

# THE CHESS JOURNALIST

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The CJA offers three types of memberships:

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Cover: CJA logo

Cover design by Mark N. Taylor

## *Chess Journalists of America*

### PATRONS

The following members have put CJA on a firmer financial footing by donating at least \$25 during Fiscal Years 2005-2010:

Herb Hickman	Don Schultz
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Donations may be directed to CJA, c/o Treasurer Randy Hough (see address at left).

# NOTES & NOTICES

## CJA INTERIM OFFICERS

We continue to look for a new treasurer, a new webmaster, and a new editor to replace our long-serving officers. Both Randy Hough and Franklin Campbell have continued with the day-to-day business of keeping the organization and the site going. But you already know that not much is happening under the present circumstances. While one's natural reaction is to wait and see what happens, you might just step up and be the happening thing.

## CJA ARCHIVIST STILL WANTED

Franklin Campbell composed a document with information on the site needed by a new webmaster and has provided copies of this document to the officers. He notes that there was a terrible loss of historic games a few years ago when the ICCF archivist died; thousands of world class and world championship games were lost.

Franklin suggests that a new position be created: archivist for CJA. The CJA has a tremendous history, but very little of this is documented in a clear way. It would be great to show the past officers and other important information on the web site. Others can think of a lot of information that should be available on the web site.

Frank Niro and Jeff Roland nominated Stephen Dann to be named archivist, seconded by Franklin Campbell. Do date no further action on this has been taken by CJA officers. Franklin, however, has reorganized the archival material dating back to Jan. 2000 that is available on the CJA website.

## CJA AWARDS CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE ON-LINE

Anyone who needs a copy of their CJA Award certificate between 2011 and 2014 can download it from the website. Thanks to Joshua M. Anderson and Franklin Campbell for making this possible.

## NEW CHESS JOURNAL DEBUTS

2014 marks the debut of the *Journal of Chess Research*, a quarterly publication out of Lexington, KY. With a 26-member editorial board and CJA president Frank Niro leading as managing editor and Natasha Niro assisting as Associate Editor, the *Journal of Chess Research* is published on behalf of the International Society for Chess Research, with support from the Susan Polgar Foundation. You can visit their website at <http://www.chessresearch.org/>.



## FROM THE EDITOR

First, I continue to edit this journal in an interim capacity. That means I copy edit and lay out material sent to me. The fact that I am producing one issue for 2014 (which is appearing well into 2015) indicates how little I am receiving. Jamaal Abdulalim's interesting piece appears because I reached out to last year's CJA Journalist of the year who graciously offered material.

Second, I have made some but not a lot of effort to try to find a new editor. If you reading this would consider the position or know someone who might, please contact Franklin Campbell or myself. (See the email addresses listed with the personnel on the previous page.)

Third, I wish to offer my personal congratulations to *Northwest Chess* in garnering the Best State Magazine/Newsletter award for 2014. Long the best regional chess magazine, *Northwest Chess* deserves this award. For quantity and quality it is unmatched. This year there are improvements to covers, photographs, and layout.

I am pleased to note that the *Colorado Chess Informant* is an up-and-coming awards competitor well worth keeping an eye on. Finally, kudos to *Louisiana Chess* editor Adam S. Caveney for continuing to participate in the awards. The idea behind these awards is that even those who do not win end up improving the quality of their work for the benefit of members. ♔

# 2014 CJA AWARD WINNERS

Joshua Anderson

ONCE again had the honor of presiding over the Chess Journalist of America's award competition. The task brings with it the pleasure of working with journalists and chess players throughout the country. It also means getting to work with a large group of judges qualified in a great variety of fields.

The judges this year were: Dan Heisman, J. Franklin Campbell (who also is a tremendous help with all the computer/website work), Peter Minear, Rodion Rubenchik, Dov Gorman, Peter Tamburro, Mark N. Taylor, Dan Lucas, Al Lawrence, Myron and Rachel Lieberman, Howard Goldowsky, Eric Johnson, Jeff Roland, Eric Holcomb, Harvey Lerman, David Sands, Matthew Bengtson, Randy Hough, Adam Caveny, John J. Dill, Keith Ammann, GM Andy Soltis, IM Anthony Saidy, IM John Donaldson, Rob Fusco, John Hartmann, Paul Fielding, and Neil Brennan. Among this diverse group, one can find experts in many fields.

## THE TOP FIVE

### Chess Journalist of the Year

Brian Jerould, nominated by Saint Louis Chess Club.  
Brian also won for the category of Best Interview

### Best Story of the Year

"Sinquefield Cup" by FM Mike Klein, submitted by USCF  
2012 Chess Journalist of the Year, FM Mike Klein, won Best Story of the Year for his *Chess Life* article on the Sinquefield Cup. This year's Chess Journalist of the Year, Brian Jerould, had the 2<sup>nd</sup>-place story, *Don't Doubt Danya*, which also appeared in *Chess Life*.

### Best Chess Column

*Chess to Enjoy* by GM Andy Soltis, submitted by USCF  
GM Andy Soltis won two categories, both in a clean sweep. In this case, the distant second was the column *On Chess*, written by Brian Jerould.

### Best State Magazine/Newsletter

*Northwest Chess*, submitted by Eric Holcomb  
*Northwest Chess*, a printed magazine, won this category. *Colorado Chess Informant*, a non-print magazine, and *Louisiana Chess* scored fairly high as well.



### Best Book (imprint only)

*Mikhail Botvinnik: The Life and Games of a World Chess Champion* by GM Andy Soltis  
GM Soltis's clean sweep for his new biography of Botvinnik won him a 2<sup>nd</sup> CJA award this year. This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in three years that a historical work by Soltis easily won for Best Book.

## VISUAL ARTS

### Best Chess Magazine/Newsletter Layout

*Chess Life*, August 2013, edited by Daniel Lucas, Senior Art Director Frankie Butler, submitted by USCF

This category was extremely close with all 3 entries scoring well. *Alive* magazine scored second place, the first magazine not purely devoted to chess to score so well. *Alive* magazine's website can be found at [www.aliveeastbay.com](http://www.aliveeastbay.com).

### Best Chess Photojournalism

"Oh no, a blunder!" by Jorge Barrera, *Chess Life* July 2013, p. 29, submitted by USCF

The Honorable Mention went to "A wonder Liang" by Mary Sweeney, submitted by USCF. This was a competition between two photos of young children. One is quickly becoming a world-renown superstar, the other is unnamed. Here, the unnamed child gets a moment to shine.

### Best Chess Art

*Endgame* by Zena Fairwether, submitted by USCF

This was one of two entries to have a perfect score, as it easily won this category of two entries.

## NEWSPAPER MEDIA

### Best Regular Newspaper Column

Peter Henner in *Altamont Enterprises*  
Peter Henner's column is for a small paper in up state New York. Both Bill Cornwall's and David Sands' columns also scored well.

### Best Regular Newspaper Article of Local Interest

"Power Moves in Politics and on the Chessboard," by David Sands. This well-researched article scored well with every judge and easily won the category.

*The following categories are open to journalists and publications both in print and online.*

## NEWS/FEATURES

### Best Tournament Report Article

"This is Why We Play Chess: The 2013 Louisiana State Championship," by Adam Caveny, *Louisiana Chess*

I am sure Mr. Caveny found this victory to be the surprise of the competition. His article resonated with the judges for a variety of reasons, especially because it took quite an original approach to covering a midsize state championship tournament.

### Best Features Article

"A Level Playing Board (Disabilities)," by Christen McCurdy, submitted by USCF

Mr. McCurdy's work on chess players with disabilities easily won the best feature article. Coincidentally, there was another article submitted in this category about playing with disabilities, "There are None So Blind," that received a respectable single 4<sup>th</sup> place finish. I am sure the young lady writing that entry will garner more votes in the future—after all, she is only nine!

### Best Instructive Lesson

This lesson, which focuses on the use of a rook and bishop to beat a rook and knight, just edged out two of Dan Heisman's works for Chess Café. One of those, "Filters and Masks," won an Honorable Mention.

### Best Review

"Dinos to the Slav: Silman on Apple Apps," by IM Jeremy Silman, from USChess Online

This category had four different entries and three of them received first place votes. Still, Silman's work received high marks from most judges, thus his work won the category.

### Best Humorous Contribution

"Posing," by Betsy Carina Dynako (with contributions from Chris Roberts), *Chess Life* Feb 2014

This category had the largest range of media: text, photo, and video. In this

case, the photo just edged out the video. (Honorable Mention: Philly Predicts the World Chess Championships from the US Chess Scoop, USChess Online)

### Best Historical Article

"A Rocky-like Chess Bout from the Romantic Era," by David Sands, *The Washington Times* March 11, 2014

### Best Interview

"Don't Doubt Danya," by Brian Jerauld, submitted by the Saint Louis Chess Club

### Best Analysis

Annotation of Sevillano-Hilby Game, by Craig Hilby, submitted by Randall Hough, *Rank and File*

*The following categories are open only to online journalists and their websites*

## ELECTRONIC MEDIA

### Best USCF State Chapter Website

ChessMaine, [www.chessmaine.net](http://www.chessmaine.net), submitted by Daniel DeLuca

### Best General Chess Website

World Chess Hall of Fame, Saint Louis Chess Club (Honorable Mention: USCF, [www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org))

### Best Chess Blog

The Kenilworthian, by Michael Goeller (Honorable Mention: Chess Book Reviews by John Hartmann, last year's minner)

This task—though a great privilege and pleasure, and one I look forward to continuing next year—is rather time consuming. I am fortunate to have family and friends who help me meet the continued real world challenges. This year, Sally Schuster, Debra Downing, and Simon Varner deserve special mention for their help. More important than all of this help is the patience and understanding of my wife, Brandy, and to her I give the biggest thank you of all. ♔

# PERPETUAL CHECK

## THE NEED FOR JOURNALISTS WHO WRITE ABOUT CHESS TO PRACTICE THE DISCIPLINE OF VERIFICATION

Jamaal Abdul-Alim



ONCE HAD AN ASSIGNMENT from a well-known chess publication to check out a story about a particular chess player who claimed to have won a certain tournament five times.

I wanted the story to be true, especially since the player had a certain style and flair, and an interesting backstory that would have made the article all the more compelling.

His business cards, for instance, bore drawings of knights—a fitting representation for a person who ran a business that provides personal security.

After meeting at a local restaurant, I sat down with the player, listened to his story and took notes on my laptop.

Since the restaurant had free wifi, I suggested that we use my laptop right then and there to access the USCF online database of players and ratings in order to verify his claim that he had won this particular tournament five times.

This player didn't even know this database existed. A lot of journalists who write about chess don't know about its existence, either. But they should.

A certain sense of uneasiness began to set in as I clicked on the various links to access the "Player/Rating Lookup" on the USCF homepage and typed in the player's name. The player proceeded to look at the screen with me nevertheless.

When we finished looking up the player's record and tallying up all the times he won his particular section in the tournament in question, his claim of being a five-time winner didn't quite hold up.

He had won his particular section in this tournament three times over the years. But he didn't win *the* tournament. And even though he won his particular section in this tournament, he didn't do so on five different occasions.

A perplexed look came across his face. He insisted that USCF must have not entered the information correctly because he was certain that he had won first place five times.

Still wanting to tell his story, I was prepared to overlook what could have merely been a faulty recollection regarding the actual number of times he had won first place. I thought I would write the story anyway because I felt he was an interesting character.

He had made an appearance, for instance, in a made-for-cable documentary about his line of work. And his line of work was very dangerous—too dangerous, in fact, to warrant such a low level of pay.

In many ways, he was a living knight—a valuable piece that guards and attacks, but ultimately one that is expendable.

However, in addition to being a living knight, he also seemed to be living a lie.

Interestingly, it wasn't his claims about his chess forays that made his story fall apart. It was a different claim he made about a different feat he claimed to have achieved in his childhood.

Specifically, he claimed to have mastered the Rubik's Cube when he was about 12 years old.

The only problem with that story is he was born in the mid-1950s, and Erno Rubik — the Hungarian architecture professor who invented the world famous brain-teasing toy — did not introduce the first working prototype of the Rubik's Cube until 1974. Further, the

Rubik's Cube did not become known as such or made widely available until 1980.

By then, the player in question was well into his 20s.

Once again, his story simply didn't add up. Only this time, I could no longer ascribe the incongruence between his autobiography and reality to this player's faulty memory.

It's one thing to forget how many times you've won first place in a chess tournament if you've won first place several times. But for a person to claim to have mastered popular logic game at age 12 when the game wasn't even in existence until the person was well into adulthood is an entirely different thing.

So—pursuant to the old Roman legal principle, *falsus en uno, falsus en omnibus*, which basically means if you lie about one thing, you'll lie about everything—this particular story never saw the light of day.

The reason I recount this story here is because chess journalists—and even journalists who occasionally write about chess—need to know that it is incumbent to verify whatever a chess player only claims is on his or her chess resume, particularly when it comes to claims about tournaments and titles.

Case-in-point: A decade or so ago, *The New York Times'* chess columnist, Dylan Loeb McClain, wrote about a well-known chess trainer and coach who claimed to have been an international master, a title that is bestowed upon players who have repeatedly achieved a rating above 2450.

“The question of whether he is an international master is not academic; coaches and trainers are often hired based on their own chess skills as well as on how well their students do,” McCain wrote.

When McCain looked into the coach's claim of being an international master, the coach backed off the claim, and the organization for which he worked removed the title from its literature.

The latest occasion I had to check out a dubious claim is when a certain politician in my home state of Wisconsin was referred in a news story as a “former state champion” who had won an “individual state championship” as a high school senior back in 1997.

Since the politician was trying to get chess started at a county parks system, part of me didn't want to knock down his “championship” claim.

However, this claim is something that—if true—would have put this particular politician in the ranks of physics professor Arpad Elo, father of the Elo rating system who, like Professor Rubik, also hails from Hungary.

Not seeing any record of this politician's first place wins in the USCF's online database, I contacted the Wisconsin Chess Association.

The association's Mike Nietman was gracious enough to go through his archives to find that the politician in question had played on Board 3 (out of five boards) as a member of his high school team in the Wisconsin State Scholastic, and finished 5-0-1 to tie for first-second on his board.

“Since we don't use tiebreaks to break ties on a board since the event is a team Swiss, he is the 1997 Board 3 State Co-Champion,” Nietman explained in an e-mail. “His team that year finished 4th.”

In this case, the claim of being a former “state champion” isn't so bad.

In fact, journalistically in the name of poetic license, I can see how a writer would want to refer to such a person as a “former state champion” instead of using all the gobbledygook associated with explaining the fact that he was “co-champion” on Board 3 in an unrated scholastic event.

The phrase “former state champion” just rolls off the tongue so much easier. And it is so much more impressive and useful when it's being used by a politician who is trying to be, well, a champion for chess.

The important thing for journalists to keep in mind, though, is that if you're going to stretch the truth, you should at least know what truth you are stretching. Otherwise, when a reader puts a player's claim into the line of fire and essentially calls “check,” you may not have an adequate response.

And what you really want to avoid is a situation in which—in addition to not having an adequate response yourself—a claim in your article is put to the test, and the person who made the claim in the first place doesn't have an adequate response, either. Of course, in many ways, this is Journalism 101. It's the reason we have a saying in journalism: “If your mother says she loves you, check it out.” This saying is no less true. ♔

Jamaal Abdul-Alim is the  
2013 CJA Chess Journalist of the Year.







## BOOTS ON THE GROUND

**N** O SOONER HAD I MADE MY AFFINITY FOR BOXING AS A METAPHOR FOR CHESS KNOWN IN THIS COLUMN TWO ISSUES AGO, I WAS MADE AWARE OF ANOTHER FREQUENT METAPHOR FOR CHESS: THE MILITARY.

It's only natural that a game with origins as a military training tool would have many military expressions associated with it. The brutish attempt to mate opponent on the f2 or f7 square is frequently called the 'Blitzkrieg' attack in addition to the more popular term 'Scholar's Mate' and it may well be an optimal strategy in a game of 'Blitz' or 'Bullet' chess. Seemingly equal middle and endgames are often decided by which side can successfully execute a 'flanking' maneuver on their opponent.

Chess literature and chess journalism is rife with military references from the '64-square battleground' to calling pawns 'foot-soldiers' and rooks and queens 'heavy artillery' to Victor Moskalenko's description of a knight sacrifice on d4 in a completely locked pawn structure as the 'Trojan Horse' sacrifice in his book *Revolutionize Your Chess*. And any discussion of military metaphors for chess must contain a salute to the commander-in-chief of military metaphors in chess: Franklin K. Young, the prolific writer of the late 1800s and early 1900s who tried to boil chess down to a series of military principles. ("As the salients repel adverse attacks along diagonals, so the supporting parallels oppose radii of offence directed along verticals." – from *The Minor Tactics of Chess: A Treatise on the Deployment*

*of the Forces in Obedience to Strategic Principle*, Boston: 1894.)

My favorite military expression as it relates to chess blogging is 'boots on the ground.' The military meaning is fairly clear: ground forces engaged in conflict as opposed to troops in reserve, personnel on clerical or KP duty, or programmed drones seeking out their targets in automaton fashion. How does this relate to blogging? When your 'boots are on the ground' as an active participant in the chess world, you will receive a wealth of material and subjects to write about in return for your participation. In this column I want to provide examples of how my blogging has benefited from having 'boots on the ground,' in the hope that they will provide inspiration and encouragement to the aspiring chess blogger that may be struggling to find subject matter.

One of the easiest ways to get 'boots on the ground' is to compete in a tournament. Any tournament game I notate gets into my blog no matter what the result. (See my column in *The Chess Journalist* n°142 for information on how to publish chess games in your blog.) Some bloggers only show their victories and others just share their defeats, but including everything will help connect with readers who will relate to your ups and downs and bumps in the road more than a linear chronicle of triumphs or tragedies. You can retain interest among your non-chess playing readers by personalizing your opponents (a picture, occupation, mannerisms, etc.) and sharing some details of your trip when traveling to play. Few remember my posts last year about my pedestrian result at the Jackson Super Reserve or my Blue Ribbon performance at the 2013 Iowa State Fair Speed Chess Tournament, but many

readers took the time to send feedback when I wrote of my discovery that the advertised 'Regional Breakfast Item' at the Jackson Minnesota Super 8 Motel consisted of a tray of hard-boiled eggs! While tournaments, playing sites, and games can tend to be indistinguishable over time, the amusing clerk at the convenience store, repairing a flat tire on the way to a tournament, or even a tray of hard-boiled eggs have the power to make your chess tournament adventure a unique and memorable article or post.

I also get 'boots on the ground' by organizing and directing chess events. In September of 2013, I was approached by Life Master Tim McEntee about helping put on a one-day three-round tournament open to anyone that had ever attained a USCF rating of 2000. Tim had obtained a sponsor to put up over \$1000 in prize money so there would be no entry fee. I agreed to direct and my hometown Marshalltown Iowa Salvation Army volunteered to host the tournament at no charge. We named the tournament the \$1150 Expert Open and set the date for February 8<sup>th</sup>. A month later I received permission from Tim to hold a reserve tournament for the non-experts with the idea of enticing the experts and masters to bring their friends along to play in the reserve tournament and share the drive. I decided to name the reserve tournament after my blog and called it the Broken Pawn Reserve.

Everything was proceeding normally when I got an email from my friend Ben Tessman, who is also an admin for the 'Team Iowa' group on chess.com. Ben told me the group was looking to have a meet-up and if I knew anywhere they could have one. I suggested that the group have a meet-up tournament as a separate section to go along with the other two tournaments. The offer was accepted and now I had three tournaments scheduled. The day was already promising to be special and ten days before the tournament Tim and I received an email from Will Liang to let us know his son, Awonder, the current world ten-year-old champion, would be playing in the tournament. (You can see him on the cover of the March 2014 *Chess Life*.) As a bonus, Will was able to bring his other three children to play since we were having the reserve tournament.

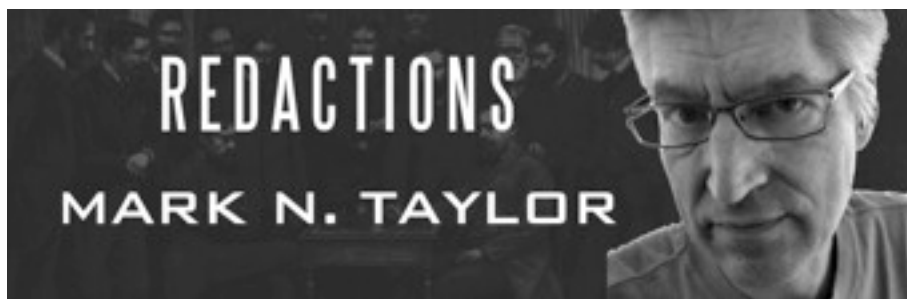
A tournament for experts and above and a reserve



Awonder Liang

tournament would be worth a blog post, but hosting the chess.com group and a world chess champion family turned the day into a chess festival and provided a large amount of chess writing material. The week before the tournament I wrote a post detailing the twists and turns that changed a staid tournament into a much anticipated event. The week after the tournament I focused on five participants that had been playing in tournaments I directed for almost ten years, showing pictures of them from then-to-now (one of the benefits of having 'boots on the ground' for over a decade!). The following week was devoted to a review of the tournament and what it was like for the participants, onlookers, and the tournament director to spend a day with a world champion and his family.

In addition to the blog posts, I submitted a tournament write-up to *Chess Life Online* that was published on the USCF web site and photographer Cliff Yates created a unique photo montage (that can be seen at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkVHz9vbNbw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkVHz9vbNbw)). There was a lot of good fortune involved to find myself in the middle of a memorable tournament that provided so many writing subjects, but much of the good fortune was made by being willing to be an active participant in the planning and staging of the event. Blogging about other people's chess activities (software and book reviews or annotating games for example) is all well and good, but by putting your 'boots on the ground' you will have a wealth of first person material for your chess blogging and other journalistic efforts. ♔



## AVERBAKH'S MINOR CHESS HISTORY

**I**T WOULD BE EASY TO OVERLOOK THIS slim paperback, but it would be a shame to do so if you have any specialized interest in early chess history. At first glance it resembles the brief general illustrated dash offs that pass for casual history, where the 40 illustrations are as interesting as the text. A perusal of the text seems to confirm the first impression. Casual readers would do better with Richard Eales' *Chess: The History of a Game* (Batsford, 1985). Averbakh's effort is simply too cursory and inconsistent to reward a facile reading. A careful reading by the historian of medieval chess, however, reveals that there is some very original and very interesting information therein as well.

The effort is frustrating because Averbakh has original ideas, yet the presentation is not scholarly—the book is pitched for a popular audience, yet the writing can appear almost amateurish. The book could have dispensed with the cursory history (such as surveying schools of chess in the four-page epilogue). Instead it could have focused on the original ideas, expanded two- or three-fold to make the presentations more solid, and still not have to worry about appearing as intimidating as H. J. R. Murray's *A History of Chess* (Oxford, 1913). Where Murray gives a chapter, Averbakh supplies only a dozen paragraphs without sufficient support for his claims.

Another frustrating feature is the lack of citation and the poor quality endnotes, a serious distraction to anyone who wants to read carefully and not casually.

The presentation primarily suffers from an author

who believes he is certainly right to the extent that further argumentation is unnecessary. To be fair, he is not insufferable in the manner of A. L. Rouse pontificating about Shakespeare. But his are controversial ideas, so of course carefully developed argument is necessary.

Averbakh's original contributions are three:

1. On the origin of chess (pp. 11–36).
2. On the Charlemagne chess pieces, "*Cherchez la Femme*" (pp. 58–63).
3. Discovery of a 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hindi chess manuscript (pp. 71–78).

Averbakh sketches a speculative thesis on the origin of chess, but speculation is not argumentation, let alone proof. His attempt to retread where previous historians fell short is admirable and, in such empty terrain, speculation can get one across dry spaces. He asks, "So what were the rules of the games that the ancient Indians were so fond of?" And he admits, "Unfortunately, we don't know" (p. 14)! Therefore he begins with dice and board games in the early centuries CE, such as the 5x5 four-player race game *Thaayam*, as a precursor to *Chaturanga*. He offers an aggressive challenge to Murray who held that race games did not precede chess. The challenge is welcome, but one cannot argue conclusively over the course of a few pages against Murray's massive scholarship. In fine, Averbakh sees two-player chess arise out of four-player board games with dice. "In order for the Indian war game for four players to become chess, three major changes would have to occur. First, the game had to become a game for two

players, second there had to be a way to win, such as checkmating the king, and, third, the dice had to be discarded” (p. 25). How did this third item occur? Averbakh claims Greek influence, suggested by a statue of Buddha with a hellenic nose he saw in India, not to mention the earlier activity of Alexander the Great. To be sure, this is intriguing speculation, somewhat logical, somewhat serendipitous—maybe it could be true, but conclusive evidence is elusive.

In examining the Charlemagne chess pieces, Averbakh presents an even more intriguing thesis, probably ground breaking, but, again, the presentation is merely speculative. He sees in the four royal pieces the deposed Byzantine emperor Michael supported by the Normans, and his daughter-in-law Helen, against Emperor Alexius I Comnenus and his mother Anna Dalassena. This reflects the tumultuous political conditions of the Byzantine empire at the close of the eleventh century. This thesis is worth a decided scholarly investigation and thorough documentation. Interestingly, Averbakh has nothing to add to the transformation of the queen to her modern movement in the fifteenth century and



*A History of Chess: From Chaturanga to the Present Day*, by Yuri Averbakh. Foreword by Gary Kasparov. Trans. by Inga Gurevich. Milford, CT: Russell Enterprises, 2012. 88 pp. Paperback. \$14.95

does not cite Marilyn Yalom’s *Birth of the Chess Queen*.

Averbakh’s discovery of the eight-page 16<sup>th</sup>-century Hyderabad manuscript is his least controversial original contribution. The work is curious if not of great significance. Of interest is an attempt to assign relative value to the pieces of the Persian shatranj game: K ∞, N 4, Q 1 or 2, B 2, p 1 (flank ½), R 6½ (presumably). This may be usefully compared with Murray’s table of As-Suli’s valuation: p 1 or 2, N 5½, B 2, R 8, Q 3 (p. 228). (When my son, Paul Taylor, and I were analyzing the pieces of the old medieval game some years ago, we came up with a valuation similar to the Hyderabad MS: p 1, N 4, B ½, Q 2, R 6.) Also interesting is the work’s council toward aggressive queen play, whereas most medieval European chess treatises relegated the queen to a defensive role.

These three sections are worth the historian’s investigation. Others may be content to admire the color illustrations. Both will find it unsatisfactory for different reasons. Yuri Averbakh is a serious chess writer. This slight book barely gestures toward what he is capable of; overall it fails to deliver much of a cohesive or useful history of chess. ♠



Left:  
Best Chess Art  
winner,  
*Endgame* by Zena  
Fairwether

Right: Best Chess  
Photojournalism  
winner,  
“Oh no, a blunder!”  
by Jorge  
Barrera



# ON THE CHESS PATZER

## Aphorisms by Savo Martinović

translated by Momir Radovic

*An aphorism is an original thought in a concise and memorable form. It is hard to translate an aphorism as its punch may be easily lost. I gave it my best shot here to bring you these aphorisms from Serbo-Croatian, as punchy and funny as I could. –MR*

*Pacer prvi vidi šah, a posljednji sazna da je dao mat.*

The patzer is the first to see the check, but is also the last one to learn he has actually checkmated his opponent.

*Paceru teško pada mat koji je dao protivniku, jer ne može više da ga šahira.*

It's hard for a patzer to take calmly the checkmate he just delivered to the opponent, as he is now unable to keep checking him any more.

*Kad pacer odigra dobar potez, prvo što mu padne na pamet je kako da ga vrati.*

After he has just made a good move, the first thought of a patzer is how to take it back.

*Za siromašnog pacera pion je veliki gubitak.*

Losing a pawn is a great misfortune for the poor patzer.

*Dok brzo vuče poteze, pacer se nekako i drži. Čim se zamisli, upropasti sve.*

As long as the patzer makes his moves fast, everything is still in order. The moment he begins to think, everything goes to ruins.

*Pacer najduže razmišlja nad primljenim matom.*

The patzer is thinking for the longest time after he got checkmated.

*Pacer gubi od svakoga jer mu ne odgovaraju protivnici.*

The patzer always loses to everyone, as all the opponents don't suit him.

*Svakoga dana pacer ima isti izgovor: Ne znam što mi je danas!*

Every time the patzer has the same excuse: I'm not sure what's up with me today!

*Samo paceri naprave poziciju u kojoj su obojica izgubljeni.*

Only two patzers can come up with a position where both are actually lost.

*Lošem potezu pacer ne može da odoli.*

The patzer simply can't resist a bad move.

*Pacer nepogrješivo vuče najgore poteze.*

The patzer makes the worst moves unmistakably.

*Poslije dvostrukog šaha pacer može mirno da umre.*

After a double check the patzer can go and die peacefully.

*About the author:*

Savo Martinović (1935, Danilovgrad, Yugoslavia) is a well-known Montenegrin satirist, humorist and journalist who lives in Belgrade, Serbia. He is also a candidate master in chess.

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