

By Jim Ricker

ABTA's 2018 Convention in Atlanta, Georgia

I don't think it is possible to attend the ABTA Teacher's Conference and not come away inspired and with exciting new material – no matter your level of experience. The ABTA Teacher's Conference is that good.

The program provides five aspects of benefit to the Convention attendees.

- 1) Social networking and connections – it is always AMAZING how accessible the big names of bridge are at the convention
- 2) Professional teaching growth – there are always many presentations on how to present various topics to your students
- 3) Personal bridge growth – the convention includes a couple of presentations that are intended to provide advance topics to the teachers
- 4) Technology updates – several vendors present the latest technology and software updates
- 5) The Awards Banquet and PRO PANEL – this year's panel was one of the best but that is understating that the pro panel is ALWAYS, without question, the highlight of the convention. It is both very informative and as funny as you can ever imagine (e.g. the question was asked "what's the worst thing you've ever done to a partner.")

The ABTA 2018 Convention in Atlanta delivered over-the-top opportunities in every category.

As you might expect there are a LOT of people that devote a significant amount of time to make these conventions solid successes. Linda Green was our program manager and has been for several years. The success of the itinerary is due to her hard work. Patty Tucker and Mary Catan were responsible for arranging the festivities on Tuesday/Wednesday (first/second attendees Tuesday luncheon at Sam's in the City,



Betty Starzec and Kathy Rolfe

tour of the Fox Theatre and

dinner at Baraonda). Henry Meguid dealt with all the audio/visual operations. Kathy Rolfe handles all the business arrangements for the convention (in advance, during and after the convention).



Linda Green, Bob Morris and Betty Starzec

The itinerary for this year included the following speakers:

Rob Barrington, Synrey Bridge, Patty Tucker, Kren Nielsen, Audrey Grant, Corey Krantz, Stephen Smith, Sally Sparrow, Robert Todd, Jim Ricker, Julian Laderman, Stephanie Threlkeld, Brenda Manning, Jeff Bayone, Jim Maier, Eddie Wold, Bob Morris, Jerry Helms, Randy Baron, Gene Simpson, Jan Van Cleef, and Phillip Alder.

Master Teacher

Sharon Carter was awarded the Master Teacher status.



Master Teacher - Sharon Carter

Awards

- Teacher of the Year (Richard Braunstein, Chair) Henry Meguid
- Book and Technology awards (Pat Harrington, Chair)
 - Beginning/Intermediate book of the year – David Bird & Barbara Seagram (Planning The Play – The Next Level)
 - Intermediate/Advanced book of the year – Mike Lawrence (Judgment at Bridge 2)
 - Technology 2018 award – Larry Cohen Videos
- Apple Basket award (Brenda Montague, Chair) – Betty Starzec
- Newcomer Book of the Year (awarded by the ABTA board) – Jeff Bayonne (Taste of Bridge)



Pro Panel Emcee – George Jacobs

Pro Panel

Teacher of the Year – Henry Meguid

As usual, the spirit of the whole evening is always derived from the emcee. Often, including this year, the pro panel emcee was George Jacobs. Oh my, what fun it is to sit back and enjoy the show.

The panel included Bob Morris, Randy Baron, Eddie Wold, Steve, and Robert Todd.

The Pro Panel

Bob Morris
Randy Baron
George Jacobs
Eddie Wold
Robert Stevens
Robert Todd



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We would like to thank our

- Sponsors: ACBL, ACBL Educational Foundation, Master Point Press, Baron Barclay, Synrey, Bridge+more
- Vendors: Patty Tucker, Dave Glandorf, Laurie Levin, Kathy Rolfe and Jim Ricker
- Give Aways: Dave Poriss, Patty Tucker, Phyllis Siegel

If you attended the conference, you know that it takes a small army to stage this event. I am grateful that so many people put in the effort to make this event a huge success. ACBL is amazingly generous with their assistance. In the end, we all love this game and any effort we can make to inspire teachers across the country plays a significant role in perpetuating the game.

Show your passion and it will be contagious.

Next Year

If you aren't attending these conventions, you are doing yourself a disservice. The 2019 ABTA Convention will be in Las Vegas – July 16-19, 2019. Start making plans to be there.