

NVBA Board Meeting  
July 30, 2023, Rev. 1, August 22, 2023

Attendees:

Georgette Weiss, President  
Jay Simon, Vice President  
Ann Atcheson, Treasurer  
Eric Poskanzer, Secretary  
Joe Hertz, Board Member  
Jamie Dahlberg, Board Member  
Kevin O'Brien, Board Member  
John Wertman, Board Member  
Marty Bley, Past President and Baltimore Regional Chair  
Jim Gerding, Unit Game Chief Director  
Ron Kral, Unit Webmaster  
Lucy McCoy, Newsletter Editor & D6 Tournament Coordinator  
Margot Hennings, ACBL Board Member – D6/NVBA Sectional Tournament Chair

Unable to Attend:

Jason Carter, Board Member

Meeting Called to Order at 9:29am

June '23 Meeting Minutes: none are available, postpone approval until next meeting.

Financials (Ann Acheson):

- Unit game break even point is 15 full tables (without refreshments)
- Unit game lost \$1,300 in June '23 and \$1,025 in July '23
- July financial report available at next meeting.
- Approved for June, 2023 financial report.

Action Items:

All items covered in rest of the agenda items.

RSVP Software:

- Used it originally to remind people of the upcoming Unit game; currently there is no cost to use; nice to know how many to expect at the game but most people not using it and not signing up when they do not see other people signed up. It's in line with ACBL's move towards more technology.
- It is believed that iContact and our weekly email can accomplish the reminder if we add a line to have people contact Jim if they are interested in playing; Jim will add manually; RSVP is just another look.
- There is a cost (\$.40/table) to continue using RSVP after our trial period expires; however, there are some concerns as to how our members use the application (enroll in the next game, look to see how many others are signed up and if very few they won't sign up; contact Jim and he will add them to the player list). Per Marty, best if the unit/club is solvent and financials are not a problem.
- Recommended and accepted that we continue using it for the next few months, Jim will manually update the player list, and Ron will talk with Brenda about our questions on modifying the software to better meet our usage (e.g., suppress the list) and if we can use it on a month-to-month basis; put message and description in new member packet.
- Discussion went onto how to increase attendance – new location, the wine and cheese, RSVP, day, increased member comfort, increased marketing like fliers at Baltimore Regional

### In-Person and Online Games:

- Discussion turned to the Unit game – should we continue with weekly face-to-face games? should we also continue to offer the online Unit game and if so, for how long?
- WBL just cancelled its online weekly unit game – going face-to-face weekly; we do not have an online game during sectionals; we cannot combine the face-to-face and online games; our online game has gotten no more than 3-4 tables; for now, we will continue our online unit game, robustly market it and maybe change its starting time by 10-15 minutes.
- What can we do to increase attendance? We have a lot of anecdotal ideas why attendance is low but not much factual information. Social bridge players are ‘afraid’ of formal, contract bridge. Recommended increased and better communications and direct contact with people, not just emails. Can we get BethEl to advertise our game in its member communications.
- Kevin introduced the ACBL’s ideas for expanding interest (sponsored by the ACBL board): Social Bridge, Pickle Bridge (won’t work in our area), Spades Night (would need to set up separate section), and Mystery Match (like speed dating, we’re planning this). Along this line, we have the LM/NLM and 8 is Enough games. After much discussion, it appeared that more information as to how this would work and what the membership might find interesting were needed.
- Location was discussed as a deterrent or inducer of attendance; for now, BethEl appears to be our best option due to its size and fairly central location, St. Andrews and Bethlehem Lutheran were raised but would be too small for our ‘pre-Covid’ game size (may work for now). No other options at this point.
- Question was poised about Partnership Chair being fully compensated; while it was generally not endorsed, the issue of free plays was raised but not resolved except to say that during our review of our policies and procedures we should look at our free play practices. Currently, board members do not get free plays. Kevin suggests compensating people to step up and volunteer; others say that to volunteer is to volunteer but we do not really need new volunteers now.

### Braille Cards and Cards at Sectionals:

- Joe raised this concern as he has a blind partner who is interested in playing again.
- There are issues with Braille cards and the dealing machines (i.e., the dots in the corners of the cards) – discussed the cost of these cards versus using cheaper cards and manually marking them up, we learned that using the more costly cards (~\$5 per deck) is not cost prohibitive.
- Margot and Joe will discuss this issue off-line and present back to the board and Joe will provide proof of concept if he manually marks up a deck.
- Complaints have been made about card quality (e.g., cleanliness, age) at the Sectionals; since we use NVBA Unit boards and cards, not boards from clubs, it was recommended that we periodically swap out the cards on all, not just selective, boards.

### NVBA Teacher’s Page (NVBA Website):

- Issues were raised about the accuracy of the listed teachers; changes to the list are easily made; Marty recently contacted them and none wanted to be removed even if they’re not actively teaching; we want more teachers. There are no certification requirements for teaching bridge but there are certifications – decision made to make no changes.
- There is an ACBL teacher’s page; could use this in addition to our page.

### New Online Membership Directory:

- Discussions between Georgette and Hadi about creating a new hard-copy membership directory; cost for paper directory is ~\$1,500 shared with the WBL but WBL does not want to go this way.
- Talked about putting the directory online; T. Ying has done this for the WBL; works with a password and only searches one person at a time – Joe will talk with Ted
- Data privacy issues were discussed and the concerns with possible hacking were raised.
- Kevin raised what the Richmond unit has done – he will investigate this.

Fall Sectional (October 12-15, 2023):

- Margot reported that we have the final schedule and it's been sent to the ACBL for its website; the flier is being printed (will be available for Unit game and Baltimore Regional).
- Margot will not be available for the Fall Sectional; Amy Brisson will fill Margot's typical role during the tournament.
- Unit will handle refreshments at BethEl on Thursday night Sectional game.
- Check the quality of the cards being used at the next sectional, significant complaints about card quality – see action item from previous discussion.
- Sectional free plays – Policies and Procedures controls this issue; looking to the board for direction on free plays; Ron and Lucy get sectional free plays from the Unit and not from the Sectional; may need to review this practice and free plays in general; review the policies and procedures and change as needed – see action item. Tournament chair should get several free plays; leave as it is for now.

Longest Day 2023:

- Kevin increased our goal and total donation to the Alzheimer's Association. Likely we are in the top 10 contributors.

Position Descriptions:

- Please review position description for your position and send to Kevin.

Club Reopenings:

- No new reopenings; Marshall's Wednesday night game closed again – may try to reopen in the Fall.

Miscellaneous Items:

- No new Agenda Items or new business.
- Certain board members still not receiving ACBL reports every month – Georgette to recontact ACBL.

Next Meeting will be August 20, 2023.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40am.

Action Items:

1. Ron will talk with Brenda about modifying the RSVP software to better meet our usage and and if we can use it on a month-to-month basis.
2. Not assigned – If we determine to move forward with the other types of games, more information as to how these games would work and what the membership might find interesting were needed.
3. Not assigned – Review our free play practices and determine if they need some changes.
4. Margot and Joe will discuss incorporating Braille cards into games at all levels and Joe to provide proof of concept.
5. Not assigned – determine and effect a schedule/plan to regularly swap out card decks.
6. Joe will talk with Ted Ying on how his online membership directory is set up and works.
7. Kevin will investigate how the Richmond unit set up and operates its online membership directory.
8. Georgette will recontact ACBL to identify which reports each board member should receive – predominant issue is with the In/Out Report.
9. Need to resolve how we will or want to use RSVP after our trial period – invite Brenda to next meeting.
10. Not assigned – Determine if we want to hold a special event on Saturday night of the Sectional as there is no game – invite Amy to next meeting to discuss.