

NEW BRITAIN CHESS CLUB

"THE HEART OF CONNECTICUT CHESS"

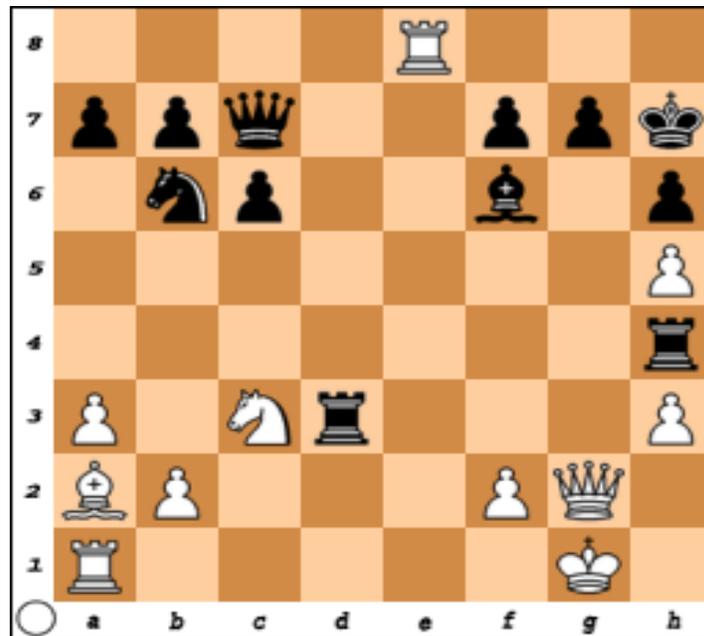
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2016 NEWSLETTER

by Robert Cyr

WHITE TO MOVE AND MATE IN FOUR



Yuri Krupenski vs. Boris Gelfand: Tallinn 2016

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

The solution is on page 28.

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INTRODUCTION

Season's Greetings, New Britain Chess Club family and friends:

The holiday season is upon us once again. As we go about our busy schedules, it is time to celebrate the memorable events that made headlines at the club and within our chess community in the last year.

As NBCC historian, I have had the pleasure of capturing the defining moments in this organization in the last twelve years. Collectively, the annual newsletters tell a story about a club that is rich and diverse and has heart and soul.

Two-thousand-and-sixteen was another phenomenal year for our family. We welcomed new friends, membership milestones were achieved, new events were held, and our spirit remained vibrant. The club continued to grow in new and different ways. And even though the club has had its share of challenges in recent years, our leaders have always quickly addressed any problems or situations that might have affected the continued success of our organization.

During this holiday season, please take a journey back in time and celebrate the stories that put the NBCC on the map in 2016. As always, I welcome any feedback and appreciate your input. Enjoy!

“If you have made a mistake or committed an inaccuracy, there is no need to become annoyed and to think that everything is lost. You have to reorientate yourself quickly and find a new plan in the new situation.”

David Bronstein



THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

As many of our members were gearing up for another fun year at our historic organization, our family was stunned to hear about the sudden and tragic loss of one of our dearest and supportive friends, Thomas Hartmayer, who passed away only hours after the New Year began. Like the legendary Arkadijs and Andris Strazdins of the NBCC, Tom was a charismatic force and mentor to many of the members of his club, the University of Connecticut Chess Club, where he was a tournament director and organizer since the 1970s. About fifteen of our members, and many more of his chess friends throughout the region - hundreds of people in all - gathered at the Potter Funeral Home in Mansfield on January 8 to pay their final respects to this amazing man. On a statewide level, Mr. Hartmayer will be remembered for his steadfast leadership and significant involvement in enriching scholastic and adult chess programs in Connecticut. But he will be best known for his deep compassion, his joyful exuberance, his abundance of love, and his utmost respect for everyone who knew him, chess and non-chess friends alike. A full eulogy about "Herr Direktor" is published later in this newsletter.

Back at the club a week later, Vice President Norman Burtness, who recently earned his United States Chess Federation Local TD certification and who has been passionately promoting scholastic chess at Hall High School in West Hartford, informed the membership about some modifications to the 2016 NBCC Championship. At last year's club business meeting, there were some suggestions brought forth by a few of the members in regard to changing the format of the championship section of this heritage event from a Swiss-system to a round-robin, as it was some years ago. Based on the concerns raised about using the Swiss-system for eight rounds for only twelve players, the officers decided to alter the format of the championship section this year, making it a seven round-robin event closed to only the top seven highest-rated members who pre-registered and last year's candidates section winner. The candidates section would remain a Swiss-system, but the mini-match playoffs would be eliminated. In spite of the slight decrease in the number of rounds in both sections from prior years, this prestigious tournament would not break club tradition for being the longest-running event of the year.

While the Club Championship was underway on Tuesdays, the club was host of the 2016 Connecticut State Quick Chess Championship on Saturday, January 30, at the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection, its home since 2014. After seven rounds of spirited competition, with many close games and a few upsets, USCF National Master Ian Harris, who drove all the way from Norwalk, clinched first place with a score of 6-1. Thanks to everyone who participated and to Doug Fiske for directing.

FEBRUARY

On Presidents Day weekend, about ten of our NBCC family members traveled to Parsippany, New Jersey, to compete in the annual three-day World/U.S. Amateur Team East Chess Championship, one of the largest chess events in America. It was one of the coldest weekends in recent memory. For nearly the last decade, the NBCC has earned the glorious honor of Top Connecticut Team at USATE (2007-2014). You might recall that our club fielded six teams in 2010, which was almost a USATE record. Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts, the NBCC was only able to field one four-member team and one team with three members to USATE this year. However, there was still plenty of news to cover.

On the first NBCC team, Jenner Gambit: King-to-Queen Four?, we had powerful masters and veteran USATE players FIDE Master Nelson Castaneda, USCF NM James Nitz, and FM Richard Bauer. They did quite well, winning four of their matches. On the second NBCC team, Trompowsky Attack: We Win - You Lose, we had Danny Pascetta, Mike Pascetta, Norman Burtness, and Bob Cyr. Storming the competition early on, this team brought their A game to the table every round. Because of their exceptional performance, this team played in the grand ballroom every round, including behind the ropes in round four on board eight!

After the annual three-day exhilarating USATE retreat, where new friendships were formed and where old friendships were rekindled, the Chess Club of Fairfield County team - Trumps Maneuver: Send Capture - earned the prestigious title of Top Connecticut Team, edging out the Trompowsky team by one-half point. There were other members playing on non-club teams. NBCC President USCF NM Derek Meredith played on a team with prominent chess book author Hanon Russell.

The organizers, tournament directors, and volunteers always do a superb job with coordinating all aspects of this incredible event. Mr. E. Steven Doyle and his exceptionally devoted, hard-working crew strive to make sure that everyone feels right at home. I really hope that more players from our club and in our state can have the opportunity to feel the unique experience at USATE, an event like none other in the annals of this historic game.

MARCH

After nearly two months of intense battles on the chess board at the club, USCF NM Dennis Prawira earned the prestigious title of 2016 NBCC Champion, going undefeated and defending his 2015 title. The last time this historic achievement of winning two consecutive club championships occurred was in 2009, when FM Nelson Castaneda successfully defended his 2008 title. In addition, Master Prawira has joined an elite group in our club (Edmund Roman, Arkadijs Strazdins, Bob Milardo, FM Richard Bauer, and FM Nelson Castaneda) for becoming only the sixth member to win two or more consecutive NBCC championships solo in the last seventy-five years. In the candidates section of the NBCC Championship, Immad Sadiq, a strong class A player and one of our newest family members, clinched first place outright, making this his first major tournament win at the club.

Shortly after winning the Club Championship, the officers asked the champion if he would host a simultaneous chess exhibition at the club the following week. Prawira graciously accepted their offer. Seventeen players had the pleasure of playing against USCF NM Dennis Prawira on March 15. Our fierce warriors put the full-court pressure on the master, attempting to slow him down. After three hours of competition, Joseph Mansigian, Bob Cyr, and Marcus Komons (all of whom were NBCC officers!) were victorious against the master. Of special note, there was a unique three-knight mate by Bob! Members Gaetano Bompastore and Gary Caruso earned draws against Prawira. Thanks to Dennis for hosting his simul at the club. It has been quite a while since the club has held a simul. Actually, the last time a club champion hosted a simul shortly after winning the title was twenty-nine years ago, when FM Richard Bauer won the 1987 Club Championship and gave a simul a few weeks later. Believe me, it took some time to research and find the answer to that historical NBCC fact!

On March 19, the club rounded out the final highlight of a terrific first quarter of 2016 by hosting the annual Connecticut State Chess Championship at the beautiful CCFC, our club's third consecutive year as the host of this coveted tournament. One of the cool things about the event was that in each round, the top four games were broadcasted live on the internet. In spite of the less than anticipated turnout, with only twenty-one players, the championship section was still quite strong, with ten masters and experts, including a few exceptionally talented scholastic superstars. After over ten hours of tough competition, USCF NM Ian Harris won the 2016 Connecticut State Chess Championship, going 4-0 and defending his 2015 title. There was a three-way tie for second place. Using conventional tie-breaking methods, FM Hans Niemann, USCF NM Yoon-Young Kim, and USCF NM Derek Meredith took second, third, and fourth place, respectively. Andrew Colwell from the club earned the top seed in the candidates section. A special thanks to the CCFC for their hospitality in allowing the NBCC to host this annual Connecticut State Chess Association-sanctioned tournament at their state-of-the-art facility. Also, a special token of appreciation to Derek for organizing this event and to Norman Burtness for directing, with some assistance from Bob Cyr. Incidentally, if Master Harris wins the 2016 Connecticut State Blitz Chess Championship, it will be the first trifecta in CSCA history where the same person will have won all three state chess championships (regular, quick, and blitz) in the same year. Let us hope that Ian can make the drive north to the NBCC for this potentially historic evening in state chess history in mid-December. Please stay tuned, folks!

APRIL

Since September 2010, our organization has held events in honor of our members based on total years of membership. The next person to have his own tributary event hosted by the club was veteran member Mark Bourque. Mark, a USCF expert, joined the NBCC around 2001, and he has been a frequent competitor in our club's events for over a decade. Specifically, Mark has played in sixty rated events in the last six years alone, which ranks him as the ninth most active member during this span. Mark is also one of our many members who enjoys the variety of activities that our club offers. Even though he prefers the long time-controlled events, Mark really gets excited about getting out of his comfort zone by playing in the club's quick, blitz, and bullet chess events. Interestingly, Mark is one of the few members who belongs to the UConn Chess Club, where he usually plays on Thursdays. Besides being a deeply committed chess player, Mark is a highly respected member in our chess community and a dear friend to many.

Twenty-four players competed in the five-round, two-section tournament for Mr. Bourque on April 26, and Norman Burtness and FM Richard Bauer tied for first place in the open section. According to the club records, Norman has broken the barrier for becoming the lowest-rated class player to win or tie for first place in an open section of a NBCC quick chess tournament. Joseph Mansigian, one of our club's longest-standing members, with a membership since the early 1970s, tied for first place with Alexander Ruth, one of our organization's youngest talented superstars, in the U1700 section. A very special thanks to Alexander's father, Anthony, one of our club's newest tournament directors, for the excellent job that he did in directing the event and to Luis Delgado for assisting Anthony during the registration process.

MAY

The annual Arkadijs Strazdins Cup was renamed to the Arkadijs Strazdins Cup - Andris Strazdins Stein starting this year to honor both gentlemen, whose combined service to our historic institution spanned close to a century. The suggestion for honoring Andris with Arkadijs in this memorial tournament was proposed by Luis Delgado and Marcus Komons, current and former club secretary, respectively. The top section was held in honor of Arkadijs, and the lower section was held in honor of Andris. A special section about both Strazdins and their incredible work for and legacy to the club is published later in this newsletter. After five weeks of battles, USCF NM Dennis Prawira went 5-0 to clinch the Arkadijs Strazdins Cup for the fourth time, the most of any member. Harold Blanchard, one of our members who recently rejoined our club, earned first place on tie-breaks over another recently rejoined member, Vipul Bhale, in the Andris Strazdins Stein section. This was also Harold's first win in a major club tournament with a time control of thirty minutes or longer. Dennis and Harold were presented with their beautiful, decorative awards on June 28.

At approximately 5:00 on the evening of May 22, as the skies were beginning to clear after a persistent overcast and unseasonably cool day at Wickham Park in Manchester, FM Richard Bauer emerged victorious to attain the title of Chess Champion of Planet Earth 2016, going undefeated in the three-round Swiss-system open section. Ruthvik Ayyagari was unstoppable in the U1600 section, going 5-0.

Many thanks to the overflow of volunteers with the setup and cleanup and to those who helped with all aspects of planning and promoting this event. Bob Cyr directed this tournament, which was hosted for the sixth consecutive year by the NBCC. Incredibly, this event has been held at six different venues! A special token of appreciation to member Laurent Lafosse for assisting Bob with the pairings and to all participants, especially Master Bauer for his galactic achievement!

JUNE

A few months before the start of the club's fiscal year in September, the officers historically schedule an annual business meeting where members have an opportunity to raise any matters or voice any concerns that they might have about the club. After a brief historical report by Bob Cyr, USCF NM Derek Meredith commenced the 2016 NBCC business meeting by delivering his state of the club address, mentioning how well our club is promoted on various websites and how our club continues to offer a variety of activities for the enjoyment of its members. The main topic of discussion at this year's meeting was devoted to club finances. Increased costs and lower than expected turnouts from fundraising events have unfortunately placed a financial strain on our club in the last year. The officers presented their ideas to the membership on solutions to these problems, and the membership, after a lengthy discussion, unanimously voted on the following measures to improve our club's financial situation:

- 1) Increasing dues (\$50 to \$60 for regular members and \$25 to \$30 for hardships and students). The officers have also agreed to waive their free membership dues for the 2016-17 year.
- 2) Retaining a certain percentage of all entry fees collected from tournaments.
- 3) Using the club's facility free of charge to host four quarterly Saturday tournaments starting in July. We are very thankful to our landlord for offering this benefit to our organization.

The election of officers went as follows: Norman Burtness - president; Derek Meredith - vice president; Luis Delgado - secretary; and Gert Hilhorst - treasurer. The club sincerely thanks of all of its officers for their efforts in maintaining our club and preserving its prominent standing in the Connecticut chess community.

After the meeting, Mark Bourque got his first experience as a tournament director by running a double round-robin bullet chess tournament. We thank Mark for doing an awesome job managing his first NBCC event. The winner of the tournament was Priyanka Nutakki, who is member Suhas Kodali's cousin. Priyanka, a resident of India, the person to travel the farthest to play an event in our club, was visiting the United States fresh off her New York International first place finish in the U2200 section. In the club's seventeen-player event that evening, Priyanka dominated the field, with her only loss to FM Nelson Castaneda and her only draw to Bob Cyr. Incidentally, Priyanka was the 2012 girls U10 world chess champion.

JULY

A week after the annual business meeting, the club commenced its summer schedule. During the typically slower summer months, the officers tend to hold events that are multi-week in order to accommodate the schedules of our tournament players.

The main attraction at the club in July was a new tournament proposed by FM Nelson Castaneda. The format of his unique event was quite simple. In round one, all players would be assigned a number and placed into a knockout bracket. The winners of the first round would advance in the knockout bracket, and the losers would enter a Swiss-system bracket. In case of a draw, a two-game blitz match would have to be played to determine the winner of the match. If the draw persisted after the blitz match, then the person who played with black in the classical game would advance. This format would continue until only two players remained in the knockout bracket. In the final round, Mark Bourque and Nelson Castaneda were the last two men vying for the top spot. Nelson, who also made his debut as tournament director, emerged victorious. Marcus Komons and Doug Fiske, who were knocked out in prior rounds, shared first place in the Swiss-system bracket. This tournament drew a respectable amount of interest, and we thank Nelson for creating the plans for this exciting activity.

Later in the month, on July 16, the NBCC scheduled the first of four Saturday events at the church. As previously mentioned, the church graciously offered use of the hall free of charge to the club. These weekend tournaments aim to provide financial benefits and promotional opportunities for our organization.

AUGUST

On August 9, the NBCC hosted a quick chess tournament in recognition of FM Nelson Castaneda for his longevity in our organization. Nelson joined our family in 1999, and his story in the annals of our institution is impressive. The master's most significant milestones in the club are his rankings as second place leader in regular time-controlled events and first place leader in quick chess time-controlled events. Recounting some of his most memorable victories, the professor notes that he is very proud of earning first-place titles in the 1st Planet Earth Chess Championship and the 1st Arkadijs Strazdins Cup. Of course, Mr. Castaneda has won many NBCC championships, ranking second behind the legendary Arkadijs Strazdins. Nelson is one of the most affable members in our family. For over fifteen years, the professor, who is a faculty advisor of the Central Connecticut State University Chess Club and a mathematics instructor at the university, has graciously welcomed friends and family from our chess community into his home for social activities, chess events, and instructional sessions. Beyond the club, you will often find Nelson reviewing games with his friends at his home and at Barnes and Noble on the weekends. Some of you also may recollect that Nelson, with the efforts of his wife, Nancy, was instrumental in securing our club's home at the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection, which is only one-third of a mile away from his home! After an evening of spirited competition, Nelson won his own honorary event, becoming only the second member in NBCC history to accomplish this, behind USCF NM Ted McHugh. Joseph Mansigian, Jithu Sajeevan, and member John Twombly tied for first place in the U1800 section.

On the last Sunday in August, the club hosted its grandest social event of the year - the annual New Britain Summer Open at Wickham Park in Manchester. The weather was glorious, with brilliant sunshine and seasonal conditions. We broke and shattered club records at this year's event: fourth highest attendance and highest attendance by juniors ages eighteen or younger. For the first time in club history, all pre-registrations were electronically processed. Norman Burtness implemented this idea. Thanks to all of the officers for their involvement with this event. We also thank Rob Roy, who brewed coffee and hot chocolate and brought muffins for the morning rounds, and International Master Jan van de Mortel, who did a wonderful job as the chief director. All first place section winners made history at the 2016 Summer Open. Andrew Colwell became the first expert to win this event since Andres Castaneda in 2007. Luis Delgado and Danny Hoffman took first place in the U1616 section and U916 section, respectively, and they each earned their first win in a major club tournament. Overall, the day filled with fun, friendship, and family.

We continue the story of FM Nelson Castaneda, who, as of August 30, has attained thirty wins or ties for first place in major club events. The professor reached this incredible milestone by tying for first place in the NBCC Summer Show-up event with Jithu Sajeevan. Jithu is a new member, and this was his first win or tie in a G/30 or longer time-controlled event at the club.

SEPTEMBER

For ten years, Kevin Zimmerman and his fiancée Marie have hosted an annual end-of-summer games day at their home for our family. This year, on September 10, thirteen players enjoyed a fabulous afternoon filled with delicious food and a fun chess tournament. “Z” and Marie always do a top-notch job with all aspects of their festive event, and they are so welcoming to everyone. Mostly clear skies and comfortable temperatures prevailed at this year’s outing. “Z” recapped the day’s highlights below.

“The guests ranged from expert to non-player ardent chess fan observers. A mixed bunch of people had to compete in Games Day 2016, from the experienced pros to ‘The House of Z’ newbies. One would expect that the seasoned pros would get the pinnacle first-place prize. However, as it turned out, a newbie clinched the top position and was crowned Games Day champion 2016. He was Jithu Sajeevan from Bristol and took clear first place, going 6-0. ‘The House of Z’ menu did not disappoint. We sincerely thank guests Tom and Brian for their offerings to the dessert portion of the menu. Everyone enjoyed the delicious treats that pleased and tantalized.”

We extend our appreciation to “Z” and Marie for the marvelous work that they continue to do to enrich the social fabric of our chess community. We look forward to Games Day 2017.

Over the last quarter, our club has been grateful for the contributions from our newest members of the tournament directing staff: Mark Bourque, FM Nelson Castaneda, Laurent Lafosse, Kevin Zimmerman, and Anthony Ruth. These members have demonstrated their willingness as TDs by successfully directing a few tournaments this year. As part of their many TD duties, they are learning how to use the software and handle situations that might arise during the course of events. We extend gratitude to our new TD crew and encourage them to serve as TDs for a very long time.

Also during the summer months, Gert Hilhorst and Norman Burtness spent many hours working on a new design for the NBCC website. The objective of this project was to make the website easier for the administrator to add new tournaments and publish event results and to make it quicker for the users to navigate. The major changes are quite evident. On the updated website, there is a Google calendar listing all of the scheduled events until June 2017 and an extensive new historical section detailing the archives dating back to our club's founding in 1901. Brian Kosnoff has stepped down as club webmaster, and Gert assisted by Joseph Mansigian has succeeded him. We take this time to recognize Brian for the work that he has put in for many years as the NBCC webmaster.

OCTOBER

The club is proud to have such a diverse membership comprised of players of all ages and skills. This diversity was evident at this year's Oktoberfest event, which attracted players from beginner to FM and from nine years old to the mid-60s. Thirty members competed in Oktoberfest 2016. The Oktoberfest event was created in 2006 as a way to remember the German ancestry of the many members who helped shape our historic organization from the 1940s and 1950s during the Roman Edmund administration through the end of the Strazdins era in 2001. As has been tradition, the club held its annual Oktoberfest dinner party on the weekend after the conclusion of the tournament. Ten friends of our family attended the social event held at J. Timothy's Taverne in Plainville on October 29. Everyone had a delightful time regaling about stories of our organization's past. I always enjoy these festive activities, where we have the opportunity to reconnect with chess friends past and present. In the spirit of Oktoberfest, cheers to the NBCC!

NOVEMBER

The NBCC kicked off November with a one-night event in honor of veteran member Marcus "Endgame" Komons. Marcus joined our family nearly fourteen years ago. Marcus began his membership with the club during a time of significant leadership transition. After a few years into his membership, Marcus expressed a desire to serve as a club tournament director. After a year of directing, Mr. Komons got even more involved when he was elected club secretary, a position that he dutifully served from 2006 until 2010. Marcus was a very devoted club director and officer, and it was truly a pleasure to work with him on so many projects for the betterment of the club. He was an excellent team player and a staunch club advocate.

For five years, Mr. Komons took a strong and active role as a club administrator, and it really comes as no surprise that he takes this same determined approach today at the chess board. He continually strives to improve his game, and his earnest efforts have noticeably paid off. In just the last few years, Marcus has been so close to attaining an expert rating. Yet his strength well exceeds his rating, and he has proven to give master-level competitors a real battle. Even though “Endgame” Komons does not enjoy getting into time pressure, he does have an ability to play quite well in these conditions. The club has been fortunate to have Marcus, who incidentally is one of the all-time most active members in the last decade, as part of our organization. Marcus often says that he is blessed for the many friendships that he has formed with our members through the years. In the spirit of camaraderie, the members mirror that same sentiment toward Marcus, who is a deeply devoted and loyal friend to everyone in our family. After an evening of energetic competition, FM Nelson Castaneda won the Marcus Komons event. This win places the professor at number thirty in total wins or ties for first place in NBCC quick chess events. Bob Cyr clinched the U1800 section.

For many years now, the club has been hosting annual double quads events in memory of legendary people who have had tremendous impacts and influences on the local chess community. This year, from November 15 to 29, the club held its annual memorial event for Thomas Hartmayer. A separate one-page section dedicated to remembering Tom is published later in this newsletter. Even though I was unable to attend his funeral, I was informed that Tom’s sister delivered my eulogy at his funeral. It was also published in the March issue of *Chess Life*.

DECEMBER

On December 6, the club hosted its final member tournament of 2016 in tribute to Gary Caruso. Gary’s worldwide chess career started long before he became a member. Gary’s first major tournament experience was playing in the 1962 U.S. Open Chess Championship. Later in the decade, in his tour of the U.S. Army, he took the opportunity to participate in a few small European tournaments, including Nuremberg in 1968 and Munich in 1969. On his return to the U.S., Mr. Caruso lived in New York City, where he would spend every Friday and Saturday night at Rossolimo’s Chess Studio in Greenwich Village. Gary, a solid class A player, competed in the 1st World Open Chess Championship in 1973, defeating a 2475 master. He moved to Hartford in 1990 and joined the club two years later.

Around the turn of the century, Gary took a long hiatus from the game. We were sad to see him leave but are glad that he has returned to our family, which he did a few years ago. Currently, Gary ranks 42 on the USCF's list of top seniors over 65 and is one of the most active senior members in our chess community. Mr. Caruso's greatest NBCC tournament result was placing third in the championship event in 1996. Throughout the 1990s, Gary often competed in many of the club's simultaneous chess exhibitions. Two of his most memorable games were his victories against prominent masters Danny Kopec and David Lees. As part of the planning for his event, Gary was given the opportunity, like the last few members who were honored by the club, to determine the time control. He choose a quick speed of G/8, d/3. In addition, Gary made an extremely nice gesture by offering \$100 to the first-place winner if four or more masters competed in his special tournament. In spite of the fact that we fell short of this condition, Gary still honored his gracious offer of \$100, which was proudly presented to USCF NM David Herscovici, who clinched the top spot in a strong field of masters and class players. As a wonderful act of generosity, David donated half of his prize to the club. Gary truly enjoys being a part of the NBCC. He is a wonderful person who possesses such enormous warmth and kindness to everyone, and we are incredibly delighted and grateful to have him as part of our family once again.

A week after the Caruso event, the club continued its busy December schedule with the annual Connecticut State Open Blitz Chess Championship. This year's event drew many newcomers. We were overjoyed that our friends from the chess clubs in Fairfield and Milford joined the NBCC forces for this CSCA-sanctioned event, which the club has hosted since 1976. As previously mentioned in this newsletter, USCF NM Ian Harris won the Connecticut Closed and Quick Chess Championships of 2016, and we were anticipating that he might participate in the state blitz event. Ian was able to compete, and he won the tournament, going undefeated in a strong field of masters and experts. Ian's victory was even sweeter because he became the first person to win all three state championships (regular, quick, and blitz) in the same year! We congratulate Ian for his historic achievement. Thanks to Jim Celone and the board of directors of the CSCA for their vote to have the NBCC host this annual tournament. Thanks also to Norman Burtness for directing.

On December 20, members and friends of our extended chess family celebrated with spirit and joy at the annual Christmas party, the club's final highlight of 2016. The club was fortunate to have a group of volunteers and contributors, like Norman Burtness, USCF NM Derek Meredith, Luis Delgado, Gert Hilhorst, Dan Golda, Bill Campbell, Thomas Sullivan, Bob Cyr, and many others, who were instrumental in making this year-end celebration one to remember. Hall's Market in West Hartford catered this year's party. Thanks to Norman for picking up the food and coordinating this big gala. On the menu, we had Mediterranean chicken and vegetarian and meat lasagna. Besides the entrées, there were many contributions of desserts and snacks. While our members were enjoying their meal, Bob got everyone in a festive mood by playing traditional Christmas carols and songs from his CD collection, including the legendary Neil Diamond! After two hours of socializing, the club's annual Bullet Chess Championship commenced. Kevin Zimmerman was in charge of keeping track of the results, and he did a great job as tournament manager. Players had a ball during the one-minute games, and you could really feel the energy in the room as the pieces were flying across the boards. Around 10:30 that evening, USCF NM Dennis Prawira won the event by one-half point over FM Nelson Castaneda, who remains the club's bullet chess record holder. This was truly one of the best social events in NBCC history, capping another amazing year for "The Heart of Connecticut Chess."



NBCC MEMBERS' MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Our members earned the following major achievements in the USCF in 2016.

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
FM Nelson Castaneda	Age 50 or Older	2375	32 nd
	Quick Overall	2300	69 th
	Quick Age 50 or Older	2300	19 th
FM Richard Bauer	Quick Age 50 or Older	2111	90 th tie
Danny Pascetta	Age 17	2026	54 th
Gary Caruso	Blitz Age 65 or Older	1810	42 nd
Joseph Mansigian	Blitz Age 65 or Older	1628	70 th

NBCC MEMBERS ATTAINING THE LEVEL OF USCF EXPERT

Andrew Colwell and Immad Sadiq reached expert level in 2016.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT NBCC MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

USCF NM Derek Meredith drew GM Alexander Ivanov at the 2016 Bradley Open Chess Championship held from July 22 to 24.

CHESS TRIVIA

The internet and social media have both played a vital role in the promotion of recent world chess championship matches like the one held in New York earlier this year between World Chess Champion Magnus Carlsen and challenger Sergey Karjakin. For those chess fans who find enjoyment in reading about the history behind the participants and these matches, a plethora of data is easily available at the click of a mouse.

Over the last few months, I perused the web on the subject of world chess champions and championships in order to create five questions for this year's club trivia challenge. I hope that you are up for the test! You can find the answers on page 28.

1. In which of the following cities did the 1894 World Chess Championship match not take place?
 - A: New York
 - B: Philadelphia
 - C: Montreal
 - D: New Orleans

2. Who was the 10th world chess champion?
 - A: Bobby Fischer
 - B: Boris Spassky
 - C: Mikhail Tal
 - D: Vasily Smyslov

3. In what world chess championship match was a demonstration board first used?
 - A: Steinitz - Zukertort
 - B: Steinitz - Chigorin
 - C: Lasker - Steinitz
 - D: Lasker - Marshall

4. In what year were two different world chess champions first crowned?
 - A: 1985
 - B: 1989
 - C: 1993
 - D: 1997

5. What was the format of the world chess championship matches between Anatoly Karpov and Viktor Korchnoi?
 - A: First to win six
 - B: Best of twenty-four
 - C: Best of twelve
 - D: First to win eight

NBCC PICTURE GALLERY

The following photos were taken by Rob Roy, Luis Delgado, and Bob Cyr.

JUST IN CASE YOU MISSED THE ACTION IN 2016, WE GOT PHOTOS FROM THE STATE QUICK AND CLOSED CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS



Norman Burtness and Richard Bauer



Back row: Andrew Colwell and Jose Castro
Front row: Manav Ramprasad and Luis Delgado

TO THE PLANET EARTH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP



Mike Pascetta and Richard Bauer



Kevin Zimmerman and Laurent Lafosse

AND THE NEW BRITAIN SUMMER OPEN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP



Top to bottom

Photo 1: Back row - Marcus Komons and Shlomi Yaakovovich

Front row - Gert Hilhorst and Doug Fiske

Photo 2: Rob Roy and Daniel Fryer

Photo 3: Back row - Joseph Mansigian and Arthur Nagel

Front row - Andrew Colwell and Immad Sadiq

**PARENTS AND STUDENTS DISPLAY THEIR EXCITEMENT
AT THE 2016 NEW BRITAIN SUMMER OPEN AWARDS CEREMONY**



Jan van de Mortel and Bob Cyr were the award presenters.

**PLAYERS ENGAGED IN SPIRITED BATTLE AT THE
THOMAS HARTMAYER MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT**



Danny Hoffman and Ann Sung



John Nitz and Alexander Ruth

REMEMBERING CHESS LEGEND AND NBCC FRIEND **THOMAS “TOM” HARTMAYER**

It is with a sad and somber heart to inform you about the sudden passing of Connecticut chess advocate, legend, and dear friend, Thomas “Tom” Hartmayer. Tom left this world on January 1, 2016, at the age of sixty-four.

For over forty years, Tom was integrally involved as a steadfast and staunch supporter, tournament director, organizer, and coordinator of adult and scholastic chess tournaments in Connecticut, especially at the University of Connecticut Chess Club, where he was the chief TD for decades. His vital role in these capacities significantly enriched the game for players of all ages and levels throughout our community for generations. He really loved the game and displayed his passion for it by being a mentor and coach to many scholastic chess players in our community.

Known warm-heartedly as “Herr Direktor” by many in the chess community, Mr. Hartmayer was also a very close friend of the New Britain Chess Club family since the early 1970s. Tom frequently competed in matches between the UConn CC and ours, played as a teammate with NBCC members, and often attended NBCC tournaments and the annual NBCC Christmas party.



On a statewide level, Tom served on the Connecticut State Chess Association Board of Directors for years and worked feverishly and tirelessly as a strong advocate and ambassador for chess in our state, promoting the game in every way possible. Tom also possessed an incredible wealth of knowledge about the rich and diverse history of Connecticut chess and enjoyed sharing the many amazing stories that shaped and defined chess in our state from the 1970s to today.

Tom was a very gracious person to every chess player, and he was always welcoming to everyone in the UConn CC family. Tom had a very amiable personality and disposition, a delicious sense of humor, and such zeal for life. He truly was a wonderful man all-around, and it was a privilege and an honor to have known him.

Rest in peace, Tom. You have touched the lives of many, and you will be greatly missed.

THE LEGACY OF ARKADIJS AND ANDRIS STRAZDINS

Starting in 2016, as a tribute and memorial to two of the all-time greatest contributors of the New Britain Chess Club, Arkadijs and Andris Strazdins, the club's annual Arkadijs Strazdins Cup was renamed to the annual Arkadijs Strazdins Cup - Andris Strazdins Stein. Father and son Strazdins, whose combined service to our historic institution spanned almost a century, passionately devoted their time, energy, and financial resources to the enrichment of the club and for the welfare of its members. They each played an essential role in building and transforming the NBCC into one of the most prominent chess organizations in the Northeast. Below is a brief history of their incredible legacies and their indelible impressions that they left and made to the club.



Arkadijs, or “Straz” as he was affectionately known, had a very long and rich history with the club, having been a member and tournament director since 1951 and club president from 1970 until 2001. In addition, “Straz” served as captain for many of the team events and served as club secretary and treasurer for a few years. He also meticulously kept and preserved the club records since the 1950s. Beyond the club, “Straz” was a staunch ambassador of Connecticut chess, having served on the Connecticut State Chess Association Board of Directors for a number of years. No matter who you were, “Straz” would always welcome all members and chess friends with his charm, warmth, and old-world gentility. For five decades, “Straz” dedicated an enormous amount of time promoting, managing, and strengthening the club, which would have fallen apart if it were not for his steadfast leadership. “Straz” passed away in 2007 at the age of eighty-four.

Andris, or “Andy” as he was fondly known, began his involvement with the club when he was elected treasurer at the age of twenty-three in the mid-1970s. In addition to the duties that he performed as club treasurer for forty-two years, Andy carried out many other unpaid volunteer tasks. Andy's work for the club was most impressive because of his sheer enthusiasm and deep devotion. Because of these qualities, Andy could always be relied upon to assist his fellow officers and always put the best interests of the membership in mind first whenever decisions were made. On a lighter note, Andy was quite an entertainer at the club's social events, often displaying his comical side with his harmonica playing. He truly loved the club and its members in every way possible. Andy passed away in 2015 at the age of sixty-five.



Arkadijs and Andris Strazdins' lifetime of service to the club was exemplary and extraordinary. They were inspirational forces in our club. Let us all take a moment to reflect on the incredible lives of these two highly respected and charismatic members. May they be remembered for who they were, may their legacies be preserved for future generations, and may they rest in peace in heaven for all eternity.

NBCC BEST GAME OF 2016

For four consecutive years, FM Richard Bauer has been the sponsor and judge of the annual NBCC Best Game contest. The club is most thankful for the excellent job that Richard always does in analyzing the games and, furthermore, awarding prizes to the winners with his own money! This overflowing generosity is a true reflection of Bauer's character.

Rick presented the best game prize to USCF NM Derek Meredith and FM Nelson Castaneda at the NBCC Christmas party. As always, the club extends its utmost gratitude to Bauer for his commitment to and exceptionally fine work on this annual club project.

[Event "2016 New Britain Chess Club Championship"]

[Date "2016.02.02"]

[Round "4"]

[White "USCF NM Derek Meredith"]

[Black "FM Nelson Castaneda"]

[Result "1-0"]

[Annotator "FM Richard Bauer"]

[40/85 with a 5-second delay]

1. e4 e5 2. Nc3 Ne7

After two of the most popular first moves, we have very quickly exited mainstream opening theory with reasonable looking developing moves. This forces both sides to play chess right from the start rather than relying on theory to carry the game for the first ten to fifteen moves.

3. Bc4 d6 4. Nf3 h6

White has transposed back into a standard setup, thus gaining a slight edge. Black's ship is harder to put in order, as he already has to deal with the threat of Ng5.

5. d4 exd4 6. Nxd4 Nbc6 7. Be3 Nxd4 8. Bxd4!?

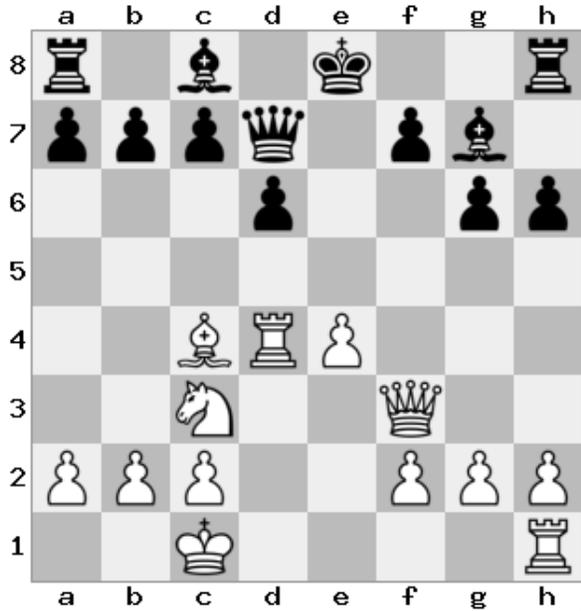
Many would quickly play 8. Qxd4 Nc6 9. Qd2 in order to win the tempo to castle queenside, but White has a much more potent attack in mind, for which he is willing to sacrifice the minor exchange (B for N).

8... Nc6 9. Qh5

9. Qf3 Be6 10. Bxe6 fxe6 11. Qh5+ is also good.

9... Qd7

9... Qe7 was somewhat better, but not 9... g6 10. Qf3 Rh7 11. Bf6 Be7 12. Nd5 Ne5 13. Bxe5 dxe5 14. O-O-O with strong play.



10. O-O-O Nxd4 11. Rxd4 g6 12. Qf3 Bg7 {SEE DIAGRAM}

13. Rxd6!!

A bolt from the blue!

13...cxd6

Worse is 13... Qxd6 14.Qxf7+ Kd8 15. Qxg7 Re8 16. Rd1

14. Bb5!

The point of his stunning tactic. By deflecting the c-pawn off its file, he has left Black with no defense to this horrible pin. 

White has gained a queen and a pawn for a rook and a bishop, a two-point edge. Since the queen and pawn only come into their full powers upon reaching the endgame, and because Nelson is particularly gifted in material imbalance situations, there is a great deal of chess left to be played.

14... O-O 15. Bxd7 Bxd7 16. Nd5

16. Rd1 is not much better, but he could make Black worry about his d6 pawn before taking up the strong d5 outpost with his knight.

16... Bc6 17. Rd1 Rae8 18. Qd3 f5 19. Qb3 Kh7 20. Nc7?!

Black can now regain his pawn at the cost of some exchanges, but since that would likely occur anyway, it would seem to be better to swap off the e-pawn first.

20... Rxe4 21. Ne6 Re8 22. Nxg7 Kxg7 23. Rxd6 Re1+ 24. Rd1 Rxd1+ 25. Kxd1 Bxg2 26. f3

26. Qa4!? is more active since the black bishop can wriggle its way out of danger.

26... Re7 27. Qc3+ Kf7 28. Qc4+ Re6 29. Qf4 Bf1 30. Kd2 h5 31. b3 Bb5 32. c4 Bc6 33. h4 Re7 34. Kc3 Re2 35. Qc7+

35. a4 Rf2 36. Qc7+ Kf6 37. f4 would secure all of White's pawns. Now, Black gains material equality, but White keeps a strong initiative.

35... Kf6 36. Qd8+ Ke6 37. Qg8+ Kf6
 38. Qf8+ Ke6 39. Qg8+ Kf6 40. Qd8+ Ke6
 41. f4 Rxa2 42. b4!
 {SEE DIAGRAM TO THE RIGHT}

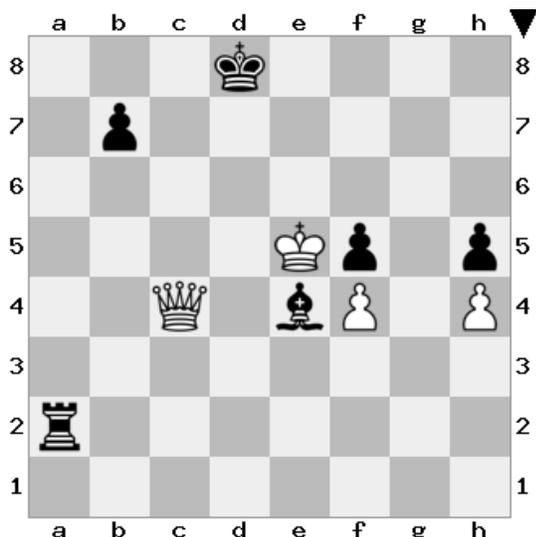
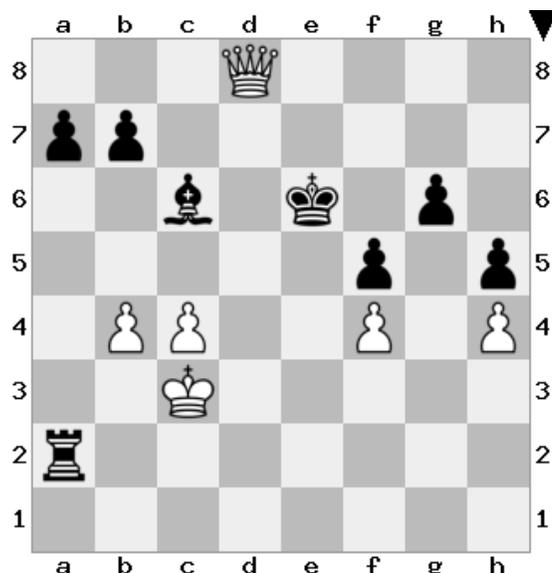
White finds a way to destabilize Black's queenside.

42... Be4 43. b5 a6 44. Qb6+.

44. Kb3 Rc2 45. bxa6 bxa6 46. Qc8+ Kf7
 47. Qxa6.

44... Kf7 45. Kd4 axb5 46. Ke5 bxc4 47. Qf6+ Ke8 48. Qxg6+ Kd8
 49. Qg8+ Kd7 50. Qe6+ Kd8 51. Qxc4! {SEE DIAGRAM TO THE LEFT BELOW}

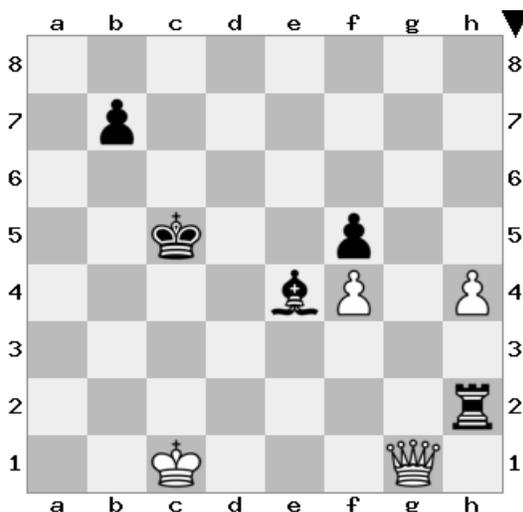
After removing Black's last serious threat, White is clearly winning, as Black cannot hold onto his h-pawn.



51... Ra6 52. Qg8+ Kc7 53. Qf7+ Kc6
 54. Qxh5 Ra5+ 55. Kd4 Rd5+ 56. Kc3
 Rd3+ 57. Kb2 Rd2+ 58. Kc1 Rh2 59. Qg6+
 Kc5?

This loses on the spot, but White's h-pawn would have decided things anyway after 59... Kd5 60. Qg8+ Kc6 61. h5.

60. Qg1+ 1-0 {SEE DIAGRAM BELOW}



THE NEW BRITAIN CHESS CLUB STORY

PART II – NBCC FOUNDING AND PUBLISHING THE NBCC BOOK

In late August, I visited the New Britain Public Library to continue my passionate endeavor to obtain additional documents about the earliest founding of our historic institution. I had the distinct pleasure of meeting with the assistant historian room librarian. With his assistance, I was able to find some articles that were written about our club during the 1930s. The librarian also said that I could search the Connecticut State Public Library website for articles about the NBCC prior to the 1930s, assuming that it existed. He graciously took the time to do this research for me as well. Incredibly, he found about thirty references to the NBCC dating to the early 1900s. The librarian informed me that I could perform this research from home, but he said that I would need to register with the state library and obtain a card from them so that I could search for records in this database from 1923 to 1994.

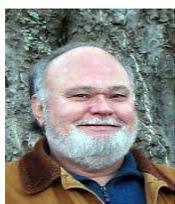
Later that afternoon, I searched this database to see if I could find the actual founding date of the club. I soon came across a *Hartford Courant* article from January 26, 1901, that reported of the first organization of the NBCC. The New Britain Chess and Checker Club was our organization's first name, and John Kirkman was our first club president. Over the next month, I searched for more articles about club activities from the earlier decades of the 20th century to include in the history book that I had compiled in 2015. I found about thirty articles for the revised book and renamed it, "NBCC Highlights and History: 1900 - 2004."

Earlier in the year, the officers granted me access to update the history section of the club website. With that control, I began transferring most of the NBCC history to the website. Eventually, I began the laborious process of publishing the big book online. However, before the final release, I was required to obtain written copyright authorization from seven local and state newspapers to republish the hundreds of articles that they collectively published about the club over the decades. By December 1, all of the club records were accessible on the internet.

Finding the founding date of our club was the impetus behind the massive project of publishing the entire club history on the internet. This enriching experience has brought me extreme joy and happiness.

THE GROWTH OF CHESS IN CONNECTICUT

The passing of Tom Hartmayer left a huge void for chess in our state. Chess growth in eastern Connecticut, especially at the University of Connecticut, felt the severest impact. This year, a group of advocates and leaders in our community came forth to re-energize the strong chess foundation that Tom so tirelessly built. The following is a brief biography on the persons who have been instrumental in continuing the legendary work that Tom so passionately pursued for decades for the advancement of Connecticut chess.



Rob Roy, who has promoted Connecticut chess since the 1970s in every capacity possible, from state president to tournament director and organizer to editor of *Connecticut Chess* magazine and so much more, created a beautiful chess center in the basement of his home in Coventry. Rob, a loyal New Britain Chess Club advocate and supporter, has graciously welcomed friends to compete in his one-day weekend tournaments in the spacious venue. Rob has donated his time, energy, and money to establishing this facility for our chess community. Besides managing his club, Rob has been involved with directing events at other clubs in the area while performing many other projects to promote chess.

Alexander Lumelsky, director of the Connecticut Chess Organization, worked with Tom as a coordinator of scholastic tournaments in the area for many years. Having worked with Alexander as a tournament director at the 1st Connecticut State Girls Scholastic Chess Championship in January, I can unequivocally state that he is such an inspirational person to all rising scholastic chess players. Alexander has established an indelible rapport with chess families and students across the state, and he handles all situations that can arise at these events, even the most challenging, with the utmost level of care and professionalism. Alexander was recently appointed to the position of CSCA tournament coordinator.



Mark Bourque, a long-time member of the UConn Chess Club and the NBCC, also was motivated to get involved in this amazing effort. A few months ago, Mark formed a chess club in his hometown of Stafford Springs. The club meets every Thursday evening at the town hall and is in an ideal location of the state to attract chess players from Connecticut and Massachusetts. Mark received his tournament directing certification this year and has plans to direct events at his club very soon. This club does not charge a membership fee and is open to all chess players.

BOB CYR'S COMMENTARY

Our travels down the NBCC historical highway have sadly closed for 2016. The winners of most events of the year are in the archives, the annual newsletter is complete, and all of the major historical projects for the club are finally finished. Before we exit 2016, I will summarize the biggest club stories of the year.

The club experienced a relatively smooth year from an administrative perspective. Financially, though, the officers had to implement a few necessary changes in order to get our club's financial health in order. As of the release of this newsletter, I am pleased to report that the NBCC treasury has rebounded nicely.

The other major club news of the year was the transition of power of president from USCF NM Derek Meredith to Norman Burtness. Derek has been involved as NBCC leader for five years. During his years in office, Derek devoted a substantial amount of energy and time promoting our organization and being a strong club advocate. We sincerely thank Derek, who now serves as club vice president, for his years of service as president.

The club's board of directors and tournament directing staff work tirelessly for our organization. For the club to function, however, it is essential that all members support our team of dedicated volunteers as often as possible. Without them, the club would cease to exist.

They say that history is usually a good predictor of the future. That statement surely applies to the NBCC. Friends, our family has achieved so much in 116 years that I am overly optimistic that the NBCC's future will always be rosy and bright.

The club officials thank you for being a part of our family and wish you and your family a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

President:	Norman Burtness
Vice President:	Derek Meredith
Treasurer:	Gert Hilhorst
Secretary:	Luis Delgado
Webmaster:	Gert Hilhorst
Historian:	Bob Cyr



Wishing you peace, health, and happiness in 2017,

Bob Cyr

SOLUTION AND ANSWERS TO CHESS PUZZLE AND TRIVIA

CHESS PUZZLE (FROM COVER PAGE)

1. Qg6+ fxg6
2. Bg8+ Kh8
3. Bf7+ Kh7
4. hxg6#

CHESS TRIVIA (FROM PAGE 16)

1. d
2. b
3. a
4. c
5. a



THE NEW BRITAIN CHESS CLUB HAS BEEN A LEADER IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHESS THROUGHOUT THE CONNECTICUT CHESS COMMUNITY FOR OVER ONE-HUNDRED YEARS.