

# American Contract Bridge League District 16

*Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors Held February 7, 2009*

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of District 16 of the American Contract Bridge League was held at the Marriott Houston Westchase Hotel in Houston, Texas at 10 a.m. on February 9, 2009.

**Board members present** (Units represented in parentheses): Ira Hessel (172), Guillermo Poplawsky (173), (Eric Snow (174), Bob Butterfield (176), Martha DeCou (187), Carol Schoenhals (197), Norinne Nelson (205), Larry Davis (207), Sandy Rea (209), Howard Wilkins (224), (Gay Roach (225), David Pennington (223), Johnny Johnson (237) and Gail Simpson (253).

**Committee Chairs and others present:** Dan Morse, Dewitt Hudson, Charles Price, Tom Whitesides, John Zilic, Jonathan Ernest, Betty Starzec, Mark Bumgardner and Jim Thurtell .

The meeting was called to order by President Larry Davis.

The minutes of the meeting held August 30, 2008 were approved as presented to the meeting with two minor corrections.

**Election of Officers:** The following persons were elected as the District's officers for the next year:

- President: Ira Hessel
- First Vice President: Charles Price
- Second Vice President: Dewitt Hudson
- Executive Treasurer: Lew Levy Executive
- Secretary: Bob Butterfield

**District Director:** Dan Morse, who will be Chairman of the ACBL Board of Directors this year, reported that the ACBL is working on selecting a site for the new headquarters building, and is making a bid on a site in north Mississippi, outside of Memphis. Participation in bridge on the internet is growing dramatically, and the ACBL is exploring sanctioning more internet games. He also reported that the ACBL has decided that clubs located within 25 miles of the site of a sanctioned tournament will not be permitted to hold any special games (those which would award bonus masterpoints) on days on which the tournament is being held.

**Excutive Treasurer:** Lew Levy distributed and discussed the District's 2008 financial statements. He pointed out that (i) revenues exceeded expenses by \$6,524 for the year, (ii) the total assets of the District exceeded its total liabilities by \$24,264 at year end, (iii) the Scorecard is losing approximately \$1,000 per issue (primarily due to increases in printing and postage costs)

and (iv) the 2008 Regional in Puerto Vallarta resulted in a net profit to the District of approximately \$5,700.

**Awards:** Eric Snow reported that the District 16 Texas Star Awards for 2008 would be presented that evening. He encouraged each Unit to consider and make new nominations for upcoming awards, including the 2009 Jacoby Award (which will be decided on in July) and the Goodwill pins.

**Charity:** Carol Schoenhals reported that the Charity Committee has decided to allocate the \$20,000 District 16 will receive from the ACBL Charity Foundation in 2009 in equal \$5,000 shares to four charities: Blue Bird Circle (a pediatric neurology clinic at Texas Children's Hospital) and Texas Hearing & Service Dogs (both in Houston), Meals on Wheels (Abilene) and Family Guidance and Outreach Center of Lubbock. These awards will be presented at the Houston NABC in March. She also reported that, beginning this year, Districts and Units are each allocated a maximum of four sessions of special fund/foundation games per year, including charity championships, junior fund, international fund and education foundation games.

**Disciplinary:** Jim Thurtell reported that no disciplinary action have been taken since the last meeting of the Board.

**Education and Membership:** Betty Starzec reported that Houston, Dallas and Austin membership has been growing nicely. A chart showing detailed District 16 membership and growth by Unit since July 2004 was presented. Efforts are being made to get the ACBL to reinstitute funding for Unit Growth Seminars. A Bridge Blast weekend has been planned and will be held at the Houston Spring NABC which will provide three days of activities and games for people interested in trying a low-key form of competitive bridge.

**Grand National Teams:** Mark Bumgardner reported that the District Grand National Teams finals will be held at the Sectional Tournament being held in Richardson on May 23 to May 25. Although Flight A players do not need to qualify, Mark requested that they notify him if they intend to play. August 6, 2008 is the cutoff date for determining masterpoint levels for qualifying purposes.

**Internet:** A report prepared by Bert Onstott was presented. It proposed that the District pay to register names for all of the District's Unit websites. The proposed addresses would be: [www.ACBLUnitxxx.org](http://www.ACBLUnitxxx.org) , with the appropriate Unit number filled in for each Unit. This represents a change from the current addresses. After discussion, this proposal was tabled. The report also suggested permitting members to opt out of receiving paper copies of the Scorecard . After discussion, this proposal was approved.

**North American Pairs:** John Zilic reported that we need to carefully check the ACBL computations on reimbursements due to the District for District

players participating in the NAP finals. He has been able to obtain additional reimbursements because of errors found in the ACBL calculations. John further reported that our District is the most active ACBL District for the NAPs. He also requested updated email addresses for Unit NAP coordinators.

**Scorecard:** Ira Hessel reported that he is working on getting the Scorecard online in the form of webpages on our District website.

**Tournaments:** Charlie Price reported that attendance at tournaments in our District have been very stable. The table count at the Houston Regional (through Friday) was down only slightly even though the upcoming NABC is believed to be having a negative impact on attendance at the Regional.

Tom Whitesides discussed the desirability of putting a cap on handicaps awarded in the top brackets of team games at District tournaments. He pointed out that many professionals and their clients don't like having to give handicaps to other teams with professionals or that otherwise have high masterpoint levels, and expressed concern that if we fail to institute a cap on such handicaps it could have a detrimental effect on tournament attendance and room counts. After discussion, the Board approved the following motion:

In team games at tournaments held in District 16, no handicap will be awarded in a match in which both teams average at least 5,000 masterpoints per team member.

**Mexico:** Guillermo Poplawsky reported that two new clubs have recently opened, giving them five clubs in Mexico.

**Old Business:** Carol Schoenhals reported that a committee appointed to consider the issue has recommended that, for three years after the upcoming Houston NABC, we continue to charge an extra \$1 on Saturdays at District 16 Regional tournaments to help fund the next NABC to be held in our District. After discussion, the Board approved the committee recommendation. Additional discussion was held concerning the possible desirability of continuing to collect the extra \$1 even after the next three years, with the funds to be used for developing bridge in ways to be determined in the future by the Board, but no action was taken.

Ira Hessel recognized and commended Unit 174 for the excellent work done in putting on the Houston Regional.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.