

bRidge Bits

The Newsletter of the Rhode Island Bridge Association

A Message From the New President . . .

With a new year, we have new officers and I am very pleased to have been elected President of our Unit along with Paula Najarian as Vice-President, Linda Ahrens as Secretary and Joe Brouillard as Treasurer. Our Annual Gala in October had a new luncheon menu and was served buffet style. I have heard from many members that they were pleased with the changes, but I am always happy to hear feedback from members, especially any suggestions to improve the Gala or any other unit events.

During the last two years, the Unit has spent a lot of time and energy to make the NABC here in Providence a success. Kudos to all who served on the committee or volunteered, but special thanks has to go to Joe Brouillard. Much of the success of the Nationals was due directly to Joe's efforts. I would also like to thank Lois DeBlois for all her efforts as head of the Hospitality Committee for the Nationals, and also as President of the RIBA for the last two years.

My number one goal as President is to encourage more people, young and old, to take up the game we all love, bridge. If you have any ideas or would like to be involved in promoting bridge at any level, please feel free to contact me or any other member of the board.

As always, play nice!

Maureen Fahey, RIBA President

Charitable Giving the RIBA Way –

Charitable giving is a perfect fit for the non-profit Rhode Island Bridge Association. Once a year the Board Charity Chair researches, identifies and then presents a recommended charity for board approval. Over the years RIBA has given to the Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Shriner's Hospitals, Marine Toys for Tots, NICU at the Hasbro Children's Hospital, East Bay Head Start and, several times, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. More than \$8,000 has been shared with Rhode Islanders in need around the state. In 2013 the board voted that all future charitable donations would be given in memory of RIBA players lost during that year. In the photo at right, the current Charity Chair



Lyn Bradford (center) and board member Diane Lambert (left) present the 2014 RIBA Charitable Donation to Andrew Schiff, CEO of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

Upcoming Events

February 11 - 16: Knockout Regional, Cromwell, CT

February 20 - 22: EMBA Sectional, Watertown, MA

March 6 - 8: I/N Sectional; GNT & NAP Qualifiers, Sturbridge, MA

March 12 - 22: Spring NABC, New Orleans, LA

March 21 - 22: RIBA Sectional, Johnston, RI

April 10 - 12, EMBA Sectional, Watertown, MA

April 29 - May 3: Senior Regional, Hyannis, MA

January 2015

NABCs A Success

By all accounts the 2014 North American Bridge Championship was a tremendous success. Players loved Providence and the organization of the tournament. Everyone raved about the playing areas, hospitality, fabulous restaurants, WaterFire, tours and how easy it was for the local players to drive and park in the city. We had a total of 9,574 tables which was just under the ACBL estimate.

This would not have been possible without the outstanding work of the NABC Committee and all the volunteers who staffed the registration desk, partnership desk, volunteer hospitality suite, tours, caddies and many others. There were also many people who worked hard prior to the tournament. All the volunteers sacrificed their personal time to make the NABC a great success. My Co-Chair Helen Pawlowski and I cannot thank everyone enough for their dedication. Everyone should take pride in a remarkable job well done.

The ACBL was extremely pleased with our committee, the event, and they stated this was one of the best organized NABC's. We were the first NABC to have our own website, a truly professional effort. I would be remiss without acknowledging Wendy Sullivan and Jeff Johnston of the ACBL for all of their work to make the event successful. On a sad note, Jeff unexpectedly passed away on December 28. He was a wonderful person and he is sorely missed.

A total of \$8 million in economic activity was generated by the NABC. The Convention and Visitors Bureau has already made a proposal to the ACBL to return in the fall of 2021.



Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, has become an avid bridge player and brought a team for the North American Swiss Teams national event Dec. 5-7 at the Providence NABC. He is pictured with Rhode Island bridge supporters Louis DiOrio, Joe Brouillard (Tournament Co-Chair), and Megan DiOrio, Co-Chair of the Sponsorship Committee.



Local Heroes — Two Rhode Island players who had tremendous success at the Providence NABCs were Phyllis Chase and Joyce Regan, pictured at left. Together they amassed over 150 masterpoints (many of them platinum), and as partners they finished in fourth place in the Smith Life Master Women's Pairs, and in ninth place in the M.M. Sternberg Women's Board-A-Match, playing with Yiji Starr and Rena Lieberman of Massachusetts (going into the final day they were in second place). "Playing against better players makes us play better," says Phyllis, who is a past president of the RIBA, and was Co-Chair of the Sponsorship Committee for the NABC. Phyllis has been playing bridge for most of her life, and Joyce began in 1990 with lessons from Bob Garfinkel of the Warwick Bridge Club.