

MANAGEMENT REPORT

To: ACBL Board of Directors

cc: Michael Kovacich
Peter Rank

From: Robert Hartman, CEO
ACBL

Date: March 2012

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership numbers have gotten off to an extremely strong start in 2012. As of February 29, total membership stands at 166,145, the highest figure since the mid-1990s. By way of comparison, at the end of the February period last year, total membership stood at 164,499.

Year-to-date we have signed up 2,329 new Members, an increase of 12.9% over the same two-month time period last year. Full membership statistics can be found at: [http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/Active Membership Statistics.pdf](http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/Active%20Membership%20Statistics.pdf)

TOURNAMENT DIVISION:

Tournaments have been generally strong as well. Through February, total Regional table count has increased by 19%. However there were two additional Regionals held in 2012 as compared to 2011. Average Regional table count is up 8%.

Total table count for STACs has increased by 25% with two additional STACs held this year. Average STAC table count is up by 3%

Total Sectional table count showed a decrease of 11% with nine fewer Sectional tournaments held this year (141 vs. 150). Average Sectional table count was down by 5%.

We are expecting an increase in the total number of Regional tournaments in 2012 as compared to last year (130 vs. 121). Year-over-year Sectional tournaments and STaCs are expected to decrease slightly (883 vs. 917 and 61 vs. 63, respectively). Please note that these figures will change as tournaments are being added and deleted from the schedule. For detailed tournament counts, please visit:

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/2012TC.pdf>

CLUBS & MEMBER SERVICES:

Over a three day period in February, the Club and Member Service Department employees called approximately 150 players who joined ACBL within the last two months. The new Members were welcomed to our organization and verified they received their new member welcome packet and membership card. Our new Members were able to ask questions and the Member Service team let them know how to contact us in the future should they have any additional questions. Members were pleasantly surprised to hear from us and thrilled that we made a personal call directly to them.

In addition, we also called about 165 players whose membership had lapsed. The primary focus of this test effort was a better understanding on the reasons why Members let their membership lapse and to develop messaging to convince Members to reinstate. The following is a top-line summary of the results:

- 5 reinstated by phone with a credit card at time of call
- 12 stated that would renew in the near future
- 64 messages were left advising them how to contact us by telephone and email
- 18 disconnected telephone numbers
 - 8 phone number and/or email not provided
- 11 miscellaneous reasons -- health reasons, too expensive
- 47 were not interested because they were no longer playing bridge

In the upcoming months we will be asking all headquarters employees to join us so we can win back our lapsed Members and to welcome our new Members. Our immediate goal is to get maximum number of reinstatements. The longer term goal is to determine why Members allowed their Membership to lapse, especially the reasons why they stopped playing bridge for other than health/financial reasons. We hope to address the issues if possible and minimize lapsed Members.

The 2011 preliminary table count for club games is 3,047,722 of which 818,929 were from on-line games. Attached below is the club table report. The final numbers will be generated in late March.

The club table count for January 2012 versus January 2011 increased 6.5% to 290,126.

The GNT Conditions of Contest pages on the ACBL web site have been updated to allow the user to choose to view the national conditions or each district's conditions for this event. Our Web Master accomplished this with input from our Special Events Coordinator.

MARKETING DIVISION:

Publicity for bridge has been on the upswing over the past few months. Twenty known articles have recently been published with total estimated readership of 16.5 million+ including:

1. Newsweek - Real Men Play Bridge – February 27/March 5, 2012 issue
2. Wall Street Journal – In Florida – a One-Woman Campaign for the Ladies’ Bridge Lunch– February 29, 2012 issue
3. ESPN The Magazine – The Stunt Man: Bob Hamman is willing to bet you won't sink the hole-in-one. Don't take it personally: It's his business. – February 24, 2012
4. New York Times – 9 year old becomes youngest life master - February 12, 1012
5. Houston Chronicle – 9-year-old Texas Youth Becomes Bridge’s Youngest Life Master – February 8, 2012
6. Naples Daily News - Bridge Scene: Bridge clubs raising money for ACBL junior program ... March 1, 2012
7. Forbes - Bill Gates Takes A Trick... March 2, 2012
8. The Columbian - Fun, in spades: Bridge lovers flock to tournament in Vancouver... Feb 26, 2012
9. Memphis Commercial Appeal - Coffee Break: Bridge drawing 4000...Feb 24, 2012
10. KYForward.com - Isabel Yates: Ever played Bridge? Card game has plenty of fans in Lexington club... Feb 14, 2012
11. Nola.com – Couple Receives National Bridge Award... Jan. 29, 2012
12. The News Herald – Hundreds expected to attend district bridge tournament... Jan 26, 2012
13. The Best of Times – American Contract Bridge League hosts Championship on March 16 in Memphis... Jan. 24, 2012
14. Denver Westword News – Burke Snowden’s Bridge Skills Trump Those of Players Six Times His Age... Jan. 3, 2012
15. Memphis Commercial Appeal – Being CEO of American Contract Bridge League No Easy Trick... Dec. 26, 2011
16. Houston Chronicle – Youngest ACBL Life Master Unveiled – March 1, 2012
<http://www.chron.com/life/article/Youngest-ACBL-Life-Master-unveiled-3374742.php>
17. The Commercial Appeal - Top bridge players to gather in Memphis for prestigious tournament
<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2012/mar/08/buzz-for-bridge/>

The following press releases have also been distributed since the Seattle NABC:

- Seattle NABC winners – releases sent to winners’ home town
Stories were published about winners in the following publications:
Los Gatos: Rose Meltzer
Palo Alto Weekly & Daily Post: Geeske Joel
Chesterfield Observer: Harry Gellis
Central NJ Courier News: Rozanne Pollack
Elmhurst Press: Cheri Bjerkan
- *Goodwill Members of the Year – John and Theresa Federico*
- *Volunteer Member of the Year – Charles Gill*
- *Barry Crane Award – Chris Compton*
- *Youngest Life Master – Zach Garrison*
- *New Hall of Fame Member – Kyle Larsen*

- *National Masterpoint Race Winners*
- *Memphis NABC*

Press release templates were created and distributed via email to all District & Unit Ace of Clubs & Mini McKinney masterpoint race winners and ACBL wide masterpoint race winners encouraging them to submit to their local newspapers for publication. (approx. 6,750 individuals)

A new “Share” button was added to news articles on the ACBL website home page. This allows visitors to the website the ability to easily share our news via email, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and about 100 other social networks. For example, the Zach Garrison article received 45 “shares” from the ACBL home page.

Cooperative Advertising Program

During the first two months of the year, a total of \$29,609 has been distributed to 33 qualified advertising campaigns. This compares to \$28,892 distributed to 68 qualified advertising campaigns last year.

Tournament Advertising

A total of 83 tournament ad email blasts have been distributed this year.

A personalized full-color email was sent to all Members who qualified to play in the 2012 Platinum Pairs event in an effort to promote attendance of this event. This e-mail saved \$2,556 compared to printing and mailing a post card to a similar list last year.

A tournament press release “template” is being created and will be made available to tournament sponsors to help them with their tournament publicity efforts

EDUCATION DIVISION:

Online Teacher Directory

Currently, there are 1,743 teachers who have elected to be listed on the ACBL’s “Find a Teacher” web site. This compared to 1,695 teachers listed on the site last year.

Teachers, in addition to displaying their email address, now have the option of adding their phone number and an alternate city to their online listing. Plans are also in place to add a search by zip/postal code option to the online “Find a Teacher” web page.

A list of available bridge classes in a geographic area will be added to the website and mobile app to allow potential students to view when new classes in their area will begin. Teachers will soon have the ability to individually input a schedule of their classes via a web page.

The “Find a Teacher” feature has been added to the ACBL mobile app. Users are able to conduct searches for bridge teachers by using the device’s GPS tracking capability or

manually by city/state or zip code. Currently, this feature is only available on iPhones, iPads and iPod Touch.

Teacher Accreditation Program

Steps are being taken to create more awareness of the ACBL TAP. A TAP logo has been created. Tote bags with the new logo were distributed to TAP participants in Seattle and were well received. These bags will be distributed to all TAP participants in Memphis and from this point forward.

Three TAPs are offered annually in conjunction with the three NABCs. Regional (area) TAPs are scheduled as requested. So far this year, five TAPs are currently scheduled (Memphis TN, Gatlinburg TN, Long Island NY, Philadelphia PA, and San Francisco CA).

In order to make the Teacher Accreditation Program more accessible, there are plans to launch a marketing campaign to Units and Districts in an effort to encourage more TAPs at the regional level in 2012.

2011 Accredited Teacher Stats*

TAP Accredited	4,514
TAP Accredited since the TAP was updated	1,072
Accredited through Better Bridge	848
Accredited through Easybridge!	991
Registered Teachers	241
School Bridge Teachers	677
ABTA Teachers	579
ABTA Master Teachers	97

*Note that teachers may be accredited under more than one program.

Teacher Recruitment

New Members recruited by teachers -- 2011	1,246
New Members recruited by teachers -- 2010	1,111

TAP Trainers

Some of the current TAP Trainers will be retiring within the next couple of years. Plans are underway to create a succession plan to identify and train new TAP Trainers.

Teacher Communications

An e-mail has been sent to our teachers alerting them to programs of special interest for the Memphis NABC.

The first electronic issue of the Bridge Teacher e-newsletter was sent in February.

Of the approximately 6,000 members coded as teachers in the ACBL database, we have valid e-mail addresses for 5,749 teachers (last report – 5,634).

Club & Teacher Focus Group

A group of teachers and club managers have been invited to join Marketing/Education, Club & Member Services and the CEO for a focus group at the Memphis NABC. The purpose of this focus group is to identify ways ACBL can better serve our teachers and clubs. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 20.

ACBL “Learn to Play Bridge” Marketing Campaign

Marketing/Education and Club & Member Services are developing a test marketing campaign in three cities to drive prospects to local bridge teachers. The goals of this campaign are to drive prospects to learn to play bridge and increase ACBL membership.

The campaign will be advertised in two ways:

- 1) A personalized and variable messaged direct mail piece mailed to a rented list of prospects who match the profile of the ACBL membership. The mailing will contain an incentive to take bridge lessons and join the ACBL.
- 2) A Groupon offer.

Houston TX, Denver, CO, and Charleston, SC, have been identified as our “test” markets. Two or three teachers in each of these areas have been contacted and plan work with ACBL in this new endeavor. If this campaign proves to be successful we plan to roll it out as a North American marketing effort.

Intermediate-Newcomer Program @ NABCs

Two free bridge lessons were held the first weekend of the Seattle NABC. Audrey Grant gave a two-hour lesson on the first Saturday. There were 174 people in attendance. All but 26 attendees were ACBL members. Jerry Helms gave a two-hour lesson the first Sunday. There were 98 people in attendance. All but 7 attendees were ACBL members.

There will be three free bridge lessons held during the Memphis NABC. Audrey Grant will give a two-hour lesson on the first Saturday. Jerry Helms will give a two-hour lesson on the first Sunday. Barbara Seagram will give a two-hour lesson the first Monday.

ABTA

The ABTA normally holds their convention in conjunction with the Summer NABC. In honor of ACBL’s 75th Anniversary they moved the convention to the Spring NABC in Memphis. The Marketing/Education Department and Baron Barclay are hosting a tour of the ACBL Headquarters and Bridge Museum on Tuesday, March 13 and a luncheon for the ABTA on Thursday, March 15.

Junior Reception

Joel Wooldridge will be the guest speaker at the Junior Reception in Memphis. An e-mail invitation was sent to all juniors. There will be an open-ended discussion about ACBL’s current Junior Programs. The Junior Task Force has invited all board members to attend.

Youth NABC

Online registration is now open for the upcoming Youth NABC in Philadelphia. Education and Meeting Services are working closely together to make the tournament run more efficiently. Emails have been sent to all Unit and District officials requesting they spread the word about the Youth NABC. A mailing containing flyers and posters was sent to all 300 school bridge teachers and a postcard mailing was sent to all 800 youth members.

King/Queen of Bridge

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2012 King/Queen of Bridge. To enter the contest, applicants need to send an e-mail with personal information and qualifications, along with the name of their school and school principal, the school address and phone number to education@acbl.org no later than May 11. An email to Unit & District Presidents and Education Liaisons has been sent requesting they help obtain nominations.

Graduates from the ACBL's Funded School Program has grown by 12.2% from 2010 to 2011:

	S06	F06	S07	F07	S08	F08	S09	F09	S10	F10	S11	F11
College	13	7	4	3	3	6	4	5	2	6	3	5
High	41	27	28	26	32	35	42	25	28	25	41	43
Middle	94	49	63	77	84	96	85	74	95	83	85	104
Elementary	60	56	47	48	42	53	28	46	68	60	45	51
Other	5	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Classes	354		297		351		309		367		377	
Total Graduates	4,830		3,694		2,803		2,764		2,970		3,331	
Total US Teacher Stipends	\$40,040		\$38,815		\$42,670		\$47,105		\$43,890		\$54,940	
Total Can. Teacher Stipends	\$64,915		\$28,265		\$41,515		\$36,000		\$34,590		\$36,750	
Grand total for Stipends	\$104,955		\$67,080		\$84,185		\$83,105		\$78,480		\$91,690	

Youth and Junior membership has grown from 2010 to 2011. Youth membership increased from 797 to 826 (4%) and Junior membership has increased from 1,140 to 1,203 (6%). The Junior membership figures include Youth.

YOUTH AND JUNIOR MEMBER STATS BY DISTRICT

(The chart reflects paid members only. 2011 figures are in parenthesis.)

District	Youth	Junior	District	Youth	Junior
1	28 (32)	36 (42)	14	25 (26)	37 (35)
2	46 (48)	56 (60)	15	43 (50)	52 (57)
3	79 (89)	91 (104)	16	40 (42)	67 (68)
4	16 (23)	35 (46)	17	12 (12)	18 (17)
5	5 (8)	9 (17)	18	3 (3)	9 (8)
6	29 (29)	52 (60)	19	16 (16)	34 (30)
7	133(141)	159 (165)	20	13 (13)	15 (18)
8	19 (24)	23 (33)	21	42 (45)	64 (74)
9	59 (53)	73 (68)	22	6 (9)	9 (14)
10	52 (20)	64 (29)	23	12 (13)	23 (22)
11	32 (35)	50 (52)	24	32 (32)	48 (51)
12	8 (11)	15 (20)	25	20 (26)	41 (54)
13	13 (18)	30 (40)	99	14 (8)	30 (19)
Total	797 (826)	1,140 (1,203)	– Includes Youth Members		

For the full education report, please visit:

<http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/121EdStatusReport.pdf>

RECORDER:

We ordered new and more sophisticated camera equipment to be used for security filming during our NABCs. This equipment is being used on a trial basis to see if we can more easily discern unusual actions by our players during play.

REGIONALS at SEA:

The following is an update to the 2012 and 2103 RAS cruises:

2012

Western Conference (Hawaii) September 26, 2012

As of 3/1 99 sign-ups

Alice Travel (Bermuda)

September 9, 2012

As of 3/1 51 sign-ups

Western Caribbean

December 16, 2012

As of 3/1 44 sign-ups

2013

Four proposals were submitted by the deadline of Friday, February 17, from the following entities:

1. Alice Travel
2. Bridge at Sea (dba Expedia Cruise Ship Centers)
3. Bruce Travel - Ft Lauderdale
4. Western Conference

All proposed cruises are 7-9 days in length. The responses are currently being evaluated and the three RAS cruises will be awarded in April.

MEGA HOUSING:

Our current agreement with Mega Housing expires this year. An RFP will be developed to rebid our travel services contract. We plan to send the RFP to potential housing service providers by mid-May and will promote it through all ACBL channels (Bridge Bulletin, website, etc.). We will have a mid-June deadline for submittals.

To date, we have identified the following agencies to which we plan to send the RFP:

Mega-Housing
Collinson
Expedient
Conlin Travel
Travel Planners
Anthony Travel

We will confer with the NABC Advisory Committee at the Philadelphia NABC in July and plan to award the 2013 – 2015 housing contract by August 1, 2012.

FINANCE:

The ACBL external audit has been completed and final adjustments recorded. A draft of the audited Financial Statements will be reviewed with the Audit Committee at the March BOD meeting and final copies will be mailed to each Director following the March meeting.

January accounting close completed and budget to actual report sent to Finance Committee.

HEALTH & PENSION PROGRAMS:

The actuarial report for the Retiree Medical Plan has been received and reviewed.

The actuarial report for the Pension Plan has been received and reviewed and a copy will be sent to the Plan Trustees. Copies of the Participant Statements are being reviewed and will be distributed within the next two weeks. A detailed discussion of the pension program is planned for Executive Session.

401k ADMINISTRATION:

A meeting of the 401k trustees – Al Levy, Dan Morse and Robert Hartman – will be held on Thursday, March 15, 2012 at 9:00am. Representatives from Morgan Keegan will be attending the meeting to review our current fee structure, the current menu of investment options, and to discuss the performance of ING, our current investment firm.

SPECIAL EVENTS REPORT:

Both the number of “special fund games” and the masterpoint awards for these games were reduced as of July 1, 2010. The table count impact on these special games declined 30%-70% in part due to this change:

	2009	2010	2011	Two-year Change
Educational Fund	12,858.5	6,811	3,557	-72%
Club Junior Fund	68,701.5	59,098	48,250.5	-30%
Club Charity Games	114,678	109,306	69,259.5	-40%

It appears that clubs started holding additional NAP and GNT games to replace the loss of special fund games. Masterpoint awards at the club level for these events are 100% half red, half black sectional rating.

	2009	2010	2011	Two-year Change
NAP	49,306	55,148	70,498.5	+43%
GNT	6,988	7,301	8,832	+26%

Prior to July 1, 2010 clubs could hold as many special fund games as they had sanctioned sessions. This was changed to one special fund game per sanctioned session per month.

The month of February is reserved for Junior Fund Games, the month of April is reserved for charity games and the month of September is reserved for International Fund games. In those months, all ACBL sanctioned club sessions may be special games for the named funds. The masterpoint rating for all of the special fund games were also reduced from 100% sectionally rated to 70% sectionally rated as of July 1, 2010. For the report on Special events, please visit [http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/2011 Special Events Report.pdf](http://web2.acbl.org/bb/BOD/2011%20Special%20Events%20Report.pdf)