**-Henry VonJouanne Responses**

**Q #1**

**Over the last couple of years, NBUA has taken on games for age groups below the age of 13.  Do you feel this is appropriate and if so why and if not appropriate?  Why not?**

**Answer 1:  I feel it is appropriate that the NBUA works games for age groups below the age of 13.  However, I believe the NBUA should work these age groups (below the age of 13) only if we are able to fully cover the 13U and 14U customers that desire our service.**

**Q #2**

**I’m proud to be associated with the NBUA. I think the Board has done a fantastic job and improved many things.**

**Tell the membership why you’re proud of our organization and how will you help recruit new members because we need new men and women to join NBUA?**

**Answer 2:  I am proud to work with a group of officials that are willing to take the field and get scrutinized on every call by the coaches, players, and fans.  And as an NBUA official, I am proud to know that I will walk onto the field with a partner who loves the game, loves to officiate, wants to be there, and wants to improve.  In addition, I believe the NBUA is recognized for the quality of our officials, our strong training program, the emphasis on mentoring, and our appearance.  This makes the NBUA the preferred umpire association by our local-area customers.  I have watched some local area customers select another umpiring organization for a season; only to return to the NBUA before season's-end to improve the quality of umpiring they receive.  I once overheard a tournament director state - when asked by a parent if umpires would arrive on-time - "Look, I've got NBUA umpires for this tournament, and if the NBUA says they will be on-time, then they will be on-time".**

**Q #3**

**So as in our evaluation process, one good thing and one thing to work on.  I would like for each candidate to give one good thing they want to bring to the NBUA (very specific) and one thing they feel the Board needs to work on to make it better.**

**Answer 3:  Regarding the evaluation process, I believe the NBUA has improved the evaluation process by standardizing the grading - and grading relative to the Tier-level of the umpire under evaluation.  I think we can improve the overall process by striving to evaluate every member every year.  This will work to improve the quality of our umpires and can communicate to every member that we want them to improve and get promoted.**

**If elected to the board, I would strive to strengthen our retention program.  This is an undoubtedly tough issue; nonetheless the best we can do is smother our apprentices and young C-Tiers with attention and encouragement.  We must convince them of their value to the organization and truly welcome them to our organization.  Each should know that we want them to get promoted.  We should know our less experienced members well-enough to know if they are considering leaving and why - and see if we can do something about it.**

**Q #4**

**I’ve read all your statements. Please be more clear to what you see is wrong with NBUA, what is RIGHT with NBUA. What do you propose to help make all of us “AN EVEN BETTER ORGANIZATION??? “**

**Answer 4:  I think the NBUA is a strong and well-run Association.  One problem that must be addressed is our retention.  Every year we get a promising group of apprentices but too few of those return for a second year - or even finish their apprentice season.  In fact, we've lost some umpires after they experience a bad game.  I think we need to better recognize our newer umpires as the "life-blood" of our sustained future.  We need to communicate to these umpires that they are indeed highly valued by the NBUA.**

**I think there is a lot that is right about the NBUA.  We are recognized for the quality of our officials, our strong training program, our mentoring program, and our appearance on the field.  I believe our emphasis on training is perhaps our strongest attribute.  I think we "train-up" our umpires very well in the basics:  rules knowledge, the mechanics & game management.  Our training program well prepares our members for working games successfully and I believe this contributes greatly to the loyalty we see from our customers.  They know what they're going to get with the NBUA.**

**Q #5**

**What would you like to accomplish as a Board member?   Be very specific.**

**Answer 5:  As a board member, I would like to increase the cohesion of the NBUA.  We need to make sure every umpire in the association knows how valued they are - and we need to convince every member that the NBUA truly wants to prepare them to improve and get promoted.**

* **I believe we should add training events at important times during the season.  For example, we can add a training event one month into the season to review the issues we've had on the field - particularly for the Apprentices; we can add a 3-Man Mechanics class just before the high-school playoffs, and we can add a training event as we transition from high-school to summer ball.  I recall we had a 3-Man class a few years ago which appeared well-attended and well appreciated; as such, we should consider making a 3-Man clinic a yearly event.**
* **I believe we should nurture our younger umpires - treat them like the gold they are to our Association.  Our mentorship program goes a long way - but I think we can go the extra effort to know our apprentices better, so we can know if they are happy working with the Association.**
* **If possible, I would like to see a graduated reward level for games worked.  I really appreciate the $100 certificate and the 100-game hat; however, we should consider lesser awards for lesser games.  An umpire working 75 games has contributed greatly and we should recognize this as well - perhaps a $50 certificate.  Likewise, an apprentice working 50 games has done a great service for the association that is worth recognition - perhaps a $50 certificate as well.**

**Q #6**

**Umpires come and go every year & retention seems to be an issue! I don’t think I’m wrong. No lack of games! How do you propose we market ourselves better to recruit new guys! I’m not getting any younger! How do we keep our guys?**

**Answer 6:  I agree that retention must be improved.  Every year, we have a promising apprentice class but too few of these umpires return.  We really need to make these new umpires understand how important they are to our Association. I believe we need to do everything we can to get our apprentices through the first season successfully.  Surely, our apprentices will have tough games and wonder why in the world they are umpiring in the first place.  We should know when these tough games occur and work with the apprentices to get through these tough spots.  Perhaps we should consider expanding the Mentor program and assign two (or three) mentors to an apprentice.  I'd rather go over-board with the apprentices - smother them with attention - than the opposite.  And as I've mentioned, we should consider adding training events at important points in the season - a training event one month into the season to review the issues we've had; a three-man mechanics class just before the high-school playoffs, and a training event as we transition from high-school to summer ball.  I think the more often our association meets as a whole, the stronger we all get.**

**Regarding recruiting, I view the local Little Leagues, and the local high-schools, colleges and universities as good areas for recruiting.  To that end, I think we should know and recruit top officials from the local little leagues; likewise, we should be actively promoting our "great summer job opportunity" at the local schools.**

**Q #7**

**If you were elected to this Board & you were voted to become a Committee Chairman, which one best suits your strengths?**

**Pick one & briefly explain why.**

* **Evaluation Chairman**
* **Training Chairman**
* **Recruiting & Retention Chairman**

**Answer 7:  I believe the Training Chairman best suits my strengths and best leverages my past experience.  While serving in the Air Force, I was upgraded to helicopter Instructor Pilot and was responsible for developing and teaching the ground-school and flight curriculum.   I learned the age-old truth that instructing is the best way to learn.  As a flight instructor, I was careful to distinguish between procedure - i.e. what you must do to accomplish a maneuver - and technique - i.e. how you as an individual perform the procedure.  I believe the NBUA Training program - and the follow-on feedback we all receive before and after games - is very similar to flight instruction and many of the same teaching methods apply.  Likewise, I have worked for many years as a Lead Engineer and an Engineering Manager.  In these roles, I serve as a mentor for many less experienced engineers.  I strive to make each engineer assume accountability for their system - and I get to watch these engineers learn very quickly and thrive in this environment.  To that end, I contend my experiences as an Instructor Pilot, Lead Engineer, and Manager have prepared me well for the Training Chairman position.**