

**CEO REPORT
March 2009**

**The Hilton Americas
Houston, TX**

To: ACBL Board of Directors

cc: Michael Kovacich
Peter Rank

From: Jay Baum, CEO

MEMBERSHIP:

In spite of the dismal state of the economy, membership for 2009 has gained 431 additional members.

New Members for the first two months totaled 2,170 which was equal to 2008 numbers.

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/09FebruaryMembership.pdf>

TOURNAMENT DIVISION:

Tournament attendance is off to a good start with Regionals showing a 2% gain for the first two months. Tables per tournament averaged nearly 1700.

Sectionals had three fewer tournaments reporting and was 2% under 2008, however, the tables per tournament have been equal to 2008.

STaCs had an increase of 1.3% over 2008 and the tables per tournament increased by 20 over the same period last year.

How the economy will affect future tournaments is difficult to predict, but the good start for the year and the consistent finish of the last quarter of 2008 gives us optimism.

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/February 2009 Tables.pdf>

CLUBS:

The 2008 preliminary table counts for club games is 2,695,340 and 470,854 were from online games. Attached below is club table report. The final numbers will be generated in late March.

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/09ClubTbIs.pdf>

BRIDGE BULLETIN:

We have received word from Quebecor World, printer of the Bridge Bulletin, that there has been a small decrease in paper prices. The location for the printing of the magazine is now in Midland, Michigan.

THE ACBL GOES GREEN PROJECT:

The ACBL Goes Green project officially began on Monday, January 19. Specifically, we want to reduce the amount of non-recyclable materials used in the ACBL headquarters building. Our first step----more are to come---was the elimination of Styrofoam cups that previously were purchased by the ACBL for employee use.

“ACBL ♡2 recycle” mugs were distributed to headquarters employees. These insulated mugs are designed to keep our favorite beverage hot or cold and can be reused hundreds of times!

MARKETING:

Marketing Staff News

Marketing has hired a web programmer, Silpa Potana, to assist Marketing in its effort and commitment to strive to continuously improve our membership's and prospect's experience with our websites. Silpa has a Masters degree in computer science and brings with her a wealth of knowledge in many technology languages and processes.

Marketing Programs/Initiatives:

Increasing Brand Awareness & Identifying/Creating PR Opportunities

- ***To increase brand awareness and reach/engage the beginner/newcomer bridge audience***, Marketing has launched a series of free weekly bridge columns. The columns first began printing in weekly newspaper publications in January 2009 and, as of mid-February, they are either being published, or are being considered for publication, in approximately 135 news publications across the United States

and Canada. At last count, the total audience reach size of all the print publications carrying the column is approximately 1,155,125 readers.

The demand for the articles continues to grow – on average, the ACBL receives approximately five to six new requests for the articles per day. Plans are being made for the articles to appear on the www.BridgeBase.com website where they will reach an online bridge playing viewership in excess of 10,000 individuals per day.

Because the columns contain the ACBL contact info as well as local club/teacher contact info, they are serving as a low-cost prospecting tool for both the ACBL and local clubs/teachers by providing free advertising for ACBL and the local clubs/teachers. Each column contains a footer that contains the www.acbl.org URL address – pushing the reader to the ACBL website for more information.

Due to the overwhelming positive response received from clubs and teachers, the articles are also serving as a relationship building tool – strengthening the relationship between ACBL and clubs/teachers in the US and Canada.

- ***To increase brand awareness and promote the ACBL website*** – Marketing is working with www.BridgeBase.com to promote/advertise ACBL news and website links on their website. Currently, the Houston NABC is being advertised on the www.BridgeBase.com website.
- ***To generate publicity*** – Marketing has sent a letter to President Obama inviting the Obama children to cut the ribbon on opening day for the upcoming Youth NABC in Washington, DC. Included with the letter was a framed record of masterpoint won by Madelyn Dunham, the President's grandmother.

Identifying and Increasing Prospecting Opportunities

- ***To increase Prospecting Campaign & Research opportunities*** – Marketing has developed and created postcards to capture contact information from attendees of the free beginner/intermediate/newcomer workshops at NABC's. Marketing is launching this initiative at the Houston NABC by attempting to collect contact info in workshops conducted by Jerry Helms and Gary King. Follow-up prospecting communication messages will be developed and sent, via email, to non-ACBL members who attend these workshops.

In addition, the capturing of this information will allow Marketing to conduct customer satisfaction research regarding the workshops and other aspects of the NABC from a beginner/intermediate/newcomer's perspective.

- ***To increase Prospecting Campaign opportunities*** – Marketing has begun collecting contact information from visitors who download the free Learn to Play Bridge software on the ACBL website. This data will allow Marketing to begin

developing and implementing a monthly prospecting email campaign to non-ACBL members who download this software from the ACBL website.

Identifying and Generating Additional Revenue Streams

Identifying Sponsorship Opportunities – Marketing is developing sponsorship opportunities/programs for potential companies whose services/products might provide added value to our membership. Leveraging the value of ACBL’s membership profile, sponsorship levels/tiers are being developed that offer various avenues for third party companies to communicate and/or have a marketing presence in front of our membership. (i.e. NABC sponsorship opportunities, NABC table/booth space, promos in registration packets, etc.)

Youth Bridge Promotion & Marketing

- Marketing has developed and printed a new brochure that targets the youth audience. This brochure, entitled *Youth4Bridge*, is a promotional tool that will be made available to teachers/clubs who are attempting to reach and engage the youth audience.
- In an effort to create a more engaging website for the youth audience, Marketing has placed a YouTube video of the Georgia Youth State Championship on the www.YouthNABC.org website home page.
- The November 2008, youth survey and contest results have been collected and analyzed. Based on the results of the survey contest, a new name for the youth website has been established. The winning name is www.Youth4Bridge.org. The URL domain name has been purchased and based on the survey/feedback of the youths, a redesign of the youth website is in progress.

Cooperative Advertising Program

Marketing reimbursed \$143,377.45 to clubs/teachers/members in response to a total of 344 unique advertising projects that qualified for reimbursement under the Cooperative Advertising Program during 2008. This is an increase of approximately \$10,000 over 2007 reimbursements.

Mind Sports – USA

Marketing has been in contact with Chris Kirschner with the American Go Association and Rich Hutnik with IAGO about developing Mind Sports in the USA. As of this date, Marketing is awaiting confirmation from American Go Association as to the date/time of a phone conference with other mind sports organizations so further discussion can be conducted.

ACBL YOUTH DIVISION:

The Youth Division program details are finalized and e-mail notices prepared to release the program to Units, Districts and Youth teachers, parents and players beginning in April of 2009.

We hope that by the Youth NABC in Washington DC that we will be able to have members of the new Youth Ambassador program approved and a Youth Advocate elected.

The text for Patty Tucker's new seminar concerning teaching youth bridge and forming Youth Bridge programs has been completed.

In Houston we are going to begin to have a table set up for Youth information. This table will contain information on seminars, workshops etc at the NABC and also upcoming events and brochures and notices from our youth groups nationwide. This will be a place where people can go to find out the 'news' about our youth.

The data base of District and Unit youth teachers, potential teachers, and programs in North America is being updated. Creation of an online youth teacher registration form is in the works. We will build it to be self-updating.