

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2010 – 1:15 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Location: Studio 2, 2nd Floor, Marriott

CHAIR: Sandy Arlinghaus

VICE-CHAIR: Bill Arlinghaus

MEMBERS: Claire Jones, Paul Janicki, Ken Monzingo, Jeff Taylor

ACBL: Vicki Campbell, Carol Robertson, Jeff Johnston, Jay Baum, Paul Ryburn

OTHERS: Jerry Fleming, Millard Nachtwey, Rich DeMartino

AGENDA:

- **INTRODUCTIONS**—each committee member gives a bit of background for the digital audio file.
- **SPECIAL REPORTS**
 - **CLUB REPORT SOFTWARE:** Vicki Campbell and Carol Robertson. In place on website and about 780 clubs are using it (about 25% of all clubs). Extensive testing took place over a period of months prior to its release. Feedback from participants is highly positive.
 - **ACBL WEBSITE HOMEPAGE IMPROVEMENT:** Technology Committee has supplied ample input to staff on currently proposed home page. Ultimately, it is a staff decision how to proceed. The Technology Committee stands ready to be helpful, provide input, and offer opinion to staff. Continuing updating and improvement of site is an ongoing project with much of it managed in-house; we continue to note the importance of ongoing maintenance—any product designed by an outside firm must be capable of straightforward in-house maintenance. The firm hired by Management to create a new home page has presented 10 alternatives to this committee for evaluation/approval on “look and feel” prior to moving forward. Many, but not all, see these as an improvement over the current site—though most do not see them as “optimal” improvement.

The approach used by the outside firm is approval of one step prior to moving forward to another. It is an approach that is “safe” because it reflects “industry standard” and is therefore defensible. A number of Committee members are looking for something beyond this style. There is ongoing struggle between conflicting viewpoints. However, this struggle should lead to a better product than would a mere rubber-stamping of the stages along the assembly line of home page development. Four major points we continue to emphasize, that were displayed on our visual summary ‘sample’, are:

 - We need easier navigation of the site and have offered a set of categories of links, from bridge player input over a period of months. These links are arranged in a hierarchy of importance. The home page produced needs to use this content developed by bridge players and not sacrifice it for “look” or “feel” of artistic issues. The arrangement of this material should not require scrolling at common screen resolutions.
 - We wish to have a live website to evaluate rather than a picture of a live website. This notion appears not to be the way the hired firm does business. This difference is one based on approaches used and if Management continues to work with this group (which they like to do) we may need to compromise on this point.
 - We wish to have better use of screen real-estate—have the home page cover an entire modern screen with content. We had asked to have the new page designed at 1280 by 1040. What has come back is one designed at 960, so it does not cover all of the screen and leaves obvious borders on most modern screens (capable of 1280 by 1040 display). There is ongoing debate here as to whether one uses industry standard or goes outside that defensible position.

enter the website as well as the world of duplicate bridge, its history and future. Everyone agrees on this idea.

Show revolving display of alternative home pages and tie it to comments above—perhaps at end of report, depending on room setup.

- **STATUS OF ACBL_SCORE:** Bill Arlinghaus, Rich DeMartino; Jeff Johnston, Jay Baum, Millard Nachtway. Unlike the website, which is obsolete as soon as it is released and is a continually moving target, ACBLscore must be carefully planned to endure over a long period of time. It is a critical project. Jeff Johnston is gathering information about the current ACBLscore from its creator to formulate some sort of archival documentation which may offer benefit to future development. So that the new program is compatible with existing ACBL programs, Jeff expressed a desire to have it written in JAVA. Committee members expressed concern that language selection is premature as it might limit development possibilities. After considerable discussion, the Committee was polled, individually. All agreed to encourage Jay and Jeff to talk to a Systems Analyst (of known capabilities) this Fall, to consider what general project approach might be good: how to choose a Project Manager, when to choose a language, how to integrate with the website, imaginative uses of technology (card-swiping), and so forth.
- **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - File nomenclature issue: continuing resolution of issue (Paul Ryburn, ACBL webmaster) including use of human intelligence factor in search engine.
 - Timetable created in Reno—where are we, AS PART OF “CURRENT GOALS” DOCUMENT
Develop an overall technology policy which will enable the ACBL to make optimum use of technology.
 - Enhance the reporting of club results by including hand records and travelers (April)--DONE
 - Enhance the ACBL website to make it easier to navigate (May)—ONGOING; PROGRESS MADE AS NOTED.
 - Produce a detailed plan for replacing ACBL Score (Management; October)—ONGOING; SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS MADE AS NOTED ABOVE.
 - Evaluate all electronic scoring products to build a consensus on what product is best (to be determined)—ONGOING AT DISPLAYS AT NABCs—SPINNER AND SUCH
 - Consider future opportunities:
 - . Virtual museum plan (June)—ONGOING; PROGRESS MADE. TO BE ON WEBSITE.
 - . Smart phone (mobile phone) application plan (June)—IN BEGINNING STAGES; PRELIMINARY RESEARCH DONE BY MANAGEMENT AS PART OF GENERAL PLAN.
- **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - E-mail from Don Mamula and Mike Stabler, both concerning aspects of broader use of technology in the meeting forum and in the reporting of technology use to the broader ACBL audience.
 - Aileen Osofsky website and related materials for staff to consider.
 - Committee Chair document useful for summarizing activities of this committee over the course of the year (as a benefit in communicating to the entire board and also as a benefit to committees that come in later years). Draft document e-mailed to committee members, June 14, 2010. *Technology 2010: Inventory and Prospect* offers an archive for future committees, as well as a chance to present dreams for that future.
- **OTHER:** General statement from the Chair based on readings from the history of technology...during times of technological revolution. Such times are times of great advance and of great struggle. One persistent issue is the problem of “laggards”—those who are resistant or who lack capability to move forward with the mainstream of the revolution. Often, kind and thoughtful people who are moving forward, themselves, worry about those who are less fortunate, either by choice or circumstance. Others, thinking

primarily of the need to move forward not only in the mainstream but also at the leading edge of the wave, think it wise not to make plans based on the needs of the transitional laggards. Primary concern is to be for advancement and leadership; if the needs and wishes of the laggards fit with the primary force, fine; but designing, at the outset, for the laggard population is inappropriate and forecasts failure for the entire project. The view of many on the Technology Committee is for the large, systems view, independent of laggard wishes and desires. The view of many in Management is concern for the laggards. It is this fundamental philosophical difference that is at least partly the source of struggle in working toward our clearly shared vital goal of developing an overall technology policy to move the ACBL forward in our exciting technological world.