

## Minutes for 2012 Assembly

August 11th, 2012

Meeting called to order at 2:06 PM.

### 1. Roll Call

- Allan Abramson (AA)
- Samuel Zimmerman (SZ)
- Daniel Smith (DS)
- Todd Blatt
- Steve Colburn (SC)
- Paul Celmer
- Gurujeet Khalsa (GK)
- Gordon Castanza (GC)
- Greg Smith
- Jeffery Horn (JH)
- Lisa Scott (LS)
- Mark Rubenstein (MR)
- Ted Terpstra (TT)
- Andrew Jackson (AJ)
- Terry Benson (TB)
- Andrew Okun (AO)
- Feng Yun (FY)
- Paul Matthews (PM)
- Keith Arnold (KA)
- Peter Armenia (PA)
- Patrick Allen (PA2)
- Chris Kirshner (CK)
- Joel Olson (JO)
- Arlene ?
- James Sedgwick (JS)
- Cristia Hu (CH) (spelling?)
- Peter Gousios
- Dennis Wheeler (DW)

### 3. President's Report

- Good year for AGA
- New board
- Expect to reach "critical mass point" in terms of ideas, tournaments, people
- Recognition of Chris K, Sam Z, Thomas Hsiang

### 6. International Affairs Report

- AA:
  - Thomas Hsiang continues his efforts
  - WMSG continues; 21 members pay their own way.

- Sport acord mind games; we are now members.
- Things are looking better

#### 4. Treasurer's Report

- AA:
  - Roy and Allan are not in agreement on the interpretation of the figures
  - (Adjourn at 2:20 to move rooms)
  - (Resume at 2:28)
  - Roy's numbers: Net loss of \$28,000
  - Allan's numbers: Net loss of \$7,000
  - Budget is 25% lower than 5 years ago
  - Operators and volunteers have consistently been coming in under their budgeted amount.
  - Roy and Allan will probably come to some agreement in the middle
- JH: What have the reserves declined to?
- AA: I didn't bring the spreadsheet with me. The total is on the order of 250k. Details of Roy's report should be on the website.
- AA: we have to stop thinking of ourselves as surviving on shoestrings. We need to grow the organization. We need 10,000 members.
- TB: any policy issue in difference of opinion?
- AA: No, it's an accounting issue. Figures are there, but which box they go in is the difference.
- TB: Perhaps difference of basis.
- AA: Yes.
- PM: question about growth. Most of what we do carries its own budget. Perhaps idea shortfall, not fund shortfall.
- AA: The dollars are going to the core. This is our base overhead. New ideas that cost money need to get it from somewhere. Occasionally we dip into reserves, but we do not like to do that for long. Techniques for getting new sources of funds are appreciated.
- PM: Ej could charge subscriptions? With things that are exciting money comes forward.
- AA: that's fair. We got \$15k for first WMSG; only 5k for most recent.
- KA: This community will support an idea if it's well publicized and good. E.g., Kickstarter, documentary.

#### 5. EJ Report

- AA: Has been a debate years ago for charging subscriptions. Difficult to predict effect.
- TT: Number of subscribers?
- AA: Around 11,000. Small number paying for premium content.
- PA: why restricted?
- AA: we wish to encourage membership.
- (discussion of subscriber model and number breakdown)
- Winston: Charge for ads?
- AA: We don't have paid ads.
- PA: Require membership for EJ access?
- AA: We've debated this in the past. No easy answer. It's an open question.

- LS: Membership meeting produced ideas that had to do with personally contacting people, adding value not having to do with EJ.
- AA: Last complete survey is old, but: people hit a wall at 15k and drop out if not helped over it. Second, life takes over and people just don't think about it.
- SZ: Hard to pin down.
- LS: Where tournaments don't happen, people want some other sort of major content.
- AA: we get \$800-900 a year on 1 day members.
- PM: there are other ways to do this. In china, there are no members. People pay fees to play in a certificate tournament. Could switch to model where you pay for what you receive; ratings fee, EJ fee.
- JH: Pro workshops, where people pay part of the fee to AGA.
- MR: goal is to increase membership levels, not get more money from each member.
- LS: rating fee has merits, but places more emphasis on tournaments. But we need other aspects of membership.
- PA2: separating fees is a good idea.
- TB: Two main area are ratings and EJ. Perhaps new board could restrict ratings to members.
- CK: Rank certification is in works and may help somewhat.
- JO: Rating decay?
- PM: Ceiling, common issue with rating system.
- AA: Had extensive discussion with Ti ?? about rating system. Ratings might mean less over time.
- SC: Technically, it's somewhat difficult to implement Benson's idea.
- CK: current iteration of algorithm does take time into account. It increases sigma with time.

#### Youth activities:

- AA: Everything is going well.

#### Marketing report:

- AA: Optimistic that they will score some funds in the next 12 months.

#### 7. 2013 Congress Presentation

- (pause to find projector)
- AA: Will accept motion while waiting, even though out of order
- **Rubenstein moves to approve congress site. Horn seconds.**
  - CK: same site as 2005. Had a good time last time.
  - AJ: What volunteers are helping?
  - CK: Gordon is codirector, is best advance organizer Kirschner has ever seen. Team looks a lot like 1986. This is an impressive team.
  - GC: we have sold out of early bird tshirts.
  - GC: Venue has better food than 2005. Free wifi. New dorm facility may be ready for us. Wide variety of rooms. Some are handicap accesible.
  - LS: are you tapping into any younger people in the seattle area?
  - CK: there are a lot of those too.
  - LS: I like to use congress to get new people involved.
  - CK: That's not likely to happen right now, but may later.

- AA: key financial question: what is the budgeting break-even point?
- CK: 320 or 360, depending on how he does the math. Won't be cheap. Will try to keep registration at \$300.
- LS: demographic assumptions?
- CK: have none at this point.
- Kirshner: burden of comps born by relatively small number of attendees.
- Arlene ?: in 2006, sold out of high class rooms. This year, opposite. We didn't make minimum number of sold rooms, site has graciously excused this.
- AO: Does tacoma have a youth hostel?
- Kirshner: Looking into it.
- GC: dates are tentative.
- (presentation commences- 3:15) (many pictures)
- GC: dry campus, but can go across street. many facts about facility and tacoma.
- MR: Does it have a la carte meals?
- GC: I don't think so.
- AA calls the question.
- CK voted no.
- Motion carries.

#### 2014 congress in Vancouver

- JS (president of CGA):
  - CGA is planning to forgo canadian open in favor of this, if it happens.
  - Cathy Li, Christia Hu, co-directors.
  - Preliminary ideas, appropriate venue. UBC right in heart of vancouver, wilderness setting.
- PA2: what were the ideas?
- JS: have confirmed venue is available, etc. How to get canadians to attend. Get 100 for canadian open.
- AA: People in US on student visa; is it easy for them to get back and forth?
- JS: We're looking at this. They will need some sort of visa.
- SZ: Need passports?
- (all): yes.
- KA: how far from airport?
- CH: about 25 minute drive.
- PA: call it north american go congress?
- JS: not sure yet?
- SZ: US open?
- JS: Perhaps "north american open"
- (discussion of structure of tournament)
- MR: ratings? How to handle?
- JS: all the games will go into the US ratings, hopefully into the canadian one, as well.
- AA: would be nice to integrate databases.
- JS: I keep thinking it will happen, but it gets pushed off.
- GS: Two high priced congresses in a row?

- AA: yes, a concern.
- CK: reasons for price increases:
  - no more ing money
  - no more free children; we're overcharging adults
  - pro comps
  - increase in non-player registration
- LS: Meal plan required at UBC?
- JS: don't know at the moment.
- AH: Not required.
- AA: Let's move on.
- KA: resolution of the whole: we wish to continue this process of discussion with the CGA.

## 8. New Business

### a. Discussion - Membership Growth (Allan)

- AA: we talked about this earlier.

### b. Discussion - 2011 Congress Financials (Allan)

- AA: a number of people have expressed interest in this. We are willing to share details, but they haven't been thoroughly audited and confirmed yet. We believe the congress lost 22k. Main contributors are extra comps, lower income, transportation charges, etc. AGA paid the bills and settled them. There can and will be questions asked about the details. Net impact was less than 22k. First time in 28 years for a deficit. Board decided AGA will begin to directly manage the books, which has not been the case up to now. From a fiscal perspective, this is the right thing to do. We're moving on, don't want to nitpick about individual decisions.
- JH: Low income due to higher number of children and nonplayers?
- AA: yes. And no shows.
- LS: Some paid deposit but didn't show. Tried to contact them, but significant portion of people that didn't respond. We required a deposit, but didn't get what we were planning on getting from registration fee from the no-shows.
- FY: Total number of ? was 451?
- LS: Yeah.
- (discussion of how many attendees this congress has)
- FY: exact numbers?
- LS: those are available on website?
- FY: I asked for numbers. I didn't get them.
- AA: I will get those to you, hopefully in the next week or too.
- PA2: What valuable info is in exact numbers?
- FY: Last year first year we lost money. 450 large number, and previous congresses made money.
- PA: breakeven point has been lowered, so we have taken care of this.
- AA: We agreed to lower margin of error to keep registration fees low. We took a greater risk in the beginning. We thought it was a rational risk. Next year we'll be more conservative.

- AJ: expenses were also higher than expected last year. Comps were an issue. Look forward to hear how the process for comps is arrived at.
- CK: comps a continuing source of conflict.
- AA: let's not get into the details here.
- KA: It was a great congress, well run in terms of we had a great time and we got new people involved. The primary place where this failed, it was too hard to have non-locals run the congress with shortage of local volunteers. Going forward, must remember, we need bodies on the ground. Must recognize that we can't just parachute in without local help. We took a gamble, some of it succeeded, some did not.
- JO: did Santa barbara cut us any slack on these extra charges?
- LS: No.
- CK: 2004 also had bill bigger than expected. it was 35k high. This bill seems to be correct.
- SC: Wasn't there a loss at 2010 congress?
- AA: Not loss, different issue. We think the numbers are correct, we just didn't have full access.
- AJ: Also, attendance in 2011 was great.
- FY: I have spreadsheet from treasurer.
- LS: I have not been shown these numbers. Gordon ceased to be our treasurer.
- AA: Chris took over the numbers.
- FY: Question about money budgeted for pro dinner.
- LS: I paid no money for pro dinner.
- FY: I saw 3k for pro dinner.
- AA: put questions in writing, we'll follow up on them.
- PM: nonprofits such as this are required to provide open access to financial data.
- AA: I've agreed that we will post this.
- PM: Should set a time frame.
- CK: Allan has instructed me to make this available to those who ask. Gordon's spreadsheet has most of it.
- AA: we will post it.
- DS: I am astonished that the congress director has not received this information from the treasurer.

c. Discussion - Chapter Services (Feng Yun)

- FY: chapter list doesn't work, minutes slow,
- DS: Minutes are up now, we have plans to fix this slowness in the future.
- AO: I don't think it will happen again.
- SC: Email list went away 1.5 years ago, due to email system change. We found a way to get it back through google groups a few months ago.
- FY: how to get list of people to advertise for tournament?
- SZ: Security problem. We haven't resolved who we may give email addresses to. I've been proposing that you give a message and we do the sending. I've done this for people pretty often. We can't just give out emails.
- GK: it's informal at the moment. We should make a formal policy. Need opt-in system.
- GS: have people been complaining about that?

- AA: new system handles this too.
  - KA: Sam shouldn't have to do this for it, it should be somewhat automated.
  - SZ: We're working on it.
  - AA: Programming challenge. Chapter leaders should have special section of website where they can send emails to states/chapters without seeing the email addresses.
  - SC: Database has no-ejournal tag. Could handle this that way.
  - JO: chapters should have way to survive AWOL chapter reps.
  - SZ: chapter rep has access to be able to contact their members.
  - AJ: There is relevant legislation that we don't want to run afoul of. I'd urge the board to consider a policy for this in light of privacy concerns.
  - MR: technology is making this much easier. Structure is in place
  - PM: NJ open has struggling for years with mailing lists. Board should give this high priority.
  - AA: Agree.
  - JO: Bandid: Ej calendar could be expanded to a couple weeks?
  - AA: let's move on.
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- FY: chapters are not very active. happy to hear mailing list will work again. How will chapters take more active role in decision making when board is split on policy issue?
  - AA: structure of aga is chapters elect board, and the board acts for the corporation. The board does solicit information for difficult issues.
  - FY: perhaps instead of annual general assembly we could have one every 6 months.
  - (several): practical concerns.
  - KA: share the frustration, perhaps not this suggestion. It is annoying that not more of us care. There are ways that the AGA could get more input. Active discussion forum. Could solicit ideas on chapters list. Less of that goes on than should. People don't care until there's an issue.
  - PA2: Discussion forum. AGA could have its own? One for only chapter heads? Moderated?
  - AO: Chapter assembly structure filters people who don't go to congress. Mailing list and forum are good for discussion. But some things we can only do at assemblies. Time lag.
  - AA: Assembly votes on specific things in the bylaws, board and president do other things.
  - SZ: (back to topic) you can't get people to participate unless they want to. Chapter reps already can contact to their board rep. We have to be realistic.
  - CK: Calls of chapter heads just among region could work.
  - KA: Sceptical of that, but AGA has got to do better job of letting people know what issues are.
  - LS: Chapters care when you personally contact them.
  - PG: personal calls have really pleasantly surprised me.
  - GC: How did Tygem give out promotional memberships?
  - AA: I authorized it for this one time event.
  - KA: probably shouldn't do that.

- FY: minutes too slow, hard to stay informed. Board meeting should be open for members to listen. Agenda should be published in advance.
- AA: OK

d. Discussion - Barriers to Tournament Participation (Feng Yun)

- FY: Six month residence rule prevented Michael Redmond from playing at the WMSG in 2008.
- AA: Yes, this was discussed with Redmond and he was ok with it. The board decided that our reps should be in the country and active in our community.
- FY: Go world is changing. International tournaments are open. They should be able to represent us to play.
- CK: I don't think the board considered open tournaments.
- AA: this policy only applies to invitational tournaments.
- FY: doesn't matter. We can only register through the organization (i.e., AGA). AGA doesn't get invitation for major tournaments.
- AA: Thomas has been working to get this, one tournament at a time.
- AO: The pro's current or past organization should register them?
- FY: Current. China Weichi cannot register me. AGA doesn't get invitation, so we can't go.
- AA: we are working on getting more invitations. it's not totally in our control.
- FY: I would put forward to the board to make sure that Thomas is on top of the issue.
- AA: Other points?
- FY: Membership lapse. We're very small organization. Participation is more important than membership. AGA needs money, but should separate EJ and other things so AGA can run on less than 10k per year as virtual organization. Without the base it's hard for pros to make a living. More participation is main goal.
- AA: Policy is that for those who wish to represent AGA, some sort of participation is mandatory. Has been discussed extensively and a large majority support it.
- PM: There is an exception for youth.
- AA: That's correct.
- FY,PM: (examples of disqualified people on account of lapsed memberships.)
- AO: Board took a vote on this and I lost. People have adapted. There is a thirty day grace period. I haven't seen a reason to bring this up and fight about it.
- AA: people understand it, we've not had many exclusions.
- SC: System sends reminders.
- CK: Youth can now get membership for 8\$ a year.
- AA: Anyone who is serious can take these steps to watch over their membership.
- SZ: Adults should be able to figure out how to keep current.
- JS: CGA is trying to go membership-fee free. For us, we think we can make it work in donations.
- DW: It seems reasonable to expect people to keep up with membership, why not let them pay prorated fees?
- AA: that was discussed, there was a strong feeling it was not right.
- FY: I don't think so.
- KA: To me, actively participating is not 30\$. 10 games is better. :)



- FY: free membership?
- GS: if current benefits stay same, free membership might make sense. but i'd like to see benefits increase, and that requires funds.
- LS: Committee on this formed last general assembly. There were a lot of questions remaining to be answered. No consensus, conversation died out.
- DS: \$10 member for a day option is sort of a ratings fee.

e. Open discussion

- KA: Go camp directors didn't take a fee. Chapters on east coast, contact me, let's get behind them and help them do this again this year.
- SZ: How much money is needed?
- KA: Don't know.
- AA: They are prime example of self sacrifice. We should do what Keith said, and take lead with PR.
- AA: last year we announced some appreciation awards. (presents plaque to Sam Zimmerman) In appreciation of 20 years of service to the AGA. (standing ovation)
- SZ: I got an award once and was so surprised I couldn't talk. These awards are given to people about to die. :) But thank you very much.

Keith Arnold move to adjourn, Terry Benson seconded.

Adjourned at 5:26PM.