

## Well, There You Go

A Tribute to Joe and Hildred Viggiano

By Kenneth E. Milutin

Originally written in July of 2012 and submitted to *Chess Life*, but never printed. Previous versions of this article can be found in the [Salisbury Chess Club Web Page dated April 30, 2013](#) and [Chess for Unity Summer Story Contest in 2022](#). It is published here with the author's permission who was 54 at the time of writing.

I would like to pay tribute to a fine person and fellow chess player, Joseph Viggiano and his lovely wife Hildred. Two issues of *Chess Life*, August 2011 and April 2012 (more on this later), prodded me to share this story.

I first met Mr. Viggiano at a Delaware State Chess Championship in the late 70's. A retired Latin teacher, Joe was a kindly, older gentleman who always wore a "golf" hat and carried his chess equipment in a white, leather, bowling ball bag. I never really found out much about Joe's early years except that, of course, he was of Italian heritage, and he was from a family of glass blowers. I next met him in the early 80's at a Central Delaware Chess Club meeting. He later took me to my first World Open in 1987, and I was amazed at the people he knew and introduced me to.

As we grew to know each other, Joe learned that my job took me on the road occasionally through the town where he lived. Joe had given an open invitation to his chess friends, including me, to stop in for lunch or dinner and a game or two of chess. I took Joe up on his offer and I am so glad that I did. His wonderful wife, Hildred, was a fabulous cook, and we had many a spirited game while having some great food on Joe's small screened porch at the front of his house.

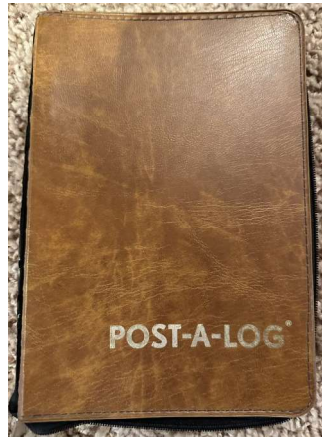
Such great memories. Joe was always fond of saying "Well, there you go" after the surprising conclusion of a game. While playing, Joe could lull you to sleep with his very slow, deliberate moves, and he had the unfortunate habit of forgetting to punch his clock. His wife made him a small cardboard reminder to "Punch the CLOCK" that he would sometimes keep in front of him during a game. For as long as I knew him, Joe always had the same small, standard analog clock. At one World Open, Joe was down two pieces to a young man who was clearly bored with the whole situation. Joe was also down on time, because of the bad habit noted above. At first glance, it looked like the game would be coming to an end fast. Joe's position was tricky, but with careful play, the young man should have had no trouble in putting Joe away. Frankly, I found myself checking my watch, wondering when Joe's game would end, so we could grab a bite to eat. The young man constantly got up from the board after making his very quick moves. He would briskly walk over to a couple of friends huddled nearby and have a few whispers, then hurriedly return when Joe would finally move (and not punch his ever-ticking analog clock). After one such sequence, Joe straightened up in his chair and carefully studied the board. I looked a little more closely, and suddenly Joe's small remaining force looked very imposing.....I then saw it and Joe saw it too.....mate in three! Joe made the first move of the combination and to my surprise, punched his clock! The young man returned, looked carefully, then slumped in his chair and sat still as a rock for what seemed like 30 minutes. He finally responded and Joe did as well, again punching his clock.....it was over. The young man

held out his hand and graciously acknowledged the defeat and I think he was probably wondering what hit him. Joe then looked around and true to his trademark, softly said "Well, there you go." A smile always comes to my face when I share that story. The April 2012 *Chess Life* issue cover features the "Winding Down" of the analog clock.....frankly.....I hope not.

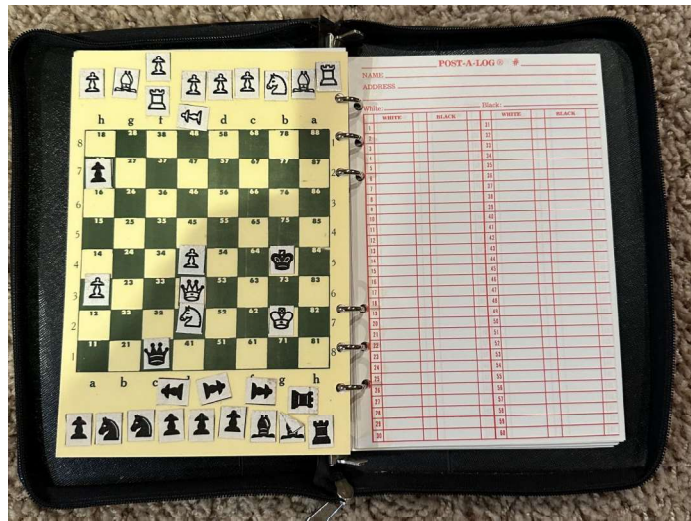
Joe and his wife moved to Florida in October of 1994 to be closer to their family.....I remember the day very well. I stopped in to say goodbye to my good friends, knowing that since Joe was in his late 80's, I would probably never see either of them again. I had tears in my eyes as I left that driveway and that small screened porch where we had many games and meals. We stayed in touch over the next couple of years, but unfortunately Joe passed away in 1997. I received a few very touching letters from Hildred and we continued to correspond for a while. Sometime later, a large box arrived at my door. Upon opening it, I found a nice note from Hildred stating that "Joe would want you to have these." Inside were a number of old chess books (some autographed by famous players) and to my surprise and delight, Joe's chess clock. The stories that clock could tell. A following letter had a picture of Joe, which I look at from time to time with great fondness. What cherished mementos from such fine people. I was in Florida in the fall of 2009 and tried to look up Hildred. Sadly, she had passed away that spring.



The final phase of this story relates to the August 2011 issue of *Chess Life*. You see, Mr. Viggiano was the inventor of the "Post—A—Log". Those of us familiar with postal chess know exactly what



this is. A simple, yet effective way to safely store all of your postal games in one neat, zippered folder. THE PIECES WILL NOT MOVE UNTIL YOU MOVE THEM! Legend has it that when analyzing at night, Joe would fall asleep with a traditional slot—type recorder album for recording postal games. While Joe was dreaming of tricks on how to remember to punch his clock, the recorder album would fall to the floor, spilling pieces everywhere from numerous games in



progress. Joe came up with a great solution! The "Post—A—Log!" The August 2011 issue cover story is about the evolution of Correspondence Chess. Postal chess, I have heard, has greatly diminished in popularity due to email and the Internet, etc. .... Like the analog clock, postal chess may be a thing of the past in the not—too—distant future.....and again, I hope not.

Many of Joe's friends and I fondly reminisce about him, and we always say, he is one of those unforgettable characters that will always remain with you.

On rare occasions, I have returned to that same town where I shared those great games and wonderful meals with Joe and his wife. I have slowly driven down the street and looked at that house and screened porch. If I concentrated, I could still smell the aroma of those meals, see Joe in his golf hat with his bowling bag at his side and hear him saying, "Well, there you go."

I hope this was a fitting tribute to two great people. Folks like this are what make our game such a great one. In closing, I hope my old friend is smiling down on me and I want to softly whisper to him ..... "Well Joe, there you go".

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## 7. Learn to Speak Chess

Effective annotations weave specific moves into the broader concepts of chess principles, tactical combinations, and strategic plans enhancing their instructiveness.

Learning the names and language used about chess concepts and relating them to your own games should also help connect dots in your mind for when a similar moment happens in future games. You can add to your vocabulary by reading master games collections or just chess books in general.

*Example:* "15. a4 is a classic overprotection strategy on the queenside, emphasizing the control of the b5-square before expanding."

## 8. Personalize

Personal anecdotes or reflections make annotations memorable. They reveal the human side of the game, relating specific moves to your chess journey.

It will also make it more fun to write and read your annotations if they are not only dry lines.

Annotating chess games is more than a simple review, it allows you to reflect, learn, and grow. Each game tells its own story and carries its own lessons. As you delve into your moves, emotions, and decisions, you will hopefully gain new insights. This concludes my 8 ideas for improving your annotations. Hopefully, you found something useful. I'm at least motivated to work on upping my annotations.

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**Morris Giles** (1953-2012) was one of the strongest, and most feared, players in Chicago in the 1980s. His style was sharp and aggressive, and his record includes wins against GM Alexander Ivanov and GM Walter Browne at the 1988 US Open in Boston. While he was employed at Sears in their IT department, Giles played on top board for the company team in the Chicago Industrial Chess League. For a more complete understanding of the life and chess of Morris Giles, please see his obituary on The Chess Drum: <https://www.thechessdrum.net/blog/2013/01/03/morris-giles-chicago-legend-1953-2012/>

**Dr. Eric Schiller** (1955-2018) was a true renaissance man. A Doctor of Linguistics from the University of Chicago, he taught both there and at Wayne State University. He was co-founder of the Southeast Asian Linguistic Society, and an officer in the Chicago Linguistic Society. Prior to graduate school, Schiller founded a music group called the Long Island Sound Ensemble, and he studied conducting in Vienna and in Hancock, Maine. In 1974 he was the Illinois Junior Chess Champion, and he played for the University of Chicago team more than once at the Pan American Intercollegiate Team Chess Championship. He has served as both an International Arbiter and an International Trainer, and was an arbiter for several games of the FIDE World Chess Championship in 2000. As a player he reached the rank of International Master. He also served as a chess journalist, reporting on Chess Olympiads and World Championship matches. One of the most prolific chess authors in American history, he has over 100 books to his credit, including some with such notable co-authors as GM Lev Albut, IM John Watson, GM Raymond Keene, GM Leonid Shamkovich, GM Eduard Gufeld, and GM Joel Benjamin.