

MANAGEMENT REPORT

To: ACBL Board of Directors

cc: Michael Kovacich
Peter Rank

From: Jay Baum, CEO
ACBL

Date: July 2011

MEMBERSHIP:

Through June ACBL membership was 165,245 fewer than June of 2010. For the calendar year, 2011 has an increase of 192 members.

New members continue a very good trend, with 6,283 for the first six months. This represents an increase of 7.5% over 2010.

[http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/Active Membership Statistics.pdf](http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/Active%20Membership%20Statistics.pdf)

OFFICIAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BRIDGE:

The 7th edition of the Official Encyclopedia of Bridge is on schedule. All chapters have been typeset and proofread. Corrections will be made to the files before they are sent to Latrescia Goss for paging. An index will be created once all the material is paged. Jim Maier has selected the cover and is advertising the book in the Bridge Bulletin. Promotional blurbs for the back cover have been secured, and a couple more will be solicited in Toronto. Work on the biographies (to be included on a CD with the hardcover book) is also on schedule, with completion expected by mid-July.

CLUB & MEMBER SERVICES:

Clubs

The Club Manager's Handbook has been updated and is available on our web site at:

<http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/ClubManagersHandbook2011.pdf>

Included in the Spring Club Managers newsletter was a "directory" of headquarter employees who are in regular contact with the managers. It can be viewed at this link:

<http://www.acbl.org/assets/documents/clubs/Club-Manager-Newsletter/Club-Managers-Newsletter-Spring-2011-05-01.pdf>

Positive reports have been received from many of the bridge clubs visited by ACBL President, Craig Robinson. This tour had a positive impact and lasting impression on many of the clubs. Craig will be touring 50 or more clubs located west of the Mississippi river after the Toronto NABC.

Membership

Due to the Canadian postal strike in June we were unable to mail the monthly membership renewal notices at our scheduled time. We sent an email to the members we could and placed a notice on the front page of our web site. Canadian members were encouraged to renew online from our web site or to call us directly (toll free). Those who did not receive a notice in June will be receiving one in July.

The format of the actual membership bill for our Canadian members has been updated so the option to pay CBF dues is listed first.

Units

The Unit Membership Chair Handbook has been updated and is also available on our web site at:

<http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/units/membershipChairmanHandbook.pdf>

TOURNAMENT DIVISION:

All tournament total tables for 2011 are running close to flat vs. 2010. Regional tables per tournament are within 1½ tables of 2010.

Sectional tables per tournament have a small increase of 3 ½ tables per tournament.

STaCs averages have dipped to 1,648 per tournaments vs. 2010 numbers of 1,676.

We still expect all tournaments will finish with healthy numbers and tables per tournament will be very close or exceed 2010.

http://web2.acbl.org\bb\BOD\2010_2011tc.pdf

FINANCE:

Cash and investments are approximately \$6,624,000.

Management completed the 4th session in a series of training on communication, managing change, performance, and teambuilding.

Conducted 401(k) meeting with Plan representatives and employees.

MARKETING & EDUCATION PROGRAMS/INITIATIVES:

Marketing Collateral/Brochures

The development of a new marketing brochure is complete and copies are available for clubs/teachers. The brochure provides an overview of ACBL and the game of bridge.

A new marketing brochure targeting school officials is complete. This brochure provides an overview of the benefits of young people playing bridge.

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 266 individuals have responded to the promotional offer and joined the ACBL. As of this date, this promotion averages a response of approximately 20 new member sign ups per month.

Media/PR

Since the 2011 Spring Board meeting, the following press releases and articles have been written and submitted to media:

- “Local Youth Seeing Education & Social Improvements with Bridge Instruction” (Lexington, KY regional article) – submitted to Lexington Parent magazine. Article appeared in the May issue of “Lexington Parent”;
- “Local Youth Seeing Education & Social Improvements with Bridge Instruction” (Atlanta regional article) – submitted to Atlanta Parent magazine. No response as of this date;
- “Local Youth Seeing Education & Social Improvements with Bridge Instruction” (Toronto regional article) – submitted to Toronto Parent magazine. No response as of this date;
- “2010 Goodwill Member of the Year” – picked up by 204 media outlets.
- 2011 Vanderbilt winners – releases were submitted to hometown newspapers of each winner as well as 750 national media outlets;
- Media alerts were sent in advance of each club visit by President Craig Robinson, during the first leg of his “100 Clubs in 100 Days” tour. Additionally, a press release was sent to media in each city following the club visit – (pre and post releases sent to a total of 22 cities). A total of six media outlets printed a story about Robinson’s visit.
- “Georgia School Bridge Championships” – sent to media outlets in the state of Georgia.
- “King of Bridge 2011” – sent to media in winner’s hometown;
- “Team Bathurst Youngest Team Ever to Represent the U.S. in Bermuda Bowl” – national media distribution;
- “Manhattan Bridge Club Youth Tournament” – media alert sent prior to tournament and press release sent post tournament to New York media outlets;
- “Schools Follow Suit and Use Bridge Game as Curriculum Enrichment” – a national, multi- media, feature news article - (searching on “youth bridge” on Google website results in this article at top of search list.)

- “Youth Bridge Tournament to Attract Hundreds of Young Players” – submitted to Canadian media outlets;
- “International Bridge Tournament to be Held in Toronto” – submitted to national media outlets
- “Astronaut Speaks to Bridge Youth” – submitted to national media outlets

Advertising

Video Ads

Development of a 30 second TV ad for club/teacher use is almost finalized and should be available for distribution by the first of August. This ad targets the recently retired / empty-nester audience. This ad may also be used for multi-media press release purposes as well as online digital video ad placement.

Development of a 90 second youth bridge video clip has been completed. This video clip will be used to accompany multi-media press releases regarding youth bridge news. It may also be used for online digital video ad placement.

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, year-to-date, has subsidized advertising costs for 168 beginner/newcomer ad campaigns submitted by clubs and teachers at a total cost of \$73,630.51. (As of June 30, 2011)

Tournament Marketing Ads

Marketing has distributed a total of 287 tournament advertisement email blasts to members on behalf of tournament sponsors – year to date – as of June 30, 2011. In an effort to take advantage of all opportunities to promote upcoming NABCs, Marketing has revised its email blast template to include a “quick link” to the most current upcoming NABC. Additional template revisions are in development to include “quick links” to most frequently visited areas of the ACBL website (e.g., “Club Results”, “My ACBL”, “Tournaments”, ACBL home page,” , etc.)

Youth Bridge Buttons

Development of “Ask Me About Youth Bridge” buttons have been completed and are available for youth bridge teachers. Distribution of the buttons will begin in Toronto at the Youth Bridge workshop.

Web, Social & Mobile Media

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

WEB MEDIA

ACBL.org Website

Google Mini Web Search Engine

The installation of the new Google Mini search engine is complete and should serve to improve our web visitors' search experiences on the ACBL website.

“Club Results”

The online Club Results feature on the ACBL website continues to be a valued application for club managers. As of July 5, 2011, 1008 clubs are taking advantage of this feature.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook – 2,200 “fans”

Twitter – 499 followers

LinkedIn – 120 members

MOBILE MEDIA

ACBL Smart Phone App – “Find a Club”

Phase I of the ACBL smart phone app – “ACBL Mobile” -“Find a Club” feature - is now available in the Apple iTunes app store. 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. Plans are in development to add additional features to the ACBL Mobile app – “Find a Teacher” and “Find a Tournament”. Additionally, plans are in development for making the app available on other smart phone platforms (Droids, Blackberry, etc.) **This app went “live” in the App Store on June 23, 2011 and as of July 7, 2011 a total of 1,073 people have downloaded it.**

Social Player/”Baby Boomer” Initiatives

AARP Convention

Plans are in development to attend and exhibit at the AARP tradeshow September, 2011 in Los Angeles, CA. Over 25,000 retirees are expected to attend this event – allowing the ACBL to create awareness of the benefits of the game of bridge to a highly targeted prospective audience segment.

Converting Social Bridge Players

- Plans are in development to work with Audrey Grant to develop programs that will reach the social bridge player and convert them into duplicate players. Audrey has been invited to attend the Marketing Committee meeting in Toronto for purposes of brainstorming and sharing of ideas.
- Marketing is working with Ron Kral of Reston, VA to develop a “Bridge University” manual. Ron was instrumental in the implementation of the successful “Bridge University” at the 2009 Washington DC, NABC. This manual will serve as a tool to assist future NABC local volunteer chairs who wish to incorporate a “Bridge University” at their NABCs.

Youth Initiatives

School Bridge Classes

As of June 17, 2011, a total of 174 classes were conducted during Spring, 2011 with a total of 1,283 graduates.

Youth NABC

This year's Youth NABC is expected to once again be a success. As of July 5, 2011, over 100 young players have pre-registered for the event. This year's event also includes a "Mystery Hand" contest/sweepstakes. This year's entertainment will include a visit from astronaut and Life Master, Gregory Johnson, who has just returned from another Endeavor space flight. The Wonderful World of Circus, former Cirque du Soleil, and Moscow State Circus performers are also part of the entertainment line-up. The 2011 Youth Ambassadors will be announced and presented their certificates at the YNABC as well as the announcement of the 2011 King of Bridge, Blake Sanders.

Junior Reception

ACBL member and national champion, Joel Wooldridge of New York is scheduled to speak briefly at the Junior Reception to talk about his bridge experiences. The 2011 Junior Ambassadors will be announced and presented their certificates. 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 Toronto to Junior/Youth players prior to the event.

School Bridge Club Program

Plans are in development to create a "School Bridge Club" program that will help promote bridge in schools (as part of curriculum or "after-school"). A pilot program is being developed for testing in the Memphis City School systems. Marketing is working with Patty Tucker and Carol Mathews to plan and conduct the pilot workshop, which is scheduled to occur in Memphis, TN on Sept 17, 2011. If this "test" workshop proves successful, we will launch the program at a national level.

National Council of Teachers of Math (NCTM)

Plans are underway to attend and exhibit at the NCTM in St. Louis, MO in October. This event will allow ACBL the ability to promote its School Bridge Lessons Series to a highly targeted audience of math teachers.

Research

Successful Clubs Survey

Marketing is working with Joel Shapiro, of Toronto, who is conducting a study of bridge clubs as part of a Masters' Degree special project. The survey was sent on July 1, to 2,280 club managers/owners. The analysis of the survey is expected to be completed by mid to late August, 2011. The results of the survey will be shared with ACBL and any club manager/owner who participates in the survey.

ACBL Member Satisfaction Survey

The annual ACBL Membership Survey was sent to a random 4,963 members. The survey received a response rate of 20%. A copy of the topline results will be made available to Board members at the Toronto Board meeting.

Teacher Recruitment Efforts

2011 Accredited Teacher Stats

TAP Accredited	4,552
TAP Accredited since the TAP was updated	1,002
Accredited through Better Bridge	837
Accredited through Easybridge!	979
Registered Teachers	246
School Bridge Teachers	612
ABTA Teachers	579
ABTA Master Teachers	94

Teacher Accreditation Program (TAP) Brainstorming Workshop

A TAP brainstorming workshop was conducted in May at ACBL headquarters. The Marketing & Education Dept invited the current TAP Trainers to attend the workshop and many ideas surfaced for improving and marketing the TAP program. TAP trainers who attended were Betty Starzec, Peg Cundiff, Carol Mathews, Marilyn Kalbfleisch, and Pat Harrington. A few of the ideas which we are currently in the process of developing/implementing are:

- Creating a TAP “logo” and tagline that will allow us to better promote and create awareness of the program.
- Creating buttons for teachers to wear allowing them to advertise that they are a bridge teacher.
- Creating a CD of bridge-themed graphics for teachers to use when developing their own marketing materials (flyers/ads, etc.)
- Creating table guide cards for teachers which can be downloaded from the ACBL website and customized with their contact info;
- Creating CD label templates for teachers which can be downloaded and customized with their contact info;
- Publishing photos and stories of successful TAP teachers in the Bulletin and Bridge Teacher newsletter.
- Publishing TAP photos and articles in the Daily Bulletin at NABCs.
- Posting/publishing TAP graduates on the ACBL website and in the Bulletin magazine.
- Sending press releases to TAP graduates’ hometown newspapers.
- Developing a continuing education workshop for experienced bridge teachers. TAP presenter Marilyn Kalbfleisch will be presenting this pilot course in September at the Thornhill Regional.
- Development of online/webinar courses – currently in the process of fine tuning the “Bridge Cruise” Course. Lynn Berg is assisting with editing and writing the online materials.

