

Zoom Video Conference.

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

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 - Grow Membership, Grow Tables, Grow Classes

NEXT MEETING Tuesday March 28, 2023 - 8 PM ET, 5 PM PT

AGENDA

- How best to engage prospects and create bridge players.
- How best to create new ACBL members
- Motions for AC Pre-Meeting (submitted to Barbara Doran and Motion Committee prior to meeting).

Discussion

Steve M. shares his thanks for the post AC meeting email discussion, and asked members to be actively supporting our motions when we bring them to the AC. Shared his concern that much of the AC is more concerned about tournaments than keeping club healthy. Shared his concern about BBO offering 0-5 players declare only games to earn first Masterpoints – this is what we want F2F clubs to do. However we are not able to point people to the 0-5/10/20 games around the F2F clubs who are operating. Need to fix the gap in information so F2F clubs don't have undue competition from online games.

Steve G – takes issue with MP inflation concerns and sees K/ Wilsons comments at the AC meeting as self-serving.

Ellis F. – League wants to depend on fewer larger sources of income.

Susan M. – The league is not 5 Board members who ram through what they want. We need to mobilize the members. We can be complacent and allow them to do what they want. President and CEO did not respond to my email after one month. Then we learned that the schedule is too full. Then 780 emails and unit presidents to tell people that we need other decisions.

Steve M. shared Susan Donnelly interaction (Broad Sponsored Membership Task Force).

Susan M. – Using trick bridge – ACBL no using it. **Fundamental Fact: the way to create members is to build community!**

Ellis – BoD views their position as one of protecting the League. Represent the League to the members and not the members to the league.

Susan M. – ACBL is a volunteer-based organization. Once volunteers go away, they will have no place to go.

Steve G. – Nobody wants to run NABCs anymore.

Susan M. - People do not call experienced stakeholders before taking decisions that affect them. Guest membership is now a part of BOOST. The current guest membership software cannot communicate with any other ACBL system.

Susan M – Brilliant Idea:

We will never have a bridge playing CEO. Pair the CEO with a club manager. Someone who is not the Board. The new person needs a sounding board.

Ellis - Best CEO was Jeff Johnson.

Susan M – need to expand BOOST so that we can advertise more broadly.

Steve M. – Are we willing to do the heavy lifting that being an active sounding board for the ACBL on all things Clubs?

Jeff B. - \$4 Rebate program was deployed poorly and is seriously flawed. Should have consulted this committee first. Massive expensive program costing alliances \$100Ks and not really benefiting the clubs they targeted.

Susan M. – Why can't we advertise clubs?

Steve M. - suggested to talk to Sylvana Morici because she built her club on Facebook ads.

Jeff B. – About BOOST, 15 students per class. Micromanaging is absurd. Don't need to keep structure so tight. No sense to fill out hours of paperwork or restrict teaching to F2F only. Clubs have an interest in growing players. Boost is strictly in-person. That makes no sense at all. Everyone of the new players want to play online. Everyone who plays in my supervised play games, learned online first. Re-sign rate is better than 80%.

Susan M. – Now guest memberships are a requirement.

KMcN – ACBL won't tell us who signed up as a guest member or a member. We are blind.

Susan M. – Update – “What happens after we are done in 6 weeks. 7 table game generated from BOOST that is there forever. If 1000 bridge clubs did that, we get 28000 tables more.

Ellis – we run LBIAD twice yearly. Seems to be working. Success depends on the personality of the teacher. Every club is different.

Susan M. – Some of the clubs should go out of business.

Ellis – 500 to 1000 clubs decide to pool with alliances.

Jeff B. – 23 more tables for ROYAL STaC week. Increased by 30%. Vast majority hadn't played at the club before. They came out for the gold .

Sylvana – Facebook is easy. Hardest part is determining demographic profile of target audience. Then there is a learning curve for using the tools. Sylvana – 20 mi radius (island), All women (men aren't looking at the stuff in their feeds), 57-72 yrs old. 2 sec to get attention in the feed. Ads are all about getting people interested. Click through for more information. 80% engage after midnight.

Steve M. – How important is having a great website for people to reach from the online ads – low risk trial, welcoming messages, learning paths, etc.

Sylvana - Free would bring a ton of people who came once. Charging one small fee for the first lesson got the real students. Make sure that they love to play bridge before they leave the first class. Play without auction, no bidding, no dummy. NT then trump. Then dummy and a goal. Keep risk low.

Susan M. – How does FB determine how much the ads cost?

Sylvana – FB gives you the choice based on several parameters. Google, Facebook, and Instagram. Entire year spend was \$1300. Key is do you have something to gain? Engage new people to try something fun and new. Did try to get bridge players to play at a club was to promise them they would never have to play duplicate. ½ card fee if playing social bridge. Rooms of social players that could care less about duplicate bridge. Their friends are more important than the competition or MPs.

Sylvana – there is a program when you insert your ad and it moves through all platforms so you are not restricted to just one platform. Trade Desk – independent media buying. Google ads very useful. Did you ever click on an Amazon ad? A BBO Ad? FB is too easy. Link to ad created by ACBL about learning to play bridge.

Sylvana - Until club owners sit on the Board we are not going to make any changes.

Jeff B – Google ads several \$100s per month very effective.

Sylvana – We've got to figure out a way for the league to recognize the importance of the future of bridge in the hands of the people it promotes. Online is here to stay forever. Platforms like BBO do not create new players. They create consumers. If we want to have bridge in 10 years the league needs to make a major shift. BridgeWhiz is a mess because of random quality of the trainers. Reward and recognize how important teaching clubs is to the future of bridge itself. The rebate and price increases were caused by League losing money. Instead of solving the problem of dropping membership, they chose to increase prices.

Steve G – Nobody recognized the need to give away a free membership for one year.

Sylvana – Ed Fdn would not have to fund this at all. The only cost to the ACBL is the magazine.

Steve G. – Proposal: Any Best Practices Teacher led class gives members a one-year membership free.

Susan M. - Guest members do not get hard copy bulletins. Need to be able to go online and see the masterpoint growth.

Silvana – ACBL would pay postage for old issues of the bulletins. Offered free to new students. Became addicted to magazine. Talked subscription to the league. Addiction came from the full package, not from the online experience. National Directors are looking for a job at clubs.

Steve M – The ACBL TDs might be seeing a permanent drop in demand for their time as the Board eliminated the requirement for Units to run sectionals, and instituted the “Local Sectional” that runs under 25 tables a session with 100% sectional rating (80-% Silver and 20% Black). Given all tournaments are barely running at 50% pre-covid attendance, the demand for TD Hours has dropped significantly. This is not surprising.

Ellis – 3 local sectionals, everyone over 70% of pre-covid. Largely local audience. Manage a club like a country club – charge a fixed monthly rate and allow play as many times as they want. Offer classes as part of that fee.

KMcN – just closed a bridge studio. ACBL Board has a monopoly and they are working with BBO. Things didn’t develop big time until there was a second bridge club. 2nd club worked no students and getting them into the game.

Rich Carle – Directing a bridge game now. League is in trouble. Not have the priorities they need. We need a comprehensive plan forward. Too much piecemeal effort.

Susan M – Plan for bridge about how to make money.

Rich Carle – All future AC meetings will be virtual.

Steve G. – The membership meeting in Chicago will be in-person.

Action Steps:

Steve M will work with Mark Aquino and Larry Sealy to determine the best way for this Committee to engage major decisions that affect clubs before they are made.

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Submitted Respectfully,

Steve Moese

D11 Advisory Council Representative