



New Year Q & A

I would like to wish everyone a happy, healthy and prosperous 2007! I fully expect it to be an exciting year for chess. I would also like to personally thank all the supporters of US Chess and the Susan Polgar Foundation. I promise that we will work hard to continue to promote chess, especially in education and for young people.

Below are my answers to some of the best or most interesting questions I have been asked over the past twelve months.

COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar

What is your final impression of the World Championship Match between Kramnik and Topalov?

It was definitely an interesting match and it was long overdue. The games were not of the highest quality; however, there was plenty of excitement and drama. Unfortunately, there were also unpleasant moments that will taint the reputation of our game for a long time.

Most non-chess people I spoke to only remember the “toilet-gate” situation, but cannot even recall the names of the players involved. I do not think that this is what chess wants to be known for.

What is your opinion about the 2007 World Championship in Mexico City?

I think that this will be a spectacular event. The four players who already qualified are Kramnik, Anand, Morozevich and Svidler. Four more will qualify via candidate’s matches in Elista later this year.

I am confident that it will be a very professionally run event with excellent media coverage. I know the organizers personally and I have no doubt that a first class event will be put together; an early indication of this is their official [website](#).

Who are some of the brightest female stars of the world today?

First on my list has to be Humpy Koneru from India. She has the work ethic and determination to be a future Women’s World Champion. China has a number of very good young female players such as Yifan Hou, Xue Zhao and Yang Shen. Russia has the two Kosintseva sisters. Of course, I must also mention Kateryna Lahno from the Ukraine. Anna Muzychuk of Slovenia is now approaching 2500 and Marie Sebag from France has also become a little



Breaking Through by Susan Polgar

more consistent of late. These are some of the brightest stars of today and tomorrow.

Who are some of the brightest young players of the world today?

I am sure the first name on everyone's list is Magnus Carlsen. He is the real deal. The other easy pick is Sergey Karjakin. Meanwhile, Teimour Radjabov has definitely come into his own, while one youngster making a name for himself of late is Dmitry Jakovenko of Russia. His rating will soon be above 2700. I first met Jakovenko in Montreal a few years ago and I was very impressed by him.

Why did you decide to run in the next USCF Executive Board election?

I love chess and I cannot stand by while US Chess and the USCF suffer from the unprofessional conduct of some of its officers. We *have* to do better and gain back lost sponsors and supporters. Drastic changes are in order for this federation to move in the right direction.

With four open seats, the future of the USCF depends on the upcoming Executive Board election. The USCF is one of the most important chess organizations in the United States. It is supposed to be a role model for other groups. For positive change to happen, the members must vote in the most qualified candidates with the highest level of professionalism. We need strong leadership to rally the entire membership. That is why I decided to run and that is also why I asked some of the most qualified people to help. I cannot do it alone. It takes a team of people in order to be successful.

I searched for people with specific talents and a passion for chess, who have the integrity, professionalism, and experience to do what is right for US Chess and the USCF.

Paul Truong: He is a very unique individual, with an incredibly inspiring life story. His ethics, integrity and passion for chess is second to none. He is also one of the most knowledgeable people in chess marketing and PR. Paul has been the mastermind behind many of the incredible projects for the Susan Polgar Foundation and he is my most trusted advisor. Without proper and professional marketing and PR, chess will go nowhere and no sponsorship will come. He will be instrumental in restoring the good reputation of the USCF in order to increase revenues through additional memberships, sponsorships and advertising, etc.

Dr. Mikhail Korenman: He is well-respected by many and he has certainly proven himself in many areas. He was the mastermind behind the [Chess for Peace](#) project and is a member of the USCF Scholastic Council. He has the experience, talent and passion to help the USCF. We need strong cooperation between adult, college and scholastic chess, and Dr. Korenman has the perfect personality and demeanor to succeed in this area.

NM Randy Bauer: He has been actively involved as a chess player, coach,

director, writer, editor, and elected state and national representative for over thirty years. He is a life member of the USCF, a national master, former Iowa state champion and Minnesota junior, junior high and senior high champion. As a competitor, he has won over thirty Grand Prix tournaments.

Randy has over twenty years professional experience in budget and finance, including nearly seven years as budget director for the State of Iowa. During that time, the State received multiple national awards for innovation and excellence in its budget processes and financial reporting.

As I mentioned last [month](#), the new candidates must be able to:

- Restore the respectability and credibility of the USCF.
- Restore a balanced budget.
- Restore the strong cooperation between adult, collegiate, youth and scholastic chess. The USCF needs to support and promote all its membership categories.
- Recognize that the USCF is in need of Professional Marketing.

It is up to us to take back control of the USCF. The members have the power to elect the best people to fix the problems.

What do you think about the cheating problem and what should be done about it?

I think this has become a serious problem, which includes real computer-assisted cheating in amateur events and the false accusation of cheating against professionals. *Anyone* can be accused cheating; for instance, I was once accused of using a computer to cheat against a 1700 player and even world champions such as Kramnik and Topalov have been accused.

I believe that there should be severe penalties for both cheaters and those who make baseless accusations. A reasonable penalty is a one year ban from chess for the first offense, a three year ban for a second offense and a lifetime ban for a third offense. In fact, *Reuters* just recently reported that the Indian Chess Federation banned a player for ten years for computer-assisted cheating.

Your son recently won the 2nd grade section of the National K-12 / Collegiate Championship. What is your training philosophy?

Each chess teacher has their own philosophy. I focus on teaching my students tactics, endgames and middlegame strategies. In addition, I have taught my children to play until the end. I do not accept and allow quick draws. I am also perfectly fine if my children give their best and lose. They would get an A+ for their efforts in my book.

The problem is sometimes they *will* lose. And if they have given their best and lost, a parent or coach *cannot* get mad at them. This could be psychologically damaging to a child.



Tommy and Leeam

In the recent National K-12 Championship, a draw in the last round would virtually guarantee Tommy a co-champion title. But he chose to grind it out against an opponent who had caused him problems in the past. If Tommy had lost, I would have been equally proud of him for giving his all! I am happy when my children apply themselves to the best of their ability in everything they do.

Your website has information about a chess and cultural trip to Budapest, Hungary. What is this about?

Last year, I took part in the [Chess for Peace](#) cultural tour to Moscow, organized by Dr. Korenman. Everyone enjoyed the experience and some of the people who took part proposed a trip to Budapest. I thought it would be great to introduce the beauty of my hometown and the rich culture of chess in Hungary to many chess enthusiasts.

This trip will present the best of what Budapest has to offer as well as the opportunity to meet Hungarian legends such as Pal Benko, Lajos Portisch and, of course, my sister Judit. In addition, I will personally conduct daily activities. You can visit my [website](#) for further information. I expect this to be an incredible experience for everyone!

You have sponsored many girls only events in the past. Why not boys?

I wanted to give the girls a head start for a year or two before integrating the boys. This year both the Susan Polgar National Open (Corpus Christi) and World Open (Las Vegas) Championship for Girls will have a boys section. I've also added prizes for the top family and top sibling team. For more information about these two events, please check out the TLA section of [Chess Life](#) as well as the Susan Polgar Foundation [website](#).

Do you plan to play actively again in the near future?

If there are interesting tournaments with appropriate prize funds, yes, I will play. However, I have two young sons to raise and my main mission now is to promote chess and fix the USCF. Still, you never know. I did not play for about nine years when I came back to win the best overall performance at the 2004 Olympiad. So it can happen again.

What chess publications or websites do you read?

Here are some of the chess magazines I read every month. They are all very good in their own way:

- *New In Chess* (English)
- *Europe Echecs* (French)
- *Schach Magazin 64* (German)
- *Schach* (German)
- *Chess* (English)
- *Chess Life* (English)
- *64* (Russian)

As for state magazines, I very much like *Georgia Chess* and *Chess Horizons*. I also visit the following websites frequently: ChessBase, TWIC, chessville, and, of course, ChessCafe.com.

You must devote an enormous amount of time to maintain your chess blog. Why do you do it?

I want to promote chess as much as possible. Too many interesting events receive little or no coverage and I want to provide a forum for chess enthusiasts to receive the latest information as soon as it becomes available – not days, weeks or even months later. It is a place to bring passionate chess lovers together to discuss and share wonderful ideas from around the globe.

Paul Truong assisted Susan Polgar in the preparation of this column. Susan Polgar is available for chess instruction. For more information, visit the Polgar Chess Center, 103-10 Queens Boulevard, Forest Hills, NY 11375 (Tel: 718-897-4600) or email: PolgarChessInc@aol.com



[\[ChessCafe.com Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About The Chess Cafe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2007 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

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