

“THE HEART OF CONNECTICUT CHESS”

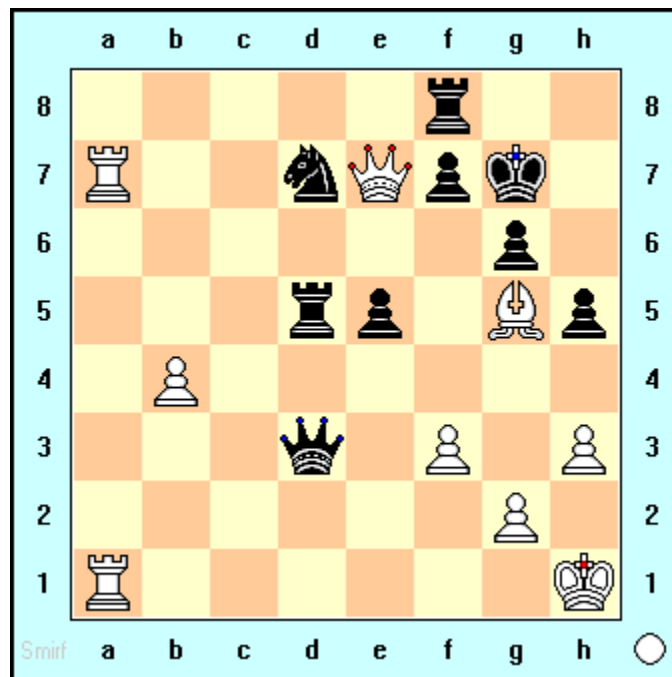
**IN CARE OF THE NEW BRITAIN QUARTETTE CLUB
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WWW.NEWBRITAINCHESSCLUB.COM

2008 NEWSLETTER

by Robert Kozlowski

WHAT IS WHITE'S BEST MOVE?



Ildar Ibragimov vs. Ara Minasian: Kherson 1991

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

The solution is on page 26.

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INTRODUCTION

Season's Greetings, fellow chess friends of Connecticut and beyond:

Another year at the New Britain Chess Club has come and gone. Two-thousand-and-eight was another extraordinary year at the club. Our club has soared to astronomical heights across the board, from the level of competition to the surge in the number of social activities to the outpouring of support from the membership. Connecticut is blessed to have one of the finest chess clubs in America.

As always, I am delighted to share and relive the wonderful club memories of the year with you. As in years past, I will highlight the personal achievements of our members and the events that placed our club on local, state, and national spotlights. By the end of this newsletter, you will undoubtedly understand why many chess players in this state, young or old, novice or master, often refer to the NBCC as "The Heart of Connecticut Chess."



THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

JANUARY

We left 2007 with the same high energy level as we started another chapter in club history in 2008. On January 8, Grandmaster Ildar Ibragimov, one of the highest-ranked players in the United States Chess Federation and the International Chess Federation, gave a lecture and simultaneous chess exhibition at the club, only the second by a GM in club history. The *New Britain Herald* provided local coverage of the major event. Our club players gave the GM a very good challenge. Member Marvin Collins was the only person who defeated the GM. Draws were earned by members Charles Wojtywaik, James Nitz, Doug Fiske, FIDE Master Richard Bauer, Andris Strazdins, Marcus Komons, and John Nitz. To show our appreciation to the GM, the officers decided to make Ildar an honorary member of the club, bringing the total number of masters to six.

After directing or co-directing tournaments at the club for nearly a decade, Tournament Directors Randy Shane and Marcus Komons agreed to give me a well-deserved year-long hiatus from directing all club tournaments, with the exception of the New Britain Summer Open Chess Championship. These gentlemen exemplify club loyalty and friendship.

Member Gert Hilhorst broke the all-time record for the biggest upset at the club for his win against member and provisionally rated USCF National Master Dennis Prawira in round two of the 2008 NBCC Championship Finals Tournament held on January 29. The rating difference at the time of the game was 867 points. The biggest upset at the club prior to Gert's incredible achievement was earned by John Chapman, who was provisionally rated at the time, for his 810-rating point victory against George Himes III, both former members of the club, in the 2003 New Britain City Chess Championship Qualifying Tournament.

FEBRUARY

The club sponsored five teams, by paying for half of the entry fee for each participant, at the 2008 United States Amateur Team East Chess Championship held in Parsippany, New Jersey, from February 16 to 18, setting another club record. Captain and FM Richard Bauer led our teams. Nineteen members proudly represented our club with their impressive results and achievements. Unfortunately, FM Nelson Castaneda was forced to withdraw from the event due to illness. However, the club extends its appreciation to him for supporting the club on Team A. The club was fortunate to find a substitute player on that team. Besides our team captains, the club greatly appreciates the efforts of Gloria Nussbaum, who provided the t-shirts which, according to Richard, “made our impact on the tournament hall so striking.” Thanks also to Derek Meredith and Nelson for hosting the pre-tournament preparation parties at their homes.

Richard summarized the results below:

“The most notable achievement was the turnout. I think this was a tribute to last year’s participants, who all immediately signed up and started spreading their enthusiasm around the club. We seemed to be the only club there to field five teams. Three of the five teams were competitive at the highest level of the tournament, which was made obvious by their playing inside the elite, roped-off area. It was fitting that the team that most closely resembled one of last year’s team, the Bad Bishops, was the top finisher despite having the third-highest team rating of our participants. Had they won their last game, they would have finished in a tie for second place outright.

I would also like to note that our most productive board, by far, was fourth board: James Nitz 5.5, John Nitz 5, Mike Pascetta 5, and Mac Gomes 6-0. Emily Pond secured the largest upset (999 rating points) of the whole tournament in round one. Every round, it seemed that Mike was locked in a close endgame that would determine the fate of his team. He prevailed every time (until the last round). By contrast, first boards all struggled. Still, some notable results were recorded on board 1: Dennis Prawira defeated veteran master and noted chess trainer, Sunil Weremantry. I managed a draw with top GM Leonid Yudasin (2662).”

The five teams from the club competing in that national event were:

1. New Britain Attack – FM Richard Bauer, Andres Castaneda, and James Nitz
2. New Britain Bad Bishops – Doug Fiske, Derek Meredith,
Yogesh Raghunathan, and Mike Pascetta

3. New Britain Crusaders – John Nitz, USCF NM Dennis Prawira,
Martin Garcia, and Chris Jensen
4. New Britain Dragons – Steve Sanabria, Danny Nussbaum,
Bill Montross, and Emily Pond
5. New Britain Endgame – Brian Kosnoff, David Aldi, Mac Gomes,
and Sofia Leja

The following team members deserve kudos for placing our club on a national spotlight for earning these distinguished awards at this event.

1. Top Connecticut and U2000 Team – New Britain Bad Bishops
2. Third place Bughouse Team – James Nitz and Steve Sanabria
3. Biggest individual upset – Emily Pond – 999 rating points
4. Perfect scores – Yogesh Raghunathan and Mac Gomes

Members Dennis Himes and Nathan Lacombe won their first major tournament at the club, earning the title of co-champions in the first of two 2008 NBCC Championship Reserve tournaments on February 26.

MARCH

Member Ed Scimia became a tournament director at the club, bringing the total number of TDs to four. Ed brings years of experience to the club from his involvement with the USCF as a TD.

Randy Shane organized the second 2008 NBCC Championship Reserve Tournament on March 11, a sectional event and only the second held with this format in club history. The first sectional tournament at the club, as some of you might recall, was the 1st Summer Open Quick Chess Tournament in 2005. Our officers and tournament directors adopted that format, where players are divided into groups based on rating. Of note, Ed Scimia was the assistant tournament director for this event, making this his first TD assignment at the club. The winners of the first major club sectioned tournament were Yogesh Raghunathan in the open section and member Danny Pascetta in the Under 1500 section.

APRIL

Danny Pascetta placed first in the U1500 section of the second NBCC Championship Reserve Tournament held on April 1, his first win in a major tournament at the club. FM Nelson Castaneda earned the top spot in the championship section again, continuing to add to his already impressive resume in the club.

A surprise 50th birthday party was held for FM Nelson Castaneda at his house on April 6. About twenty of our members celebrated the master's milestone birthday. A special thanks to his wife, Nancy, for hosting the event.

John Nitz won the 1st NBCC NCAA Men's Basketball Pool on April 7. Bill Montross organized the basketball pool. For winning the pool, John received a wooden chess set. Thanks to Bill for getting our members involved in that exciting activity.

To celebrate the April 15 deadline for filing individual income taxes in the United States, Randy Shane organized a fun quick chess tournament at the club on April 15, dubbing the tournament the "First IRS Special Quick Chess Tournament." No entry fee was collected for that interesting event. James Nitz won the tournament.

JUNE

USCF NM Ted McHugh won the 2008 Arkadijs Strazdins Cup, making this Teddy's first win a major NBCC tournament. It should be noted that Teddy has been a member since the early 1990s but unfortunately has not been able to participate in major tournaments at the club because of work and family. For his first-place title, Teddy was presented with the rotating "Strazdins Cup." For earning first place in the U1600 section of the 2008 Arkadijs Strazdins Cup (his first win in a major tournament at the club), Bill Montross received an engraved trophy on June 10. Similar to the conditions of holding "The Strazdins Cup," the trophy presented to Bill will be rotated to winners of the reserve section in future Arkadijs Strazdins Cups.

After presented with "The Strazdins Cup," USCF NM Ted McHugh gave a simultaneous chess exhibition. Ted, as always, rapidly played his games, and all were finished in just under three hours.

Teddy's overall performance in the exhibition was excellent as he lost one and drew two games out of nineteen. The only player to defeat the master was Mike Pascetta. Mike was awarded a chess book for his victory. Marcus Komons and Gert Hilhorst earned draws against Teddy. It was wonderful to see two of our players from the past, USCF NM Kerry J. Leahy (or "Mr. Leahy") and USCF NM Harris Appelman ("Appel"), in attendance. They certainly added much excitement to Ted's simul, and it was like living old times at the club again. Thanks also to Gert for bringing four students from the Simsbury Public Library Chess Club to play in Ted's simul.

The NBCC annual business meeting was held on June 17. With so much accomplished in the past three years at the club, the meeting was brief. I reported to the membership on the overall rise in tournament participation in the last three years. There was discussion on the possibility of organizing a match with the Marshall Chess Club or the Boylston Chess Club. Finally, Treasurer Andris Strazdins informed the membership that the club recently opened a new checking account.

JULY

Emily Pond filed the necessary paperwork with the USCF to become our club's newest and currently fifth tournament director. Emily has plans to become a USCF Local TD by the end of the year. Her first TD assignment at the club was co-directing the 2008 NBCC Quick Chess Championship with Randy Shane.

Member Kevin Zimmerman brought the local chess community together by hosting a series of four blitz chess tournaments and serving his famous barbeque lunches to participants on summertime weekends beginning on July 12 at "The House of Z."

On July 15, the club welcomed back USCF NM Eric Godin, a regularly attending member in the 1980s. Currently, Eric resides in Boston, MA, and is a tournament director at the Boylston Chess Club. With Eric rejoining the club, the number of masters rose to seven, three more than the club had at the start of the year.

On July 20, fifty-one players of all ages and playing levels in the Connecticut chess community competed in the 2008 New Britain Summer Open, almost breaking the club record of fifty-six set back in the 1970s. That was one of the greatest events in NBCC history. The club was overjoyed with all of the assistance for the event. Besides the officers and tournament directors, Kevin Zimmerman, member Roy Beavers, Doug Fiske, Derek Meredith, Bill Montross, and Mike and Michelle Pascetta served on the food and advertising committees. In addition to a free barbeque lunch, participants were treated to after-tournament entertainment by a local rock band, *Accusing Society*, yet another first in club history. Also another milestone for this event, David Gaston set a new record for winning three prizes in a NBCC tournament. David won trophies for the biggest upset, top junior, and first place in the U1600 section. We were blessed with fairly good weather. It was indeed a typical summer day in Southern New England, with temperatures in the 90s with relatively high dew points. The club also received contributions from a silent auction of chess books and videos. Thanks to Doug Fiske, David, Kevin, and member Andres Montiel for their contributions to the club from the auction.

AUGUST

Ed Scimia and Randy Shane passed the USCF test and joined me as USCF local tournament directors of the club.

The club held its 1st “Odds Chess Tournament” on August 12. FM Nelson Castaneda presented the ideas for the format. In general, the higher-rated players gave pawn or piece odds, which were determined by the rating difference between them and their opponents. The support for this event was overwhelming, and it appears that the club will hold more of them. The winner of that first event of its kind was James Nitz, one of our club’s quick chess superstars.

On August 26, the membership reached the highest point of the 2007-2008 year at ninety-two, one of the highest membership totals in club history.

Kevin Zimmerman and his fiancée Marie Juergens hosted the 2nd Zimmerman Games Day on August 31, another spectacular social event. “The Z Man” grilled some of most delicious barbeque around. Besides the recreational activities and the annual Zimmerman Games Blitz Chess Tournament, the main attraction was the musicians playing West African and Caribbean music in their “drum circle.” These talented artists set the soothing tone for a relaxing summertime afternoon.

Like at the 2007 Zimmerman Games Day, I eagerly joined the musical ensemble and played a spirited drum recital. Thankfully, the weather cooperated all day because inclement weather prevented the holding of “Z’s” blockbuster celebration on August 30.

SEPTEMBER

A surprise 45th birthday party was held for Mike Pascetta at his home on September 6. Unaware that his friends were gathered downstairs for nearly an hour (he was actually playing an online chess game), Mike was greeted by his friends with a huge surprise. A special thanks to his wife, Michelle, and Derek Meredith for organizing the party.

On September 9, the officers and tournament directors unanimously voted to make sectionals a permanent feature for club tournaments, except the NBCC Championship, for the 2008-2009 year. Latitude was given to the TDs for determining the number of rounds and entry fees for players in each section. The membership welcomed the new major format change to our events as evidenced by the increase in tournament participation.

USCF NM Dennis Prawira gave his first simultaneous chess exhibition at the club on September 9. The NM was thrilled to give his simul, and members from the club, along with many new faces, had an opportunity to take on one Connecticut’s highest-ranked chess players. The following members defeated the master: Joe Hricko, Dennis Himes, Andres Montiel, and Marcus Komons. Draws were earned by the following people: Tom Pasim, Bogdan Olzacki, Robert Kozlowski, Brian Kosnoff, Ed Scimia, Andris Strazdins, and members Sydney Faria and Hermann Zickfeld.

Due to a rise in the serious level of competition in the club, a cell phone policy was implemented. Randy Shane, Emily Pond, and Ed Scimia drafted the policy. It was announced to the membership on September 30 and went into effect immediately for all club tournaments.

OCTOBER

With an average of forty-five to fifty players regularly attending club meetings, Andris Strazdins and I purchased a few more tables for the club on October 3.

The club offered a free dinner at the famous East Side Restaurant in New Britain to the sectional winners of the 2008 Oktoberfest Open Chess Championship, a first in club history. The winner of the open section was James Nitz, and the winner of the U1600 section was Kevin Berry. Of special note, that was Kevin's first win in a major tournament at the club.

Sixteen people attended the 3rd annual NBCC Oktoberfest dinner party on October 17 at the East Side Restaurant. Our members were treated to authentic German cuisine and drink while they listened to German songs played by an accordionist. Andris Strazdins once again accompanied the accordionist and entertained our group by playing songs from the days of old. Club President Joseph Mansigian arranged the reservations for the party.

Joseph Mansigian, Marcus Komons, Randy Shane, FM Richard Bauer, David Aldi, and I attended the 2008 Connecticut State Chess Association Board of Directors meeting on October 18, in part to present our case to hold the 2008 Connecticut State Open Blitz Chess Championship at the club on December 23. During the meeting, members from our club exchanged ideas with the CSCA Board on ways local chess organizers and tournament directors can jointly work to increase participation in Connecticut chess events, especially for scholastic players. Many provocative plans were mentioned by former and current state chess organizers. This healthy dialogue spearheaded the formation of strong alliances throughout the state chess community. Because of my involvement at the club as a TD, I offered a few suggestions on ways to get people more involved in chess in Connecticut. Shortly afterwards, David and I were nominated to serve as board members of the CSCA to represent the voices of all chess players throughout the Nutmeg State.

On October 21, the officers voted to lower the age, from sixty-five to fifty, to members eligible for senior discounts on tournament fees and club dues.

NOVEMBER

Randy Shane outlined a conditions of contest for the 2009 NBCC Championship Qualifying, Finals, and Reserve tournaments. The rules for determining the automatic seeds in the finals tournament were similar to the prior two years. However, the rules on tie-breakers, which determine what players advance to the finals from the qualifiers, were a major contrast from years past. The specific contest conditions masterfully drafted by Randy Shane are listed below.

“A two-person tie will be broken by a pair of G/15 5-second delay games, each player taking White in one and Black in the other. If the tie remains, a pair of G/5 3-second delay games will be played. If, after that, the tie remains unbroken, a single ‘Armageddon’ game will be played as follows: White shall receive five minutes, Black some whole number of minutes, three-second delay with Black getting draw odds. One player, determined by lot, will suggest a time setting for Black’s clock, the other player then has the choice to play White or Black. Rounds may be skipped with the joint consent of the tied players if they both wish to speed up the tie-breaker. Alternatively, if the two players jointly wish to break the tie by lot, that will be allowed. A three-person tie will be broken by a set of three G/15 5-second delay games as a round-robin. A two-way tie after that drops into the G/5 3-second delay round above; if the tie remains three-way after that, it moves to a round-robin G/5 3-second delay tie-breaker with colors reversed from the G/15 round. Any resulting two-way tie after that will be broken with the ‘Armageddon’ game described above. Rounds may be skipped with the joint consent of the tied players if they all wish to speed up the tie-breaker. Alternatively, if the three players jointly wish to break the tie by lot, that will be allowed.”

DECEMBER

The NBCC held the 4th annual Christmas party on December 23 and invited everyone from the Connecticut chess community and beyond to partake in the festivities. In conjunction with this event, the club held the 2008 Connecticut State Open Blitz Chess Championship. An auction and raffle of chess books and equipment took place, and that monumental event concluded another sensational year at the club. The club thanks John and James Nitz, Ted McHugh, Marcus Komons, Kevin Zimmerman, Yogesh Raghunathan, and Doug Fiske for their contributions to the party, auction, and raffle. John was the winner of the 2008 NBCC raffle. Ted won the tournament. Ed Scimia and member Mark Bourque won first place in the lower sections.

Subsequent to the release of this newsletter, on December 27, Derek Meredith organized the first official Quick Chess Tournament at the Farmington Borders. Eleven players joined Derek and me in this four-round Swiss-system USCF-rated event. Initially, I wanted the name of the tournament to be unique. But, after originally dubbing this event the “2008 Borders Browsers Quick Chess Tournament,” Derek suggested that this tournament be renamed to the “Kozlowski Kwik Chess Tournament.” Of course, I had absolutely no objection to that. After four hours of competition, James Nitz won the event. I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation, on behalf of the entire chess community, to Derek, for bringing our social network of chess friends together for more exciting times. Derek has been very instrumental in creating these social functions for our club in the last four years, and his efforts have reshaped our organization into one of the greatest chess clubs in America.



NBCC MEMBERS' MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

The following major achievements were earned by our members at non-club tournaments and in the USCF in 2008.

NBCC MEMBERS RANKING IN THE TOP 100 LISTS IN THE USCF AS OF THE DECEMBER 2008 (ANNUAL) USCF RATING SUPPLEMENT

Please note that only ratings of USCF members who have been active within the last year were used in compiling the Top 100 listings.

<u>NBCC MEMBER</u>	<u>USCF TOP PLAYER LIST</u>	<u>USCF RATING</u>	<u>USCF RANKING</u>
GM Ildar Ibragimov	Overall	2627	12th
	Overall Quick	2556	11th
James Nitz	Age 18	2053	32nd
	Quick Under Age 21	2006	87th
Danny Rozovsky	Age 12	2030	7th
	Quick Under Age 13	1804	38th
Danny Pascetta	Age 9	1440	37th

NBCC MEMBERS ATTAINING THE LEVEL OF USCF EXPERT

In 2008, two of our youngest members, James Nitz and Danny Rozovsky, currently age eighteen and twelve, respectively, became USCF experts, a very noteworthy achievement of both individuals. James became a USCF expert in April, and Danny became a USCF expert in June.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT NBCC MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❖ As mentioned earlier in his report, FM Richard Bauer drew one of the top chess players in the U.S., GM Leonid Yudasin, in the fourth round of the 2008 USATE Chess Championship. The GM was rated 2662 at the time of the event.
- ❖ Derek Meredith won \$2,229 for earning second place in the U2100 section of the 2008 Foxwoods Open Chess Championship on Easter weekend. Although that was not a club record for a member winning the most money at an outside chess tournament (some members remember former member FM Mike Casella winning \$3,000 in some tournament decades ago, and we cannot forget about James Nitz winning a \$2,000 renewable four-year scholarship at the University of Connecticut School of Engineering Scholarship Chess Tournament in 2006), Derek's prize was impressive.
- ❖ Danny Rozovsky became the 2008 New England scholastic middle school chess champion, his second time winning the event for his age group. The tournament was held in Mt. Snow, Vermont, on November 8 and 9.
- ❖ On December 15, James Nitz drew GM Alexander Ivanov in the third round of the 2008 UConn December Open Grand Prix. GM Ivanov was rated 2611 and ranked 16th overall in the USCF at the time of this tournament.



CHES TRIVIA

Are you a chess trivia buff? If so, please take a moment and test your knowledge of our U.S. presidents and chess. The answers are on page 26.

1. What U.S. president established the first national chess day?
 - a) John F. Kennedy
 - b) Richard Nixon
 - c) Gerald Ford
 - d) Ronald Reagan

2. What U.S. president wanted to become a chess expert after leaving the White House but finally gave up, saying, "I found that I do not have any particular talent for chess. I hate to admit it, but that is a fact."
 - a) Bill Clinton
 - b) Jimmy Carter
 - c) Theodore Roosevelt
 - d) Thomas Jefferson

So, you nailed those questions, right? Then see how well you know our world leaders and chess.

3. Which of the following world figures did the FIDE not award the title of Grand Commander of the Legion of Grandmasters in 1999?
 - a) Jacques Chirac
 - b) Pope John Paul II
 - c) Fidel Ramos
 - d) Nelson Mandela

NBCC PICTURE GALLERY

These pictures were taken by Brian Kosnoff and Robert Kozlowski.



2008 AMATEUR TEAM EAST CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

BACK ROW: Steve Sanabria, Mike Pascetta, James Nitz, FM Richard Bauer, Doug Fiske,
John Nitz, Martin Garcia, Emily Pond, Bill Montross, and USCF NM Dennis Prawira

FRONT ROW: Danny Nussbaum, Chris Jensen, David Aldi, and Brian Kosnoff

Missing from this picture were Derek Meredith, Yogesh Raghunathan, Mac Gomes, Andres Castaneda, and Sofia Leja

OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS AT THE NBCC



Roy Beavers and Joseph Mansigian
2008 New Britain Summer Open



Andris Strazdins
2008 NBCC Oktoberfest Dinner Party



Mark Leja
2008 New Britain Summer Open



Sofia Leja and Michelle Pascetta
2008 New Britain Summer Open



Marcus Komons and Terrence Foster
2008 Zimmerman Games Day



Yogesh Raghunathan, Brian Kosnoff, Doug Fiske, Gert Hilhorst
2007 NBCC Oktoberfest Dinner Party



Kevin Zimmerman and Robert Kozlowski
2008 Zimmerman Games Day



FM Nelson Castaneda
2007 Arkadijs Strazdins Cup Winner



Lecture by GM Ildar Ibragimov



USCF NM Ted McHugh
2008 Arkadijs Strazdins Cup Winner

THE NBCC VISITS AMSTERDAM

In early May, Gert Hilhorst and members of his chess club in Amsterdam, the Fischer-Z, challenged the NBCC to an international chess match. Gert presented an itinerary to the club for this once-in-a-lifetime match and trip to his home country, the Netherlands.

On June 7, Gert held a barbeque at his house to discuss the plans for the trip in November. Despite the initial interest from about fifteen of our members for this European vacation, there were not enough early commitments required to hold a match. However, a few members still were interested in visiting Amsterdam and postponing the match until a future time.

After months of planning, two members from our club, Brian Kosnoff and I, made the adventurous six-day trip (from November 20 to 25) with the Hilhorst family. The vacation was both a cultural and enlightening experience. Gert and his wife Holly gave us a grand tour of the city of Amsterdam and Gert's hometown of Naarden. There were many highlights of our trip. Because of Gert and Holly, we were able to see many of the major attractions, which I eagerly share with you below.

1. We visited Max Euwe Centrum, a museum dedicated to preserving the history of the 5th world chess champion. Outside of the museum, we played on a human-size-like chess set, which drew many spectators. During one of our games, we were taken by surprise when we saw former World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov stop by and observe one of our games. It was merely by chance that we were in the presence of Mr. Kasparov since he was only in the city for an appointment with the organizer of the museum.
2. Even though a match between the NBCC and the Fischer-Z Chess Club of Amsterdam did not happen, Brian and I did have a historic opportunity to visit and play a few blitz chess games with members of their club.
3. We visited some of the historic sites of Amsterdam, such as the Anne Frank House and the Van Gogh Museum. We also dined at some of the most authentic restaurants in the world, having a chance to taste many different cuisines.

4. The most invigorating activity on the trip, by far, was the twenty-mile bike ride in the small town of Naarden in the hail and twenty-five mile-per-hour headwinds.

With currently thirty chess clubs in Amsterdam alone, each with an average membership of about fifty, the Dutch apparently take their chess very seriously. During our dinner with a few members of the Fischer-Z Chess Club, Brian and I mentioned that some of the members would be interested in holding an international match with their club in the near future. Obviously, there are many factors to consider for making such a match a reality. Although we live 3,500 miles apart, I am fairly certain that members from both of our clubs will make local and national history when we hold this historic chess match.

Brian and I were very grateful to the Hilhorsts for providing us with lodging at their apartment and for taking time out of their busy schedule to ensure that we had a wonderful visit of one of the most beautiful cities and countries in the world. We appreciate them extending their genuine Dutch hospitality to us during our visit.

THE CHESS EXPERIENCE IN AMSTERDAM

Of the more than five hundred photos and videos Brian and I took on our vacation, here were the most momentous.



Alfred Ranzijn vs. Brian Kosnoff
Fischer-Z Chess Club of Amsterdam



Brian Kosnoff and Gert Hilhorst
Max Euwe Centrum



Jos Teeuwen vs. Robert Kozlowski
Fischer-Z Chess Club of Amsterdam

THE ROAD TO A NEW HOME FOR THE NBCC

The NBCC has had a steady thirty-three-year relationship with our landlord, the New Britain Quartette Club, thanks mainly to the steadfast efforts of the late Arkadijs Strazdins and other former key members. Since becoming tenants of the New Britain Quartette Club in 1975, we have not been charged excessive rents, and our club has been very fortunate to maintain a very low dues structure because of this. This year, however, our landlord's board of directors approached our club's board of directors to inform us that the club's rent would increase by thirty-three percent, or \$500. Although some of the officers anticipated a raise in rent, we were quite shocked and even alarmed by our landlord's last-minute decision, after already fulfilling our obligation by prepaying \$1,500 to them on September 30 for the coming fiscal year. Even though the club authorizes the officers to pay our rent, Joseph Mansigian strongly believed that he had to convene a meeting to discuss this important matter with the membership. Initially, there were many discussions on whether or not we should explore other venues. Unbelievably, on October 28, after members had an opportunity to visit a conference room at the Homestead Suites by Hilton hotel in Farmington, a lead made by Derek Meredith, the club voted 12-5 (with one abstention) in favor to move. Regrettably, due to a miscommunication between the hotel management and board and Derek, they reneged on the deal a few days later. Consequently, we were forced again to hold an emergency business meeting, this time on November 4, to report back to the membership on what had transpired in the past week. At that meeting, the followings topics were discussed and ratified by the membership.

1. A unanimous vote (22-0) to pay our landlord the additional \$500 in rent for the 2008-2009 year. There were no motions made to have our board of directors engage in further negotiations with our landlord to improve the overall playing conditions. Our officers informed the membership that since we have sufficient funds in the treasury, there was no justified reason to raise dues this year. Randy Shane made a suggestion that, in the near future, the club retain a small percentage from the entry fees collected from tournaments as a "rainy day" reserve.
2. An exploratory committee was appointed and charged with searching for new venues for our club. Volunteers on this committee were Roy Beavers, Joseph Mansigian, Robert Kozlowski, Marcus Komons, Andris Strazdins, Derek Meredith, and member John Baclawski. The committee would report back to the board of directors and the membership with their findings and research in early 2009.

3. I made a motion, which was unanimously ratified, to increase the number of officers and members present to hold a quorum. Prior to this meeting, the NBCC Constitution stated that “a quorum must consist of at least one officer and seven members.” Because of the recent heightened significance in business matters at the club, the members voted to make a quorum consist of a minimum of two officers and twenty members.
4. Yogesh Raghunathan expressed his willingness to take on an official role in the club to explore ways that our organization could make more efficient use of its financial resources. Joseph Mansigian told Yogesh to draft his ideas for such a position and report back to the membership. It should be pointed out that decisions proposed by Yogesh, if he is appointed to this new position, would be limited to a certain dollar amount and would always necessitate membership approval.

It was apparent that the memberships’ initial decision to move was made on an impulse. The board of directors dealt with many problems during the last few weeks of October and the first few weeks of November. And, indeed, many lessons were learned from our experiences. In the end, though, the members made the right, and honestly only, decision to continue our tenancy at the New Britain Quartette Club for one more year in order to allow sufficient time to search for a new venue. Regardless of where we move, the NBCC cannot make this transition without carefully considering all of the options. It would be a risk the club could not afford to make. Our strong reputation in the Connecticut chess community would be seriously jeopardized if the club disbanded, even for a short duration, and that would be a sheer disaster. I am very optimistic that the club will find an ideal site in 2009. And, at our first meeting, we will celebrate and rejoice as the club commences a new chapter in its very long history.



BOB KOZLOWSKI'S COMMENTARY

My friends, we have ended our incredible journey down memory lane. Our ride was filled with lasting memories of an exceptionally amazing year at the club. It is almost mind-boggling, to a degree, that the NBCC accomplished so much on all levels in a very short duration. It has been with utmost pleasure to share the success stories of our trip. At this point, I want to recap on the club's successes in recent past and expound on how these achievements will shape the course for our organization's very bright future.

Over the last three years, the number of participants in club events has steadily risen. For the year ended June 30, 2008, I prepared a statistical summary on the rise in tournament participation at the club, from regular to quick to blitz chess tournaments. My report showed that there has been approximately a thirty percent increase in overall turnout in all club tournaments since July 2005. I imagine if I were to include data from events held since June 30, 2008, in my report, this percentage would soar to over fifty.

The NBCC is most fortunate to have members who are very concerned about the welfare of our organization. This is reflected not only by the outpouring of support from our officers and tournament directors, but also from many members not involved in club management. The following non-officers and/or TDs were instrumental in establishing a strong presence for our club in 2008: Derek Meredith, Doug Fiske, and FM Richard Bauer.

There were four milestones set at the club in 2008, more than in any another year to my recollection.

1. In 2008, the club saw an increase in the number of masters from five to seven. To be often referred to as "the strongest chess club in Connecticut" is a noteworthy honor. Joining our club's elite players, FM Richard Bauer, FM Nelson Castaneda, USCF NM Ted McHugh, and GM Gildardo Garcia in 2008 were GM Ildar Ibragimov and USCF NM Eric Godin.
2. Besides the rise in the number of masters, there was an unpredicted increase in the number of tournament directors at the club this year. Ed Scimia and Emily Pond, two very dedicated members, joined Randy Shane, Marcus Komons, and me as club TDs.

3. In the spring of 2006, Derek Meredith approached Joseph Mansigian and me about the possibility of holding the annual New Britain Summer Open under the New Britain Quartette Club pavilion on a weekend. Between 1993 and 2005, this annual club event was held on five Tuesday evenings in our hall, so it was definitely time for a change of scenery. After months of preparation, the club organized the 2006 New Britain Summer Open as an outdoor weekend chess tournament. In 2007, the officers wanted to make this event even more attractive. Therefore, the club decided to offer a free barbeque lunch for participants. Around May of this year, former member Keith Little discussed his ideas with Joe and me to have his rock band, *Accusing Society*, perform at one of the club's future events, perhaps the 2008 New Britain Summer Open. We were ecstatic about this possibility. Once again, the NBCC kicked the annual Summer Open up another notch, and, at the conclusion of this year's tournament, we listened to the music of *Accusing Society* until early dusk. The band put on an electrifying performance. I realize that this genre of music did not satisfy everyone's palate. Nevertheless, what other chess club in America can boast that it offers free lunch and musical entertainment at its tournament? Overall, this event has definitely captured the interests of the Connecticut chess community.
4. The previous milestones have undisputedly placed our club high on the local and state chess scenes. Therefore, it was time for our club to make our presence known nationwide. For the past two years, our club has won Top Connecticut Team at the annual United States Amateur Team East Chess Championship. At this event, our members have had an opportunity to play with the likes of many of America's highest-ranked chess players like GM Hikaru Nakamura. Our members brought home the gold this year again, with some of the achievements earned by our participants mentioned on the New Jersey State Chess Association website and in an issue of *Chess Life*.

Over the last few years, our club has been fortunate to build its financial resources because of the increase in membership and efforts to raise additional funds from auctions and raffles. In 2008, FM Nelson Castaneda and member Hermann Zickfeld made very generous contributions to the club for books that were donated by a former member, the late Thaddeus Szafranski. During the six-year period that ended June 10, 2008, our club's funds soared from \$1,301 to \$3,277, nearly a \$2,000 increase, even after purchasing chess equipment and sponsoring five teams at the 2008 United States Amateur Team East Chess Championship. Friends, I am pleased to report that the state of the NBCC Treasury is strong.

Up until 2005, most of the social activities for members were held on Tuesday evenings at the New Britain Quartette Club. In September 2005, Derek Meredith invited members of the local chess community over to his house for a unique event - a reverse simultaneous chess exhibition. Ever since that summertime day, the level of social interaction at the club has ascended to unimaginable heights.

Starting in 2006, our club organized two annual parties for our members - the Oktoberfest dinner party and the Christmas party. Indeed, the NBCC has formed one of the largest social networks for an organization of our size. Besides Derek, the following members of our club who have played a central role in creating these networks throughout Connecticut chess are Kevin Zimmerman, Joseph Mansigian, FM Nelson Castaneda, Sofia Leja, Andres Castaneda, Andres Montiel, Brian Kosnoff, Emily Pond, Mike Pascetta, Yogesh Raghunathan, and former member Yuval Shemesh. I also wish to thank our member's spouses or significant others, Amy Meredith, Marie Juergens, Nancy Castaneda, Michelle Pascetta, Karin Montiel, and Miki Shemesh, for organizing these social events at their homes for our members.

The club has made significant progress on all levels in the last four years. But what does the future hold for Central Connecticut's premier chess club? Will the club reach one hundred members again? Will the successes of our club have an effect on other chess institutions in Connecticut? Will the club be the first in Connecticut history to hold an international chess match? There can easily be many responses to these provocative questions. Regardless of your thoughts, the one thing certain is that all tournament directors and chess club organizers in this state must continue to work together to spark interest in the game for everyone.

I applaud the following people of the Connecticut chess community for their efforts to promote this game to players of all ages and skills (David Aldi, Kevin Zimmerman, Luis Delgado, Ed Scimia, Yogesh Raghunathan, Rob Roy, Richard Chang, Melvin Patrick, Gert Hilhorst, Joseph Mansigian, Andris Strazdins, Marcus Komons, Randy Shane, and Emily Pond, and Jim Celone). With the huge turnouts at outdoors tournaments such as the New London Chess Fest, the New Haven Chess Fest, the New Britain Summer Open, and the scholastic chess tournaments held throughout the state, our expanding chess community is definitely moving in a very positive direction.

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM “DR. K”

Friends, we are sadly closing the books on another amazing year at the club. I want to take this opportunity to share a personal story with you. When I joined the NBCC at the age of nine, I would never have imagined that twenty-one years later the club would play a major role in my life. Along my journey, there have been many people who helped me realize my ambitions.

For years, my stepfather, former member Reginald Cyr, brought me to the club until his health began to fail in the late 1990s. My mother then brought me to meetings until I got my driver's license. My parents were supportive of my chess goals from the beginning, and I am grateful to them for everything.

My teachers and friends from elementary through graduate school also encouraged me to pursue my chess endeavors. My performance in school was positively affected by the skills the game taught me. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, I devoted a substantial amount of time to studying the game. Due to my steadfast determination, I managed to win a few state scholastic chess championships.

In 1998, while in college, I began exploring the possibility of becoming a tournament director at the club. I could not have had a more experienced person to work with than the late Arkadijs Strazdins. With Mr. Strazdins, I quickly acquired the skills required to be a proficient TD. He trusted me to carry the torch as chief TD when he began to succumb to severe illness. Because of this, I held Mr. Strazdins in the highest respect. It was a privilege to work with Mr. Strazdins and an honor to be his friend.

In 2003, around the time when Mr. Strazdins health failed, Joseph Mansigian asked me to become vice president. Joe and I, along with Treasurer Andris Strazdins and Secretary Marcus Komons, often discuss ways on improving the club and keeping the membership happy.

In the last two decades, I have made countless friendships at the club and in the Connecticut chess community. Besides Mr. Strazdins, there were veteran members like Hermann Zickfeld, Peter Galazan, and Bill Dworski who always welcomed me to the club's family. My life has been enriched because of my warm relationship with these men. And they, like Mr. Strazdins, have been instrumental in the development of my values and philosophies.

Since becoming a tournament director, I have made a concerted effort to report about the exciting activities at the club through the myriad of e-mails and telephone conversations. However, as any volunteer of a social organization would tell you, with triumphs, there usually come tribulations. There have been many occasions where I made executive decisions that not everyone was satisfied with. Those of you who know me personally know that I set high standards for myself. And this holds true for my management of the club. No matter what situation might arise at the club, I promise that your interests and concerns will always be addressed.

The late Arkadijs Strazdins, Rob Roy, and former CSCA President Frederick Townsend Jr. were very valuable members of the chess community, and I hope to be inspired by their many contributions to Connecticut chess. Although I am somewhat involved in the CSCA, I pledge that I will continue to be an active member of our club and strive to keep you abreast about our thriving organization because, as far as I am concerned, the NBCC is, and will always be, “The Heart of Connecticut Chess.”

My team of officers, tournament directors, and our webmaster wish you and your family a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

President: Joseph Mansigian

Vice President: Robert Kozlowski

Treasurer: Major Andris Strazdins

Secretary: Marcus Komons

Tournament Directors:

USCF Local: Randy Shane, Ed Scimia, and Robert Kozlowski

USCF Club: Emily Pond and Marcus Komons

Webmaster: Brian Kosnoff



The membership currently stands at seventy-seven. If you are not a member, I hope you will rejoin the club in 2009. If you are a member, thank you for your continued support.

Finally, during these most difficult and uncertain times, take care of yourself and each other.

Yours in chess,

Robert Kozlowski

SOLUTION AND ANSWERS TO CHESS PUZZLE AND TRIVIA

CHESS PUZZLE (from cover page)

1. Rxd7 Rxd7
2. Bf6+ Kg8
3. Qxf8+ Kxf8
4. Ra8+ Rd8
5. Rxd8+ Qxd8
6. Bxd8 wins

CHESS TRIVIA (from page 14)

1. c
2. b
3. d

