

CHESS / NBCC BIOGRAPHY OF GERT HILHORST

Since 2010, the club has been hosting quick chess events to honor our members based on their longevity in our organization. On February 20, the club held a tournament for Gert Hilhorst, our first honoree of 2018. Gert, or Gary as he cheerfully refers to himself in America, is one of the club's most veteran members, having joined our community over a decade ago. This gentleman, however, was not new to the chess world prior to his membership in the club. One of the most traveled people in the NBCC, Gert is proud to hold memberships in chess clubs in Germany and in his birth country, the Netherlands, where two of our members had the experience of a lifetime visiting with Gert and his wife Holly in 2008. They treated our visitors to an enlightening Dutch experience. Months prior to the visit, Gert tried coordinating an international chess match between the NBCC and the Fischer-Z Chess Club of Amsterdam, but that never happened unfortunately. Maybe it will one of these days! With chess deeply rooted in his blood, shortly after moving to the United States, Gert formed a scholastic chess program in the Simsbury Public School System. Since 2008, Gert has worked passionately to expand and enrich scholastic chess in his hometown. Because of his steadfast efforts, the Simsbury Public Library Chess Club, where he has coached his son Eric, has become one of the largest scholastic chess communities in Connecticut. Beyond Simsbury, Gert, who is rated near 2000 these days, has been actively involved in our club for years. As you all know, Gert is our club treasurer. He was elected to this position in 2015 after the tragic passing of his predecessor, Andris Strazdins, who had held the position for a club record forty-two years. Gert has done wonders for the club in this major role. Gert is a very altruistic person like Andris was, always giving of himself with his time and money. The NBCC is proud to recognize Mr. Hilhorst for his amazing contributions to the enrichment of chess and for the warmth and generosity that he has bestowed to everyone in our family for so many years. Instead of choosing to host a traditional quick chess tournament, Gert opted to organize a Fischer Random (or Chess960) event, the first one in NBCC history. In addition, Gert awarded non cash prizes to the place winners of his special event. What a display of generosity! Winning first place (and the four pack of Grolsch Dutch beer!) was member David Herscovici. Two of our rising scholastic members, Jack Clayton and Nakul Ramaswamy, each received lovely chess books for finishing second overall and second among the scholastic players, respectively.