

NEW BRITAIN CHESS CLUB

“THE HEART OF CONNECTICUT CHESS”

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2022 NEWSLETTER

by Robert Cyr



What is White's best move?

Ernesto Inarkiev vs Abhijeet Gupta: Sharjah 2019

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

The solution is on page 44.

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INTRODUCTION

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

First and foremost, I hope that you and your family are doing well. I am glad to report that I am doing quite well. I cannot believe that we have reached another end of a year. Time certainly does fly! As we gather around the kitchen table this holiday season, celebrating with family and friends, we should ask ourselves what we are most thankful for. I know one of the things that I am most thankful for is the many friendships that I have made at the club through the years. By far, the NBCC is one of the greatest chess organizations in America.

One of the proudest accomplishments in the club as your historian has been the writing of the annual newsletters. For the last eighteen years, I have strived to capture the heart and soul of the club in my reports. My stories have collectively become one huge, big book.

The NBCC is not your typical, ordinary chess club. We hold a variety of social functions and events for the benefit of all members. If you have not had an opportunity to visit our club, please check us out. I am certain that you will enjoy your experience. Even if you are unable to pay us a visit in the near future, please take some time this holiday season, while you are busy with plans, and read about the adventures that occurred at the NBCC in 2022. Cheers!

**“LIFE IS LIKE A GAME OF CHESS,
CHANGING WITH EACH MOVE.”**

Chinese proverb

THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

The NBCC commenced 2022 with lectures from one of its most favorite instructors, USCF NM Derek Meredith. Derek usually gives lectures in the winter since this is his slower time of the year where he works. Derek has a vast knowledge of the game but is especially knowledgeable about opening theory. Thus, his very informative sessions focused on opening studies. In each study, Derek asked each of his students if he or she would "buy" or "sell" a move that he suggested for White or Black in a specific position. Everyone learned a lot from the lectures, and we are grateful for Derek for adding such value to the club by being such a fine lecturer.

FEBRUARY

On a glorious and unseasonably mild Presidents Day weekend, over 1,000 chess enthusiasts of all ages and skills gathered at the Hilton in Parsippany, New Jersey, to compete in the 52nd annual World/U.S. Amateur Team East Chess Championship. Commonly known as USATE, this event was directed by one of the greatest chess organizers in the world, the esteemed E. Steven Doyle. Mr. Doyle and his excellent staff worked diligently on all aspects of this grand tournament to ensure its success – which it was! Every detail, from working with the hotel to setting the chess rate to awarding the door prizes to making the pairings, had to be carefully planned and executed. And, my friends, Mr. Doyle and his team did a superb job! Unfortunately, according to Mr. Doyle, the number of teams had to be limited this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Despite concerns over COVID-19, the NBCC still was able to bring down one team for this big event. The legends on the elite team, which called themselves Chess Nuts Roasting on an Open File, were USCF NM James Nitz, Mario Guevara-Rodriguez, Jithu Sajeevan, and Norman Burtness. These veteran USATE players played very well, earning four out of six match points. They started very strong (defeating a team whose average rating was 200 points higher than theirs in the first round) and ended up very strong as well. Of course, they had a few losses along the way, but they played their hearts out and had one enjoyable time in doing so. Unfortunately, this team just missed earning the title of Top Connecticut Team, which was won by Moderna Chess Openings: Omicron Variant, a team of young and very high-ranked players from the Chess Club of Fairfield County.

Two-thousand-and-twenty-two marked my tenth year at USATE. I was very fortunate to play on a team with warm and friendly people. Initially, I was approached by Bill Montross, a former club member, to be on his team. He then asked me to reach out to Mr. Doyle to find two more players. And we did! We found Tony Delabre and Peter Zuchowski, two gentlemen in their 30s from New York. This was their first USATE experience. Bill and I decided, this year, to add a fifth player to our team. That is how we got Charles Miller from New Jersey. Charles, incidentally, has been playing in USATE since the 1980s (when the pairings were made manually) and has been playing competitive chess since the Fischer-era. We called ourselves French Men Don't Fou'en Mate, and I was the team captain. Bill was the alternate player. We struggled in the first two rounds, having to play up. But then our internal energy kicked in, and we won 2.5 out of our next four matches. But like the NBCC team, we still had to bring our "A" game to the table each round. We were faced with playing many scholastic teams, which was a challenge to say the least. Believe me, I know! But we had one exciting time.

Ladies and gentlemen of the chess community, USATE and team chess are unique experiences, something that every serious chess person should put on his or her bucket list before leaving this world. I was blessed to find a team this year and eagerly look forward to 2023. Between rounds, my fellow team members and I dined out at the Office and the Homestead, two very affluent restaurants in Morristown, just minutes south of Parsippany. During our meals, we chatted about our chess experiences and planned to meet up at tournaments such as the World Open Chess Championship and the Foxwoods Open Chess Championship later this year.

I conclude this year's USATE highlights report with a huge thanks again to Mr. Doyle for helping Bill and me organize a team and for directing a wonderful event. If you never have had the opportunity to play in USATE, it is the holy grail of chess, so I hope that you can join me at the 53rd World Amateur Team Chess Championship in Parsippany next Presidents Day weekend. See you all!

Since 2010, the club has held tournaments in honor of our members based on their years of longevity in our organization. Our first member honoree event of 2022 was for our dear friend, Dan Golda. Dan was introduced to chess by his father, and his earliest memories of playing chess were with him. Dan played chess throughout high school and progressed in his chess abilities from novice to amateur level.

In 2012, through his search of chess clubs in the area on the internet, Dan joined our thriving community. Dan recollects his earliest times with the NBCC as a warm and welcoming group of people who were instrumental to him getting an opportunity to play serious over-the-board competition. Throughout his membership, Dan, who served as club secretary from 2012 to 2013, has been an asset to the club. Specifically, he has been extremely helpful with the setting up and breaking down of equipment and supplies at various major tournaments such as the annual New Britain Summer Open Chess Championship and the annual Christmas party. He also has been the club's resident house player for many years, eagerly willing to play anyone at a moment's notice. Additionally, he had made contributions of beverages (a bottle of wine one year!) to the club's Christmas party. One of his most memorable moments in the club was his tie for first place in the lower section of the Bill Campbell Quick Chess Tournament. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, Dan was a frequent player at the Friday chess sessions at the Farmington Barnes and Noble. Dan is one of the most charming, friendly, and polite members of our community. He is always welcoming to members of all ages and levels. On behalf of the Connecticut chess community, we are delighted to have Dan be a part of this amazing organization, and we look forward to his continued presence in the club for many years to come. Winning the one-section Dan Golda Quick Chess Tournament was USCF NM David Herscovici.

MARCH

Since the 1930s, the NBCC has held an annual championship event for its members. Many masters have won this tournament. However, this year, a new member and a USCF expert-rated player, Justin Lalor, became the first non-master to clinch first place in the club championship since Robert Lawrence did it in 2005. Justin performed very well in the tournament. In the reserve section, NBCC VP Lisa Smith went unbeaten. Lisa continues to climb the club ratings and is one very strong class chess player. Kudos to TD Mark Bourque for directing the club's most prestigious annual tournament. Thanks also to NBCC President USCF NM Suhas Kodali for assisting Mr. Bourque.

On the week after the conclusion of the NBCC Championship, our newly minted club champion, Justin Lalor, gave a nice lecture. His one-hour presentation was devoted to two spirited games from the recent championship event. Justin did a wonderful job engaging his class. He had them analyze key positions from both games, and everyone enjoyed his lecture. We look forward to more lectures from Justin in the coming weeks. He even has expressed a desire to become a tournament director. Wow!

After the lecture, as club tradition has it, our 2022 champion gave a simultaneous chess exhibition. Nineteen players of all levels competed in his simul, which lasted just short of two hours, which was very fast play by Expert Justin! The players put pressure on the expert and played quite well. In the end, the following players earned draws (Murthy Medisetti and Bob Cyr) and wins (Yonatan Axelrad, Alexander Madej, Roger Besette, and Dennis Himes) against Justin. We sincerely thank Justin for hosting this simul. It was one fun evening.

Throughout our club's history, there have been times when a non-member has won a tournament held by the club. One of these instances occurred on March 29, when Luis Baez from Massachusetts clinched first place in a rated blitz chess tournament sponsored by the club. On his way to victory, Luis played very well, winning against a few of our club's experts and masters. His only loss in the seven-round tournament was to Justin Lalor.

APRIL

One of the things that I enjoy most about the club is the variety of activities. Some people prefer the longer time-controlled events, while others enjoy the faster time-controlled tournaments. For three weeks in April, the fans of the quicker events had an opportunity to compete in the club's annual class championship. Players were divided into sections based on ratings. Rating sections, however, had to be merged because of a low turnout. The winners of each section took home the entire prize. It was a fun tournament and a nice way to take a break from the serious competition at the club. It was a delight to see new participants as well. In the end, here were the winners of the 2022 NBCC Class Championships.

- Master/Expert/Class A: Luis Baez
- Class B & C: George Himes
- Class D & Under: Nikhil Nair & Sumaanyu Jagtiani

On April 20, the Connecticut chess community lost a huge ambassador – the legendary Melvin Patrick, founder of the Chess Club of Fairfield County. On May 6, FM Richard Bauer and I paid our final respects to Melvin at the Calvary Baptist Church in Norwalk. At his beautiful service to say farewell to such a dear friend to hundreds of chess players across the tri-state region, USCF NM Ian Harris gave touching reflection of Melvin. Also, USCF NM Daniel Lowinger wrote a heartfelt eulogy that appeared in the pamphlet for Melvin's celebration of life. A full eulogy about Melvin is published later in this newsletter.

Our second member honoree tournament of 2022 was for USCF NM David Herscovici. David was about five years old when he first saw people playing chess when he was on vacation with his family. David bugged his dad to teach him how to play, but his father figured that he would not understand, so David's father refused. David kept badgering his dad, however, and he finally decided to try so that David would stop nagging his father when he did not get it. Of course, David did get it and even started playing in scholastic tournaments a few years later in and around Newtown, where he lived at the time. At age 11, David moved, and none of the kids in his new town played, so he stopped playing for the next ten years, other than games with his dad. When he started playing tournaments again, David had matured and improved significantly. But, of course, his rating was still outdated. David tied for first place in the U1400 section of the World Open Chess Championship, and he was a bit of a chess shark until his rating caught up to his ability (probably around 1800 at the time). David played regularly during graduate school in Massachusetts and then in the Bay Area between 1992 and 2001. During that time, he married and moved back to Connecticut where he started working at Quinnipiac. Because of the demands of raising a family, David cut back pretty substantially (though not completely) on chess when his kids were born (2002 and 2005). But when they got older, David was able to get back to chess. During one of his infrequent tournaments, David met USCF NM Derek Meredith, and he told David about the NBCC. David played in the New Britain Summer Open in 2009 and tied for first place, winning his first game against FM Nelson Castaneda and drawing USCF NM Dennis Prawira. They have both gotten plenty of revenge since then. In 2014, David was ready to get back to spending time at chess, so he became a regular at the club. The warmth and camaraderie of everyone at the club kept him coming back, and he eventually agreed to serve as treasurer, of which he has done an excellent job in this capacity. David is also a USCF certified tournament director. He has also given a few lectures at the club. His contributions to the club are most appreciated. David is a compassionate person who cares deeply about the welfare of our members, and we are so fortunate and blessed to have him as part of our thriving and glorious community. FM Richard Bauer was the winner of David's event.

MAY

On May 3, the NBCC organized an open house, where chess players of all ages and skills were invited to compete in a fun one-night tournament. The ideas behind this promotional event came from our club officers. We were delighted to see many newcomers to the club, some traveling as far as the shoreline.

This tournament was divided into two sections - an open and a scholastic. The open section had eighteen players, and the scholastic section had six players. This was a five-round Swiss-system event. Everyone had a wonderful time. The adults and kids were so thrilled to play in this tournament. A special thanks to Justin Lalor, Norman Burtness, and Bob Cyr for helping with the setup of the tables, boards, and clocks for this event. Thanks also to Bob assisting USCF NM Suhas Kodali with directing this event.

Brought back by popular demand, the annual Planet Earth Chess Championship held on May 21 was hosted again by the historic NBCC at its home at the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection. This galactic event, last held in 2018, drew its second-highest turnout since its inaugural event held in 2011, with thirty-seven players from the region competing in this three-section tournament. This event could not have been a success without the incredible work of two people: USCF NM Suhas Kodali, who did the lion's share of the organizing for this tournament and gave up playing to ensure everything went smoothly, and Norman Burtness, who did an excellent job with directing. They were the men! Of course, there were many other people who were instrumental in helping with the setup, breakdown, food delivery and preparation, and much more. They all worked tirelessly to ensure that everything went smoothly for this event. And these people deserve recognition for their efforts: George Himes, Roger Bessette, Estee Axelrad, USCF NM David Herscovici, Lisa Smith, and Bob Cyr. I apologize if I forgot to mention someone. Lunch was provided by Jersey Mikes in Simsbury. Our hungry chess warriors were treated to meat and veggie subs, potato chips, apples, cookies, and bottled water. It was a delicious lunch fit for a king! After lunch, play resumed. After an afternoon of spirited competition on this very hot day, where our games were forced to be played inside due to the excessive heat, a new Planet Earth chess champion was crowned. And that was FM Yoon-Young Kim. Member Bill Campbell won the U1600 section, and member Jeraldin Sundar won the scholastic section, his first major club event win. Overall, it was a glorious day for chess. We thank everyone who helped support the club in this incredible, out-of-this-world event. We look forward to seeing you all at next year's event.

Throughout May and early June, the club held a series of one-night lectures devoted to each of the chess pieces. There was a different lecturer for each piece. The ideas for this incredible lecture series were created by FM Richard Bauer. The sessions were very informative, and everyone learned a wealth of information of the value of each chess piece. The following lecturers gave the presentations: king (Justin Lalor), pawn (FM Richard Bauer), queen (Joseph Bihlmeyer), rook (Mario Guevara-Rodriguez), bishop (Roger Bessette), and knight (FM Nelson Castaneda).

The next major tournament that the club held was the annual Strazdins Cup – Stein. This was one of the greatest and most exciting tournaments held in many years. First, the club drew a near record with forty-six players, which was tied with the turnout for this event in 2010. Second, we had many upsets, perhaps a club record. Some of the upsets were as high as 800 points. Incredible! Third, the final round game between FM Nelson Castaneda and FM Richard Bauer was broadcasted live on the internet (Zoom) on June 4. We thank USCF NM David Herscovici, Roger Bessette, and Bob Cyr for coordinating this awesome project. We also thank Nelson for hosting the game at his house, providing a very nice playing environment and offering snacks. He is such a gracious host. And lastly, the final game of the tournament between Roger and Mario Guevara-Rodriguez would determine who would win the event, either Nelson or USCF NM Suhas Kodali. It was a nail biter. In the end, Mario won his game, and Nelson did better on tie-breaks over Suhas and won the Strazdins Cup. Winning the Strazdins Stein was Shritan Vijay, his first win in a major club tournament. Congratulations to Nelson and Shritan! And thanks to everyone for making this one awesome, incredible event.

JUNE

The NBCC historically holds its annual business meeting on the second Tuesday in June to report on the operational and financial condition of the organization. The election of club officers for the upcoming fiscal year in September also takes place. Lastly, there is a new business segment of the meeting where members have the opportunity to present their ideas on ways to improve the club. Here were some of the highlights from the 2022 NBCC business meeting.

- USCF NM NBCC President Suhas Kodali reviewed the minutes of the 2021 business meeting.
- Bob Cyr, NBCC historian, gave his historian's report.
 - The major highlights of 2022 were covered.
 - A new contest for the awarding of Grand Prix points to the winners of the club's tournaments in 2022 was presented.
 - Dr. Tony Yablonski was presented with a plaque for his 60 years as a member of the club.
 - Bob mentioned some upcoming historical tournaments and activities, including a 35-year anniversary celebration tournament and a free pizza party for the membership sometime in August.

- Suhas gave an overview of the operations of the club in the last year.
 - He noticed the success of the Planet Earth and Summer Open Chess Championships, thanking those members who volunteered.
 - He made mention of the purchase of new chess clocks (DGT North American), which are much easier to program and use.
 - He thanked the club's tournament directors and lecturers who work tirelessly throughout the year.
 - He mentioned that wearing masks are still optional.
- VP Lisa Smith gave a presentation of the duties that she did in the last year.
 - She was instrumental in helping deliver the food for the club's Christmas party and the Planet Earth event.
 - She has been opening and closing the club on a weekly basis, even writing up a two-page document outlining the instructions on what needs to be done to open and close the club.
 - She organized the storage cart unit and chose the new clocks and labeled them.
 - She has been a very strong leader on the executive committee and thanked her fellow club officers for helping her out in her new role.
- USCF NM David Herscovici gave his treasurer's report.
 - He thoroughly reviewed the financial health of the club in the last twelve months, noting that the club's overall net assets slightly decreased compared to this time last year.
 - He said that the membership is at ninety-three, which is an increase of about twenty-five members compared to the prior fiscal year, mostly due to the increase in students.
 - He mentioned that the new clocks were purchased with an anonymous donor contribution.
 - He said that the club is very blessed to have a warm relationship with the church, which provides us with a nice, spacious, well-lit area, which are ideal playing conditions for our events.
- The election of officers took place for the September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2023 club year.
 - The president, treasurer, and secretary were unanimously re-elected to their positions for the new year.
 - Lisa said that she is stepping down as VP. A nomination was made to have Justin Lalor, one of our club's lecturers, to become the next VP. Justin has already made significant contributions to the club.

- The club thanks Lisa for her service to the organization.
- During the new business portion of the meeting, the following ideas were brought forth by the membership:
 - Ways to make it easier for members to navigate the club's website. It was noted that some of the pages of the website are outdated and need to be archived.
 - Extending offers to anyone interested in being a training coach. As FM Richard Bauer pointed out, you don't need be a master or an expert to be a lecturer.
 - Organizing scholastic tournaments throughout the year.
 - Opening the club earlier for the kids.
 - Reaching out to the community by writing grant proposals for the club to help with our operations.
 - Exploring a new platform for TD software and implementation, moving away from Swissys and into Caissa.
 - A long-term goal of seeking a possible new permanent home for the club.
- The meeting lasted a little over an hour, with twenty-three members present.

JULY

The club commenced the month of July with its annual knockout and Swiss tournament. FM Nelson Castaneda, who drafted the format for this event, reprised his role as tournament director. According to the rules for this unique tournament, all players were initially assigned numbers based on rating and were grouped into one section for pairing purposes. The first and all subsequent winners in each round of the knockout event would advance until there was one champion. The losers in each round of the knockout event would be placed into an open Swiss system section. 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. After three rounds, new member Niloy Chaudhuri and Nelson, prior knockout champion, were vying for the title of NBCC Knockout Champion 2022. The battle on the sixty-four squares between the #7 seed and the #1 seed was one for the history books. However, with the game ending up a draw, we went into overtime to break the tie. Because Niloy played as Black against Nelson, he had the advantage in the blitz chess playoff. All Niloy had to do was win one of two games in the playoff to clinch first place. And he did!

Niloy is now the NBCC Knockout Champion of 2022! Of historical note, this was his first major tournament win in the club. In the Swiss section, Joseph Bihlmeyer took home the gold. He has won (or tied for first place) in the Swiss section for two consecutive tournaments.

AUGUST

The club kicked off the month of August with a very special event held by our club's own historian, Bob Cyr. This was his 35th anniversary event with the club. He treated the entire chess community to a free pizza party and an unrated chess tournament. This was so kind of him to do this. The pizza was made by Tony's Central Pizza in New Britain (near the CCSU campus), and it was totally delicious. Bob also provided beverages (water and soda). Bob would like to thank the following people who helped make his tournament bright and a success: Norman Burtness for directing his tournament, Estee Axelrad for serving the pizza and going with Bob to pick it up, Mario Guevara-Rodriguez for setting the clocks, USCF NM Suhas Kodali for scheduling him to host his special event, and FM Richard Bauer for that lovely, touching tribute to him! Thirty-three chess enthusiasts (almost a club record for a quick chess tournament!) competed in Bob's event, including many high-ranked players. And over forty people came to the party. It was truly a glorious evening, and I thank everyone who attended. As I have stated many times before, the people of the NBCC are my family, and you guys have enriched my life. God bless! I love you dearly. I hope that we can do this event in five years at my 40th anniversary! It was truly nice to have an opportunity to meet new friends and reconnect with old ones. If you wish to read more about my history with the club and with chess, please check out the history section of the NBCC website. Congratulations to Richard for winning the open section of my tournament and to Yonatan Axelrad, one of our youngest members at the age of nine, for clinching first place in the U1600 section. Also of historical note, this was the first tournament held by the club where the new pairing software (Caissa) was used.

Our club's next lecture series, which was held during July and August, was devoted to the various parts of the chess game. These lectures, which were organized by FM Richard Bauer, were devoted to the opening, the middle game, and the endgame. Our superstar presenters – Justin Lalor, Mario Guevara Rodriguez, Joseph Bihlmeyer, USCF NM Derek Meredith, and FM Nelson Castaneda – did a wonderful job with covering their assigned segments of the game.

They used demonstration boards and lichess.org technology to facilitate their lectures. Everyone learned a lot from these insightful and instructional presentations.

On August 9, the club hosted a new and exciting event where lower-rated players were paired against higher-rated players in a two-game match. After the matches, in a new twist, the higher-rated players engaged in post-mortem analysis with their opponents. This was a great learning opportunity for the lower-rated players to learn from their higher-ranked opponents. We hope that the club holds more of these unique events.

The following week at the club, USCF NM Suhas Kodali gave a lecture on one of the most favorite and well-known games of World Blitz Chess Champion Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, more commonly known as MVL. On the weekend of August 19-21, the super GM made an appearance at the Bridgeport Open Chess Tournament. The DIG organization hosted this event for MVL. Players from across the region competed in this three-day event, with lectures and simultaneous chess exhibitions by MVL. It was indeed a historic weekend for Connecticut chess. Thanks, DIG! You are such a wonderful chess institution.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate FM Nelson Castaneda for passing the test to become a USCF Local TD. Way to go, professor!

On the last Sunday in August, the NBCC hosted its grandest social outing of the year, the famous New Britain Summer Open Chess Championship. Sixty-six players (and thirty-eight scholastic players – a club record) throughout the state and beyond (the third-highest turnout for this event) competed. This year's event, which was held at the beautiful Wickham Park in Manchester, our tenth year at this venue, was one of the greatest and smoothest chess tournaments held and directed in club history. Thanks again go to chief tournament director Norman Burtness, who managed the event with such grace, ease, and professionalism. Thanks again also go to Mario Guevara-Rodriguez and Gert Hilhorst, who worked as co-chefs, for managing the grill and ensuring that everyone was fed. The food on the huge menu included hamburgers, hot dogs, coleslaw, chips, cookies, and beverages. We also want to thank the following crew for their assistance behind the scenes: Bhawana Singh, Estee Axelrad, Justin Lalor, USCF NM Suhas Kodali, and Bob Cyr. The weather could not have been more cooperative and ideal, with temperatures kept refreshingly cool due to partly cloudy skies and a light breeze. It was nice to make new friends and reconnect with old ones at this tournament.

This is the essence of the event. Everyone enjoyed themselves! All the scholastic participants received medals for their participation. This was a lovely touch! In the open section, after very intense games on the top boards, USCF NM Ian Harris, who drove all the way from the shoreline to play in this event, won the tournament. Way to go, Ian! Overall, it was a glorious day of chess, food, friendship, and the outdoors. If you never had the experience of playing in this unique event, I hope that you will put it on your bucket list for 2023! See you then!

At the end of the club's 2021-2022 year, we broke the 100-membership mark with a total of 101 members. Our club has seen a rise in membership in recent years, especially scholastic members. We are getting closer to breaking the all-time membership record of 119. Hopefully, the club will continue to experience more growth in the coming years.

SEPTEMBER

The NBCC kicked off its new season with an honorary tournament for its spiritual leader, USCF NM Suhas Kodali. Suhas started chess in high school. A schoolmate in his karate class encouraged him to join the school's chess club. Suhas was interested in math, and his friend thought that he would make a good fit, so Suhas went to the club with no expectations and came out with an addiction to chess. In the first tournament that Suhas played in, he lost all of his games and yet won the unrated prize! Starting with a rating of 800, it was only going up! His high school, Madison West High School in Wisconsin, had a rich history in chess. They were the state scholastic team champions for many years running, and they had FM Alex Betaneli and Neil Gleason as their coaches. They were volunteers who promoted chess, helped organize tournaments, and even mentored Suhas and his team. In his freshmen year, Suhas played board 4 out of 5 in the state scholastic team championship and barely squeaked out a first-place prize. In the last round, everything depended on Suhas' game. A draw or a loss would hand the championship to his opponents. He had a bishop, a knight, and a pawn vs. his opponent's rook and a pawn. In the midst of chaos, Suhas pulled out a win! Luckily, he didn't have to demonstrate a knight and bishop checkmate, but he made sure that would never happen again! Suhas' team continued to win the state scholastic team championship in each of Suhas' high school years, having played board 2 with a rating of 1800 in his senior year. Also in his senior year, Suhas tied for first place in his state's scholastic championship. Suhas' chess had been on and off over the next few years until he joined the club in late 2014. He had been fluctuating between class A and expert, and the club was fertile ground to make the next climb.

He became good friends with USCF NM Derek Meredith, and they studied chess regularly over the next five years, which helped push Suhas' rating to 2200, having made master in November 2020. Meanwhile, the club's previous president, Norman Burtness, pulled Suhas into the happenings at the club. Norman encouraged Suhas to become vice president in 2018 and taught him all of the work it takes to run the NBCC. The club has been an incredible social outlet for Suhas. He has made many friends and has gotten to play great chess. In 2020, Suhas became the youngest president of the club, giving back to it for all that it has given him. Suhas is truly an amazing and inspiring chess contributor, coach, and leader. He is a very kind and affable person with such zeal and energy. He truly has an innate passion for the club and cares deeply about its members. We love you, Suhas! Together, with your steadfast leadership and drive for success, we look forward to the future of the greatest chess club in the United States of America – the NBCC. For his tournament, Suhas proposed the Basque format, where each player played two games, one with the white pieces and one with the black pieces. Because of the format, the tournament could not be rated. FMs Nelson Castaneda and Richard Bauer tied for first place in this exciting event.

OCTOBER

Starting in October, for eight weeks, USCF NM Suhas Kodali offered training classes to a group of students. This project was piloted by Estee Axelrad, one of the parents. These informative sessions have added great value to the club. It is just a joy and a delight to see these new programs in our organization. The kids are our future, and we hope that they stay in our club for many years to come.

Each year since 2006, the NBCC has held an Oktoberfest tournament to celebrate the rich Germany history of our club dating back to as early as the 1930s. This year's tournament was a total success, with nearly a record forty-five members competing. Because of the large turnout, Bob Cyr decided to group players into three sections in the five-round Swiss. As always, there were many interesting games and upsets. Winning the open section and defeating three of our masters (does this sound like a USCF NM Dennis Prawira repeat from 2007?!) and going undefeated, was Justin Lalor. He performed exceptionally well and got the gold. Way to go, Justin! In the Under 1600 section, Yonatan Axelrad, a nine-year-old, clinched first place, blazing the field with a perfect score and earning the 2022 NBCC Grand Prix prize (the first one given by the club). Finally, in the Under 1200 section, new member Pragyan Pandey, another scholastic superstar, won on tie-breaks over Nathan Mezheritskiy and Kashvi Madhwani. Of historical note, this was Pragyan's first victory in a major club event.

On the last Sunday in October, sixteen friends of the NBCC gathered at the Wood 'N Tap restaurant in Farmington to celebrate in style for our annual Oktoberfest dinner party. This festive event, which was organized by USCF NM Suhas Kodali, was held outdoors, which afforded our diners a beautiful view of the Farmington River on what was an unseasonably mild day. This annual party has been a club tradition ever since our first one held in conjunction with the Oktoberfest event back in 2006. Suhas thanked all of its volunteers for helping out with the club every week and for making it strong. In turn, those present thanked Suhas for his tremendous work as our president. It looks like we are going to hold more Oktoberfest dinner parties at this restaurant in the future.

NOVEMBER

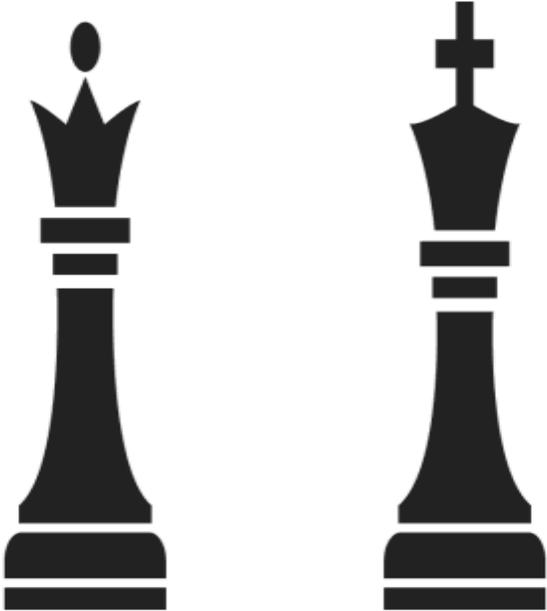
In early November, the club held its annual Quick Chess Championship, which drew thirty-four players, tying the record for the most players in a club quick chess event. You might recall the other two events that attracted that many players were the Bob McDaniel and Richard Lee honorary tournaments. FM Nelson Castaneda, who won this year's championship, now has forty-five quick chess tournament wins or ties for first place under his belt.

Since 2011, the club has held annual memorial tournaments to remember prominent chess players in Connecticut, or with ties to Connecticut, for their contributions to chess in the state. This year, we paid a tribute to Melvin Patrick. Melvin was an inspirational force for chess at the Chess Club of Fairfield County for many years. A eulogy of Mr. Patrick is published later in this newsletter.

DECEMBER

To cap the year, the NBCC held its biggest social meeting with its annual Christmas party and bullet chess tournament. Like last year, our party was catered by Fitzgerald's Foods in Simsbury. And what an excellent choice this was! On the grand menu, we had eggplant parmigiana, chicken picatta, grilled veggie lasagna, sausage and green peppers, oven-roasted seasonal vegetables, green bean almandine, chocolate fudge cake, carrot cake, and beverages. Adding to the big feast were home-made brownies and deviled eggs prepared by Bob Cyr. This was such a nice gesture by Bob, who also enlivened the atmosphere that evening by playing Christmas carols on his keyboard and on his CD player. Also bringing food and beverages were members John Nitz, David Mashkov, Tom Sullivan, and Norman Burtness. And whoever brought the wine, wow! Thank you! USCF NM Derek Meredith is now the new club bullet chess champion.

Overall, the evening was a truly magnificent one, with friends and family, young and old, beginners to masters, celebrating together in the spirit of the holiday season to reflect on another spectacular year at the historic NBCC. Thanks to our esteemed volunteers for making this year’s party even more special!



NBCC MEMBERS' MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Our members earned the following major achievements in the USCF in 2022.

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
USCF NM Edward McHugh	Age 50 or Older	2297	63 rd
FM Nelson Castaneda	Age 50 or Older	2321	59 th
	Quick Age 50 or Older	2238	40 th
	Blitz Age 50 or Older	2277	22 nd
	Blitz Age 50 or Older	2077	68 th
USCF NM Derek Meredith	Blitz Age 50 or Older	2077	68 th
FM Richard Bauer	Age 65 or Older	2246	27 th tie
	Quick Age 65 or Older	2060	53 rd
	Blitz Age 65 or Older	2157	13 th
	Age 50 or Older	2246	87 th tie
	Blitz Age 50 or Older	2172	41 st
Mark Bourque	Blitz Age 65 or Older	1838	79 th
Elizabeth Smith	Women Age 65 or Older	1400	20 th
	Women Quick Age 65 or Older	1326	12 th
	Women Blitz Age 65 or Older	1356	5 th
	Women Age 50 or Older	1400	41 st tie
	Women Quick Age 50 or Older	1326	25 th
	Women Blitz Age 50 or Older	1356	11 th
Yonatan Axelrad	Age 9	1555	47 th tie

CHESS TRIVIA

Historically, the chess trivia has been one of the most exciting sections of the annual newsletter to put together. This year, I simply decided to devote the questions to general chess knowledge. Nothing special! But be prepared to test your skills! You can find the answers on page 44. Good luck!

1. Bobby Fischer's article, "The Russians Have Fixed World Chess," was published in a 1962 issue of what magazine?
 - A: U.S. News and World Report
 - B: Time
 - C: Newsweek
 - D: Sports Illustrated
2. In the United States, at least how many years does a chess tournament have to be held before it is called a "heritage" event?
 - A: 15
 - B: 25
 - C: 40
 - D: 50
3. In what state was American chess player Paul Morphy born?
 - A: New York
 - B: Louisiana
 - C: Pennsylvania
 - D: North Carolina
4. The \$100,000 Fredkin Award was presented to the inventors of what chess computer?
 - A: Deep Blue
 - B: Deep Junior
 - C: Deep Fritz
 - D: Deep Thought

NBCC PICTURE GALLERY

The following photos were taken by Mario Guevara-Rodriguez, Estee Axelrad, Suhas Kodali, and Bob Cyr.

WORLD AMATEUR TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2022



LEFT PHOTO

Center: Norman Burtness

Bottom (left to right): Jithu Sajeevan, Mario Guevara-Rodriguez, and James Nitz

RIGHT PHOTO

Left to right:

Peter Zuchowski, Bill Montross, Bob Cyr, Charles Miller, and Tony Delabre

NEW BRITAIN CHESS CLUB CHAMPIONS OF 2022



Aiden Paradis, David Herscovici, Dennis Himes, Lisa Smith, Nathan Mezheritskiy, Justin Lalor, Damon Bramble

JUSTIN LALOR SIMULTANEOUS CHESS EXHIBITION OF 2022



Justin Lalor makes his move against Jozef Madej

NEW BRITAIN CHESS CLUB OPEN HOUSE TOURNAMENT OF 2022



PLANET EARTH CHESS CHAMPIONS OF 2022

Open Section (with Suhas Kodali and Norman Burtness, center)



Jason Lalor, Yoon-Young Kim, Bob Campbell, Gaetano Bompastore

Under 1600 section (with TD Norman Burtness)



Bob Cyr, Andrew Feng, Yonatan Axelrad, Bill Campbell

Scholastic section (with TD Norman Burtness)



Robbie Jay, Lily Wang, Jeraldin Sundar, Vivaan Lodha

STRAZDINS CUP/STEIN WINNERS OF 2022



Justin Lalor, Bob Cyr, Nelson Castaneda, Dennis Himes, Richard Bauer, Suhas Kodali



Yonatan Axelrad, Shritan Vijay, Bob Cyr, Kevin Corteville, Suhas Kodali

BOB CYR (LEFT) PRESENTS DR. TONY YABLONSKI (RIGHT) WITH HIS 60TH NBCC MEMBERSHIP PLAQUE



JULY KNOCKOUT AND SWISS TOURNAMENT OF 2022



The championship round between Niloy Chaudhuri and Nelson Castaneda

BOB CYR'S 35TH NBCC ANNIVERSARY UNRATED CHESS TOURNAMENT



Bob Cyr and Yonatan Axelrad compete in this special tournament

NEW BRITAIN SUMMER OPEN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP OF 2022



Master Chef Mario Guevara-Rodriguez serves food to Suhas Kodali



In front: Gary Hilhorst vs. Mario Guevara-Rodriguez
In back: Lisa Smith vs. Nakul Ramaswamy



In front: David Herscovici vs. Richard Bauer
In back: Joseph Bihlmeyer vs. Ian Harris

OKTOBERFEST OPEN WINNERS OF 2022



Nelson Castaneda, Joe Bihlmeyer, Roger Bessette, Kevin Corteville, Bob Cyr, Justin Lalor, Lisa Smith (Back row)
Nathan Mezheritskiy, Pragyana Pandey, Yonatan Axelrad (Front row)

2022 NEW BRITAIN CHESS CLUB OKTOBERFEST DINNER PARTY



NBCC GRAND PRIX WINNER OF 2022

In early 2022, FM Richard Bauer and Bob Cyr came up with the ideas for the first NBCC Grand Prix contest. The process and conditions to determine a winner were very simple. Throughout the year, points earned by the top two scorers in each of the club's major tournaments (New Britain Chess Club Championship, Planet Earth Chess Championship, Strazdins Cup / Stein, New Britain Knockout and Swiss Chess Tournament, New Britain Summer Open Chess Championship, New Britain Summer Show-Up Chess Tournament, and Oktoberfest Open Chess Championship) were tabulated. In the end, one of our youngest and most talented scholastic chess superstars, Yonatan Axelrad, earned seventeen GP points. Way to go, young man! Yonatan was presented with a plaque for his fine accomplishment. Yonatan just joined the club earlier this year and has already had much success in tournaments at the club, scoring in the top two positions in many of them. His picture is below.



THE CHESS EXPERIENCE IN CUBA

This November, John Pasco, who recently rejoined the club after nearly twenty years, paid a visit to Cuba. On his trip, he visited some of the historic chess sites in this lovely country, which he gladly shares below. Enjoy!

“From November 2 through 12 of this year, I had the privilege of traveling in the Republic of Cuba with a tour group, spending a few days in Havana and also visiting the surrounding provinces (all very hard hit by Hurricane Ian, with much repair ongoing). If you have heard that it's difficult to travel to Cuba, it is - but the difficulties are all due to U.S. government prohibitions on their own citizens to travel freely. Citizens of other nations have no such problems. In fact, Canadians comprise the plurality of worldwide tourists to Cuba. Once in Cuba, tourists find themselves quite welcomed. The weather, the historic architecture, the public art, the public music, the 1950s era cars, and Cuba's revolutionary history bring millions of tourists there annually (though COVID-19 shut down tourism for two years).

For chess players, Cuba has special history. Havana hosted two historic matches between chess giants W. Steinitz and M. Chigorin in 1889 and 1892, the latter being the second official match for the World Championship. Havana proudly hosted José Raúl Capablanca's match versus Emanuel Lasker in 1921, which established Capa as the third World Champion of Chess. Cuban native Capablanca is, of course, among the elite of the greatest players in chess history. He remains the chess hero of Cuba and of Cubans and of many more around the world. The World Chess Olympiad of 1966, also held in Havana, is famous for Bobby Fischer having participated by teletype from New York (that circumstance again due to U.S. government prohibitions).



Keeping my eyes open for chess, I found a sala de ajedrez (chess room, or parlor) dedicated to Capablanca in the city of Matanzas, just a block from my group's hotel. The sala was a long room with quite familiar tables and sala-stamped chess boards, with typical plastic sets but old clocks (models made in USSR). An attendant was on site, who kept the sala open, I was told, until people stopped coming. (See photo.) Children and adults were playing on my first visit, and, after some halting Spanish on my part, I was able to play a few games with an opponent who (thankfully) was about my strength. An inconclusive match but a very chess-friendly atmosphere. I visited again the evening of the following day, playing a couple of games with a young boy of maybe eight (who played well) and then with the same gentleman opponent from the day before. A neighborhood kibitzer turned out to speak excellent English, and we spoke for quite a while.

He told me they did conduct tournaments, especially youth tournaments. As we talked, it occurred to me that it might have been nice to exchange stamped boards between the NBCC and the sala de ajedrez in Matanzas. Maybe next time?

Days later, in Havana, a Cuban friend and I located the gravesite of Capablanca in Havana's large historic cemetery (see photo). Capa is buried next to, I think, his first wife and his son. The tomb is topped by a chess king, which is not original to the grave but is an appropriate addition. And yes, I did extend the fraternal greetings of the NBCC to the ghost of Capablanca, who agreed to visit our club at an unspecified future date.



While our group was in Cuba, the United Nations had its yearly vote (this year 185-2), condemning the U.S. blockade of Cuba's economy, which causes severe hardships (as the policy intends) to Cuban lives to its children first. The human rights of Cubans require the end of this blockade. GENS UNA SUMUS, as chess players say. But while the world awaits the arc of history to bend toward justice, chess remains a popular and respected pursuit in Cuba to train and expand the mind.

Next time in Cuba, I will attempt to visit Havana's chess club and also seek out the sites where the two Steinitz - Chigorin matches were held. Eleven days were not enough!”



REFLECTING ON THE LIFE OF MELVIN PATRICK



For many years, Melvin Patrick, or “Bernard” as he was often known to his family and to many of his closest friends, was an inspirational force for chess in Connecticut and the tri-state region. Melvin was very compassionate about the game, notably organizing over 1,300 events at the Chess Club of Fairfield County, Connecticut’s premier chess facility, which he founded over a decade ago.

Melvin was an extremely outgoing, generous person and loved mentoring his students, never missing a day of work at the CCFC. He was as devoted as any chess player could be, one of the all-time greatest ambassadors in state chess history. According to FM Richard Bauer, Melvin was the “Straz” of the CCFC.

Melvin immensely touched the lives of so many people in the chess community. We will never forget the incredible work that he has done to build such a thriving chess community in our state, especially in Fairfield County. As such, may his legacy never be forgotten.

And may Melvin rest in peace in heaven for all eternity.

CREATING A COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY COMMONS **THE COMMON'S GAMBIT**

A REPORT BY CCSU STUDENT JESMARIE DISDIEL

On April 12, Jesmarie Disdiel, a Central Connecticut State University student, paid a visit to the NBCC. Jesmarie, a newcomer to chess, came to the club with her boyfriend, who is a chess player, to interview a few people to draft a report on the game of chess and its impacts on the community for her education in multicultural class.

To get a better understanding of chess and its influence on the broader community, Jesmarie decided to interview Bob Cyr, NBCC historian, and Lisa Smith, NBCC vice president, to get their views on how this game has enriched the members of the club and its extended family. During the one-hour interview, Jesmarie asked Bob about the history of the club, dating back to its founding in 1901. Bob spoke about how the club has evolved through the decades and has had to rely heavily on a few key people to ensure its success, particularly during world wars and during times of low memberships. Bob also was asked about how he got involved in the club. Bob told Jesmarie that if it were not for his father, he would have probably never got involved in chess and would have never been blessed to have made so many friends in the club. During Lisa's interview with Jesmarie, Lisa informed her that she volunteers at the Simsbury Public Library Chess Club, where students from second to sixth grade are taught the rules of the game. Lisa also mentioned about the DIG program, which stands for "Determination, Integrity, and Growth." This organization provides opportunities for low-income families to learn chess and other sports in the state of Connecticut.

Besides the information that Jesmarie used in her report from the feedback obtained via inquiring of Lisa and me about the club and chess in the community, she also wrote about how the effects of globalization and the use of computers on chess in the last few decades. She also devoted a few pages on the benefits of playing chess, specifically the ability to improve a person's critical thinking skills and one's ability to plan and strategize.

It was a beautifully written report, and I, and many others, enjoyed reading it. It is always a blessing when someone beyond the club comes to do a documentary on our organization. On behalf of the NBCC, I hope that Jesmarie and her boyfriend join our warm and welcoming family.

NBCC WHO'S WHO PHOTO TRIVIA CONTEST

With the overflow of photos taken this year by FM Richard Bauer and Estee Axelrad, I thought that it would be a great idea to have a photo trivia contest. Can you guess who these players are? The answers are on page 44.



NBCC BEST GAME OF 2022

This game concluded with both kings exposed to the opponent's major pieces. The player who could successfully attack his opponent's king while defending his own would prove victorious. Before that, both sides had chances, but White had more than Black.

FM Nelson Castaneda is not only our best player, but he is our most dynamic and interesting player. Mario Guevara-Rodriguez is a very tough competitor, especially for the top players in the club to contend with. His games with Nelson are always exciting, but this was even more exciting than all of the others. I hope that you enjoy it as much as I did.

Event: "2022 NBCC Strazdins Cup: R4 B2

Mario Guevara-Rodriguez - Nelson Castaneda

"MARIO-INDIAN" ECO "A05" Opening "Zukertort Opening: Nimzo-Larsen Variation"

Site: "<https://lichess.org/study/M6w46mpw/Gy5qzKZI>"

Annotated by FM Rick Bauer

In thinking back over the games played during the year, I remembered this outstanding game. The conclusion came after most of the other games were finished, so quite a few of us could watch.

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. b3!?

After experimenting with many openings, Mario has settled on his own personal system that starts with a queen fianchetto. It has the advantage of being playable for White and Black, against all but 1 e4.

2... d6 3. Bb2 g6

The King's Indian is as good a way as any to combat "The Mario." The opposing bishops work out for Black, whose king will guard g7.

4. e3 Bg7 5. d4!?

This move is part of Mario's unique opening system. Queen's Indian players are taught not to block the Bb2 in this way, but Mario is playing for the pawn center.

5... Nbd7 6. Be2 c6

6... O-O I would have played this move earlier since it is always part of the plan, whereas Nbd7 and c6 are optional.

7. a4! +=

Stockfish likes this! I suspect preparation since Mario generally plays c4.

7... a5 8. O-O O-O 9. Nbd2 Qc7 10. e4!? +=



Mario finds a strong novelty to conclude a successful opening, establishing the classic e4, d4 central pawn duo. The last two vestiges of opening theory are: 10. Ra2 Re8 11. Re1 Nf8 12. Qa1 Nd5 13. c3 = Nogueiras Santiago, Jesus - Rodriguez Cespedes, Amador, 1-0, Havana op, 1992, <https://lichess.org/zsSQIXbX> and 10. h3 e5 11. dxe5 Nxe5 12. Nd4 g5 13. f4 gxf4 14. exf4 Ng6 15. f5 Ne5 16. N2f3 += Puschmann, Laszlo - Restas, Peter, 0-1, HUN-chT2 9394, 1994, <https://lichess.org/6oaCHWCD>

10... e5 11. Re1 += Re8 12. Bf1

12. dxe5 Nxe5 (12... dxe5 13. Bc4) 13. Nxe5 dxe5 14. Bc4

12... exd4 13. Bxd4 Ne5 14. h3

White has come out of the opening with a slight advantage.

14... Nh5?!

14... Be6

15. Nxe5!

This would seem to play into Black's hands, securing the f4 outpost, but the white knight can now target b6 and d6.

15... dxe5 16. Be3 Nf4? +2.2!

16... Bf8 17. Nc4 +/-

17. Qf3? +=

17. Nc4! +/- is incredibly strong as it targets all of the weak squares in Black's position. It remains a strong threat for many moves. If 17... Rd8 (17... Bf8 18. Bb6 Qe7 19. Qf3) 18. Bb6 Rxd1 19. Bxc7 Rxa1 20. Rxa1 Be6 (20... Ne6 21. Bb6) 21. Nxa5

17... Ne6, eyeing d4 **18. Qg3 Qe7**

18... Nd4 is impossible due to the pinned e5 pawn, but 18... f5!? is bold and strong.

19. Rac1

19. Nc4! is once again powerful. Nelson was afraid of this move, but he could not prevent it.

19... Nc5

19... Nd4 20. c3

20. f3 Bf6

20... Be6

21. Qf2! (+1.9) **Ne6 22. g3**

22. Nc4! is still very strong.

22... h5



23. Kh2?

23. h4! +/- is imperative.

23... h4! =+

Weakening the black squares around White's king.

24. g4 Bg5 25. Bc4?

25. Nc4

25... Bf4+ 26. Bxf4 Nxf4 -+

Having forced the trade of black-squared bishop, Black has a strong advantage.

27. Nf1 Bd7?!

The white-squared bishops do not help Black. 27... Rd8 28. Rcd1 Be6 is very good for Black.

28. Ne3 b5!? 29. axb5 cxb5 30. Bd5 Rab8

30... Rac8

31. Ng2!

Removing the Nf4 eases White's game.

31... Nxd5 32. exd5 =+

The exchange of the knight for bishop has helped White.

32... g5?

Guarding h5, but Black would be better off sacrificing it. Now, the black squares are blocked by Black's pawns. 32... Qd6! 33. Qxh4 Rbc8 34. c4 a4 or 32... a4!? 33. Qxh4 Qxh4 34. Nxf4 a3 35. c3 Ra8 =

33. c4! +/-

White's central pawn duo are now activated into an unstoppable offensive force.

33... bxc4 34. bxc4 Rb3!?

Starting to set up play along White's 3rd rank. 34... e4!? 35. Rxe4 Qf6 is another try.

35. c5!

White is close to winning here. A crowd is starting to form around the board

35... Reb8

35... Bb5



36. Red1?

The rook is needed on the e-file, and the pawns can advance without its help. Every tempo is critical here. 36. c6! +- Bc8 (36... Qd6 37. cxd7 e4+ 38. f4) (36... Be8 37. Qd2) 37. Qd4 f6 38. d6 Qf7 39. d7)

36... e4! =

Black gains counter-play against the white king. The game is now balanced on a razor's edge. Every move is critical, and both players are getting into time trouble.

37. c6?

The move that could have won a move earlier now loses!

37. f4! =



As the position keeps getting more and more complex, both players have to also contend with sudden death time pressure.

37... Rxf3! 38. Qd4 Qd6+! 39. Kg1 Rb4?



39... Rxh3! 40. Qxe4 Qh2+ 41. Kf2 (41. Kf1 Rb2 42. Rc2 Rxc2 43. Qxc2 Bxg4) 41... Bxg4! 42. Qxg4 Rg3 43. Qe4 h3, and Black's knockout blow lands first.

40. Rc4?

40. Qc5! +- Qg3 (40... Qxc5+ 41. Rxc5 +-) 41. cxd7 Rb8 42. Qd4 e3 43. Rc8+ Kh7 44. Qh8+ Kg6 45. Qh5+ Kg7 (45... Kf6 46. d8=Q+ Ke5 47. Qe7#) 46. Qxg5+ Kh7 47. Qg8+ Kh6 48. g5+ Kh5 49. Qh8+ Kxg5 50. d8=Q+

40... Rxh3!

Nelson finds the forced win.

41. Rxb4 Qh2+ 42. Kf1 Rf3+ 43. Ke1



43... Bxg4!

Combining defense and offense. Pure offense is not good enough: 43... Qxg2?? 44. Rb8+ Kh7 (44... Bc8 45. Rxc8+ Kh7 46. Qh8+ Kg6 47. Rg8#) 45. Qh8+ Kg6 46. Rg8#. Better is 43...Qh1+ 44. Kd2 Qxg2+, but there is no forced mate, and White is winning after 45. Kc1 axb4 46. cxd7 Rc3+ 47. Qxc3! bxc3 48. d8/Q+

44. Rb8+

I thought that this was a blunder, but there is nothing better. (44. Rbb1 Qg3+ 45. Kd2 Rd3+ 46. Kc2 Qxg2+ 47. Kc1 Rxd4 48. Rxd4 Qg1+ 49. Kc2 Qxd4)

44... Qxb8 45. Qxe4?

The best hope is 45. d6! Qb5! 46. Ne3 Rf1+! 47. Kd2 (47. Nxf1 Qe2#) 47... Rf2+ 48. Kc1 Qxc6+ 49. Qc4 Qxc4+ 50. Nxc4 h3 -+ since the bishop can sacrifice for the d pawn.

45... Qg3+! 46. Kd2 Rf2+! 0-1

Facing a forced mate, White resigned.



47. Kc1 (47. Ke1 Rxd2+ (or 47... Re2++ 48. Kf1 Qf2#) 48. Kf1 Rg1#) 47... Qc3+ 48. Kb1 Qb2# *

BOB CYR'S COMMENTARY

Well, friends, we have made it to the end of another successful and thriving year at the NBCC. Two-thousand-and-twenty-two was the first year since COVID-19 began in 2020 that the club held its operations at the church for an entire year. And things are looking up! Membership has reached near record highs (especially with scholastics), tournament participation has increased by at least twenty percent since 2020-2021 levels, our treasury continues to grow, and our team of executive leaders have put forth one amazing agenda with a variety of activities for the interest of all members. No wonder why our club was voted Best Chess Club in Connecticut in 2022!

As I have done with prior commentaries, I would like to thank our awesome team of officers, tournament directors, lecturers, webmaster, and our games judge for their amazing work. This year, I am proud to mention four new people in our organization who have gone above and beyond the call of duty by taking on many responsibilities. These four people are Estee Axelrad, Lisa Smith, Roger Bessette, and Justin Lalor. Every one of them is an asset to our club, and we sincerely thank them for their service and devotion to the betterment of the club and for the welfare of its members. Estee has worked with the executive team on various projects relating to the improvement of the club website and the introduction of new chess management software. She has also been a strong advocate for scholastic chess, working to form classes for the kids prior to the weekly meetings. She also has been opening the club every week for months now. Never before have we seen a parent get so involved with building a better future for our club. Estee is a very outgoing, friendly person. Lisa, our first NBCC female officer, has worked tirelessly with her fellow officers on various assignments. Specifically, she delivered the food for the 2022 Planet Earth Chess Championship, opened and closed the club for many months, created a bin for our chess equipment, and helped out on other engagements. Even though she stepped down as vice president of the club on August 31, her work this year was none other than incredible. Lisa also volunteers at the Simsbury Public Library Chess Club. Lisa is a very personable, sociable person. Our next volunteer, Roger, has been contributing to the club in his roles as NBCC lecturer and club closer. He has also worked extensively with the officers at outdoor functions, the Planet Earth event, and the Christmas party with the setup and cleanup. Roger is a very kind and considerate person who enjoys the club immensely. Lastly, our current club vice president, Justin Lalor, who just joined the club earlier this year and became the club champion, has done a fabulous job with the planning and presentation of lectures throughout the year. He has a very vast knowledge of chess history and theory and has done a superb service to our club in his new role as NBCC lecturer. Justin has also started learning the ropes as NBCC vice president, helping setup and close the club weekly. Justin is also a certified club TD. Justin is a very cordial and respected member.

It is also nice to welcome back NBCC legends who we have not seen in quite a while. This year, we were delighted to see former NBCC President John Pasco back at the club. John competed in the 2022 New Britain Summer Open, his first club event in many years. For those of you who do not know, John was the first post-Strazdins president, and he served the club well during this period of great transition. He is thrilled to be back in our tight-knit organization and loves the camaraderie of his old friends and the establishment of his new friends. Welcome back, John. We missed you! We hope that you can stay around for decades to come.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the club for being my friend. You guys and gals have a special place in my heart, and you have become like a second family to me. I love you all and am truly blessed to be a part of this incredible organization. We do so much for the membership and the chess community at large.

With that said, I extend my wishes to you and your family for a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy new year. May God be with you all. Take care of yourself and each other. Thank you for the privilege of your time.

President: Suhas Kodali
Vice President: Justin Lalor
Secretary: Mario Guevara-Rodriguez
Treasurer: David Herscovici
Website Admin: Gert Hilhorst
Historian: Bob Cyr



SOLUTION AND ANSWERS TO CHESS PUZZLE AND TRIVIA

CHESS PUZZLE (from cover page)

1. Bc4 Qxc4
2. Bxf6+

CHESS TRIVIA (from page 18)

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

NBCC WHO'S WHO PHOTO TRIVIA CONTEST (from page 33)

From left to right, top to bottom

Photo 1: Matt Costello and Jozef Madej

Photo 2: Mario Guevara-Rodriguez and Roger Bessette

Photo 3: Andrew Feng and George Himes

Photo 4: Nathan Mezheritskiy

Photo 5: Lisa Smith and John Pasco

Photo 6: Nikhil Addleman and Arijit Chakraborty

