

2005 USCF BOARD / STAFF FORUM

The 2005 USCF Board / Staff Forum was called to order by Executive Director **Bill Hall** at 4:09 PM on Friday, August 12, 2005. The forum focused on the staff. Among those present during at least part of the Forum and Membership Meeting were Board members Joel Channing, Bill Goichberg, Beatriz Marinello, Don Schultz and Robert Tanner; Staff members Walter Brown, Joan Dubois, Gerry Dullea, Bill Hall, Pat Knight, Jerry Nash, Mike Nolan, Diane Reese and Peggy Stephens; Secretarial Assistants Myron and Rachel Lieberman; and Roger Gottschall, Jim Gray, Guy Hoffman, George John, Tim Just, Richard Koepcke, Dave Kuhns, Mike Nietman, Andy Rea, Tim Redman, Harry Sabine, Luis Salinas, Kenneth Sloan and Harold Winston. Please note that state of residence is included only the first time a speaker is mentioned in the forum and again in the membership Meeting.

INTRODUCTION

Bill Hall (TN) introduced the office staff that was present at the time, which included (Director of National Events, Scholastic, Club Development, and Media) Joan Dubois, (Acting "Chess Life" Editor) Gerry Dullea, (Executive Assistant) Pat Knight, (Scholastic Director) Jerry Nash, (Computer and Internet Consultant) Mike Nolan, and (Acting CFO) Peggy Stephens. (Technical Specialist) Walter Brown and (National Events Consultant) Diane Reese were introduced when they arrived later.

RECOGNITION OF OFFICE STAFF

Myron Lieberman (AZ) commended Pat Knight and the office staff for working under very pressing and unusual circumstances, getting things done during the transition with virtually no time to do it. He called for and received a round of applause for the staff.

FIDE FEES AND FIDE RATING BACKLOG

Luis Salinas (TX) asked about the \$35 fee due with FIDE rating reports and why FIDE tournaments held in April have not yet been rated. Bill Hall indicated that the rating backlog was due to a health problem with an individual in the office and it is now being caught up.

Gerry Dullea (NY-U) pointed out that FIDE charged a flat fee per event rather than per game regardless of the size of the tournament. Originally it was paid by the office. FIDE has changed its fee structure since then. **Bill Goichberg** (NY-U) explained that he implemented a \$35 fee of a similar structure in part to help with the financial crisis. **Luis Salinas** pointed out that it didn't seem fair that he was charged \$35 for a five player event, while a very large tournament such as the HB International pays the same \$35 fee. **Bill Goichberg** indicated that the \$35 figure might need to be changed. **Roger Gottschall** (IA) mentioned that the fee is doubled if the event is reported late. **Mike Nolan** (NE) indicated that a FIDE registration fee may need to be payable when the TLA is submitted in addition to the FIDE rating fee submitted with the rating report. He said that we need to check the FIDE regulations and charge the appropriate fees.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Andy Rea (CO) asked about corporate sponsorship. **Bill Hall** replied that he thinks sponsorship is crucial. He indicated a need to improve the database of e-mail addresses, improve the website, and offer ads in "Chess Life" and online as a package.

MEETING DOCUMENTATION

George John (TX) asked if the staff was involved in recording the meetings. **Bill Hall** indicated that a lot of responsibility is placed on volunteers that should fall on paid staff. A round of applause was given to Secretarial Assistants **Myron and Rachel Lieberman**. Please note that a substantial amount of support is provided by the staff, especially **Pat Knight** and **Diane Reese**, and they deserve recognition.

WEBSITE

Luis Salinas asked about fixing the website. **Mike Nolan** indicated that this will be covered in the Delegates' Meeting. **Bill Hall** pointed out that there are currently over 30,000 pages on the website. **George John** asked that information be archived.

Diane Reese invited everyone to the President's Reception and the Denker and Polgar Awards Presentation.

HOUSTON GRADES

George John mentioned the Grades, which will be held in Houston, TX. He mentioned that there are plenty of things to do in Houston, and will look into a block of rooms, then asked about problems with online registration at the Super Nationals. **Diane Reese** replied that they are in the process of solving the problems and that there should be no problems in time for the Houston Grades.

CROSSVILLE OFFICE

Bill Hall pointed out that there is over 135 years of USCF office experience and over 200 years of chess experience in the Crossville office. Many people left higher paying jobs to work in the USCF office. There are many young people in the office as well. There is a vibrance in the office, however there will be mistakes as the new people learn. He asks that they not be judged by the mistakes that they make but by how they handle those mistakes. He received a round of applause after which the meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM.

2005 USCF MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The membership Meeting was called to order at 4:38 PM on Friday, August 12, 2005. Bill Hall, Beatriz Marinello, and Don Schultz were at the dais. All present had attended the Board/Staff Forum (see list). A quorum was present.

NEEDS OF ADULT PLAYERS

David Kuhns (MN) expressed a concern that USCF was 95% youth oriented and that many adults feel alienated. He noted the number of national championships for youth as contrasted to what is available for adults. He feels that virtually all of USCF's effort goes to youth. USCF needs to also answer the needs of adult players, age 30 and above.

Gerry Dullea (NY-U) suggested that there may be an economic factor. Expensive tournaments, such as the US Open, may not be affordable to younger players so they have to have other events. **Bill Goichberg** (NY-U) suggested side events at national scholastic tournaments that are open only to those older than age 21. **Andy Rea** (CO) suggested that Regional championships can be organized that would enable everyone to play without having to have large entry fees or heavy travel expenses. There could be a top tier where the winner might be seeded into a national event. **Myron Lieberman** (AZ) mentioned that over 20 years ago players were used to slow time controls, no sudden death, and often only one round per day. A typical tournament would take an entire weekend. Today this has changed, with fast time controls, including sudden death, and multiple rounds per day becoming usual. He offered that rather than an age restriction, players from that era might prefer to play under the conditions prevalent then. He suggested that such a "retro" tournament might be worth trying. **Joel Channing** (FL) identified himself as a player who does not want to play more than one round per day. He recommended a tournament within a tournament with one round per day so that players like him can play. **Don Schultz** (FL) suggested incentives to tournament directors to hold national age category championships (such as the under age 30 championship, the under age 40 championship, etc.). **Richard Koepcke** (CA-N) pointed out that scholastic chess is where the action is. USCF does not provide assistance for the TD and we are losing organizers and TDs for adult events.

George John (TX) mentioned that an analysis is needed regarding small clubs. Clubs are losing their places to play, in part because of increasing requirements for liability insurance. **Mike Nolan** (NE) confirmed that the number of USCF affiliates is going down. **Mike Nietman** (WI), co-chair of the Scholastic Council, pointed out that he is running a Veteran's tournament as well. He also pointed out that scholastic members receive "Chess Life" with a scholastic insert every other month. They want to resume "School Mates" as a separate publication. Not only will it provide more appropriate reading for members under age 15 as well as for adults who do not want the scholastic insert, but it should lower the cost of the magazine. **Beatriz Marinello** (NY-D) suggests that USCF look into getting a reduced cost group liability insurance policy that could enable local organizers to save on the cost of insurance. **Joel Channing** indicated that his city has a facility available for club meetings but the cost of required insurance is too high. He noted that clubs are now playing at bookstores, colleges and libraries which have their own insurance, but there is an insurance issue with the membership form. **Dave Kuhns** emphasized that he is asking for a change in focus, not more adult events. There is a marketing issue. There are chess clubs at the local Barnes and Noble bookstores but many of the members are not USCF members because they don't see how USCF can benefit them. USCF needs to promote itself to clubs.

Executive Director **Bill Hall** (TN) asked how many people in the room learned to play chess before they were 18 years old. Nearly everyone raised their hand. Bill Hall then pointed out that we were all Youth players at one time. He said that if we want to have a healthy organization we have to be respectful to both scholastic and adult players.

Joel Channing pointed out that Barnes and Noble might be a good match as a corporate sponsor as they host chess clubs nationwide. He offered to work with Bill Hall to follow up. **Myron Lieberman** pointed out that Borders also hosts local chess clubs and might also be interested. **Kenneth Sloan** (AL) mentioned that he remembered a presentation three or four years ago about USCF working with Barnes and Noble and asked what happened to that. Most suspect it was lost in the personnel turnover. He suggested that USCF contact them again.

Bill Goichberg mentioned that low rated adults do not want to play against eight and nine year-olds and kids don't want to play against adults. **Mike Nolan** (NE) suggested that, as in the US Amateur Team East, you can have two player teams where only one player can be over 20. If they don't like to play against each other, then make them a team. **Myron Lieberman** pointed out that parent/child team events have been successfully held locally in Gilbert, AZ.

Scholastic Council co-chair **Mike Nietman** mentioned that at the National Scholastics they had a tournament for parents, friends, and coaches. He also mentioned a regulation change suggested by **Steve Shutt** (PA) that called for more trophies and an event where children and adult relatives or coaches are paired.

No motions were proposed for the Delegates to consider and the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 PM.