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INTRODUCTION

Season's Greetings, fellow chess friends of Connecticut and throughout the world:

It is amazing that another twelve months have flown by. It just seemed like yesterday when I was reliving the New Britain Chess Club's memorable moments of 2008 with you. The momentum with which our club operated at in 2009 appeared to be, at times, faster than a speeding bullet. A myriad of wonderful things happened at our club in 2009. And, indeed, it was one of the most exciting years in our club's history.

I am very proud to be a member of this social organization. Our members, who range from ten to eighty-seven, of all playing levels, come from all across the Constitution State and beyond and, every Tuesday evening, meet at the New Britain Quartette Club to compete with their friends in this battle of the minds. Beyond the club, many of our members are actively involved in mutual social events. It has become known by many that the NBCC is way more than a typical chess club. When you join our social group, our members welcome you to our family. It is with this affection that our organization has often been referred to as "The Heart [and Soul] of Connecticut Chess."

As always, it is a pleasure to share the wonderful moments at the club with you fine people. So, take a break from this hectic world we live in, enjoy your favorite wintertime beverage, and spend some time reading about the memorable moments at the NBCC in 2009.



THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

It was a wonderful way to usher in 2009 as members Sofia Leja, Andres Castaneda, and Yogesh Raghunathan became citizens of the United States of America.

Member and FIDE Master Nelson Castaneda won the 1st “Komons Kwik Chess Tournament” held at Borders in Farmington on January 13. Thanks to members Derek Meredith and Marcus Komons for organizing that awesome event.

On January 24, friends of member Andres Montiel celebrated his surprise 40th birthday (I was almost sworn to secrecy not to reveal his age) with an exciting day of sporting activities from bowling to pool to chess. The festivities started in the afternoon and lasted well into the early hours of the following day at Andres’ house. Thanks to his wife, Karin, for hosting this event.

FEBRUARY

Six NBCC-affiliated teams participated in the 2009 United States Amateur Team East Chess Championship held in Parsippany, New Jersey, from February 14 to 16, setting a new club record for the most past or present members participating in a non-club tournament. Our twenty-four players commanded the playing field and battled among the intense competition. Once again, our superstars victoriously brought home the gold. Team Captain Doug Fiske reported on our teams’ excellent performance below.

“Winning the Top Connecticut Team prize (four digital clocks and a plaque) with a score of 4.5 - 1.5 was the team of USCF National Master Ted McHugh, Harris Appelman, Danny Rozovsky, and Jason Lenore (New Britain Prodigies). The team of Derek Meredith, James Nitz, Doug Fiske, and Mike Pascetta scored 4 - 2 and won a \$140 free entry for the top team name, I Can See Russians From My Board! The team of FM Nelson Castaneda, Andres Castaneda, Sofia Leja, and Mark Leja (Gen Ties) scored 3.5 - 2.5. Nelson won a digital clock for going 6 - 0. The team of Yogesh Raghunathan, Chris Jensen, John Nitz, and Danny Pascetta (Baffling Bishops From New Britain Balooga) scored 3 - 3. The team of Joe Hricko, Karl Eschelbach, Kevin Zimmerman, and John Chapman (Marinating Fischers) also scored 3 - 3. The team of Steve Sanabria, Brian Kosnoff, Bill Montross, and Emily Pond (New Britain Dragons Return) scored 2.5 - 3.5. As a group, our six teams scored 20.5 - 15.5 (57%) in match points and 80.5 - 63.5 (56%) in board points.”

On February 24, Andres Montiel won his first major NBCC tournament by tying for first place with NBCC President Joseph Mansigian in the first of three Club Championship Reserve Tournaments.

MARCH

On March 31, member Randy Shane won his first major NBCC tournament, the 2009 Club Championship Reserves 2 in the open section.

APRIL

Around mid-April, Rob Roy, member and former Connecticut State Chess Association President, contacted Joseph Mansigian and me regarding the possibility of arranging a reporter from Connecticut Public Television to film a documentary on our club for a new series on PBS titled, "All Things Connecticut." Friends, our club's first debut on television became a reality on May 14. During our five-minute segment of fame, which was filmed on April 21, a few members spoke about the lessons the game has taught them and the outlet for which and the positive affect our club has had on them in the fulfillment of their life goals and ambitions. That was undoubtedly one of the greatest moments in the history of the NBCC and was excellent promotion for chess in Connecticut. The video of our segment is posted on the club website.

On April 21, members Jozef Madej and Brian Kosnoff won their first major NBCC tournament, the 2009 Club Championship Reserves 3 in the open section. Also winning his first major club tournament was Leonid Stolov, who earned first place in the U1500 section.

The 2009 Connecticut State Open Championship, which was organized by the University of Connecticut Chess Club on April 25 and 26, was won by grandmaster and honorary member, Gildardo Garcia. In addition, nearly every other section winner was a member of our club (Kevin Zimmerman, Mike Pascetta, and Danny Rozovsky), an amazing accomplishment by all. Also, the Southington High School Chess Team won the state title, led by Captain John Nitz. A story about their victory appeared in the *Southington Observer*.

MAY

FM Nelson Castaneda etched his name in club history for becoming only the fifth member to successfully defend his title of Club Champion. He did so on May 7 when he won the 2009 NBCC Championship.

The club extended the second annual IRS Quick Chess Tournament to May 12. Member Randy Shane came up with the neat idea of naming the annual IRS Quick Chess event after the titles in the Frankenstein movies. Fittingly, this year's event was called the "Son of IRS Special Quick Chess Tournament."

On a glorious Memorial Day, Derek Meredith brought his ten-foot square giant board with the weighted pieces to Blue Back Square in West Hartford and held a giant chess day. Derek keenly observed that, "*The huge chess board captivated the interests of many non-chess players and drew friendly attention from all spectators, especially the women, who found those outdoor chess players so irresistible.*"

On May 31, John Nitz organized the 1st Hawk's Landing Chess Open at the beautiful Hawk's Landing Country Club in Southington. The winners of that first event were FM Nelson Castaneda (open section), member Miguel Purgatorio (Under 1600 section), and Tyree Green (scholastic section). John superbly described about his first awesome open-air event below.

"Players competed under the newly built pavilion, which provided an aesthetic and quiet playing area overlooking the first and seventh holes of the golf course. The field included a scholastic and an adult division, for a total of twenty-three players. Several highly rated players, led by FM Nelson Castaneda, challenged each other in the four-round quick chess event. A few unrated novice players also experienced tournament action for the first time. Robert Kozlowski served as the tournament director and successfully managed four sections (an open, an Under 1600, a scholastic, and an unrated division). The scholastic division included a group of young gentlemen from the New Haven area, chaperoned by their coach, David Goldblum. The NBCC showed tremendous support for the event. Hawk's Landing provided the venue, along with a lunch special. We owe our gratitude to the staff and ownership of the HLCC, which included my friend and assistant, Dan LaPorte."

JUNE

On June 23, Kevin Zimmerman was awarded “The Strazdins Cup” reserve section trophy for taking first place in the Under 1500 section of the 2009 Arkadijs Strazdins Cup, his first win in a major club tournament.

Member Doug Pence filed the necessary paperwork with the United States Chess Federation and joined Randy Shane, member Ed Scimia, Emily Pond, Marcus Komons, and me as our club’s newest tournament director, bringing the total number of club directors to six.

The 2009 business meeting held on June 23 was one of the longest (two hours) and perhaps the highest attended (around forty members) in club history. There were a few important subjects on the agenda, namely deciding on whether or not to relocate the club, section club tournaments, and increase club dues. I am devoting a separate section to the first two topics. Regarding club dues, to anticipate an increase in rent, the membership approved increasing annual dues for regular members from \$30 to \$40 and charging non-members an additional nominal fee for events open to them.

JULY

The NBCC was proud to report to the Connecticut chess community that the annual New Britain Summer Open Chess Championship held on July 19 was another tremendous success. A club record seventy-eight players, some traveling as far as Montpelier, VT, Queens, NY, and even Mexico City, gathered for a full day of chess, barbeque lunch, and fun in the sun. Players competed in the four-round USCF dual-rated event consisting of three sections - an open, an Under 1700, and an Under 1300 (a first in club history) - under the pavilion of the Quartette Club, in what could easily be dubbed the all-time greatest summertime chess event in New England. What continues to make this tournament unique is the free barbeque lunch. Our food committee, led by culinary professionals Marcus Komons and Kevin Zimmerman, did a phenomenal job. These masters of the grill were assisted by sous-chefs John Fikiet and Michelle Pascetta. Our culinary crew displayed the highest level of professionalism and due care as they served a variety of typical summertime foods. The items on the huge menu included hot dogs, hamburgers and cheeseburgers, Polish kielbasa, Italian sausage, marinated chicken, veggie burgers, grilled corn, Boston-baked beans, antipasto salad, tomato and cucumber salad, tropical fruits, chips, garden salad, and rolls.

There was also plenty of soda, water, and other beverages, which were made available to everyone for the entire day. In the words of prominent Chef Emeril Lagasse, these extraordinary chefs “kicked up” the food preparation “to notches unknown to mankind.” I also want to thank Joe Kozlowski, Joseph Mansigian, and Andris Strazdins for purchasing the food the night before the event. Special thanks also go to Roy Beavers, who donated coffee and purchased donuts for the players to enjoy while playing their morning game. In addition to the food crew, the club appreciates the efforts of FM Nelson Castaneda, Doug Fiske, and Robert Fitzpatrick, who assisted the officers with the overall setup and cleanup. Most of the advertising and promotion for the event was through word-of-mouth and e-mail. That is probably why this year’s event attracted so many more players than in previous years, especially from the shoreline and the Simsbury Chess Club directed by member Gert Hilhorst. Thanks to Gert, Derek Meredith, Joe Hricko, and the following state tournament directors (Tom Hartmayer, Rob Roy, and Alan Lasser) for spreading the word to their chess organizations about this event. Thanks also to Randy Shane and Ed Scimia, who drafted the advertising for this event for publication in the July issue of *Chess Life*. In order to direct a tournament of this size, my team of all-star TDs, Emily Pond and Ed, successfully managed the collection of the entry fees, made the pairings, and were always available in case players had questions or concerns. Thanks also to Randy and Rob, who volunteered to be backup directors. The winners of the first major club tournament with three sections were member and USCF NM Dennis Prawira in the open section, Dustin Hugenin in the Under 1700 section, and member Angel Garcia in the Under 1300 section. Of note, that was Angel’s first win in a major club tournament.

AUGUST

After the Summer Open, there was a month where there were no scheduled activities, so Joseph Mansigian developed some ideas and prepared the overall framework for a unique, new club event. The tournament was named the New Britain Summer Games Chess Tournament. Thirty players were divided into three sections based on rating. The sections were Masters/Experts (for players rated at least 1950), Mad Dogs (for players rated above 1600 but below 1950), and Striving Upward (for players rated 1600 and below). The event started on August 11.

Congratulations to winners FM Nelson Castaneda, two of our youngest members (Danny Pascetta and Leonid Stolon), and Doug Pence for winning their respective sections on September 1. Of note, that was Doug's first time earning first place in a major club tournament and his first time as a TD at the club. I also want to thank International Master Robert Hungaski for playing in this event. To my recollection, that was the first time an IM has participated in a NBCC tournament.

On August 30, Kevin Zimmerman and his fiancée Marie Juergens, also known as "Mr. and Mrs. Z," held their 3rd annual Zimmerman Games Day. Friends from the Connecticut chess community, along with friends and family of Kevin and Marie, joined together in that late-summer celebration. While "Mr. Z" was organizing the 2009 Zimmerman Games Blitz Chess Tournament, "Mrs. Z" was coordinating other sporting events from poker to table tennis to miniature golf and holding a "50/50" raffle. "Mr. Z" awarded cool prizes like t-shirts to the winners of the chess tournament. As always, our host and hostess did a marvelous job with the overall food preparation. And, like at the Summer Open, there was literally enough food to feed an army. Unfortunately, the musical entertainment lined up at the party, Kevin's "drum circle," was unable to partake in the festivities this year due to scheduling conflicts. Not to fret because filling that void was NBCC's illustrious harmonist, that traveling man "Mr. Marley," (many of you know him better as Andris Strazdins), who charmed the crowd by playing traditional American songs on his harmonica. The "Z Man" pointed out that

"Although early predictions from weather center officials put gloom upon the entire weekend, Marie was determined to see the 'Z' Games go forward regardless. Anyway, the games had old and new tradition, continuing to bring joy and happiness to all in attendance. Old friends and new ones made the event at least custom in the patronage sense, enriching the day beyond expectation for all."

The membership came just shy of reaching the one-hundred mark for the 2008-2009 club year. Still, the NBCC had a six-year peak in membership with ninety-four members for the current fiscal year.

SEPTEMBER

It appeared that the annual games day theme was catching on and seemed to be becoming a major hit. On Labor Day 2009, Derek Meredith organized similar games day festivities. In the afternoon, about fifteen members from the club competed in a frisbee and soccer tournament at Beachland Park in West Hartford. Afterwards, some of these guys and "El Presidente" gathered at Derek's house for a chess event and barbeque. Derek captured the thrills of that exciting day below.

“On a beautiful Labor Day, we had fifteen people meet or play at Beachland Park, and the lines were quickly drawn in the sand. Danny Pascetta's clutch opposite-spin catches helped put Brian Kosnoff's 'Pascetta-rich' ultimate frisbee team up 6-3. But then, the Merediths and Hilhorst got hot, rallying to 6-5 before Doug Fiske stunned Derek by beating him one-on-one in the end zone to abruptly end the first event. The ante was then doubled for soccer. Brian's team, led by Andres 'Fidel' Montiel, Yogesh Raghunathan, Mac Gomes, Danny, and the Lejas, added Bob Kozlowski to put great pressure on the Hilhorst and Meredith team. Film is still being reviewed to determine the winner. But the real stunner was yet to come that evening. Having skipped the athletic events and furiously studied the Tromp until 6 p.m., 'Florida' Joseph Mansigian went 4-1 to win the '2, 2' Tromp Blitz Chess event in tie-breaks over Andres Castaneda. What is not clear is which was better: Joe's preparation of the Kielbasa Mansigian or Joe's analysis of the early Bishop-to-c1?”

On September 8, the club welcomed back Grandmaster Ildar Ibragimov to the club for his second simultaneous chess exhibition and lecture. A special thanks to Marcus Komons for arranging the details, including contacting the GM, for Ildar's event. Joseph Mansigian, who was the only person to earn a draw against the GM, wonderfully summarized the details of Ildar's event below.

“A total of twenty-three players entered to play against the grandmaster. Ildar began by showing a game from the recent past in which he played Black in an obscure opening that his opponent chose to violently attack. The grandmaster played through the moves of the game seated at a chess board while the simul participants gathered around to see the game. The game presented was very double-edged, and it looked as though Grandmaster Ibragimov was in danger of being mated. However, with a precisely timed counter-strike, Ildar gained the initiative and finished the game with a series of checks that drove his opponent's king over the board to be mated on a7 by a knight - a truly spectacular razor-sharp game. After the lecture, Grandmaster Ibragimov began the simul. Ildar played quickly and accurately as he moved around the circle of tables. His performance was exemplary, scoring all wins but for one draw. And this was all accomplished by 11 p.m.! Grandmaster Ibragimov, who is an honorary member of our club, is more than a talented chess professional. He is also a very warm and personable man who really loves the game.”

Later in the week, on September 12, Mike Pascetta hosted a party at his house. Players from our club played soccer and chess and were served hot dogs and hamburgers on the grill. The competition on the field in the afternoon was as serious as on the chess board, where two teams (one led by Derek Meredith and the other by USCF NM Ted McHugh) competed in a group consultation match later in the day. It was another fantastic social gathering organized by the Pascetta family.

Around mid-September, Emily Pond became the first woman USCF Local tournament director in the history of the NBCC and joined Randy Shane, Ed Scimia, and me in this category of TDs. Later in the month, member Al Pinto approached Randy Shane and me about his interest in becoming a tournament director. After our conversation, he obtained the required paperwork from the USCF, purchased the rule book, and began his directing duties, assisting Emily Pond and Ed Scimia in the Oktoberfest Tournament. That brought the total number of TDs at the NBCC to an all-time high of seven.

OCTOBER

For winning first place in the 2009 Oktoberfest Open Chess Championship, FM Nelson Castaneda became the first member since FM Richard Bauer in 1999 to win three major club tournaments in one year, an amazing achievement. Prior to this event, he won the 2009 New Britain Summer Games and the 2009 NBCC Championship.

Also playing in the Oktoberfest Open was George Himes, who returned the club after a four-year hiatus. George entered in the Under 1600 section and went undefeated with score of 4-1, making this his first win a major tournament at the club.

I am glad to report to the entire chess community that the NBCC had a blast at their 4th annual Oktoberfest dinner party held on October 23 at the Corner Pug in Elmwood (a section of West Hartford). A record twenty-one people attended the annual party and celebrated this festive German season with fine food and spirits. Of course, our magnificent “Mr. Marley” entertained the group with songs on his harmonica once again - all this while surrounded by the company of our NBCC family and friends. Good times were had by all. I want to take this opportunity to thank Joseph Mansigian for choosing the restaurant (an excellent choice, indeed) and for making the reservations and the arrangements to hold that festive gathering.

DECEMBER

On December 1, member John Twombly tied for first place in the 2010 NBCC Championship Qualifying Tournament Under 1500 section with George Himes, which was John’s first win in a major club tournament.

What a spectacular way to end the year as Emily Pond had a major upset against member Robert McDaniel in the final round of the 2010 NBCC Championship Qualifying Tournament held on December 8. Her upset against Robert earned her a place in the NBCC Hall of Fame. Emily's upset was an 874-rating point difference, and she beat the all-time NBCC biggest upset of 867 rating points earned by Gert Hilhorst over member and USCF NM Dennis Prawira in January 2008 by an incredible seven points.

The club held its 5th annual Christmas party in conjunction with the annual Connecticut State Open Blitz Chess Championship on December 22. Almost sixty players attended that blockbuster celebration. As has been the tradition at this party, the club raffled and auctioned off some chess books and equipment in its collection, many of which have been donated by former and current members. This year, the following players made very generous contributions to the club party, auction, and raffle: John and James Nitz, Jozef Madej, Bill Montross, Marcus Komons, Roy Beavers, Mike Cafiero, Kevin Zimmerman, Doug Fiske, USCF NM Ted McHugh, and members Al Cabot, Jerry Aiyathurai, Stuart Mushala, Bill Lindberg, Arunas "Rooney" Simonaitis, and Quartette Club bartender, Lisa. John and Jozef won the 5th annual club raffle, and Harris Appelman won the tournament. Marcus Komons, James Nitz, Jason Lenore, and member Dennis Himes took first place in the lower sections.



NBCC MEMBERS' MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

The following major achievements were earned by our members at non-club tournaments and in the USCF in 2009.

NBCC MEMBERS RANKING IN THE TOP 100 LISTS IN THE USCF AS OF THE DECEMBER 2009 (ANNUAL) RATING SUPPLEMENT

Please note that only ratings of USCF members who have been active within the last year were used in compiling the Top 100 listings.

NBCC MEMBER	USCF TOP PLAYER LIST	USCF RATING	USCF RANKING
GM Ildar Ibragimov	Overall/Overall Quick	2634/2555	12 th /8 th
USCF NM Ted McHugh	Overall Quick	2252	Tied at 93 rd
James Nitz	Quick Under Age 21	2020	86 th
FM Danny Rozovsky	Age 13	2131	5 th
	Quick Under Age 16	1906	Tied at 78 th
Danny Pascetta	Age 10	1805	10 th

OTHER SIGNIFICANT NBCC MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

- On May 9, FM Nelson Castaneda tied for first place in the 2009 Portsmouth (New Hampshire) Open and defeated Grandmaster Alexander Ivanov in the third round.
- USCF NM Dennis Prawira claimed victory against one of Connecticut's grandmasters, Sergey Kudrin, in the first round of the June Master's Tournament held at the Marshall Chess Club in New York City on June 16.
- Danny Rozovsky won first place in the Pan American Youth Chess Championship in the Under 14 age group. The event was held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, from August 14 to 16. For his impressive victory, Danny also earned the prestigious title of FM. His photo and one of his games from this event were published in the December issue of *Chess Life*.
- Danny Pascetta became the 2009 New England scholastic elementary school chess champion. This tournament was held in Windsor Locks on October 31 and November 1.

NBCC MEMBER ATTAINING THE LEVEL OF USCF MASTER

In April 2009, Harris Appelman attained the level of USCF NM.

MEMBERS RECOGNIZED FOR THE FASTEST INCREASES IN RATING

NBCC MEMBER	FIRST RATING	CURRENT RATING	INCREASE	MONTH WHEN PLAYERS EARNED THEIR FIRST ESTABLISHED RATING
James Nitz	1010	2120	1110	JUNE 1998
FM Danny Rozovsky	1109	2131	1022	JUNE 2002
Danny Pascetta	860	1805	945	FEBRUARY 2007

CHES TRIVIA

In 2008, the chess world lost a legendary player - Robert “Bobby” James Fischer. He passed away in Reykjavik, Iceland, at the age of sixty-four from kidney failure. Many consider Fischer to be one of the all-time greatest chess players.

Are you a Fischer trivia buff? If so, answer these challenging questions about the former world chess champion. The answers are on page 28.

1. How many conditions did Bobby Fischer submit to the FIDE for his defense of the world chess title in 1975?
 - a) 159
 - b) 169
 - c) 179
 - d) 189
2. Which of the following books was not written by former World Chess Champion Bobby Fischer?
 - a) “I Was Tortured in the Pasadena Jailhouse!”
 - b) “My 60 Memorable Games”
 - c) “Bobby Fischer vs. The Rest of the World”
 - d) “Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess”
3. How many times did Bobby Fischer win the U.S. Chess Championship?
 - a) 6
 - b) 7
 - c) 8
 - d) 9
4. In the 1972 World Chess Championship match, what was Bobby Fischer’s opening move against Boris Spassky in game six?
 - a) Nf3
 - b) c4
 - c) Nc3
 - d) f4

NBCC PICTURE GALLERY

The following photos were taken by Doug Fiske, John Nitz, Will Howard, and Robert Kozlowski.



2009 UNITED STATES AMATEUR TEAM EAST CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

PLAYERS MAKING NATIONAL CHESS HISTORY AND BRINGING HOME THE GOLD

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

BACK ROW: FM Nelson Castaneda, James Nitz, John Nitz, and Joe Hricko

THIRD ROW: John Chapman, Derek Meredith, Sofia Leja, Yogesh Raghunathan,
Kevin Zimmerman, Doug Fiske, and Bill Montross

SECOND ROW: Mike Pascetta (wearing the Patriots sweatshirt), USCF NM Ted McHugh,
and Harris Appelman

FRONT ROW: Mark Leja, Andres Castaneda, Chris Jensen, Danny Pascetta, Emily Pond,
and Brian Kosnoff (kneeling in front)

Missing from this picture were Steve Sanabria, Karl Eschelbach, Danny Rozovsky, and Jason Lenore.

MEET SOME OF THE NBCC FAMILY



Mark Bourque and Sydney Faria

Playing a friendly game at the 2008 CT Blitz Championship



Al Pinto

Analyzing his next move against GM Ibragimov



Tom Hartmayer and Max Chia-Hsin Lu

In deep thought at the 2009 NB Summer Open



Tim Fennell pondering his next move against Alex Madej

2009 Hawk's Landing



Andris Strazdins enjoying some BBQ

2009 Zimmerman Games Day



Bob Kozlowski and Marcus Komons cheering the NBCC

2009 NBCC Oktoberfest Dinner Party



Kevin Zimmerman and Miguel Purgatorio battling it out

2009 Hawk's Landing



GM Ibragimov making his move against Brian Kosnoff



Joseph Mansigian waiting for his next opponent

2009 Zimmerman Games Day

MORE KODAK MOMENTS OF THE NBCC FAMILY
CAPTURED ON CAMERA



Jozef Madej, Carl Heineman, and Rob Roy
2009 New Britain Summer Open



Danny Rozovsky and Kevin Zimmerman
2009 Zimmerman Games Day



Roy Beavers and Peter Galazan
2009 New Britain Summer Open



Derek Meredith with his son Nick
On a late summer hike with NBCC friends



John Baclawski
2009 New Britain Summer Open



John Nitz with his son Jim
2009 NBCC Oktoberfest Dinner Party



USCF NM Ted McHugh with his daughter Tara
2009 Zimmerman Games Day



Richard Lee
2008 NBCC Christmas Party



Sofia Leja, Andres Castaneda, and Mark Leja
2009 Zimmerman Games Day

THE NBCC WELCOMES FRIENDS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Over the years, the NBCC has been visited by many chess players from across Southern New England and the New York City metropolitan area. Many of these guests have also participated in our club tournaments. I want to take this moment to express appreciation to the following non-state residents who supported our club by playing in one of our club events in 2009. On behalf of the membership, I look forward to their return to our club very soon.

Arunas "Rooney" Simonaitis, Steven Mitlitzky, Christopher Wong

- **POLGAR CHESS CLUB: QUEENS, NEW YORK (AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2009, THIS CLUB DOES NOT EXIST)**

NOTE: "ROONEY" AND STEVEN JOINED THE NBCC ON DECEMBER 22

Curtis Jones

- **ALL THE KING'S MEN CHESS CLUB: PITMAN, NEW JERSEY**
- **WOODBURY CHESS CLUB: WOODBURY, NEW JERSEY**

Max Chia-Hsin Lu

- **BOYLSTON CHESS CLUB: BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

Juan Luis Obregon (traveled the farthest to play in a NBCC event – 2009 NB Summer Open)

- **MEXICO CITY CHESS CLUB: MEXICO CITY, MEXICO**

THE NBCC VISITS THE CCSU CHESS CLUB

In late September, FM Nelson Castaneda, faculty advisor of the Central Connecticut State University Chess Club, made an invitation to members of the NBCC and the local chess community to attend one of his club's meetings. The purpose of this inter-club networking opportunity was two-fold - to determine the possibility of holding rated events at their club and to recruit some members from their club to participate in our club tournaments and possibly join our organization. So a few members from the NBCC, including Joseph Mansigian and me, decided to visit the Central CC on October 8. We had an opportunity to speak with their officers and exchange ideas about holding a major tournament at their site in the near future. We also played a few of their members during our visit. For those of you who have not been to the Central CC, here is what their organization is all about.

The Central CC meets every Thursday evening at the Student Center during the school year. Meetings usually start around 7:30 p.m. They meet in Devil's Den, a very spacious lounge area where students can eat or study. Most meetings are informal, and therefore, players generally engage in casual play. The ambience is lovely, and the location of their club is very accessible to the major highways. Overall, I firmly believe that their site is definitely suitable to hold a faster-time control event.

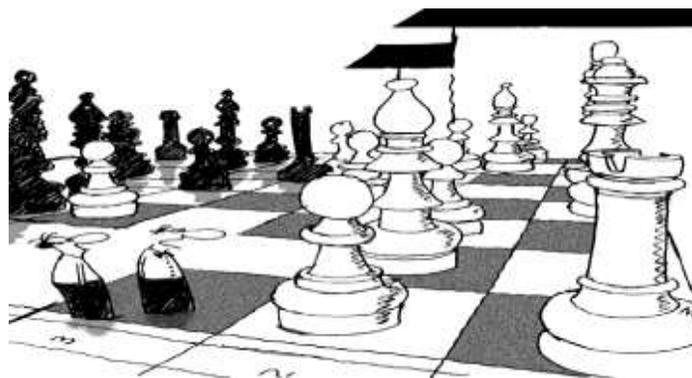
Currently, the NBCC has not made any commitments with the management of the Central CC to hold tournaments at their site. Many details still have to be ironed out, such as the rental costs of the facility and the possibility of making CCSU CC members exempt from registration fees. Regardless if our club sponsors an event at theirs, the initial steps have been taken to form a nexus between our organizations. On behalf of the Connecticut chess community, I want to thank Nelson for getting this communication process started.



IT'S YOUR MOVE!

THE ROAD TO A NEW HOME FOR THE NBCC (CONTINUED)

As the ball in New York City's Times Square dropped on December 31, 2008, the work soon began for our exploratory committee, led by the officers and a few other members, charged with searching for alternative venues for the NBCC. After many months of intense searching, Joseph Mansigian and Derek Meredith found a suitable playing hall, similar to the one at the Quartette Club, at the Assyrian Club of New Britain. At the annual business meeting, Joe outlined the advantages and disadvantages of this site, along with a few others, to the membership. A subsequent meeting, chaired by Marcus Komons, was also held. During the spirited and lively discussions at these meetings, the membership had many opportunities to inquire of Joe, Marcus, and Derek about the Assyrian Club. The main concern on many peoples' minds was the security of the location. Therefore, in order for our members to make an informed decision about the venue, Joe and Derek wisely arranged for our members to visit this club's hall on a Tuesday evening. After the visit, the decision to stay at the NBCC's home location or move to the Assyrian Club was left to the membership. Each member had one week, after visiting the site, to submit his or her vote via e-mail or phone to Joe. The final vote was 30 to 28 in favor of staying at the Quartette Club for another year. Still, because our club was nearly divided based on this vote, there apparently remains much uncertainty about whether our club will continue to lease from the Quartette Club beyond 2010. Therefore, you will have to wait patiently until next year, or perhaps beyond, to read about the conclusion of the "Road to a New Home for the NBCC."



*"I'd love to play chess, but my back is still sore
from yesterday's game."*

This chess cartoon was posted by Gary Gilford at
<http://www.chessville.com/Editorials/cartoons.htm>

NEW FORMATS FOR TOURNAMENTS AT THE NBCC

Besides the decision about moving to another venue, the other very important topic slated for discussion at the 2009 club business meeting was about new formats for NBCC tournaments. Roy Beavers presented a report to the membership about the benefits of having sectioned tournaments at the club. Many ideas were put forth on the table about how to incorporate sectioned events in the club's yearly schedule of activities. Overall, the consensus was that having a structure where players could compete within their own rating class or have the option of playing in a higher-rated section would result in a more enjoyable playing experience for all. Personally, because of the increased playing strength of our members, having sectioned tournaments was apparently needed. So, after our lengthy brainstorming session, the membership voted and ratified the following into permanent club law.

“Effective July 1, 2009, all tournaments held at the NBCC, with the exception of blitz chess, shall be sectioned. The determination of the specifics of each tournament, such as the number of sections, the number of rounds in each section, the overall time control, the entry fees charged to players in each section, and the prize fund awarded to the various class and place winners of each section, shall be left to the discretion of the chief and assistant directors responsible for managing the tournament. If necessary, the tournament directors may discuss their decision with the board of directors before the start of the tournament. However, unless any unusual situation arises, the TDs will have the final authority to make those decisions.”



"Next time we're using a clock"

This chess cartoon was posted by Arnie Gatton at <http://agallery.comicgenesis.com/chesscartoonsx.html>

THE PASSING OF STANLEY ARCHACKI

After a long battle with complications relating to heart failure, Stanley Archaki, veteran member of the NBCC since the late 1950s and lifetime member of the New Britain Quartette Club, sadly passed away at the age of eighty-one on June 2. I learned about his death from his long-time friends, Ed Valauskas and Bob Milardo.



Stanley, or "Stash" as many of his friends often called him, played an instrumental role in securing our club's current venue since 1975. He also assisted the late Mr. Strazdins in various management roles at the club for decades, most notably vice president for many years during the 1970s and 1980s. Stanley also served in various directing capacities.

I had the pleasure of playing with Stanley many times at the club from 1987 until most recently a few years ago. One of his favorite openings was the Sicilian Defense. His opening repertoire was usually consistent, and it was to almost to no surprise to his opponents that, as Black, he opened with 1. . c5.

Stanley regularly attended club meetings. He was very passionate about the game, enjoyed competing with his friends, and was a respected member of and asset to our club. The members of the NBCC extend their condolences to the Archaki family during their time of grievance. May he rest in peace.



This chess cartoon was posted by Arnie Gatton at <http://agallery.comicgenesis.com/chesscartoonsx.html>

CHESS POEM

Before closing with my year-end commentary, I found a poignant chess poem on the internet that I thought you might enjoy reading.

Battlefield of Life

I make this pledge to you alone,
that I shall serve your royal throne.
My silver sword, I gladly wield.
Squares eight times eight the battlefield.

With knights upon their mighty steed
the front line pawns have vowed to bleed
and neither Queen shall ever yield.
Squares eight times eight the battlefield.

The castle walls protect our back
and Bishops plan for their attack;
a master plan that is concealed.
Squares eight times eight the battlefield.

For chess is but a game of life
and I your Queen, a loving wife
shall guard my liege and raise my shield.
Squares eight times eight the battlefield.

This chess poem was submitted by Amera M. Andersen on
<http://www.eadon.com/phil/chesspoemreaders.php>

BOB KOZLOWSKI'S COMMENTARY

It almost goes without saying that 2009 will go down in the Connecticut chess history books as one of the greatest years at the NBCC. It ceases to amaze me what our club accomplished this year, let alone in the last five. More milestones occurred this year than in any other in our club's very-long established history. Before closing this chapter in NBCC history, I want to briefly recap on our club's milestones of 2009. In addition, I am concluding by sharing a few of my ideas that I think could benefit our club in its continued growth.

Here were the NBCC's major highlights or milestones that occurred in 2009:

1. The NBCC made its first appearance on television, because of the efforts of Rob Roy, for a new series on PBS titled, "All Things Connecticut."
2. A club record twenty-four past or present members participated in the 2009 USATE. Making national chess history, three of our six teams won a prize, one for Top Connecticut Team, one for Top U2000 Team, and one for top team name.
3. On a picture-perfect day on July 19, the 2009 New Britain Summer Open, held at the New Britain Quartette Club, attracted seventy-eight players throughout the Northeast, including a chess player visiting from Mexico City. This was without doubt the greatest event in NBCC history.
4. For the first time at the NBCC, the membership unanimously decided that all tournaments starting on or after July 1, 2009, with the exception of blitz chess, would be sectioned in order to give our members a more pleasurable playing experience.
5. Because of the sectioning of club tournaments, more of our members had an opportunity to win first place in their section. And, for the first time in NBCC history, ten of our members in a mere one year (Andres Montiel, Randy Shane, Leonid Stolov, Jozef Madej, Brian Kosnoff, Kevin Zimmerman, Angel Zayas-Garcia, Doug Pence, George Himes, and John Twombly) accomplished just that.
6. Emily Pond became the first woman USCF Local tournament director in the history of the NBCC.
7. Incredibly, the all-time record for the current number of tournament directors at the NBCC rose from five to a staggering seven, when Doug Pence and Al Pinto eagerly joined our esteemed TD staff in 2009.
8. FM Nelson Castaneda became the first member in ten years to win three major tournaments at the NBCC in one year for earning first place in the 2009 Oktoberfest Open, the 2009 NBCC Championship, and the 2009 New Britain Summer Games.
9. The membership reached one of the highest in at least the last six years, if not since the 1990s, climbing to an astounding ninety-four in late August.
10. Nearly all members who participated in the annual Connecticut State Open (a non-club event) earned a place or class title, probably a NBCC first.

Despite all of these amazing achievements, I believe that our club still has room for growth, especially in the areas of scholastic chess and club matches.

Historically, adults have been members of our organization. I know this because I was its youngest member for about ten years. Over the last five years, about ten of Connecticut's chess youths, five of whom are currently under the age of twenty and are members (James Nitz, Danny Rozovsky, Max Krall, Leonid Stolov, and Danny Pascetta), have participated in tournaments at the club. In the last few years, Marcus Komons and I have frequently discussed the idea of arranging a scholastic tournament at the club. Since the NBCC really has no experience in organizing these complicated events, we sought the advice from David Aldi, Connecticut State Chess Association Scholastic Chess Director and an expert in the field of organizing scholastic chess tournaments, about ways to successfully manage and coordinate a youth chess event. Basically, David told us that, in order to run a successful scholastic chess event, there must be adequate planning and a constant line of communication between the tournament directors, the students, and the parents. In short, the responsibilities can be overwhelming, much more than organizing non-scholastic chess events. Although our club has the staff and the facility to host and organize such an event, my fellow TDs will leave directing scholastic chess tournaments to the professionals for the meantime.

Because of our club's growth, which is not only measured by the number of members, but by their overall playing strength, our organization has maintained its status as Connecticut's strongest for many decades. Unfortunately, because of this, our club has not been able to hold a competitive match with other Connecticut chess clubs in many years. Over the last few years, some members have expressed interest in having a match with the Marshall Chess Club or the Boylston Chess Club, but nothing concrete has been planned yet. This year, there has been some conversation about organizing a match with the UConn CC. Because of our clubs' close proximity, a match with their club is more likely. More recently, Bill Montross, a member of the Burlington, Vermont Chess Club and the NBCC, said that members of his club want to hold a match with ours sometime next year. As of the publication of this newsletter, our club is still in the planning stage. With hard work, the NBCC can make this match happen.

Two-thousand-and-nine will be remembered as one of the most exciting years in NBCC history. Though there were certain times during the year where our administrative staff was extremely overloaded by having to deal with many complex club issues. Juggling these issues was even a more difficult task. I personally managed to stay afloat during those times, but there were many occasions where my fellow officers and I considered taking a sabbatical from club management for a few months.

From my observations, despite the somewhat heated debates about relocating the club, our members do deeply care about the welfare and future of our organization. Furthermore, I have concluded that no venue should ever determine a club's existence and that a club is only as great as its members make it. Of course, folks, we must be practical. Our members truly deserve a decent venue that has an atmosphere suitable to play chess. However, we must come to some agreement that we cannot search indefinitely for sites that will have every amenity because I surmise that the rent at these locations will far exceed what most people might be willing to pay in dues merely to play chess.

The bottom line is this: It is essential that the NBCC officers proceed with the process of relocating our club with special care since any hasty decision could seriously affect the future of our organization. The more carefully our officers plan their approach in our club's transition process, the more successful our treasured club and satisfied our members will be.

My esteemed team of officers, tournament directors, and our webmaster wish you and your family a merry Christmas and a happy new year. They also thank you for supporting the NBCC.

President: Joseph Mansigian
Vice President: Robert Kozlowski
Treasurer: Major Andris Strazdins
Secretary: Marcus Komons
USCF Local TDs: Randy Shane, Emily Pond, Ed Scimia,
and Robert Kozlowski
USCF Club TDs: Doug Pence, Al Pinto, and Marcus Komons
Webmaster: Brian Kosnoff



During these most uncertain economic times, I wish you and your family all the best of health and happiness. I also want to thank you for your friendship.

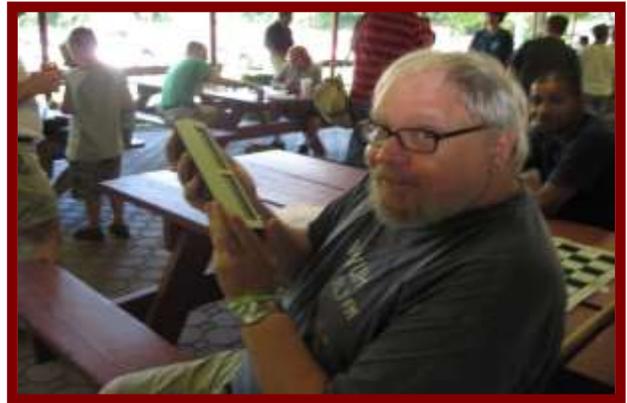
The membership currently stands at eighty-six.

Your friend in chess,
Robert Kozlowski ("Dr. K")

SPECIAL ADDITION! NBCC FAMILY AND FRIENDS PICTURE TRIVIA

I spent a few hours viewing the NBCC photo archives in search of more pictures of the NBCC family to include in this year's newsletter. I tried to include as many people as possible.

Do you recognize these smiling faces? The answers are on page 28.



SPECIAL ADDITION!

NBCC HISTORY TRIVIA

2005 - 2009

In 2005, the New Britain Chess Club was undergoing some major changes, with the beginnings of new tournaments and social activities happening at and outside the club. At that time, I decided to write about and capture these memorable moments in an annual club newsletter. Since then, our club has ascended to unimaginable heights, making chess history throughout Connecticut and beyond. It has truly been a pleasure to document these club highlights, so future generations of chess players will be able to read about them decades from now.

As some of you know, I am a chess trivia buff. Therefore, I decided that what better way to link my passion for the club and trivia than to create the NBCC's first history trivia quiz.

The questions below are listed in order of increasing difficulty, based on my assumption of what the general membership remembers about the last five years at our club. The answers are on page 28.

1. Who were the winners of the First Oktoberfest Open Chess Championship?
 - a) James Nitz and Yogesh Raghunathan
 - b) Danny Rozovsky and Andres Castaneda
 - c) Danny Rozovsky and James Nitz
 - d) Yogesh Raghunathan and Andres Castaneda

2. Which of the following events occurred first at the NBCC?
 - a) NBCC traveled to Amsterdam
 - b) Randy Shane became club tournament director
 - c) Dennis Prawira gave his first simul at NBCC
 - d) NBCC purchased twenty-five sets and clocks from USCF

3. In which of the following years did the most people attend the annual NBCC Oktoberfest party?
 - a) 2006
 - b) 2007
 - c) 2008
 - d) 2009

4. What member proposed a new format for the annual New Britain New Year's Open Blitz Chess Tournament in 2006, which became the standard for all future NBCC blitz chess competitions?
 - a) Ted McHugh
 - b) Nelson Castaneda
 - c) Richard Bauer
 - d) Martin Garcia

5. What member made a motion at the 2005 NBCC business meeting to make all tournament directors exempt from paying entry fees for tournaments they direct?
 - a) Derek Meredith
 - b) Roy Beavers
 - c) Joseph Mansigian
 - d) Doug Fiske

6. Which of the following statements is false?
 - a) Andres Castaneda won the First Zimmerman Games Day Blitz Chess Tournament
 - b) Al Pinto became a NBCC tournament director in September 2009
 - c) NBCC held first open-air summer tournament in 2006 since 1992
 - d) No member won against GM Ibragimov in his first simul at NBCC

7. What NBCC team won the Top Connecticut and the Top U2000 prize at the 2008 United States Amateur East Team Chess Championship?
 - a) New Britain Crusaders
 - b) New Britain Endgame
 - c) New Britain Dragons
 - d) New Britain Bad Bishops

8. Excluding quick chess tournaments, what was the first sectioned tournament, with an open and at least one lower-rated section, held at the NBCC?
 - a) 2008 NBCC Championship Reserves 2
 - b) 2007 New Britain Summer Open Chess Championship
 - c) 2008 Arkadijs Strazdins Cup
 - d) 2008 Oktoberfest Open Chess Championship

9. How much money did our team from the NBCC win for taking second place at the 2006 Northeast Chess Winter Getaway tournament held in Marlborough, Massachusetts?
 - a) \$125
 - b) \$300
 - c) \$500
 - d) \$875

10. Which of the following members became the first to win a major tournament, or section of a major tournament, at the NBCC?
 - a) Dennis Himes
 - b) Yogesh Raghunathan
 - c) Mike Pascetta
 - d) John Nitz

BONUS QUESTION

What member raffled off an Austrian chess set at the NBCC's 1st Christmas party? And who won it?

SOLUTION AND ANSWERS TO CHESS PUZZLE AND TRIVIA

CHESS PUZZLE (FROM COVER PAGE)

1. d7 Bxd7
2. Qd2 wins

CHESS TRIVIA (FROM PAGE 12)

1. c
2. c
3. c
4. b

NBCC FAMILY AND FRIENDS PICTURE TRIVIA (FROM PAGE 25)

(From top to bottom - left to right)

PICTURE 1: Miki and Yuval Shemesh (at a party at Andres Montiel's house)

PICTURE 2: Steve Sanabria (at a party at Andres Montiel's house)

PICTURE 3: Doug Pence (2009 NB Summer Open)

PICTURE 4: Richard Pizzoni with Angel Zayas-Garcia in the far right (2009 NB Summer Open)

PICTURE 5: Emily Pond and Marie Juergens (2009 Zimmerman Games Day)

PICTURE 6: Yogesh Raghunathan and Andris Strazdins (2009 Zimmerman Games Day)

NBCC HISTORY TRIVIA: 2005 – 2009 (FROM PAGES 26 – 27)

1. c (I would almost say with absolute certainty that James Nitz and Danny Rozovsky are probably two of the youngest players to win a tournament at the club.)
2. b (Randy Shane became a tournament director at the club in July 2006.)
3. d (Twenty-one people attended the NBCC Oktoberfest dinner party in 2009, almost twice as many than in each previous year.)
4. b (FM Nelson Castaneda's new format for blitz chess events can accommodate more players and prevents games from lasting past midnight.)
5. a (An excellent motion by Derek Meredith. Look how many TDs we have at the NBCC now!)
6. d (Marvin Collins won his game against GM Ildar Ibragimov.)
7. d (This team's name was originally the New Britain Bad Bs.)
8. a (The first sectioned tournament at the NBCC was the 2005 NB Summer Open Quick Chess Tournament. Some of you might recollect that this event was won by USCF NM Ted McHugh {open section} and the late Danny Elkayam {Under 1600 section}.)
9. b (The winners of this event applied their winnings to their next years' club dues.)
10. d (John and James Nitz tied for first place in the 2006 NB City Chess Championship Reserves. Incidentally, they also became the first family members, with the exception of Andy Strazdins and his father, to tie for first place in a tournament at the club.)

BONUS QUESTION: Hermann Zickfeld raffled off an Austrian chess set, and Marcus Komons won it.