



Memorandum of Discussion

ACBL Unit 174 Board of Directors Meeting

February 9th, 2009

Houston Bridge Studio

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. Present were Jolie Hess-President, Pat Levy-Vice President, Bert Onstott-Secretary, Paul Cuneo, Joyce Ryan, Bob Dowlen, John Erickson, Lauri Laufman, and Karen Nimmons.

Also present for the start of the meeting were Jim Woodward-Treasurer, and Eric Snow-District Unit District 16 Representative and NABC Chair.

Guests

Eric Snow – District 16

Eric Snow reported on happenings at the District level.

New District Officers

New District officers were elected at the district board meeting on Saturday morning during the regional. They are:

- President -- Ira Hessel
- 1st Vice President -- Charley Price
- 2nd Vice President -- Dewitt Hudson
- Executive Secretary -- Bob Butterfield
- Executive Treasurer -- Lew Levy

Texas Star Awards

The Texas Star Awards honoring those Unit volunteers who work so steadfastly at the Unit level to promote Bridge and to further Unit activities were made on Saturday during the Regional. Selection is made by the Unit Board of each Unit and the awards are traditionally presented during the February Lone Star Regional. This year, 13 out of 17 Units gave awards. Unit 174 gave their awards to Natalie Greene and Dale Crumbaugh, who have served as election judges for the Unit for many years.



New Rule for Club Games held during Tournaments

The ACBL has enacted a new rule effective January 1st, 2009 - clubs within a 25 mile range of a local tournament can be open, but can't offer any upgraded point games, such as Junior fund or Charity games. It's unclear from where the 25 mile limit applies – from the tournament site or the city in which the tournament is held. Eric Snow will try to get clarification.

District Charity Games

There will be four district Charity games in 2009. This year notifications will be sent via e-mail, not by regular mail. The unit charity coordinator needs to make sure Carol Shoenhals has their e-mail.

District GNT Finals

District GNT finals will be in Richardson over Memorial Day this year. Currently the Superflight is planned to be held at the same time.

Opt out of receiving paper copies of the Scorecard

The District Board passed a proposal to let people opt out of receiving paper copies of the Scorecard. Bert Onstott will maintain the list and develop the tool to remove the names from the master list.

Puerto Vallarta Regional

The Puerto Vallarta Regional will be held November 2nd – 8th, 2009.

Handicapping of KO's

A change was made in how KO's will be handicapped that will affect only the top bracket. The previous rule left whether to handicap the event up to the director's discretion, and if it was handicapped the handicap given was determined using the ACBLScore program. Under the new rule any team whose top four members have more than 20,000 masterpoints will get no handicap. Those under 20,000 masterpoints will be unaffected by the change.

New Committee Chairs

New committee chairs were appointed. They are:

- Disciplinary Committee Chair – James Thurtell
- Grand National Teams Coordinator – Mark Bumgardner
- Internet Coordinator – Bert Onstott

Financial Report

Some highlights of the District Treasurer's report presented by Lew Levy are:

- Total assets are \$28,739.53, of which \$24,089.18 is in checking and savings accounts.
- Net Income for 2008 was \$6,523.80.

NABC

The NABC committee is meeting with the Hilton Americas and ACBL staff at the hotel from 3:00 – 5:00 pm on Wednesday, February 11th. All committee members are welcome to attend.



Minutes of January board meeting

John

Motion: That the minutes of the January meeting be approved.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report

Jim

February Financials

Jim presented two financial reports, one for all of 2008 and another for 2009 through February 8th. Some highlights:

Final for 2008

- Total assets at the end of the year were \$176,095.56. \$71,395.62 of that is in NABC checking accounts and CDs.
- Net income for the year was \$6,009.87.
- \$3,374.91 was spent on Holiday party subsidies paid to Unit clubs.
- \$2,071 was spent on Novice game subsidies.

Through February 8, 2009

- Total assets are \$194,536.80.
- Net income for the year is \$65,147.25, which is mostly income from the Regional; most of the expenses for the Regional have yet to be paid.

Motion: That the treasurer's report be accepted as presented.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Committee Reports

Awards/Flyers

Karen

Flyers

Election Sectional flyers were distributed at the Regional. Karen will be distributing them to the clubs. No GNT paper flyers ever made.

Awards

LM plaques are up to date. Karen will order the Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney awards to be awarded at the Election Sectional.

Bridge in Schools

Natalie Wernet

KIPP high school has again requested that we teach bridge during their Intersession break. Natalie will do the teaching.

Errol LeCesne expressed an interest in getting involved in teaching bridge in the schools. Jolie will contact him.

Communications Committee

Jolie (for Betty Freedman)

There was nothing new from Betty.



Membership

Bert

Membership is up 11 to 2,366. We had 13 new members. This is the highest membership total since August 1994 and 187 higher than the low point reached January 2001.

Fund Raising

Bob

No news.

Goodwill

Pat

Pat received a card from the Gay Robertson family thanking the Unit Board for our card.

Pat sent condolence cards to Georgiana Gates whose husband passed away and to the family of Billy Kitchens.

I/N, Education & Book Sales

Joyce

Book Sales

Joyce sold a total of 135 books various teachers:

Education

Joyce is helping several unit teachers with classes and lesson plans.

NAP/GNT

John

NAP

The board discussed where to hold the Unit qualifying NAP games.

Motion: To ask the Houston Bridge Studio to hold flights A&C and the Bridge Club of Houston to hold Flight B.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. John will follow up with the two clubs.

GNT

The Unit GNT qualifying game for both Flights B and C is this Sunday at 11:00 am at the Houston Bridge Studio. Scott Humphries will be directing.

No flyers were ever printed, but the game is posted on the Unit web site. In an effort to get the word out about the game, Joyce will make announcements at Tracy Gee, Karen at JCC, and Paul at Pech Road. John will call all the NAP flight B and C participants to tell them about the GNT.

New Player Services

Paul

Things went well at the Regional. Paul's committee greeted a lot of new players and helped them out.

Pro-Am

Paul

The Pro-Am game for this year will be held October 22nd.



STAC

Bob

Bob reported on the January STaC. Some highlights were:

- Twenty clubs participated.
- Total tables were 705.5.
- Net income at this time is \$2,129.62.
- Tom Whitesides reported six more tables played at BCOH than did the club. Bob will investigate.
- Tom Whitesides alerted Bob to the fact that the sanction fee charges may increase due changes implemented by the ACBL in Boston.

Supplies

Lauri

Lauri reported that there are several stacks of the cardboards sheets that are used to put between the tables in the warehouse, and wanted a decision on whether to keep them. The board felt they might be useful in the future, so felt they should be kept. There are also two overhead projectors in the warehouse; those will be discarded.

Lauri will buy a package of Standard American Yellow Card score sheets.

Tournament Coordination

Pat

Pat has a signed contract with Humble for October Sectional.

Pat contacted Motel Super 8 and obtained rooms for the directors, the caddy master and Dale and Natalie, the election judges, for the May Election Sectional.

Old Business

Election Sectional

Lauri, Bob

Committee chairs have been chosen and flyers produced; an on-line web page has been posted and the ad was sent to the Scorecard. Many thanks are owed to Arlene for producing all three. Bert updated the candidates' ad for the Scorecard and sent it to Ira.

Someone needs to check with the Stafford Center to arrange for rooms to store and count the ballots. Arrangements need to be made to have the final payment sent to the Stafford Center by the deadline of February 15th.

Bert will send a unit roster to Dale and Natalie.

June Sectional

Karen, John

The schedule and budget have been approved. Pat will arrange for hotel rooms. Karen will be looking for committee chairs.

On-Line Partnership Desk

Bert

As reported last month, the application has been put on its own server with its own domain name: www.Unit174Partnership.com.

A total of 277 partnership requests have been posted; 183 since January 1st. A total of 178 users have registered; 90 since January 1st. It was pretty useful in helping people find partners in



advance of the regional. Bert created a poster for the regional; it can be re-used for future tournaments.

There have been a couple of complaints about requiring that all members of a team be registered to post a team partnership request. Bert does not intend to change the approach.

Programs for Clubs

Joyce

Clear Lake has someone going over the hands after the I/N games. The Unit subsidizes this activity by \$25 each time.

There is a program the Unit implemented in June of 2008 that subsidizes new 0-20 games started by any Unit club.

These are the details of the program:

Unit 174 will:

- Pay the hosting club \$10 per table for new 0-20 games for the first three months the game is held.
- Clubs must notify the Unit I/N chair when the 0-20 game is started.
- Clubs would be required to submit invoices showing the total amount requested to the Unit I/N coordinator. The request must be supported by attaching copies of game reports showing the monthly table count.
- The I/N coordinator will validate the request and forward the approved request to the Unit Treasurer for payment.

A motion to revise this to be effective the beginning of 2008 was made.

Motion: That the 0-20 beginner game subsidy program be revised to read:

Effective January 1, 2008, Unit 174 will:

- Pay the hosting club \$10 per table for new 0-20 games for the first three months the game is held.
- Clubs must notify the Unit I/N chair when the 0-20 game is started.
- Clubs would be required to submit invoices showing the total amount requested to the Unit I/N coordinator. The request must be supported by attaching copies of game reports showing the monthly table count.
- The I/N coordinator will validate the request and forward the approved request to the Unit Treasurer for payment.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Bert will update the procedures manual to reflect the change.



2009/2010 Directory

Bert

Paper Directory

One thousand copies of the directory were printed and distributed during the Regional. There are two boxes left in supplies; probably about 160 copies. A box was taken to the Houston Bridge Studio and another to the Clear Lake Bridge Club.

The total cost was \$3,988.44.

On-Line Directory

Bert will now proceed to put it on the web. There are a couple of issues with that.

First, it requires a database. The web hosting company the district (and all the Units) uses, AIT, only permits the creation of one database per account. While only Unit 174 is currently contemplating the use of a database, we will have taken up the district's entire quota if we proceed. This will not be a problem in the short term, but may be one in the longer term.

Second, Bert plans to require people to register with a password and their ACBL number. The ACBL numbers will be preloaded; only those with valid numbers will be allowed to gain access. If anyone objects to this level of security, Bert requests to hear about it now.

Social Bridge Event

Bert

April 2009 Event

Bert presented a proposed budget for the next event projecting a net loss of \$70.

Motion: That the proposed budget for the April 2009 Social Bridge Event be approved.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

The committee is having a hard time finding a date when both sites and committee members are available. In April, the only date that would work was the 25th (the 4th is too soon, the 11th is Easter, and Gatlinburg is the 18th). In May the only workable date is 16th (the 2nd is the Election Sectional, Gary is out of town the 9th and the 23rd is during Memorial Day weekend).

Laura Lee Jones, who is in charge of finding a location, has not found a site that is available for either of the April dates. She's now looking at the May date. We may have to push it back to June.

The committee is meeting again on Tuesday, February 10th.

2009 Lone Star Regional

The total table count was 2537, down 232 from last year, but 366 ½ more than the 2170 ½ we budgeted. That's down 8%; much better than the 20% drop expected due to the NABC in March. The regional held in before the last Houston NABC in 2002 experienced a 25% drop in table count from 2001, so this is a pleasant surprise. I/N held up better than the rest; it was only 9 tables below last year's total. Sunday was almost the same as last year, down only 1 ½ tables. Strangely, Tuesday was our biggest day this year; normally it's Thursday.



	Open Pairs	KO's	Swiss/BAM	ZIP KO	I/N	Total			
2008	904 1/2	1014	482	26	342 1/2	2769			
2009	838	895	442	28 1/2	333 1/2	2537			
Change	-66 1/2	-119	-40	2 1/2	-9	-232			
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total	
2008	135 1/2	475 1/2	472	475 1/2	480 1/2	423 1/2	306 1/2	2769	
2009	115 1/2	466	428	418 1/2	449 1/2	354 1/2	305	2537	
Change	-20	-9 1/2	-44	-57	-31	-69	-1 1/2	-232	

As a result, the tournament will probably make a small amount; the budget projected a loss of about \$4,000.

The board thanks all those who helped clean tables and bidding boxes on Monday morning and afternoon. They also thank Bridgette and Danny Sandifer for doing such a great job on the Thursday night reception. Jolie thanks all her committee chairs and everyone who volunteered during the tournament.

Improvement suggestions; things to continue doing

- Have a Lost and Found.
- Have a complaint form.
- There were complaints about the \$1.75 price of coffee, but the cup was larger than last year.
- The snack bar closed from 2:00 to 2:15 to change shifts; it should remain open.
- The hotel didn't empty the trash cans on Saturday night.
- The participation in the BAM on Thursday night was half that in the Swiss the other nights, which suggests that we not repeat that event.
- There were both complaints and compliments about holding six 8 board matches instead of six nine board matches. This is the board's choice. The sense of the board is that we will continue having six eight board matches for the regional.
- Moving the I/N sections from the back to the front of the Grand Pavilion was a big improvement.
- The quality of the speakers was great.
- The black photo backdrop used for photographs doesn't work well. Donna Sparks will look into obtaining a photo gray backdrop instead.
- It was suggested that we put the speakers to the right of the I/N director's table, and the photo station to the left to keep folks from walking in front of the speakers.
- Being I/N chair for the regional is a big job, and Joyce feels that the job of getting speakers should be split off as a separate responsibility.
- Perhaps we should not have a speaker on Monday night.
- It was a good thing not to offer free plays to new players. Nobody complained and it saved the Unit on the order of \$1,000.
- Director in Charge Tom Whitesides said we should change the strats from Open/1500/500 to Open/2000/750.



ABA Contract

Paul has finalized the deal with the ABA to provide them with supplies for their April 13-20 tournament at the Westin Galleria. We have to make sure we have enough consumables, stanchions, bidding boxes, boards, and 8 dozen decks of cards. Lauri will ensure we do.

Stafford Center Contracts

John will get copies of both May and June's contracts for Pat's records.

New Business

August Sectional

Paul and some new board member will chair the August sectional. Paul will prepare a schedule and a budget for approval during the March board meeting.

2010 Regional

The schedule for the 2010 regional is due in to Memphis this month. It was decided to have the same schedule as this year, except that the BAM will be changed back to a single session Swiss and the open strats will be changed to Open/2000/750.

Motion: That the 2010 LSR schedule be the same as that for 2009 except that 1) the Thursday night BAM will be replaced with a single session Swiss, and 2) the Open Strats will be changed to Unlimited/2000/750.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Domain Name for Unit Web Site

At the district board meeting, Bert proposed that the District pay to register domain names for all the unit web sites. Instead of using www.d16acbl.org/Uxxx/ as the address for the site, we would have www.ACBLUnitxxx.org.

This has the advantage of

1. It is more easily remembered by the average unit member.
2. It is not case sensitive. Currently if someone types in a lower case U in the name, they won't find the site. (This is not true for Unit 174, as Arlene has made special arrangements to allow a lower case u to work.)
3. It is more easily 'findable' by search engines, so if, for example, someone does a Google search for bridge and Houston, they'll be more likely to find the web site for Unit 174.

The cost is \$10.40 cents per name per year.

The District board tabled discussion until the next board meeting. According to then District President Larry Davis,

There were objections, and no one seemed to fully understand the financial end of it. It will be taken up again at the next meeting when you are there to answer questions.

Since the cost is so minimal, Bert suggested that the Unit proceed to register www.ACBLUnit174.org and pay for it out of unit funds.



Motion: That Bert is authorized to register www.ACBLUnit174.org as the Unit domain name.

The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Jacoby Service Award

Nominations for the Jacoby Service Award are due by July. The Jacoby Service Award is designed to honor those volunteers who have worked diligently at the Unit level and risen to recognition at the District level after many years of outstanding service. It is District 16's premier Service Award.

Executive Session

The board was in executive session for 20 minutes.

Future Meeting dates

Future board meeting dates are March 2nd, April 6th, and May 4th.

Adjourn

Motion: That the meeting be adjourned.

The motion was seconded and approved at 10:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted



Bert Onstott

Secretary

