

CHESS / NBCC BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN PASCO

On the third week of February, the club held its second honorary tournament of the year, this one for John Pasco. John, who recently rejoined the club after a very long two-decade hiatus, began his membership in our organization during the 1970s, when we met at the General Haller Post on Broad Street and when chess in America and at the club was at its peak. Prior to joining the club, John played chess casually. And he, like many other chess players in our country did at the time, followed the Fischer – Spassky match with greatest interest, without the internet, social media, computers, or cell phones. Back at the club, John was introduced to our family by Arkadijs Strazdins, club president at the time. “Straz,” as John notes, was very encouraging to young players, not to drink beer, though, which “Straz” often enjoyed doing during games! John dropped out of the chess scene in the late 1970s but returned with a vengeance in the 1980s. He continued to climb up the rankings in the club and, to this day, has maintained his status as a strong class chess player. In the 1990s, John became a USCF certified tournament director and learned how to direct tournaments under the guidance of Mr. Strazdins. In 1998, John assumed the position of club vice president, which he would hold for three years. It was also that year when John was the club champion. In 2001, John was elected the first NBCC president of 21st century when Mr. Strazdins decided not to run for re-election. In late 2002, unfortunately, John resigned from the club presidency due to demands of work and personal life. However, during his short duration as our leader, he dutifully carried out the many club traditions that Mr. Strazdins had established during his thirty-one years as president. When John returned to the club last year, he played in the 2022 New Britain Summer Open Chess Championship, his first big chess tournament in nearly twenty years. John has often told USCF NM Suhas Kodali and me that he is quite impressed with how the club has grown since 2002, especially with the scholastic outreach. Having been a member for over thirty-five years, I had the pleasure of getting to know John during the 1980s and 1990s, and I am so delighted and thrilled to see him back in action at the club. We thank John for his dedication to the club during a period of huge transition. His pleasant personality, kindness, and delicious sense of humor are personal attributes that make John a nice person to be around with. He always looks out for everyone’s interest – that is for certain. Recently, John visited Cuba, where he had the grand opportunity to visit the historic site of Jose Capablanca, a former world chess champion. Check out his report in the 2022 NBCC newsletter. John is extremely elated to be a part of the NBCC family once again, and I speak for the entire club when I say, “Welcome back, friend. We missed you!” USCF NM David Herscovici, our club’s treasurer, won the tournament.