

**Dallas Bridge Association Unit 176
Long-Range Planning Session
October 13, 2006**

Participants: Gerrie Owen, Mary Jane McGinnis, Jack Rollier, Catherine Tucker, Bob Butterfield, Mimi Zavitkovsky, Dorsey Shaw, Jim Bauer, Shirley Ashby
Charles Price, Leader, Bob Scallan, Facilitator and Melanie Price served as scribe.

Ground Rules

- Stay on topic.
- One person talks at a time.
- Take care of your own needs.
- Nothing will be repeated outside this room that could be hurtful.
- Don't find fault during brainstorming.

Agenda

- What is our current status?
- What is ideal?
- What are the barriers to achieving the ideal?
- How can the barriers be overcome?
- What are the payoffs?
- Develop the mission statement.

What is the Current Status? (Verbatim from brainstorming session)

- Main source of income (tournaments) – dwindling attendance
- In 2003, table count at sectionals was bigger because no regional
- Our attendance seems to be holding steady
- We seem to be doing better than other units
- San Antonio has more tournaments, but smaller
- 2005 and 2006 were not good years (attendance and income)
- Difference in 04-05 is regional
- For past three years, outgo has been stable, but income has declined
- \$1900 spent on GNT entries in May 2006 and \$900 went to I/N (Intermediate/Novice) program
- ACBL fees have increase \$50 per table since 1999, but entry fees have only increased \$4 per table – could this be due to fewer tables?
- Unit Game net loss has increased
- Table counts are down
- Caddy expenses are up (??)
- Director fees have increased
- Bottom line: net outflow has increased
- Net assets have significantly decreased over past few years
- Dallas is 2nd in district in number of new members over last 3 years
- Not using Unit Game as a way to promote tournaments or other events

- Current work on Unit Game attendance has been effective
- Our retention rates are significantly lower than the other large units in our district
- New players are intimidated, especially in club games
- Many experienced players purposely enjoy having new players intimidated – try to take advantage of novice players' inexperience
- Zero tolerance issues affect retention of new members
- New players are not identified as new to duplicate
- No new player information is provided re: how to play duplicate, benefits of ACBL membership, scoring process
- Lack of programs, better functioning committees
- Not enough camaraderie among players, board members
- Players not involved, Board does most of the work
- Players should be asked to do meaningful work (not just bring food)
- There should be more, earlier planning
- Lack of pool of knowledge
- Lack of involvement of members outside the Board
- Lack of coordination/communication among club owners
- Communication by Board toward membership could be improved
- Visibility/activity of Board is minimal
- Many members only want to play bridge
- No programs in place to improve players' games
- All Board members may not be aware of their fiduciary responsibilities; by and large the Board does what the membership expects us to do – have been trying to spend money wisely
- No input from membership re: Board effectiveness
- No budgets
- No audits

What is the Current Status? (Organized after the meeting into categories)

May Sectionals/Tournaments

- Our sectional attendance seems to be holding steady
- We seem to be doing better than other units in sectional attendance
- 2005 and 2006 were not good years (attendance and income)
- Main source of income (tournaments) – dwindling attendance. **See attachment**
- In 2003, table count at sectionals was bigger because no regional
- San Antonio has more tournaments, but smaller
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- Caddy expenses are up (??) **See attachment**
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Unit Games

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Finances

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- All Board members may not be aware of their fiduciary responsibilities; by and large the Board does what the membership expects us to do and tries to manage money wisely

Recruitment/Retention of Players

- Dallas is 2nd in District in number of new members over last 3 years
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Board

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- Players should be asked to do meaningful work (not just bring food)
- There should be more, earlier planning
- Lack of pool of knowledge
- Lack of involvement of members outside the Board
- No programs in place to improve players' games
- Lack of coordination/communication among club owners
- Many members only want to play bridge rather than assist Board members with Unit activities

What is Ideal? (Verbatim from brainstorming session)

- Break-even situation overall, but make enough money from tournaments to maintain Unit programs
- Establish a budget to determine how much money we need to make
- Prioritize goals and expenditures; can add more programs if income allows
- Establish ideal minimum operating balance we need to maintain
- Find alternatives to tournaments for fund raising
- Unit should develop a plan to determine how to allocate future tournaments
- Unit should hold the number of tournaments that meets the demands of the members
- Unit/Board need to work with clubs in planning events – take into account their interests
- Board should utilize feedback from club owners (open lines of communication)
- Need new players and the programs to support them
- Board needs to determine ideal percentage of growth/retention – establish membership goals
- Involve membership in election of key Board officers or make them aware of proposed officers
- Maintain or improve current table count
- Keep tournament costs to a minimum while meeting the needs of the members
- Everybody is nice to everybody – ex: introductions at tables, beginning with Board members; active friendliness; promote cordiality
- Begin approaching members early in the year re: committee involvement; have a broad base of member involvement
- Communicate to general membership the activities of the Board
- Board members are fully aware of their fiduciary responsibilities and conduct themselves accordingly
- Conduct annual external audit/revue of finances and communicate results to membership
- Develop an annual budget that effectively allocates Unit resources prior to beginning of fiscal year
- Seek membership input re: Board effectiveness
- Board members be as visible as possible (Unit games, tournaments)
- Bridge is viewed by public as enjoyable and desirable; develop programs to promote bridge to the public

What is Ideal? (Organized following the meeting into categories)

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Board

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What Are the Barriers to Achieving the Ideal?

- Attendance (adequate) at tournaments
- Managing expenditures
- Entry fees
- ACBL costs
- Time involved in budget planning, goal priorities, communication
- Alternative funding – members are already tapped out (so much is already asked of them)
- Cost of I/N program
- Election changes require by-law changes/ change in election process
- Membership needs more information re: functions of Board
- Last third of Ideals – time/effort
- By-laws re: club owners as Board members
- Re: audit – costs, find someone to do the job
- Getting into schools, organizations – approval, red tape
- On-line bridge

How Can the Barriers Be Overcome?

May Sectional/Tournaments

- Advertise tournaments, announce at clubs, including private clubs, send flyers to other tourneys
- Automatic emails, ads on website; ask members to share email addresses
- Make games a more inviting social event (i.e., speakers)
- Budget for I/N, for tournaments
- Communication between Board and I/N coordinator

Finances

- Budget funds for audit
- Find an auditor

Recruitment/Retention

- Get sponsor in each school or site (from within) who will volunteer
- Make games socially more appealing

Board

- Take needed time, be efficient with time
- Let Board members and prospective members know how much time will be involved
- Appoint committee to review by-laws
- PR person/*Scorecard* contributor
- Publicity/website

What Are the Payoffs?

- Everybody wins – members, Board, club owners, teachers, community
- Increase in pride by members and Board
- Improvement of memory, mental health
- Improvement of communication
- More fun, camaraderie

Mission Statement

To: Promote bridge within the Unit

In a Way That:

- Maximizes enjoyment of the players
- Encourages participation of players (beginners, advancing, and experienced) at all levels – clubs, tournaments, teachers, etc.
- Attracts new players
- Utilizes resources (fiscal and personal) of the Unit most effectively
- Promotes and conducts contract bridge tournaments in cooperation with the ACBL

So That: Positive bridge experiences for members of Unit 176 will be maximized.