

# AMERICAN GO ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL REPORT

2003

### WHAT IS THE AMERICAN GO ASSOCIATION?

The American Go Association is the national organization of U.S. Go players, cooperating with similar national organizations around the world. We:

- ❖ Publish *The American Go Journal*
- ❖ Maintain a computerized rating system
- ❖ Sanction and promote AGA-rated tournaments
- ❖ Organize the U.S. Go Congress, the U.S. Open and qualifying tournaments for international competition
- ❖ Maintain a Web site and organize discussion groups, mentoring programs and teaching ladders
- ❖ Support professional players with tournaments, teaching opportunities and other activities
- ❖ Work to develop a strong national network of chapters
- ❖ Promote Go and enhance public awareness
- ❖ Develop projects to strengthen the U.S. go-playing community

The AGA is working to let more people know about this wonderful game and

# Board of Directors

Dave Weimer, At-Large, Chair  
Jon Boley, Western Region  
Bob O'Malley Western Region  
David Dinhofer, Central Region  
Harold Lloyd, Central Region  
Chen- dao Lin, Eastern Region  
John Stephenson, Eastern Region\*

## Officers

### President

Chris Kirschner

**Treasurer:** Ben Bernstein

**Secretary:** Susan Weir

**VP for Communications,** Chris Garlock

## National Coordinators

Archivist.....	Craig Hutchinson
Chapter Management.....	Paul Celmer, Nicole Casanta
Community Outreach.....	John Goon
Congress Liaison.....	Judy Debel
Database Manager.....	Sam Zimmerman
Education Coordinator.....	Lee Ann Bowie
Equipment Distribution .....	Paul Celmer
Legal & Compliance Coordinator.....	Michael Brockbank
Membership Services.....	Tom Hodges, Joel Gabelman
Policy & Governance.....	Keith Arnold
Professional Players Representative.....	Zhu-jiu Jiang
Ranking Issues.....	Jeff Shaevel
Ratings Coordinator.....	Paul Matthews
Tournament Coordinator .....	Chuck Robbins
Tournament Regulations .....	Duane Burns
Webmaster .....	Roy Laird
Youth Coordinator .....	None Redmond

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It feels a little peculiar to write a report for a year of which only 2 months were under this administration. But that is the nature of Fiscal Years, and Presidents' terms. Let it suffice here to note that the accomplishments recorded here are the result of the good work of the prior administration under President Roy Laird, to whom I give my enduring thanks for passing the baton in the most helpful ways possible. We are living in a time of great change, and the AGA has been as subject to those not always gentle winds as any other organization or person. Roy titled his report last year "2001: A Year of Change". I cannot conceive a more appropriate description for this year.

Proposed changes to the AGA Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were adopted by the membership, in time to run the first elections under the new system. These changes were neither minor nor cosmetic. The basic form of organization has been completely revised. Although the new Board of Directors was elected in August, it did not take office until January 1, 2003, just two months prior to the end of this reporting year. Nevertheless, sweeping changes were made. One consequence was that a considerable number of new volunteer jobs were defined, and a (smaller) number of new people became involved in AGA organizing activities. The Board has strongly urged expansion of our capacity to provide services to the membership, and has approved an organization chart describing how that is to be achieved. (See the chart and accompanying task descriptions on the AGA website at [www.usgo.org](http://www.usgo.org).) The need to fill those positions is a continuing challenge, and the most worthwhile and enjoyable activity of this office. Please come join the fun.

Chris Kirschner  
President

## Finance

*Ben Bernstein, AGA Treasurer*

The financial report shows the AGA to be in good financial health, with adequate funds to consider new ideas and projects bent on spreading knowledge of Go to potential new members. As has been the case for many years, this is largely due to the continuing contributions of the Ing Foundation, which has – as in past years – contributed \$80,000 in cash and another \$20,000 in equipment to help us promote Go in this country. We expect this grant to continue in years to come. The Board has urged that we put more emphasis on programs and projects that are aimed at developing youth players. Therefore, the projected budget reflects that shift. (See the Treasurer's report following.) With the recent announcement that Hikaru no Go will be published in English, we expect more opportunity to reach youth, and therefore expect this shift to continue in future budgets.

## AGA Statement of Activities

Description	Totals for FY 2003	As Approved FY 2004	Projected FY 2005	Comments
<b>INCOME</b>				
Congress 2002	11,025	5,000	5,000	Conservative estimate Compare to last year
ING Donation	80,000	70,000	70,000	We expect some reduction this year
Interest Inc	3,126	3,500	3,500	200K @ 1.75%
Member Fees, Donations, Sales	57,506	61,000	64,000	Assumes an increase of 100 members, consistent with recent exp.
Royalties	1,585	1,000	750	Assumes reduced sales & perhaps reduced royalty %
Summer Go Camp 02	959	-	-	- This is planned for break even
Misc	(107)	-	-	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>154,094</b>	<b>140,500</b>	<b>143,250</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
TOTAL AGA Journal	30,408	<b>27,000</b>	<b>27,000</b>	Expect phase down in favor of enhanced E-Journal
TOTAL AGA Admin	11,348	<b>13,000</b>	<b>13,000</b>	Expect higher communications costs
TOTAL AGA Chapter Svcs.	2,457	<b>3,000</b>	<b>3,150</b>	More chapters
TOTAL AGA Data Base	6,948	<b>7,500</b>	<b>7,750</b>	More members
TOTAL Annual Report	1,111	<b>900</b>	<b>900</b>	Scale back a little on size
TOTAL Office Expenses	2,212	<b>3,000</b>	<b>3,500</b>	Higher communications cost due to location of President
TOTAL AGA Treasurer	310	<b>300</b>	<b>330</b>	
AGA WEB	1,270	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,750</b>	Web server & contract maintenance
Bank Charge	161	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	
Fees	90	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
Legal-Prof Fees				
Misc	195	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	
New Tournament	550	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	
S-GO-Camp	3,000	-	<b>3,000</b>	Funding transferred back from Ing Budget this year
IGF Participation		<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	IGF Dues
D & O Insurance		<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>	Estimate
Marketing/advertising		<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>	Estimate for potential new program
Contingencies/Discretionary		<b>3,000</b>	<b>3,000</b>	
	<b>60,060</b>	<b>65,200</b>	<b>69,380</b>	
<b>ING</b>	<b>69,052</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>70,000</b>	See separate spreadsheet for details
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>129,112</b>	<b>135,200</b>	<b>139,380</b>	
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>24,982</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>3,870</b>	

## Fiscal Year 2005 Ing Grant Budget

Ref. #	2003 Actual	2004 Est.	2005 Proj.
1. Admin.	1,128	1,200	1,200
2. CD-ROM	4,200	3,200	3,200
3. Central	4,350	5,000	3,000
4. East	3,470	5,000	3,000
5. West	4,200	5,000	3,000
6. Equipment Purchase	11,956	9,000	9,000
7. Equipment Shipping/Storing	1,789	2,000	2,000
8. No. American Ing Cup	11,978	11,000	7,000
9. NAMT	11,665	-	-
10. Pro Competition	-	11,500	12,000
11. Redmond Cup	3,257	3,300	3,500
12. Airfare	709	700	-
13. Discretionary Spending	-	100	3,000
14. Summer Go Camp	-	3,000	-
15. Web	350	80	100
16. Youth Mem. Pilot Projects	-	6,000	9,000
17. Youth assistance for Cong.	10,000	9,900	10,000
18. Redmond-Ing Tournament	-	-	1,000
19. Carryover from Unspent Funds from Last Year		(5,980)	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>69,052</u></b>	<b><u>70,000</u></b>	<b><u>70,000</u></b>

**NOTES:**

- 1 Grant management expenses are expected to remain quite stable
- 2 Hoping to reduce development expense portion (\$2,000 last year)
- 3 Decrease to favor youth Ed - Line 16 projects are also regional, thus raise in total regional spending
- 4 See note 3 above
- 5 See note 3 above
- 6 Additional Ing sets? Will ask if more can be had.
- 7 These costs are expected to remain relatively stable
- 8 De-emphasize tournament in favor of children's education
- 9 NAMT resumption is desirable, but not yet defined. Will be resumed if possible
- 10 Alternative to NAMT
- 11 Some funds now accounted in other lines. (17 & 18) Total remains similar to prior years
- 12 This line discontinued
- 13 Grant committee needs some flexibility to deal with prn events, opportunities, and new development"
- 14 Transfer to AGA expenses - a shift this year to show emphasis on children now addressed
- 15 Sergei Zoubuk Ing pages
- 16 Assumes program will expand. Note: projects are funded annually 6 months out of sync with FY
- 17 A cap amount - but usually used in full recently
- 18 Was funded through Redmond cup funds previously
- 19 Carry Fwd. from 2003. Negative as an expense, but not income either. Not allocated here.

## **Hikaru no Go is coming!**

Just a few weeks ago, we were informed that Viz, LLC had picked up the rights to present Hikaru no Go in North America. We have established contact with the company, and are working with them to find ways in which we can mutually benefit. Release date has just been announced for January issue of Shonen Jump (on sale beginning December 2), (Circulation 300,000 – 500,000 per month!) We have established contact with VIZ executives in charge of this new production, and they have expressed interest in working with us. Specifically, the presence of a teaching table at anime` festivals will be a welcome addition beginning next Spring. The manga will include a page that will teach about Go – and point readers` at the AGA for more information. And there will be links to the AGA on their website. We anticipate that this will produce a strong – likely overwhelming – demand for Go teachers. We will be doing our best to get ready.

## **Tournament Regulation**

*Duane Burns*

We have assembled a committee with Duane Burns of Cleveland chairing, to update existing regulations, and establish new ones to operate effectively in the varied new competitive environments now available. Along with updating the existing TD Guide for face to face competition, we will add a similarly complete guide for organizing and managing competition over the Internet. We also plan to establish a Tournament Director Training and Certification program for both types of tournament. This is a huge task, not likely to be completed in a single year, but we do expect to have a draft available for review and comment by next August.

## **Education Coordination**

*Lee Anne Bowie*

This is a new position, one long wished for and now filled by Lee Anne Bowie of Seattle. The beginning objective is to develop effective teaching materials for all types of prospective players, (e.g. elementary, middle, and high school, adult, etc.) and make these available to teachers all over the country. The idea is that a teacher anywhere will be able to get teaching materials, such as lesson plans, designed specifically for whatever type group they want to teach. We are also looking at the idea of holding a pre-Congress workshop next year, for aspiring teachers wishing to start local programs. We anticipate a large increase in requests for this kind of assistance due to the imminent arrival of Hikaru no Go in America. (See below.)

## **Youth Coordination**

*None` Redmond*

Youth activities have been growing for several years. Go Camp remains popular, and youth attendance at the Go Congress is rising. The strength of our youth players has been growing more rapidly. Some youth have “graduated” from the Redmond Cup competition because they are strong enough to compete at higher levels. The Ing-Redmond tournament was created to provide and opportunity for such players. (The

winner of that tournament is seeded into the Ing Invitational at the Go Congress each year.) We expect soon to need to “graduate” juniors into the senior tournament before they reach the automatic age transition (12 years) for the same reason. The year past has seen a sharp increase in interest by teachers, and we expect this to translate into a sharp increase in youth participation in the coming year. The arrival of Hikaru no Go is also expected to provide a big boost. We are also planning on providing new teachers with more and better information on how to get a program going. (See education).

### **Membership**

*Tom Hodges, Joel Gabelman*

Things are definitely looking up. We have increased membership every month for over a year now, and have every expectation that this trend will continue. The fears of a few years ago that the Internet servers would draw membership away from both chapters and the AGA is now dispelled by reports of people who learned on the Internet coming to clubs wanting to play on a real board. A number of people report having a new face show up at their local club, playing at or near dan level, but being rather uncertain about the counting procedure – having done it only a few times before.

### **Chapter services**

*Paul Celmer, Nicole Casanta*

Chapter membership is also up dramatically at 100 plus, continuing a year long trend. The AGA continues to provide a wide array of support for chapters, ranging from equipment and promotional supplies to tournament software and grants from the regional Ing fund. We will continue to develop more ways to support chapter growth.

### **Changes in the American Go Journal**

*Chris Garlock*

As reported in both the regular paper Journal and the E-Journal, there are strong reasons to change the way we currently operate these means of communicating with and provide services to the membership. Briefly, the Journal is expensive to produce, can be published only a few times a year, and is limited in content. The E-Journal is cheap to produce, is published 50 times a year, and can contain as much content as we care to put into it. There is therefore a strong motivation to concentrate our efforts on the E-Journal. How we switch emphasis, and how rapidly, is under review, and there will be much discussion at the Congress, and following. What is certain is that the amount of content will be much greater as we make more and better use of the E-Journal.

### **Website**

*Roy Laird*

The job of the AGA webmaster is to create and maintain a comprehensive, uniquely valuable resource for Western Go players, attractive to newcomers and repeat visitors. We want lots of visitors, and we want to inspire those visitors to learn more about Go, to improve their playing skills, and to join the growing community of American Go players. We need to help local organizers to create sustainable Go cultures in their communities, and we want to give them the tools to achieve that goal. More specifically, since our

recent growth is clearly tied to the E-Journal, we want people to subscribe to the free edition. The more traffic we can drive to the E-Journal page, the more Western players will connect with Go as they begin perusing the EJ each week.

In the past year the AGA website has grown and changed dramatically, moving forward toward all of the above goals. Some sections have been completely reorganized and streamlined, others created from scratch. With nearly 1000 visitors per day, including 3000 newcomers every week, the website reaches more people than anything we do. For detailed statistics on the web site, go to <http://www.usgo.org/stats/universal.htm>.

Next on the drawing board is a long overdue revision of the member application process, making it as easy as possible to join the AGA., and expansion of the Teacher Support pages.

Regular visitors to the site may have noticed that due to staffing problems, the puzzle of the week actually has not changed for several months. Future plans include the return of the "Problem of the Week," possibly with numerous enhancements. In addition, we are exploring the use of a sophisticated graphic display module to add some technical content to the site -- in other words, games and lessons that are easy to play through and learn from right on the site.

### **Ing Grant Management George Zhou, Chair**

Until this year, the President made the Ing budget in consultation with the Executive committee, and the regional VPs distributed some of it for various projects in their regions. With the encouragement of the Board, we have created a committee to take over the whole task. It is chaired by George Zhou, who has a mandate to create a grant management system and budget for the future. You can expect to get an application form when requesting funds, and the committee will evaluate projects as they are completed, and report to the Board and the Ing Foundation. For the transition, the former VPs are participating in the committee. New members are being sought.

A new program has been instituted to increase youth membership. The Board has requested that we devote more energy – and money – to developing youth players. This will be funded through the Ing Grant, but administered separately. See “Youth Development Project” below for description.

### **Ratings**

*Paul Matthews*

Starting in 2003, AGA ratings are being updated monthly, with new ratings posted on the AGA web site on or about the first day of each month. Previously, rating updates had been coordinated with publication of the American Go Journal (AGJ), but that dependency is now severed.

Although many tournament organizers submit their data for rating within a few days of a tournament, we are still receiving some data weeks or months late, which diminishes the benefits of more frequent rating updates. Also, organizers should e-mail data files to the [ratings@usgo.org](mailto:ratings@usgo.org) e-mail reflector, which enables ratings work to proceed in parallel and assures that no data are lost.



The perceived problem of ratings deflation has been addressed by implementation of a new "anti-anchor" mechanism, which was described in a recent (Spring 2003) AGJ article. This mechanism has already been successful in making sensible rating adjustments, and we will continue to monitor ratings for signs of inflation/deflation. Special thanks to Dave Weimer and Jared Roach of the AGA Ratings Committee for helpful discussions on this topic.

The rating system now routinely calculates the probability of a player being a particular rank given the player's rating history. These calculations are potentially useful for rank certification, and for assigning bands in a traditional McMahon tournament.

## **Ranking**

*Jeff Shaevel*

There has been much discussion over the years, about the possibility of creating AGA sanctioned ranks. These discussions intensified two years ago with the formation of a ranking committee created to explore the possibilities. There has been substantial agreement that any ranks should be based on the ratings system. The work done by Paul Matthews (see Ratings above) was responsive to these discussions, and it paves the way for development of a ranking system that will remain consistent with the rating system, yet provide those who wish it a recognized rank certificate. Some work remains to be done, and a volunteer administrator found to manage the system, but the basics are now in place.

## **Youth Development Project**

*Bob O'Malley*

This project was developed in consideration of the wish to devote more of our resources to developing youth players. The basic idea is to provide grants of up to \$1,000 to people who have defined a project to develop new youth players. Project plans will be submitted, and evaluated by a committee, which will approve them (or suggest improvements so that they might be approved). Projects aimed at developing 16 or more players will get up to \$1,000. Smaller projects will get proportionally less.

Projects will be evaluated, and those that seem to have promise will be written up to provide others with the benefit of the experience gained. The end result should be not only a good number of young players, but also a resource of tested project designs that others can use in the future. Information on how to apply will be available at the Congress, and soon also on the website. (Final touches on the program are being made even as we go to press here.)

## **Local Community Outreach**

*John Goon*

This is another new position. The National Coordinator will foster grass roots awareness, information sharing, and mutual support within the community. A principal aim will be to educate organizers to available possibilities and to help them articulate and achieve their outreach goals. The AGA grass roots experience base is a substantial one and the National Coordinator will be dedicated to ensuring that everyone will have

access to it. So, if you have success locally in getting outside support for Go activities, Let John know.

As a first step, the Washington DC outreach experience base will be shared with the community at large over the Internet. The planned topics will include:

- Dealing with external (non-go) groups
- Finding and getting grants
- Growing and empowering volunteers
- Creating and exploiting serendipity;
- Why people volunteer
- Finding decent sites
- Why centralize and regionalize
- Recognizing parochialism
- Managing promotional and other assets inventory
- Politics and personalities
- Networking, teaming, and communications;
- Making the most of technology
- Evolving and staying flexible
- Feeder clubs
- Patience and persistence
- Success and failure
- Dealing with the AGA
- Dealing with the American Go Foundation
- Value of promotional materials
- Using the “First Capture” method to teach beginners
- Infrastructure issues
- Dealing with vendors
- Dealing with other game communities
- Legal concerns
- Inter-generational programs with kids and seniors
- Metrics
- Time management.

During this time, pilot programs will be set up at selected sites in order to evaluate the transportability and viability of the DC ideas to other regions. Those site organizers will generate regional plans and identify long term material requirements needed to conduct sustained and concerted outreach campaigns. The National Coordinator will arrange for consistent and timely AGA material resupply to preclude program stoppages due to lack of promotional inventory. The performance of these pilot programs will be monitored, measured, and evaluated. The goal is to establish long range and coherent planning

discipline, a stable and reliable supply base, an adequately resourced volunteer pool, and a strong network that will increase outreach productivity and lead to a self-sufficient long term infrastructure.

The steps beyond remain to be decided. This is a work in progress so any and all ideas would be welcome and appreciated now. If anyone wishes to contribute to the topics mentioned earlier, contact the Coordinator. One observation to emerge from the DC experience is that the impact of volunteers on productivity is not merely 1:1. It is much, much more. A single individual might accomplish X number of projects, but adding a second volunteer can actually increase productivity by 3 or 4 fold. Adding a third person might double the output of the previous two. It's a surprising phenomenon and it makes you realize just how valuable every volunteer is to this organization. For more details, contact John Goon at [outreach@usgo.org](mailto:outreach@usgo.org) or 301-613-8297.