

The Membership Meeting was called to order by Doug Couchman at 8:00 PM. Since there were only 25-27 people in attendance, no quorum was present.

Doug thanked attendees and all the volunteers supporting the Chicago NABC, and complimented the host hotel for their service.

ACBL President Joann Glasson noted the recent transitions, and shared her enthusiasm for our new Executive Director Bronia Jenkins and for the future of bridge in the ACBL. She thanked:

- Paul Cuneo for his efforts on reorganizing management.
- Jay Whipple, inducted into the ACBL HoF, volunteered a framework to bring ACBL IT forward.
- Margot Henning chaired the Search Committee comprised of Dennis Carman, David Lodge, Mark Aquino and Robert Todd worked tirelessly until they found the perfect new Executive Director – Bronia Jenkins. The Board was unanimous in her appointment.

Joann reviewed Bronia's approach to engaging management and membership in her first months. Financial reports are positive, membership trends turning around, tournaments are growing, the future is bright and there is a new excitement in the organization. The ACBL is focused now on membership growth and retention.

Joann Glasson introduced Bronia Jenkins, the new ACBL Executive Director.

Bronia appreciated the amount of work that the Board of Directors do to support management and the organization.

Bronia presented a slide show from the headquarters at Horn Lake. The emphasis was on creating an energized atmosphere in support of the organization.

Bronia presented slides that gave an update on surveys and data that show where we are today. Surveys, trends, conclusions.

**Current projects in delivery:**

- Boost Program
- Guest membership
- Intro to bridge – new online program that teachers bridge (teachers and students)
- Surveys – will do more surveys to engage members so we can improve
- Also survey about chrome books in the Spingold.
- Lapsed face-to-face member recruitment postcard coming.
- Element 3 Medicare Plan benefit – bridge pays for your membership when you play. – Social fitness and wellbeing are important.

**Upcoming ideas for near term learning/execution:**

- Create social division Bridge4Friends – web page ready but input needed to make a compelling concept/proposition.
- The more we can involve members the more members will own the initiatives
- Pickle-bridge (Flyer) – how to engage fastest growing sport among seniors combined with on-site post-game bridge games. Exercise mind and body.

- Community game – a game for new players. Ran about 4 games. 0-20 and 0-50 MP players short games 12 boards followed by a zoom lesson so they feel some social connection. When you play online bridge, you don't feel the same social connection as face-to-face provides. Learnings from pilot lead to redeployment in August 2023. Can individuals find a partner? No online partnership desk yet. However, they can talk to the person running the game who will try to find partners.
- Tiered ACBL membership – social, guest, regular, patron, super patron membership spectrum. Able to choose what is interesting to every member. Everyone is not the same type of member. How do we offer the right things to the right people. Monthly subscriptions, bulletin options, and more.
- How do we get better branding and navigation on BBO? Couldn't find how to get to the Community game – for a new player navigation was bad.

What might be a benefit for the social bridge member? Need to figure out how we can appeal to the social membership. Perhaps social players can rent space for a special game/party away from home – less effort, no clean-up?

The ACBL Market place is under consideration but Bronia is not ready to commit as it is not yet clear that the application is ready for project status.

Bronia shared the postcard for lapsed members to return to in-person bridge.

Bronia shared the poster for Pickle-Bridge. Social bridge for pickle ball players at the pickle ball venue.

Social Bridge initiative has a website in test – seeking your feedback: <https://www.acbl.org/bff4/>

**Future Ideas** (not assessed nor defined – open for input)

What are we going to do with our Youth Program? How do we partner with the EF to get the best Youth Program? How do we engage:

- Country Clubs
- Community Centers
- Cruises

**IT Flower** – Bronia has reorganized current projects under flight. One manager per project. Focus necessary to ensure successful completion.

- Modernization of AS400
- Security improvement for infrastructure
- One platform
- Entry Express
- Data Architecture – hired Pin Hu – how to get good data and how do we use it to make good decisions.

Jennifer Webster (Finance) familiar with Great Plains system currently in use. Strong start to 2023. Revenues up slightly and costs down slightly. Net asset gain due to retirement plan investments. Financial reports on time. Operations streamlined/eliminated.

Sherry Terracino – 94% members satisfaction with member services. Established a live agent zoom room 3:30-5:30 PM ET. Could staff more time if necessary. Working on how to better serve west coast.

Several email failures have been corrected.

Deal Me IN – online articles for new players. What can we give social players that are a benefit for them.

Catch the Stars – Sherry Terracino – what can we do to leverage the awareness of our Star Players.

Create the digital museum – access to the museum contents online. How do we take today's stars and create a digital current museum.

Social members will get a social online bulletin. Things for home bridge, renting party bridge space.

### **Surveys of clubs:**

Social division gets different recognitions than duplicate players – first slam, first game, first squeeze, etc. New names that had strong appeal.

- Bridge Connect – used for the new marketplace – Connect teachers and new players.
- Bridge 4 Friends – social bridge division name.

People are looking for connection and friends.

Interest in 4-is-enough game – high interest. Mystery Match – 14 boards among 4 people can find new partners for people. Pickle-bridge.

Players are interested in alternative awards.

Players and clubs are interested in social bridge.

Clubs are interested in traditional bridge games, but many are not interested in new initiatives. Club owners want only what they have – they are not the best marketers or recruiters – need to find members who can complement that effort. We want targeted pilot initiatives so we can try ideas and make them better – or drop the idea quickly.

Most clubs rejected innovation ideas – most clubs are only interested in traditional bridge games.

This means the ACBL and members need to find new channels to reach newer members and expand the ACBL umbrella.

### **Reports on activities**

- NABCs – improving, but not where we were pre-covid.
- Number of regionals and sectionals – post covid is not at where we were pre-covid. Having fewer, smaller tournaments. Total Tables down. We went to local sectionals held at clubs to make them affordable. Saturdays are expensive at hotels – so tournament are running on different days.
- Showed Gatlinburg table by game type. Pair games up, team games down.
- 2022/2023 Clubs – F2F up, VACB down. BBO dominates club tables (down but very strong).

### **Summary:**

- Building a robust and resilient organization
- How to do things better, not the same. Number one goal.

- MS Teams improves communication among management – improved collaboration
- Board of Directors will join MS Teams.
- Doing better at membership trends but we still face issues.
- Tech “Debt” – Archaic systems
  - Security project modernizes to one platform so apps can communicate.
  - MP Engine
  - Databases
  - ACBL Score – build apps to interact outside ACBL Score to improve capabilities. Will not update ACBLScore.
- Distribution Channel need improvement – how to get the people with energy to do nw things, collaborate with them and channel our message
- Strengthen partnerships with EF, BBO, NBOs and more.

## Q&A

### **Q D-20: Rising costs have caused us to cancel in-person regionals. When will the ACBL allow Districts to run online regionals?**

Bronia: Not “no chance” but how we distribute MPs and how we maintain their value matters and we are working that.

Joann Glasson: We have 4-6 online regionals. Districts don’t run regionals BBO does. Districts manage logistics that don’t exist online. Just looking for money, right? (Yes, we need to supplement income because we cannot afford to run in-person regionals any more).

### **Q. (A new player presented a series of comments/ideas)**

- Survey traits and characteristics of people playing bridge right now – U50yr old, youth bridge.
- Need for YouTube channel that offers beginners insights and enticements to bring them to the game.
- Do a better job welcoming first time attendees at an NABC – signage insufficient, layout complex except for those who already know.
- Survey newcomers not just returning players.
- Hard to get to club games when not at night because I work. Went to game that was cancelled and lost my leave time. How can we avoid these disappointments.

Bronia: Will look into reaching out personally to members who attend an NABC for the first time for their input to learn what would make them more attractive. Registration at the NABC allows for personalized contact.

Bronia reviewed the web page for social bridge division – Bridge4Friends: <https://www.acbl.org/bff4/>  
She mentioned the new ACBL merchandise available for purchase.

ON the ACBL.org homepage they will replace “Bridge Feed” with “Bridge4Friends”. Bridge Feed hardly used now.

### **Q. Why not have social bridge at our clubs? Even online social bridge?**

Bronia: We support that and its up to the club to decide to do that. Clubs can decide to award special recognitions. John Nichols shared that he ran a rubber rbdige game and got 17 tables – had to turn people away! Rubber bridge is the game – way more people play rubber bridge than duplicate bridge.

**Q. Will the ACBL do work to determine hoe to update the rest of the website?**

Bronia: There is a large amount of information on the website. We will not redesign the website. We can manage other links to specific destinations. Navigation has to happen. So much to share means navigation effort required. Can us the Zoom request to learn how to manage the navigation on our website.

Doug Couchman – Thank you Bronia for all you have done so far. Thanks to Joann Glasson, President of the ACBL. There is a new energy and enthusiasm. There is a new willingness to try new ideas and to listen to new ideas from the membership.

Since we do not have a quorum, we cannot entertain any official business at this meeting.

Steve Moese – Motion to adjourn the meeting.  
Seconded.

Doug Couchman adjourned the meeting at 9:02 Central time.

Submitted Respectfully,  
Steve Moese K082411  
Vice Chair, Advisory Council