

# 2020 COLUMBUS NABC SPECIAL REPORT

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## COLUMBUS NABC CANCELED

For several weeks now I had been looking forward to this newsletter as a way of getting everyone amped up for the Columbus NABC. An NABC in one's home District is a special opportunity, and they don't happen very often for those of us in the Midwest.

However, the Covid-19 crisis burst into the news a month or so ago, and it planted the tiniest seeds of doubt in Columbus. We wouldn't actually cancel the NABC? I mean, it's the *ACBL National Championships* – we've never canceled one of those since they began in 1927 (!!). That's 93 years of continuous NABCs, uninterrupted by World War II, 9/11, or any other crisis.

So I held off, and the writing on the wall started to emerge about a week or so ago. Finally, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine issued an order yesterday prohibiting groups of 100 or more people from gathering in a single location, with certain exceptions that didn't include the NABC. Our Board of Directors, who has been meeting this week by teleconference (more on that later), accordingly canceled the 2020 Spring Columbus NABC to comply with the Governor's order. We have no plans to re-schedule, but hopefully the Board and staff can come up with a way to atone for the loss or at least say thanks.

My sympathies go out to Cheryl Schneider and her entire NABC Committee, which is listed above. But kudos to all of them, too, as I know we would have had a terrific time in the Columbus Convention Center district, Short North, German Village, and the rest of that great capital city. Don't forget about those ACBL employees who have spent their work lives making this happen – the Tournament Directors in Charge and the folks in ACBL Tournament Operations. Give them all a hand (these days, it's an elbow) for their efforts. It's beyond frustrating to see your hard work of the last 3 years go up in smoke, so we feel for you.

We'll emerge from this crisis. Let's try to use it as an opportunity to reflect on how our bridge in North America, with its 2500 duplicate clubs and world-class tournaments and innumerable games of Chicago and rubber, can be a critical institution in our social fabric. It's how we connect our friends and commune with our family, where we network with our neighbors, get our bridge "fix" when we need it, check in with our vulnerable populations, share information, relieve anxiety and reduce panic (the non-bridge kind, not the kind when your partner passes you in a cue bid), and escape from the rigors of the world for a few hours. We can do better to evangelize the game to the non-bridge world, use our clubs more efficiently, and make better administrative decisions affecting the game. Let's resolve to do this together.

I'll use this newsletter to address some of questions I've heard from you over the last several days relating to the Great Corona Cocoon we find ourselves in. There are many different kinds of risk in times like this, and one of the underappreciated ones is the risk of misinformation. Let's be careful out there.

## Other District Tournaments and Events

The ACBL will not make decisions whether to cancel our Regionals or Sectionals. These decisions are left to the tournament organizer and sponsor, which are our Units. The ACBL will provide guidance and information in the coming weeks, certainly, but the ACBL will leave these decisions in the hands of local bridge leaders. Our next Regional is Cincinnati's Flying Pig Regional from June 8-14, and we currently have no plans to cancel. Stay tuned, of course, as everything is subject to change.

## COLUMBUS 2020 NABC COMMITTEE

Committee Chair	Cheryl Schneider
Treasurer	Judy Auer
Prizes Chair	Eileen Erwin Kathy Fellows
I/N Chair	Tim Kohl Joyce Penn*
Partnership Chair	Larry Jones
Fundraising Chair	Trish Jones
Publicity Chair	Terry James
Information Chair	Marsha Reall Sherry McArdle
Hospitality Chair	Melissa Warheit Anita Torrence
Restaurant/Event Chair	Luci Secord Jim Bachelder
Volunteers Chair	Judy Williamson
Registration/ Welcome Desk Chair	Kimberly Music Jane Witherspoon



The GNT Finals are scheduled for April 18-19 in Dayton. Those plans have not changed, but keep an eye out for updates.

## NAP Finals and Stipends

My heart goes out to those of you planning to attend your first NABC as a participant in the North American Pairs Finals. The ACBL Board will be discussing this issue in our meetings next week, and I'll communicate a decision as soon as I can. Our District also supplements the stipend for some of the NAP Finalists, and expect a decision on that from the District Board soon thereafter.

## The Financial Implications of the Columbus 2020 Cancellation

The ACBL doesn't view the NABCs as a huge profit center, and the Columbus NABC was expected to run a slight loss. However, the financial dynamics of an NABC are really complex, and the ACBL makes a huge financial bet on NABCs in the form of hotel room block commitments and contracts with the Columbus Convention Center and other vendors. The action of the State of Ohio affects our contracts considerably, and we hope and expect to be able to cancel these contracts without a considerable penalty.

This is something of a tarnished silver lining, so to speak, but the current crisis will impact the ACBL budget in other negative ways. We will lose all the revenue from cancelled tournaments and club games, and I suspect the picture will look pretty dismal once we get some idea of how this plays out. The ACBL Board has canceled its in-person meetings in Columbus, but we have already scheduled Committee and full Board meetings via teleconference throughout next week. Serious deliberation on difficult questions is really tough with 25+ people when you're sitting around a table, and it may be impossible to do remotely. But we're going to try, and I'll provide an update on how the meetings go in a few weeks.

## Club Games

I've already heard that some clubs have canceled some of their games, but I've also heard that some clubs remain open for business. These decisions are generally made by the club manager, though we're in somewhat uncharted territory. Check with your local club for the latest information.

## Final Note

I want to end with a good vibe, so I'm going to slip in one non-Columbus related item. One of the most rewarding parts of my position as ACBL District 11 Board member is the chance to be part of your bridge milestones. I love reading your stories when you make Life Master or progress from one rank to another, and I always appreciate meeting a new bridge friend at tournaments or clubs. A month or so ago, I had the opportunity to help Marian Levy celebrate her 101st Birthday at the Cincinnati Bridge Center. Marian Levy is a stalwart at our local games, and she exemplifies the gentle and genteel spirit that we all should strive for in our bridge journeys. Marian is well-known for carrying a cane but refusing to use it! She gets around better than most of us. . . . As a bridge partner Marian is at the top of the game, very kind and patient and a lot of fun.

So, congrats to Marian and the rest of you who recently celebrated an important date or accomplishment. Let's make this crisis an opportunity to commit to be more like Marian and the best of the rest of us.

I am always available by phone (513-313-0488) or e-mail ([AJStephani@gmail.com](mailto:AJStephani@gmail.com)) with questions or concerns. Take care of yourselves, your partners, and your neighbors out there.

A.J.

