



FEBRUARY 2017 NEWSLETTER



ELECTION RESULTS

In our annual January election we voted to select two new Board members to replace, due to term limit rules, two long serving Board members, Bonnie Fabian and Jay Jacobs. We had four excellent candidates and the voting was extremely close. Please join me in welcoming our two new Board members – Cathie Lindler and Phyllis Pellarin.

In addition, the By-Law amendment to make the previous Club Manager a Board member for a three year term passed overwhelmingly. So, we also welcome Steve Banwarth back to the Board.

I would like to thank Bonnie and Jay for their service, but, although they may not know it yet, their service will continue. For whatever reason, being an active volunteer at our club is kind of like being a guest at the Hotel California (Eagles, 1977). You can check out but you can never leave.

UPCOMING SPECIAL GAMES

Grand National Teams Qualifying – Friday, March 10 – Perfect 10 does not apply, awards are half red/half black points

ACBL-Wide Senior Pairs – Monday, March 27 – hand records and expert analyses will be distributed after the game. You must have been born prior to January 1, 1959 to be eligible for awards. While I know this excludes most of you, please consider it a service to our senior members.

Individual Game – Wednesday, March 27 – our second ever Individual Game. You will play with many different partners. Only two bidding systems will be allowed, basic Standard American as on the yellow SAYC card (we have them available – basic stuff) and the ever popular “wing it” system, known to everyone. Regular card fees (4\$) apply this time and in the future.

FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

February is a short month and usually very short on special games. However, this year our three games during the week beginning Monday, February 6 are Charity Games for the benefit of the victims of the Gatlinburg fires. We also have our normal three Charity games plus two Sectional Tournament at Clubs (ST@C's) awarding silver points on the first Wednesday and Friday of the month.

WARNING

This newsletter is extremely boring. Do not read prior to driving or operating heavy machinery.

Game Schedule - February 2017

Monday 1:30pm	Wednesday 1:30pm	Friday 1:30pm
	1-Feb Open Pairs@	3-Feb Open Pairs@
6-Feb Open Pairs\$	8-Feb Open Pairs\$	10-Feb Teams -- Perfect 10\$
13-Feb Open Pairs	15-Feb Open Pairs	17-Feb Open Pairs\$
20-Feb Open Pairs	22-Feb Open Pairs\$	24-Feb Open Pairs
27-Feb Open Pairs\$		

@ = Sectional Tournament at Clubs

\$ = Charity Game

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The Baseball Hall of Famer Satchel Paige, who pitched till he was 47, always said never look back because someone might be gaining on you. Sage advice, but I'm going to ignore it.

I think our club had a good year. Our financial reserves increased by nearly \$4000, primarily because we grew by about 100 tables from the previous year, plus a nice surplus from our yearly Sectional and a great job of expense control by our incredible volunteers.

So, is growth important? Well, yes and no. I don't think, unlike most businesses, that it is the primary objective. It is, however, necessary to meet our objectives. We want to be able to keep our card fees low while continuing to offer all special games at no extra charge, offering free snacks and beverages, and holding parties for our members. Since everything seems to cost more every day, the only way to do this is by growing our table count. Can you help? You bet! Play more!

In April and May we conducted an opinion survey of our membership. The response was very gratifying and the results have been a great tool for me and the rest of your Board in our attempts to enhance your experience at our club. Without going into detail, things were added, things were brought back and things were eliminated. Hopefully, all consistent with the survey results. The changes seem to have been well received. Did we do everything you expressed an interest in? Certainly not. But we will keep at it.

HELP WANTED

Last year's member survey revealed that a significant number of you were interested in learning opportunities, aka bridge lessons. Everyone? Not even close. However, I truly believe that one of our major obligations is to provide these opportunities to those interested. What did we do about this? Well, absolutely nothing. So, bottom line, I flunked.

About a year and a half ago the club offered a series of lessons monthly before a Wednesday game, utilizing skilled, experienced instructors. Not terribly successful. Why? Don't really know. My best guess is that we were teaching what we wanted to teach and not what the students wanted to learn. So, I want to know what you want to learn, as well as how we can best satisfy the need.

If you are really interested in a learning opportunity I ask you to volunteer to attend a group meeting to discuss the what, how, and wherefores of a learning program. I hesitate to call this group a committee because, well, you know the old joke – What's a camel? A horse designed by a committee.

If you are interested in serving, please email, call, or speak to me.

WHAT ABOUT THIS YEAR

The Chinese just welcomed in the Year of the Rooster. Oh, that reminds me of an old joke – what's the difference between a rooster and nymphomaniac? – Oops, best not go there. Anyway, at the Aiken Bridge Club, 2017 will be the Year of Nice. No, no, we are not taking everyone to France.

I've heard it said that you can never be too rich or too thin. I'm not so very sure of that, but I'm pretty sure that you can never be too nice. So, this year, I would like to see us begin moving from our current status as a very, very nice bridge club to being the nicest bridge club on the planet. Yep, we're just going after the low hanging fruit.

I just ran out of space, so more on this next month, and the next, and the next and.....