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**Welcome U.S. Open Players & Delegates  
Vancouver, Washington, August 4-12, 2012**

# Northwest Chess

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**2265 E. Clifton Drive,**

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# The Publisher's Desk

by Duane Polich

Welcome to all players and USCF delegates to the 2012 U.S. Open and best wishes for a successful event! The last U.S. Open in the Pacific Northwest was back in 1987 in Portland, which was won by Lev Alburt. This was one of the last tournaments that Arthur Dake, from Portland played in. Dake had beaten Alekhine in 1932 in Pasadena, becoming the first American to do so. Even at age 77, Arthur went 8-4 at the U.S. Open. Before that the event was held in Seattle, WA in 1966 and was won by Robert Byrne and Pal Benko. This year we welcome “native son” Yasser Seirawan, who learned the game during the Fischer boom and went on to become one of America's top players.

The Vancouver-Portland area has a lot to offer from the Columbia Gorge to the Oregon coast and in between. Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Hood are nearby and the Columbia River is just right down the street. So, there are plenty of things to do during your stay, if you want to take a break from chess. If you are not playing in this event, I do hope that you will have an opportunity to visit the U.S. Open to rekindle old friendships or perhaps start some new ones.

I am pleased to announce that Frank Niro has been named interim editor of Northwest Chess. He will serve in the role for a period of about six months and will be training Jeffrey Roland, currently the Idaho editor, to eventually step into the role of editor. While in training Jeff will serve as the assistant editor.

Frank has served as an award winning editor of *Chess Horizons* magazine of Massachusetts, is a former President of the United States Chess Trust and was Executive Director of the United States Chess Federation from December 2001 to August 2003. He brings considerable experience and chess background to the job.

Frank and Jeff will start with this issue, a special U.S. Open edition, where additional copies will be printed out and given to participants in the event, scheduled for August 4-12 in Vancouver, WA. Jeff will continue to be Idaho editor and Frank will also step into the role of Oregon editor until a replacement can be found.

I am excited about these changes and hope/expect that they will allow us to reach our goal of getting a high quality magazine out on a timely basis, so it can be relied upon and respected. Fred Kleist, who returned as editor with the November 2011 issue of *Northwest Chess*, is thanked for his service as editor dating back to the May 1989 issue that he co-edited, and including 70 issues from November 2002 to August 2008 and October 2008. Fred now stands fourth on the all-time *NWC* editors list in term of number of issues edited.

Chess-related content for possible publication in *Northwest Chess* may be submitted to Frank Niro by email to [editor@nwchess.com](mailto:editor@nwchess.com). Any content of an advertising nature, or any content where payment is requested for publication, must also be submitted to and approved by business manager Eric Holcomb: [eric@Holcomb.com](mailto:eric@Holcomb.com) or [info@nwchess.com](mailto:info@nwchess.com).

Northwest Chess is a non-profit organization which publishes *Northwest Chess* representing the Washington Chess Federation (WCF), the Oregon Chess Federation (OCF) and the Idaho Chess Association (ICA). *Northwest Chess* was first published in 1947 and this is the 775th edition of the magazine.

Please stop by our table to offer your suggestions, purchase a subscription, and place an ad in a future edition of the magazine or just to say “hello”.

Play On !

**Duane**



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April 13, 2012

United States Chess Federation  
PO Box 3967  
Crossville, TN 38557

Good Day,

On behalf of the City of Vancouver, and our community, I would like to extend my personal welcome to the United States Chess Federation. We are pleased that you have selected our community as the site for your 113<sup>th</sup> Annual Open Chess Tournament in August.

Vancouver USA is the fourth largest, and historically, the oldest city in the State of Washington. Our vibrant and burgeoning community offers year-round activities and scenic sites for you and your attendees to discover. Tour through Fort Vancouver National Site, home to the 1800's Hudson Bay Company; enjoy a stroll down Officers Row, the oldest neighborhood in the Northwest; or explore Pearson Air Museum located on the oldest continually operating airfield in the country.

Our revitalized and dynamic downtown has a small town concept with a metropolitan flair of offerings, locally owned restaurants, art galleries, wineries, theaters, entertainment venues and boutique shops are easily accessible to your attendees. We are also very fortunate to be surrounded closely by thriving communities here in Southwest Washington, from Ridgefield and Battle Ground to the north and Camas and Washougal to the east, all offer exceptional unique visitor experiences.

Vancouver USA is full of breath taking beauty and incredible outdoor recreational opportunities. I hope you will take time to walk, run, or bike the Waterfront Renaissance Trail along the shores of the Columbia River or take a break in Esther Short Park, the oldest public square in the Pacific Northwest. Be sure to visit the neighboring Vancouver Farmers Market for authentic local fare, entertainment, and find that perfect gift made by a local artisan! There are so many attractions and activities available for your enjoyment here in Vancouver USA, and we hope that you have the opportunity to experience them all.

With so much to offer, I'm sure that you and your attendees will have a great event in Vancouver USA. Our community looks forward to the opportunity to welcome your organization in August.

Sincerely,

Mayor Timothy D. Leavitt  
City of Vancouver (USA)

---

Vancouver City Council

Mayor Timothy D. Leavitt • Jeanne Harris • Jeanne E. Stewart • Larry J. Smith • Jack Burkman • Bart Hansen • Bill Turlay  
City Manager Eric Holmes

## US Open returns to the Pacific Northwest after 25 years, plus some personal

### US Open notes

By Russell Miller

The 113th U.S. Open will be held in Vancouver Washington on Aug 4-12, 2012. The most recent one held in the area was August 2-14, 1987 at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Portland. The event was a 12 round swiss unlike the 9 rounds of the 2012 event.

Ralph Hall of Oregon City, OR, was the chief organizer, back in the days when the USCF accepted bid proposals for most National Events.

Grandmaster Lev Alburts score of 10-2 topped the field of 532, good for \$5,000. At 9.5-2.5 were Stuart Rachels, Vivek Rao and Alexander Fishbein.

Some Northwest prize winners were 1st Expert Carl Haessler at 9-3 - \$800 and 2nd Expert Derek Edwards 8.5-3.5 - \$400. Both are playing in 2012. It will be interesting to see how many others played in 1987 and 2012 let alone 1966.

The other was the 67th U.S. Open on August 14-26, 1966, a 13 round swiss held at the Seattle Center site



"Rusty" and Kathy Miller, flanked by Washington Governor John Spellman and his wife Lois, circa 1982.

of the 1962 Seattle's World's fair in Seattle, WA. 201 players took part in the third largest U.S. Open up to that time. It might have been bigger were it not for an airline strike and the Paitigorsky Cup tournament was in progress during the Open which kept several LA players away from Seattle. 96 players from Washington State took part.

Two grandmasters, Robert Byrne and Pal Benko, topped the field with 11-2, good for \$800 each. Duncan Suttles was 3rd at 10-3 winning \$300. On the 1966 crosstable I noted a few who are playing in 2012: Viktors Pupols, Mike Murray, Russell Miller and possibly some others.

George Koltanowski was the chief TD assisted by Buz Eddy of Seattle.

My first U.S. Open was Chicago 1963. To get there Jim McCormick, Duncan Suttles and I drove from Washington State.

I met my future wife, Kathy, at the 1966 Seattle event. She has told me that she met me at a chess tournament in Chelan that she attended with her brother, Buz Eddy, but I never remembered meeting her there.

For some U.S. Opens I just attended the delegates meetings as in Lincoln Nebraska in 1975, (where the election rules were changed), Fairfax, VA 1976, St. Paul, MN in 1982, Framingham, MA 2001.

I played in Phoenix, AZ 1978, where the janitor took down the wall charts in the middle of the tournament and they had to be found in a dumpster. For Chicago 1979 and Pasadena 1983 I drove by myself from Yakima. 1984 was quite a summer! In addition to the U.S. Open in Fort Worth, TX, I

attended part of the U.S. Championship and the New Orleans World's Fair on the same trip. I think it was Los Angeles 1991 where I was a Tournament Director helper.

I hope to see a lot of old friends in Vancouver and make some new ones - as well as some new memories. If you can't play, please stop by. There will be numerous side events as well as a book vendor, and an awards ceremony where a number of Pacific Northwest folks are getting awards, including Kathy as "Honorary Chess Mate."

The complete list of 2012 USCF Awards is presented below. All of these awards will be given at the U.S. Open Awards luncheon in Vancouver, WA on Saturday, August 11, 2012:

- 1) Distinguished Service Award:
  - a. Randy Bauer (IA)
  - b. John Donaldson (CA)
- 2) Outstanding Career Achievement:
  - a. Duane Polich (WA)
  - b. Michael Morris (OR)
  - c. Neil Dale (OR)
  - d. Barry Eacker (ID)
- 3) Special Services Award:
  - a. Jeff Roland (ID)
  - b. Eric Holcomb (OR)
  - c. Elliott Neff (WA)
  - d. Arun Sharma (CA)
- 4) Meritorious Services Award:
  - a. Russell "Rusty" Miller (WA)
  - b. Kevin Korsmo (WA)
- 5) Committee of the Year:
  - a. Ratings Committee
- 6) Chess City of the Year:
  - a. Los Angeles

## 2012 USCF Awards

(continued from page 5)

- 7) Koltanowski Awards - Gold:
  - a. Rex Sinquefield (MO)
  - b. Jeanne Sinquefield (MO)
- 8) Scholastic Service Award:
  - a. Individual
    - i. David Mehler (DC)
  - b. Organization
    - i. US Chess Center (DC)
- 9) Organizer of the Year:
  - a. Chad Schneider (NM)
- 10) Frank J. Marshall Award:
  - a. Anthony Saidy (CA)
- 11) Grandmaster of the Year:
  - a. Hikaru Nakamura (MO)
- 12) Honorary Chess Mates:
  - a. Susan Barber (CA)
  - b. Kathy Miller (WA)
- 13) Chess Club of the Year:
  - a. Portland Chess Club
  - b. Seattle Chess Club
- 14) College of the Year:
  - a. University of Texas – Dallas
- 15) Tournament Director of the Yr:
  - a. Tim Just (IL)
- 16) Lifetime Tournament Director:
  - a. Martin Morrison (CA)
- 17) Special Friend of the USCF:
  - a. Barbara Pryor (WV)

The Chairman of the USCF Awards Committee is IM John Donaldson. For further information concerning past awards or future nominations, John Donaldson can be reached at: [imwjd@aol.com](mailto:imwjd@aol.com)

As part of the U.S. Open festivities, the annual delegates meeting will be held on Saturday, August 11 and Sunday August 12. The number of delegates for each state is determined primarily by membership. The official 2012 delegates for the region - appointed by WCF, OCF and ICA - are as follows:

### Washington

Delegate - Josh Sinanan  
Delegate - Duane Polich  
Alternate - Fred Kleist

### Oregon

Delegate - Carl Haessler  
Alternate - Michael Morris

### Idaho

Delegate - Jeff Roland  
Alternate - Hugh Myers

The Chairman of the U.S. Open Committee for 2012 is:

Hal Terrie III  
[halterrie@comcast.net](mailto:halterrie@comcast.net)

The U.S. Open traditionally features a large number of workshops and meetings open to all U.S. Chess Federation members. Please consult the detailed schedule on the facing page for the appropriate dates and times.

There are several Northwest players entered in the Denker and Barber tournaments. Look for complete coverage of these and the other U.S. Open festivities in the September issue of the magazine.

Please see Frank Niro's tribute to Dr. Ralph L. Hall, chief organizer of the 1987 U.S. Open in Portland, beginning on Page 10. Ralph passed away last year in his home in Oregon City. During Frank's time living nearby from 2007-2010, he was a member of the Oregon City-West Linn Chess Club, a vibrant club that Ralph Hall founded in 1976. It was Ralph's dream that the U.S. Open would come back to the area for the 25th anniversary of the 1987 event.



Rusty and Kathy Miller on a recent trip to the National Open in Las Vegas

# 2012 U.S. Open Schedule

## AUGUST 4 - 12

### SATURDAY, AUGUST 4

**10:00 AM** Weekend Swiss Rd. 1, Rd. 2: 1 PM, Rd. 3: 3:30 PM

**3:00 PM** Denker/Barber Opening Ceremonies

**7:00 PM** Denker Tournament of HS Champions, Rd. 1  
Barber K-8 Tournament of K-8 Champions, Rd. 1  
Trophies Plus U.S. Girls Junior, Rd.1  
U.S. Open Traditional Schedule, Round 1

### SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

**10:00 AM** Weekend Swiss Rd. 4, Rd. 5: 1 PM

**12:00 NOON** Barber K-8 Tournament of K-8 Champions, Rd. 2  
Trophies Plus U.S. Girls Junior, Rd.2  
Denker Tournament of HS Champions, Rd. 2

**7:00 PM** Barber K-8 Tournament of K-8 Champions, Rd. 3  
Trophies Plus U.S. Girls Junior, Rd.3  
Denker Tournament of HS Champions, Rd. 3  
U.S. Open Traditional Schedule, Round 2

### MONDAY, AUGUST 6

**12:00 NOON** Barber K-8 Tournament of K-8 Champions, Rd. 4  
Trophies Plus U.S. Girls Junior, Rd.4  
Denker Tournament of HS Champions, Rd. 4

**7:00 PM** Barber K-8 Tournament of K-8 Champions, Rd. 5  
Trophies Plus U.S. Girls Junior, Rd.5  
Denker Tournament of HS Champions, Rd. 5  
U.S.Open Traditional Schedule, Rd.3

### TUESDAY, AUGUST 7

**11:00 AM** Barber K-8 Tournament of K-8 Champions, Rd. 6  
Trophies Plus U.S. Girls Junior, Rd.6  
Denker Tournament of HS Champions, Rd. 6

**4:00 PM** Denker/Barber Award Ceremony

**7:00 PM** U.S. Open 6-day Schedule, Rd. 1  
U.S.Open Traditional Schedule, Rd 4

### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8

**EARLY AM** Golf Tournament

**9:00 AM** Denker and Barber Committee Meeting  
FIDE Trainer's Seminar  
Forum Committee Meeting

**10:00 AM** WORKSHOP: College Chess  
WORKSHOP: Forum

**11:00 AM** Women's U.S. Open, Rd. 1

**12:00 NOON** U.S. Open 6-day Schedule, Rd. 2

**1:00 PM** WORKSHOPS: Outreach, Women's Chess

**2:00 PM** WORKSHOP: States

**3:00 PM** WORKSHOPS: TDCC, Scholastic Committee

**4:00 PM** WORKSHOP: TDCC/ Problem Solving

**7:00 PM** U.S. Open 6-day Schedule, Rd. 3  
U.S.Open Traditional Schedule, Rd.5

### THURSDAY, AUGUST 9

**9:00 AM** FIDE Trainer's Seminar  
Senior Chess Committee Meeting  
Executive Board Meeting (closed)

**10:00 AM** Executive Board Meeting (open)

**11:00 AM** Women's U.S. Open, Rd. 2

**12:00 NOON** U.S. Open 6-day Schedule, Rd. 4

**1:00 PM** WORKSHOPS:  
Chess Trust, Rules Workshop, Chess in Education  
U.S. Open 4-day Schedule, Rd. 1

**3:00 PM** WORKSHOP: USCF Legal

**4:00 PM** WORKSHOPS: Ratings Committee, International Affairs  
U.S. Open 4-day Schedule, Rd. 2

**7:00 PM** U.S. Open, Traditional Schedule, Rd. 6  
U.S. Open 6-day Schedule, Rd. 5  
U.S. Open 4-day Schedule, Rd. 3

# 2012 U.S. OPEN SCHEDULE

(continued from page 7)

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 10

**9:00 AM WORKSHOP:** Bylaws/  
GTF

**10:00 AM U.S. Open 4-day Schedule,**  
Rd. 4

**11:00 AM Women's U.S. Open, Rd. 3**

**12:00 NOON U.S. Open 6-day**  
Schedule, Rd. 6

**1:00 PM U.S. Open 4-day Schedule,**  
Rd. 5  
**WORKSHOP:** Finance/LMA Com-  
mittee

**2:00 PM WORKSHOP:** Clubs  
Committee

**3:00 PM WORKSHOP:** Publica-  
tions/CJA

**3:30 PM U.S. Open 4-day Schedule,**  
Rd. 6

**4:00 PM Staff Forum & Member-  
ship Meeting**

**5:30 PM Executive Board Reception**

**7:00 PM U.S. Open, Rd. 7—All**  
three schedules merged!

## SATURDAY, AUGUST 11

**9:00 AM Delegates' Meeting**

**11:00 AM Women's U.S. Open, Rd. 4**

**12:00 NOON U.S. Open Blitz Rd.**  
1, other rounds to follow.

**\*\*USCF Awards Luncheon\*\***

**2:00 PM Delegates' Meeting** re-  
sumes

**7:00 PM U.S. Open, Rd. 8**

## SUNDAY, AUGUST 12

**9:00 AM Delegates' Meeting**

**11:00 AM Women's U.S. Open, Rd. 5**

**3:00 PM U.S. Open, Rd. 9**  
Executive Board Meeting (open)

**6:00 PM Executive Board Meeting**  
(closed)

As you can see, there are many side events and activities. One event has been a part for many years, the Arnold Denker High School Tournament of Champions. It pits high school players from all the states and this year there will be about 48 states sending players.

The Idaho player is Adam Jiang of Boise. Oregon is represented by Alexandra Botez of Happy Valley and the two Washington players are Michael Omori of Seattle and Bryan Yue of Sammamish. Washington gets two players because of the location of the event. Bryan gets paired if there is an odd number of players.

The 2012 Dewain Barber Tournament of K-8 Champions is in its second year and has players attending from 46 states. The Idaho player is Nathan Jiang of Eagle (not related to Adam Jiang), the Oregon player is Aaron Grabinsky and the two Washington players are Roland Feng of Seattle and Mayhul Arora of Bellevue.

By the way, among those playing in the 1987 U.S. Open in Portland was a teenager named Bill Hall from Tennessee, a nationally rated expert who

qualified for the third annual Arnold Denker High School Tournament of Champions, where he finished with an even score of three points in six rounds. If the name sounds familiar, it is because Bill Hall will be in Vancouver this year for the 25th anniversary of the last Portland area U.S. Open. Only this time, he will be leading the festivities as Executive Director of the United States Chess Federation.

Bill Hall is pictured on the cover of this issue together with Crossville, TN based USCF staff members Judy Misner, Director of Quality Control; Joe Wright, Membership Associate; Joan DuBois (in the car), Director of Affiliate Relations, TLA and advertising; Traci Lee, Mailing Lists and Membership Associate; Susan Houston, Scholastic Associate; Chuck Lovingood; Joshua Van Winkle; Cheryl Bruce, Membership Services Supervisor; and Alan Kantor, Chess Life Editorial Assistant and Copy Editor.

Judy Misner and Joan DuBois are twin sisters and have worked at the United States Chess Federation for more than 40 years. They, together with Traci Lee and Alan Kantor, relocated with the office from New Windsor, NY to Crossville, TN.

While here in Vancouver and the Greater Portland area, take in the sights and experience the many exciting things taking place during August. Explore historic attractions, play a round of golf, sightsee in the Columbia River Gorge, take a hike up Mount St. Helens, visit the Maryhill Museum or simply enjoy fantastic Northwest cuisine at one of our many restaurants. Bring your family. There's something memorable available for nearly everyone!

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# Dr. Ralph L. Hall (1930-2011), Man behind the 1987 Portland U.S. Open

by Frank Niro

Ralph Hall's influence is still felt 25 years later. Known as a treasured friend to chess players and colleagues across the country, Dr. Ralph L. Hall was born in Smithfield, Nebraska, on June 16, 1930 to Max and Velva Hall. He died in Oregon City, Oregon, at age 80 on January 27, 2011. Ralph graduated from Elwood High School (NE) in 1948. He attended the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, receiving a Bachelor of Science with distinction in 1953 and a Master of Science in 1957. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force in June 1953. Ralph married Irene Roberts Aug. 16, 1952, in Wahoo, NE. He was a science teacher and coach in Coleridge, NE during the 1953-1954 school year. He served on active duty in the Air Force from 1954 to 1956. He was a squadron adjutant at Kimpo Air Base for one year and was promoted to first lieutenant in 1955. Following his military service he became a teacher, coach, then assistant principal at Norfolk High School in Nebraska.

Ralph was an enthusiastic chess player. He started playing the game in the fall of 1944 after viewing the movie, *The Bishop Murder Case*, which has a chess theme. "After seeing the film," Ralph once recounted, "I was motivated to read the chess articles in the encyclopedias in the high school library. A short time later, I purchased a flat, cardboard chess set with rules for ten cents." His parents gave him a regulation size plastic set for Christmas that year and, after that, Ralph was hooked on chess.

In 1955, a Major at Kimpo Air Force Base in Korea was looking for a chess opponent and Ralph volunteered. They played frequently during the following months. In the Spring of 1956, his wife's uncle, Herbert Roberts, invited him to play correspondence chess and, in the process, sent him a sample copy of *Chess Review* magazine. It was through this magazine that he discovered the world of chess books, clubs and tournaments.

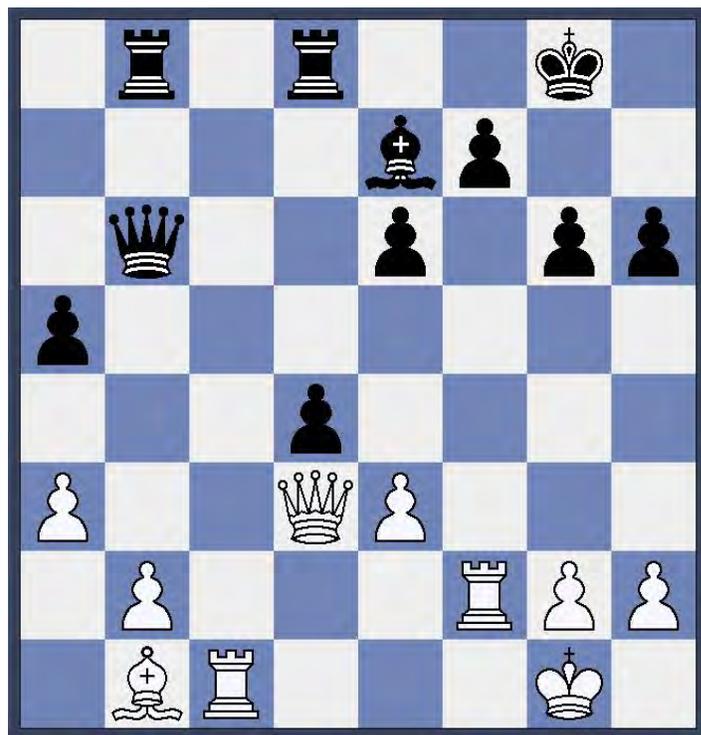
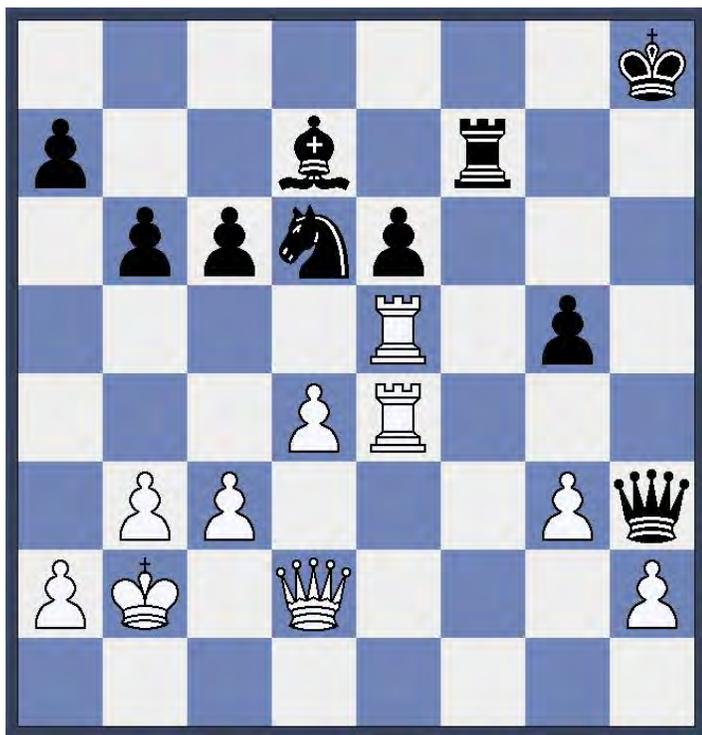
In August 1956, Irene and Ralph moved to Norfolk, Nebraska. Ralph taught science at the high school and Irene taught music at Wayne State Teachers College, an activity that still gives Irene great pleasure even today in Oregon. A short time after arriving, Ralph inquired at the Norfolk YMCA about chess activity. They had none, but the Di-

rector gave him the name of a man who had coincidentally made the same inquiry a few days before. He was Wolf Wolfensberger, a German refugee doing a psychology internship at a nearby hospital. Together they organized the Norfolk Chess Club in 1957.

Ralph was invited to his first rated chess tournament by Jack Spence, editor of the *Midwest Chess News*. It was the 1957 Morphy Centennial, held in Yankton NE, and directed by George Koltanowski. Koltanowski sold him his first membership in the United States Chess Federation, an organization in which Ralph remained active for more than 50 years, serving as Regional Vice President for a time and as chief organizer of the 1987 U.S. Open held at the Hilton Hotel in Portland. His most memorable moment in his first tournament, however, did not concern one of his own games. "I saw Koltanowski win \$5 from Charles Gurney the hotel owner," Ralph said, "by betting that he could lose a game against him. Kolty reduced Gurney's material to king and one pawn, then put the king in *zugzwang* in such a way that the remaining pawn had to advance and give checkmate."

In 1958, Ralph was elected treasurer of the Nebraska Chess Association, the beginning of a long stint of volunteer service to state chess associations in Nebraska, Florida and Oregon. In the following year, he became a tournament director and, in July 1960, he organized his first tournament, the Platte Valley Open, near Lincoln. Later that summer, he resigned his position as assistant principal at Norfolk High School to study for a doctorate at Columbia University in New York City. En route to New York, Ralph and Irene stopped in St. Louis so that he could play in the 61st U.S. Open Championship, won by Robert Byrne of Indiana over Pal Benko of Hungary, and Paul Poschel of Michigan.

After that, wherever Ralph and Irene lived, Ralph would always join or establish a local chess club, starting with the Morningside Heights Chess Club in Manhattan that boasted a number of notable members including Dr. Ariel Mengarini. Ralph's first NYC tournament was a 107-player event held at the Westside YMCA won by Pal Benko over William Lombardy and William Weinstein. On occasion he was invited to play for Morningside Heights in one of their Manhattan Chess League matches. He played many well known players while in the area including on October 7, 1961, when he was memorably, in his words, "checkmated by Lisa Lane, the young, attractive, U.S. Ladies Champion."



This position is from a game played in New York City in 1961. Ralph Hall had the White pieces against M. Roets.

**1. Rh4+ gxh4 2.Qh6+ and Black resigned.** If 2...Kg8 3.Rg5+ Rg7 4. Qxg7#, or if 2...Rh7 3.Qf8#

Ralph played in the U.S. Amateur championship held in Asbury Park NJ in May, 1962. Of the 153 players, he was ranked 76th at 1844, which meant that he had to be paired in the first round against the top seed, Robert Durkin, rated 2199. Ralph won the game in 26 moves.

### Robert Durkin vs. Ralph Hall [C02]

Asbury, Park, NJ, 1962

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.Qg4 cxd4 5.Nf3 Ne7 6.Bg5 Qc7 7.Bd3 Nbc6 8.Qg3 Nf5 9.Bxf5 exf5 10.0-0 h6 11.Qh4 Be6 12.Re1 Rg8 13.c3 hxg5 14.Qh7 dxc3 15.Nxc3 Ne7 16.Nb5 Qb6 17.Nd6+ Kd7 18.Nxg5 g6 19.Ndx7 Rg7 20.Qh8 Rxf7 21.Nxf7 Bxf7 22.e6+ Bxe6 23.Rac1 Nc6 24.Qh7+ Be7 25.Qxg6 Nd4 26.Rcd1 Nf3+ 0-1**

In the second round, he played another expert, James Young, and sacrificed a rook leading to checkmate in six moves (*see Diagram top of next column*).

The game continued **1.Rxf7 Kxf7** (if 1...Kh8 2.Qxg6 as both win easily) **2.Qxg6+ Kf8 3.Rf1+ Bf6 4.Qxf6+ Kg8 5.Qf7+ and Black resigned** due to the inevitable 5...Kh8 6.Qh7#.

In round 3, Ralph lost on time in an exciting game to reigning Georgia State Champ William Scott and finished the tournament with a respectable score of 3 1/2 points in six rounds.

Ralph accepted an administrative job in 1962 with the Miami-Dade Public School system, the fifth largest school district in the country. He served as a school principal and curriculum director during his 13 years in Florida. Ralph and Irene found an apartment near city hall in Coral Gables. Their daughter, Kristine, was born in 1963. Ralph organized the Florida Open in 1964, a tournament in which he defeated the 1962 Florida State champion, Eugene Sadowski.

In 1965, he was awarded a Doctor of Education degree by Columbia University, the culmination of nearly five years of course work and thesis writing. And despite his periodic successes at the board, Ralph's real passion was promoting the game he loved to others, especially the benefits of chess among children. He taught during the summer of 1966 at University of Florida in Gainesville and used the opportunity to start a chess club at the University. He worked, along with noted tournament director and writer Kenneth Harkness who retired to South Florida, on an unsuccessful bid to bring the 1967 U.S. Open to Cocoa Beach FL. Following that effort, he was elected FCA Vice President. It was during this period that Ralph achieved a national expert's rating both over-the-board and in correspondence chess. He returned to Lincoln for

the 1969 U.S. Open where he began lobbying to bring the tournament to southern Florida in 1970, 1971 or 1972.

In 1975, Ralph was hired to be the principal of Moss Junior High School in Oregon City. The new “open space” school opened in 1976. His first tournament in his new home was the Oregon Open, held over Labor Day weekend in 1975. He scored 4 1/2- 1 1/2 to finished in 9th place, earning an initial Northwest rating of 2101. He drew with James Bricher, the reigning Oregon champion. In 1976, he drew future Grandmaster Yasser Seirawan, rated 2328 at the time, in the Portland Spring Open. Ralph and Yasser met again later that year during the Seafair Open in Seattle. “Nice to see you again; I think I owe you one,” Yasser remarked. “He then proceeded to win easily,” remembered Ralph.

### Ralph Hall vs. Yasser Seirawan [A40]

Portland, Oregon, April 10, 1976

1.d4 g6 2.Nf3 Bg7 3.e3 d6 4.Bd3 Nd7 5.0–0 e5 6.c3 Ne7 7.Nbd2 0–0 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.e4 Nc5 10.Bc2 b6 11.b4 Nd3 12.Nc4 Nxc1 13.Rxc1 f6 14.Ne3 Qxd1 15.Rfxd1 Bh6 16.Bb3+ Kg7 17.Rc2 Bxe3 18.fxe3 a5 19.Rcd2 c6 20.a3 axb4 21.axb4 Ra3 22.Rb1 g5 23.h3 h5 24.c4 Be6 25.Rdb2 c5 26.bxc5 bxc5 27.Ba2 Bf7 28.Rb7 Nc6 29.R1b2 Nb4 30.Bb1 Rd8 31.Kf2 Rda8 32.Nd2 R8a7 33.Rxa7 Rxa7 34.Nb3 Rc7 35.Nxc5 Rxc5 36.Rxb4 Bxc4 37.Rb2 Ra5 38.Bc2 Kg6 39.Bd1 Be6 40.Be2 Ra4 41.g4 hxg4 42.hxg4 Bd7 43.Rc2 Rb4 44.Kf3 Kf7 45.Bc4+ Ke7 46.Bd5 Rb1 47.Rg2 Rf1+ 48.Kg3 Kd6 49.Bc4 Rc1 50.Bf7 Rc3 51.Kf3 Ba4 52.Rd2+ Ke7 53.Bg6 1/2–1/2

Ralph established the Oregon City Chess Club in 1976 and remained an active member of the club until his death. For the first meeting he found a location near the library and placed a notice in the local newspaper. Since then, despite a few relocations and thanks to a dedicated core group of members led by Brian Berger, the Oregon City-West Linn Chess Club has met once a week without interruption. Ralph earned the title of club champion on numerous occasions. The club’s current meeting place is the Pioneer Community Center, 615 5th Street, Oregon City, where the members recently hosted the 28-player 2012 Oregon Senior Championship (see story beginning on page 38). Visitors are always welcome and the site is wheelchair accessible. The club entrance is on the Washington Street side, lower level.

Over the years, the club spawned many strong junior play-

ers, including Richard Becker, the winner of the Oregon Junior Championship in 1977, and his teammates John Philips, Keith Drew, Mark Aughenbaugh, Alan Knowles, Tim Misley and Donald Knowles, who combined to win the Oregon State High School championship for the Oregon City Pioneers. There were many others since that time. The club still encourages young players, in large part due to Ralph’s influence, even today.

Ralph and Irene loved to travel and Ralph was always on the lookout for a chess game wherever they went. He also kept notebooks with memorabilia and special details describing those encounters. One such occasion was during a vacation to France in 1978. “On July 7 in a bookstore near the University of Paris,” he wrote, “I noticed an incomplete crosstable for a chess tournament on a bulletin board. When I inquired about the tournament, I was given an entry form for the *International Chess Festival at Bagneaux*. On a map of Paris, I found that Bagneaux was a town a few miles south of the city. I took a train to Bagneaux the following afternoon. I walked to what seemed like the town center, went into a bar and ordered a beer, then asked for directions. No one spoke English. Although I did not speak French, I had a long conversation with a teacher who said he had just retired and was going fishing. He laughed at me when he understood I was a school principal. After thanking me for America’s help in winning World Wars I and II, he took me out on the street and pointed in the direction of the chess tournament.”

Ralph walked a few blocks when he noticed some people who looked like chess players on an outdoor stairway leading to a second story door of a large building. He went there and found a ballroom with two tournaments in progress, a masters’ event and a large open tournament. Off the playing room was a snack bar and, next to that, a book concession. He bought dinner and watched the play for a couple of hours.

“When I returned to the train station, the ticket windows were closed” he wrote in one of his notebooks. “I went on board the next train to Paris. At the end of the line, there was no way to get out of the station without a ticket and there was no way to buy one. I found myself alone with a moral dilemma: Should I climb over the turnstile and make my way carefully back to the hotel, or should I remain in the station until the ticket windows reopen?”

“I still owe the Paris transit company the cost of a ticket from Bagneaux to Arc-de-Triomphe,” he confessed later.

On the way back to the U.S., Ralph played in the London Congress. His notes reflect a less eventful experience in Great Britain.

In 1979 he began regular attendance at U.S. Opens when he participated in Palo Alto CA, as a player and delegate, finishing a 6 1/2 – 5 1/2. It was his first plus score in a United States Open Championship event.

Ralph was ahead of his time in understanding and appreciation the positive potential for chess in education. He published a well received position paper in 1983 entitled, *“A Passionate Position Paper on the Educational Merits of Chess.”* His work served as a base document for many of the studies that followed, including my own research at the University of Texas at Dallas in 2000-01.

In it he defined many of the principles still utilized by chess teachers and coaches all over the United States and beyond. In particular, he noted that: *“Chess requires that individuals become actively involved in a mentally demanding competition; its effects are stimulating, wholesome, and healthy.”*

Some of Dr. Hall’s other early insights concerning chess and education are presented below:

*“Chess is a game of quiet intensity.”*

*“To the players, the game is like an unfolding drama. Tension builds and a crisis is reached which decides whether or not there will be a happy ending. The players live through the emotions of an exciting story.”*

*“Chess masters subject themselves to much the same kind of discipline as that of great music composers. Success at the highest levels in both art forms comes from: constant practice and study; memorizing; trying new ideas; developing a unique style; holding to an unwavering faith in personal ability; and genius.”*

*“Chess success is an intellectual achievement appropriate for schools. It belongs in schools because: it is a fascinating game; it can provide a lifetime hobby; it has international appeal; it requires a minimum of resources; and, it demands that participants exercise their best powers of planning, memory, decision-making, judgment, creativity, and concentration. For these reasons alone, all schools should be providing opportunities for the learning and practicing of chess.”*

Dr. Hall’s paper led to other studies, including the 1990 *Palm Report*, funded by the American Chess Foundation and indirectly, I would argue, stimulated the formation of the NYC Chess-in-the-Schools program and other similar initiatives. As an educator, he truly believed that all schools should be providing opportunities for the

learning and practice of chess. He found it frustrating, no doubt, that others in a position to influence the local, statewide and national education systems couldn’t see it.

He was a visiting scholar at Cambridge University during the 1982-1983 academic year in order to conduct an independent study of British secondary schools. The Oregon City School Board granted him a one-year sabbatical so that he could accept the appointment. It was during this time that he wrote the position paper referred to above.

While there, he became a member of the Cambridge City Chess Club. He was able to attend the famous Lloyd’s Bank Masters tournament at the Barbican and spent a month traveling on a rail pass, with Irene, throughout the Continent. This allowed him to attend the opening ceremony of the 25th Chess Olympiad in Lucerne, Switzerland. While watching the U.S. defeat Mongolia 4-0 in the first round, he was spotted in the audience by Grandmaster Yasser Seirawan. The U.S. player graciously came over to greet Ralph and Irene and invited them to dinner with the U.S. Team as his guest on the following evening.

They watched the U.S. defeat France 4-0 in the second round, then went to the U.S. team’s hotel, where they again sat with the U.S. men’s and women’s teams at dinner. They eavesdropped on the planning for the match vs. the Soviet Union the next day. Ralph later told friends, “After dinner, Yaz suggested we walk the mile and a half back to the convention center to watch adjourned games. “It was a beautiful evening and as they strolled along, Yaz said, “Can you believe it? Here we are in one of the world’s most beautiful cities and I’m doing what I love to do, and getting paid for it!” Ralph whispered to himself, “And you aren’t the only one!” The following day Ralph and Irene left to visit Vienna, Venice and Florence - and Seirawan drew with Anatoly Karpov.

Ralph played in the U.S. Senior Open in San Diego in 1984, where he finished with an even score. He formally retired in 1985, but refused to sit quietly. He volunteered as chief organizer of the 1987 U.S. Open held at the Hilton Hotel in Portland. The tournament attracted a total 532 entries, the 7th largest amount up until that time in the 88 year history of the event. He later explained how the tournament came about after a long and fortuitous chain of contacts, modified by his personal energy and enthusiasm. For those players who are interested in the history, or who may be inclined to take large events such as the U.S. Open for granted, here’s a look behind the scenes in Ralph Hall’s own words:

*"In March of 1985, Mike Scatoloni, a convention manager at the Portland Hilton Hotel noticed on a list of conventions that the 1987 U.S. Open Chess Championship was to be awarded in August and that a local chess organization could bid for the event. He called the Greater Portland Convention and Visitors Association to get the name of a local chess group and the name of a contact person. The most recent name they had was Charles VanDemarr."*

*"Mike called Charles and asked if there was a possibility of a local chess group sponsoring the U.S. Open. Charles said that he was no longer an officer in the OCF but that he would call Lewis Richardson, OCF Secretary-Treasurer. Charles called Lewis who liked the idea. Lewis then called me about it."*

*"I was interested because I had been to four U.S. Opens, enjoyed them, and felt that if I ever had the chance to organize one, I could do as well or better than the organizers of the tournaments I had attended. I was retiring from my job at the end of July and would have enough time to do the work. I went to the hotel to meet Mr. Scatoloni. He convinced me that the hotel was eager to host the tournament."*

*"Because I was Vice President of the OCF, I called President Harry Bell to present the idea. He agreed that we should call a meeting of interested members to discuss the advisability of making a bid. I then talked to Doyle Dillon of the Greater Portland Convention and Visitors Association to learn how they would help. Doyle agreed to a meeting at the Lloyd Center Red Lion with Harry Bell and six other local chess enthusiasts. We discussed the pros and cons."*



Shadow box of memories, including cover from January 1987 NWC, presented to Ralph Hall by OC-WL CC members. The inscription at the top reads, "Presented to Dr. Ralph L. Hall, educator, organizer, chess opponent and friend, in recognition of his many years helping others to understand the benefits of chess - October 2009." Photo credit: Brian Berger

*"The arguments against were that the local chess community did not have sufficient experience to successfully organize and manage a major national event, and that Portland was too small and isolated to attract a large enough number of players. The arguments for making the bid were that there would be enough capable volunteers to do the work; and that an aggressive advertising campaign selling the beauty of Portland and the surrounding area, especially the pleasant weather in August, would attract enough players. I knew that a few U.S. Opens had made a nice profit, so I argued that this was a good opportunity to put some much needed money into the OCF and USCF treasuries."*

*"The group agreed to go ahead if I would agree to chair a committee and prepare the bid document. Harry appointed a planning committee and a series of important sub-committees that included Bill MacDonald, Michael Morris, Clay Kelleber, Michael Groves, John Howell, Gerry Reiner, Elmer Blanton, Neil Dale, Brian Donnell, Evan Whipple, Robert Karch, Lewis Richardson and Lucia Pena. International Master Arthur Dake and Grandmaster Yasser Seirawan were appointed honorary co-chairmen. We held a couple of meetings in which we settled on the essential details and constructed a proposed budget."*

*"We sent announcements to all the large hotels asking for bids to host the event. We received nine proposals and the proposal from the Portland Hilton was easily the best."*

*"The Committee prepared a budget which would break even with 350 entries. We obtained letters of endorsement from Yasser Seirawan, Arthur Dake, O.W. LaFreniere (WCF President), Jose Lam (BCCF Secretary), the Northwest Chess Board, Earl Blumenauer (Multnomah County Commission Chairman), Bud Clark (Portland Mayor) and Victor Atiyeh (Oregon Governor). Randy Hough, the USCF Technical Director, came to Portland in May to meet with members of the committee and to inspect the Hilton. Four of us met with Randy for dinner on the top floor of the hotel on his last night in Portland. The final bid document was approved by the committee at the end of May. On June 6, 1985, copies were sent to the USCF office and all members of the Policy Board."*

*"The selection of the site for the 1987 U.S. Open was made in meetings of the Policy Board during the 1985 U.S. Open in Miami, ironically the site of my previous attempts to attract the tournament to Florida more than ten years earlier. Carl Haessler was the Oregon delegate to the USCF business meetings and had been involved in preparing a bid document. The Southern California Chess Association also submitted a strong bid which included a \$20,000 cash bonus from a Los Angeles hotel on the condition that the U.S. Closed Championship be held at the same time and place. A possible third bid from a group in New Orleans hoping to hold an event in that city to honor the 150th anniversary of the birth of*

*Paul Morphy failed to materialize, so New Orleans was dropped from consideration.”*

*“The member of the Policy Board from Los Angeles, Jerry Hanken, was determined to get the bid for L.A. The bid document from Portland was obviously persuasive with certain members of the U.S.C.F. staff offering that it was one of the best they had ever seen. The Policy Board also liked the idea of holding the event in the Pacific Northwest to help boost USCF memberships and increase support in an area that for some time had developed its own renegade rating system.”*

*“The first attempt to make a selection failed to get a majority vote for either city. Hanken was furious and stormed out of the meeting. He spent the time until the next meeting denigrating the Portland bid. During that same time, Haessler quietly conducted a less volatile but more effective campaign on behalf of Portland. At the next meeting, our bid was selected by a vote of 5-2.”*

*“For the next two years, the planning committee continued to meet and determine ways to work with the United States Chess Federation to promote and strengthen the tournament. Sunday August 2, 1987, was a busy day at the Hilton Hotel in Portland. Chess players were everywhere. The registration desk for the United States Open Chess Championship was open in the foyer outside the Grand Ballroom. New entries were being taken and advance entries were checking in. People at the hospitality desk were answering questions, giving out materials, and selling tours. A chess book store and a snack bar were open at the north end of the foyer. A skittles room was ready for action at the south end. A room for chess computers entered in the U.S. Open was set up near the ballroom. Tournament directors were busy making and arranging pairing cards. Two side event tournaments had been played on Saturday and another on Sunday morning. Pairing sheets for the first round of the U.S. Open were posted at 6 pm.”*

*“At about 7 pm just outside the ballroom, a jazz band began to play. They were playing Dixie Land music in honor of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Paul Morphy. At 7:20 pm, the ballroom doors were opened and hundreds of chess players moved in, some dancing to the music. Inside, they found tables in rows with 240 chess sets ready for action. The top six boards were on a platform in front of the south end of the ballroom with demonstration boards just behind the top four. Roped off at the south end of the room were the next 30 boards. The top 40 boards had valuable wooden sets. In front of the top boards were 100 chairs ready for spectators.”*

*“At 7:30 pm, Gerard Dullea, Executive Director of the United States Chess Federation, welcomed the players to the 88th annual U.S. Open. Ira Lee Riddle, the chief tournament director, followed*

*with information and advice for the players and spectators. He introduced the assistant directors, then told the players to ‘start the clocks.’ Sief Poulsen had designed and ordered 600 plastic bags to serve as registration packets for the U.S. Open players. As the players checked in, they received packets which contained a tournament program, ads for lectures and simul, a copy of the August 1987 Northwest Chess magazine, a copy of The Portland Book, and an ad for local tours. Gerry Reiner had obtained the materials and supervised the stuffing of the packets. When the players checked in, they were asked to complete a registration form which could be used as a ‘finder’ during the tournament.”*

*“The August Northwest Chess featured a picture of Arthur Dake on the cover. The two major articles in the magazine were a biography of Dake and a history of the Portland Chess Club, both written by Casey Bush.”*

*“The tournament was a resounding financial success, generating more than \$7,000 profit for the OCF treasury and even more to the USCF. The concern of members of the Policy Board and others that the Open in Portland would fail were completely smashed. Jerry Hanken apologized to me for negative remarks he made in 1985 in Miami.”*

More than a decade later, while presenting a proposal for the U.S. Open to be located in Los Angeles in 2003, Mr. Hanken reportedly told the U.S.C.F. Executive Board that

**Carl Haessler**  
Chess Master



**chessworksNW.com**

■ ■ ■

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he wanted to put together a tournament “even better than Portland 1987.” I can attest that for Hanken, and perhaps some USCF officials, Portland 1987 had become the gold standard.

Dr. Ralph Hall was interred at Willamette National Cemetery. Last year, a rotating trophy identifying the winners of the Oregon Senior Chess Championship was established in his memory as a result of a donation from his family. He leaves behind an abundance of chess players attracted through his influence to the game he loved.

A display of Ralph Hall’s chess papers and memorabilia is on permanent display at the Museum of the Oregon Territory in Oregon City, where he lived for his 25 years in the area. Overlooking the Willamette Falls, 18th largest in the world, the Museum features 15,000 year-old petroglyphs, artifacts from the American Indian communities of the Willamette Valley and is home to the Clackamas County Historical Society’s extensive collection and library where guests can research land claim documents, marriage & civil war records and historical photographs.

Admission is free, but the hours are limited to Wednesdays and the first and third Saturdays, 11a.m. to 4p.m. Please swing by the *NWC* table if you would like to make the half hour trip down route 205 during this year’s U.S. Open. I would be happy to serve as your volunteer chauffeur and tour guide.

You can visit the historical society web site at [www.clackamashistory.org](http://www.clackamashistory.org) for more details. Better still, visit the Chess Exhibit in the Murdoch Gallery and view the collection of Dr. Ralph L. Hall in person.

Sadly, Dr. Hall is not with us to commemorate the return of the U.S. Open to the Pacific Northwest. Before I left Oregon City to play in the 2010 N.Y. State Championship in Albany, I paid a visit to Ralph and Irene on my way out of town.

“If you see Bill Goichberg you should remind that 2012 is the 25th anniversary of the Portland Open,” Ralph said. “It would be nice if they would come back.” When I passed the message the following weekend, Goichberg responded, “Portland was a nice location. Maybe we should go back there. I’ll mention it to Bill (Hall) and Pat (Knight-Smith).” What happened after that is a mystery to me since I am no longer connected to the process.

Nevertheless, it seems clear - Ralph Hall’s influence is still felt 25 years later.



From the pictures above, you can get a partial glimpse of the items on display at the Museum of the Oregon Territory.  
Photos courtesy of Brian Berger

# 61st Annual Oregon Open September 1, 2 & 3, 2012

**6-round Swiss:** 2 sections, Open & Reserve (under 1800)

**Time Control:** 40 moves in 2 hours, sudden death in 1 hour, 5 second delay (40/2; SD/1; d5)

**Registration:** Saturday 9-10:45 am. Bring sets & clocks (none provided)

**Rounds:** Saturday 11 & 5:30; Sunday 9:30 & 5:30; Monday 9 & 3

**Location:** Mt. Hood Community College, Vista Room; 26000 SE Stark, Gresham. Check [www.pdxchess.org](http://www.pdxchess.org) for directions to playing site

**Organizer:** Portland Chess Club **Byes:** 2 Byes available, request before Rd.1

## \$3,000 Guaranteed!

\$1500 in each Section

Increased at discretion of Organizer if more than 100 non-junior players

**Open:** 1st \$550; 2nd \$300; 3rd \$200 **U2000:** 1st \$200; 2nd \$150; 3rd \$100

**Reserve:** 1st \$370; 2nd \$220; 3rd \$130 **U1600, U1400, U1200 each \$130-80-50**

Unrated players limited to class prizes of \$100 in Open, \$60 in reserve

**Entry:** \$60; \$10 discount for PCC members who register by August 30

Juniors (under 19) may pay \$15 and compete for non-cash prizes in Reserve Section (no PCC discount)

**Memberships:** USCF and OCF/WCF required (OSA) NW Grand Prix.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

USCF ID # \_\_\_\_\_ USCF Exp \_\_\_\_\_ OCF/WCF Exp \_\_\_\_\_ Rating \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Bye Rds \_\_\_\_\_

**Entries:** Payable to Portland Chess Club; mail to Mike Morris, 2344 NE 27th Ave., Portland, OR 97212

# Most Exciting Game of 2011 (Roua vs. Chen)

by Frank Niro

The reason I consider this the most exciting game played in the Northwest during 2011 is that it was the product of a wild time scramble between two top players with everything on the line. Until now, the spectator who wandered by at the exact moment the competitors stopped keeping score - and literally scribbled down the rapid fire moves in shorthand - has not had the chance to share the game.

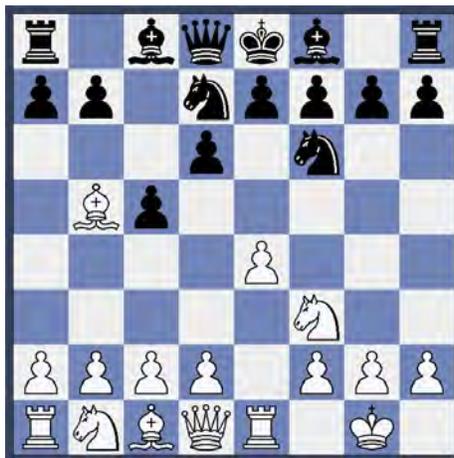
At the end of three rounds in the 58 player Gresham Open, Radu Roua, Howard Chen and Michael Schemm were the only players with perfect scores. Six masters played in the tournament, with Chen and Roua holding the top two seeds at the start. They were paired against each other in round 4, with Roua playing the white pieces. Schemm lost to David Bragg on Board 2, setting up the showdown between Roua and Chen. Fittingly, it was the last game to finish.

Roua defeated Chen and then beat Richard Gutman in the final round for a perfect 5-0 score. This was part of a ten game winning streak beginning with his last round victory at the Oregon Open against Brian Esler and continuing with his perfect 4-0 start at the Oregon Closed Championship. Remarkably, Roua's performance rating during the streak was over 2500.

Coincidentally, the spectator who carried around the only complete scoresheet for this game during the past year was your interim editor. I promised Radu Roua that I would publish this game eventually and am genuinely pleased to have the opportunity now. Enjoy!

White: Radu Roua (2275)  
Black: Howard Chen (2335)  
Gresham Open (4), 2011

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Nd7 4.0-0 Ngf6 5.Re1



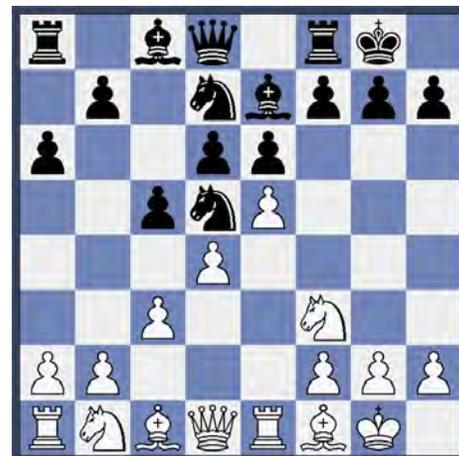
5...e6

An early example of what black is trying to do in this variation was demonstrated in the 1986 US Open by IM Jonathan Schroer: 5...a6 6.Bf1 (6.Bxd7+ Bxd7 7.e5!?) 6...b6 7.d4 cxd4 8.Nxd4 Bb7 9.Nc3 e6 10.f4 Qc7 11.Kh1 Nc5 12.Bd3 g6 13.f5 gxf5 14.Nd5 Nxd5 15.exd5 Bxd5 16.Nxf5 0-0-0 17.Ne3 Bb7 18.b4 Nxd3 19.cxd3 Bg7 20.Rb1 Kb8 21.b5 axb5 22.Re2 Rhg8 23.Rxb5 Qc6 24.Rb4 Bh6 25.Rc2 Bxe3 26.Rxc6 Bxc6 27.Re4 Bc5 28.Rg4 e5 29.Bb2 h5 30.Rg3 h4 31.Rf3 h3 32.d4 hxg2+ 33.Kg1 Bxf3 34.Qxf3 exd4 35.Qd5 Rde8 0-1, FM J.Curdo (2285) - IM J. Schroer (2320), Alexandria VA, 1986

6.c3 a6 7.Bf1 Be7 8.d4 0-0

8...cxd4 9.cxd4 b5 10.a4 bxa4 11.Rxa4 Nb6 12.Ra1 0-0 13.Nc3 Bb7 14.Bd3 Re8 15.h3

9.e5! Nd5



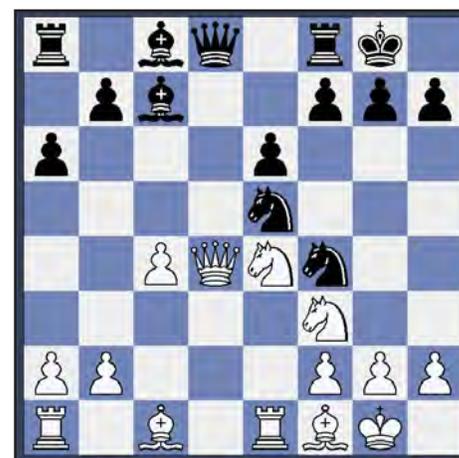
10.Nbd2 (Novelty)

The most common line in the databases is 10.c4!? Nb4 11.a3 Nc6 12.exd6 Bxd6 13.dxc5 Bxc5 14.b4 Be7 15.Bb2; An alternative is 10.exd6 Bxd6 11.c4 N5f6 12.Nc3 b6 13.dxc5 Bxc5 14.a3 Bb7 15.b4 Be7 16.Bf4 Qc8 17.Nd4 Re8 18.Qd3 Bf8 19.Bg5 Qc7 20.Qh3 Rac8 21.Re3 g6 22.Bh6 Bxh6 23.Qxh6 Ng4 0-1, F.Rupeni (2205) vs. B.Toth (2420), 1981

10...cxd4 11.c4

11.exd6 Bxd6 12.Ne4 Bc7 13.Qxd4=

11...Nf4 (11...Nb4!?) 12.exd6 Bxd6 13.Ne4 Bc7 14.Qxd4 Ne5



15.Qc3

15.Bxf4? Nxf3+

15...Nfg6 16.Bg5 (+/=) f6 17.Rad1  
Qe7 18.Bc1 Bd7 19.Nd4 Rad8



20.Ng3?!

Best was 20.c5 with advantage for White according to the chess engine, Houdini.

20...Qf7

Better was 20...Nc6! (Houdini)

21.b4 Nc6= 22.Nc2 Bc8 23.Ne4  
Be5 24.Qb3 Qc7 25.g3 Nge7  
26.Bb2 Bxb2 27.Qxb2 Nf5 28.c5  
e5 29.Bg2 Be6 30.Bh3 Qe7 31.Bxf5  
Bxf5



32.Nd6 Bg4 33.Rd2 Kh8 34.a4



Howard Chen of Washington (left foreground) faces Radu Roua of Oregon in the critical Round 4 game at the 2011 Gresham Open held on the campus of Mt. Hood Community College. Behind them are Michael Schemm (left) and David Bragg (right). Roua defeated Chen en route to a perfect 5-0 sweep of the event.  
*Photo Credit: Andrei Botez*

34...Qc7 35.b5± axb5 36.axb5 Ne7  
37.Qb4

37.b6!? Qb8 38.Qb3± (38.Nb4!?)

37...Be6 38.Ne3 Rd7 39.Red1



In mutual time trouble, both players stopped keeping score here. The game was blitz from this point until the finish. A large crowd of spectators gathered around the table. At the end, both players had the 5 second delay plus only a few seconds remaining.

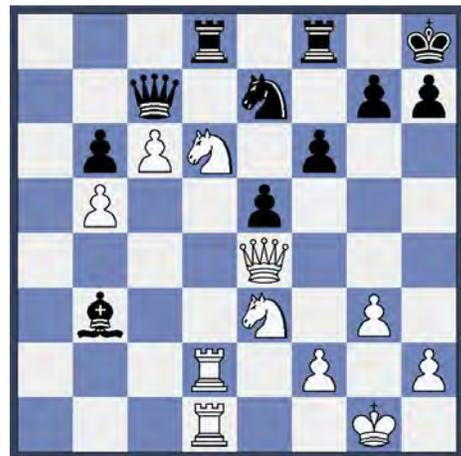
39...Rdd8 40.Qe4

40.Nxb7 Rxd2 41.Rxd2 Qxb7 42.c6  
Qc7 43.b6+-; 40.c6 bxc6 41.b6  
Rb8 42.Ndf5 Rxb6 43.Qxe7 Qxe7  
44.Nxe7+-

40...b6 41.c6

41.Qb7! Qxb7 42.Nxb7 Rxd2  
43.Rxd2 Nc8 44.c6+-; 41.cxb6 Qxb6  
42.Ndc4 Bxc4 (42...Qb8?! 43.Rxd8  
Rxd8 44.Rxd8+ Qxd8 45.b6 Nf5  
46.b7 Nd4 47.Na5+-) 43.Rxd8  
Rxd8 44.Rxd8+ Qxd8 45.Nxc4 Qd5  
46.Qxd5 Nxd5 47.b6 Nb4

41...Bb3



At this point, hands were moving so fast that it was difficult to keep track of the moves.

#### 42.Rb1

42.Qd3!!+- A nice move, but really tough to see with flags hanging. A practical choice under fire, the move played was certainly good enough in the circumstances.

42...Be6 43.Qb4 f5 44.Rbd1 f4 45.Nec4 Ng6 46.Ne4 Rxd2 47.Rxd2 Ra8 48.Ng5+- Bg4 49.f3 Bxf3 50.Rd7 Qc8 51.Nxf3 e4 52.Nd6 Ra1+ 53.Ne1 1-0



Here's the proof! A group of spectators surrounds the Roua-Chen game obscuring the players at the 2011 Gresham Open. Note the intense look on all the faces and the "geezer" in the white shirt frantically trying to keep track of the action for posterity. *Photo by Andrei Botez*



Portland Chess Master Radu Roua, 2010 Oregon Champ, 2011 Gresham Open Champion and 2011 Oregon Co-Champ. *Photo credit: Andrei Botez*

After the game, the winner commented, "I have beautiful memories from the tournament and this game was one of them." Graciously, he acknowledged his competitor: "I have nothing else to add, except to congratulate my opponent for his fighting spirit which contributed to this beautiful game."

### Portland's Geezer Gallery, supporter of chess

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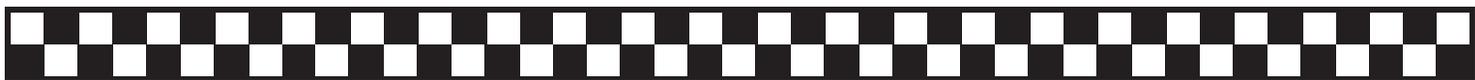
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Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

USCF I.D. Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ **All pre-registered players please check in at tournament desk on arrival.**

**ENTRY FEE ENCLOSED: (CIRCLE SECTION AND FEE BELOW)** **BYE(S) REQUESTED FOR ROUND(S): (CIRCLE)** 1 2 3 4 5 6

----- OPEN SECTION -----			EXPERT	"A"	"B"	"C"	"D"/Under	UNRATED
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# A Forgotten Chess Tale: Hapley's Project

by Yasser Seirawan

*The following story is a work of fiction. With the exception of the historical figure of the World Chess Champion José Raúl Capablanca none of the characters was an actual person or is intended to represent anyone. The characters are the product of the author's imagination. Readers will benefit to know that the currency of the period was 12 pence equalled one shilling (known as one Bob) while 20 shillings equalled one pound. Thus 240 pence equalled one pound or a guinea. The story is dedicated to Fred & Carol Kleist; however, inspiration for this story comes from Unkle Vik. Here's looking at you, kid.*

George Charles Hapley was in a rush and excited to be home. During his thirty-four year career at the London Standard Charter Mortgage he had rarely taken two hours off from a full day at his job. He either worked full days or took sick leave for the whole day. Now fifty-nine years old, he was nine years beyond the age of retirement. Hapley wanted to work until his sixtieth birthday and then retire on a more comfortable pension. He quickly made himself a cucumber and butter sandwich, washed it down with a glass of bottled milk, delivered that morning, and dressed while the water boiled for his tea. He donned his best tweed suit jacket and black worsted wool trousers with a deep burgundy tie. Without expecting to match the sartorial splendor of the World Chess Champion, he paused at the mirror to admire his own effort.

His plan, hatched weeks ago, was to leave his Council House bachelor flat by five sharp. He didn't actually think of himself as a bachelor; more like a widower. He had been betrothed to Mary set during his second year of residence at Eton. Her motor car accident, a blocked accelerator knob, had been declared freakish. Hapley never found another who could match his gentle Mary. Decades ago he had stopped looking.

If he left on time he could catch the 25 at five and twenty minutes past five, arriving at the King's Mead YMCA community hall at the stroke of six. The club would have as its guest the World Chess Champion, Señor José Raúl Capablanca, for a display against forty players which was to start promptly at seven o'clock. It had been a project two years in the making, and Hapley was anxious to ensure that the grand preparations were in proper order.

During the bus journey Hapley smiled to himself as he reviewed how events had progressed to this extraordinary historical moment.

Four years previously Capablanca had defeated the age-

ing World Champion Emanuel Lasker in a match of a mere fourteen games. Capablanca had won four and lost none when Lasker abandoned the contest, citing troubles with Havana's tropical heat. Since his victory, the charismatic Cuban had been the toast of the chess world, winning events with extraordinary ease. Other masters now considered him invincible. The logic of his play couldn't be matched by his peers, while chess enthusiasts thrilled at the effortless smoothness of his victories. Most extraordinary of all was the plain fact that he didn't lose. Hapley thought that in the past five years the Cuban's losses could be counted with the fingers of one hand.

Two years ago, during one of its quarterly club meetings, speakers had droned on endlessly about subscriptions. Towards the second half of the meeting Robert David Templeton suggested a festival to draw in new members and replenish the club's meagre coffers. Such an excellent suggestion evoked eager debate. The key question was what to do for the marquis draw. Suggestions rose and fell, it was towards the end of the discussion that Hapley tentatively put forward an idea that drew both praise and rebuke: *"Perhaps we could engage the World Champion, Capablanca, to perform a séance display at the club,"* he had ventured.

It had taken all of thirty seconds for the surprise to wear off, after which many voices began squabbling at once, *"We're too small a club,"* one had said. *"Can't afford it,"* offered another, as if the matter were thereby settled. Others had been more agreeable. *"That would be splendid. Sure to draw reporters. Perhaps obtain a mention in The Times as well. Good for patronage and sponsorship, you know."* For the next few minutes chaos had ensued, with everyone jabbering at once. It had taken the presidential gavel of Thomas William Preston to bring the meeting back to order.

*"How much will it cost the club? What is your plan? When are the dates?"* These were the questions with which Mr.

Preston was, quite reasonably, confronted. All eyes turned to Hapley.

Hapley was forced to stammer, *"I, I really haven't ... thought about it that much. It was all rather a dream, really."* That was all he managed. There was a pause until Hapley surprised everyone, including himself, by continuing, *"Perhaps we could offer a forty board séance with a forty pound stipend. Each player would have to pay a pound to compete."* Hapley was a quiet man. He had been the club's Secretary and Treasurer alternately for the past twenty five years. Pummelled by the endless, tedious labours of these stations, he had stepped down officially and was now merely a volunteer. Even so, he had always been the first one to arrive early and set out the chess sets, and the last to leave, carefully putting them all away in their boxes and locking the cupboards, where the sets rested faithfully until the club met again.

The amounts drew incredulous gasps. *"Forty pounds!,"* cried one voice. *"A pound to play a game of chess?,"* shouted another. *"Who would pay a pound?,"* asked the same voice. As if the amount was absurd.

Once more, feeling compelled to speak, Hapley heroically rose to the occasion, and for the last time. *"I would pay a pound,"* he said, before quietly resuming his seat.

The idea might have been still-born there and then except that two other voices rose in support. *"An opportunity to play against the World Champion? For a pound? Very well. I'll do it as well."* Another voice affirmed, *"For a pound, I'd give it a punt."*

The meeting debated the pros and cons of a chess festival, combined with a Capablanca séance, for the next forty-nine minutes. The idea of a King's Mead festival was, in time, dropped, but the idea of a séance continued to generate debate.

Again, the President, Preston, called the meeting to order. *"Hapley, if you are agreeable, you are to form a three-man committee, which you shall chair. The committee is to explore the feasibility of such an undertaking. If you can secure thirty players who agree, the club can take the risk of making such an offer. You must understand that the club cannot afford to incur financial disadvantage on your undertaking, so you may be asked to bear some of the burden yourself. You will report at our next quarterly meeting."*

The meeting had been adjourned shortly after these pronouncements, without Hapley's voiced approval. He had merely nodded his assent. At first, he had been elated that his idea had drawn any support at all. Over the next three months elation turned to despair. He had pleaded, begged, cajoled and even threatened the club's one hundred and twenty members to make a commitment. He wrote letters, penned articles in chess magazines and kept a lively forum going in the club's bulletins. By dint of untiring, forceful efforts he managed to gain undertakings from twenty-eight persons, wo short of the number demanded by the club's directors. In three cases he had to make up four shillings himself. His efforts had drawn excitement from the rank and file, and especially from those who couldn't afford the registration fee.

The next quarterly club meeting had gone much better. Hapley had even won praise for his efforts. Twenty-eight was a very good number. After much debate a close vote of 4 to 3, with the tepid support of the President, passed the resolution. Preston even apologized to the opposition for his support, explaining that otherwise the project would be vetoed. Hapley was authorized to write to Capablanca direct on behalf of the King's Mead Club, guaranteeing a Forty pound stipend for performing a forty-player séance. A fortnight later Hapley sent off a carefully worded, well crafted letter. He wanted his invitation to be precise. Hours were spent drafting the text, which began with an introduction featuring generous praise. Hapley had tortured himself by thinking, "One does not obtain a second chance to make a first impression."

The answer that arrived two months later was crushing: Capablanca expected One Hundred pounds. A princely sum, and the matter would have died there and then if Hapley hadn't worked so hard to acquire thirty registered players. Supportive letters from around the United Kingdom had arrived in the club's post-box. Many asked if non-club members might be allowed to register. Indeed, such thoughts had caused Edinburgh, Dublin, Cardiff, Liverpool, Nottingham and Hastings to consider séance displays of their own. Hapley managed to convince three other clubs to work together to create a tour. Capablanca could perform four displays for a fee of One Hundred & Sixty of his Majesty's pounds. Again, the answer was crushing but Hapley was cheered; the idea wasn't as completely out of reach as before. Capablanca had agreed that in case of four sé-

ances he would charge half of his regular fee and each club would have a burden of Fifty pounds, along with two days' hotel expenses, as well as train fare within the Kingdom.

The King's Mead Club directors wrangled for weeks before a compromise was reached. Hapley was enjoined to try to come up with Ten pounds in addition to the Forty pounds from the registration fees. While no salesman of any merit, he managed to convince the Directors of the London Standard Charter Mortgage to sponsor the engagement to the tune of One pound. Two club members had generously stepped forward with ten shillings above their One pound registration fees. The real breakthrough came when the owner of Simpson's-in-the-Strand promised One pound ten shillings' worth of refreshments and drinks.

It was the munificent sponsorship of Simpson's-in-the-Strand that created an opening for further patronage. At the club meeting, it had been decided that spectators would be charged two shillings each. They would have refreshments, including the new rage ginger ale, along with the opportunity to spectate. Through scrupulous and even ingenious discounts and raffles, Hapley had carefully concluded that he would be on the short end of the stick for Three guineas, fourteen shillings, eight and a half pence. A good month and a half's worth of his wages.

He wrote back to inform Capablanca that four clubs, including his own, the King's Mead YMCA, could meet his terms including hotel and train expenses while in the UK. That for the four séance displays, Capablanca would earn Two Hundred pounds. Capablanca had accepted. That was fourteen months ago.

The months passed quickly and as the great event drew closer, matters had taken on a momentum of their own. What had been a torturous undertaking now proved easy. Two months earlier, the registration book surpassed forty players. Hapley was asked to give up his seat, as he was near the bottom of the club's rating-ladder and stronger players wanted to play. Hapley had reluctantly agreed. Those players who were short of their registration fees were replaced. Hotel owners offered discounts for lodgings and eventually agreed to defray the entire hosting costs.

Hapley was to pay the train costs of two shillings, eight and a half pence, but when spectator tickets were last counted, even this amount was sufficiently covered. In fact, eighty spectator tickets had been purchased in advance. There had been no last-minute cancellations, which meant that the club would, at last count, manage a tidy profit. Best of all, thanks to the spectator tickets Hapley had no financial exposure of his own. His project was an overwhelming success, and it would all culminate tonight.

Hapley emerged from his reflections just in time to realize that it was his stop. He opened his umbrella while stepping off the bus. There was only light drizzle as he happily walked the relatively short distance to the YMCA's community centre in the King's Mead borough of London. He was pleased to arrive before six and busily took out the boards and sets and began arranging the tables for play, as well as tables for refreshments. The commotion would begin over the next half-hour.

It was either giddiness or simple excitement that caused him to knock over a pawn while setting up the pieces. The pawn had fallen to the floor before he could attempt to catch it. Naturally, it had fallen into the least accessible spot and Hapley was nearly stuck at full reach under the table on hands and knees when a familiar voice called out from behind him.

*"Evenin' Hapless!"* The voice was cheerful.

Hapley cringed. The voice belonged to Stephen Potter, one of the club's best players but a truly ungainly individual where manners were concerned. Hapley hated his nickname "Hapless" at the club. It was something he had endured at Eton but had managed to outlive after being hired at London Standard Charter Mortgage. Once he had joined the King's Mead Club it had resurfaced, adhering to him with pitiless tenacity. The truth was that Hapley was indeed helpless at chess. The standing joke was that a beginner would have Hapley off the bottom of the club ladder but only for a day... week...month. Hapley, of course, bristled with indignation. For a period of eleven consecutive months he wasn't at rock bottom but no one seemed to have noticed. Other than himself.

Hapley was "house man." If anyone at anytime when the club was in session wanted a game, there was Hap-

ley, and almost certain victory to be had. Hapley himself couldn't understand why he lost so often. After all, he reasonably told himself, he played all out for the attack at all times. It was the initiative, he repeated to others. His own mantra was simple, *"Get out the bits as quick as you can and go for the attack."* He loved the combination above all else and by his own reckoning had a keen eye for tactics. The problem was obtaining positions where they were actually successful. Hapley simply adored gambits. Gambit play for both sides, in fact. The problem was that he never quite seemed to get back the sacrificed material. If he did recover it, he contrived to lose an ending which was level. All the time. Rook endings were particularly dreadful. He always confounded as to when his Rook should be active, passive, behind or to the side.

With a final effort Hapley managed to grab the elusive pawn and squared himself back up and onto his feet. *"Evening, Potty,"* he replied while pulling himself up to his full imposing height of five feet eight and one quarter inches. It was his only intimidation tactic, but one that was sure to work. He knew Stephen Potter despised his nickname as well. It was tit for tat. *"Watta seats goin' fur now?,"* Potter drawled in his Cockney accent.

Hapley thought about his answer. It was important. Potter was the club's local hustler. The best man at lightning chess but not the best in tournament play. The man had no job or any visible means of support but somehow managed his affairs. Hapley usually aided him by tossing a few Bob per month in weekly take-downs. Potter had waited a long time for signing up the registration form before advancing his ten shilling coins. Ten Bob he really could ill-afford to go without. Now the registration was complete and Potter had his chair, but others were clamoring to enter. *"I think you could get twenty-four shillings,"* came Hapley's careful reply. Hapley watched Potter's face turn into a thinking study. Potter could make a four shilling profit on a ten shilling investment made two months ago. A forty per cent return. Conversely, he would have to come up with another ten shillings this evening to play. The club had carried him to the eve of play and only Morrison hadn't advanced the full One pound registration cost.

Potter pushed a hand through his carefully greased, elegantly parted black hair. He too had dressed in his Sunday best. *"I'll drop out for two dozen..."*

Hapley was quick to correct him. *"Morrison will give you fourteen shillings for your seat. He already paid ten shillings for being a replacement player and you've paid only ten shillings."*

*"Yeab. Right."* Potter agreed. *"Morry got me spot for 'ourteen Bob."* *"All right. I'll let him know."* Hapley moved on to the next table to start putting out the pieces. *"Care to lend a hand?"*

*"Nah. I'll 'elp the tea and crack a fresh pot."* Potter moved off to the small kitchen area where there was a hot plate to set up the tea. Biscuits were in a cupboard above. Potter was sure to help himself.

Hapley wasn't surprised by Potter's leaving and sped up his tempo in setting out the pieces. It was a quarter past six, and the stampede would start soon. Hapley placed a table by the door so that he could sell and collect spectator tickets, as well as Morrison's late registration fee. If Morrison was in time, Potter's ten shillings advance would be moved on the ledger to Morrison's benefit and he would in turn owe fourteen shillings to Potter. There were four replacement players waiting in the queue. Each had advanced ten shillings on the condition that if he didn't make it he would receive a full refund. As the project's manager, Hapley had the keys to the cash box and now set it up on the table, along with his ledger and receipt book. As a trained accountant he was scrupulous at maintaining the records, including keeping track of club dues down to the large half-penny "half-a-copper" coin.

That was another reason why the séance had been a brilliant coup: club members received preference and first claims to a seat. The club had attracted six new members, and all the members had uncomplainingly paid their annual subscriptions in arrears to buy a spectator's ticket. The club hadn't been so replete in years.

Hapley had just taken a seat by the entrance when the first wave of people crashed through. For the next forty minutes, Hapley had never been so busy except when doing pairings of the last round of the club's lightning tournaments. During one club championship so many persons were looking over his shoulders when he matched scorecards that he feared the mob would crash down upon him. This, however, was a different kind of excitement. He was simultaneously taking tickets, selling them, giving refunds directing caterers, as-

signing players their boards, handing out score sheets with the new carbon copy papers that were now the rage and welcoming club members and club directors when there was a sudden roar from behind him, coupled with a burst of applause. Hapley turned to see the club's President, Preston, triumphantly march in with the World Champion Capablanca through a second entrance. It was usually locked. They continued right to the drawing room, the inner sanctum beyond the reach of the great unwashed, where club directors were invited to indulge in conversation, a cigar and a champagne toast in the presence of the World Champion before the séance began. Hapley hadn't been invited. Nor was he introduced as the smiling Champion waved through.

In any case, Hapley still had innumerable tasks before everything was in readiness. It was after he witnessed Morrison paying fourteen shillings, each coin carefully counted out to Potter as well as Potter's signed return of his Club's receipt in favor of Morrison that he had registered Morrison as a player and crossed out Potter from his ledger. Hapley smiled brightly, as things had just tidied up when the telephone in the booth at the building's entrance down the hall began ringing. It was a call that would turn the world, or at least Hapley's world, upside down.

To catch the call Hapley managed to find a club member, Anthony Darnell, to collect spectator tickets while he went to the booth to deal with the long, incessant rings. He managed to get his shoe stuck while picking up the receiver and closing the folding glass door against himself. It was Thatcher, and the line was atrocious. He had been driving with three club members, all of whom were registered. Thatcher's motor car had broken down ten minutes earlier. It had taken him a while to find a telephone booth to call the club with the news that they were "...at least forty minutes away." Depending upon

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the state of the motor car, perhaps even more. The drizzle had turned into a driving downpour, and the men had collectively decided that they couldn't make the one hour time deadline. Could they have their entry registration payments returned to them, sans penalty?

Hapley had been resolute. *"If I can sell your seats for One pound, the answer is yes. If not, the registration fees are forfeited. Any loss could be shared collectively."* Hapley replaced the receiver and started thinking. He rushed back to his table thanking Mr. Darnell for manning his post. With Morrison replacing Potter, that left three persons who had registered as replacements. Of course, he had forgotten about himself. In fact, he had been the first to register, the first to lose his seat, the first to lose his replacement seat, and yet the last in line.

He now shared his new-found knowledge with the three replacements. All were excited about their, "wee bit of good luck..." and eagerly paid an additional ten shillings to play. Hapley reached into his own wallet to balance the books and he carefully recorded the forty shillings just collected. Thatcher and the other three members were owed a ten shilling refund each. He jotted down a careful note to himself in the ledger. The awareness that he would play against Capablanca hadn't quite sunk in when he heard the familiar voice.

*"So. I'm in it again, am I?"* It was Potter, looking cheerful. *"I beg your pardon?"* Hapley felt a chill pierce his breastplate. *"Pete and Thomas told me Thatch's motor may have snuffed it. I'm in for a guinea then?"* Potter continued. *"No. You've sold your place to Morrison already. And we are fully booked."*

At the mention of his name, Morrison had come to join the discussion.

*"Yeah, an' who's the four, then?"* Potter pressed. When Hapley mentioned himself as the last one, Potter pounced. *"I'll take your place, then."* And he began to extract his wallet.

Hapley was saved by Morrison. *"See here, my good man, I've paid twenty-four shilling. Twenty belong to the club and four to you. You mean you want to play for One pound? You'll have to give me back my four Bob."*

Hapley herded the two men away from the entrance to

continue their now animated discussion. He carefully reviewed the registration list, crossing out a few names and added others, including his own. His heart nearly skipped a beat as he stared at his name on table forty: *George Charles Hapley*, he had written in fine penmanship.

He was snapped out of his revelry by the loud voice of the club's President. The World Champion José Raúl Capablanca stood at his side. "*Would the players please take their seats. I propose now to explain the rules of the séance.*" It was a commanding voice that boomed across the large room. "*Hapley! Do you have the list of players?*" Preston called.

Hapley brought with him the cash box and gave Preston the list of players. Preston immediately conferred over it with Capablanca, pointing out that the top players would play on the highest boards, while the lower boards would have weaker players. Their backs turned, Hapley had been dismissed without a word. It was time to lock away the cash box and take his place at board forty. After double-checking that the cupboard was securely locked, Hapley returned to the playing hall. He made an effort to avoid Potter by circumnavigating the room before taking his seat.

Preston's voice was still ringing out while Hapley filled in his score-sheet. In the box for "White" Hapley carefully wrote, *José Raúl Capablanca, World Champion*. In the box for "Black" he wrote *George Charles Hapley* and stared at it for several seconds. He could hardly believe his good fortune. Again, Hapley was surprised by the applause, hearing just the prelude, "*Please join with me in a warm King's Mead Club welcome to the World... Chess... Champion... Señor... José ... Raúl... Capablanca!*"

Capablanca rewarded his applauding admirers with a graceful bow. He then explained that he would proceed clockwise. He moved to the first table. Directly to Hapley's left. Top board and club champion, Andrew Whitely Kyle, stood to shake hands, and Capablanca then made his first move. This process was repeated all the way around the thirty-nine boards before Hapley stood as well. "*George Charles Hapley, a great honour to meet you, Señor Capablanca.*" Capablanca smiled and courteously replied, "*Likewise.*" The two shook hands.

Before Capablanca could open the game, Hapley con-

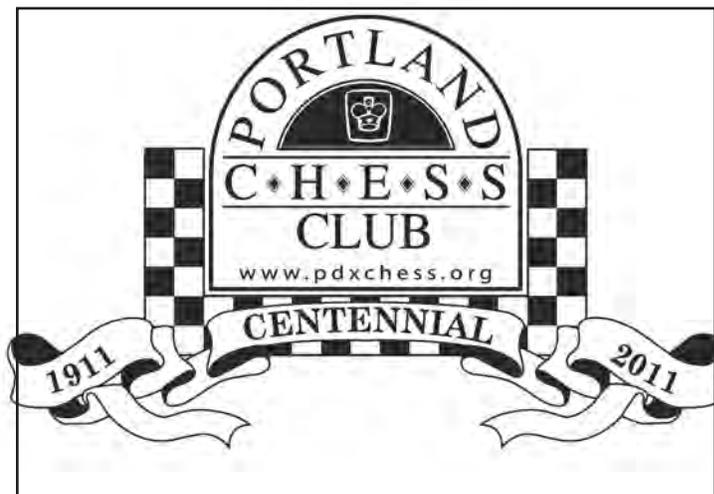
tinued, "*It was I who wrote you.*"

Capablanca's handsome face now broke out into a wide smile, "*Yes. Thank you for mentioning it. Your name was familiar. Thank you for your letters. It seems that if it wasn't for you, I shouldn't be here.*"

The compliment staggered Hapley into complete silence, and he merely nodded positively while taking his seat. As there was no response, in a few seconds Capablanca was forced to say, "*Allow me to play my opening move.*" He reached for his King pawn, pushed it forward two squares and moved on to table one.

Hapley carefully wrote down "*(1.)P-K4*" and looked up. Now that the introductions were over Capablanca was moving down the tables with extraordinary speed. To his left, from board one he saw, Kyle, Patterson, Moody, Johnson, Elvin, Lawson, Jamison, Winter and others. Murderers' row. The whole lot of them. The best of the club with only Potter missing. Hapley in all his years had never taken a game from any of them. Not once. Hapley pondered the magnificence of it all. The World Champion facing the crème de la crème of what the club could offer – all at once. It was a staggering thought. Tonight's séance was the fourth in the tour. Capablanca had arrived by steamer in Scotland, where he engaged in Edinburgh, travelled down to Nottingham and onwards to Cardiff. At each outing the scores had been lopsided. Two draws, two draws and one draw. No losses for Capablanca. Even more amazing was his speed of play. Despite forty games at once, all the displays were over in less than four hours of play. Adjectives of praise were failing to keep up.

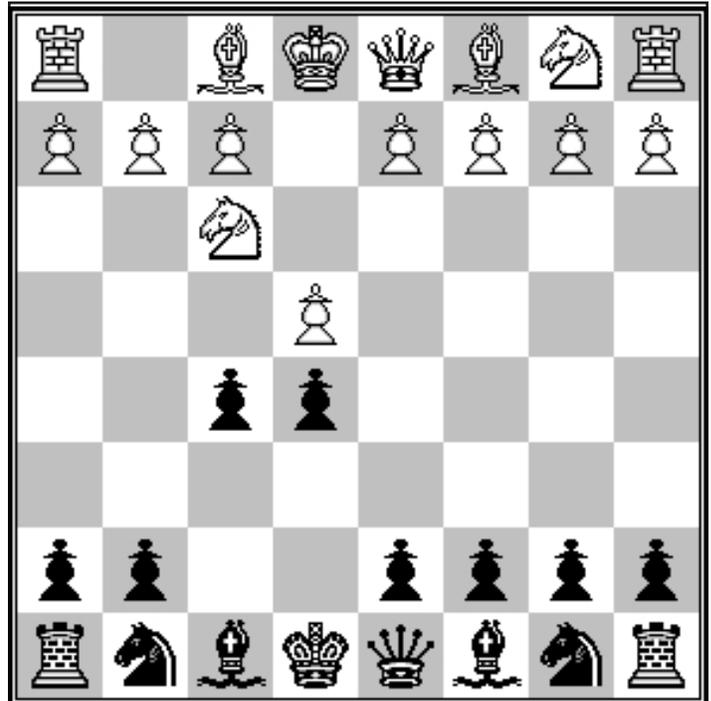
Now Capablanca had reached midway through the



boards pausing before Preston's. The two shared another laugh together. Hapley was pleased with the physical layout. It was a square rather than a circle. Each long table hosted five boards, and there were two long tables along each of the four sides. The room was so large that there was plenty of room between the eight tables as well. In the centre of the square was a round table containing food and drink, exclusively for the World Champion. Hapley looked around the room and was pleased at the sight of the many spectators, all of whom seemed to be nibbling and drinking contentedly. Indeed, it seemed there were more spectators than ticket sales, and a cross thought went through his mind. Worse, by avoiding Potter he had forgotten to get himself anything to eat or drink.

Hapley now wrote "(1...) P-K4" in the box on his own score sheet reserved for Black's reply. As Capablanca drew close he was ready with his response. He hadn't yet released his King Pawn when Capablanca jumped forward with his King's Knight and moved on. Hapley's heart skipped a beat. He carefully wrote on his scoresheet, "(2.) Kt-KB3" and tried to quell his excitement. He knew he would have been sunk if Capablanca had played, 2.Kt-QB3 or even 2.P-Q4, for then he would not have been able to play his favourite Greco Counter Gambit, 2...P-KB4. All the club members laughed at his pet variation yet he hadn't come off that badly. At least from the opening. It was usually in the middle-game that he went astray and, if not, there was the waiting endgame where mistakes could pile up. Often in a row. In any case, the club members weren't inclined to beat him in the main line of play; usually, 3.P-Q3 was sufficient to pound him into submission.

The first round had been slow but for the second and third Capablanca seemed to be at a jog. Hapley had just written, "(2...) P-KB4" when it was time to play it. Capablanca's hand had been in mid-air when he froze and actually lingered. Now he stopped fully to consider his response. Hapley was absolutely thrilled. He was the first to stump the great man. His chest swelled with pride. Capablanca quickly reflected on the possibilities. The second move by Black was terrible. Opening theory books called it an unsound gambit, pledging a refutation to astute readers. He was sure of it but hadn't made it a habit to study them. He was pressing his mind to remember why and could not.



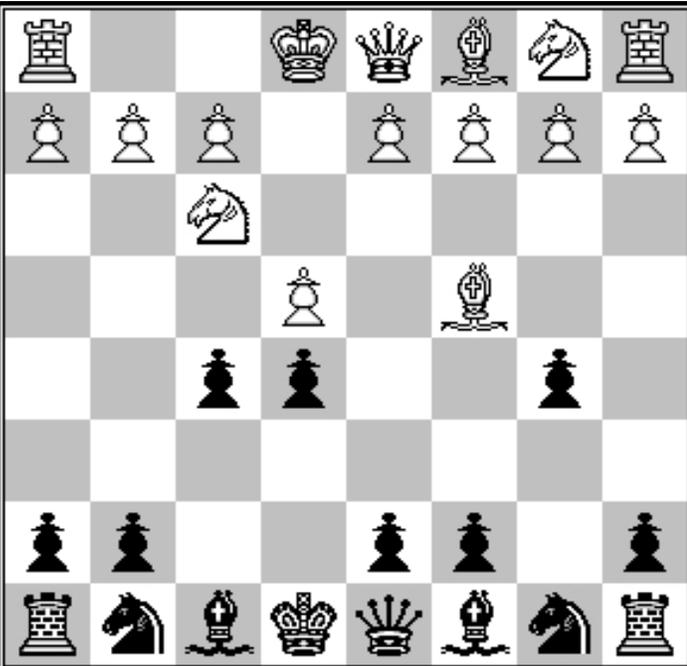
He considered, 3.PxP P-Q3 4.P-Q4 P-K5 5.Kt3-Q2 BxP 6.P-QB4 Kt-KB3 7.Kt-QB3, as well as 3.KtxP Q-B3, to guard against a Queen check, 4.P-Q4 P-Q3 5.Kt-B4 PxP 6.Kt-B3 Q-Kt3 7.Kt-K3 P-B3 8.P-Q5. Both continuations seemed to offer White a superior position, but neither promised the refutation that he wanted.

Tarrying longer than he expected, Capablanca looked at the position with a child's eyes. What was wrong with Black's second move? Suddenly it was clear: a diagonal was fatally compromised. He leaned over the position with the heels of both hands on the edge of the table, did a quick series of calculations against a forcing line of play and judged the outcome favourably. The World Champion confidently moved his Bishop.

In a sudden burst of excitement, forgetting the etiquette of séance play, Hapley pushed his Queen Knight's pawn forward at once.

Capablanca had been about to move on, but the suddenness of his opponent's response made him linger further. In truth, he was quite happy when his opponent matched him move for move. In this way, he could accelerate his way through the opening phase and the transition to a position which both combatants wanted. It saved him a good deal of walking and sped up the exhibition. So, instead of chiding his opponent, he was actually pleased by the increased tempo. Furthermore,

what was his opponent doing?



The third move, 3...P-QKt4, made no sense and was probably as bad as the second move. With the two moves taken in conjunction, Black might well be lost. The Bishop could simply capture the pawn, but that capture, Capablanca instantly recognized, was bad. No, the choices seemed to be to play 4.BxKt, ruining Black's opportunity to castle, or 4.B-Q5. There was something alluring about this finesse. Attacking the Queen's Rook would coax 4...P-B3, denying the Queen's Knight its natural square. Then 5.BxKt RxB, would leave what? After the exchange 6.P-Q4 PxKP 7.KtxP P-Q3, what then? The retreat 8.Kt-Kt4 and a King three blockade? There didn't seem to be any follow-through that would lead to a clear advantage.

Capablanca considered again, judging 4.KtxP PxB 5.Q-R5 check P-Kt3 6.KtxP Kt-KB3 to be a dead end. With the captures considered and found wanting, the only sensible move was 4.B-Kt3, which he played. His opponent began thinking, and so Capablanca moved on. Let his opponent play his Queen Knight's pawn forward with a tempo. It appeared to be only a weakening move after all. In time, this weakness would come back to haunt Black's position, he felt sure.

Hapley could feel his heart beating more quickly. It now seemed to be a pounding in his head as blood swirled through his cheeks and neck. Staring at the board, he could hardly believe his luck. Hapley's understanding about chess, while above the "duffer level," was not up

to "club standard." However, on one thing he did pride himself: a deep knowledge into the esoteric lines of the Greco Counter-Gambit. In fact, 3...P-QKt4, was his own concept. In the main variation, the plan was that his Queen would go on a rampage while his King would exit to the Queenside and safety.

Unfortunately, the Queenside march held a drawback: the Queen Knight pawn was in the way. If he could clear it, his King could find shelter. Now he was staring at the Bishop on Knight three. He had his position! His cheeks now a deep scarlet, Hapley looked up. Amazingly, Capablanca was already half-way through his round. He would have to catch up on his score-sheet quickly. He wrote, "(3.)B-B4 P-QKt4 (4.)B-Kt3," Capablanca had now moved to board 36, the fifth board on his table. He would be upon him in a moment. Hapley wrote, "(4...) PxP" and was pleased that while Capablanca was stepping towards his board he had his move ready and took away the World Champion's King Pawn.

Capablanca did not hesitate. In any case, his move was forced. He captured the pawn with his Knight and while putting it on the table and away from the board his opponent moved as well, bringing out his Queen early. Capablanca pursed his lips; he had expected the move. In fact, what choice was there? The absurd 5...Kt-R3, to protect the Bishop seven square? That would have been terrible. Developing the Queen so early in the game, is, of course, a beginner's mistake. He looked at the card, proudly proclaiming table "40" and was unsure. Was his opponent a complete beginner? Was he a last-minute replacement player forced to take the final table? More cruelly, was the club playing a trick on him?

Now he recalled that his opponent had introduced himself as the Secretary of the club. The complimentary letters with the fine writing had been that of an educated man. No beginner, the man with the receding grey hairline was an experienced club player. In any case, he had no choice and he launched his Queen pawn forward. Quickly his opponent captured his Knight pawn. Again, he was forced to pause in front of the same board. He had anticipated this line of play before the thrust of the Queen Knight's pawn, but was it as clear as before? He could be forced to sacrifice a Rook, and perhaps more. He now reflected on the moves he had made; no, they had all been correct. He was playing to the rules of strategy – central control – as well as



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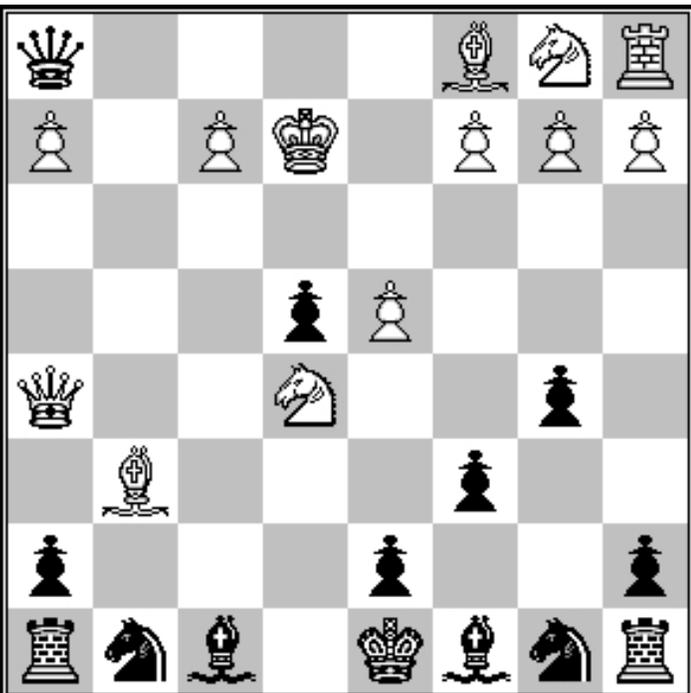
development. His opponent was making trespass. He played his Queen out with check. Once more his opponent responded quickly as he had no choice, blocking the check with a pawn. The pawn could be taken but that would be a blunder. No, it was time to bring the Bishop into play with a forcing check. Again, the opponent replied, moving his King. Now he had a choice, he could check with the Queen and force an exchange. That made no sense. He would be a pawn down with minimal compensation. No, he would play for a checkmate attack. He captured the pawn with his Bishop. Immediately, his Rook was captured with check. Now his King would have to move. King two or Queen two? Of course, there was no choice. King two. Now his opponent hesitated. Thinking, Capablanca waited a few seconds before moving on.

It was quite a strange game on board forty. The room was full of Ruy Lopez variations. A few French Defences as well as Sicilians and one had chosen an "Alekhine's Defence." Was there a hidden message behind such a

choice? In any case, he felt pleased about thirty-nine games and only one had wobbled off into the strange zone. Although unsure, he was confident. His moves had all been logical and sensible, while his opponent's struck out in various directions lacking harmony. He continued with his job of piling up advantages. Hapley had been so ecstatic over the last few moves that he had nearly forgotten his analysis. Now he was struggling to update his score-sheet. How had it gone? He was pleased that Capablanca paused at several tables to play move on move and wasn't loping so quickly around the room. Some opponents had mimicked Hapley and were taking the opportunity to accelerate the opening play. He now wrote, "(5.)Kt×P Q-K4 (6.)P-Q4 Q×P (7.)Q-R5 check P-Kt3 (8.)B-B7 check K-Q1 (9.)B×P Q×R check (10.)K-K2," and stopped. With his score-sheet now up to date, Hapley glanced again. Oh dear, Capablanca had sped up once more. He was merely a minute or two at most away from his board. Hapley was facing the devastating threat of 11.Kt-B7 check, which would shortly lead to checkmate. He had to make an escape for his

King. He had two choices, 10...B-QR3 or 10...P-B3. He had made a careful study of both moves and wrote down the one he preferred, "(10...)P-B3". This choice of moves matched his penchant for connecting with his third move. Capablanca had paused at some length on board 37 and during this moment Hapley now wrote, "*Hapley's Counter-Gambit*," on his score-sheet inside a box marked, "*Opening*." His King would find blessed sanctuary on Queen Knight two.

Years later, in club circles around Great Britain, Hapley would be taken to task for his tenth move. The masters, after careful analysis, would prefer 10...B-QR3, as well as 10...B-Kt2, a move Hapley never considered. Queen Knight two was the destination square for his King. His heart was throbbing when Capablanca appeared at his board.



Capablanca studied the position for a brief time. His opponent was no duffer after all. Otherwise he would have played 10...QxB and after 11.Kt-B7 check KK2 12.Q-K5, check and mate would have added another game to a very long list of quick séance victories. Although he had many tempting choices he developed his Queen's Knight, confident that a discovered check with his Bishop would win the Queen and the game. Surprisingly, his opponent quickly moved his King, and once more he was forced to study the position. Now Capablanca paused for a considerable time. The minutes ticked by. Something was wrong. Where was the forced win? In the lines he saw, Black's King had sanctuary on the Queen Knight two square. It was amazing,

the ridiculous third move of the game had a hidden meaning. He now realized that he had fallen victim to an extremely well conceived trap. His sharp eyes blazed with intensity as he reviewed all his previous moves. All moves seemed to be logical and correct. There simply had to be a forcing conclusion to his attack. He had to invite all of his pieces into play and offered a second Rook, moving his Queen's Bishop. Almost immediately his second Rook was captured.

Now he was forced to think again. His lengthy stay at board forty had a magnet-pulling affect; spectators around the room gathered around this table. What was the World Champion thinking? They whispered to one another as they jostled to see the game. Hapley suddenly felt himself as squeezed as in a crowded bus queue at Victoria Station.



Capablanca's choice was difficult. He would have to sacrifice his central Knight and take either the Queen Pawn or the Queen's Bishop pawn. Both captures would blow up the Queenside fortress for Black's King. But which capture was right? He analyzed as deeply as he could and chopped off the Queen Pawn with his Knight. The capture stopped his opponent cold. Clearly, he had prepared only for the other capture, and Capablanca was comforted by the thought that he had surprised his opponent. He waited a few seconds, but his opponent sank into his chair and into deep thought. Capablanca moved on.

Hapley felt the blood rush out of his cheeks and he

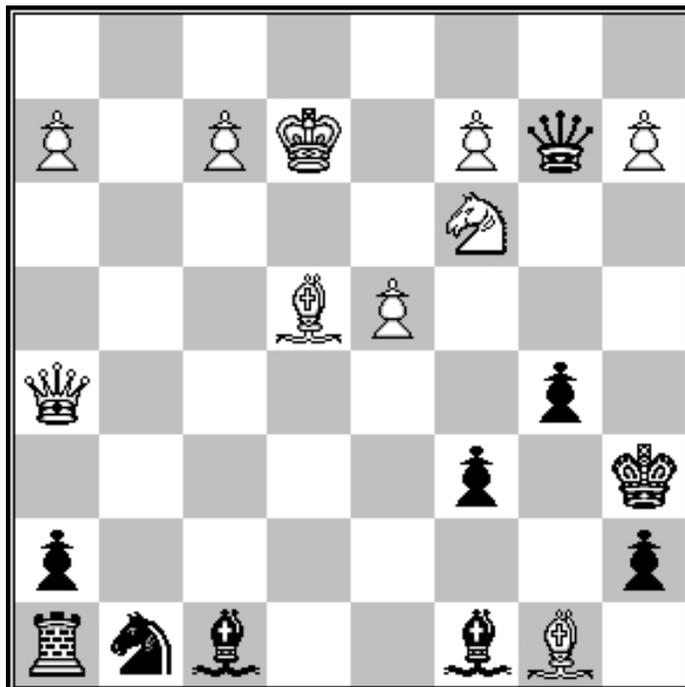


They were his comfort. He was far ahead in material. That was clear. But would his King survive the ferocity of White's attack? He had his doubts and gripped the Rooks tightly in his lap as a talisman. He saw that the World Champion could capture his Knight with a lethal threat to his Bishop Pawn, a key defender for his King. Hapley was determined in that case, to capture the Knight at the cost of a Rook. He would then sprint with his King to the board's edge, where it would be safe. Yes, he would return a Rook and use the most primeval defence known to man: he would run. Pleased with his millennia-old insight, he felt a half-smile crease his face.

It was further applause that pulled his concentration away from his game. The club was learning a key lesson: don't play lightning moves with Capablanca. He had no equal. Hapley looked to board thirty-nine on his right and grimaced. Foxwood was in a merciless positional bind. It was one of those manic newfangled "Sicilian" positions which players were trying in order to avoid the Spanish Torture. White had a grip in the centre and was training his sights on Black's backward Queen pawn. Capablanca moved so quickly on board thirty-nine that Hapley was flustered. Righting himself, he quickly checked his score-sheet and captured the Knight pawn with his Queen.

Capablanca felt his annoyance growing. There were multiple ways for his opponent to go wrong and only one way to go right. Had he found the right way. The gravity of the situation now sank in; far behind in material, he simply had to play for checkmate. Capturing the Bishop would mean to move away from the Queenside and Black's King. His only chance was to undermine the fortress there by capturing the Knight, which he did. Much to his surprise, his Knight was captured at once. Again, he was forced to concentrate on this annoying game and once more the spectators began their crowding. There was no choice, and he lifted a Rook from the board, expecting a recapture. Without pause his opponent ran with his King. Not bothering to capture the Bishop, which was *en prise*. Capablanca's face betrayed surprise. An action caught by the spectators, who collectively turned to stare at the position.

Once more Capablanca leaned over the table, this time his hands moved far apart, fingers spread on the table with his palms elevated. He studied the position intent-



ly. It was absurd. Defying all logic, the move actually had a sense. The King was now out of harm's way. Not safe. That was certain. There were several ways for him to pursue the attack. The problem was that thanks to the King's move out of the pin, the rejoinder Queen takes Knight pawn check was no longer playable, whilst his Knight was now *en prise*. How to continue the attack? Queen to Bishop seven would allow Knight to King two, blocking the threat of mate on Rook seven. There was another pathway: Queen to King five and then to Bishop seven to threaten mate. Black would capture the Knight, and Queen Bishop seven would be met by Queen captures pawn, defending the threat of mate on Rook seven. His difficulties mounting, he considered the capture of the Queen Bishop Pawn, which would continue the attack on Black's King. If he took the pawn, his King would be exposed to two harassing checks only. He could block the second one with his Knight. He took the pawn and waited. His opponent didn't reply.

Now the crowds around Hapley were pressing in, making excited whispers and voicing their dismay. "Why did he move his King? He could've taken the Bishop!" "What a missed chance!" "He didn't take the Bishop?" "My goodness. What a mistake!" The chorus of voices expressed wonderment, alarm and dismay. It was while he was writing down the last moves, "(15.)Kt×Kt RxKt (16.)B×R K-R3 (17.)B×BP", that Hapley heard Potter's voice again. "Hapless! Still alive? Need me 'elp?" "Put a sock in it Potty. I can lose this one myself," Hapley

heard himself say.

*“No truer words ever spoken,”* Potter laughed cruelly and moved away.

Hapley had no readily available retort and resorted to putting his thumbs in his ears to concentrate. How to justify his last move and explain his desire to run? That would only invite further ridicule. He realized that Capablanca’s last capture was devastating. No doubt about it. The King’s run had been a dead end after all and defence was no longer possible. Hapley had a check left in the position and hoped that he might stave off defeat a while longer. With no development his cause would be hopeless. It was a comfort that the club’s President had lost before him. He wrote down, *“(17...)QxP check”*, and suddenly a happy thought burst forward. He would be giving check to the World Champion’s King for a second time in the game. It was something he could savour over a Guinness in any public house in the Kingdom, *“I once had the World Champion in a dreadful pickle, you see. I had given a second check to his King and forced him to gasp for breath...”*

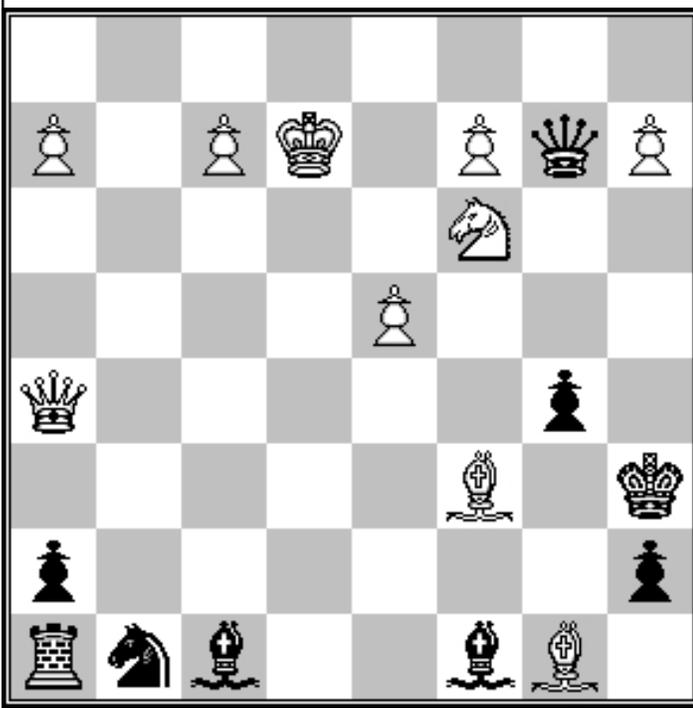
Hapley stopped his fantasy and began thinking about where the White King might go after a check. The King could not advance because the Knight would be lost with check. The White King would have to retreat, and he could give a second check in succession. Hapley felt his heartbeat skip. Was there a chance to force an exchange of Queens? *“Your turn?”* The voice, although

soft, snapped Hapley to alert. Capablanca was standing in front of him. In a near panic he checked his score sheet for his move and took the pawn with check. Capablanca’s hand froze in mid-air. He had seen the Queen check and had anticipated being able to retreat with his King. His capture of Black’s Knight pawn was unstoppable; three pieces were trained against the pawn. Now he realized his predicament, and he had a momentary blind spot. He had anticipated being able to block the second check with his Knight. An exchange of Queens was in the offing. In any case, his move was forced and he retreated his King and walked away. He concentrated on walking in as stately a manner as possible. He didn’t want his walk to betray the reality which he now saw so clearly: he was lost.

Hapley wrote down *“(18.)K-B1”* and checked his options. He had two different checks with his Queen, but the one on Queen six protected against the mate on Queen Knight four. What could White do? Blocking with the Knight was logical and then he was stuck. He would need to develop his own pieces. Which one? Hapley looked again; the loss of his Queen pawn had benefit: it opened the diagonal of his Queen’s Bishop, and this meant that he could play Queen to Rook six check to force an exchange of Queens. He found himself gasping for breath. Such an exchange would end White’s attack, and he would be a Rook to the good. Hapley frightened himself with his insight. It meant that after the Knight blocked the check he would exchange Queens, with a won position. His hand trembled as he wrote down *“(18...)Q-Q6 check”*, and looked at Capablanca’s circling.

There had been further applause as a player from “murderers’ row” resigned his game. And still further applause as one after another on the far side three players in succession tilted over their Kings. Now Capablanca was slicing through his table. Foxwood, on Hapley’s immediate right, resigned. As he had many times before, Capablanca paused to autograph the score-sheet. Hapley heard applause throughout the room. The signature completed, Capablanca moved to his board. Hapley played his Queen check and Capablanca stopped for half a minute. By-passing the hoped-for blocking Knight move, the World Champion moved his King to the Knight file.

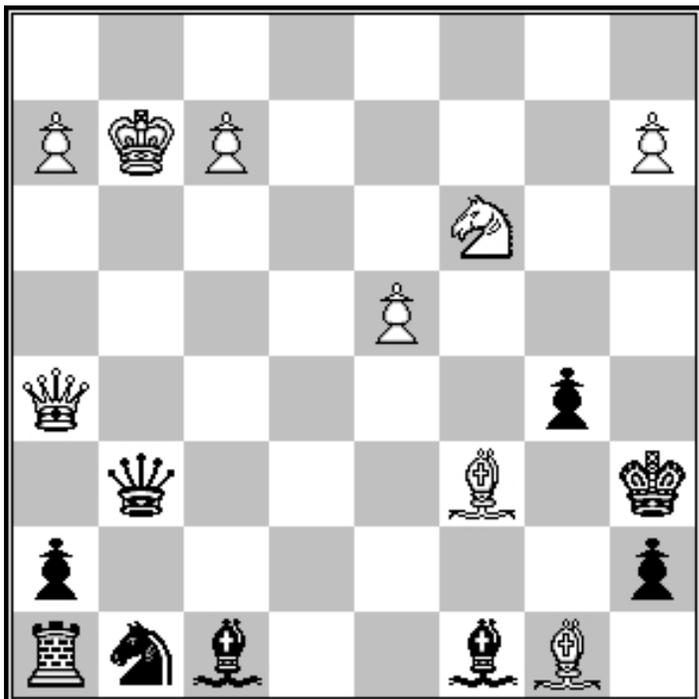
It wasn’t the move that Hapley wanted to see. Even so, he could play the Queen check, forcing the exchange



of Queens at the cost of a Bishop. He would be an Exchange to the good, and in his lap he squeezed the Rooks held by his left hand. The consequences of such an ending, even such a favourable one, were clear to him: he would lose. Was there another defensive option?

The threat to his Knight pawn was taking on an intensity all of its own. The threat had to be stopped at all costs. He could block the threat with Bishop to King Bishop four but after Bishop takes pawn check the game would be over; his King and Queen would both be attacked. Hapley could resign. Now a new thought was taking shape: he could block the threat by retreating his Queen. Hapley didn't like retreating moves, considering them cowardly. But Queen to Bishop four, and the Queen protected by Bishop, blocked White's Queen from slashing across the board. Of course, the pawn would be lost with check, but checkmate could be averted.

Suddenly Hapley froze. There was something else in the position. The Queen retreat added a new dimension to his thinking. He could retreat his Queen to Knight three. In that case, White's King was in check and an exchange of Queens was well and truly forced. He felt the blood rushing into his cheeks again and he duplicated his calculations to be sure. The exchange of Queens on Knight three meant that he stood a Rook to the good. He wouldn't have to lose a Bishop at all. He wrote down, (19.)K-Kt2 Q-Kt3 check, and waited in a dreadful fear that he might have missed something. The room now seemed to be jam-packed with loud voices, much banter and bouts of applause. Hapley was relieved that the noise in the room was at such a crescendo; only he could hear the pounding of his head. He would be able to exchange Queens. Hapley's legs felt like they were on pins and needles.



Capablanca moved swiftly through the bottom tables. Only two were left; seven had given up. Now the World Champion was before him and Hapley retreated with his Queen.

Capablanca paused to consider his predicament. Then he smiled and offered his hand, *“Congratulations. A confounding game, but I resign. You have won. Would you like me to sign your score-sheet?”*

Hapley couldn't speak. He merely nodded and pushed forward his score-sheet and fountain pen. *“Thank you,”* he managed to mumble.

Before signing his name Capablanca overwhelmed his opponent and audience. *“I'm sorry. My Bishop takes pawn was a terrible oversight. I thought I could block your Queen check with my Knight, but I missed Bishop to Rook six check and wins. Instead of Bishop takes pawn, the problem with Knight to Queen one is Queen takes Queen Pawn. Clearly Queen to Bishop seven, Knight to King two blocking the checkmate on Rook seven would have been bad. Possibly I had to try Queen to King five, Queen takes Knight, Queen to Bishop seven, Bishop to Knight five check, pawn to Bishop three, Queen takes Queen pawn, defending the mate on Rook seven, Queen takes Bishop pawn check and Queen to Knight three wins. That may have been my proper course. Possibly something exists there that I missed. Perhaps capturing the Bishop on Knight five.”*

Hapley had been completely confused; capturing a Bish-

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op on Knight five? When was that possible? His Bishop had never moved. Defending a mate threat on Rook seven? When could that happen? He could play Bishop to Rook six check? Who then was mating whom? While José Raúl Capablanca signed his full name replete with a beautiful flourish, Hapley chimed in with, "Exactly."

It was a strange comment but the best he could muster. He was certain that he had no clue what exactly the World Champion was saying.

Satisfied that he had made the right decision and that his opponent fully understood the tactics and strategy of this most confounding game, the World Champion, offered another handshake before moving on to mow down the rest of the opposition giving up nary a nick. Hapley was in shock. Dizzy from his happiness, he found that his senses now seemed temporarily blocked. It was as though a switch was pushed in his head, dimming the lights. Time seemed to slow to a crawl as he gasped. He realized that his mouth had been half-open during the whole "analysis session" and he hadn't drawn breath. Now congratulations were pouring over him from all corners, and the pats on his back and shoulders were genuine. He could hardly believe it himself. He had won. He had defeated the World Champion. He would have a story to tell for the rest of his life.

Voices swirled around him and he had been pulled out of his seat and to his feet for comment. "Did you catch Capa's analysis? I want to write it down for the bulletin!" From another came, "What was Capablanca's mistake?" Hapley was being asked to give a critique of the moves of Capablanca? He didn't know what he said or what happened to the rest of the evening. Time blurred and crawled at the same time. Somehow he had managed to say his good-byes before the séance completed. Other club members promised to put away the sets, and the directors even spoke about "saving the chess set and board" for the "brilliance" of the evening. It would be the only loss for Capablanca in his "Tour of Kingdom".

Hapley couldn't remember putting on his overcoat or when he had boarded the bus home or what time he had even entered his lodging. It simply happened. Now he was back at his desk with a battered chess set reliving the most unbelievable victory of his life. He filled in the final move of his carbon copy score-sheet, "(20.) Resigns", delighted that he had remembered his favou-

rite fountain pen. Why had Capablanca resigned? Could he have won while a Rook ahead? He wanted to flatter himself and say, probably but he wouldn't have bet a Brighton Holiday on that outcome. Instead, he felt enchanted by the final position. Hapless no longer.

That night George Charles Hapley slept a sleep fit for a King. Dreaming contentedly of his everlasting achievement. His final thoughts were of walking triumphantly into the club the following week. What would they say to him then? A smile froze on his mouth. Hapley never awoke, and for years the King's Mead Club spoke about the passing of the happiest man in the world. The chess set and board were, in time, lost, and the tale was forgotten until the day that it would be repeated.

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### Grandmaster Yasser Seirawan

Photo courtesy of *Susan Polgar Chess Daily News and Information*  
Editors note: The preceding story has been reprinted from the November 2010 issue of *Northwest Chess* with permission of the author. The Publisher and Board members of NWC wish to offer it as a gift to you, our readers and attendees at the 2012 U.S. Open, for your reading enjoyment.

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# Idaho Chess News

by Jeff Roland



L-R regardless of row: Paul Edvalson, Kevin Patterson, Hugh Myers (in back), Kory Puderbaugh, George Lundy, Jeff Roland, Corey Longhurst, Caleb Kircher, Shane Taylor, Frank Niro, Peter Olsoy, and Tom Booth. Photo by Credit: Jeff Roland

## 2012 Meridian Invitational

Twelve players played in the 2012 Meridian Invitational chess tournament at the residence of Frank Niro in Meridian, Idaho on June 23, 2012. The time control was Game/30, with a five second delay. Frank Niro was Chief Tournament Director and Jeff Roland was Assistant Tournament Director. *Swiss-Sys*, developed by Thad Suits of Montana, was the program used to do the pairings.

Caleb Kircher won the event with a perfect 4-0 score, followed by a 3-way tie for 2nd-4th place between Frank Niro, Corey Kenneth Longhurst and George Lundy, each with 2½-1½.

This makes the second Meridian Invitational tournament held

at the Niro's home. The first event was played August 20, 2011 and had seven players. Twelve is about the most that can comfortably be handled in this setting. Accordingly, some players were given "rain checks" and will be invited to the next Meridian Invitational, tentatively penciled in for January, 2013.

Due to the fast time control, it was sometimes necessary for others to help in the recording of moves in the interest of preserving a complete and accurate record of all the moves to all the games in the tournament. Caleb Kircher recorded moves at the end of the Kory Puderbaugh vs. Tom Booth game from Round 1. Frank Niro recorded from moves 40-102 (!) in the Peter Olsoy vs. George Lundy game from Round 3 where both players were so short on time that

it was sometimes hard for even the spectators (the rest of the players in the tournament) to follow, and Frank got every move. Jeff Roland stepped in and recorded moves at the end of the Round 3 Shane Taylor vs. Paul Edvalson game, although in that case the game would still have been preserved as Edvalson was still able to record all the moves on his score sheet.

Entry into the tournament was free and by invitation only. Nearly everyone who was invited accepted their invitation and played. The event was actually "tri-rated". It was Dual Rated both as Regular and Quick by the United States Chess Federation (USCF), plus it was rated as "Rapid" by Rocky Mountain Chess. Lunch and snacks were provided by Natasha Niro.

(continued on page 44)

## Morris, Rupel co-champs at 2012 Oregon Senior Championship



left: Mike Morris, right: David Rupel, with the Dr. Ralph L. Hall Memorial trophy (photo by Brian Berger)

The 2012 Oregon Senior co-champions are Michael Morris of Portland, OR, and David Rupel of Olympia, WA, who tied with a 4-1 record against a formidable 28-player field. Each earned \$131.25 for their efforts. There was a six-way tie for third place. The event was held on July 7-8, 2012 at the Oregon City-West Linn Chess Club.

The first place age 80+ prize went to Clement Falbo of Joseph, OR. Viktor Pupols of Kingston, WA, won the age 70+ prize. The field consisted of 20 Oregon based players, seven from Washington and one from Idaho. Pupols left his home at 6 AM to make the tournament while Rupel opted for a half point first round bye and some extra sleep.

Following is the decisive final round game between Morris and last year's

co-champion, Steven Deeth. A draw was agreed in time pressure with a clear advantage on the board for Morris.

“I had an easy win at the end of my game. 49...Rh2+ 50. Kg1 Rbg2+ 51.Kf1 Ra7,” explained Mike. “After struggling all game from an inferior position, both of us down to the end of our time (although I had enough time to study the position before offering a draw) and thinking that Viktor Pupols would draw with David Rupel, giving me sole first place, I offered the draw.”

As it turned out, Rupel came away with a win to earn a share of first place. The Rupel-Pupols game will be featured in September.

The tournament was sponsored by the Geezer Gallery, located in the

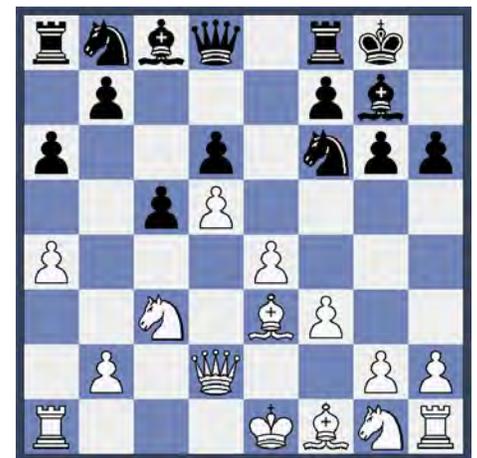
Loaves and Fishes building in Multnomah ([www.geezergallery.com](http://www.geezergallery.com)) and directed by Frank Niro, with assistance from National TD Paul Shannon of Reedsport, OR,, who served as a one man appeals committee.

**White: Steven Deeth (2097)**

**Black: Mike Morris (2033)**

[A65] Oregon City, OR (5), 2012

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Bg5 c5 7.d5 e6 8.Qd2 exd5 9.cxd5 a6 10.a4 h6 11.Be3



**11...h5**

More common here are 11...Re8 or 11...Nbd7. After 12.Nge2, White achieves a small advantage.

**12.Nge2 Nbd7 13.Nc1**

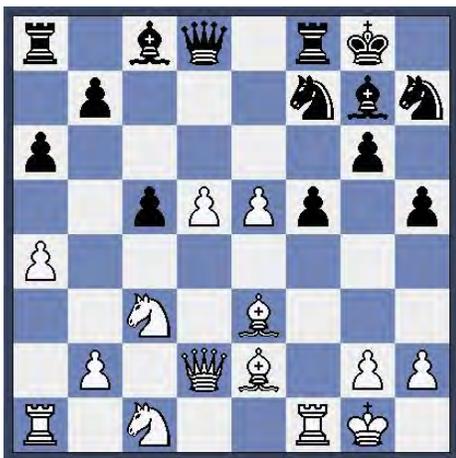
Rybka 4 suggests 13.Nf4 to maintain the advantage.

**13...Nh7**

13...Ne5!?

**14.Be2 Ne5 15.0-0 f5 16.f4 Nf7 17.e5 dxe5 18.fxe5**

We reach our first critical position.



18...Bxe5

Mike's recapture is supported by Fritz, but the stronger search engines such as Rybka and Houdini prefer to take with the Knight. Either way, there's plenty of play in the position for both sides. 18...Nxe5!? 19.Bxc5 Re8 20.Nd3 Bd7=

19.Nd3 Bd6 20.Bxc5 Re8 21.Bxd6 Nxd6 22.Nf4 Qf6 23.Rad1 Bd7 24.Ne6 Rac8 25.Qf4 Nf7 26.Bf3



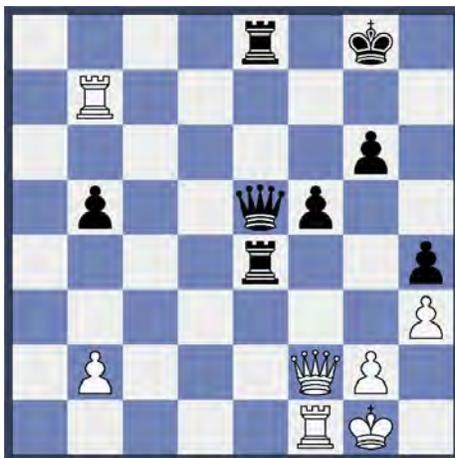
26...b5

26...Bxe6 27.dxe6 Qxe6 28.Kh1 Rc4 (28...Nf6 29.Qg3=)

27.axb5 axb5 28.Qb4 Rc4 29.Qb3 Nd6 30.Be2 Rcc8 31.Qa3 Nc4 32.Bxc4 Rxc4 33.Qd6 Qe7 34.Qg3 Rg4 35.Qd3 Ng5 36.h3 Rb4 37.Qg3 Bxe6 38.dxe6 h4 39.Qf2 Ne4 40.Nxe4 Rxe4 41.Rd7 Qxe6

42.Rb7 Qe5

White is in severe time pressure here and, with his next move, he understandably decides to pursue the initiative by seizing the seventh rank.



43.Qa7?

Best was 43.Qb6 targeting the g6 pawn and not allowing Black the time to drop his rook on e1.

43...Qd4+

With little time remaining, Black chooses to liquidate into a "can't lose" endgame. However, with g7 defended, he can resolve matters quickly with 43...Re1. After 44.Qf2 (best) Rxf1+ 45.Qxf1 Qg3 wins, or if 45.Kxf1 Qd5! threatens mate and the rook on b7.

44.Qxd4 Rxd4



22.Rxb5

45. Ra1 and 45.Rc1 are draws. The text seems to simplify but actually gives Black time to double on the second rank with winning chances.

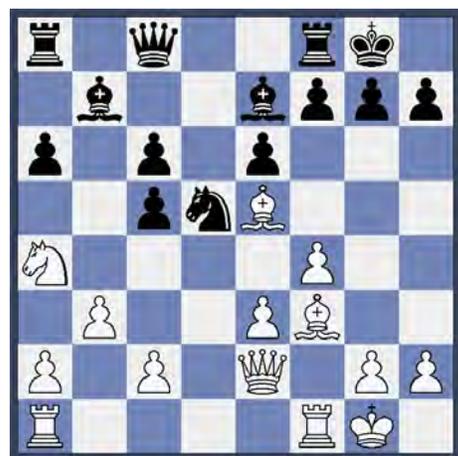
45...Rd2 46.Rc1 Ree2 47.Rc7 Rxc7+ 48.Kh1 Rxb2 49.Ra5 1/2-1/2

W: Clement Falbo (1507, age 81)

B: Dale Wentz (1521)

[A03] Oregon City, OR (5), 2012

1.f4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d5 3.e3 c5 4.Be2 e6 5.0-0 Be7 6.b3 Nc6 7.Bb2 0-0 8.Nc3 a6 9.Ne5 d4 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.Na4 Bb7 12.Bf3 dxe3 13.dxe3 Nd5 14.Qe2 Qc7 15.Be5 Qc8



16.c4 Nf6 17.Nb6 Qe8 18.Nxa8 Qxa8 19.Rad1 a5 20.Bd6 Qe8 21.e4 Ba6 22.e5 Nd5 23.Bxe7 Qxe7 24.Qd2 Nb6 25.Qxa5 Bxc4 26.bxc4 Nxc4 27.Qc3 Nb6 28.Bxc6 h6 29.Qc2 c4 30.Rd6 g6 31.Rfd1 Kg7 32.Be4 Qa7 33.Qf2 Qc7 34.Qxb6 1-0

W: Mike Morris(2033)

B: Carl Koontz (2035)

[B01] Oregon City, OR (4), 2012

1.e4 d5 2.d4 dxe4 3.Nc3 Bf5 4.f3 exf3 5.Qxf3 Qc8 6.Bf4 c6 7.Bc4 e6 8.Nge2 Nf6 9.0-0-0 Nd5

9...Nbd7=

10.g4 Bg6 11.Bg3

11.h4!?

11...Be7 12.h4 f6 13.h5 Bf7 14.Ne4 Qd8 15.Bb3 b5 16.Kb1 a5



17.Rhf1

17.h6! g6 18.Bxd5 cxd5 19.Nxf6+ Bxf6 20.Rhf1 g5 21.Qxf6 Qxf6 22.Rxf6 Ke7

17...a4 18.Bxd5 exd5?!

18...cxd5!?

19.Nc5= [19.Ng5!] Na6 [19...0-0=]

20.Nxa6 Rxa6 21.Nf4 a3 22.b3 0-0 23.Rfe1 Qd7 24.Re2 Bd6 25.Nd3 Raa8 26.Bxd6 Qxd6 27.Rde1 Rae8 28.Rxe8 Rxe8 29.Rxe8+ Bxe8 30.Qe3 Bd7 31.g5 Qe6 32.Qg3 fxg5 33.Qxg5



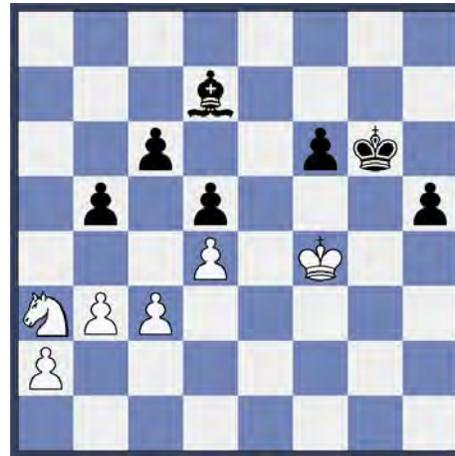
33...Qf6

33...h6! 34.Qd8+ Be8 35.Ne5 Kh7-+

34.Qxf6

34.Qc1!? Qxd4 35.Qxa3

34...gxf6 35.Kc1 Kg7-+ 36.Kd2 Kh6 37.Ke3 Kxh5 38.Kf4 Kg6 39.c3 Bf5 40.Nb4 Bd7 41.Nc2 h5 42.Nxa3



42... h4

42...Bf5!-+ The tournament was played at the unusual time control Game in 120 minutes. Many players fell into the trap of consuming large amounts of time early in the game only to be left short at the end and, as a result, unable to convert their hard won advantages into victories. Unfortunately for Carl Koontz, the reigning Oregon City-West Linn chess club co-champion, this game is a perfect example of that phenomenon.

43.Nc2 h3 44.Kg3 Kg5?!

44...Kf5! 45.a4 Ke4 46.a5 Kd3 47.a6 Bc8 48.a7 Bb7 49.Nb4+ Kxc3-+

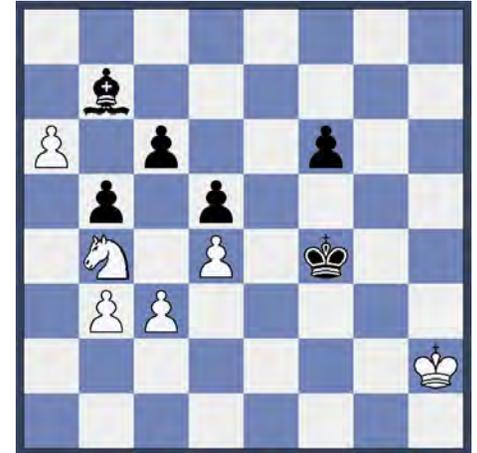
45.a4 h2

45...Kf5 46.a5 Bc8

46.Kxh2 Kf4 47.a5 Bc8 48.Nb4 Bb7

48...Ke4! 49.Nxc6 Kd3=

49.a6



49...Ba8?!

49...Bc8 50.a7 Bb7 51.Na6 Ke3 52.Nc7 f5 with an unclear position

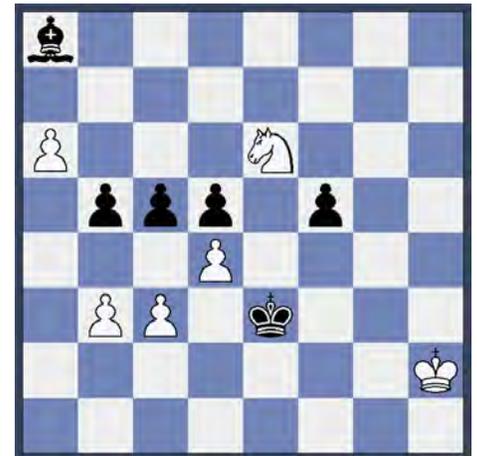
50.Nd3+

Now it is White who has the advantage. But with both players under severe time pressure, the game good go either way.

50...Ke3 51.Nc5± f5 52.Ne6

52.Kg1 b4!

52...c5



53.dxc5

53.Nxc5 f4 54.b4 f3 55.Ne6 f2 56.Kg2 Ke2 57.Nf4+ Ke1 58.Nd3+ Ke2 59.Nxf2 Kd2=



Steven Deeth, with the Black pieces, faces off against David Rupel, in Round 4 of the 2012 Oregon Senior Championship. Deeth was the 2011 co-champ of this event. Rupel finished 4-1 despite a half point first round bye to tie with Mike Morris for first place. Viktors Pupols (background) is in his customary perch on the top board. *Photo credit: Brian Berger*



Oregon City-West Linn Chess Club reigning co-champion Carl Koontz defends with the Black pieces against eventual co-winner Mike Morris at the 2012 Oregon Senior Championship. National Tournament Director Paul Shannon of Reedsport is in the background. Morris won the game after a wild time scramble. *Photo credit: Brian Berger*

### 53...f4?

With seconds remaining, Black missed the saving shot 53...b4!  
 54.cxb4 d4 55.Nxd4 Kxd4 56.Kg3 Ke3 57.b5 f4+ 58.Kg4 f3 59.b6 f2 60.b7 f1Q 61.b8Q=

### 54.Kg1 [54.Nd4!] 54...f3



### 55.Kf1?

Now White returns the favor. 55.Nd4! wins.

### 55...Bc6

Remarkably, 55...b4!-+ 56.cxb4 Bc6! 57.a7 Bb5+ 58.Kg1 f2+ turns the tables.

### 56.a7

Again 56.Nd4!+-

### 56...Bd7

And again 56...b4!-+

### 57.a8Q 1-0

An exciting game comes to an exciting end, setting up the last round showdown. Because Pupols and Morris both had two Whites in a row, they could not be paired in round five. So it was Rupel vs. Pupols and Deeth vs. Morris.

# The 2012 Northwest Chess Grand Prix

by Murlin Varner, recorder of points

A relatively quiet month since I last wrote. Seven events in four cities, none with multipliers, and a total of 134 entrants, yielded very few changes in the standings, and most of those owing to people rising in class rather than windfalls of points. Another seven events loom for the remainder of July (with only the Seafair Open having the potential of a multiplier – I haven't seen the prize structure yet) and, due to the impact of the US Open in Vancouver, only four Grand Prix events will be held in August. This sets the table then, for all avid GP point seekers to converge on our next big event of the year, the Oregon Open, which typically has a 4x multiplier and has recently been drawing in excess of 100 entrants.

This is not to say you should avoid all the smaller events between now and Labor Day weekend. Heavens no! Get out often, warm up for the US Open (not a GP event, but still a good tournament to play in, especially when it is right here at home), and gain points every weekend, if you can. Those eleven events leading up to the Oregon Open can be found in Boise, Portland (3), Seattle (4), Spokane, and Tacoma (2). Get out there and play! No excuses will be accepted.

The data below include all events played through July 7<sup>th</sup>, and peak ratings are current through the August official ratings list.

Idaho			Oregon			Washington				
last	first	pts.	last	first	pts.	last	first	pts.		
						<b>Masters</b>				
			1	Raptis	Nick	109	1	Pupols	Viktors	57
			2	Gay	Daniel Z	30.5	2	Feng	Roland	40.5
			3	Breckenridge	Steven J	26	3	Orlov	Georgi	28
			4	Haessler	Carl A	2	3	Bragg	David R	28
						5	Perez	Ignacio	27.5	
						<b>Experts</b>				
			1	Esler	Brian J	44	1	Bartron	Paul R	76
			2	Fisette	Robert A	33	2	Lee	Megan	44
			3	Morris	Michael J	19	3	He	Daniel M	33.5
			4	Heywood	Bill	18	4	Lee	Nathan Y	32
			5	Janniro	Mike E	16	5	Ummel	Igor	31
						<b>Class A</b>				
			1	Saputra	Yogi	77.5	1	Buck	Stephen J	100
			2	Sherrard	Jerry	34	2	Szabo	Marcell	82
			3	Cigan	Jason	32.5	3	Lampman	Becca	55
			4	Bannon	David T	26	4	Smith	Micah A	53
			4	Jiang	Nathan	5.5	5	Ackerman	Ryan S	48
						<b>Class B</b>				
			1	Weyland	Ronald M	27	1	Zhang	Derek	73.5
			2	Pemsler	Carmen	4	2	Ramesh	Jothi N	70
			3	Myers	Hugh	3.5	3	Nagase	Toshihiro	56.5
			3	Bruck	Nick J	3.5	4	Nagase	Masayuki	55.5
			5	Dalthorp	Matt	13	5	Wang	James	54.5
						<b>Class C</b>				
			1	Jaroski	Jeffrey A	21.5	1	Jones	Davey V	52
			2	Patterson	Kevin R	10	1	Piper	August	52
			3	Porth	Adam	6.5	3	Thomas	Arjun	45
			4	Lang	Jamie	6	4	Zhang	Brendan	43
			4	Gorman	Cody A	6	5	Bashkansky	Naomi	41

Class E and Below				Class D and Below							
1	Patterson	Katie R	9	1	Buerer	Harry F	30.5	1	Richards	Jerrold	68.5
1	Blake	Lloyd	9	2	Lian	Hansen	17.5	2	Haining	Breck	38
3	Blake	Isaac R	8.5	2	Brahmarouthu	Abhinav	17.5	2	Dixon	Max L	38
4	Three tied at		6	4	Svetal	Scott M	17	4	Chalasanani	Sujatha D	36
				5	Botez	Andrea C C	14.5	5	Two tied at		34.5
Overall Leaders, by State											
1	Leslie	Cameron D	28.5	1	Raptis	Nick	109	1	Buck	Stephen J	100
2	Joshi	Kairav	27.5	2	Saputra	Yogi	77.5	2	Szabo	Marcell	82
3	Weyland	Ronald M	27	3	Gaikwad	Dagadu B	50	3	Bartron	Paul R	76
4	Williams	Richard R	22	4	Esler	Brian J	44	4	Zhang	Derek	73.5
5	Jaroski	Jeffrey A	21.5	5	Sato-Duncan	Takuma	34.5	5	Ramesh	Jothi N	70
6	Bodie	Brad	20	6	Sherrard	Jerry	34	6	Richards	Jerrold	68.5
7	Havrilla	Mark A	15.5	7	Fisette	Robert A	33	7	Pupols	Viktors	57
8	Kircher	Caleb P	10.5	7	Doddapaneni	Venkat S	33	8	Nagase	Toshihiro	56.5
9	Patterson	Kevin R	10	9	Cigan	Jason	32.5	9	Nagase	Masayuki	55.5
10	Patterson	Katie R	9	9	Sharan	Praveer	32.5	10	Lampman	Becca	55
10	Blake	Lloyd	9	11	Gay	Daniel Z	30.5	11	Wang	James	54.5

Players in Database: 2012

class	ID	OR	WA	Oth.	totals
Master	0	4	10	1	15
Expert	0	11	26	2	39
Class A	6	19	46	5	76
Class B	14	16	55	5	90
Class C	4	22	39	6	71
D-below	21	26	84	5	136
	45	98	260	24	427



Most active GP players				
Last	First	State	Rtg	events
	Stephen			
Buck	J	WA	1828	16
Szabo	Marcell	WA	1942	14
Piper	August	WA	1548	13
Ramesh	Jothi N	WA	1737	11
Raptis	Nick	OR	2335	11
Pupols	Viktors	WA	2227	10
	Five tied at			
				9

Conversation... continued from page 46

**Jeff Roland:** When we were in Crossville, I could tell that you harbor no bitterness toward USCF and that the staff members there have great respect for you. On the other hand, you remain on the Board of the Susan Polgar Foundation and it is common knowledge that Susan and the USCF recently had a bitter legal battle. Could you share a little about how you reconcile your loyalties to Susan and the USCF?

**Frank Niro:** Well, first of all, I have known Susan and her family since she was 15. When I left the USCF office she was the only person in the chess world who took the time to check on my health status and find out if there was anything I needed. So we are loyal friends and that will always continue to be so. I have been on the Board of the Susan Polgar Foundation for ten years and I'm the TD for the Susan Polgar National Girls Invitational. SPF is a great organization that does a lot to promote chess, particularly among young people.

As far as I am concerned, people have a right to pursue their legal options when they feel wronged. I don't know the details of the law suit and I don't need to. I know what's in Susan's heart and I admire what she has done for the game of chess. Right now there are five players on her Webster University chess team that will be playing in the upcoming Olympiad - for five different

countries! Obviously, she is respected most everywhere or she would not be able to attract Grandmasters from all over the world. By the way, GMs aren't the only chess players attending Texas Tech (where she recently left) or Webster University on scholarship.

For example, Vanita Young from Philadelphia just graduated from high school and will be attending Webster in the fall on scholarship. I saw her yesterday and she was giggling with gratitude. I heard from Chris, the dad of Idaho's Savannah Naccarato, and he told me that Savannah is focused on improving her play so that she too can earn a scholarship next year. And I'm willing to bet that she will!

(to be continued in September...)

(continued from page 37)

Inspired by the 6-foot *Subway* sandwich idea that Kevin Patterson came up with for an earlier Meridian tournament, we had smaller sections and more variety, along with chips, pretzels, and soft drinks.

Prizes of some very nice chess books were given to each player in the tournament with first choice going to the first place winner and proceeding down the line until last place. Play started at 10:00 a.m. and lasted until about 4:00 p.m.

Thank you to all the players who came and made this such a great event. Thank you Frank and Natasha Niro for hosting this zero entry fee, tri-rated event!

### **RUY LOPEZ, EXCHANGE**

**W: Frank Niro (1700)**

**B: Jeffrey T. Roland (1706)**

**[C68] Meridian, ID (3), 2012**

(Notes by Jeff Roland)

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6  
4.Bxc6**

Frank played the Exchange Variation against me in the WCCC First Saturday Quads played in West Chester, Pennsylvania on October 1, 2011! In that game, Frank played beautifully and won a very pretty and artistic game. In the present game, I knew that Frank was a connoisseur of this variation and that he has played it frequently for over 40 years. I was not likely going to catch him make any opening mistakes, not even in Game/30!

**4...dxc6 5. Nc3 f6 6.d4 exd4  
7.Qxd4 Qxd4 8.Nxd4 Bd7**

This is where the game deviates

from our previous encounter. There I played 8...Bd6 and the game continued: 9.Be3 Ne7 10.f3 Bd7 11.Kf2 0-0-0 12.a4 Ng6 13.Nde2 Rhf8 14.Rhd1 Ne5 15.b3 f5 16.Kg1 f4 17.Bd4 c5 18.Bf2 g5 19.Nd5 b6 20.Nxb6+ Kb7 21.Nxd7± Rxd7 22.Rd5 c6 23.Rxd6! Rxd6 24.Bxc5 Rfd8 25.Bxd6 Rxd6 26.Rc1+- Kb6 27.Kf1 Kc5 28.Ke1 Rf6 29.h3 h5 30.Rd1 g4 31.hxg4 hxg4 32.Ng1 Rh6 33.Ne2?! [33.fxf4! Nxf4 34.Nh3] 33...Rh1+?! [33...gxf3! 34.gxf3 Rh1+ 35.Kd2 Nxf3+ 36.Kc1 Rh4] 34.Kd2 Rxd1+ 35.Kxd1 gxf3 36.gxf3 Nxf3 37.Nxf4 Kd4 38.Ne6+ Kc3 39.Nc5 a5 40.Nb7 Kb4 41.Ke2 Ne5 42.Kd2 c5 43.Nd6 Nc6 44.Nc4 Ne7 45.e5 Nd5 46.e6 Ne7 47.Kc1 1-0

**9.Be3 0-0-0 10.f3 Ne7 11.Kf2**

Frank jokingly called this the “Niro Variation”. He said he’s won about 23 out of the last 25 games with it! So I knew the challenge was on!

**11... g6 12. Rad1 Bg7 13.f4**

This is logical and thematic. When Black castles queenside, White can often win an endgame where the kingside pawn majority takes advantage of the fact that the Black king is too far away.

**13...Rhe8 14. Rhe1 Bg4**

Black is a little bit cramped and this move is played to give him some breathing space. However, it is only a temporary situation, and soon the Bishop is chased back to c8.

**15.Rd2 Kb8**

I felt that this was needed because I did not want to have to move

my Bishop to d7 when all that would have been accomplished is a strengthening of White’s position and no gain for Black after he doubled on the d-file. I needed to be able to exchange on the d-file, so needed to be able to tuck my Bishop in to c8.

**16. h3 Bc8 17.Red1 c5 18. Nde2  
Rxd2 19.Rxd2 b6 20.Nd5 Nc6**

Well, at this point, I felt pretty good because my position seemed pretty solid and well defended and my pieces were poised for counter-attack, even though no solid outpost presented itself to me. But I still felt that White was slightly better at this point due to his nice development and well placed Knight on d5. I couldn’t help but think that in an ending, White still has a plus on the K-side. How can Black get into White’s position? I could not yet see how!

**21.Nec3 f5 22.e5 Be6 23.Kf3 g5**

Finally I saw a way to make some progress! The central pawns are blockaded and there is a chance to break in on the K-side.

**24.g3 g4+! 25.hxg4 fxf4+ 26.Kg2**

If 26.Ke4, I thought 26...Rf8 and lots of threats based on ...Bf5+! Certainly this position is encouraging for Black who has until now not seen any chances to create any threats. Now my mood became stimulated and encouraged, and I felt that now I did have some counter-play! And white’s Q-side pawns are becoming potential targets thanks to my united Bishops. But reality check...Frank is “in his element” in the Exchange Ruy Lo-

pez, and he does still have the K-side pawn majority, a strength that is ever present in my mind and almost always a permanent endgame advantage! The Black pawn at g4 is nice, however, because it does kind of keep White's K at bay. And it will be hard for White to ever push f5 given how d4 is so solidly held by Black so White will likely never have a Knight there!

**26...Kb7 27.Ne4 Rd8**



**28.Ndf6**

This is an important move and decision in the game. The whole character of the game from here on rides on this move. Black has weaknesses in his K-side pawns and with Black's K way over on b7, White might very well have a hey-day over there! And White has some weakness in his Q-side pawns, or at least that's that it "looks" like. There could be some poison in those pawns, but pawns are pawns too! After the coming exchange of rooks, the resulting minor piece ending is critical. The "fine point" is that after Black puts his Knight on d4 (which happens next move), then f3 is a great outpost for it! And for the first time in the game, Black will have something that is in White's territory. Plus, if I put

my Bishop on d5 instead of taking the a2 pawn, then there are tactical threats involving the pin of the e4 knight.

**28... Rxd2+ 29.Bxd2 Nd4!**

For the first time in the game, Black's knight gets to a good square!

**30.c3 Nf3 31.Nxh7**

I thought at the time that 31.Be3 was absolutely required in light of my threat of ...Bd5 followed by ...Nxd2. But this was Game/30. Frank told me after the game that, given the short amount of time, he was focused on his own plans and only looking at what I could do on the Q-side. Computer analysis recommends 31.Be3= Bxf6 32.Nxf6 Bxa2 33.Nxg4 Ne1+ 34.Kf2 Nd3+ 35.Ke2 Nxb2 36.f5.

**31...Bd5**

Black is now simply winning a piece, or so I thought. But after 32.Nhf6!= Nxd2 33.Nxd5 Nxe4 34.Ne3 a5 35.Nxg4 White has three connected passed pawns for the piece. Had the time control been slower, Frank would probably have played that.

**32.Nhg5?**

Oops. Here's a common situation in fast time controls. While not in *actual* time trouble yet, Frank admitted that he rushed his move in order to avoid a future time scramble. He called it the pressure of the impending time pressure. In any case...

**32...Nxd2! 0-1**

## Upcoming Stories for the next issue...

USCF-rated Match: Roland vs. Olsoy, July 9-August 1, 2012 (best of 12 games match)

ICA Summer Classic, Boise, ID, July 14-15, 2012

Mountain Home Summer Chess Tournament, Mountain Home, ID July 28, 2012

## Upcoming Events...

Eastern Idaho Open (September 22-23, 2012, Pocatello, Idaho - NWC Grand Prix!)

Please visit the ICA web site at: [www.idahocheessassociation.org](http://www.idahocheessassociation.org)

## A Conversation with the Interim NWC Editor, Frank Niro

Frank Niro relocated to the Northwest in 2006 and, in that short amount of time, has been a resident of all three states. Initially, he lived in Port Orchard, WA, on the farm of radio personality Delilah Rene ([www.delilah.com](http://www.delilah.com)) while working on his memoir (only partially about chess) and volunteering as her business development manager.

He moved to Oregon City with his wife, Natasha, in 2007. Last year they moved to Idaho to be near her parents. Currently, he is on the faculty of Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, where he serves as Executive-in-Residence in the Sloan Program in Health Administration in the School of Human Ecology. In the

## A Conversation with Frank Niro

(continued from previous page)

Spring of 2013, he will be returning to campus to co-teach (with his wife) a course entitled “Strategic and Business Planning for Healthcare Professionals.” His professional “bio” can be found on the Cornell University web site ([www.human.cornell.edu/bio.cfm?netid=fan3](http://www.human.cornell.edu/bio.cfm?netid=fan3)).

Last fall, I had the unusual opportunity of driving to Crossville, TN, and visiting the offices of the United States Chess Federation with Frank. On the trip, my eyes were opened to his 45-year career promoting chess everywhere he has been. In a sense, this “interview” began on that trip. I would like to introduce you to the Frank Niro that I have come to know.

**Jeff Roland: Welcome to Idaho. I understand that you were U.S. Chess Federation Executive Director from December 2001 to August 2003 and left for medical reasons. How did you come to choose Idaho as a place to settle down?**

*Frank Niro:* Thank you. We love it here in the “Great Northwest.” Except for the absence of Fenway Park and *Dunkin’ Donuts* franchises, the area is perfect.

Yes, I was pretty ill back then. I probably should not have returned to work after my earlier stroke, at least not a job that required so much travel. I suffered a heart attack in March of 2003. Fortunately I was staying with Al Lawrence at the time and he literally saved my life by calling an ambulance in the middle of the night. He knew I was in trouble when I told him that it “felt like Steve Doyle was standing on my chest.” He still likes to tell people that story.

Then three weeks after having two stents inserted into my anterior descending artery, I went right back to the office. Following that, while on a trip to Tennessee to sign the paperwork for the new office in Crossville, I suffered a pulmonary embolism. It took five days for me to drive back to New York. As a result, I missed a bunch of critical meetings - most notably those involving our auditors - with the unfortunate result that the published financial statements for 2002 were overly conservative. I didn’t let anyone know how sick I was at the time. It was a dumb move because, when I couldn’t do it any more, it looked to some people like I was leaving for other reasons. My doctor advised me not to fly to Los Angeles for the

*Natasha and Frank Niro, pictured here, met in West Seattle in 2006 and were married in Oregon City in 2007.*



U.S. Open for fear of blood clots. So I did what I should have done a lot sooner and resigned. I was accused of disappearing without resigning and a variety of other nonsense. Following that, I became “persona non grata.” I prepared a detailed analysis of the USCF financial position and nobody in control wanted to hear what I had to say. I attended the Executive Board meeting in October 2003, along with the representatives of the City of Crossville and the buyer for our New York property. We weren’t even given the courtesy of being invited into the meeting. I addressed some of these issues publicly in 2009, so there’s no need to repeat it now. The details are located online at: <http://twchesssafari.blogspot.com/2009/03/resignation-great-laptop-caper.html>.

I moved to Connecticut to be near my son in 2004 and to Queens to share an apartment with Stephan Gerzadowiz around 2005. Then, in 2006, Delilah invited me to Seattle to work on my memoir. I met my wife, Tash, in West Seattle and we were married in Oregon City in 2007. We came to Meridian in March of 2010 so that we could spend more time with my in-laws.

**Jeff Roland: So who in the chess world has influenced you most over the years?**

*Frank Niro:* I feel very fortunate to have had many mentors, from Martin Morrison in the early days to Harold Dondis, George Mirijanian, Helen Warren, John McCrary and others. But if I had to choose one person whose support and advice I treasure most, it would be Dr. Tim Redman, twice the President of USCF. I met Tim at the U.S. Open in St. Paul 2000 when I was on the Board of the U.S. Chess Trust. He helped me gain a fellowship to work on a Ph.D. in Chess in Education at the University of Texas at Dallas, and he spent countless hours answering my questions about how to make chess more attractive to the masses. Tim taught me much about a lot of different subjects and put me on a good track in my life. I will always be grateful for his guidance. He is a behind-the-scenes guy, and I have tried to emulate him in that regard.

(continued on page 43)

# Seattle Chess Club Tournaments

Address  
 → 2150 N 107 St, B85 ←  
 Seattle WA 98133  
 Infoline  
 ↗ 206-417-5405 ↖  
 www.seattlechess.org  
 kleistcf@aol.com  
 Address for Entries  
 SCC Tnmt Dir  
 2420 S 137 St  
 Seattle WA 98168

## How to Find the SCC

Look for the Northway Square East Building, just across I-5 from Northgate Mall, with large signs proclaiming "Northwest Kidney Centers" and "City University." The main entrance is reached by turning east on N. 107th Street from Meridian Ave. N. The club is on the lower level.

## SCC Championship

**Sept. 7, 14, 28, Oct. 5, 12, 26, Nov. 9**

**Format:** 7-rd Swiss held on Friday evenings.

**TC:** 35/100 and 25/60. **EF:** \$30 if rec'd by 9/5, \$37 thereafter. SCC memb. req'd — special \$25 tnmt memb. **Prize fund:** 75% of EFs. **Prizes:** 23%-16%, U2000 9%, U1800 8%, U1600 7%, U1400 6%, Unrated 3%, Endurance 3%. **Reg:** Fri. 7-7:45 p.m.

**Rds:** Fridays 8 p.m. **Make-up Games for Rds 1-4:** 8 p.m. Wed. Sept. 19—1 make-up (G/75) game; 8 p.m. Wed. Oct. 3—1 make-up (G/75) game. **Byes:** 4 (1 in rds 5-7, commit by 10/7). **Misc:** USCF memb. req'd. NS. NC.

♣ **August 18, Sept. 15** ~~Cancelled~~ **Saturday Quads** ♣  
**Format:** 3-RR, 4-plyr sections by rating. **TC:** G/120;d5. **EF:** \$9 (+\$7 fee for non-SCC). **Prizes:** Free entry for future quad. **Reg:** 9:00-9:45 a.m. **Rds:** 10-2:15-6:30 **Misc:** USCF, WCF/OCF/ICA memb. req'd, OSA. NS, NC.

♣ **August 26, Sept. 30** **Sunday Tornado** ♣  
**Format:** 4-SS. **TC:** G/64 or G/60;d5. **EF:** \$18 (+\$7 fee for non-SCC). **Prizes:** 1st 35%, 2nd 27%, Bottom Half 1st 22%, 2nd 16% (\$10 from each EF goes to prize fund). **Reg:** 10:30-11:15 a.m. **Rds:** 11:30-1:50-4:10-6:30. **Misc:** USCF, WCF/OCF/ICA memb. req'd, OSA. NS, NC.

♣ **Sept. 9** **New Event!** **SCC Octagonals** ♣  
**Format:** 3-SS, 8-plyr sections by rating. **TC:** G/90;d5. **EF:** \$9 (+\$7 fee for non-SCC). **Prize Fund:** \$54 b/8. **Prizes:** \$36-18 per sec. **Reg:** 10:00-10:45 a.m. **Rds:** 11-2:30-6:00 **Misc:** USCF, WCF/OCF/ICA memb. req'd, OSA. NS, NC.

**October 27** **SCC Novice**  
**Format:** 4-SS. Open to U1200 and unrated. **TC:** G/75;d5. **EF:** \$11 by 10/24, \$16 at site. (-\$2 for SCC mem., -\$1 for mem. of other NW dues-req'd CCs). **Prizes:** Memb (SCC, WCF, USCF). **Reg:** 9-9:45 a.m. **Rds:** 10-12:45-3-30-6. **Byes:** 1 (Rd 3/4—commit at reg.). **Misc:** USCF memb. req'd. NS, NC.

## SCC Fridays

Typical Friday fare is one round of an ongoing tournament (free to SCC members, no prizes) played at a rate of 40/90 followed by 30/60. Drop in for any round!

**Dog Days:** August 3, 10, 17, 24.

**Workman's Quads (G/24):** August 31.

**Autumn Leaves:** Sept. 7, 14, 21, 28.

**SCC Championship (35/100, 25/60):**  
Sept. 7, 14, 28; Oct. 5, 12, 26; Nov. 9.

## Seattle Fall Open

### September 21-23 or September 22-23

A 2-section, 5-round Swiss chess tournament with a time control of 40/2 & SD/1 (except Rd 1 of the 2-day option — G/64) with a prize fund of \$1000 based on 58 paid entries, 6 per prize group.

A Northwest Grand Prix event

**Open: \$180 gtd-\$120 gtd, U2200 \$100, U2000 \$95, U1800 \$90**

**Reserve (U1700): \$110-\$80, U1550 \$70, U1450 \$65, U1350 \$60, UNR \$30**

**Entry Fees:** \$33 by 9/19, \$42 at site. SCC members — subtract \$9. Members of other dues-req'd CCs in BC, OR, & WA — subtract \$4. Unrated players FREE with purchase of 1-yr USCF & WCF. **Add \$1 for 2-day option.** Make checks payable to SCC.

**Registration:** Fri. 7-7:45 pm or Sat. 9-9:45 am. **Rounds:** Fri. 8 pm, Sat. (10@G/64)-12:30-6:45, Sun. 11-5.

**Byes:** 2 available. Rounds 4 or 5 must commit at registration. **Misc.:** USCF & WCF required. NS. NC.

## Upcoming Events

(● denotes NW Grand Prix event - see page 42 for more details; Please note: for Seattle Chess Club events, see page 47)

**Aug 7, 14, 21** Portland Tuesday Night Quads. Time: 7:15-10:15 pm. Location: Portland Chess Club, 8205 SW 24th Ave, Portland, OR. Phone: 503-246-2978. Notes: The only weekly (one round/week) USCF-rated, quad-format tourney in the Portland-Vancouver area. TC: 40/90, SD/30. To register, contact Mike Morris, mikejmorris@earthlink.net or Alex Grom, grom.alex@gmail.com. QUADS REGISTRATION as the heading of the email. Please include your USCF ID and name, and be specific about which event you are registering for. Pay on-site. Checks/cash only. \$10 members/\$15 visitor

**Aug 11** Portland Saturday Quads. A monthly, USCF-rated quad tournament that usually takes place on the second Saturday of every month at the Portland Chess Club. 4 Player Round-Robin: If there are enough players for more than 1 section, players are grouped based on rating (so that you play others who are rated approximately the same); sometimes can run as a small Swiss, depending on number of players. Time control: G/90. Entry Fee: \$10 for PCC members; \$15 for non-members. Membership: USCF is required and can be purchased/renewed at registration. Round 1 starts at 10 AM, registration runs 9:30-9:45 AM. Prizes: 1st place - free entry to Tuesday or Saturday Quads, valid for 3 months (non-members still must pay \$5 visitor's fee). No tiebreakers used, prizes split between players with the same results.

**Aug 16, 23, 30** August Ajeeb. Site: Spokane Chess Club. E.F. \$16, Format: 3 Rds, G/2Hrs, USCF membership required, n/c, USCF rated. Ent/Info: Dave Griffin, (509) 994-9739, Email: dbgrffn@hotmail.com, website spokanecchessclub.org.

● **Aug 25** 79TH PUGET SOUND OPEN, Tacoma, WA. Site: Tacoma Chess Club, 409 Puyallup Ave. Across the street from Alfred's Café & 2 blocks down the hill from the Tacoma Dome. Format: 4 round Swiss. Time Control: G/60. Rounds: Sat. 10:00, 12:30, 2:30, A.S.A.P. Entry Fee: \$20.00. Registration: 9:00-9:45 am. Prize Fund: \$135.00 B/10. Top Half 1st \$50.00, 2nd \$25.00, Bottom Half 1st \$35.00, 2nd \$25.00. NS NC NW. USCF & WCF/OCF memberships required. Entries/info: Gary J. Dorfner, 8423 E. B St., Tacoma, WA 98445 or call (253)535-2536 or (253)306-7137 (club), e-mail ggarychess@aol.com.

● **Sep 1-3 Oregon Open**, Gresham, OR 6-round Swiss: 2 sect: Open & Reserve (U1800) Time Control: 40 moves in 2 hrs, sudden death in 1 hr, 5 sec. delay (40/2; SD/1; d5) Register: Saturday 9-10:45 am. Bring sets & clocks (none provided) Rounds: Saturday 11 & 5:30; Sunday 9:30 & 5:30; Monday 9 & 3 Location: Mt. Hood Community College, Vista Room; 26000 SE Stark, Gresham Check www.pdxchess.org for directions to playing site Organizer: Portland Chess Club Byes: 2 Byes available, request before Rd 1. See entry form on NWC web site.

**Sep 8 WASH. WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP. SITE:** Seattle Chess Club, 2150 N. 107 St. B85, Seattle, WA 98133. FORMAT: 4 ROUND SWISS. (FOR WOMEN & GIRLS) TIME CONTROL: G/75 + 5 second delay. REG: 9:00-9:45 AM. ROUNDS: SAT: 10:00, 1:00, 4:00, 7:00 OR A.S.A.P. ENTRY FEE: \$30.00. PRIZE FUND: (B/16) \$290.00, 1ST \$75.00 + PLAQUE, 2ND \$65.00, 1ST U2000, U1700, U1400 \$50.00. 1 HALF POINT BYE AVAILABLE. NS NW NC. USCF & NW MEMBERSHIPS REQUIRED. ENTRIES/INFO: GARY J. DORFNER, 8423 E. B ST., TACOMA, WA 98445. (253) 535-2536, ggarychess@aol.com. CHECKS PAYABLE TO GARY DORFNER. Also **WASH. SR. ADULT CHAMPIONSHIP**, same day, same site, FORMAT: 4 ROUND SWISS. (FOR THOSE OVER AGE 50+), other details same as Women's event.

**Sep 15-16** Taste of the Harvest Open, Wenatchee, WA. See details on NWC web site.

● **Sep 22-23** Eastern Idaho Open Chess Tournament. 5SS, G/120; d5. 2 Sect: Open and Reserve (U1400). ISU Student Un Bldg, Salmon River Suites, 1065 S. 8th St., Pocatello, Idaho. EF: USCF mem req., \$30 (U18 & 60+ \$25), by 9/19. \$5 more after. Reg & Ck in: 7:30-8:30 AM 9/22. Those not paid & ck'd in by 8:30 AM may not be paired in 1st rnd. RNDs: 9,2,7,9,2. 1/2 pt byes: Max 1, Rd 1-4 only. 0 pt bye avail rnd 5. Commit by end of rd 2. Prizes: \$\$ b/30 non ISU; Open: \$175-85-65; Reserve: \$75-50-35. INFO: ICA Jay Simonson, 391 Carol Ave. Idaho Falls, ID 83401, 208-206-7667, rooknjay@yahoo.com or www.idahocheessassociation.org. NC, NS, W. See flyer on ICA website.

**Oct 6** Wood River Weekend Progressive. 4SS, Time Control: G/30 Rd 1, G/45 Rd 2, G/60 Rd 3, G/90 Rd 4. 2 Sections: Open and Reserve (U1400). Site: Wood River High School, 1250 Fox Acres Rd., Hailey, ID. USCF mem req., EF by 10/3 \$30 (\$25 if 60+ or under 18), K-12 students \$10, \$40 entry for all after 10/03. Email entries OK. Register & check in: 8-8:30am 10/06. Rd. times: Sat 9am, 10am, 1pm; 3pm. 1/2 pt byes: Max 1, Rds 1-3 only. Commit by end of Rd 2. Prizes: \$\$ b/15; Open: \$100-75-50; Reserve: \$75-50-25, Student: trophies 1st-3rd pl. HR/ENT/INFO: ICA, Contact: Adam Porth, 212 N. 3rd St., Bellevue, ID 83313. 208-450-9048. aporth1@cox.net, www.idahocheessassociation.org. NC, NS, W. Chess Magnet School JGP. See flyer on ICA website.

● **Oct 6-7** Oyster Bay Inn Classic, Bremerton, WA. Site: Oyster Bay Inn, 4412 Kitsap Way, Bremerton, WA 98312. Format: 4SS, 3 sections. Time control: G/90 + 30 seconds/move increment. Registration: 10:00-11:30 AM. Rounds: Sat. 12:30 PM, 6:00 PM; Sun. 9:45 AM, 3:00 PM. Prize fund: \$800-same as last year but b/40: Open section >= 1900 USCF \$160, \$80, \$80; Premiere section: U1900 \$80, \$56, \$44 plus top score U1700 \$60; Reserve U1400/unr. \$80, \$56, \$44 plus top Unrated score \$60. Entry fee: \$40 if received by 9/24, \$50 after and on-site; USCF/ NWC req. Half-point bye: must be requested at registration, max. of one. Entries, checks payable to: Kris Dietsch, Apt. C-102, 2251 High View Ln. NW, Bremerton, WA 98312-5345 (please use a separate line for Apt C-102); cash/checks at site. You may also register online at <http://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/>. Info: Kris (360) 479-0847, mrkrisyawho@yahoo.com, Joe Eversole, joeeversole@q.com. Hotel: view tournament, skittles and guest rooms-Refurbished since last year!; players \$60 single/dbl. in advance, mention Kitsap County Chess Club: (360) 377-5510, 1-800-393-3862, site photo gallery and info.: [www.oysterbayinnbremerton.com](http://www.oysterbayinnbremerton.com). See Dec. 2011 NWC issue for article on last year's Classic. NM Bill McGeary will be giving entrants a complimentary SIMUL Sat 10 AM (others \$10), and will return with complimentary coaching/lecture for entrants after rd. 2 and between rds. 3 and 4.