

# Minutes

## AGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

### Sunday, November 25, 2007 – 8:00 PM EST

Meeting called to order by: Roy Laird at 8:03 EST  
Type of meeting: Regular monthly conference call

Attendees:

Roy Laird (At Large) Chairman  
Paul Celmer (Eastern Region)  
Chuck Robbins (Eastern Region)  
Laura Kolb (Central Region)  
Roy Schmidt (Central Region)  
Willard Haynes (Western Region)  
Gordon Castanza (Western Region)  
Mike Lash (President)  
Pauline Pohl (Secretary)

Absent:  
None

#### 1. Approval of minutes

Willard Haynes made a motion to accept the minutes as amended and e-mailed by Roy Laird and Mike Lash. Roy Schmidt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### 2. President's report

Mike Lash presented his monthly report:

##### a) Tournaments

ING Cup – Four US pros will compete in an elimination internet event being arranged by Dennis Wheeler as TD, coordinated with Chris Kirschner. Results will be final by December 15 when the winner's name is submitted to Mr. Yang for inclusion in the list of 32 players. The tournament will likely consist of two rounds. This is a major new achievement for the AGA and came directly from a personal request to Mr. Yang in Boston this year and vigorous follow up.

Fujitsu Qualifier – This is also being organized online for January/February. Canada will participate. Lash invited the Mexican Go Association to identify a player, but they declined saying they are competing in the South American region.

## **b) World Mind Sports Games (WMSG)**

Lash reported that a core team (Lash, Roy Laird, Chris Kirschner, and Thomas Hsiang) is working to define the total program and coordinate implementation over the next 9 months.

The current plan is to allow any tournament that has enough top players competing in it to be considered a qualifying event. The idea is to allow unlimited qualifying events to maximize the possibility of players qualifying for the WMSGs. The top contenders will participate in a play-off tournament on the Wednesday during the Go Congress. There would be no winner of the event, but the top 20 or 25 players would qualify to represent the US in the WMSGs. Lash noted that there may need to be special events to choose women for the women's team and the pair go team due to the limited number of strong women competing in AGA events. There is a need to make sure that eligible women have a fair opportunity to qualify for the women's seats on the WMSG team and not be crowded out of contention by the larger number of male players.

## **c) Fund Raising**

The AGF Board met on November 18<sup>th</sup> and debated whether to allow donations made for the go Congress in Portland to pass through the AGF and back to the Congress. It appears it will be allowed. Use of the funds should be channeled to youth or educational programs at each Congress.

The AGA and Congress organizers are responsible for any promotions or fund raising campaigns for the Congress.

The second fund raising matter is to arrange a similar flow-through-the-AGF specifically for the WMSG in 2008. However, here there is a desire by the AGF Board to have a formal understanding between the AGF and AGA. Lash said he will work with Chris Kirschner to draft a Memorandum of Understanding for circulation among both Boards.

The AGA will be running its own fund raising campaign over the next 9 months to help support training, uniforms and transportation for the 20+ player team going to the WMSG. Donated funds will be solicited under the name of the AGA only but donations may be sent to the AGF for the tax benefit of the donor. If sufficiently successful, limited or no AGA funding may be required at the other end.

## **d) Web Site Upgrade**

The working group has been through two live demos of different website developers. Both offer sets of features and functionality far beyond the capabilities of the current website. Budget wise, the AGA spent slightly over

\$6,300 last year on the website and the online email manager for the EJ. In addition, we spend over \$1,000 annually on postage sending notices and letters to members. Automated notices and improved membership services on the website will reduce mailings costs. The new website will come with a built-in membership database that will reduce the labor significantly when updating records and creating reports.

The two leading proposals cost approximately \$4,200 and \$6,000 annually. One-time start up fees range from \$2,000 to \$3,500.

The project leader, Mark Rubenstein, will finish his research and recommend a vendor within the next two weeks. Lash has a high level of confidence in Rubenstein, and will likely agree to use the firm Rubenstein recommends. The final result will be a more attractive, functional, member-friendly, management-friendly and expandable website. The most significant function of the current web site that will not be upgraded or integrated into the website at the start is the ratings database. The ratings data will still be available to all members as it is now. The total website upgrade should take place over the next two to three months.

#### **e) Financial**

Lash said he hasn't received any financial reports for this fiscal year, and since the fiscal year is about half over, he is concerned.. He spoke to Treasurer Adam Bridges who promised to have the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter reports ready by the end of this month. Until then, Lash said he cannot advise on our financial status for the fiscal year .

The 2007 Congress Treasurer sent a partial report on their financial performance. There was a surplus but the amount is not yet fixed and is in the range of \$20,000 - \$25,000. The Congress is waiting for reimbursement by the Ing Foundation, AGF and AGA for various expenses, and they should have their final numbers within the next month or two. These reimbursements will likely bring the surplus to the higher figure that will then be split between the hosting chapter and the AGA.

Lash recommended that for future years, starting in 2008, the Board adopt a policy of providing confirmation letters approving a chapter's authority to host the annual Congress shortly after the General Assembly vote each year. The confirmation letter should set out broad guidelines, schedules and policy reminders about the conduct and management of the Congress. Financial reporting would be one of the items covered in the guidelines. The letter would set the standards for hosting and running an annual Congress from the AGA management point of view. There was general support for this idea and Lash will deliver a draft letter to the Board in the near future.

### **3. Responsibilities of tournament directors and event managers –**

Paul Celmer reported that he sent a note to chapters, saying that the AGA expects tournament results within a week of the event. He warned that results turned in later than one month following the event may be rejected. Celmer reported that he got no negative feedback from any of the chapter representatives.

### **4. Rank certification**

Paul Matthews continues to move toward going live with a function on the ratings page to let people know when they are qualified for rank certification. The first certificate may be ready to sell by January 2008.

### **5. Confirm selection procedure**

Laird said that although this was supposedly settled last year, the procedure was never posted, so it needs to be updated and publicized. The proposed procedure was circulated through e-mail to the Board, and there were a few suggestions made. After some discussion, the Board decided to keep the number of games required to qualify for consideration at 10 games with players at 6 dan and above over a 12-month period – but it will not become effective until December 2008. This allows players time to work at getting in the games they need and avoid complaints about the policy being put into effect too early. It will be made public almost immediately which will start the 12-month period over which games will be counted.

Willard Haynes said he is concerned by the fact that competitors will be limited to two international competitions per year, and sending 20 participants to the WMSGs will use up all of our top competitors. Roy Laird said he would be concerned if the limit were one, but having a limit of two international events is not too limiting. He favors spreading out the privilege a little bit to let more people participate. Laura Kolb said that it would be a problem if it were a surprise to participants, so they couldn't choose which events to attend, but if they know and can choose it would be acceptable. Roy Schmidt noted that the Mind Sport Games only happen every four years, so it wouldn't be an issue most years.

Roy Schmidt proposed accepting Mike Lash's revised version of the procedures with the exception of item number two. The residency requirement should be that the person should be a resident for 6 months in the U.S. if they represent the U.S. We should not make any rules affecting residents of Canada or Mexico, because that would overstep our responsibilities. Lash said he would amend item number two to stipulate six months residency for U.S. representatives only. In fact, all items should only apply to U.S. (AGA) representatives. When Canada

or Mexico is asked to send a player, they will use their own criteria to select those players.

## **6. New business**

Willard Haynes said there has been some question about the appropriateness of funding the players attending the Olympics. Haynes checked what the Chess Federation has been doing in this type of situation. They have been supporting players using the Kasparov Foundation to attend the chess Olympiad for several years. The Bridge Association has also been supporting Bridge players to attend international competitions. It appears they are using their equivalent of the AGF to fund these events.

Lash said we will have to set a budget and a target and try to raise the money so we will not have to spend AGA money to send the players to the World Mind Sports Games.

## **7. Set time for next meeting:**

The next monthly conference call of the Board will be held December 16, 2007 at 8:00 EST.

## **8. Adjournment:**

Willard Haynes made a motion to adjourn.

Chuck Robbins seconded the motion.

The vote was unanimous to adjourn at 9:10 PM EST.

Minutes submitted by Pauline Pohl, AGA Secretary