

# The Chess Journalist

Volume XLVI (Issue 155)

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## CHESS JOURNALISTS OF AMERICA



Police officer playing a game of chess with a child from an underserved community. Courtesy of Saint Louis Chess Club, Crystal Fuller. Best Single Chess Photo 2023.

<b>Table of Contents:</b>	<b>Page</b>
Hello From the Editor	3
2023 Chess Journalists of America Awards by Joshua Anderson	4
Three Interesting Online Conversations	10
Chess Journalist of the Year: Pete Tamburro Interviewed by Mark Capron	11
The Chess Word Crossword Puzzle by Bob Basalla	21
Library Focus: Ken Milutin Interviewed by Mark Capron	23
Library Focus: Andy Tichenor Interviewed by Mark Capron	28
Why Write About Chess? by IM Junta Ikeda	33
<i>Humor In Chess III</i> by Dewain Barber & Ralph E. Bowman Reviewed by Mark Capron	35
Cartoon by Jim Hollingsworth	35
<i>Korchnoi Year by Year</i> By Hans Renette & Tibor Karolyi Reviewed by Mark Capron	36
Nikolai Bruni Obituary by Joshua Anderson, FM Carsten Hansen, IM John Donaldson & Mark Capron	37
Chess Keys Deflection by Rachel Schechter	38
The 1982 Midwest Masters Invitational—Part 1 by Robert Irons	43
The Queens' Corner—Laurel Aronian Interviewed by Rachel Schechter	50
Crossword Puzzle Answer	56

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## Join the CJA!

The Chess Journalists of America seeks to encourage chess journalists, writers, editors, and publishers to exchange information and ideas for their mutual benefit, to promote the highest standards of ethics in chess journalism, to represent United States chess journalists in appropriate national and international bodies, and to influence policies affecting the promotion of chess.

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### Hello From the Editor

This issue is jam packed and the longest I have completed. Hopefully that makes up for its lateness. ☹️

Welcome to newly elected officer Vice—President Robert Irons and new Webmaster Caleb Brown. We want to thank outgoing webmaster Grayson Rorrer for all the work he and his father, Chris Rorrer, did on our website. It looks amazing and the awards submissions went much smoother this year.

Speaking of awards, congratulations to all the winners of this year's CJA awards. Inside you will find Joshua Andersen detailed report of all the winners. We were lucky enough to capture some of Chess Journalist of the Year, Pete Tamburro's time for an interview. There is also a splendid interview with the extraordinary Laurel Aronian in The Queens' Corner. We not only had our first taker for the chess libraries interview, but we had a second as well. I would love to keep the Library Focus articles going. Consider volunteering to share information about your library with the TCJ.

You will find two book reviews in this issue. The last in the trilogy *Humor in Chess III* by Dewain Barber & Ralph Bowman and *Korchnoi Year by Year* by Hans Renette & Tibor Karolyi.

IM Junta Ikeda writes the blog called *Infinite Chess* and he allowed us to reprint issue #26, that is very applicable to all of who write about Chess.

Rachel Schechter is back with another *Chess Keys*. The lessons learned in this series have been such wonderful life lessons. This one continues on that same path.

Newly elected Vice—President Robert Irons submitted his first article. He discusses the 1982 Midwest Masters tournament. This will be a several part series.

We learned that long time CJA member Nikolai Bruni passed

away last year. There is a short Obituary that IM John Donaldson, FM Carsten Hansen, Joshua Anderson and I contributed to.

Thanks to Diane Dahl, Rex Gray and newcomer Gio Espinosa for their excellent proofreading and suggestions.

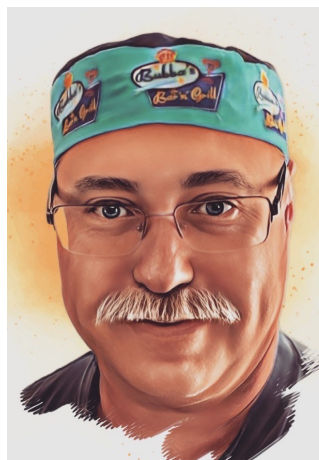
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There have been a lot of really great books put out this past year. I have been reading both some older classics and some of the newer ones. I would like to have a few more reviews next issue, but I need some of you readers to contribute. I can't keep up. I will tell you that it's Pete Tamburro's fault this issue is later than expected?! Ha! Ha, just kidding, but after I read his review in the last issue on the 1948 World Chess Championship, I immediately bought the Golombek book and have been absorbed ever since.

I also got my hands on Ray Keene's book *Korchnoi—Spassky: Chess Crisis* from 1978. It was a typical World Chess Championship match book that Ray Keene has been writing, but I must relay a very humorous story from the book. If you're familiar with the story of the match (or if your not you should read about it) there was much discussion of Spassky's behaviour. Spassky even played one game (game 10) from his "players privacy box" only coming out to make the move and punch his clock. In this match each players box mostly hid them from the opponent. Game 10 ended the first playing session with a time scramble and had to be adjourned. The adjournment is normally played the next day, but Korchnoi took a time out (each player received up to three timeouts during the match for medical reasons) because he needed more time to figure out the complex position. When the arbiter came to ask what the ailment was, Korchnoi told him he was suffering from bad eyesight and he couldn't see Spassky for long periods during the last game. This made me laugh out loud and my wife asked what was so funny. I explained it to her and since she thought it was funny too I am passing it on! I recommend reading the book.

Update on the works of Jeremy Gaige. The post, written by Caleb Brown, can be found at — [The Gaige Archives - Chess Journalists of America \(chessjournalism.org\)](http://The Gaige Archives - Chess Journalists of America (chessjournalism.org)). This highlights the development on our site of the Gaige Page ( [Gaige Archives - Chess Journalists of America \(chessjournalism.org\)](http://Gaige Archives - Chess Journalists of America (chessjournalism.org)) ) that comes not only from the tremendous work of Jeremy Gaige, America's premier chess archivist, but also the work of Jon Edwards and Andy Ansel to make this work available to all.

Please consider sending in an article or idea for next issue. If you are a junior we want to see your name in print in TCJ.



As some of you know I took a two week trip to Ireland and Scotland. Had a blast and even got some pictures of the Lewis Chessmen. Unfortunately I couldn't fit them in this issue. I will try to get them into the next issue.

Please send your comments, suggestions, or even better, send me a story or idea for the next issue: [mcapron243@mchsi.com](mailto:mcapron243@mchsi.com).

—Mark Capron

## 2023 Chess Journalists of America Awards

By Joshua Anderson

This year was tremendous for the awards—we received over 350 entries spanning 50—plus categories. The following report will cover both winners and other interesting notes.

First, I would like to thank all the judges for their fine work this year. We did have a few people who unexpectedly left and a few who suddenly weren't available, but like we always do, we had some great people who could fill in. The judges who helped us were: Vasishta Tumuluri, John Hilbert, Dan Heisman, Peter Minear, Pete Tamburro, Al Lawrence, Eric Johnson, David Sands, Matt Bengtson, Andy Soltis, John Donaldson, Mark Capron, Howard Goldowsky, Jim Hollingsworth, Mike Klein, Daniel Lucas, Rebecka Ratcliffe, Dov Gorman, Anand Mishra, Melinda Matthews, Anthony Gold, Eric Holcomb, Jeffrey Roland, Bette Marshall, Shawn Wang, Ralph Dubisch, Ray Linville, Scott Varagona, Matt Traynor, John Edwards, Emily Allred, Leteef Street, Chris Torres, Rachel Schechter, Robert Irons, Macauley Peterson, Daniel Rohde, Grayson Rorrer, Richard Pointer, Evan Rabin, Laurel Aronian, John Hartmann, Anthony Saidy, Ram Singh, Darrell West, Robert Shlyakhtenko, Brian Flowers, River Travis Lawson, Julie Rorrer, John DeVries, Michael Buss, Diane Dahl, and J. Eugene Salomon.

Secondly, I'd like to give a brief review of the scoring. For 90% of the categories (the exceptions are things like the Mainstream Media Award that exists mainly to help promote us and encourage mainstream media to do more chess stories), five people score using the 5, 3, 2, 1, 0 scoring system. (Each category is assigned five judges, and every judge chooses entries in their category to receive 5 pts, 3 pts, 2 pts, and 1 pt, and any remaining entries receive 0 points.) So, the best an entry can achieve is 25 (5 x 5), and the worst is 0. Categories with one entry are "scored" either Yes, Honorable Mention, or No. For an entry to win an Honorable mention, the entry must score 80% or more of the winning entry's score. So, if the winning entry had 20 points, the score necessary to win an Honorable Mention is 16. If the winning entry is 12, then 10 would be required. If there are multiple Honorable Mentions, they are not listed in any order.

### **TOP THREE AWARDS CATEGORIES**

For more than a decade, these categories have been considered our top awards (with Best Book having moved in and out during that time.) These are also the three for which we send out physical awards to the winners.

#### **Chess Journalist of the Year:**

Winner: **Pete Tamburro**

Tamburro has written multiple award-winning articles this year and demonstrated journalistic excellence. For more, see the interview later in this issue of *The Chess Journalist*.

#### **Best Story of the Year:**

Winner: [L'affaire Niemann](#) by **John Hartmann**

Honorable Mention: [Fischer versus Spassky - 50 Years On](#) by **Robert Shlyakhtenko**

Cheating in chess has always been an unfortunate yet essential topic for discussion, especially with the rise of modern chess engines in the past few decades. Hartmann's article on the Hans Niemann cheating scandal provides crucial insight into the situation and its impact on the chess community. Shlyakhtenko earned an honorable mention for his excellent retrospective on the Fischer—Spassky match.

#### **Best Column of the Year:**

Winner: [Getting to Work](#) by **Tatev Abrahamyan**

Abrahamyan's column provides excellent advice on planning your chess training regimen. She has personal insight into the thought process of playing chess and how to improve your skills, and both are demonstrated beautifully in this column.

**"All of us get lost in the darkness, dreamers learn to steer by the stars."  
— Neil Peart**

## BOOK AWARD CATEGORIES:

This year's book categories included all entries in the Best Book Overall category. This duplication helped lead to the decision to have the same five judges judge everything. Another factor is that companies and sometimes authors and judges increasingly desire to use PDFs instead of physical books.

- A. **Best Book of the Year – Overall:**  
[Life at Play](#) by **Lubomir Kavalek** Winner

The winner of the best book overall was *Life at Play*. Published by New in Chess, four judges scored this book as the Best Book.

- B. **Best Book of the Year – Other**  
[Life at Play](#) by **Lubomir Kavalek** Winner  
  
[Chess Theory from Stamma to Steinitz](#) by **Frank Hoffmeister** Honorable Mention

This book also won the Best Book of the Year award in the Other category, which includes chess books that are not primarily instructive. *Chess Theory from Stamma to Steinitz*, printed by McFarland Books, earned an Honorable Mention.

- C. **Best Book of the Year – Self-Published**  
[The Chess Wizardry of Wotawa](#) by **Carsten Hansen** Winner  
  
[Kings of My Home State](#) by **Scott Varagona** Winner

The self-published category had many entries, including our only fiction entry. *The Chess Wizardry of Wotawa*, written by Carsten Hansen, and Scott Varagona's *King of my Home State: a History Of the Alabama State Championship* tied for this award.

- D. **Best Book of the Year – Instructional**  
[How I Became a Chess Grandmaster](#) by **Vinny Bhat** Winner

The best book of the year in the Instructional category was *How I Became a Chess Grandmaster* by Vinny Bhat. This book was PDF only as the publishing house would not send copies. The PDF was sufficient, and the judges liked it so much that it won despite concerns about not receiving the actual book.

## III. VISUAL ARTS

- A. **Best Photojournalism Article**  
[Records & Rivalries](#) by **Sandeep Sethuraman** (Photos by David Llada.) Winner

Sethuraman and Llada produced an excellent piece about the 2022 K-12 Grade Championships. Congratulations to Sandeep for becoming the 11th national champion and winning this award.

- B. **Best Art**  
[Sound Moves: Where Music Meets Chess](#) by **World Chess Hall of Fame** Winner  
[100K!](#) by **Natasha Roberts, John Hartmann, and Melinda Matthews** Honorable Mention

World Chess Hall of Fame's *Sound Moves: Where Music Meets Chess* won this category. This entry edged out a submission from *Chess Life* by Natasha Roberts, John Hartman, and Melinda Matthews.

- C. **Best Cartoon**  
[That Nakamura Life](#) by **Nicolas Barrios** (art), **Melinda Matthews** (layout & design) and **Natasha Roberts** (script) Winner

In best cartoon, artist Nicholas Barrows, designer Melinda Matthews and scriptwriter Natasha Roberts win with *That Nakamura Life*. This entry, more of a comic strip than a single illustration type of entry, received first-place votes from four of the five judges.

- D. **Best Photo**  
Untitled - [Police officer playing a game of chess with a child from an underserved community](#) by **Crystal Fuller** Winner

In the Best Photo category, Crystal Fuller beat out over 20 other entries (the largest category in the awards this season) to easily win with "Police Officer playing a game of chess." This photo received two first-place and two second-place awards.

- E. **Best Single Chess Magazine Cover**  
[American Chess Magazine #28](#) by **Vladimir Vuksan** Winner  
  
[Chess Life – April 2023](#) by **David Llada** (photo) Winner

Best Single Chess Magazine Cover had a tie: *Chess Life*, April 2023. David Llada (photo) scored 13 points and tied with *American Chess Magazine* #28. *Chess Life*, August 2022 Robert Bentley (image) finished just outside the points necessary for an Honorable Mention.

## IV. PRINT ARTICLES

The Print Articles category had almost 100 entries this year. Most entries were from *American Chess Magazine* or US Chess (*Chess Life*), but a few were from other magazines such as *The Chess Correspondent*.

- A. **Best Regular Newspaper Column**  
*Chess* (Washington Times) by **David Sands** Winner

David Sands won for Best Regular Newspaper Column. His column is entitled *Chess* and appears in [The Washington Times](#).

- B. **Best Overall Magazine**  
[American Chess Magazine](#) Winner

ACM won this year in the contest between *Chess Life* magazine and *American Chess Magazine*.

- C. **Best Single Article of Local Interest**  
[The Green Bay Open](#) by **Steve Erbach** Winner

Steve Erbach won the best single article in the Local category

with his piece about the Green Bay Open, beating out Bill Broich for the award.

D. **Best Feature Article**  
[L'affaire Niemann](#) by **John Hartmann** Winner

Hartmann won the award for Best Feature Article just like he won Best Story. Unfortunately, Shylakhtenko's article about the Fischer-Spassky match barely missed receiving the Honorable Mention in this category.

E. **Best Interview**  
[GM Jon Edwards: 32nd World Correspondence Chess Champion](#) by **Maurice Carter** Winner

[25 Questions for Bruce Pandolfini](#) by **Pete Tamburro**  
 Winner

[An Interview With Liz Garbus](#) by **Jimmy Adams**  
 Honorable Mention

[Hikaru Nakamura](#) by **John Hartmann**  
 Honorable Mention

[Meet FM Andy Woodward](#) by **John Hartmann**  
 Honorable Mention

Best Interview always has a lot of very close scoring. This year was no different. Pete Tamburro and John Hartman, two distinguished chess journalists, both routinely have several entries added to this award. Pete Tamburro's entry *25 Questions for Bruce Pandolfini* won first place this year. Tied with it was a surprise entry from *The Chess Correspondent* magazine. *The Chess Correspondent* has not entered in numerous years, but the organization entered with Maurice Carter's interview with GM Jon Edwards this year. This piece tied with Pete Tamburro's work for first. There were three Honorable mentions: two articles by John Hartman about Andy Woodward and Hikaru Nakamura, and Jimmy Adams' work with Liz Garbus.

F. **Best Tournament Report National/International**  
[A Triumph of Experience and Youth!](#) by **Irina Krush**  
 Winner

Best Tournament Report was by far and away the biggest category in the print articles—there were 18 entries. In this case, Irina Krush won first place. Jon Burke's article *Nepo Again!* barely missed receiving an Honorable Mention.

G. **Best Tournament Report – State/Local**  
[Rebirth of High-Level Chess in Wyoming](#) by **Alex Fishbein** Winner

[A Double Clean Sweep!](#) by **Paul Swaney** Honorable Mention

In the Best Tournament Report (in a local or small tournament), Alex Fishbein won first place and was the only entry ranked first by multiple judges. Paul Sweeney's *Double Clean Sweep* came in second and received an Honorable mention. Justus Williams's piece *Getting My Reps In* also scored first place from one of the judges but didn't have enough total support for an Honorable Mention.

H. **Best Club Newsletter**  
 Memphis Chess Club – “Chess Advocate ([Volume 7 No. 1](#), [Volume 7 No. 2](#), and [Volume 7 No. 3](#).)” Winner

The Memphis Chess Club won the Best Chess Club Newsletter - print version award. It is a very artistic newsletter, and Memphis is one of the few clubs to provide physical copies for their members.

I. **Best Instructive Lesson**  
[Play it Along With Sam Shankland \(ACM #31\)](#) by **Jacob Aagaard** Winner

[How to Study Tactics](#) by **Tatev Abrahamyan**  
 Winner

[Play it Along With Sam Shankland \(ACM #32\)](#) by **Jacob Aagaard** Honorable Mention

The three winners outdistanced the field this year. Tatev Abrahamyan's *How to Study Tactics* tied with Jacob Aagaard's *Play It Along with Sam Shankland* in ACM #31 with 13 points. Jacob Aagaard also won an Honorable Mention for his next iteration of the lesson with the same name in the next issue of *ACM*.

J. **Best Review**  
[But Does it Work?](#) by **John Watson** Winner  
 In Best Review, John Watson's *But Does it Actually Work?* received one of the only perfect scores, getting five first-place votes from all the judges.

K. **Best Analysis**  
[The Magnificent Three](#) by **Sarunas Sulskis** Winner  
[Nepo Again!](#) by **John Burke** Honorable Mention

The Best Analysis category saw Sarunas Sulski's *The Magnificent Three* win with 18 points, just edging out John Burke's *Nepo Again!* which scored 17 points and earned an Honorable Mention in this category. While these two articles won the awards, the other four entries received 2nd or third—place scores.

L. **Best Historical Article**  
[Not Without Hope](#) by **John Hilbert** Winner

John Hilbert won easily with *Not Without Hope*, scoring 20 out of 25. My article *1946 Youth Chess* came in second, barely edging out Mykola Fuzik's—*Isaac Lipnitsky: Chess Master*. To paraphrase Pete Tamburro, if you see John Hilbert entered in the best historic article, just hope you can win next year.

M. **Best Humorous Contribution**  
[Unfortunate Chess Quotes](#) by **Pete Tamburro**  
 Honorable Mention

Speaking of Pete, his humor is not beloved by all, but his article, *Unfortunate Chess Quotes*, received an honorable mention for best humorous contribution in print.

N. **Best Personal Narrative**  
[Human Champion of 'Computer Chess'](#) by **Jon Edwards** Winner

John Edwards won Best Personal Narrative this year with *Human Champion of Computer Chess*. It was an excellent piece about his success in correspondence chess. Mark Heimann's article *Woodpushing for the Washed-Up* and Kayden Troff's *The Road That Led Me Back* each finished a single point away from an Honorable Mention award.

## V. ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The online and social media section is by far and away our most-entered section, with about 150 entries. This group of categories now has more entries than the CJA awards combined for all categories during my first few years of running the awards.

### A. Best Interview

[Episode 65 of The Chess Files – The Answers are Out There \[Interview with Sal Matera\]](#) by **James Eade**  
Winner

Winning Best Interview was James Eade with his submission from *Episode 65 of The Chess Files – The Answers Are Out There*. With 17 points, Elizabeth Heubeck's *A Chess Grandmaster Makes the Case* came in second, just not enough for an Honorable Mention.

### B. Best Feature Article

[World Chess Hall of Fame: 1972 Fischer/Spassky: The Match, Its Origin, and Influence](#), by **Joshua Anderson**  
Winner

[Chess at the Top](#) by **Paul Whitehead**  
Honorable Mention

My piece, *World Chess Hall of Fame 1972*, won the Best Feature Article, barely edging out Paul Whitehead's *Chess at the Top*, which earned an Honorable Mention. Melinda Matthews's *Sexual Harassment in Chess* was the only entry to receive a five from a judge.

### C. Best Podcast

J.J. Lang and Julia Rios – [Chessfeels: Conversations About Chess, Psychology & Mental Health](#) Winner

The best podcast was won by J.J. Lang and Julia Rios, *Chessfeels: Conversations About Chess, Psychology & Mental Health*, receiving 18 points. Evan Rabin's submission *Premier Chess – Conquer the Game; Master Your Life*, finished second, just short of an Honorable Mention.

### D. Best Single Podcast

[Ladies Knight with Jen Shahade featuring Laurel Aronian](#) Winner

Jennifer Shahade's *Ladies Nights with Laurel Aronian* (Aronian's interview with Rachel Schechter is in this issue) won Best Single Podcast. Shahade easily won first place with 20 out of 25 possible points. When Shahade enters, she almost always wins.

### E. Best Tournament Report – National/International Last-Second Substitute Wins Most Prestigious Online

[Event of the Year](#) by **J.J. Lang** Winner

[Sinuefield Cup](#) (rounds 1–9) by **Carsten Hansen**  
Honorable Mention

[When Gambling Pays Off: Meduri Goes All-In On Vegas](#) by **Aakaash Meduri** Honorable Mention

Best Tournament Report National / International Report is a category where many submissions are a series of short reports, getting written round by round as the tournament plays out in real-time. This year, JJ Lang's piece just edged out Hansen and Meduri, both of whom won Honorable Mentions.

### F. Best Tournament Report – State/Local Denver Open 2022, by J. C. Macneil Winner

[Sheridan Open Brings Big Chess to Small Town](#), by **Brian Kuehl** Honorable Mention

The mountain region of the United States ruled this category. J.C. Mcneil's *Denver Open 2022* report just edged out Brian Kuehl's report from Sheridan, Wyoming.

### G. Best Club Newsletter

Marshall Chess Club – [The Marshall Spectator](#) edited by **Greg Keener** Winner

Memphis Chess Club – [Chess Advocate](#) edited by **Dwight Weaver** Honorable Mention

It is hard to imagine two more different entries in this category. The Memphis Club is relatively new (at least in its current format), has a firm art focus, and comes out just a few times a year. The Marshall Spectator is from the Marshall Club, one of the oldest clubs in the country. It is much more focused on analysis and comes out many times a year.

### H. Best Instructive Lesson

[Chess – a Thought Process Overview](#) by **Dan Heisman** Winner

[Chess Mistakes and How to Avoid Them](#) by **Evgeny Miroshnichenko** Honorable Mention

Dan Heisman's *Chess—A Thought Process Overview* won this category. This lesson edged out Miroshnichenko's entry. Heisman has entered most, if not all, of the years I have run the awards, and most of the time walks away with a category win or an Honorable Mention.

### I. Best Analysis

[1972 Fischer/Spassky: Beautiful Games Lecture](#) by **Varuzhan Akobian** Winner

[Endgame Deep Dive](#) by **Grayson Rorrer** Honorable Mention

Varuzhan Akobian won the best analysis award for his lesson about the 1972 World Chess Championship. Rorrer's Honorable Mention was for his fine article in *The Chess Journalist* just a couple of issues ago.

<p>J. <b>Best Humorous Contribution</b>  <a href="#">How to Become World Chess Champion</a> by <b>Bob Basalla</b> Winner  <a href="#">Kid Humor</a> by <b>Ray Linville</b> Honorable Mention</p> <p>Robert Basalla's article <i>How to Become World Chess Champion</i> won Best Humorous Contribution. Ray Linville came in a close second, earning himself an Honorable Mention. Both of these fellows scored far higher than the rest of the entries in this category.</p> <p>K. <b>Best Historical Article</b>  <a href="#">From Alekhine to Kasparov and Beyond</a> by <b>J. Eugene Salomon</b> Winner</p> <p>J. Eugene Salomon, the oldest award winner, wrote the Best Historical Article. Gene recently celebrated his 95th birthday, making him 94 when he won the award. He broke the previous record, which he also held when he won this award last year. While Diane Dahl is sometimes uncredited in his work, I know she helps him quite a bit, and I wish to acknowledge all of her help here. Robert Irons's remembrance piece about Alex E. Dunne and Ray Linville's remembrance piece on Shelby Lyman tied for second, just a few points outside an Honorable Mention.</p> <p>L. <b>Best Personal Narrative</b>  <a href="#">Our Man in Madrid</a> by <b>Abhinav Suresh</b> Winner</p> <p>Since Al Lawrence suggested this column some years ago, it has routinely been among the Awards' most popular categories. Abhinav Suresh won this year when his article <i>Our Man in the Madrid</i> scored 16. This point total may sound low, but there were 11 entries in this category!</p> <p>M. <b>Best Overall Chess Website</b>  US Chess Federation – <a href="http://uschess.org">uschess.org</a> Winner</p> <p>The best overall chess website was the US Chess Federation's uschess.org. They won with 18 points, vastly outshining the competition. The Saint Louis Chess Club website came in second place, with its affiliated websites following closely behind it.</p> <p>N. <b>Best Overall Website – Small Organization (group of less than 500)</b>  <a href="#">Daily Chess Musings</a> by <b>Chris Torres</b> (web designer) Winner</p> <p>The judges picked either the Daily Chess Musings or the Eades Foundation (which came in second place) as their top choice.</p> <p>O. <b>Best Blog</b>  <a href="#">Learning with Each Game</a> by <b>Ray Linville</b> Winner</p> <p>Ray Linville's <i>Learning with Each Game</i> won Best Blog, scoring 21 points. Ed Yetman's pay blog (the only one I have ever heard of and which our judges could access for free) came in second, just a few points away from Linville.</p> <p>P. <b>Best Educational Lesson</b>  <a href="#">Grandmaster Versus Amateurs – Lessons from the 2022 U.S. Open</a> by <b>John Hartmann</b> Winner</p>	<p><a href="#">15 Teachable Moments from the Pro Chess League</a> by <b>JJ Lang</b> Winner</p> <p><a href="#">Improve by playing 'What If?' with a Chess Engine</a> by <b>Dan Heisman</b> Honorable Mention</p> <p>The two USChess.org pieces scored very well, with Dan's work surrounding the "What if" idea receiving an Honorable Mention. Dan's second entry on the geometry of chess tactics was the best scorer outside those who won an award.</p> <p>Q. <b>Best Online Review</b>  <a href="#">How a Book About Chess Can Capture a Child's Imagination</a> by <b>Ray Linville</b> Winner</p> <p><a href="#">Glory to the Queen—A 21st Century version of The Three Musketeers Review</a> by <b>Joshua Anderson</b> Honorable Mention</p> <p><a href="#">World Chess Hall of Fame: 1972 Fischer/Spasky: The Match, Its Origin, and Influence</a> by <b>Joshua Anderson</b> Honorable Mention</p> <p><a href="#">Chessays. Travels Through The World Of Chess by Howard Burton</a> by <b>Mark Capron</b> Honorable Mention</p> <p>The Best Online Review was a very close contest. Ray Linville scored 15 points and won. My two article entries in this category scored Honorable Mentions. Unfortunately for me, it seems that those who liked my traditional review approach, used in the Fischer/Spasky review, did not enjoy my more creative direction for the "Glory to the Queen" and vice-versa. Much like Linville's, Capron's review of Burton's book scored solidly across the board and received an Honorable Mention.</p> <p>R. <b>Best Non—Instructional Chess Video</b>  <a href="#">Chess Shorts ep 1 – Elo Ratings and Chess Titles Explained</a> by <b>Adam Whitaker</b> Winner</p> <p>Best Non—Instructive Chess Video is an interesting category. We often get a wide range of submissions on vastly different topics. Some examples of non—instructional chess content include tournament reports, documentaries about how chess improves people's lives, and chess news coverage. This year's category winner was Adam Whitaker, who recorded an excellent video about the ELO rating system and chess titles.</p> <p>S. <b>Best Twitter Feed</b>  <a href="#">NM Dan Heisman</a> Winner</p> <p>Dan Heisman won Best Twitter Feed despite being the only feed in the category run by one single person. His feed scored higher than well—respected organizations like the Saint Louis Chess Club and the US Chess!</p> <p>T. <b>Best Twitch Channel</b>  <a href="#">Saint Louis Chess</a> Winner</p> <p>The Saint Louis Chess Club won the Best Twitch channel. Their Twitch channel is mostly live streams chess lessons taught by various strong players from the club.</p> <p>U. <b>Best Instagram Feed</b></p>
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Saint Louis Chess Club – [stlchessclub](#)  
Winner

World Chess Hall of Fame – [worldchesshof](#)  
Honorable Mention

Grand Chess Tour – [GrandChessTourOfficial](#)  
Honorable Mention

Best Instagram was a close contest. Saint Louis Chess Club won with 14 points. World Chess Hall of Fame and Grand Chess Tour came in second with 12 points, earning them Honorable Mentions.

V. **Best Documentary**  
[Through the Mirror of Chess: A Cultural Exploration](#)  
directed by **Howard Burton** Winner

[King Chess](#), directed by **Dylan Quercia** Honorable  
Mention

Howard Burton's *Through the Mirror of Chess* won the best documentary, and Daniel Quercia's *King Chess* won an Honorable Mention. Last year's winner, Adam Whitaker, came in third for his piece on Paul Morphy.

W. **Best Tournament/Match Coverage** (This may be a series of videos)  
US Chess – [2023 FIDE World Championship](#) Winner

Saint Louis Chess Club – 2023 [Superbet Chess Classic](#)  
(rounds 1- 9) Honorable Mention

In Best Tournament Match Coverage, US Chess won the award for their news coverage of the 2023 World Championship match, and the Saint Louis Chess Club won an Honorable Mention for their round-by-round coverage of the 2023 Superbet. The 2023 Superbet Rapid & Blitz series from Poland also scored well and was just a point short of an Honorable Mention.

X. **Best Coverage by Mainstream Publication** (free entry!)  
[Unruly Queens give young girls a seat at the chess table.](#) **The Unruly Queens** Winner

[The 'Unruly Queens' of Chess](#) **The Unruly Queens**  
Winner

Two articles on "The Unruly Queens," a group spotlighting young girls playing chess excellently, won Best Coverage by Mainstream Publication. Though this theme received much more coverage this year than in previous years, it goes back at least until the Second World War.

## VI. JUNIOR

We created a section of awards to feature junior chess writers a few years ago. These categories have grown more popular over time. We had several different people who entered a total of over 20 unique entries.

A. **Best Print Article by Junior Author**  
[U.S. Teenage Sharks](#) by **Grayson Rorrer** Winner

Best Print Article by a Junior Author was by far the most popular of these categories, with 12 different entries. Grayson's article, *U.S. Teenage Sharks*, won first place. If you're not familiar, Grayson is the gentleman who set up the new entry system for the awards this year. Jennifer Yu's *One Last Chance* was just a point away from an Honorable Mention.

B. **Best Online Article by Junior**  
[Mr. President, Señor Presidente! 3 Americans Win Spots at the World Cup](#) by **Max Lu** Winner

[USATE 2023 – Two Teams At Top](#) by **Davis Zong**  
Honorable Mention

In the Best Online article, Max Lu's piece about his experience in a key Dominican Republic tournament won over David Zong's piece about the United States Amateur Team East, which scored an Honorable Mention.

C. **Best Personal Narrative by Junior**  
[Andy Woodward: A Quest For My IM Title](#) by **Andy Woodward** Winner

[The World Grand Chess Tour, St. Louis Rapid & Blitz 2022 ~ 'The Sinquefeld Sacrifice](#) by **Laurel & Jack Aronian** Honorable Mention

[Mr. President, Señor Presidente! 3 Americans Win Spots at the World Cup](#) by **Max Lu** Honorable  
Mention

Andy Woodward won Best Personal Narrative for the article about his journey to become an International Master. Max Lu's article scored an Honorable Mention, as did the piece from the Aronian siblings.

## VII. SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT

Special Achievement is a section for submissions that don't fall into the other outlined categories. People send in their submissions along with a statement explaining their accomplishments. Then, their work is evaluated independently on its own merits, outside the boundaries of awards categories.

A. [2023 Young Arts Award for Songwriting \(Chess-Themed\)](#) by **Laurel Aronian** Winner

B. [Chess Connections](#) (Quarterly Student Chess Magazine) **Ellen Wang** - Co-Editor-in-Chief Winner

The two individuals, Laurel Aronian and Ellen Wang, both earned Special Achievement awards. Among various achievements, both are in the magazine *Chess Connections*. This magazine is found at [Chess Connections Magazine – Sharing chess, one story at a time](#), and highlights youth chess players. Hopefully, we will see much of their work and much work from the magazine over the next few years.

C. [Faces of US Chess](#). US Chess, **Natasha Roberts**  
Winner

US Chess then entered two categories as well: *Faces of US*

<p>Chess, an ongoing piece examining the widely diverse membership of US Chess.</p> <p>D. <a href="#">2023 FIDE World Championship Coverage</a> US Chess, JJ Lang, Natasha Roberts, Communications Team—Winner</p> <p>These individuals also received recognition for their excellent news coverage of the most recent World Championship match.</p> <p><b>VIII. CRAMER AWARDS</b></p> <p>The Cramer Awards are named after Fred Cramer and recognize the importance and role of state chess tournaments and associations.</p> <p>A. <b>Best State Championship Report</b>  <a href="#">The 69th Alabama State Championship – Play by Play</a> by <b>Scott Varagona</b> Winner   <a href="#">2023 Senior Open</a> by <b>Mark Capron</b> Honorable Mention</p> <p>In the Best State Championship Report, Scott Varagona's <i>The 69th Alabama State Championship – Play by Play</i> won first place. Mark Capron's <i>2023 Senior Open</i> report from the State of Iowa received an Honorable Mention. The third entry, from Brian Tillis and Matthew Kolcz of Florida, also received a first-place vote and almost received an Honorable Mention award.</p> <p>B. <b>Best Scholastic Coverage in State</b> (multiple articles allowed)  <a href="#">2023 Florida Scholastic Championship!</a> By <b>Andrew Rea</b> Winner</p> <p>Best Scholastic Coverage by a State was won by Andrew Rea, covering the 2023 Florida State Scholastic Championship. He won with a score of 19. The other entries did not win Honorable Mentions, but all three of them scored at least ten points.</p> <p>C. <b>Best Overall State Website</b>  <a href="#">Texas Chess</a> (sponsored by the Texas Chess Association) <b>Chris Wood</b> (webmaster) Winner</p>	<p><a href="#">Northern California</a> Honorable Mention</p> <p>Chris Wood, Webmaster for Texas Chess, won Best Overall State Website, edging Northern California by two points. Northern California earned an Honorable Mention.</p> <p>D. <b>Best State Magazine/Newsletter – Print</b>  <a href="#">Northwest Chess Magazine</a> issues 2022-06 through 2023-05. <b>Jeffrey Roland</b> – Winner</p> <p>Jeff Roland won Best State Magazine Newsletter Print for Northwest Chess Magazine. Northwest Chess scored a perfect 25 points and has won this award for at least the last five years.</p> <p>E. <b>Best State Magazine/Newsletter – Online</b>  <b>Jeffrey Roland</b> (editor) – <a href="#">Northwest Chess Magazine</a> (issues 2022-06 through 2023-05) Winner   <a href="#">Colorado Chess Informant</a> Winner</p> <p>Best State Magazine Newsletter Online was a tie between <i>Northwest Chess Magazine</i> and <i>Colorado Chess Informant</i>.</p> <p>F. <b>Best Personal Narrative</b>  <a href="#">The Advent and History of the Fairfield Interscholastic League</a> by <b>Alvin Hamilton</b> Winner   <a href="#">2023 Senior Open</a> by <b>Mark Capron</b> Honorable Mention</p> <p>Alvin Hamilton won Best Personal Narrative for his article chronicling the creation of the scholastic chess league in Fairfield, Connecticut. Mark Capron's article about the 2023 Senior Open came in second place and received an Honorable Mention. Mark Kaepernick's article was also well—received.</p> <p>In the end, as it is every year, the awards bring together many of the best and most exciting stories in chess, and I am thankful for my role in getting all of this together. I am even more grateful for all the authors, illustrators, editors, and judges participating. Until next year!</p>
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### Three recent very interesting online conversations relevant to Chess Journalism and Chess Books:

[The amazing book collection of Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam | A true chess connoisseur](#) by Chessbase India with IM Sakar Shah. This is a YouTube video that is almost 2 hours long where IM Sakar interviews Dirk Jan by going through his house and seeing some of his book collection. Dirk Jan tells many back stories of his interviews and how he got certain autographs along the way.

*The Chess Angle* podcast

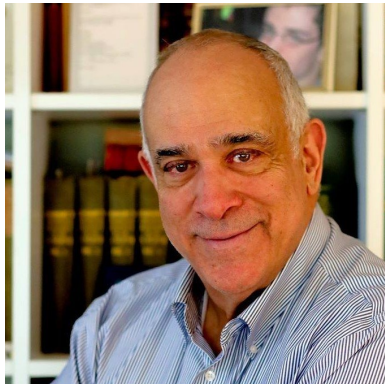
**Ep. 88: Amateur Chess Legend Andy Ansel on his Massive 15,000+ Book Collection, Playing 3 World Champions, & Whether Club Players Should Use Classic or Modern Books for Improvement**

This podcast interview is with Andy Ansel where they discuss his extensive book collection. *The Chess Angle* has been around for about 2.5 years broadcasting from the Long Island Chess Club.

[United States Women's Chess Champions, 1937-2020 Book Interview w/ Alexey Root \(Chess Shorts Ep. 12\)](#) with Adam Whitaker. Last issue we featured Alexey Root in the Queens' Corner.

## Chess Journalist of the Year: Pete Tamburro

Interviewed by Mark Capron

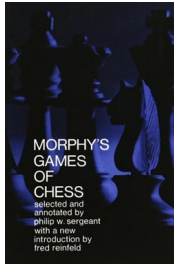
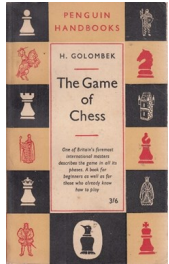


**Hello Pete. First off, congratulations on winning the Chess Journalist of America's most prestigious award of 2023, *Chess Journalist of the Year*. Well deserved.**

Thank you!

**Your history with the royal game goes back quite a way. Where did your story with chess actually begin? Who taught you to play?**

My dad and my Uncle Bob taught me after I took an interest in their playing. I was seven years old. My uncle gave me Golombek's [The Game of Chess](#) and I read it cover to cover, over and over again. He later gave me [Morphy's game collection](#)



by Sergeant. We lived in an area that still had farms, so all I had were a couple of friends and my dad. It took me five years to beat him. I didn't play in a chess tournament until high school. My first rated tournament was in 1964 at age 17. Times have changed.

**This is the second time you have been named Chess Journalist of the Year, the last time being in 2006. How does 2023 compare to 2006?**

The first time always has special meaning. Not only that, but it was a vote of the CJA membership. 2023 was very gratifying because I did so many different things, and in many of them I was helping other journalists out or recruiting a young person to write for us or driving 1300 miles to Florida to support the chess park that players created in West Palm Beach. I even was interviewed by two TV stations. When I looked at how much work I and Josip Asik and Dusan Kronic and Jimmy Adams and Vlad Vuksan put into [American Chess Magazine](#) and the contributions of all our writers, it made me feel that what we dreamed of seven years ago has come to fruition, and people recognize it as a spectacular magazine. Still when I showed the magazine to someone (for the umpteenth time), I got this response: "Oh, my God, THIS is a chess magazine!?" That's the real reward.

**What was the one thing you were most proud of in 2023 that you feel led to the award?**

This past year was the busiest and most diverse year I've ever had in chess. In my nomination, my editor, Josip Asik, noted all the stuff: *"What is unique this year is that his record in this past year shows not only achievement, but a diversity in all aspects of chess journalism: openings columnist, puzzle columnist, book producer, award winner, Facebook page editor, chess research helper to fellow journalists and even taping to be interviewed for a documentary, interviewer for our magazine, historical writer, editorialist, humorist, game annotator, public relations person to promote local community chess culture and continually finding young stars of chess to bring them into the field of chess journalism. Finally, his contributions to the production of our magazine are critically important. You would be hard pressed to find someone with this variety of accomplishments in a single year and his*

*youthful energy."* I'm not so confident about the youthful energy part, though. 76 is not the new 66.

**The CJA has been around 50 years now. Are you surprised we survived this long?**

Quite frankly, yes. We've been very fortunate to have people step up when needed. Too often there have been damn few people willing to contribute to the success of the organization. Whether it's been a Helen Warren way back when or a Joshua Milton Anderson today, it's been pure luck that such people have existed to keep us going. We've had great support staff heroes, too, like Randy Hough, John Hillery, Mark Capron or J. Franklin Campbell, to name a few. **Thanks! Those are some high-class folks you're lumping me in with.**



*Helen Warren on left. Joshua Anderson standing behind Pete at the US Open 2023 Awards meeting.*

**What have been the biggest CJA accomplishments?**

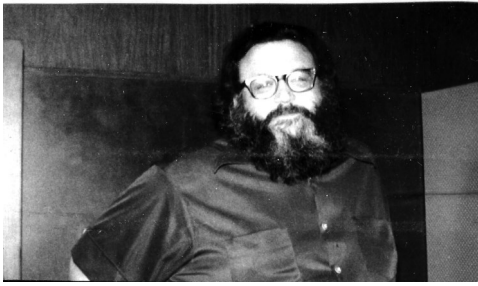
Without question, the CJA awards program. Everyone from grandmasters to amateurs and even non-chess players have entered and won awards. There is little or no money in doing journalism, so some bragging rights make you feel good, because you've created something, and other people have appreciated it. Edward Winter, whose historical skills have been peerless, is very grouchy about the CJA. He just doesn't get the good it does. Also, we've kept a decent record, albeit incomplete, of the last 50 years of chess reporting in the US. And, if you have ever read the old journals back to '73 as I have, you notice that there are a lot of "how to" articles that are worthy of a booklet online. We can even add some more "how to" pieces as well.

**Yes, when I was making my decision to take over editorship of the magazine, I was thinking about many of those how-to articles that used to be in the magazine. I wanted to keep that going, but just haven't found any takers on writing that type of article.**

I've been thinking about writing one on how to do interviews. Just bug me every now and then!

**What have you most liked doing within the CJA?**

I have a love/hate relationship with my past president and chief judge experiences. I loved getting entries from all over the country to see what people were doing. I hated having my living room and dining room floors and furniture covered with piles of papers and categories. Getting people to judge, or worse, be chief judge, was frustrating. Happily, enough people came through most of the time. Joshua has been outstanding in getting people to judge. I met so many great people from all over the nation. I have to mention my Jerry Hanken story. Back then chess politics got very personal. I received a story from someone who related a tale as true—about Jerry. I made an off-hand joking reference to it. One night, I got a phone call—Jerry! He was not a happy camper. He explained in detail what really happened. I profusely apologized.



He invited me to dinner in Philly at the next World Open. We met and became great friends. We were on opposite sides of the political spectrum, but he would stay at my house when on the East Coast and we

would sit at my chess table and go over old games or play five minute and, of course, talk Shakespeare, whom we both loved, but he was a real expert, and I learned a lot. We often get so wrapped up in all the chess hub-bub that we forget the social aspect of the game. Involvement in the CJA gave me that aspect of chess I truly value.

#### What have been the most unexpected changes?

Three things: computers, computers, computers. With the internet, publishing programs, Chessbase and the rest, there has been an explosion of people writing and publishing. Still, after these recent years, we're still dealing with what it all means.

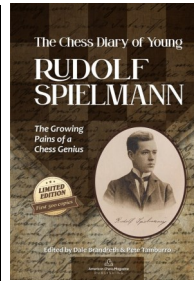
#### Who were some of your favorite people to work with?

My all-time favorite is, of course, my late, dear friend, Glenn Petersen. He got me into the whole journalism gig when he showed up at my home while I was in graduate school and said he had an idea for a chess newspaper. You can read the whole story in *ACM #23*. Quite literally everything I've written, edited, published—everything—is due to him. He was a visionary and a much underappreciated one at that. I also worked well with Steve Doyle in our joint, and award-winning newspaper column. He is one of the most amazing people that chess in the US has had in the last 50 years. I loved Helen Warren. At a US Open once, out of the blue, she nominated me for CJA vice-president, which started the whole CJA involvement. Speaking of favorite quotes, she once cracked me up when she wrote to her correspondence chess members who would write in and complain about every damn thing. She wrote something like this about the whiny complaints: "I feel like telling you all to get a life, but then I realize this is your life."

#### You have been the senior editor of *American Chess Magazine* since its inception. Can you tell us what your part was in the original idea and launch? What do your current duties involve?

In *ACM #24* we celebrated our 5th year of existence and told the story. Shorter version: Josip was the then new editor of *British Chess Magazine* and got complaints my column didn't appear in his first production. He called me on Skype. We talked. He loved what was going on in American chess and wanted to have a magazine that would celebrate that. That was my chance to give something wonderful back to chess, so I agreed on the condition that I don't receive a salary. I am thinking of asking for a raise to \$1 a year, so I can deduct my expenses! Back in 2016 we did it. I recruited some great writers, proofread, edited, interviewed, wrote historical articles, did puzzle pages, responded to correspondence, reviewed submissions, proofread for the second time, wrote an editorial, talked with various companies around the US, handled any problems that came up for our readers, managed the Facebook site, where we have a lot of fun with the puzzle contest, proofread for the third time, made calls to the other editors at six or seven in the morning....that sort of thing.

#### You have written many books over the years. In 2023 you were co-editor of *The Chess Diary of Young Rudolf Spielmann* with Dale Brandreth. What drew you to this pro-



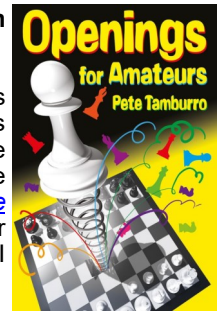
#### ject? What were some of the obstacles that came up during the writing process and how did you overcome them?

That took me three pages to explain in the foreword and two more for us to explain in the introduction. Buy the book and read the epic tale of how it took 50 years to get done.

#### I do have the book, it's wonderful, and I would recommend it. Our readers will need to get a copy to understand some of the obstacles and how you overcame them then.

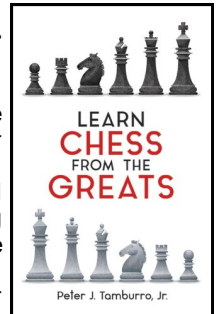
#### Which of your books has done the best in the marketplace?

*Openings for Amateurs* is the star. It was even translated and published in Italy. Its reception has been great. However, that little collection of syndicated columns I had done for the USCF called *Learn Chess from the Greats* back in 2000 was reprinted by Dover in recent years. They didn't even tell me! I found it by accident.



#### I hope you found out on accident when you opened your mail and found a royalties check!

Actually, no! Dover just gave me a one-time payment! It was my first chess book. A tip for prospective authors. If a publisher does that, just negotiate some arrangement for second printings or simply taking over publishing rights after "x" years. Happily, Mongoose gives me royalties for my work and even helped sell the book to an Italian publisher for my *Openings for Amateurs* series.



#### Writing books can involve lots of research. Do you do the research in your own chess library or do you go to someplace else, for example Cleveland? What is your overall Chess library like?

Tons of opening books because I write about openings. Lots of crucial reference works, which ends up helping others as well, the bound magazine runs I mention elsewhere here, game collections, player game collections, teaching books, endgame books, middle game books, my miniature games books (I love them!) and books reflecting how to enjoy chess in literature. One unusual group of items is my set of *Illustrated London News* bound volumes which have Staunton's very first columns, all his columns on Morphy, the London 1851 tournament as well as the 1883 tournament. What's funny is that when chess players from GM to amateur walk into my living room and see floor to ceiling books they go looking for chess books and there are none! I love

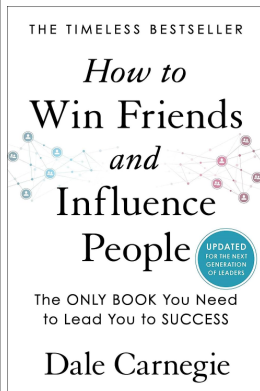


it when my books on those shelves attract a few of those chess people. Jerry Hanken combined the joy when he found Staunton's Shakespeare volumes on a shelf. And Ruth Haring went looking and leaped for joy when she found a favorite author of hers. We talked for hours about him.

Ruth and I.

Those magazine runs sound terrific. I am a bibliophile as well. I have books everywhere my wife puts up with and some places she doesn't. She got me a kindle so when we travel, I don't have one suitcase for clothes and one for the books. Who are a couple of your favorite non-chess authors?

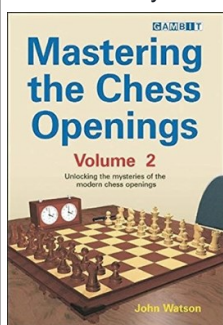
Too many to mention! I am a largely non-fiction guy. 19th century Spanish poets (Becquer, Espronceda, Machado) are favorites as are several American poets like Langston Hughes and E.E. Cummings, who issued only 77 copies of a signed limited edition which graces my book shelf. I love Mark Twain and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In economics, Milton Friedman is my favorite and in politics the one who also taught me how to write was William F. Buckley, Jr. My non-chess runs that are key are H.L. Mencken's bound volumes of *American Mercury* from 1924 to 1933. It's the best magazine ever—with no photos! I also have several rare



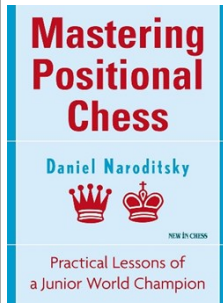
runs of 19th century historical magazines. I have books from every century going back to 1493. When I bought that book, I realized something about book collecting. There were 500 years of people who owned it before I did. So, I didn't really own it. I was just the next caretaker who paid for the privilege of taking care of it. When my students, who knew of my love of books, always asked me what one book would I recommend to them to read, my answer was always the same: [How to Win Friends and Influence People](#) by Dale Carnegie. Kids need to read it.

You have been a prolific writer for several world class magazines including *British Chess Magazine*, *Chess Life*, *Chess Life for Kids* and of course *American Chess Magazine*. What has been your top few articles over the years and why?

For *BCM*, which I've now been doing for nine years, my favorite columns are ones that just hit on all cylinders. I've already made two books with them. They EXPLAIN things, and it's very practical advice. My best stuff for *Chess Life* were some book reviews.



I reviewed John Watson's book in 2007 by interviewing him in detail about the book, [Mastering the Chess Openings, Volume 2](#). One master wrote me saying it was the best review he ever read. I did one on Lev Alburt's great book on [Chess Openings for White Explained](#) that went for 3 or 4 pages, because I went through every opening and just asked questions a reader might ask that weren't answered in the book. It wasn't a criticism. Just questions. Much later, Lev came up to me in the US Team bookstore and started asking me my advice on what they might do in the next edition. One time I

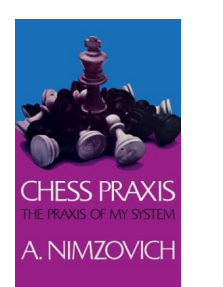
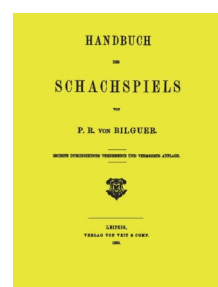
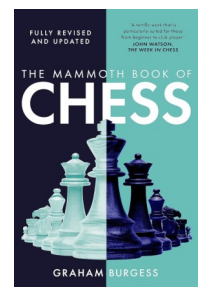
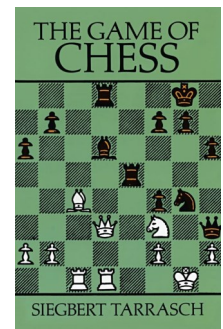
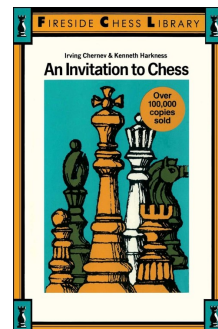
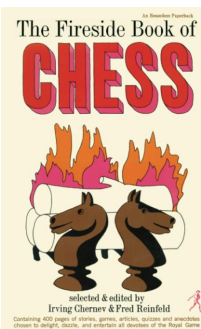


was assigned to write a review of the very young at the time Daniel Naroditsky's book, [Mastering Positional Chess](#). Quite a few people were skeptical that he really wrote it saying he probably had an adult do most of it. So, I got permission to talk to him over the phone. I taught AP students, so I knew what some of those kids could do. After five minutes I knew he was the real deal AND he agreed to photograph his notebook that he based his book on and we printed some pages in the review! That ended those ru-

mors. In *Chess Life for Kids*, I did 64 separate items and enjoyed them all. For *American Chess Magazine*, it would have to be our special Marshall/Marshall Chess Club issue. My idea and I got to write the early history of the club. I had several memorable interviews. My favorite was the one with Nathan Resika—an opera singer and master. It was Nathan's superb answers and relating chess and music that made it the best of that type of topic. When I submitted the award-winning Saidy interview by someone else for a CJA award, I knew it would win and did, but I didn't care. I loved what Nathan had to say. The last thing would be the editorial I wrote about the Niemann affair (ACM#29). It was something that needed to be said.

Do you have a favorite chess book someone else wrote? If so, what is it?

Hard to have just one. I have a sentimental feeling toward the only three books on chess in my high school library: [The Fireside Book of Chess](#) by Chernev and Reinfeld, [An Invitation to Chess](#) by Chernev and Harkness and [The Game of Chess](#) by Tarrasch. They lit up my chess interest. Today, I would hope libraries have the [Mammoth Book of Chess](#) by Graham Burgess. Once I got going into chess books, I went nuts over Schlechter's [Handbuch des Schachspiels](#), Marshall's autobiographical games collection, all sorts of great tournament and match books, Keres' three volumes, Botvinnik's, Smyslov's and, most recently, Judit Polgar's three volume masterpiece that surpasses all of them. And then there's the periodical collections I developed runs in. I sold off my *Wiener Schachzeitung* run (Marco years), and *L'Echiquier* from the 20s and 30s, but I still have a bound *Chess Life* run, a bound *Chess Review* run, an *American Chess Quarterly* run, Purdy's *Chess World* magazine run, a bound Kagan's *Neueste Schachnachrichten* run from the 20s, a *Chess Amateur* run from 1906 to 1929 and my two favorites: *American Chess Bulletin* from 1906 till it closed in the 1960s, and my all-time favorite, *British Chess Magazine* from the beginning to today. Having bound magazine runs allows you to be a better historian and journalist. There are a lot of people out there just putting out crap online with no knowledge of what has been written before on whatever they're writing.



Is there a book that you read and your understanding of the game was greatly improved?

I ran across [Chess Praxis](#) by Nimzovich before I read [My System](#), and that was a great help. Along the way, I bought the Purdy run of *Chess World* magazine. How he could teach! A huge help.

What aspect of chess draws you in most when selecting something to read or write about? History, openings, endings, biographies, tournament books, etc.?

Yeah, all of those!

Do you have any future book plans?

My third, and final, *Openings for Amateurs* book is in editing right now. It is called *Openings for Amateurs—Theory vs. Practice*. I'm also doing a booklet for ACM.

Do you have a favorite opening? Ending?

Openings: The Sicilian Wing Gambit. I beat a computer in the US Open with it during the same round one of its clones was beating an IM. I beat my first expert with it when I was rated 1400. I had a master tell me he didn't play the Sicilian against me, because he didn't want to see what I had up my sleeve! It's still fun to play in 5-minute online, but I moved on to my modern favorite, the 3. ♘d4 Sicilian, which I introduced on the ICC (Internet Chess Club) lecture series. I was deluged with people from all over the world who were beating much higher rated players with it. Of course, time and neural networks have caught up with these openings, but the point of my books is that equality doesn't mean drawn as long as you understand what your opening is about.

When Chess Digest used to give out free book bonuses depending on how much you spent, I got a book on the Sicilian Wing Gambit. I never ended up playing that opening though. Instead, I got stuck on the Smith-Morra Gambit for quite a while.

Do you have a favorite game anyone played?

For positional play, it would have to be the draw between Janowski and Lasker in their match. I annotated it in *Openings For Amateurs—Next Steps*. I was fascinated by Lasker's demonstration of his opening choices being part of a superb defensive plan into the middle game. And Janowski was playing really well in his attack!

Excerpt from *Openings For Amateurs—Next Steps* pages 164-8 reprinted with permission of the author.

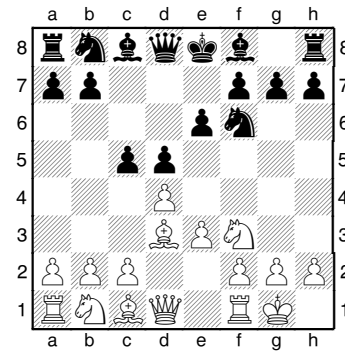
The world championship certainly adds to the fun of opening theory, and just recently it also added some interest in the resurrection of another old line – the Zukertort Attack. Karjakin used the All-Purpose Defense against Carlsen's Z-Attack, and it was hard not to feel we were going back in time. So, we are going to go back in time!

It's 1910, the time of the world championship match between Janowski and Lasker, where Lasker essays the same defense as Karjakin. In his theoretical survey in *BCM*, GM Čolović made a comment that just leapt out at me: "The Zukertort appeals to club players because it is usually played like this: 8.Ne5 followed by f2-f4, Nd2-f3 and an attack on the kingside. If Black knows what he is doing though, there will be no attack and it is safe to presume that Karjakin would know what to do."

Absolutely correct in every way! However, although Karjakin might know what to do, I would venture to wager that precious few amateurs would know, using the All-Purpose Defense that C.J.S. Purdy popularized years ago, what the middlegame plan was beyond the opening. This game is thematic, hard-fought, and well-played. Club players would be well advised to study this world championship fight from over a hundred years ago.

Game 39  
Janowski – Emanuel Lasker  
World Chp (2), Berlin 1910  
Zukertort Attack D05

1.d4 d5 2.♟f3 ♟f6 3.e3 e6 4.♞d3 c5 5.0-0

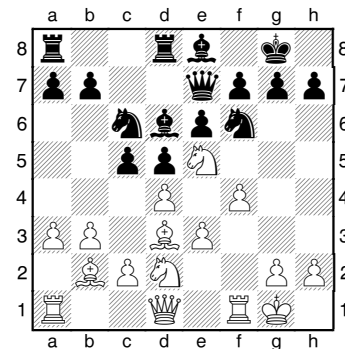


While many Colle-oriented players immediately play 5.c3 to keep the bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal, Janowski gives the ...c5-c4 threat a "never you mind" and goes about his development – and with some good reason.

5...♞c6

Lasker is not ready to have the game opened with 5...c4 6.♞e2 b5 7.♞e5 (7.b3 ♞b7 8.a4 a6 9.axb5 axb5 10.♞xa8 ♞xa8 11.♞e5 ♞c6 12.f4 ♞e7) 7...♞d6 8.b3 ♞c7 9.a4! ♞xe5 10.dxe5 ♞xe5 11.c3 bxa4 12.bxc4 0-0 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♞xa4 because Janowski will then have the two bishops and plenty of scope for them.

6.b3 ♞d6 7.♞b2 0-0 8.♞bd2 ♞e7 9.♞e5 ♞d8 10.a3 ♞d7 11.f4 ♞e8

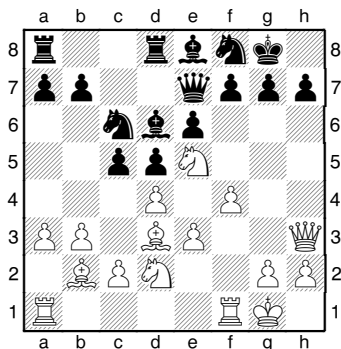


Commenting at the time in *BCM*, Leopold Hoffer wrote, "The defense runs on well-known lines, and is minutely timed by Lasker. The ...♞d8 was intended to make room later on for ...♞f8; the queen's bishop is brought to the rescue, to eventually fortify the King's position at g6." There you have it! Hoffer answers the unasked question. Amateurs who know the All-Purpose Defense setup often just stop here without any idea how to prepare the next steps for the middlegame. Lasker has a plan from his first opening moves: ...♞d7-e8-g6 in coordination with ...♞f6-d7-f8 and ...f7-f6 with exchanges on g6. It's logical. White's d3-bishop is formidable if not challenged, and yet how many times do you see an ...h7-h6 or ...g7-g6 move as a "defense"? Watch how this plan is implemented!

12.♞f3 ♞d7 13.♞h3

Hoffer felt that the knight exchange first with 13.♞xc6 bxc6 14.♞h3 f5 15.♞f3 was better, to follow up with ♞f3-e5, ♞h1, and g2-g4, a typical Stonewall Attack plan. However, that assumes Black will remain static and wait for all this when, by 15...cxd4 16.♞xd4 c5 17.♞b2 ♞ac8 18.♞e5 c4, it is Black who has the initiative. Now Lasker plays a move that prepares his move 15.

13...♞f8



Black continues with his defensive plan.

14. ♖df3

White might try to keep the bishop's diagonal open with 14. ♖xc6 bxc6 15. dxc5 ♖xc5 16. b4 ♖b6, but Black could play 14... ♖xc6 15. dxc5 ♖xc5 16. b4 ♖d6 followed by 17... ♖ac8, when he has counterplay along the c-file and can put the bishop back on e8 to continue with his original plan.

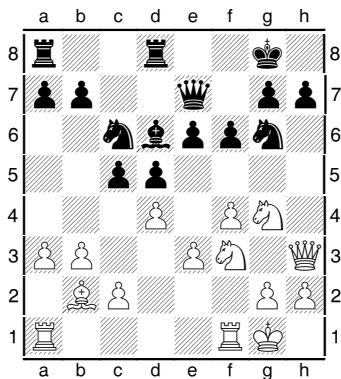
14...f6

Allowing the fruition of Lasker's plan to get the bishop to g6. It's important to note that Lasker planned out where he wanted his pieces placed and then found the means to put them there!

15. ♖g4

BCM quotes Lasker: "The pawn blocks the line of the white B and opens that of the black one. The attack on the knight is only incidental [! -PT]. If White leaves the knight, Black proceeds on his way [i.e., on the queenside -PT], threatening to capture it at an appropriate moment, probably very late. If now, for instance, 15. ♖g5 h6; 15. ♖h4 a6 16. g4 b5. It is doubtful whether White could have forced matters on the K's side, whereas there is no doubt as to the rapidity of the advance of Black upon the other wing."

15... ♖g6 16. ♖xg6 ♖xg6



An instructive position. White has five men overprotecting e5. Black has five men in support of the pawn push to e5. Black's counterplay in the center keeps White's kingside attacking ideas at bay. It was not a coincidence that Lasker played his ... ♖e7 on move 8 for the push to e5. He knew this position could arise in concert with his ... ♖e8-g6 idea, which by playing ...f7-f6 for the bishop's deployment also supports ...e6-e5. This is such a fine example of an opening plan carrying over into the middlegame.

17. dxc5 ♖xc5 18. ♖d4

Threatening ♖xe6.

18...f5

Lasker points out that the knight could not be captured, as White would recapture with the pawn, leaving the e6-pawn backward, and then notes that Janowski forces an exchange to keep the queen's bishop's diagonal open.

19. ♖xc6 bxc6 20. ♖e5

According to Lasker, the coming pawn sacrifice is forced, as 20. ♖f2 would have been too passive.

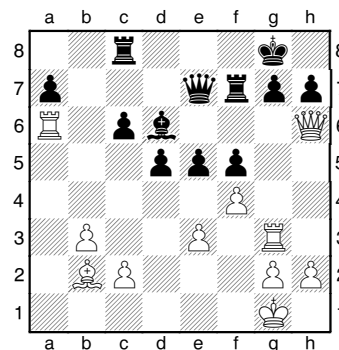
20... ♖xe5 21. ♖xe5 ♖xa3 22. ♖f3 ♖d6 23. ♖b2 ♖f8

Another possibility was 23...c5 24. g4 e5!. Black's theme of the freeing ...e6-e5 advance is still around on move 24.

24. ♖a6 ♖ac8 25. ♖g3 ♖f7 26. ♖h6

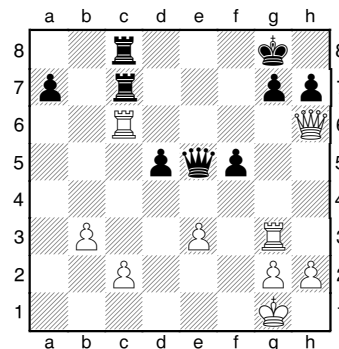
The threat is 27. ♖xg7! ♖xg7 28. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 29. ♖xe6+. Lasker says his next move is forced – which it is, but it's a great forced move to make!

26...e5!



And here we are, seeing an ...e6-e5 push that we will also see in Games 40 and 41. Lasker makes defending look easy and logical. He must also see that he's giving a pawn back, but he has a reason for it.

27. fxe5 ♖xe5 28. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 29. ♖xc6 ♖fc7



And here it is! He maintains the defense of g7 and now counters along the c-file, all at the same time! Komodo gives Black a bit more with 29... ♖xc6 30. ♖xc6 g6 31. ♖c8+ ♖g7 32. ♖f3 ♖c7 33. ♖a6 h5.

30. ♖f6!

Janowski, who has displayed great energy in this game, comes up with a "pretty coup" (Lasker).

30... ♖xf6 31. ♖xf6 ♖xc2

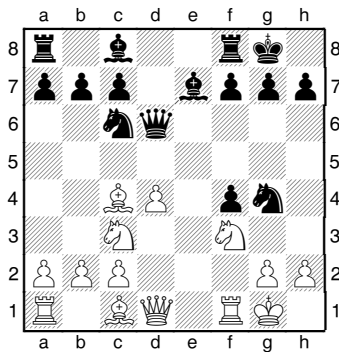
The game is drawn.

32. ♖f5 ♖d2 33. h4 ♖e8 34. h5 ♖d3 35. ♖f2 ♖f8 36. ♖g3 ♖xf5 37. ♖f5 d4 38. exd4 ♖xd4 39. ♖b5 ♖d2+ 40. ♖f3 ♖f7 41. ♖e4 g6 42. g4 gxh5 43. ♖xh5 ♖g6 44. ♖b5 ♖d6 45. ♖a5 ♖b6 1/2-1/2

This encounter did not make either player's best games collections or any anthologies of brilliant chess. However, both players did play very thematic and accurate chess that teaches us a great deal. For those of you who would like to rely on the All-Purpose Defense, this game is a model for Black right into the middlegame. For those who find the Zukertort Attack of interest, it offers very valuable ideas to put into use, just in case you're not playing a Lasker in your next tournament game. You might also want to check out Hartston – Kosten, British Chp 1982.



7...♖xd6! 8.d4 ♘c6 9.♗c3 0-0



OK, we're both castled, and I have my eye on a kingside attack. I had seen some books give ♗e2, which did not make sense. The move played not only attacks the f-pawn, but deals with ...♗e3 in proper fashion.

10.♗d5! ♗e3

I had also seen a line with Black defending f4 with a pawn, but that makes for a breezy castled position which I would welcome: 10...g5 11.h3 ♗h6 12.h4 ♗e6 13.♗xe7+ ♗xe7 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.♗xg5 ± as Black's three weak kingside pawns will make the difference.

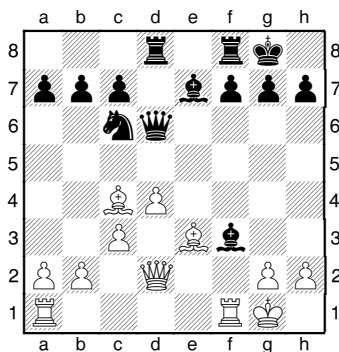
11.♗xe3 fxe3 12.♗xe3

Now, I'm a happy camper! A half-open file to attack along, Black with no piece in front of his castled position, and Plan B, the queenside pawn majority if we get to the endgame.

12...♗g4!?

12...♗e6 13.♗xe6 ♖xe6 14.♗f4 ♖d7 and now either 15.d5 or 15.c3 with perhaps Plan B looming.

13.♖d2 ♗ad8 14.c3 ♗xf3



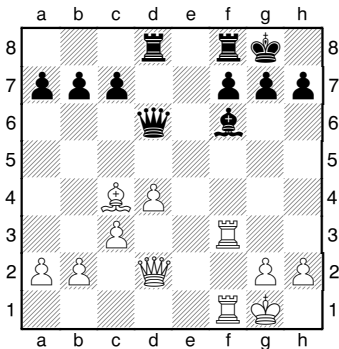
He was expecting the rook to recapture whereupon he would play ♗e5. What's absolutely crazy was that two masters in Buenos Aires in 2001(!) played our game right up through 14.c3. In C. Perez-Pietronave 2280—S. Slipak 2472, Black played 14...♖g6 and lost as well!

15.♗f4 Zwischenzug!

15...♗e5 16.♗xe5 ♖xe5 17.♖xf3 ♖d6

He got the exchanges he wanted to lessen the pressure, but he really didn't.]

18.♗af1 ♗f6



He didn't have anything better. The first thing I looked at was ♖xf6, but something concrete to follow it up with was required. I looked for a couple of minutes, found it, and then got up to clear my head. My master friend, Steve Pozarek, playing for Westfield, looked at my face and gave me one of those, "You're going to take the bishop aren't you?" looks. I nodded and he smiled. He saw me staring intently at the bishop. I took a short stroll to play it in my head and went back and took the bishop. It's funny how I've always been lured by sacrifices for attacks. At that time, I didn't try to find a more positional approach as an alternative, which would have been an easier win. However, I did have a lot of fun back then! The better I got in later years, the more chess became work. That's one reason I turned to writing about chess.

19.♖xf6

The more prosaic way of winning was 19.♗d3 ♖fe8 20.♗c2 ♖a6 21.♖f4 ♗d6 22.♖f5 g6 23.♖c5 ♖c6 24.♗d3 ♖xc5 25.♗xa6 ♖f5 26.♖xf5 gxf5 27.♗xb7 ♖b8 28.♗d5 ♖xb2 29.♖xf5 ♗g7 30.♗b3, but the sacrifice was too tempting to pass up.

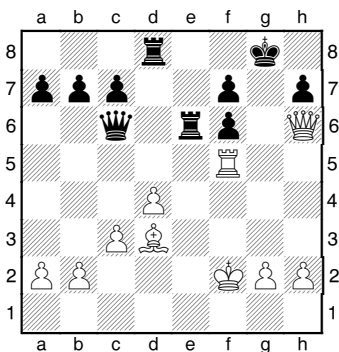
19...gxf6 20.♖f5!!

My favorite move of the game because I had to see that to take the bishop. The queen is shut out because he can't play f6–f5.

20...♖fe8

Ironically, he could have played the queen to c6 earlier rather than later and that would keep him in the game. Now, if 20...♖c6 21.♗d3 ♖fe8 22.♖h6 ♖e6 23.♖f3 (23.♖g5+ ffg5 24.♗xh7+ ♗h8 25.♗g6+ ♗g8 26.♗h7+ ♗h8=) 23...♖e1+ 24.♗f1 ♗d5 25.♖xf6 ♖e6 26.♖f4 and White has sufficient compensation for the exchange.

21.♖h6 ♖e1+ 22.♗f2 ♖c6 23.♗d3 ♖e6



And now I got to do something I never had an opportunity to do: I announced a mate in 5! I thought he saw it coming, too, but he didn't. In fact, after I gave the moves, he made me play it out to mate, and I did.

23...♖e6 24.♖f3+—

24.♖g5+ ffg5 25.♗xh7+ ♗h8 26.♗g6+ ♗g8 27.♖h7+ ♗f8 28.♖xf7 mate 1–0

What are some key lessons from chess that you have applied to your life outside the game?

The biggest lesson of chess is that there are consequences for your decisions, not only in chess, but in life. Thus, you have to come up with a reliable thinking process to make sure they are the right decisions. When I coached high school and college basketball, we used to scout our opponents to see what defenses made them uncomfortable. I had learned a lot from chess in terms of making your opponent uncomfortable and taking them out of their game.

Students I have had tend to do before thinking or understanding the issue. I always like to remind them to "sit on their hands" first. Understand before action. Very much the adage - Stop, Think, Act.

**This has been my mantra (sit on your hands) as well. A bit more time upfront gets it right most of the time and ends up saving time and painful corrections later on.**

**I love quotes, do you have a favorite quote?**

Hermann Helms once asked Lasker, age 69, when he was visiting the US, "Doctor, do you **ever** intend to retire?" Lasker, with a smile on his face, replied, "No; at any rate not until I have succeeded in gaining a competence from Chess."

**What will your chess legacy be?**

My fondest wish for a legacy is that someday my grandchildren will pick up my books and *American Chess Magazine* and be able to appreciate and love the game that Pop-Pop did.

**Thank you for agreeing to this interview. Any final parting words for our audience?**

You're welcome. Yes, I have some parting words. All chess journalists should encourage the work of our colleagues. Our true mission is not to win awards. The awards are great fun, but as I recently wrote one editor, one should remember what Emerson in *Self-Reliance* had to say. Here is the whole quote: *The roses under my window make no reference to former roses or better ones; they are what they are; they exist with God today. There is no time to them.* There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence." Whatever your journalistic creation, create your rose, revel in your work and know you have done your best. And, I would continue the analogy: encourage other flowers to grow as well because our true mission is to promote chess and to let other people know what's out there in the world of chess journalism.

Postscript:

While retrieving photos for this interview, I forgot two very important articles—from 1975. They started my writing for *Chess Life* for 40 years. Burt Hochberg called me to ask permission to reprint my *Theory of Szen* article (K+3 pawns vs. K+3 pawns) from *Atlantic Chess News*. He wanted to make USCF members aware of this interesting new publication. Then Ed Edmondson

asked me to be writer/photographer/chaperone for a group of high school students going to Scandinavia. Jeff Kastner was my chaperone partner.



Burt Hochberg

I ended up writing "*Innocents (?) Abroad*" in the November *Chess Life*. What a group: Ken Regan, Lewis Cohen, Ken Potts, Ron Henley, Mark Diesen, Michael Rohde, Jon Tisdall, John Fedorowicz, Jake Meskin and Erik Moskow. The photo with Fed and Mike so many years later in NYC reminded me of it. Some became friends over the years, and at Kimberly Doo McVay's party this summer, Jon Tisdall came from Europe to visit and I saw him for the first time since '75! And, hey, I even tied for first in the amateur section of the Scandinavian Open while the rest played in the master section.



Michael Rhode, Pete Tamburro and John Fedorowicz.

Below the group that went to the Scandinavian Open. Used with permission of US Chess



I forgot one really great interview—with Frank Brady (Left). We met at a NY deli. It was published in *The Chess Journalist* in 2000.

Did I mention interviewing Tal, Karpov and Kasparov as favorite articles?

**No, you didn't mention. I bet Tal was a riot. Karpov was always so serious it seemed and Kasparov always outspoken.**

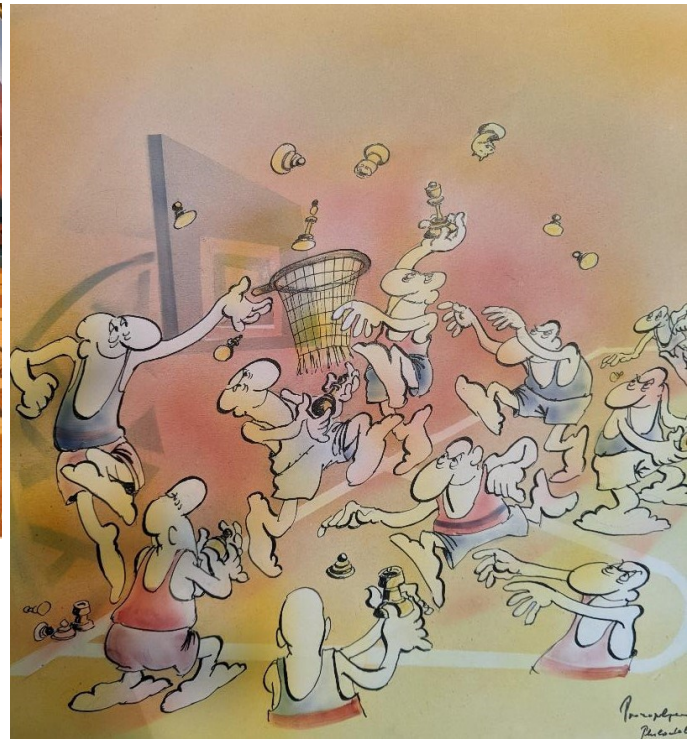
Of my three interviews with world champions, Tal's was the best. Even Andy Soltis quoted it in the *New York Post*. I had asked Tal about a comparison of his match with Botvinnik and modern world championship matches. He replied that back then "we were all amateurs." One funny moment: I asked him where he was living then. He responded with "Ramadan." Now, geography is considered a necessary bit of knowledge for history teachers, but I had no idea where that was. Then, it dawned on me: The Ramada Inn! Karpov was in a talkative mood that night in New Jersey at a simul. Kasparov spent all his time talking about FIDE, as he was running for president.



Up to this point Pete has won 31 CJA Awards in 14 categories.

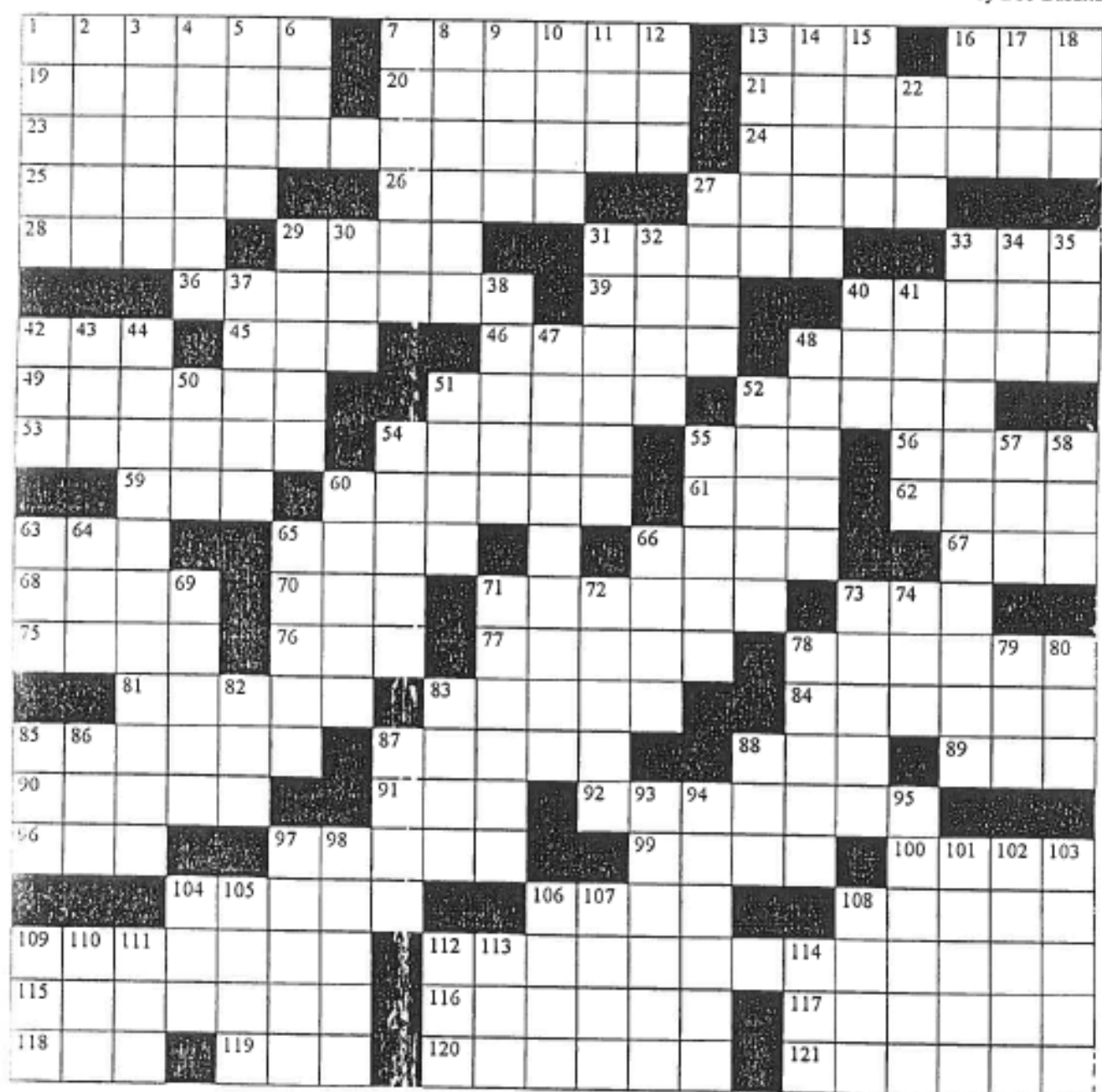
## List of Pete's CJA Awards

- 1995 Won Best Regular Newspaper Column Syndicated Column for the USCF [Ira Lee Riddle]
- 1995 HM Best Historical Article "For the Love of the Game" [Ira Lee Riddle, Pr.]
- 1996 HM Best Historical Article "Olympic Moments" [Jim Eade, Pr.]
- 1997 Won Best Human Interest Story "Barry Spiro, RIP" [Bob Holliman, CJ]
- 1997 HM Best Mag. Tourn. Report "Interplay US Championship" [Bob Holliman, CJ]
- 1999 HM Best Instruction "For Mails Only" [PJT, Pr.]
- 2000 Won Best Interview "Interview with Frank Brady" [PJT, Pr.]
- 2000 Won Best Human Interest "An Interview with Frank Brady" [PJT, Pr.]
- 2001 Best Chess Magazine (Under 1000 circulation) Honorable Mention, Atlantic Chess News with Matt Tamburro as Technical Editor.
- 2002 Won Best Regular Newspaper Co. of Local Interest "Sunday Star-Ledger" [PJT, Pr.]
- 2006 Won Best Analysis "Attacking Strategies in the Ruy Lopez" [Jerry Hanken, Pr., Randy Hough S.T.]
- 2006 Won Chess Journalist of the Year [Jerry Hanken, Pr., Randy Hough, S.T]
- 2006 Won Best Review "The Day Kasparov Quit & Other Chess Interviews" [Hanken, Hough]
- 2007 Won Best Chess Column, Any Media, "Chess Lessons in Chess Life for Kids" [JH, RH]
- 2007 HM Best Review "Make Life Miserable for Black" CL Oct [JH, RH]
- 2008 Won Best Review "Watson: The Sequel " CL Nov [Jonathan Hilton, CJ, RH]
- 2009 HM Best Chess Column CLKids "My Favorite K & P Endings for Students" [Hilton,CJ, RH]
- 2010 Won Best Hist. Article "Botvinnik the Invincible" CL [GM A. Kosteniuk, Pr., Ramon Hernandez,CJ]
- 2010 Won Best Review "Botvinnik the Invincible" CL [GM A. K., Ramon Antonio Hernandez, CJ]
- 2011 HM Best Review "Youth Breeds Experience" CL June '10, "Youth Breeds Experience" [J.M. A.,CJ.]
- 2016 HM Best Analysis "Openings for Amateurs-and GMs" Mar2016 CL [JoshuaMiltonAnderson,CJ]
- 2018 Won Best Interview "25 Questions for Carol Meyer" ACM# [GM A.K., Pr., JMA, CJ]
- 2018 HM Best Interview "25 Questions for GM Lev Alburt" [JMA, CJ]
- 2022 Won Best Personal Narrative "A Remembrance: GlennArnePetersen ACM#23" [JMA, CJ]
- 2022 HM Best Interview "A Star-Spangled Opera and Chess Succes " ACM#25 [JMA, CJ]
- 2022 Special Achievement Award "Marshall Tribute Issue #22" [JMA, CJ]
- 2022 Special Achievement Award "Fifth Anniversary, ACM #24" [JMA, CJ]
- 2022 HM Best Historical Article "How it All Began: Marshall CC 1915-1944"ACM#22 [JMA, CJ]
- 2023 Won Chess Journalist of the Year [JMA, CJ]
- 2023 Won Best Interview "25 Questions for Bruce Pandolfini" ACM#28 [JMA, CJ]
- 2023 HM Best Humorous Contribution "Unfortunate Chess Quotes" ACM#30 [JMA]



Representative artwork in Pete's collection. By the way if you really like something, contact him and he might be willing to sell, as he was saying he wanted to downsize a bit. I am partial to the top and bottom left.

The Chess Word Crossword  
by Bob Basalla



Aug 18, 1999 - Crosswords Plus

Across

1. Sample from a cloth chess board.  
7. Opening offer  
13. What Morphy did while waiting for Paulsen to move  
16. Queenside safety  
19. Chess trainer/author Divinsky  
20. Lethargy inducing play

21. Rout the defense  
23. Zwischenzug  
24. Fight for supremacy  
25. Considers  
26. Steady consumption; chess books, for instance  
27. Southeast Asian figurine vessel's used for rooks  
28. Peon  
29. Winawer bishops go to b4 to effect \_\_\_\_.

31. A type of chess  
33. 1...g6 and 2...Bg7 defense  
36. Rook heaven  
39. GM Rachels hailed from here  
40. The best Indian  
42. Bishop hemmed by its pawns  
45. A worthless horse  
46. Loyd's pipes  
48. Rhythmic phrases

- forbidden at the board  
49. Potentiality of any legal move  
51. Breaks a bind  
52. A fish that proves too tough  
53. To abandon your king  
54. Polite rebuff to guy requesting take backs (2 wds)  
55. Judit Polgar is one  
56. Uedemann code for

- Bb1-a2  
 59. The queen bishop file  
 60. Nine is your limit  
 61. Author of a 'Turk' treatise  
 62. Popular show piece material  
 63. Opening manual (abbr.)  
 65. Financially consumed chess nuts  
 66. To settle a piece on a square for many moves  
 67. K.I.D. is one  
 68. To delight in chess  
 70. Benko's column  
 71. Actor and one time chess hustler  
 73. Tournament dir.  
 75. Free of obstructions  
 76. Lasker and TV's talking horse  
 77. Resulted, as in difficulties  
 78. 'Always check, it might be mate,' is one  
 81. Two Spanish kings  
 83. Eastern European coin perhaps showered on Marshall-Lewitzky  
 84. Qualifying tourn.  
 85. A crippled pawn structure  
 87. Desire to snatch even questionable pawns  
 88. It often needs a break  
 89. Special plays (abbr.)  
 90. Acquiesces to chess law  
 91. In Caissa's honor: another deity, the Celtic sea god  
 92. Co-champions  
 96. Misplayer of horses?  
 97. Lopez land  
 99. '\_\_\_\_ Tu,' Mecedades hit during Fischer reign  
 100. Many training regimens have you \_\_\_\_ the crack of dawn.  
 104. Intensely disliked, like certain masters  
 106. King on The Avengers  
 108. Tilted board attribute  
 109. To get 'em you gotta give 'em, said Bobby
112. Caissic metamorphosis  
 115. To take advantage of a weakness  
 116. A good plan's center (2 wds)  
 117. Eliminated a threat  
 118. Newly minted moves (abbr.)  
 119. Unknown opponents in published simul. games  
 120. A ruler or potentate  
 121. Chess principles
- Down
1. A kibitzer's insinuating remark  
 2. Decreases in strength  
 3. Where a gatherer of white knights must stop in a game (2 wds)  
 4. Chess problem concepts  
 5. Places for traveling chess sets  
 6. He made his name at Hastings (initials)  
 7. Lustrous grandmaster from Russia?  
 8. 'Sherwin-Williams' may be a pairing or \_\_\_\_  
 9. Smidgen  
 10. Poisoned pawn purpose  
 11. O. J. 'game' arbiter  
 12. Quick chess time  
 13. Black Sea Russian resort and tournament site  
 14. Steer clear of mistakes  
 15. Short for time in chess  
 16. Duke's first digs (abbr.)  
 17. Not in the proper position  
 18. Top board  
 22. Starters at a2, a7, h2 and h7 (abbr.)  
 27. Length of a title reign  
 29. 'I was mated by \_\_\_\_ right wing conspiracy,' said Hillary.  
 30. A type of set  
 31. Players that get violently angry at losing  
 32. Sighing exclamation of concern (at being busted)  
 33. Members of chess players' union?
34. Slavish follower of book lines  
 35. Lothar Schmid, Bill Goichberg and others (abbr.)  
 37. Between (opponents) in Barcelona  
 38. Common depiction of a certain piece  
 40. Uttered upon solving a chess problem  
 41. Drowsiness (comb. form)  
 42. A foundation or base  
 43. To brutally cut off counterplay  
 44. Revealing threats  
 47. Bolster an attack  
 48. Impudent audaciousness of many a young master  
 50. To recognize a mate  
 51. Opposition  
 52. Not Tal?  
 54. Loses sensation sitting too long in one position  
 55. 'Do you have a \_\_\_\_ set?'  
 57. A score without play  
 58. Only way a king pawn ends up on the bishop file (abbr.)  
 60. Common tourney format  
 63. A name that rates  
 64. Steal a pawn  
 65. Deplete of all resources  
 66. Chess history  
 69. The opponent, during the game at least  
 71. German peons  
 72. Incites into error  
 73. Incidence of 1.g4 relative to 1.e4  
 74. This needs to be sharp to play well  
 78. Spots a good move  
 79. To check in development  
 80. Conquest, Fine and Short (abbr.)  
 82. Favorable reply  
 83. Board three in the Bundesliga  
 85. In Henry's honor: another flightless bird
86. Strong development not necessary for chess players  
 87. The 'I'm not paired with the Grandmaster' feeling (for most)  
 88. Board three in Rome  
 93. NOT Pillsbury's alleged social disease  
 94. Noah's Ark Trap?  
 95. The Great Khan  
 97. One of the Leonids  
 98. Persistent, annoying kibitzers  
 101. Composure under duress  
 102. Chess fanatic Alexander Pushkin's profession (2 wds)  
 103. Nurses an advantage  
 104. Chess playing computer in 2001  
 105. What Elvis' gravestone and Nimzo SHOULD have had in common  
 106. Chess problem closely related to another  
 107. 'I went up the exchange \_\_\_\_ ♟ pawn,' you might hear  
 108. Annoyed at the opponent  
 109. Staunton is one  
 110. The Lady descriptively overcomes a horseman (abbr.)  
 111. Your good stretches during a back and forth game  
 112. Used to keep score  
 113. Problem lingo meaning all replies are equally futile  
 114. Contested over the board

## Library Focus:



Several issues ago I asked for others to share their Chess libraries with us. We had two takers. Thank you Ken and Andy. Let me know if you want to have your library be featured in a future issue. –Ed.

Long Room at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, photo by Mark Capron.

### Ken Milutin

#### Tell Us a little bit about yourself.

I was born and raised in southern Delaware. I am married to my beautiful and supportive wife Sheri. We have two children and seven grandchildren, ages nine through twenty-two. I retired in February 2020 after a 30+ year career in the real estate appraisal industry. I, of course, love chess, enjoy travel, and regularly play pickleball.



**Congrats on the retirement. Sounds like you are keeping busy. Any particular favorite travel locations? Is your wife your pickleball partner?**

We enjoy traveling to Italy with our next trip planned in the early fall of this year. London is on my bucket list! Sheri tried pickleball, but it just wasn't her cup of tea. I enjoy mixing with different partners. The subdivision where we live has a very active pickleball community.

#### When did you begin playing chess?

My father first taught me at the age of six. I became a little more serious about the game in late junior high school. A leg injury had me missing several weeks of school. A neighbor, who was a good chess player, volunteered to check in on me during the day while my parents were at work. After he made sure any homework was completed, we would settle in for an afternoon of chess. When I finally was able to go back to school and back to our school chess club, I suddenly found that I had improved from the lower middle of our group to one of the top two or three players. That eventually led to an interest in postal and then over-the-board, rated chess.

**Interestingly, I started out similar to you by playing postal first, then over the board. Do you still play postal chess?**

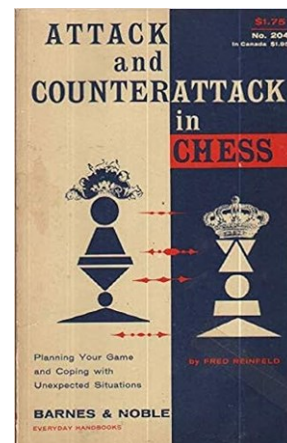
I gave up postal chess many years ago (mid-1980's). However, it has again tweaked my interest. I may pick it up again soon.

#### When did you begin collecting Chess books?

I obtained my first chess book around the age of twelve (about 1970). I guess I technically starting collecting chess books then, since I still have that first book. I was in a resort area in 1980 at the end of the season ... a small book store was going out of business and was vastly discounting its stock. I asked about chess books ... the manager appeared with two boxes of books on various games, of which maybe 15–20 were about chess. I bought them all! I collect chess sets as well. I am fortunate to have around 125 chess sets and about 900 chess books in my home office with numerous boxes of other chess books that are recent acquisitions I haven't cataloged and displayed yet. Of the sets, about one-third are antique/vintage (of those, eleven are antique Jaques sets) ... Plus, I have numerous sets that are reproductions. Some sets are just sentimental ... such as the first sets my parents gave me. Regarding the books ... probably almost half are antique/vintage ... My heaviest collecting focus is on tournaments. I only have a handful of books on openings, defenses or endings.

#### What was that first chess book you got?

My first chess book was *Attack and Counter Attack in Chess* by Fred Reinfeld.



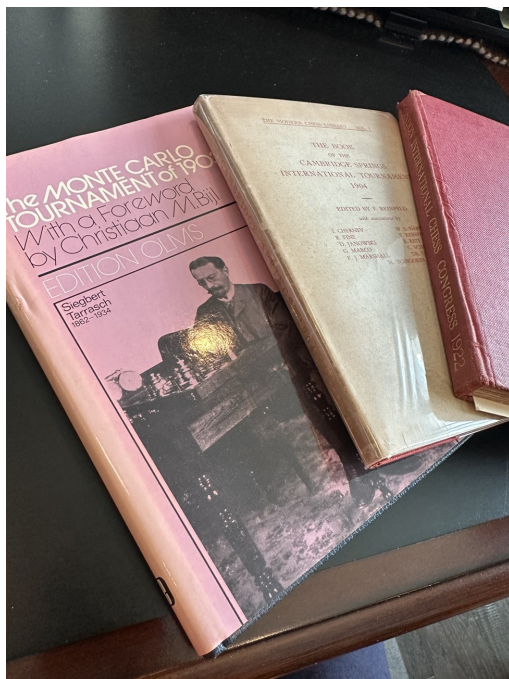
**Did you see our last issue that featured Jon Crumiller and his amazing chess set collection?**

Yes, I did! I have long admired Mr. Crumiller's collection and have read a couple of articles about it over the years. My own favorite set has to be my first antique set ... the one mentioned below that my wife Sheri gave to me for Christmas in the late 1990's. It is a circa late 1860's–1870 Jaques, standard size "Steinitz" set with original box and label. If I had to part with my collection, this would be the last set to go!



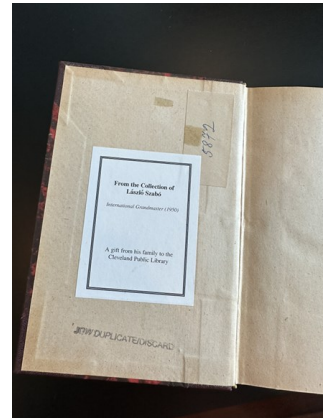
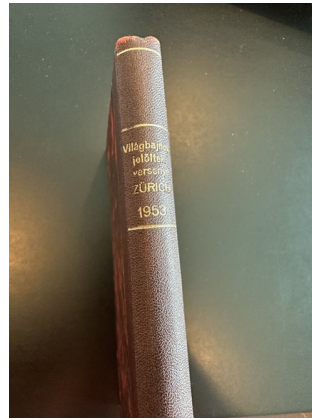
Some of my favorite books are tournament books as well. Do you have a few that are your favorites?

Several come to mind: *Cambridge Springs 1904* for its historical significance. *Zurich 1953* for the quality of the participants and games. The *Monte Carlo* books from the early 1900's, as well as *Cambridge Springs 1904* and *London International Chess Congress 1922* are some of my favorites. Here is a picture of three favorite tournament books: *Monte Carlo 1903*, *Cambridge Springs 1904* and *London 1922*.



What are some of your favorite books you have collected?

Over the last 10–12 years, the focus of my collection has been on antique/vintage tournament books, pre–1970. I especially enjoy the era from about 1900–1940. I like books on famous matches and players during that same era. I have a vintage, hard–back copy of *Zurich 1953* from the personal library of Laszlo Szabo.



Tell us a story or two about how you got some of these books?

*Monte Carlo 1903* and *London 1922* were two of the first tournament books that I owned. I believe *London* came from a catalog or advertisement I saw in *Chess Life & Review*. I do not recall how I obtained *Monte Carlo*. I remember playing through the games in these books on one of the first chess sets my parents gave me.

What's your most prized possession?

That is tough to pin down ... I love several of my antique chess sets and books. I have an ivory chess set left to me by a dear chess friend. A retired judge, he was a member of our local chess club. He knew how much I loved all things chess and left me the set, noting that it would be "in good hands." As far as a favorite book? Several of my antique tournament books immediately come to mind. Picking just one would be impossible for me!





**Do you have lots of your books autographed?**

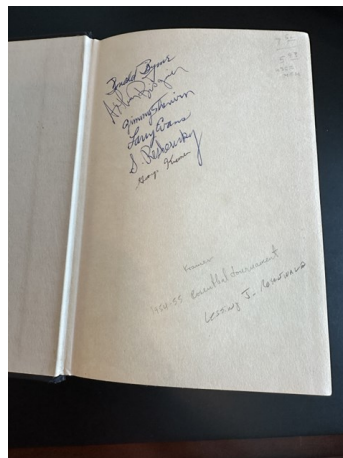
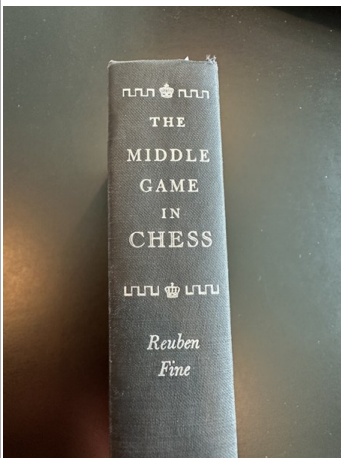
I have about 30 – 35 of my books autographed by famous players or authors.

**Who are a few of these famous players or authors?**

Some of the autographs I have obtained are: GM Robert & IM Donald Byrne, GM Walter Browne, GM Samuel Reshevsky, GM Art Bisguier, Dr. Holger Langer, just to name a few.

### Any good stories about getting autographs?

One very good one: a very close friend and fellow chess player gifted me a special book for Christmas. The book itself is not an exceptionally rare one: it is a vintage hardback copy of Reuben Fine's *The Middle Game in Chess*. My friend obtained the book as a youngster. Having an interest in chess, his father took him to see some of the games being played in the 1954–1955 Lessing J. Rosenwald Tournament. There were 6 participants: Donald Byrne (didn't become IM until 1962), GM Art Bisguier, IM Jimmy Sherwin, IM Larry Evans (didn't receive the GM title until 1957), GM Sam Reshevsky and George Kramer. During the course of the tournament, my friend was able to obtain autographs from the first five noted above, but not Mr. Kramer. When the book was gifted to me, I made a feeble attempt to see if I could locate Mr. Kramer with no luck ... I shelved the book and forgot about it. Fast forward to the December 2019 issue of *Chess Life*. I was reading an article on the Dubrovnik Olympiad, and Mr. Kramer was mentioned. The author of the article noted that Mr. Kramer was still with us and was interviewed for the article (he was 88 in 2019). This prompted me to begin my search again. After some research, I found an article regarding a paper that Mr. Kramer (now Dr. Kramer) had written. In the on-line article, there was a link to send Dr. Kramer a message if you had questions or comments about the letter. I reached out and within a couple of days we were corresponding. Residing in New Jersey, he had me send him the book, which he kindly autographed and included a nice note ... I was very excited when I received the book! I now have all 6 autographs in one book! What luck that Dr. Kramer was still with us and was the only one who hadn't signed it! We have corresponded a couple of times since then and I hope to meet him someday soon. He noted that he has a son living in Delaware, only about 90 minutes from my home.



### What strategies have you used to get books?

None really: I do follow various collector's sites as well as eBay etc. ... Many folks know I collect chess books and sets and keep an eye out for me!

### What is your favorite bookstore to purchase from?

I really do not have a favorite. I live in an area where there are not a lot of book retailers or used book stores ... and the few that exist rarely have books on chess.

### Have you gone to any of the book auctions?

No, I have not, but it is on my list to do some day!

### Do you have a favorite publisher?

No, I do not, but I do like the vintage Bell books.

### Have you written any books yourself?

No, I have never written any books, but I do enjoy writing and research. I did submit a story to *Chess Life* about ten years ago that they strongly considered publishing, but, ultimately, did not. One of my job responsibilities was corresponding with clients and staff regularly, submitting proposals, completing narratives for reports. Tasks that I enjoyed.

### Do you read everything you have collected?

Read all cover to cover?? I would be lying to you if I answered yes, however, I have read many of them...especially the games collections of famous players and tournaments. I have opened and at least read part of every book that I have (in English).

### What draws you to want more books?

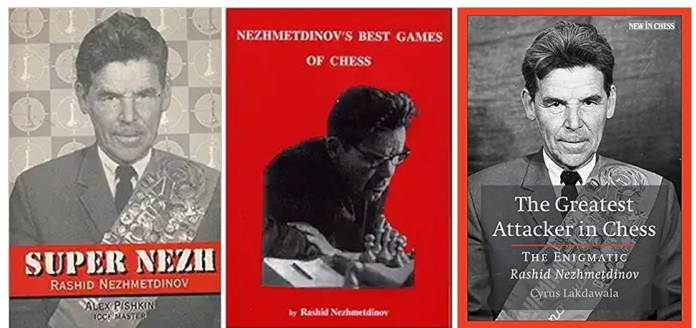
Excellent question and one that my wife asks me several times a year .... Since I enjoy tournament books, as I read through them, there are usually numerous references to other games from other tournaments ... I will check my library to see if I have that specific book and if not ... well ... that prompts me to want that title.

### Who is your favorite player?

I like several players, especially those active in the early to mid-1900's. Capablanca probably heads the list. I also love the games of Nezhmetdinov. GM Walter Browne is a more contemporary favorite. I had the pleasure of meeting and playing Mr. Browne in a simul in 2006 in Las Vegas. He was very gracious and informative, taking a few minutes at the end of the simul to go over our game, as well as inquiring about where I was from, family etc. ... He autographed a copy of *Wijk aan Zee 1974* for me, which was one of his excellent tournament successes.

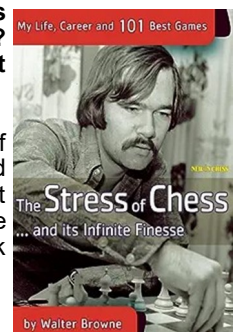
### Do you have Nezhmetdinov's book *Super Nezh: Rashid Nezhmetdinov, Chess Assassin* published by Thinker's Press?

Yes, I do have this title as well as two others: *Nezhmetdinov's Best Games of Chess* and *The Greatest Attacker in Chess: The Enigmatic Rashid Nezhmetdinov*.



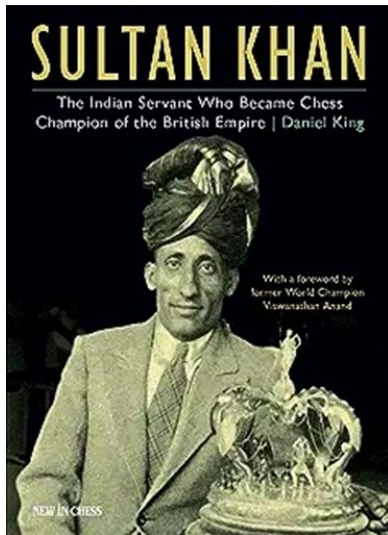
I enjoyed GM Walter Browne's biography book that came out a few years back *The Stress of Chess: My Life, Career and 101 Best Games*. Do you have this book? If so, what did you think of it? What stood out to me was the constant time trouble Browne had.

Yes, I do have this book. I found many of the games and some of the stories behind the games interesting. I do relate, in that time trouble is something I personally have struggled with in the past. I found the book to be enjoyable as well.



## What is your favorite biography?

I picked up a copy of *Sultan Khan* by Daniel King a few years ago. I find his meteoric rise to the upper levels of chess fascinating. I enjoy playing through games from that era which adds to my enjoyment of the book.



## What's your favorite opening book?

I enjoy KP Openings as white ... I like playing c3 against the Sicilian, so *The c3 Sicilian* by IM Gary Lane is one I reference a lot. Another book that has given me a number of quick wins as white is *New Sicilian Gambits* by GM Andrew Soltis.

## Do you have a favorite endings book?

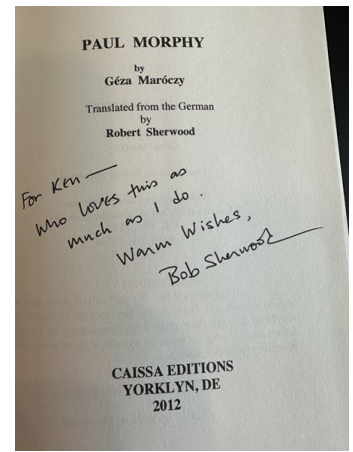
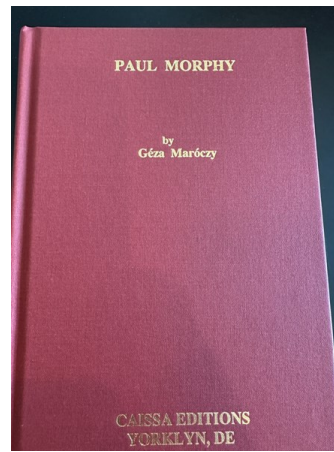
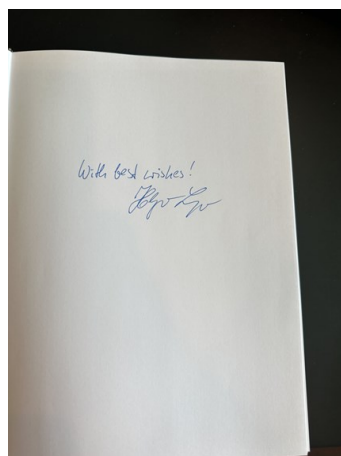
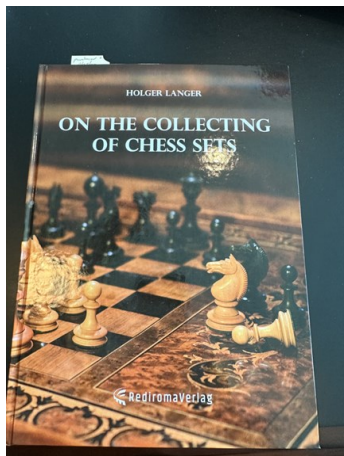
No, but I feel like you can't go wrong with *Basic Chess Endings* by Fine.

## What is your favorite tactics book?

I don't have a favorite, but all of the books about Tal are fun to play through for tactics.

## Do you have a favorite book overall?

I enjoy all of my vintage, hard-back tournament books. Two recent acquisitions are *On the Collecting Of Chess Sets* by Holger Langer and *Paul Morphy* by Geza Maroczy. The former, which is an excellent book, is autographed by Dr. Langer and the latter was an autographed gift from the translator, Robert Sherwood.



## Do you have a favorite game someone has played?

Actually, two or three. Of course, Bobby Fischer's "Game of The Century" comes out on top. Nezhmetdinov vs. Chernikov (Russian Federation Team Championship 1962) is another game that ranks near the top as does Larsen vs. Petrosian (Piatigorsky Cup, 1966).

**Byrne, Donald - Fischer, Robert James [D97]** New York Rosenwald-03 New York (8), 17.10.1956

1. d1f3 d1f6 2. c4 g6 3. d3 d7 4. d4 0-0 5. d4 d5 6. b3 dxc4 7. xc4 c6 8. e4 b7 9. d1 b6 10. c5 d4 11. d5 d4 12. a3 dxc3 13. bxc3 dxe4 14. dxe7 b6 15. d4 dxc3 16. d5 f8+ 17. f1 d6 18. dxb6 dxc4+ 19. g1 e2+ 20. f1 dxd4+ 21. g1 e2+ 22. f1 d3+ 23. g1 axb6 24. b4 d4 25. b6 dxd1 26. h3 dxa2 27. h2 dxf2 28. e1 dxe1 29. d8+ d8 30. dxe1 d5 31. f3 d4 32. b8 b5 33. h4 h5 34. d5 d7 35. g1 d5+ 36. f1 d3+ 37. e1 d4+ 38. d1 d3+ 39. c1 e2+ 40. b1 d3+ 41. c1 d2# 0-1

**Nezhmetdinov, Rashid - Chernikov, Oleg L [B35]** Rostov on Don Rostov on Don, 1962

1. e4 c5 2. d3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. dxd4 g6 5. d3 d7 6. d3 d6 7. d4 0-0 8. d3 d6 9. d3 d6 10. d3 d6 11. 0-0 d6 12. d3 d6 13. d3 d6 14. d3 d6 15. d3 d6 16. d3 d6 17. d3 d6 18. d3 d6 19. d3 d6 20. d3 d6 21. d3 d6 22. d3 d6 23. d3 d6 24. f4 d5 25. d3 d6 26. d3 d6 27. d3 d6 28. d3 d6 29. d3 d6 30. d3 d6 31. d3 d6 32. d3 d6 33. d3 d6 1-0

**Larsen, Bent - Petrosian, Tigran V [B39]** Piatigorsky-Cup 2nd Santa Monica (7), 27.07.1966

1. e4 c5 2. d3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. dxd4 g6 5. d3 d7 6. c4 d6 7. d3 d6 8. d3 d6 9. d3 d6 10. d3 d6 11. d3 d6 12. 0-0 0-0 13. d3 d6 14. d3 d6 15. f4 d5 16. f5 d6 17. d3 d6 18. f6 h6 19. f2 d6 20. e5 d5 21. d4 d5 22. d5 d6 23. d3 d6 24. d6 d7 25. d3 d6 26. d3 d6 27. d6+ f7 28. d3 d6 29. d3 d6 30. d3 d6 1-0

## Anything else you would like to tell us?

Chess has allowed me to meet many interesting people, play in many different cities and venues, and expand my knowledge of other cultures. I once again have to thank my wonderful wife Sheri ... she has supported and encouraged my chess hobby, and is actually the one who sparked my interest in collecting antique chess sets and antique chess books. As a surprise Christmas present in 1998, she gave me an antique Jaques set. From that day, I was "all-in"...hook, line & sinker! Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share my love of chess with you.



Long Room at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, photo by Mark Capron.

## Library Focus:

Andy Tichenor

### Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I started playing in tournaments seriously in 1998 and my high school team won state titles in 1999 and 2000 (I was board two). I was top 12 scholastically in the state of Maryland in 2000. I continued to pursue chess on the side while at Bucknell University and made expert shortly after graduation in 2005. I improved to National Master in 2009 while up in Boston for work and have been 2100 USCF or higher ever since. I made a lot of good friends and had enjoyment collecting autographs.



### What do you do for a living?

I'm an accountant at an oversight group controlled by the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission), a quasi-government organization. I received my business management degree from Bucknell University and Masters in accounting from Boston College. I landed the CPA title in 2010, too.

### When did you begin playing chess?

I started playing in high school chess club as a freshman in 1997. The team was me and another strong, A player leading the way, with other talent to fill in.

### When did you begin collecting Chess books?

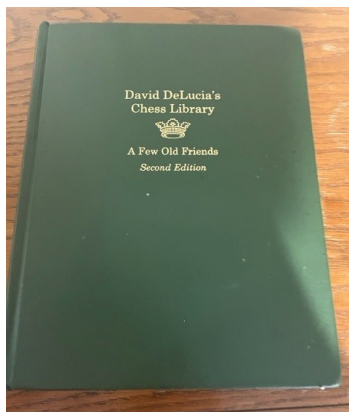
I began collecting books around 2003 while at Bucknell University. Most were opening books, early on.

### Do you recall what the first book you ever had was?

The first book I ever read was *My System* by Nimzovitch.

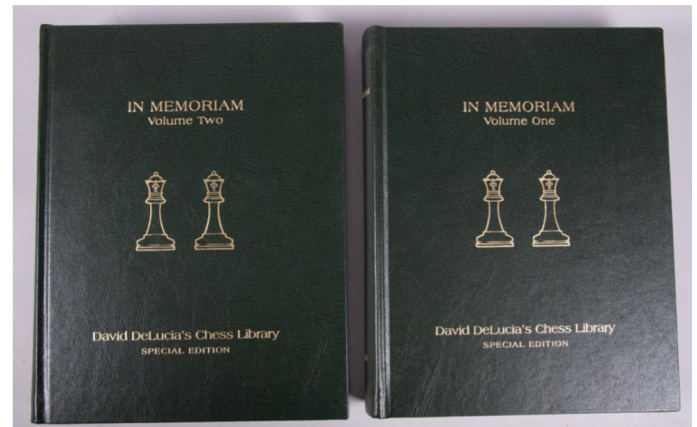
### What are some of your favorite books you have collected?

David DeLucia's *A Few Old Friends* and *In Memoriam* are high on the list. Both are excellent guides for general collecting of chess memorabilia, especially autographs. Are they expensive? Yes, but worth it.



### Tell us a story or two about how you got some of these books?

I found a lady on a business trip in 2019 who gave away 250 free chess books to me.



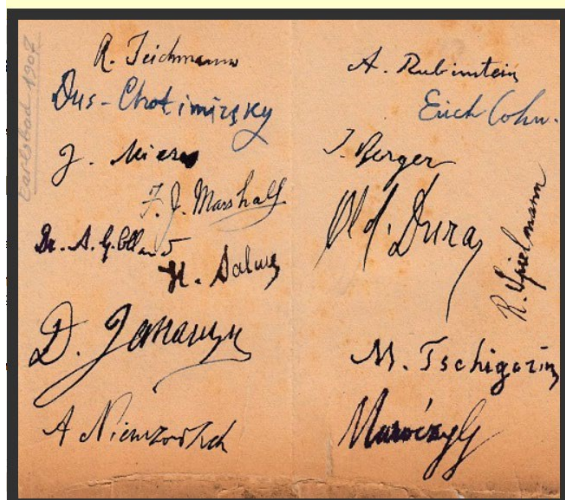
The worst part was the local club declined them (always good resources to help out locals or use them as door prizes at tournaments, so their club missed the boat), and I had to transport them from Charlotte to Washington DC in a Nissan Rogue along with my work equipment. Quite the little detour one would say.

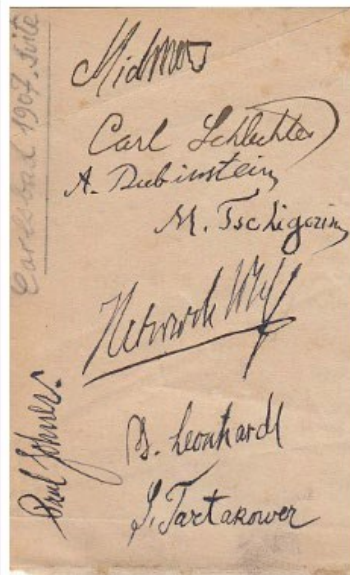
### Would you please elaborate a bit more on this story and add a few titles you were able to obtain. Why the lady was getting rid of the books in the first place? How did you find out about her in the first place?

Some of the lady's books were *Anand's Best Games*, *Kramnik's Best Games*, *Starting Out: Sicilian Dragon*, and *Chess Explained: The French Defense* among others. It was labeled as family junk she was looking to get rid of and out of the house. The thing that really blew me away was a chess club not taking the items. Sometimes, I see a family gets stuck with chess books from older relatives and just gives them away for nothing, but a chess club?

### What's your most prized possession?

The entire set of all the autographs from Karlsbad 1907. Two different cards containing all the autographs and a true piece of chess history.





### How did you obtain all these autographs?

Karlsbad 1907: I made a joint bid with a friend of mine. We bid \$1,250 together, as I did him a few favors over the years in locating good items. We literally could not go any higher and we won it at LSAK auction. Only 50% of autographs were on first sheet. Then, 3 months later, a similar item from the same tournament came up for auction with LSAK Chess Book Auctions with Lund Chess Academy based in Sweden. It went for less, but a similar strategy was deployed. We won again and so got the whole set. Took me a while to pay off my friend, but well worth it. Lesson learned was

### Do you have lots of your books autographed?

Ironically, no, except two written by Capablanca.

**That is interesting. I was going through my collection recently and I was surprised at how many books I had autographs on. I do not have any real memorabilia like you though.**

### Any good stories about getting autographs?

My best story was in 2012. I found a lady on Craigslist by searching for a Capablanca autograph on Google. She had two signed books by Capablanca (*My Chess Career* and *Chess Fundamentals*). First editions. She had no bank account and was living in the backwoods of New Mexico. I tried calling her nine times. No success. On the tenth try, she picked up. The books belonged to her grandfather. She was down on her luck and needed the money. The problem was I needed to send \$1,000 via Western Union with no real assurance this wasn't a scam. I took a chance (wouldn't do this now with a family to support) and sent the money. The books arrived safely and were in near mint condition. They are worth about \$3,000 each and sit in a locked safe at my parents' home. The thing that really blew me away was the condition was about as good as you could get considering the age. Also, his signature in both books was bold and strong.

trust in friendship, it can go a long way.

**Unfortunately, by the time of publication we could not get a picture of the books.**

### What strategies have you used to obtain books?

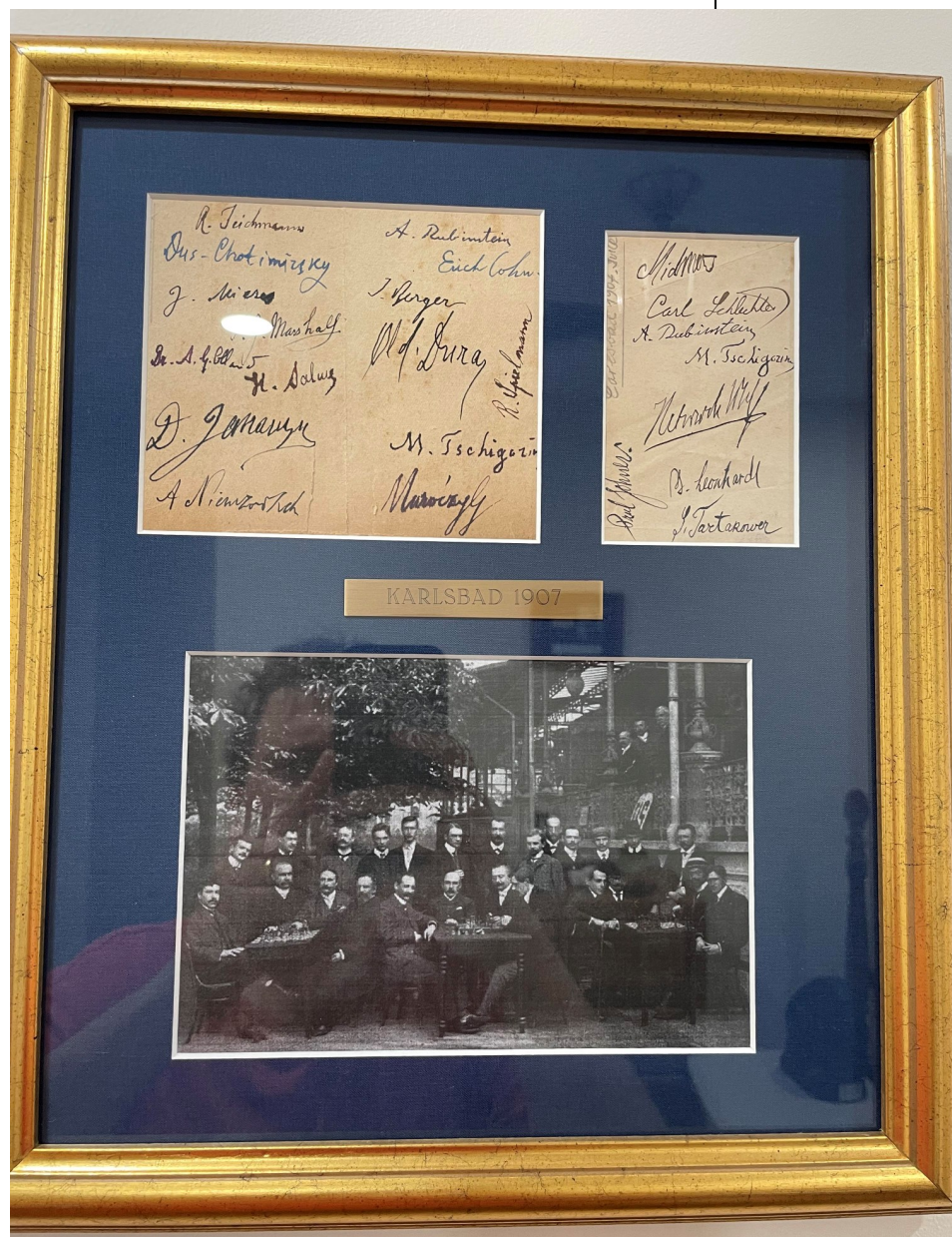
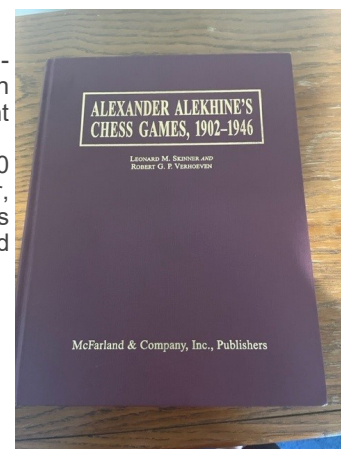
I spend time perusing USCF Sales for discounts and social media websites for good deals. People outside of chess always sell books for way too little or way too much. There is always something out there each month. I've tried to make good relationships with various vendors in USA to be able to make trades that benefit both sides.

### What is your favorite bookstore to purchase from?

eBay. Generally, you can find really good deals on there.

### Are there good used bookstores in your area?

The only one is Second Story Books in Rockville, Maryland, as they have some excellent hard cover books. I picked up *Alekhine* McFarland hard-cover in near mint condition for \$90 this year, which was a good deal.



### Do you have a favorite publisher?

McFarland, as they produce great books with beautiful bindings. Historical mostly, but extremely in-depth.

**Have you written any books yourself?**

Never attempted, but wrote for the DC Chess League blog from 2015 to 2022. The blog went away, as my friend was paying \$50 annually for it, and didn't want to sponsor a website. My final article was a discussion on Hans Niemann.

## Do you read everything you have collected?

Generally, yes.

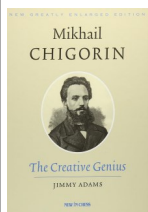
### What draws you to want more books?

Learning more about the history of the game. Also, I enjoy the creativity of chess in general at the highest level.

### Who is your favorite player?

Capablanca

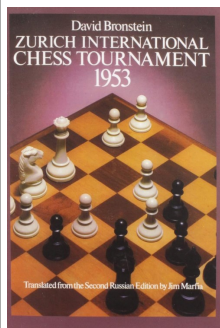
### What is your favorite biography?



*Mikhail Chigorin Creative Genius*. For a year, I brought it on the train ride to work each day and read it. It was so beat up by the end, the book literally broke in half due to so much wear and tear. I luckily acquired a new copy for \$45 from a vendor in Georgia who is a nice guy (even though the book retails for \$110 usually).

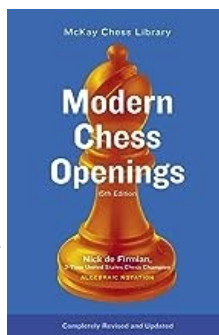
### What is your favorite tournament book?

*Zurich 1953.*



### What's your favorite opening book?

People may think it is an average book, but I really liked *Modern Chess Openings* by de Firmian, growing up. It is a solid repertoire, crash course, book for basically any opening you will see at a level below 2300 FIDE. If



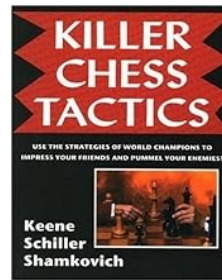
you know the ideas in the book down cold, you will be fine in terms of playing against anyone FM or lower. Also, it is relatively inexpensive now.

**Do you have a favorite endings book?**

*Fundamental Chess Endings* by Müller. A terrific book with real life examples one will encounter in their games whether it be blitz or classical.

### What is your favorite tactics book?

**Killer Chess Tactics.** Despite being written by Schiller, who is generally not well regarded among Facebook groups, I liked the book. The reason I like it is my parents gave this book to me as a birthday gift when I turned 21. They



explained how they tried so hard to get a chess book I could use and would like. I won't forget the smile on their faces when they gave it to me. Other books on tactics are knowledgeably much better, but this one holds a special place in my heart.

**Do you have a favorite book overall?**

*Alekhine's Game Collection* in maroon hardcover by McFarland. This one sets the gold standard for a games collection. It's very expensive, but well worth the price. It shows every game Alekhine played and is well annotated. I am looking forward to seeing the Lasker one later this year, as I imagine it will be similar in greatness and style.

**Do you have a favorite book series?**

*My Great Predecessors* by Kasparov. Excellent book series showing the highlights of the greats from 1750–2000. Kasparov is a masterful writer, and his analysis is extremely strong. Very few players of his strength can explain the ideas as well as he can. To me, that laborious effort to write all 5 volumes was his gift back to the chess community.

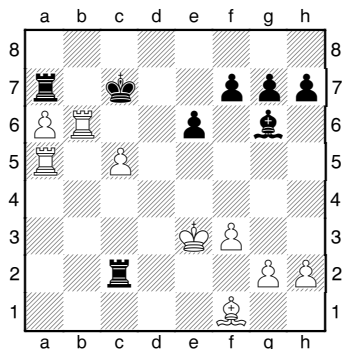


**Do you have a favorite game somebody's played?**

Kramnik's final win over Topalov. The match was very dramatic and it all came down to the final tie break game of game four. I rushed back from grad school class at Boston College that day to watch the final game. When Topalov blunders with  $\text{Bxc5}$ , it was as if Caissa came down from the sky to give Kramnik the title he deserved. Topalov was never the same again, and Kramnik passed the torch to Anand who is a great representation of true goodness in chess. The closest thing we will get to the "good guy wins in the end" story.

**Kramnik,Vladimir (2743) - Topalov,Veselin (2813) [D47] World**  
-ch Kramnik-Topalov playoff Elista (4), 13.10.2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♖f3 ♖f6 4.♗c3 e6 5.e3 ♗bd7 6.♗d3 dxc4 7.♗xc4 b5 8.♗e2 ♗b7 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.e4 b4 11.e5 bxc3 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.bxc3 c5 14.dxc5 ♗xc5 15.♗b5+ ♖f8 16.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 17.♗a3 ♗c8 18.♗d4 ♗e7 19.♗fd1 a6 20.♗f1 ♗a4 21.♗ab1 ♗e4 22.♗b3 ♗xa3 23.♗xa3 ♗c5 24.♗b3 ♖e7 25.♗d4 ♗g6 26.c4 ♗c6 27.♗xc5 ♗xc5 28.♗xa6 ♗b8 29.♗d1 ♗b2 30.♗a7+ ♖f6 31.♗a1 ♗f5 32.♗f3 33.♗a3 ♗c2 34.♗b3 ♗a5 35.a4 ♗e7 36.♗b5 ♗a7 37.a5 ♗d6 38.a6 ♖c7 39.e5 ♗c3 40.♗aa5 ♗c1 41.♗b3 ♖c6 42.♗b6+ ♗c7 43.♖f2 ♗c2+ 44.♖e3



45. Bxc5? 45. Bb7+  
1-0

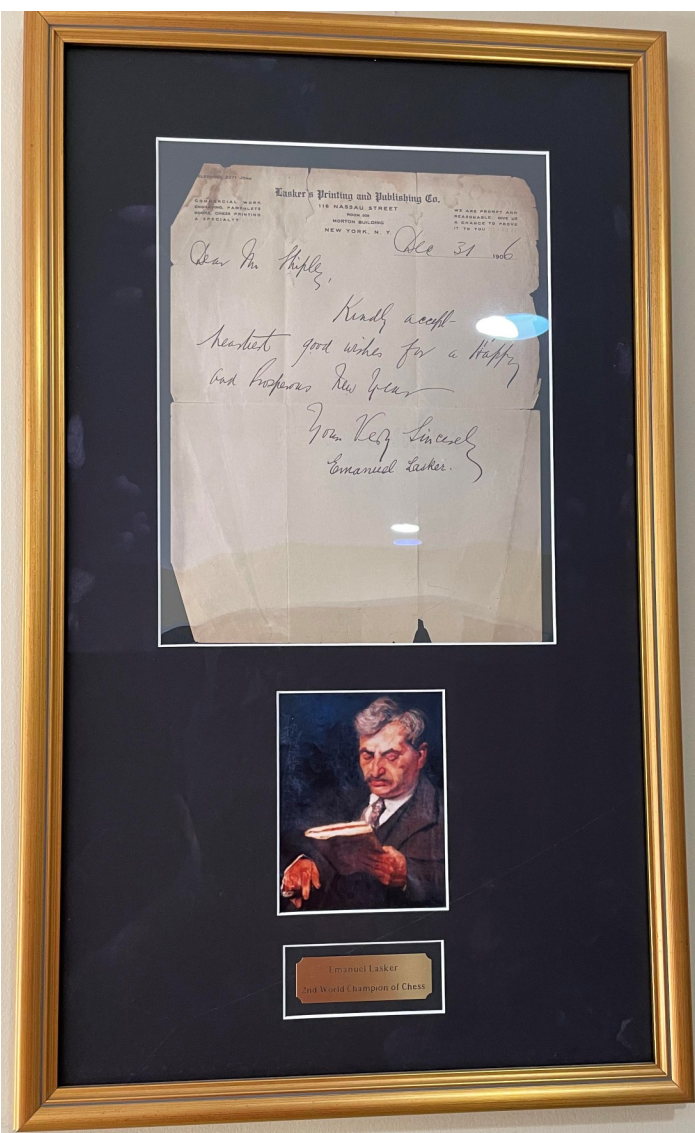
Do you care if your books are in descriptive or algebraic?

Algebraic only! As I won't buy books in descriptive.

Anything else you would like to tell us?

I love collecting autographs of famous players like Capablanca, Smyslov and Fischer. Despite not playing in tournaments anymore, it keeps me connected to the chess world and allows my children to see my appreciation for chess history. Partly as a result, my older son finally took up learning chess this summer. That alone made the journey worth it.

Thank you.




*Para mi amigo  
Sures Rafael  
J. R. Capablanca*



JOSE RAOUL CAPABLANCA  
3RD WORLD CHESS CHAMPION

*R. H. S. Stevenson Esq.  
47 Garden Road  
London S.W. 4.*

*J. R. Capablanca*

<p><i>play to-morrow - Sir Uuar called me this morning. Said he would come to see me Monday - Yours sincerely J. R. Capablanca P.S. I am going out this afternoon to Sir Horace Plunkett's country home. Expect to be back to night</i></p>	<p> Carlton Hotel, Pall Mall, London, S.W. 1. Saturday 2.30 P.M.</p> <p><i>Dear Mr. Stevenson: Just got your letter. Have tried to get in touch with you by phone both at the Gaiety and at Stop 5800 without success. Please call me up to-morrow morning at 10.00 10.30 - I do not the address of the place where I am to</i></p>
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## #26: Why write about chess?

### The benefits of writing that might encourage YOU to get started

[JUNTA IKEDA](#) writes a blog entitled “Infinite Chess.” It comes out approximately once per week. Junta is an Australian IM. This blog is reprinted here with his permission.



Here is a link: [Junta Ikeda | Substack](#)

After 6 months of publishing posts about chess (and half-way to my original ‘goal’ for 2023, 50 posts), I feel it’s a good time to touch on the act of writing itself.

Writing about chess, while not easy, is a rewarding and fulfilling activity. Though I’m still early on in my journey, here are a few reasons I would recommend it to others:

#### 1. Self-expression

Writing about chess gives you a platform for expressing your unique thoughts, insights and perspectives on the game.

- Putting yourself out there is scary. You have doubts about whether your writing is any good, and the question, “*why am I even doing this?*” crosses your mind all the time. However, if you persevere and keep hitting that *Publish* button, **you can grow in confidence as you overcome the waves of doubt and fear each time—and you can find out more about yourself and grow in the process.** The fear and doubt still remain, you just get a bit better at managing them over time.
- **Tapping into your creative side stimulates your brain, is cathartic and can relieve stress.** You might have spent years of your life on chess, but creating content on it is a whole new ball game. **Working on improving your writing enriches you and allows you to connect deeper with yourself.**

#### 2. Connecting with and giving value to others

**Writing about chess allows you to connect with readers and other writers who are also passionate about chess.** Having others appreciate something you’ve created that means a lot to you feels great, and it’s rewarding hearing you’ve been able to help someone with their chess—even someone on the other side of the world!

- **Since starting in February, I’ve had quite a few players go out of their way to approach me at tour-**

**naments,** telling me they enjoy my writing. I’ve also received kind words online through comments and emails. To be honest, publishing consistently is hard work, but I’ve received a lot of support and every time I hear my writing has been helpful or interesting, it feels like it’s all been worth it.

- **By writing about chess, you can contribute to the learning and growth of fellow chess enthusiasts.** Your insights might help players improve their skills, gain a deeper understanding of the game or even invite newcomers to the game. With the rise in popularity of chess over the last few years, now is a better time than ever to create content, and I believe *everyone* has a market they can write for.

#### 3. Meaningful action

When I was younger, how I’d perform at chess tournaments meant the world to me. Although I’m still working on my chess and striving to improve, I have other things that also mean a lot to me now, including writing.

By creating things borne out of your unique experiences and insights, you can help and inspire others online and also OTR (over-the-reality). Transcending space and time, you can impact the world through the things you publish and share.

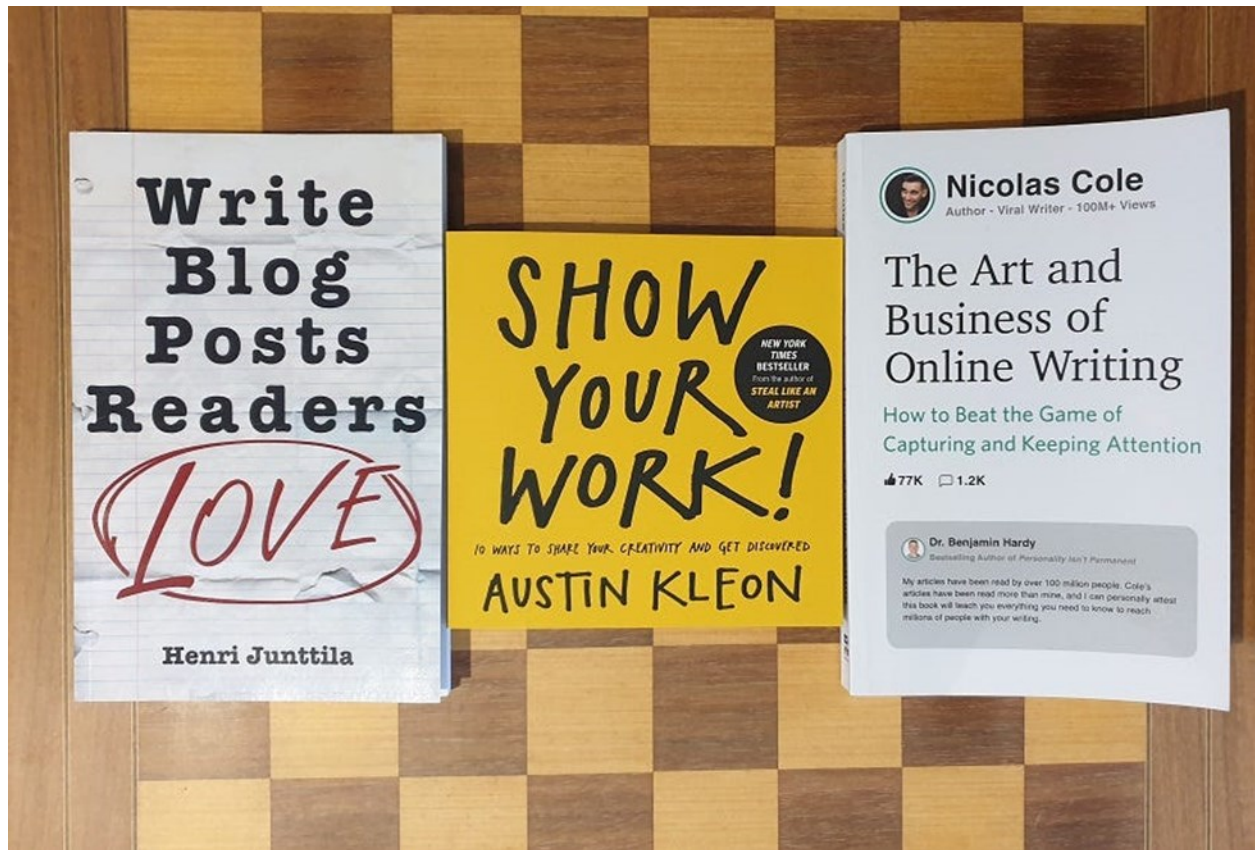
Chess, which has captivated millions of people around the world for centuries, is evolving in the 21st century with the advent of computers and the Internet. There are many ways you can be a part of the chess community—playing, coaching, writing, creating courses, creating videos, streaming, organising and helping out at events. For some of you, writing might be the one that suits your personality or interests.

**Chess and writing are both timeless endeavours that connect and inspire people—and I believe the combination of the two, writing about chess, has a strong future.**

**Writing about chess: where to start**

It's easier than ever to write about chess online—you can start on Lichess or Chess.com. You can also try other platforms like Substack, Medium or X (Twitter).

Since deciding to start writing online, I wanted to learn about it and improve so since last year I've read various books on writing, writing online and marketing. Here are three very accessible books that are good starting points for inspiration and guidance:



*The truth is you already know what it's like. You already know the difference between the size and speed of everything that flashes through you and the tiny inadequate bit of it all you can ever let anyone know. As though inside you is this enormous room full of what seems like everything in the whole universe at one time or another and yet the only parts that get out have to somehow squeeze out through one of those tiny keyholes you see under the knob in older doors. As if we are all trying to see each other through these tiny keyholes.*

*But it does have a knob, the door can open. But not in the way you think...The truth is you've already heard this. That this is what it's like. That it's what makes room for the universes inside you, all the endless inbent fractals of connection and symphonies of different voices, the infinities you can never show another soul. And you think it makes you a fraud, the tiny fraction anyone else ever sees? Of course you're a fraud, of course what people see is never you. And of course you know this, and of course you try to manage what part they see if you know it's only a part. Who wouldn't?*

—David Foster Wallace, *Good Old Neon*

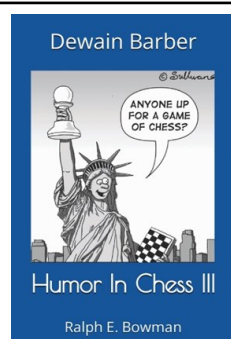
Thanks for reading Infinite Chess! Subscribe for free to receive new posts and support my work.

[#25: Why write about chess?](#)

## Humor in Chess III

By Dewain Barber and Ralph E. Bowman

Reviewed by Mark Capron



Do these titles intrigue you? “You’re So Mean,” “The Blue Line,” “Wife Knows Everything,” and “Chess Elbow.” They did me as I read the newest book in the [Humor in Chess](#) trilogy. This is but a drop in the hat as there are many, many more stories in the 294–page book. The book is a collection of stories with a humorous slant. Some much more slanted than others. A particularly slanted one is found on pages 54–56 entitled

chessboard. All right, I admit to being easily intrigued. ... You see, knights of the standard (Staunton) design are the only chess pieces displaying an overt asymmetry. ... How does the average player orient his knights? ... For example, one almost never comes across a knight sitting with its head facing *toward* its own back rank in effect “mooning” the opposition. ... Still, it is quite amusing to imagine some future psychologist turning to his patient and saying, “That was a very interesting ink blot interpretation, Mr. Jones. Why don’t we take a break now and play a game of chess? Here, you set up the board.” – Bob Basalla

Some of the stories are well ... just stories and don’t really have much slant such as page 188’s

### Loopholes

“Rule–makers have to be careful to avoid leaving loopholes in the rules. In 1895, Samuel Lipschutz exploited a rules–loophole in his match versus Showalter. Lipschutz had to seal his move at adjournment, when his King was in check from a knight. All four of his legal moves were King moves, but he needed more time to decide which one to make. So he deliberately sealed an illegal move. When the sealed move was opened, the math official applied the “penalty” for illegal sealed moves, which under the current rules was that Lipschutz had to move his King! Since that’s what he wanted to do anyway the “penalty” had merely given him more analysis time during adjournment to decide which King move to make (and he won the game 64 moves later).” –Robert J. McCrary

Not having much “slant” doesn’t make it bad. Many of these stories were quite interesting. I am just not sure everything in the book fits into the “Humor in Chess” category. By book three in the trilogy, I can imagine the authors may have been looking for a few filler items and although interesting just didn’t have as much humor.

Two stories that I thought particularly humorous were **Desperate Chess Wife** submitted by Ronald Nurmi on pages 271–273 and **Letter From A Chess–Players Wife** submitted by Pete Tamburro on pages 258–263.

I enjoyed the book and would recommend it for a lighthearted look at the “wild west” characters of the game.

### Must–Learn Tactics for Chess

#### The “Pretend You Know What You’re Doing” Tactic

“This tactic is perfect for those moments when you have absolutely no idea what your next move should be. Simply stare intently at the board, stroke your chin, and mumble something about “sacrificing a pawn” or “opening up the king’s bishop.” Your opponent will be so impressed by your apparent knowledge that he will probably make a mistake and you can take advantage of it.

...

Now, I must warn you that some of these tactics may not be entirely ethical or sportsmanlike. But hey, if it works, it works, right? So go forth and conquer the chessboard, my friends! And remember, no matter what happens, always blame your losses on bad luck or the fact that the sun was in your eyes.”

–Jesse Cohen.

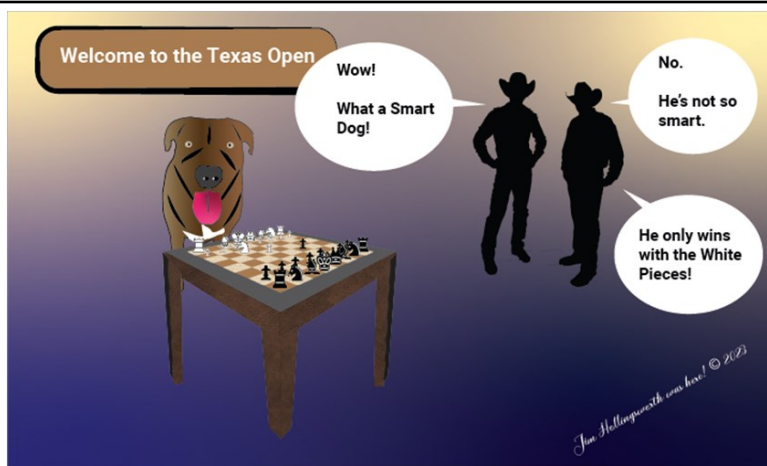
Sometimes there are one–liners that put a giggle on your face such as:

“One time I found myself a queen up on a grandmaster. Then he recaptured.” – Bob Basalla

Other times the stories make you think:

#### Are You An Innie Or An Outie? On pages 95–99.

“There is a suspicion that certain aspects of someone’s personality can be revealed by the small things they do, that little quirks can provide clues to a person’s true nature. ... A choice of openings, the style of play, or even the method of moving the pieces, provide opportunities for insight into the black box of a human mind. ... He has a choice of how to place his knights on the



# Korchnoi Year by Year, Volume I (1945—1968)

By Hans Renette and Tibor Karolyi

Reviewed by Mark Capron

## Korchnoi Year by Year Volume I (1945-1968)

Hans Renette Tibor Karolyi



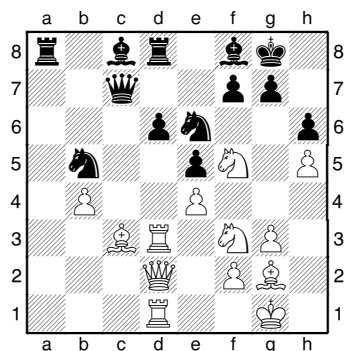
Over the past few months several books have piqued my interest. I was particularly excited to hear about [Korchnoi Year by Year](#). I was particularly surprised it was going to be a three volume set. I have been a Korchnoi fan ever since I read Ray Keene's book on the 1978 World Championship Match Korchnoi played vs. Karpov. Soon after I read two of Korchnoi's books *Persona Non Grata* and *Chess Is My Life* and I was hooked because of

his amazing, crazy life story. The latest Elk and Ruby book by Tibor Karolyi and Hans Renette covers the years 1945—1968. Karolyi has been particularly active in writing these "biography/games" anthologies. The praise that Karolyi dotes on Korchnoi: "I have written books on Soviet world champions Tal, Petrosian, Spassky, Karpov and Kasparov, and judge Korchnoi the second-best among those players at openings, behind Kasparov, as well as the second-best in endgames behind Karpov. Arguably, nobody was a greater and more fearless fighter than him." I have really enjoyed Karolyi's other books and this new work does not disappoint. The 550—page monster contains a few pages of introduction and context then 181 games or game fragments that lead us through Korchnoi's life. His biography is found within the annotations and between the games. One excellent example from pages 340—1: "but those present again saw how phenomenally Korchnoi performed in time trouble. Miroslav Filip, his victim, saw him execute a dazzling combination with seconds on the clock—one which was rewarded with the 2nd—3rd beauty prize"

### Korchnoi, Viktor — Filip, Miroslav [A30]

Interzonal—05 Stockholm (8), 07.02.1962

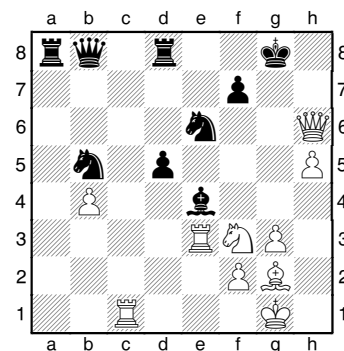
[Karolyi, Tibor]



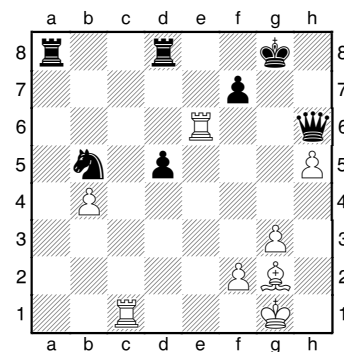
**30.Bxe5!** Korchnoi goes for a tactical line. **30...Bb7?** After **30...dxe5 31.Rxd8 Nxd8 32.Qxd8** Black maintains the balance with the fantastic move **32...Ra1!! 31.Rc1! Qb8**

## Diagram

**32.Bxg7!** Korchnoi destroys Filip's kingside. **32...Bxg7 33.Nxh6+ Bxh6 33...Kf8 34.Ng5 (34.Nf5 wins too) 34...Nxg5 35.Qxg5 Rd7 36.Nf5** and White wins. **34.Qxh6 Bxe4 35.Re3 35.Rd5 Bxd5 36.Ng5 Ra7 37.Bxd5** and White wins as well. **35...d5**



After **35...Bf5 36.Qf6 Bh7 37.Rc4** White wins. **36.Ng5 36.Rxe4 dxe4 37.Ng5 Nxg5 (37...Qa7 38.Bxe4) 38.Qxg5+ Kf8 39.h6** and White wins. **36...Qe5 37.Rxe4 Qxg5 38.Rxe6 Qxh6**



**39.Rxh6** The dust has settled, Korchnoi is two pawns up. **39...Ra4 40.Rb6 Nd4 41.Rc5 1-0**

The *Guardian* reported on 13 February that "In spite of his moderate score, so far the most impressive player on view during the past week was the former Russian champion Victor Korchnoi. The combinations which he conceives and executes with lightning rapidity, usually when only a couple of minutes remain on his clock, envelop the whole board: the way he freed himself in such circumstances against Geller in a seemingly inferior position, or the fantastic combination he unleashed against Filip, who still had 45 minutes to spare against Korchnoi's two, for the better of ten moves roused the numerous spectators to admiration." To a Swede, Korchnoi lifted a corner of the veil surrounding his blitz abilities when asked why he didn't take the d6—pawn in his game with Filip: "If I took the pawn, I was afraid of losing time. In a time crunch, it is easier for me to play sharp positions. Much easier to see forced variations."

The chapter goes on to discuss the rest of the interzonal tournament and the stories that went with it.

Korchnoi wasn't always the player who scored tops in all tournaments he entered. Many times he was middle of the pack. Sure, he showed signs of greatness, but wasn't consistent enough in those early, formative years. As example, see his play in the 1959 Soviet Championship. Tal had won in 1957 and 1958 and was on top of his game. Only Botvinnik had ever won three championships in a row. Korchnoi started strong, winning versus Nezhmetdinov and Bronstein, but then lost to Furman and Spassky back to back. Next he drew several games in a row against players such as Nikitin, Krogius, Kholmov, Taimanov and Yukhtman. Korchnoi then defeated Tal in a key game. He ended the event at +1 and in 9th place.

Korchnoi finally broke through and won the 1960 Soviet Championship. It was a tense battle where he outscored his nearest combatants, Petrosian and Geller, by 0.5. Tal and Botvinnik were absent due to preparing for the world championship, but nevertheless, it seemed Korchnoi had turned the corner.

In 1961 the Soviet Championship was the strongest event of the year by far containing ten grandmasters and ten masters. Korchnoi had another solid performance and finished in second just behind Petrosian. If Korchnoi had not lost to Petrosian on time things may have been different. This event qualified Korchnoi for the interzonal in 1962.

The 1963 Soviet Championship was a disaster for Korchnoi finishing only in 10th place. He had been tired and still suffering from a stomach ulcer that required medicines and tranquilizers to make it through.

In 1964 Korchnoi played strongly and won the Soviet Championship with an impressive score of 15/19 with no defeats. Unfortunately, politics led to him not being invited to the interzonal tournament. In Korchnoi's biography he said he thought this was the year he would have had the best chances to win the world title.

In 1965 Korchnoi was invited to "stay" in Germany, but at that point he politely declined. Later that year he became the world's number one ranked player for four months, the only time in his long career!

In 1967 Korchnoi qualified for the interzonal by placing in the top two of a playoff. The interzonal was held in Africa for the first time. Korchnoi's game against Fischer was a very hard fought draw. Shortly thereafter, Fischer withdrew from the tournament citing issues with the lighting and other organizational deficiencies. In the end, joint second was achieved and with it an invite to the candidates.

1968 brought Korchnoi's first participation in the Wijk aan Zee tournament of which he made the most of, winning by 3.5 points! Following Wijk aan Zee he won his first candidates match vs. Reshevsky 5.5-2.5. The semi-final candidates was another win, this time vs. Tal 5.5-4.5. In the final candidates match Spassky finally took Korchnoi down. Spassky went on to win the WCC.

The book was a great way to get to know Korchnoi better through his ups and downs and also learn a bit about some of his peers and adversaries.

Highly recommended and the next two volumes can't come out soon enough!

## Nikolai Brunni 4/27/1962—5/21/2022

**Nikolai Brunni** was a long time member of the CJA from Hawaii and passed this past year. He was born in Rome, Gerogia. He was interested in chess history and Carsten Hansen said Nikolai was working on a book when he passed away.

From John Donaldson: Nikolai Brunni was a first—rate and prolific chess historian who primarily published his findings at chessgames.com (user name: The Focus). He had a wide range of interests but, like many who came to chess in the 1970s, it was Bobby Fischer who especially captivated him.

Being a chess historian from Honolulu sounds like an oxymoron, but in the digital age Nikolai thrived. He searched long and hard in his Fischer research for old—time acquaintances of Bobby who might have undiscovered materials. Nikolai struck pay dirt when he made contact with Arthur Feuerstein who played Fischer a number of times between 1956 and 1957. The results of their collaboration were published in the April—September 2010 issue of the *Atlantic Chess News*.

The article included a previously unpublished crosstable of the 1956 New York City Open where the young Bobby tied for fifth place. This was the event where future Fischer biographer Frank Brady met his subject for the first time and the crosstable was long thought lost.

This was a great discovery by Nikolai who immediately realized its significance when Feuerstein shared it with him. The chess world owes these two gentlemen a debt for making it available and it serves as but one example of many of Mr. Brunni's unfailing generosity in sharing his findings with others. The chess world, and in particular those interested in the history of the game, will miss him.

*Ed.*

A couple quotes from Nikolai:

'I enjoy the entire history of chess and consider myself a minor historian/researcher. ..' TheFocus

'.. I may only be an Expert player, but I am a grandmaster of research. The description about me that I like the most is that "He can track down the shadow of a whisper." ..' TheFocus

Here is one of Nikolai's games:

### Brunni,Nikolai - Torrance,Robb [E81]

Match (1987) (exhibition) Atlanta (3), 27.09.1987

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♠g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♘ge2 c6 7.♠g5 e5 8.d5 a6 9.g4 h6 10.♠e3 ♠e8 11.b4 g5 12.h4 ♘h7 13.hxg5 ♘xg5 14.♠g2 cxd5 15.cxd5 ♠d7 16.♘g3 f6 17.♘h5 b5 18.a4 bxa4 19.♘xa4 ♠xa4 20.♘xa4 ♘d7 21.0-0 ♠c8 22.♘xd7 ♘xd7 23.♠a5 ♠c7 24.♠b1 ♘f7 25.♠f1 ♠cc8 26.b5 axb5 27.♠xa8 ♠xa8 28.♠xb5 ♘d8 29.♘g3 ♠b8 30.♠a5 ♘h7 31.♠b5 ♘f8 32.♘f5 ♘f7 33.♠a7 ♠c8 34.♠c6 ♘h8 35.♘e7 ♠d8 36.♠b5 ♘h7 37.♠b7 ♘h8 38.♠b8 ♘h7 39.♠c7 ♠a8 40.♘f5 ♠a1+ 41.♘g2 ♠a2+ 42.♘g3 ♠g5 43.♠xd6 1-0

## ChessKeys

### Deflection

By Rachel Schechter

My heart quickened. There she stood at the demo board illustrating the Queen's Gambit opening. She was Kate Thompson: a smart, fearless female who'd enrolled in my winter/spring chess at Franklin Elementary in Minneapolis. I'd been blessed to study with many fine young queens over the years. But this girl seemed to have the *whole* package—fierce, assertive, competitive—a bit of a tom-boy—and surprisingly pleasant. An 11-year-old, fifth grade dynamo who might actually stay with the game when she reached 13. And this was only the first class. What would she do next? And she was the sole girl in a class of 14.

I imagined Katerina the Great, Katherine of Aragon, Catherine de'Medici, Katherine Hepburn...all reputed to have played chess. Powerful queens, power plays—commanding names for a demanding game. Now, Kate Thompson. God had smiled on me.

Or, so I thought.

For the first few classes, Kate truly *was* heaven-sent, learning, playing, and mentoring less experienced students. Then I caught a bad cold, missed two classes, and when I returned, she had, well...taken over...so to speak: barking orders, pairing students. At first, I was impressed—imitation being a sincere form of flattery—but after the first hour (these are 2-hour chess sessions) I realized, suppressing a smile, that *not only* was she trying to *be* me, but she was also trying to *beat* me. How would this play?

So...we were an hour into our Tuesday afternoon session. I sit down at a game between two students, good friends, Alan and Gene, and begin analyzing, as I do with all non-tournament games, i.e., studying positions, calculating, recommending candidate moves, correcting errors, and so forth. The boys are glad, considering, learning, trying new moves, re-playing, questioning, exchanging ideas, and suggesting alternative plans.

Suddenly, Kate—who'd just won her own game—pulled her chair beside us, forcing me to move to the side and began mimicking me. Quiet fell the room. She rambled on—confidently—moving pieces, confusing positions, confusing the players. Even me.

I looked at her quizzically and smiled:

"So, what's going on, Kate?"

"What do you mean?" she shot back.

"Uh, what are you doing? *This* game is between Alan and Gene."

She threw her hands into the air:

"I'm doing what *you* do!" she said acidly.

All eyes and ears were upon us. What an unkind, unexpected outburst. Must tread carefully. I cleared my throat, smiled again.

"Well, thank you for your insights, Kate, but if you want to *watch* this game or any other game, it's best to remain quiet and respectful."

She jumped to her feet:

"How is what *I'm* doing any different than what *you* do?"

Alan and Gene exchanged glances:

"Miss Rachel is the *teacher*," Alan said quietly.

"Yeah," echoed Gene, "She *knows* what she's talking about."

Kate narrowed her eyes, voice ice, body tense, standing intimidatingly over Gene:

"*Are you saying I don't know what I'm talking about?*"

I stood and smiled at the class:

"Okay, please finish up your games. We have about 30 minutes left. Work on Knight's Tours, 8 Queens Boards, ChessKid on your iPads, puzzles... Chess Art—Derrick and Mylo weren't you working on designing our club logo?" A new energy took hold. I turned to Kate:

"What would you like to work on, Kate?"

She snorted and walked away. Yet within minutes, she's laughing, fooling around, trying to best her previous Knight's Tour score, clearly enjoying herself. I think about this duality, and file it. Bit of a schizoid? Perhaps. I stayed close to the perimeters of the media center, nodding, commenting. Best not to overreact.

In the weeks that followed, Kate's behavior alternated between cooperation and belligerence. When paired with someone she liked, she played consistently, and displayed good sportsmanship regardless of the game outcome. When not, she worked solo on the computer, the chess club logo, or on an eight queens board. And while she smiled at me in a clearly good-natured fashion—one afternoon—out of the corner of my eye, I caught her.... How shall I say this? Mocking me when my back was turned. It was unnerving. And it continued. Little knives in the back. When and why did she start disliking me? From then on, I interacted with her face forward only. We became satellites circling one another, always on opposite sides. If I approached another student, she backed off and vice versa. When I used the demo board, she laughed, interrupted, and challenged me with nonsensical statements. There developed an inexplicable nastiness about her—behind her smile, beneath her laughter. I could not understand it.

I checked with Joan, the after-school coordinator. Any previous behavior issues? An Improvement Plan? Recent traumas? But there was nothing. Good grades, good athlete, vocal, well-liked...no indications of anything amiss. In fact, one day after class, her dad sought me out to tell me "Just how much Kate enjoyed chess class, and to thank me for being such a good teacher." I squirmed. It was... odd. Yes, an odd uncomfortable situation. Hairs up at the back of your neck.

Then she started acting out with three other fifth graders: jumping over small book tables as if they were low hurdles—ignoring my warnings— laughing, back-slapping, betting who could jump the highest. But eventually these students would settle into the game. Though worrisome, this kind of behavior within this age group at day's end is natural. And I must say, the students *did* produce some fine games. They became 'the fearsome foursome'. Played only with each other. Because we were nearing the end of the semester, I allowed it. As I said, their games were good. (As a disciplinarian, I was lax, casual; a posture which served me well for 30+ years.) Then Kate dropped two games in a row. I sensed her confidence falter and saw her blink back a few tears, so the following week I paired her with a lesser player to boost her confidence level. Rather than realizing an opportunity, she became irate, irrational:

"Why am I playing with Steven?" she asked loudly. "I want to play with Louis."

I sighed:

"Louis beat you twice last week, so I thought you might want to work with a less experienced player, *that's why*."

"But I *almost* won!" I shifted my weight, shaking my head. She *didn't win*. Louis had played her queen down and still won easily. I sighed again, frustrated, as she tried to recreate their last board *without fen, without notation*. Then she launched into an illogical explanation of the endgame. I nodded politely, tried another tactic:

"Do me a favor. Just play Steven. If you win, then you play Louis. That's fair, right?"

She stood quickly; I moved back a few steps.

"No—I want to play Louis now! You *want* to play me, don't you Louis?"

Louis—the young man in question—also of the fearsome foursome and perhaps a boyfriend (the kind 11-year-old kids have) —was clearly embarrassed, shrugging, eyes everywhere but on Kate. She turned to me, accusing, pugnacious:

"Why *can't* I play Louis? Why? Why?"

In truth, I snapped:

"*Because Louis is a better player than you. Because at your level you just can't beat him. You're unevenly matched.*" Again, all eyes and ears were upon us. I took a deep breath, counted to 10. "Listen, Kate, when you become more experienced, you two will have competitive games, but please, for now, play Steven."

Kate tossed her hair defiantly, sat across from Louis and moved pawn d4. Everyone else started playing. I looked at Steven, a shy, thin third grader trying to disappear into the bookcases:

"Come on Steven, set up the board, I'll play you."

Now, a no-nonsense teacher would have insisted she leave the class. But such I was not. As a disciplinarian, I was lax, casual; a posture which served me well for 30+ years. But now— in this instance, should I have been? Shoulda. Woulda. Coulda.

Half an hour later, Kate tapped the back of my shoulder. I was startled.

"Well, I'm losing to Louis again," she said, "Could you analyze our game? Help me out?"

I redirected Stephen to his chess puzzle text:

"Yes, I can help *both* of you."

I sat down and studied the board. Louis had a mate in 3, maybe 4, but both players were focused on the opposite end of the square. Knights and bishops could be exchanged, a pawn; but these small gains were irrelevant to the game, having little if anything to do with the inevitable mate. I pointed to the board and looked at Kate:

"Why are you concentrating your efforts *here* when you're in danger of being checkmated on h6?" I asked gently.

Kate studied the board; then lit up:

"I thought that if I *distracted* him, he might not see the checkmate possibility. You know, focus on this other stuff."

I sat up straight, nonplussed, errant chess pieces falling into place. **Distraction**, yes. *That's what she was about*. Sitting on the left side of the media room and chatting while a small fire burned on the right. A fire *she* might have started. **Deflection**. Asking me inappropriate questions about my personal life while I'm working with a discovered check on the demo. Add in confusion, derailment, and derision. That's who she was. And yes, while distraction and/or deflection are valuable tactics in chess and in life— **keys to a good defense**—Kate used them...destructively. She might gain a brief advantage... I imagined her in the cafeteria shouting: "Hey, look at the blue bear outside the window"—then moving to the front of the food line; but in the end, I knew it would cost her. In life. In chess. She was smart and slick...very slick. I felt sad at heart. It would cost her dearly.

"What should I *do*, Miss Rachel?" I gazed out the window. No blue bear. Just new spring flowers—hepatica, pasque. After all, she **was** only eleven years old, trying to learn a 2,000-year-old game. Reluctantly, I turned back to the board.

"Alright, Kate, Louis has a clear advantage, materially, positionally, but how about we remove a couple of his pieces and I show you how to win from a similar position? **If** Louis agrees." Louis rolled his eyes, nodding, relieved. I smiled and turned to Kate. "Okay, let's reposition this queen..."

We moved rather quickly, and Kate finished with a simple back rank mate. I reset a few pieces and illustrated a queen/bishop mate. More lessons learned. Louis stood, stretched, smiled, and thanked me. Kate hugged me tightly, impulsively:

"Thanks so much," she gushed.

I stiffened instinctively, stood, and moved back.

"Glad to help," I said, turning to another board. Jekyll/Hyde. Yes.

And so, it went. Three sessions left. Any hope I'd had of Kate emerging as a strong female chess player had long since vanished. On a personal level, she clearly disliked me. Why? I never did find out. Worst of all, she negatively affected my interaction with the other students whenever she could. Fortunately, she would graduate from Franklin Elementary school at term's end, and I'd never have to see her again. I couldn't wait.

Two weeks later, I sipped a cup of tea with Joan, the after-school coordinator. Joan had been intrinsic to helping me build a successful chess program at Franklin: creating flyers for a chess party, planning a build-your-own-board segment. Genuinely caring and supportive.

"Any issues with Kate Thompson?" she asked, recalling our previous conversation.

I shrugged, shook my head, and quelled the educator instinct inside me. One class left. Just let it go. You're just a chess teacher, I tell myself, not a psychologist. The girl is dualistic—maybe it's a personality conflict. Whatever. One class left. This, *I could deflect*.

"Well, I've had easier students, but no, not really. She plays a decent game."

Joan nodded, relieved. That's what the parents pay for so... the program worked. Everyone wanted to play chess. And I was getting excited about the last week, prizes, small awards, and the like. Bit of a party. Spring had *finally* sprung in Minnesota—yes indeed, a small celebration was in order.

I'd distributed my ChessKeys the previous semester, so I decided to award my favorite chess coins: The American Presidential Golden Dollars. Occasionally the banks threw in a handful of Golden Sacagawea Dollars as well. It was a good mix. I polished the coins until they sparkled, then velvet-pouched them.

I ended up with a total of 28 students that semester, 14 per class: ergo, 28 coined pouches. Assorted colors, assorted presidents, cluster of Sacagawea dollars.

Finally, the last Tuesday class. Even though it felt like the longest semester of my life, I still loved the game. I stood before the students, smiling mysteriously and produced "abracadabra" velvet pouches like a magician. Oohs and Aahs. I launched into my coins-value-knowledge spiel, presenting each student with a pouch, and spoke encouraging words specific to that student's chess playing abilities and character traits.



"Whoa—these coins are cool!"

"What kind are they?"

"Are they valuable?"

"Ah, now there's the **key**," I said, "**the Chesskey** connection. *What value hath knowledge?* Think of these coins as knowledge: the more you amass the more valuable becomes your storehouse; the more you learn, the greater your chances of success. In chess. In life. In whatever endeavor you choose."

The students compared coins.

"Are they all presidents?"

"Wait—mine is a native American woman with a child—?"

"Yes," I nodded. "Sacagawea. She was rather famous—a guide and interpreter for the 1804 Lewis and Clark expedition. Navigated thousands of miles, with her infant son."

The students talked among themselves.

"Say, can we trade them? Trade the coins?"

"Sure," I laughed, "we trade pieces, don't we?"

I switched from my usual classical piano venue to a light rock station and the atmosphere was suddenly festive. Another teacher popped in with lemonade. Kids trading coins, setting up floorboard chess, 4-way chess, laying the finishing touches to their chess art. Spirits were high. I circulated, listening, laughing... Then:

"Hey, Miss Rachel—"

I turned. Frowned. It was Kate. I was in the rear of the media center; she was in the front. An uncomfortable position for me—but I was caught up in the 'spirit' of the day.

"What's up, Kate?"

"I have a Sac coin, but no one wants to trade with me. What should I do?"

"Uh, all the coins for the Thursday class are in my briefcase. Swap it out for whichever one you like."

She nodded happily; I turned away. Happy ending. Good day.

Later, after dinner, I rummaged through my briefcase pre-

paring for Thursday's last class. The velvet pouches tumbled out. Out of habit, I counted them. Paused. Recounted. There were only 13. Impossible. I created 14. One for each student. I emptied the contents of the briefcase. No. Perhaps one fell out on my way home? I checked my car, retraced my steps, and checked through the house. Nada.

And then it dawned. A sad dawn. She took it. Kate Thompson took a coin—while my back was turned—when she went to exchange the coin she'd been awarded. I moved quietly to the kitchen, prepared a chamomile tea, silently considering other possibilities. I sipped my tea, looked through the living room window for at least an hour. No...she took it...every instinct I had supported this. So, what to do?

I called Patrick, a chess friend and colleague in Illinois. He teaches chess and special education—quite a combo—and is in fact working on a thesis proving how chess is greatly benefiting ADHD students. He's also a bit older, more experienced. I'd been talking with him about Kate all semester so...

"Of course, she took it," he said. "You *must* confront her. If she steals coins at 11 years old, she'll steal wallets at 15 years old. Then what? Phones? Netbooks? And then she's no longer a minor. The truth is, you're her *teacher*, you're *obligated* to confront her. It's what we *must* do as educators. Right path and all that. Unpleasant, but consider the alternatives."

I know he is right. Yet, the semester is *over*. It's my first year with this school; I'm just a chess teacher in an after-school program. Who *wants* this kind of issue?

"But I can't actually *prove* it," I said. "*I didn't see her take it*—and even if one of the other students did, kids usually band together at times like this."

"True, true," he agreed, "But you must call her out on this, Rachel. You must find a way. An obnoxious kid is one thing: but a con artist, a thief? Another story. Not a good one. She's a bad actor. Hell, in the long run you'll be doing her a favor."

"Will I?" I ask quietly. "Will I really?"

"You *know* you will. This is Teaching 101, my dear friend. Not reporting this is a disservice. And worst of all, *she's dishonored the game*."

"But it's my first year in Minnesota, my first year at this school—it's a *good* school, I've met some *super* people. This could turn into a nightmare."

There's a long pause, then:

"Rachel, she has **dishonored** the game."

We click off. Pajamas. Bedtime tea. I think of the game. What it teaches, what it yields, the incalculable benefits—and she dishonored it—and I knew I *had* to deal with it. If I approached her primary teacher, it would simply be adding another layer of educational bureaucracy. But how to approach her? If I were straightforward, she'd simply deny it. If I were hesitant, uncertain, she'd zero in, attack me, turn

it around: my fault the coin was lost.

Fortunately, I had a couple of days to think about it—and thought of little else. On Wednesday evening, while I polished and pouched another coin for the Thursday group—there came another dawning. An idea. A good one.

I arrived early at school on Thursday, checked with the front office, the lost and found, then briefly apprised my supervisor, Joan, of the situation. Worried, but supportive, she rubbed her brow—another headache.

"Sorry," I said, "I've been teaching since before you were born and I can't let it go."

"No, no, I agree," she said, "But what's *my* role? What exactly do you want *me* to do?"

"Just back me up as the onlooking, supervisory adult while I speak with her. You, me, and Kate. You don't have to say anything. Your presence will speak volumes. I'll handle the rest. Diplomatically. Don't worry. Can you pull her out of class 10 minutes early?" Joan nodded. "I'll wait for the two of you in the Media Room. We'll have the entire center to ourselves."

"No problem," said Joan, rising to action. "I'll get her now. Meet you in Media."

I stood at my desk in the media room, briefcase on the table. Pacing, deep breathing. A few minutes later, Joan walked in with a very puzzled, very worried Kate.

I smiled pleasantly:

"Kate—sorry to take you out of class, dear—but I'm hoping you can help us solve a problem..."

"A problem?" she said quietly, "What problem?"

"Well, I can't find one of those velvet-pouched coins. I had 14 for your class and 14 for today's class, 28 in total. But now I have only 13. So—since you were the last student to handle the coins—remember? —when you exchanged your Sacagawea? I thought you might have seen one roll under a bookcase or table—It could have fallen out of the bag. Or another student could have mistakenly walked off with the velvet pouch... So, did you see anything, Kate? Can you help us out here?"

The color drained from her face, but she did not hesitate:

"I have half a dozen of those Sacagawea Dollars at home," she said quickly. "Why don't I just bring one in?"

Joan and I exchanged glances, smiled.

"That's a great idea," I said.

"Yes," Joan added, "Leave it at the front desk. We'll reimburse you if you like."

"No, no, that's okay," she mumbled, "I have a bunch of them, so..."

I put my arm around her shoulder as we all walked to the door:

"Thanks Kate. You've no idea how much you've helped us

out—I'll never forget this."

She opened her mouth as if to say something, thought better of it, shot me a glance that would have chilled ice and left the Media Center with Joan. I returned to the demo board and sacrificed my queen, trapping the king, so that my knight delivered a smothered mate.

And that's game, I said to myself, rearranging the demo board, as my Thursday students filed in, "That's game, Kate Thompson. Live and learn.

"Finis?

Perhaps it should've finished there, or I could slap on a happy Hollywood ending: arrogant young girl changes her ways, apologizes to her chess teacher, never steals again, goes on to become a teenage WIM...but it didn't. A few weeks later I learned that while Kate did indeed return the Sacagawea coin, she feigned 'hysteria', claiming I'd accused her of theft, enraging her parents, the other members of the fearsome foursome and a few of *their* parents. Complaints were filed.

Joan advised me to address these issues formally, Patrick vowed to drive to Minnesota and come to the school with me, in my defense. "You *have* to fight this, Rachel—it's *unethical*, it could cost you your job." A few other colleagues weighed in similarly. My attorney daughter read the fine print. "It's a one-year contract, mom. I'd challenge these accusations. They're untrue and unjust."

Untrue and unjust. Yes, yes. My daughter was right, my colleagues were right. Ten years ago, even five, I would have risen—unquestionably—to the occasion. But now...

I brewed a sweet cup of hibiscus tea, dashed it with elderberry, sprinkled it with ginger, soothed it with lemon, and stood in my yard, drifting into the sweet June air...lilies, violets, marigolds...the white oaks beckoned...the hares scampered, the deer sauntered—and felt the Universal Being flow through me, recalling Thoreau:

*"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." Henry David Thoreau, from Walden: or, Life in the Woods*

Henry may have packed a chessboard, but I did not. Two days later, I canceled a summer chess program, disconnected from all media, even my phone, headed up to Duluth, and ferried across the blues and greens of Lake Superior and Lake Michigan for a month. Refreshed. Renewed. Rediscovering...the 'real' of me.

When I returned home, I poured a cup of white oolong tea infused with lingonberries and perused the mail. There were three offers from nearby schools to teach chess in the fall, two requests for private lessons, and a brief note that Franklin Elementary had decided to drop chess from its afterschool program completely. I shook my head sadly. It was the youngsters who would suffer the loss. Fortu-

nately, kids are resilient. They'd reconnect to the royal game at another point in time. I refilled my bird feeders and finished my tea. Within minutes my grandchildren burst through my door:

"Where have you BEEN Nana?" said Logan.

"Mommy said you sailed to the *Arctic*. We thought we'd never see you again," said Cora, lower lip trembling.

"The Arctic Defense? Hmm..." I hugged them.

"We're going canoeing—" said Logan.

"Yeah—and barbecuing—hotdogs and everything!" grinned Cora.

"Then we're camping out in the woods," smiled my daughter Diana. "Wanna come?"

"Of course," I nodded.

"But let's play chess, before we go," said Logan.

As I watched my grandchildren reset the board—5-year old Cora insisting the knight ride with the queen while 8-year old Logan rolled his eyes, acquiescing, I suddenly realized—or shall I say *remembered*—that for every one person who dishonored the game and/or those who passed on its incalculable value, there were 100, 1000, an army, no, *armies* of folks who loved and honored the royal game—the core of it, the lore of it, the twists and turns, the swords in the dirt, the history, the mystery, the moat and the myth—the toppling of empires with a quick of the wrist—the genius, the art, the preparation, the celebration of a game well-played. And the millennia of goodwill in the quiet yet infamous chess handshake. And I smiled too.



"What's The Arctic Defense?" asked Logan. "Pretty cold, right?"

"Lots of polar bears?" said Cora.

"Hey—we could make the castles igloos!" yelled Logan.

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Yes, finis



## The 1982 Midwest Masters Invitational—Part 1

By Robert Irons

The first Midwest Masters Invitational chess tournament took place in Chicago during the first week of December in 1982. The event was held at the Palmer House Hotel—one of Chicago's most storied establishments. Potter Palmer, an American businessman who was behind much of the development of downtown Chicago during the 19th century, built the hotel as a wedding gift to his wife. Less than two weeks after its grand opening, the Palmer House, and much of Chicago, fell victim to the great fire of 1871. Palmer rebuilt the hotel and reopened it two years later, and it has been a landmark of the downtown area ever since. The Palmer House has held many chess tournaments during my life; its old-world charm and rugged Chicago history make it a good site to host a struggle for chessboard supremacy.

The tournament was organized by Helen Warren, a long-time supporter of chess in Illinois (I believe Helen organized all ten of the Midwest Masters tournaments). The tournament was directed by Walter Brown. Fred Gruenberg assisted with the organization and sponsored two \$100 game prizes that ended up being divided over three games. Master Richard Verber was the judge for the prizes, and he chose to give one prize

to Erik Karklins for his first-round win over Master Albert Chow, while the second \$100 prize was split between Steve Szpisjak for his first-round win over Master Chris Kus, and Master Albert Chow for his fifth-round win over Steve Szpisjak.



Fred Gruenberg, owner of RAE Chemicals, sponsor of the tournament and donor of the two Best Game prizes. He is also the source for the photos, which he no longer has.



The game Karklins-Chow from round 1, with John Rose far left and Charles Lawton center.

The lineup consisted almost entirely of local, Midwestern players—only one player was from a state outside of the Midwest (Stephen Popel of North Dakota). There were no grandmasters at this first event; an International Master was the highest rated player in this contest. Both of those circumstances would change in the coming years as the event became better known and more popular.

The first MMI hosted the following 36 players (in descending order of rating before the event):

IM Leonid Bass (WI) – 2538  
 FM Michael Brooks (MO) – 2436  
 SM Leonid Kaushansky (IL) – 2426  
 M Dennis Gogel (IN) – 2363  
 M Dr. Eugene Martinovsky (IL) – 2362  
 M David Sprenkle (IL) – 2350  
 M Steve Tennant (IL) – 2343  
 M Kenneth Jones (MO) – 2321  
 M John Rose (IA) – 2306  
 FM Allan Savage (IA) – 2304  
 M Marvin Dandridge (IL) – 2304  
 M Albert Chow (IL) – 2292  
 M David Rubin (IL) – 2286  
 M Charles Lawton (MO) – 2283  
 M Allen Kornfeld (IL) – 2257  
 M Kenneth Larsen (IL) – 2248  
 M Chris Kus (IL) – 2239  
 M Miomir Stevanovic (IL) – 2235  
 M Larry Chachere (IL) – 2230  
 M Lester Van Meter (MI) – 2220  
 M Eric Schiller (IL) – 2219  
 M Kenneth Mohr (IL) – 2211  
 M Morris Giles (IL) – 2203  
 Ed Friedman (IL) – 2192  
 Albert Sandrin (IL) – 2182  
 Fred Rhine (IL) – 2176  
 Kevin Bachler (IL) – 2170  
 Kenneth Wallach (IL) – 2169  
 Angelo Sandrin (IL) – 2162  
 Erik Karklins (IL) – 2159  
 Stephan Popel (ND) – 2152  
 Charles Kramer (IL) – 2146  
 Glen Gratz (IL) – 2138  
 J Timothy Sage (IL) – 2135  
 Timothy Redman (IL) – 2103  
 Steven Szpisjak (IL) – 2081

The action took place over five rounds, with the first round being held on Friday December 3rd, rounds two and three on Saturday the 4th, and the final two rounds on Sunday the 5th.

### Round 1

The first round of this contest brought very mixed results; half of the 18 games ended in draws and two of them ended in less than 20 moves. But the overall results in no way indicate the fighting nature of the games in this round which saw seven Sicilian Defenses, including two Smith–

Morra Gambits. Of the three game prizes awarded in this tournament, two came from the first round. Further, three of the decisive games were won by untitled players beating masters, and of the nine draws, six were the result of untitled players holding masters to a draw. This was a fighting round!

Larsen–Bass was a Sicilian Smith–Morra Gambit in which Larsen was unable to obtain enough pressure for his donated pawn. This led him to throw more pawns on the fire in an attempt to generate enough heat for an attack. Bass continued to consume the offered material, and by the 26th move White ran out of threats. Larsen resigned on move 37.



The game Larsen–Bass from round 1.

Eric Schiller, the late prolific chess author, coach, and international arbiter, was rated 2219 at the time, and was paired up with Michael Brooks, a FIDE master rated 2436. Schiller held a clinic on the playability of the Schliemann Defense to the Spanish Opening, holding his own into an easily held opposite-colored bishop and pawn ending. The draw was agreed on move 51.

Friedman–Kaushansky was another Smith–Morra Gambit with the untitled player again going for the gold. Friedman was able to maintain a fairly level game until move 52, when Kaushansky managed to get his rook behind one of his passed pawns in a rook–and–pawn ending. Friedman fought on until move 76 before packing it in.

Gogel–Stevanovic was an Averbach King's Indian Defense in which Gogel's attempts at aggression were dissipated by Stevanovic's steady defensive maneuvers. Over repeated onslaughts, Gogel could make no headway, and peace was agreed upon after 42 moves.

Angelo Sandrin–Martinovsky showed the good doctor playing his favorite Gruenfeld Defense against Angelo's solid, if unenterprising, play. Despite a 200–point difference in their rating, Sandrin was able to hold Martinovsky to a draw in a queen and pawn ending.

The game Sprenkle–Rhine seems to have been an attempt to test the untitled player's knowledge of theory. Master David Sprenkle chose the Ponziani Opening (1.e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♫c6 3.c3) against Fred Rhine. Fred, now a National Master but untitled at the time, gave as well as he

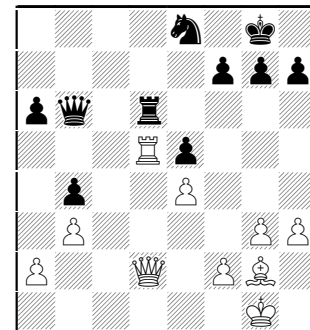
took and defused the position quickly, ending with a draw on move 13.

Albert Sandrin–Rose was a Sicilian Kan with a Maroczy Bind structure that stayed even until move 16, when Sandrin offered material in return for a kingside attack. Rose took the material, kept his cool, and got his pieces into play. White's attack landed no real blows, and Sandrin resigned on move 29 rather than play an ending two pieces down.

The game Lawton–Moore started as a Closed Sicilian, but by move five transposed to a standard Scheveningen. The play followed theory for 14 moves, and the players agreed to a draw five moves later without any fanfare.

The Jones–Wallach game was a hard-fought battle in the French Defense, during which the advantage swung back and forth, first to White when Wallach loosened the pawn cover around his king, then to Black when Jones allowed a passed pawn to make it to the sixth rank. The game finally ended after 55 moves with a drawn rook and pawn ending.

The game Kornfeld–Sage was a positional struggle for the first 30 moves. Kornfeld's English Opening became a Maroczy Bind structure on move 15. For the next 15 moves, both players followed standard plans, until Sage opted to try to force more exchanges with 30...♙d6:



The rook move (30... ♙c6–d6) appears logical on its face, but Black has two weaknesses—his e–pawn and his back rank—that can be exploited with one move: 31.♙xe5! Kornfeld held onto the pawn, but Sage was able to centralize his knight and penetrate with his queen to the second rank, preventing White from making the most of his prize. The players agreed to a draw on move 41.

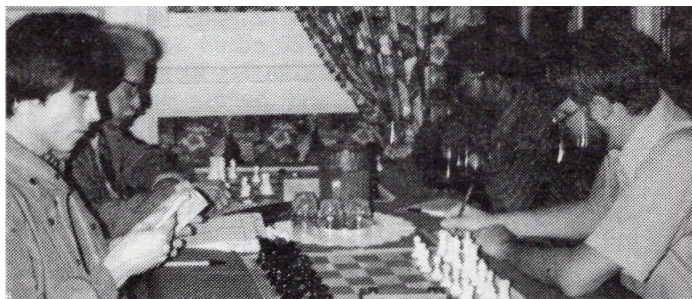
Bachler–Rubin was a sharp battle from the start. Rubin chose the Classical Variation in the Sicilian Defense, and Bachler responded with the Velimirovic Attack in the Sozin Variation. The players each built their own positions separately, only stopping to trade a pair of knights, until the 16th move, when Bachler played 16.e5 to clear the fourth rank for his rook to move from d4 to h4, joining his queen on h5. Rubin weakened the black squares around his king, playing g6 to prevent White's rook and queen from coordinating effectively, then redeveloped his black-squared bishop to g7 to cover those weakened squares. After that, the center opened, more pieces were traded, and peace was declared.

The game Giles–Gratz started sharply and quickly became

tense. Gratz' choice of the Najdorf Sicilian was countered with Fischer's favorite 6...Qc4. Giles offered a pawn which Gratz refused, whereupon Giles advanced the pawn, driving Gratz's knight into a precarious position, unsupported in the center. White's moves became more aggressive, and his lead in development began to seriously threaten Black's king. Gratz found a continuation that won a pawn and forced the trade of queens, but Giles saw one move further, winning a rook for a knight. Black offered more material in an attempt to build a counterattack, but White returned the material to trade down to an easily won ending.

Popel–Dandridge began as a quiet d–pawn opening (White's first four moves were d3, d4, c3, and e3), and Black had no trouble equalizing by move ten. Both players maneuvered uneventfully until Dandridge advanced his kingside starting on move 20, which Popel immediately countered with a queenside assault. Further maneuvering enabled Black to win rook for knight on move 39 while still maintaining the kingside pressure. Popel resigned on move 44.

The game Van Meter–Chachere was a Nimzowitsch–Larsen Opening. By move 13, both sides were castled and had initiated opposing pawn storms, – White's on the kingside, Black's on the queenside. The game stayed fairly even until move 35, when Van Meter unfortunately hung a knight, allowing Chachere to collect the full point.



"Larry Chachere meets Lester Van Meter, front, as Stephan Popel plays Marvin Dandridge."

Redman–Savage was a King's Indian Defense where White advanced d4–d5, leading to the classic blocked center with opposing pawn storms (a2–a3, b2–b4, c2–c4–c5 for White, f7–f5–f4, h7–h5, g6–g5–g4 for Black). Both sides pressed their own attack while maneuvering around their opponent's attack and neither player was able to gain an advantage. The players called it quits after 26 moves.

The game Kus–Szpisjak was a Sveshnikov Sicilian that quickly became a fight around the d5 square. That struggle led to more exchanges, and the players reached a fairly even ending with rooks, opposite color bishops, and four pawns on each side by the 27th move. Black centralized his king and liquidated his doubled e–pawns, continuing to make slight improvements in his position, then White made a misstep on move 35 by bringing his king out into the open. From there, it took Szpisjak just three moves to force a mating position. This game split one of the two Best Game prizes with the game Szpisjak–Chow from round five.



"Asst. TD Tim Just keeps an eye on his left flank as FM Allan Savage and Chris Kus, facing camera, prepare to square off vs Tim Redman and Steve Szpisjak."

The game between the late Erik Karklins and the late Albert Chow won one of the Best Game prizes outright, due to its theoretical contribution. The opening was the Marshall gambit in the Spanish game, one of my favorite lines. The players followed theory until Chow overlooked a tactic when making his 25th (!) move. It took only five more moves for Karklins to force resignation. The game is cited in David Vigorito's splendid book *Understanding the Marshall Attack*. At the time of this game, Chow was a master and Karklins was untitled, making this result even more impressive.

For this first round, I chose to analyze the game between the late Charles Kramer of Dolton, Illinois, and the late FIDE Master Steve Tennant of Palos Hills, Illinois. At the time of the game, Tennant was rated 2343, while Kramer was rated a mere 2146—the 32nd–highest rated player taking on the seventh–highest. Bill Murray would call it a Cinderella story—an untitled player beats a master under tournament conditions.

Kramer's approach to the game is sound, and one that I would use: a positional opening (the English) with a fixed pawn center (Botvinnik's variation), choosing positional play over sharpness. And for those of you who think endings aren't worth the study time, it is in the ending where Kramer won this game.

#### Kramer – Tennant English Opening [A36]

1.c4 d3 2.d3 c3 g6 3.g3 g7 4.g2 0–0 5.e4 d6 6.dge2 c5 7.0–0 d6

The Botvinnik system involving c4, e4 and g3 is very popular among untitled players, having been covered by a number of opening book authors. It is a solid system that lets White get through the first nine or ten moves without fear of hidden tactics.

8.d3 d8

Since White has not started his queenside play yet, Black could consider it for himself with 8...a6 followed by b8 and b5. Instead Black chooses central play.

9.a3 ♖d4 10.♖b1 b6

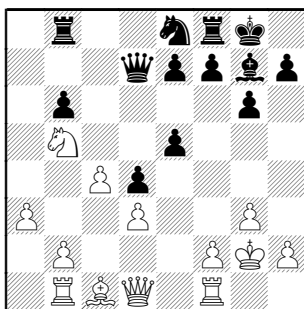
Kramer uses this weakening of the long diagonal to create an imbalance in the queenside pawn structure. It doesn't lead to a tangible advantage, but the resulting position is strategically clear and has plenty of room for both sides to play for a win.

11.♗x♗d4 cxd4 12.e5 ♖b8 13.♗b5 ♖b7 14.♗a7 ♖xg2 15.♗xg2 ♗d7

But not 15...♖xe5? 16.♗c6+.

16.♗b5 dxe5

Now the two sides have clear opposing pawn majorities. White's best pawn break is b2–b4 and a3–a4–a5 with an outside passer, while Black will play f7–f5 and e5–e4 to create his own passed pawn. Black achieves his pawn break first, and the threat of e4–e3 looks fierce. Kramer calmly and methodically lets all the air out of Black's tires by trading off a pair of rooks and the queens. Black's remaining rook will have to both support the e3 pawn's advance and stop White's a–pawn from queening. White's play comes from two specific circumstances: his king is close to Black's passed pawn, and Black's king is nowhere near White's passer. Those two conditions are enough to hold the position.



7.a4 ♗d6 18.♗x♗d6 exd6 19.♖d2 f5 20.f3 d5 21.cxd5 ♗xd5 22.b4 e4 23.fxe4 fxe4 24.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 25.♗b3 ♗xb3 26.♖xb3 e3 27.♖e1 ♖b8 28.♖a3 ♗f7 29.a5 ♗e6 30.a6 b5

This artificially isolates the a–pawn, depriving it of protection by the b–pawn. Given this, White decides to trade off the a–pawn for Black's b–pawn, giving him a new passer in the b4 pawn.

31.♖a5 ♖a8 32.g4 ♗d6 33.♖xb5 ♖xa6 34.♖a5

This is the only move of Kramer's that I take issue with. I would prefer 34.♖g3+ ♗c6 35.♖c5+. While this lets Black's king closer to the passed pawn, it helps the White bishop and rook coordinate with the king.

34...♖c6

And here I prefer 34... ♖xa5 35. bxa5 ♖e5. The text allows Kramer to get his rook behind his passer—still not enough to win, but leaving him better off than he was.

35.♖g3+ ♗e6 36.b5 ♖c2+ 37.♗f3 ♖e5 38.♖xe5 ♗xe5 39.b6+

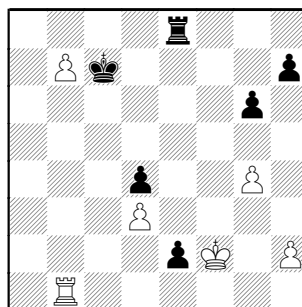
♗d6 40.♖b5 ♖f2+

But not 40...♖xh2? 41.b7 ♖f2+ 42.♗e4 ♖f8 43.b8 wins.

41.♗g3 ♖f8 42.b7 ♗c7 43.♖b4 e2 44.♖b1 ♖e8

44...g5 is possible here because White's king is too far from the e2 pawn, which leaves Black with an in-between move if White pushes his pawn: 45.b8/♗+ ♖xb8 46.♖xb8 e1/♗+ wins. Instead 45.♖e1 ♖e8 46.♗f2 holds.

45.♗f2



45...g5?+–

This is the losing move. Necessary is 45...♗b8, with one possible continuation being 46.♗e1 ♖e3 47.♖b3. Now queening the passed pawn results in White winning Black's d–pawn, and from there it's easy.

46.b8♗+ ♖xb8 47.♖xb8 ♗xb8 48.♗xe2 ♗c7 49.♗f3 ♗d6 50.♗e4 ♗c5 51.♗e5 1–0

White has won the d–pawn. The simplest plan after that is to use the opposition to force White's king into the kingside to win Black's other pawns, leaving the passed White d–pawn behind as a constant threat.

Charles Kramer played a solid game against a difficult opponent. He kept up with him through the middlegame, then took advantage of the one clear mistake Black made, and went on to win in the ending. A game any untitled player could be proud of!

Nine decisive results left nine players tied for first place at the end of round one, with a third of them being untitled. The second round would leave only four players sharing first place, after a number of the masters felt the need to bring the fight! The scores at the end of the first round:

1: Bass, Kaushansky, Rose, Kramer, Karklins, Giles, Dandridge, Chachere, Szpisjak  
½: Schiller, Brooks, Stevanovic, Gogel, Martinovsky, Angelo Sandrin, Rhine, Sprenkle, Mohr, Lawton, Wallach, Jones, Sage, Kornfeld, Rubin, Bachler, Savage, Redman  
0: Larsen, Friedman, Al Sandrin, Tennant, Chow, Gratz, Popel, Van Meter, Kus

## Round 2

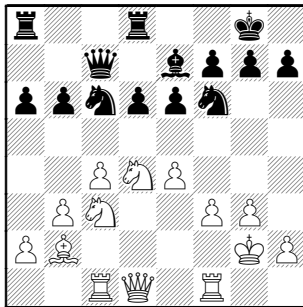
The heat got turned up in round two; 13 out of 18 games were decisive. This round saw two more Sicilian Najdorfs, four King's Indian Defenses, a Dutch Leningrad, and a Benko Gambit! While only one of the decisive games is

worthy of calling an upset (Popel –Larsen), four of the five draws were between players with more than 100–point differences in their ratings.

After solidly beating an untitled player in round one, Marvin Dandridge came out swinging with the black pieces against the top seed. Leonid Bass chose the Exchange variation against Dandridge's Queen's Gambit Declined, reaching a tabiya at move ten. Bass chose to exchange bishop for knight in order to pursue the minority attack on the queenside. Dandridge used a rook lift as the basis for a kingside assault, which Bass countered with an advance in the center. Dandridge sacrificed a knight for a pawn and some additional pressure, but Bass calmly accepted the material, then pushed a passed pawn through to a queen.

Kaushansky chose the theory–avoiding 6.g3 against Chachere's Najdorf Sicilian, and on move ten Chachere initiated a skirmish on the queenside that dropped one of his pawns. Going after Kaushansky's e–pawn in turn denied Chachere the chance to castle, and on his next move Chachere missed a pin that cost him a piece. It was over by move 20.

John Rose and Charles Kramer discussed the Hedgehog structure, and the game remained quite even until Black overlooked what is now known as a typical maneuver in Maroczy Bind positions (after 14...♖fd8?):



15.♘d5! exd5 16.cxd5 ♔d7 and while Rose's 17.♖xc6 was good enough to win, even better is 17.dxc6! ♔c7 18.♘f5 followed by ♗e3–d5 with an overwhelming position.

The game Karklins–Giles showed Morris Giles creating what I once overheard another player refer to as “one of Giles' tactical messes.” Karklins was well–prepared with a line against the Najdorf Sicilian that brought his queen out to the kingside early. Giles responded with a threat to undermine the protection of White's e–pawn, which Karklins used to trade a bishop for three pawns in a standard maneuver. Unfortunately, Karklins chose to trade bishop for knight in the middle of the transaction, in a continuation that looked strong but led nowhere. After throwing another knight onto the fire, White was forced into further trades that led to an ending with Black up two bishops for four pawns. Karklins chose to throw in the towel.

Steve Szpisjak played the Nimzo–Larsen Attack against FM Michael Brooks, following b3 and ♗b2 with f4 to play on the long dark–squared diagonal. Brooks responded by sacrificing his e–pawn to create weaknesses on White's kingside, which he then exploited with his queen and knight, eventually winning one of White's knights for a

pawn. Szpisjak held on for as long as he could, but walked into a knight fork on move 40.

The late Dr. Eugene Martinovsky played a solid, if unambitious, line against Miomir Stevanovic's King's Indian Defense, and Stevanovic even got the better of the position for a few moves. By move 39, however, the players agreed to a peace.

The game Angelo Sandrin–David Sprenkle was a Lenin–grad Dutch that saw both players attempting action on the kingside. Sandrin weakened the pawns around his king, which Sprenkle quickly exploited by stripping away the remaining pawns in a relentless assault. Sandrin, facing a mating attack, resigned on move 27.

Fred Rhine held Charles Lawton to a draw with solid play against Lawton's King's Indian Defense, maneuvering effectively in a Maroczy Bind while keeping Black's pawn breaks at bay. Lawton traded off key minor pieces in order to enforce the d6–d5 break, which led to an exchange of rooks as well. The players agreed to a draw just three moves later.

The game between Ken Mohr and Kenneth Jones was a battle with several fronts. Jones' King's Indian Defense was met with the Averbach Variation, but the pawn structure ended up resembling the Saemisch Variation. Mohr got an early advantage and held it until move 26, when he overreacted to a threat against his king, creating a pawn weakness that Jones used as the basis for a counterattack. At move 50, however, just when he had the win within reach, Jones moved his king in the wrong direction, giving away his entire advantage. The draw was declared shortly thereafter.

The late Albert Sandrin, who had been blind since childhood, handled Lester Van Meter's Caro–Kann Defense deftly, setting up a pawn sacrifice with his 20th move that he didn't get back until move 32. The resulting ♖+♗ ending was declared drawn on move 54.

David Rubin put on a tactical display against Timothy Sage, who opened with the Queen's Gambit Accepted, but then got overly aggressive with his queenside pawn advances. Sage thought he saw a double attack on move 12 when he made his 11th move. Instead, he overlooked Rubin's 13th move, which created conditions for a flank attack against the black king. Sage resigned on move 20, facing mate in five moves.

After holding David Rubin to a draw in round one, Kevin Bachler held Allan Savage to a draw in round two. Savage played the Advance Variation against Bachler's French Defense, and was able to maintain the better position until it reached a ♖+♗ ending, when one more check would have been enough to win. By missing the check, however, Savage gave away his advantage, and had to settle for a draw on move 44.

Tim Redman played the Benko Gambit against Steve Tenant, who declined the second pawn and played to maintain a space advantage in the center as well as on the queenside. Redman opened the center to obtain counterplay, but in the ensuing melee he lost a knight. He re-

signed on move 35.

Al Chow chose the same line of the Carlsbad Variation against Edward Friedman that Bass used in the first round to defeat Dandridge. While the play was even for the first 22 moves, on move 23 Friedman miscalculated a series of exchanges, giving up queen and knight for two rooks and some kingside pressure. Once Chow relieved the kingside pressure, the counterattack against Friedman's king was too much to handle, and he resigned on move 43.

Ken Wallach employed a fianchetto against Allen Kornfeld's Modern Benoni Defense, and the players kept things pretty equal until the 22nd move, when Wallach chose queenside maneuvering rather than central play. Without a concern for central counterplay, Kornfeld was free to storm the kingside, first with pawns and then with a rook. The final move, sacrificing a rook to open the h-file, forced mate in two more moves.

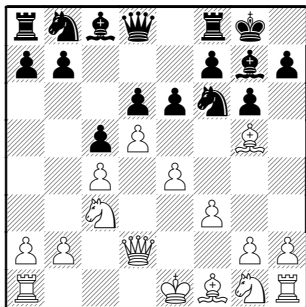
The game Gratz-Kus employed the sharp Poisoned Pawn line of the Winawer Variation of the French Defense, and White kept a grip on the position until he permitted an exchange of Black's knight and rook for queen and pawn. From that point on, the play was all Black's, and Gratz finally called it quits on move 40.

Stephan Popel played an English Opening structure against Ken Larsen's Queen's Indian Defense, with no clear advantage for the first 19 moves. On move 20, Popel pinned a knight against Larsen's queen, preparing to win it with a pawn push. When Larsen replied by increasing the pressure against White's king, Popel snagged the knight and weathered the pressure, winning more material and forcing submission on move 28.

For this second round, I chose to analyze the game Schiller-Gogel, the 21st seed against the 4th seed. Dennis Gogel missed the opportunity to change the pawn structure early, and Eric Schiller never gave him a second chance.

### Schiller – Gogel King's Indian Defense [E81]

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♙g5 c5 7.d5 e6 8.♞d2



8...♞e8?!±

This is Black's chance to change the structure to his benefit. 8...exd5 9.cxd5 a6 10.a4 h6 11.♙e3 ♞e8= and the position is roughly even.

9.♗ge2 ♞b6?!±

The queen excursion offers nothing. 9...exd5 10.♗xd5 ♙e6 11.♗ec3 ♙xd5 12.♗xd5± and while White is better, Black is still in the game.

10.0-0-0 exd5 11.♙xf6 ♙xf6 12.♗xd5 ♞d8 13.♗xf6+ ♞xf6 14.♞xd6 ♙e6?!+-

14...♞xd6 15.♞xd6 ♗c6 16.♗c3 ♙e6± leaves Black a bit better off than the text.

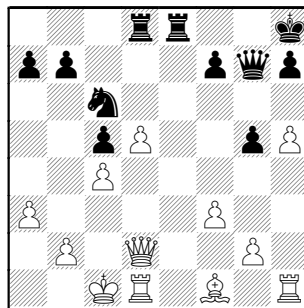
15.♗c3 ♗a6 16.♗d5 ♞g7 17.h4 ♗h8

17...♙xd5 18.cxd5 ♞ad8 19.♞f4 looks slightly better than the text.

18.h5 ♙xd5 19.exd5?!

Better is 19.cxd5 ♞ad8 20.♞f4 and the pressure against Black's king is increasing.

19...♞ad8 20.♞f4 g5 21.♞d2 ♗b4 22.a3 ♗c6!



Clever, but not enough to alter the inevitable. However, there is little to offer at this point.

23.♗b1 ♗d4 24.♙d3 f6 25.♞he1 ♞c7 26.♞xe8+ ♞xe8 27.♞e1 ♞xe1+ 28.♞xe1 ♞d7 29.♞e4 ♗g8 30.h6 ♗b3 31.♞e3 ♗f8 32.♗a2?!

Better is 32.♞e1 b6 33.♞g3 ♞e7 34.♙c2 ♗d2+ 35.♗a2 ♗xc4 36.♞b8+ ♞e8 37.♞xa7 ♞f7 38.♞b8+ ♞e8 39.♞xe8+ ♗xe8 40.♙xh7 and White is clearly winning. The text is only a slight setback.

32...♗d4 33.♙b1 b5 34.♞e4 bxc4 35.♞xh7 ♞xh7 36.♙xh7 ♗b5 37.♙f5 c3 38.g4 cxb2 39.♗xb2 ♗f7 40.h7 ♗g7 41.♗b3 ♗d6 42.♗a4 ♗h8 43.♙c2 ♗c4 44.♗b5 1-0

At the end of round two, the four players in first place were all titled players, but there were several untitled players still vying for prizes. The end of round three would find one of those four alone at the top of the leader board. The scores at this point in the tournament:

2: Bass, Kaushansky, Rose, Giles

1½: Brooks, Schiller, Sprenkle, Kornfeld, Rubin

1: Tennant, Redman, Dandridge, Kramer, Mohr, Szpisjak, Kus, Savage, Stevanovic, Martinovsky, Rhine, Lawton, Chachere, Bachler, Popel, Jones, Chow, Karklins

½: Al Sandrin, Wallach, Van Meter, Sage, Angelo Sandrin

0: Friedman, Larsen, Gratz

### The Players

It will take three issues to cover all five rounds of the tournament, and I will use the last part of each issue to introduce the players, in reverse or based on final scores. In this issue I will start with the bottom third of the final scores, from 36th to 25th.

Glen Gratz is the former head chess coach at North Boone High School in Poplar Grove, Illinois. Glen continues to compete at chess, including winning the inaugural Rock River Chess Tournament in July 2017. He currently has a US Chess regular rating of 2026.

Albert Sandrin Jr. (1923–2004) of Illinois won the 1949 US Open and took second in the 1951 US Open, despite being blind. He represented the US in the World Blind Championships of 1970 and 1982, and he played first board for the US team in the Blind Olympiads in 1968, 1972, and 1980, playing second board in 1976.

Kenneth Larsen attended college at the University of Chicago during the tournament, and now lives in Arizona, where he is the five-time state chess champion. He was the coach of the National Champion Orange Grove school team which once included now GM Tal Shaked. Ken's current US Chess rating is 2320.

Timothy Sage, now living in Massachusetts, is still an active chess player. Tim won the 2016 Chicago Class Championship in the Expert category, and scored 3/6 at the 2023 US Open Championship, including a win against FM Javier Antonio Torres. His current US Chess rating is 2136.

Charles Kramer of Dolton, Illinois passed away in September 2017. His last regular rating was 2274.

Ken Wallach of Illinois coached the Stevenson High School chess team to win the IHSA Chess State Championship in 2020 and 2022. Ken is an active player with a current FIDE rating of 2085.

Christopher Kus grew up in Chicago but has since moved to California. He was on the chess team at Lane Technical High School, along with Ken Mohr and Fred Rhine, when they won the Illinois State Championship in 1976. Christopher does not appear to have played competitively in the past 20 years.



Allen Kornfeld shared first place in the 1979 Illinois Open Chess Championship in Chicago prior to this tournament. He no longer plays competitive chess.

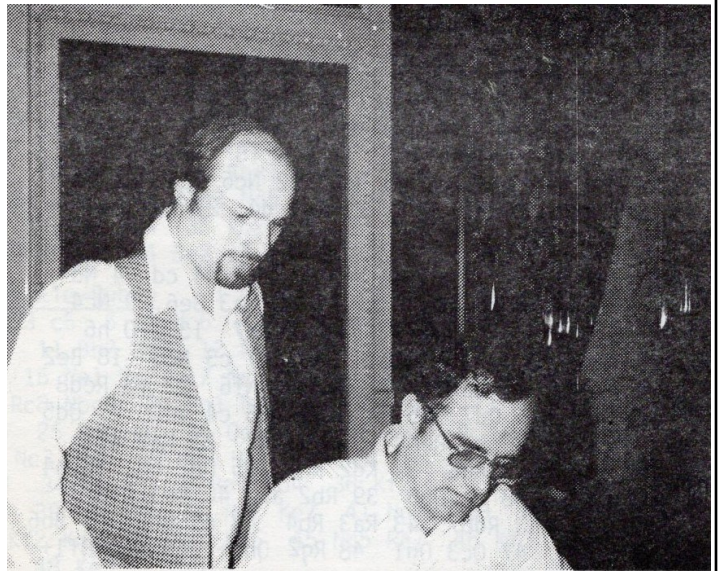
Stephan Popel (1909–1987) of Fargo, North Dakota, grew up in Ukraine, where he won the championship of Lviv in

1929. After WWII he moved to France, where he won the Paris City Chess Championship in 1951, 1953, and 1954. He emigrated to the US in 1956, where he won the Michigan State Championship in 1957, 1958, and 1959. After moving to North Dakota in 1960, Popel won the State Championship of North Dakota 11 times. In 1996, the city of Lviv hosted their first International Chess Tournament in memory of Stephan Popel.

Erik Karklins (1915–2017) of Chicago was born in Riga, Latvia, the birthplace of Mikhail Tal. Educated as an architect, he emigrated to the US in 1951. He tied for second place in the 1963 Illinois State Championship, and he was awarded the National Master title in 1984 at the age of 68. He is the father of FM Andrew Karklins, author of *Modern Grandmaster Chess: As Exemplified in the 1964 USSR Zonal Tournament*.

Edward Friedman shared first place in the 1976 Illinois Open Chess Championship. He is on the faculty of the University of Chicago in the Mathematics department. His current US Chess quick rating is 2238.

FM Lester Van Meter currently lives in Indiana and remains an active player, with a US Chess regular rating of 2200. He was inducted into the Indiana State Chess Association's Hall of Fame in 1993 for his service to chess in Indiana.



Asst. TD Tim Just standing, Chief TD Walter Brown sitting.

Stay tuned for part 2 coming next issue. It will feature some games newly annotated by a few of the players themselves.



## The Queens' Corner

By Rachel Schechter



Meet Chess Queen **Laurel Aronian**: Chessplayer, Instructor, Singer, Songwriter, Media Maven—a remarkably gifted teenager, inspiring up-and-coming queens everywhere.

**Congratulations, Laurel, you're so accomplished at such a young age. Please tell us a little bit about yourself.**

Thanks so much for this opportunity; I'm excited to be a part of *The Chess Journalist's* Queen's Corner!

I'm a high school junior who lives in Westchester County, NY, and attends St. Luke's School in New Canaan, CT. I have a younger brother named Jack, who also plays competitive chess (he's a serious fan of four player chess too!). I played chess with my family before kindergarten, and began team tournament play with Trinity Elementary in NY and The Montessori School (Seven Acres) in Wilton, CT. My first tournament was actually an all-girls event in NYC.



My 1st Tournament in Kindergarten (An All Girls Tourney), NYC 2013. Photo Credit: J. Aronian.



Jack Aronian, THE Jonathan Corblah (1st Coach!), Laurel Aronian, 12/18. Photo Credit: J. Aronian.

I love chess, as well as the culture that comes along with the game. I'm also passionate about music and writing. The ability to integrate these passions has been amazing and fulfilling. Playing, writing, and singing have opened new doorways for me in the chess world, whether playing chess at the Parliament in Armenia, singing the Star-Spangled Banner at US Chess national tournaments, or covering the US Chess K-12 Nationals for *Chess Life Kids* magazine.



Chess Festival at The Parliament in Yerevan, Armenia (Laurel (Blue Hat, rt)). Photo Credit: J. Aronian.



Singing The National Anthem, Opening Ceremony, US Chess High School Nationals, Wash DC, 1/23. Photo Credit: Caroline King.

Teaching chess is also a passion. I began teaching during the pandemic when Jack and I and friends designed a summer camp for elementary kids where we offered academic enrichment and chess instruction. After the program ended, the kids asked to continue with chess, so Jack and I launched a volunteer teen service initiative, Chess-

In1Day. The program provides volunteer chess instruction in public libraries, schools, and community centers. I've made strong relationships with my recruited peers as we work together, refining our approach and growing the game and the program itself.



Chessin1Day Class, CT, 9/23. Photo Credit: J. Aronian.



Chessin1day instruction. Photo Credit: K. Aronian.

The chess community truly comprises a unique group of people. The friendships I've made teaching, attending tournaments, as Teen Ambassador of the US Chess Women's Girls Club, captaining my school's chess team, and hosting cross-cultural chess events for my school, have been some of my closest. Chess has always been much more than a rating for me, and I always connect to its unique culture, even when I'm not in a head-to-head match.

**We understand you're rated around 1400 and are 38th among girls under age 16. To what do you attribute your rapid improvement?**

Fortunately, my last tournament at the New York State Championship was a good one, and boosted my rating to about 1450 with two wins and a draw against opponents rated 1600 and above. Before this past year, I was at somewhat of a plateau, so I began focusing more on memorizing opening lines (during sophomore year, I started

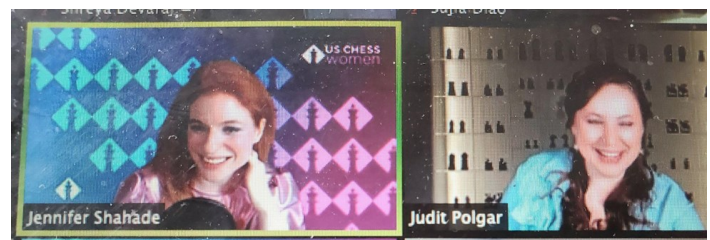


Catching up with Friends on the Chess Circuit at The Liberty Bell Tourney, PA. Photo Credit: K. Aronian

waking up about half an hour early to fit in some chess, as it was practically impossible to study in the evenings after I finished homework). I think running lines had a significant effect, as did working on tactics. Instead of simply doing Chesstempo puzzles as I had in the past, I began including lichess and Chess.com puzzles for variety (I find lichess puzzles the hardest). Taking more time on puzzles may have also been beneficial (i.e. not selecting a move until I'm quite positive it's the right one). I also started "playing up" in tournaments as often as I could. Attending the US Chess Women's Girls Club online sessions (since 2020) and tournaments was very beneficial as well. I'm not positive if a single one of these aspects launched me out of stagnation, but consistent study in itself was key.



US Chess Girls Club Virtual Meetup: Sarah Chiang, WGM Jennifer Shahade, (My profile picture is my Cat, Bonnie) Photo permission provided by Jennifer Shahade and USChess. Screenshot: L. Aronian



You and Jack received Chess Journalism's 2023 Award for Best Personal Narrative written by a junior. This, *The Sinquefield Sacrifice*, ran on Chess.com vis-a-vis the St. Louis Rapid & Blitz venue. The story and photos were stellar. But could you tell us something the article doesn't?

Thanks so much for asking. These stories were incredibly fun for us to write and look back on. *The Sinquefield Sacrifice*, which covered the World Grand Chess Tour's 2022 Rapid and Blitz, was actually our follow up piece. I'd suggest checking out the article that came first, [Autograph Signing - 2019 St. Louis Rapid & Blitz / Sinquefield Cup Ceremonies](#), which briefly appeared on Chess.com's Blogs Front Page (Jack and I were super psyched about that). We wrote the piece when we were 10 and 12, so the perspective is quite different.

We do these pieces on spec, without any assurance that we'll get interviews or be in the right place at the right time. As rogue reporters, we're always in random places trying to get the interviews, photos, and find the story. For instance, in a stroke of luck, GM Alireza Firouzja (winner of the '22 Rapid & Blitz) was seated next to us at breakfast!



Laurel, Jack, & GM Alireza Firouzja, Sinquefield, Rapid & Blitz, 2022. Photo Credit L. Aronian.



Jack & I Made it To The Proverbial Game! The World Grand Chess Tour, St. Louis 2018. Photo Credit: J. Aronian.



Closing Ceremony, Sinquefield, Rapid & Blitz, 2019. Photo Credit: J. Aronian.



Reporting & Playing, St. Louis Chess Club. Fun Master Mike, Jack Aronian, Laurel Aronian (lt-rt), 2019. Photo Credit: J. Aronian.



Opening Ceremony, Sinquefield, Rapid & Blitz, 2022. Photo Credit: J. Aronian.

A fun fact that the article doesn't mention is that we have an annual Chase Hotel pool swim relay (Super GMs present!). I'm not too sure how we'll pull it off this year since the St. Louis Grand Chess Tour events are taking place in September and December, but perhaps we'll try ping-pong (a nod to Dan Lucas' [US Chess Open Tennis](#) side event). It's no secret Super GMs are known for racquet sports and cook-offs. We haven't come across any reports on slow, relaxing sports yet (i.e., golf), but we'll keep our options open. Maybe bowling is a possibility?



Swim Relays at The Chase, 2022. Photo Credit: K. Aronian.

**Do you regularly write for Chess.com? Other chess venues?**

I actually have an upcoming assignment covering *The Faces of US Chess*— which I'm super excited about! It's tough for me to write regularly because of school, but I pop in and out for assignments. Still, I love juggling articles at events. Some prime photos can be taken between and after rounds! The image below was one of my favorites taken for *Chess Life Kids'* K-12 Grade Nationals cover story that didn't make it into the piece.



**Chess Success: The Egelhof Family Tuckered Out Awaiting Awards, K-12 Nationals, MD 12/22. Photo Credit: L. Aronian**

**You also won one of Chess Journalism's Special Achievement awards for *Songwriting*, featuring chess-themed work. *Touch Move*, right? What inspired you?**

"Touch Move" was about my experience at the 2022 US Open and Haring Invitational. I was flying from California back to New York, and realizing how difficult it'd be to maintain the relationships I'd made inspired me to write the song. I submitted "Touch Move" to YoungArts along with "Yours to Use," another song that drew some inspiration from chess.



**WIM Ruth Haring Invitational of Girl State Champions US Open '22, Rancho Mirage, CA (close-up). Photo Credit: K. Aronian.**



**WIM Ruth Haring Invitational of Girl State Champions US Open '22, Rancho Mirage, CA. Photo Credit: K. Aronian.**

**What, in general, inspires you to write? Do you have any special or unique writing processes?**

My drive to write comes largely from wanting to capture and share a moment with others. When I write articles, I want to bring the readers into the specific tournament: the random events, humorous happenings, the people, the games, and the unrepeatable energy and atmosphere. I write articles for people outside of the chess world as a window into this unique experience that they might not yet know, but may just decide to try. Similarly, I write songs because I want to share the beauty or emotion that's encompassed within my experiences.

In most of my writing, I begin with an outline, since it gives the piece a sense of direction and helps me get started when I'm staring at a blank document. I also often play piano instrumentals when writing articles, i.e. Will Hali-mou's chess music playlists (ironically, I never listen to these while playing chess, they tend to distract me).

**Are any other chess-themed songs in the works?**

I'm currently finishing a song called "*Albany*", which is about wanting to escape the present and return to Albany, a sort of haven for me as well as a tournament location. I had a wild coincidence about a month ago where I played the 145th Annual New York State Chess Tournament in Albany, and I contemporaneously competed in the 175th New York State Fair Talent Showcase Finals in Syracuse—with my song "*Albany*"!

I headed up to Albany Friday night, played round one at 7pm, woke up, drove to Syracuse for the Talent Showcase Finals at 9:30am, sang "Albany", then drove back to Albany for my 6pm match Saturday evening.



**175th NY State Fair Talent Showcase Finals, Syracuse, NY. Photo Credit: K. Aronian**



**145th NY State Chess Championship, Albany, NY. Photo Credit: K. Aronian**

### Are there any other kinds of chess ventures in the works?

I just finished a piece for American Chess Magazine about the 145th Annual New York State Championship, which will be coming out soon. Indeed, my Labor Day break consisted of chess, singing, and writing—busy, but fun!

Additionally, [Chessin1day](#) will host a class on National Chess Day (October 14th) at [Teachers College, Columbia University](#). We are focusing on the idea that teachers and administrators can have the biggest impact in spreading the sport; however, educators must know the game and its benefits so they can encourage chess in their classes and schools.

### Which female chess players do you most admire and why?

I greatly admire WGM Adriana Nikolova for her confidence and her entertaining streams. I love WIM Dr. Carolina Blanco's unique fusion of her passions: orthodonture and chess, along with her bilingual coaching at Girls Club. I'm awed by IM and WGM Rusa (Rusudan) Goletiani's bravery, pursuit of chess, and financial genius which she shared with the Girls Club. I was also fortunate to play chess with her at the Girls To Grandmasters & US Chess





**Teachers College**  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



**TC (Re)Unites**  
Healthy Planet • Healthy People

**REGISTER**  
National  
Chess Day  
10/14/23

2023  
**TC (Re)Unites**  
Laurel Aronian Chessin1day.com

2023.10.14 / 2:00p.m.-3:00p.m.

#### Chess for All

We are thrilled to present the "Chess for All" workshop at Teachers College TC Re(Unites) on National Chess Day in the United States!

Laurel Aronian, CT State Girls Champion '22, US Chess Women's Girls Club Ambassador and Co-Founder of Chessin1day, will facilitate a hands-on chess workshop. She will be joined by US Chess CT State Delegate and TC Alum Karen Aronian, Ed.D. ('96, '97, '15).

The workshop will welcome all-comers, from absolute beginners to skilled players. Although chess is perceived as complex to learn, the Chessin1day method activates participants in just one meet-up. Chess provides social engagement with face-to-face communication that elevates focus, critical thinking, multiple literacies, and meditative flow. Chess connects young and old, near and far, from all walks of life to think deeply and to play as we endeavor toward a more "Healthy Planet, Healthy People." This workshop will illuminate chess benefits, inclusivity, and the essentialness of Chess For All, especially for education communities.

Chess is gaining worldwide momentum, and we will spotlight teachers as key linchpins in chess education. For chess to broadly impact scholastic populations, chess instruction needs to be a part of teacher education. Chess is an ideal choice for a fill-in activity during the typical school day, uniquely offering a near-silent interaction while simultaneously providing both a social and learning experience.

#### Chessin1day at Teachers College, Columbia University, NY, 10/14 #NationalChessDay

Girls Club event in Central Park, NY. I met WGM Sabina Foisor (and GM Elshan Moradiabadi) in the US Chess Women's Girls Club Room at the 2018 K-12 Nationals in Orlando Florida and see Sabina at national events every year; her coaching, commentary, interviewing, and speaking continually inspire me and other female players I know. Similarly, I've seen IA Sophia Rohde around the chess world for years (running tournaments I play at!), and was thrilled to finally interview her in Albany this year. She has an incredible background as a chess player, international arbiter, chess organizer and influencer. Finally, I'm forever grateful to WGM Jennifer Shahade for her tireless efforts to get more girls into the game through her courage, reinvention and determination.



**WIM Rusa Goletiani & Laurel, Girls to Grandmasters with US Chess Girls Club at Central Park's Chess & Checkers House, 2/20 Photo Credit: K. Aronian**



Scholastic Nationals with WGM Jennifer Shahade and WIM Carolina Blanco, 12/19 Photo Credit: K. Aronian.



WGM Jennifer Shahade, WIM Carolina Blanco & Girls Club Teen Pizza, K-12 Nationals '21, Orlando, FL. Photo Credit: K. Aronian.



Laurel & WIM Carolina Blanco & WGM Jennifer Shahade Girls Club Teen Pizza Party, High School Nationals, National Harbor, MD 12/ 22. Photo Credit: K. Aronian.

### What special challenges do chess queens face?

Personally, I've always felt a bit like an atypical chess player at tournaments. Not solely because I'm a female player, but also because I often have other objectives in mind than winning the event, like covering the tournament, performing, or recruiting for Girls Club. I sometimes feel out of



place, and question if I should have the same mind-set as the players around me.

I really enjoyed the US Open and Invitationals because of the social events they offer for the attending teens and the adults. Social events like these provide space for the nuances of chess players' personalities.

WGM SABINA FOISER with Laurel US Chess Open, Rancho Mirage, CA 2022. Photo Credit: K. Aronian.

### Shifting squares, were you born in North Salem, NY? Brief bio?

I grew up in North Salem, NY, but I've lived in NYC as well.

### Will you be a high school junior this fall?

Yes, I'm currently a junior.

### What are your plans for college and career?

I'm currently visiting schools—checking out their chess clubs and academic departments (i.e., music, psychology, humanities, philosophy, education). I hope to keep chess in my life and integrate it with my academic fields of study.

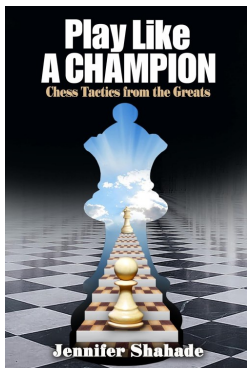
### What advice do you have for other up-and-coming, young chess-related women?

Overall, I'd say that if you have a goal, stick with it through the hard times. Many girls drop out of chess due to conflicts, (i.e. school and friends), and it can be hard to continue with the game after said barriers impede improvement. However, if you truly love the game and/or the chess culture and friends you've made, stay with it. I've realized over time that when I'm unsure about something, it helps to "hold on loosely, but don't let go" (38 Special), rather than quitting. It's always important to take positive action!

As mentioned, there are many ways to connect to the chess world rather than aiming to be among the best players. Commentary, writing, and teaching are just a few options. I think many people quit, because they're not the best at the game, yet you can be your best in other aspects of the game—there are more wins than simply over-the-board. And there's room on the board for everyone.

I've also found that it's important to have confidence in your choices, and also consider the game from your opponent's perspective. In tournaments I'll often take a look at the game from the other side of the board to get an idea of what my opponent is planning. This strategy has helped me find many of my best responses. Similarly, I've been hesitant about playing an insane or dubious looking move, despite its obvious benefits, since I'm worried about what my coach or peers will say upon review. However, trusting my instincts and following through with the move has led me to the right decision more frequently than worrying about others' judgment.

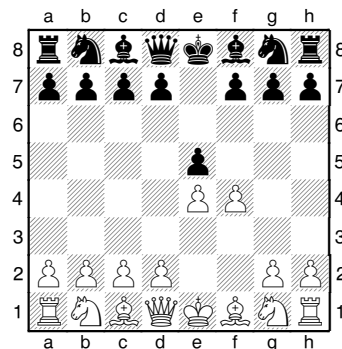
### What's your favorite chess book?



*Play Like a Champion* by Jennifer Shahade

### And your favorite chess opening?

I used to play the *King's Gambit* but stopped because it was too risky.



### Finally, shifting squares again, what's your favorite tea?

I'm pretty much guaranteed to be seen with a water bottle of room-temperature green tea at chess tournaments (ITO EN's Sencha + Matcha blend). However, my actual favorite tea is *English Tea Shop's* White Tea Blueberry & Elderflower.

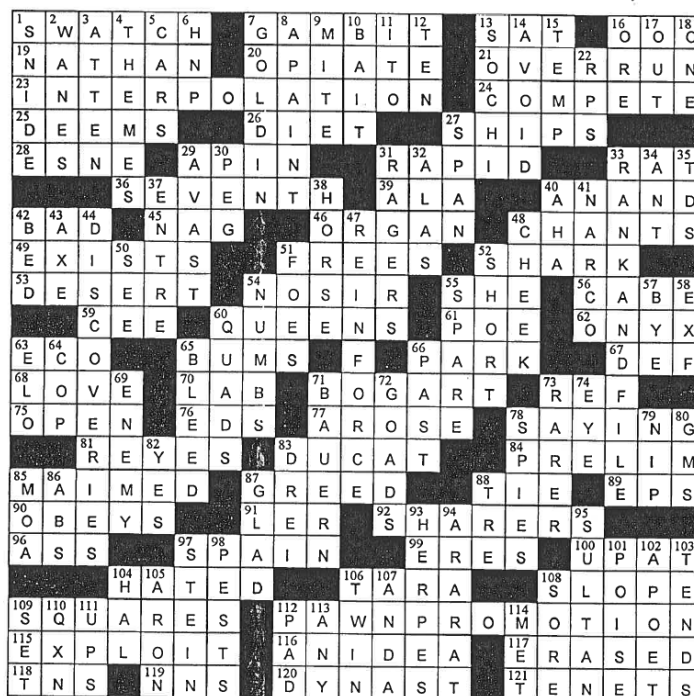
Thank you so much for including me in *The Queen's Corner*, it's a great spot on the board!



Back in the day at Montessori Chess, Jack (left), Laurel, & Chess Mates. Photo Credit: The Montessori School, CT

Thank **you**, Laurel Aronian for being such a stellar example for future young chess queens everywhere! (When we meet, I'll bring the tea.)

The Chess Word Crossword  
by Bob Basalla



Aug 18, 1999 - Crosswords Plus