

Unit 487 Board Meeting
August 6, 2020

Attendees: Kristin Steinmetz, Kathi Marcus, Monte Garrett, Alan Johnson, Paul Walker, Paula Koeller, Tara McMahon, Jon Gassaway, Mike Eyer and Dee Poujade.

Board President Kristin Steinmetz called the meeting to order. Meeting topic was "Status Update on Local Clubs and Ways to Support Them." She reported that the limited games at both Portland clubs are doing well, with attendance often higher than for pre-Corona in-person games. Open games, however, were never doing well on line, with often only 3-4 tables, and they are now dropping off even more.

There appear to be several reasons for this:

1. Open game players prefer to play in the ACBL games, which offer more competition (and cost less!)
2. Some players just don't like to play on line.
3. Because the games are so small, the players get tired of playing against the same people all the time (related to #1, above).

Kristin said she has talked to both club owners. Dave (Portland Bridge Club) discussed what it would take for them to continue to break even (or above) and felt that if some participation from open game player didn't happen they might reach a point where they were losing money. He felt one of the biggest reasons for the drop off or for players who were playing on line but not club games was because the game size was too small. He felt it would be in both local club's interest to do every other day so each day would be one slightly larger open game. Staci (owner of Ace of Clubs) also has been thinking of the every other day idea as well... having the two clubs holding their open games on alternate days, in hope that this would attract more players for both. The club owners will be discussing sometime soon and we will await what they agree is the best schedule going forward.

Kristin said that both clubs are doing "Okay" for the time being – but this is partly because neither has been paying rent – holding it in "escrow" until they can come to an agreement with their respective landlords. The Ace, thus, has no expenses at present; PBC is paying the salaries of two employees (and have some government loans that will be forgiven if they keep people on payroll).

Kathi pointed out that she had "done the math" on the income that the clubs are receiving from the ACBL (which was estimated at \$4.50 out of each \$6 payment made), and that both receive several thousand dollars a month although, as Kristin pointed out, much of this will eventually have to go for rent.

Bottom line: Both clubs are "surviving," but we should encourage players to do more to support local clubs. Kristin will be sending out an e-mail to all Unit members, updating them on the status of local clubs and encouraging "open" players to play at least one local game a week to support local clubs. The email will also include any new games or schedule changes the clubs agree on.

It was also noted that PBC has added 3 new 2500 games in hopes of serving the "tweeners"...those with too many points for the limited games but wanting to play in a field less than open. Also they have been offering a variety of on-line classes, and that these are going quite well, potentially bringing in new players.

Also the board asked Mike Eyer if he had any knowledge of what other Units might be doing or if there were any plans underway that we needed to be aware of from National or the District. He said everyone is in the same state of trying to figure things out on the fly as things change and we adjust to the new “normal”, but that he will keep us posted if he hears of anything .

Dee Poujade
Secretary