

Proceedings of the April 2-3, 2005, USCF Executive Board Meeting – Berkeley, CA

Special thanks to Elizabeth Shaughnessy for hosting the meeting and to Pat Knight for her assistance. Thanks also to Mike Goodall and the Shaughnessy family for helping with the transportation.

Board members present were President Beatriz Marinello, Vice President Steve Shutt, Secretary Don Schultz, and Members at Large Randy Bauer and Elizabeth Shaughnessy. Also present were Myron and Rachel Lieberman who were acting as assistants to the Secretary, and Pat Knight, USCF Executive Assistant.

Saturday, April 2, 2005

Prior to the start of the open session Board meeting on Saturday, April 2, the Board interviewed three of the five candidates for the vacant Executive Director position. Each interview was scheduled for 1 hour and the Board discussed each interview immediately after the interview. All Board members present participated in the interviews, which started at 8:30 AM on Saturday, April 2, 2005. A sample of the questions and topics covered is provided as Appendix A.

After a 25 minute closed session unrelated to the interviews, the open session commenced at 2:54 PM. The audience included Neil Falconer, Mike Goodall, Bill Hall, Steve Lampkin, and Bley Rose. All participated in the question and answer session and are thanked for their interest.

First to be discussed was multiple scholastic state championships. At times a state affiliate has become divided and a new group splintered off. Both of the affiliates organized their own scholastic state championship. Also at times an outside group attempted to take over the state affiliate or organize its own scholastic state championship. Both situations could result in more than one state championship being organized. Whether the USCF should get involved with negotiating with the groups to resolve the split in the first situation was discussed. Whether or not to rate or accept TLAs for state championship tournaments organized by groups other than the state affiliate was also discussed. The sense of the Board was that the state championship title must be authorized by the state affiliate, but that the games played in any ratable event by any USCF affiliate in good standing should be rated. Another factor to be considered is whether or not the split was caused by improper action or negligence on the part of the state affiliate. No motion was considered. Other suggestions that arose from the discussion were to hold additional events for children that did not qualify for the state championship, to have coverage (including pictures) on the USCF (and state) magazine and/or website, and that there should be one scholastic chess issue of "Chess Life" per year.

President Beatriz Marinello read a letter from Tim Sawmiller, President of the Michigan Chess Association, to the Board. The letter took issue with motion EB 05-27, which was worded as follows:

EB 05-27 (Hanke) Based on the advice of legal counsel, the Executive Board reserves the right to comment in *Chess Life* on the suitability of a candidate for the Executive Board. Such action would require 2/3 support of the Executive Board and would have to be approved by legal counsel. PASSED 7-0 Brady voted via telephone

Mr. Sawmiller requested that the motion be rescinded and believes that while individual Board members can express their opinions the Board as a whole should not. The Board members agreed with Mr. Sawmiller but decided to defer action until the May meeting when the maker of the motion Tim Hanke would be present.

The next topic of discussion was awards. Don Schultz agreed to provide a summary for the Board of the basis for each award. Please note: A list of awards and winners since 1979 can be found on Page 43 of the 2004 "Delegates' Call", which is available on the USCF website at www.uschess.org/org/govern/2004delcall.pdf.

Next to be discussed was a letter regarding FIDE trainer certification which was sent by the American Chess University (ACU). Vice President Steve Shutt read the letter to the Board. ACU is asking to be recognized as the sole location in the US where players can train for FIDE titles. There was discussion of the point that no exclusive right can be given to any organization without giving all who are interested the opportunity to bid. A suggestion was made that other organizations be made aware of the opportunity to bid. A list of FIDE Senior trainers was discussed. Also questioned was whether any one small entity should be given exclusive right to certify trainers. The Board

decided to obtain more information from FIDE and other interested parties in the USCF before making a decision in this matter. Beatriz Marinello will follow up.

There are over 5,000 entries to date for the Supnationals. This is a good indication of the tournament's success but there have been problems with online registration. The system for online registration must be improved. Also, it was pointed out that we spend over \$400,000 per year on tournament expenses. This area needs to be managed with an eye toward cost cutting and increased revenue. Four Board members plan to attend the Supnationals.

An update on the Crossville move was then given. The main USCF office has moved to temporary quarters in Crossville, TN. The Crossville office opened in February and will house USCF operations until the new building in Crossville is ready for occupancy. Additional functions are being moved to that facility.

Currently the USCF office address for anything other than Publications is USCF, P.O. Box 3967, Crossville, TN 38557 and their phone and fax numbers are: PHONE: 931-787-1234, FAX: 931-787-1200. More information can be found on the USCF website and in "Chess Life".

The time line for the new building was discussed. The anticipated completion date is March, 2006. The floor plan of the new building was also presented and discussed. The time line and floor plan can be found at www.uschess.org/crossvillemove.pdf along with additional material regarding the move. They are also in the April 2005 issue of "Chess Life".

Changes in personnel and systems have been made. There will be a receptionist in Crossville. Noteworthy is the combination of the membership and ratings departments, which will allow substantial improvement in the processing of rating reports. Thanks to Mike Nolan all ratings and membership data are compatible and there will be new membership software. Judy Misner is the head of the combined department. The operation as well as national and international events and other related areas will be handled by newly hired NTD Walter Brown.

Joan DuBois will be in charge of the website, media, and correspondence chess.

Pat Knight has been hired as Executive Assistant, replacing Barb Vandermark who has moved to Florida.

Jerry Nash has been hired as Scholastic Director. He will be assisted by Alan Kantor.

There are three people in the Finance Department. Grant Perks is the Acting CFO. Peggy Stephens is the accountant and Susan Houston handles Payables, Receivables, and Purchasing. The Peachtree accounting software has been upgraded.

Financial ramifications of the move were also discussed. Beatriz Marinello indicated that the building taxes, which were \$18,000/year in New York are \$2,000/year in Crossville. The building cost is \$90/sq. ft. Crossville is also a low cost area which will also help.

She also cautioned that we must know what we want when we start construction as change orders can increase construction costs 20%.

The architect has agreed to a reduction in compensation to approximately \$40,000 including landscaping. The landscaping will include 64 squares which can be purchased by donors to help reduce costs. The combination of the membership and ratings departments not only eliminated the process of duplicate data entry but also cut our requirement from two departments with 12 people to one department with six people to fulfill those functions. The Membership/Rating department will have its own toll free number, 800-793-USCF. There will be three other toll free numbers.

Questions from the audience were then entertained after which the meeting recessed at 5:05 PM until the next day.

Sunday, April 3, 2005

Prior to the start of the open session Board meeting on Sunday, April 3, the Board interviewed the remaining two candidates for the vacant Executive Director position. The interviews were conducted in the same manner as the first three. All Board members present participated in the interviews, which started at 8:30 AM on Sunday, April 3, 2005.

The Board convened in open session at 12:08 PM. Mike Goodall, Bill Hall, Stephen Lampkin, Pat Knight, Myron and Rachel Lieberman, and Grant Perks were present in addition to the Board. The following motion that arose out of closed session was presented:

EB 05-36 - Marinello, Shutt, Schultz, Bauer, Shaughnessy – The USCF Executive Board authorizes the use of the Professional Players Health and Benefit Fund in a amount not to exceed \$10,000 for medical expenses for Igor Ivanov. PASSED 5-0 on a roll call vote.

The Board recessed at 12:13 PM until 3:00 PM when the meeting resumed as an open forum. Randy Bauer and Steve Shutt had to leave the meeting, so the Board members present were Beatriz Marinello, Don Schultz, and Elizabeth Shaughnessy. Beatriz Marinello announced that there are two finalists for the vacant Executive Director position. They will be given a second interview at the May EB meeting.

Among the topics discussed in the discussed in the forum were: The FIDE Organizer title, book and equipment sales, the need for management to keep members well informed, Bobby Fischer, the FIDE election.

It was pointed out that the Arts and Entertainment Network will air a program about Bobby Fischer in April. Among those interviewed for the program were Arnold Denker, Susan Polgar, and Don Schultz.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 PM.

APPENDIX A – Sample questions and topics covered in the Executive Director interviews

Questions asked included but were not limited to:

What is your vision for USCF short term and long term?
What can you do for USCF?
What compensation would you expect?
How would you be able to improve profitability?
How would you allocate resources?
What philosophy do we have that you would like to change?
What would a sales and marketing plan of action include?
How much time would you need in Crossville and how much on the road?
How will you open doors to find contacts?
How would you follow up with foundations?
Would your #2 manage the office or work outside?
Is solving membership or rating problems the Executive Director's job?
What experience do you have with computers and automation?
How would you budget your time in the office?
What is your vision to grow chess and USCF?
What do you believe are your strong points and weak points?
What should the ED role be in house?
What will you do to regain former members?
What are your plans in connection with staff?
Are you willing to relocate to Crossville?

Topics discussed during follow-up questions or brought up by the candidates included but were not limited to:

Communication (including being a source of information to the public, communication with members and affiliates, communication with other organizations, interoffice reports, mentoring, partnerships, talk to other Executive Directors)

Customer service (including responsiveness to phone calls, e-mail, etc. especially if there is a question or problem)

Management (including accountability, Board relations and governance structure, building an organization that lasts, flow chart development and improvement, development of and following a consistent plan, efficiency, infrastructure to enable involvement at the grassroots level, employee benefits, event staff, executive director's role in house, fighting fires, finance, information technology, management team, market research, overtime, staff meetings, staff training)

Membership (including membership benefits and how to improve them, goals for membership growth, term of membership)

Outreach and PR – Chess promotion, publicity, and visibility (including Bobby Fischer, celebrity contacts and special events with celebrities, chess clubs, “Chess Life” and uschess.org as outreach tools, “Chess Life” in libraries, free online chess site, local media, logo recognition, professional players’ public events, TV exposure, USCF branded products, women in chess)

Sales and marketing (including use of the Internet, inventory content and pricing, non-chess advertisements in “Chess Life”, stimulate activity)

Scholastic chess (including chess in education and chess curricula, teach teachers to teach chess)

Sponsorships (including federal grants, involvement of local affiliates, use of naming rights)