

HANDBOOK FOR UNIT PRESIDENTS



American Contract Bridge League

6575 Windchase Blvd.

Horn Lake MS 38637-1523

662-253-3100

www.acbl.org

Revised Nov. 2010

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction..... | 4 |
| The Role of the Unit President..... | 5 |
| Minimum Unit Requirements | 6 |
| Duties and Responsibilities of All Units | 6 |
| Getting Started | 8 |
| Your Team | 8 |
| Positions Required by the Unit Bylaws — Unit Officers..... | 8 |
| Positions Requested by the ACBL Board of Directors..... | 8 |
| Basic Committees | 9 |
| Special Unit Positions | 9 |
| Getting Everyone in Your Boat Rowing in the Same Direction.... | 10 |
| Schedule a Planning Meeting..... | 12 |
| Working with Volunteers..... | 14 |
| Motivating People to Say “Yes” | 14 |
| A Great Idea on Volunteering | 16 |
| Nominating Committees | 16 |
| Designing Volunteer Work Positions | 17 |
| Tips for Coordinating Your Volunteer Efforts! | 18 |
| Let ACBL Help!..... | 19 |
| Offer a Unit Growth Seminar (UGS) | 19 |
| Priority Programs | 20 |
| New Player Services..... | 20 |
| Mentoring..... | 22 |

Appendix

| | |
|--|----|
| Duties of Your Unit Officers..... | 24 |
| Duties of the Requested Position Team Members..... | 26 |
| Education Liaison..... | 26 |
| IN (Intermediate-Newcomer) Coordinator..... | 26 |
| Unit Tournament Coordinator, Contact and Chair | 27 |
| Committees and Their Duties | 28 |
| Membership Committee — Unit Membership Chair..... | 28 |
| Publicity Committee — Publicity Chair | 29 |
| Education Committee | 30 |
| Disciplinary Committee | 31 |
| Special Unit Appointments | 32 |
| Unit Recorder | 32 |
| Unit Game Coordinator..... | 33 |
| Organizational Structure of the ACBL..... | 34 |
| Tips from Other Unit Presidents | 36 |

Introduction

Congratulations, you've just been elected president of your ACBL unit! We've gathered some guidelines and tips to help you get started.

We'd like to include your ideas and tips, so please let us hear from you.

We've started with a discussion on your role as unit president:

- the unit's obligations in order to be an ACBL unit,
- ideas for your first board meeting,
- tips for appointing your team members,
- job descriptions for the positions you and/or the board will want to fill.

Make certain your new officers and appointees have an up-to-date list of unit members (call the ACBL Data Services at 901-332-5586, ext. 1258) and get the ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations (www.acbl.org/about/handbook.html) to use as a valuable reference. ACBL provides handbooks for many of the unit positions, so check to make certain your volunteers have these useful publications (www.acbl.org/units/units.html).

We've included information on the structure of the ACBL (how the units, districts and national board fit in) to help your board members have a better understanding of the organization. We've provided links to the ACBL web site (www.acbl.org) for some priority programs (New Player Services, Mentoring) that you will want to implement and publicity and marketing information you will find helpful.

Continuity is important for your unit. Not only should you pass on notes and information regarding the unit activities you have been involved in during your tenure, but you should encourage each of your officers and committee chairs to do the same for their successors.

An ACBL contact sheet is available in the Bridge Bulletin. Use this when you need to contact headquarters for information or assistance. Remember ACBL's headquarters staff is available to assist you in performing your duties. Please don't hesitate to contact us if and when you need help. Good luck!

The Role of the Unit President

The unit president is the person whose job it is to infuse the unit with the interest and enthusiasm necessary for the unit members to work as a team. The unit president leads the team as it works to fulfill the basic unit obligations, duties and responsibilities as outlined by the ACBL. (See the following pages.)

The unit president's main focus should be to perform the duties and accept the responsibilities outlined for the president in the unit bylaws. These responsibilities should conform as closely as possible to the description that follows:

- The unit president presides at all meetings of the unit board of directors and all general meetings of the unit membership.
- The president appoints all committees and serves on them as an ex-officio member with the exception of the Nominating Committee. These committees will include the following: disciplinary, education, executive, membership, publicity and tournament.
- The president exercises general supervision over the activities of the unit board.
- The president performs the duties that are incidental to office, including those assigned by the unit.

MINIMUM UNIT REQUIREMENTS

- To hold an annual membership meeting.
- To produce a written annual financial statement and make it available to the district director and any unit members upon request.
- To adopt bylaws that are consistent with those of ACBL and file a copy with the ACBL. (See Appendix for a sample of unit bylaws.)

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL UNITS

- To actively recruit and enroll new members of the ACBL.
- To appoint a tournament coordinator, an education liaison, and an IN (intermediate-newcomer) coordinator.
- To provide optimal playing opportunities for all unit members.
- To conduct sectional, regional and NABC tournaments when authorized by the district.
- To prepare conditions of contest for the unit's tournaments.
- To offer IN sectionals (the unit can delegate these tournaments to clubs) and IN programs (at unit sectionals and regionals).
- To work with the district and the ACBL on the promotion of district-wide and ACBL-wide tournaments.
- To promote the development and organization of sanctioned club games within the unit.
- To process reports of dishonesty in all games within the unit's jurisdiction.

- To appoint a Conduct and Ethics Committee.
- To investigate and process reports of dishonest, unethical or improper conduct by participants in sanctioned games, unit events or tournaments under the unit's jurisdiction.
- To discipline members guilty of such conduct in a manner fully consistent with the ACBL disciplinary regulations.

To participate in the following elections:

- Annual or biennial election of a unit board of directors by popular vote of the unit members.
- Election of unit officers as provided in the unit's bylaws.
- Annual election of district director, first and second alternate directors and representatives to the Board of Governors by the unit board of directors.

Getting Started

YOUR TEAM

Now that you know the scope of your duties, let's take a look at the members of your team. The unit board has been elected by the membership. The unit officers may be elected by either the membership or the board, according to your unit's bylaws.

You, as the unit president, will generally make the appointments for the requested positions and the various standing committees. (See the Appendix for details on the duties of each of these positions.)

POSITIONS REQUIRED BY THE UNIT BYLAWS — UNIT OFFICERS

Each unit is expected to have a president, a vice president, a secretary and a treasurer as provided by the unit's bylaws.

The bylaws may provide for additional officers (*i.e.*, a recording secretary).

POSITIONS REQUESTED BY THE ACBL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The ACBL Board of Directors has made a special request that each unit appoint an education liaison, an IN (intermediate-newcomer) coordinator and a tournament coordinator.

Basic Committees

The size of the unit will determine which committees you want to establish as standing committees. The president may appoint ad hoc committees to supplement the standing committees as they are needed. Start with these ...

- a. Membership Committee
- b. Education Committee
- c. Disciplinary Committee
- d. Publicity Committee

Special Unit Positions

Once again, the size of the unit will determine if you should appoint a person for each position or one person to fill more than one position.

- a. Unit recorder
- b. Unit game coordinator(s)
- c. NAOP coordinator
- d. GNT coordinator

Getting Everyone in Your Boat Rowing in the Same Direction

It's time for your first board meeting. You've appointed your team members. Now you must decide how you can best work together and what you will try to accomplish during the year.

If your unit has previously established a mission statement, a vision statement and a credo, review how you are doing. If this hasn't been done, start by having your group answer these questions together to give your unit board a sense of ownership in the unit's mission, vision and credo. This will bring your unit board members together as a team — rowing in the same direction.

1. What's important around here?

(This is your mission statement.)

Your mission is what you hope to accomplish. It's the unit's purpose or "reason for being." It is the primary objective of your unit's plans and programs. When there is agreement about what's important, people tend to come to decisions faster and define objectives more easily.

***Our Mission Is to Perpetuate All Forms of the
Game for the Benefit of Our Membership***

2. Where do we want to go?

(This is your vision statement.)

A vision is something to be pursued. It is a concise word picture of the unit at some future time, which sets the overall direction of the unit. It is what you are striving to be. A vision should be simple, realistic, but most of all energizing. The most compelling reason for a crystal-clear mutual vision is that it gives everyone in the unit something on which to focus their skills and brain power.

***Bridge Games Generate the Excitement
that Everyone Wants to Enjoy***

3. What do we stand for?

(This is your credo!)

A credo is the message you send to your members. A credo is a strong, crisp, clean statement of what your unit believes in, what it stands for. The credo encompasses the collective principles and ideas which guide the actions of the unit — its values.

***Fun, Friendship, Competition —
Bridge Is the Game for a Lifetime!***

Schedule a Planning Meeting

Every year at the beginning of your unit year, the president should schedule a planning meeting — a session where all ideas are heard. It should last three to four hours — no business conducted — and it should be run by someone familiar with running management seminars. (Most units will find they have a person who fills this bill — you may have to seek him or her out.)

Establish unit projects. Through your discussions, determine which projects your unit wants to take on. Prioritize them and, most importantly, assign your team members to head the various projects.

Determine how you will measure success. It's important to determine a way to measure the success of new projects.

For instance, if you are trying the New Player Services program for the first time, how are you going to determine the success of this program? You can measure the reactions of the participants and then follow these people to see if they continue to remain members, continue to play in your clubs and at tournaments; you can follow your membership numbers — are they increasing and at what masterpoint level are they increasing/decreasing.

Don't be afraid to try something new. Consider having one or two meetings during the year when you don't discuss business.

Take an area of concern, like membership, and brainstorm. Then take action on the ideas the members of the board have generated.

Whenever you run this type of meeting, get stats from ACBL Headquarters on how your unit is doing (*e.g.*, on membership, tournament attendance, club attendance, etc.). Get the facts so you will know exactly what you are dealing with — not what individual board members might think — but what is actually happening.

Stay in touch with your unit members. Get feedback from your members by taking surveys — not just at tournaments — but from your membership at large. It's important to evaluate how your members are reacting to what you are doing.

Working with Volunteers

The three R's to volunteering:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Recognition

To fill the jobs your unit is required to have and those the unit will want to have in place to run efficiently, you will find yourself in the position of needing to recruit a number of volunteers. Don't worry. After all, someone was successful in recruiting you, right?

MOTIVATING PEOPLE TO SAY "YES"

- Be motivated yourself. Sincerity wins out over technique every time.
- Be clear on what you want people to do. You can make job descriptions whenever possible.
- Use titles. The word "volunteer" is a category, not a function. It is much more appealing to be asked to become a "New Player Services member" or "Education Committee member" or something else definable, than to simply be asked to become a "volunteer."
- The more specific you can be, the better. If you ask the general question, "Who wants to volunteer?" what are you telling people about the job you need to fill? On the other hand, if you ask, "Who would like to work on the Bridge In Schools program?" you give people a chance to consider if they might be interested in a specific task that might be ideal for them.

- Be honest. Tell prospective volunteers what the work entails, including time lines and deadlines. This should be an honest but upbeat picture of the work. Volunteering should be fun!
- Identify and express to the volunteer the benefits of accomplishing the task. Every job has its payoffs and it is okay to discuss these. The best volunteering occurs when the giver benefits as well as the recipient.
- Explain why you decided to ask this particular person to help — what skills or personality traits make him or her a good candidate for the position. Keep in mind that you can never insult people by asking them to volunteer. You flatter them because you imply that they have the talent to do the job.
- Finally, the best way to recruit volunteers is to ask people to help. If you never have the conversation, how can someone say yes? And if you are turned down, keep in mind that by reaching out to people and explaining projects under way, you have made others feel important for having been asked.

A GREAT IDEA ON VOLUNTEERING

from *The Volunteer Recruitment Book* by Susan Ellis.

NOMINATING COMMITTEES

Most organizations use a Nominating Committee to develop a ballot of candidates for office or to recommend prospective board members. Usually such a committee is mandated by the bylaws. Unfortunately, nominating committees too often convene themselves at the last minute, scramble around for names of people to select and breathe a sigh of relief when the ballot is “in the mail.”

A more effective idea is to make the work of the Nominating Committee a year-round, pro-active function. One of the earliest articles on the continuous role of the nominating process was written by Phyllis Acker in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration* (Winter 1983-84).

A good first step is to change the committee’s name to something like Leadership Development Committee.

Among the tasks that could be handled within a broader capacity are:

- Keeping job descriptions updated for all board and officer positions, committee chair positions and project roles.
- Being responsible for the gathering and tracking of member volunteer service history.
- Monitoring recognition needed and received (which often is an indicator of when a member is ready to be asked to assume a new position).

- Defining volunteer “career ladders” in which members who wish can advance in degree of responsibility.

NPS Member

NPS Coordinator

IN Coordinator

Education Liaison

It is important to reward hardworking volunteers with increased responsibility. The goal for a nominating committee member is to make sure the benefits and fun outweigh the problems of accepting a leadership position in your unit while you recruit responsible people.

DESIGNING VOLUNTEER WORK POSITIONS

The single most important factor in the success of volunteer involvement is the design of the work to be done by volunteers.

The challenge is one of “task analysis,” breaking down a project or projects into defined steps, since volunteer work is done in limited chunks of time.

It is not enough to say “we need volunteer help.” Unless work is defined specifically in advance, you run the very real risk of wasting volunteers’ time. To meet your organization’s goals and to respect the desire of volunteers to be productive, take the time to plan volunteer assignments.

TIPS FOR COORDINATING YOUR VOLUNTEER EFFORTS!

- Burnout of valued volunteers is the inevitable result of going back again and again and again to the same people.
- Move volunteers up the ranks — have a leadership development plan for rewarding exemplary volunteers.
- Ask your volunteers to bring along a friend to expand your volunteer base.
- Be sure you are truly welcoming to new volunteers.
- Make the most of your written communication. In addition, make sure you have prepared in advance for your organizational meetings. Don't waste the volunteers' time!
- Recognition is much more than a thank you. Appreciation and recognition are different. While it's important to say thank you sincerely, the most effective form of recognition is to utilize a volunteer's ideas and credit the source!

Volunteers feel thanked when:

- someone actually says “thank you;”
- they are told how something they did had a positive impact on the organization;
- they are invited to join in on a formal recognition event in front of their peers;
- they get a personalized note from the unit president thanking them for their contribution.

Most people do not say no to the invitation to volunteer — they never feel asked. Do genuine outreach and invite people to get involved.

Let ACBL Help!

OFFER A UNIT GROWTH SEMINAR (UGS)

If your job as leader of your unit seems overwhelming, let us help. With pre-planning, the ACBL can send a trainer to your area to conduct a one-day seminar for the volunteers in your unit who are interested in increasing participation in your local games and in growing your membership.

The seminar will help your unit clearly define its goals and objectives in regard to newer players while providing in-depth information on ACBL programs, activities and ideas specifically designed to promote growth in the IN area and to generate more activity and interest in your unit.

The advantages of presenting this seminar include:

- **TEAM BUILDING!** Helps organize the volunteer efforts of the local program. The volunteers become a cohesive team working toward clearly defined objectives.
- Provides a full understanding of the 10-point IN program with emphasis on attention to detail and following through.
- Develops an understanding of the benefits of publicity, advertising and promotion.
- Instills an enthusiasm and “can do” attitude into the volunteers. Creates enthusiasm that is contagious — the key to success.
- Provides follow-up points so that the successful start of the program becomes a continuing effort among the volunteers.
- Instills the importance of celebrating your successes. Appreciate your volunteers.

Contact the Education Department (education@acbl.org) if you are interested in bringing this program to your unit. Costs are based on location and availability of a trainer. Approximate cost for the program is \$1,000.

Priority Programs

NEW PLAYER SERVICES

Should your unit establish a New Player Services (NPS) program? New Player Services has proven to be so valuable in units that have put it into practice, that we urge you to put this project at the top of your priority list. A full implementation document is available at ACBL's web site www.acbl.org/units/units.html.

What is the New Player Services program? One of the ten points of a successful newcomer program is to establish a New Player Services program. This is an idea that was originated in District 7 by Anita Humfleet. It is a PR program designed to promote hospitality and to make the new players feel welcome at all levels of play. It is a program that can infuse your established unit members with enthusiasm about working with new players.

How does the program work? After the unit board has agreed to establish a New Player Services program, a budget is created and the committee members are appointed, inducted and receive distinctive pins. (The original program used name badges with lopsided hearts and the committee name.)

The NPS program coordinator, usually appointed by the IN coordinator, determines when and where the committee will serve — club games, unit games, sectionals, regionals. At any event where the unit is the immediate sponsor, committee members are given specific assignments to make certain that someone is available in the playing area before and after each session.

The committee members, wearing their badges, make themselves available to offer a helping hand to new players by answering questions, helping to fill out convention cards, giving directions and informing the players of special activities such as the Celebrity Speaker program, etc.

What specifically should New Player Services committee members do at tournaments? At a tournament, committee members should:

- be available at the hospitality desk to answer questions,
- man a special partnership desk for new players,
- demonstrate how to use bidding boxes,
- mingle in the playing room, pass out candy and talk with the players,
- go from table to table in the IN area to meet the new players and wish them luck,
- be available during the session for moral support,
- help explain the scores when they are posted,
- participate in any and all activities that will help to make the new players more comfortable (goodie bags, welcome to your first tournament packets, door prizes, refreshments).

Do New Player Services (NPS) committee members work only at unit functions? Since the committee is established by the unit, its main focus is to serve at unit games and activities. Clubs within the unit's jurisdiction should be delighted to have the assistance of the committee members at their games as well.

NPS committee members are welcome to offer their services to the local committee at any ACBL functions in and outside of their district where new players are participating. In other words, members who attend the district's regional tournaments should volunteer their services by presenting themselves in the IN program area of the tournament and checking in with the IN tournament directors to see how they can be helpful. If the district has adopted the NPS program, the district NPS program coordinator, usually the district education liaison, will make up a schedule of assignments.

When NPS committee members attend an NABC, they are always welcome in the IN program area. Again, they should check in with the IN program tournament directors to find out how they can best be of service to the new players.

MENTORING

Is your unit ready for a mentoring program? If your unit has teachers, newcomer games and a start on an IN program, the next logical step is to provide a mentoring program which is sometimes called an “Adopt-a-Newcomer” program. Again, work with your unit ed liaison who should be the coordinator of this project.

How do we get started? ACBL provides a full implementation booklet which is available at ACBL’s web site, www.acbl.org/units/units.html.

What are new players looking for? Surveys of new players beginning their duplicate experience show they are motivated by three things. A mentoring program can provide all of these elements.

1. The challenge of competition.
2. The anticipation of meeting new people.
3. The promise of fun.

What are the most important benefits of a mentoring program?

- *Experience Is the Best Teacher for a Newer Player*

A new player will appreciate being assisted in learning the game by someone who is an *expert*. Remember, expert is a relative term. To a newer player, someone who has 100 masterpoints may seem an expert. This perception allows you to design your program at whatever level or levels your unit (or club) desires.

- *Social Opportunities Developed*

Mentoring provides the opportunity for both newcomers and mentors to meet and get to know each other on a basis other than as opponents at the bridge table. This relieves some of the fear the newer players have when a more experienced player comes to their table.

- *Provides Opportunity for Mentors to Give Back to the Game*

Very often successful players want to give something back to the game. Mentoring provides a wonderful opportunity to accomplish this goal for the mentors.

- *Mentored Players Are More Likely to Stay with the Game and Become Mentors Themselves*

Mentors can be one key component for instilling the confidence and motivation that is so necessary for achieving success. The simple fact is that mentored newcomers are more likely to stay with bridge as they are more easily able to deal with the frustrations and complexities of the game with the assistance of a mentor. In addition, players who have been mentored will most likely want to mentor. In this manner, the whole process perpetuates itself.

- *Increased Table Counts*

Whether a mentoring program exists on a unit or club level, involves tournament or weekly games, table counts will definitely increase. The more advertising and promotion that are done in support of the program, the greater the benefits.

Duties of Your Unit Officers

President

The unit president presides at all meetings of the unit board of directors and all general meetings of the unit membership. The president appoints all committees and serves on them as an ex-officio member (but not on the Nominating Committee), except when the unit bylaws or regulations specify otherwise. He or she exercises general supervision over the activities of the unit and performs other duties that are incidental to office, including those the unit board assigns.

Vice President

In the absence or incapability of the president, the vice president assumes the president's duties and performs other duties that the president or board may assign.

Secretary

- a. Attends all membership and board of directors meetings.
- b. Records and keeps the board minutes.
- c. Maintains a roster of unit members and is usually responsible for the maintenance of membership records.
- d. Sends notices of unit meetings to the members and the unit board.
- e. Keeps records of all tournament and unit activities.
- f. Completes and files all unit reports required by ACBL.
- g. Receives and files the reports of all officers and committees.

Treasurer

- a. Has custody of and is responsible for all funds, securities and properties of the unit.
- b. Deposits such funds in the bank or banks as designated by the board.
- c. Pays unit obligations from the unit funds as directed by the board.
- d. Makes financial reports as directed by the board.

Note: The treasurer is normally bonded at unit expense. Units are urged to conduct an annual audit of their financial records. If an external audit by an independent professional is deemed too expensive, a unit could appoint an internal audit committee to verify cash and cash equivalents and test major income and expense items. Units must produce a written annual financial statement and make it available to its district director and any of the unit members upon request.

Duties of the Requested Position Team Members

EDUCATION LIAISON (UEL)

The education liaison is involved with the big picture of making the unit aware of programs ACBL has made available to encourage participation and membership. The unit should work with the UEL to create a job description for this position.

A handbook for education liaisons is available at www.acbl.org/units/units.html.

IN (INTERMEDIATE-NEWCOMER) COORDINATOR

What is an IN coordinator? The unit intermediate-newcomer (IN) coordinator position was created by the ACBL Board of Directors to assist units in making new players a part of the local bridge family and to increase the participation of these new players by providing newcomer games and activities.

Note: The “Handbook for Intermediate-Newcomer Coordinators” is available at www.acbl.org/units/units.html.

What is the specific focus of an IN coordinator? The IN coordinator should organize and serve as tournament chair for the unit’s IN sectionals, work with clubs running IN sectionals that have been delegated to them by the unit and work with the unit’s tournament chair to offer IN programs at all of the unit’s sectional tournaments (and regional tournaments within the unit’s jurisdiction).

What is an IN tournament or IN program? IN sectionals and IN programs are planned for players who are either new-to-duplicate or new-to-bridge. (60% of ACBL’s members have less than 300 masterpoints.)

IN sectionals stand alone and require a separate sanction number; IN programs run as part of a regular sectional or regional tournament and do not require a special sanction. The format of each is the 10-point IN program.

UNIT TOURNAMENT COORDINATOR, CONTACT AND CHAIR

What is a tournament coordinator? The unit's tournament coordinator is the person who handles the scheduling of all unit tournaments and special events by keeping a calendar of events. The tournament coordinator attempts to schedule all games (unit championships and higher) in an effort to avoid player conflicts that will effect participation.

The unit's tournament coordinator is the person who submits the unit's sectional tournament dates to the district tournament coordinator for approval prior to sanctioning by the ACBL Tournament Department.

What is a tournament contact? When a sectional sanction application is submitted to the ACBL Tournament Department for approval, ACBL needs a person to correspond with about the tournament. The tournament coordinator serves as the tournament contact until an official tournament chair is selected.

What is a tournament chair? The tournament chair is the official liaison between the ACBL and the sponsoring organization prior to the tournament. The sponsoring organization is the liaison with the director in charge (DIC) during the tournament (or prior to the tournament for advice on the types of games, times and places to hold tournaments). It is important for the tournament chair to put together an effective team of volunteers for committees such as publicity, entertainment and hospitality.

Note: ACBL provides a handbook entitled, "Planning A Sectional or Regional Tournament, a Guide for the Tournament Chair," online at www.acbl.org/units/tournamentmanagement.html.

ACBL also offers a handbook for IN sectionals, "IN Tournament Planning Guide," available for the tournament chair of IN activities online at www.acbl.org/units/tournamentmanagement.html.

Committees and Their Duties

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE — UNIT MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Mission

The mission of the unit membership chair and the unit Membership Committee is to maintain records, process new memberships and encourage present or former members to renew or reinstate memberships.

Unit Membership Roster

Each person who joins ACBL automatically becomes a member of the unit in whose territory the new member resides.

Each month the unit membership chair receives from Memphis (The ACBL Club and Member Services Department) a copy of the unit “In and Out” report. It contains the total membership of the unit divided by rank, address changes, rank changes, transfers out of the unit, the names of deleted or deceased members and the names of members who are being sent renewal notices.

The unit membership chair should notify the ACBL Club and Member Services Department of any discrepancies found in these reports.

Note: The “Handbook for the Unit Membership Chair” is available online at www.acbl.org/units/units.html.

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE — PUBLICITY CHAIR

Mission

To publicize unit tournament activities and increase public awareness of ACBL and its charitable and educational activities.

Duties

Publicity can come in many forms. Here are a few things this committee could try to do in addition to the obvious publicity requirements for tournaments and special bridge activities that are sponsored by the unit:

- Work to get independent and PBS stations to carry ACBL's beginning bridge TV shows. They can be tagged with a local phone number for people to call to find out more about bridge. This can be very valuable publicity for the unit, the local clubs and area bridge teachers.
- Present local bridge information and game winners to area newspapers.
- Write a bridge column for a local paper.
- Organize a day at a local club for the area media to visit and find out more about the game and local bridge activities. This works best when you have a hook such as an unusual player, an upcoming major event, a new facility, etc.
- Use publicity as a fund-raiser for the unit. Sell advertising (the name of an event, a tournament, space on unit flyers/convention cards/brochures) to local sponsors.
- Create a bridge flyer to advertise local games and clubs and distribute to the Visitor's and Convention Bureau, area hotels, senior centers, etc.

Note: ACBL's Cooperative Advertising Program (CAP) offers funding for advertising expenses for programs and lessons designed for newcomers and/or to recruit ACBL members. See www.acbl.org/marketing/coopadvertising.html for details.

Note: A publicity information packet is available online at ACBL's web site at www.acbl.org/marketing/publicity.html.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Mission

To promote and implement programs designed to increase participation in the unit's games and to increase membership by working with the unit's education liaison who works in cooperation with the district education liaison, the IN coordinator, and the ACBL Education Department.

Duties

In many ways, this is the unit's most important committee. It helps the education liaison with "the big picture"... improving and maintaining the "health" of the unit by implementing programs that will increase participation and membership.

In units that cover a large geographic area, the education liaison needs volunteers in all parts of the unit in order to promote and implement the programs that the unit elects to support.

Even when working in a small area, the education liaison can't do it all alone. Whether the project is a New Player Services program, a mentoring program, a school bridge lesson program or even a myriad of smaller activities, there is more than enough for a group of dedicated workers to do.

Note: Information on forming an education committee can be found in the "Handbook for Education Liaisons" at www.acbl.org/units/units.html.

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

Mission

To receive and investigate complaints or charges that involve the conduct and ethics of members of the unit.

Duties

The ACBL requires each unit to establish a unit Disciplinary Committee unless it is not practical due to unit size or area. On behalf of the unit, this committee acts on disciplinary matters in accordance with the “ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations.” This publication is available at ACBL’s web site at www.acbl.org/plan/disciplinary.html.

Decisions made by disciplinary bodies must be reported in writing to ACBL.

Guidelines

Information on organizing disciplinary committees and holding hearings can be found online in the “ACBL Club Directors Handbook” at www.acbl.org/clubs/clubdirector.html.

The Unit Recorder

The unit’s Disciplinary Committee would work in coordination with the unit’s recorder.

NOTE: See the next page. More information on the duties of the recorder can be found in Appendix C of the “ACBL Handbook of Rules and Regulations” available online at www.acbl.org/handbook/handbook/appendixc.htm

Special Unit Appointments

UNIT RECORDER

The unit recorder handles complaints which

- (1) by themselves do not warrant the filing of formal charges or
- (2) are very serious but there is only the implication of wrongdoing without substantial evidence necessary to bring formal charges.

Since ACBL members must have the highest confidence in the persons appointed as recorders, the system will operate successfully only if there is a general belief that a recorder will perform the duties of the office honestly and impartially.

The duties of the Recorder are:

1. To receive, investigate and evaluate player memos.
2. To educate reporters and subjects about proper behavior and ethical behavior in accordance with the Laws of Duplicate Contract Bridge and the ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations.
3. To communicate, as appropriate, with those involved in a reported incident, especially the reporter and subject.
4. To maintain a record of all player memos including investigation and resolution.
5. To act as a “state’s attorney” on behalf of the unit and its constituency when presenting evidence to a disciplinary committee in support of charges filed by the recorder on his or her own initiative.
6. To file a complaint with an appropriate disciplinary body against a subject as a means to resolve a player memo(s).
7. To serve as the recorder (or nominate a qualified assistant) for any tournament sponsored by the unit.

UNIT GAME COORDINATOR

Overview

Each unit is allocated a certain number of games, championships, charity events, sectional tournaments and IN tournaments in addition to the opportunity to participate in ACBL-wide events and ACBL's two grassroots competitions, the NAP (North American Pairs) and the GNT (Grand National Teams).

The size of each unit will generally indicate the number of game coordinators necessary to handle the sanctioning, organizing and running of these bridge activities. Most units will need a unit game coordinator, a special events coordinator and a tournament coordinator. This would mean that the unit's IN coordinator would handle IN programs and IN sectionals and the unit game coordinator would handle charity events.

The various volunteer positions available within the unit which pertain to the coordinating of these unit bridge games are defined in "The Handbook for Unit Game, Special Events and Tournament Coordinators" available online at www.acbl.org/units/units.html.

Organizational Structure of the ACBL

Unit

The American Contract Bridge League is divided into more than 300 local organizations known as units. Each unit's members elect their own volunteer board of directors.

The unit as a whole is responsible for the promotion and advancement of bridge in the area. Each unit works in cooperation with ACBL to support the programs and goals of the organization. The unit holds regular meetings to conduct business and often publishes a newsletter to keep its members informed of local bridge activities and news.

District

Each unit belongs to one of 25 districts. Each district elects one member to serve on the ACBL Board of Directors, three members to serve on the ACBL Board of Governors and two alternate directors who are eligible to attend Board of Governors meetings. Each is elected for a three-year term.

Each district conducts a specific number of regional tournaments each year. Different cities within the district's territory host the regional each year to give all members a chance to attend.

ACBL Board of Directors

The ACBL Board of Directors elects the ACBL president and the ACBL treasurer each for one-year terms. It also elects four representatives to the World Bridge Federation Executive Council for three-year terms. The board meets three times a year during the week prior to the Spring, Summer and Fall NABCs. This body determines the policies and direction of ACBL.

ACBL Board of Governors

The ACBL Board of Governors serves in an advisory capacity to the ACBL Board of Directors. This body meets three times a year during each of the NABCs.

ACBL Headquarters

ACBL Headquarters is located in Memphis, TN and has a management team and staff of more than 90 employees. In addition, there are more than 300 field personnel working with the Memphis staff to carry out the business of this versatile organization. Housed at ACBL Headquarters is the ACBL Albert H. Morehead Memorial Library, the largest non-private bridge library in the world, and the ACBL Bridge Hall of Fame, a photographic tribute to the great players and benefactors of the game.

Tips From Other Unit Presidents

Tournaments

“Try to generate energy in your unit through your tournaments — after all that’s where the most number of people congregate in your unit.

“Do something different — try setting up your New Player Services with a ‘bar’ table instead of the low banquet tables — make your people stand up at the various volunteer tables — It’s a lot more inviting.

“Put up pictures at tournaments of event winners — not just the INs — it’s an inexpensive way to recognize people.

“Use balloons — music — color — banners — something to excite the people. Remember this is the age of visual and multi use of graphics in the rest of the world — take advantage of this in your bridge advertising and actual events. Remember — people have so many options in life that we need to entice them into our world.

“Be creative. Get local companies to sponsor your tournaments — get the media out to help advertise.

“JUST DO IT!”

Nancy Shifflet
Minneapolis, MN

NOTE: Many tips for all aspects of a unit's interests can be found online in the “Club Manager’s Handbook” at <http://web2.acbl.org/documentlibrary/clubs/clubmanagersHandbookfinal1.pdf>



American Contract Bridge League

6575 Windchase Blvd.

Horn Lake MS 38637-1523

662-253-3100

www.acbl.org

Revised Nov. 2010