

**TO: ACBL Board of Directors
ACBL Board of Governors**

**FROM: Jay Baum, CEO
ACBL**

**RE: November, 2004 – Orlando, FL
CEO Report**

1. **MEMBERSHIP:**

As of October 31, 2004 we have 167,955 total members, an increase of 1,150 from the same period in 2003. Total paying members reached 150,107 vs. 149,722 for the same period in 2003. (Exhibit 1)

Retention of first (1st) year to second (2nd) year members has reached 65 percent. This is an increase of 9 percent from a year ago and 13 percent from two years ago.

Kudos to Districts 4, 10, 15 and 20 for breaking the 70 percent barrier.

2. **BRIDGE ADMINISTRATION:**

Our NABCs in Reno and New York City were both very successful. We have every reason to believe that Orlando will also exceed our early projections. For 2004 we expect to entertain well over 40,000 tables at our NABCs. This is on a par with 2001, with Toronto and Las Vegas on the same calendar, when we had over 42,000 tables. Note: prior 40,000 table NABC years were 1986-87, 1989, and 1991-92, in addition to 2001.

Our tournament sponsors are enjoying a banner year too. Regional and sectional table counts are also up. Our members are playing more and enjoying our great game all over ACBLand.

Regionals: Tables are currently 6 percent ahead for 2003 with two fewer tournaments. The most impressive number is the table per tournament average, which has increased by 114 tables per event.

Sectionals: Tables increased by 1 percent with 16 more tournaments. Per tournament table average dropped by two tables per event.

STaCs: Table counts have increased by nearly 9 percent due to an increase of seven additional tournaments. Tables per STaC dropped by 39 tables per event.

2004 Table Count (Exhibit 2)

We are pleased to announce that Mr. Paul Martin has joined the staff as a Senior Programmer/Analyst and will be part of the ACBLscore team that is converting the program to a windows based format and documenting the entire program.

One of our stars this year has been our Special Events Department. Club fees for the North American Pairs were reduced for the 2004-05 NAP season. This was a winner for clubs and players alike. Club participation increased by more than 10,000 tables. Once Unit and District finals are completed, we should see similar revenues to those we had with much lower table counts and higher fees. A brief one-page summary of recent NAP history, and this year's results, is attached. (Exhibit 3)

3. **MARKETING:**

2004 ACBL Club Officials and Teachers Survey Report: The 2004 survey was distributed electronically to 4500 club officials and teachers, with a statistically sound response rate of 28 percent.

Significant Findings

Consistent with last year's findings, club officials and teachers are not motivated by money. Only 40 percent respond "earn money" as the reason for their involvement in bridge. Major factors: encourage others to play 96 percent; enjoy as hobby, 92 percent; give back to the game, 90 percent. 77 percent of teachers very or somewhat actively promote membership in the ACBL, with the most important reasons being to stay mentally active, have fun and improve their game.

A gratifying 71 percent think the new Play Bridge section of *The Bridge Bulletin* is greatly or somewhat improved. Only 10 percent thought it was not improved, and 19 percent had no opinion.

More than 80 percent say it is somewhat (39 percent) or extremely (44 percent) important that the ACBL provide teacher accreditation programs. However, the effectiveness of teaching the ACBL Bridge Series has gone from 95 to 81 percent, no doubt largely because nearly 90 percent believe the series should be updated to reflect modern techniques. We cannot continue to ignore numbers of this magnitude.

Only 23 percent of teachers are very interested in teaching bridge in K-12 schools. While 35 percent are somewhat interested, it is probably those with the greatest

interest who would be able to sustain a program. This question reflects the importance of introducing youth to bridge through means other than our membership.

Opinions are mixed for online teaching accreditation programs but not so with online club director training. Fully 86 percent believe online director training is somewhat (40 percent) or very (46 percent) important. The ACBL now is working with a provider of online education to launch these programs in 2005.

Awareness and satisfaction with virtually every program and publication for teachers and club officials has increased. Examples:

	03 Awareness	04 Awareness	03 Satisfaction	04 Satisfaction
Star Teacher Discounts	52	59	55	72
Find a Teacher web site	62	73	67	84
Marketing Department (teachers)		74		80
Web resources for teachers	56	62	68	78
Coop Adv. (teachers)	53	69	64	80
Education Department		77		84
CopyMax Discount		43		68
Bridge Teacher Newsletter	72	74	74	83
Star Club Program	58	59	52	71
Coop Adv. (clubs)	60	62	66	81
Web resources for clubs	63	75	85	82
Marketing Department (clubs)		66		82
Find a Club web site	75	76	81	91
Club Manager Newsletter	87	77	86	89
Club Department		78		90

Overall, ACBL support for teachers rates 26 percent extremely satisfied and 62 percent somewhat satisfied. Overall satisfaction with support for clubs rated 35 percent extremely satisfied and 56 percent somewhat satisfied.

The benefits of rewards to clubs and teachers remained about the same, with marketing materials and I-N game incentives rating the highest.

Responses regarding the NABC educational and social activities will present a challenge as we work to accommodate the 10 and 3 schedule at some tournaments. While the preference for 8:30 a.m. start times was greatest, at 32 percent it was not overwhelming. A majority (57 percent) indicated they would not want other activities to conflict with bridge play.

The entire survey can be found at: <http://www.eqr1.com/client>

User name: ACBL

Password: Report

You can also see the results of the annual membership survey at this site.

Club Table Count: The table count for clubs through August 2004 (1,385,680) is up 2.33 percent from the same period in 2003 (1,354,075). This does not include on-line games.

The on-line table count through August 2004 (97,670) is up 1.25 percent from the same period in 2003 (96,463).

2004 Inter-Club Championship Games: There have been 20 ICC games administered on-line through October 28. 305 clubs have participated resulting in 3,010.5 tables. There is an additional fee of \$1.00 per person to participate and we have brought in \$12,042 for these 20 games.

New High School Team Competition: In 2005 ACBL is adding a high school division to the on-line college bridge team championship. On-line play will be on Bridgebase.com on February 16, 2005. To register, contact Charlotte Blaiss at juniors@ACBL.org. Members of a single winning team will receive \$250 college scholarships.

4. **CUSTOMER SERVICE:**

Customer Service communications activity report – September and October 2004
Phone calls: 852 calls distributed during the 42 business days in the month.

Departments receiving the highest number of calls from the ACBL's toll free line:

Address Change	-	171
Member Services	-	184
Memberships	-	142
Club	-	130

E-mails: 482 received and distributed:

Opt out (Data Entry & Customer Services	-	114
Member Services	-	84
Memberships (accounting)	-	50

5. **ACTION ITEMS FROM NEW YORK:**

1. Resources for Tournament Chairman have been posted on the web-site.

2. Conflict of Interest questionnaire has been drafted and included in the supplemental journal.
3. Convention charts will appear in the December Bulletin.
4. Zip-codes look-up for area clubs is being created but is not yet implemented.

6. **MAILINGS TO MEXICO:**

Due to difficulties with delivery of the Bulletin to Mexican addresses, all deliveries are now on priority status. We are also sending back issues to those that did not receive their regular mailings.

7. **PRIVACY ISSUES:**

We are finishing a number of issues dealing with privacy for our members. They include:

- 1) ACBL's Privacy Policy. (Exhibit 4)
- 2) ACBL's Consent and Release forms for minors. (Exhibit 5)
- 3) Photography of members.
- 4) Children's On-line Privacy Protection Act. (COOPA)
- 5) IT Risk assessment.
- 6) IT inventory information.

We are being assisted with these issues by our Tennessee law firm, Baker, Donaldson and hope to have all this completed by the end of 2004.

8. **EDGE TV:**

ACBL has signed an agreement with Edge TV, a start-up cable channel. Edge hopes to be on air by June 2005. Our commitment from them is a minimum of 14 hours of programming for 2005. The format is still undetermined, however, ACBL will play a major role in this as well as assisting with players for the shows. We are allowed airtime for commercials at no cost. Production expenses for the ads are the only expense for ACBL.

9. **WORLD OLYMPIAD:**

ACBL members representing the U. S. scored Gold, Silver and Bronze medals at the recently concluded World Olympiad Championships.

Winning gold medals in the Seniors were: Leo Bell, Neil Chambers, Marshall Miles, John Onstott, Jim Robison, John Schermer, and Gene Freed, non-playing Captain.

Winning silver medals in the Women's were: Marinesa Letizia, Jill Meyers, Randi Montin, Jancie Seamon-Molson, Tobi Sokolow, Carlyn Steiner, Jell Levin, Non-playing Captain, and Jan Martel, Coach.

Winning bronze medals in the World University Team Championships were: Charlie Garrod, Marc Glickman, Ari Greenberg, John Kranyak, Joon Pahk, Noble Shore, and Donna Compton, non playing Captain.

In the World Transnational Mixed Teams, Zia Mahmood teamed with Sabine Auken, Catherine D'Ovidio and Paul Chelma to capture the gold medal.