

# CEO Report

## Fall 2007

To: ACBL Board of Directors

cc: ACBL Board of Governors

From: Jay Baum, CEO  
ACBL

### MEMBERSHIP

- **Membership through October** – Continues an upward trend. Year-to-date we have gained 992 members. October 2007 vs October 2006 shows an increase of 1,229. The new member total for the year is 9,694, an increase of 354 over last year.

#### **Active Membership Chart**

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/OctoberActiveMembers.pdf>

### FINANCE

#### **Financial Forecast 8/31/07**

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/FinancialForecast83107.pdf>

#### **Financial Position 8/31/07**

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/FinancialPosition83107.pdf>

### CLUB & TOURNAMENT TABLES

- **Tournament Tables** – All categories remain strong despite fewer tournaments. The tables per tournament count will end with Regionals having a good increase, Sectionals a slight increase and STaCs a small decrease.

#### **Table count**

[http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/OctoberTC06\\_07.pdf](http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/OctoberTC06_07.pdf)

#### **Distribution Analysis**

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/Distribution%20Analysis.pdf>

- **Club Tables** – Are projected to have a slight increase with online tables seeing healthy growth.

- **Online Tables** – We estimate 325,000 for 2007.
- **Total Tables** – We have a very realistic chance to break the 3,000,000 sanctioned tables mark for the first time in ACBL history.
- **ACBLscore Program** – New club game in version 7.50 of the update is now at [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org).
- **Special Games Benefit** – The ACBL Educational Foundation games may be held in lieu of or in addition to the current special fund games: Junior, Charity and International Fund games. The Educational Foundation games award masterpoints at 100% sectional black. Minimum donation is \$4.00 per table to the Educational Foundation. The donation will be included with the monthly report.

Please note, Educational Foundation games cannot be held during the other special fund game months (February is Junior Fund month, April is Charity month and September is International Fund month). The ACBL Educational Foundation is a charitable trust fund established as a nonprofit organization in 1987. This Foundation provides grants to promote bridge.

- **Sectional Tournaments at Clubs** – We plan to run all Sectional Tournaments at Clubs (STaC) through our Memphis headquarters, using salaried Tournament Directors at this time. Management strongly supports a flat sanction fee for STaCs, to begin January 1, 2008. A simple sliding scale of fees will produce revenues needed to support the staffing of these tournaments along with residual dollars to fund all or most Tournament Director increases. Attached are two examples, using actual tables and comparative costs, for 2006 and 2007.

#### **2006 Sectionals by Month**

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/2006-08STaCProForma.pdf>

#### **2007-08 STaC Pro Forma**

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/2007-08STaCProForma.pdf>

- **Rating Plan** – We have begun reviewing possible current ranking ideas with Jim Lopushinsky, our ACBLscore developer, Richard Oshlag, our IT manager here at ACBL headquarters, and four interested ACBL members.

What is our goal here?

- Establish a current rating for all players.
- Acknowledge fast improving players
- Acknowledge a players diminished ability without causing any embarrassment
- Enable clubs and tournaments to better flight, bracket or stratify fields

One new option proposed is a simple 60-month rolling rating based on a weighted percentile rank. Such a rating is easily quantifiable and produces an easily understandable number.

Some of the methods proposed mimic ratings we have seen on internet play sites, notably e-bridge and OKBridge. They presume a completely closed system, with the rating mechanism having complete knowledge of players, hands and hand results. Despite the power of ACBLscore, we do not now, nor do we anticipate, having such knowledge available.

We will focus on what is workable. Discussions, evaluations and testing will continue.

- **Electronic Scoring** – We have continued to hear news on the two available wireless scoring devices, BridgeMate and BridgePad.

BridgeMate has been purchased and is being used by several clubs. BridgePad testing is continuing in clubs and sectional tournaments in California.

Both products have been advertised in the Bridge Bulletin (see November pages 59 & 63). In subjectively evaluating the two products:

BridgeMate has a larger keyboard, with larger screen fonts

BridgePad has a larger brighter viewing screen

BridgePad is much more compact

BridgeMate appears to be sturdier

Both devices offer a number of features

Both devices are compatible with ACBLscore

BridgeMate requires TD interaction each session

BridgePad requires player input only

We have no history of durability or service needs.

The one distinguishing characteristic may be the marketing of the two products, with BridgePad offering a lease option.

Management believes that both products lend themselves to ‘spoilage’ at an unacceptable rate. The purchase or lease of either of these products would require management to go through a formal bid / evaluation process. Management is not prepared to recommend either product over the other to our members, our clubs or our Board of Directors. Management is not prepared to recommend a budget inclusion for a wireless scoring product.

- **ACBL Online Courses** – Courses at SyberWorks for January 1, 2007 to November 7, 2007.

ACBLscore for Beginners	144
-------------------------	-----

Ruling the Game	<u>130</u>
-----------------	------------

Total courses purchased	274
-------------------------	-----

- **Club Director Courses 2005**

	<u>Attendance</u>
January – December 2005	178
January – December 2006	122
January – October 2007	148 – sub total
San Francisco CA NABC Nov 19-21, 2007 (pre registrations)	<u>21</u>
	<b>169</b>

## MARKETING / EDUCATION

- [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org) – We have been trying to add interest to the web site in various ways since our last meeting.

**Welcoming New Players** – There is a lot of information on our web site that our club managers and directors are not aware of. We posted this notice to help them locate some of the material that would be helpful in making new players welcome at their clubs:

**Welcoming First Time Visitors** – How do you treat new players when they come to your club for the first time? Do you have a plan for making them feel welcome? Read our latest update on the Club Managers web page about the ["friendliest club around"](#) and how they make new and potential members feel right at home.

**In Their Own Words** – Our members are interested in conventions. A search through back issues of The Bulletin and the Bridge World magazines revealed some interesting articles written in the 50s and 60s by the authors of the conventions themselves. So far we have featured: Blackwood on Blackwood, Stayman on Stayman, Shenken on The Weak Two Bid, Oswald Jacoby on The Jacoby Transfer Bid, Jim Jacoby on The Jacoby 2NT, Eric Murray on The Drury Two Club Bid and The Murray Two Diamond Bid, Mike Michaels on Michaels, Roth and Stone on Sputnik and It's Satellites.

We plan to continue this feature until we run out of material. The archives will remain available at our site.

**So You Might Want To Be** – In the near future, we plan to start a series of articles telling our members how to become a Bridge Cruise Host, a Club Director, an ACBL Accredited Teacher, etc.

- **New Member Newsletter** – Over the years, the ACBL has tried various methods of communicating with its new members. In the 70s, we mailed a quarterly flyer; in the 90s, the students of our teachers received, in their first year of membership, seven issues of a mini-magazine known as "The Bridge to Better Bridge, A Student Supplement." When the magazine was suspended (as a budget cut), the new member

welcome packets were expanded to include a new publication entitled, "The ACBL from A to Z."

In Nashville, the Marketing Committee agreed that the first two years of membership are crucial if a new member is to become a long-term member. Management was asked to consider some method of maintaining closer contact with our new members. Having explored our options, we have developed a New Member newsletter. Our plan is to send every new member four issues during the first year of membership. The newsletter will introduce the new member to the many facets of the ACBL and will include bits of ACBL history, while offering articles designed to help the newcomer improve bidding, play and defense. There will be some humor and a quiz in each issue.

The first issue is scheduled to be mailed in April of 2008 to the new members who join the ACBL during the first trimester of the new year.

- **Revising the ACBL Bridge Series Materials** – Work on this project is proceeding. The third updated teacher manual (Defense in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) is available for free download at ACBL's web site, along with the first two updated teacher manuals (Bidding in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Play of the Hand in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century). Baron Barclay is printing the updated books as their stock on the original books runs low.
- **Co-Op Ad Program** – The Co-op Ad program has reimbursed over \$109,000 through the first 10 months. This program continues to be popular with clubs and teachers and is an outstanding benefit for them.
- **Speaking and Writing** – Former Washington Post columnist and ACBL member, Bob Levey, did a presentation at the AARP on behalf of the League. We will have Bob again next September when AARP meets in Washington. In addition to speaking engagements, Bob will be authoring an article on the upcoming Junior NABC and other articles highlighting bridge personalities.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

- **ACBL Cafeteria Plan** – We have changed administrators of ACBL's Cafeteria Plan effective January 1, 2008. The new company is Corporate Planning Network, Inc. (CPN). This company offers benefits that have not been available to us through our current administrator: a debit card for the FSA plan, over the counter medication coverage under the plan, an educational web site with calculating tools and personalized on-line FSA account activity for ACBL participants. The Visa debit card operates in real-time.

In addition to the Visa debit card feature, FSA claims may continue to be filed via surface mail, fax or e-mail. Medical FSA claims sent to CPN will be processed each

Thursday evening and be available in the employee's bank account by Friday morning. Our current administrator only processes claims twice a month.

- **401(k)** – The 401(k) Trustees put the plan out for bid and decided to stay with ING as the administrator of the plan. However, they did make some investment changes that went into effect on October 15, 2007.

The ING Money Market Fund was also added to the menu. This will offer participants an alternative to the ING fixed account. The money market, however, is not guaranteed, and the rate it will pay will fluctuate with the market.

### **ACBL STRATEGIC PLAN 2005 – 2009**

- Many of the ongoing or completed items are included in the above report. This document is now three-years old, with some adjustments made in March of 2006. Management will be reviewing the objectives of the entire plan with the goal of having the Board update and revise the plan in March 2008 at the Spring meeting.