



HAPPY NEW YEAR bridge players of the American Bridge Association!!! . As president of the ABA, I would like to thank you all for the support you have rendered me and the association over the past two years. Thanks also for the faith and trust you have shown by re-electing me as your president. Let me assure you that your faith is well founded and I will not let you down. As I start a second term in office, we begin a very challenging new year for the ABA. I assure you I will muster every ounce of courage to bring about new and innovative programs to better bridge, friendships and personal rewards. But I cannot do anything positive or progressive without your assistance.

The American Bridge Association is in dire need of members and the only way that we can get them is by the individual efforts of each and every one of you. Our Teacher Certification Program is an overwhelming success as far as helping us get certified teachers. But where is the reward if these newly certified teachers are not actively involved in teaching bridge to attract new members. Teachers remember this, “you made sacrifices to get certified and you didn’t do it for nothing”. I appreciate the sacrifices you have made, but they can only benefit the ABA if you put your new found skills to work. Get out there and teach some classes. There can be some monetary values there to reimburse you for what you spent. We have generated close to fifty new teachers over the past two years, but have not seen a positive addition to our membership. We need each and every one of you to become proactively dedicated to increase our membership.

Another program that you are overwhelmingly supporting is our Director Certification Program. Over the two past years many of you have sacrificed to attend the workshops offered at our national tournaments. Your efforts too are well founded but contribute very little to the ABA if you don’t continue your training to get certified and become an active director in the association. Clubs, units and sections all need certified directors and it is my goal to ensure that each entity has a director certified to the level needed to be Director-in-Charge of their games. I realize that the cost of hosting our games is on the rise. We can minimize that cost if we have qualified directors within and don’t have to hire them from without. Only those of you who are willing to make the initial sacrifices can help me meet my goal. I am willing to help any aspiring director become better

qualified at the skill of directing. But it has to be your choice. If you want help to become a better director, you can get it. Just let me know and we will work on it.

We are making splendid progress in a couple of programs with our fellow bridge players in the ACBL. Once again your help could be quite beneficial. Presently I am working with ACBL so that ACBL players (as members of the ABA) could play in our games and earn ACBL points. At the same time ABA players (as members of ACBL) can earn ABA points while playing in an ACBL game. We are working to tweak or fine tune this process for the benefit of both associations. Meanwhile invite your ACBL friends to join in your games. I believe we will be able to offer this as a reality in the very near future. The program will require ACBL players desiring ACBL points while playing in an ABA game to also be members of the ABA. Details will be provided as soon as they are all worked out.

Hospitality and director fees are usually the top two expenses for our games. Many of our clubs aren't having their sanctioned games because of these expenses. You have supported an increase in membership dues and in playing fees, we can't continue to be successful in we lose sanction fees and continue to lose members. You have got to help. Reduce your local cost and have your ABA sanctioned games. As we partnership with ACBL, we can provide a win-win for both associations. Take just a little time and evaluate the benefits we get from playing this game of bridge. It isn't all about eating. We develop friendships and display a comradery that last a life time. You go to tournaments and look for one another and become concerned if someone isn't there. This is what we are all about. Love yea one another, and we do. We also love and respect the game. Give this same respect to another and make the American Bridge Association and any of its subunits the absolute best place to play bridge. That is the hospitality we offer and it is better than food. Take a new look and support others tournaments, play this game you love and make friends for life. What more can you ask for. Long live the American Bridge Association and we will do all that's in our power to enhance its longevity.

I remain your president working for you and as a leader, I need your help.

Respectfully,

Henry "Hank" Irwin, Jr., President

American Bridge Association