

The Accidental Mandate

2019-21 BOTE Year In Review

The purpose of this document is to capsulize the major events, activities and operations of our Club during the Covid interruptions and communicate, as fully as possible, to our membership on all BOTE activities following AGM 2019. It has been organized into the following main sections:

- 1) BOTE Board Governance;
- 2) Finances;
- 3) Club Operations;
- 4) Committee Reports;
- 5) Activities & Initiatives; and
- 6) Future Directions.

1. Board Governance.

Despite the physical closure of the Club in March 2020, the BOTE Board has maintained all its regular duties and responsibilities. All Committees remained operational and eight regular Board meetings were scheduled and held, via Zoom, between May 2020 and April 2021. There was 100% attendance of Board members at these meetings, all agenda items were pursued, minutes kept and promptly posted to our website. In May 2020, the President, Brian Shortall, asked the present Executive to voluntarily extend their mandate until such time as it was possible to safely convene an AGM. All of the Board members agreed. This provisional arrangement will stay in place until holding a safe, in-person AGM is possible. A Membership Renewal was launched in the Fall of 2020, 153 members, 27 new and 126 returning, signed on for 2020-21.

2. Financial Report

Treasurer: Rick Comerford

At the last Board Meeting, April, 29th 2021, an Income Statement, Year Ended March 31, 2021 with comparative figures for 2020 was tabled.

The main points were:

- (I) Revenue was 1/3 of 2019-20 when we had face-to-face operations.
- (II) 2019-20 operations approached breakeven with a small profit of \$1,948.
- (III) The past year 2020-21 was all on-line and this was reflected in the expenses and revenue.
- (IV) Operational loss for this past period was \$3,732.
- (V) We have a safety reserve of \$22,657 (invested) from previous year's operations. It has not yet been necessary to tap into this reserve.

The Financial Reports are posted online for members who require additional details.

3. Club Operations

Manager: Rahul Chandra

BOTE transitioned from live play to online (BBO) games in early March of 2020.

The Club was immediately approved for duplicate status (ACBL/BBO) and four Directors applied for and received computer/technical training.

Rent commitments to the Swilers were honoured for the short term only & renegotiated from then on; insurance was maintained in full, as was the Manager's salary.

Online Directors were paid (\$40-50) per game.

During the period we ran 204 games up to April 30th 2021 with 1297 tables. 74 BOTE/ACBL members played in these games, less than half our membership. We also ran some team games in 2020. In the Fall of 2020 we added 0-500/750 limited games as well as the regular open games to give our newer members an opportunity to play with their peers. We also ran extra games during ACBL Gold Point weeks to help our members search for gold. In spring 2021 we partnered with Halifax Bridge World to run two Swiss Team games.

4. Committee Reports

4.1 Education

Members: Anne Hughes (chair), Gloria Stone, Marilyn Walbourne, Roy Perry, Joan Fitzgerald (resigned March 2020)

Four meetings were held before face-to-face play stopped in March 2020;

There were six educational offerings in the fall of 2019 and two in the winter 2020. Three were scheduled for spring 2020 but were postponed due to Covid-19 and closure of the Club.

The Supervised Play offered in fall and winter, 2019/2020 was extremely successful.

New Mentored Newcomer games were offered in winter, 2020.

Education policies were revised, approved by the Board and posted on our website.

Focus group comments and suggestions re Education were shared with the committee and instructors.

An Education questionnaire is in development but not yet finalised.

4.2 Constitution

Members: Anne Hughes (Chair), Marguerite Noonan, Gerry Thompson and Brian Shortall (resource).

The committee was constituted to propose amendments to the Terms of Office of the Board members and to look at the Term of Office of the Club Recorder.

The committee met three times and a final draft was submitted to the Board for consideration at the January, 2020 meeting.

The proposed amendments were publicized on the website and await ratification at the next AGM.

4.3 Mentoring Online 2020-21

Team Lead: Susan Follett

In the Fall of 2020 over 20 people participated in the mentoring program. The feedback from these participants was amazing, most felt the program helped to improve their bidding, playing and understanding of the game. Many thanks to our mentors ... Brian Collins, Tom Dale, Viki O'Dea, Marilyn Bennett, Heidi Janes, Janet Parsons and Anne Hughes. This would not have been possible without you.

The Spring 2021 mentoring session was smaller, but no less enthusiastic. Many thanks to Richard Lash and Randy Bennett for volunteering their time and knowledge. The Board has decided to wait until the club reopens before any additional mentoring sessions are offered.

4.4 Hospitality and Social

Team Lead: Susan Follett

BOTE was very active socially in 2019. Between members supplying all sorts of goodies on a weekly basis, we had pizza parties, a Canada Day celebration and an Hawaiian luau day with Hawaiian pizza and punch. Our third anniversary was celebrated with a lunchtime barbeque of hamburgers (expertly cooked by Derek Janes and Gary Follett) with salads and cake. In October there was a Halloween party and some members did dress for the occasion. Our Christmas Dinner was very well attended. There was a photo booth and Santa Dan dropped by to wish us all well and sit in for pictures. Early 2020, started off well. On Valentine's Day we decorated the club and had more treats. March 14 we took PI day to a whole new level with lots of pie to eat. Our next event would have been Paddy's Day but unfortunately Covid had other plans for us. Here's hoping we can get back to our club soon

4.5 Housekeeping

Team Lead: Fran Cook

Premises

BOTE representatives met with the Swilers re-bathroom air quality concerns. Their positive responses resulted in new fan installations. The quality of lighting is an on-going issue. The Swilers are always attentive to general cleanliness and table set-ups. The nuisance bar sink taps were finally replaced by Richard Lash in a mutual Board arrangement with him and the Swilers.

Library

The club purchased a mobile cart to house our new bridge library, a popular initiative. Member response for contributions, (books, journals, periodicals) was gratifying. Library users acknowledged this effort by availing of this resource, using the sign in and sign out sheet, and abiding by the suggested time returns. BOTE also used the Club website to create a virtual book club for members to exchange recommendations and suggestions.

Equipment

The purchase of new chairs has been delayed by Covid-19. The club addressed privacy concerns by the purchase of a secure filing cabinet for membership data storage.

Reopening Protocols

As negotiations with the government to reopen continue, the safety of our members remains foremost. Some of the larger ACBL Clubs have been surveyed for their safety measures and a number of their protocols will be adopted along with some of our own.

5. Activities and Initiatives

These can easily be divided into pre and post closure events.

Before closure we: set up a lending library of bridge books; held defibrillator training; ran a Focus Group; and supported the Longest Day initiative, chaired by Dan Regan, which raised \$4,030 for Alzheimer's research in Canada.

Following closure our activities were, obviously, very curtailed, however, we
Designed and distributed a Bridge Planner/calendar.
Held a Longest Day event which raised over \$1,000 for Alzheimer's research in Canada.
Held a Town Hall on September 22nd to discuss possible reopening.
Ran an experimental After Game Consultancy for the 0-750 game.
Started an online Book Club to try to keep members connected.
Set up an online Help Desk & Partnership Desk to assist members to navigate BBO operations. This Help Desk was also used throughout the year by the Club Manager, Secretary & Vice President to receive suggestions, answer all correspondence, and maintain interpersonal communications.
Launched a 2-year Membership Drive.
Instituted weekly games for 0-500/750 players.
Added extra games when it was possible to win ACBL gold points .
Partnered with Halifax to run Swiss Team games.
Convened a working Committee to develop reopening protocols & liaise with Department of Health and
Attended the annual ACBL Unit 194 AGM by Zoom in April 2021.

Future Directions

The BOTE mandate is to promote the development and availability of Duplicate Bridge for its members under the rules and provisions endorsed by the ACBL. This report provides the reader with an overview of efforts undertaken during the COVID 19 pandemic since March 2020 in this respect.

This period has not been without its challenges. A major concern for the Administrative Board has been the decision to postpone the 2020 AGM. Even though the Board stands committed to the sound management of the affairs of our club, which include full disclosure of information about the operations of BOTE, our ability to convene such a meeting in a safe and appropriate manner for all members who wished to participate was beyond our reach. The Board continued to work on behalf of BOTE during this period.

Discussions are ongoing with the Department of Health with respect to re-opening of our regular, in person operations. As soon as there is progress on this front members will be alerted promptly. The Board will have an Action Plan ready to unfold immediately. Those in attendance at the September 2020 Town Hall Forum will recall that there was a clear desire to return to normal operations as soon as they could be safely conducted.

In conclusion the BOTE Board of Administration is grateful for the support of our membership during these difficult times. Our hope is that you continue to be safe and we look forward to greeting you when we re-open for regular play.

If you have any questions or further suggestions you are welcome to submit these directly to any member of the Board of Administration through our webpage.

Respectfully Submitted:

President Brian Shortall; Vice President Roy Perry; Treasurer Richard Commerford;
Secretary Judith McIntyre, Members at Large: Fran Cook, Susan Follett and Anne
Hughes.