

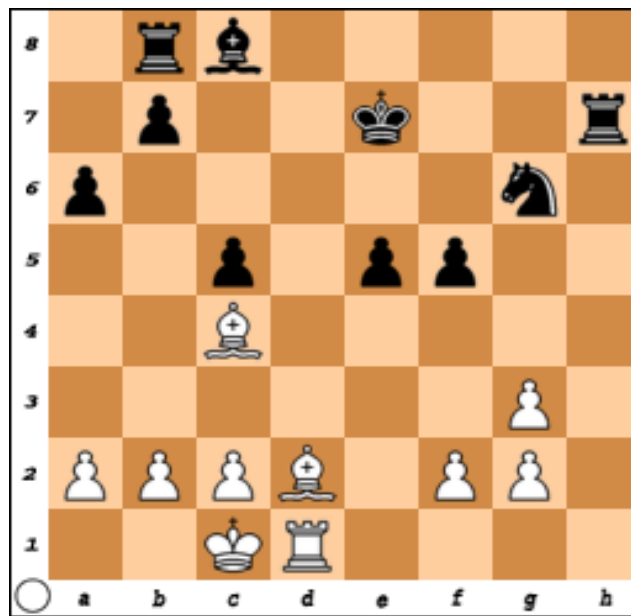
# NEW BRITAIN CHESS CLUB

*"THE HEART OF CONNECTICUT CHESS"*

IN CARE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY RESURRECTION  
1910 STANLEY STREET NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT 06053  
[WWW.NEWBRITAINCHESSCLUB.COM](http://WWW.NEWBRITAINCHESSCLUB.COM)

## 2020 NEWSLETTER

by Robert Cyr



White mates in 3.

Cristobal Henriquez Villagra vs. Cristobal Torres: Santiago 2019

This chess puzzle was posted on [www.wtharvey.com](http://www.wtharvey.com) by Bill Harvey.

The solution is on page 25.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

The holiday season is fast approaching once again. This is the time of the year when we spend quality time with our closest family and friends. This year, though, due to the coronavirus pandemic, many of our plans are being altered to reflect smaller crowds and gatherings. This virus has disrupted the lives of millions of people across the country. And the NBCC has not been immune to the COVID outbreak either. The club has had to close its operations twice in 2020 because of this insidious virus. But we are hopeful to reopen in early 2021.

The club's history goes on, however, despite the virus. And my work, as club historian, could not be more important during these trying times. Since 2005, I have taken on the massive responsibility of writing the annual club newsletters, a job that I really take pride in doing. My main objective in these reports is to capture the essence of our club. This includes covering annual highlights, recognizing members for their noteworthy achievements, and posting beautiful pictures of club events for the ages. In addition, I have included, in nearly every report, trivia sections and Richard Bauer's Best Game of the Year contest game with his annotations. These additional sections add variety and spice to these annual publications, which combine now total more than 400 pages.

Two-thousand-and-twenty was a difficult year for the club. However, we survived and managed to still be a strong advocate for Connecticut chess. After all, we are "The Heart of Connecticut Chess." And our colorful past is a truly a reflection of who we are as a people. Despite a shorter newsletter this year compared to years past, there were still many fun stories to share and report on. And I hope that you will enjoy reading about the NBCC's adventures in 2020, one incredible year that will be remembered in the historic books for many years to come.

**CRITICAL THINKING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT  
FACTOR WITH CHESS. AS IT IS IN LIFE, YOU NEED  
TO THINK BEFORE YOU MAKE DECISIONS.**

Hikaru Nakamura

# **THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR**

## **JANUARY**

On January 10 and 11, the club welcomed back prominent Grandmaster Alexandr Lenderman, one of the top chess players in America. On Friday, the GM began his two-day visit to the club with a master training class. The intense and engaging three-hour session focused on the topic of making your opponents' position more difficult. The next day, GM Lenderman began with a nice lecture about proper piece placement. The lecture was followed by a simultaneous chess exhibition, where twenty-three players from our community participated. Our competitors gave Mr. Lenderman a tough battle on the chess board, with many challenging games, according to the GM. Despite our players' attempts to slow him down, though, the GM emerged victorious on all boards (a perfect 23-0) in about three hours. This historic weekend in club history would not have been possible if it were not for member Mario Guevara-Rodriguez, who arranged the GM's visit and furthermore provided him with transportation to and from Milford.

## **FEBRUARY**

Every Presidents Day weekend, for over a decade now, teams from the NBCC have participated in the annual World/U.S. Amateur Team East Chess Championship, more commonly known as USATE. This is the largest team chess event in history. Here is a recap of our club's results at this event in 2020.

On the first team, Connecticut's Finest, we had the combined forces of USCF Senior Master Arslan Otchiyev and USCF National Master Ian Harris from the Chess Club of Fairfield County and Joe Bihlmeyer and Jithu Sajeevan from the NBCC. This team ended up with a fine performance score of 5-1 and thus won the Top Connecticut Team prize. The all-NBCC team (Illegal move in Ukraine), which had Mario Guevara-Rodriguez, Norman Burtness, Mike Pascetta, and Michael Smith, ended up with a score of 3.5 out of six match points in spite having lost a game that was played behind the ropes in round one. The next team from the club fell apart when FIDE Master Richard Bauer was unable to play due to illness. But the almost-NBCC team competed anyway. And this team (Pence Still on Board 2) consisted of USCF NM Ted McHugh, USCF NM Derek Meredith, Doug Fiske, and a 1900-rated player from New Jersey who scored 5-1. This team ended up with four match points in spite of losing on board one in round two.

Incidentally, this team had to play the Ukraine team in round five of the tournament, the first time that nearly two complete NBCC teams ever had to face off in a tournament of this size like USATE. The Pence team won that match. I got to experience action at USATE this year with a brand-new team, Queen's Bald Eagles. On board one, we had a WFM from Nigeria. One of our teammates, our board four player, had tailored made t-shirts with the Nigerian and American flags embroidered on them. That was cool! It was nice to make new friends. This was my ninth consecutive USATE appearance.

A very special thanks and shout out goes out to Mr. E. Steven Doyle, chief event director, for the exemplary work that he did in organizing and directing this incredible event. He and his professional staff did a marvelous job to ensure that this tournament ran as smoothly as possible. They are the heart and soul of this annual three-day retreat, where new and old friends have the opportunity to connect or reconnect in the spirit of friendship. Kudos to them!

Our first member who the club honored in 2020 for his longevity with the club was Matt Faille. Matt started going to the NBCC in the early-to-mid 2000s. His father, Mark Faille, had introduced him to both the game and the NBCC. Mark Wilkin and his friend Ilya Gofman, along with member Joe Hricko, were the first to take turns beating on Matt over the chess board. Until the NBCC, Matt had only been limited to playing at the Barnes & Noble in Waterbury, at the library chess club in Waterbury, and in the Townsend Cup at Wesleyan University in Middletown. A few years after that, Matt met member Will Torres in high school, and then they started going to New Britain together to maraud the countryside. It was not until later that they learned that they had the same initial chess coach, Julius Fuster, for many years without the knowledge of each other! The NBCC had been the single most influential group of people in helping Matt improve his chess strength and giving him a sense of brotherhood. He could not possibly mention all of the names of chess players who meant so very much to him. At one point, USCF NM Derek Meredith had allowed Matt to sit in with several of his studies at the mall and at Panera Bread to formally improve his chess strength. In addition, Jimmy Wilkin and Mark would always show Matt why unorthodox chess openings and aggressive practical play were viable at almost all levels. Preparing for the New Britain's slow tournaments week after week gave Matt insight into how to prepare for such things and absolutely garnered him a spike in opening preparation ability. Even though he currently resides in Rhode Island, if anyone asks him, USCF Expert Matt still calls the NBCC his home club. His fondest memory of tournaments at the club had to have been the team tournaments, where New Britain always did well.

All in all, Matt is extremely grateful to be part of such a wonderful club with rich history and dedicated officers. And we are so grateful to have Matt as our friend in our thriving chess community. To make this tournament a friendly one for students, Matt opted to have his tournament unrated with games of various time controls gradually starting at G/15 and ending at G/1. A special prize (a club chess set) was also awarded to the top scoring student, which ended up being member Nakul Ramaswamy. FM and member Nelson Castaneda took home the gold with a first-place score. Matt's event was held on February 18.

On February 29, the NBCC hosted the annual Connecticut State Senior Open Chess Championship and the inaugural Connecticut State Women's Open Chess Championship. The senior event was won by GM Sergey Kudrin, and the women's event was won by Jasmine Su, a nine-year old whose rating is class A. USCF NM Derek Meredith took home second place in the senior event, and he will be automatically seeded in the state championships to be held in May. Thanks to all those who participated, and a special thanks to Normal Burtness for directing both tournaments.

### **MARCH**

The club held its most heritage tournament of the year, its annual championship tournament, from mid-January through early March. A record fifty-three players competed in this tournament. After many rounds of fierce competition, FM Nelson Castaneda emerged victorious in the event. This marks Nelson's fortieth win or tie for first place in major (G/30 or longer) club tournaments. Winning the reserve section of this major event was member Shriniket Sivakumar, his first win in a major club event. Thanks to Mark Bourque for directing this significant club event. He did a great job!

Keeping with club tradition, the reigning club champion of the year hosts a simultaneous chess exhibition. This year, it was Nelson's turn to host a simul. Sixteen players competed in this event, with the participants all striving to tackle and upset the master. After nearly three hours of competition, member Jozef Madej and Nilish Terance nicked a draw against the master. Thanks to Nelson for hosting this simul. He had a good performance overall. Prior to his simul, Nelson reviewed some games from the most recent club championship.

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the club made a prudent decision to suspend all indoor operations effective March 13. The club officers decided, therefore, to take advantage of the loss of over-the-board play at the club by hosting the club's first online tournament on chess.com on Friday, March 20. The winner of the NBCC's first online tournament was FM Nelson Castaneda. Congratulations, Professor! Twelve members competed in this tournament.

## **APRIL**

Amidst this epic pandemic, the club held blitz chess tournaments on Tuesday and Friday evenings on chess.com. The club also held its first-ever virtual lecture online using Google. The first lecture, which was open only to a few key members, was of a game played between Arkadijs Strazdins and USCF NM James Bolton and was annotated by Dr. Joseph Platz. FM Richard Bauer and the chess software Stockfish reanalyzed the game, which was published on lichess.org. Using this platform with Google and lichess.org, the club decided to host its first-ever trial lecture to all members on April 21, with the topic being pawn endgames presented by Mr. Bauer. We want to thank Suhas Kodali for arranging this virtual online lecture. We also want to thank Master Bauer for his willingness to host the club's first online lecture.

Since the Google platform only allowed ten players to view the virtual online games, the club switched to Webex, where our first lecture was conducted by none other than the energetic Joe Bihlmeyer. Joe possesses an amazing knowledge of the game and is always willing to share his extensive knowledge with his students.

## **MAY**

Due to a high demand, the Tuesday evening chess.com tournaments were increased to a longer time-controlled format. Players were grouped into quads, with the games at a time control of G/75, with a 30-second increment.

On Sunday, May 24, the historic first online chess match between the New Britain Chess Club ("The Heart of Connecticut Chess") and the Chess Club of Fairfield County ("Connecticut's Premier Chess Community") was held. A very special thanks to USCF NM Ian Harris for arranging the match, and thanks to him and FM Richard Bauer for being the match annotators. They did an excellent job! The NBCC, unfortunately, lost the match, with the final score being 6.5 to 9.5.

The biggest highlight of the match was USCF NM Derek Meredith's double rook sacrifice, which was the best game of the year per FM Richard Bauer (see the game later in this newsletter). He ultimately won the game! This was the second match held between the two chess organizations. The two premier chess clubs in the state fielded two masters, two experts, two class A, and two class B chess players for the two-game, G/25 +5 match.

## **JUNE**

During the month of June, FM Richard Bauer gave an analysis of live-streamed matches of various class and expert-ranked players. We hope to make this an occasional feature of our training classes in the weeks to come on chess.com.

## **JULY**

The NBCC resumed its weekly operations with a rivals challenge tournament held on Saturday, July 11, at the Armenian Church. The tournament was played outdoors, and the necessary COVID-19 precautions were taken to ensure the safety of our players. Players were grouped based on their nearest rated opponent in the two-round, G/24 tournament.

A week after the rivals tournament, the club held a four-week Summer Show-up tournament, with an average of twelve players competing in this event. The tournament was held on Saturdays outside of the Armenian Church. The tournament began on July 18 and ended on August 8. Suhas Kodali won the event with a score of 3.5-.5. Thanks to Norman Burtness for directing.

## **AUGUST**

Typically, the club has held its annual business meeting in mid-June. But with the coronavirus outbreak disrupting our club schedule, the annual club business meeting was postponed until Tuesday, August 11, outside of the Armenian Church. We just had enough players for a quorum (20). The meeting lasted exactly one-hour. The highlights of the meeting were as follows:

- ✚ Club addressed the COVID-19 virus by purchasing sneeze guards to prevent the spread of infection. Clorox wipes will be used to wipe down the tables, chairs, clocks, and sets after each meeting.
- ✚ Club purchased new clocks and sets for its operations.



- ✚ Club will move all of its operations back inside the Armenian Church hall starting in September. Our first major event will be Oktoberfest. The club will not hold the Arkadijs Strazdins Cup/Stein this year due to a crunch in our schedule.
- ✚ Club members will be required to sign the club code of conduct in lieu of the incident that happened earlier this year when a member sent out an e-mail to the membership that was not club related, which got very politicized.
- ✚ Club's financial health is very strong. Membership was at ninety-two prior to the COVID-19 virus and was on target to top one-hundred.
- ✚ Club voted not to decrease membership dues from saved rent from not using the hall during the summer months. Instead, the additional savings on our rental obligations will be applied to be an unrestricted fund and will be used to pay for any "rainy-day" expenditures.
- ✚ Vice President Suhas Kodali thanked our team of weekly chess trainers and lecturers, especially the enthusiast Joe Bihlmeyer, and others, like USCF NM Derek Meredith, for their efforts. The lectures have greatly benefited the club.
- ✚ Bob Cyr gave a brief highlights report on activities from the start of the year. He also mentioned that he will be issuing the club's 16th annual newsletter this year!
- ✚ Election of officers went as follows:
- ✚ President - Suhas Kodali: youngest president in NBCC history at age 27. We thank Norman Burtness for the tremendous amount of work that he has put into the club as president for four years and three years as vice president under USCF NM Derek Meredith, especially with his work on the club website, his publication of the weekly e-mails, and his organization of the training classes.
- ✚ Vice President - Michael Smith (a motion was made to nominate Mario Guevara-Rodriguez, but he declined) - We thank Suhas Kodali for his exemplary work as vice president.
- ✚ Secretary - Mario Guevara-Rodriguez - Great job to Mario as well!
- ✚ Treasurer - David Herscovici - Great job to David as well!

On a very gloomy and wet last Saturday in August, due to the remnants of Hurricane Laura, the NBCC hosted its annual Summer Open tournament at the beautiful Wickham Park in Manchester. Norman Burtness was the chief tournament director of the event and did an exceptional job in this capacity, his last official one as club president. Thirty-five players competed in the tournament, including five players who competed in their first USCF-rated event. The open section had sixteen players, and the U1620 section had nineteen.

For pairing purposes, the U920 section was combined with the U1620 section. In spite of showers for most of the day, game play was unaffected by it, and players were able to keep dry under the pavilion. Gert Hilhorst did a fantastic job as chef, cooking up hamburgers, veggie burgers, sausages, pasta salad, and potato salad, with Suhas Kodali serving the food. Suhas also assisted Norman and Gert with the overall setup and cleanup of equipment and supplies. Entries were limited to thirty-six to allow there to be a plexiglass shield between each pair of opponents. Congratulations to Gaetano Bompastore and Michael Pascetta, who tied for first place with 3.5/4. Gaetano got to take home the first-place trophy on tie-breaks, and this was his first major tournament win in the club. It should also be noted for the record that it is extremely rare for two class players to tie for first place in a Summer Open tournament. Thanks to all participants for braving the rain. We look forward to seeing you all at the 56<sup>th</sup> Summer Open next August.

### **SEPTEMBER**

The NBCC is grateful to have many presenters and lecturers. On September 15, our very own club vice president, Michael Smith, gave a very interesting lecture on materialism, one of the seven deadliest sins in chess as published in the book by Jonathan Rowson. This was Michael's first official presentation in our thriving organization. We look forward to his other lectures in the weeks and months to come. Thank you, Michael! His lectures have been posted on YouTube, incidentally.

### **OCTOBER**

During the month of October, the club held its annual Oktoberfest Tournament, one of the major tournaments of the year. Despite a low turnout, there were still many interesting games and spirited competition in this fun tournament. After six rounds of competition, Expert Suhas Kodali took home first place. Suhas became the third member to win the Oktoberfest event back-to-back, and he is almost a USCF NM now! Abhijit Mondal won his first major event at the club for earning first place in the Under 1800 section. Congratulations to both Suhas and Abhijit!

After the conclusion of the Oktoberfest event, the club traditionally holds its annual Oktoberfest dinner party to celebrate this festive German season with fine food and spirits. This year, our club president, Suhas Kodali, with advice from Norman Burtness, arranged for a special Oktoberfest lunch at the Wood 'N Tap restaurant in Farmington. About ten members gathered for the lunch on Halloween. It was a nice afternoon with social interaction and enlightening conversation. The club treated its volunteers to a free lunch, which was held outside overlooking the beautiful Farmington River.

## **NOVEMBER**

After Oktoberfest, the club held an unrated, collaborative event on November 3 - Election Day. According to Suhas Kodali, here were the details of this interesting vote chess tournament.

“We would break up into two teams. We would review instructive historical games but pause at some critical moments to give each team a chance to pick the correct move out of two or more options. After some discussion internally within the teams, the teams would vote for their pick. After the move was decided, a representative from each team would share with the entire club their thought process for their choice. We would reveal the correct move after the discussion. After four to five such critical moments in a game, we would tally the score and declare one team the winner. The twist was there would be an imposter on each team. The imposter would be actually working for the success of the opposing team! They may use tactics of their choice to influence the team of what might be the wrong answer. If the team discovers the imposter, they may choose to send them back to the opposing team and score an extra point. If they pick one of their own teammates incorrectly, they would lose a point.”

Before the vote chess tournament, Mario Guevara-Rodriguez reviewed his game with Joe Bihlmeyer from the Oktoberfest Tournament. Mario won the game! His performance in Oktoberfest was exceptionally good, having gained him enough rating points to push him over expert level. Congratulations, Mario!

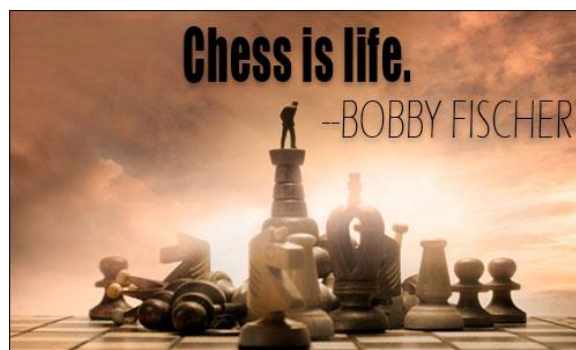
Since 2011, thanks to the ideas created by USCF NM Derek Meredith, the club has held a double quads event in November to immortalize a person who has been instrumental in promoting and enriching chess throughout our community. This year, we memorialize the tournament after Judge John Kirhkam, our club's first president. The judge was instrumental in organizing and officially founding the club in 1901 and growing it by hosting various inter-club matches with local chess clubs like Hartford. He was also a Connecticut chess champion and was a key advocate for the promotion of Connecticut chess, serving as a leader in the also very historic Hartford Chess Club.

Mr. Kirkham was incidentally considered one of the strongest chess players in Connecticut during the early part of the twentieth century and beat a strong chess player in the Boylston Chess Club in 1905. Mr. Kirkham also entertained Jose Raul Capablanca, a candidate for the world chess championship, at the Hartford Chess Club in 1909 for a simultaneous chess exhibition. Without the leadership exhibited by this legendary man, the NBCC and Connecticut chess might not be as strong as it is today. Please note that this year's memorial event format was not a double round quad but instead a double round Swiss.

In late November, a decision was made by the club officers to suspend all indoor operations again due to the widespread increase in the coronavirus pandemic. However, this did not mean that all club operations were suspended. The club officers transitioned the over-the-board play to online play via chess.com. Lectures prior to the tournaments were also held online. This cancellation of indoor play at the church would only be temporary, with indoor play resuming sometime in early 2021. Any holiday plans or club gatherings at the church, consequently, would be cancelled. The Judge John Kirkham Double Swiss event would also resume in early 2021.

## **DECEMBER**

On Saturday evenings in December, the club hosted a new online study group aimed toward the stronger players in the club. According to USCF NM Suhas Kodali, the objective of this study group was to “work on some of the more advanced topics in chess.” Specifically, “there were studies on lichess.org with chess positions from books setup (tactical/positional), of which the members would discuss their approaches to finding the best move in the position. Afterwards, we would review the responses with the book and continue onwards to the next position.” It should be noted that lower rated players would be allowed to listen into these discussions on lichess.org.



## **NBCC MEMBERS' MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

Our members earned the following major achievements in the USCF in 2020.


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


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

| <b>NBCC MEMBER</b>       | <b>USCF<br/>TOP PLAYER LIST</b> | <b>USCF<br/>RATING</b> | <b>USCF<br/>RANKING</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| FM Nelson Castaneda      | Age 50 or Older                 | 2358                   | 45 <sup>th</sup>        |
|                          | Quick Overall                   | 2243                   | 93 <sup>rd</sup>        |
|                          | Quick Age 50 or Older           | 2243                   | 24 <sup>th</sup>        |
|                          | Blitz Overall                   | 2325                   | 96 <sup>th</sup>        |
|                          | Blitz Age 50 or Older           | 2325                   | 16 <sup>th</sup>        |
| USCF NM Edward McHugh    | Age 50 or Older                 | 2297                   | 61 <sup>st</sup>        |
| USCF NM Derek Meredith   | Blitz Age 50 or Older           | 2083                   | 60 <sup>th</sup>        |
| Mario Guevara-Rodriguez  | Blitz Age 50 or Older           | 2013                   | 81 <sup>st</sup> tie    |
|                          | Online Age 50 or Older          | 1924                   | 15 <sup>th</sup>        |
| USCF NM David Herscovici | Blitz Age 50 or Older           | 2006                   | 83 <sup>rd</sup>        |
| Dennis Himes             | Blitz Age 65 or Older           | 1710                   | 77 <sup>th</sup>        |
| Joseph Mansigian         | Blitz Age 65 or Older           | 1600                   | 96 <sup>th</sup> tie    |
| Elizabeth Smith          | Women Age 65 or Older           | 1625                   | 5 <sup>th</sup>         |
|                          | Women Quick<br>Age 65 or Older  | 1481                   | 6 <sup>th</sup>         |
|                          | Women Blitz<br>Age 65 or Older  | 1270                   | 2 <sup>nd</sup>         |
|                          | Women Age 50 or Older           | 1625                   | 18 <sup>th</sup>        |
|                          | Women Quick<br>Age 50 or Older  | 1481                   | 14 <sup>th</sup>        |
|                          | Women Blitz<br>Age 50 or Older  | 1270                   | 9 <sup>th</sup>         |

As of the November USCF Top 100 lists, FM Richard Bauer ranked in sixth place for seniors ages sixty-five or older.

### **NBCC MEMBERS EARNING USCF MASTER AND EXPERT TITLES**

 Suhas Kodali earned the title of USCF NM in 2020.

 Mario Guevara-Rodriguez reached the 2000 (expert level) mark in 2020.

## **CHES TRIVIA**

Since 2008, I have included a chess trivia section in the annual NBCC newsletters. I have written many chess trivia questions over the years. This year, with the U.S. election making daily headlines, I thought that I would devote this year's NBCC trivia to U.S. presidents and chess. Good luck! The answers are on page 25.

1. Which of the following U.S. presidents does not have his chess set displayed in the Smithsonian?
  - a) Abraham Lincoln
  - b) Woodrow Wilson
  - c) George Washington
  - d) John Quincy Adams
2. On May 29, 1859, at the University of the City of New York, the son of what U.S. president toasted Paul Morphy and ended a testimonial presentation by proclaiming him as "The Chess Champion of the World" to 1,500 guests?
  - a) Martin Van Buren
  - b) Andrew Jackson
  - c) James Polk
  - d) William Henry Harrison
3. What U.S. president played chess with Henry Ford during lunch at the White House?
  - a) Harry Truman
  - b) Calvin Coolidge
  - c) Franklin D. Roosevelt
  - d) Dwight D. Eisenhower
4. What U.S. president was introduced to the Polgar sisters when visiting Budapest?
  - a) George Herbert Walker Bush
  - b) Barack Obama
  - c) George W. Bush
  - d) Bill Clinton



## **NBCC PICTURE GALLERY**

The following photos were taken by Suhas Kodali, Naganathan Sivakumar, Doug Fiske, Mario Guevara-Rodriguez, and Bob Cyr.



**GM Alexandr Lenderman with the master training class students at the club**

Left to right: Jithu Sajeevan, Nelson Castaneda, Harold Blanchard, Nakul Ramaswamy, Daniel Zhao, Nathan Zhao, Alexandr Lenderman, Peter Wolfe, Mike Smith, Mario Guevara-Rodriguez, Norman Burtness, Doug Fiske, Mike Boisselle, Ted McHugh, Richard Bauer



### **LECTURE AND SIMULTANEOUS CHESS EXHIBITION**

**BY**

**GM LENDERMAN**



### **CONNECTICUT STATE OPEN 2020 WOMEN'S CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP**



BACK TO FRONT, LEFT TO RIGHT

THEJA SURESHNAGAN VS. ELIZABETH SMITH, JASMINE SU VS. MACKENZIE FURMAN

### **CONNECTICUT STATE OPEN 2020 SENIOR CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP**



BACK TO FRONT, LEFT TO RIGHT

HANON RUSSELL VS. SERGEY KUDRIN, MARIO GUEVARA-RODRIGUEZ VS. NELSON CASTANEDA



## **NBCC CHAMPIONS OF 2020 WITH NBCC PRESIDENT NORMAN BURTNES**



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Suhas Kodali, Punyavrat Upadhyay, Yogahari Jegadeeswaran, Rick Schnitzler, Roger Bessette, Norman Burtne, Shriniket Sivakumar, Dave Herscovici, Nelson Castaneda, and Mackenzie Furman



NELSON CASTANEDA HOSTS A SIMULTANEOUS CHESS EXHIBITION AT THE NBCC

## **55<sup>th</sup> NEW BRITAIN SUMMER OPEN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP**



Gaetano Bompastore, first place winner, with TD Burtress



Michael Pascetta, second place winner, with TD Burtress



Lisa Smith, U1620 winner, with TD Burtress



Players gathered under the pavilion for play



Gary Hillhorst under the canopy getting ready to serve lunch



**2020 NBCC OKTOBERFEST LUNCH PARTY**  
**AT THE WOOD 'N TAP RESTAURANT**



THE ATTENDEES!



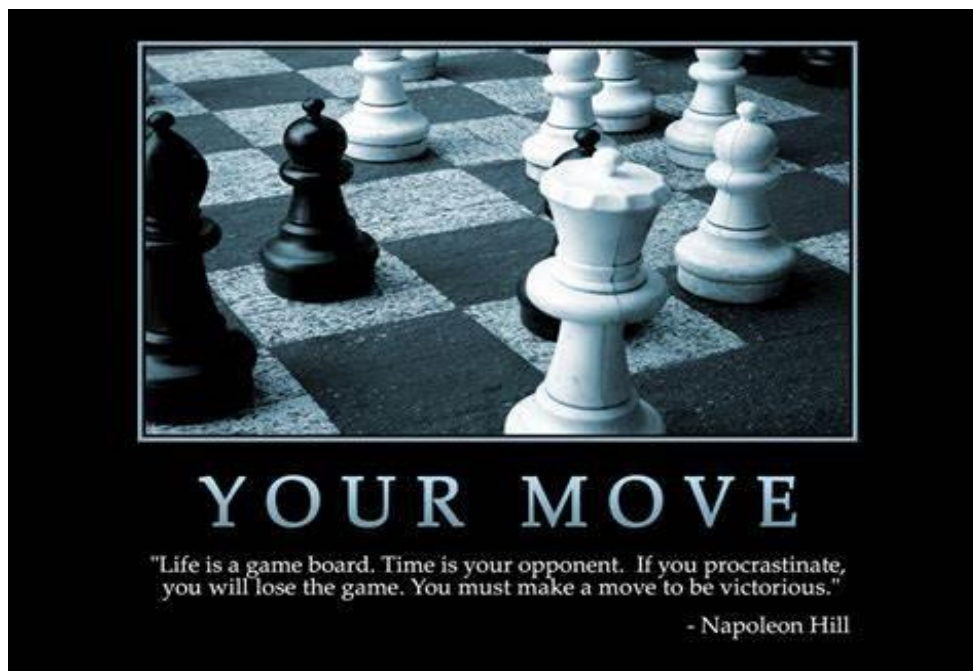
We ate lunch outside and had a beautiful view of the Farmington River.

## **2020 OKTOBERFEST OPEN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS**



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Bill Graham, Rick Schnitzler, Abhijit Mondal, Suhas Kodali, and Mario Guevara-Rodriguez



## **NBCC BEST GAME OF 2020**

Since 2013, FM Richard Bauer has been the sponsor and judge of the annual NBCC Best Game contest. The club is most thankful for the excellent job that Mr. Bauer continues to do with his analysis of the games and the awarding of prizes to the winners with his own funds. He is simply the best!

This game was played as part of an innovative online match between the Fairfield County Chess Club and the New Britain Chess Club. We started out incredibly strong. In the first round as White on all boards, we were winning on all boards at one point. Fairfield staged a massive comeback, minimizing their losses in that round and punishing us on "their serve."

The biggest star for New Britain was USCF NM Derek Meredith, who won both of his games on board three. Derek does the best job of opening preparation I have seen and has several GM scalps to show for it. My strategy against him has evolved to this: Survive the opening and take him on later.

This game is a stunning example of the triumph of great opening preparation. At one point, Derek had used just one of his 25 minutes, while his opponent had used 24 of his 25!

### **Double Rook Sacrifice**

**Date "2020.05.24"**

**White "NM Derek Meredith"**

**Black "NM Ryan Young"**

**Time Control "G25 D5"**

**Annotator "FM Rick Bauer"**

**Opening: French Defense: "Two Knights Variation"[ECO "C00"]**

- 1. e4 e6** The French Defense. Derek has a hate-hate relationship with this defense!  
**2. Nf3!?** This "beginner move" has been played by the likes of Ivanchuk and Carlsen, which surprised me because it is often played by those that aren't really paying attention to their opponent's move. 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. Nf3 would transpose to the game.
- 2... d5**  
**3. Nc3** The Two Knights is rarely played against the French Defense. That makes it dangerous!
- 3... Nf6** Black wants to continue playing a traditional French rather than "taking advantage" of his opponent's move order with 3... d4 4. Ne2 c5, which also equalizes.
- 4. e5 Nfd7**  
**5. d4 c5**  
**6. Bg5!?** A very provocative move.
- 6... Qb6** The queen adds pressure to both b2 and d4. White gains a temporary development advantage in the French, but Black's rock-solid structure generally allows him to catch up later. 6... f6?! 7. exf6 Nxf6 (7... gxf6 8. Bf4 cxd4 9. Nxd4 e5 10. Qh5+) (6... Be7?! 7. Bxe7 Qxe7 8. Nb5 O-O 9. Nc7 Nxe5 10. Nxa8

Nxf3+ 11. Qxf3 {Perunovic, Milos - Sedlak, Nikola, 1-0, SRB-ch, 2011, <https://lichess.org/zC0liWJe> } { proved good for White. } (6... Qa5!? {is the best alternative to the main move.})

**7. dxc5 Bxc5** Now Black is threatening both f2 and b2.

**8. Qd2 Bxf2+?! The B sac deflects White's queen from covering c3, so that Qxb2 becomes a strong double attack. As clever as this tactic is, it falls into an opening trap that Derek has undoubtedly prepared. Everyone in our club has fallen victim to his treacherous opening preparation. 8... Nc6! 9. O-O-O Bxf2 (9... Qa5!? \$15) 10. Na4 Qa5 11. Qxf2 Qxa4 12. Rd3)**

**9. Qxf2 Qxb2**



"He who takes the b-pawn sleeps in the street." Martin Garcia.  
Some of the most critical lines in chess theory rely on this move to hold the balance, but Derek's favorite move may well be Qxb2/b7 for his opponent!

**10. Kd2!** 10. Rc1 is the move Stockfish would play when Qxc3+ 11. Bd2 Qc5 is =+

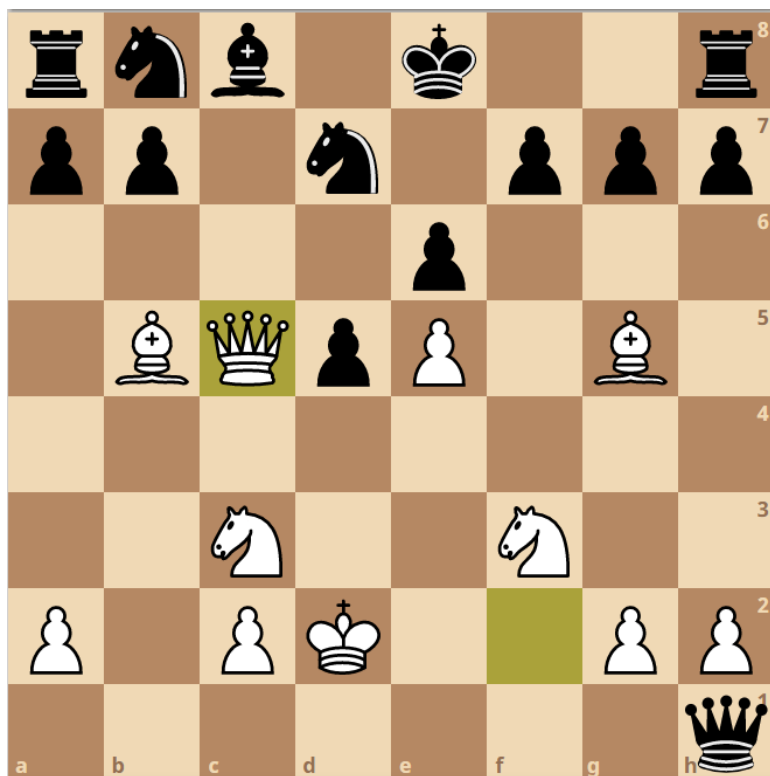
**10... Qxa1**

**11. Bb5!!** White sacrifices both rooks and now stands better! Derek has used no time (less than a minute), so this reeks of home cooking. This game is a beautiful victory of development over materialism.

**11... Qxh1** Black has used 10 of his 25 minutes. 11... Qb2 doesn't stop 12. Qc5+-

**12. Qc5!**





A rude shock! Two rooks up, but the mate threat on e7 will cost Black his queen.

**12... Qxg2+**

**13. Kc1 f6??** Black must sac the Q on g5 to avoid mate, when White would still have a huge advantage: 13... Nc6 14. Bxc6 Qxg5+ 15. Nxc6 bxc6 16. Qxc6 Rb8 is better for White (2.5-0.5) but Black is still alive. Rohl Montes, Juan Armando - Uribe, Mauricio, 1-0, Medellin La Raza, 2003

**14. exf6 gxf6** Played with just 7 minutes left on his clock. The king cannot escape: 14... Kf7

15. Qe7+ Kg6 16. Nh4+ Kxg5 17. fxg7+

**15. Bxf6 Kf7** Black is down to one minute. White has used only one minute.

**16. Qe7+ Kg8** 16...Kg6 17. Qg7+



Derek misses the mate here, but he does wind up winning all of Black's pieces and the game. Can you find it (Mate in 5)?

**17. Qxe6+** 17. Ne5! Qg5+ (17... Nxe5 18. Qe8#) 18. Bxg5 Nxe5 19. Bf6 1-0

**17... Kf8**

**18. Qe7+ Kg8**

**19. Ng5** 19. Ne5! {is even stronger since Black cannot sacrifice the Q and} 19... Qg5+ {still the best! 19... Nxe5 20. Qe8#} 20. Bxg5 Nxe5 21. Bh6 Nd3+ 22. Bxd3 d4 23. Qf8#)

**19... Qxg5+** Black has finally found a way to avert mate by sacrificing his queen! Now, material is close to even, but Black's shaky king and undeveloped forces make the win easy. None of Black's necessary sacrifices can stem the tide.

**20. Bxg5 h6**

**21. Be3** 21. Nxd5! {Opening the c4-g8 diagonal!} 21... Rh7 (21... hxd5 22. Nf6+ Nxf6 23. Bc4+) 22. Nf6+ Nxf6 23. Bc4+

**21... Nc6**

**22. Qe6+ Kf8**

**23. Bxh6+ Rxh6**

**24. Qxh6+ Kf7**

**25. Qh5+ Kf8**

**26. Nxd5 Nce5** 26... Nde5 27. Qh8+ Kf7 28. Qf6+ Kg8 29. Nc7 Rb8 30. Ne8

**27. Qf5+ Kg7**

**28. Nc7 Rb8**

**29. Ne8+ Kg8**





White to play and win a piece.

**30. Nf6+ Nxf6**

**31. Qxe5** The double attack on f6 and b8 wins more material.

**31... Ra8**

**32. Qxf6 Bh3** 32... a6 33. Bc4+ Kh7 34. Bd3+ Kg8 35. Bg6.

**33. Bc4+Kh7**

**34. Qh4+ Kg7**

**35. Qxh3 Rf8**

**36. Qd7+ Kg6**

**37. Bd3+** With the loss of his last piece in sight, Black finally resigned.

**1-0.** 37... Kf6 38. Qd6+ Kf7 39. Bc4+ Ke8 40. Qb8+ Ke7 41. Qc7+ Kf6 42. Qd6+ Kg7 43. Qe7+, and Black loses the rook.

## **BOB CYR'S COMMENTARY**

Can you believe it, my friends? We have reached the end of 2020, a year that will be remembered in club history as one of the most challenging. The NBCC, like many other chess organizations throughout our great nation, was faced with operating through one of the deadliest viral pandemics in our lifetime this past year. The club officially closed its indoor operations in March and went online until July, when operations resumed outdoors. It would not be until the start of the new club fiscal year, in September, when we officially resumed operations inside the church. When the virus got more widespread and severe around November, the club suspended its indoor operations again and resumed its online operations. Our club officers have taken many precautions to ensure the safety of our members during this crisis of epic proportions, such as requiring the use of masks and placing sneeze guards between players during their games.

Membership, unfortunately, has reached one of the lowest levels in recorded club history because of the pandemic. I am personally sad to see many of our veteran members not in attendance at the club. But rest assured, once this virus passes, membership will return to normal levels. In the meantime, we will have to wait for a vaccine to be issued to the general population, which might take many months. Let's be patient. We will get through this.

Before I conclude, I want to congratulate three people who won our club's major tournaments this year: Club Championship (FM Nelson Castaneda), Summer Open (Gaetano Bompastore), and Oktoberfest Open (Suhas Kodali).

Being a part of this thriving chess community has been one of my life's greatest pleasures. The job of NBCC historian has brought me wonderful treasures, and my work as your historian will be my lasting legacy to the club. Years from now, people will have a chance to read about the memories of the club and how it managed to operate and survive during this awful crisis.

I love you all. May God bless you and your family. Let us pray for a more promising, peaceful, and less hectic 2021. Remember, my folks, take care of yourself and each other. Thank you for the privilege of your time. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**President:**  
**Vice President:**  
**Treasurer:**  
**Secretary:**  
**Webmaster:**  
**Historian:**

**Suhas Kodali**  
**Michael Smith**  
**David Herscovici**  
**Mario Guevara-Rodriguez**  
**Gert Hilhorst**  
**Bob Cyr**



## **SOLUTION AND ANSWERS TO CHESS PUZZLE AND TRIVIA**

### **CHESS PUZZLE** (from cover page)

1. Bg5+ Kf8
2. Rd8+ Kg7
3. Rg8#

### **CHESS TRIVIA** (from page 12)

1. c
2. a
3. c
4. a

