

AGA Annual Report for FY2011

President's Report - Allan Abramson

O Introduction

It was the best of times: new volunteers in key positions, more online tournaments, a new membership database integrated with the ratings database (something in the works for many years), more young people learning Go and starting school clubs, a thriving E-Journal, stronger international relations, and a new AGA credit card (GET YOURS NOW: <http://www.cardlabconnect.com/AGA>).

It was the worst of times: barely stabilizing our membership numbers, slow progress on new sponsors (focusing on the Congress and next year's Mind games, which costs a lot to field our team), erosion in chapter numbers, still looking for solid tournament pairing software, and the ancient question of "what value to I get from my AGA membership?"

It seems obvious that we need to strengthen our community. More people volunteering to help with membership and fund-raising growth. More online tournament directors. More creative ideas for chapter support. Above all, a greater sense that there is more to Go in the U.S. than finding the next game.

We need to work together to secure our Go future!

International Activities - Thomas Hsiang, VP for International Affairs

In May 2011, I attended the 32nd Board Meeting and General Meeting of the International Go Federation. 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; 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 EGF; Vanthanee NAMASONTHI, proxy for 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; Kyung-moo HEO, proxy for Han Sang-yul, VP of IGF and Executive Secretary of the Korean Baduk Association; Jae-ho YANG, VP-elect of IGF and Secretary General of the KBS; and Martin FINKE, Director-elect; Hiroko TAKI, Director-elect and Vice President of World Pair Go Association; and Yuki SHIGENO, IGF Secretary General. Guest participants included three Nihon-Kiin Directors, Chizu KOBAYASHI, Mr. WADA, and Mr. KANDA.

The first business was the election of the new Directors, Mrs. Taki, Mr. Yang, and Mr. Finke. Australia and Thailand were re-elected as auditors. Yuki Shigeno was re-appointed as Secretary General. Of special note is that Mrs. Taki was elected as Director at large: this election, along with the anticipated election of Mr. Ming-hao YING from the Ing Foundation later this year to the other Director at large position, would provide IGF a forum participated in by all the major Go organizations in the world.

Future WAGC events

It was reported that the 2012 WAGC will be held in March 2012 in Guangzhou, China. Nihon Kiin will host the 2013 WAGC event. The priority of hosting the 2014 event is given to Korea.

Report of development

I reported that IMSA, of which IGF is a member, has entered a commercial development contract with Mind Sport Partners (MSP), a company based in Singapore. IGF anticipates receiving at least \$25,000 yearly to support Go activities, in addition to the funds for the Go events of the World Mind Sport Games in 2012 and 2016. Further, IMSA has entered into a contract with SportAccord to hold the 2011 SportAccord Mind Games (SAMG), from which IGF will receive a management fee of \$50,000.

Under this contract, IGF is expected to support the formation of several National Mind Sport Associations and to participate actively in all MSP-organized competitions and promotional events.

Mr. Siming Liu reported that he is exploring an IGF-sponsored professional world championship that will be commercially supported.

SportAccord Mind Games2011

The SAMG games will be held December 8 through 17 at the Beijing Convention Center. Five sport events will participate: Bridge, Chess, Draughts, Go, and Xiangqi.

For Go, the competition items include two medals, a five-member team competition from six teams and a six- or seven-pair pair-go competition. The former will be held December 9-14, the latter on December 15-16. The six teams will be formed from China, Japan, South Korea, Asian-Pacific region (represented by Chinese Taipei), the Americas (represented by AGA), and European (represented by EGF). Pairs will be chosen from these six teams, plus possibly a seventh pair from the host city. All expense of the players will be borne by SportAccord. Substantial prize money in all places is provided.

AGA is requested to form its team, with at least one female member, before August 31, 2011.

World Mind Sport Games in 2012 and 2016

WMSG 2012 is not yet under contract. Several locations are under consideration, most notably Manchester, UK, and Madrid, Spain. WMSG 2016 has received preliminary approval by the Brazilian government.

Anti-doping activities

I reported the discussions between WADA and IMSA officials about anti-doping. IMSA raised the question that there is no scientific proven

benefit of performance enhancement drugs for mind-sport players taken prior to the competitions. It was requested that WADA officially exempt mind sports from “out-of-competition testing”.

It was further pointed out that, for now, Go, Bridge, Draughts have suspended their out-of-competition testing programs pending a decision by WADA. Chess uses a separate program, where selected players are tested 24 hours prior to competition to constitute the out-of-competition testing.

In response to this request, WADA agreed to re-visit the issue in their next revision of the anti-doping code starting early 2012, intended for publication in 2013. For now, WADA requested that the three non-compliant IMSA members adopt the Chess model, or continue to be considered non-compliant.

Within IGF, Ms. Shigeno reported that the testing during this year’s WAGC would not be held, because of the refusal of Japanese anti-doping agency to support this activity for Go, the latter being an unrecognized sport in Japan. Instead, the 2011 testing will be done during the SAMG event in December in China. Martin Finke, an IGF Director, has been appointed to organize the anti-doping infrastructure within IGF.

Other IGF sponsored events

The 22nd International Amateur Pair Go Championship will be held November 19-21, 2011, in Tokyo.

KBA asked the Go community to join in its petition for the 2014 Asian Games to include Go as a competition item. Go players can go to the KBA website to sign up.

The Korean Prime Minister Cup, now in its sixth year, will be held in October, 2011; the World University Student Championship (March), the Hi Seoul World Businessman Baduk Fair (November), the Hangzhou World City-Team tournament (November), and the Children’s Team Tournament (Thailand, February) all will continue at their traditional times.

KBA was asked to investigate the possibility of IGF joining the International University Sports Federation, FISU.

KBA reported that it will support the formation of a professional system in Europe by allowing the latter’s members to participate in some of the Korean title competitions.

Mr. Liu reported IGF is supporting European Go activities by sponsoring up to 20 European youths to study Go in China in the summer of 2011. He also commented that China Qiyuan is supporting the European Go Congress by helping EGC secure a third year of support from the Chinese team company, Zhuyeqing. In addition, there will be a large delegation of Chinese professionals and amateurs visiting the 2011 EGC. The Chinese

A-League will play one round at the mid-Congress break; eight top professionals from China will participate.

In response, Ms. Kobayashi noted that Nihon Kiin will have a large presence at the 2011 EGC as well; several NK Directors and professionals will participate. Similar comments were made by the Pair Go Association (Mrs. Taki) and Korean Baduk Association (Mr. Yang). Very little was said about the US Go Congress...

Communications - Chris Garlock, VP, Communications

It's been another incredibly productive year for the AGA's communications team. We're proud to have kept the AGA at the cutting edge of world go coverage, helping inform the global go community, building and maintaining a national and worldwide network of go communicators, all in service of the game of go and the American Go Association.

Here are a few key highlights of the past year:

- Go News: 1,040 posts on our go news site, including original reporting on the U.S. go scene as well as compilations from news sources around the world
- Special Reports: published a series of full-color hot-linked PDF reports for AGA members on the World Amateur Go Championships in China, the U.S. Go Congress in Denver, and the Cotsen Open in Los Angeles
- Online American Go Yearbook: switched publication to an expanded and extensive on-line-only version (at a great savings to the AGA, and with minimal member objection), with the following sections already published: Year in Headlines (4-page PDF includes selected headlines and color photos from reports appearing in the American Go E-Journal in 2010); Games, Commentaries & More (includes all the Member's Edition material published in the E-Journal in 2010).

This online resource enables members to quickly find the material they're looking for on a month-by-month list. Once selected, game records or PDFs open up quickly and easily for review or download. This 2010 Yearbook collection also includes bonus files not originally included in the E-Journal); Instruction (8-page PDF includes samples of game commentaries by Michael Redmond 9P, puzzling life and death problems from Yilun Yang 7P, Haruyama Isamu 9P's "Questions From Actual Play," Kazunari Furuyama's "Lessons With Kaz," kyu game reviews by Yuan Zhou 7-dan, translations from Weiqi World, and excerpts from Go World appearing in the American Go E-Journal in 2010.

Throughout the PDF we've included handy clickable links to the 2009 and 2010 game collections); The Traveling Board (3-page PDF includes both of Paul Barchilon's reports on teaching go in prison and Roy Laird's report on the Chess and Checkers House in New York City's Central Park. We've also included handy clickable links to our Traveling Board reports from China last year as well, previously released in the 2010 WAGC special report); Go Spotting (go was spotted everywhere last year, from television shows to French novels and of course films.

In Go Spotting, our latest 2010 American Go Yearbook release, we've collected our reports on go's appearance in popular culture, from popular television shows like Criminal

Minds to philosophy books — A Thousand Plateaus — as well as films — The Taste of Tea and The Warlords and a best-selling French novel, The Elegance of the Hedgehog and even a blog entry, Eyes of Wood, Hands of Stone, Heart of Paper); Youth (AGA youth had a great year in 2010, and some of the highlights are compiled in the American Go Yearbook Youth section. From Team Tiger's Mouth taking on the Internet Insei League, to Calvin Sun's first-person account of his matches in the World Youth Go Championships (Sun finished fourth, beating out Japan, and we provide a commented game record from Team Leader Mingjiu Jiang 7P). Other highlights of the Yearbook Youth section — which is twice as large in 2010 as it was in 2009 — include the Redmond Cup, with Curtis Tang 7d, named the new Redmond Meijin; highlights from the US Go Congress Youth Room, and reports on the School Team Tourney).

- EJ Readership Stats: 1,700 AGA members; 3,455 former AGA members; 6,709 non-members

- Proven Membership Driver: the E-Journal and Yearbook continue to be highly-valued in the go community, cited by existing and new members as reasons for re-joining/joining, and the EJ's Go World promotion in May helped boost membership by nearly 300 alone. 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 the 2008, 2009 and 2010 reports, such regular semi-annual promotions like the Go World and 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 2011-2012.

Volunteers: the AGA's communication team continues to recruit, train and retain an amazingly broad, diverse and committed group of volunteers, without whom we could not accomplish a fraction of the work described above:

EJ/WEBSITE VOLUNTEERS/CONTRIBUTORS: Managing Editor: Chris Garlock; Website Editors: Jake Edge, Roger Schrag, David Ormerod, Edward Zhang, Ivan Vigano; Games Editor: Myron Souris; Professionals: Michael Redmond 9P; Feng Yun 9P; Yilun Yang 7P; Guo Juan 5P; Alexandr Dinerchtein 3P. Contributors: Paul Barchilon (Youth Editor); Lawrence Ku (U.S. West Coast Reporter); Brian Allen (U.S. West Coast Photographer); Ian Davis (Ireland Correspondent); Nicholas Roussos (Cyprus Correspondent); Horatio Davis (Australia/New Zealand Correspondent); Columnists: Kazunari Furuyama; Roy Laird; Peter Shotwell; Translations: Bob McGuigan (Japan)

YEARBOOK VOLUNTEERS/CONTRIBUTORS: Managing Editor: Chris Garlock; 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, Jie Li 7d; Correspondents: Kazunari Furuyama (Japan), Lawrence Ku (US Youth); Design/Production/Distribution: Chris Garlock

2011 E-JOURNAL/WEBSITE/KGS REPORTING/BROADCASTING TEAM: Managing Editor: Chris Garlock; TEAM COORDINATORS: Steve Colburn, Todd Heidenreich; KGS TEAM: Akane Negishi, Matt Heymering; VIDEO STREAMING/ING FINAL TRANSCRIBING: Todd Blatt; YOUTH EDITOR: Paul Barchilon; REPORTERS: Jake Edge, Lee Huynh, Laura Kolb; PHOTOGRAPHERS: Roy Laird, Gen Zhang, Edward Zhang, David Weiss; PROFESSIONALS: Yasumasa Hane 9P, Seong-Yong Kim 9P, Mingjiu Jiang 7P, Ryo Maeda 6P, Cheng Xiaoliu 6P, Jennie Shen 2P, Shigeko Hane 1P, Xuefen Lin 1P,

Cathy Li 1P; TRANSLATORS: Yoshi Sawada, Shoji Honsono & Jonathan Kim; US OPEN/ING GAME RECORDERS: Solomon Smilack, Chris Burg & Richard Dolen; ING GAME RECORDERS: Gordon Castanza, David Weimer, Myron Souris, Ryan Bernstein, Jim Hlavka, Michael Huang, Mike LePore & Daniel Smith; REDMOND CUP GAME RECORDERS: Justin Teng, Ashish Varma & Hugh Zhang; Pro Pair Go: Josh Larson.

Youth Activities - Paul Barchilon, Youth Coordinator

I am pleased to report that AGA Youth membership is on the rise again, up to 692 this year, compared to 533 at this time last year, for a 29% increase. This solid increase has been fostered by continued support for youth programs, from the board, the President, and from the AGF.

The East Coast Go Camp struggled this year, and was almost canceled, but 14 youth did sign up and the AGF stepped in to help cover the projected loss. We have continued our mainstays, the US Youth Go Championships (USYGC), the Redmond Cup, the School Teams Tourney (STT), and seen friendship matches with Canada, Europe, and Mexico.

As I write this, ten of our youth are preparing for a very exciting new opportunity, the first ever match-up with kids studying to be professionals in Japan, the insei. I hope to arrange similar matches with the Koreans and the Chinese in the near future as well. I am also very excited to be going to Romania for the World Youth Go Championships, where 15 year old Vincent Zhuang 6d, and 9 year old Aaron Ye 4d, will represent the AGA in international competition. I will be reporting from the event daily; look for updates on the home page starting on August 13th.

Perhaps the biggest news this year has been another astonishing donation from Winston Jen, who gave us 1,000 sets of the Hikaru no Go manga. That is 23,000 volumes, taking up 11 pallettes of space in the AGF warehouse, and with a retail value of over \$228,000.00. In partnership with the AGF, we have made the series available to any school or public library, for just the cost of shipping. To further boost our visibility, The AGF sent myself, Chris Kirschner, and Vincent Eisman (2008 Teacher of the Year) to New Orleans to introduce Go and Hikaru to 20,000 librarians at the American Library Association's annual convention. All three of us have done a lot of demos before, but we felt that this was very different. People were not casually interested, or just wandering by and curious; they were focused, excited, and looking specifically for ways to engage kids and teens in their libraries. Not only did 113 libraries sign up for a free set of Hikaru on the spot, but we also gave out over 700 brochures, about 500 copies of The Way to Go, almost 200 starter CDs and 280 cardboard sets. We even taught librarians how to play right there in the booth as well, and they all seemed fascinated.

The AGF is honoring Fritz Balwit as Teacher of the Year for 2011. Fritz is based in Portland, where he has been a chess teacher in the schools for years. When he discovered Go, he fell in love with it, and introduced it to his chess students. Now, most of his clubs have morphed into Go clubs. He has run programs in over a dozen locations over the past several years, several of which are still on-going, and reached hundreds of kids. Balwit will share his tips for success in a round table for Go teachers here at the congress, on Tuesday at 5 pm. Anyone who is interested in youth Go is invited to attend.

Budget - Summary by Allan Abramson (attachment: FY12 budget)

Bottom line:

- O Bottom line is \$16,818 surplus for FY11, with key factors being:
- O Income received from both 2009 and 2010 Congresses (2009 was late), so this accounts for an extra \$5,000
- O We had six new lifetime members, vs budgeted two, for an extra \$4,000
- O Web site expenses came in \$5,700 under budget
- O Other expenses were a little lower, too

Final FY 12 Budget Notes:

Income:

- O Continuing our conservative approach, I have assumed \$2,000 less in budgeted donations, and \$4,000 less in budgeted membership income than last year
- O Investment interest is adjusted from \$2,000 to \$1,000, closer to reality
- O Sales income is reduced by \$3,500, reflecting the loss of weblink income
- O With other small adjustments, assumed income is around \$12,000 less than FY11 budget
- O New item is income from Affinity Credit Card, assumed to be used by 200 people, giving us \$10,000 in income for 2012 Mind Games reserve; this is a wild guess of course... This item shows up as both income and expense, but really will affect next year's budget, not this year's budget, as it is a reserve...

Expenses:

- O Line 60102, Casual Labor, AGA phone/POBox, estimated at \$2,000, down from this year's actual, reflecting full implementation of online credit card payments through Paypal, etc.
 - O Line 60230, Website upgrades, estimated at \$2,000, as a reserve for consulting, if needed. Note that \$4,000 was reserved in FY11, but only a little used
 - O Lines 60300 and 60390, E-Journal and Yearbook, about the same, but FY11 actuals are over \$3,000 less than budgeted, so this may be an area with savings/reinvestment
- Line 60450, Database entry and Q/A, should drop considerably now that new system online; reduced by \$4,000
- O Lines 60500, Tournaments

- O Line 60511 - Provided \$1,750 for the Master's
- O Line 60512 - Provides \$4,000 for the Redmond, adding \$1,000 back
- O Line 60515 - Adds \$500 for an online pair go tournament
- O Line 60519 - Adds \$1,000 for SPOT2
- O Line 60600 - Equipment, retains \$2,300, but could see large savings again
- O Line 60710 - Membership cards, includes \$400 in estimated costs; expect \$2,500 next year for new card stock as current supply is exhausted
- O Line 60720, Go Camp, anticipates that this year's camp will lose \$1,000 again

Bottom Line:

- O Net result is a balanced budget, with overall expenses down another \$4,000 from 2011, or over a 6% reduction. This brings budget reductions to over 25% in the past three years. While this is prudent budgeting to avoid losses, we need to make progress in increasing both membership and sponsor support, to ensure a bright future.