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# CalChess REPORT

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• October 1990 •

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## OCTOBER CalChess MEETING

At this month's meeting, it was decided to reclaim the name "CalChess" for the organization, and to take the necessary steps to acquire tax-exempt and not-for-profit status.

Ray Orwig was presented an award as "Chess Teacher of the Year 1990-1," recognizing his achievements as a chess teacher, which include organizing, training, and chaperoning a national championship team, writing articles on chess training for *School Mates*, and establishing a series of scholastic tournaments that continue to invigorate chess with talented youngsters. Thanks, Ray!

Clearinghouse Coordinator Alan Glasscoe reported that there have been a number of conflicts in tournament dates this year. While they continue to be a problem, there have been no repeat offenders, and everyone has expressed a willingness to cooperate. Alan has done a good job of identifying conflicts early and working with the parties to resolve them amicably.

RVP Withgitt reports that we will have a Womens' Open in Northern California on June 1-2, 1991, that will unify the title of California champion, recognized by both Southern California and CalChess. The Southerners will then have the option to hold it there in 1992. It will be the first time since the state split that we have had a unified state championship recognized by both state federations.

Treasurer Poschmann reports that he has now obtained free checking for us, and that, as usual, our balance is virtually nonexistent. He loaned us some of his own funds to reach the \$100 minimum needed to open a new account.

A motion was passed for Carolyn Withgitt to write a business plan for *CalChess*, to be submitted and discussed at the next meeting.

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Our next scheduled meeting will be in Fremont, December 14, 7 p.m., at the branch library (behind the shopping center) on Alder Avenue at Fremont Boulevard.

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## GOOD NEWS/ BAD NEWS

The good news is that our free fall on the USCF membership list is almost over. The bad news is we have reached the bottom of the list. Secure in 50th place, our percentage loss is better than Nebraska and Iowa (states with declining population), but in absolute numbers we are by far the worst (we lost 115 members; next-to-last was 87). Now we have nowhere to go but up!

Since I became President of NCCA/CalChess in August, I've talked to a lot of people about the situation, and I've heard as many opinions. Other than the occasional oddball who prefers chess as a cult activity with a few diehard adherents, almost everyone realizes something has to be done to reverse the decline. If chess continues to shrink at this rate, in a few years pickup games in public parks will be all that is left. Tournament and club directors have already felt the hit. Players want more—and better—tournaments, more options about when and where to play, and more opponents.

My own view is that there are lessons we can draw from our experience over the past few years. First the obvious, disorganization failed. Since our last state organization expired (more precisely, it was euthanasia), the available evidence suggests that, while termination achieved the short-term objective of eliminating an ineffective organization, it failed to achieve the long-term goal of promoting chess. The experiment in anarchy is over, and the data is summarized in the first paragraph.

Since poor organization has not worked, and disorganization has not worked, good organization is the only option left untried. Some of us who have survived several such

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cycles can remember the characteristics of earlier state organizations, like "Chess Friends" and early CalChess, that did a good job.

First and foremost, the state organization needs to provide an information net, or magazine, focusing on local games, information about upcoming events, and local results. A good state magazine is a forum for its members, the bulk of whom are ordinary players who will never see their name in Chess Life. Anyone who plays a decent game or scores a win in a tournament should be in the magazine, and there should be complete before-and-after coverage of local events. The magazine becomes the tangible common denominator for a group of like-minded individuals; it creates a bond between the member, who receives information and support for minimal cost, and the organization, which improves its participation and retention rate.

But a first-rate state organization needs to do much more than just publish a timely and interesting magazine. It should *promote* chess. That includes such things as providing answers to organizers who have questions; working with directors to minimize problems and conflicts; facilitating events by providing certified directors, flyers, or mailings; and it must earn the respect and cooperation of the area's players and organizers.

The thorniest problem is the four-letter word, "dues." People reflexively rebel at the notion of paying for something new, especially since few, if any, are pre-sold. Organizers are concerned that charging an additional membership fee will cut the gate. My view is that dues are only a conceptual problem, because the amount is too trivial to damage anyone—we're talking about \$10 a year, a fraction of one entry fee, less than you now pay for heartburn or a parking space at some tournaments. It only seems significant as an addition to other fees, when it is the final straw on top of a large entry fee and huge USCF dues.

So the initial approach, for the first 6-18 months (depending upon the number of events) should be to make dues voluntary, but offer a \$5 entry-fee discount to members. That way the player perceives membership as a *benefit*, not a burden, because in the long run he *saves* money by joining. And the discounts given by the organizer can be made up in a number of ways. A magazine that reaches all active tournament players can provide advertising to organizers, CalChess can provide merchandise or gift certificates to increase the prize fund, and, of course, after the start-up is over, organizers benefit from the increased participation of a membership organization. CalChess should also supply personnel for registration at tournaments, so the manpower of the organizer is augmented, not further depleted. When most of the area's active tournament players are members, mandatory membership will be supported by a majority, and discounts can then be eliminated or limited to tournaments sponsored by CalChess.

The common view is that dues are a necessary evil to support the services of the state federation. In fact, dues almost always pay exclusively for the magazine, with little or no money left over to squander on projects or administrative costs. My view is that dues are not about money, they are a bond. A token payment—and \$10/year certainly qualifies—is *essential to create a sense of obligation between the player and the organization*. The player must feel a commitment to, and participation in, the organization; those who run the organization must be obligated to the members. The token payment is the catalyst, the exchange of consideration, that triggers the mutual obligation and creates the common denominator of an organization.

Dues obligate the members to their organization, and thereby trigger a reciprocal obligation to the members.

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At the meeting this month, held in conjunction with the Berkeley Class Championships, USCF voting members for the next year were elected. Representing Northern California are George Koltanowski (life voting member), Frank Elley (life voting member), Peter Yu (regional vice president), Carolyn Withgitt (regional vice president), Tom Dorsch (CalChess officer), John Barnard (CalChess officer), Hans Poschmann (CalChess officer), Alan Glasscoe, Ray Orwig, Dr. Pascal Baudry, Julie Regan, Nick DeFirmian, Walter Browne, Jim Hurt, Elizabeth Shaughnessy, Max Wilkerson, Kerry Lawless, Don Wolitzer, Bob Hamm, Larry Lehman, Don Shennum, Frisco Del Rosario (alternate), and Arasu Ganesan (alternate). Since the US Open, and the concurrent USCF annual meeting, are to be held in Los Angeles in 1991, Northern California will have one of the three largest delegations at the annual meeting.

If there is some burning issue that you would like to present to the USCF's ultimate authority, the Board of Delegates, contact a CalChess officer and make your views known. We may be able to submit a resolution that will pass.

GOODALL RESIGNS AS SECRETARY

At the last Board meeting, Mike lost a Board vote regarding the official address and contact person for the 1990-1 year. Mike subsequently submitted the following letter:

"To Whom It May Concern:

Since the position of Secretary in CalChess has been stripped of all value and meaning, I hereby resign as Secretary of CalChess, effective immediately.

Mike Goodall  
10-22-90"

Mike has been an important part of Northern California chess for years. The loss

of his experience and leadership will make it more difficult to accomplish our goal of promoting chess. Perhaps he will use the time off from organizing to get his Master certificate, then lend his talents to CalChess again in the near future.

SUCCESSFUL RENO OPEN

This year's Reno Open, held October 25-28 in Reno, was a great success for Jerry Weikel, the organizer. Last year, he had to rent space in the Sundowner casino. This year, he moved to the Sands Regency, less than a block away, and was able to get the hotel to contribute several thousand dollars to the prize fund. In fact, the prizes were doubled with no increase in entries. Unable to resist a bargain, some 230 players—more than any Northern California tournament drew in 1989-90—trekked to Reno to play, including such luminaries as GM Gurevich (1st place), GM Browne (2nd place), and IMs John and Elena Donaldson, Igor and Alexander Ivanov, Dr. Anthony Saily, and Northern California champion Vladimir Strugatsky. The prize fund was increased because of the larger-than-expected turnout.

Everything was first-rate, although the unexpectedly large number of entries delayed the start of the first round. The hotel even supplied a management official to help. There was a full schedule of collateral events, including a WBCA event (won by Walter Browne) and a WRC event.

Well-organized events still draw very well, despite membership declines overall.

**TOM DORSCH**  
*President, CalChess*  
P.O. Box 3294  
Hayward, CA 94544

**MINUTES OF THE NCCA MEETING - October 21, 1990**  
**submitted by MIKE GOODALL, Secretary**

- The NCCA Annual Meeting was called to order by President Tom Dorsch at 3:33 p.m.
- The four officers present voted to make every member who attended a "director" for purposes of voting at the meeting.
- The ballots for voting members were distributed.
- A vote of confidence in the Secretary failed. (The Secretary subsequently re-signed.)
- The following people were elected to be voting members in next year's USCF policy board elections (votes shown in parentheses): Alan Glasscoe (19), Ray Orwig (17), Pascal Baudry (16), Julie Regan (15), Nick DeFirmian (13), Walter Browne (12), Jim Hurt (12), Elizabeth Shaughnessy (12), Max Wilkerson (12), Kerry Lawless (10), Don Wolitzer (10), Robert Hamm (9), Clarence Lehman (9), Frisco Del Rosario (alternate), Don Shennum (alternate). [NOTE: THE ORDER OF DELEGATES WAS CHANGED BY THE SECRETARY'S RESIGNATION AS OFFICER AND DELEGATE; ORWIG MOVES UP TO DELEGATE, SHENNUM MOVES UP TO VOTING MEMBER, AND ARASU GANESAN IS ADDED AS AN ALTERNATE.]
- Motion to set aside \$500 for State Championship.
  - passed 10-8 after discussion.
- Motion to set aside \$200 for scholarship.
  - passed 18-1 after discussion.
- Motion to set aside \$250 for U.C. Team.
  - passed 13-6 after discussion.
- Motion to set aside \$50 for plaque.
  - passed 13-3 after discussion.
- Motion to set aside \$200 for Denker candidate.
  - tabled 18-0 after discussion.
- Motion to help send a scholastic team to the Nationals.
  - tabled 16-0 after discussion.
- Motion to change name of organization from "N.C.C.A." to "CalChess."
  - passed 11-5 after discussion.
- Motion to pursue not-for-profit and tax-exempt status.
  - passed unanimously.
- Motion to write a business plan for CalChess.
  - passed unanimously.
- The Treasurer reported a balance of \$55.00.
- The Clearinghouse reported that he has no power to prevent conflicts.
- The R.V.P. (Withgitt) reported that Southern California wants to develop regional events that move around in the region.
- Motion to recognize a Southern California scholastic event, scheduled for early December, as a regional event.
  - passed unanimously.
- Motion to hold and recognize a Women's Open event next year as a regional event.
  - passed unanimously.
- Filipp Frenkel came in and related about how he was teaching chess to poor children.
- The next meeting was scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, December 13, in Fremont at the library. This meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Goodall, *CalChess* Secretary.

## AGENDA

CalChess meeting, October 21, 1990

**I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.**

**II. NEW BUSINESS.**

**A. ELECTION OF DELEGATES AND VOTING MEMBERS.**

*The following candidates have been nominated:*

1. Alan Glasscoe (Tournament Clearinghouse, D/O\* Berkeley Club, immediate past RVP)
2. Nick DeFirmian (America's best player)
3. Walter Browne (Grandmaster, six-time U.S. Champion, D/O WBCA)
4. Ray Orwig (NCCA Scholastic Director, captain, US Champion Jr. High Team, organizer, scholastic events)
5. Jim Hurt (D/O, LERA tournaments)
6. Dr. Pascal Baudry (former French Jr. Champion, tournament player, organizer of the Walnut Creek Quads and scholastic tournaments in Contra Costa County).
7. Julie Regan (D/O, Kolty Club, Campbell)
8. Clarence Lehman (D/O, Walnut Creek Club)
9. Don Shennum (SUPERB organizer, D/O, UC club)
10. Mike Stansbury (D/O, Chess for Kids, Monterey peninsula)
11. Vincent McCambridge (IM, Chess Life contributor, award-winning author, teacher)
12. Don Wolitzer (D/O, Livermore Club)
13. Scott Wilson (D/O, Burlingame Club)
14. Kerry Lawless (D/O, Hayward, Chabot Clubs)
15. Max Wilkerson (D/O, Mechanics Institute)
16. Cain Garrett, Jr. (D/O, Sacramento chess)
17. Bill Wall (D/O, Palo Alto Club)
18. Frisco Del Rosario (Chess columnist, editor)
19. Robert Hamm (corporate officer, Games of Berkeley)
20. Paul Liebhaber (tournament player)
21. Bill Orton (master, author, chess programmer)
22. Arasu Ganesan (D/O, Berkeley Club)
23. John Easterling (D/O, Richmond Club)
24. Al Hansen (D/O, Kolty foundation)
25. Elizabeth Shaughnessy (D/O, Berkeley scholastic tournaments)
26. Richard Koepcke (master, D/O, Palo Alto Club)
27. Peter Dahl (D/O, Lowell High CC)

**B. MOTION:**

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\* Director/Organizer

"In the alternative,

1. The official representative, contact person, and address of the NCCA shall be the Secretary, (GOODALL) OR

2. The official representative, contact person, and address of the NCCA shall be the President. (DORSCH)

### C. GOODALL MOTIONS.

1. MOTION: "Set aside \$500 to contribute to an Open or Closed Master State Championship. This escrow reverts back to our general fund if no plans for such a tournament materialize by March 1, 1991." (GOODALL)

2. MOTION: "Set aside \$200 to contribute to another promising Junior under 18, in the form of a chess scholarship." (GOODALL)

3. MOTION: "Set aside \$250 to contribute to defray expenses of sending a U.C. team to the Pan Ams. If U.C. plans to send two teams again, and/or if Stanford plans to send a team (or any other Northern California college), the requesting parties must submit their request for this money and/or additional monies by November 1, 1990." (GOODALL)

4. MOTION: "Set aside \$50 to buy another plaque for another chess teacher." (GOODALL)

5. MOTION: "Set aside \$200 to contribute to defray expenses of sending our next high school champ to the Denker Tournament of High School Champions at the Los Angeles U.S. Open in 1991. This money reverts to the general fund if the next high school champ does not attend the Denker." (GOODALL)

6. MOTION: "If Dahl or Orwig or anyone else plans to take a team to the Nationals, they must apply for an NCCA contribution by January 1, 1991." (GOODALL)

D. MOTION: "That the name of this organization be changed from 'NCCA' (back) to 'CalChess.'" (DORSCH)

E. MOTION: "That NCCA takes steps to acquire an identification number, and not-for-profit and tax-exempt status under state and federal law, and that Dorsch be appointed chairman of a committee to pursue these goals." (DORSCH)

F. MOTION: "That a committee be appointed, chaired by Carolyn Withgitt, to write a business plan for Cal Chess to be presented and discussed at the next meeting." (WITHGITT)

III. TREASURER'S REPORT. (POSCHMANN)

IV. CLEARINGHOUSE REPORT ON CONFLICTS. (GLASSCOE)

V. RVP REPORT. (WITHGITT)

VI. SCHEDULING OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING.

VII. ADJOURNMENT.