

AGA Annual Report for FY2012

President's Report - Allan Abramson

O Introduction and farewell

After four years, my term as President is ending. Your new President, Andy Okun, will do a great job in bringing in new sponsors and volunteers, and in bringing the AGA to a new level of accomplishment.

In looking back, it always is good (and very sobering) to review the vision of 2008, and see how well we have done in pursuing it. (See the attachment) It remains my vision for the AGA to reach and go beyond 10,000 members. This is the critical mass we need to ensure enough volunteers to make all your good ideas reality. Yet, we still face that old "I just want to play Go" mountain. It has been hard to motivate members to recruit new members, but we need to keep trying.

The good news is that my vision of a new generation of AGA leaders is happening. Andy is our first West Coast President, and a generation younger than I (not a high hurdle, actually). The Board has many new members, and the election this year had perhaps the largest number of candidates in decades. New volunteers have taken key positions, more schools are forming clubs, our systems infrastructure has been updated, and the internet promises greater community awareness and involvement.

Our new Pro certification system is off to a good start, thanks to Kim Myungwan and our sponsor, Tygem. The university group producing their Go documentary promises to significantly increase public awareness of Go. Winston Jen's generous contribution of Hikaru no Go volumes is infiltrating libraries across the country. We fielded a large World Mind Sports team even as they had to pay their own way to France.

The first AGA International Symposium on Go will be fantastic. Our Congress continues to attract more visitors from abroad, and we are set for next year in Seattle and 2014 in Vancouver (any volunteers for 2015?).

Online tournaments continue to expand, with the Strong Players Online Tournament (SPOT), Young Kwon National Online Tournament (YKNOT), the National Pair Go Online Tournament, and the soon-to-arrive Pandanet City League tournament (sign up is coming!).

People must be recognized. Japan has a tradition of naming people as Living National Treasures. My four are Chris Kirschner, Sam Zimmerman, Thomas Hsiang, and Chris Garlock. Their constant support and dedication was essential to me. Of course, they will continue to contribute invaluable services to the AGA. I also must mention Paul Barchilon, who lives and breathes commitment to youth (but it will be some decades before he becomes "age-eligible" for this honor)! As for our many other dedicated volunteers, you know how much I appreciate your services. "Thank you" to all these fine people.

I leave the AGA in good hands. It has been a privilege to serve you. Best wishes to all of you!

Allan

International Activities - Thomas Hsiang, VP for International Affairs

International Tournament Scene

AGA players participated in a number of international tournaments in the past 12 months, including two new events. There will be even more international tournaments in the next 12 months.

The 10th World Student Oza was held Feb 28-29 2012, in Tokyo. Representing US was Yue Zhang, who placed 7th. The 11th event will be held in Feb. 2013 in Tokyo.

The 32nd World Amateur Go Championship was held May 26 – June 2 2011, in Matsue City, Japan. This historical city is famous for its ancient castles, extensive shorelines, and a beautiful inland lake. Taking place shortly after the big earthquake, the 32nd WAGC was nevertheless marked with great hospitality and superb organization by the hosts. Representing the US was Eric Lui, whose 3rd place finish tied a historic high for AGA players in this tournament.

Guangzhou Qiyuan hosted the 33rd WAGC May 12-16 2012. This is the first time the WAGC moved to South China. Playing for US was Yuan Zhou, another strong and popular player from the DC area. Unfortunately, Yuan finished in 21st place, the worst finish ever by an AGA player! The very different results in two consecutive years by comparable players were clearly indicative of the competitive nature of international play, where European and South Asian players are rapidly advancing in their playing strengths.

The WAGC will return to Japan in early June 2013, in the city of Sendai. This charming city was near the epicenter of the last earthquake, but has rapidly recovered to its former glory. Many players will surely look forward to visiting it next year. The 35th WAGC will be held in Korea in 2014, the first time this event moves outside of Japan and China.

The Korean Prime Minister Cup was held Oct 22-23 2011 in Pohang-si, Korea. Of special note was that Frederick Balwit, the AGA Teacher of the Year, was sent as the guest official, while Curtis Tang earned his right to represent US. But, through a series of mishaps, Curtis did not receive the tournament information until the last moment. It was impossible for him to get ready and Fritz was forced to substitute for Curtis. He did well to win two games.

The 22nd International Pair-Go Championship was held Nov 19-20, 2011 in Tokyo. Yuan Zhou and Roxanne Tam played for the US. The 23rd event will be held Nov 3-4, 2012.

The inaugural SportAccord World Mind Games (SAWMG) was held at the Beijing Convention Center, Dec 8-17 2011. Organized by SportAccord (formerly GAISF), this prestigious tournament provided generous travel, accommodation, and prize money to 30 of the world's top players. The tournament was organized in a team format, with five players from each of the main Go-playing countries/regions, and each team further contributed a pair for a second, pair-go tournament. AGA used a selection tournament

run on KGS to select five players: Yun Feng 9p, Mingjiu Jiang 7p, Andy Liu, Jie Li, and Ke Huang. In addition, Yun Feng and Jie Li played in the pair-go tournament. The US placed fifth, ahead of the EGF, for both the team and pair competitions.

The 2nd SAWMG will take place Dec 12-19, 2012, in Beijing. The tournament is changed to include only singles and pair medals. Out of the total of 28 invitees, the US is invited to send one male and one female player.

The quadrennial World Mind Sports Games returns in 2012 to Lille, France on Aug 9-23. WMSG-II will feature five sports: Go, Bridge, Chess, Draughts, and Xiangqi. The Go portion will be an all-amateur event, offering medals for men and women singles, team, pair-go, and youth competitions. Any member country may send a team to this event.

Another quadrennial event, the Ing Cup, also returns in 2012. Thanks to the much-reduced tension across the Taiwan Strait and a less restrictive visa policy against Chinese players, the event could be held in Taipei, Taiwan, for the first time. A very large contingent of Chinese Go officials, government officials, and other social dignitaries descended on the island for the May 23-27 first three rounds. Go (or Goe ^^) in this case truly fulfilled its role as a bridge of friendship. Playing for the US, Hui-ren Yang 1p lost in the first round.

Two Chinese-sponsored international championships, both operating on a bi-annual basis, have started in early 2012 and will last well into the latter part of the year. The 9th Chunlan Cup was played in Taizhou City, March 28-31. Jing Yang from Canada won the North America representation right. For those unfamiliar with Yang, he was a contemporary of the famous player Ma Xiaochun. In Nie Weiping's book, he said the child prodigy Yang had more talent and potential than Ma! Mr. Yang lost in the first round.

The second tournament is the Bailing Cup, which inaugurates in 2012 and operates with a very different format. All professional players and a select few amateur players may enter in the elimination rounds, but they must all pay their own way to play. Only those who won the elimination tournament, along with seeded players, are guaranteed enough prize money to cover their expenses. A total of 365 players eventually registered, with the elimination rounds played Mar 3-8 2012. The AGA was given a single amateur slot, which went to Xinyu Tu. None of the US resident pros took up the offer of free entry to the tournament, however.

An older event, the Ing University Team Championship, invites a US team to play for the first time in 2012.

The First International Go Symposium

In December 2012 I wrote and submitted a proposal to IMSA – the International Mind Sports Association – for the support of the first-ever North America International Go Symposium to be held in August 2012. The Symposium will bring international Go scholars together for a 2-day exchange of research results and would provide a platform for publication of their work. The requested budget of €7,000 (about \$9,000) was fully awarded.

Under the organization of Paul Celmer, Peter Freeman, and Peter Shotwell, the Symposium appears to be in good order. The founder of Atari - Nolan Bushnell - will be the keynote speaker. Other international special guests include Chen Zuyuan, the world's top Go rules and history expert, and Hotta Yumi, author of Hikaru-no-Go.

It is hoped that this Symposium will become a regular feature of the US Go Congress, perhaps on a bi-annual basis. The goal is to establish it as the main event for Go scholars who will use the Symposium and the AGA e-library as the main repository for their research.

AGA Development Activities

Go has always enjoyed strong financial support from Asia. However, in the past, we have taken the role as only a passive recipient. Recently, with the formation of the AGA Development and Marketing Committee (Peter Freeman, Andy Okun, Paul Celmer, Thomas Hsiang), we are starting to proactively seek out sponsors, both domestic and international.

For the past 12 months, there has been some limited success. Besides the Symposium grant, we have secured agreement with NKB/Pandanet of Japan to sponsor a City League that will start in the fall of 2012. Of course the largest international support has come from Tygem in the sponsorship of the American pro system, which is due mostly to the single-handed effort of Myungwan Kim 9p.

We have also aggressively pitched the US Go Congress to the Asian markets. This year, we will see several contingents of Asian players at Black Mountain, including a new Chinese group. We also have received inquiries from other Chinese groups that indicate their interest in the Congress in 2013 and beyond.

The US remains an attractive vacation destination for the Chinese market. The much welcomed news from the State Department of a more relaxed policy of visa issuance will surely help in the future. I further believe that in the Chinese market, there are many potential sponsors that we could work with. This will be one of the top priorities of the Development Committee.

Change in Leadership on the International Go and Mind-Sports Scene: What does the Future Hold?

Starting 2011 and lasting into 2013, we have seen/will see several major changes in leadership in Go and related mind-sport organizations. Some of them may have significant impact on the future of Go and mind-sport development.

The AGA will welcome a new President this summer who will probably have the help of a younger and enthusiastic volunteer group. Mirroring the US is the situation at Nihon Kiin, where a new president will bring with him new financial support and a younger group of assistants. This is good news for Japan Go and could also lay new hopes for our relationship.

Mind sports' biggest fan and supporter, SportAccord's president Hein Verbruggen, will step down in 2013, along with IOC's president Jacques Rogge; raising questions about

whether mind sports will continue to enjoy a close tie with this strong sports organization. IGF itself also has a new president, the former UNESCO Director-General, Koichiro Matsuura. We have already seen an initial contact between IMSA and UNESCO, warming up to the talk of a UNESCO patronage of the mind sports. Could this lead to an increased emphasis of the cultural aspect of mind sports, as opposed to the sports aspect?

Quietly operating in the background is the establishment of several National Mind Sports Associations (NMSA's). The US NMSA was formed in 2011; Brazilian and Singapore NMSA's in 2012; Germany, Russia, Netherlands, and China will likely soon follow suit.

These groups have a major emphasis on promoting the educational and sociological values of mind sports. They have already accomplished a great deal in a very short time. For example, the US NMSA has won support of the Berkman Center of Harvard to start a mind-sport research network linking several universities. They indirectly funded the AGA's Symposium project, with IMSA as an intermediary. With a similar arrangement, they have also funded a South American Go teaching program that will start this fall in Venezuela. A new proposal is on the table that will start a teaching program for Draughts in West Africa (with Go and Chess to follow). There was a mind-sport festival in London in Nov 2011 and a much-expanded second festival in July 2012 in Singapore is being organized that will feature items beyond the current five sports – such as Gomoku and Sudoku! This proliferation of mind-sport activities deserves close observation and participation by AGA. I have involved Andy Okun to participate in the US NMSA.

The international Go scene is dynamic and interesting and promises to continue so. To conclude my report, I wish to express my appreciation of the support by our departing president Allan Abramson who has given me a free hand in this side of the AGA business for the past four years.

Communications - Chris Garlock, VP, Communications

It's been both a routine and an unusual year for the AGA's communications team. Routine in that we've continued our high-quality coverage of U.S. and world go in the American Go E-Journal. Unusual in that we've spent the last year engaged in the arduous process of preparing to transfer the AGA's website. By the time this report is published, we expect the new site to have been successfully launched and look forward to building our communications on a much more robust and reliable structure.

Here are a few key highlights of the past year:

- Go News: we have now published nearly 1,700 posts on our go news site, continuing our original reporting on the U.S. go scene as well as compilations from news sources around the world. In addition to continuing to expand our global stable of contributors, the next major project we look to take on is adding our 2004-2008 EJ archives to the news site so that that material is readily available and searchable, rather than simply archived, as is the case now.

- Special Reports/Online American Go Yearbook: In addition to our usual extended live coverage of major events like the World Amateur Go Championships and the U.S. Go Congress, we have issued several online compilations of that coverage, including the 2011 AMERICAN GO YEARBOOK: Member's Edition Collection of Games, Commentaries & More, the 2011 U.S. Go Congress Overview: Reports, Photos, Games & Commentaries, the 2012 Cotsen Overview: Reports/Games/Commentaries and 2012 WAGC at a Glance: Report/Game Index. The compilations bring all our coverage of these events together into handy all-inclusive posts with links to the stories, game records, crosstabs and more. Readers find this format much more user-friendly than the PDF versions we did for the Online American Go Yearbook the previous year, and as they are far less labor-intensive for our volunteer staff, we expect to continue and expand this approach.

- Website: This has easily been the biggest, most expensive, time- and energy-consuming project the comms team has taken on in many years. We will spare you the gory and tedious technical details of the myriad pieces of work that had to be accomplished to transfer the AGA's website to a more up-to-date structure, but thanks to the incredibly hard work of a small cadre of gifted volunteers (and the patience and support of AGA leadership), we now have a site that we'll be able to build on for many years to come.

- EJ Readership Stats: Total Readership: 11,238; Daily Member EJ: 1,560; Weekly Member EJ: 128; Daily former Member EJ: 3,266; Weekly Former Member EJ: 65; Daily Non-Member EJ: 5,675; Weekly Non-Member EJ: 544

- Proven Membership Driver: it bears repeating that 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 previous promotions in the E-Journal have helped boost membership. 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, 2010 and 2011 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 2012-2013.

Volunteers: the AGA's communication team continues to recruit, train and retain an amazingly broad, diverse and committed group of volunteers; we look forward to continuing to work with them and new volunteers in the year ahead.

EJ/WEBSITE VOLUNTEERS/CONTRIBUTORS: Managing Editor: Chris Garlock; Website Editors: 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)

2011 E-JOURNAL/WEBSITE/KGS REPORTING/BROADCASTING TEAM: Managing Editor: Chris Garlock; EJ Congress Team Assistant Manager Todd Heidenreich (who did double-duty as Pair Go TD) and IT Manager/Beverage Wrangler Steve Colburn, who keep our recording team well-supplied and running smoothly no matter what the crisis of the day might be. The always stylish KGS Admin Akane Negishi – who provided key pro relation support — was joined on-site by Greg Wright and was backed up by the usual crew of ever-helpful KGS admins, including Matthew Heymering, Mef, and FlameBlade, with Bill Shubert's support. Chris Burg, Richard Dolen and Dennis Wheeler anchored the recording/broadcasting teams for both the U.S. Open each morning and the North American Masters each night; Chris is the master of play-by-play reporting, Richard has been playing longer than the rest of the team combined and Dennis is the unflappable zen master of the team. Our other game recorders/broadcasters included Gordon Castanza, Calvin Clark, Jim Hlavka, John Mangual, Peter Martin, Michael Scudder, Daniel Short, Solomon Smilack (who also helped with some of the pro game commentaries this year), Phil Straus & Marc Willerth. Todd Blatt was once again our Simulcast Broadcaster for the nightly NAMT pro game commentaries and this year launched the "ToddCam" which provided some unusually-entertaining views of the top boards. Brian Allen and Phil Straus were our photographers this year, and deserve special recognition and appreciation for matching 2011's gorgeous location with such wonderful images of the Congress. EJ Youth Editor Paul Barchilon once again did our youth reporting and youth game recording/broadcast coordination and Roy Laird was our roving reporter. Finally, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to the professional go players who took the time to provide us with such great live game commentaries: Michael Redmond 9P, Seo Neong-Wook 9P, Wang Qun 8P, Mingjiu Jiang 7P, Maeda Ryo 6P, Hajin Lee 3P, Jennie Shen 2P, and Li Ting 1P.

WEBSITE TEAM: Chris Garlock, Roger Schrag, Steve Colburn, Joshua Simmons, Justin Kramer, Jason Preuss, Jonathan Bresler, Roy Laird, Phil Waldron, Sam Zimmerman, David Arteché and Bob Gilman.

Youth Activities - Paul Barchilon, Youth Coordinator

This has been another great year for our youth programs. Our premiere event, the US Youth Go Championship, drew 66 kids for the online qualifier. The finals were held a few weeks later, and had our top 8 kids competing in a double-elimination tourney for the right to represent the US at the World Youth Championships. Calvin Sun 7d won that right in the Senior Division (under 16), while Aaron Ye 5d won in the Junior (under 12). Both boys will travel to China to compete, the week after the Go Congress.

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 165 youth this year. Their Young Lions Tourney was also a big success, and they are helping build a new generation of players. 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.

The Redmond Cup, now in its 19th year, continues to be run by Michael Bull. Four talented youth have won a free trip to congress to compete in the finals. Calvin Sun 7d and Jianing Gan 6d will compete in the Sr. (under 18) and Aaron Ye 5d and Austen Liao 2d will compete in the Jr. (under 12).

The AGF sponsored 36 youth scholarships to congress this year, and an additional 5 scholarships to the Go Camp as well. In outreach, we continued our major push to get Hikaru no Go into school and public libraries. I am pleased to report we placed Hikaru in over 200 libraries last year, and launched numerous youth Go clubs in conjunction with many of them. None of this would have been possible without Winston Jen's generous donation of 1,000 sets of the full series, which we continue to distribute. The AGF staffed a booth at the American Library Association's annual conference again, reaching out to 20,000 librarians from across the nation.

The AGF is honoring Joe Walters as Teacher of the Year for 2012. Walters started a Go program at his grandson's elementary school four years ago. Before long, about 150 of the school's 400 students were involved – ironically, his grandson was not among them. Starting with brief presentations during recess, the program soon moved to the lunchroom. Walters expanded his activities to another school as well, teaching and operating the program two days a week during lunch at each site. The principals of the two schools are good friends and maintain a friendly rivalry between their schools, so when Walters proposed an intramural tournament last year, they jumped at the chance and even provided a traveling trophy. Next, Walters hopes to teach participants in a local senior center and perhaps arrange for some of his students to meet and play with the seniors. He also enjoys teaching beginners on [KGS](#) and can often be found in the Beginner's Room as "Jodageezer". Walters will share his tips for success in a round table for Go teachers, on Monday at 5pm, in BRC Board Room.

Marketing and Development Committee - Peter Freedman, Chair

First Annual Report: July, 2012

Establishment. The AGA Fund raising committee was formed after a call for volunteers in the EJournal in the winter of 2011.

Membership. Initial members were Andy Okun, Chair, Thomas Hsiang, Joanne Phipps, Paul Celmer, and Peter Freedman. Joanne left the committee for personal reasons. Peter Freedman became the chair. Lisa Scott has recently joined the committee.

Mission. Initially the mission was to raise money. Subsequent discussions led to a reformulation of the mission to promoting Go in the U.S. The committee changed its name to the Marketing and Development Committee.

Strategy

1. Identify companies in whose interest it is to associate themselves with Go, as sponsors or in other ways. Such companies include but are not limited to U.S. companies doing business in Asia, Asian companies, gaming companies, hi tech companies, and AI companies.

- a. Develop marketing materials.
 - b. Market sponsorship of major activities to these companies (Congress, pro league, NMSA, etc).
2. Identify high-profile Go players and engage them in helping the committee achieve its mission.
 3. Utilize social media to spread awareness of Go. Possibly develop a Go-themed music video.
 4. Obtain rights to use Hikaru No Go for non-profit purposes.
 5. Engage the American Go community in the committee's efforts by contacting chapter reps to explain our work and asking them if they or their members can help.

Significant achievements to date

We have developed the mission for the committee and honed in on the strategy to accomplish this mission. Considerable amount of time was devoted to developing professional-quality promotional materials for the AGA and for the US Go Congresses. These materials have been sent to a number of US companies, foundations, and individuals, as well as to our international friends and potential partners.

On the tangible side, we point to the success of securing a five-year agreement with Pandanet to sponsor the Pandanet-AGA City League, starting Fall, 2012, that will add to the high-profile Go competitions in North America. We have also secured the funding for the first AGA International Go Symposium, which we hope will continue on a regular basis and become the center stage for scholarly activities in Go.

Most importantly, the committee has made great strides in reaching out to friends of American Go. For example, we successfully invited Nolan Bushnell to be the keynote speaker for our Go Symposium. In addition, a slate of well-known international Go scholars will make their presentations. They come from China, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Europe, in addition to the US, and all but guarantee the Symposium to be a success.

We have sent many invitations to Chinese commercial and government interests. This year, for the first time, we will have a mind-sport delegation from Shandong province to the Black Mountain Congress. We will have a number of Korean Baduk officials as well. These activities add to the traditional "tour groups" from Asia and bode well for future development opportunities.

More recently, Andy Okun and Thomas Hsiang have worked with other mind sports in the US to form the US Mind Sports Association. The Association's first task is to organize a workshop that develops common promotion and education strategies. There is an excellent prospect that we will be able in the near future to leverage the stronger sports – Chess, Bridge, and Poker – in market development.

On the members level, our committee members have telephoned about 1/3 of the AGA chapter reps to invite their suggestions and participations. This activity will continue in the future.

Treasurer's Report - Roy Schmidt, AGA Treasurer

Please refer to the enclosed spreadsheet for copies of the final FY2012 balance sheet and a statement of the budget vs. actual income and expenses.

Despite the appearance of a sizable net income of over \$45,000, the AGA suffered massive losses in this fiscal year, most of which will be evident in the FY2013 statement due to a delay in final reckoning for the 27th Congress and the Cotsen Open.

\$44,000 of the net income is from grants by Tygem and the Stolaroff Family Foundation. Most of these funds will be spent in FY2013 in support of the Professional Certification program and to reimburse expenses for the Cotsen Open (an expense statement is expected soon).

Almost all of the \$30,000 outstanding loan for the 27th Congress will be written off as a loss due to a perfect storm of excessive comps, non-payment by participants, and unexpected charges. Chris Kirschner soon will close the bank account and send the proceeds to the treasurer as final payment on the loan. (A loan for the 28th Congress has already been repaid from early proceeds.)

The AGA Board budgeted \$1000.00 to assist the Go Camp with expenses. In the end, the AGA paid over \$2,000 and the AGF chipped in a similar amount to cover a \$4,000 budget overrun due to low attendance.

As a result of all of the above, the actual impact on the AGA reserves is a loss of about \$28,000.

On the positive side, memberships in all categories exceeded expectations.

More good news: expenses for administration, treasurer, database, and the e-Journal were all well under budget, thanks to a concerted effort to streamline handling of membership applications and the move to an almost paperless mode of operation.

Based on the final figures, the Board and the President should consider adjustments to the FY2013 budget to reflect the changes in the distribution of expenses.