

WBL Board Meeting

August 6, 2008

The meeting was held at Carole Bank's home.

In attendance: Carole Banks, Don Berman, Ellen Cherniavsky, Richard Ferrin, Jim Geist, Fred King, Clyde Kruskal, Linda Marshall, Steve Robinson, and non-voting members Donna Rogall and Ted Ying.

Fred King called the meeting to order at 7:58 PM.

Secretary's Report

The Board approved the minutes, without objection.

Treasurer's Report

Steve Robinson reported a balance of \$12,549.02 in the WBL's checking account. The building fund now has \$126.83. The WBL has \$38,282.04 in an investment account. The Board approved the treasurer's report, without objection.

President's Report

Fred King said that the Machlin award committee needs nominations by September 1. Fred will appoint to the committee the past two winners of the award, plus himself, Carole Banks, Ellen Cherniavsky, and two others to be determined.

Fred reported that the NVBA September sectional will have a fund-raising event, to raise money for the 2009 Summer NABC in Washington. The WBL should think of doing one as well. Fred will sell t-shirts at the sectional. T-shirts will also be on sale at Hunt Valley.

August Sectional

The following board members volunteered to help Nadine at the August sectional: Friday before the morning game Don Berman, Friday after the evening game Richard Ferrin, Saturday before the morning game Richard Ferrin and Jim Geist, and backup Saturday Carole Banks.

Bulletin

Donna Rogall stated that she was extending the deadline to Monday for the next Bulletin. Fred King suggested sending an e-mail to Bob Levey to publicize the Youth Nationals in Atlanta, and the performance of the participants in the DC area.

Donna Rogall asked whether the joint ABA-WBL event could be confirmed for the WBL sectional on January 10. Carole Banks replied that the date could not yet be confirmed.

Don Berman noted that Cassandra Smith asked him to write a book review of a book she wrote on several long-time ABA players. Don is working on the book review now. The Board agreed that the book review should be placed in the November-December issue of the Bulletin.

Fred King said that the next Bulletin should include a notice that the October 9 game will start 30 minutes late.

Unit Game

Steve Robinson asked whether the Unit Game should be held on Thursday, January 1, 2009. Ted Ying commented that the game would likely lose money. Steve replied that since the previous Thursday will be Christmas, not holding the game on New Year's Day would mean that there would be two consecutive weeks with no Unit Game. The Unit Game needs consistency. After further discussion by the Board, Steve said that he would survey the membership by e-mail.

Fred King suggested that there should also be a short survey to see what can be done to improve attendance at the Unit Game, given the declines this year. Jim Geist said that he compiled a list of WBL players who either earned no points last year, or who earned much fewer than expected, suggesting lack of attendance. Ted Ying commented that much of the drop in attendance results from WBL players going to regional and national tournaments. Carole Banks suggested comparing the table count trends with the tournaments.

The Board then discussed the general procedure involved with the annual scheduling meeting between the WBL and NVBA.

Membership and Publicity/Marketing Joint Committee Report

Carole Banks explained that the two committees were combined to exchange ideas and issue a report to the Board. She passed out a handout summarizing the findings. Ted Ying commented that the club and unit growth trends tend to be a zero sum game. Richard Ferrin suggested improving interest at the club level by improving the web site links between the WBL clubs and the WBL unit web site. Carole Banks suggested more cross-marketing between the clubs and units. Ted Ying noted that there was more interaction between the NVBA and the clubs within that unit. Donna Rogall suggested that the WBL commit additional funds to jump-start web sites for those clubs within the WBL that do not already have web sites.

The Board also discussed the possibility of encouraging more beginning bridge players by setting up formats at the clubs to provide a mini-lesson, followed by supervised play for a limited number of hands.

The Board also discussed recruiting efforts from senior communities.

Steve Robinson suggested boosting attendance at the Unit Game by providing a side "fast pairs" game for those who currently do not attend because the game gets out too late. Ted Ying suggested that this might work.

2009 Nationals

Jim Geist suggested boosting interest in the 2009 Nationals, and in bridge in general, by promoting televising of parts of the tournament and attracting bridge-playing celebrities to the event.

Convention Charts

Richard Ferrin noted the recent change in the ACBL mid-chart that changes the rating of several of the mid-chart conventions, including multi 2 diamonds, from a 2-board-per-round rating to a 6-board-per-round rating. This means that these conventions are not allowed at tournament pair events, and any other events where there are fewer than 6 boards per segment. Milliard Nachwey and Doug Grove advised him that they are seeking guidance from the ACBL Chief Tournament Director Rick Beye to see if this new restriction can be waived for sectional and regional tournaments, noting that the ACBL had previously allowed some waivers, such as allowing mid-chart conventions to be used in sectional games as long as they were advertised as such in advance, and the Mid-Atlantic allowing use of a 2-diamond overcall of 1NT to show an unspecified major suit, without pre-alerting the convention, even though this is technically a mid-chart convention. In the meantime, the limited guidance they have received so far is that the restriction of these certain mid-chart conventions (including multi) to events with 6 or more boards per segment cannot be waived for sectional or regional tournaments. However, they did say that clubs can waive any requirements they want with respect to conventions, and so can the WBL in its Unit Game, except when the Unit Game is also part of a Sectional.

After discussion by the Board, Richard Ferrin moved that items 15 through 18 in the ACBL mid-chart be allowed in all WBL club games in the A/X flight, including pair games. Don Berman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (Steve Robinson abstaining).

Steve Robinson noted that for a 2-diamond overcall of 1NT, or the sequence 1 of a minor - pass - 2 hearts, showing a two-way or three-way bid, these conventions are mid-chart, but are not affected by the new rule and therefore still allowed to be played in games with 2 boards or more per segment. However, because these conventions have become so common in the WBL, Steve moved that the WBL rules be changed to either require a pre-alert (as is currently done), or the pair using the method should provide a written suggested defense, if asked. Neither of these conventions currently have suggested defenses required. The suggested defenses would be developed by a WBL committee. Pre-alerts would be required until the WBL committee issues the defenses.

After further discussion, the Board decided to the motion at this time (by a 5-4 vote). The proposal will be revisited once such defenses are developed.

Linda Marshall also noted that the convention of 2 diamonds as either Flannery or mini-Roman is no longer allowed under the new rules, even under the Mid-Chart or the Super-Chart.

Also, it was suggested that Richard Ferrin send an e-mail to Nadine Wood regarding the advisability of a resolution requesting a “local option” on mid-chart conventions for sectional tournaments.

Next Meeting

Ellen Cherniavsky will host the next meeting, which will take place September 17, 2008. The following meeting will take place October 15, place to be determined.

The Board thanked Carole Banks for her hospitality.

Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 11:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Ferrin,
Secretary