

**ACBL Unit 234 Board Meeting  
Wednesday, September 14, 2016, 5:00 PM  
Kaw Valley Bridge Club  
Lawrence, Kansas**

**Minutes  
(Approved October 5, 2016)**

**Present:** Dave Chipman, Jana Goodman, Sally Henry, Chris Lane, Mary Locniskar, Pat Lombardi, Jim Masilamani, Terrance McKerrs, Jason Smith.

**The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Pat Lombardi.**

**Election of Board Officers:** The following Board members were elected to the following offices:

Pat Lombardi, President  
Jason Smith, Vice President  
Mary Locniskar, Secretary  
Sally Henry, Treasurer

**Election Game Report:** Mary Locniskar presented the report. The ACBL Unit 234 Election Game was held at the Kaw Valley Bridge Club on Saturday, July 23, 2016. The candidates included: Jo Anderson, Julia Dalton, Chris Lane, Jim Masilamani, and Jason Smith. After counting the fifty-five ballots, the three candidates elected to take the three board positions were Chris Lane, Jim Masilamani and Jason Smith.

## **Tournaments**

**1) 2016 Regional Report:** Jim Masilamani reviewed the final report from the Sunflower Regional Tournament held in Topeka Kansas, June 21-26, 2016 (see Appendix A, Final Tournament Report for details).

### **2) 2017 Tournaments**

**Possibility of alternate venues for Lawrence tournaments:** Mary Locniskar reported that the Community Meeting Hall on the Douglas County Fairgrounds and the Crown Toyota showroom were potential venues for small bridge tournaments (20-30 tables).

**February 2017 Free State Winter Sectional in Lawrence, February 3-5, 2017:** Mary Locniskar reported that the DoubleTree Lawrence Hotel had been secured for the tournament and that most of the Tournament Chairs had been selected including:

Tournament Chair, Mary Locniskar  
Partnership, Julia Dalton,  
Hospitality, Chris Lane,

Set-Up/Clean-Up, Grant Sutton  
Caddies, Paula Schumacher  
PR, Jana Goodman, Sally Henry and Mary Locniskar  
Welcome Table,?

**November 3-5, 2017 Sectional in Topeka:** Jason Smith agreed to chair the Sectional Tournament to be held November 3-5, 2017. He will contact Mike Kelly for information about last year's tournament, to begin planning for November, 2017.

**3) 2018 Regional (Week of June 18, 2018):** Jason Smith moved (seconded by Chris Lane) to nominate Jim Masilamani as Chair of the 2018 Regional Tournament to be held in Topeka, Kansas the week of June 18, 2018. The motion was approved unanimously. Therefore, Jim Masilamani will Chair this regional tournament in 2018. Jason Smith agreed to be Co-Chair of the tournament.

#### **4) Other Tournament Possibilities**

**Limited Sectional:** Pat Lombardi discussed the possibility of having a one-day Intermediate/ Newcomer Tournament in 2017. Pat will check with Phil Rea to determine a potential date and then identify a venue.

**Marketing Solutions Program:** Jason Smith volunteered to assume responsibility for the Marketing Solutions Program. Jana Goodman will send the necessary information to Jason.

**Location of Future Board Meeting:** The next ACBL Unit 234 Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 9, 2016 at 5:30 PM at Annie's Place, Gage Shopping Center, 4014 SW Gage Center Drive, Topeka, Kansas.

**Other Business:** The NAP final is scheduled on Saturday, September 24, 2016. Pat Lombardi will send out an announcement of the game.

**The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM.**

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Mary Locniskar, Secretary**

## APPENDIX A

### Topeka Regional 6/21- 6/26/16 Final Tournament Report

Chairman: James A Masilamani  
Co-Chairman: William Jason Smith  
Budget Committee: Jan Tillery, James Masilamani  
Hospitality sub-committee: Klee Zaricky, Jan Tillery  
Partnership sub-committee: Mike Kelley  
Publicity sub-committee: Jana Goodman, Sally Henry  
Appeals Committee: Jim Masilamani  
Welcome sub-committee: Jett Elmer, Jan Benson  
Set-up of site: Mike Kelley

**Venue:** Topeka Capitol Plaza and Convention Center / Sunflower Ballroom

The playing area was in the Sunflower Ballroom - 7000 square feet – we utilized about 75-80% of it. The lighting and ambience was good. The extra space was cordoned off by screens and this provided us with separate areas that were utilized a) for the Speakers and b) as a storage area c) a side game.

The hotel provided the microphone and this worked fine. The hotel also provided WiFi that was a must for the Directors. White Board, erasers and marker pens for use of the Expert Speakers were also provided.

There was adequate space in the corridor outside the main playing area for tables to accommodate the welcome desk and the partnership desk.

Hospitality purchased from the hotel in fulfillment of our contract obligations was provided in a separate room of moderate size adjacent to the Sunflower Ballroom.

Advance booking of hotel rooms at the “bridge rate”: Per contract we were committed to an attendance of 138 room-nights or equivalent of \$12,420.00. We actually had 204 room-nights booked and easily exceeded the contract requirement. I believe the publicity (mainly Flyer and website) played a big role in this.

In addition we were committed to an agreed minimum banquet food and beverage revenue of \$6,000.00. All food and beverage was subject to a 20% service charge, which was taxable at 8.95%. Food was also subject to an 8.95% and alcoholic beverages to a 10% tax.

The Hotel Staff were easily available and responsive to our needs both in the run up as well as during the actual tournament. The major glitch was on Sunday 6/26 when the AC was out because of a power outage which occurred at approximately 8:30 a. It took about 3-4 hours before the room cooled down to an acceptable temperature again.

**Publicity:** One major innovation was the Tournament website. This was based on the experience of Unit 132 (Wichita) and their most recent Regional at Mulvane in 2015. Jan Tillery was the spearhead behind organizing and bringing this project to fruition. Though this was done at a late date, no more than 2-3 months before the tournament began, it was a great success. I must also point out that our Unit owes an immense debt to David Kopper of Wichita who setup the website and gave most generously of his time and services in trouble shooting and dealing with the inevitable glitches. The website was a great resource for our attendees, since information about the schedule, hotel reservations, partnership etc. were conveniently available at one location. The website was extremely helpful to the bridge players as attested to by many of them and was one of the aspects of the tournament which received much favorable comment. It was also relatively inexpensive.

Jana Goodman was responsible for the design of the flyer and in liaising with ACBL and its Tournament Section, particularly with regards to changes and updates in the Flyer. She also was responsible for the design and format of the Flyer, which received a lot of favorable comment.

Another innovation was the use of the software, which ACBL had recently made available for contacting ACBL members by e-mail. We were able to send e-mails to targeted groups of ACBL members in our District as well as the adjacent Districts reminding them of the tournament and other pertinent information about the schedule, events, updates, hotel reservation information etc.

Utilizing the website as well as software from ACBL we were able to send out a post-tourney electronic survey to attendees to obtain their feedback.

We were also in touch with Len Fettig who is responsible for Publicity at the District level and we are grateful to him for his suggestions and help. However a lot of what he would usually do in this regard was done by us using ACBL software to contact potential attendees.

We used the Capper Foundation in Topeka to print the flyers and other stationary items like Free Plays and nametags. The cost was very cheap and the service was exceptionally prompt and efficient. The foundation also undertook to mail the Flyers to various Clubs once we provided them with a list of addresses. Sally Henry was our liaison with the foundation.

Last but not least, our Unit bridge players provided much word of mouth publicity for our Regional when they attended other local sectional and regional tournaments in the months immediately preceding the tournament.

**Hospitality:** Our Hospitality Chair was Klee Zaricky. The terms of the Contract provided that we guarantee the hotel \$6000 worth of food and beverages. We estimated that we would have 125 people in attendance for the Swiss Teams on the last Sunday. At an estimated \$15 a head this amounted to \$2000-2500. We decided that we would restrict the hospitality to the remaining approximately \$4000 which we would have to pay the hotel. We could have utilized the complementary room, which the Hotel had agreed to provide per the contract, to bring in our own supplies for additional hospitality. However it was decided based on our previous experience that due to the distance from the playing site and the relatively low number of players showing up to the hospitality site, that we would forego providing additional hospitality at the Unit's expense. As a result our budget permitted hospitality on Monday night, between the afternoon and evening sessions on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, in addition to the pastries (pre-game) and lunch provided on Sunday.

**Partnership:** Mike Kelley was responsible. Once again the website helped players to get in contact with Mike to arrange for partners. I must also thank our local bridge players who volunteered to be available to play on request.

**Card Tables / Set-up:** Mike Kelley also arranged for this. Card tables were brought from the Woman Club in Topeka and additional tables were brought from Kaw Valley Bridge Club. Tablecloths were provided by the Hotel. Bidding boxes were obtained from Sunflower, Ace of Hearts and Kaw Valley bridge clubs.

**Free Plays:** A total of 33 free play Coupons (white) - each worth \$14.00 equivalent to a single session entry fee, were provided. In addition a total of 10 yellow coupons (each worth \$10.00) were provided to the Partnership sub-committee to be used to compensate bridge players who filled in as stand-by partners. These were all distributed by the Tournament Chairman and a list was maintained to ensure strict accountability. A total of 33 Free Play and 9 yellow coupons were turned in to the Directors in lieu of entry fees. One yellow coupon was returned by The Partnership sub-committee chairman. Prior to the tournament, the Unit 234 Board had budgeted for 30 Free Plays. No specific number of yellow coupons was budgeted by the Unit Board. The actual amount spent on these items conformed pretty closely to the budgeted estimate.

**Welcome Desk:** This was manned throughout the tournament and our thanks are due to Jett Elmer and Jan Benson. The goody bags, which included restaurant guides and a listing of local attractions, were provided by Visit Topeka. Visit Topeka also provided the badge holders and lanyards. The Capper Foundation was supplied with a list of players who had registered on the Tournament Website and provided pre-printed nametags. Capper Foundation also arranged to insert the nametags into the badges. For those who registered at the Tournament site, hand printed name tags were provided.

**Directors:** Director in charge: Rick Beye  
Other Directors: Larry Brobst and Joan Paradeis.

All the Directors were very proficient, courteous and professional. Larry Brobst was responsible for the pre-duplication of the Boards.

**TABLE COUNTS / BREAKDOWN of EVENTS:** The detailed breakdown of the table counts was provided by Rick Beye (appended). Summarizing:

=Our total table count was 483 tables, up from 389 in 2014

=There was a marked preponderance of Pair events vs. KO events.

=The Gold Rush Pairs with the concurrent Open Pairs were very successful

=We had a fair turnout in the Newcomer-intermediate Pairs every morning (Wednesday thru Saturday, as well as on Tuesday evening) – this event was not initially in our schedule and was added on late.

=Swiss Teams turnout on the last Sunday was also up from 2014 by 3 tables.

=KO events: Compared to the 2014 schedule, which had a total of 4 KO events, we had scheduled only 3 KO events. The KO usually starting on Thursday 1.0 pm was not scheduled as we wanted to emphasize the pairs events. We had to cancel the am KO starting on Wednesday due to lack of teams.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The final financial report indicates

Total Table/Entry Fees:	\$27,658.00
ACBL related fees and expenses	\$12,203.60 + \$1902.60 (Deductions)
Hotel (Hospitality)	\$9031.07
Net profit	\$1981.87

(See attached reports from Rick Beye and Jan Tillery which have been submitted to the Secretary)

**Post Tournament Electronic Survey:** In general the feeling of most players were extremely favorable. We received many compliments about the organization of the tournament and the facilities and playing conditions. Negative feedback and comments were relatively few. In this regard the main area of dissatisfaction was with regard to the hospitality or lack thereof. Oddly the area of most complaints was with regard to lack of doughnuts, parties etc. for the mornings sessions.

**Sponsors:** We did not aggressively pursue local businesses, restaurants for help/donations. The Yeldarb Gallery held an exhibition of their artwork at the playing site on Thursday. This was well patronized and I believe they had about \$800.00 in sales. They had agreed to donate 10% of the proceeds to the ACBL for the cause of Alzheimer's research. Jan Tillery was responsible for arranging this.

## **ANALYSIS / LESSONS FOR FUTURE REGIONALS:**

### INCREASED ATTENDANCE:

Our total table count was 483 tables, up from 389 in 2011. The main reason in my opinion was that it was held in late June (our traditional date) when there is minimal conflict with other regionals both in terms of timing and contiguity. A second reason was improved publicity through the electronic website, multiple letters generated by ACBL software and word of mouth.

### EVENT TYPES:

There was a marked preponderance of Pair events vs. Team events. There were a total of 102 tables in Team events (KOs, one session Swiss Teams, and the Swiss Teams on Sunday).

The Gold Rush Pairs with the concurrent Open Pairs were very successful. We had a fair turnout in the Newcomer-intermediate Pairs every morning (Wednesday thru Saturday, as well as on Tuesday evening) – this event was added on late to our schedule. Some of these pairs who wanted to play a second session in the afternoon were accommodated in a side Pairs game.

Swiss Teams turnout on the last Sunday was also up from 2011 by 3 tables.

KO events: We had to cancel the am KO starting on Wednesday due to lack of teams. Compared to the 2011 schedule which had a total of 4 KO events, we had also not scheduled a KO starting on Thursday 1.0 pm as we wanted to emphasize the pairs events.

### DIRECTORS OPINIONS and COMMENTS:

Rick Beye felt that our schedule was satisfactory and that the mix of Pair/Team events was OK. It is clear that with the increase in Gold Rush Pairs, KO events have lost a lot of popularity. He also felt that if we increased the number of IN/Newcomer or similar 0-199/299 events we would merely shift Pairs away from Gold Rush events without any real increase in the number of total pairs. There was some demand for a 2-session IN/Newcomer game but if we accede to that demand we would encounter the same pair-shifting phenomenon.

### HOSPITALITY:

This is one major area of concern. As I explained we made a conscious decision to stick to a fairly strict budget with regard to Hospitality. We were alive to the fact that we guaranteed per contract a sum of 6000 dollars to the Hotel for food and beverages. This was exclusive of service fees and sales tax, which was, estimated at a further 3000 dollars and a total estimate \$9,000.00 for this item of expenditure.

The beverage services (coffee and iced water) were well stocked.

Sunday morning pastries and Sunday lunch were well appreciated.

The main focus of negative comments was with regard to Hospitality or lack thereof. I have alluded in the foregoing to the reasons why we decided to stick to a very strict budget due to our concerns regarding the attendance figures about potential receipts from entries. Our budget estimates were based on the attendance figures from the last Regional in August 2014 at the same venue. Notwithstanding, our expenses for Hospitality (\$8,900.00) are in the range of 30-35% of total receipts, which is in line with the District 15 policy. The breakdown of these expenses per hotel invoice:

Beverages, coffee:	\$2,584.00
inter-session hospitality on Thurs, Fri and Sat: hors d'oeuvre, vegetable tray:	\$3,064.93
Ice cream on Tuesday night:	\$ 160.00
Sunday am pastries:	\$ 392.00
Sunday Lunch:	\$2,190.00
Total (inclusive of service charges and tax) :	\$9,031.07

The hotel charges for food and beverages are high – to mention one for example, the charge for chips and dip on 6/25 was \$ 320.00.

Were we to provide Hospitality' through the Capitol Plaza hotel every am and after each afternoon and evening session, which is customary at other regionals, we are looking at least at a doubling of our expenses with regard to Hospitality. I believe had we done that, we would be in the red, even with the improved attendance this year. (see also items #1 and #2 in Recommendations).

As I mentioned, most of the complaints were with regard to lack of donuts, pastries in the morning. Perhaps we should provide these in the future.

Were we to provide our own hospitality we could certainly save on the chips and dip.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. We need to decide on whether we want to continue at the Topeka Capitol Plaza venue for our next tournament. The facility is excellent. The attendees were very happy and with the site and playing conditions. Those who stayed at the Hotel were also extremely satisfied with the facility and service provided by the Hotel for the guests. The main drawback is the expense and in particular the guarantee of approximately \$6000.00 for food and beverages.



We could utilize a Hospitality room (a complimentary Room was available as part of the contract) and this would enable us to provide our own hospitality, which would be much cheaper. We chose not to use the Hospitality Room as I have explained above. We would have to seriously reconsider that option.

An alternate suggested venue is the Holiday Inn on Fairlawn and 6<sup>th</sup>. The playing space is 6000 square feet with possibly some additional space. Both Rick Beye and Larry Brobst who have directed Sectionals at this site feel that the playing space is sufficient. Our previous experience also indicates that some of the problems with regard to Hospitality would be more easily handled.

Another possible location is the remodeled Ramada Inn downtown Topeka.

2. Increased/improved Hospitality: Please refer to the discussion above under Hospitality.

3. I was appointed as Tournament Chair about 6 months prior to the Regional. Prior to that considerable planning and arrangements had been done by various people including our previous Tournament chair Jerry Sloan and our Unit President Pat Lombardi. I suggest:

The Tournament Chair be appointed at least 18 months prior to the Tournament. He/she in turn should appoint the various sub-committee chairpersons well in advance.

The schedule and Flyer should be finalized at least one year prior to the Tourney date.

The Tourney should be scheduled for mid-late June. We should insist that district 15 gives us this date.

Publicity: The website was a great success and we should include this feature at future Regionals. Capper Foundation was an excellent resource with printing flyers, posters, coupons etc.

Visit Topeka was another excellent resource, which we should use at future Regionals.

Fast results to a large extent supplanted the need for a daily Bulletin. We should consider augmenting our goody bags with some additional items (hopefully including the name of our regional) such as pens, plastic Conventions card etc. This would increase our expenses but hopefully some sponsors might be persuaded to provide gifts.

Another item which we had provided in the past (but elected not to do this year for lack of time and resources) was the provision of prizes for winners and section tops.

4. Sponsors: We should make a concerted effort to contact local businesses etc.to provide sponsorship in return for publicity. They could defray some of the expenses related to prizes for example. We could also explore contacting local restaurants etc. for discounts for bridge players.

In conclusion I cannot sufficiently stress the fact that our success was due to the unstinting effort, enthusiasm, collegiality and team spirit of the entire tournament planning team and our volunteers. The number of people involved in terms of the various Committees and sub-Committees was small which only emphasizes the hard work, commitment and dedication of all involved. My thanks to ALL OF THEM.

Jim Masilamani (Tournament Chairman) – 8/15/2016

Also submitted separately to Secretary:

Final financial report

Breakdown of Directors Tournament balance sheet

Electronic post tournament survey