

Minutes from Membership Committee Meeting, June 26

Attendees: MaryAnn Boardman, Maureen Garlich, Tom Flanders, Gary Edwards, Barb Skogman, Wyn Seeley and Joe Pieper

Committee Purpose: Recruit new ISBL members (i.e. ACBL members in Unit 163) and implement practices that enhances the bridge experience for existing ISBL members. ISBL currently has 475 members.

Meeting Purpose: Develop goals and action plan to achieve goals for next 12 months

Discussion:

1. Methods to recruit ISBL members: Three categories:

a. Party bridge players who don't play duplicate bridge: Recruitment methods:

(1) Tap into existing party bridge groups via ISBL members who also belong to the party bridge group.

(2) Begin with a questionnaire to determine why party bridge players don't play duplicate. Listen to their concerns and make the appropriate accommodations. Follow up with focus groups of 4 to 6 prospects. Karen Cummins and Gerry Tetrault have had great success with this technique in Iowa City.

(3) Offer instructions on the unique aspects of duplicate.

(4) Assign one-on-one mentors as needed.

(5) Give interested persons a new member packet (see below).

b. Teach persons to play bridge: Recruitment methods:

(1) Emulate Bob Otto's effort.

(2) Recruit and identify volunteer ISBL members willing to teach.

(3) Canvas high schools and colleges for interest in bridge lessons.

(4) Advertise to find persons interested in bridge. ACBL's Cooperative Advertising Program will reimburse units 75% of cost up to \$1,000.

(5) Adopt a ISBL "lesson plan" to be used at multiple club sites. (e.g. ACBL has Audrey Grant's Beginner Bridge Lessons.) Ask Bill Kent, Bob Otto and MaryAnn Boardman for their ideas/suggestions.

c. Find duplicate bridge players in the community and schedule sanctioned games to foster their attendance. For example, Dubuque's only sanctioned game is in the afternoon. Duplicate bridge

players still working cannot attend. Query these players to see if a night game would be attended.

2. New member packet. This packet is tailored for each community's bridge club. It contains calendar of club games throughout the ISBL, local information inviting newcomers players to games, location of games, directors contact info, ACBL App for club games for smart phones, list of members in club, web site, next Sectional schedule, novice tournament information, an old Bridge Bulletin, and information on joining the ACBL. Wyn is working on a simple one page tri-fold brochure which can be mass distributed and includes local information inviting players to games and lessons. This packet would be given to all new bridge players that come to a club game. It could also be given to interested persons that are being recruited.

3. Novice tournament proposal. The objective is to increase member participation in tournament play. This effort is an important element toward enhancing ISBL members' bridge experience. We have a large group of players in Cedar Rapids (18-24 tables) who regularly play on Monday morning and many are not even members of the ACBL. We should add novice events to the Cedar Rapids and Hills Sectionals. Also schedule a Novice Sectional in November or December. This would include a group e-mail encouraging their players to attend, offering prizes, advertising it as a friendly tournament and having mentors available to help. The event would be stratified at the Director's discretion, depending on attendance, and a Swiss Team would be held on Sunday. Gary suggested that each of the Board and committee members be responsible for recruiting at least 4 players for each Novice event at the Cedar Rapids, Hills, and Novice Sectionals. In addition, ALL clubs in our Unit will be focusing on getting their novice players to come and play. This would guarantee success of the events. Bill Kent will be asked to direct the Novice tournament. MaryAnn will arrange a site and apply for a sanction. MaryAnn and Gary will prepare a budget. This also sows the seeds for increasing C level participation in GNT for 2013.

4. Club level actions to improve club play and participation in local events.

a. Present bridge talks 30-45 minutes before the club game. We would survey our club members for topics of interest.

b. E-mail and telephone club members before all games. Help members who need partners.

c. Team Games: Members arrive as pairs. Draw for teams. Match A pairs with C pairs and B pairs with B pairs.

d. Send out monthly news letters (e-mails).

5.. Gary handed out the following ABCL information: Handbook for the Education Liaison, Handbook for Membership Chairs, Attracting new players and potential students.

Goals/Action Plan:

1. Increase ISBL membership from Party Bridge Groups by 30 persons no later than October 31, 2013. Baseline is 475. Action Plan:

a. Joe Pieper request all ISBL clubs to identify Party Bridge Groups and number of members by 15 July 2012. Area board members will be asked to pursue this discovery in their club. Get an ISBL member who plays in the party bridge group to serve as point of contact (POC) within each party bridge group.

b. Area board member and ISBL party bridge group POC develop a recruitment plan for each party bridge group by July 31. The plan should identify who does what and when. See ideas in discussion 1a above. Area board members send recruitment plans to Joe Pieper by July 31.

c. Joe Pieper follow-up with Area board members on their plans and share ideas used for other party bridge groups. Frequency of follow-up will be dictated by the individual recruitment plans. Joe Pieper will inform Membership Committee Chairperson, MaryAnn Boardman at end of each month. These recruitment plans should strive to complete their recruitment actions by October 31.

2. Increase ISBL membership by 20 persons via teaching bridge in the community and offering sanctioned club games that accommodate new members. Strive to achieve this goal by May 15, 2013. Area Board Members will give end of month progress reports to Member Committee Chairperson beginning August 2012.

a. (who) develop lesson plan to use to teach bridge by September 15.

b. Joe Pieper contact ACBL Cooperative Advertising Program coordinator for purpose of developing an advertising campaign for Unit 163. Present to board for approval. Send to Area Board Members by July 31.

c. Area Board Members identify volunteers in communities to canvas local high schools and colleges by August 31. Also identify volunteer to advertise for non-ISBL duplicate players who would be interested in playing in a sanctioned ACBL duplicate club game by August 31.

d. Area Board Members identify volunteers for teaching bridge in their respective communities by August 15.

e. Volunteers at club level advertise for/contact duplicate players who don't attend sanctioned ACBL duplicate club games by September 15. Report results to Area Board Members by October 15.

f. Volunteers at club level canvas local high schools and colleges by September 30.

g. Volunteer teachers conduct training through May 2013.

h. Area Board Member and associated club directors determine whether a new or changed time/day is justified for sanctioned game based on interest from training and advertisement by January 15.

3. Goal for new member packets.

a. Wyn Seeley prepare a simple one page tri-fold brochure and a table of contents by July 20. Provide material to Board Members at the Cedar Rapids July Sectional.

b. Board members ensure brochures are given to perspective duplicate bridge players beginning in August.

4. Goal for Novice tournament events/sectional and increase ISBL membership by 15 persons.

a. Add novice events to the Cedar Rapids and Hills Sectionals. Use Unit wide e-mails and face-to-face encouragement at club games to bolster participation.

b. ISBL Board approve a 2-day (Sat. and Sun.) tournament. Saturday would be 2 stratified pair events. MaryAnn Boardman would present a lesson between sessions on team vs. matchpoint strategy. Sunday would be a 2 session stratified team game. The tournament would advertise free play on one or both games Saturday for anyone who is a member of the ACBL with less than 10 master points. Bill Kent would volunteer to direct the game. Location: The Country Inn and Suites has an available playing site for the weekends of Nov. 9, 10 and December 8,9.

c. Add a C team GNT event in April. The tournament would be similar, but Sunday would be devoted to GNT.

5. By July 15 Joe Pieper request Area Board Members and directors discuss/identify new practices at clubs that enhance experience for club members. Area Board Members report results to Joe Pieper by September 30. Joe share new practices with all directors and on Unit 163 web site by October 30.