

Chance Call Helps Lead to Huge Cancer Fundraising Effort

A chance phone call helped lead to a huge increase in IAABO Massachusetts' cancer fundraising efforts. It occurred in the fall of 2011.

Louis "Lou" Levine was making his very first phone call to other officials seeking assistance in obtaining games to raise funds for the Officials vs. Cancer campaign. The call went out to Chip Leeds. Lou had known and officiated with Chip for years. His hair had always been pitch black. The standing joke was that Chip used shoe polish to keep it so dark. Lou placed the call, "So Chip, you still using the shoe polish?"

"No, Lou, I don't have any hair." Chip told Levine he had stage 4 lung cancer. Levine was floored. "In sixty seconds I went from being excited about talking to Chip to being totally in shock. It was my first call to talk to other officials about the effort."

The statement, "Cancer affects everyone," hit home. "Guys in our Board (#44 - North Central Massachusetts Board) have passed away. Others have cancer. That call really motivated me," Lou related.

It wasn't the only motivating factor for Levine. What initially got him placing the phone calls to fellow officials was the ongoing friendly competition between IAABO Boards to raise money for the fight against cancer. The previous season, Colorado had outraised Massachusetts, despite having fewer members (Massachusetts has approximately 2,500 members and 13 IAABO Boards).

"I was disappointed in how poorly we had done, and thought, 'Gee Whiz, if all that money can be raised by the Jimmy Fund, we can do better'," Levine explained. He was aware of a bicycle cancer fundraiser in Massachusetts where cyclists traverse 192 miles across the state from the far west to Cape Cod in the east. It takes two days, and raises a lot of money. Cyclists train for months, and get pledges for several thousand dollars.

It motivated Levine to step up. Levine decided to donate all the game fees from the games that he did during the IAABO Officials vs. Cancer week and, in addition to his regular schedule, to officiate as many extra games as possible and also donate these game fees to Officials vs. Cancer.

Assignors Helping Out

Knowing Chip's condition, and the cancer status of others on his board, motivated Levine. But he couldn't increase his game count quickly because it was already the fall, and in Massachusetts, many games had been assigned. He needed to rely on assignors and his good relationships with them to get extra games.

"We start play in December in Massachusetts, so most assigning had been done, even for weekend non-high school games. Some of the assignors weren't accommodating, but I was willing to go anywhere, and got some throw-in games. I did as many games as I could, including nine on one Saturday in 3 different locations."

Through his efforts, Levine was able to raise and donate last year approximately \$3,200 to the IABBO cancer fighting effort. But he wasn't done. "This year I was more motivated. I gained

credibility in 2011-2012. They began calling me 'that crazy guy from last year'. There was also less resistance to giving me games. Several assignors were helpful in 2011-2012. In 2012-2013, after word got around, 14 assignors were extra helpful."

"To make real money, I needed sponsors. I hit up everybody I knew. There was no shame whatsoever. I asked them to donate a 'per game' fee, no lump sums. That meant every game mattered. People gave everything from 25 cents a game to 20 bucks a game. Two guys gave 10 bucks a game."

Levine hoped to officiate an extra 100 games this year, and donate all game fees he earned during the IAABO Officials vs. Cancer week, as part of his mission, to top the 85 or so he'd done the year before. It turned out to be 144. "Nobody complained. I got \$2,820 from one guy. Ninety-three people contributed. I just ran out of time when it came to finding sponsors. But I was more organized this past season and able to start making calls earlier, so that helped me build the base."

His game fees came to \$5,684. Sponsors contributions were \$25,455. The average sponsor per game contribution was approximately \$1.90. Levine's total amount raised, combining his game fee contribution and sponsors' contributions, came to \$31,139.

The Passing of a Friend and Colleague

Sometimes people with cancer survive. That's what

raising money and awareness to combat the disease are all about - making things better. In Chip Leeds' case, survival was not in the equation.

Lou knew Chip's time was short after finding out about his condition. Fortunately, during the NCAA tournament in 2012, the two were able to get together during the first round. By September, Chip had passed away.

"It motivated me to dedicate the season to him," Lou remembered. "Unfortunately, there is someone to dedicate your season to every year," he said sadly.

"A lot of people gave more money than they had actually pledged. In the Officials vs. Cancer games, I would let coaches know about what I was doing to raise money for cancer, and though some didn't believe me, others would thank me for my efforts."

Levine related an amusing story from one game, when his partner assessed a technical foul against one coach. The coach was mortified because he believed that he hadn't done anything to warrant the technical and felt he had embarrassed his team. Levine told the coach that although he had to sit the rest of the game, not to worry about the technical foul. "After the game, the coach gave me twenty bucks to help fight cancer."

In 2011-2012, Levine said IAABO Boards raised approximately \$115,000 in cash donations for the Officials vs. Cancer cause. For 2012-2013, IAABO was on track to hit \$170,000, which doesn't include in-kind contributions.

Levine pointed out that often the

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Officials vs. Cancer Totals

Massachusetts - \$70,843.80	Colorado - \$43,708.72
Connecticut - \$35,511.87	New Jersey - \$8,709.00
New York - \$6,825.00	District of Columbia - \$3,710.00
Maine - \$3,452.00	Vermont - \$2,500
Canada - \$2448.01 **	Pennsylvania - \$2,396.00
New Hampshire - \$1,255.00	Other - \$110.00
Rhode Island - \$405.00	
Grand Total: \$181,864.40	

** Money was donated to the Canadian Cancer Society

2013 Spring Meeting Wrap Up (continued from page 1)

everyone of the full day of business ahead. All of the standing committees conducted their meetings on Friday or Saturday. These reports were then presented to the Executive Committee for approval on Sunday morning. A constitutional amendment was approved that local boards may set their own fees and annual membership dues. Also approval for the test dates for those boards conducting spring classes was awarded.

Alan Goldberger made a very helpful presentation on "IAABO Membership and Game Assignments". As usual, Alan's topic was on target and presented some food for thought for the board secretaries in attendance.

Friday night at the Alabama Theater proved to be a very entertaining show, featuring a great comic and a patriotic finale that had everyone up on their feet.

The highlight of the weekend was the Life Membership luncheon. This was a formal affair to honor this year's class of inductees which included: Willie LA Jones, BD 12 DC, Michael Hammond, BD 27 MA, Leroy Hendricks, BD 42 NY, G.P. "Tom" Cinella, BD 168 NJ, Dennis Herbert, BD 211, ONT. Each was presented a Life Membership ring and a plaque to signify his contributions to IAABO. Many thanks to Ron Foxcroft and Fox 40 for their sponsorship of this great event. All inductees spoke eloquently as they related their IAABO experiences and acknowledged the important people in their lives. The luncheon broke another record with over 260 members and families of the recipients in attendance.

The 90th Anniversary Gala that followed that evening proved to be quite a happening with good food and drink, a photo booth complete with costumes, a fantastic band that got us all up and dancing. All this while pictures of this incredible weekend flashed on the screen. Each person in attendance received a souvenir book with pictures, mementos and memorabilia from throughout IAABO's 90 year history. It was memorable event that those present won't soon forget.

Thanks also to the guys from Massachusetts for manning the hospitality room; they sure know how to throw a party. Thanks also to

all the behind the scenes work that made these programs go off without a hitch (Barbara, Mark, Dana, Lynn), and a big thank you to Donnie Eppley as well.

Sunday morning's General Assembly meeting included acceptance of the formal reports of all the standing committees. Constitutional changes were approved as they were posted in the mandatory "Sportorials" issue. Fifty year awards were presented along with IAABO Foundation Chairs in the amount of \$1000 each in honor of Nick Gaetani, BD 37, NJ, Mark Byron, BD 20 ME, Don Thorne, BD 102 ONT, William Cingolani, BD 54MA, Dr. Ron Brown BD 4 CO, Jerry Salvato, BD 168 NJ, James Buddy, Keaton, BD 37 NY, Howard Green, BD 52 NY, Mike Hammond, BD 27 MA.

The 2013-14 IAABO Handbook dedication was announced and was awarded to life member Dick MacKenzie. The Canadian version dedication was awarded to Allen Rae.

Elections: Jack Sweeney, BD 40 NY was elected President, Dennis Herbert, BD 102 ONT was elected to President -Elect and Tom Reese, BD 244 MD, was elected Vice President. Elected to the executive committee position vacated by Tom, was Joe Mitchell, BD 134. Re-elected to new three year terms were: from Region 1, Sal Capitumino, region 2, Ron Martel, and from Region 4, Scott Young (unexpired term), Region 6, Willie LA Jones, Region 11, Dennis Murphy.

Peter Carroll will serve as Honorary President and Bill Loftus as Honorary Executive Director.

It is now time to turn our attention to the Fall Seminar, which will be conducted in Long Island, NY on September 19-22, 2013. IAABO heartily urges all interpreters to attend this most important meeting. As you know, the primary focus is to prepare you so that you can prepare your members by utilizing the materials and methods presented at this seminar. IAABO is working diligently on various timely topics with some very good presenters and is designing some new materials to assist you. IAABO looks forward to kicking off the next season with you in Long Island.

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fundraising output is driven by 10 percent of the members. He encouraged every IAABO official to get involved, "Every guy in IAABO could donate one game fee a year. There are 16,000 IAABO members. If you assume \$50 per high school varsity game, that's \$800,000 we could easily raise every year for the cause."

"You never get the same number of games from year to year, so by donating one game fee, it's like one game you never had," he advised. Excluding Levine's efforts, "this past year my Board [44] actually raised more with fewer guys participating. Some of the other officials donated a few game fees, some made contributions and Board 44 had fundraisers. It all added up." Board 44 has approximately 190 members, and not including Levine, raised \$6,778 this year for Officials vs. Cancer.

"I Couldn't Win People over with an Argument"

Levine got started officiating 22 years ago. Although an attorney, Lou laughed when describing how he quickly learned that he "couldn't use his mouth" to win people over when officiating. "I had to take the criticism that goes with officiating, and that was good for me. I couldn't win people over with a verbal argument. I had to show what I was capable of doing on the court. It was good for me to learn to admit my mistakes."

Lou's years spent building relationships throughout Massachusetts helped him get games the past two years in his effort to help fight cancer. "Assignors accommodated me. When they didn't, it was because they

couldn't - they didn't have the openings. With the level of cooperation I received, you can do it."

Levine said he wanted to honor the following IAABO members who are courageously fighting cancer: Paul Cartwright, Board 27, Barbara Benoit, Board 44, Peter Desy, Board 26, Gerry Flynn, Board 44, and Bill Miller, Board 175.

He also wanted to thank the following IAABO officials for their tremendous support and assistance in assigning games to him: Bob Bourque, Board 44, Lonnie Bouzan, Board 208, Tom Bresciani, Board 208, Paul Cartwright, Board 27, Sal Ciuffetti, Board 44, Chris Cordella, Board 175, Dave DeCarolis, Board 44, Gerry Deschaies, Board 26, Roman Ferguson, Board 44, Gerry Flynn, Board 44, Babe Grady, Board 208, Josh Hammer, Formerly Board 44, Bill Perla, Board 44, and Buddy Tackett, Board 44.

"Some guys need every nickel they earn officiating," Levine acknowledged, and it is tougher for them to contribute. "But everyone can give up one game fee. Cancer is not going to be cured in my lifetime, but there are a lot more people alive today that would have died 20, 30 or 40 years ago. It's a non-discriminatory disease."

Dave Simon has been an IAABO member since 1984, and written for Sportorials for over 15 years. He writes a weekly newspaper column you can access at www.justwrite15.wordpress.com, or you can contact him directly at davidsimon15@hotmail.com or www.twitter/justwrite15

