
MEMPHIS REPORT- MARCH 2012

The ACBL celebrated its 75th Anniversary with a NABC in hometown Memphis for the first time. It was a rousing success with 9,659 tables in play. Many players took a tour to see Graceland (Elvis Presley's Home) but by far the most popular was the free tour to the Hall of Fame and Bridge Library at ACBL headquarters. There was an inexpensive trolley up and down Main Street that went to many fine restaurants as well as Beale Street where all the clubs are located (I went to BB Kings Club). I also visited the Peabody Hotel and watched the ducks walk across the lobby. All and all, a very fine NABC even though the Hotel only had 600 rooms and many people had to stay in smaller nearby hotels.

Congratulations to **Zack Garrison** on becoming the youngest Life Master ever at 9 years and 2 months. I think this record will stand for a long time.

Congratulations to **Peggy Sutherlin** on being appointed to the Hall of Fame committee and to **Bob Hamman** for being appointed to the Competition and Convention committee.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership numbers have gotten off to an extremely strong start in 2012. As of March 1, total membership stands at 166,145 the highest in over 15 years. Year to date we have signed up 2,329 new members, an increase of 12.9% over the same two month period last year.

TOURNAMENTS

Tournaments have been strong. Through February, total Regional table count has increased by 19%. However, there have been two more regionals this year.

CLUB AND MEMBER SERVICES

Over a three-day period in February, the Club and Member Service Department employees called 150 players who joined ACBL within the last two months. The caller welcomed the new member and verified the receipt of the new member welcome packet and membership card. The new members were pleasantly surprised to hear from us and thrilled that we made a personal call directly to them.

In addition, Club and Member Services called about 165 players who had recently not renewed their membership to inquire why they let their membership lapse. I am pleased that 17 of these members renewed or said they would shortly.

These calls were successful and we plan to continue to do this.

MARKETING

Publicity for bridge has been on the upswing over the last few months. Twenty known articles have been published with total estimated readership of 16.5 million.

Houston will be one of three test markets for a "Learn to Play Bridge" marketing campaign. Hopefully, this will drive new students to local bridge teachers.

COOPERATIVE ADVERTISING PROGRAM

During the first two months of the year, a total of \$29,609 has been distributed to 33 qualified advertising campaigns. This is a great program, more units, cubs, and teachers should take advantage of it.

EDUCATION

Currently, 1,743 teachers have elected to be listed on the ACBL'S "Find a Teacher" web site. Teachers can add their phone number and soon their schedule to the web site.

Some of the current TAP Trainers will be retiring within the next couple of years. Plans are underway to create a succession plan to identify and train new TAP Trainers.

RECORDER

We ordered new and more sophisticated camera equipment to be used for security filming during our NABC'S.

MEGA HOUSING

Our current agreement with Mega Housing expires this year, we plan to send a "Request for Proposal" to potential housing service providers by mid-May and we will have a mid-June deadline for submittals.

ACBLScore

A new version of ACBLScore (the new name will be ACBLScore+) is under development to take the place of the ACBLScore, which was developed in the early 90's.

GNT/NAP'S

A new GNT/NAP/Special Events task force has the charter to improve these events and encourage greater participation.

STRENGTH OF FIELD

A shadow-testing period of the proposal to include a measure of the strength of the field when determining masterpoint awards will begin in May. During this period, masterpoints will be awarded using the current approach, but also calculated using the new strength of field method, and the results will be reported to the Board.

See you at the tables.

Dan