



February 2019 NEWSLETTER



ANNUAL ELECTION

Our annual election is currently in process. Our voting members are selecting three of their peers: one to serve as Club Manager; one to serve as Club Treasurer; and one to serve as Board of Directors member. Ballots, and voting instructions, are currently available at the Club. The voting period will end at the conclusion of the Annual Membership Meeting on January 30th, 2019. **Our By-Laws define voting members as those who have paid their 2019 Membership Dues prior to the Annual Membership Meeting and have played at the Croft House six times since the previous annual meeting.**

There are two nominees for the Board of Director position, Lauren Alexander and Greg Roberts. The sole nominees for Treasurer and Club Manager are the incumbents, Mike McComb and Ron Jaeger.

If you have not yet voted and wish to, you have until the end of the Annual Membership Meeting on January 30th, 2019. So, hop to it.

FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

Football season is nearly over with only the Super Bowl remaining. Our own Clemson Tigers vanquished the collegiate football evil empire. With a lot of luck, maybe the same fate will befall pro football's evil empire. Baseball has yet to start its endless summer (not that anyone cares); basketball and hockey are in the mid-season slog, going through the motions waiting for the playoffs. And so it is in ACBL Land. February and March are two of the driest months for special games. I found a few, so they will have to do. In addition to our three allowed Charity Games and a Club Championship we will have the following:

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Sectional Tournaments at Clubs (ST@C's) – February 4th, 6th, and 8th – your opportunity to win silver points at our club. **Big Note: the February 8th game will be a Dirty Dozen Handicapped Swiss Team Event.** The reason for this is to enable more of our members to win silver points. The other two games are Open Pairs. **Little Note: the Swiss Team Handicap Categories have been updated. The masterpoint ranges for the categories have been changed in an attempt to make the handicaps fairer. The new list is on the Bulletin Board. Please check to find out what category you are in.**

ACBL – Wide Charity Game – Wednesday, February 20th – Pairs Matchpoint Game scored across all participating clubs in the ACBL. Masterpoint awards will be partially red (not sure what part).

Game Schedule - February 2019

Monday 1:30pm	Wednesday 1:30pm	Friday 1:30pm
		1-Feb Open Pairs&
4-Feb Open Pairs%	6-Feb Open Pairs%	8-Feb Dirty Dozen Teams Handicapped%
11-Feb Open Pairs	13-Feb Open Pairs&	15-Feb Open Pairs
18-Feb Open Pairs	20-Feb Open Pairs#	22-Feb Open Pairs
25-Feb Open Pairs&	27-Feb Open Pairs	
Charity Game = & ST@C = % ACBL Wide Charity Game = #		
Club Championship\$		

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Our By-Laws require an Annual Membership Meeting in January of each year. This year it will be held on Wednesday, January 30th prior to our usual bridge game. The primary purposes of the meeting are to elect new Board Members and/or Officers and for the current Officers to present to the membership a summation of the "State of the Club." The rest of this article will constitute that summation and is part of the Annual Meeting by reference. The first part of the summation is the Treasurer's Report by Mike explaining the current financial condition of our Club. The second part is your Manager's ramblings about whatever pops into his head.

Thus, the Annual meeting will consist of questions and/or comments from our members and answers from your current Treasurer and Manager, followed by pacifier collection. Immediately after the meeting, the results of the election will be announced.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Club's assets as of 12/31/18 were \$37,916.33. This included \$1484 in our checking account, \$21,219 in our money market account, and \$15,211 in four separate 15 month Certificates of Deposit that are laddered to provide liquidity should we need funds and to take advantage of increasing interest rates. All funds are held at Security Federal Bank, as they have been for many years.

Despite our efforts to spend what we take in, it appears our assets increased by a little over \$1800 during 2018. We took in just a little shy of \$20,000 in game fees, and slightly under \$1800 in dues.

Our expenses totaled \$26,292.05, with the big items being Food (17%), ACBL Fees (23%), Parties (12%), and the Tournament (17%). A more detailed list of expenses is available electronically to the membership from Ron or me, and I will have copies at the annual meeting on January 30th.

The Club made about \$385 on our Sectional Tournament in 2018, but the cost of renting the Week's Center is increasing. If participation and other expenses remain the same, we will be lucky to breakeven in 2019.

Membership numbers are roughly as follows:

2013: 106

2014: 106

2015: 116

2016: 111

2017: 127

2018: 113

2019: 108 as of 01/07/19, with another 5-10 likely to pay dues in the coming months

As you can see, our membership has remained fairly steady, despite our aging demographic. I feel it is significant that a sizable number of people from the Columbia and Augusta areas regularly make the trip to play at our Club. I attribute this to the friendly atmosphere and low game fees we offer. Ron's goal to make us the "friendliest bridge club on the planet" may not be totally achieved, but the comments we hear from many

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members indicate we are all making our club a nice place to play bridge. We all, but especially Ron, need to take time to recognize what we have achieved in this regard.

I will be at the annual meeting, and look forward to trying to answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding our finances, and I look forward to continuing to serve the club in the future.

MANAGER'S REPORT

As many of you know, this was supposed to be my last article in my last newsletter. I had planned to discuss the achievements and failures during my three year tenure as your Club Manager. Well, it didn't quite work out that way. As Marilou, my wife, often points out, "you plan, God laughs". Regardless, I am doing this report as if I am out of here.

TABLE COUNT

After being elected, I set a personal objective of increasing table count by 300 during my three year tenure. I felt that by making the club friendlier we would get increased attendance. The first two years were promising with an increase of 188 tables. The last year, not so good, a disappointing increase of only 35 tables.

However, the real question is if this is good, bad, or indifferent. In an attempt to answer that question, I put together an analysis of table count comparables. The following chart compares the year to year percent increase/decrease in table count for all ACBL clubs, for our Unit 160 (South Carolina) and for clubs in our vicinity (70 miles or less).

	2016 Over 2015	2017 Over 2016	2018 Over 2017	Three Year Period
Total ACBL	-0.8%	-0.3%	0.2%	-0.9%
Unit 160	-1.5%	-3.0%	1.1%	-3.4%
Vicinity	-2.2%	-3.0%	-3.5%	-8.4%
Us	6.7%	7.0%	2.3%	16.8%

As you can see, our numbers are quite a bit better than the comparables. So, I guess we are doing pretty well, and maybe I can be a little less disappointed.

SECTIONAL TOURNAMENT

This has been a wild ride. First year table count was down a tad, second year up 8% and third year a total mess, table count down a whopping 20%. The only good news here is that we managed to make a profit each year. This tournament is held to enable our members to earn Silver Points locally, so, as long as we don't lose money we are OK with the financial results.

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HOLIDAY PARTY

In April 2016 we did a member opinion survey and one of the questions related to having our annual Holiday Party at a non Croft House venue. While the response was less than favorable, we decided to do it anyway. I feel the change has been remarkably successful. Attendance has increased each year with the latest event having 22.5 tables for bridge and over a hundred members and spouses for dinner.

OTHER STUFF

Handicapped Team Games – we are now using handicaps in all of our team games, unless disallowed by the ACBL in certain special games. This seems to have worked out quite well as team game attendance has increased and the playing field has been leveled, making it easier for our lower masterpoint members to be successful.

Guaranteed Partner Program – this program was started about a year ago. At our Monday game we have guaranteed a partner to anyone who shows up without one. This means we need a volunteer to be the stand-in player to partner the single player who shows up without a partner. There have been five members who have, at one time or another, volunteered to serve in this capacity. Absolutely pathetic, but then again, what can you expect from people who feel pushing their chairs under the table after the game is over is too much to ask. Anyway, I'm afraid this program is a total flop and will most likely be discontinued in the near future.

Change In Check In Procedure – elimination of taking names and collecting card fees one at a time has worked out really well. Everyone is able to get in the room in a timelier manner. The play cards (now being used by well over 90% of our members) have made the collection process very streamlined. Doesn't take but a few minutes to collect the card fees. It could even be faster if the dozen or so people who feel compelled to not be at their table at game time gave up that compulsion. Thanks to Greg R for the initial suggestion to start collecting card fees at the table.

Teaching Program – still don't have one. Seems nobody wants one. Multiple attempts to create one have all been total failures. Nuff said.

Thank You – I would like to thank all of our volunteers who have served during my tenure as Club Manager. First, in no particular order, the Board Members: Alan Brooks, Ernie Levinson, Jay Jacobs, Kay Lawton, Bonnie Fabian, Cathy Lindler, Sedley Roach, Phyllis Pellarin, Phoebe Walters, Past Manager Steve Banwarth, and Treasurer Mike McComb. Game Directors: Alan Brooks, Jay Jacobs, Sedley and Jesse Roach, and Steve Banwarth. Our incredibly efficient Set Up/Take Down Team: Pat Biebel, Rose Coldiron, Betsy Rinehart, Shela Wardlow, Sara Wampole, and Marc Carney with assists from many others when needed. If I have omitted anyone (memory not quite what it used to be) I apologize.