

Unit 141 Meeting – September 12, 2023

Attendees: April Apfelbaum, Jay Apfelbaum, Ellen Berkowitz, Randee Braslow, Becky Levinson Mark Cohen, John Dickenson, Joan Goldstein, John Nothdurft, Cathy Strauss

Regrets: Andy Rosenberg

John Dickenson called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm via Zoom, and the board addressed the following topics:

Financial Report

Ellen Berkowitz reports that the unit has almost \$88,623 in our savings account. District 4 sent us a check for \$600 from the two Silver tournaments at Clubs (STACs). In July the ACBL gave us a quarterly reimbursement of \$2604 for our membership numbers.

October Cherry Hill Sectional Status

Ellen Berkowitz will do email outreach to Unit 141 members, but needs appropriate promotional verbiage and a link to the most current flyer. John D volunteered to provide the link to the flyer and secure verbiage from Bernadette Hennessy May. The promotional email should include a notice of the Unit 141 Annual Meeting which will be held during the lunch break on Saturday. John Dickenson will run that meeting which will include an election for open seats on the board.

There was a lengthy discussion on the quality/quantity of food to be served at the sectional. As the Cherry Hill Club has a guarantee to prevent a financial loss, there is no reason to skimp on the food preparation.

The board abandoned the idea of an organized shuttle from the nearby PATCO station because of (commercial) car insurance issues. Any player seeking arrangements for a ride from PATCO should reach out individually to another local player.

John subsequently followed up with Bernadette, who reported that Rui Marques, the Director in Chief of the Cherry Hill tournament agreed to accept cash payments on game day. Therefore, there is no need to amend the flier. Bernadette agreed to supply verbiage to Ellen so that marketing emails could be sent. The email blast went out on September 15.

Dates for Future Sectionals

Jay Apfelbaum applied for a sanction to do our first “split” sectional hosting Open Pairs events at King of Prussia Bridge Club and I/N pairs at North Penn. The Sunday team event will be held at King of Prussia as this event may not be “split”. Jay has not received any feedback and will contact Crystal Mann at the ACBL to make sure that she has our application.

Jay will meet with the general manager at the Bala Golf Club to discuss contracting March 5-7 for our spring sectional.

Newcomer program

The board discussed ideas for pull-through of attendees at Pax Unplugged. This year's event takes place December 1-3 at the Philadelphia Convention Center. We will host an event on Saturday, December 1, for four or six hours, to attract young players to bridge. Vinnie Emilianowicz will coordinate the event. Suggestions included documentation from clubs as to what they offer to onboard new players (potentially compiled into a handout or poster), and a sign-in sheet for local players who are attending this national event. Cathy Strauss and John Nothdurft will reach out to Vinnie to further refine our approach.

Welcoming Committee

Each month assignments are made by Andy Rosenberg to have committee members reach out by phone to new players.

Website/Electronic Communications

John Dickenson spoke to Todd Thorsen to gauge his interest in cloning his design for the District 4 website for the unit to use. One great advantage to the design is that the website is linked to the ACBL website which updates tournament schedules on a daily basis. Todd also hosts the D4 website on his server and provides security. We are delighted that he is willing to clone the site and host for us. There will be a small cost to cover the daily updates.

Player Retention Committee

At the last board meeting we agreed to create a hybrid of the Club Mentoring Program proposal from Elaine Weintraub, Ellen Berkowitz and Joan Goldstein along with the 2020 Delaware State Bridge Association (DSBA) Mentoring Program. We will target players in the 300-500 master point range to help get them past their reluctance to play in open sectionals after they become ineligible for the Intermediate/Newcomer (I/N) tournaments. John D has a few action items to discuss with Bernadette regarding the pilot program to be held in Cherry Hill. John will send us the information on mentoring that he gathered at the recent sectional at the Bridge Studio of Delaware. Becky Levinson volunteered to assist with the mentoring program. The board views the pilot program as an excellent opportunity to take advantage of funds available in the unit account.

New Business

Cathy Strauss and Jay Apfelbaum drafted updated by-laws regarding the transition of terms for board members. A final version of the updated by-laws was subsequently circulated via email and approved by the board. The main changes are as follows: allow alternatives to electronic voting; eliminate requirement of holding an election if the candidate slate is equal to or less than number of openings; clarifications of the election process.

STAC Sanction Numbers for 2025 have been forwarded to the unit as follows for the STACs beginning on:

01/27/2025 = 2502505

08/18/2025 = 2508501

11/10/2025 = 2511502

08/18/2025 = 2508501

05/05/2025 = 2505501

02/10/2025 = 2502504

Mark Cohen reports that the Alloy Hotel Contract has been finalized and signed for the 2024 Philadelphia Regional in King of Prussia

Update from ACBL

The ACBL initiative to encourage lapsed members to return to clubs with a \$20 postcard coupon to redeem for face-to-face play, good until June 30, 2024, has had disappointing results, and has been extended from Labor Day until October 31. Many of the postcard recipients turned out to be ill, or recently passed away, or playing exclusively online.

Lapsed members comprise 17% of District 4 membership, but D4 had only a handful of players take advantage of the postcard.

Next meeting: Monday, October 16, via Zoom

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.