

## AGA Annual Report for FY2010

### President's Report - Allan Abramson

#### O Introduction

As an organization of volunteers, we all know that the AGA lives on the generous donations of time and energy of people who could be doing something else.

Once again, I would like to recognize our Board of Directors, Chris Kirschner, who continues to do everything he can to help the AGA, Phil Waldron, who took the new position of Vice President for Ratings and who rapidly developed the new ratings system, without as much as a hiccup for our members, Paul Barchilon, whose passion for our youth remains outstanding, Thomas Hsiang, who continues to be the gift that never stops giving for the AGA, Sam Zimmerman, who handles the membership database with grace and good cheer, Chris Garlock, for innovations with the E-Journal, Steve Colburn, who maintained steady progress with the web site, and Arnold Eudell, who runs a smooth elections process.

New names like Andy Okun, who took the position of lead fund-raiser, Jonathan Bresler, who took over as Vice President for Ratings, and who feeds the ratings system with your tournament reports, and Edward (Zhiyuan) Zhang, who recently stepped up to the Tournament Coordinator's position (with the assistance of Oren Laskin), also deserve mention. All of the AGA team, both old regulars and new hands, deserve our appreciation.

#### O Membership

Once again we are seeing erosion in our membership numbers, and I invite everyone to submit suggestions on how we could grow substantially in the next year. Internet marketing is an area I would like to explore... Sometimes it seems to be true that "all I want to do is play go," but if people do not step up to find new members, even that will become harder. Keith Arnold has agreed to ask his committee to work on a strategy for membership growth, so the next year could bring us new ideas.

Yes, the new membership cards finally arrived! Thanks to Sam Zimmerman for coordinating the distribution. Remember that these are intended as permanent cards (replacement fee for lost cards will be \$5), and as such will not have your expiration date on them. To find your expiration date, just search for yourself in the ratings system online.

#### O Funding

The Board approved AGA funding for our major tournaments, especially those for youth. The amount is nearly \$8,000 from our reserves, underlining the need to find sponsors and donors. Of note is AGA funding for the Master's tournament this year (in lieu of Ing funding), but the Master's next year will have to be supported by external sources.

#### O Tournaments

We had an interesting experience with the first Strong Players' Online Tournament (SPOT1), with many strong players participating, and our first experiment with webcams

for each player, to come closer to a face-to-face experience. We plan to hold a Women's Handicap online tournament (WHOT1) and a Members' Handicap online tournament (MHOT1) in the next year. Suggestions for other online events would be welcome.

#### O Tournament software

We have one new tournament pairing system submitted so far this year, and it will continue to be worked on. Additional submittals would be welcome.

#### O Volunteers

We still have some key positions vacant, and applications are encouraged. These include: Executive Vice President, VP - Operations, and Volunteer Coordinator. Note that I would like to move toward volunteer teams, to share the load and to expand the new ideas, so even if a position is filled, volunteering to join the team is possible. Some of the areas needing more people still include: (1) programming a computerized system to issue rank certificates to members when they reach new levels; (2) developing and managing an AGA online store; (3) running a training program for tournament directors; (4) developing a mentoring program for lower kyu players; (5) developing outreach programs for minorities and disabled; and (6) fund-raising!

#### International Activities - Thomas Hsiang, VP for International Affairs

In May 2010, I attended the 31st Board Meeting and General Meeting of the International Go Federation, held in parallel with the 31st World Amateur Go Championship at Hangzhou, China. Below is a report of the important issues discussed in these meetings.

The IGF Board Meeting was attended by these Directors: Hideo Otake, president of IGF and President of Nihon Kiin; Zhenming Chang, President-elect of IGF and President of China Citic Group; Siming Liu, Executive Director-elect of IGF and President of the China Qiyuan; Thomas Hsiang, VP of IGF and VP of AGA; Eduardo Lopez, VP of IGF; Martin Stiassny, President of European Go Federation; Korsak Chairasmisak, President of Thai Go Association and World Chinese Weiqi Association; Ichiro Tanioka, President of Osaka University of Commerce; Neville Smythe, Vice President of the Australian Go Association; Mr. Heo, proxy for Han Sang-yul, VP of IGF and Executive Secretary of the Korean Baduk Association; Maria Dolores Puerta, President of Venezuelan Go Association; and Viktor Bogdanov, VP of Russian Go Federation. The staff members attending were Ei Kanda, IGF Office Manager, and Yuki Shigeno, IGF Secretary General. Attending as Advisor to the Board was Mrs. Hiroko Taki, VP of World Pair Go Association.

The first business was the election of the new President, Mr. Chang. Four Vice Presidents were elected, Mr. Hsiang, Mr. Han, and Mr. Lopez, and Mr. Otake. Australia and Thailand were elected as auditors. All Directors were re-elected for two years, except Bogdanov and Puerta will have one year remaining on their terms. Yuki Shigeno was re-appointed as Secretary General.

#### ***Revision of IGF Statutes***

Director Ichiro Tanioka reported an update of the IGF Statutes that would increase the Director count to 12 and the VP count to 4, including three at-large Directors with no

country restrictions. The official language of IGF is now changed to English. These changes were approved by the General Meeting.

### ***New structure and support for IGF***

IGF's Secretary General Yuki Shigeno reported the new three-country support structure of IGF is now in operation. China will take over the first two-year presidency of IGF, with annual budget contribution of US\$90,000; Korea and Japan will assume two of the VP positions and contribute US\$30,000 each year to the IGF budget. In 2012 Japan will take over the presidency, followed by Korea in 2014.

### ***International tournaments***

This year the 31<sup>st</sup> World Amateur Go Championship was sponsored for the first time by a non-Japanese host. The City of Hangzhou, with its deep cultural roots and beautiful scenery, provided an excellent venue for this historical occasion. For 2011, Shimane on the North Coast of Japan's Honshu Island will be host, followed by China again in 2012. (*Thomas Hsiang was the US representative this year.*)

The International Amateur Pair Go Championship celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary November 14 and 15, 2009, at Iidabashi, Tokyo. (*Yinli Wang and Yuan Zhou represented US*). In addition, a special commemorative event, run in the format of a "World Cup" of pair go, was held in March, 2010 at Hangzhou. This pro-am mixed tournament included the strongest pairs world-wide. (*Representing North America were Yun Feng and Jie Li*).

The 7th World Student Oza, with the new sponsor of NKB, Inc., a Japanese advertising company and the sponsor of JPGA and IGS, was held in October, 2009. (*Jie Li represented US and placed second, the highest a US player has achieved in any international tournaments*).

The 2010 Asian Games has announced the inclusion of Go as a competition item. IGF is working with the Asian Go Federation and the Chinese Weiqi Association to coordinate the Go event.

For other tournaments, the 4<sup>th</sup> Korean Prime Minister Cup was held in October, 2009; the Hi Seoul World Businessman Baduk Fair, the Hangzhou World City-Team tournament, and the Children's Team Tournament (Thailand) all continued at their traditional times.

*(Additional information on international tournaments not related to IGF: Jie Li was the North American representative at the 2010 Fujitsu Cup.*

*In an important success of international diplomacy, the AGA won over the right to select the North American representative to the Chunlan Cup. A selection tournament for the 8<sup>th</sup> Cup was held in February, 2010, and won by Mingjiu Jiang.)*

### ***SportAccord, IMSA, and mind sport events***

The 2010 SportAccord Convention was held in Dubai in April. This is the annual meeting of SportAccord (previously known as GAISF, the General Association of

International Sports Federations, of which IGF is a member) that provides a forum for international federations to interact with each other and to organize international tournaments. For Go, most important is our engagement with IMSA (the International Mind Sports Association) and WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) during the week.

This year, IMSA was particularly busy, with six meetings held over nearly twenty hours during the week. Some of the major items for these meetings were: (1) approval of International Poker Federation as a provisional member; (2) hearing the proposed plans by West Nally (a marketing company based in London) and Dentsu (a media company based in Tokyo) to market mind sports, including the 2nd World Mind Sports Games (WMSG) planned for 2012 in Manchester, UK, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> WMSG planned for 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; (3) discussion with Hein Verbruggen (SportAccord President) and his associates their plans for holding an “elite mind sports event” in 2011 in Nanjing, China; and (4) discussion with IOC representatives about their plans for mind sports and anti-doping.

*(IGF has started its official in-competition anti-doping testing program with this year's WAGC. The top five finishers plus one randomly selected player were tested. The out-of-competition testing was suspended, pending WADA decision on the suitability of this type of testing for mind sports).*

The new Executive Director, Mr. Siming Liu, gave a report on the preparation of the 2010 Asian Games. He told us that a brand new \$35M Guangzhou Qiyuan has been built as the venue for the Go and Chess events. Go will include three medals: men team, women team, and pair competition. Chinese Rules will be used; an international referee team is being assembled and trained. In addition, a five-member international arbiter team will be organized to supervise the event. Thomas Hsiang will be the Western representative on this team.

### ***Miscellaneous***

The IGF Ranka-online team now collaborates with the AGA e-journal team to cover the WAGC news. This year, five Ranka members and two e-journal members (Chris Garlock and John Pinkerton) were in Hangzhou. The news was updated several times daily on the Ranka web page.

New potential IGF members have emerged from Côte-d'Ivoire and Pakistan. The new support of IGF hopefully will allow it to expand promotion in such areas that previously had very little Go activities.

The European Go Federation was admitted as a new Association Member of IGF.

### **Communications - Chris Garlock, VP, Communications**

In April of this year the American Go E-Journal celebrated its 10th anniversary by taking a giant step forward using the latest online technologies to automatically feed reports posted on the AGA website into the E-Journal. In addition to significantly streamlining the E-Journal and website news production process, this means that the timeliness of our reports has been dramatically enhanced.

This was most strikingly illustrated in the expanded reports from the World Amateur Go Championships (WAGC) in China, as well as in the ongoing editions of the E-Journal,

which is now available as both a briefer daily feed as well as the usual weekly edition. Another aspect of the new technology -- we're using WordPress for the website and MailChimp for the E-Journal -- is that the Member's Edition game commentaries are now available both in an online format playable without an .sgf reader or as downloadable .sgf files. This conversion took several months of hard and painstaking work and special thanks are due to Josh Simmons for his patience, creativity and problem-solving skills.

The E-Journal, website and American Go Yearbook continue to provide comprehensive, cutting-edge and timely coverage of the world go scene. Our network of contributors spans the globe and continues to expand, enhanced by the new social networking tools we adopted this year. This included a first-ever special 20-page full-color PDF report compiling all the WAGC reports and photos, with hotlinks to every game commentary published by the E-Journal, which was distributed to AGA members immediately following the WAGC.

With 13,000 readers, the E-Journal continues to function as a valuable service to AGA members who receive the special Member's Only content each week and as an entry point for future members, hundreds of whom join the AGA each time we run a promotional effort. As noted in both the 2008 and 2009 reports, such regular semi-annual promotions like the December and early Spring Yearbook offers which help retain existing members and recruit new members out of the ever-larger pool of non-members who sign up for the free edition of the E-Journal are clearly effective and we once again strongly recommend that the E-Journal and Membership staff work together to regularize the schedule in 2010-2011.

While the volume and timeliness of the E-Journal and website have increased in the past year, we've also continued to provide the wall-to-wall coverage of the annual U.S. Go Congress, the World Amateur Go Championships (WAGC) and major events like the Cotsen and New Jersey Open. A record 39-person EJ team helped cover the 25th annual U.S. Go Congress last year, broadcasting top boards at the U.S. Open and the North American Ing Masters, including simulcasts of live pro commentaries, as well as daily E-Journal reports and a live video feed via EuroGoTV-US. Between the local audience at the Congress and the online audience, viewership surpassed 1,000 for several of the games. The E-Journal team again provided nightly live simulcasts of North American Ing Masters top-board games with pro commentary by the legendary Takemiya Masaki and others, and also added live pro commentaries in the morning, drawing large crowds on KGS. And at this year's WAGC, we again teamed up with the Ranka team to provide extensive reporting from this high-profile event, which was held for the first time in China. This team effort not only strengthened the E-Journal-Ranka staff ties, but was a major AGA-IGF collaboration, and plans are already in motion for covering the 2011 WAGC together in Japan. Another significant byproduct of the EJ's WAGC coverage was the recruitment of Michael Redmond 9P as a regular commentator on current top pro games for the E-Journal.

**The seventh annual American Go Yearbook** continued the design changes instituted in the 2008 edition, including a photo Year in Review section and replacing the Scoreboard tournament winner reports with a smaller, more user-friendly collection of event photos from across the country over the course of the year. As noted previously, while the Yearbook continues to be extremely popular with AGA members who count it as one of the few tangible benefits of membership the significant expense in both staff time and organizational financial support suggest that we review the option of electronic

distribution, taking into consideration the Yearbook's added function as the annual historical record of the organization.

Finally, a few notes on finances and volunteers. The website, E-Journal and Yearbook have been functioning on essentially flat budgets for the last few years, as the organization has confronted the loss of Ing funds and the impact of the global financial crisis on our membership. We are proud to be able to do more with less, but this is not a bottomless well. The AGA's publications lead the English-language go world by far in both quality and reach, thanks to the investment of resources by the AGA and thousands upon thousands of hours of almost entirely volunteer time by an extensive team of contributors. The website, E-Journal and Yearbook make valuable contributions to the spread and development of go here in the United States as well as around the world, and constitute a priceless investment in the game by the AGA, its leadership, members and our volunteers. While we must continue to maximize the effectiveness of the AGA's financial investment, we must work just as assiduously to recognize and reward the investment of time and effort by our volunteers and contributors, without whom there would be no website, E-Journal or Yearbook.

***EJ/WEBSITE VOLUNTEERS/CONTRIBUTORS:*** Managing Editor: Chris Garlock; Assistant Editor: Bill Cobb; Website Editors: Mark Proctor, Jake Edge, Roger Schrag, Edward Zhang, Gurujeet Khalsa; Games Editor: Myron Souris; Professionals: Michael Redmond 9P; Yilun Yang 7P; Alexandr Dinerchtein 3P. Contributors: Paul Barchilon (Youth Editor); Lawrence Ku (U.S. West Coast Reporter); Brian Allen (U.S. West Coast Photographer); Keith Arnold (Go Quiz); Peter Dijkema (Dutch/European Correspondent); Marilena Bara (Romania/European Correspondent); Ian Davis (Ireland Correspondent); Jens Henker (Korea Correspondent); Nicholas Roussos (Cyprus Correspondent); Horatio Davis (Australia/New Zealand Correspondent); Columnists: James Kerwin 1P; Kazunari Furuyama; Rob van Zeijst; Roy Laird; Peter Shotwell; Translations: Bob McGuigan (Japan); Formatting: Adam Wright

***YEARBOOK VOLUNTEERS/CONTRIBUTORS:*** Managing Editor: Chris Garlock; Assistant Editor: William S. Cobb; Associate Editors: Paul Barchilon, Terry Benson, Roy Laird, John Pinkerton; Contributing Professionals: Feng Yun 9P, Yilun Yang 7P, Guo Juan 5P, Alexander Dinerchtein 3P, Fan Hui 2P, James Kerwin 1P, Jie Li 7d; Correspondents: Marilena Bara (Romania), Peter Dijekma (Europe), Kazunari Furuyama (Japan), Jens Henker (Korea), Lawrence Ku (US Youth); Design: Chris Garlock; Production: Doyle Printing; Database Manager: Sam Zimmerman

***EJ GO CONGRESS TEAM (2009):*** Special thanks to the professionals who gave so generously of their insights: Takemiya Masaki 9P, Feng Yun 9P, Nakano Yasuhiro 9P, Myeong-Wan Kim 8P, Sasaki Tadashi 8P, Maeda Ryo 6P, Guo Juan 5P, Lee Haijin 3P, Yang Shuang 2P, James Kerwin 1P, and translators Yoshi Sawada and Richard Dolen. Our core team worked incredible hours and overcame every glitch with aplomb and good humor: Akane Negishi (KGS admin), Steve Colburn (IT support, crosstabs and spirit coordination), John Pinkerton (Team Coordinator/photographer), Chris Burg (recorder, US Open/NAIM), Matt Luce (recorder, US Open/NAIM), Max Peterson (recorder, US Open/NAIM), Solomon Smilack (recorder, US Open/NAIM), Todd Blatt (simulcasts). Paul Barchilon coordinated our youth coverage, Phil Straus did photos and Photoshop magic, and our reporting team included Andrew Jackson, Laura Kolb and Lee Hunyh, while Gurujeet Khalsa handled website updates. Game recorders were: Brady Daniels, Calvin Lee, Daniel Poore, David Weimer, Frank Brown, Gordon Castanza, Huck Bennett, Jim Hlavka, Kenneth Elliott, Lawrence Ku, Matt Bengtson,

Stephen Allen, Tom Bahun. Thanks also to Congress Director Todd Heidenreich and his Congress team, who gave the EJ Team their full support.

### Youth Activities - Paul Barchilon, Youth Coordinator

This has been a difficult year for the AGA in terms of budgets, but I am pleased to report that the President and the Board have both maintained strong support for our many youth activities, despite the loss of Ing funding. The American Go Foundation also stepped in to provide additional funding for both the Redmond Cup and the School Teams Tournament, and we were able to continue both events without having to cut their budgets.

Our community also benefited tremendously from a new, and extremely generous, private donor, Winston Jen. Jen donated a treasure trove of Hikaru no Go graphic novels, a full 200 sets of all 17 volumes, and a large collection of Anime DVDs to be used as prizes for youth tournaments, both here at the Congress and year round. The Hikaru donation has enabled us to help start youth go clubs at libraries and schools all around the country, and the response has been extremely positive. Jen also made a direct donation to help both the Redmond and the School Teams Tournament.

The AGA has continued our close collaboration with the American Go Honor Society (AGHS), who are running many youth tournaments online. Their flagship event, the School Teams Tourney, drew over 300 youth this year, continuing to break records. Perhaps the most exciting part about the AGHS is that they are organized and run almost entirely by teenagers. This new generation of leaders is learning critical skills early, and we can look forward to their involvement in running the AGA in the future. In addition to their tournaments, they also ran a USYGC qualifier for the AGA, and we can expect more collaborations like this in the future.

Our partnership with the AGF has also been fertile this year, and joint resources have launched many new clubs all across the country. Most notably, the AGF used their infrastructure of school programs to distribute Hikaru no Go to locations where it could do the most good, and they continued to manage and run the AGA College Matching Program, which was launched last year to help new college programs form.

The AGF is honoring Marjorie Su Co Hey as Teacher of the Year for 2010. Hey has been a tireless promoter of youth Go for over a decade, often running up to 5 programs a week, at elementary schools, libraries, and anywhere they will let her. She has a special ability to enchant and engage children, and seems to never tire of sharing Go with beginners of all ages. She is living proof that one does not need to be a strong player to teach Go, in fact, often the opposite is true. A double digit kyu player herself, she is able to introduce the game to beginners without going over their head – a mistake dan level players often make. Hey will share her tips for success in a round table for Go teachers at the Congress, anyone who is interested in youth Go is invited to attend. Check your schedule for date and location.

In all our many successes for youth this year, there were also less than successful events. The United States Youth Go Championship has been problematic every year, and this year has convinced me that we need to make major changes. I have worked very hard to promote and grow this event for four years, but it is time to face the facts. We simply do not have enough distribution of youth players nationally to hold regional

qualifiers, and in the locations that we do have, youth are intimidated by the strong field and are not entering the event. This year we tried to help the situation by offering national titles in Single Digit Kyu and Double Digit Kyu brackets. This did help us out online, where we were able to attract 42 youth to the competition, but did not increase regional participation.

For next year, we have decided to hold the entire tournament online. This will greatly simplify the structure of the event, and allow us to focus on what we can do well instead of struggling to stage regional events that no one is attending. We also lost our West coast Go Camp this year, although we have two organizers set to run next year's. The East coast Go Camp also struggled, losing Feng Yun as the primary teacher, and getting off to a late start. Jennie Shen 2p stepped up to help out though, and 15 young players registered. Overall, Go Camps have not proved economically viable, and we may reassess the situation for next year.

### Webmasters Report - Steve Colburn

Most of the changes to the AGA website were regular updates and corrections that our users and volunteers found. Much of what has been worked on has been in areas not visible on the front of the website

Our largest notable change was in conjunction with the E-Journal. The news was changed to an RSS feed from wordpress hosted by the AGA's server. This allows the E-Journal to post more regularly throughout the week. This is used in conjunction with a new email platform, MailChimp, to send out the weekly E-Journal. The weekly Journals can also be sent out daily as a user option.

We have started working on a new web based membership database. I found a programmer who had the expertise with making complex web applications. We gathered all information from Sam Zimmerman and started to develop the application. Development has included sitting down with Sam for numerous hours to go over all aspects of the database's inner workings. The new database will be able to do all aspects of the job online as well as providing a more robust membership application and a way to integrate the database into other parts of the site. The Board of Directors approved funds to pay our programmer \$3,000 for the work (at a very low hourly rate). The database is expected to be completed by August 2010 (Estimate as of end of June).

Last year the Board of Directors also approved advertisements on the web site. The initial offer we received fell through but we received another offer, which is active today. I have worked with one vendor since November of 2009 to implement the ads on the site. Today on the bottom of each page you will see nine links which we are getting paid \$300 per month for running. Since adding the links to the site we have had two more offers for advertisements on the site. This is welcome additional income for the AGA.

Andy Okun and I have also prepared a document to send to potential sponsors of the AGA. This document will provide sponsors a brief overview of the AGA, its goals and sponsorship levels. Andy Okun was also named as the head of the AGA's fund-raising efforts. We are hopeful this approach will help us find new sponsors in the coming year.

We have started looking for an upgrade to the entire site in the last few months. We have created a template for use once a suitable Content Management System is found.

As of June 2010 no system has been found.

We have implemented an AGA Wiki at <http://wiki.usgo.org>. This has provided a central place for much information with regards to tournaments, rules, ratings, AGA Go Database, and congress information. This is an open wiki to easily write down and share information. This will help future volunteers easily obtain information needed to their position.

Special thanks to Josh Simmons for all of his programming support throughout the last year.

### Budget - Summary by Allan Abramson

This has been another difficult year for the budget. Continuing our conservative approach, the planned budget for 2011 has expenses reduced by about 9%, or \$9,000.

Income:

Membership income was down over \$9,000, underlining the need for greater collect effort in seeking renewals and new members in the coming years. Interest income also remains very low, given current economic conditions.

On the plus side was a generous \$2,000 donation by Winston Jen, for youth activities, and a new contract for text link ads on our web site, which will bring in \$3,600.

Expenses:

We plan to switch to Google Docs this year, which will save an estimated \$1,500.

The Board continues to support some tournaments, with an emphasis on youth. Allocations from reserves for tournaments is about \$8,000.

Funds for marketing and promotion of Go have been eliminated for 2011, forcing us to be more creative in internet advertising.

Funds for tournaments, such as the Master's and online tournaments, will have to come from donors and sponsors in 2011.

Overall, hard choices had to be made, and everyone involved cooperated in the decision-making process. Once the final budget is approved by the Board, we will post it online.