

## **National Director Report April 2021**

The ACBL Board of Directors held its spring meetings via Zoom March 10-12, 2021. During these unprecedented times, the ACBL Board of Directors, committees and work groups continue to meet regularly through conference calls, GoToMeeting and Zoom.

The information presented in this report has been sourced from the following, and represents a synopsis of the items included in:

- . Spring Management Report.
- . ACBL board chairs and board member reports.
- . March meeting minutes.

Details of all motions and issues raised in the above-referenced sources can be found at <https://www.acbl.org/about-acbl/administration/board-of-directors/meeting-motions-and-minutes/>.

### **Finance**

Despite a rough start in 2020 due to the onslaught of COVID-19, the ACBL has improved its financial condition producing \$3.2M+ in revenue over expenses for the year ending 12/21/2020. Revenue derived from online tournaments, an increase in the market value of the ACBL's investment portfolio, and delayed expenditures combined with a reduction in operating costs contributed to the increase.

The 2020 ACBL audit is complete. No significant issues were reported as a result of the audit. The 2020 audits of the ACBL Charity Foundation and the ACBL Educational Foundation are nearly complete. The IRS Form 990 tax returns for all three entities are being prepared.

Joann Glasson, District 4, ACBL Board of Directors, was elected as ACBL Treasurer for a one-year term from May 1, 2021 through April 30, 2022. Glasson currently serves as Finance Chair.

### **Office of the National Recorder**

The Office of the National Recorder, headed by Robb Gordon, continues to see a surge in player memos, almost all of which involve unethical behavior. For the foreseeable future, the Office of the National Recorder expects to see more ethics-related player memos than experienced pre-pandemic. In 2020, the ACBL received 1,000 player memos. Fifteen volunteers support the investigative process.

## Appeals and Charges Committee

The Appeals and Charges Committee presented its report on hearings/revisions to the Code of Disciplinary Regulations (CDR). During the March meeting, the Report on Hearings (Item 211-01) contained one hearing that had been held and had not yet been received by the Board. However, multiple Hearing Reports are presented and received during “special” Board meetings.

Hearing Reports from 2018 through those received to date by the Board this year as well as new summary Disciplinary Disposition Charts for Online and Face-to-Face hearings and Negotiated Resolution settlements can be found at [Hearing Reports | American Contract Bridge League – ACBL](#).

The names of those disciplined, and the disciplines imposed can be found at [CurrentlyUnderDisciplineList.pdf \(acbl.org\)](#).

## Membership

The ACBL membership count continues to decrease slightly each month with a 6.1 percent decline since January 2020. The ACBL currently has approximately 150,000 members.

## Clubs

Over 2,021+ clubs have renewed their sanctions in 2021. February’s table count for virtual clubs totaled 132,306.

ACBL sanctioned bridge clubs received over \$3.0 million in January 2021. Although declining, The Support Your Club (SYC) games produce on average about \$60,000 per month for clubs.

## Strategic Committee

The Board solidified its strategic objectives for post pandemic bridge citing majority support for a robust return to face-to-face bridge and favoring a restricted/invitational model over open competition. Under the restricted model, virtual clubs would continue to be owned and operated by face-to-face clubs bolstering confidence to reopen.

The current status of pooling virtual bridge clubs during the pandemic as well as the expected status of such pooling once the pandemic ends and clubs reopen were integral to the discussion.

The Board will continue to provide input as Management works to deliver its plan regarding post pandemic bridge in May.

## **North American Bridge Championships**

The ACBL successfully negotiated the cancellation of the hotel and convention center contracts for the spring 2021 NABC, previously scheduled to take place in St. Louis, and the summer 2021 NABC, previously scheduled to take place in Providence, RI, without damages to the ACBL. The ACBL also successfully navigated the bankruptcy closure of the Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, DC, the hotel that was to host the summer 2022 NABC.

The spring 2021 NABC St. Louis site has been rescheduled to spring 2026. The Providence site for the summer 2021 NABC moved into the gap left by the closure of the Marriott Wardman Park and accordingly, has been rescheduled as the site for the summer 2022 NABC.

For information on upcoming NABCs, go to: <https://nabc.acbl.org>

## **Youth NABC 2021**

The Youth NABC, scheduled for the summer of 2021, will be rescheduled for the summer of 2022. Plans are underway to schedule an online event in July, coinciding with the original dates for the 2021 YNABC.

## **Collegiate Bridge Bowl**

The 2021 Collegiate Bridge Bowl was scheduled to be held July 22-24 during the Summer 2021 NABC in Providence, RI. Online tournaments to award travel packages were planned to begin in February 2021. With the postponement of the summer 2021 NABC until summer 2022, the ACBL plans to hold team and pair tournaments for fun and masterpoints later in the spring with a larger team/pair event in the summer to replace the 2021 Bridge Bowl.

## **Education**

### Online Teacher Certification Program

All 2020 face-to-face Best Practices Teacher Certification Program workshops were canceled. However, courtesy of an ACBL Educational Foundation grant, ACBL worked with the original Best Practices Workshop developer to create a highly interactive ACBL Online Teacher Certification Workshop. During 2020, 94 teachers took the workshop and 69 teachers earned the certification.

## Student Bridge Lessons

During 2019, the ACBL sent supplies to support 2,740 students taking bridge lessons in K-12. During 2020, the ACBL sent supplies to support 827 students. As of February 28, we have received two orders for a total of 32 students, a slow down attributed to the coronavirus. The ACBL is working with the ACBL Educational Foundation to develop an online youth bridge program.

About 50 school programs created during the 2019/2020 academic year shut down due to the pandemic. A few schools continued to meet via Zoom and BBO. During fall 2020, just under 20 colleges offered bridge programs and/or student clubs mixing both face-to-face and online lessons and games.

## College Bridge Club

Through a partnership with BBO, college students have access to the College Bridge Online (CBO) Club, a free and exclusive online bridge club that offers daily individual practice tournaments, free robot rental and bi-monthly special tournaments with masterpoint prizes. With over 108,000 individual entries since October 2017, these CBO Club games have become quite popular with college students and have continued during the coronavirus lockdown.

## **Marketing**

Marketing objectives for 2021 are to stabilize the membership base, improve member recruitment and retention and increase member value.

## Guest Memberships

The ACBL Marketing Team continues to promote the Guest Membership Program. As a special offer, guest members can join at a discounted price anytime during their 120-day trial. There are approximately 1,797 guest memberships of which 417 have been converted to full time ACBL members.

## Communication

A bi-monthly e-newsletter, the *ACBL Speakeasy*, was launched in February. It is sent to all members and highlights important news and upcoming events.

The ACBL website is being redesigned with an anticipated launch in May. The redesign includes rebranding, auditing content, and upgrading the legacy of the [www.acbl.org](http://www.acbl.org) website template created by WordPress® (the ACBL's website platform manager) as well as integrating the YourMembership® platform for a streamlined user experience.

## Social Media

The ACBL continues to use multiple social media platforms, primarily Facebook.

- . The ACBL Facebook page has over 10,600 followers.
- . As of February 28, the ACBL Twitter account has over 3,000 followers, a 1 percent increase since November.
- . Instagram is a rapidly growing social network. The ACBL's Instagram account has over 1,565 followers, a 13 percent increase since November 2020.

## The Longest Day

In 2020, bridge players rallied around The Longest Day, raising more than \$828,000 despite the coronavirus pandemic. Over 300 units and clubs participated in this annual Alzheimer's Association event providing funds to support caregivers and to fuel research.

All Virtual Club Games held during the weekend of June 19 and 20, 2021 will be considered Alzheimer's Association games where participating clubs will donate sanction fees. Elevated black points will be awarded.

Clubs that have resumed face-to-face play can choose a day during the week of June 20-27 to hold events and to offer upgraded games. So far, 60 plus teams have registered and started raising funds.

## **Information Technology**

Analysis to enable pre-registration for face-to-face tournaments once the tournaments resume later in 2021 has begun. Project design is expected to start in the second quarter 2021. The IT team will be working on this project with Bridge Operations and Marketing to ensure that it is completed and tested before the summer.

The IT team continues to plan for the Masterpoints Engine to calculate the masterpoints for Class 1 and Class 2 special game ratings, ACBL-wide overall results, and ICC (Inter-Club Championships) overall results.

## Analytics and visualizations

Working with the Marketing and Field Operations teams, the IT team developed Tableau workbooks depicting ACBL membership trends and the demographics among

active members, historical masterpoint awards by month and pigment, and the locations of regional tournaments and the geographic distribution of their attendees. In addition, IT completed a quality check of incoming masterpoints to prevent duplicate entries.

## **Governance Board Operations Committee**

Several actions were undertaken by the Governance Committee in advance of and during the March meeting. All were approved by the Board during the meeting.

The most important of these actions concerned regulations for this year's elections for Regional Directors, who will take the place of District Directors for those Directors whose terms end this year. This is the start of a rather complicated process that will eventually reduce the Board of Directors from 25 to 13— in early March, District board officials all received an email from President Georgia Heth about this process and its effects on each district.

At this meeting, Item NA211-13: Campaigning for Regional Director, amended the Codification Part 1 – Governance and Policy, Chapter IV – Board Procedures, A: Administration, Section 5.5.8, ACBL Board of Directors Behavioral Code, to allow a current member of the Board who is a candidate for Regional Director to campaign in all Districts within that Region. Prior restrictions permitted a District Director to campaign only within their District. In addition, numerous administrative changes were made (see Item NA211-14) to the Codification Part 1 – Governance and Policy, Chapter III – Administration, D. Elections, to change references to “District Director” to “Regional Director” and to comport with the 2020 changes to the ACBL Bylaws that documented the downsizing of the ACBL Board of Directors and the process whereby Regional Directors would be chosen.

In addition, two minor administrative/housekeeping actions were taken. The Bylaws of the American Contract Bridge Educational Foundation were amended in November 2016 to separate completely the governance of the Foundation from the ACBL. Accordingly, an overlooked reference to Appendix 5-A2, which had previously been deleted and contained the Bylaws of the ACBL Educational Foundation, was deleted from Section 1, ACBL Charity Foundation and ACBL Educational Foundation, of the Codification, Part 1 – Governance and Policy, A. Administration and Policy Regarding Charity. A copy of the ACBL Educational Foundation Bylaws that had inadvertently not been previously deleted was also approved for deletion. This copy was contained in Appendix 5-D of the Codification, Part 2 – Bridge Operations, Chapter V Charity, Foundations and Special Funds.

Finally, Management was given the action to ensure that the emails of departing Board members would be archived in accordance with corporate policy, and that access to

these emails by incoming Board members using the same email address would no longer be possible.

## **Bylaws Committee**

Two motions to the ACBL Bylaws regarding changes to Board of Governors operations were unanimously deferred to April 21, 2021 in order to allow time for the Board of Governors to formally approve all aspects of these motions.

For the complete wording of these motions, please see the Minutes of the March 2021 meeting at <https://www.acbl.org/about-acbl/administration/board-of-directors/meeting-motions-and-minutes/>.

## **Appointments**

David Berkowitz and Paul Lewis were appointed to the Hall of Fame Committee for a three-year term from March 10, 2021 through the end of the Spring 2024 NABC.

Mark Perlmutter was appointed to the Online Ethical Oversight Committee to fill the remaining three-year term of Fred Pollack. The term runs to the end of the Summer 2023 NABC.

Phil Clayton was appointed to the Online Ethical Oversight Committee to fill the remaining three-year term of Adam Parish. The term runs to the end of the Summer 2021 NABC.

Craig Allen, Mitch Dunitz, Jeff Miller and Gary Cohler were appointed to the ACBL Disciplinary Committee for a three-year term from March 10, 2021 through the end of the Spring 2024 NABC.

Doug Doub, David Grainger, Jeff Ford and Jeff Goldsmith were appointed to the Competitions & Conventions Committee for a one-year term from March 10, 2021 through the end of the Spring 2022 NABC.

Peter Boyd, Howard Weinstein, and AJ Stephani were appointed to the ACBL Laws Commission for a five-year term from March 10, 2021 through the end of the Spring 2026 NABC.

Peter Boyd, Bart Bramley, Leslie Davis, Brian Platnick and Karen Walker were appointed to the Ethical Oversight Committee for a three-year term from March 10, 2021 through the end of the Spring 2024 NABC.

Danny Sprung was appointed for a three-year term from March 10, 2021 through the end of the Spring 2024 NABC.

David Lodge has assumed the position of Western Conference Representative to the Executive Committee; his term will expire December 31, 2022. David Johnson was appointed as the Executive Committee alternate member for the Western Zone.