



Communications Report

Melanie Haddad, Chair, D21 Communication Committee
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Hello District 21! Welcome to the new online Diamond in the Ruff. Bill Yeast and I are excited to introduce some communications innovations to District 21.

Bill and I teamed up earlier in the year with the goal of making communications with District members easier, more accessible, more timely, and less expensive. We wanted to bring the newsletter production “in-house” and migrate the website away from its decade old roots and into the world of content management systems (CMS). I had some graphic design experience and Bill had the technical expertise, so we started

looking at what other organizations were doing as well as industry trends. It soon became obvious that the District newsletter and website should be linked if we were going to be successful. Today we present the online Diamond in the Ruff and the new website!

Welcome to the online Diamond in the Ruff

We hope you enjoy the new look of the newsletter and find it easy to navigate and read, whether in an email or on our site. It was produced completely in-house by an amazing team of volunteers. We organized the articles into “cards,” which preview the article and have click-through buttons for you to read the full reports. The standards of every issue, Rank Advancements and the Heart of the District Reports, are there too, accessible via buttons at the bottom of the email. We grouped accompanying documents that did not fit neatly into an article, such as flyers covering ACBL, District or Unit activities, into an Additional Information button.

For those of you who are click-in-any-email adverse, the current edition of the newsletter is also available on the Home page of our district website. Which leads us to our other, really big news: concurrently with this newsletter, we are launching our new District 21 website – d21acbl.org!

Welcome to the new D21 Website

The District's prior website, while a font of information, had not had a do-over for more than a decade and did not render well on all current devices, like phones and tablets. The language it was written in did not lend itself to easy transformation into a modern, responsive, content management system (CMS), so Bill built the new site from scratch.

Be sure to bookmark our new site! We are using the domain name d21acbl.org, which is more appropriate for social welfare non-profit organization like ours. Visitors to the prior site will be automatically redirected to the new site.

The new site is a solid foundation, but only the beginning of what we will now be able to bring you. As launched, it provides these features:

- Adapts to whatever device the user is on, computer, tablet, or mobile phone
- “Sticky menu” at the top that always remains visible and accessible – you can get to anywhere from anywhere on a page
- Banner on the top of the home page that announces all our Regional tournaments and any NABC we host – put your mouse over it and it will stop for you to read or click in it to see specifics about the event (where, when, links to the hotel, etc.)
- News section at the top of the home page that will announce late-breaking news





- Most current Diamond in the Ruff edition displayed on the home page (reproducing the “cards” from the newsletter). All past editions are also archived and available on the site
- Footer visible at the bottom of every page with links to our most popular web pages, a button so readers can subscribe to our email newsletter, and buttons to contact us or follow us on Facebook
- Calendar that shows the details of future, present, and past events – complete with a search box and colored filters to help you find what you are looking for
- All of the information from the old site (years and years of material) - even if not visible, is stored on the new site for archival purposes and accessible by the webmaster should a need arise.

Speaking of webmasters, we are delighted that **Grant Robinson** will continue as the District 21 Webmaster of the new site.

Feedback is the key to successful communications

We are excited about this new site and hope it will be a great resource for you. Please have look around and let us know what you think. The site will evolve, of course, as we get more feedback, learn what our members want and need, and as tournaments, education, goodwill, and other areas expand as we return to face-to-face bridge.

The newsletter will also evolve with time, as we receive your feedback and learn what's important to you. For now, we will aim for quarterly publication of the newsletter, but as we return to face-to-face bridge, we hope to return to a more frequent newsletter.

The District owes a huge debt of gratitude to Bill Yeast for donating hundreds of hours of his time, energy, technical expertise and creativity to make the newsletter and the website a success. But it takes a village, and I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard over these past few months to modernize and improve our communications with district members: Tracey Bauer, Ed Gould, and Grant Robinson. A special thank you to Ray Yuenger, who continues to be our very own Diamond in the Ruff mainstay and to Laura DaCosta who has taken on the Heart of the District and the Rank Advancement reports.

I hope you like these changes and would love to hear from you.

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