additional rooms for our block from the hotel, and sold those out as well. Twenty people ended up staying at other hotels, while some players paid non-discounted rates to remain at the tournament site. We will request a larger block for future tournaments. Our current agreement with the hotel runs through 2019. We will probe the hotel's interest in hosting a December tournament, and inquire about pricing. Room rates will increase modestly, from \$124 per night to \$129 to \$134. Table count through Saturday increased from 1206 in 2014 to 1244 this year. By comparison, table count through Saturday in 2015 as the Pasadena Westin was 1129. We estimate revenue of approximately \$68,000, and hope to realize a profit of roughly \$15,000. There have been sufficient parking spaces, but the rate will increase to \$7.00. The hotel has been very accommodating. The Gold Rush Swiss had 29 tables, which was fewer than the Gold Rush Pair events. Tom Lill has been pressed into service as tournament photographer and is eager to be replaced. Candy Scott added that the Master Solvers Live panel worked well, and the Not-So-Newlywed Game is upcoming. Sally the Swan earned \$30 for the Scholarship Fund, and was won by Lucy Gellner. Hospitality reported that we have given away 700 patches, down 10 from earlier numbers.

Bob Shore reported for the Disciplinary Committee that a hearing will be scheduled.

John Jones reported for the Education Committee that he is hoping to revive the Scholastic Youth Game. Participation in bridge has declined at Caltech and UCLA.

Marcus Evans reported that a schedule for North American Pairs qualifying games will be published.

Candy Scott reported that she has discovered errors arising from ACBL in the assignment of players within the District to the wrong Unit. She is attempting to get those errors fixed.

John Jones suggested that Corresponding Secretary Candy Scott write on behalf of the District to congratulate and recognize players upon their achievement of new ranks.

Tom Lill is willing to again assume the position as Chair of the Bylaw Committee.

Grass Roots games are popular with clubs. They are available in May.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m. A decision will be made later whether to convene the Board in October or to wait until the February regional.