

NEW BRITAIN CHESS CLUB

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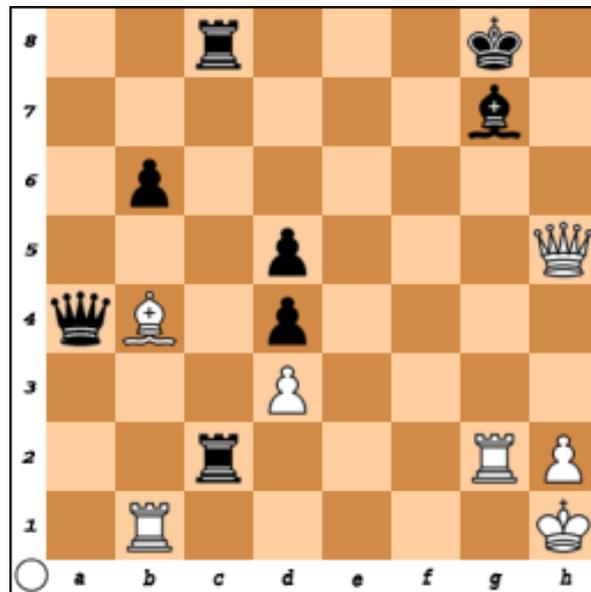
IN CARE OF THE NEW BRITAIN ASSYRIAN CLUB
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2013 NEWSLETTER

by Robert Cyr (formerly known as Robert Kozlowski)

WHITE TO MOVE AND MATE IN FIVE



Magnus Carlsen vs. Boris Gelfand: Nice 2010
Blindfold Game

This chess puzzle was posted on www.wtharvey.com by Bill Harvey.

The solution is on page 25.

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INTRODUCTION

Season's Greetings, fellow chess friends:

It is hard to believe that another year has flashed before our eyes. It just appeared like a few months ago when we were rigging in 2013 and saying farewell to 2012. Therefore, the time has come to once again begin another journey down memory lane and recap the New Britain Chess Club's memorable moments of the year.

This year's club newsletter is packed with the usual monthly highlights, chess trivia, photos, and more. However, for the first time in the nine years writing the newsletters, I have included two new sections. The first section is the game that took first place in the Best Game of the Year contest, which was judged and annotated by FIDE Master Richard Bauer. The second section features pictures that Rob Roy took of our members at various tournaments of yesteryear. Both sections have enriched this newsletter, and I am very grateful to Rick and Rob for their contributions to this annual report.

Many of our members look forward to reading the annual club newsletter, which has become, in many ways, an annual tradition. As in the past eight years, I have made every effort to exude even more enthusiasm when sharing the club's stories of 2013. So, without any further introduction, get a cup of coffee or some eggnog, find that favorite chair or couch in your home, and let me take you on an epic excursion of the club's happenings in 2013, one that I hope you will remember in the years to come.



The postal chess player wins his first game.

This chess cartoon was posted at
<http://www.chessgraphics.net>.

THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

The NBCC said adieu to 2012 and started 2013 in high gear with its first highlight occurring only two days into the New Year. On Wednesday, January 2, the club held its fifth “Odds Tournament.” This event was originally slated for December 26 but was postponed because of snow. Even though the officers have organized these unique events before, where players give time odds based on rating differences, all of those tournaments were played without time delay. The minor modification of a one-second time delay added to this event further equalized the playing field and perhaps gave the participants receiving time odds much greater winning chances, truly the makings for some very good battles. It appeared that the players enjoyed the competition, and we anticipate that more of these fun tournaments will be held throughout 2013 and beyond.

On the second meeting of 2013, January 8, the club continued its series of tournaments held in tribute to its veteran members with the Matt Columbe Quick Chess Tournament. Although some of our longest-standing members knew Matt by his name back in the 1970s and 1980s, all of you know him today as USCF National Master Derek Meredith. Derek has had a very long history with the NBCC. Derek, whose membership in our organization spans about thirty years but is separated by a ten-year absence due to time spent creating his business, has been one of our club’s greatest advocates. He has contributed so much to the club in his role as its spiritual leader since 2011. Specifically, Derek’s ideas on using different tournament formats, as with the Club Championship, and starting new tournaments, like the Planet Earth Chess Championship, have added much variety to the club’s schedule of activities and have tremendously benefited our organization financially. However, I adamantly believe that Derek’s involvement in helping the prior club administration locate and secure our club’s wonderful venue and his role as host of the many social functions he has held at his home for our members and the Connecticut chess community since 2005 stand out as his two most significant contributions to the NBCC. All of Derek’s efforts have added to the richness and diversity to our organization. Moreover, Derek executes his club duties with much energy and passion and is very welcoming to all new members to the club.

There was a good attendance for Derek's tournament. Twenty-four people came for the one-night tournament. After four rounds of friendly play, FM Nelson Castaneda, who made history that evening for becoming the first member to win or tie for first place in twenty club quick chess tournaments, won the event with a perfect score. Four of our members tied for first place in the Under 1600 section: Andres Montiel, John Twombly, Andris Strazdins, and Bob Kozlowski. Lastly, Mike Fries and Jason Stange, two of our members who recently became certified tournament directors, assisted TD Jozef Madej with the event.

FEBRUARY

For the past seven years, at least two NBCC teams have participated in what has become the largest and most exciting team tournament in the history of chess - the World/U.S. Amateur Team East Chess Championship held in Parsippany, New Jersey, over Presidents Day weekend. This annual three-day competition, which has attracted chess enthusiasts from all across the nation in the last four decades, usually commences with our country's national anthem, opening remarks from the organizers, and the awarding of chess books and other cool items. The prizes are usually given to the first person to come up to the podium who might have a unique item like a two-dollar bill or provide proof of being born in a certain year or living in a certain state. There are also prizes awarded on the second day for the team with the best costume and the team with the best name. In addition, besides the main event, there are exhibits, sessions, and a bughouse tournament that provides as much opportunity for the enthusiasts for chess action around the clock.

This year, two teams represented the club. On the first team, Mayan Team Just Happy to be Here, we had USCF NM Ted McHugh, USCF NM Derek Meredith, Martin Garcia, and Doug Fiske. This team did very well and ended up with five out of six match points. Their only loss was to Princeton University A in round four, who won the event. Individually, Ted earned 4.5 points, Derek had three wins and one draw, and Martin had 1.5 points. And then came storming Doug, who, after spending weeks preparing for the event, won every one of his games and etched his name in NBCC history for being only one of four members to win all of his games at prior USATEs. Because of his incredible performance, Doug's rating has soared back over 2000 to expert level again. Doug won a chess clock for his achievement. It further gives me pleasure to report that this team won the Top Connecticut title, an award that our club has earned at USATE for the last seven consecutive years.

On the second team, our players were Danny Pascetta, Mike Pascetta, Bob Kozlowski, and Mike's cousin, Anthony Danese. Our team name, which Derek gave to us, was Bond Gambit: Taken, Not Deferred. It was such a great name that it was mentioned as one of the Top 10 on the night of the awards ceremony. In addition, Steve Doyle, event director, said to me in person and via e-mail that our team name was his personal favorite of the event! Despite having lost our first two matches, our team did everything in our capacity to claw ourselves out of the "kiddie" rooms. And we triumphed! After emerging victorious in our matches in rounds three, four, and five, we were so elated to head back to play in the "adult" grand ballroom in the final round, almost on the same boards where we started at in our first match. Unfortunately, we lost our final match. Though Bond Gambiters could not complain - we earned a respectable three match points. The individual scores were as follows: Danny (3.5), Mike (2.5), Bob (3.5), and Anthony (2.5 out of 4). Unfortunately, Anthony could not compete on the third day, but we were fortunate to find an alternate (Jun Tang - his score was 1-1). Besides our NBCC teams, it was nice to reconnect with former and current members, like Al Pinto and Jonathan Aiyathurai, who both played on other Connecticut teams.

As I had mentioned in my report last year, USATE is not just your ordinary chess tournament. It is an extraordinary chess experience. If you have yet to play in this team event, I hope you plan to be a part of the action in Parsippany next Presidents Day weekend.

At a meeting in late 2012, our club's secretary and webmaster, Brian Kosnoff, announced that he would be moving to California in early March of 2013. Because of the relocation, Brian informed the members that he would have to resign his position as club secretary (which he began in 2010) but would continue to be the NBCC website administrator (which he began in 2006). Brian has done a terrific job in his dual roles in the club and has been a great friend to many of our members. Quite frequently over the last decade, Brian has held parties and sporting activities at his home around the holidays and at special occasions. And it would come to no surprise that he would be the host of his own farewell party. At these events, like the one he organized on February 23, Brian always extended his genuine hospitality to everyone who attended. Brian will be greatly missed. On behalf of the NBCC family, I am taking this moment to wish Brian, one of our nicest members, the best of luck in his new life on the West Coast. We thank him for his friendship and for his many years of devoted service to the club.

MARCH

The Club Championship, the NBCC's most prestigious annual tournament, has had a very prominent history in our organization dating back to the first-recorded event in 1939. Over the last eight decades, there have been periods where a few of our members have won the coveted title of NBCC Champion for many consecutive years. Since WWII, legends like Edmund Roman during the 1940s, Arkadijs Strazdins during the 1950s to the early 1970s, Bob Milardo during the late 1970s to the early 1980s, and FM Richard Bauer during the late 1980s to the mid-1990s won this tournament several times. Recently, the club has seen the rise of one of our members who has earned his way into the NBCC Hall of Fame for winning or tying for first place in nine club championships all in just the span of eleven years (2002 to 2013). No member has accomplished this incredible feat since 1971. The person who achieved this is FM Nelson Castaneda.

It is also important to recognize the winner of the reserve or candidates section of the 2013 Club Championship, Norman (or "Storming Norman") Burtness. This was Norman's first win in a major tournament held by the club. In addition, he is the only member currently seeded in the 2014 NBCC Championship - what a prize for his first win! Both Norman and Nelson received their championship trophies on March 19.

As most of you are probably aware by now, the United States Chess Federation established a rating system for all events "that start on or after March 1 that have a total time per player of between five to ten minutes." After receiving an e-mail from the USCF about this, our officers quickly scheduled the NBCC's First Rated Blitz Chess Tournament so that our members could get their first official Speed Chess rating. The first event of its kind at the club was held on March 19. It was wonderful to see some of our members who normally do not compete in these tournaments play in the seven-round Swiss-system event. After about three hours of spirited games, FM Nelson Castaneda won the tournament. Jozef Madej and Norman Burtness directed the twenty-two player event, and it was Norman's first TD experience at the club.

In recent years, some of our members have left our club because of job relocation, health reasons, or retirement from the game. Regardless of why they left, occasionally, some of our friends return to the club, even if it is for just one meeting. I wanted to share with you that one of our former youngest members, FM Danny Rozovsky, who currently resides with his family in California (I guess California is the place you ought to be!), returned to the club on March 26 while on spring break to play in the 2nd NBCC Rated Blitz Chess Tournament. Danny is an excellent blitz chess player, and it is always intriguing to watch him deliver his rapid moves with razor-sharp accuracy. Danny went undefeated in seven-round Swiss-system event (his only draw was against USCF NM Ted McHugh) and took first place. For those of you who were at the club that evening, I speak for everyone when I say that it was a delight to have Danny in our presence. He is a gentleman and a scholar. We wish him all the best in his future academic and chess endeavors. Thanks to Norman Burtness who brought Danny to the club. Mike Fries and member Bill Campbell directed the event, and it was Bill's first time in a TD role at the club.

APRIL

We continue the NBCC highlights of 2013 with the month of April. During this month, the club hosted tournaments in tribute to two of its veteran members, USCF NM Ted McHugh and Bob Kozlowski.

Ted's membership in the club started in 1990. As Ted told me before his honorary event held on April 2 and 9, he recollects his early years when Doug Fiske was nice to give him a ride to the club since he did not have a car. After being a member for only a few years, incredibly, Ted became a USCF NM. Since then, he has offered his services to the NBCC by hosting many simultaneous chess exhibitions. During his events, Ted has commanded the playing field with great speed and accuracy. I personally have seen him compete against thirty players and finish with a near-perfect score in just under a record four hours! Even though Ted has not played in many of our longer tournaments because of his busy schedule, he recalls winning the 2008 Arkadijs Strazdins Cup as one of his proudest achievements in our club. I just wish Ted could play in more of our club's major events. Well, there is always the next twenty years! In addition to his accomplishments in the club, Ted holds the record of Connecticut Blitz Chess Champion the most (eight) - a title that the legendary Arkadijs Strazdins held for many successive years prior to Ted.

On the first night of the six-round Ted McHugh Quick Chess Tournament, I had mentioned that there was a distinct possibility that Ted could make club history for being the first member to win his own tournament. And he did! Since the turnout for the Ted McHugh Quick Chess Tournament was very good, the directors grouped the participants into two sections. I want to recognize our member Andres Montiel for taking first place in the lower section of Ted's event.

On April 30, the club organized the Bob Kozlowski Quick Chess Tournament. Bob, also known by many in the club as "Dr. K," has been actively involved in our organization for many years as a player and as a contributor. As most of you know, Bob was vice president of the club from 2003-2010 and is currently the club historian. Bob also has been a tournament director since 1998. Furthermore, Bob now sets the record for being the "youngest" (thirty-five years of age) of the "oldest" members (twenty-six years as a member) to have a club tournament named after him. Over the last two decades, Bob has been a strong advocate for the NBCC and Connecticut chess. However, speaking now in the first person, I want to state that I have received so much more in the form of friendship from our members than I could possibly reciprocate to them and the club. Friends are the ties that bind, and I have truly valued my friendships with those in our club and chess community since I joined the club on July 28, 1987. I enjoyed competing in my tournament, and I thank my fellow compadres who played in my event. And, despite my earnest attempt to clinch first place, it is with the utmost pleasure to inform you that member Joe Hricko, who is often referred to as "HR" by his friends, was so elated to win my tournament. Incidentally, Joe quickly defeated me in the first round on his way to a perfect score. Apparently, he thought my event was the "Beat Dr. K Quick Chess Tournament!"

MAY

On the first Saturday in May, the NBCC hosted the 2013 Planet Earth Chess Championship at the Simsbury Public Library Chess Club. For the third consecutive year, the club received the prestigious rights to hold this coveted tournament. On that glorious, sunny day in the quaint Town of Simsbury, thirty-seven humans competed in the ultimate chess competition - all with one objective in mind - to become the Planet Earth chess champion 2013. In the early rounds of the two-section, four-round tournament, we saw a number of very close games, some of which resulted in major upsets. After round two, our players took a break from the action for lunch, which was catered by a local restaurant. The items on the menu were vegetable lasagna, beef stroganoff, pizza, salad, and refreshments.

Play resumed after lunch. In rounds three and four, the intensity was getting high, the games were full of action, and, at around 5 P.M., it was quite apparent that the adrenalin levels of the players on board one in each section were probably sky high as evidenced by the seriousness in their faces. It would not be long until we knew who would win the event. At exactly 5:20 P.M, all of the games were finished, and the place and section winners were presented with their decorative Planet Earth trophies. So, without any further suspense, the 2013 winners of the Planet Earth Chess Championship and Planet Earth Chess Championship Reserves were our members, Mike Pascetta and John Twombly, respectively. Both players had perfect scores on their way to earning their esteemed titles. The following people worked very hard to make this event a tremendous success for the benefit of our club: Doug Fiske (tournament director), USCF NM Derek Meredith (event creator, planner, promoter, and purchaser of the trophies), Gert Hilhorst (provided the beautiful, spacious site for the event), member Jerry Aiyathurai (prepared the TLA and brought donuts and coffee for the morning games), Kevin Zimmerman (culinary coordinator who delivered the food from the restaurant to the playing site and also served lunch to the participants), and Bob Kozlowski (assisted Gert and Doug with on-site registrations). As always, these events cannot thrive without the support from our chess community, and we thank all who played in this year's Planet Earth Chess Championship. I hope to see you at the Planet Earth Chess Championship 2014. Until then, if an alien from outer space questions you about this year's champion, you can send them directly to Mike Pascetta!

JUNE

The club has been known for its many traditions in its rich history. One of these traditions, for as long as I can remember, has been the 40/90, SD/30 time control for our major events. Of course, there have been some exceptions to this norm. It was just recently, though, at the Arkadijs Strazdins Cup, that this established time control was modified to G/100. I think that most players felt this was a nice change of pace. I know some players personally who prefer a sudden-death time control rather than having to play a certain number of moves in an allotted amount of time, especially those who often find themselves in severe time pressure. Besides the time control change, the other thing of significance in the Strazdins Cup was that it was the first major club event where the winners of each section (FM Nelson Castaneda - open section, Andris Strazdins - Under 1505 section) were also the winners in the previous year. For winning first place in their respective sections, Nelson and Andris were presented with their Strazdins Cup trophies on June 4. Now, the question is, can they make it three consecutive years?

Jozef Madej was the next member to have a tournament held in his honor at the club. His story in the NBCC began in 1998. Early on, Jozef was a solid class C player. But, from the turn of the century to today, Jozef's ranking in the club has steadily risen. Currently, he is class A player. Who knows how high Jozef's rating might increase in the years to come? He might just become our club's next expert. However, if he thought that he was too old to have his own tournament, then he had better hurry up to reach 2000! Most recently, Jozef has been regularly directing the tournaments at the club. His involvement in this capacity and in other related duties have greatly benefited our organization. In addition to his TD responsibilities, Jozef has been one of the most steadfast NBCC supporters. In the last six years, he has competed in over seventy rated club tournaments. Jozef is a very nice person and, furthermore, has a quiet, pleasant charm and disposition. But do not let that fool you if you ever play him! We almost had a record number of players participating in the Jozef Madej Quick Chess Tournament (thirty-two), and, despite a few technical difficulties with the pairing software, the tournament finally got underway at 8:30. After four rounds of competition, International Master Jan van de Mortel took first place in the open section, and John Twombly earned the top spot in the Under 1600 section. I want to take this moment to thank Kevin Zimmerman, who assisted me with directing the tournament. Kevin has been involved as a TD in the past few years, but, on June 11, it was his first time in this official role at the club.

The annual NBCC business meeting took place on June 18. At this session, USCF NM Derek Meredith first gave a wonderful overview of the club highlights since the last meeting. Next, Andy Strazdins, who, as of August 31, will have served the club for four decades as treasurer, gave a very impressive financial report. I am proud to state that the club is in its best financial condition ever. Our success in the last year was attributed to the two weekend chess tournaments and the accumulation of small percentages of entry fees that the club has been retaining from all of its events in order to recoup the shortfall between the membership dues collected and the rent paid that has existed since moving to our new location. In addition, membership has increased about ten percent in the last year. Lastly, it does appear that our rent will not be increasing in the near future. Everything was going so well that it was quite sad to hear, during the time of officer elections, that Doug Fiske would not be running for vice president in the coming year. And, as most of you know, Brian Kosnoff will not continue to serve as secretary due to his relocation to California. Both of these members served the club well, and we extend our gratitude to them for their years of hard work and dedication. It is important to note that Doug will continue to direct tournaments occasionally, and Brian will continue to be the club webmaster.

The election results went as follows: Norman Burtness will be the next vice president, Dan Golda is now the new secretary, and Derek and Andris were nominated and voted unanimously (like the other positions) for the positions of president and treasurer, respectively. Overall, that was the best meeting the club has had in recent memory. For once, there was no drama! The NBCC is strong in so many ways, not just financially. Without the help from so many volunteers, our club could not be as prosperous as it is today.

On June 25, FM Nelson Castaneda gave a simultaneous chess exhibition at the club. Nelson, who is only one norm away from becoming an IM, has offered his services in this regard many times to our club in the last decade. For our newcomers to the club, playing one of our masters in a simul is good experience. Although I was not present to view the games, my assistant historian, Andris Strazdins, said that there were many good battles. Our fifteen competitors, no doubt, put the master to the test. However, after approximately three hours of play, only two players were able to draw him - Jozef Madej and member Dennis Himes. No one was able to defeat the master. All of the proceeds from Nelson's simul were donated to the club. Thanks to Professor Castaneda for hosting the event.

Our organization has been grateful to have people who not only get involved at the club but also contribute to its betterment by organizing special events at their homes for our members and the local chess community. In almost every year since 2007, Kevin Zimmerman and his fiancée, Marie Juergens, have hosted their annual Games Day. Many people have partaken in the festivities at "The House of Z and Marie." Unfortunately, plans for this blockbuster event, which have featured a grand barbeque lunch, entertainment by a local drum group, a chess tournament, poker competitions, door prizes, and more, did not materialize in 2012. Nevertheless, the culinary duo decided that 2013 would be the comeback year. Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts, this year's social event, which did occur on June 29, did not have the musical lineups nor the other non-chess related activities. Not to fret, folks! Kevin and Marie, in spite of the disappointment in not being able to arrange the other activities, prepared a large lunch with all of the summertime foods and beverages and held an informal chess tournament for the crew. For once, their event would not be impacted by weather. I recall in years past when we dodged heavy rain, thunderstorms, wind, and, in 2011, a tropical storm! I guess "Z" and Marie must have prayed hard to the chess gods for beautiful weather! Everyone had an awesome time and enjoyed each other's company. We hope that next year, we can bring the drum group back!

JULY

One of the tournaments that I have not mentioned much about in the nearly nine years I have been writing the NBCC newsletters is our club's blitz chess championships. The annual one-night event, which has been held for at least twenty-five years and thus qualifies as a Heritage tournament, has traditionally been played in June or July and, with the exception of last year, has always been unrated. It was only about four years ago when these competitions were organized as round-robins. This format was adequate when there were fewer than twenty-four players. However, the Swiss-system is more suitable to accommodate many more participants and has been especially favored by those directing these events since the format change. It is with regret to inform you that the records of the winners of the club's blitz chess championships from the 1960s to 2005 are generally not available. Believe me, I have searched extensively through the club archives that Arkadijs Strazdins meticulously kept until I began taking over the responsibility in 2005. Well then, I might just have to pay Andris Strazdins a visit to investigate where those missing records are! All levity aside, because of my longevity in the club, I have vivid memories of those wonderful evenings of yesteryear when Blitz Champs USCF NM Ted McHugh, FM Richard Bauer, FM Nelson Castaneda, USCF NM Harris Appelman, Arkadijs Strazdins, and others often went undefeated in these events. It is my pleasure to report to you that, on July 2, USCF NM Derek Meredith joined this elite group of blitz chess superstars, going a perfect 7-0.

AUGUST

The first of three club highlights in this month actually began on the last Tuesday in July. On that evening, twenty players showed up to compete in a three-week, intra-club team tournament, only the second held, to my knowledge, in NBCC history. Each of the four highest-rated participants was designated as a team captain. Choosing the leaders was the easy part. What posed somewhat of a challenge was to find the fairest way to seed the remaining sixteen players in the four five-member teams. After discussion among the tournament directors, it was decided that the captains would meet behind closed doors to choose their teammates. Even though I cannot attest to the words spoken among Team Captains FM Nelson Castaneda, USCF NM Dennis Prawira (who recently rejoined the club), USCF NM Derek Meredith, and Joe Hricko in the kitchen of Mike's Hall that evening, I can unequivocally state that, after intense back-room deliberations, they came out of their meeting with great vigor, so elated to announce their selections.

It should be mentioned that Kevin Zimmerman and Norman Burtness played in John Twombly's absence (John was on Team Hricko) in rounds two and three, respectively. Chess is generally not a team sport, so holding this event was quite different for the club. Unfortunately, however, in comparison to nearly all sporting competitions, there could only be one winner of this tournament. Therefore, at approximately 11:00 p.m. on August 13, Team Meredith won the competition. With sharp, tactical play from Derek and his teammates, Marcus Komons, Allen Mo, Paul Jaffe (one of our newest members), and Jose Cyriac (another new member), they were able to earn a perfect team score and clinch first place.

One of the cool things about the club, as I have mentioned quite often, is the variety of our activities. In particular, the quick chess tournaments have captured the interest of our members, and players of all ratings turnout for these events. Whenever there is anything new at the club, like the first sectioned NBCC Quick Chess Championship held on the last two Tuesdays in August, I always make a point to mention it. Incidentally, the club's Quick Chess Championship, which started as an annual tradition in 2006 during the Joseph Mansigian administration, has been won by eight different players over eight years. In a few of those years, there were two or three co-champions, and FM Nelson Castaneda (current year champion) and USCF NM Derek Meredith have won the event twice. Since this was the first sectioned NBCC Quick Chess Championship, I want to recognize member Laurent Lafosse for taking first place in the Under 1600 section.

On the morning of August 25, with an autumnal chill to the air and a sky that could not been more clear and brilliantly blue, forty-four people of the club's family gathered under the Williams pavilion at Wickham Park in Manchester to play in our organization's biggest and most exciting social function of the year - the famous annual New Britain Summer Open Chess Championship. In order for this open-air event to be a success, it is vital that we have many volunteers. The following people spent many hours to ensure that the participants had a delightful time. First, we had Chief Tournament Director Norman Burtness, who did a fantastic job for the first time in this capacity at this event. He handled everything with ease and professionalism. Doug Fiske helped Norman with the collection of early registrations, and Bob Kozlowski was available on-site to assist Norman. Mike Fries, Dan Golda, and others were very helpful with the setup of the equipment.

For lunch, the culinary trio of Kevin Zimmerman, Marie Juergens, and Mitch Daniels served the participants classic summertime foods like hamburgers, grilled kielbasa, macaroni salad, garden salad, Boston-baked beans, chips, fruits, refreshments, and the to-die-for strawberry shortcake. This crew worked very hard and kicked up the food preparation to “notches unknown to mankind.” To help promote the event, we could always rely on the club’s loyal friend Rob Roy, editor of *Connecticut Chess* magazine, who broadcasted the tournament on his website. Rob also took many photos, which he has published at <http://connecticutchess.blogspot.com/2013/08/connecticut-chess-magazine-september.html>. Jerry Aiyathurai advertised the event on the NBCC Facebook’s page and submitted the TLA to the USCF. And we must not forget Andy Strazdins, who purchased the beautiful trophies. The big hit that sparked the curiosity of many of the players at this year’s event was the new NBCC t-shirts. The idea of selling the shirts to raise funds for the club was brought to the attention of the officers by Bob at the 2012 business meeting. USCF NM Derek Meredith came up with the brilliant idea behind the picture on the front of the shirts. We are all familiar with the cultural precept, “What would Jesus do?” With that in mind, Derek decided to take a reverse twist on this precept and thought it would be awesome if, on the front of the shirts, there were a picture of Jesus looking at a chess position and, in deciding what to play, asks himself, “What would Bobby (Fischer) do?” The letters N-B-C-C are embroidered on the back of the shirts. The nearly thirty shirts sold like hot cakes. Thanks to Derek for coming up the incredible conception for the shirts and to his friend for making them. Before signing off on the August highlights report, I do want to congratulate member Miguel Purgatorio for winning the Under 1413 section, the first time he has earned first place in a major NBCC tournament.

SEPTEMBER

In between our club’s major events, the officers hold many interesting one-week tournaments, many of which, such as the First NBCC Thematic Endgame Tournament held on September 3, add variety to our organization’s yearly activities. In addition, these events generally draw members and non-members of all skill levels. For this unrated tournament, FM Nelson Castaneda prepared a different endgame position in each of the six rounds, and the participants had to play their games from those positions. After each game, the professor provided lessons to the group on how White and Black should play for the win. The participants learned a lot, and club thanks Nelson for sharing his wealth of knowledge and expertise about this area of the game. One of our club’s most competitive members, Matt Faille, took clear first place in the event.

OCTOBER

Another annual tradition that started in 2006 during the Joseph Mansigian administration has been the NBCC Oktoberfest dinner parties. Since 2009, these festive gatherings, where we celebrate the German heritage of many of our members, have been held at the Corner Pug, a very popular restaurant in the Elmwood section of West Hartford. Having been to every one of these social functions, I can state with certainty that about forty of our members and extended family have attended at least one club Oktoberfest dinner party. At every party, NBCC's own Andris Strazdins has livened up the atmosphere with his harmonica. Because he is quite a master of this instrument, I have persuaded him to audition for the 2014 season of America's Got Talent! Besides Andy the Magnificent, the usual familiar faces of the current and prior club administration were at the Pug on October 11. It was also a pleasure to see a few of our newest members attend, and it appeared that everyone enjoyed the evening of casual, friendly conversation.

Anthony Diaz Sr. was the next member in seniority to have a tournament organized in his honor by the club. Unfortunately, Tony was unable to play in his own event held on October 22. We hope he returns to the club soon. Tony joined the club around the turn of the century and has maintained at a solid class A level throughout most of his membership. In addition, Tony has been a regular participant in our club's major tournaments. More recent, he has brought his son, Anthony Diaz, Jr., to these events. When both of them come to play on Tuesday nights, just watch out! The Anthony Diaz Sr. Quick Chess Tournament, which was unrated, was divided into two sections. In the open section, member James Nitz (or "Kramnitz") took first place, and Alexander Ruth, who just joined the club that evening, was the Under 1595 section winner.

On October 29, the club held the fourth in its series of rated blitz chess tournaments. If you remember from the last of these events, the officers choose not to add a time delay, which was a slight modification from the first two. For this tournament, it was decided that big money prizes would be awarded to the winners. Obviously, the entry fee had to be raised from the usual \$5 to \$20 in order to generate a huge prize fund. In spite of a smaller than Norman al turnout, the tournament was successful. I do want to stress that the officers put a substantial effort into creating different things for the club's events, and it is important that their ideas like this be mentioned.

NOVEMBER

On the first three meetings in November, the club held a double quads event in tribute to the late USCF NM Jim Bolton. The master was a member from the 1960s until 2000 and was a regular participant in the club's major tournaments during that time. Throughout Bolton's chess career, which spanned an amazing six decades, he earned many prestigious titles. His most notable were two-time New England chess champion and three-time Connecticut chess champion. The master also won many NBCC tournaments and became only the second member, behind Mr. Strazdins, to win three major tournaments in one year at the club. The master was an inspiration to all chess players. His untiring determination to ensure that everyone strived for success in chess was a testament to his character. Tragically, Master Bolton's health declined in the late 1990s. His memory, ability to reason, and cognitive skills rapidly deteriorated, which sadly lead to his passing in 2006. Those of you who remember Master Bolton know that his death was a significant loss for the NBCC and New England chess communities.

DECEMBER

The club kicked off the final month of the year with a quick chess tournament dedicated to Dennis "Bad Bishop" Himes. Dennis was the next member in succession to have a tournament held by the club in his honor based on seniority. Dennis' membership began in 2001 after the disbandment of the Hartford Chess Club, of which he was a member for many years. Since 2001, Dennis has been a very active competitor at the NBCC. He has played in well over one-hundred rated club tournaments, seventy-three in just the last six years. Even though some of us lightheartedly refer to Dennis as "Bad Bishop," anyone of his opponents is well aware that he takes every chess game seriously. In fact, Dennis' rating has steadily climbed in recent years. Currently, at 1911, his highest rating to date, he is only ninety points from expert level. Like Tony Diaz Sr., Dennis encouraged his son, George "Good Knight" Himes, to become a member, making Dennis and George one of the few father-son duos in the club. Twenty-two players participated in Dennis' tributary event. After five rounds of spirited battles, FM Nelson Castaneda won the tournament, and member Angel Zayas-Garcia took first place in the Under 1600 section. Before I sign off on this highlight, I have to admit that even though all of the games in the "Bad Himes" Quick Chess Tournament were played with the bishops on the board, some of them were really bad, including mine in one of my games against "BB"!

On December 10, the club held its first Random Tandem Tournament. The format was very simple. Each person played two games simultaneously, one as White and one as Black, with an opponent whose rating was closest to his. The time control for each game was G/60 with a delay of fifteen. The delay was long for obvious reasons. In spite of the somewhat icy road conditions, eighteen members braved the elements and showed up for this new activity. I have noticed in recent years that these variety tournaments have received much favorable reaction from the membership, especially from our newest members. Unfortunately, because of the nature of these random games, none could be USCF-rated.

On Monday, December 23, the NBCC held its second grandest social event of the year - the popular annual Christmas party. The club also organized its annual silent auction and Bullet Chess Championship in conjunction with the party. Joseph Mansigian and Andris Strazdins spent that afternoon shopping for the food, and Bob Cyr, who prepared a tray of peanut butter blossoms and brought Christmas music, assisted these gentlemen with the setup a few hours before the festivities commenced at 7:30 p.m. Besides Bob, one of our members who made a food contribution (and has done so at nearly every NBCC Christmas party) was John Nitz. John brought his wife's famous nacho cheese dip platter that, according to him, was gone in thirty minutes! Last, but definitely not least, Norman Burtness and Dan Golda each donated a bottle of wine, which were definitely very nice touches. After winning the first three NBCC Bullet Chess Championships, FM Nelson Castaneda has begun cementing his way into the club archives as the NBCC Bullet Chess King! The annual club silent auction, even though not as formal as in the past, was relatively successful. The following people made donations for chess sets and books that were donated by former members: Brian Kosnoff, Doug Fiske, Marcus Komons, John, and Bob. Lastly, the club thanks Norman, Andy, and Bob for cleaning up and putting the equipment away. In short, it was a nice evening filled with fun, laughter, excitement, and joy. And, as always, it was wonderful to reconnect with our family and friends past and present. Of notable occurrence was the appearance of USCF NM Kerry Leahy, who was visiting from Florida.

The final club highlight of the year occurred on Monday, December 30. On that night, the officers organized another new event - a rivals challenge. Basically, each player competed in two matches (separate, I might add!) with his nearest rival based on rating. The players had the option of rating the G/45, 5 games. Overall, we had a small turnout, but it was a nice activity to the wrap-up of another fantastic year at the NBCC.

NBCC MEMBERS' MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

The following major achievements were earned by our members at non-club tournaments and in the USCF in 2013.

NBCC MEMBERS RANKING IN THE TOP 100 LISTS IN THE USCF AS OF THE DECEMBER (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
Danny Pascetta	Age 14	2014	41 st
Jonathan Aiyathurai	Age 14	1906	74 th

NBCC MEMBERS ATTAINING THE LEVEL OF USCF EXPERT

Joe Hricko attained expert level in 2013.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT NBCC MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

- In July, when Andres Castaneda became a USCF NM, he and his father, Nelson, became the first members of the same family to become USCF NMs.
- Following in the footsteps of expert James Nitz, Danny Pascetta, on September 29, became the second member to win the top prize (a \$2,000 scholarship to the University of Connecticut School of Engineering) for earning first place in the annual UConn School of Engineering Scholarship Chess Tournament.

CHESS TRIVIA

The magnificent rise of World Champion Magnus Carlsen to the top of the chess world has captured the interests of players worldwide. Magnus, only twenty-two, has already built an impressive chess resume. Besides being world champion, Magnus, who many refer to as “The Mozart of Chess,” became the second-youngest grandmaster in history and the youngest player in history to rank number one.

Because the 2013 World Chess Championship match received so much media attention, I decided that the 2013 trivia section of this year’s club newsletter be fittingly devoted to questions about prior matches. So, are you up for this challenge? The answers are on page 25.

1. Which of the following statements is not true about former World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov?
 - A: Defended the title more than any previous champion
 - B: Earned a FIDE rating of 2851
 - C: Was named Soviet Union Sportsman of the Year
 - D: Won fifteen consecutive tournaments from 1981 to 1990

2. How old was Emanuel Lasker when he became world chess champion?
 - A: 20
 - B: 23
 - C: 25
 - D: 27

3. During the 1978 World Chess Championship match, what food did Viktor Korchnoi claim was given to Anatoly Karpov during the games as code to give advice on what move he should play?
 - A: Ice cream
 - B: Yoghurt
 - C: Cake
 - D: Melon

4. Which of the following was not one of the “London Rules” proposed by Jose Capablanca in 1922 that dictated the conditions for future world chess championship matches?
 - A: Time control of 40/150
 - B: Champion decides the date of the match
 - C: Highest purse bid must be accepted
 - D: First player to win twelve games wins the match

NBCC PICTURE GALLERY

The following photos were taken by Robert Cyr.



2013 PLANET EARTH CHESS CHAMPIONS

MIKE PASCETTA
(OPEN SECTION)



JOHN TWOMBLEY
(UNDER 1600 SECTION)



FRIENDS OF THE NBCC COMMUNITY COMPETE AT THE 2013 NEW BRITAIN SUMMMER OPEN



EDWARD DIDAN AND JAKE WANG



JOSE CYRIAC AND BEJAMIN SMALL



JOE HRICKO AND MARCUS KOMONS



JOHN SENTILLES AND SCOTT CAMERON

NBCC BEST GAME OF 2013

After analyzing twelve submissions for the NBCC Best Game of 2013 contest, FM Richard Bauer awarded first place to the game between USCF National Master Dennis Prawira and Allen Mo, an upset of 345 rating points, played in the final round of the Oktoberfest Open. All of the games were evaluated on a number of criteria, not just players' difference in rating.

Rick noted that "the highlight of this game was two beautifully timed 'breaks' to open the game and some spirited tactical play to gain the win. It was also a full game with the game retaining interest even into the endgame due to counter-play opportunities." Rick also mentioned that the game between Norman Burtness and USCF NM Derek Meredith came in at a very close second, deserving honorable mention. He further added that "both games were upsets taken by spirited play on the part of the winner, not blunders on the part of the loser. They helped confirm [his] strong feeling that both players are responsible for the creation of a brilliant game!"

Rick presented Dennis and Allen with their prizes at the club on December 17. The club extends its gratitude to Richard for being the judge of this contest and for the generosity he exemplified by giving the winners prizes with his own funds!

[Event "2013 Oktoberfest Open Chess Championship"]

[Date "2013.10.15"]

[Round "5"]

[White "USCF NM Dennis Prawira"]

[Black "Allen Mo"]

[Result "0-1"]

[Annotator "FM Richard Bauer"]

[Game in 100 minutes with a 5-second delay]

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. c4 Bb4+

{Bogo-Indian Defense, a very solid alternative to the Queen's Indian.}

4. Bd2 Qe7 5. a3

(5. g3 {gives White a better chance for an advantage.})

5... Bxd2+ 6. Nbx2 O-O 7. e3 d6 8. e4?

{White offends the chess goddess Caisa by using two moves to get his king's pawn from e2 to e4!} (8. Be2)

8... e5 9. d5 a5 10. h3 a4 11. g4 Nbd7 12. Bd3 Nc5 13. Qc2

(13. Bc2)

13... Bd7 14. Nf1 b5!

{A very effective break that utilizes the rock-solid Nc5 to create a strong initiative for Black on the queenside.}

15. Ne3

(15. cxb5 Nxd3+ 16. Qxd3 Rfb8)

15... bxc4 16. Nxc4 (SEE DIAGRAM)

16... Nxd5!!

{Winning a key central pawn.}

17. exd5 e4 18. Bxe4 f5!

{Rather than settle for a material advantage, Black breaks open the kingside with dramatic effect.}



After 16. Nxc4
Black to play and win.



After 23. Rd2
Finish White off!

29. Qxe2 Qe4+

(29... Qf2)

30. Qxe4 Nxe4 31. Nc2 Rf1+ 32. Ka2 Nf2 33. b3!

{White now starts to stage a comeback by creating a very dangerous passed a-pawn.}

33... axb3+

(33... Nxh3)

34. Nxb3 Ne4

19. O-O-O fxe4 20. Ne1 Bb5 21. Rh2 Qf6
22. Kb1 Rab8 23. Rd2 (SEE DIAGRAM)

23... Qf4

{The double threat of BxN and QxR forces...}

24. f3 exf3 25. Na5 Rbe8 26. Qd1 Be2
27. Rhxe2 fxe2 28. Rxe2 Rxe2

{Black has played a magnificent game so far, but he now misses a chance to end it with Qf1!!}

(34... Nxf3 35. a4)

35. Kb2 Nc5

(35... Nf6 36. Nb4 Rh1 37. a4 Rh2+ 38. Ka3 Rxf3 39. a5 Nxf4 40. a6 Re3
41. a7 Re8 42. Nc6 Ra8 43. Nbd4 Ne3)

36. Nxc5 dxc5 37. a4 Rf6 38. Kb3 Ra6 39. Na3 Rb6+ 40. Kc3

(40. Kc4 Rb4+ 41. Kxc5 Rxa4 42. Nb5)

40... Rb4 41. a5 Kf7 42. Nc4 Ke7

(SEE DIAGRAM)

With no defense to the long-range threat
of Kd8-c8-b7-a6-b5!, White throws
in the towel.)

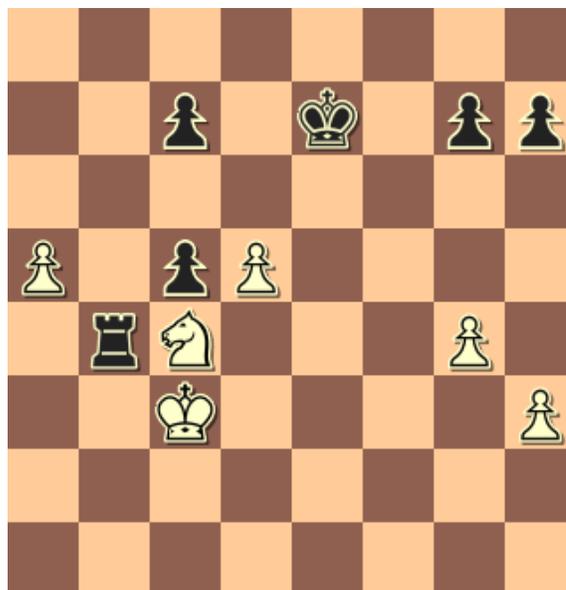
43. d6+

(43. h4 Kd8 44. h5 h6 45. Ne3 Kc8
46. Nc4 Kb7 47. Ne3 Ka6 48. Nc4 Kb5)

43... cxd6 44. Ne3 Kd7 45. Nd5 Rb5

46. Nb6+

(46. a6 Ra5)



After 42... Ke7

**46... Kc6 47. Nc8 Rxa5 48. Ne7+ Kd7 49. Nd5 Ra3+ 50. Kc4 Rxf3 51. Nb6+ Kc6
52. Nd5 h5 53. Nf4 hxg4 0-1**

NBCC HISTORICAL PICTURE GALLERY

All of these photos were taken by Rob Roy, editor of *Connecticut Chess* magazine and loyal NBCC friend. Since the 1970s, Rob has taken hundreds of photos from chess tournaments held in Connecticut. On behalf of the club, I thank Rob for allowing me to publish a few of the pictures from his collection.



John Pasco, Arkadijs Strazdins, and Dennis Tortora



USCF NMs Mike Casella and Ted McHugh



Ed Valauskas



USCF NM Jim Bolton



Joe Hricko



Reggie Cyr and Bob Cyr (FKA - Bob Kozlowski)



FM Richard Bauer

Rob Roy – editor, *Connecticut Chess* magazine
<http://www.connecticutchess.blogspot.com>

BOB CYR'S COMMENTARY

Alas, we have reached our final destination in our trip down memory lane of the NBCC in 2013. However, before I bid you adieu, let me briefly summarize what I thought was the club's most notable highlight of the year.

Some of you will recall that it was only a few short years ago when our organization was facing financial challenges. Fortunately, swift action was taken by the officers to make sure our club would be able to continue providing a venue for its weekly meetings. Because of the magnanimous efforts of the current administration, the volunteerism of our devoted tournament directors, the support from the local chess community at the Planet Earth and Summer Open Chess Championships, and a slight increase in membership, the NBCC has never been more financially strong. Simply stated, this was the club's biggest story of 2013.

The club is blessed to have members and friends who went the extra mile in the last twenty-four months to bring "The Heart of Connecticut Chess" back more financially sound than ever. I personally, on behalf of the club, thank everyone who supported our club during its struggles and who continue to support the club now and in its future.

The officers wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

President:	Derek Meredith
Vice President:	Norman Burtness
Treasurer:	Major Andris Strazdins
Secretary:	Dan Golda
Webmaster:	Brian Kosnoff



The membership currently stands at sixty-five. If you are not a member, I hope you will join or rejoin the club. I wish you peace, health, and happiness in 2014.

Bob Cyr

**(Formerly known as Bob Kozlowski -
My name change went into effect on November 5, 2013)**

SOLUTION AND ANSWERS TO CHESS PUZZLE AND TRIVIA

CHESS PUZZLE (FROM COVER PAGE)

1. Rxg7 Kxg7
2. Rg1+ Rg2
3. Rxg2+ Kf6
4. Qg6+ Ke5
5. Bd6#

CHESS TRIVIA (FROM PAGE 18)

1. c (Anatoly Karpov was named Soviet Union Sportsman of the Year.)
2. c (Emanuel Lasker defeated Wilhelm Steinitz in 1894 and held the title of World Chess Champion until his defeat to Jose Capablanca in 1921. Lasker has held the title longer than any other world chess champion in history.)
3. b (According to Wikipedia, “When Karpov's team sent him a blueberry yogurt during a game without any request for one by Karpov, the Korchnoi team protested, claiming it could be some kind of code. They later said this was intended as a parody of earlier protests, but it was taken seriously at the time.”)
4. d (The first player to win six games would win the match.)

**STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT CHESS IMPROVES MENTAL COGNITION.
SO, FRIENDS, I ENCOURAGE YOU TO DEVELOP YOUR INTELLECTUAL
PROWESS AND...**

PLAY CHESS!

