

A Big Thank You to Our directors

When considering writing this article, I flashed on the saying: “Walk a mile in their shoes.” It is really that *walk* that inspired my thoughts. As some of you may know, I recently took – and passed – the director’s exam. So ... now I am one ... officially. However, the ACBL exam teaches little about what is involved in being a director. The rulings are necessary to know. How to communicate with ACBL and enter scores is essential. However, there is so much more. To get a better understanding of what the job entails, I started helping John Schwartz at his Monday game to see what is involved. Most of us only encounter directors when we need their arbitration at the table, or when we have a concern (complaint.) Here are some other things I have learned about being a director in Palo Alto:

- Our directors usually arrive at the club between 45 minutes to an hour before we do. They need to arrange tables for their game, put out the table mats, make sure all is clean and in order and begin food preparation.
- The board rotations used in our club are unlike those in most places. Our directors do everything possible to assure that we all play the same boards and that the sections allow us to play most other teams in our game. This often requires using multiple sets of boards in a section and “unusual” rotations. I understand that directors around the country consult with our directors, particularly Will Watson, to learn how to do this.
- Even when they take reservations and from experience have a good sense of how many people to expect, there are still the last minute changes necessary to have all run smoothly. When you don’t show up, or arrive at the last minute, perhaps you don’t realize the adjustments that are needed to accommodate you.
- Our food is incomparable. I have brought guests from other clubs to play with me; they are amazed at the feasts our directors prepare for hundreds of people. There is nothing in the job description that requires this. They are really wonderful hosts and hostesses as well.
- Sometimes, in the heat of the moment, we can lose our cool and become angry at a director or his/her call. However, I almost never see the reverse. From my brief experience, it sometimes takes great control to not react to a situation. Kudos to our directors for their temperaments.
- Directors do make mistakes. Learning is part of life. It has been my experience that they acknowledge and correct mistakes; check with experts for difficult decisions and make every effort to be fair to everyone.

So, if it seems appropriate to you, thank your favorite director for all she/he does. Or maybe, thank your LEAST favorite director. They may become your favorite when you see them in a different light.