



AMERICAN CONTRACT BRIDGE LEAGUE

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REPORT FROM FALL ACBL BOARD MEETINGS - ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Most members of the ACBL Board of Directors travelled to Orlando on November 12 to attend a weekend strategic planning session. The groundwork for long term priorities and strategies for the ACBL was laid out. ACBL management will flesh out these strategies and the process will continue next March.

The planning session was followed by regular ACBL Board meetings and the NABC. The Orlando World Centre Marriott Resort & Convention Centre is a beautiful place. It is the largest Marriott in the world, with over 2000 rooms, multiple swimming pools, a golf course, and ideal playing facilities where all the events were held on the same floor. Everyone appreciated the free coffee and orange juice that Florida tournaments are famous for. There were 14,641.5 tables in play, which made Orlando the third largest Fall NABC in history.

I. Names in the News

The late **Percy Sheardown** will be inducted into the ACBL Hall of Fame as the 2005 von Zedtwitz Award winner. The ceremony will take place during the first Saturday evening at the Atlanta Summer NABC in July.

Fred Gitelman, who created the Learn To Play Bridge software and founded Bridge Base Online, will be the ACBL Honorary Member for 2005.

Chuck Wilkinson, District 10, resigned as the ACBL President-Elect for 2005. He will be leaving the Board after many years of excellent service.

Roger Smith, District 21, was elected ACBL President for 2005. Roger is a strong believer in emphasizing the positives about our game and the ACBL. He plans to travel throughout the ACBL helping us celebrate the 50th anniversary of the ACBL Goodwill Committee. Roger will be visiting the CBF International Fund Regional begin held in Calgary, March 21 - 27, 2005. I hope you will be there and get a chance to meet our new ACBL President.

Dan Morse, District 16, was reelected to a three-year term as one of the ACBL's representatives to the World Bridge Federation.

Geoffrey Cross was elected President of the ACBL Educational Foundation. **Don Mamula** and

Eugene Kales remain as Vice-President and Secretary respectively. **Jerry Thorpe** will be the new Treasurer. **Phyllis Harlan**, District 15, was elected to a three-year term as a Trustee on the Foundation. I am still on the Education Foundation.

Linda Mamula was elected Chair of the Board of Governors for a two-year term. **Roni Gitchel** was elected Vice Chairman.

Jim Lopushinsky, formerly of Edmonton and the creator of ACBL Score, is the first recipient of the ACBL Distinguished Employee Award, established to recognize contributions that dramatically change the nature of the game or the way the league functions.

II. Financial Issues

The ACBL is in excellent financial health. The 2005 budget that was approved would entail about a \$300,000 loss but would keep the ACBL well within its financial guidelines. Carried 21-4.

In my summer NABC report I reported the 2005 dues increase but stated that there would be no increase in NABC entry fees or sanction fees. Tournament Director (TD) session fees were proposed to increase by 7% across the board. There have been some changes to the above, as well as some other budgetary items:

- a) The motion to establish two sponsor rates for the ranks of Associate National TD and National TD such that the rate for a National TD would be significantly higher was defeated 9-16. I voted against the motion, as it would have made it very difficult to assign National TD's to smaller tournaments. ACBL management was opposed for similar reasons.
- b) The Director In Charge (DIC) fee was replaced with an across the board increase in TDs' session rates. Carried 13-11-1. This motion will reduce costs to smaller tournaments but increase costs to larger ones. For our District, it should mean slight savings for our Sectionals.
- c) The Per Table Sanction Fees will DECREASE effective Jan. 1, 2005. **The numbers below are tentative and should be used as guidelines only.** Within the next week, I expect management, the Finance Committee, and perhaps the ACBL Executive Committee to ratify the final figures. At that time, I will immediately update this information on WASUMI.

	2004	2005
Open/Senior Regional	\$ 4.60	\$ 4.41
I/N Regional	3.22	3.08
Open/Senior Sectional	3.22	3.08
STAC	2.46	2.36
Prog. Sectional (qualifying)	2.80	2.68
Prog. Sectional (final)	3.22	3.08
I/N Sectional	2.22	2.13

- d) Unit Rebates will increase effective January 1, 2005. Units will receive 11% of full dues payments and Life Master Service fees paid by their members. This motion means more money for all of ACBL's units and the amount will automatically increase with any future dues increase.

	2004	2005
Non Life Master	\$3.50	\$3.85
Life Master	\$2.75	\$3.04

III. Junior Issues & Marketing

- a) A motion to restrict all junior bridge camps in Zone 2 (ACBL) to campers with a maximum age of 20 years was defeated 10-15. The bridge camps alternate between Europe and North America under the auspices of the World Bridge Federation. The age range is from 16-25, with about half being under 21 and half 21 or older. At the moment there are not enough junior bridge players to separate the two age groups.
- b) A major ACBL Bridge in Schools Marketing Initiative has been approved for 2005. Simpson Communications, LLC (www.simpson-communications.com) has been hired to help the ACBL enhance the image, reputation, and interest in bridge, primarily among the younger demographics from elementary school through age 26. The long-term goals are to familiarize a new generation of potential players with the game of bridge and to increase ACBL membership and participation among junior players.

Within the next year there should be a new "BridgeIsCool" website, celebrity endorsements, and expanded media coverage. This is a \$200,000 commitment (out of ACBL's \$1 Million + annual marketing budget) towards marketing the game to younger players. It is in addition to all of ACBL's existing junior programs.

The hard reality is that ACBL Junior membership has remained stable at about 750 members during the past decade. Meanwhile the average ACBL member is now 68 years old. The ACBL 2005 budget commitment to hire a professional outside marketing firm is a major shift in priorities that I believe is a very positive move.

- c) In Ottawa, ON a new “Bridge Kids Program”, partially funded by the ACBL Educational Foundation (<http://www.educationalfoundation.info>) has already attracted more than 400 youngsters in grades 4-6. For nearly all of these children, bridge has become part of the official school curriculum. This program shows great promise.
- d) In Orlando, **Andrew Pedersen**, an independent film producer from Halifax, was filming and interviewing Canadian bridge players in the Reisinger and North American Swiss Teams event. Canadian bridge experts **George Mittelman** and **Fred Gitelman**, and junior stars **Gavin Wolpert** and **Vincent Demuy** were featured. Based on his Orlando experience and the trailer he is producing, Pedersen is hoping that CTV will fund a one-hour documentary on bridge. This is also a promising development.

IV. Potpourri

- a) The David Bruce LM Pairs (LM-5000 masterpoints) and the Sally Young LM Pairs (LM-1500 masterpoints) were permanently added to the summer NABC schedule. Carried unanimously.
- b) The Hall of Fame Committee submitted amendments to the Hall of Fame Charter for the year 2005. The amendments were approved 22-3.
- c) The second reading of the proposed revision of the ACBL By-laws was unanimously approved. The current and proposed by-laws can be viewed on the ACBL web site at: <http://www.acbl.org/about/administration.html>. The Board of Governors, which received a hard copy in Orlando, needs to approve the by-laws at the Pittsburgh meeting (March, 2005). Subsequently, the by-laws must be approved at the ACBL Annual General Meeting in Atlanta in July in order to take effect. A lot of hard work went into the revisions and I will be pleased once the approval process is complete.

Please consider planning a vacation around one of the ACBL's NABCs in 2005: Pittsburgh, Atlanta and Denver. There is no better place to experience the excitement of bridge and to meet old friends or to make new ones.

The Holiday Season is upon us. I wish all of you a happy, healthy, and peaceful New Year. I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming District 18 Sectionals and Regionals!

Dick

Dick Anderson

District 18 ACBL Board of Directors