

**ACBL BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
MARCH 11, 2012 THROUGH MARCH 13, 2012**

**REPORT FROM BILL COOK, JR.
DISTRICT 10 REPRESENTATIVE**

The following actions were taken by the Board:

- Rescinded Item 051-121 Junior Fund Money and replaced it with the following: "Upon receiving a budget from the USBF for the 2012 Junior and Youth World Championship expenses by April 30, 2012, ACBL Management is authorized to contribute up to \$50,000.00 from the Junior Fund to the USBF. 75% of the approved funds will be given to the USBF In June 2012. The remaining 25% will be paid upon presentation of all receipts for approved expenses if actually spent.
- Approved Item 121-62 Defined Purpose of the Junior Fund.
- Approved Junior coupons for junior members in good standing for entry into events at NABC's as follows:
 - A. Any Junior under the age of 26 who is a full time student (must provide proof of eligibility) will be entitled to coupons that can be used for any event. These coupons will have a value of \$10.00 per session.
 - B. Any Junior under the age of 21 years will be entitled to coupons that can be used for any event. These coupons will have a value of \$10.00 per session.
 - C. Any Junior under the age of 19 years will be granted free plays for each session of regionally rated events.
- Deferred a second reading of the "Strength of Field" masterpoint plan pending a "shadow" testing period beginning about May 1, 2012. The results of the testing will be reviewed by both management and the Masterpoint Committee. The results of the initial testing will be reported to the Board. The monitoring will include but not be limited to the following items: Masterpoint inflation, effects on both regional and sectional events, and geographic and demographic variations.
- Deferred to summer 2012 meeting a motion that says Masterpoints can only be awarded for sanction games that follow the laws of Duplicate Bridge with the exception of teaching games, where teachers are encouraged and often do use specialty prepared hands to establish a lesson point.

- Amended Appendix 1 – GNT/NAP conditions of Contest as follows: In both events, changes in residence after June 1 of the year prior to the National Final shall not change the district in which the player is eligible to participate.

A “Snowbird” may play beyond the club qualifying stage in the district of seasonal residence. If he chooses to do so, he may only play in the district level portal of one district. He must play in the district’s district finals to be eligible to play in the national finals. Such a player will not be eligible to be added to a team from his other district. All necessary approvals must be obtained before play begins at the district level.

If a player has multiple domiciles they need to apply to the Credentials Committee for a one time choice of district in which he wishes to play prior to the start of the event’s qualifying period.

Applications for exceptions must be made before the start of the event’s qualifying period.

The Credential Committee may consider exceptions under unusual circumstances for otherwise eligible players who change their District through a change in their physical domicile after September 1 (GNT) and June 1 (NAP). Request shall be made at least 30 days before the appropriate District Level final.

- Approved changing the Super Senior Pairs from the last Saturday and Sunday of the Fall NABC to the first Sunday and Monday of the Fall NABC.
- Elected Rand Pinsky of Los Angeles, CA as ACBL Treasurer replacing Bill Cook who did not seek re-election.
- District 10 Member, Elaine Said, was reappointed to the ACBL Competitions & Conventions Committee for a one year term, beginning at the end of the Spring 2012 NABC.
- Deferred to the summer meeting a motion proposing that anyone found guilty of unethical cheating in addition to probation/suspension or expulsion also lose masterpoints and those masterpoints be replaced with placement points. There are 19 conduct defined offenses and 20 ethics violations.
- Ratified the 2012 budget with a projected year end surplus of \$86,000.00 income over expenses.
- The Board devoted an afternoon session to working in small groups to brainstorm areas we believed to be ACBL’s most important responsibilities and the things we might do to improve. Each group shared these with the whole Board and these ideas were

compiled and will be used by management to recommend a strategic plan to the Board for adoption that will establish ACBL's future directions.

- Robert Hartman, ACBL's new CEO, reported the following:
 - Membership is off to a very strong start with a total membership of 166,145 as of February 19. The highest membership number since the mid-90's.
 - Year-to-date we have signed up 2,329 new members; an increase of 12.9% over the same two month period in 2011.
- Tournaments also had strong participation, generally. Regional table count has increased by 19% with 2 additional regionals being held in 2012 as compared to 2011. Average regional table count is up by 8%.

Total table count for STAC's has increased by 25% with 2 additional ones held this year average STAC table count is up by 3%.

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

For 2012 he expects an increase in the total number of regional tournaments compared to 2011 and slight decrease in the number of sectionals and STAC's over 2011 totals.

- Club and Member Services over a three day period called 150 players who joined ACBL within the last 2 months. They were welcomed to ACBL and verified they received their new member welcoming packet and membership card. They were able to ask questions and told how they could contact us if they had questions in the future. Members were pleasantly surprised to hear from us and thrilled we made a personal call to them.

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

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

In the coming months we will be asking all headquarters employees to join us in making contacts to win back lapsed members and welcome our new members.

- The 2011 preliminary table count for club games is 3,047,722 of which 818,929 were from On-Line games. The table count for January 2012 vs. January 2011 increased 6.5% to 290,126.
- Publicity for bridge has been on the upswing in recent months. Twenty known articles have been published with total estimated readership of 16.5 million plus, including such publications as *Newsweek*, *Wall Street Journal*, *ESPN Magazine*, *New York Times*, and *Forbes*.
- In the first two months, the Cooperative Advertising Program distributed \$29,609 to 33 qualified advertising campaign, an increase over the same period in 2011.
- ACBL will conduct a “Learn to Play Bridge” Marketing Campaign using Houston, TX, Denver, CO, and Charleston, SC as “test markets” to drive prospects to local bridge teachers. The campaign will be advertised in two ways:
 1. A personalized and variable messaged direct mail piece mailed to a rented list of prospects who match the profile of ACBL members. The mailing will contain an incentive to take bridge lessons and join the ACBL.
 2. A Groupon Offer.

Two or three teachers in each of these areas have been contacted and plan to work with ACBL in this effort. If this campaign proves to be successful we plan to roll it out as a North American Marketing effort.

- Graduates from ACBL’s Funded School Program have grown by 12.2% from 2010 to 2011; or from 2,970 in 2010 to 3,331 in 2011.
- Youth membership increased from 797 in 2010 to 826 (4%) in 2011; and Junior membership has increased from 1,140 to 1,203 (6%).
- ACBL will conduct three Regionals at Sea (RAS) cruises in 2012. We have solicited and received four proposals for 2013 RAS cruises. We expect to award contracts in April 2012 to market the cruises for ACBL.
- Mega Housing’s travel services agreement with ACBL to handle NABC travel services expires this year. We are preparing an RFP to rebid our travel services contract. Six firms have been identified from which we will solicit bids. The contract will be for the period 2013-2015, and is expected to be awarded by August 1, 2012.