

**ACBL BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
NOVEMBER 24 THROUGH NOVEMBER 27, 2013**

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

I chaired the Fall Board of Director's meeting as ACBL President and with the help of my wife, Myra, hosted for two weeks, the President's suite at the Sheraton Hotel for board members and their guests.

The following actions were taken by the Board:

- Phyllis Harlan of Oklahoma City was elected 2014 ACBL President.
- Jay Baum was selected as the 2014 Honorary Member of the Year.
- The ACBL Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR) was modified to include a definition for a Unit sponsored club as follows: A club which has any one or more of the following features: (a) a board which is the same as the unit board or which is appointed by the Unit, or (b) a co-mingling of funds with those of the Unit, or (3) a placement of funds in a Unit owned account or (4) the appointment of a club manager or director by the Unit.

And except as a Unit sponsored club as defined in the Definitions Section, units, districts and ACBL have no original jurisdiction over behavior at club sponsored games.

- Deferred to the 2014 Spring meeting in Dallas, a decision on the Strategic Committee proposed play schedule for the three annual NABC's to be implemented in 2015 on a trial basis subject to Board approval of any/all new events included in these schedules as well as any additions, deletions and tweaks.
- Gave tentative approval to the 2014 operating budget, which indicates a surplus of \$5,932.00 of income over expense. Also approved a 2014 capital expenditures budget of \$670,000.00, most of which is for the final phases of ACBL Score +.
- Approved giving the Board of Governor's a more detailed financial statement.
- Amended the smoking policy for the NABC playing area during any bridge playing event, to include electronic smoking devices.
- Defeated a motion for the Board to establish a permanent club committee that would include Club Managers/Directors, ACBL Management and Board of Directors.
- Defeated a motion to change the master point requirement of the Micro-Spingold NABC KO Teams to players with fewer than 2,000 master points from players with fewer than 1,500 master points.
- Adopted a Youth Protection and Abuse Prevention Policy that will apply to all persons involved with youth.

- Appeals and Charges reversed the District 10 President's decision to void Allan Siebert's suspension and reinstated the Unit 138 decision to suspend Allan Siebert for a three month period, April 1, 2014 until June 30, 2014 and place him on probation thereafter for one year until June 30, 2015.
- Appeals and Charges upheld the decision of the District 10 President to deny Michael Schrieber an appeal of the discipline imposed by a club.
- The 2014 Conditions of Contest were approved.

ROBERT HARTMAN, ACBL CEO REPORTED THE FOLLOWING:

- ACBL membership, at the end of October, stood at 167,912. This is a net increase of 1,504 members, the highest gain in a single year since 1993 (with the exception of 2009, when the new life master level was introduced).
- Regional and sectional tournament table counts have shown a small decline as compared with last year. Regional tables were down 6% with three fewer regionals held.
- Sectional tables were down 2%, while STaC's were a really bright spot, with a 10% increase over 2013, mainly because of five additional STaCs.
- The Bridge Administration department is being transformed to provide a long standing need for more TD level bridge knowledge within the department; the need for improved customer service, the takeover of the Regionals at Sea Programs, the anticipation of the rollout of ACBL Score+ and the need to train newer directors and Jim Miller's retirement as National Recorder.

A number of changes have been made to enhance service levels and expertise. Joyce Stone was moved from Club & Membership to Bridge Administration. Dan Plato, who brings a great skill set of TD knowledge, was transitioned from the field to be an Atlanta based headquarter employee. TD Tony Greene is also moving from the field to headquarters. The Plato Project is one of the first tactical efforts that ACBL has undertaken. A new weekly Field Supervisor Conference call has also developed into an opportunity to improve communication with the field and present ACBL policies, solicit feedback and standardize TD ruling, enforcement and procedures.

- For the first time, in preparation for the Phoenix NABC, Tourney Trax was used to generate all hand records and pre-dupe files for the tournament. Another first was a pilot program with Bridge Winners to pre-sell entries for three events and a communication effort to potential seeds, encouraging them to buy entries early in order to help start games on time.
- We are reemphasizing Zero Tolerance in order to achieve our goal of making the experience of playing bridge inviting and pleasurable for all. Dan Plato, the Club and Membership Department, developed a Zero Tolerance Workshop that debuted in Atlanta, and will be offered in Phoenix. The workshop is designed for Club Managers, Directors, and

Owners to educate these key stakeholders on how to deal with poor behavior at clubs. A number of other things will be provided to emphasize this effort.

- Through September, face-to-face club table count was down 2.44%, with a total of 1,660,202 tables reported. Online table count through September is 704,528, which reflects a 4.74% increase, compared to the same period in 2012.
- Tourney Trax is now being used to process all tournament financials, and it has brought significant improvement.
- The final draft of the Substance Abuse Prevention Policy has been presented to ACBL management (headquarters and field). The policy will be presented to field employees at the NABC, and then via conference call in December. The employee assistance program (EAP) will be in place for all ACBL employees starting January 1, 2014.
- Our IT group continues to work on a new web design, which will introduce many new features for our members. In addition to a new home page design, we are also working on a new NextGen bridge site to replace our youth 4 bridge web site.
- We recently hired a mobile web developer, Julia Lovel, who will help us move forward with new capabilities for accessing information via smart phones and pad devices; and will be starting with a new My ACBL portal for mobile devices. We expect to start rolling out our new capabilities early next year.
- Phase four and five of the ACBL Score+ project is now back on schedule. These phases were more expensive than anticipated; and Nicholas Hammond, our developer, has asked to use the savings of Phases 1-3 to help augment the budget for Phase four and five. Even with this change, the project is currently still on budget. The internal testing and rollout program is in development. It is anticipated that all design work will be complete by late Spring 2014.
- The marketing staff has been increased with the addition of a marketing project supervisor, a graphic designer, and a marketing assistant.
- The new ACBL Style Guide is complete and implementation at the corporate level has begun. Maximizing brand consistency at the District and Club levels is included as a 2014 marketing tactic.
- Plans are underway for the 2014's Longest Day to raise funds in support of the Alzheimer's Association. ACBL's goals are to have 250 teams registered and to raise \$750,000.00.
- Teacher Accreditation Program for 2013 has seen a huge increase over 2012, with 14 TAPs completed, and two remaining. 2013 accredited stats are as follows:

TAP Accredited	4,970
Better Bridge Accredited	897
Easy Bridge Accredited	1,029
School Bridge Teachers	758

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

- TAP schedule for 2014 already includes the Dallas NABC, Houston, Albuquerque, and King of Prussia Regionals. More to be added.
- Strategic Planning Updates on 2013 Strategic Projects:

Online learn to play bridge, Phase I

- Currently beta testing with over 30 beta testers.
- IT has established secure connection for obtaining membership data.
- Soft rollout planned for December with full rollout in early 2014.

Online partnership desk, Phase I

- Development will now take place in 2014.
- Quotes requested for outside programming assistance (responses range from \$40,000 to \$125,000).

Understand why people choose to leave ACBL and identify ways the ACBL can best retain our members

- Report of survey results for both populations of interest (lapsed and current members) scheduled for delivery in December.

Develop a vision of an ideal new tournament Director structure and identify paths to this structure

- Project leadership has transitioned to Human Resources Department (Sylvia Hardin)

ACBL + Score

- The addition of Ken Horwedel to the project leadership team has added the dimension of directing experience to this critical project.
- Developer requesting savings of \$75,000 for Phase 1 through 3 carry forward to be applied to Phase 4 & 5.

Implement better web development tools

- Webmaster interfaces (tournament schedules, Master point races, achievement) NextGen Bridge site nearly complete.

Centralization of data

- Empowering headquarters staff to quickly and easily find information project is now complete.

- In 2014, the testing and verification of ACBL + Score will be a major focus and require a major investment of human resources. Documentation, along with training of directors, staff and volunteers will be critical to the non-disruptive rollout of this system that touches so many areas of our members and organization.
- Peter Rank, League Counsel, reported that on September 24, 2013, Michael Schrieber filed a lawsuit against the ACBL and various other named defendants in Shelby County, TN, claiming he was slandered, libeled, and otherwise injured by the acts of the owners and

managers of the M.A. Lightman Bridge Club in Memphis, TN. Insurance counsel has been appointed on behalf of the ACBL. Insurance counsel will file an answer on behalf of ACBL within 30 days of the date of service on the League.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

It has been my pleasure to serve you as your representative on the ACBL Board of Directors for the past nine years. I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to give back to the game I came to love as a student at Vanderbilt University in 1958.

Your newly elected representative, Russ Jones, brings a lot of knowledge and experience to the ACBL Board, and I believe very strongly that our District will be well represented by Russ.

See you at the bridge tables!