

Zoom Video Conference.

Attendance: Steve Moese, Jeff Bayone, Steve Gaynor, Rich Carle, Betty Starzec, Kathie Macnab, Henry Meguid, Ellis Feigenbaum, Susan Miguel

Key Links:

Committee Documents: <http://www.district11bridge.com/BoG/2017BoGTCODocs.html>

BoG Reports: http://www.district11bridge.com/ACBL_board_reports.html

BridgeWinners Clubs & Teachers Forum: <http://bridgewinners.com/forums/browse/clubs-and-teachers/>

Priorities - Emerge from Covid19 Impacts; Grow Membership, Grow Tables, Grow Classes

NEXT MEETING Tuesday January 24, 2023 - 8 PM ET, 5 PM PT

AGENDA

- Ideas for reopening clubs
- Discuss November Meetings

Discussion

We congratulate Betty Starzec, ACBL's 2023 Honorary Member of the Year.

We discussed the recent resignations of senior management.

We discussed recent losses in IT expense.

ACBL is one of the biggest volunteer organizations around. Running it as a business kills volunteerism. We have hit the demographic cliff.

We discussed the nature of leadership issues and lack of an aligned direction among board and management.

The loss of membership is a major issue and management hasn't been able to respond/correct the fall. They instead tended to online bridge is a source of income to the detriment of in-person clubs.

Board of Directors caused the problem. Large alliances an BBO are reaping the rewards from what the ACBL needed to stay alive.

Alliances aren't paying great income to its members. The Alliance owners are reaping extra profits.

99 er games – clubs opt in. In place mid-April 2020. Mechanism in place to help smaller clubs using that tool.

Clubs would get back 90% of what their member spending was.

Online games do not grow bridge players. Not huge games but people like it because they know the people.

ACBL not capable of running SYC games on BBO scale participation.

A bridge club should be an intimate group of people who bond with each other and create relationships and friendships.

ACBL Management didn't do anything about a 40% guest rate.

Need to solve the VACB Problem (Large Alliances) and Support the Clubs. Major role for ACBL – Set up an education program across the country. Annual programs in standard locations to recruit new members. Require follow-up lessons and bridge club experiences.

New member recruits come from areas where population density is higher.

Retaining members has to be face-to-face.

Wouldn't it be nice to use the internet to recruit people to learn how to play bridge, then have a smooth transition to nearby in-person bridge clubs? Requires games are available to make this work.

JB – Teaches 300 people a week online. Better than in person – retain 80% (in-person more like 60%). Many people taught online start playing in supervised play at the club (25 30 tables per week). Many will never play in our club because they live too far away. They can find a bridge club near them.

Never get 20's and 30's or young professionals at the club, but we do online. Online helps bridge the early years to strong in-club and tournament play later when they have the time money and desire to socialize. Clubs have to survive over those 20 years. Clubs need income from online play to make this work.

Leadership has to understand what the attractions of the game are. They do not have to be bridge experts.

How can we use the tools from online bridge experiences (teaching and Play) to funnel new people to existing in-person clubs? We need to have clubs near where new players are “born”.

Concern on the committee that the new prospect process with the Ed Foundation is not scalable and should not be limited to in-person experiences only. The program needs to have the tools to retain people – keep the client base intact.

Recruit online for club play, use online bridge as a supplement only when necessary.

People are not coming to the clubs as before.

HM – Why do new players need the ACBL? Full-service clubs are finding it very difficult to survive in the current environment because of poor attendance.

Concern shared that Board Leadership is not interested in our advice and input about what clubs need.

Action Steps:

- Create a position in ACBL Management that is responsible for club support that has deep club management experience. Don't rely on the website.
- Define ways to recruit new players online and face-to-face.
- Define how to bridge new players from the online experience into face-to-face clubs near them.
- Make no changes to VACB program without consulting the stakeholders at several levels. Eliminate the severe advantage large alliances have drawing players away from local VACBs.

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Submitted Respectfully,

Steve Moese
D11 Advisory Council Representative