



District 21 Director's Report

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There comes a time in the affairs of man when he must take the bull by the tail ... and face the situation. - W.C. Fields

Organization:

Herein lies the biggest change in the ACBL in many years.

Due to declining membership, now down below 135,000, and with slow increases in club and tournament attendance, revenue is expected to be lower. In our regular Board of Directors (BoD) meeting in Phoenix, the Executive Director and Finance Director presented their budget for 2023, showing an almost \$1M loss. This was unacceptable to the BoD, which rejected the proposed budget unanimously and asked for a revised budget with mitigated losses. Either expenses had to be cut, or dues/fees raised. No one wanted the latter in these times where clubs are struggling and many tournaments have difficulty breaking even. Nor do we want to raise membership dues and see more members leave.

Following the request to cut Horn Lake expenses, Joe Jones, our Executive Director (ED), resigned. Paul Cuneo, the Region 9 Board member, volunteered to take over the ED job until a permanent replacement could be found. Paul has a background in senior management for a large corporation and runs a not-for-profit bridge club in Houston.

After Paul stepped in as temporary ED, Mary Stratton, the senior manager for marketing, and Greg Coles, the senior manager for bridge operations, both left. This was preceded by our legal counsel Linda Dunn, leaving some months ago. Susie Cordell, our senior manager in IT left last month after we had two bridge players, who have extensive computer systems knowledge, volunteer to review the IT department and strongly suggest changes.

The legal counsel staff position has been replaced with an outside consultant only as needed. There is a search ongoing for the IT department head. The new ED may decide to go without replacing the marketing and operations senior managers, and have a structure that has fewer management levels. This would result in a leaner staff and would save about \$500K in expenses in 2023.

Bridge:

Aside from the major upheaval in Horn Lake, the BoD managed to address a few bridge issues.

- a) Each District is now allowed to hold up to 5 limited regionals in addition to the regular open regionals they are allotted; the old limit was 3. The limited regionals can be Youth,



Junior, or Non-Life Master. D21 has yet to run any of these this century, but maybe we will soon.

- b) Each District now can run one week of Sectional-rated virtual club (VACB) fundraising games in each of the three years prior to a NABC held within the District. This is in addition to the equivalent Face-to-Face (FtF) games. Such funds are raised to support the hosting of the NABC.
- c) Management will designate one week in each of the Special Games months for VACBs to hold special games for designated charities.
- d) Smaller sectional tournaments now can be run by non-ACBL employed TDs. Local Sectionals, which are defined as open sectionals with an anticipated attendance of fewer than 25 tables per session, may be staffed by Tournament Assistants or club directors who have been certified for Local Sectional staffing. NLM Sectionals with an upper masterpoint limit of 750 (was 500) masterpoints or fewer may be run by Tournament Assistants or club directors who have been certified for Local Sectional staffing.
- e) The Ace of Clubs is now divided into two different races: one for FtF games, namely the existing Helen Shanbrom Ace of Clubs, and one for virtual online VACB games, called the Ace of Virtual Clubs for lack of a renowned person associated with these games.
- f) While the above five changes were approved by a big majority, a VACB appreciation week with increased Masterpoint awards similar to that for FtF games was NOT approved. It was felt FtF games should still be getting preferential treatment since they are struggling to survive.

Elections:

Joann Glasson was elected for another one-year term as ACBL President. Perhaps this is a start of a new trend where ACBL Presidents serve more than just one year. Georgia Heth started this trend two years ago.

Margot Hennings was elected as ACBL Vice-President. This is a new position on the BoD, replacing the Chair of the Board position.

Morris Jones, a former D21 member also known as MoJo, and now living in the Los Angeles area, was named the Aileen Osofsky Goodwill Member of the year.

Betty Starzec was named Honorary Member of the year. She has been a senior Teacher Accreditation Program (TAP) presenter for 20 years. Betty is currently the D16 President.

Brian Platnik and Franco Bassegio were named the Nadine Wood Volunteer Members of the year. They are the developers of EDGAR, a program that detects cheating trends in online play.



D I A M O N D I N T H E R U F F

Finally, after a 3-way race and extremely close run-off, Jackie Zayac has been elected Region 12 Director for a 4-year term starting this January. As District 21 Director, I will continue to serve on the BoD through 2023, so there will be two people on the BoD representing D21 for one year.

I hope 2023 proves to be a good year for you and for bridge!