

MANAGEMENT REPORT

To: ACBL Board of Directors

cc: Richard Anderson

From: Robert Hartman, CEO
ACBL

Date: November 2016

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership stands at 168,352 as of the end of October with 91 fewer members than at the start of the year. New members increased by 1.3%, however, lapsed members also increased slightly. The net is Full membership statistics can be found at:

[Active Membership Statistics OCT.pdf](#)

CLUBS:

Club Table

The overall table count for club games for the first nine months of 2016 is 2,416,990 of which 782,334 are from online games. Total table count is relatively flat compared to last year. The full report can be found at:

[Club Tables Year to Date September 2016.pdf](#)

Club Outreach

To better serve clubs, Carol Robertson contacted club managers and/or owners to obtain their thoughts, suggestions and concerns. It is important to note that 50% of ACBL club table count comes from 10% of clubs. The ACBL is looking at ways to better incent all top clubs.

Click here for the key findings and recommendations: [club outreach 10-28-16.pdf](#)

Click here to see the top Clubs who represent 50% of the table counts: [top10%from2015.pdf](#)

TOURNAMENT DIVISION:

Regional table count is down 1.8% compared to last October (2672 tables) on three additional regionals. The average table count per tournament was down 4.5% (1318 v. 1261).

Sectional tables are flat (362 tables) on one additional tournament, with average tables running are also flat (152 v. 152).

STaC Tables show a decrease of 3.9% (3344 tables) on four fewer tournaments. Average tables are up by 2.62% (1379 v. 1415).

Total tournament tables decreased by 1.78% (6378.6 tables) on the same number of tournaments.

Click here for table counts through October 2016 [102016TC.pdf](#)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

Personnel

- Web Developer Paul Ryburn transferred into the Marketing team to provide web and technical support.

Software Development

- Continued progress towards a USEBIO standard and using USEBIO to feed a Masterpoint Engine external to ACBLScore
 - Created Dropbox for sharing sample club USEBIO gamefiles for testing in Masterpoint engine
- Released a BETA version of the ACBL Live API to 10 non-ACBL Developers. Received rave reviews for the work completed.
- Created Hand Records for the Orlando NABC using Big Deal instead of our proprietary Hand Record Generator.
- Upgraded TourneyTRAX to support changes to:
 - Big Deal Hand Records
 - ACBL Live API
- ACBL Live 2.62 was released to provide the following new capabilities:
 - Added additional data integrity checks for gamefile upload.
 - Added time zone selection to facilitate checking of premature uploads.
 - Updated TD Message facility so that TDs will now see new messages in near real time as they are entered into the system making important information more readily accessible.
- Modified MYACBL Login process to allow for members to see their password. This was requested by the customer support organization to assist members who are having difficulty logging in.
- Club Sanction Renewal Process was rewritten to store club data in the cloud. Data is updated in the cloud first and then replicated to the AS/400 so that existing legacy reports can continue function correctly. We continue to migrate off the AS/400. 2017 projects include the ERP and CRM Systems.
- Updated Club Reports to use new version of double dummy information from Bridge Composer.

Infrastructure Upgrades

- Installed 3 new servers at Horn Lake to support the following applications:
 - Microsoft WSUS
 - PastPerfect
 - Iml Mail Gateway for non acbl.org email
 - Cloudberry Backup
- Phophix and Paperwise to be upgraded before year end
- Rolled out new laptops to Tournament Directors at Summer NABC

FINANCE:

Drafts of the 2016 forecast and the proposed 2017 budgets for operations and capital expenditures were discussed with the Finance Committee on October 31. These documents will be updated and will be presented to the Finance Committee in Orlando.

Financial results for the year-to-date period through October show an increase in net assets of \$774K. The forecast for the 12 months ending December 31, 2016, estimates an increase in net assets of \$701K, \$600K higher than the \$101K budget increase. The main drivers of this positive variance include \$250K in unbudgeted BBO income, which offsets lower than expected tournament revenue, and total expenses which are expected to be \$485K lower than budget.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Current staffing

219 employees

Headquarters: 56 full-time; 3 part-time

Field: Canada – 3 full-time; 23 part-time

US – 34 full-time; 99 part-time

Open positions:

Director of Field Operations

Director of Marketing

Filled positions:

Joe Irby joins the IT team as Developer, reporting to Julia McGaughy. Joe graduated from University of Memphis with a degree in Computer Science and has over 12 years of web and software development experience.

Doree Sobel and Lynn Chapin have been hired as part time Local TDs, reporting to Marilyn Wells.

Compliance Training

All employees have been assigned Anti-Harassment Training and are required to sign off on the receipt and understanding of our Workplace Harassment Policy and the Youth Protection & Abuse Policy. This will be completed by end of Q4 2016.

ACBL Employees Give Back

Several headquarters employees and their family members participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer on October 23. The group completed the three mile walk and raised \$600 for the Memphis Chapter of the American Cancer Society.

Headquarters employees collected over 350 canned and packaged foods and toiletry items for the Memphis Food Bank.

2017 Benefits

The initial quote from Aetna for 2017 medical, dental, and vision rates initially came in at a 23% increase. Our benefits broker solicited quotes from other benefits providers, with the goal to secure more reasonable rates or to leverage their quotes to negotiate lower rates with our current provider. They were able to secure United Health Care at a 9.1% decrease in rates.

Meeting Services

Orlando reservations are going very well; additional rooms have been added at the adjacent Swan hotel and at the Doubletree which includes a free player shuttle. The tournament chairs and their committee members have worked hard to ensure the players have an exceptional tournament experience. They have secured two sponsorships: Tupperware is donating registration gifts and Florida's Natural is donating orange juice daily.

Reservations for Kansas City opened last month. They are selling and will pick up after the fall NABC.

The contracts for Providence, summer 2021, have been finalized and a proposal for New Orleans, spring 2023, will be presented in Orlando.

Facilities

Construction commenced on the flood protection project on October 28 and is estimated to be completed by November 30. The project involves constructing a ring levee around the building and parking lot protecting the building from flood water. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$140,000.

MARKETING:

Acquisition/Awareness

Website analytics

With a focus on prospect data and ultimately increasing membership to the ACBL, McNeely Pigott & Fox set up a Google Analytics dashboard to better understand traffic on ACBL's website. This allows us to draw conclusions about user behavior so that we can plan our marketing efforts accordingly.

To better segment member traffic from prospect traffic, a pop up asking users to self-identify was used. Non-members were given the option to provide the ACBL with more information to receive education resources. During a month of collecting data, 40,903 responses were submitted. 7716 users identified as non-member (approximately 20% of traffic), with 2942 (38% of nonmembers) giving an email address to obtain more information.

Data is showing there is a healthy amount of prospective traffic to the ACBL website that is interested in learning bridge. Modifications to the website are being made to better engage this audience for conversion.

Just Play Bridge

On June 1, the ability to play solitaire games from Bridge Base Online was added to the ACBL website. The goal of this project was two-fold: to provide an avenue to play bridge on the ACBL site and to collect email addresses and information from prospective members visiting the website. To play, users must first fill out a brief form including some contact information. Nearly 2500 users have filled out the form, and approximately 68% of players have identified themselves as non-members.

Non-members added to the prospective member database, and engagement begins within a week of collecting their data. As of November 7, a total of 68 non-member users have been converted to membership via this tactic alone.

It's Your Call

On May 24, Marketing launched a weekly subscription email using archived It's Your Call columns. The email gives subscribers the weekly It's Your Call problem along with a link to read the complete expert answer on our website. While members and non-members alike have the opportunity to subscribe to the email, non-members who play Just Play Bridge are automatically subscribed.

Currently, 12,847 readers subscribe to the email, and of these, 3471 are non-members. Year-to-date, 123 readers have joined or renewed their membership after receiving an It's Your Call email.

Further promotions and initiatives are being planned to drive self-subscribers to It's Your Call with a goal of attracting social players/non-members.

Bridge Life

The new version of Bridge Life has been printed, and mailing began in November. The revised Bridge Life includes more beginner articles and better promotes membership. The piece is currently mailed to all non-members who have earned masterpoints at the club level and of which there is a mailing address.

Resource Center/Tricks of the Trade

Designed to be a convenient, easy-to-use tool that allows clubs, teachers, units and districts to order or download virtually anything they need to grow the game, the Resource Center has become a regular part of marketing operating procedures. Average site visits and resource downloads continue to rise as more clubs, teachers and unit/district officials become aware of the Resource Center and others continue to return.

Tricks of the Trade, the marketing blog released every other week in conjunction with the Resource Center, continues to receive positive feedback and encourage traffic and downloads. On average, the email blast for the blog has a 37% open rate.

Retention

New member email series

A series of monthly emails has been created to guide new members on the first year of their membership. New members are encouraged to establish their MyACBL and Abenity accounts, access education resources and visit their first club or tournament. Each month there is a new education lesson that links to practice hands in Learn To Play Bridge, and a one-question survey aimed at helping Marketing better understand the first-year member and his or her needs.

All emails have a 50% or greater open rate. The average click-through-rate to the ACBL website or LTPB is 23%, with some emails receiving up to a 35% click-through-rate.

E-renewal notices

Clubs and Member Services, Marketing and IT are working on a project to begin emailing renewal notices to all members with known email addresses. This will save the organization significant funds in printing and postage. Additionally it provides the opportunity to clean our email lists and revamp the way we communicate with our members.

Engagement

The Longest Day

The Longest Day 2016 was held on June 20. This is a day earlier than previous years due to the leap year. In addition to The Longest Day, there was a Canadian-specific event held, called Trump Alzheimer's Contré. In total, 252 clubs in the U.S. and Canada held games to support the event.

All players who ACBLscore indicated played in the event were surveyed for satisfaction. The survey indicated that our members enjoy The Longest Day and the ACBL's participation in the event gives them pride in the organization.

Marketing Solutions, powered by Pianola

As requests for email services come in, units and districts are reminded about the availability to spearhead their own campaigns through Marketing Solutions, powered by Pianola. Each unit/district has access to a database of members it is appropriate for them to contact – their unit/district and surrounding regions.

A new feature for managing contacts is being added to the software. Instead of selecting recipients based solely on home unit, users will be able to select recipients in a limited radius of the tournament. Units and districts will still be able to contact all of their own members.

Thus far, 141 user accounts have been created. In addition, the product is being used internally to fulfill Tournament Emails Services. To learn more about Pianola and to read the Terms of Service, visit <http://www.acbl.org/marketing/marketing-solutions/>.

Marketing plans to continue use and maximization of the service to units and districts through a series of email coaching communications.

Rank and Recognition

Several award certificates have been created and automated including those for Mini-McKenney, Ace of Clubs and rank changes below Life Master. These can be accessed through users' MyACBL accounts.

Emails with links to certificates recognizing members' rank changes are distributed at the onset of each month. The program has been met with positive response from members and features one of the highest open rates (an average of 69%).

Social Media

Facebook and Twitter are used to engage our members, promote the ACBL and reach out to the media in addition to including a digital marketing strategy in the majority of our communications and advertising plans. Our Facebook page is particularly active, and with 6373 followers, has grown by nearly 12% since January 1. Our Twitter account has 2245 followers, a number that also continues to grow.

Facebook content is added daily and features a variety of topics including archived It's Your Call games (the most popular posts), winners, historic photographs, famous quotes and more. During NABCs, photo galleries of winners and players are added as well as links to Daily Bulletins. Twitter

is primarily used to reach out to media sources and connect members to articles written about the ACBL and bridge.

During the Orlando NABC, Marketing will explore Facebook Live as a way to connect with members and potential members. Plans include utilizing this tool to broadcast the Teacher and Club Roundtable, select education speakers and the excitement surrounding event wins.

Media Relations

Media outreach during the Washington, DC NABC lead to 31 clips in 10 outlets, generating 1,906,742 total impressions. Highlights include YNABC coverage with Sports Illustrated Kids and Washington Post.

Marketing Operations

E-marketing and communication

Between January 1 and November 1, 2016, 654 email campaigns were launched by the ACBL. Email topics included the following: tournament announcements, Tricks of the Trade blog posts, rank change announcements, ACBL program promotions, district newsletters, surveys and reminders about expired memberships.

Since the launch of Marketing Solutions, powered by Pianola, the number of campaigns led by the ACBL has dropped by 35%. We expect this number to continue to drop as more units and districts understand the power of this new tool.

Creative Services

Creative services were employed for many of the organization's departments and for a wide variety of projects, the most significant of which was the overhaul and redesign of Bridge Life Magazine. Not only were all elements refined, but also a new cover to target a younger audience was designed and three new articles targeted to newcomers were added.

Other design projects included several elements to go with this year's Instant Matchpoint Game like a new logo, a booklet of analysis, posters for clubs, travelers and a slider for ACBL's homepage. Additionally, the Philadelphia NABC logo has been finished, and the design for the 2019 Las Vegas NABC is underway. The restaurant guide and interactive map for the Orlando NABC was also completed. The interactive map continues to be improved, and this time local grocery stores were added.

New collateral continues to be designed and added to the Resource Center. Recent examples are business card templates, the "Come Play with Us" ad template and the "Rules of Thumb" bookmark.

The design of numerous email campaigns is continuing, including monthly emails to new members and specialized NABC emails, as well as designs for game analyses for the International Fund Games and Charity Games.

Hall of Fame

The 2016 Hall of Fame had 126 guests and collected \$7660 in ticket sales. The event was well received and came in under budget. Eddie Wold received media coverage for his induction with the local NPR affiliate in Houston TX.

EDUCATION:

Cooperative Advertising Program

Year-to-date, the program has reimbursed \$98,067 to 158 units, clubs and teachers.

Learn Bridge in A Day?®

The ACBL hosts a LBIAD seminar and corresponding teacher training course at each NABC. Reservations are now open for the LBIAD at the 2016 Fall NABC in Orlando. The Educational Foundation also sponsors the course at the unit level. In 2015 they funded 11 events and funded 10 in 2016.

Marketing supports both the NABC and Unit LBIAD events by sending email blasts to area teachers, club managers, members and lapsed members before the event. For clubs hosting LBIAD events, Marketing will also distribute email blasts upon request.

Participating clubs and units are requested to submit attendee contact information for follow-up marketing and ACBL membership tracking. So far 637 people have attended LBIAD events sponsored by the Educational Foundation in 2016.

Learn To Play Bridge

Since 2014, Learn to Play Bridge has had 34,226 registered users of the software. Of these 440 have joined directly through the software, and an additional 2309 have joined sometime after using the software. The conversion rate for the new Learn To Play Bridge software is about 8%.

Lifelong Learning

In 2016, 390 students have participated in 21 classes at 12 institutions offering bridge through their lifelong learning programs.

ACBL supported the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) programs at University of South Florida, University of North Florida, University of Georgia, California State University at Long Beach, University of Delaware, University of Alabama Huntsville and Kennesaw State University. We are now an officially recognized OLLI curriculum resource.

Other lifelong learning programs with ACBL-supported bridge lessons were offered at Collin College in Plano TX, Lone Star College in Humble TX and McGill University in Montreal Canada.

Teacher Accreditation Program

We have accredited 163 new teachers through five TAPs held in 2016. Below is the schedule for the balance of 2016 and those scheduled so far in 2017.

Year	Start Date	End Date	City	State	Type
2016	Nov. 25	Nov. 27	Orlando	FL	NABC
2017	Oct. 30	Nov. 1	Lancaster	PA	Regional
2017	Jan. 22	Jan. 23	Houston	TX	Regional
2017	Mar. 9	Mar. 11	Kansas City	MO	NABC
2017	Apr. 20	Apr. 22	Gatlinburg	TN	Regional

Year	Start Date	End Date	City	State	Type
2017	Jul. 20	Jul. 22	Toronto	ON	NABC
2017	Nov. 24	Nov 26	San Diego	CA	NABC

Collegiate Bridgebowl

The first qualifying stage of the Collegiate Bridgebowl drew 16 teams. After two days of online competition, UC Berkeley, Georgia Tech, UNC Chapel Hill and UI Urbana-Champaign qualified to the finals to be held in Toronto.

A second qualifying stage is scheduled for February 4 and 5. All teams who played in the first qualifying stage, but did not qualify, are eligible to participate in the second qualifying stage. Teams may also add members or change existing members.

Youth NABC in Washington DC

A record 233 kids attended and played in the YNABC. Baron Barclay sponsored a \$2000 scholarship for the winning pair, Bridge Base Online sponsored a \$4000 for the winning Swiss team and Master Point Press sponsored the \$1000 sportsmanship award. Reporters from The Washington Post and Sports Illustrated Kids attended the YNABC, and both publications ran stories about the event.

Accredited Teachers

The following are the statistics as of June 2016:

ACBL Accredited	6592
Better Bridge Accredited	952
ABTA Teacher	660
Easybridge! Accredited	1056
LBIAD Teachers	145
School Bridge	228
Registered in Find a Teacher Database	1414

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

School Bridge Program

The following table shows statistics from the School Bridge Program:

Schools	S11	F11	S12	F12	S13	F13	S14	F14	S15	F15	S16
College	3	5	3	4	3	8	7	6	7	9	3
High	41	43	45	49	44	58	57	54	51	40	11
Middle	85	104	86	91	81	108	112	106	102	167	57
Elementary	45	51	58	60	62	75	78	68	72	89	14
Total Classes	377		396		439		488		537		85
Total U.S. Teacher Stipends	\$54,940		\$71,657		\$108,620		\$111,231		\$138,900		\$34,250
Total Can.	\$36,750		\$37,450		\$42,860		\$43,871		\$50,050		\$15,050

Teacher Stipends						
Grand total for Stipends	\$91,690	\$109,107	\$151,480	\$155,102	\$188,950	\$49,300

The drop in school bridge programs is largely due to the reclassification of lessons series. Prior to 2016, stipends were paid to teachers for every eight students they instructed. Under that execution, a class of 24 students would have been counted as three separate classes with three separate stipends. With the policy revision, a class of 24 students is counted as one class, and the teacher receives one stipend. Junior memberships have also declined.

YOUTH AND JUNIOR MEMBER STATS BY DISTRICT

(The chart reflects paid members only.

Previous Total is from Summer 2016 NABC CEO Report.)

District	Total	Prev. Total	Diff.	Youths	Juniors
1	34	33	1	20	14
2	53	46	7	41	12
3	52	59	-7	41	11
4	21	22	-1	6	15
5	12	10	2	6	6
6	74	79	-5	59	15
7	157	177	-20	126	31
8	14	20	-6	10	4
9	80	80	0	67	13
10	29	36	-7	21	8
11	28	35	-7	22	6
12	13	14	-1	4	9
13	39	41	-2	23	16
14	19	22	-3	13	6
15	16	24	-8	11	5
16	71	79	-8	38	33
17	23	27	-4	14	9
18	5	4	1	2	3
19	43	31	12	34	9
20	14	13	1	9	5
21	127	136	-9	98	29
22	22	22	0	14	8
23	25	21	4	10	15
24	57	61	-4	37	20
25	68	49	19	51	17
99	84	38	46	64	20
Total	1180	1179	1	841	339

2014 Summer NABC Management Report: 1208 Total Junior/Youth Members

2015 Summer NABC Management Report: 1152 Total Junior/Youth Members

2016 Summer NABC Management Report: 1179 Total Junior/Youth Members

2016 Fall NABC Management Report: 1180 Total Junior/Youth Members

2012: 556 new Junior/Youth members; 461 aged out

2013: 622 new Junior/Youth members; 424 aged out

2014: 546 new Junior/Youth members; 359 aged out

2015: 587 new Junior/Youth members; 364 aged out
2016: 451 new Junior/Youth members YTD; 155 aged out YTD

2016 CBF JUNIOR ACTIVITIES REPORT

2016 was the second year in the current two-year cycle of the CBF Junior Program. The focus this year was on selecting and preparing the two teams that would represent Canada at the 2016 World Youth Team Championships, from among the 27 players who participated in the program in 2015.

The two teams (Juniors and Kids) were selected in the first quarter. The teams were captained and coached by Bryan Maksymetz (Juniors), and Nader Hanna (Kids).

Team preparations included:

1. Supervised play sessions. The Junior sessions were held on BBO as team members were located in different cities. On the other hand, all but one of the Kids team members lived in Toronto so their training was a combination of face-to-face sessions as well as online BBO sessions.
2. Players continued to have free access to Bridge Master software, and were given assignments to help develop their declarer skills.
3. The two teams competed in the Canadian Bridge Team Championships (Flights B and C) held in Toronto in May.
4. 24 youths, including members of the Kids team, received financial assistance to attend the Youth NABC in Washington, DC in July.

In early August, the two teams travelled to Salsomaggiore, Italy immediately following the Washington NABC. The Kids team was accompanied by parents/guardians as mandated by the CBF youth protection policies.

It is our expectation that, in addition to new recruits, most of the 27 players who participated in the just concluded Junior Program cycle will continue in the program for the upcoming 2017-2018 cycle.

REPORT OF USBF JUNIOR BRIDGE ACTIVITIES FOR 2016:

Each January the ACBL awards the USBF \$50,000 to support our Junior Program. These funds are used to pay for expenses associated with sending teams to represent the USA at the World Youth Bridge Team Championships (WYBTC), which are held in even-numbered years. Funds we received in 2015 and 2016 were used to send five teams (27 players and 5 nonplaying captains) to the 2016 WYBTC in Italy in August.

Expenses for the 2016 WYBTC

Airfare	\$57774
Housing & meals (arranged by WBF)*	28283
Uniforms required by WBF	5265
Entry fees for four teams (no fee for U16)	4440
Transportation to and from airports in Italy	2613

Miscellaneous expenses (\$100 given to each person for domestic ground transportation and other miscellaneous expenses)	3200
Total Spend	\$101575
*Includes housing and meal for parents of young players who went with the U16 team. We paid the WBF directly and were reimbursed by parents (\$2887) for their housing and meals	(2887)
Net Expenses	\$98688

In addition to selecting and supporting junior teams in international play, the USBF continues to have a vibrant internet-based training program run by Michael Rosenberg. Currently we have about 70 juniors who are active members. The juniors play weekly online in small groups and receive training and feedback from about 15 volunteer expert mentors.

Using funds raised from private donors, the USBF hopes to sponsor the third biannual Junior United States Bridge Championships (JUSBC) in late 2017 to qualify teams to represent the USA in the 2018 WYBTC. For the 2015 JUSBC we paid expenses for 71 young players (total cost was about \$54,000) to come to Atlanta and compete in four categories (Under16, U21, U26, and young women).

Many thanks to the ACBL, its Board of Directors, and its Management for supporting our representatives to the WYBTC. The USBF Junior Program very much appreciates your helping us develop a strong program for our young bridge players, many of whom will be active members of the ACBL for decades to come.

Joe Stokes
 USBF Junior Program Coordinator