

WBL Board Minutes

March 26, 2024

All Board members attended. Lloyd Rawley (Club Manager), Linda Marshall (Communications), and Barb Devaney also attended.

Minutes: The Board approved the minutes of the January meeting.

WBL Archives: Peter Boyd will be resigning as WBL historian, and Barb Devaney and Alex Stille have offered to collaborate in taking over this role. Barb and Alex reported on their discussions with Peter about preserving the WBL archives and enhancing their usability.

For most of the history of the WBL, the archives include copies of paper bulletins that provide a thorough record of WBL activities. The recent record, covering the years since the bulletin stopped publication, is much less complete.

Barb and Alex reported that the archives include minutes of WBL Board meetings, membership directories, records of members' masterpoint holdings, and photographs of players (many of whom are unidentified). They also include bridge history that is not specific to the WBL, such as ACBL Bulletins, issues of the Bridge World magazine, and Table Talk columns for improving players. The Board agreed that only materials specific to the WBL and local bridge should be preserved.

The Board discussed the digitization of our existing archive. Barb reported that the WBL website has bulletins going back to 2002 and reasonably detailed records (e.g., covering competitions) through 2018, but that records dealing with the period after the bulletin stopped paper publication in 2018 are sparse. Peter's archive includes paper copies of bulletins from 1948 to 2018. Alex S. suggested that someone with a scanner would be able to put the paper bulletins in the archive into digital form. He added that it would be valuable to interview past WBL presidents and longtime players about the organization's history and to preserve records of the interviews in our electronic archive. Hadi noted that it would be important to talk to Linda Marshall about what she did in leading the WBL Board's efforts to adapt to the challenges involved in guiding the WBL through the Covid pandemic period.

Barb, Alex, and the Board agreed that the most valuable materials in the archive for historians and non-bridge players were the records covering the conflicts over racial integration in DC area bridge in the late 1950s and early 1960s, including the history of the integration of the WBL and the creation of a separate, segregated ACBL unit in Northern Virginia.

Barb said that the records concerning integration are the best organized materials in Peter's archive. The District of Columbia has a history center, which might be interested in archiving information about integration but would not want to archive our other materials. Local libraries, the American Historical Association, and Georgetown University were mentioned as other possible resources that could aid in finding a suitable archive for materials dealing with integration. Ron suggested that we contact local members of the American Bridge Association, whose members are predominantly Afro-American players, to ask about their records and perspectives concerning

racial integration in D.C. area bridge. Doug Grove and Tanya Rodich were also mentioned as possible sources of information and perspective.

Carole remarked that it would be nice to include a history section on our website, which could direct interested persons to archives with complete records on the racial integration controversies in the 1950s and 1960s.

Alex S. noted that 2031 will be the 100th anniversary of the WBL and suggested that we ought to begin preparing soon to celebrate this milestone.

Hadi asked Barb and Alex to submit a written proposal covering what materials in the archive should be kept, how to digitize materials that should be saved, and how much it is expected to cost to digitize and store the records that need to be preserved.

Unit Game: Lloyd said that we are averaging about nine tables a week at the Unit Game. He reported that Ohr Kodesh would be unavailable on April 25 and suggested that the WBL hold an online game that day, which would be easier than finding an alternative site for a face-to-face game. Because Lloyd does not yet know how to direct an online game, we would need someone else to serve as online director. There may be occasional availability problems later in the year with Ohr Kodesh, but not before July.

The Board agreed to continue running the unit game until the end of the year and to make decisions about its future in light of developments in the next few months.

Treasurer's Report: Our net loss for January and February was \$1772. This includes payments we received from the ACBL. We lose approximately \$272 per unit game.

Communications: In the near future, Linda hopes to send a mailing summarizing the special events for the remainder of the year and to update the tournament page on the website.

Growing the Game: The Board discussed initiatives that the Growing the Game committee might consider to increase the number of people who play bridge and who might become tournament players. Board members agreed that it was important to identify and energetically pursue a limited number of focused initiatives in light of the limited amount of volunteer time available to us. This is especially true in view of the time volunteers are now spending to implement the ACBL 5-5-5 initiative.

Labyrinth, an online site that has an open game room in which volunteers can teach young people bridge, was mentioned as a promising venue; the ACBL Seattle unit has experience working with them. Awesomecon is another site with a gaming room that provides opportunities to play bridge. It was noted that we might work with local libraries to include bridge lessons in their recreational programs.

Melanie suggested holding a mini-retreat to discuss and choose initiatives. The Board decided to devote its first meeting after a new president is elected to identify things that, in light of our resources, we are willing and able to do to "grow the game." Ron stressed that it was important for Board members to prepare for this meeting by giving serious thought to our priorities and consideration to what kinds of commitments were realistic; Kim agreed that plans needed to be specific, not amorphous.

Melanie promised to write a brief statement proposing an online partnership desk and describing how it would work.

Elections: Hadi's term as WBL President ends in May. Ron plans to run for President. Kim will run for Vice President, and Bob I. is willing to continue as Treasurer. Bob B. said that he is willing to continue as Secretary for only one more year, but would be happy to step down sooner if another volunteer emerged.

Sectional and Regional Sites: Because we have been informed that the Schweinhaut Center will be much less available for sectional tournaments than it has been in the past, we need to examine other possible sites for our tournaments. Carole and Kim will take the lead in this process.

District 6 will host two regional tournaments this year—July in Reston and August in Baltimore. However, District 6 has no regionals planned for 2025. A dearth of economically viable sites and a shortage of volunteers who are able to perform the necessary work are major obstacles

The next WBL Board meeting will be Tuesday, April 30. Issues surrounding the May Sectional will be the main topic.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bell

Secretary