

ADBC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2025

Call to Order: President Larz Smith called the meeting to order at 10:34, and announced that we had a Quorum present of 44 members from a total paid membership for 2025 of 78 members, or 56%. Four members paid on site. All members present were given handouts that included the meeting agenda, Minutes from last year's Special Membership Meeting, as well as financial statements on the ADBC as prepared by George Morey.

Minutes Of Special Membership Meeting held on May 11, 2024: President Larz Smith requested a motion to approve the minutes as presented to the membership. Margo Hirsch did so move, and it was seconded by Bob Dove. All voted to approve them unanimously.

Election of Board Members: Dorothy Moore (as Chairperson of Nominating Committee) introduced the 6 candidates running for the available 4 Board positions. Current Board members Melody Gann, Wayne Corbett and Larz Smith will continue as elected Board members for 2025. Dorothy requested nominations from the floor. Seeing none, Joyce Anderson moved to close nominations, seconded by Pete Clive. All approved.

The nominees for the four open Director positions were Doug Berke, Diana Clive, Bob Dove, George Morey, Kara Jean Hawthorn, and Kate Wickham. Five nominees in attendance stood in turn, introducing themselves to the membership and gave a few remarks on why they were running for office.

Ballots were passed to all eligible voting members, with instructions to vote for four candidates. Each candidate could only be elected by majority vote. The ballots were collected and tabulated by four club members. The results were announced later with Doug Berke, Diana Clive, George Morey, and Kate Wickham receiving the required majority votes, and elected for two year terms.

Joyce Anderson expressed her appreciation to all the candidates willing to run for office.

In Memorium: Melody Gann requested a moment of silence and reflection for the members who had passed in the last year: Caroline Drews, Dwight Hill, Hugh Hillaker, Carol St. Onge, Don Greer, Darlene Shirey, Tom Edwards, Ivan Ace, Mary Hogar, Winnie Simon, and Norma Brown.

Selection of Local Club Charities for 2025: Larz announced additional ballots to be handed to all voting members for the selection of local charities that the ADBC would be contributing to for the year 2025. Each member should vote for 2 of the 6 available, sign the ballot, and place it with the Secretary or in the suggestion box by April 30.

Our charities supported during 2024 were Mission Arlington and Arlington Life Shelter.

Treasurer Report for 2024: Larz introduced George Morey as our ADBC Treasurer. George referred the membership to two documents in their handouts: a Balance Sheet current to December 2024, and an ADBC December 2024 Financial Report. George noted that the Club lost about \$10,400 in the period between December 31, 2023 and December 31, 2024, leaving the ADBC with a Cash Balance of \$30,809.86. We have 12 months in 2025, and 10 months in 2026 remaining in our lease at our current location. In addition, he highlighted the Dec YTD 2024 loss as \$10,813.98, but the Dec YTD2023 loss as \$7,228.65. Major expenses during the 2024 fiscal year have included the necessity for replacement of our HVAC. Our door lock required replacement in early 2025 because it had become a security risk. Both of these were subsequently covered by a member donation. We have also recently had to repair our board dealing machine.

Additional items to note are the revenues provided by online games. These have held up better than expected with little fall off. But we have seen a significant fall off in revenues from our Face to Face or Table fees in the

ADBC. Online games have become one of our competitors for member dollars. ACBL has been increasing the sanctioned points available through BBO, and has also created ACBL Clubhouse games that our ADBC will benefit from. Problematically, the playing costs for members to play at the ADBC is more than the playing fees levied at other Tarrant County bridge playing venues. In addition, the premium points offered by play at the ADBC also cost us higher sanction fees to ACBL, increasing our expenses. We also recognize our directors who work for us at minimum costs, live quite a distance from the ADBC, and we try to compensate them as we can afford to.

George opened the floor for questions. Member: Would a single table gain from 4 tables to 5 tables per game help limit our revenue losses. George responded positively, noting that an additional \$40 per game per approximately 286 games during the year would equal over \$11,000 in additional revenues. The club would indeed break even. Bob Dixon suggested that the consistent use of a partnership desk would significantly contribute to increasing the needed table count.

George expressed his thanks to Rosalee Hacker for reviewing the financial records of the ADBC for the year 2024, reading a letter from her that he will post in the club for all to read. Rosalee has been our club auditor since 2013, contributing greatly to the confidence we have in our financial status. "In my opinion, the financial records of the Club reflect the results of Operations for the year ending December 31, 2024."

Larz thanked George for his hard work on our behalf. He also thanked Mary Ellen Stanton our Club Manager. She has acted as our interface with ACBL, receiving at least one email from ACBL each day. "A thankless task".

Future of Arlington Duplicate Bridge Club/Open Forum

George Morey: He noted that we had a miserable January following the end of the 2024 holiday season. February was somewhat better primarily because of Steve Kornegay's special Life Master party. We lost approximately \$1600 for the first two months of 2025, even though we had an income stream of membership dues and donations during these months. Going forward, George expects us to see at least \$1000-1500 per month in negative revenue for the rest of 2025. Projecting this through the 20 months remaining on our lease at this location, we can expect to have \$0-\$5000 left in our bank account when our lease expires in October 2026.

George Morey: We have a lot of competitors now. They can charge less to play because they have lower monthly expenses. There are also a lot of Sectional and Regional tournaments being scheduled, which draw people away from our club. We haven't tried scheduling our own tournaments, partly because we don't have a facility in which to host them. Our revenues are still predicated on us charging a \$10 table fee for F2F play

Larz Smith: This has been a problem since Covid. We have tried different things but with only minor success. None have added up to an additional \$1500 per month to keep us in our studio. He liked the idea a member suggested of trying to attract students at UTA to learn and play, but the bottom line is that we have the remainder of 2025 to create economic stability. Once we are into 2026, it is going to be too late and we will be at a decision point for going forward. This place costs us (rent, common costs, utilities) about \$3500 per month. This is a "big nut" every month to cover. We are the only club in the Unit that has that big a 'nut' to cover. We may have to consider relocation to a church, senior center, or rec center. This will have negative impacts on our directors who will need to carry in game supplies each time, and infrastructure will be limited.

Our standard table fee is \$10. But certain ACBL games cost much more in sanction fees. We do upcharge for StaC games for example, but there are many middle tier games that also have upcharge fees but pay only in increased black points. Do we want to pass the upcharges to the players, or elect to run more local club games? These middle tier games come in groups. In February, we had 20 of them. That's 20 games we gave up \$300-400 dollars of revenue on.

Dorothy Moore: Those games cost \$1 more per person, and we have been absorbing all of those extra costs for the past 5 years.

Diana Clive: I think we need to decide if we are more interested in points gained in play, or financial stability. We can't pay the bills if we continue to lose money on these mid tier games that we have not been charging extra for. We like the points, but we can't afford to pay for them. We need to decide our priorities.

Other member opinions: Those extra costs were supposed to be baked in when we raised the table fee to \$10. Larz noted that that was 5 years ago, and our costs have gone up both in capital expenses and ACBL fees since then.

We need to focus on increasing our table count. However, we also stand the risk of decreasing the table count if we increase player costs.

We need to expand our teaching of bridge to new players and bring them in.

Dorothy: Doug has tried to teach beginner classes. I have two learning games where anyone is welcome, but few turn up. We have gained a few players this way, but who and where are we going to draw more?

Member: High school and college students may want to play bridge, but they can't afford to.

Melody: We just voted on charities. Moneys for those charities comes from those games labelled as charities. Other special interest games are part of our altruistic mission as an organization.

Dorothy: ACBL has added more 'special months', going from three to now at least six. They have added causes to their programming, and the funds raised by increased ACBL fees go to these.

Member: We should try contacting the mayor and ask for a dedicated room in the new beautiful senior center. Another responded that there is already a group there playing rubber bridge.

Member: I saw in Memphis that ACBL has been successful in recruiting high school AP and math teachers to teach their students bridge. And the kids are great at it. Melody countered facetiously that we don't want young players that 'can beat us'.

Member: I am currently teaching a bridge class at TCCSouth for senior citizens. My class is the only bridge class being so offered. The teaching honorarium however is only \$3 per teaching hour, and I've 'donated' about 60 hrs so far. We have an opportunity if someone else is willing to donate their time if they live close to another campus. I have been encouraging my students to play here, but they gulp when told it's \$10 to play. They are active senior citizens who live within budgets.

Dorothy: We need to make online players aware that if they select and play in the newly created ACBL Clubhouse games, we get \$2.30 per person. We make even more from our games, but perhaps the times are not accessible to everyone. Our online games are MTWTh at 7PM. IF you are going to play online at 7PM, please play in our games. A member would like a flyer with this info to promote to her players. In response to a question if the games can run earlier, Dorothy made it clear that online directors Moores and Steve Kornegay cannot get home earlier than that when running F2F games as well.

Member: Can we not give out free plays?

Larz: We have rewritten the bylaws already that have diminished these considerably. And a free play slip is not the same as a pre-paid play slip. Dorothy noted that some players called in to fill a table are not required to pay.

Larz: A hand vote on whether we should raise fees for mid-tier black-enhanced point games? The non-binding vote looked positive.

Member: The raise of \$1-2 for special games isn't going to make much of a difference. Could we raise all games, or create some sort of monthly membership or subscription plan. Larz noted that we are already the highest cost in the area, and risk losing more players because of our costs.

Member: Can we increase the \$40 annual membership fee? It has stayed the same as last year. Larz again noted that we risk alienating our members.

Member: Can we create a more formal partnership desk as proposed by Bob Dixon and Bob Dove to increase our table count? They can be a BOB D committee to drive this.

Member: Can we create a capital voluntary donation plan for members? We have frequently had individual donations, but we need to emphasize the current financial needs.

Larz: Can we create a 'Patron' or 'Sustaining' membership level beyond the regular membership? Benefits could be determined. Dorothy objects to creating levels among the group.

Member: Can we reach out to the many informal bridge clubs that already exist in our area and encourage them to join us here? Admittedly, many of those players don't want to and aren't willing to pay anything to play.

Larz: Asking George and membership at large if raising the fees to \$12 per player would be sufficient to secure our financial status. Helpful, but not enough. But raising the table number per game by a single table would create a break even point. Encouraging all members to commit to playing at least one extra game per month would also go a long way to mitigating our losses almost to \$0.

Member: Would we consider a time change to 12:30 for the Saturday game. The Board of Directors agreed to talk about it at our next meeting.

Discussion on Unit Sectionals:

Larz: The District 16 Board voted years ago that each Unit can only hold a maximum of four local sectionals per year. This has become an issue since they became aware that both Fort Worth and Denton have exceeded this number. Each club was forced to cancel a sectional at a late date. We haven't opted for one this year but have reserved the option to do so next year. The ADBC actually lost money on the last one we offered. They rarely make much money after expenses.

Dorothy: The last Fort Worth sectional had a very good turnout, very low expenses with their venue (\$100/day), and still made only \$3000-\$4000 profit. This is not enough to turn our balance sheet to a positive.

Discussion on Unit 183 Management:

Member: The Fort Worth club is subsidized by the Unit 183. The Unit pays almost all of their rent for example. But it doesn't support ANY other clubs. He has sent a letter to the District detailing this but has yet to hear anything back.

Member: It is true that the Fort Worth Unit and club receives money for every member at all the clubs. Larz says those should be rebated proportionately to the other clubs. At one time, it was intended to pay for the newspaper they published. That is now online.

Larz: The Unit 183 Sectional held every two years should share profits across ALL the clubs in Unit 183

Member: No fees should be increased given the context of the economic stress experienced by our players. We need to focus on personal interactions to increase player numbers. Talk it up and bring them in. Perhaps

not even charge them at first. Feed them, show them a good time, and then encourage them to join. However, it is long overdue to examine our Unit management . For too many years, Fort Worth has pulled funds as needed from Unit accounts that should belong to ALL Unit 183 clubs. They can charge only \$8 per player because they are subsidized for supplies or any needs by the Unit account. The Fort Worth Club is not a club. It is an entity or location where the games are owned by the directors.

Member: Randy Eads is on the Fort Worth Board of Directors. He has tried for some time to address these club equity problem, but has been 'shot down' many times. He sees our side of the picture.

Member: ACBL needs to get involved. The Fort Worth game directors are voting down equity sharing because they OWN the games.

Member: Years ago, the bylaws were structured there so that the directors or owners of games could not serve on their Board of Directors. This has evolved back to now where they do so serve and do not recuse themselves from financial decisions affecting them directly. "It's a fixed deal folks". It can no longer be fixed locally but must be elevated to a higher level.

Member: Background information is that the 'honeypot' of the Unit derives partially from a bequest years ago from a bridge player stipulating that it subsidize a Fort Worth club. But the money they get from the national ACBL should be shared.

Larz: Everyone, remember the ADBC in your will.

The meeting was adjourned by Larz at 12:00