

GNYBA Board Meeting Minutes – November 17, 2021

In Attendance (by 'Zoom')

J. Bayone, A. Davidson, B. Gellas, J. Hu, M. Lawson, P. Lentz, F. Levine, S. Levine, L. Lin, R. Marchione, D. Moss, A. Parrish, A. Rhodes, J. Rothstein, W. Sigward, N. Trabulus, J. Wank, M. Warren, A. Weinshank.

Club Update

Jeff Bayone summarized current activity at Bridge & Games. He is averaging 12 tables per day, which is a fraction of pre-pandemic levels. While Bridge is lagging, Canasta, Mahjong, and Scrabble are back to normal playing levels. Supervised Bridge is doing well, while evening bridge is completely dead. Jeff's conclusion is that online bridge is hurting the Face-to-face bridge numbers.

Jeff believes that, based on activity elsewhere, there is reason to think that a NYC-based Sectional tournament could work (a Sectional, not a STaC); and proposed holding a Sectional at Bridge & Games over the Christmas holidays and/or in 2022. He has a capacity of 35-tables.

Jeff and David Moss specifically proposed holding a Sectional during the last week of 2021, subject to obtaining ACBL sanction and ACBL director[s]. David offered to check with the ACBL on those logistics. Adam Parrish and other board members agreed this was a great idea to pursue. Jeff and David further suggested that we schedule a Sectional in the 1Q of 2022.

Jeff also stated that he is currently negotiating for additional club space in a building on Lexington Avenue in the mid-50's, which would have, like Bridge & Games, a capacity of 35 tables.

District Rep Report

District Rep David Moss discussed a new tournament format — the 'Rainbow Tournament' — that the ACBL has devised and approved for use on an experimental basis (thus far, by Districts 3, 4, 24, and maybe 25). The Rainbow format will essentially be a Face-to-Face STaC, but with overall awards determined on an Inter-district basis. A

mixture of point-colors will be offered, including Gold, Silver, Red, and Black. Any interested District may hold one of these tournaments between January and April, 2022.

In general, each District/Unit may decide whether to conduct/participate in a Rainbow Tournament, and each club will decide whether to participate (just as in a STaC). Each District that chooses to run a Rainbow must ensure that their event will not conflict with a nearby Face-to-Face Regional. The ACBL Board has heretofore been hesitant to permit players to win Gold Points in Clubs because Gold has historically been awarded at Regionals and used as an incentive for players to participate in those events. For any Rainbow event, the ACBL will charge a STaC fee, and Districts/Units will have the option to add a surcharge fee. David and Adam recommended that no such surcharge be levied by Unit 155, and there was agreement from the Board regarding that proposal, and therefore Unit 155 will continue to waive STaC fees.

A Rainbow Tournament is scheduled to be held in the Northeast from January 24 - 30. The Rainbow format will be officially announced at the Austin NABC, with ACBL Marketing to distribute suitable promotional material to the clubs in December.

David also reported that the ACBL Board would meet at the Austin NABC and would pass a budget for next year. The ACBL has \$3+ million in the bank, with expenses down for the year and online revenue up. The next ACBL budget will likely propose to plan for a loss (\$700 thousand), which would be the result of ACBL's decision to make a significant investment (\$700 thousand) in its Technology. David stated that he will be the ACBL Board's IT Liaison.

Tournament/Hilton Report

Steve Levine reported that the Unit successfully cancelled the previously scheduled December regional tournament, and that we received a full refund of our deposit from the Hilton. At the present time we have no other commitments with the Hilton, or with anyone else.

Discussion ensued regarding when to attempt to schedule another regional, how much physical space would be required, and how any space we book would need to accommodate the ACBL's spacing requirements (8.5 to 9.0 square feet per table). In the past, we have set up around 140 tables, but the feeling now — in the current post-pandemic period — is that perhaps 80 tables would work. The Hilton continues to represent the most attractive and suitable venue for us, and offers several different potential playing sites of different sizes within their building. Some of the available dates (*as of August*) at the Hilton include: April 14-17; May 3-7; June 11-19; and June 29-

July 4 (however, the traditional Memorial Day week is not available). We do not know whether Hilton's pricing may increase going forward vs prior cost quotes, nor is there any guarantee that any of these dates will remain available going into 2022. We are operating on the assumption that the large Ballroom space will cost \$50 to 55 thousand for a tournament, while another smaller space in the building would be slightly less expensive.

The sense of the Board at the meeting was we should attempt to run a tournament in the spring. David suggested we figure out what dates and what physical space would work best, and meanwhile apply for an ACBL sanction to run a tournament; that much could be done prior to the need to sign another contract. Discussion ended with Adam charging the Tournament Committee to review our tournament options and return to the Board with a recommendation regarding whether, where and when to schedule our next tournament.

2022 GNT

GNT Coordinator Lee Lin discussed the District's forthcoming 2022 GNT, and raised the issue whether the event should be held Face-to-Face or conducted once again online.

By way of background, in the past two years New York is one of only a few districts in the country to have fielded more than 8 teams in Flights B & C; which is noteworthy because the ACBL permits districts with more than 8 teams in B & C to send two teams to the nationals. Last year our second place 'C' team went on to win the entire nation, while one of our Flight B teams made it all the way to the national finals and won second place in the nation. Accordingly, Lee stated it makes great sense to encourage continued Flight B/C player participation going forward. Consideration of that goal should be one criteria in deciding how to structure the 2022 GNT's; i.e., whether to hold a Face-to-Face GNT in late spring, or hold an online GNT as in 2021.

Lee compared the 2020 GNT, in which there were 50 F-t-F tables, vs the 2021, when 40 tables played online. He also observed that while F-t-F play helps local clubs, a lot of bridge is currently taking place online, and perhaps one way to proceed would be to hold a F-t-F opening round followed by subsequent online rounds. 2020 play marked a precedent for beginning with in-person play and finishing online. Lee stated that he is open-minded which way to go, and welcomes input from Board members. No final decision was made at this time regarding logistics for 2022 GNT play.

Lee also reported that the 2021 NAP's concluded successfully. There were 9 tables in Flight A, 8 tables in Flight B, and 6 Pairs in Flight C.

Treasurer's Report

Jeff Rothstein reported that financially speaking, 2021 was a good year for the GNYBA. The Unit will record a \$12 thousand profit for the year (mainly because we did not run a money-losing tournament), with income coming in from our share of dues and revenue from the GNT. The Unit's equity position remains very strong, standing at \$240 thousand.

Other Business

Adam Parrish concluded the meeting with the following points:

- We will have a Nominating Committee meeting following the Austin NABC; the Committee will produce a slate of officers and directors that will stand for election for 2022;
- Marla Lawson will assume leadership of the Tournament Committee in 2022;
- Adam requested suggestions for the names of individuals who might be considered to become new board members;
- We will have an annual meeting in December, at which the full membership needs to approve the bylaw changes that were made and approved by the Board earlier in 2021. Adam suggested we accomplish that with a December board meeting, which will tentatively be held on Tuesday, December 14th.
- Adam stated he is hopeful to get a Sectional or two on the books, as well as a Spring Regional; and that we should be willing to invest in, and possibly lose some of our equity, staging tournaments in order to help re-start in-person bridge in New York.

Respectfully Submitted by
Bill Sigward, Secretary of the Board

November 30, 2021