

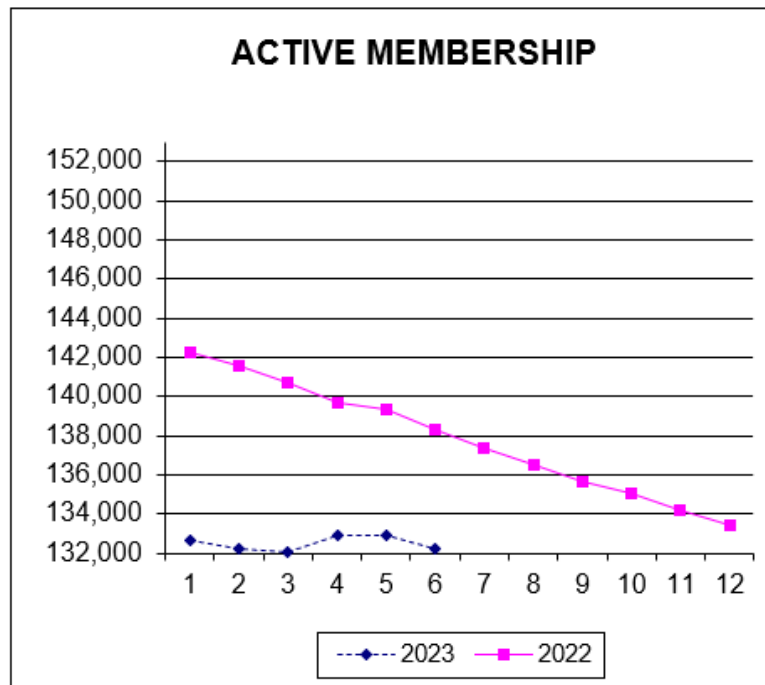
ACBL MANAGEMENT REPORT

Summer 2023

Bridge Services

Membership Activity

The ACBL's membership count has continued to decline monthly, and as of the end of June 2023, it is at 132,247 members. While this is 4.4% lower than one year ago, our new member recruitment is up 32.9% from 2022. Guest membership continues to increase tremendously in 2023.



	2023	2022	Change	%
New Members YTD	3,905	2,938	967	32.9%
New Guest Members YTD	1,897	801	1,096	136.8%

**Active Membership
Statistics
Jun-23**

<u>Membership Category</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>%</u>
Life Masters	41,620	43,166	(1,546)	-3.6%
Non Life Masters	86,913	91,391	(4,478)	-4.9%
Total Paying Members	128,533	134,557	(6,024)	-4.5%
Active Unpaid LM	3,714	3,771	(57)	-1.5%
Total Members	132,247	138,328	(6,081)	-4.4%

Club Activity

The Virtual Club table count continued to decline in recent months, even in April when the Virtual Clubs were allowed to run a (much-appreciated) Silver Linings Week.

Virtual Clubs are looking forward to the North American Pairs club-level qualifying events for June, July and August, as these were reinstated for Virtual Clubs in Summer 2023. (Summer of 2022 saw no NAP club-level games online.)

Year-over-year from March to May:

- Face-to-face table counts increased
- [Virtual table counts decreased](#)
- BBO table counts decreased
- Clubs running face-to-face games increased
- Clubs running virtual games decreased
- **Total tables YoY has turned around, seeing an increase in May 2023!**

CLUB ACTIVITY		March 2023		April 2023		May 2023
F2F Tables ACBL	↑	92,472 <i>62,051 in 2022</i>		79,220 <i>59,263 in 2022</i>		87,798 <i>62,688 in 2022</i>
Virtual Tables ACBL	↓	29,951 <i>58,013 in 2022</i>		32,630 <i>53,807 in 2022</i>		28,455 <i>47,786 in 2022</i>
Total Tables ACBL		112,423 <i>120,064 in 2022</i>		111,850 <i>113,070 in 2022</i>		116,253 <i>110,474 in 2022</i>
BBO Tables	↓	184,618 <i>216,019 in 2022</i>		174,951 <i>205,840 in 2022</i>		177,016 <i>205,496 in 2022</i>
Clubs running F2F Games	↑	1626 <i>1368 in 2022</i>		1629 <i>1440 in 2022</i>		1620 <i>1471 in 2022</i>

Clubs running Virtual Games	↓	319 <i>439 in 2022</i>	304 <i>413 in 2022</i>	283 <i>395 in 2022</i>
------------------------------------	---	---------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------

Field Operations

Tournaments continue a roaring growth in 2023. Year-over-year numbers from 2022 to 2023 show that in the first six months of the year, we've held more than 100 more tournaments, 50% more total tables across all tournaments and more tables per tournament.

	January-June 2022		January-June 2023		Change Year/Year		
	# Tourns	# Tables	# Tourns	# Tables	# Tourns	# Tables	TbIs/Tour n
Open Regional	35	24,170.0	45	34,184.0	10	10,014.0	69.1
NLM Regional	9	1,169.5	12	1,407.0	3	237.5	(12.7)
Open Sectional	144	14,591.0	203	24,208.0	59	9,617.0	17.9
NLM Sectional	31	891.0	51	1,601.0	20	710.0	2.7
Local Sectional	12	849.0	32	2,393.5	20	1,544.5	4.0

The Spring NABC in New Orleans was successful as well, with a 15% increase in table count over the 2022 Spring NABC in Reno (with New Orleans having historically smaller table counts than Reno). We expect the Summer NABC in Chicago to be the first post-pandemic 8,000+ table tournament.

ACBL Tournament Directors continue to help support other departments with things like manning the phones for the Club Support line and testing for the IT department. In early July, TDs started a New Member Outreach program to help our newest members feel welcomed and made more comfortable with the bridge community and to gather more data about where our new members are coming from.

Meeting Services

Operations

The team has completed a year-out on-site visit to Toronto, a month-out visit to Chicago and a site visit to Seattle. Christina Goldsby has been promoted to Event Specialist. Together, Christina and Montie will continue working on streamlining procedures and improving how quickly other departments meet deadlines. Meeting Services will continue to move deadlines further out to provide a better planning process for all.

Summer NABC in Chicago

HOUSING

At the closing of reservations, 91.1% was sold at the Sheraton and 70.9% was sold at the Intercontinental. This is the first time since the pandemic that we have been this significantly over on our attrition rate at both hotels going in to the NABC. (New Orleans Marriott had reached 86.6% sold; Sheraton New Orleans was at 29.7% sold.)

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

We will continue with the Covid restrictions and wristbands in Chicago and ask for proof of vaccinations. We will continue to use hotel security for medical issues instead of hiring an on-site medic.

PATRON LOUNGE

The Patron Lounge has been a success and will continue in Chicago. The lounge provides Patron members with lunch and a nice space to relax in. The team evaluated including a \$10 charge for spouses or bridge partners to also be allowed, but it was decided that it is too great of a risk for running out of food on an already tight budget.

2023 Fall NABC in Atlanta

Reservations for Patron members opened on March 7 and for regular members on May 23. There will be no attrition costs. We are currently at 19% booked. Conference Direct will be on site the first weekend to help with existing and new reservations.

2024 Spring NABC in Louisville

Reservations for Patron members open September 12 and for regular members on January 16, 2024. The team visited the Louisville site in February and met with the local committee, Louisville Tourism and the hotel to begin the planning. The city is excited to host us.

Human Resources

Staffing

HEADCOUNT

Headquarters: 52 full time

Field: 118 part time, 18 full time

OPEN POSITIONS

Tournament Support Coordinator

PROMOTIONS

Shaneka Cunningham, Executive Assistant

NEW HIRES

Bronia Jenkins, Executive Director

Jennifer Webster, Director of Finance

Ping Hu, Enterprise Architect

Mike Pisula, Developer

Jonathan Baxter, Developer

Jordan Canevari, Support Analyst

Amanda Lee-Low, NABC Caddy

Danielle Rotz, NABC Caddy

Sutton Yarbrow, NABC Caddy

Information Technology

Application Development Projects

MASTERPOINT® ENGINE V2

Most club games will be supported by the end of August. There are some game types that are being excluded due to the low volume of those types of games. E.g., handicap games, bridge class, home_style_pairs, cruise ship, etc. Improvements to the overall MP Engine process and updates to accompanying programs will be done over the remainder of 2023.

The next phase of the project will be to start supporting Tournament games.

MASTERPOINT® ENGINE V1

Rule Engine V1 has been archived and is no longer in use. Legacy code has been archived.

MyACBL

From March 1, 2023, to July 07, 2023, 121 tickets for the MyACBL project have been resolved. The team is continuing to migrate Web3/Web2 functionality and reporting to MyACBL.

ZEND/LIVE

In Q4 ACBL will work in conjunction with partners to plan and define project timeline for migrating LIVE. This is required in order to support MP Rule Engine V2 in the future for tournament games.

MySQL DATABASE UPDATES

ACBL will upgrade to MySQL 8.0 by the end of 2023.

ACBL CENTRAL (AS400 RETIREMENT)

Dues processing migration will be completed by the end of August. The team is in the process of defining the remainder of the project with proper goals and timelines. RPG programs, AS400 data architecture and reporting will be the focus.

AWS INFRASTRUCTURE

The team has been working to improve overall security for our applications and services. ACBL has been working with partners to implement AWS Terraform across all our platforms. (3-6 months)

Entry Express

The team has performed various bug fixes as they have been reported. In addition, the tournament event page load time has been improved drastically.

Resources

VENDOR PARTNERSHIPS UPDATES

Escolasoft partnership is assisting with the following projects: Masterpoint® Engine V2, and ACBL Central (AS400 Retirement). MyACBL support will be scaling down within the next 1-2 months as we bring this work back internally.

Infrastructure Projects and Support

INFRASTRUCTURE

The IT Department continued performing weekly maintenance and monthly operating system and cyber security updates, continually monitoring and managing data backups, performing break/fix and resolving issues. The team works collaboratively to support production and infrastructure issues.

The team is putting a plan together to limit and control access in various areas of infrastructure to ensure proper management and security of assets. There is a combined effort between Development and Infrastructure, including Escolasoft, to rebuild the AWS environment with process and security segmentation.

TD SUPPORT

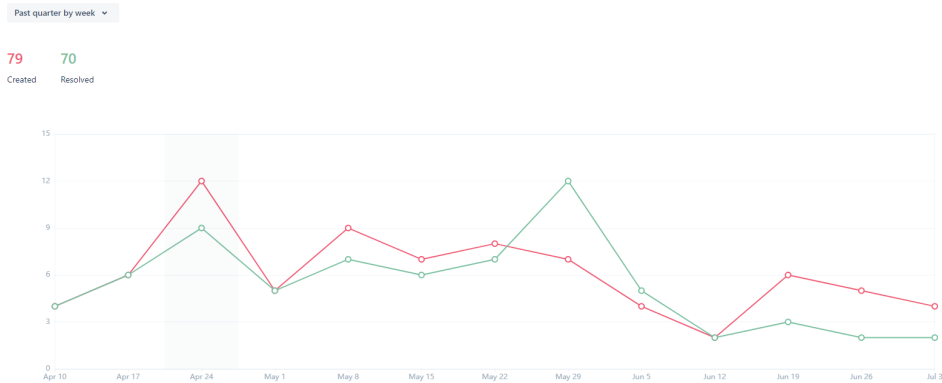
IT resources are used for day-to-day support of Tournament Directors while the IT team continues working with ACBL leadership on new initiatives.

NABCs

The team provided support for a successful Spring NABC and is preparing for execution of the Summer NABC in Chicago.

IT SERVICE DESK

The team provided direct support to ACBL employees at Headquarters and in the field, both remotely and locally. In the last quarter, the team received 79 tickets for direct user and member support, and 70 have been resolved to date. This does not include tickets or cases encompassed in other projects.



CLUB AND MEMBER SERVICES SUPPORT

The team has been actively working with Club and Member Services to improve the level of support provided to clubs and members. This includes weekly meetings with their team to discuss current issues, needs, events and upcoming changes.

Following research into call reporting, the IT team set up a verbal bulletin for callers to hear when there's an active event. This was used recently when there were email issues concerning game results.

Marketing

Digital Marketing Efforts

ACBL ONLINE COMMUNITY GAMES

In June 2023, the Marketing team partnered with the Virtual Club team to develop and run a pilot of ACBL Online Community Games. These games were held on Bridge Base Online in a Virtual Club only accessible by newer members (one game for 0-20 masterpoints, one game for 0-50 masterpoints). Players who participate in the Community Games also receive a pre-game bridge tip and a post-game bridge lesson, sometimes accompanied by discussion with a bridge celebrity. Masterpoints are awarded.

The purpose of Community Games is to offer a welcoming environment where beginners can practice and learn alongside others at their skill level. Because many local clubs aren't able to hold this kind of limited game (due to not having enough 0-20 or 0-50 players in their area), Community Games fulfill a frequent request from newer members.

In June, Community Games were offered four times, and sessions had as many as 48 tables, which proves there is a demand for this kind of event. Different times were experimented with so that the Community Games don't overlap with common game times for other clubs.

While popular, the games suffered from some technical and logistical issues. The team will work to improve the program so that it can be relaunched in August with a regular schedule. There will also be a dedicated page on the website that will house recordings of the post-game lessons.

EMAIL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The majority of communication with members is done through mass email campaigns, frequently targeted by member profile. Year-to-date, 371 separate email campaigns have been sent (not including automated emails, like billing or ACBL Live), which means that more than 15 individual email campaigns are drafted, edited, formatted and sent weekly.

While the average open rate has remained steady at 56%, the click-to-open rate has increased to an average of 4.5% (up from 3.5% in March). The average rates for our industry are 39% and 1.7% respectively. This shows our members are interested and engaged. To ensure we don't oversaturate member inboxes, calendars for sending emails are carefully managed.

Due to the availability of A/B testing in the Mailer Lite platform (used for sending marketing emails), there has been much research done on which content leads to the most engagement (opens and clicks on links). This has led to an overall improvement in engagement with emails.

The New Member Email series was relaunched in April 2023, and as such, each new member has entered a refreshed, rebuilt automated series since then. Each member receives a new email sent at the start of the month. These emails focus on the fundamentals of bridge and being a new ACBL member.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The ACBL continues to utilize multiple social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, primarily Facebook) to engage with current members and others interested in bridge. As of July 5, the Facebook audience was the largest at 12,482 followers, an increase from 12,185 in February. Facebook posts with the most engagement included the weekly Retro It's Your Call discussions and photos from the NABCs. Short videos and memes also receive a great amount of engagement.

As of July 5, the Twitter account has remained steady at 4067 followers. The ACBL Instagram account has had an increase in followers, from 2216 in February to 2304 as of July 5. A possible ACBL Tik Tok account is being researched.

Public Relations

Obsidian Public Relations assisted with various media relations and digital advertising campaigns. The firm also continuously monitored news trends locally and nationally so that these could be capitalized on with media outreach. In addition, the firm monitored any mentions of the ACBL in the media.

For the 2023 Spring and Summer NABCs, Obsidian created a welcome letter for attendees that included information on health and safety protocols and highlighted specific events.

Obsidian also tracks media mentions of bridge and the ACBL. There have been 250 tracked news stories in 2023. Of these, nearly 30 featured clubs participating in The Longest Day.

MEDIA RELATIONS

For Bronia Jenkins' appointment as executive director, Obsidian developed and distributed a news release, which led to coverage in Yahoo Finance, the Daily Memphian, The Commercial

Appeal (Memphis area) and the DeSoto County News (Mississippi).

The firm distributed announcements of 32 winners from the 2023 Spring NABC to their local newspapers to generate coverage of the players, the event and bridge. ----- news placements came from these press releases. Several news outlets reached out for more information, which led to a published article about a winner from Massachusetts.

Additionally, the firm led various efforts to garner media coverage for the 2023 Spring NABC itself, composing and distributing a news release about the tournament and a news advisory with details about the Charity Foundation check ceremony. This resulted in WGNO, the local ABC affiliate news station, producing a lengthy piece about the NABC and bridge, including several on-camera interviews.

For the 2023 Summer NABC, the agency distributed media materials, including a news release for the tournament and calendar listings for the Learn Bridge in a Day course. The firm also drafted posts for members to share on Nextdoor and Facebook. Additional pitches were made to news outlets about the Youth NABC and Collegiate Bridge Bowl, which led to a preliminary article and several requests for information after the event has ended.

Prior to the check presentation ceremony, the firm will develop talking points for those involved in case media attend. After the check presentation, Obsidian will distribute a news release and share images from the ceremony with Chicago media.

DIGITAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

Obsidian completed various digital ads on the Meta platform (the parent company for Facebook and Instagram), primarily for the Boost F2F program.

For each phase of the Boost program, the firm has refined messaging and accompanying ad design, built lead generation forms, curated target audience lists and managed the running of ads for multiple teachers. Phase 2 and Phase 3 led to more than 80 total ad campaigns. The firm is currently managing Phase 4 ads.

The firm has also developed and deployed Meta ads for various Learn Bridge in a Day workshops and the 2023 Spring and Summer NABCs. The workshop ad for the Spring NABC led to 24,392 users reached and 1071 link clicks.

Obsidian managed a sponsored ad to promote the Element3 Health partnership from March 16 to April 5, which led to 19,471 users reached and 2582 link clicks.

Creative Services

With several new marketing initiatives in development, comprehensive graphic designs (art, fonts, etc.) were completed. Some of these campaigns include the Lapsed Member Postcard, Picklebridge and bridge4friends.

Following directives from the Meeting Services team, new kinds of pop-up signage were devised, including adjustable directional signage with movable locations and arrows. Creative Services also worked with the Field Operations team to design explanatory signage for player movement in NABC events.

Supporting art was created for social media posts on a near-weekly basis. Subjects for the posts were wide ranging, from ACBL-wide club events to NABCs to interesting holidays designed to foster interaction on the ACBL page.

Additionally, the New Member Welcome Packet was adjusted to include an A-Z Guide for bridge and ACBL-related terms.

LAPSED-MEMBER POSTCARD INITIATIVE

The team developed a program to re-engage lapsed members at the local level through a promotion that awards the returning member with a \$20 credit to play at their local face-to-face club. This offer and the way to access it were included on a postcard to be mailed to members who had previously played in a face-to-face club and have lapsed since 2019

In addition to announcing the promotion, the postcard features two QR codes, one the member scans to renew and the other the club manager scans to receive the \$20 credit (credits will be tallied each month and paid to the club). The QR codes are specific to the addressee/lapsed member and can only be used by them. Members must renew by Labor Day (September 4, 2023) to access the special offer, and the club credit must be used by July 2024.

To foster as much momentum as possible, districts will be contacted ahead of time with names and contact information of the corresponding lapsed members. This will allow them to share the information locally with a unit so that a unit representative can follow up with the lapsed member.

Guest Membership Program

We continue to promote and grow Guest Memberships with more than 7179 guests coming through the program since it started. To date, 2576 Guest Members have converted to regular memberships. As of June 30, there are currently 1897 active Guest Members.

Guest Members are one of the target audiences of the new ACBL Online Community games as they have fewer than 20 masterpoints.

Guest Members receive monthly links to the online version of the Bridge Bulletin, 18 weekly Bridge Tips (duration of membership) and promotions of special first-year membership rate. Guest members are continually one of the most engaged with email communications.

Recruitment Incentives

ACBL's Recruiter Incentives program pays teachers and club managers for bringing in new members. Recruiters receive \$10 when someone joins and \$10 each year when the member renews for years two and three.

In 2022, a total of \$22,770 was sent to 565 recruiters. First quarter 2023 payments totaling \$7540 were sent to 310 recruiters in April 2023 and second quarter payments totaling \$8850 will be sent in July.

Cooperative Advertising Program

The Cooperative Advertising Program (CAP) reimburses 50% of the cost of an ad campaign up to a maximum \$500 reimbursement per campaign. The program continues to be popular as more and more clubs and teachers have started offering beginner classes again. Qualifying ads must promote bridge lessons and/or newcomer programs and contain the ACBL logo.

As of June 30, we have processed 52 CAP requests for 40 recipients, totaling \$15,165. This is an increase of 41% over last year YTD.

Alzheimer's Association Partnership

As of July 5, 2023, units and clubs have raised \$789,857 for The Longest Day, the yearly fundraiser that supports patients, caregivers and researchers, bringing the total raised by ACBL since 2013 to more than \$9 million. As in previous years, Bridge Base Online gave an additional \$5000. Donations are still being processed, and the final amount of table fee donations has not been totaled yet.

Element3 Health Partnership

The ACBL entered a partnership with Element3 Health, a third-party resource that coordinates financial benefits from healthcare insurers associated with Medicare. Many healthcare insurers provide financial incentives so that the insured maintain physical and mental wellness through social, engaging activities like bridge. With Element3 Health's assistance, the ACBL will be able to harness the financial benefits and share them with ACBL members.

If the member is part of an associated Medicare insurance program (Element3 Health checks each individual member's eligibility), they can play bridge to earn credits toward a free additional year of ACBL membership. Playing in club games, tournaments, VACB games and ACBL-sanctioned online tournaments will earn credits. Around 900 ACBL members have enrolled, and the first free membership was processed in June.

Currently, Element3 Health services more than 12 million subscribers through other partnerships, and they will begin promoting bridge to its areas of high concentration that also have bridge clubs with robust beginner programs.

Boost F2F Bridge

Boost Face-to-Face Bridge launched in August 2022 as a joint initiative with the ACBL Education Foundation. It supports a return to face-to-face bridge by running social media ad campaigns that generate leads for teachers who offer in-person, beginning bridge classes and their affiliated clubs. Boost Teachers are required to promote and offer ACBL Guest Memberships, as well as coordinate with their partner club to offer opportunities to play at the club. Obsidian Public Relations is assisting with the execution of the ad campaigns.

The pilot round was completed in late 2022, and the second round was for courses starting in the 1st quarter of 2023. For the second round, there were 61 campaigns, representing 20 districts (including nine new districts from the pilot round) that generated 5230 leads, 401 students and 120 Guest Members. Additionally, more than 500 leads expressed interest in a future class.

The third round (for summer classes) had 21 campaigns that generated 1406 leads and 131 students plus another 166 who expressed a future interest. Many of these classes are still running, but to date there are 53 Guest members with an ad cost of just over \$11,500.

We have started accepting submissions for 3rd quarter and have 17 campaigns already scheduled.

Although harder to quantify, another significant benefit of Boost is the potential for recruiting the leads to join the bridge community and the ACBL. Anecdotally, we have had feedback from multiple teachers who have picked up students for more advanced classes, as well as new players for club games. Moreover, they feel the prospect list that they are building from these leads provides rich potential for future classes. We have also heard that some of the students in their classes did remark on seeing the ads, although they did not show up as a “lead,” and this got them thinking about learning the game.

Marketplace

The Marketplace, now known as BridgeConnect, is a new initiative designed to connect prospective students with teachers. The initial focus is to provide an interactive digital platform where prospective and current players can quickly and easily find in-person or online classes and even newcomer games as they advance in their bridge journey.

Currently if someone wants to find bridge lessons in their area, the “Find a Teacher” directory tool allows them to search by zip code and provides a list of nearby teachers; however, it does not show what classes are offered or indeed if they have any upcoming offerings. In order to find the right fit in terms of location, time, teaching style, etc., the only option for prospective students is to contact each teacher and try and find something that works. This is a huge barrier to entry. An online marketplace that provides up-to-date listings directly from teachers will not only benefit our teachers, but also ensure anyone looking to learn bridge can quickly and easily find the resources that will work for them.

In addition, BridgeConnect would allow for social media advertising to be run either in targeted markets or nationally. In these ads, prospective students will be directed to the marketplace where they can search based on their criteria (e.g., topic, location, time, teacher profile, etc.) and easily find upcoming classes that suit them.

ACBL worked with the Lokion firm to identify the best platform for the site by holding workshops and journey-mapping sessions with stakeholders, including representatives from the ACBL Educational Foundation, the American Bridge Teachers’ Association and a few individual teachers. Once all workshops were completed, a list of requirements was put together that Lokion used to evaluate possible vendors, and three were chosen to demo their products. ACBL is currently negotiating with one of those vendors.

Education

ACBL Intro to Bridge (Online)

We have not offered the online iteration of ACBL Intro to Bridge so far this year but are planning one or two classes for the fall in order to develop facilitator materials. Once we have these materials completed, the online version of the course will be made available on a complimentary basis to ACBL teachers for their use.

ACBL Intro to Bridge (Face-to-Face)

As a part of our efforts to support a return to face-to-face bridge, we have adapted our successful instructional design of ACBL Intro to Bridge Online and developed an in-person course. The new course is split into two series with a combined total of 20 two-hour classes.

Series 1 was piloted in Florida, Texas and California, and we received positive feedback from both the teachers and students. The Series 1 course materials were released in April, complimentary as an earned benefit to certified Best Practices teachers, as well as used in support of our School Bridge, Collegiate and Lifelong Learning programs. Experienced teachers who do not have at least one of those qualifications can apply to receive the materials for free on a case-by-case basis.

As of July 5, 76 teachers have requested rights to use ACBL Intro to Bridge and its course materials, which include a teacher outline, slides, lesson videos, hand files (PBN) and printable student workbooks. Student books are also available to purchase online on Amazon for \$10.

Series 2 has been piloted in Florida, and we are currently finalizing the accompanying videos. It will be released in August.

Online Teacher Certification Program

The ACBL, with support from the ACBL Educational Foundation, developed the ACBL Online Teacher Certification Workshop, which was launched in August 2020. This workshop focuses on how to teach engaging online lessons.

Since the program began, 220 teachers have graduated, and 135 have earned certification. Although demand for this course has slowed, we still do get requests for this workshop and just completed one with a smaller group of teachers.

Best Practices Teacher Certification Program

The Best Practices Teacher Certification workshop focuses on training teachers how to teach rather than what to teach. Workshops are held at each of the three NABCs, the Gatlinburg Regional and, when requested, by clubs, units or districts. Certification is not guaranteed, and proficiency assessments are offered after each workshop to allow participants to earn the Best

Practices Teacher Certification.

In 2023, three districts have already held workshops at their regionals and certified 40 new Best Practices Teachers. Currently there are 368 Best Practices Certified Teachers.

We are also working with four facilitator candidates to certify them to lead the workshop. One of the candidates is from the Montreal area and plans to offer workshops in French. We are working to get the materials translated for a late summer/fall implementation in Canada.

School Bridge Program

<i>Programs</i>	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023
	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
College	15	29	3	20	15	29	9	4	1	3	6	6	4
High	20	11	11	29	20	11	6	0	0	1	1	1	3
Middle	32	43	57	68	32	43	10	0	3	4	4	8	14
Elementary	66	47	14	99	66	47	30	1	4	1	1	1	5
Total	263		309		225		60		17		28		19

<i>Teacher Stipends</i>	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
US	\$46,686	\$43,950	\$33,300	\$15,050	\$4,200	\$5600	\$4900
Canada	\$27,665	\$20,650	\$14,000	\$4,550	\$350	\$0	\$1400
Total	\$74,351	\$64,600	\$47,300	\$19,600	\$4,550	\$5600	\$6300

Covid caused the school bridge program to dwindle, but we are starting to see an uptick in programs. We are hoping to continue growing with the launch of our new face-to-face ACBL Intro to Bridge curriculum.

The team helped staff a booth at a STEM teacher conference in Philadelphia this summer, which generated several strong leads for launching programs at new schools. Note that the college programs listed here are actual classes and do not include the student clubs from the collegiate program below.

Collegiate Program

Thanks to a generous grant from the ACBL Educational Foundation, we can support college student bridge clubs and coaches with stipends and bridge supplies. Currently, we are supporting almost 30 colleges and universities with supplies, books and stipends.

Through a partnership with BBO, college students have access to the College Bridge Online (CBO) Club. Since its onset in October 2017, CBO members have logged more than

149,000 individual entries, more than 1.1 million boards and over 16 million tricks in the exclusive daily games and semi-monthly tournaments.

ACBL and the ACBL Educational Foundation awarded travel packages to eight teams and 12 pairs to the 2023 Collegiate Bridge Bowl through online tournaments this spring. Students will participate in team, pair and individual events, including an individual game with James Holzhauer of Jeopardy fame. In addition, the ACBL Educational Foundation is sponsoring an off-site social event Saturday evening for all college students at the tournament.

Lifelong Learning Programs

The ACBL is an officially recognized Osher Lifelong Learning Institute curriculum resource, but we also support bridge through several other unassociated lifelong learning programs. The new face-to-face ACBL Intro to Bridge curriculum was just added as an option for these programs in addition to the ACBL Bridge Series.

Face-to-face continuing education declined during the Covid-19 pandemic, but since January 2023, we are supporting 16 Lifelong Learning classes with materials and/or stipends. Lifelong Learning teachers are encouraged to sign their students up for Guest Membership.

Editorial

The Editorial team worked with the Marketing department to create a new e-publication called “Deal Me In” that is exclusively for newer players (under 20 masterpoints). Deal Me In includes content tailored to beginning bridge players, like tips on bidding and breakdowns of common bridge terms. Puzzles designed for their skill level are also included. Issue 1 will be sent out by email on July 15; subsequent issues will be sent on the 15th of each month. Deal Me In can be accessed by laptop/tablet/cellphone.

The April–June 2023 issues of the Bridge Bulletin featured stories on the 2022 Mini-McKenney and Ace of Clubs winners; the Lazard Sportsmanship Award (Fred Stewart); results from the Spring NABC in New Orleans; a tournament glossary for newer players; profile of new Executive Director Bronia Jenkins; Vanderbilt KO report; The Longest Day promo; and Board news updates.

Office of National Recorder

The Recorder’s Office continues to provide phone and email support to members and district officials involved in the disciplinary process. Members of the team serve as primary Charging Party Advocates.

The team investigated nine conduct cases stemming from the NABCs in Providence, Phoenix, and New Orleans. These nine conduct cases have all resulted in findings of responsibility against the Charged Parties.

A standing practice now employed is to process each new Player Memo within 24-48 hours. We have standardized the formatting of evidence as it is presented to the OEOC for hearing consideration, while endeavoring to evolve packet submissions to become more panel-friendly over time. The case turnover time has been cut dramatically; advancement of a player memo to formal charges can happen in as little as 10 days if necessary.

In June of this year, four pairs were formally charged with online collusive cheating where the Institute for Bridge Arbitration (IBA), rather than the OEOC, was the hearing body of original jurisdiction. As of this writing, no matters have been heard by the IBA, but that will change as more and more cases are sent to the IBA. This venue change should create a more efficient process that is fairer to Charged Parties.

ACBL management, the Board of Directors, and this Office are working diligently to implement a more scalable system to efficiently tackle the problem of cheating in our game, and major changes and improvements are likely mere months away.