

2002 ABC CONVENTION
Billings, Montana

Thursday March 14, 2002 – General Session - 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

This session was conducted by Roger Dalkin, Executive Director, and Jack Mordini, Assistant Executive Director. It involved a status report on the merger of ABC, WIBC, YABA, and USA Bowling into USBA.

The intent of the SINGLE MEMBER ORGANIZATION (SMO) is to eliminate duplication of services in all levels, reduce operating expenses, to provide unified governance, and eliminate multiple levels of executives.

A timeline of Jan. 1, 2004 was set for merger at the national level. Local areas will be given 5 years to complete consolidation. The process will begin after approval in 2003. Both Dalkin and Mordini commented on what they see as "the core of the matter:" They recognize that it is hard to give up familiar ways, that there are dangers of history being lost, and that the consolidation will require massive co-operation.

CONCLUSION: I left this general session with the impression the SMO was well thought out, had merit, and would probably come into fruition, however modified, by the target date. I also wondered how we, as Canadian ABC members, fit into the equation.
(MORE LATER)

Thursday March 14, 2002 – ABC STANDARDS - 10:30 a.m. - NOON

Bob Burke presented a workshop on the six standards that ABC has set for operating local association after August 1, and offered tips on how to implement them.

The standards are:

1. receive membership and dues by Oct. 1, – new bowlers within 20 days
2. process via WinLabs by Aug. 1
3. submit Annual and Financial Reports by Aug. 1
4. Have an annual Association Tournament
5. Have a written plan for supplies/ awards

6. Apply for all association-wide awards.

The remainder of the workshop was devoted to methods of implementing the preceding six standards. Those attending were encouraged to contribute to the discussion on meeting these standards. I was surprised that some associations lagged behind in such things as awards, use of WinLabs and the holding of an association tournament. (By contributing the example of how a couple of our leagues pay their entry as a part of their weekly fees, the WEKCBA won two Hershey bars.)

Some associations had other innovative methods of enhancing their tournaments such as getting squad sponsors. Evansville Indiana Association purchases an insurance policy (\$800.00 US) to cover the cost of a \$10,000 prize for the first 300 in its tournament.

Some associations have gone to four bowler squads.

At the end we were given a second handout, "Tips for Meeting the ABC Standards."

And this contained some additional creative ideas which we may want examine at the committee level for the future. If the 219 member Ketchikan Alaska, B.A. can get \$2,750 in tournament sponsorships by taking smaller (\$100-\$500) contributions, I thought that we might be able to do so too.

CONCLUSION: I learned some new approaches, but all in all I quietly felt quite pleased with way we do things. That is not to say that there are other innovative things that we can try, or that we cannot do the good things we do even better.

Friday, March 15, Legislative Session – 1:45 – 3:30 p.m.

This session went remarkably quickly and despite some regional gripes, misunderstandings and people speaking to hear themselves speak, it proceeded rather smoothly.

CONCLUSION: Some of concerns, especially about membership cards being sent from headquarters, struck me as self serving, kind of petty, and regional. To me, the way that memberships are processed at least should make members feel that they are part of a national organization.

Saturday, March 16, 2002 – Workshop – 9:00 a.m. – Noon

This was THE BEST SESSION. Conducted by Jack Mordini, it was informative and very fast paced. It was here that my view of things really took on a new perspective.

Joe Kelly of the Reno Convention Bureau spoke about improvements which will be made to the National Bowling Stadium after the 2004 tournament. It especially will improve display space and meeting areas.

Jeff Peruzo, a member of Team USA, and an aeronautical engineering student at Arizona State University (bowling scholarship, I believe) made a plea for a \$1.00 per bowler from state or association tournaments in support of Team USA for training and coaches.

Kevin Dormburger, Past President of USA Bowling, also asked for support for Team USA.

Rick Groga of Bowlers Development Pipeline, (rgroga@bowlinginc.com) made a presentation on what is being done to provide programs and services to bowlers. The project is a shared initiative between ABC, WIBC, YABA, USAB, and BPAA to increase bowling participation through an increase in bowler knowledge and skills.

Current programs include “Bowling the Fun Sport” which is a video for beginners, “The Learning Curve” which is composed of a video and booklet and is geared to adults, and “Bowling Rocks” which is designed for youth ages 8-13. “The Learning Curve” is currently being test and “Bowling Rocks” is in the editing stage prior to testing. All will be available soon.

Sleeping Bear Publications spoke on *The American Bowler* and *Bowling* magazines. *The American Bowler* has been well received, and a special insert is added for league secretaries. Cost continues to be a consideration.

Jack Mordini then chaired an open session which provided a venue for questions, gripes, concerns and the like.

My questions pertained to the following which appeared on page 30, question 14, of **USBA Ad Hoc Status Report**: “Can Canadians belong to USBA?”

“The ad hoc committees concentrated on the United States to develop the concept for a single membership organization. This was with the understanding that a similar task force, with Canadian representation, was studying a separate membership organization

for Canada. However, any bowler in the world is eligible for membership in the USBA but only U.S. citizens are eligible for a place on our national team.”

I asked if the initiative to remove Canadians from USBA came from Canadian pressures or the USOC. I mentioned that we were proud to be ABC members, and that some of our bowlers bowl in Detroit as well as Windsor. I wanted to know what to tell our bowlers. Mordini referred to the above and said that our bowlers could still hold ABC cards, and that the initiative to separate Canadian bowlers was not from the USOC, but from within Canada. He called upon Hazel McLeary, a member of Bowling Inc. as well as CTF for her input. She later responded that there are issues that have to be investigated, that CTF is in the process of hiring someone, and that having a representative at the CTF Convention in Vancouver would be very important.

The session ended and the WECKBA delegation sought out Hazel M.

During our half-hour conversation with her, we learned more about what is going to happen than before. Issues included reciprocal recognition of averages, and purchase of services from USBA. Hazel candidly pointed out that we have nothing in Canada on the high school or collegiate level, that we need coaches, funding, and that as unified group we have a better chance of attaining funding. Contrary to some rumours, we will NOT form an organization with 5 pin, duck pin, and candle pin bowlers.

In essence we have to look at what is best for the game in our country.

CONCLUSION: A Single Member Organization (SMO) is a given. Its structure, guidelines, voting basis, final composition, etc. will occur despite the protestations of some elements of ABC. It makes business sense and the financial savings will win out in the end. Its format is continuing to evolve, until the powers that be feel it is passable by at least two of the merging parties.

A new Canadian bowling organization (not the CTF) will emerge soon after and structurally it will be a mirror image of SMO. It will buy services from SMO.

We must accept these facts, and prepare ourselves for the two transitions as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted:

Mike Ouellette, President WECKBA

March 24, 2002