

Minutes of the AGA Assembly  
Saturday, 8 August 2009

- **Roll Call:** Quorum present
- **Approval of 2008 minutes**
  - No comments when circulated
  - Comment: need to have physical copies of the minutes at this meeting, since the meeting was a year ago, so that people can review them
  - Should be sent out at the end of the meeting as a reminder and before the next
  - Minutes approved
- **Board of Director's Report - Roy Schmidt**
  - Thanks to Allan and all volunteers; we are a volunteer organization
  - Board meeting spent time trying to develop ideas to recruit, retain, and recognize volunteers - very important, the Board is serious about working on this
  - Loss of Ing funding: needs to be renewed effort to increase membership
    - More money through dues of new members
    - This is said every year, many things have been tried; should stay focused
    - Budget took two big hits: withdrawal of Ing and diminished return from reserves
    - Youth funding has been curtailed; youth are the future of AGA
    - We were receiving 70-80k per year for over 10 years in cash, plus up to 20k per year in equipment
    - Due to world economy, Ing lost investment returns and eliminated funding for AGA and EGF
    - First few months of the year spent figuring out how much was left over
      - We had considerable ING reserve, although last year's Congress spent Ing funds without receiving much
      - Ing money used through 2009 Congress
      - After 2009 Congress we will have no ING reserves and will have spent over 50k since 2008 Congress
      - Net diminution of reserves due to loss of ING funding
      - About 220 sets are stored and shipped to each Congress; more is added to make Congress function
      - We have no idea about Ing money in the future
      - For the next one-two years we assume that we will not hear from the ING foundation that they will resume funding
        - If they do, the relationship will probably be different; they expressed dissatisfaction at how money was used, and may reassess

- **President's Report - Allan Abramson**
  - New and exiting Board members
  - Special recognition
    - Williard Haynes - contributed much to the Board
    - Chris Kirschner - never stops working for AGA interests
    - Phil Waldron - tournament coordinator, took over and improved
    - Paul Barchilon - efforts for youth increase every year
    - Thomas Hsiang - diplomacy is unexcelled; ascended in ranks of International Go Federation
    - Chris Garlock—EJ is now reaching 14k people
    - Steve Colburn—took over webmaster position; greatly improved operations
    - Ever growing team of volunteers with new ideas, focuses, and directions
  - Membership: after Congress 2008 (maybe with economy) we lost 200-300 members in 3 months; due to membership drives and efforts, we recaptured losses; now a little ahead of Congress 2008; no huge gains, but stabilized
  - New permanent credit card-type membership cards; will have barcode, but no expiration date or rank
    - Many of the long time members say rank is getting worse
  - Budget: not down a lot, but still significant loss; trying to break even
    - Historically Board policy was not to use AGA funds to fund tournaments, but now rethinking because of lack of ING, so using some reserves to keep major tournaments, particularly for youth
  - Board amended 2-trip per year international policy—now if win all tournaments, go to all tournaments
    - Now minimum of 10 rated games applies not only to amateurs, but also pros
    - This was sent to the US & Canadian pros and they should understand
      - Pros know about this and do not agree, as previously discussed
      - It is hoped that they will eventually accept - they must in order to compete, although the time is taken away from their profession
    - The rule does not distinguish between amateur tournaments and pro-only tournaments, but only applies to tournaments in which the AGA is requested to send a representative - pros may compete in foreign qualifiers on their own, when not sent by the AGA
  - Last year at the WMSG we agreed with China to send pros to teach talented youngsters or groups, underwritten up to 20 hours per week by the Chinese association; we fly over and pay room and board - here up to 12 weeks
    - We hope to send the current person in this capacity to NY, and certainly will keep in the DC area and send to Feng Yun's event at the end of the month
    - Expect this to be a long-term exchange program, more limited by our ability to provide support than by theirs

- Memorandum of understanding with Korean Baduk Association that anticipates similar outreach programs, most in our direction
  - The AGA anticipates that the individual family, if one, will pay air fare; if for a school, the board may cost-share the airfare; room and board must be a local issue; nothing budgeted in terms of expense for this
  - It was made clear that both of these were short term items that would build the strength of US Youth, and that it could not conflict with resident professionals' income
  
- Phil Waldron's report on tournaments is in the Annual report
  - He has done a fabulous job and Allen is sure that everyone agrees
  
- Paul Barchilon summarizes youth activities in annual report - pleasure to read
  
- Steve Colburn -182 countries visiting our website
  - Progress on the website:
    - At the beginning of the year the website underwent a major update—all videos moved to Youtube (US GO Web on YOUTUBE)
    - This resulted in going from 30 GB to 10GB every month on bandwidth
    - 40% of hits are from new people specifically searching for the website
    - Integrating authorize.net with payment system—much smoother
    - Online member database
    - Replace chapter and club with better updates, etc—much in demand
    - Go Congress website now at GOCongress.org
      - Congress will not have to spend money for hosting, domain, etc
      - Hosted by Chuck Robbins; John Hilt has code and back end
    - Tournament cross-tab is not ratings, but is being updated; shows all of the US Open and ING cross-tabs, online SGFs (no CGoban, etc. required); will integrate more in the future; hopefully with photo albums
    - you will be able to log in at a club and change information
      - People will be able to change their own club information, and not have to email Sam to do it
      - Once everything is in place, we hope to find a unifying password scheme so a club can only change its own information
    - Phil Waldron and Jonathon Bressler produced the AGAGD; you can see all tournament information back to 1991; currently still has bugs, but can put up pictures and SGF's; still some gaps, but slowly being fixed
      - This is an incredible perk of being an AGA member that we did not previously have; you have real records
      - Do not have data back to 1970's, but have only the rating; as far as Sam knows the data does not exist; archive data back to 1986
      - Discussion of how far back is useful; this is “history,” not just useful, but should in principle be able to go back to 1986-1987
        - This was data to estimate parameters for rating system in 1989

- There are errors in the data that Sam has, because it was fixed after Sam had it; data should come from Paul Matthews, not Sam
    - Should this relate to membership, or be available to everyone?
    - In early days of association did not get a rating because not a member
      - When rating went online, we lost this restriction; comments?
      - On the other hand, new members would be able to see what is available; this could be a way to retain old members; this is a debate
      - There are cross-tabs in old journals, etc; we could manually enter these for historical interest
    - Are we publicizing these new facets to members?
      - 2 resource pages for distributors and equipment have jumped to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> most visited pages
      - It is hoped that the EJ will help get word out
      - These are usually used to research statistics, etc.
      - Is there personal information?
        - Only name, club, rating, last tournament, etc; one can put a picture
    - Website now has green light for advertising
      - Some are against this , but helpful for budget
      - Other advertisers will be asked to sponsor a tournament, etc
        - However, if the ads have bad content, members should be vocal
        - We agree not to do ads with sex, drugs, etc.
          - If these things show up, they can be yanked in 24 hours
- **Treasurer's Report** - Allan for Adam Bridges
  - The detailed report will be on website shortly after Congress
  - WMSG cost: \$42k—total cost to AGA, \$15k from donations
    - Net cost was \$27k from AGA reserves
    - One can argue whether or not it was a good investment
    - We had planned that this would be a cost, but not this large
      - Originally estimated \$30-35k total, some off-set by donations
      - No question that we exceeded estimates
      - Some may be recouped by selling remaining t-shirts, hats, etc.
      - Large hit, sobering lesson for next WMSG and financial planning
        - Next WMSG is 4 years away (every 5 years to avoid conflict with the Olympics)
  - Adam does important work as treasurer
  - Membership dip? Does this coincide with promotional 2-year memberships?
    - We do not know: Allan will ask for research
    - Keith Arnold would think that it does
    - Allen did not notice the difference when he studied it, but he was not looking for such information

- **EJ Report - Chris Garlock**
  - Correction: the EJ has 14k readers, not 13k—shockingly clean email list
    - More European readers and therefore contributors; new Australian and New Zealand, Irish, etc. contributors
    - New people to update the website
    - At the World amateurs we have a new relationship with Ranka
      - Excited about future collaborations; exciting development
  - EJ team at Congress continues to grow and evolve; 2 dozen folks working on EJ and website, broadcasting games
    - New live pro commentary to US Open games
    - Pros hang out in EJ office while waiting for later commentary, so nice to have them comment there and broadcast onto KGS
    - Always trying to think of ways to be more efficient and use resources
    - KGS folks can now virtually attend congress, even if not actually there
  - Able to broadcast live video feed from the top board
    - High interest at the Congress
    - This has been done in Europe for a few years
    - They follow game and commentary online
    - Cannot say passwords because of live mike and webcam
    - Almost 700 viewers for Takemiya Friday night; 650 the previous night, 400's for other Ing and Open games
    - Too many boards broadcast last year; lower boards getting only dozens of viewers; used extra people as relief - much more useful than originally thought, so nice to get a break every 30 minutes or so
    - Because Congress moves, there are East Coast and West Coast supporters, and a core that goes every year, and then can draw from the different areas
    - Games are immediately posted on the website
      - The entire record is posted immediately
      - Opens immediately in a board online, not on an SGF
      - Phil is cleaning up the kibbitz and putting it on the website
      - Man vs. Machine—saved but not yet posted
      - Selection of games sent with EJ, but all posted online
      - At the banquet Chris Garlock with recognize volunteers
        - Volunteers do it to help, but lack of pay means that they really appreciate recognition
  - Chris Garlock additionally took on doing the handbook for this year
    - Redesigned - previously too big, and pocket-sized is extremely handy
    - Lots of pictures, including of pros
    - Keith was sad because it won't fit with the others in his collection
      - Perhaps a touch bigger would be better
      - Some felt that the maps were useless (too small)
    - Came out better than expected, but took longer than expected
    - Make maps two pages
  - It has been extremely helpful to begin working with the Congress director ahead of

- time because of the large team
- Need to start working together ahead of time to promote the congress
  - Is the yearbook worth the cost?
    - No bill for the biggest part of the cost - labor and time
    - Design is now in-house using InDesign
    - High value to the membership who like it
      - Strong players say not enough go, but it is a historical document, not just to be filled with Go
      - This is the best of the EJ and what people will think of when they look back
      - A CD is just as expensive in labor and time, and would not be as appreciated
        - CDs themselves are cheap, but would not be acceptable substitute
        - Same amount of work to send as a pdf, and perceived as not as good
      - We could have the option of people saying that they want or do not want the physical copy of the yearbook
        - People under 20 may want pdf; older want physical
      - Could well lose members if no yearbook - some people see this as the only real benefit of being a member
      - Before any changes, the membership should be surveyed - major issue
      - Possibly need digital when start doing lots with video - then you have a reason to be digital, and then not chintzy but an enhancement
      - Helpful to use yearbook almost like a business card—good to be able to take it out and show it off
        - Many organizations do this
        - The AGA's journal is one of the the best
  - **International report** - Thomas Hsiang
    - Biggest event last year was the WMSG
      - AGA sent full contingent of 24 players—will continue from now on, one year after the summer Olympics so that it can be held in the summer, not October
      - Working on IOC recognition
        - Not so that will be summer Olympic game, but so that it can be a 3<sup>rd</sup> part of the Olympic games
        - In the 2010 and 2014 Asian games, Go will be an item
    - Several large meetings which were participated in by every large go organization
      - Olympic movement brought us all together
      - The IGF suddenly has this huge responsibility, even though tiny organization
      - In international meetings from now on Go will be called “Go,” not weiqi or baduk
      - Everyone agreed to adopt the same rule set
    - International tournament status:
      - World Amateur Go Championships from now on will not only be in Japan but open to all countries who bid
        - Next year will be held in China, then return to Japan
        - Starting in 2012 there are several candidates (Thailand, Korea) which have expressed interested in hosting these games
          - Using the WAGC ruleset

- The AGA could host this event, it would be easy
      - Would not need to pay for airfare, etc
      - Need to solve Visa problem, however
    - Korean Prime Minister Cup is going strong and will be held again in October
    - Starting next year (2010) both Korean Prime Minister's cup and WAGC will not provide airfare
      - Host country covers everything once you land
      - IGF is trying to set up a fund to send participants from smaller countries
  - Pair Go celebrates 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year
    - Large celebration
    - All paid for by the pair go association
  - World Student Oza
    - Rumor earlier that it would be discontinued
    - NKG stepped in to take over; it will be held in Japan
  - The Hangzhou City League tournaments
    - Worthwhile if you can pay for ticket
    - Once you land, everything is paid for
  - Baduk Team Championship
    - Only have to pay for airfare, then all paid
  - Everyone should look into attending these events
  - EJ has been well unified with Ranka online - much for the better for everyone
  - Anti-doping plan (along with Olympic movement)
    - Allan has sent out a letter to all possible representatives that testing will be required for all top finishers and one randomly selected player
      - Necessary for Sports Accord, before entering IOC
    - Currently Go, Bridge, and Chess are asking that they waive out-of-competition requirements; hopeful that this will be accepted
  - Starting May 2009 the IGF will be supported by the 3 professional organizations in China, Korea, and Japan
    - The presidency will rotate between these 3 countries
    - A few years ago the IGF was under tremendous financial stress because of the pull out of Japan Airlines, but now it is in a stronger position than ever
    - Really broadening the support base
- **Membership Lapse Discussion**
    - Paul Barchilon mentioned that one of the Youth Go participants was disqualified because membership had lapsed
      - The AGA should make sure that this does not happen again
      - The AGA should make it easier for youth to join for multiple years
      - The EJ and the board will be advertising this more in the next month
        - The Board is aware that there are lots of worries about this issue
        - The board of directors passed a directive that this rule would be enforced, and Allan enforced it
        - It should be clarified that Allen did not do this on his own, but that it was the Board's decision, although not all contingencies may have been anticipated

- Clearly did not do a good enough job of advertising that we are enforcing this rule; the surprise was how many people routinely have membership lapses before they renew, even when e-renewal works well
    - The breadth of the impact was not anticipated
    - Policy says that to go overseas should have been a member for one year, not just show up, win and go overseas
      - Not enforced strictly until this year
      - The board is thinking seriously about this issue
  - Will be advertising that for \$10 per year the parent should look ahead to age 22 and pay for it, so that it is taken care of until they are an adult
    - If they want their child compete internationally, they should just take care of it once, and not worry about it
  - As we become more electronic, there should be a “renew me annually” button
  - There should also be a box that they check that they have read and agree to the tournament rules
- Procedure
    - Arrives at Sam's desk 2 weeks after mailed—this is one of the issues
    - When people sign up online, we never go more than 2 days
    - When a tournament director collects data and sends in information 30 days later, Sam needs to know when to count the membership - Allan replied that it would be the postmark date or the tournament date, not the date of processing
    - If the board will have no grace period, then Sam needs precise rules
- **Membership Renewal Discussion**
    - - If it lapses in March, and they renew in July, does it expire in March or July?
        - It was previously backdated to look continuous
        - Now it is no longer backdated, but reflects actual date
      - Exception: youth may now join for the first time in the World Youth qualifying event and play; must maintain during the cycle
        - Parents are often not go playing and so pay little attention to the AGA
        - Membership is in the hands of the parents, not the youth
        - Must consider youth different than adults; should bend over backwards
      - Should not necessarily be the same policy for every international representative
        - Particularly Youth under 12, under 18, and pair go, the rules should probably be differentiated based on kinds of international representation
        - The board has asked the president to come up with a set of options which will be discussed, such as differentiation
- **2010 Congress**
    - 2010: The Year We Make Contact
    - Director: Karen Jordan and Ken Koester
    - Lots of players in Colorado who are interested, many clubs in Denver and two in Boulder, including Boulder Kids and Teens club with 50 members

- Temperature: 55-84 degrees, overall 70.8
  - Few places have A/C because never use it
  - Average precipitation is 2.85 inches, usually in short bouts in the afternoon
  - Over 1 mile high
    - Lots of fluids
    - No marathons
    - Do not expect to hike Pike's Peak
    - Be careful about alcohol, tobacco, etc
- Colorado College, 20<sup>th</sup> in the Nation
  - 1,900 people at the college (base of Pike's Peak)
  - Coverage of college is 9 sq. small city blocks
  - Rooms include apartments with kitchen, living room, etc
  - Trying to get downtown shuttle
  - Internet and parking free
  - Want staff at the airports (particularly Denver) to greet people
    - Scary not to know which bus in a new place without someone to greet
    - Magnetic signs to slap on the bus, so findable without greeters
    - Colorado Springs Airport 20 minutes away
    - Denver International Airport 90-120 minutes away
  - Residence halls
    - Dorms and apartments
      - Give fans
      - Microwave and fridge in dorm rooms
      - Mandatory meal plans
      - Have cable, get linens, towels, soap, etc
  - On Campus facilities
    - Library, pool, ice skating rink, weight room, soccer fields & tennis courts (to be looked into)
  - All-night playing room
    - 100-person room (double EJ room) above the dining facilities
      - You can walk from dorm to dining to party room without going outside
    - We can bring in food/beverages under our control
    - They can dispense alcohol for tickets (we purchase)
      - At least 2 microbreweries within 1 mile walking distance
  - Dining
    - The college will offer the food from a secondary facility
    - Eat outside under pavilions
      - Looking for tents, or cancel breakfast from mandatory meal plan
      - Would offer basic continental breakfast in the playing rooms
      - One could still pay breakfast prices for hot breakfast from the dining hall
      - Trying to get them to take back a room we reserved, a smaller dining hall,
        - This room is currently a Youth Room
    - Meal plan attaches with staying on campus
    - Much discussion about the lack of breakfast automatically included, but these breakfasts can be individually paid for
  - Sports Gym

- US Open in the Large Gym
- Strong players in small gym
- Youth room in astroturf room
- Also the EJ Office
- Another room that could be youth or vendors
- Small Rooms for Simuls in Warner Center
- Armstrong Hall
  - Classrooms for game reviews
  - Two 50 person lecture halls
  - 75 person game room
  - Bemis great hall—large, youth room
- Wednesday trips
  - Canon City
    - Royal gorge Bridge
    - Picture with bridge
    - Bungee jumping
    - Horseback riding
  - Colorado Springs
    - US Olympic training center
    - US Air Force Academy Chapel and Visitor center
    - Garden of the Gods Visitor Center
    - Choice: Manitou Cliff Dwellings OR Cave of the Winds
  - Denver
    - Option A: Castle Rock Factory Outlets & shopping
    - Option B: Elitich Gardens (like 6 Flags)
    - Option C: Denver Zoo/Nature & Science Museum (with discounts)
    - 1 ½ hours on a bus, a little over an hour in a car
  - Microbreweries
    - New addition, but many
    - Go on tour at microbreweries
- Pro Dinner
  - Dinner to be test-driven with a 100 person dinner next weekend
- Other Activities: cars needed
  - Many used book stores
    - List will be available
    - Possible discounts (\$50 or more and 10% off)
  - Many breweries and microbreweries
  - Pike's Peak Cog Railway (wait until after Wednesday because of altitude)
  - Colorado Springs zoo
    - hilly and high zoo
  - Farmers' Markets
  - Botanical Garden
  - Historic Tours
  - So far, no one willing to drive bigger vans, but looking into it
    - Good for non-players and small groups
    - Volunteers needed!

- Downtown
    - Starts across the street and continues for a mile
    - Many outside cafes
    - Many restaurants, churches, shops, 2 microbreweries
    - Some have back patios blocked by buildings (makes wind no problem)
    - A handful of restaurants within 3 blocks for eating under an hour
    - 7-11 on either side of the campus
  - Leaving: Airports
    - Computers to check flights (via internet)
    - Pick up and Drop-off
      - In the range of \$15-\$25
    - Occasionally cheaper to fly in and out of Colorado Springs, also because of time, hassle, etc
      - American, Delta, SouthWest, United all fly to Colorado Springs
      - Some connecting out of Denver, direct to Chicago, Dallas, etc.
  - Help Needed!: Volunteers
    - Setup/take down
    - Check-in
      - Registration is 2 month gig
      - Check-in: we need helpful bodies
    - What would you like to help with?
  - Sponsorship
    - tournaments
    - professional players
    - Youth player discounts
      - No Ing money, so otherwise no discounts
      - Currently the adults will subsidize kids, but it won't be as low as usual
      - Ing subsidy started in 1998, and that is when big increase in kids began
  - Cost
    - Comparable to the last 2 years, if not less
    - Dorms and food less, registration higher
      - Have minimum contract with college for number of dorms to sell
      - Would actually lose money by increasing housing as much as decrease registration
      - If housing is too high, drives people to local hotels
  - Move to Approve (Terry Bensen), Gordon seconds
    - Motion approved
- **2011 Congress**
    - Lisa Scott and Andrew Jackson introduced as Directors
    - In LA metro Area
    - Andrew Okun and others and local liaisons

- **New Business**

- AGA Hall of Fame
  - Rough concept
  - Discussed on policy and governance commission
  - We have the Teacher of the Year, Laester, Nakayama awards
  - Currently have other things to worry about (Keith Arnold)
    - Need to not seem like we are just sitting around congratulating ourselves
    - We need to make a list of everyone...whether devoted life or spent a week conducting the US Open,and then make a decision
  - We should maybe make a list, but the people could be of varying degrees of merit in a hall of fame
    - We should recognize what people actually do openly and fairly instead
  - President prepared to withdraw proposal, but member recognition is important
  - Keith willing to put something in go quiz about people who are willing to help get this information together and put on a web page
    - Archives are another beta resource
    - David Doshay volunteered to take over archives, moved out West
      - He has personal health issues which have kept him from the task
      - We all want to digitize the archives
    - Go Player's Almanac is a great resource for older material
    - Archives are huge—probably a cube of 8x10 if compacted
      - Needs sorting, weeding, digitizing, etc.
      - No one has the time to put in the work
      - Pending issue
- Membership retention and recruitment ideas
  - Ratings only for members (Suggested by Terry Benson)
    - Visible on website, access to historical data, only if a member
    - To be on the list, you must be a member, but anyone can see the list
    - Because we are making a database that has everyone's information, it would be a problem if we could not see everyone's information and game's played—this was a discussion:
      - This is potential administrative headache
      - Membership status changes hourly, so hard to keep up to date
        - All the codes, rules, policies, etc have to be programmed
      - If they are no longer a member, they are only viewing things that they've done in the past, so less value
      - We could have a members-only portion of the website, and put such things there
      - Some do not think that the availability of membership data online will be a real encouragement
      - Others say that without automatic immediate gratification, people will become a member to get this
      - Also possibly move ratings button to member's only section, and leave all

the other coding the same

- The membership only section may also have other aspects: great idea
- AGAGD
  - Incredible perk of being a member (Andrew Jackson)
    - Should be promoted regardless of whether or not it is locked off
    - People don't know how to get to it
    - Locking off information doesn't usually work on the internet
    - The value is seeing your information
  - Ways to encourage new members
  - Ways to retain members
    - Option to get a mentor
      - Built-in friend
      - You would go to tournaments when he/she did
      - Helps to feel connected within your club
    - Notification to local leaders when a new member joins in your area
      - People raise privacy concerns
      - One could opt into this system
      - Send the information to the person instead of to the club
    - Make the environment of visiting the club facility a good one
      - Find someone to play with
      - Have teachers available
    - Need to make club a better alternative than online
    - Encourage clubs to have new membership drives, AGA dues in dues, etc
  - Please refer members willing to work on this issue to Allan
- Recognition of long-term members
  - 10-, 20-, etc. year pin, suggested by Terry Benson: Allan agreed to do it

- **Meeting Adjourned**

(Minutes submitted by Lisa Scott)