

There is a New Interim Executive Director at ACBL HQ

Joe Jones, who has been serving as Chief Financial Officer of the ACBL, has been appointed to serve as interim Executive Director effective April 30, 2018 while a search committee begins to seek a replacement for former CEO Bahar Gidwani.

ACBL President Jay Whipple is Visiting us in Nashua 6/21-24

I'm happy to announce that ACBL President Jay Whipple has accepted my invitation to join us at our upcoming Summer Regional at the Radisson Nashua at 7 Tara Boulevard, Nashua NH.

Jay will host a meet and greet with the general membership prior to the morning games on Saturday, June 23rd starting around 9 AM. All are invited to attend.

He will also be meeting with the D25 Executive Committee Saturday, June 23, and with the Board of Delegates, Sunday morning June 24.

Finally, Jay will round out his busy agenda with a brief meeting with the Tournament Directors and staff on Friday morning June 22nd.

In addition to being our 2018 ACBL President, Jay is the District Director from the ACBL's largest district – Florida. He has deep roots in New England, having graduated from Exeter Academy, Exeter NH, and from Yale University, New Haven, CT. He is the originator of The Common Game and the creator of the Regional Event at the Club House (REACH). You may want to take advantage of this great opportunity to meet Jay and discuss with him face to face some of the challenges facing the ACBL today as well as the game of bridge in general.

Many thanks to D25 President Lois DeBlois, Tournament Manager Helen Pawlowski, and DIC Peter Marcus who have collaborated to host a warm welcome for Jay.

North American Pairs District Finals Flight A Scheduling Problems

In the next few days, we are going to have to make a tough decision about conducting the District 25 Finals of the North American Pairs – an event that is open to each and every ACBL member in good standing who resides in New England – regardless of masterpoints. We want maximum participation – as this is our premiere pairs event. We also want to ensure that we have the best players in our district representing us in the NABC+ finals.

We've been looking at all options and none are perfect. Our tournament schedule is very busy in the fall. Availability of qualified directors for this NABC+ qualifying event, available and affordable space, conflict with overlapping scheduled sectionals and other major events all pose major challenges. There is an open weekend in January, but that is obviously very risky. Weather at that time of the year is extremely problematic, and the event which is a qualifier for the NABC+ finals in Memphis, March 2019, must be concluded by January 30th.

In order to help cut down the travel for our members residing in the southern and western part of New England, we had hopes of conducting this year's Flight A NAP District Finals at the Hartford Bridge Club, Oct 20-21. HBC Manager, Donna Feir, has been most cooperative in helping to facilitate this. Unfortunately, this conflicts with the Connecticut Sectional Tournament at Clubs (STAC) that is being conducted that week. That just isn't going to work for the club. So, we thought we may want to keep

the event at Watertown one more year as part of the EMBA Fall Sectional, October 6-7. EMBA was very receptive to this, and EMBA President Bob Bertoni has been especially helpful. We were all set to go with this, but, as luck would have it, this conflicts with the World Championships being conducted in Orlando, FL (September 21-Oct 7).

At present, the most likely option is to conduct the Flight A NAP District Finals in conjunction with our D25 Harvest Regional during the weekend of November 10-11, 2018, at the Holiday Inn, 31 Hampshire St., Mansfield, MA

If we go this route, it will mean that our top players will have to give up playing in other regional events that would have been scheduled over that weekend. It's not ideal. That's for sure. But our other options aren't great.

By sharing this, I hope you are getting a sense for the enormity of the challenge associated with the behind the scenes work that goes into scheduling of this and all our other tournaments. With the NAP and GNT we have had some passionate volunteer coordinators in recent years – Dean Panagopoulos and Bill Braucher from EMBA, and now many time NABC+ champion Frank Merblum from CT.

Scheduling tournaments has never been my trump suit. When I was District VP, I was blessed to work alongside David Rock from Western MA who was great at this. As your District President, I had Bob Bertoni as my VP and he was exceptional in this regard. He, in turn, had the benefit of your current President, Lois DeBlois, and she now has Jack Mahoney from ME handling these activities. They all put a great deal of time and effort into this work – as do Maureen Fahey from RI, your District Tournament Coordinator, and your entire cadre of directors led by David Metcalf and Peter Marcus, and including Marilyn Wells at the regional level. The volunteers and staff who work so hard for you deserve your deepest gratitude. If you want to learn more about how you can help as a volunteer, please take a few minutes to watch the Volunteer Management Webinar that is on www.acbl.org/webinars

Thanks,

Mark

P.S. I want to hear from you – especially if you're interested in participating in the NAP A Finals. Please send me a quick note with your thoughts at District25Director@acbl.org