



District 21 Director's Report

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Deadlines. Deadlines. Deadlines. Sounds like a 1950's movie about reporters. Well, deadlines are not yet dead. This article has to get to the editors of the DIR in two days. So I will keep it short and to the point. That was the plan, but you might not agree on the shortness.

Governance:

The ACBL Board of Directors (BoD) had our first live meeting in two years. That coincided with the first NABC in two years. We met in Austin for 3 days just before Thanksgiving and the tournament started on Thanksgiving Day. The last time we had an NABC was November 2019 in San Francisco.

A good deal of the BoD's work has been done on Zoom. While Zoom fills the void when there are no live meetings, it still cannot take the place of meeting in person and being able to discuss matters face to face and informally.

Much of what the BoD is doing relates to how the organization will be run as we transition from a board of 25 District Directors down to a board of 13 Regional Directors. The 25 districts themselves will remain intact, but some of the tasks traditionally performed by the District Directors will be reassigned to the District President rather than the Regional Director.en

There were a few elections that took place. The new ACBL President for 2022 is Joann Glasson, from New Jersey. She is the current BoD's financial chair. George Jacobs was voted the Volunteer of the Year, and Ann Romeo and Al Bender, from the Seattle area, were chosen as the Nadine Wood Members of the Year for the work they have been doing with Bridge for Youth in D19.

Districts or Units that suffer financial damage due to denial of Tournament Directors by the ACBL (typically due to pandemic concerns) can be considered for financial reimbursement. If you were running a sectional, paid the rent for the space, then found out the ACBL cancelled your event by saying no TDs would run it, you might qualify for having the loses covered. This is not a guarantee and requires a lot of paperwork before being considered but it might be a way to keep your unit solvent.

A number of units in D21 with relatively small memberships are having trouble finding volunteers to serve on their unit's board. Unit board members are typically the biggest volunteers in the organization, but without enough board members it is difficult to run the unit. Some units are considering merging with other neighboring units. The BoD is working on defining how this should be accomplished as an affiliate of the ACBL.

Finance:

Finance is always a major item on the BoD agenda. The ACBL has actually had two good years financially. For 2021 the estimated gain is \$744K, with an estimated \$12M in liquid assets. Originally 2021 was viewed as the year of returning to live play, but as the Delta and Omicron variants put the brakes on that return, the efforts to support Face-to-Face (FtF) play were pushed out to 2022. Because of that, we felt 2022 was not a good time to raise fees, so Finance put forth a plan to spend gains from previous years and run a deficit of \$850K in 2022 in order to support FtF play and grow the membership with new or returning players.



Bridge:

Online cheating is still a hot topic. The process for hearing cases and determining punishment is extremely time consuming. We all want hearings to be fair to both sides and there is the Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR) that details all the procedures that must be followed. Mostly these hearings are a result of players filing player memos when someone is suspected of unethical actions. There are about 1,000 players memos filed each year, and they are all read. The more memos filed against a given player, the more likely it is they will be charged. If you feel you have been cheated or slighted, do file a player memo.

Marketing has had great success with its Intro to Bridge, an online 10-week interactive class. 86% of those who took the course recommended it, and there were 880 students. Plans are to increase the number of courses and teachers. Those who participate in these classes are funneled into the guest member program, which gives them a taste of all the benefits of a regular membership.

Lately, there have been complaints of Virtual Clubs (VC) allowing players to have a robot as a partner. Some small clubs do so to reach the minimum number of tables to hold a game. Others appear to do so to increase the table count so that more masterpoints are handed out. The former is not much of a problem, but the latter has generated those complaints. The ACBL Director of Operations noted that there can't be more than one robot pair per game at the start of the game. But there is currently no restriction for players who opt to play with robots. However, robots are given a rating of 100K masterpoints, so if a C player partners with a robot, they would be considered in the A stratification. Jeff Meckstroth has 'only' 92,000 masterpoints, but I truly doubt a BBO robot is better than he is.

There was much discussion of how food is allocated at NABCs. The 1pm and 7pm players traditionally get food snacks around 10:30pm, while the 10am and 3pm players receive a \$2 chit at the end of their last session. As daylight games are getting more popular, some felt that the imbalance should be rectified. Marketing wanted to determine the number of players who avail themselves of this benefit before committing to reallocating the funds. The BoD agreed to wait until we have more information.

It was also noted that registration gift allowances had not been updated in many years. As a result, the I/N welcome gift was raised from \$3 to \$5.

The visitors, or guest, policy for Virtual Club games has been a hot issue. It was recently modified so that it does not count partners of those on the include list. This means that the 15% limit on visitors also does not count these players. It would appear trivial to implement this condition, but it had to be made within the BBO software. BBO is a separate company, independent of the ACBL, which means that they had to implement this change. Fortunately, they agreed. Another benefit is that the VC director no longer has to list the guest partner as a visitor. If you ever had to get the director to add your partner to the visitors list at the last moment, you can appreciate the benefit. So can the director.

There will be a trial run of a new concept in Sectional Tournaments at Clubs (STaC). Three districts in the northeast will run a 'Rainbow' StaC. Instead of providing silver masterpoints like a regular StaC, it will be 25% gold, 25% red, 25% silver, and 25% black points. It was noted that the name 'Rainbow' was just a temporary name. I spoke out in favor of keeping that name. Why? Because there is a pot of gold at the end of it.

Seems like a pot of gold is a good place to end. If this was not enough for you, watch soon for a link on the [D21 web site](#) where you can find the full, official notes of the Fall 2021 BoD meeting. It is not yet ready at this time.