

Minutes of ALACBU Board Meeting of February 11, 2017

In attendance: Unit 551 (Tom Lill, Penny Barbieri), Unit 557 (Diane Sachs, Janet Logan), Unit 556 (Kim Wang) Unit 559 (Peter Szecsi, John Jones), Unit 562 (Barbara Nusbaum, Peter Benjamin, Howard Einberg, Candy Scott), Unit 568 (Jeff Grotenhuis). President Mike Marcucci, Secretary Robert Shore, Treasurer Joe Viola, District Director Kevin Lane, Tournament Chair Stan Holzberg, Liang Fan. Guests: Unit 557 President Dalia Hernandez, ACBL Field Manager Nancy Boyd, Marjorie Michelin, Ellis Feigenbaum.

Units not present: 553, 556, 561, 564.

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Marcucci at approximately 9:30 a.m. The minutes of the October meeting were approved.

President Mike Marcucci introduced Unit 557 President Dalia Hernandez and ACBL Field Manager Nancy Boyd. Both were present to observe.

Kevin Lane gave the District Director's report. Robert Hartman has announced his resignation as chief executive officer of ACBL, effective July 31, 2017. The Board is implementing its plan to find a replacement. At the November meeting, the ACBL Board voted (over Kevin's opposition) to make the Educational Foundation an independent entity. Kevin is heading a "club task force" to increase the visibility of bridge clubs and their issues at the level of the Board.

There was no report on behalf of the Board of Governors.

Joe Viola gave the Treasurer's report. Accounts receivable appear relatively high. Joe will investigate. The District made a profit of approximately \$10,000 on the Long Beach Regional and makes approximately \$1000 profit on each of the District's three annual STACs. Grand National Teams lost approximately \$1800 in the 2016 calendar year (our fiscal year runs from October through September).

Peter Benjamin gave the Tournament Manager's report. Attendance at the LAX Regional is down by approximately 125 to 150 tables compared to the 2016 tournament, reducing the tournament's revenue by \$56 per table with very little reduction in cost. Accordingly, the District expects to incur a substantial loss. We did meet our hotel room guarantees. People did not like the hotel and the parking arrangements. With the exception of a couple of major problems, the hotel staff has been very good. Nevertheless, in light of the severely decreased table count, the District does not intend to return to this site.

We have signed a contract to hold a year-end regional from December 26 through 31 at the Glendale Hilton. Room rates will be \$129 and parking will cost \$5. Candy Scott suggests hiring Eddie Kantar to host a Pro-Am Game to attract additional interest from our newer players, and Peter extends our thanks to the South Bay Bridge Club and the Agile Bridge Club for closing during the tournament and encouraging their players to attend the tournament.

Stan Holzberg gave the Tournament Chairman's report. Stan has been coordinating sectional dates in an effort to spread District sectionals further apart throughout the year. Also, Stan has been searching for other potential sites to hold a regional.

Candy Scott encouraged attendance at the Not-So-Newlywed Game, the scheduled entertainment between sessions on Saturday at the regional. Also, Mitch Dunitz has agreed to host a Master Solvers Live panel at the Long Beach Regional. Candy sent 120 Christmas cards on behalf of the District. ABA President Hank Irwin is coordinating with ACBL to obtain changes that will make it easier to use ACBLScore in games that combine both ABA and ACBL members. Candy suggested that after this change is implemented, the District hold an ABA/ACBL event at one of our Regionals.

Robert Shore gave the Disciplinary Committee report. A hearing was held at the Long Beach Sectional. The result is on appeal and the appeal has not yet been resolved.

Candy Scott reported that zip codes have been corrected so that zip codes are now correctly matched to Unit boundaries. Candy urges clubs to include their Unit number in membership applications to avoid future mismatches between player addresses and Unit assignments. Ida Simms has applied for a Sectional Director rating.

There are reports that Alan Curtis of the Thousand Oaks Bridge Academy II has been encouraging District 23 members, particularly from the San Fernando Valley Unit, to transfer to his Unit, which would move them to District 22 and render them ineligible to play in either Grand National Teams or North American Pairs for District 23. Because these players do not live within the geographical boundaries of District 22, there is no assurance that they would be permitted to play in these events for District 22 either.

Mike Marcucci reported that the District earned \$1600 for its North American Pairs events for 2016. The Board approved a motion to provide each member of the second and third place pair in each flight \$100 to defray expenses attending the event in 2017. This payment is over and above any payment that ACBL provides, and is conditioned on the pair actually attending and competing in the national event. A new chair for the event will be appointed. Jeff Grotenhuis will work on operational issues.

Dates are set for this year's District 2017 Grand National Teams competition, and advertising is out. We do not anticipate earning a profit from the event. Nevertheless, no change has been made to the District's ongoing commitment to pay the District's representative in each flight \$1000 per team to defray their expenses attending the event. Perhaps Unit Presidents can be persuaded to solicit additional teams to help increase profits and revenues for the event.

Mike Marcucci reported that he anticipates Bob Kent presenting potential bylaw changes at the July meeting.

Betty Jackson reported that there were a total of 1818 tables at the District's first STACs of 2017 in January. There were a total of 5415 tables at the three 2016 STACs. However, ACBL reaped approximately 90% of the revenue from those events. She is concerned that these events enrich ACBL at the expense of the Units, because table counts at the STACs appear to be cannibalizing Unit-sponsored Sectionals.

Peter Szecsi reported for the Scholarship Committee. The Scholarship Fund currently has approximately \$18,000 with further contributions anticipated. The Fund paid 11 scholarships at \$800 per student per year. Applications are to be found on the District's Web site. The Board would like the receipt of pictures and brief biographies to be a condition of awarding the scholarships, so that the donors can get to know the people being helped by their largesse. John Jones anticipates that he will present three new scholarship candidates.

Marjorie Michelin reported on behalf of the tournament's Entertainment Committee. People have been commenting favorably on the speakers. Many speakers are already lined up for the December tournament.

John Jones reported on behalf of the Youth and Education Committees. College bridge in the District is down. The Caltech Bridge Club is hanging on by a thread. The immediate goal is to restore it to club status with the Institute and again obtain use of the Avery Dining Hall.

Sharon Biederman is helping with John's local high school club. There will be no Los Angeles Scholastic Game this year. John's school has a new principal who has added too much red tape to make the event feasible. John anticipates that he will present three scholarship candidates. John will contact Claremont College regarding interest in bridge.

Tom Lill reported on behalf of the Pomona-Covina Unit that the Unit is very unhappy with the increase imposed by ACBL for Unit Game sanction fees. Tom also solicited timely updates to content for the *Daily Bulletin*, so that schedule changes and other late-breaking news can be communicated to tournament attendees promptly. Tom is still hoping to be replaced as tournament photographer. Dave White may have some willingness to assume the role.

Ellis Feigenbaum proposed that the Tournament Committee prepare the schedule in such a way as to maximize "tack-on" point awards available to the main pair or Swiss event each day. This can be done by making sure that the main event is accompanied by a Gold Rush or Flight B event of the same type.

New Business

The office of Vice President is vacant. Mike Marcucci would like the Vice President to be in charge of recruitment, player development, and coordination of the education and intermediate/novice programs for the District. A bylaw change may be needed to implement this change of responsibilities. The office will be filled no later than the regularly scheduled election at the July Board meeting. Mike called for volunteers, who should contact the Nominating Committee.

Mike Marcucci reported that he will form a History Committee in an effort to preserve the historical records of District 23 and its past and present units. Contact Mike if you would like to serve on this committee.

Liang Fan is working with a team of people who have created the Synrey smartphone app, which allows people to play bridge against robots. The app already boasts 130,000 users. The developers plan an on-line tournament, and will purchase free plays to be awarded as prizes.

Mike Marcucci announced that he would like the District to obtain pins as tangible awards for the District's Mini McKenney and Ace of Clubs winners. Mike is still working on acquiring a new Stoddard Trophy. Mike would like to increase content in the *Southern California Bridge News* to encourage more people to read it. We had many more articles in the old printed version than we have now. The annual Longest Day event to benefit the Alzheimer's Foundation is coming up in June.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:30 p.m. The next meeting will occur at the Long Beach regional in July.