

**DISTRICT 5 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BOARD MEETING
May 24, 2014**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Officers Present: Lou Joseph, Jan Assini, Brian Ellis

Representatives Present: Barbara Bergman, Mary Paulone Carns, Sharon Fairchild, John Toy, Jim Zimmerman

Representatives Absent: Marc Sylvester

Guests: Alex Bealles, District Tournament Coordinator

WELCOME/PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

President Lou Joseph called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM and welcomed the members. He welcomed John Toy, who had been ill.

MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

The minutes had previously been emailed to the members. The minutes were approved.

COMMITTEES

Treasurer's Report – Brian presented the financial report. The following were discussed:

- The balance hasn't changed much since July
- All 3 regionals made money
- The Olympiad had very low attendance and is on the agenda later

Report of the District Director – Sharon Fairchild distributed her report to the members. She reviewed the following highlights:

- Attendance at tournaments is down, as is the number of tournaments
- The ACBL is starting to work on social media and will be sending out kits to the units
- There is a document on the ACBL Website addressing Roles & Responsibilities of Tournament Sponsors and DICs
- There is a pending motion at the BOD to eliminate some special games. Generally they are those that duplicate other events or are poorly attended. A complete list is in the report. Members are requested to contact Sharon if there are particular games that they request be retained.

Fifth Column – No news. Barb took an informal poll and believes that fewer people read the 5th Column now that it is only online. She asked if there is a way to determine how many hits it gets. Mary will talk to Bill Holt.

All American Regional (ongoing) – Sharon said that to date, every event has increased attendance compared with last year, but last year attendance was down.

Pittsburgh Labor Day Regional – Mary brought flyers. The Hyatt marketing team is going to work with the chairs to attempt to increase local attendance.

Buffalo Regional – John had been ill during the early planning stages. He reported that Jan Assini, Mary Paulone Carns, and Marc Sylvester worked to get the schedule and the flyer completed. There is no Buffalo Bills game that weekend, and the site is closer to Cleveland and Pittsburgh (but further for Canadians who make up ~70% of attendance). Prizes will continue to be more expensive but with less variety (gift cards, wine). Patty Rasmus will shop.

There was a discussion about what will happen with future tournaments. The next date is June 2015 but a site is needed. The current site is intended to be a 1-time location. A committee of John Toy, Jan Assini and possibly Mike Ryan will investigate sites. Possible chairs were discussed.

Whether to accept Canadian currency was discussed. Historically we have accepted it at par, but the rate has become unfavorable. It was decided to charge \$12 USD or \$15 CanD per person per session.

Jan reported that Patty Rasmus' son is doing a lot of work for the Regional. She asked board members to help out in any way they can.

Rock and Roll Regional (2014) –Jan said that attendance was down but the tournament made money.

Rock and Roll Regional (2015) –Jan said that Jim Overcashier and Jill Smith are chairs.

NAOP and GNT – Sharon reported for Barb Bacon. Dates below assume the event will stay in Erie.

- Dates for 2015
 - GNT: 4/25-26 Flights A & C
 - GNT: 5/2-3 Superflight and B
 - NAOP: 10/3-4
- Dates for 2016
 - GNT: 4/30-5/1 Flights A & C
 - GNT: 5/14-15 Superflight and B
 - NAOP: 10/1-2
- Dates for 2017
 - GNT: 4/29-30 Flights A & C
 - GNT: 5/6-7 Superflight and B
 - NAOP: 9/30-10/1
- The Board approved the dates and the site for 2015 and 2016, and a contract may be signed. The board approved the suggested dates for 2017.

- The possibility of having Superflight/B the first weekend and A/C the second weekend will be discussed at the meeting of the full board tomorrow.
- Brian said that he favors moving the event back to Meadville, where all GNT events could be held on the same date and socialization would be better.
- There was a question about which individuals and/or pairs can be added to a team for the National finals. The ACBL CoC's indicate that 3 original members of a team must remain. Some members felt that a player who doesn't intend to participate in the National finals (if the team qualified) should be barred from playing in the qualifier. It would be possible to amend the local CoC's to read this way. It was also suggested that to add a pair or individual, they have to have played in the qualifying event. There was considerable discussion and no agreement. Lou appointed a committee consisting of Jim Zimmerman, Jan Assini and Barb Bergman to address these 2 issues:
 - Can a person or pair play if not intending to participate at the National level?
 - Can people be added if they didn't play in the District Qualifying event?

STaC – Mary Paulone Carns reported that plans are underway for the Summer STaC. Alex Bealles requested that the webpage not have a price advertised for the clubs. He feels that as a club director he is forced to charge the suggested price when in fact clubs are free to charge any price they want.

Website – Mary Paulone Carns reported for Bill Holt that there are no problems with the D5 website.

Membership – Jan Assini reported for Marc Sylvester. He continues to send welcome letters and a one-session free play certificate for a District 5 Regional to new members. Over the past 12 months we have sent 177 letters & certificates. Barb Grzegorzewski is interested in teaching bridge in local colleges. She is hoping to start in the fall.

Education – Jan Assini reported that there were 88 school children at the field trip on Thursday. Doug Henderson is attending the Board Meeting tomorrow. Barb Bergman reported that the Pittsburgh unit has started a program at a YMCA after-school program.

OLD BUSINESS

Bookseller – Lou Joseph reported that Rose Cassmer, the new bookseller, is at the tournament. She will sell books at all four District 5 tournaments for 1 year on a trial basis. We get a discount from Baron-Barclay of 1/3 to 1/2 depending on the publisher. She will work for at least 4 days in return for 3 nights lodging. If she doesn't need the room, she will receive free entries (2 sessions) for each day she works. He thanked Brian and Mary for their help in setting up this program.

Olympiad– Sharon Fairchild reported that the attendance at the last Olympiad was very low. In addition Dick Early wishes to have an administrative chair. He is interested in continuing the educational portion of the tournament but not the administrative portion. Mary read the relevant portions of the minutes from Sept. 2013 in which Brian discussed possible revisions to the playing conditions. The consensus was to invite Dick Early to attend the meeting of the full board tomorrow. [Note: following the meeting, Dick said he

didn't want to attend the Board Meeting. He requested a further discussion among the members of the Executive Board. In particular he wants an Administrative Chair. He will send specific information to Mary].

NEW BUSINESS

Howard Lebow Fund– Mary reported that the board decided approximately two years ago to repurpose the fund for student education and to have the District Board take over the local administration of the fund, previously done by Howard's sister Marilyn Stack. The control was never actually transferred. Mary will work with Sharon on this.

Second Signer on Checks–Brian was ill for a time this spring, which brought up the fact that there should be a second signer on District 5 checks. Lou appointed Jim Zimmerman. He and Brian will make arrangements.

Regional Attendance Committee–Barb Bergman reported that this committee never met, due to John's illness. Barb took an informal survey and feels that some of the differences in attendance relate to playing times (for example, Niagara Falls had a huge attendance increase and their times were 10 and 3). The upcoming Buffalo Regional will have these times and can serve as a test.

Bridge Finesse–Mary reported that Bridge Finesse, who is providing an online partnership desk and Fast Results, is being used for the first time at a District 5 Regional. It was previously used in Titusville and at the Cleveland Spring Sectional. The services are provided free, in return for a donation of \$100 per regional (\$25 per sectional) to the ACBL Education Foundation. Mary suggested that the district make one donation of \$400 per year; this plan was adopted.

Promoting District 5 Events–Sharon Fairchild reported that Jim Overcashier has an idea concerning promoting bridge by having pictures of bridge activities on the internet. The possibility of using social media was discussed, and the ACBL is currently suggesting this. No decisions were made.

Instant Rebate for Students–Sharon reported that we have a student discount but it is essentially canceled by the penalty for non-members. She suggested offering an "instant rebate" in the amount of the penalty, which the board agreed to do.

Robert Hartman, ACBL CEO–Sharon reported that he will be attending the RONI Regional in Pittsburgh. Possible activities were discussed. He'll be invited to meetings and to the LB1D class, and to the Saturday Newcomers supper. Additionally there will be a reception. Invitees will be Executive Board Members and Unit Presidents and one guest per invitee. The date and time will be determined after his schedule is known.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at noon.