Chess Room Newsletter

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At the October Chess Social – George Wilkerson

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Recent Tournaments at Mechanics’ Institute

The **Felix German Memorial TNM** kicked off on November 8, with 84 players competing in three sections. This Mechanics’ Institute flagship event was started in 1972 by Chess Room Director **Ray Conway**, with attendance at the club booming during the **Fischer-Spassky** match in Reykjavik. This tournament will wrap up on December 20.

**Felix German** (pictured above), a Mechanic’s Institute stalwart of tournaments and match play, passed away unexpectedly in 2020.

For TNM info, standings and results: [https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/felix-german-memorial-tuesday-night-marathon](https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/felix-german-memorial-tuesday-night-marathon)

The tournament is co-directed by International Arbiter **Judit Sztaray** and FIDE Arbiter **Abel Talamantez**.

The **Vladimir Naroditsky Memorial TNM** ended October 18, with **Steve Sobel** (1674) the winner of the top (1800+) section with a 6-1 score. Steve lost in the final round to IM **Kyron Griffith**, who finished in clear 2\(^{nd}\) with 5.5 points. Experts **Abhishek Handigol** and **Luke Widjaja** tied for 3\(^{rd}\) place with 5 points each. Tied for best under 2000 were **Sebastian Suarez** and **Max Hao**, while **Anton Maliev** took away the prize for best under 1800.
In the under 1800 section Yonathon Admassu scored an impressive 6.5-.5 to take clear 1st, and 2nd was Dominic James Croce with 6 points. Konrad Goc and Karl Stuart Kingma tied for 3rd and best under 1600, while Fernando Toledo Guerrero and Jahsun Barrack tied for best under 1400.

Final results here: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/vladimir-naroditsky-memorial-tuesday-night-marathon

The tournament was co-directed by International Arbiter Judit Sztaray and FIDE Arbiter Abel Talamantez.

On October 8, the Mechanics’ Institute hosted its monthly double-header of Scholastic Swiss in the morning and Quads in the afternoon.

Thirteen players turned out for the scholastic event held in two sections, with Hayes Marvin taking 1st place on tie-breaks over Ethan Liu and Rakshita Dhanasekar in the 700+ section, while the under 700 section was won outright by Simon Lim.

Final results here: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/mechanics-institute-monthly-scholastic-swiss-person#1008

A whopping 68 players in 17 sections turned out for the Quads, with the top quad won by the brother duo of Patrick Liu and Aiden Liu.

Final results here: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/mechanics-championship-quads#1008

Both events were directed by Local TD Arthur Liou.

The 20th Saint-Amant Memorial, held on October 22, saw 75 players competing in two sections. The top section (1800+) saw a three-way tie for 1st, with IM Kyron Griffith splitting the honors with experts Chawit Asavasaetakui and Christophe Bambou – all scoring an undefeated 3.5-.5 points.

The under 1800 section was won outright by Victor Briancon-Marjollet with a perfect 4-0, while Henry Lien, Bowen Gui, and Stanley Zhong tied for 2nd-3rd with 3.5 points each.

Final results here: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/20th-st-amant-memorial-championship

The tournament was directed by FIDE Arbiter Abel Talamantez.

The 50th Carroll Capps Memorial, held on November 5, again saw a full house with 75 players competing in three sections. IM Kyron Griffith and Expert Sricharan Pullela tied for 1st in the 2000+ section with 3.5 from 4 games, and tied for 2nd were Experts Advay Bansal, Chawit Asavasaetakui, and Niko Pompe with 3 points each.

In the 1600-1999 section Yuvraj Sawhney took clear 1st with a perfect 4-0 score. Second place was taken by Max Hao with 3.5, while Kian Jamali and Alec Thompson
tied for 3rd with 3 points.
The under 1600 section also saw a clear winner, with Robert Huskins earning a perfect 4-0, while Nicholas Brown and Calvin Rummens tied for 2nd and 3rd with 3.5 points each.

Final results here: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/50th-carroll-capps-memorial-championship
The tournament was directed by Local TD Arthur Liou.

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On November 12, the Mechanics’ Institute hosted its monthly double-header of Scholastic Swiss in the morning and Quads in the afternoon.
Sixteen players showed up for the scholastic event divided into two sections, with Ethan Lam as clear 1st in the 500+ section and Sawyer Cohen taking clear 1st in the u500 section.
Final results here: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/mechanics-institute-monthly-scholastic-swiss-person#1112
A full house of 79 players in 19 sections showed up for the Quads, with IM Elliott Winslow the winner of the top quad.
Final results here: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/mechanics-championship-quads#1112
Both tournaments were directed by Local TD Michael Hsu, assisted by FIDE Arbiter Abel Talamantez and International Arbiter Judit Sztaray.

The winners of each quad were presented with a chess board signed by the visiting players from the Meltwater Champions Chess Tour (more on that below):

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IM Elliott Winslow: Annotated Games from the TNM
A selection of games from rounds one and two of the Felix German Memorial TNM:

11.Qb5+ Nxb3+ 12.axb3 Qc7 13.g4

14.h4N Gesturing aggressively towards Black's king, but as the game goes it turns into a target (or should have!).


[20.exd5 Rcb8†]

20...a5

(Diagram)

It appears that Black's pawn storm is striking home first, but White's light-square grip is paramount. 21.Bxc5?! Rather an inexplicable move, giving Black some tactics.

[21.Bc4† is superior. Ne6 22.Qb5 is the computers' suggestion, but does any human want their queen on a4?]

21...dxc5 22.Bc4 Or else ...Rd8 equalizes.

22...Bf6? After this accommodation White steadily converts the win.

[Here Black (and White?) overlooked 22...Bxh4!= reducing White's
advantage to minimal. 23.Qd7
( 23.Rxh4 Rd8 regains the piece:
24.Rdh1 when it's a hard choice
between taking the queen and 24...h6,
in both cases offering likely chances to
hold.) 23...Qxd7 24.Rxd7 Bg5!= ]

23.Qd7!± Strongly threatening g5. White
has more active pieces. 23...Qxd7?
[ 23...Qa7± ]

24.Rxd7+- Rf8 25.g5 Bd8
[ 25...Rad8 is a better defense. ]

26.Rhd2 Bb6 27.R2d6
[ ø27.Rb7 ]

27...Rad8 28.Rxf7 Rxf7 29.Rxb6
[ Not 29.Bxf7+ Kxf7 30.Rxb6 Rd1+
31.Ka2 Rd2± ]

29...Kf8 30.Bxf7 Kxf7
[ 30...Rd1+ 31.Ka2 Kxf7 ]

31.Rb5?
[ 31.Kc1 Kg8 32.Rc6 ]

31...Rd1+ 32.Ka2 Rf1 33.Rxc5 Ke6
[ 33...Rxf3 is a better chance. 34.Rxa5
( 34.Rxe5 Rh3± ) 34...Rf2 ]

34.Rc7 Rxf3?
[ 34...h5 35.Rxg7 Rh1 ]

35.Rxg7 Rf4 36.Rxh7 Rxe4 37.g6
aiming for h5. 37...Rg4 38.g7
[ 38.h5+- and the rest is easy. ]

38...e4?
[ 38...Kf6± ]
[ Lc0 v.0.26.1: 38...Kf7 39.c4 bxc3
40.bxc3 e4 41.Kb2 Kg8 42.Rh5
Kxg7 43.Rxa5 Rxh4 44.Rf5 Kg6
45.Rf1 Rh2+ 46.Ka3 Kg5 47.b4 e3 ]

(Diagram)

A nice finish -- Black queens two moves
ahead of White, but can't stop White
queening too -- with an extra rook and
safety from any perpetuals.
1-0
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1
   [6.d3]
6...b5 7.Bb3 0-0 8.a4 b4
   [8...Bb7]
9.d4
9...d6
   [9...exd4 10.e5]
   [9...Nxd4]
10.dxe5 Nxe5
   [10...dxe5 11.Nbd2]
11.h3?! Just another line I've been meaning to learn about for ages but never have; I vaguely remembered 10. dxe5 but here, on my own board, it all goes dark.
   [11.Nbd2]
11...Bb7 12.Nbd2
12...Re8
   [12...Nxf3+ 13.Qxf3 a5=]
13.Nh2?
13...Bf8 14.Nhf1 c5?!
   [14...Ned7]
15.Ng3?!
   [15.a5]
15...Qc7 16.c4 Nd3 17.Re3 Nxc1
18.Rxc1 g6 19.f4 Bh6 20.Qf1 d5
   [20...Bg7?]
21.e5 d4 22.Re2 Nd7 23.Bc2 f5?!
   [23...f6!-+]

25.Bxf5! gxf5 26.Nxf5 Bg7 27.Ne4?
   [27.Nxg7 Qxg7 28.f5=]
27...Bxe4 28.Rxe4 Re6?
   [28...Rad8 29.e6=]
29.Nxg7! Qxg7
   [29...Kxg7 is just as bad: 30.f5 Rh6 31.Qf4 Ne6!? 32.Qd2!]
30.f5+- Rh6
   [30...Ree8]
31.Rg4 Ng6 32.Qf3 Rd8?! 33.e6 Qf6
34.e7 Re8 35.Qd5+ Kh8 36.fg6
   [36.Qd7 Rxe7 37.Qd8+ Qf8 38.Qxf8+ Nxf8 39.Re7]
   [36.Re6! Nxe7 37.Qxc5 (37.Qd7)]
36...Rxe6

(Diagram)
37.Re6?? An incomprehensible short circuit. 37...Qxe6 38.Rxg6 Qxg6
39.Qxc5 Qf6
0-1

Previous TNM winner Steve Sobel continues his impressive forward motion, with another rating upset. 1.e4 c6
2.Nc3 d5 3.Nf3 Nf6
[ 3...dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Qe2!? is one way to avoid usual lines. ]
[ 3...Bg4 4.h3 ( 4.Be2 ) 4...Bxf3 ( 4...Bh5 ) 5.Qxf3 e6 is the solid way to play. ]
4.e5 Ne4 And into the rabbit-hole.
[ 4...Nfd7 ]
5.Ne2 Qb6!

(Diagram)

6.d4! f6!?
[ 6...c5 tries to free the knight on e4, but it also lets White organize: 7.dxc5 Qxc5 8.Ned4 ( 8.Nfd4!? with f2-f3 still available )]
[ 6...e6! has been the preferred continuation, when 7.Ng3!? c5!? 8.Bd3 has done fairly well "at the top."
]

7.Ng3
[ The computer likes △7.a4 (Oh, it would these days, wouldn't it?) ]

7...Bg4 8.Be2 White is clearly better according to bots, although the only two games here were won by Black. 8...Nd7

9.exf6
[ 9.0-0± ]
9...gxf6N Sensible on one level, but neither the g-file play nor ...e7-e5 are realistic.


10.c3
[ △10.a4 -- Quiet, computer! ]

10...Nd6
[ 10...0-0-0± was "necessary" (Now the computers are tossing in some words) ]

11.h3
[ 11.a4+- ]

11...Be6
[ 11...Bxf3± 12.Bxf3 e5 ]

12.a4

(Diagram)

Nf5? Black leaves his king in the center a little too long!

[ 12...0-0-0± keeps fighting. 13.a5 Qc7 ]


18.Bxg6

e6 19.h4
[ 19.0-0+- ]

19...f5± 20.Qg3 Nf6
[ 20...c5± ]

21.h5 Bd6 Inhibits Qe5. 22.Qf3
Bf7 is the strong threat. 22...Qc7
[ 22...a5± is a better defense. 23.Bf7 }
26.Bxf6 Rxf6 27.g4 Bf4 28.gxf5 exf5
29.Kd1 The proverbial "castling by hand"
29...Kb8 30.Kc2 Bh6 31.Rae1 Qd7
[ 31...a6 32.Qe2 Qd6 ]
32.Re5 c5?
[ 32...a6 33.Rhe1 ( 33.Rxf5 Rxf5
34.Bxf5 Qf7=; 33.Bxf5 Qf7= )
33...Ka7 ]
33.Qxd5 Losing the f-pawn might
provide drawing chances with the dark-
square blockade; here White is clearly
winning. 33...Qxa4+ 34.Kb1 Rc8
35.Rf7 Rb6
[ 35...Qc6 36.Qe5+ Rd6 ]
36.Bxf5
1-0

Rakonitz,David 1662
Hack,Richard 1500

11.Nd5
c6??
[ 11...g5!= 12.Nxg5?? Nxd5! ]
Bb6 15.Qf3 Kg7 16.Qg4+ Kh7
17.Qf5+ Kg7 18.Rad1 Qe7 19.Rd3
Bd8 20.Rfd1 d5 21.Qg4+
1-0

Li,David Z 1711
Casares,Nick 1600

Bc5 5.0-0 0-0 6.Bg5 h6 7.Bh4 d6
8.h3 Be6 9.Nc3 Bxc4 10.dxc4 Nd4
even for a couple of moves now. 16...d6
17.Nf3 f4 18.Bxb7 Qxb7 19.e4
   [ 19.exf4 ]
19...g5 20.h3 Qg7 21.Rxc8 Rxc8
22.Qd3 g4 23.hxg4 Qxg4 24.Nh2
Qg6 25.f3 Bg5 26.Qb3 Kh8 27.Rd1
Rg8 28.Rc1 Bh4 29.Rc2 Qg7 30.Qc4
Bg3

31.d5 Bxh2+ 32.Kxh2 Qg3+ 33.Kg1
Qe1+ 34.Qf1 Qe3+ 35.Qf2 exd5
36.exd5 Qe5 37.Qd2 Re8 38.Qc3
Qxc3 39.bxc3 Leaving Black with some
plus.
   [ 39.Rxc3 Re2 40.Ra3 Rxb2
41.Rxa7 heads to a draw. ]
39...Kg7 40.Kf2 Kf6 41.c4 Re3 42.g3
Kf5

(Diagram)

43.Rd2?
   [ 43.gxf4 Kxf4 44.c5! holds; Black
has to save his rook before anything
else. Rxf3+ 45.Kg2! (45.Ke2??
Re3+ can block on e4 ) 45...Rg3+
46.Kf2 Rg8 47.cxd6! Rd8 48.Rc7
Rxd6 (48...h5 49.d7 ) 49.Rxh7
The computer breaks out the "0.00"s ]
43...Rc3+ 44.gxf4 Rxc4 45.Kg3 h5?
No, it can't wait.
   [ 45...Rxf4 46.Rh2 Ra4
A) or 47.Rh6 Rxa2 48.Rxd6 Ke5
49.Rd7 Ra3 (49...h5 50.f4+ Ke4 );
B) 47.Rxh7 Rxa2 48.Rh5+ Kg6
49.Rh8 Ra5 might be a tough
question of technique, but it is
won. ]
46.Rh2= Kg6 47.Re2 David back-and-
forts to a simplified draw. 47...h4+
48.Kg4 h3 49.Re6+ Kg7 50.Kxh3
Rxf4 51.Kg3 Rf6 52.Re7+
   [ 52.Rxf6?? does indeed lose, as so
often is seen when "all rook endings
are drawn" isn't believed. ]
52...Rf7 53.Re6 Rf6 54.Re7+ Rf7
½-½

20.f4? Missing a shot!
[ 20.Nxe4! (It doesn't win, but it sure doesn't lose! Probably some slight advantage. And, it takes the punch out of Black's position.) Na5 (20...Rxe4?? 21.Qxd5++- ) 21.Qd1 Bb5! (That's one less hanging piece)
A) 22.Re1?? dxe4 (22...Qe6! );
B) 22.Nc5! and White gets away to d3 with that nice extra pawn Note 22...Bxf1?? 23.Bxg6 ]

20...Bh3!
[The only other good (and also winning!) move was 20...Na5 and again, Black manages to save everything with those center pawns surviving and thriving.]

It might be "only" a bishop for two pawns, but it's quite won for Black. 23.Rf2 Kh8

24.Qg5 Bf5
[24...Qxg5 25.fxg5 Rxf2 26.Kxf2 Bxg2 ]

25.Rd1 h6 26.Qxg6 Bxg6 27.Nb3 b6 28.g4 Be4
[28...Re4! ]

29.Nd4 Nxd4 30.cxd4
[30.Rxd4 Bc6 ]

30...Bd5 31.a3 Re4 32.h3 Rxf4 33.Rxf4 Rxf4 34.Rf1 Rxd4 35.Rf8+ Kh7 36.Rd8 Rd3 37.Kf2

(Diagram)
Rxe3 "Simplifying" -- but keeping the bishop would be fine as well. 38.Rxd5 Rh2+ 39.Kf3 Rxb2 40.Rd7 Rb3+ 0-1

[ 9...Nd7= ]
10.a4 Bd7
[ 10...b5! ]
11.Qe2
[ 11.Bg5= ]
11...Qe8
12.d5
There are myriad repetitions: even

21.Qb7  Rc7  22.Qb8  Rc8 

18...Nc5+ 19.Qc4

Nxb3+??
[ 19...Rxb3+ ]
[ 19...Rb4!+ ]

20.cxb3+– Qd7
[ 20...Rxb3 21.Qxc8 Rxc8+ 22.Kd2 ]

[ 22.Qd5 ]

22...Rc8 23.Qa6 Qc7 24.Rc1?
[ 24.Ke2 ]

24...Bh6+ 25.Ke2 Bxc1= 26.Qd3±
d5!? 27.exd5 Qe7+

28.Kd1?
[ 28.Kf1  Bb2 29.g3  Rc3 30.Qe2
Rc1+  31.Ne1= While White is
untangling, Black gets the pawns
back ]

28...Bb2?
[ 28...Bb6  It's going to be all about
White's exposed king: 29.Nd2  Bxd2
30.Qxd2  (30.Kxd2 Qf6 ) 30...Qa3
(30...Qb7)]

29.Re1
[ 29.d6! ]

29...Rc1+ 30.Kd2 Qb4+ 31.Ke2 Rc3
32.Qb5?!
[ 32.Qd2  Qxb3 33.Qh6+ Kg8
34.Kf1= ]

32...Qe4+?
[ 32...Qxb5+ 33.axb5 Rxb3= ⨯
And this one is all about the excellent
partnership of passed a-pawn and
dark-squared bishop. Maybe White
can disrupt things enough with 34.Nd2
Rxb5 35.Nc4 Bf6 36.d6 ]

33.Kf1 Qc2?!
[ 33...Qd3+ 34.Qxd3 Rxd3 35.Re4!
Rxd5 (35...Rx b3 36.Nd2 Rd3
37.Nc4 Bc3 38.Re3+-) 36.Ke2+-
White can work this one. ]

34.Qe8+
[ 34.d6! ]
34...Kg7 35.d6 Qd3+ 36.Qe2 Qxe2+ 37.Rxe2 Rxb3 38.Re8?? Wrong order!
  38.d7 Bf6 39.Re8  ( 39.Rd2 Bd8 40 Ne5 Rb6 41.Rc2 ) 39...Rd3
  40 Ne5 Rd4 41.g3 is, basically, a Zugzwang.
38...Rd3= 39.Rd8 Kf6?!
  39...Bf6
    A) 40.Rd7 Ra3  ( 40...g5 )
    B) 40.Ra8 Rxd6 41.Rxa5 Rd1+
  42.Ke2 Ra1 ]
40 Ne1?
  40.Ke2± Rd5 41.Nd2 ]
40...Rd1
  40...Rd5= ]
41 Ke2 Ra1??
  41...Rd5 ]
42.Rb8!+-
  42.Re8! ]
42...Bc3 43.Nd3??
  43.Nc2 Rc1 44.d7 ]
43...Rxa4??
  43...Ke6= 44.Nc5  ( 44.Rd8 Bd4 )
  44...Kxd6 45.Ne4+ Kc7 46.Rf8 Be5
  47.Rxf7+ Kc6 48.Rxh7 Rxa4= as it turns out.
44.d7 The rest is just a waste. 44...Rd4
45.d8Q+ Rxd8 46.Rxd8 h5 47.Ra8 Ke6 48.Nc5+ Kd5 49.Nb7 Kc6
50.Nxa5+ Kb5 51.Nb3 Kb4 52.Nd2 f6
53.Rf8 f5 54.Rg8 Be5 55.Rxg6 Bxh2
56.Rh6 f4 57.Rxh5 f3+ 58.Nxf3 Bc7
59.g4
1-0

Bf6?!
[ 8...0-0 9.d4 sees White's jump in development causing troubles. ]
[ Black still needs something radical to show up White's maneuver as a bit artificial: 8...Qb6!? ]
[ or 8...Nd4!? ]
9.Nc3 Nxc3?
  9...0-0 10.Ne4 Be7 11.d4± ]
10.dxc3 Qb6

Diagram
11.Bg5! 'Inviting' Kyron to go pawn hunting  11...Qxb2  All but fatal, but completing development was going to be problematic for Black in any case.
14.Bxc6+!?  Certainly good,  
[ but even better was 14.Qb5!  0-0  
( 14...Bd7  15.Ne4! ) 15.Ne4!  
and Rd2 is going to trap Black's queen! ]
14...bxc6  15.Qf3  0-0  16.Ne4  f5
17.Nf6+  Kg7  18.Rac1  Qa4  19.Nh5+  Kh6
[ 19...Kg8  20.Qe3! ]

(Diagram)

20.Nf4
[ 20.c4!+- ]
20...Kg7
[ 20...f6  21.Qh5+  Kg7  22.Qh4  
(threatening the queen) readies  Qa5  
23.Nh5+  Kg6  24.g4 ]
21.Nh5+  Kh6  22.Nf4??  Kg7
I guess Luke just wasn't up to beating a 2400 in a handful of moves just yet, and settles for a draw.
½-½

[ Urquhart,Joe S 1893
Seitzer,Phillip 2129
MI Felix German TNM: 2000+ (2.2)
][Winslow,Elliott]

Seltzer wins a pawn after an unusual opening by both players (mostly Joe), and brings it to a win -- to be the only player with a perfect score.  1.Nf3  d5  
2.d4  Nf6  3.g3  g6  4.Bg2 Bg7  5.0-0  
0-0  6.c3  Nbd7  7.h3  Ne4  8.Ng5  Ndf6  
9.Nf3

(Diagram)
Joe hasn't played a tournament game for quite a while, and seems to be trying to find his bearings. (He will, I'm sure.)


After many perambulations in a typical Exchange Gruenfeld middlegame, longtime veteran Snyder grabs the chance to mobilize his queenside pawns and takes the point.


(Diagram)
White has a probably winning advantage with the bishops and absolute control of the c-file, but it never crystallizes into anything further. 19...e5 20.dxe6 Better to keep the passed pawn, and leave Black’s bishop out of the game for a while. 20...Qxe6 21.Qd5 Qf6 22.Qd6 Qb2 23.Rc7 Qxa2 24.Bc8?! [24.Rxa7?! Nb3 25.Be3 Qa1+ 26.Kg2 Nd4 White has nothing.] [24.Kg2! Qe6 25.Qxe6 fxe6 26.Bd6 Rf7 27.Rc8+ Bf8 28.f4± is a bind worth a lot more than the pawn.]


Exchanging on his own terms 26...Qf6?? 27.Bg5?? [27.Bd6+- is crushing; note Qd8 28.Rd7! Qxc8 29.Bxf8 Qxf8 30.Rd8] 27...Qe5± Now White’s just out on a limb, and climbing off it is a difficult process. 28.Rc2 Nb3! heading to a better square and clearing the path for the a-pawn. 29.f4?! [29.Qxe5 Bxe5 30.f4 Nc5 (30...Nd4 31.Rd2 Nb3 32.Rc2 Nc5 anyway) 31.fxe5 Rxc8 32.Be3 a5±] 29...Qb8? [29...Qxd5 30.exd5 Nc5 31.Bh3 f6! 32.Bh4 Kf7 33.d6?! f5 34.Be7 Rb8 That d-pawn is neutralized and eventually won, in classic Exchange Gruenfeld fashion.] 30.Bh3 Nc5 31.e5? [31.Be7! Qxf4 (31...Re8 32.Bxc5 bxc5 33.e5 Bf8 34.Bd7 Rd8 35.f5! gxf5 36.e6!± makes sure both kings are exposed.) 32.Bxf8 Bxf8 33.e5 Qg5+ 34.Kf1 a5 35.Rc3 a4 36.f4 Qh4 White is kicking up problems for Black’s attempt to use the nominal material advantage.]
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.h3 e5 7.Nde2 There are other knight moves... 7...Be7  [7...Be6 8.g4 d5 (8...h6; 8...b5)]  [7...h5!?]

8.Bg5!?  
[8.g4! has been the point since Weaver Adams came up with the "symmetric" response to 5...a6 in the 1940s; in fact it was seen in Lombardy-Fischer, US Championship

1958. If White is attacking, RJF didn't think so; he just castled here (½-½ 47).]

8...Nbd7  
[8...Be6 aims for an optimal development, but White could go for one of his own with 9.Bxf6 Bxf6 10.Nd5 Still, it's nothing special; Black develops, the pawn at h3 is just a wasted move.]

9.Ng3 h6 10.Bxf6 Now Black has no problems.  
[10.Be3!? is interesting, say Nb6 11.Qf3!?± One thing about the Najdorf Sicilian: it leaves White to choose from a huge array of setups!]

[14.Nxf6+ Bxf6 15.Bxe6 fxe6 16.0-0 is certainly double-edged, with chances for both sides but leaning slightly Blackward. Bh4!? (16...d5!?)]

14...Qxe7 15.Bxe6 Qxe6 16.0-0 Rc4  
[16...d5!±]

17.f3 This loosening of White's pawn cover comes back to haunt him later.  
[17.Re1]  
[17.Qd3]  

17...Rfc8  
[17...d5! again ]

18.c3 d5
The quintessential Successful Sicilian, emerging with better center (well, only center, with that e-pawn), minority attack chances (maybe), possible peering towards the dark squares around White's king.  

19.exd5 Nxd5 20.Re1 Nf4

21.Ne4??  
[How the computer determines that 21.Qc2! is the only move to keep it in balance I'll never know.]  

21...Qb6+?  
[21...Qg6! first! 22.g4 (22.Qc2 f5 woops; 22.Qd2 f5 23.Nd6 Rd8 no better) 22...Qb6++ is worlds better than the game!]  

22.Kh1 Qxb2 23.Rg1!  

23...R8c7  
[23...R4c6! 24.Rb1 Qa2 25.Rxb7 Rg6 26.Qd7 Rf8 27.Qd2 Qc4 28.a5 f5† keeps up the pressure.]  

24.Qd8+  
[24.Qd6! f5! 25.Qxe5 fxe4 26.Qxf4 exf3 27.Qxf3 Qxc3 28.Qd5+† is going to be hard or impossible to win.]  

24...Kh7 25.Qe8! f6 Now both sides have the same Swiss cheese for pawn cover!  
[25...Nd3! 26.Rad1 Rxe4! 27.Rxd3 Qc2!?† (another cryptic computer move) has better winning chances.]  

26.Rad1 Qb6?  
[26...Rxe4! 27.fxe4 Qxc3 favors Black, best being 28.Rd8 h5 29.Qh8+ Kg6 30.Qe8+ Kg5 Again, a dangerous bid to win.]  

27.Rd8?  
[27.Rd6!= White sets up, at the least, 28.Nxf6+ and 29.Rd7+ with a perpetual.]  

27...Qe6!† 28.Qh8+ Kg6 29.Rgd1? R4c6?  
[29...Rxe4!! 30.fxe4 Nhx3!!+ The point of the preliminary exchange sac is 31.Re8 Qg4]  

30.Rg8  
[30.h4= says Stockfish 15... Rc8 31.g4 Rxd8 32.Rxd8 h5 33.Ng3 hxg4 34.Re8 Qd7 35.Rd8 Qc7? 36.Rg8+-]  

(Diagram)
Perhaps Black thought his combination was winning, but White finds a precarious route to a perpetual. Black did have his own path to a win:

36...Rxg7 37.Qxg7 e4!! Crazy as it seems, there just isn't a win for White. Meanwhile Black reduces White's king protection, not to mention other avenues. For example:

36...Rc1+ 37.Kh2 Qd6+ Ouch! 38.Ne5 Nxf3+! 39.gxf3 Qd2+ 40.Qg2 Qxg2+ 41.Kxg2 fxe5 and a winning rook ending! ]

35.Kh2

Nxf3+! 36.gxf3

[ 36.Kg3!? Rxg7 37.Qxg7 Ng5 38.Nxh6+ Ke4 is another wild ride, with a perpetual the best result: 39.Qxb7+ (39.Qg6+?! (Any other tries just lose) f5 40.Qxg5 Rh1 41.Qxf5+?= (Or knight first -- again, other tries succeed -- in giving Black the point.) ) 39...Qc6 40.Qb4+ Qc4 (40...Rc4?? 41.Qe1#) 41.Qb6 Qc6= ]

36...Qa2+ 37.Kh3 Rh1+ 38.Kg3 Rg1+ 39.Kh4

[ 39.Kh3?? ]

39...Rh1+ 40.Kg3 Fantastic all-in play by both players! ½-½
The Chess Scuttlebutt

The news is coming in fast and furious – we can barely keep up. From the Carlsen/Niemann scandal to the World Fischer Random Championship, here are some links to the stories that make up our world.

GM Hans Niemann sues just about everyone that stands in his way:
https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/65592749/niemann-v-carlsen/

The Mechanics’ Institute makes page one of the lawsuit – but in a good way, as he mentions his connection to the Institute.

GM Garry Kasparov weighs in:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzcyAtquVZw

GM Maxim Dlugy defends his reputation:
https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/hans-niemann-mentor-maxim-dlugy-what-magnus-carlsen-did-is-absolutely-ridiculous-a-cc8cc41f-84ca-4ec9-bd9c-223c89fb28e2

GM Rauf Mamedov resigns after one move in protest against Carlsen’s 1...g5:

Can cheaters ever be detected?

GM Hans Niemann is picked to lead the USA at the World Team Championship:

Our own IM John Donaldson takes us through Fischer vs Spassky, 1972:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ah_1gtCdIBM

GM Hikaru Nakamura wins the World Fischer Random Championship:
https://fischerrandom.fide.com/

GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda wins the Aimchess Rapid ahead of Carlsen, et al:

FM Jennifer Yu is the new US Women’s Chess Champion:
And GM Fabiano Caruana wins the US Chess Championship:  
https://www.uschesschamps.com/2022-us-championships/pairings-results

The Marshall Chess Club has reprinted “Hans Niemann: Chess at the Top” by FM Paul Whitehead from our last newsletter in The Marshall Spectator (subscribe!):  
https://www.marshallchessclub.org/club/newsletter

Recent Games

A small collection of games played around the world in the past month that have caught our attention:
Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova 2336
I Krush 2432
U.S. Women's Championship (5) 9.10.22

The eight-time U.S. Women's Champion crashes through on the dark squares.


10.Bxe4 1-0


(Diagram)
Black resurrects a dubious opening move... and holds the draw. 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5

(Diagram)

Nxe4!? 4.Qe2 Qe7 5.Qxe4 d6 6.d4
E60  
M Carlsen 2856
N Grandelius 2651
Aimchess Meltwater Champions (12)

Black's little combination with 14...e4 lands him in trouble on the dark squares.
1.b3 d5 2.Bb2 c5 3.e3 Nf6 4.Nf3 g6 5.c4 dxc4 6.Bxc4 Bg7 7.0-0 0-0 8.d4

(Diagram)
The winner of the U.S. Women's Championship hangs a bishop... and wins. 1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.0-0 e5 5.d3 Ne7 6.Nbd2 0-0 7.e4 d4 8.Ne1 Nbc6 9.f4

(Bigram)

31.Ba4?? Qxa4 32.Qf7+ Kh8 33.h5 gxh5 34.Rf5 Bd4 35.Rg5 Qc2+ 36.Kh3 Qe4 37.Rxh5 Qh1+ 38.Kg4 Re4+ 0-1

Krush,Irina 2432
Yu,Jennifer 2297
USA Championship Women-TB 2022 (1.3)


(Bigram)

23. Nd6 Qxd6 24. Rxa7 1-0

Carlsen sacrifices a bishop... on move one. 1.b3 g5

(Diagram)

1-0

D38

Duda, Jan-Krzysztof 2731

Giri, Anish 2764

Meltwater CCT Finals 2022 (3.3)
The publisher New in Chess (www.newinchess.com), best known for its famous magazine of the same name, has been publishing chess books since the 1980s. Today it is more active than ever. Its recent merger with the Play Magnus Group has led to some Chessable courses becoming available in book form, a welcome innovation.

New in Chess has always been noted for publishing books on a variety of subjects, not just opening works. Its recent offerings reflect this.

**Openings**

*The Rossolimo for Club Players* by Victor Bologan

*Countering the Queen’s Gambit* by Michael Prusikin

*Trompowsky Attack and London System* by Viktor Moskalenko

*King’s Kalashnikov Sicilian* by Daniel King

**Middlegame**

*Master Your Chess with Judit Polgar* by Judit Polgar and Andras Toth

*Improve Your Chess Calculation* by RB Ramesh

**Endgame**

*Endgame Strategy* by Mikhail Shereshevsky

**Game Collections and Anthologies**

*The Youngest Chess Grandmaster in the World* by Abhimanyu Mishra

*From Ukraine with Love for Chess* by Ivanchuk, Ponomariov and others

*The Most Exciting Chess Games Ever* by Steve Giddins

**History**

*The Match of All Time* by Gudmundur G. Thorarinsson

There was a time the Open Sicilian was considered the main line after 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 and the Rossolimo (3.Bb5) a sideline. This is no longer the case as can be seen from Ravi Haria’s 520-page work on the subject (Thinkers Publishing 2021). The length of this tome can be partly explained by the English Grandmaster offering two options for White
after Black’s main choices 3...e6 and 3...g6. Victor Bologan, who has written well-received books on the King’s Indian and Ruy Lopez, has taken a more focused approach in his recent work *The Rossolimo for Club Players* (240 pages, $29.95) where he follows the advice given to him by his early trainer Viacheslav Chebanenko (best known for the variation 4...a6 in the Slav which bears his name) – to trade on c6 without provocation-3...e6 4.Bxc6 and 3...g6 4.Bxc6. Bologan supplements his analysis with a great deal of explanatory prose which will make this book accessible to players from 1800 on up.

*Countering the Queen’s Gambit* (222 pages, $24.95) by the German Grandmaster Michael Prusikin is a well-executed book that will be helpful for club players. The author presents a repertoire for Black against everything but 1.e4 that is centered on playing the Queen’s Gambit Declined and in particular the Tartakover variation (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 h6 6.Bh4 0-0 7.Nc3 b6). The book starts out with several chapters about typical pawn structures that arise in the Queen’s Gambit Declined. They are centered around well-annotated model games illustrating typical ideas and stratagems. The author then moves on to covering the theoretical nitty gritty but in a way that doesn’t overwhelm his target audience – players in the 1600 to 2200 range. As mentioned previously, this book covers more than its title indicates. Various attempts to avoid the Queen’s Gambit are covered here (London, Colle, Veresov etc.) as well as the Catalan, English, Reti, Larsen and Bird. A knowledge of the Queen’s Gambit (and Ruy Lopez) is the mark of every educated chess player and *Countering the Queen’s Gambit* is a first-rate introduction to the subject.

*Trompowsky Attack and London System* (200 pages, $29.95) by Viktor Moskalenko is a book for learning and inspiration, not a theoretical work. Almost evenly divided between the Trompowsky (1.d4 2.Bg5) and London (1.d4, 2/3. Bf4/Nf3), it is centered around 46 well-annotated model games rather than move by move analysis characteristic of most opening works. As such it is well-suited to players in the 1600-2200 range as well as stronger players new to these openings. One example of the latter for this reviewer is game 45 (Burmakin-Tomazini, Graz 2020) where after 1.d4 Nf6 2.Bf4 g6 3.e3 Bg7 Moskalenko considers White’s next two moves the most precise as they discourage counterplay based on ...Nh5 - 4.Be2 d6 5.h3. The Ukrainian Grandmaster, long based in Spain, advocates for holding back the White c-pawn to retain the option of advancing it two squares – for example 5...0-0 6.Nf3 Nbd7 7.0-0 b6 8.c4. Those looking to play 1.d4, but not 2.c4, will find this book most helpful.

*King’s Kalashnikov Sicilian* by Daniel King (192 pages, $30) is a book version of the English Grandmaster’s Chessable (www.chessable.com) course and the transition to paper has been most successful. This attractively produced hardback book is generously laid out with the analysis easy to follow. A gifted teacher, King has produced an opening
book on 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 e5 for non-professional players that is accessible, without being dumbed-down. One way he has done this is by giving catchy names to key maneuvers to reinforce the learning process. For example ...Be7-d8-b6 is the bad-bishop bounce. King’s approach is a model for how opening theory should be presented to players in the 1800-2200 range. Stronger players that want an introduction to the subject may also benefit from this book.

*Master Your Chess with Judit Polgar* (508 pages $39.95) by Judit Polgar and Andras Toth is another Chessable course that has been transferred to paper in the form of a beautiful hardback book. This massive tome covers all aspects of the game through 287 games and studies. Players from 1600 to 2200 in need of sharpening their overall skills will find this book one-stop shopping.

The recent success of the silver-medal winning India B team in the 2022 Chess Olympiad is in part due to the efforts of its captain, Grandmaster RB Ramesh. His new book *Improve Your Chess Calculation* (331 pages, $29.95), which begins with testimonials from a number of Indian Grandmasters including 17-year-old Rameshbabu “Pragg” Praggnanandhaa (currently rated 2687) and Daniel Naroditsky, is an important work for developing the fundamental skill of calculation. This is not an easy book but for the ambitious student it will be rewarding. Portions of it dealing with coaching, particularly of junior players, are must reading for students, teachers and parents.

*Endgame Strategy* (367 pages, $39.95) by Mikhail Shereshevsky, was a revolutionary work when it first appeared four decades ago. Previous to its appearance, all endgame books dealt almost exclusively with theoretical positions with few pieces remaining. Few clues were offering how to proceed in more complicated situations involving additional pieces. Shereshevsky was the first to address this gap in the chess literature. Now he is back again with a new, much larger revised edition (the 1984 Pergamon edition was 218 pages), incorporating more recent material. This includes many examples from Magnus Carlsen. This is a book every chess player who has reached Expert level (2000+) should read.

It’s fitting that the first book on the youngest Grandmaster of all time should be by the youngest chess author of all time for players rated over 2000 – 11(!)-year-old Oliver Boydell wrote a chess book in 2020. 13-year-old Abhimanyu Mishra, who was less than 12½ when he became a GM, is the current record holder in both categories. He traces how he achieved this monumental feat, trimming two months from the record established by Sergey Karjakin almost twenty years ago, in *The Youngest Chess Grandmaster in the World* (203 pages, $24.95). Twenty-seven carefully annotated games accompany the prose narrative in this portrait in time of the rising young star.
One of the strongest chess nations of the 21st century has been Ukraine with gold medal finishes in the 2004 and 2010 Olympiads and a near miss in 2016. Its women have been even more impressive, both individually (two World Champions) and collectively (team gold in 2006 and 2022). Some of this nation’s best games can be found in From Ukraine with Love for Chess (207 pages, $20) by Ivanchuk, Ponomariov, and others. This anthology is filled with beautiful chess, the proceeds go to support Ukrainian charities and it is attractively priced. You can’t go wrong with that combination. Buy a copy!

The Most Exciting Chess Games Ever (201 pages, $24.95) by Steve Giddins is a different kind of anthology. For the last twenty years, New in Chess magazine has interviewed a prominent chess personality in each issue. Among the questions asked is what was the most exciting chess game you ever saw. With beauty lying in the eyes of the beholder the candidates run the gamut from savage attacks to subtle positional play. Steve Giddens had the difficult job of whittling down the candidates to 45 games and he succeeded with flying colors. This is the rare book that can be given to chess players of any strength from newcomer to World Champion and they will love it.

Last and not least is The Match of All Time (223 pages, $24.95) by Gudmundur G. Thorarinsson which appears on the 50th anniversary of the best-known World Championship match of all time – Fischer-Spassky. One might think nothing new could be said about the match on which over 100 books have been written, but Thorarinsson, who was the point man for the Icelanders in the negotiations leading up to the match and continued to solve the thorniest problems during the competition, offers many new details. Many of them concern the negotiations involving F.I.D.E president Max Euwe, the Soviets, and Bobby and his team concerning where the match would be held and the prize fund. Who knew Bobby did not want Lothar Schmid, arbiter for both the 1972 and 1992 Fischer-Spassky matches, to serve in that position. He felt the West German Grandmaster, who was still an active player, might be biased. Thorarinsson points out that Iceland was a much smaller country fifty years ago, one whose reputation as a cultural mecca punching well above its weight was many years in the future. The author writes that his homeland really had no business organizing the greatest chess match of all time, but it did and for that chess fans will be eternally grateful. Anyone with an interest in the Match of the Century will want to read this book.
Mechanics’ Institute Chess Socials

We hosted our first Chess Social on Friday, October 7 and it was quite the affair! Twenty people showed up to drink a glass of wine, eat Chessmen cookies (of course), and talk about chess and everything else. Afterwards, some folks walked across the hall to watch the documentary film *Hollywood Chinese* (2007), as part of our CinemaLit program. This once-a-month, new tradition was repeated on November 4 with King Vidors’ *Show People* (1928) starring Marion Davies as the film. Please join us for our next event on Friday, December 2 from 5-6pm and every First Friday moving forward.
FM Paul Whitehead

Chess Engines vs. the Human Race

“People say 'It's as plain as the nose on your face.' But how much of the nose on your face can you see, unless someone holds a mirror up to you?”


Running parallel to the Carlsen/Niemann scandal – with its focus on over-the-board and on-line cheating with the use of computer assistance – is the rampant out-of-control use and reliance on engines by amateurs and professionals alike in preparing for upcoming games, studying chess, and in post-mortems.

Regularly, I have players of all strengths showing me their games – unable (or unwilling) to explain their thinking processes during the game or afterwards. Instead they rely on post-mortem engine evaluations they do not understand, in a deeply ironic stab at trying to make sense of what occurred over the board.

“The engine says I’m winning (or losing),” says the player, but, when asked how or why, is unable to explain. Or, in another sign of cluelessness, they will then pick up their phone (with Old Stockfish, cackling idiotically away) in order to rattle off some more variations – again without stopping to think for themselves.
This lack of comprehension, this reliance on engines, is not confined just to lower-rated players. It’s the norm now to see Grandmasters analyzing games with the help of engines in the pages of magazines or in online streams and videos. With players of all stripes it can be an outright addiction.

Very often the engines come up with moves and evaluations that baffle the experts. “A human would never play that” or “No one can figure out why that’s the right move” are now common annotative tropes, trotted out routinely. The questions that arise are then left dangling in the air, unanswered. The value of this, especially for the learning and aspiring player, is certainly questionable.

Chess is deep. We get that.

Watching the recently completed US Championship I was continually jarred by the dissonance created by their two lead commentators, GM Yasser Seirawan and GM Christian Chirila.

Seirawan, once a top-ten player and a candidate in the World Championship cycle, slogs along in a manner once familiar - yet now oddly quaint. He uses his vast experience to try to figure out what’s happening on the board – without the chess engine - and his thinking is wordy and faltering, searching. Watching Yasser make his way, I feel I am watching human thought in action: imprecise yes, but understandable, brilliant, and something we all can relate to.

When the analysis switches over to Chirila, a player just within the top 600 worldwide, we see the modern GM in action: engine on, he confidently rattles off variations, sometimes refuting Yasser’s thinking, sometimes verifying, but almost always playing second fiddle to the silicon God at his side. In essence, Chirila’s commentary felt like an interpretation of the computer’s commentary – with his own thinking thrown in as an afterthought.

It looks like a dazzling display of “what-ifs.”

I suspect, however, that it’s mostly just a useless list of “so-whats.”

I find an analysis that leans so heavily on engine moves and evaluations boring and lifeless, and hardly valuable to most of us – in terms of learning and improving one’s understanding of chess.

GM Vishnu Prassana is quoted at length in a terrific column by GM Avetik Grigoryan on LiChess. He says of computers, “Questions are more important than the answers. The engine gives you the answers, but it doesn't give you the questions.”
And GM Andy Soltis sums up computer learning vs ‘clickless’ learning with this pithy observation in the September 2022 issue of Chess Life, “You can’t spell-check your way through a middlegame.”

Computers and engines pose a similar ‘existential threat’ to the developing player that they do to the Big Chess establishment: corruption. But in this case it’s not about power and money – it’s about the corruption of independent thought itself.

We have developed an infatuation with the power and speed of chess engines, but this infatuation has come at the cost of human-style thinking and understanding.

And if you’re not thinking, why play chess at all? Perhaps it’s time for every chess player who uses engines on a regular basis to question their interest in playing chess.

Full stop.

After all, isn’t chess about thinking for oneself? Isn’t that what attracted us to chess in the first place? Figuring things out, puzzling over continuations. Making choices. Do we want someone (or worse yet, something) making our choices for us?

Wouldn’t you rather be using, dare I say it, your brain?

There are numerous analogies one might make, like walking instead of taking a car. Or meeting a friend in person instead of on Zoom. Participating in a sport, rather than passively watching.

And so on.

Chess can be a deeply human activity: we meet in person, we shake hands, we feel the presence of another being, whether friend or foe. We are human, and we learn and develop in ways that are unique to us – not in the superhuman ways that chess engines operate – and that we are being deceived (or deceiving ourselves) into somehow trying to emulate.

At another point Prassana says, “You probably shouldn’t use engines ‘till you’re 2200.” To that I would add: most definitely not. And, if it’s hampering independent thought or ruining your love of chess, perhaps never.

With our increasing reliance on engines and computers we are forgetting how to ask questions, as Prassana noted, thus sacrificing our chance to understand and enjoy chess in the only way we really know how.

As human beings.
Today is November 11. It has been a lively five weeks since October 5, our last deadline. This newsletter will appear on Nov. 19, which is also the date of the FIDE World Team Championship 2022, which was originally set for March ’22 (and also a big date in the life of Joe Hill). Alexey Root (who also writes for SparkChess) has been hired by David Llada and FIDE to be FIDE press officer for the event in Jerusalem. John Donaldson will coach the U.S. team, and Hans Niemann will play first board. Viswanathan Anand will be the commentator, and Gadir Guseinov will also be there. It promises to be quite an event, even though many top players turned down the invitation to play.

The school fall term is advancing to its end and a new beginning. Our teacher Colin was also praised as “excellent” by one adult student, while another said, “He dissects my games . . .”

On Oct. 31 at the Café, Paul said, “Chess has arrived in a big way that was unimaginable not so long ago. I don’t think chess will die as a result of this scandal.” He meant the cheating. We know that overcompetitiveness can overcome good sportsmanship and even the commitment to legal play.

Mike Walder showed us a game from a one-day tourney in San Jose, which paid Elliott to play and gave free entry to Mike. The players were experts who want to be 2200. Mike and Elliott were paired in the first round, then a rapid with a FIDE master, Shiva Kumar, who has not crossed 2200 yet. Elliott tied for 1st, though he didn’t win every single one of the games (G/45+inc).

Paul showed a Fischer Random game between Nakamura and Nepomniatchi: “It was like brick after brick they were throwing at each other.” Nepo finished second by losing to Naka in the finals. Paul added that there have been two Fischer Random World Champions and both are Americans.

“When I was a young player,” he added, “watching good technique was very important to me. Like watching GMs win won positions—e.g., like here, Q+B vs. 2 R’s + 2 P’s. The side with the queen cuts off communication between the two rooks. The player, Nakamura, inches forward, winning one pawn, then another.
“Naka is a great teacher when he explains what happened in his games. Like his 15 to 20 minutes on each of his Candidates games when they were still fresh in his mind.”

He and Sal agree that Nakamura, like Korchnoi, is known for being a great fighter. Yet he himself was caught taking a move back against Aronian.

“You can’t blame them really.”

“When we were young, we were taught touch move.”

Alexey: “There are a lot of clock moves in blitz.”

Sal: “And you pull it back after it’s been set in pre-move.”

“The idea of cheating is alien to them, and cheating is never considered.”

Mike: “Some players adjust their pieces when it isn’t their turn.”

Paul mentioned that Petrosian would show lines of thought 7 or 8 moves deep, more than most players.

Mike suggested people try out Naroditsky’s endgame problems on YouTube.

Ako and Paul mentioned schematic thinking as shown in Shereshevsky’s Endgame Strategy.

Another highly recommended book: Domination in 2535 Endgame Studies by Ghenrikh M. Kasparyan (1910-95). “I was at 2100 when I started the book. A year later I was 2385,” said Mike. “All of a sudden I was trapping master’s pieces in the middle of the board.”

Paul wrote ten columns based on the book. He also noted Carlsen solving 100 endgames on video. “He opens up his thinking while he’s trying to figure it out. Each GM is different, and I try to see how.”

Mike noted that players were quite civil to each other in the Azeri-Armenia match that took place during a war between their countries. Paul added that they played without any big names, yet “the Armenian team was incredible, even without Aronian.”

Juliana solved a three-move problem at the Oct. 7 Café starting with a move by the king going back instead of forward, which is also one of the suggested motifs in the interesting book Invisible Chess Moves. Paul mentioned the ideas of first looking at the target king’s limited range, then creating a void that sucks him in to set him up for the final one-two. Juliana’s made quite a practice of solving problems at the Café before anyone else; her work as a graphic designer was singled out as a demonstration of her pattern recognition and skill at piece arrangement.
Paul asked what was the strongest chess house in SF? He himself suggested Silman and Dennis Waterman, two masters, sharing an apartment. Tarjan, too, adds Mike Walder. Paul himself lived with Steve Brandwein in a place that Bobby Fischer later shared as well, after he was World Champion.

Paul and others have often spoken of the active chess scene of the past in various cafes of SF and Berkeley. Mike Walder mentioned that many IMs and GMs once played at Café Picaro on 16th St. just west of Valencia. Paul mentioned a bakery that was near Post and Polk.

Juliana was singled out for keeping the tradition alive with her Saturday afternoon Bernal Chess event on the patio behind Progressive Grounds coffee house at 400 Cortland Ave. and the Wednesday lectures at the Bernal Hts. Library. She said 35-40 people attended on a recent Saturday, and that IM Gady Costeff, a renowned GM of Composition, always shows up to watch the play. He also gave an excellent lecture on a past Wednesday.

The MI’s Chess Social on first Fridays will occur next on Dec. 2. On Nov. 7 there were 15 to 20 people. A new sound system and black-out curtains have just been installed in the Meeting Room. Paul said it has been enjoyable.

“It’s working,” added Trish.

There’s also a photo op with some socializing coming up after the Nov. 12 Quads at MI with a couple players from the Meltwater round-robin finals that will run from Nov. 14-20, one round per day:

“The Meltwater Champions Chess Tour is the world’s first year-long online chess series designed to determine the world’s best chess player over a full season of competitive online chess.

“Play Magnus Group created the Tour from scratch as the world of sport closed down during the global covid pandemic in 2020...

“The Tour is supported by San Francisco-headquartered social and media intelligence provider Meltwater, which became the title partner of the Champions Chess Tour at the beginning of the inaugural 2021 season.

There’s been more than one scandal in chess. We soon got into a lot of discussion of the longstanding situation of women in the sport. We talked about this at various recent Cafes. Sal noted that chess culture has been largely “a bro fest,” but that China “threw a billion people at the problem and guess what—the talent showed up.”

Alexey Root had a lot to say about it at her Nov. 10 presentation of her 8th book, *United States Women's Chess Champions, 1937-2020* (McFarland Books).

Paul sat next to John Donaldson during the event, where almost two dozen Zoomers beamed in to share the knowledge and festivity. (There were 8 men and 13 women.)

In a nice introduction, Laura Sheppard, MI Director of Events, noted that among other things, the book has 171 annotated games.

The first women’s tournament at MI took place in 1934.

Alexey presented an interesting slide show about her life, career, and family. Her son William wanted to be an acquisitions editor even as a child and was the one who suggested the theme for Alexey’s new book.

She first qualified for the U.S. Women’s Championship when she was 15. Gisela Gresser, who won 9 times, was there, but the two of them didn’t really meet. Alexey is collecting autographs of all 20 living women’s champs and got each player featured in the book to approve the chapter written about her.

When Alexey asked why there should be separate tournaments (open and women’s), John mentioned the fact that there are far fewer women players. He noted that girls are at least close to 50% of the scholastic players.

I also remember Hou Yifan talking about the different tracking for boys and girls in China, and how girls tend to assimilate the non-competitive path in regard to chess and certain other sports.

Alexey noted that there are 40 women GMs, all still living. “Maybe in 20 years, we will approach parity. At this point in time the numerical difference is very important. Adult women are less than 5% of players. Bigger groups (like men and boys) have more outliers, such as really great players.” She mentioned Marc Glickman’s finding that girls had ratings equal to or better than boys, but only when they were at least 50% of the class.

“It still makes me comfortable when there are fairly equal numbers.”

She said five-time champion Diane Savereide was her hero. She studied a lot and was very serious about the game.

Juliana asked how boys greeted her. Alexey said that if a boy arrived randomly to a chess club at the same time she did, people would ask if she was his girlfriend. Even in
St. Louis in 2014, she was asked, *Whose mom are you?* There is just an ongoing assumption that you’re not a chess player if you’re female.

“For most of my chess career, I had no bathroom to use.” At 15 she had to tell an adult if she had to use it so he could clear it of boys so she could go in.

I remember when a radical guy at MI helped spearhead the move to build a women’s room on the 4th floor where the MI chess club is. This was during the administration of John Donaldson.

We saw the cover of Sports Illustrated that featured Lisa Lane, a popular women’s champion. At the time the prize fund for the Women’s Championship was only 10% of the men’s prize fund. Lisa helped organize demos with placards, speeches, burning of USCF membership cards, and so on. Today the women’s prize fund is 61% of the men’s prize fund.

Sal asked if she actually spoke to Lisa Lane. Alexey said yes; that she’s the oldest living women’s champ, but her health is not good. Her husband, Mr. Hickey, held the phone up to her while she was bed-ridden. She told Alexey that some things in her chapter were not accurate, but it was OK, and she approved it.

She mentioned how Caroline Marshall was a big proponent of women’s chess, and that the Marshall Chess Club hosted ten U.S. Women’s Championships.

She and Sal spoke also about multiple champ Mona May Karff.

In the last couple of years, there has been a Karen’s Cup for really elite women players. For the last 10 years, there has been a Girls’ Jr. Championship, also initiated, John noted, by the St. Louis Chess Club.

There was a bright blue and cloudy sky forming a background for Alexey’s raised head.

She told a story about her one and only Interzonal, which took place near Kuala Lumpur in 1990, the last time she was out of the country. “I was playing Anna, and suddenly it sounded like a freight train was coming right at us. It was just the afternoon monsoon hitting the roof. Some players took to wearing headphones to shut out some of the noise.”

(For more information about the Chess Café – and to join the conversation – look here: https://www.milibrary.org/chess/online#Chesscafe)
The Meltwater Champions Chess Tour’s final event is going on in San Francisco as we go to press, and Mechanics’ Institute is involved in the festivities. We attended the opening reception at SHACK15 in the Ferry Building on November 10, and GM’s Anish Giri, Wesley So and Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa paid the club a visit on Saturday the 12. Among the celebrities present were journalist IM Tania Sachdev, Mechanics’ Institute Trustee John Donaldson, and former Trustee GM Patrick Wolff. The players were warmly welcomed by Mechanics’ Institute CEO Kimberly Scrafano and the Institute Chess staff. They signed our historic Chess Visitors Register to a throng of excited chess fans, gave out autographed chess boards to the Quads winners, and played a few blitz games with lucky guests.

Full report and more photographs in our next newsletter!

Mechanics’ Institute Senior Director of Programs and Community Engagement Alyssa Stone with World Champion Magnus Carlsen at the opening reception.
Gathering in the Chess Annex, from left to right:
Seeking Scholastic Chess Coaches

Are you interested in joining the team at Mechanics’ Institute? The Institute is currently seeking Scholastic Chess Instructors for the upcoming school year. Qualified candidates should have a foundational knowledge of chess and should be familiar with or willing to learn chess instructional techniques. Candidates should also have a basic foundation in classroom management and conflict resolution strategies, particularly working with children. This is an in-person position and candidates must be able to commute to schools in San Francisco. If you’re interested follow the link below or reach out to our Chess Program Manager, Alex Robins, at arobins@milibrary.org.

A Puzzle in the Library

Every week or so the Mechanics’ Institute’s Head of Technical Services, Steven Dunlap, puts up a chess puzzle in the library for our members to solve.

From *Chess for Children* (2004), by Helen Milligan and Murry Chandler.
White to move and win. As Steven notes, one does not have to promote to a queen.
Indeed, 1.c8=Q would be a drawn position. Therefore...?
Tony’s Teasers

1. H. Bernard 1919.
   White mates in 2 moves.

2. Dr. A. Kraemer 1949
   White mates in 4 moves.
Upcoming Events

Tournaments

Felix German Memorial Tuesday Night Marathon – Ongoing
Tuesday, November 11, 2022 to Tuesday, December 20, 2022. 6:30PM. USCF + FIDE Rated. 7 Round SS G/120;d5
Information and link to register: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/felix-german-memorial-tuesday-night-marathon

21st Guthrie McClain Memorial G/40;d5
Saturday, December 3, 2022. 4 games of G/40;d5.
Information and link to register: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/21st-guthrie-mcclain-memorial-championship

4th Annual Donaldson Championship G/90+30 (FIDE rated)
Saturday & Sunday, December 17 & 18. 4 games of G/90+30
Information and link to register: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/4th-annual-donaldson-championship-fide-rated

Monthly Championship Quads
Saturday, December 10, 2022, 3PM. 3 games of G/40;d5.
Information and link to register: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/mechanics-championship-quads

Monthly Scholastic Swiss – In Person
Saturday, December 10, 2022, 10AM. USCF Rated. 4 games of G/30;d5.
Information and link to register: https://www.milibrary.org/chess-tournaments/mechanics-institute-monthly-scholastic-swiss-person

*All tournament participants must wear masks until further notice*

Classes

Free Women’s Online Class with FIDE Trainer Sophie Adams - Ongoing
Every Sunday from 10AM – 12PM. Information and link to register:
https://www.milibrary.org/chess/free-womens-online-chess-class

Introduction to Chess: Free Class for MI Members with FM Paul Whitehead
7 classes, in person. Wednesdays, 11/16 to 12/28. 5PM to 6PM.
Information and link to register: https://www.milibrary.org/chess/online#beginner
Chess Improvements for Developing Players
10 classes. Taught online by Colin Schober. Wednesdays, 9/28 to 11/30. 6PM to 7PM.
Information and link to register: https://www.milibrary.org/chess/online#Colin
- Late enrollees are eligible for pro-rated tuition -

Game Analysis Series with FM Paul Whitehead
8 classes, in person. Thursdays, 10/13 to 12/1. 5PM to 6PM.
Information and link to register: https://www.milibrary.org/chess/online#Paul

Other Offerings

Chess Café, Mondays 4PM – 5:30PM: Ongoing
Information and link to register: https://www.milibrary.org/chess/online#Chesscafe

Chess Social, First Fridays 5PM – 6PM: See attached flyer.

Solutions to Tony’s Teasers

Problem #1: 1.Qa4! Zugzwang. 1...Ng4 2.Qe8#. All other knight moves allow 2.Qd1#!
Problem #2: 1.Kb2!! Threatens 2.Qg2+ Ke1 3.Nd3+ Kd1 4.Qc2#. If 1...Rb8+ 2.Ka3! Re8
3.Nd3! Re2 4.Qh1#!

Author Event with WIM Alexey Root

IM John Donaldson and FM Paul Whitehead interviewed author Alexey Root over Zoom on November 10. A lively discussion about her new book and the status of women in chess ensued. You can see that interview, and more from the MI here: https://www.youtube.com/c/mechanicsinstitute/videos
Contact Us

The Mechanics’ Institute Chess Club is on the 4th floor at 57 Post Street, San Francisco 94104. Our phone number is (415) 393-0110.

We welcome any feedback, articles or "Letter to the Editor" piece. Submit yours today at chessroom@milibrary.org

With over 3,000 books and periodicals, The Mechanics’ Institute boasts one of the largest chess book collections in the U.S.

You can now access our newsletter directly from the chess home page! https://www.milibrary.org/chess