



## **2017 San Diego Fall NABC District Director's Report – Mark Aquino**

**The Venue** - San Diego in late November and early December is absolutely fabulous! The weather was fabulous –reaching into the high 80's on some days. The host hotel – the Manchester Grand Hyatt was an incredible bargain at the bridge rate of \$149 plus tax. There were ample, well-lit playing areas, excellent hospitality to include a live band and an Elvis impersonator, a picturesque oceanside setting with a delightful marina, the USS Midway, and a number of other local attractions to include the world famous San Diego zoo that made this a delightful tournament experience for all. The attendance of 11,747.5 tables was consistent with budget forecasts, but down 9% from the last time the Fall NABC was held in San Diego eight years ago. We certainly should be looking at returning to this location more frequently in the future, and we need to do a much better job of marketing how beautiful this location is at this time of year. As we start looking towards our own 2021 Summer NABC in Providence, the lesson for us needs to be to start early advertising the fact that New England is the most beautiful and attractive location for a bridge tournament in July! If you like beaches, ours are the best. If you like history or culture, no place has as much as ours. If you like to gamble, why endure 120 ° heat in Las Vegas when you're about an hour's drive from top casinos?

Next fall, the ACBL is hosting its fall NABC in Honolulu from November 22 thru December 2, 2018. This will undoubtedly be the last chance for most of us to enjoy an NABC in this location. Book your travel early. The host hotel will be less expensive than comparable properties in the area, and you may be pleasantly surprised at how affordable airfares will be (especially if you might happen to have some extra air miles!)

I was thrilled to see so many of our New Englanders at San Diego, and, as usual, there were many top finishers.

**Following the "ZZ Tops"** The big BuZZ at the San Diego NABC was about the old "Z" (Zia Mahmoud) playing with the young "Z" (D25's own Junior World Champion and 3-time NABC+ champ, Zachary Grossack in the prestigious Blue Ribbon Pairs. The pair generated a lot of excitement, making it to the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the event, finishing 21<sup>st</sup> overall. I can assure you that none of the large group of kibitzers that were watching this pair ever dozed off out of boredom and "caught any Z's".

### The D25 Top 25

D25 Rank	Overall Rank	mps	Name	City	State
1	103	125.15	Victor King	Hartford	CT
2	134	109.53	Adam Grossack	Newton	MA
3	145	104.77	Zachary Grossack	Newton	MA
4	159	101.62	Douglas Doub	West Hartford	CT
5	163	100.22	Seth Cohen	Stamford	CT
6	183	90.62	Karen McCallum	Exeter	NH
7	257	75.28	Yiji Starr	Wayland	MA
8	262	74.84	Richard DeMartino	Riverside	CT
9	270	73.3	Geoffrey Brod	Avon	CT
10	326	63.91	Lloyd Arvedon	Woburn	MA
11	362	58.98	Phyllis Fireman	Chestnut Hill	MA
12	370	58.51	Debbie Benner	Fairfield	CT
13	371	58.51	Arthur Crystal	Fairfield	CT
14	466	50.3	Walter Lee	Sudbury	MA
15	481	49.34	John McLaughlin	Melrose	MA
16	500	48.21	Stewart Rubenstein	Newton	MA
17	501	48.21	Christina Parker	Newton Center	MA
18	517	47.3	Margie Sullivan	Sagamore Beach	MA
19	523	46.93	Mark Aquino	Jamaica Plain	MA

20	542	45.69	Bernard Yomtov	Cambridge	MA
21	590	42.25	Paul Fireman	Chestnut Hill	MA
22	597	41.67	Rick Holcomb	Malden	MA
23	611	40.92	Stephen Gladyszak	Chelsea	MA
24	696	36.92	Andrew Chesterton	Winchester	MA
25	704	36.75	Harold Feldheim	Hamden	CT

**The top D25 finishers in NABC+ events:**

WOMENS B-A-M TEAMS	Yiji Starr	2	Wayland	MA
SUPER SENIOR PAIRS (age 70+)	Richard Budd	5	Portland	ME
SUPER SENIOR PAIRS (age 70+)	Shome Mukherjee	5	Randolph	MA
BAZE SENIOR KNOCKOUT TEAMS	Karen McCallum	5/8	Exeter	NH
BAZE SENIOR KNOCKOUT TEAMS	Richard DeMartino	5/8	Riverside	CT
BAZE SENIOR KNOCKOUT TEAMS	Victor King	5/8	Hartford	CT
BAZE SENIOR KNOCKOUT TEAMS	Geoffrey Brod	5/8	Avon	CT
SENIOR MIXED PAIRS	Bill Irvine	14	Quincy	MA
SENIOR MIXED PAIRS	Ellie Hanlon	14	Barre	VT
SENIOR MIXED PAIRS	Stephen Gladyszak	18	Chelsea	MA
NORTH AMERICAN SWISS TEAMS	Bernard Yomtov	16	Cambridge	MA
NORTH AMERICAN SWISS TEAMS	Douglas Doub	16	West Hartford	CT
NORTH AMERICAN SWISS TEAMS	Andrew Chesterton	17	Winchester	MA

NORTH AMERICAN SWISS TEAMS	Mark Aquino	17	Jamaica Plain	MA
WHITEHEAD WOMENS PAIRS	Phyllis Fireman	18	Chestnut Hill	MA
NAIL LIFE MASTER OPEN PAIRS	Douglas Doub	20	West Hartford	CT
NAIL LIFE MASTER OPEN PAIRS	Yiji Starr	20	Wayland	MA
KAPLAN BLUE RIBBON PAIRS	Zachary Grossack	21	Newton	MA
WHITEHEAD WOMENS PAIRS	Rena Lieberman	25	North Easton	MA
WHITEHEAD WOMENS PAIRS	Margie Sullivan	25	Sagamore	MA

**Top Finishers in Secondary Events:**

Ed Foundation Open Pairs	Marshall Williams	2nd C	Pawtucket	RI
Ed Foundation Open Pairs	Marguerite Gousie	2nd C	Pawtucket	RI
Daylight Open Pairs	Stuart Treworgy	1st C	Cumberland	RI
Daylight Open Pairs	Richard Katz	1st C	Sharon	MA
Daylight Open Pairs )	Stewart Rubenstein	1st A & B	Newton	MA
Daylight Open Pairs )	Christina Parker	1st A & B	Newton	MA
Open Pairs	David Dobrin	2nd B & C	Cambridge	MA
299er I/N Pairs	Karen Birck	2nd C	Wilton	CT
Sun-Mon AM Compact KO	Alexander Frieden	1st A	Brookline	MA
Sunday Zip KO	Nathan Glasser	2nd A	Somerville	MA
Sunday Zip KO	Barry Margolin	2nd A	Arlington	MA
Daylight A/X Open Pairs	Lloyd Arvedon	1st A	Woburn	MA
Daylight A/X Open Pairs	John McLaughlin	1st A	Melrose	MA
A/X/Y Open Pairs)	David Dobrin	1st C	Cambridge	MA
B/C/D Open Pairs	Matthew Fienberg	2nd A & B	Northborough	MA
A/X/Y Open Pairs	Laurence Lebowitz	1st A B & C	Boston	MA
A/X/Y Open Pairs	Adam Grossack	1st A B & C	Newton	MA
Compact KO Teams 4	Alexander Frieden	1st A	Brookline	MA
Monday Zip KO	Barry Margolin	2nd A	Arlington	MA

299er I/N Pairs	Karen Birck	2nd in C	Wilton	CT
Evening B-A-M Teams	Cenk Tuncok	1st A	Amesbury	MA
Zip Knockout Teams	Nathan Glasser	1st A	Somerville	MA
Zip Knockout Teams	Barry Margolin	1st A	Arlington	MA
Daylight A/X Open Pairs	Jeffrey Goldman	1st B	Norwalk	CT
Open Pairs	Jack Mahoney	1st B	Brunswick	ME
Open Pairs	Dan Morgenstern	1st B	Brunswick	ME
Open Pairs	Bernard Yomtov	2nd A	Cambridge	MA
A/X Open Pairs	Victor King	1st A	Hartford	CT
Evening Swiss Teams	Weiling Zhao	1st A	Brookfield	CT
Daylight A/B/C Open Pairs	Jack Mahoney	1st C	Brunswick	ME
Daylight A/B/C Open Pairs	Dan Morgenstern	1st C	Brunswick	ME
Daylight A/B/C Open Pairs	Marek Kawka	2nd C	Bolton	MA
Sat-Sun KO Teams 1	Adam Grossack	2nd A	Newton	MA
Sat-Sun KO Teams 1	Zachary Grossack	2nd A	Newton	MA
Fri-Sun Side Game	Karen McCallum	1st A	Exeter	NH

### **My Summary Assessment of ACBL Board of Director Minutes**

There was a very busy 5 days of meetings – to include all day Thanksgiving – in which a total of 53 motions and 12 discussion items were reviewed. In addition, the new CEO presented 10 “Big Ideas” – each of which was a composite of some 30-50 separate items.

Overall, I was rather pleased at the end of the week, but not completely happy. I was pretty apprehensive leading up to the meetings, as many of the new CEO’s ideas, in my opinion – as well as the opinion of most of our District and Unit officials - had far-reaching adverse impacts on our district as well as on the entire ACBL. To that end, I’m happy to report that we were quite successful in pushing back on most of what I consider to be the more concerning new ideas. Moving forward, a much more comprehensive board review process was established for subsequent ideas emanating from management. On the other side of the coin, there were a few experiments that have OK’d my a vast majority of the Board against my strong objections. The basic issue for districts like ours is that there appears to be a disregard for the adverse impact on the ability to successfully sustain face-to-face regionals and sectionals. In addition, while generous experimental masterpoint formulations for online and in-clubs may be very popular to many – they are totally out of line, in my opinion, with the proper parity and proportion required to satisfactorily sustain the variety of competitions that are extremely important components of our overall product portfolio.

**Status Update regarding ACBL CEO Bahar Gidwani's "Ten Big Ideas"**

Idea	Board Direction	Management's Next Steps
Advertise, Promote, Sponsor	OK to proceed.	Preparing test msgs. Initial focus is on-line ads since they are easy to track.
Improve Teaching Results	OK to proceed.	Completed methods research. Doing a survey. Building an assessment tool.
Simplify Masterpoints	OK to proceed.	Building a team of TDs and some outside thought leaders to work on this.
Strength-Based Ratings	OK to proceed.	Recruiting a team of ACBL members to work on this.
Money Bridge	Put On hold - Will reconsider if a sponsor is found.	On back burner until after Philadelphia at which time will begin to look for a sponsor.
Redistribute Tournament Activity	Put on hold - Many aspects unacceptable.	An internal task force will be formed to develop more potentially acceptable options. First 3 options to be presented to BOD as soon as possible.
Integrate Social Bridge	Put on hold - Better approach, clarification needed	Starting to build a list of best practices – primarily from clubs so far. Plan to enlist ideas from tournament organizers and teachers.
Document Health Benefits	Drop it!	Upgraded our relationship with Alzheimer's Foundation - working to develop bridge-related research proposals
Start Expert Player Guild	Drop it!	Considering admin actions re: visas?
Upgrade Table Technology	Drop it!	Lots of confusion. This has nothing to do with ACBL Score! Put on back burner while reviewing new technology options.

**Some big progress!**

One big innovation was the ability to purchase entries for the first time with credit cards.

An experiment was conducted on scoring Swiss events with Bridgemates. Unfortunately, this still has a few glitches – but it looks like this will be doable in the foreseeable future.

Management tells us that a group of clubs are using a new Masterpoint Gateway to submit either ACBL score gamefiles or USEBIO files. See <http://results.acbl.org>. As a result, we are building the data we need to test a new masterpoint engine. This is expected to help us replace ACBL score – to eliminate monthly reports, and to bill clubs electronically.

A new temporary ACBL membership was approved. Cost is \$7.99 for a 1-2 month membership. \$5 rebated to the teacher/sponsor who brings in the member. 1-2 ACBL Bulletins will be included. Looks to be a lot more attractive than the \$4/session fee, and hopefully will result in

many full new memberships.

A motion I have co-sponsored and have been pushing for a while has passed the first important stage. By a vote of 16-8, the first of two 2/3 vote approvals was granted to establish a By-Laws change that will limit for the first time ever the term of office of ACBL Board members. It's a modest proposal. The term limit is four 3-year terms effective 1/1/19 – but it's a start aimed at signaling that serving on the board is not a lifetime appointment, and there is upward opportunity.

Another motion I co-sponsored was also passed. This motion puts an end to ACBL Board meetings overlapping the start of NABC events. The intent is not to send the message to would-be board members that service on the board should be not viewed as being conflicting with playing bridge. We want members to attend our NABCs and it's important that our BOD members play, I believe.

Paul Cuneo, DD from Houston, and I collaborated with ACBL Marketing to produce a webinar and we'll be launching this training in mid-January regarding Volunteer Management. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. This webinar is designed to help units and districts across the ACBL in their efforts to recruit, retain, and recognize key volunteers.

### **Recap of Other Important – but contested - Board Motions**

With so many board motions, I will leave out most of the unanimous votes. You can look on acbl.org if you have interest on the details of all the motions.

173-08 Zone 2 National Bridge Organizations – This motion for reconsideration of an earlier vote failed by a 9-15-1 vote. The motion outlines a complex monetary plan that is intended to significantly adjust and reduce over time the amount currently being paid by the ACBL to support the USBF and the CBF. I voted with the minority for reconsideration. The Board of Governors voted that this motion sends a message that the ACBL does not support the World Bridge Federation. I agree with the BOG and I also believe this may undermine the USBF at the expense of the CBF.

173-10 Online Individual Robot Tournament - This motion extends the experimental online robotic Individual which was very popular and profitable to be part of each of the NABCs moving forward. I was only 1 of 3 board members voting against this. My objection is the masterpoints being awarded are completely inappropriate in my opinion – more than 40 Gold points for the winner - and I feel the event acts as a demotivator to locals travelling to nearby NABCs.

173-16 Drop-Ins - This is one unanimously carried motion that I do want to highlight. It allows a much more reasonable approach than had been in place. For those who lose in the quarterfinals of the Spingold to drop in to the second day of the 3-day Roth Open Swiss, but they enter with zero carryover. Any mps they earned in the Spingolds they will keep, but they will only receive 5/7 of the mps that would ordinarily be given to their earnings in the Roth Open Swiss. Previously, players were allowed to drop in with 1/3 of the max carryover and were allowed to keep only the greater of the 2 awards they may have earned.

173-17 Uniform Electronic Device Policy for NABCs, Regionals, Sectionals - This was divided into two votes. I voted with the majority on both. First, we agreed to keep the same policy at Regionals by a wide 22-3 margin. By a 9-15-1 vote, we voted to not have the same policy apply at sectionals.

173-19 Soloway KO Condition of Contest – Starting with the Fall NABC in 2019 ( the year after Honolulu), the board voted unanimously to support the expert-led Competition and Convention Committee’s recommendation to start a 5-day KO following a 2-day Swiss Qualifier consisting of 16 7-board matches.

173-20 Revised ACBL Convention Charts – The key features of the four new charts (Basic, Basic+, Open and Open+) were recently published in the ACBL Bulletin. The board voted to defer action on this until Philly. I will be working on the top two charts (Open and Open+) between now and then. Let me know if you have any thoughts on what you might like to should be included, changed or modified.

173-21 One Convention Card at the Table - This motion was originally intended to make things simple by only requiring one convention card to be at the table, but discussion and input from TDs made it clear that this would only make things worse. By a vote of 8-17, this motion failed. I voted with the majority.

173-24 Reinstatement of pre-2010 LM Requirements - Any member who joined the ACBL prior to 1/1/ 2010 and let his/her membership lapse, may have the old LM requirements if their membership is reinstated prior to 7/1/2018, or if reinstated after 7/1/2018 by paying a one-time \$50 fee to the ACBL. Carried – 14-9 (I and another board member were called out of the meeting when this vote was held, but if present, I would have voted with the majority.) Hopefully, this will convince some folks to reinstate memberships.

173-30 Limited and Invitational Games at STACs – A very long and complicated motion regarding STACs was defeated by a 11-14 margin. I voted with the majority because I did not feel there was a convincing case made for the proposed changes.

173-42 Paperless Board Meetings – By a 15-7-3 vote, the board voted to submit all motions and receive all minutes in an electronic manner. I voted against this, only because I thought it should be piloted before implemented. This is a major change in the way we conduct our business, and there may be some issues that we can’t foresee without a trial.

173-47 Board Oversight Committee By a 21-4 vote, the board voted to eliminate this committee. I was overjoyed to see this change. The committee is essentially a disciplinary committee for board members. I was shocked to learn that such a committee existed in the first place, and while I could certainly see the potential benefit of such a group, as a new board member I thought it sent a very negative message.

173-29 NABC Tournament Chair - The Board voted 19-6 to not allow District Directors or the Chairman of the Board of Governors to serve as an NABC Chair. I voted against this, because while I couldn’t understand why anyone would want to do both jobs, many have in the past and done a very good job. Furthermore, we just had a situation in Philadelphia in which JoAnn Glasson was elected to the board after having been working as their NABC Chair for a while. To me, seemed like an unnecessary motion.

173-40 WBF Funding - This was a motion to ensure there was at least \$50,000 more raised for the WBF in 2018 than in 2017. The motion failed 12-13. I voted for it as it ties in with my belief that the ACBL needs to strongly support the WBF.

TASK FORCES and Miscellaneous - This was most, but by no means all of the motions and discussion topics discussed. We had 3 very active task forces last year – the Tournament Task Force, the Volunteer Task Force, and the Club Task Force. These task forces consisted of board members and non-board subject matter experts working together to try to address longer term, complex issues facing our league. An enormous amount of work



was conducted over the phone between meetings aimed at addressing a large number of concerns. A lot of data was gathered, and we are working hard to address the concerns associated with attendance decline, decline in volunteers, and very specific problems that are affecting our clubs. A lot of work still remains to be done on all fronts, and action plans are going to be developed and implemented in the months to follow.

Let me know if you have any questions about any of these ongoing activities. Thanks for all your great support!

Mark

