

CEO REPORT

Spring 2011 – Louisville, KY

To: ACBL Board of Directors
ACBL Board of Governors

cc: Michael Kovacich
Peter Rank

From: Jay Baum, CEO

Date: March 2011

MEMBERSHIP:

After a sluggish start in January (-787) membership rebounded with a gain of 234 members. We still trail 2010 by 533 members but new membership numbers for the first two months averaged over 1,000 per month. The expected dip in 2010 did not happen. We believe new member growth will continue to be strong and membership will remain stable through 2011.

[11FebruaryMembership.pdf](#)

CLUBS

ACBL President, Craig Robinson, has set a goal to visit 100 clubs in 100 days during 2011. Click on the link below to read the full article from the Winter 2011 Club Managers newsletter.

[Club-Manager-Newsletter-Winter-2011-02-01.pdf](#)

The 2010 preliminary table count for club games is 2,965,821 of which 713,135 were from on-line games. Attached below is the club table report. The final numbers will be generated in late March.

[Club Tbls Report 02-21-11.pdf](#)

BRIDGE ADMINISTRATION:

Regionals started 2011 with a nice increase, particularly in February. The average table count came in at over 2,000, a huge number for this segment.

Sectionals through the first two months also saw an increase in average tables (216) despite six fewer tournaments being held.

STaCs showed a decrease in tables due to one fewer event but average tables were at a pace equal to 2010.

We have listed Cruise sectionals as a separate entry. It is too early to judge what impact they will have but we note that there are currently 12 scheduled for 2011.

2010 had seven sectionals at sea that averaged 146 tables.

[2010 2011tc.pdf](#)

NABC PLANNING:

The NABC Advisory Committee has met several times via conference call. We have discussed specifics as detailed as locations of restrooms at host hotels and as broad as the philosophical issues serving as the basis for NABC profit requirements. Following additional meetings, the committee is considering a request for a full Board discussion or formation of a task force to consider all aspects of NABCs.

Reservations for the Louisville NABC closed with the minimum required room block achieved.

Planning for Toronto, Seattle, Memphis and Philadelphia are well underway.

The next dates to be filled are Spring and Summer of 2017. Toronto (six year rotation) should be considered for the Summer of 2017 but we want to wait until after the Summer tournament there this year to begin the site survey and selection process.

HALL of FAME ELECTIONS:

No New Hall of Fame Members

None of the candidates for the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame class of 2011 received enough votes, so there will be no new regular members this year. To be elected, candidates must receive at least 50% of the ballots cast. There were 10 candidates on the ballot this year. The nominees for the Hall of Fame were Marty Bergen, Peter Boyd, Bart Bramley, Gail Greenberg, Kyle Larsen, Jill Meyers, John Mohan, Sue Picus, Judi Radin, and Tobi Sokolow.

The von Zedtwitz and Blackwood Awards are still to be determined, so the Hall of Fame may add members in those categories. The von Zedtwitz Award goes to the ACBL member who has combined service to bridge with bridge expertise. The

Blackwood Award honors the member who has served bridge long-term without necessarily being a top-flight player.

The annual banquet honoring Hall of Fame members is scheduled for Toronto and will include tributes to Hall of Famer Betty Ann Kennedy, the latest recipient of the Sidney Lazard Jr. Sportsmanship award.

BRIDGE OVERALL:

We are anticipating some staff turnover, possibly as early as year end, 2011. While we would like input from the incoming CEO prior to making any major staffing decisions, we are putting together plans to address our specific, anticipated needs in case we are forced to act prior to a decision being made on a new CEO

We are considering options to either upgrade or replacement of the Bridge Administration/Tournaments databases.

We will be conducting classroom and on the job electronic scoring device training for all TDs assigned to Louisville. We continue to use both BridgePads and BridgeMates at NABCs

MARKETING/EDUCATION:

Promotions

Learn to Play Bridge Member Drive Promotion

This automated new member campaign was launched in June of 2010 and since that time a total of 166 individuals have responded to the promotional offer and joined ACBL. As of this date, this promotion averages a response of 20 new member sign ups per month.

Platinum Pairs NABC Event

A postcard mailing was sent out to all those who qualify to play in this event notifying them that they were eligible and inviting them to the Louisville NABC to play.

Media/PR

A press release was sent out regarding 2010 Player of the Year, Brad Moss. The release was picked up by 204 online news media outlets.

A press release was sent out regarding the Louisville NABC.

Darbi Southers has joined the Marketing department as the new Marketing Project Supervisor.

Advertising

Cooperative Advertising Program

The Cooperative Advertising program continues to be a successful and popular resource for clubs and teachers in their efforts to reach out to beginner and/or newcomer players. The program, in 2010, subsidized advertising costs for 340 beginner/newcomer ad campaigns submitted by clubs and teachers. 42 club/teacher ad campaigns have been subsidized in 2011 (as of February 1, 2011).

Tournament Marketing Ads

Marketing distributed a total of 482 tournament advertisement email blasts to members on behalf of tournament sponsors for 2010. As of February 1, 2011, a total of 51 tournament email blasts have been distributed.

Web, Social & Mobile Media

The ACBL continues to take advantage of marketing opportunities offered via the website and social and mobile media platforms.

Web Media

ACBL.org Website

New navigational/organizational layout of home page;
RSS feed added to home page;
Electronic/interactive bridge articles added for intermediate/newcomer players.

Social Media

Facebook – 2,000 + “fans”
Twitter – 250 followers
LinkedIn – 88 members

Mobile Media

ACBL Smart Phone App – “Find a Club”

Phase I of the ACBL smart phone app (“Find a Club”) is scheduled to be released and available in the Apple iTunes app store by mid-March, 2011. This app allows users to find the nearest bridge club on their iPhone using GPS technology and/or a manual search using City/State/Zip.

QR Codes

The ACBL is taking advantage of this new technology which allows marketing messages to be cross-promoted from print communication channels to mobile and internet channels. The new School Bridge Program posters include QR codes that allow smart phone users the ability to scan the code on the poster and instantly view the youth promotional DVD on the Youth4Bridge website. This marketing technology will help ACBL reach and engage a younger audience.

Try it out yourself now by scanning the below code with your smart phone – (you’ll need to download a free QR Reader app on your smart phone to scan the code.) ☺



School Bridge Classes

A total of 367 classes were conducted during 2010. Currently, there are 82 classes registered for the Spring of 2011 and there are still Spring classes being registered.

Youth NABC

This year's Youth NABC will be held in Toronto. A "save the date" announcement email blast has been sent out to ACBL youth members, youth bridge teachers and Unit/District officials. Additionally, a post card announcement was mailed to youth members and youth bridge teachers. We also sent a mailing with flyers, posters and postcards to teachers to help them promote the event. We will again include a contest/sweepstakes and a separate email announcement was sent out to the youth members informing them of this year's "Mystery Hand" contest/sweepstakes.

Junior Reception

A survey was sent to ACBL junior/youth membership asking them to provide insight and feedback concerning junior receptions at NABCs. Based on survey results, plans are being put in place to 1) better advertise the event; 2) bring in expert speakers to speak and/or conduct "mini" workshops; 3) offer door prizes.

We have scheduled ACBL member Joe Grue of New York, to speak briefly at the Junior Reception to talk about his bridge experiences. Grue is a former Junior Corp member, Grand Life Master and previous National Champion bridge player. An email invitation was sent to all junior/youth members – inviting them to attend the Junior Reception and a follow up email reminder was sent to them one week prior to the event. The Junior Reception will also be publicized via the Daily Bulletin and post card invitations have been printed and will be handed out in Louisville to Junior/Youth players prior to the event.

FINANCE and ADMINISTRATION:

The 2010 year end was strong with revenues of approximately \$15.5 million and operating expenses of approximately \$15.6 million. Cash and Investments are approximately \$6.8 million after completing and furnishing the new Headquarters in Horn Lake, MS. The auditors have completed their audit of the financial statements for 2010. The process went smoothly and was completed sooner than in years past. The forecast vs. budget came in extremely improved from previous years.

Recruiting for a new Human Resources Manager is in process with the expectation that someone will be in place in April. The H R team is working together and taking on additional duties until such time as a new manager is hired.

The facilities team is working well together to address all the issues of our new headquarters and it is expected that a new facilities manager will be hired in the second quarter. The IT team is working diligently to move ACBL from Lotus Notes to Microsoft Outlook as our email and they have hired Mahantesh Gurusiddalah as a permanent addition to the staff for Java programming. He was previously a contract employee in the department.