

District 25 Director's Report Fall NABC 2016

Orlando, FL
Mark Aquino

First Impressions – Being on the board is a great privilege, and I am thrilled to be your representative on so many important issues. It's also a very tense period, because the board is going thru a huge period of change. It's trying to improve business procedures, and overall effectiveness in light of unprecedented high costs for management infrastructure, staffing, legal requirements, and technology. Membership has remained constant around 168,000 members, but the average age continues to increase – currently 71.4 and rising. Significant change is needed. On a positive note, there are 7 new members of the board within the past year alone, and the board's focus is much more receptive to change, to solving our complex problems to the best of our ability, to making things better for all of our members, and to keeping this great game of ours thriving for a long time to come.

Orlando Report

There were numerous complaints about the in and out parking lot congestion and the pricey and limited food selection, but all in all, New Englanders seemed to enjoy getting away to a nice location for this time of year. The host hotel was Disney's Dolphin Resort. There were nightly fireworks, live entertainment, and festive holiday decorations. There was a great Boardwalk next door, and a lovely shopping and restaurant area conveniently accessible by free shuttle bus in nearby Disney Springs. Unfortunately, attendance at the NABC was about 3,000 tables short of projections! That equates to about a \$250,000 budgeted revenue shortfall, so I'm sure we are going to see a continuance of belt tightening motions in 2017. I'm sure it didn't help for the Florida district to hold a regional in Daytona a mere 70 miles away from Orlando a week before the NABC – as well as to hold a regional in Ft. Lauderdale the following week. One lesson for us as we begin our planning for the Summer 2021 NABC in Providence is to try to make sure that we don't create the same kind of conflicts for our attendance.

BIG NEWS!

D25 Tournament Director David Metcalf was honored as ACBL 2016 Jean Molnar Employee of the Year.

D25 President Bob Bertoni has been elected D25's First Alternate to the Board of Directors for a 3 yr term starting 1/1/2017.

EMBA Board Member Carol Weinstein has been elected D25's Second Alternate to the Board of Directors for a 3 yr term starting 1/1/2017.

AND THE WINNER IS....

While it'll be tough to match the performance of our players in Washington, D25 players were in contention in a number of events across all levels of play in Orlando.

NABC+ Top 10 Finishes

Mitchell Open Board-A-Match Teams

- 4) Paul Fireman, Chestnut Hill, MA
- 5) Phyllis Fireman, Chestnut Hill, MA
- 8) Franklin Merblum, Bloomfield, CT ; Douglas Doub, West Hartford, CT

Kaplan Blue Ribbon Pairs

- 10) Richard Zeckhauser, Cambridge, MA

Reisinger BAM

- 6) Paul Fireman, Chestnut Hill, MA

Super Senior Pairs

- 2) Pat McDevitt, Brookline, MA ; Rich DeMartino, Riverside, CT
- 5) Shome Mukherjee, Randolph, MA; Richard Budd, Portland, ME

0-5000 Mini Blue Ribbon Pairs

- 2) Michael Schrage, Chestnut Hill, MA

D25 Top 25

Here's a list of the top 25 masterpoint winners in Orlando from D25.

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| 1) Paul Fireman, Chestnut Hill, MA | 145.95 |
| 2) Phyllis Fireman, Chestnut Hill, MA | 83.33 |
| 3) Shome Mukherjee, Randolph, MA | 79.60 |
| 4) Karen McCallum, Exeter, NH | 74.32 |
| 5) Michael Schrage, Chestnut Hill, MA | 70.69 |
| 6) Lew Gamerman, Randolph, MA | 68.13 |
| 7) Patrick McDevitt, Brookline, MA | 68.03 |
| 8) Franklin Merblum, Bloomfield, CT | 68.00 |
| 9) Richard DeMartino, Riverside, CT | 67.06 |
| 10) Barton Buffington, North Kingstown, RI | 65.68 |
| 11) Douglas Doub, West Hartford, CT | 63.66 |
| 12) Nathan Glasser, Somerville, MA | 63.32 |
| 13) Zachary Grossack, Newton, MA | 60.13 |
| 14) Richard Zeckhauser, Cambridge, MA | 60.00 |
| 15) Russell Ekeblad, Portsmouth, RI | 57.97 |
| 16) Margie Sullivan, Sagamore Beach, MA | 57.90 |

17) Walter Lee, Sudbury, MA	57.41
18) Robert Bertoni, Haverhill, MA	53.68
19) Adam Grossack, Newton, MA	50.46
20) Lloyd Arvedon, Woburn, MA	49.27
21) William Fogel, Portland, ME	47.74
22) Robert Lurie, Wayland, MA	45.05
23) Grace Charron, Fall River, MA	44.64
24) Mark Aquino, Jamaica Plain, MA	42.82
25) Richard Budd, Portland, ME	42.74

1st & 2nd Second Place in Regional, 299er & Other Events in Orlando:

1st Saturday Evening B/C/D Swiss

- 1) Michael Baker, Adamsville, RI

1st Sunday B/C/D Swiss

- 1) Marguerite Gousie – Marshall Williams, Woonsocket, RI;

Linda Ahrens, Joseph Brouillard, Lincoln, RI

1st Sunday Zip KO

- 1) Eric Schwartz, Arlington, MA; Nathan Glasser, Somerville, MA

Monday Evening B/C/D Swiss

Tied 1-2) Grace Charron, Fall River, MA

Monday CKO-3

- 1) Barton Buffington, North Kingstown, RI;

Dan Morgenstern – Jack Mahoney, Brunswick, ME

Marty Baff Daylight Open Pairs

- 2) Shome Mukherjee, Randolph, MA; Mark Aquino, Jamaica Plain, MA

Lola Wells Daylight Open Pairs

- 2) Lew Gamerman, Randolph, MA

Tuesday Late Zip KO Teams

- 2) Barry Margolin – Eric Schwartz, Arlington, MA; Nathan Glasser, Somerville, MA

Mon-Wed AM Side Game

- 1) Barbara Murphy, Newton, MA ; Stephen Gladyszak, Chelsea, MA

Wed Afternoon 49er Pairs

- 1) Patricia Foley, Wakefield, MA

Wed B/C Swiss

2) Grace Charron, Fall River, MA

Wed Late Zip KO Teams

2) Lew Gamerman, Randolph, MA; Laurence Lebowitz, Boston, MA;
Adam Grossack – Zachary Grossack, Newton, MA

Cessy Rubinson Swiss

A -2) Karen McCallum, Exeter, NH

X tied 1-2) William Nason, Andover, MA

Tue-Thu KO Teams 2

2) Nora Miller, Grantham, NH; Grace Charron, Fall River, MA;
Gardner, Newport, NH

Claire

Thu Fri Daylight KO-3

2) Rhoda Chickering, East Montpelier, VT

2nd Thu-Fri Swiss

2) Shekhar Sergupta

M Wicks and J Prillaman Open Pairs

Flt A 1) Walter Lee, Sudbury, MA

Flt B 1) Larry Lebowitz, Boston, MA; Adam Grossack, Newton, MA

2nd Sat-Sun KO Teams 2

2) Barton Buffington, North Kingstown, RI

Patty Jones A/X Swiss

X-1) Al Muggia, Andover, MA; Dan Jablonski, Stoneham, MA; Lon Sunshine, Framingham, MA; Ivania Yeo, Brighton, MA

2nd Sat-Sun Eve A/X/Y Swiss

Tied 1-2) Al Muggia, Andover, MA; Dan Jablonski, Stoneham, MA

2nd Sat Eve 299er Pairs

1) Ulla Winkler, Medford, MA

Harry Falk BC Swiss

2) William Fogel, Portland, ME

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BOARD OF DIRECTOR MOTIONS

163-57 Election of ACBL President – Bob Heller, D7 was elected to a one year term effective 1/1/2017.

163-58 Election of WBF Representative – Merlin Vilhauer was re-elected to serve a 3 year term starting 1/1/2017.

163-60 2017 Aileen Osofsky ACBL Goodwill Member of the Year – Eldon Clayman, District 7 was selected by the Goodwill Committee. (Chair, Sandra DeMartino.)

163-61 – 2017 Honorary Member of the Year – Eddie Wold was selected for this award by the Board Honorary Member Committee.

163-62 – 2016 Nadine Wood Volunteer Member of the Year – Nancy Erickson, District 22, was appointed by Ken Monzingo, 2016 ACBL President.

163-44 – Annual Top 25 – There was a motion to not count online masterpoints in the leaders of masterpoint categories, and that online points won't be added in the Lifetime Masterpoint List. I voted against this – because so much of our revenue is generated from Online masterpoints - as did 19 other board members.

163-46 Online events at Regional Tournaments – experiment will continue for 2 more years. I supported this because I could potentially see some advantage to us in helping to fill the void in our evening programs during the week. I also see some advantage for those who live quite a distance from our regional sites and this may afford some unique opportunities to get gold points. I think there is a risk, however, so I pushed for this to be done on an experimental basis only until we get more data. My concern is that we have to be careful not to create a conflict with our face-to-face regionals which we are fighting hard to sustain.

See Minutes of Orlando Board meeting on ACBL.org for complete conditions of contest.

163-16 Spouse Excursions - This was a very controversial topic that involved a lengthy heated debate -especially considering the relatively small amount of money being discussed (Not to exceed \$2,500 per NABC on a \$17 million budget). I spoke out against the Finance Committee's unanimous recommendation at the DC meeting and the attempt at that time to eliminate paying up to \$2,500 for tours and entertainment for significant others of Board members was overturned. My argument was that there are a large number of new board members, and while my own wife would seldom attend NABCs during Board meetings, several of the other new board members' spouses might, and this small gesture affords recognition for their support, while filling the void of their being at the host hotel while their spouses are tied up in daylong meetings. This was defeated. I had recommended a \$1,000 per tournament ceiling compromise, that was also defeated.

163-17 Membership Application requirements – This motion would require that individuals seeking membership would be required to disclose any prior discipline by any other bridge organization. If any info was not disclosed, management can revoke the membership. Only 1 district (D13) voted for this. I didn't vote for it because it seemed pretty hard to enforce, and placed rather arbitrary powers in the hands of management.

163-19 Standing Rules for Meetings – 1) Board meetings should ideally last no more than 3 days. Defeated 11-14 (14 of the 25 board members voted against this). I voted against this because it said nothing and represented an unnecessary additional item to our already excessively long codification.

2) Only Audit, Finance, Bridge, Appeals and Charges, Governance, Strategic Planning,

and CEO Review Committees should routinely be allocated meeting time at Board meetings. Carried. I voted for this. Our new President, Bob Heller, is trying to streamline the board meeting process. This past year, we had 26 different committees, I chaired one, and was a member of a half dozen others. This really is excessive, and consolidation and reduction of committees is a good start.

3) All committees should conduct as much business as possible between Board meetings. Carried unanimously. This is a motherhood and apple pie kind of motion. I'm not sure it really is necessary, but not worth arguing.

4) Likewise.... "all board meetings should be devoted primarily to strategic issues."
Carried unanimously.

163-21 Relocation and Rescheduling of Fall NABC's Meetings - Management argued that Fall NABCs represent a tremendous challenge to staff who are required to be away from home on Thanksgiving, so they wanted to have the Fall NABC in early November at Horn Lake – not at the Fall NABC. Motion failed 10 members voting for it, 1 abstaining, and 14 against. I was one of those voting against this, and there were several reasons for this. First, there is no mandate for management to bring so many staff members to the entire NABCs. Certainly, if holidays are a main hardship, it would make sense to rotate attendance and reduce the number of nonessential staff members. Secondly, there are meetings throughout the NABC beyond the board meeting. It's extremely important for all board members to attend the Board of Governors' meetings. We need to encourage attendance at NABCs, and I firmly believe that it is extremely important that board members interact with their constituents who attend NABCs – and get their direct and immediate feedback on current business matters.

163-36 Soloway KO – A seven day KO named in honor of Paul Soloway be created and included in the schedule of the Fall NABC. Failed – 6-19. I voted for this in support of the efforts of the Convention and Competition Committee that had worked hard on this and had recommended the motion to the BOD. The C&C Committee includes top experts like Jeff Meckstroth and Bob Hamman, and includes our own Doug Doub. There has been a sense that the BOD has been working against the top experts. I had serious reservations and mixed feelings about specific aspects of this motion, particularly how it might adversely impact our Senior Kos and the Blue Ribbon Pairs, but more than any concern for the specifics of this motion, I felt it of paramount importance that I show support for the efforts and hard work of our top experts who had volunteered a lot of time and effort in developing this recommendation.

163-37 and 163-38 - Removal of the Wagar Women's KO Teams from the Summer NABC, and removal of the Machlin Women's Swiss Teams from the Spring NABC –
Carried unanimously. The dismally low numbers of attendees over the past several years made this necessary. There is a rule that states that an NABC+ event will be eliminated if it fails to generate 30 teams for 3 consecutive years, and we weren't even close. To help alleviate the impact on our women players at the Summer NABC, a new event has been created...

163-39 – Wagar Women's Pairs – A 4-session NABC+ event will be added on Monday and

Tuesday of the Summer NABC schedule effective June 1, 2017.

163-40 – Hand Records – Concurrent events (LMs, 0-6K LMs, Blue Ribbon Pairs, 0-2500 Blues, etc.) will have the same hand records, but side games or other events with the same start times will be different. There was a lot of discussion around this. On the one hand, security concerns were paramount. On the other side of the coin, there was a desire for being able to review hands at dinner, etc. I supported this motion, as I thought the proposal is better than the status quo and offered a reasonable compromise. The vote was 14 for and 11 against.

163-41 – Section 5.1 NABC Tournament Conduct Committee – The ACBL Disciplinary Coordinator will create a roster of committee members from a list of names prepared by the ACBL President, the Ethical Oversight Committee, and the membership at large, if needed. This committee is primarily focused on conduct matters, but when the committee hears cases involving ethical violations, the EOC chair will select the committee. The committee members serving on a case will be compensated in the amount of 2 sessions of free plays at NABC+ events for every day the committee meets. Passed unanimously.

163-52 Board Member Authorization to Play in NAP and GNT – Basically, this was just a wording change to existing rules so as to make it clear that board members could play in NAP B or NAP C National Finals. This motion was passed with only one member abstaining, District 23.

I spent a lot of time and effort on the next two motions that barely failed. I was disappointed in the results, but I believe the ideas are very sound and the large amount of discussion around these events and about overall NABC attendance was beneficial:

163-49 Subsidize 3rd and 4th Place NAP District Finalists - I wrote this motion which would have provided \$200 each for 3rd place finalists, and \$100 each for 4th place finalists. The motion failed 13 against, 10 for, 2 abstentions. The major concern was that funds are already being provided by many districts with Grass Roots funds and there is a rather significant cost impact – even though the proposed increases represent only 8% of the total revenues generated by NAP club qualifying games. I prepared data that showed the NAP club qualifying games had grown in attendance by more than 125% over the past 10 years and the total revenues garnered last year alone totaled in excess of \$400,000. *(Later in the week, at the Board of Governors' meeting, it was voted to have the board of directors reconsider this motion at the spring meeting in Kansas City.)*

163-50 Providing incentives to authorize a 2nd qualifying team in GNT – I also wrote this motion. My idea was to help attract more teams at both the district finals and the national finals. Districts that had a minimum of 8 teams in a flight would be authorized to send a 2nd team in that flight to the national finals. Those against argued that there would be challenges with the conditions of contest as well as there being additional costs, not only on the districts, but also at the NABC level. Sadly, this failed by the narrowest of possible margins, 12-12 with one district (D9) abstaining.

163-01 Report on Hearings – While not on this committee nor privy to some of the detailed discussions on these hearings, during my first year on the board, I have been very favorably impressed with the board's Appeals and Charges Committee (A&C). The committee is

thorough and fair-minded and consistently displays a great deal of professionalism, and sound judgment. The A&C reported to the full board on its hearings. The two most significant rulings affected the automatic reviews of the Ethical Oversight Committee's decisions regarding World Champion Italian pair, Fulvio Fantoni and Claudio Nunes, as well as of the Israeli stars, Lotan Fisher and Ron Schwartz. In both cases, the decisions of the Ethical Oversight Committee were upheld except that the partners and teammates of the offenders were deemed subject to mandatory forfeiture of all masterpoints, titles and status ranks earned during the 2015 Spingolds. The issue here was that the offenses occurred before the BOD voted in 2016 to remove all the titles, masterpoints, etc, of teammates and partners.

There was another important matter under review that has recently been concluded regarding incorrect score reporting by some top pros when their teams sat in the same direction at a regional Swiss. Mark Lair and Dan Morse have been suspended for the month of January, 2017 and placed on probation for all of 2017. Cameron Doner was put on probation for 6 months with no suspension and charges against all others were dismissed.

163-26 Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR) Attorney - I was only one of 3 board members who voted for this motion that would have allowed for individuals brought before the Ethical Oversight Committee (EOC) to be provided an attorney who is not a member of the board.

163-27 CDR Grounds for Discipline - I was with the majority on this one in voting down extensive detailed new rules surrounding CDR. Looked to me that this was written from the perspective of the recently formed Ethical Oversight Committee and was too complicated with little value added over existing rules.

163-29 EOC Attorney – I went against the vast majority on this motion that would have required the ACBL to retain independent counsel to advise the EOC as needed. Seemed to me that the current in-house ACBL legal counsel who was hired by the CEO and reports solely to him might have a problem representing fairly what might be an opposing point of view in some disciplinary matters.

163-30 Board Counsel – As we just decided to hire a lawyer to work directly for the CEO and represent both management and board interests as required, I voted against hiring another lawyer to exclusively represent the board. This motion was defeated 8-17.

163-32 Live Streaming - All ACBL BOD and BOG meetings be recorded and placed on a website or U-Tube. I stepped out for a minute and was absent for this vote, but it wouldn't have mattered as no one voted for it and if I had been present, I certainly would have voted against it as well. We discussed this topic at length in DC, there were high costs and little if no benefit to recording these proceedings. Occasionally, confidential topics are raised in open meetings that should not be aired publicly. Sometimes, the board members get a bit argumentative, but for the most part, most of the meetings of the BOD and the BOG are as exciting as watching CSPAN. These detailed updated and reports should be more than adequate in keeping folks apprised as to the essential topics being reviewed.

163-47 Drop-Ins – Drop-Ins from team events to premier pair events are not going to be allowed effective 1/1/17. This motion carried 17-8. I voted with the majority, but I can actually see the advantage to allowing drop-ins – provided an entirely different set of rules

was developed. Since there were no provisions to change the current rules, I could not support the drop-in policy without restrictions. I think the actual arrangement in Orlando as part of a management-authorized experiment, was not ideal nor fair to the contestants in the Blue Ribbon Pairs because the drop-in carryover proved to be too high. It was also not ideal for the actual winners, as the decision to allow only the greater of mp awards from the two events was flawed. Semifinalists in the Senior Teams who played in the Blue Ribbon Pairs could actually earn more mps than the winners. There was a subsequent decision by the ACBL Executive Committee that allows players to select the event for which they want their points counted. It seems strange to me to assume that players should be “allowed” to earn less what they might have otherwise been entitled, if they wanted “special points” such as those earned in Senior KO’s that might count towards the Senior Player of the Year Competition.

163-07 Electronic Devices Penalty Guidelines - Detailed guidelines for penalties associated with use of electronic devices in NABC+ events, as well as guidelines for other events, to include Regional and Sectional events. Effective 1/1/17. I was only 1 of two voting against this. I don’t like cellphones ringing any more than the next person, but I didn’t think it made sense to allow players 3 offenses over 3 different sessions before being disqualified, as compared to 2 offenses in the same session, nor did I think it was the Board’s role to legislate penalty guidelines regarding this for Regional and Sectional events. This should be up to the local district and/or unit.

The Board meeting was adjourned briefly to address business matters affecting the ACBL Educational and Charity Foundations. Educational Foundation ByLaws were approved. An election was held for trustee of the Charity Foundation. Nancy Strohmer was elected to a four year term.

163-34 – Daylong Robot Tournaments – This motion authorized 18 board online competitions that could be done throughout the day. There would be timelimits per hand, and if not met, the player is disqualified, but the thought is to allow a player to play a few hands in the morning, head off to work, play a few more at lunchtime, and then finish his set later in the evening. The highest masterpoint allowed would be 2.50 and if hundreds of players participated, there would be buckets of 100 players with each bucket having a 2.50 masterpoint limit. Recently Robert Hartman negotiated a 4 year contract with BridgeBaseOnline which resulted in the ACBL being provided \$500,000 per year. Part of the negotiation was an agreement to encourage BBO to creatively investigate new online bridge opportunities. As such, this motion was not really necessary, but it was very helpful, in my opinion as serious consideration was given to appropriate ceilings for online bridge masterpoints, as well as discussion around what kind of extra efforts and incentives the ACBL can provide to help our face-to-face clubs.

Item 163-10: 2017 Operating and Capital Budget - The 2017 operating budget showing revenues over expenses of \$234,283, and the 2017 capital budget of \$355,750 were approved.

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Item 163-14: ACBL Investment Policy Statement –

1.3.3.3 An investment in master limited partnerships and/or preferred stock in an amount up to 10% of our investment portfolio shall be considered “fixed income” investments.

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1.3.4.2 Fixed Income – At least 75 percent of the Portfolio’s assets should be invested in fixed income securities, with no more than 10% invested in master limited partnerships and/or preferred stocks.

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1.5.2 The asset allocation applied under this policy shall be determined by the ACBL Finance Committee and reviewed at each Summer NABC.

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Effective immediately Carried unanimously

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Rescheduling of Spring and Summer BOD Meeting – The board voted to change the schedule of its spring and summer meetings so as to end on the first Saturday of the NABC. This will result in a significant cost savings as Board members get free hotel and per diem allowance through the first Sunday of each NABC when the Board of Governors meet. Currently, the board meetings end on Thursday and the board gets 2 additional nights leading up to the BOG meeting. I voted against this because this motion downplays the importance of playing in NABC+ events that I love, and the ACBL needs for financial reasons. This means that Board members can no longer play in the 1st major national event of these tournaments. Effective June 1st, 2017.

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Item 163-06: Forfeiture of Masterpoints/Titles for Unethical Behavior - This motion, which was carried unanimously, tightens penalties for teammates and partners of players found guilty of unethical behavior. It removes titles and masterpoints going back 4 years from the admission of guilt or finding of wrongdoing.

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Item: 163-08: CDR Appendix B - This very long and detailed motion that outlines an extensive table of offenses and applicable sanctions was tabled until Kansas City.