



Editor's Desk

By Jared Johnson
ScoreCard Editor

At long last, an NABC in Alaska!

The ACBL has just selected Nome as site of the Fall 2016 North American Championships to be held in late November and early December of that year. Fairbanks was running a close second, but the lavish new Nome Convention Center, built in the shape of the world's largest igloo, swung the deal.

Of course, you cannot drive to Nome. You can get to Fairbanks by road through Canada, but the last leg provides only two choices, the faster but more expensive air travel, or the less expensive but much slower dog sled. Despite the unusual northern location, the Nome NABC will feature the full expected slate of national championships plus the usual variety of regionally rated events, with one exception.

There will be no Daylight Pairs. Because of course, there won't be any daylight. *April Fool!*

Rocky—Continued from page 1

official until 1948. In any event, the PBL was fully absorbed into the ACBL in 1956. The ACBL continued to maintain a western office in Los Angeles and the western division was renamed the "Western Conference."

During the 40s, 50s, and 60s the ACBL often loosened the purse strings on masterpoints, and in response the league experienced exceptional growth. In 1947 there were but 15,000 ACBL members, but this had soared 170,000 by 1970, about the same as we have now. It was still recognized that points won at larger tournaments should be worth more, and the concept of red points was instituted. At one point there were blue points and then pink points. Instead of "State Masterpoints" being worth 10 times club points, it was now more like three to one.

It was the superior masterpoint scheme that put the ACBL on the map and fueled its growth. Masterpoints have always been a measure of lifetime achievement (except for 1937 to 1944 when you had annual deductions). The scheme never purported to measure present ability, although I guarantee you that someone who won a few major events last year is sure to be among the favorites this year.

Points also became more readily available at clubs. Back in the sixties club points were called fractionals (or rating points) and that's because the best you could do was a fraction of 1.00. As recently as the early 1980s 0.60 was the most you could get for winning a club game, unless it was a "special" game, and those were few and far between.

In recent years the ACBL has made it a lot easier to earn masterpoints. More masterpoints was seen as a way to encourage beginning and intermediate players, and so we saw the birth of strats and brackets. And it achieved its purpose. Printing more masterpoints was also seen as a way to increase club attendance and raise money for charity, the junior fund, the international fund and the education fund.

At first it was one or two special games a month (for each sanctioned session), but a few years ago the board passed a motion allowing all club games to be special games. For the price of a \$1.00 per person contribution, all club masterpoint awards would be (almost) tripled. Clubs could now offer triple points for all their games, and when the players at the club across town only got one-third the payoff for beating the same number of pairs in the same level of competition, the other clubs in town were forced to follow suit. In just the past year the number of special games (measured by table-count) has increased 50%. Although they still represent only 16% of all club table-counts, negative effects were already becoming evident.

Why would anybody take the time and spend the money to travel to a sectional tournament when the same masterpoints could be won at their local club? In our district most of our sectionals rely on out-of-town players, and if they were lost we would start losing sectionals. Why would anybody bother playing in STACs or NAPs or GNTs? New players were rocketing up the rank ladder before they had time to really learn the game and when they were forced into brackets and strats because of their special masterpoints they were lost and many just quit the game.

Worst of all, the phenomena was creating two classes of masterpoints, which cuts right to the integrity of the game. Simple math tells us that one-third of the triple points were earned, but the other two-thirds was purchased. And the masterpoint inflation was devaluing the masterpoints earned "the hard way" in the past.

The ACBL Board recognized that the system needed to be brought back into balance and effective July 1 masterpoint awards for special games will be 70% of sectional rating rather than 100%, in other words double instead of triple. Although all games can be "special" in February, April and October, in the remaining months clubs will be limited to one special game per month per sanctioned session.

The motion passed by a vote of 23 to 2.

Special games will continue to raise healthy amounts of money for worthy purposes, but the amounts are expected to decrease.

The next challenge will be to rein in Internet masterpoints. It is simply too easy to accumulate huge amounts of points. With barely 1/6 of the year gone the leading online player had piled up more than 360 ACBL masterpoints, which puts him on a pace to finish the year with over 2,000. This was enough to win the McKenney Trophy (now Barry Crane Top 500) every year until 1977.

You can expect this to be adjusted by the National Board of Directors.

It was extremely interesting to see the ACBL Board in action, and we can all be comforted to know that the future of bridge is in the competent hands of a group of very dedicated and exceptionally talented people. That doesn't mean you can't disagree with some of their decisions every now and then. Some of the problems are not easy and sometimes you just can't keep all the people happy all the time.

If anybody would like to know more about what happened in Reno, please drop me a line at johnvanness@comcast.com or you can get the full and official report from Jerry.

Spring is coming and that means Mesa in April, Denver in May and Las Vegas in June.

Unit 356 Election for D17 Representative

Unit 356, Tucson, Arizona, will be holding an election for the unit's District 17 board representative to fill a vacancy created by the recent resignation of Gene McDougall. To run for this position you must fulfill the following requirements: (1) You must be in good standing with the ACBL. (2) You must be a member of Unit 356. (3) You cannot be an owner or operator of a bridge club.

Any persons wishing to announce as a candidate for this position please contact Julie Abrahams, president of Unit 356, julierutha@msn.com or 520 615-1712, for election timing and/or to have your name on the ballot.

The district board term begins in June, 2010 and runs through December 31, 2012.

If you have more questions contact Karin Griffin, elections secretary for District 17, nieve14@aol.com or 505 797-1837.

Bergen-Cohen Reunion Seminar

Just a couple weeks after the Las Vegas Regional at the Riviera Hotel & Casino, June 7-13, another bridge event takes place. Marty Bergen and Larry Cohen are one of the legendary partnerships of bridge; they won seven national championships in the 1980s. Both men play little in-person tournament bridge these days, and devote most or their time to teaching and writing bridge books (and CDs), but they are getting back together again for a grand reunion seminar at the Wynn in Las Vegas, June 22-24, Tuesday to Thursday.

There will be three full days of bridge seminars and duplicate game, a panel show, question and answer sessions, and daily lectures from Bergen and Cohen, providing a wealth of valuable information for aspiring players.

The package includes three nights at the luxurious Wynn Hotel, plus breakfast and lunch each day.

Details are available at www.larryco.com or www.martybergen.com or 800 367-9980 or e-mail mbergen@mindspring.com

Now you can have two bridge adventures in Las Vegas this summer.

Bridge Squad Kids

By Rod Bias

At the Phoenix President's Day Sectional, the Phoenix Unit has 19 ACBL members attending three different schools in the Dysart Unified School District. Ten have attended sectional tournaments and 12 have begun accumulating masterpoints (so have a few non-ACBL members).

The after school program is called "Bridge-Squad" and runs it's own website at

Bridge.Squad.info (but you can also get there by typing bridge-squad.com).

Check out the online Bridge Boot Camp.

Kids who have never played a card game can quickly begin playing MiniBridge and enjoy it with friends and at home.

You can start your kids, grandkids, and others playing with online lessons at nofearbridge.com/minibrIDGE/lessons/lesson1.php For more info contact Rod Bias by phone at 623 444-7960 or BridgeCoach@Bridge-Squad.info

Grand National Teams

By Jerry Ranney

D17 GNT Coordinator

District 17 Grand National teams finals, will be held at the Riviera Hotel and Casino during the upcoming Las Vegas Regional in June. The finals will start on Friday, June 12, for all brackets, so check with your local clubs for remaining dates and times for GNT qualifying games.

I remind club owners that the results of all

GNT qualifier games along with a check for \$4.00 per table need to be sent to Jerry Ranney so I can prepare a list of all qualified participants to use at the district finals.

For everyone's information, these District 17 table fees are used to reimburse teams that travel to participate in the finals for a portion of their travel costs.

In addition, District 17 provides additional funding to District 17 teams that qualify for and attend the national GNT finals held at the upcoming ACBL Summer NABC, New Orleans, July, 2010.

Mesa Reminder

Just a reminder on the Mesa Senior Roadrunner Regional April 5-11 at the Crowne Plaza San Marcos Resort in Glendale, Arizona. See recent, and this, issue of *ScoreCard* for Mesa ads and articles. There is still time to make plans to attend.

Las Cruces Unit 380
Down Country Sectional

April 23rd, 24th & 25th, 2010
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL
2755 East Idaho
Las Cruces, NM 88011
www.lascrucesbridge.com

Schedule of Events
ACBL Sanction No. S1004091

Friday, April 23rd:	
Compact Bracketed Knockout Teams*	10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Stratified Paris (single sessions)	10:00 am & 3:00 pm
199er Pairs (single sessions)	10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Saturday, April 24th:	
Compact Bracketed Knockout Teams*	10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Stratified Paris (single sessions)	10:00 am & 3:00 pm
199er Pairs (single sessions)	10:00 am & 3:00 pm
Sunday, April 25th:	
Stratified (by team average) Swiss Teams	9:00 am & TBA
----- Lunch included in Team Entry Fee -----	
Stratification: (A) 2000+, (B) 500-2000, (C) 0-500	
*Top brackets (Knockouts) may be handicapped at director's discretion.	
Entry Fees:	
\$10.00 per person/session	
\$11.00 per person/session for non-members & unpaid LMs	
\$80.00/team for Sunday Swiss (includes lunch)	

Director in Charge: Ken Horwedel
Chairman: Evelyn Colson (575)524-9302 ekcolson@zianet.com
Partnerships: Sue Parker 575-382-5421 psuzann@netscape.net Betty Stori 575-532-5464 ed.stori@comcast.net
Hospitality: Chickie Lerdal Joanne Dunkel Sandy Miles Peggy Knapp

Host Hotel
Sleep Inn
2121 South Triviz

Tel: 575-522-1700 Fax: 575-522-1515

For Special Rates mention: Bridge Center
Standard Rooms (Singles, Doubles) - \$65 + tax