



Unit 557 Board Meeting
January 23, 2024

Members Present: Cherene Birkholz, Leo Dittemore, Fern Dunbar, Joey DuRee, Jenny Ernest, Judy Jones, Chuck Laine, Linda Leventhal, Mary McIntyre, Alan Olschwang, Ann Peacock, Lillian Slater, Melanie Smothers, Rita Vanlierop

Welcome New Board: Lillian called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m. and welcomed Cherene, Mary, and Casey Stiers to the board.

Dalia Hernandez resigned from the Board to make room for new members:

- Lillian expressed the unit's gratitude for Dalia's service on the board for more than a decade.
- In her two years as president, Dalia instilled a work ethic in the Board and recruited newer players to serve.
- Dalia continues her work teaching and coaching intermediate and advancing students improve their game.
- Lillian asked Nancy to write a thank you note to Dalia expressing our gratitude for her many years of dedicated service.

Election of Officers

- Alan nominated and Jenny seconded Lillian Slater for president. She was unanimously elected.
- Alan nominated and Ann seconded Leo Dittemore for Vice President. He was unanimously elected.
- Joey nominated and Lillian seconded Linda Leventhal for Secretary. She was unanimously elected.
- Judy nominated and Joey seconded Jenny Ernest for Treasurer. She was unanimously elected.

Approval of Minutes: Alan made a motion, which was seconded by Jenny, to approve November and December minutes. All voted in favor.

Treasurer's Report

- Jenny reported that the December unit game had the highest attendance since January 2019. Seventy-two players enjoyed the holiday party with Ralph Brunson's music adding to the spirit.
- Unit games usually run in the red. December's had a net loss of \$22.72.
- The checking account's ending balance as of December 31, 2023, was \$15,674.27. Two checks have not yet cleared: the \$232 check of donations to the Women's Shelter and ACBL's \$500 check for the November sectional.
- The balance is \$2,000 greater than it was at the beginning of the year, so the unit's financial position is good. Profit from the November sectional accounts for this increase.

Hospitality Report: Nancy was absent but provided her report via email. In November, Dalia Hernandez was sent a Get Well card and Robert and John Bakovic were sent sympathy cards for the passing of Ricky Bakovic. January cards were also sent, a Get Well to Al Appel and a sympathy card to the family of Louis Shen.

Long Beach Bridge Center Update

Chuck presented an overview of the club's performance in 2023:

- The club hosted 3,500 tables in the year. January table counts remain stable.
- July was the lightest month, probably due to vacations.
- November had the highest table count with 250+ tables, partially due to the large turnout for the Local Sectional.

Chuck and Lillian clarified the card fees/game:

- The card fee for an Open game is \$10.
- The Wednesday NLM game will be \$5 until it is established and then will be increased to \$10.
- Members who come for a NLM game and end up being moved to the Open because the NLM turnout isn't sufficient will pay their NLM card fee.
- The Long Beach Bridge Center will absorb sanction fees above \$10 for upgraded championship games.
- The club will charge members the extra card fees for STaC, charity, Junior Fund (educational purposes), and ACBL-wide events.

Chuck requested that people clean up after themselves when using the kitchen.

Bridge Brigade Classes

- A new round of classes has started with Bridge 1 having 3+ tables and Bridge 2 having 4-5 tables of students. Lynda Montgomery continues to support Hank Dunbar with Bridge 1 while Melanie is assisting with Bridge 2 this session
- The 199'er games remain strong: 7-9 tables on Tuesdays with Rob Preece and Fern, and 5-6 tables on Wednesdays, now supervised by Leo.
- Attendance at Rob's Monday class (assisted by Fern) remains consistent at 11-14 tables per week.

Leisure World Report: Judy reported:

- There were 12 days of play in November and 10 in December, averaging seven tables per game.
- For the next 4-6 weeks, the game has been moved from Clubhouse 1 to Clubhouse 4 due to renovations.

January 28 Unit Game

- Director: Sean Lui
- Boards: Lillian
- Food: Judy – cookies, Lillian – ice cream
- The Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney awards will be acknowledged at the March unit game.
- After discussion, it was decided to not give BBO awards
- Fern will update the plaques to reflect these awards.

ALACBU Update: Lillian reported on the ALACBU:

- Last year's income for the Bridge Week regional was \$76, 857 with \$66,874 of expenses, which resulted in a profit of \$9,983.
- Donations for session naming rights amounted to \$8,350. Coupled with the donation of \$11,160 for the Sunday Swiss game, the regional was able to end in the black. There were also donations for some of the morning coffee service and Hospitality resources including Unit 557's \$300 of candy.
- The district has a contract with the Hilton for the 2024 and 2025 regionals. A serious problem with parking has to be resolved as the lot behind the Hilton is not owned by the hotel and is scheduled to be turned into condominiums. The tournament committee plans to locate alternate parking and run a shuttle to-from the hotel. Obviously all this will increase parking costs and convenience. Joey suggested The Grand as a possible replacement for the Hilton.

- The 2026 regional must relocate due to Long Beach's Centennial celebration. Glendale may be an alternative location.
- The 2028 regional conflicts with the Olympics and will have to be relocated and/or scheduled at a different location.
- There will not be a pro-am at the 2024 regional because no one volunteered to organize/run it. Marjorie Michelin will still provide a lesson with a limited game afterwards.

New Business

Unit 557's Pro-Am:

- The board discussed and agreed to continue a Pro-Am game for the Long Beach Unit.
- There aren't enough pros to partner amateurs. The board needs to define what constitutes a pro.
- It was suggested that we rename the game Master-Am, and encourage all Life Masters to volunteer.
- This game will be held on a Tuesday in March.

Lillian suggested offering a limited NLM tournament in April.

- There was a discussion of whether 500 or 750 should be the limit for the points of those entering the NLM tournament.
- Cherene suggested using the lower number in order not to discourage newer players.
- The issue was tabled until the February meeting.

New Business

Future Unit Games/Tournament(s)

- Lillian is applying for ACBL sanctions for our November 2-3 tournament. Sean will be the director.
- Lillian announced 2024 STaC dates: 3/18-3/24, 7/8-7/14, 10/7-10/13 (submitted but not yet approved). Royal STaC's are scheduled for 5/6-5/12, 8/19-8/24, 11/18-11/24.
- The unit gets 24 sanctions, proportioned as follows: 12 to our monthly unit games, 1 to the Chinese Alumni Association game which gives its cards fees to the club, and the remaining 11 divided according to the club's size, i.e., seven given to Long Beach Bridge Center and four to Leisure World.
- The November Unit Game will be on the 24th since Thanksgiving is on the 28th.
- The December Unit Game/holiday party will be on the 15th, the last day of the Palm Springs regional.

Joey moved that the NLM game be changed to a 499'er game. Some Life Masters attain that status at 300 points instead of today's 500. Changing the name/requirement will keep these players eligible to play in the limited games.

- Mary noted that the South Bay Bridge Club voted to up the number of points for its lower-level game to 750, and this intimidates newer members.
- Alan moved to table the motion until the next meeting.

Alan moved and Ann seconded to adjourn at 11:57 a.m.

The next meeting is February 20th at 11:00.

Respectfully Submitted by Linda Leventhal