



District 21 Director's Report

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The ACBL Board of Directors met in a special online meeting in January to enact some specific motions that were best handled in January instead waiting until our regular meeting at the Spring NABC in March. The meeting went faster than expected and Zoom-ed right along.

The items of interest to bridge players include a couple of items that were not mentioned in my last communique, so they come first.

There is a new, improved convention card that was approved by the Board.

The biggest change includes a separate section for 1C and 1D openings. A number of expert pairs are using these openings in various forms that do not coincide with the common 2/1 meanings. In addition to those who play Precision, a number of players are now using 1C for balanced hands and 1D for unbalanced hands, among other, lesser-known methods. For those who play common methods, there is not much significant difference on the new convention cards. Just the same, watch for articles in the upcoming ACBL Bulletins for discussions on filling out the new cards. For the foreseeable future, you can still use your old convention cards.

Our own Roger Smith was elected by acclamation as the new chair of the Aileen Osofsky Goodwill Committee. Sandy DeMartino was the previous chair; Aileen Osofsky preceded her. Roger should be familiar to many of us since he has served as District Director in the past.

Cheating, especially online cheating, is still prevalent and being addressed by the Appeals and Charges committee. The process is very detailed and time consuming. It is also subject to appeal via legal channels, which can take many resources and run into major expenses. There is also the appearance of bias, since the charges are brought by the ACBL Executive Director and judged by bridge players on the Ethics Oversight Committee (EOC) or Online EOC (OEOC) followed by a review and/or appeal with the Appeals & Charges (A&C) Committee of the Board of Directors (BoD). HTFA (How's That For Acronyms?). But wait, there's more!

To circumvent all these potential problems, the BoD passed a motion that all ethics charges that have a potential penalty of over 6 months suspension will be handled by the Institute for Bridge Arbitration (IBA), a branch of the American Arbitration Association (AAA). The IBA is a newly forming group of bridge players, such as were serving on the OEOC, that will train to be recognized arbitrators. This will relieve the A&C and OEOC of addressing serious ethics charges as well as provide arbitration that is not directly associated with the ACBL. Courts recognize the AAA as groups of professional and fair arbitrators. It would be much more difficult for lawsuits to challenge these arbitrations.

Ethics charges that can result in no greater suspension than 6 months will still be handled by the OEOC and A&C, but that may change in the future in order to streamline smaller charges.

There was also a motion to amend the ACBL Bylaws, whereby the Treasurer is elected by the BoD (presumably in the fall) to serve the following calendar year, instead of being elected at the Spring NABC for a one-year term. Bylaws changes require a 2/3 vote of the BoD, followed by a posting in the ACBL Bulletin at least 30 days before a 2nd reading and vote by the BoD. Then the Advisory Council has to ratify it. As the new chair of the BoD Bylaws Committee, it is my duty to handle these motions and see that they go through the correct procedure. Hey, if I have to do this, you might as well read about it!