



C O L U M N I S T S

*From the Archives*Hosted by
Mark Donlan*Chess Mazes*
by Bruce Alberston

From the Archives...

Since it came online over eight years ago, [ChessCafe.com](#) has presented literally thousands of articles, reviews, columns and the like for the enjoyment of its worldwide readership. The good news is that almost all of this high quality material remains available in the [Archives](#). The bad news is that this great collection of chess literature is now so large and extensive – and growing each week – that it is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate it effectively. We decided that the occasional selection from the archives posted publicly online might be a welcomed addition to the regular fare.

Watch for an item to be posted online at least once each week, usually on Thursday or Friday. We will update the [ChessCafe](#) home page whenever there has been a “new” item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

Learning the Trade: Simuls, Skittles, and Rapid Transit from the Mengarini Papers

by John S. Hilbert

Anyone approaching *Predicament in 2 Dimensions: The Thinking of a Chessplayer*, by Dr. Ariel Mengarini (Thinker's Press: Davenport, Iowa 1979) will find an intriguing work largely focused on how to approach thinking about chess in a larger context. The work is not a treatise designed to improve, say, your rook and pawn endgame technique. Rather, the book offers insights into how to prepare yourself mentally for a game or tournament, and, correspondingly, any number of mental pitfalls to avoid. In addition Mengarini offers a small selection of some of his better games, played between 1938 and 1979, and including, not surprisingly, his 1951 United States Championship win over Reshevsky that essentially cost the latter the national title.



What one will find little of in the book, sorry to say, is much of Mengarini's own story. In his Preface, for instance, he takes us in one paragraph from his birth on October 19, 1919, in Rome, to his winning of the 1943 United States Amateur Championship with a perfect 11-0 score. But of course his story is, in truth, like so many other chess masters' stories, a path liberally strewn with a rich and varied concoction of chess.

Some time ago I was entrusted with Ariel Mengarini's scoresheets, literally thousands of them, by his widow, Aristeia Mengarini. In examining Mengarini's papers, I have been fortunate to unearth any number of treasures that will form the subject of later works.

For now, though, I would draw the reader's attention to a folder Mengarini kept of what he called Skittles and Simultaneous events, but which might more generally have been included under the common rubric of "miscellaneous games." I had in fact left this particular folder unexplored for a long time, concentrating instead on his scoresheets from hundreds of tournaments, all collected year by year, neatly identified, and well ordered. No doubt the organization of his chess files reveals much about the man.

And Mengarini's small folder of miscellaneous games reveals a fair amount concerning the variety of exposures to chess that used to be common enough for players of previous generations, but that in this age of Chess Informants, Internet chess tournaments, and mega-databases of games appears almost antiquated. Sadly so. For much of what has been lost involves the personal, human contact, the other side, so to speak, of the chess experience. Mengarini's experience was not unique. What he made of it, of course, while also pursuing a career that found him for many years practicing as a psychiatrist, indeed was unique. What follows are just a few of those contacts.

In *Predicament in Two Dimensions*, Mengarini mentions that his family emigrated to this country, and in particular to New York City, in 1927. "Although I learned the moves of chess at six," he wrote, "I had no opportunity to practice nor enter a tournament until I won a competitive scholarship to Harvard in 1937." In addition to playing in his first real tournament while in Boston, Mengarini spent much of his time too much, as he later would admit at Harvard playing chess. By doing so, Mengarini had an opportunity to meet many interesting players, including, for example, Harold Morton, then champion of New England.

Born January 10, 1906, Morton was thirty-two years old when he appeared late in the winter at the Harvard Club to give a simultaneous exhibition against twenty-six opponents. One of those opponents was Mengarini, then an eighteen year old Harvard freshman. Although just two years earlier Morton had a dismal performance at New York 1936, finishing at the bottom of the crosstable in the first modern United States championship following Frank J. Marshall's retirement, and although he would have an almost equally disappointing performance two weeks after his Harvard simultaneous performance, at New York 1938, Morton was a solid player who could inflict wounds on some of the

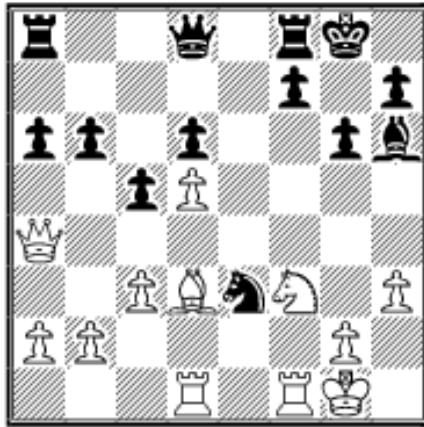
best players in the country, as Abraham Kupchik and George Treysman, for example, would shortly find out in New York City. Morton finished his exhibition 20-5, with 1 draw. The brief annotations below are Mengarini's own, added to his scoresheet, which was also signed by Morton.

Harold Morton - Mengarini

Harvard Club Simul (1:26)

March 14, 1938 Sicilian Defense

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Be2 Nf6 4.Nc3 g6 5.0-0 Bg7 6.d3 Nc6 7.Be3 0-0 8.Qd2 Ng4 9.Rad1 b6 10.h3 Nxe3 11.fxe3 Bb7 12.d4 e5 13.Nd5 A bad blunder.
13...exd4 14.exd4 Nxd4 15.c3 Bxd5 Not so strong was 15...Nxf3+ followed by ...Be5. **16.exd5 Nf5 16...Nxe2+** was objectively best, but I thought in a simultaneous game White was likely to overlook the threat to win the exchange.
17.Bd3 Bh6 18.Qc2 Ne3 19.Qa4 a6



20.Bxa6 “Might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb,” was Morton’s comment. **20...Nxd1 20...Qe7** followed by **21...Qa7** would have won a whole piece, but though I saw it, I had no time to make a thorough analysis, therefore I played for the simplest win. **21.Rxd1 Qc8 22.Bxc8 Rxa4 23.Bd7 Rxa2 24.Rb1 Rfa8 25.b3 Be3+ 26.Kh2 Bf4+ 27.Kg1 Bg3 27...Rc2** may have been stronger. **28.Bb5 28.Ba4** would have been a heavier impediment, but Black can play **...Ra7-e7-e2. 28...Rc2 29.Ng5 Raa2 30.Bf1 Rxc3 31.Ne4 Re3 32.Nxg3 Rxg3 33.b4 c4 34.Kh2 Rb3 35.Rc1 b5 36.Re1 Rxb4 37.Re8+ Kg7 38.Rd8 Rb1 39.Rxd6 Rxf1 0-1** If **39...Rxf1**, then **40.Rb6 c3 41.d6 c2 42.d7 c1Q 43.d8Q Qf4** mate

Unfortunately Mengarini assumed that Harvard, as he phrased it, “was a chess university.” He wrote that he “neglected going to classes so as to engage in innumerable skittles at the Harvard Union. I lost my scholarship and had to go home, which was now in Washington, DC.” Living at home, he attended George Washington University. But his experiences at Harvard had not dampened his enthusiasm for chess. During the early fall of his first year at George Washington, Mengarini was back at it, and before long found himself seated at another simultaneous exhibition.

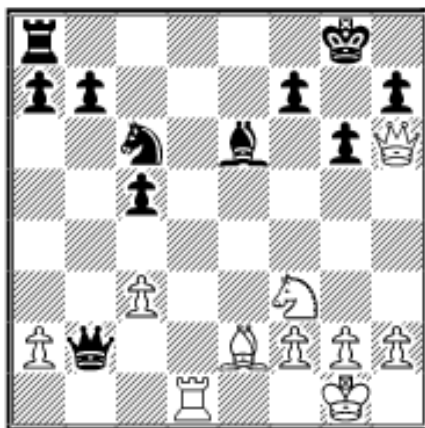
His opponent this time was Henry A. Rousseau, a player who stood just a notch below perhaps half a dozen of the capital’s finest players, but who was considered by those who knew him to always be a dangerous opponent. At one time Rousseau was champion of the Capital City Chess Club, where the game below was played. The Washington Star for November 22, 1942, would refer to Rousseau as being “of Georgia, not so much the book player as the master of tactics and attack.” Rousseau finished his eighteen board simultaneous exhibition 12-4, with 2 draws. Mengarini was one of the four to defeat him.

Henry A. Rousseau – Mengarini

Capital City Chess Club Simul (1:18)

October 1, 1938 Benoni Defense

**1.d4 c5 2.d5 d6 3.e4 e5 4.dxe6 Bxe6 5.Nc3 Ne7 6.Nf3 Nbc6 7.Be2 g6 8.Bf4 d5
9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Nxd5 Bxd5 11.0-0 Bg7 12.c3 0-0 13.Qd2 Be6 14.Rfd1 Qb6
15.Bh6 Rfd8 16.Qe3 Rxd1+ 17.Rxd1 Bxh6 18.Qxh6 Qxb2**



**19.Ng5 Qxe2 20.Qxh7+ Kf8 21.Rb1 Rd8
22.h4 b6 23.h5 Rd1+ 24.Rxd1 Qxd1+
25.Kh2 Qxh5+ 26.Qxh5 gxh5 0-1**

Studies, this year, did occupy much of Mengarini's time, as he would continue through George Washington University, first as an undergraduate and later as a medical student. A year after his game in Rousseau's simul, Mengarini found himself once more sitting down at a chessboard to face another exhibitioner. This one,

however, faced only four opponents. One difference was that the master giving the exhibition was blindfolded. The other difference was the master himself. Mengarini's tentative note to his opponent's sixth move hints that he had intended to answer the question later, but no further comments were found with the game. Perhaps curious readers would be interested in answering Mengarini's question for themselves. Koltanowski finished his exhibition 1-0, with 3 draws.

George Koltanowski – Mengarini

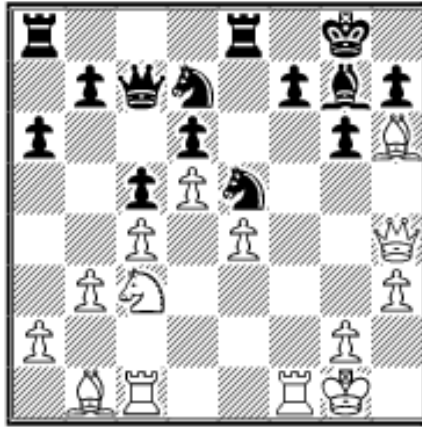
Capital City Chess Club Blindfold Simul (1:4)

October 14, 1939

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.e4 d6 4.f4 g6 5.Nf3 Bg7



6.Nc3 Koltanowski said he could have obtained the advantage here with 6.fxe5 Bxe5 7.Nxe5! Qh4+ 8.Kd2 etc. Is that true?
**6...Bg4 7.h3 Bxf3 8.Qxf3 Ne7 9.Bd3 exf4
10.Bxf4 0-0 11.0-0 Qb6 12.Na4 Qc7
13.Qg3 Nc8 14.c4 Nd7 15.Nc3 Ne5
16.Rac1 a6 17.b3 Nb6 18.Bb1 Nbd7
19.Qh4 Rfe8 20.Bh6** (see next diagram)

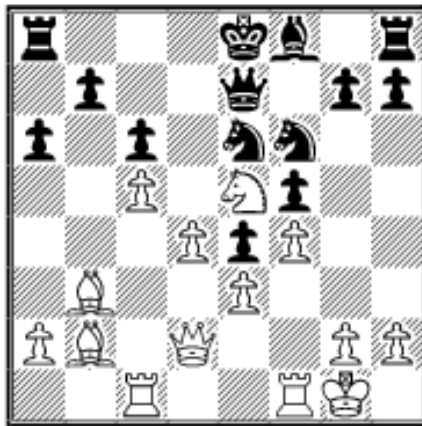


20.Bh8 21.Nd1 b5 22.Ne3 Qd8 23.Qxd8 Raxd8 24.Bf4 Nb6 25.Kh1 Rb8 26.Bxe5 Bxe5 27.Ng4 Kg7 28.Nxe5 Rxe5 29.Bd3 Nd7 ½-½ Adjudicated a draw.

Very early the next year Israel Horowitz, owner and publisher of the then-three year old Chess Review, as well as his new business partner, Harold Morton, who as we know Mengarini had met before while in New England, came to Washington, DC, as part of their tour promoting the magazine. While Horowitz visited the Capital City Chess Club, Mengarini had a chance to meet the master in skittles play.

Mengarini - Israel A. Horowitz
Skittles Game, Washington, DC
January 6, 1940 Irregular Opening

1.b3 e5 2.Bb2 Nc6 3.e3 d5 4.Bb5 Bd6 5.Nf3 Qe7 6.0-0 Nf6 7.d4 e4 8.Ne5 Bd7 9.Nxd7 Nxd7 10.f4 f5 11.c4 dxc4 12.bxc4 Qf7 13.Nd2 a6 14.Ba4 Nd8 15.c5 Bf8 16.Bb3 Ne6 17.Rc1 c6 18.Nc4 Nf6 19.Ne5 Qe7 20.Qd2



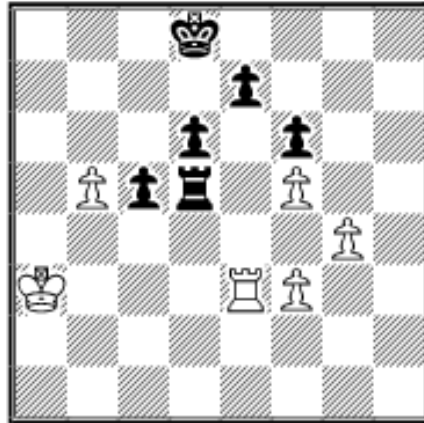
20.Nc7? 21.Nf7 Ncd5 22.Nxh8 0-0-0 23.Bd1 g6 24.Be2 Bg7 25.Rb1 Bxh8 26.Bc1 Ng4 27.Qa5 Ngxe3 28.Bxe3 Nxe3 29.Bxa6 Bxd4 30.Bxb7+ Qxb7 31.Qxd8+ Kxd8 32.Rxb7 Nxf1+ 33.Kxf1 Bxc5 34.Rxh7 Be3 35.g3 c5 36.Rg7 and White won in a few more moves. 1-0

Another interesting feature of Horowitz and Morton visiting the Capital City club was their performance of a tandem simultaneous exhibition. In such affairs, the masters would follow one another around the boards, alternating moves. Mengarini had a chance to play in this event as well, though with notably less success than in his skittles game with Horowitz. The pair finished their exhibition with a record of 15-2, with 1 draw.

Horowitz, Morton - Mengarini
Tandem Simul, Washington, DC (1:18)
January 6, 1940 Irregular Opening

1.e4 b6 2.d4 Bb7 3.Bd3 f5? 4.exf5 Nf6 5.Nf3 Nc6 6.0-0 Nb4 7.Re1 Nxd3 8.Qxd3 Qc8 9.c4 c5 10.d5 b5 11.Nc3 bxc4 12.Qxc4 Ba6 13.Qf4 Kf7 14.g4 Qb7 15.Rd1 Qb4 16.Ng5+ Kg8 17.Nge4 h6 18.Nxf6+ gxf6 19.a3 Qxf4 20.Bxf4 h5 21.h3 Kf7 22.b4 Rc8 23.b5 Bb7 24.a4 Bh6 25.Bxh6 Rxh6 26.Rac1 hxg4 27.hxg4 Rch8 28.Kg2 Rh4 29.Kg3 Rh3+ 30.Kf4 d6 31.Rd2

Ra8 32.f3 a6 33.Re1 axb5 34.axb5 Ra3 35.Re3 Ke8 36.Rde2 Kd8 37.Ke4 Rb3 38.Ra2 Rb4+ 39.Kd3 Rd4+ 40.Kc2 Bxd5 41.Nxd5 Rh2+ 42.Kb3 Rxa2 43.Kxa2 Rxd5 44.Ka3



44 Rd4? 45.b6 Rb4 46.Rb3 Rxb3+ 47.Kxb3 Kd7 48.f4 Kc6 49.g5 1-0

Sadly enough, forty-two days after Mengarini faced both Horowitz and Morton in Washington, DC, the latter two were in a car accident that took the life of Harold Morton and left Horowitz with serious injuries. Hermann Helms' American Chess Bulletin for January-February 1940 gave a relatively detailed account of the tragedy. As the account is rarely remembered today,

it is presented here in its entirety.

According to the Bulletin, "rarely have the sympathies of the chess playing community been aroused to such an extent as by the news that came out of Iowa, on February 17, that Israel A. Horowitz of Brooklyn, a member of the Manhattan Chess Club and U.S. internationalist, and Harold Morton, of Providence, R.I., former New England champion, were the victims of a serious car accident while crossing that state on the return journey after a tour of the south and far west. Morton, driving their car, was killed outright in a collision with a truck and Horowitz, suffering concussion of the brain and other injuries, was taken to St. Anthony's Hospital in Carroll, Iowa."

"The many friends of Horowitz, one of the four sons of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Horowitz of Brooklyn, will be relieved to learn that the famous expert, whose tall figure has become so familiar at important chess gatherings, is resting comfortably at the hospital in Carroll and, with careful treatment, is showing gradual improvement. His brother, Irving, is with him and sending home daily reports of his condition."

"Horowitz, who acquired his skill at Brooklyn Boys High School and New York University, was twice champion of the former American Chess Federation and a member of three of the champion United States teams in the tournaments of the International Chess Federation. He is on the seeded list for the congress to be held in New York during April" [As it happened, Horowitz had not recovered sufficiently to play at New York 1940 JSH].

"Morton, the latest partner of Horowitz in publishing the Chess Review, for which they were touring the country, was long the outstanding player in Providence, R.I., where he conducted a weekly chess column. Several times he held the New England championship. For the past year he had been residing in New York, to be closer to his new work. Aggressive and ambitious, Morton made friends easily and he and Horowitz seemed to harmonize well as a team."

“According to the Des Moines Register, the accident happened on highway 30, about seven miles west of Carroll, when a motor van, driven by Frank S. Robbins of Denver, Colorado, collided with the car in which Horowitz and Morton were traveling eastward.

Deputy Sheriff Arnold R. Witt of Carroll County said that Morton was thrown out of the car and was killed instantly. Horowitz was taken to St. Anthony’s Hospital, where he was able to give his name.”

“For several days thereafter, the utmost quiet was imposed but, under the best possible treatment and with constant attention, he responded favorably and made satisfactory, if gradual progress.”

“The pair were en route to Minneapolis when the accident cut short their trip. Morton’s death is said to be the first traffic fatality of 1940 in Carroll County.” So ended the life of Horowitz’s new partner and one of the strongest players in New England.

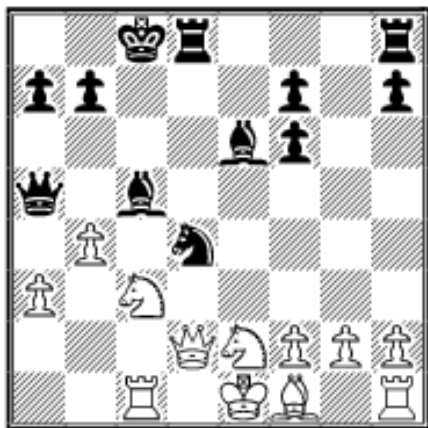
On a less sorrowful note, it can be said that Mengarini’s skittles games and participation in simultaneous exhibitions brought him in contact with many well-known figures in American chess. Here he plays to a standstill a figure so well known as to need no introduction. As mentioned above, only two years later Mengarini would face, and defeat, the same opponent in their individual game in the 1951 United States Championship.

Samuel Reshevsky – Mengarini

New York Simultaneous Exhibition (1:41)

August 29, 1949 Queen’s Gambit Declined

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Bg5 Bb4 5.e3 c5 6.cxd5 exd5 7.dxc5 Be6 8.Qd4 Qa5 9.Bxf6 Nc6 10.Qd2 gxf6 11.Rc1 d4 12.exd4 0-0-0 13.Nge2 Bxc5 14.a3 Nxd4 15.b4



15 Nb3 16.bxa5 Rxd2 17.Ne4 Nxc1 18.Kxd2 Nb3+ 19.Kc3 Bxa3 20.Nf4 Nxa5 21.Nxe6 fxe6 22.Nxf6 Bf8 23.Ne4 Bg7+ 24.Kc2 Nc6 25.Bc4 Nd4+ 26.Kb1 b5 27.Ba2 Kd7 28.Rc1 h6 29.Nc5+ Kd6 30.Nb7+ Ke5 31.Rc7 Bf6 32.Rf7 Ne2 33.Nc5 Nc3+ 34.Kb2 Nxa2 35.Nd7+ Kd6+ 36.Nxf6 Nb4 37.Rxa7 Nd3+ 38.Kc3 Nxf2 39.Kd4 Rf8 1/2-1/2 Adjudicated a draw.

And what can one say about the following pair of games, played at the old rapid transit rate of ten seconds a move? One can only wonder how many other players have ever had a chance, on the same day, to defeat a future world correspondence champion and also a future candidate’s match participant, as well as to record the games, as Mengarini did, on opposite sides of the same sheet of paper. First,

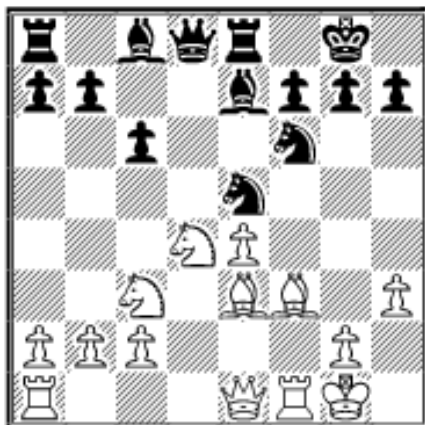
one side of the paper.

Hans Berliner – Mengarini

Marshall Chess Club Rapid Transit Play (10 seconds a move)

May 30, 1950

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 Nbd7 4.f4 e5 5.Nf3 Be7 6.Be2 0-0 7.0-0 Re8 8.fxe5
dxe5 9.h3 exd4 10.Nxd4 Ne5 11.Bf4 Ng6 12.Be3 c6 13.Bf3 Ne5 14.Qe1



14 Nc4 15.Bf2 Nxb2 16.Be2 Bb4 17.Rb1
Nxe4 18.Rxb2 Bxc3 19.Qb1 Nd2 20.Qd1
Nxf1 21.Rb3 Ne3 22.Bxe3 Rxe3 23.Rxc3
Rxc3 24.Bf3 Rxf3 0-1

Next, the paper's other side.

Mengarini - Robert Byrne

Marshall Chess Club Rapid Transit Play (10
seconds a move)

May 30, 1950

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.c3 d6 6.0-0 Nbd7 7.Re1 e5 8.e4 Re8
9.Qc2 h6 10.Nbd2 Nf8 11.b3 g5 12.Bb2 Ng6 13.Rad1 g4 14.dxe5 dxe5
15.Nc4 Qe7 16.Nfd2 Be6 17.Ne3 c6 18.Ndf1 Rad8 19.Nf5 Qc7 20.N1e3 Kh7
21.Ba3 c5 22.c4 b6 23.Nd5 Qc6 24.Bb2 Nd7 25.Qd2 Ndf8



26.Nxg7 Kxg7 27.Bc1 Bxd5 28.exd5 Qd6
29.Qxh6+ Kg8 30.Bg5 f6 31.Bc1 f5 32.h4
Rd7 33.h5 Nh8 34.Qg5+ Rg7 35.Qxf5 Nf7
36.h6 Rg6 37.Re4 Nxh6 38.Bxh6 Rxh6
39.Rxg4+ Rg6 40.Rxg6+ Nxg6 41.Be4 Kg7
42.Kg2 Rf8 43.Qxg6+ Qxg6 44.Bxg6 Kxg6
45.d6 Rd8 46.d7 Kf5 47.f3 Ke6 48.Kf2 1-0

While such "miscellaneous" games may not
always offer great chess, they do give body
and texture to the development of any
player. They stand as landmarks long

remembered by those who play them. And when seen again, over at least half a
century after the fact, they offer as well an enriching and entertaining excursion
into the byways of American chess history.

2000 John S. Hilbert All Rights Reserved.



[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Bulletin Board\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2004 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

"**The Chess Cafe®**" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.