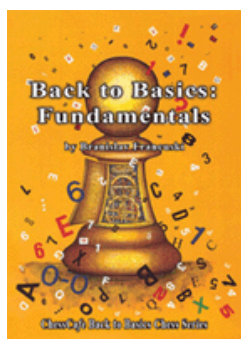




COLUMNISTS

Scholastic Chess

Steve Goldberg



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The Future of Scholastic Chess Part Two

Scholastic chess is arguably the strongest element in the U.S. chess scene, but much more is possible. Only a tiny percentage of schools incorporate chess into the curriculum, and many schools don't offer any type of extra-curricular chess activities. In addition, as is well known, many talented youngsters drop out of the chess scene in or after high school.

I asked eighteen individuals, who have been actively involved in the U.S. scholastic chess community, their thoughts on these issues. Last [month](#) we began reviewing their responses. This month we conclude this discussion, with summary comments and my own opinion.

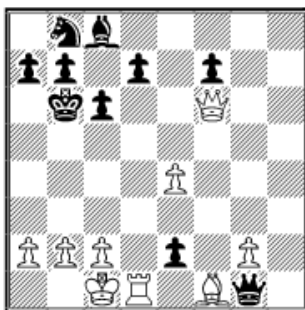
Everyman Quiz of the Month

Each month Everyman Chess sponsors our Everyman Quiz of the Month, offering a free chess book to three respondents with correct answers. This month, winners of our quiz will receive, at the discretion of [ChessCafe.com](#), one of the following: *Starting Out: Closed Sicilian* (CD), by IM Richard Palliser; *Starting Out: Sicilian Najdorf* (CD), by IM Richard Palliser; and *Starting Out: 1 e4!* (CD), by GM Neil McDonald. Please note – winners within the last three months are ineligible for this month's contest.



We will accept all contest answers for *two weeks* following the appearance of the column, then randomly select our three winners from this group. Please e-mail your responses to me by November 19, 2008. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck!

Problem #1



Keeping in mind the maxim, "If you find a good move, stop and look to see if there's an even better move," how did White force a win here?

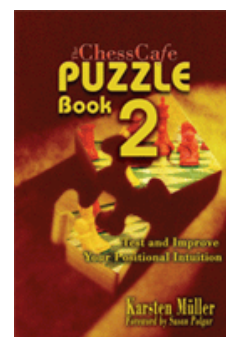
Problem #2

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[Chess Mazes 2](#)

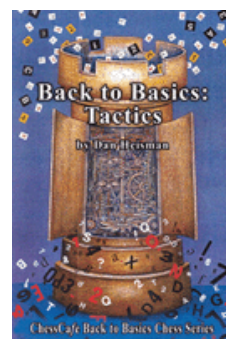
by Bruce Alberston



[ChessCafe](#)

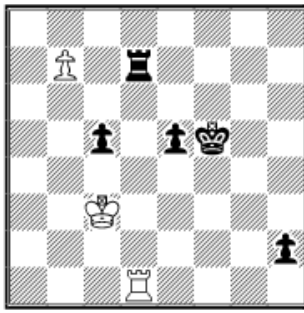
[Puzzle Book 2](#)

by Karsten Müller



[Back to Basics: Tactics](#)

by Dan Heisman



Black has just played 51...Rxd7. Both White and Black have pawns on the verge of queening. How can White put the game away?

The Final Two Questions

In last month's [column](#), we began looking at why chess "dropouts" occur during and after high school. Eighteen chess personalities prominently involved in the world of scholastic chess were consulted, and their responses were presented. We continue with the second part of this series this month.

Here are the questions I posed to the eighteen experts:

1. What can be done to remedy the common situation in which talented youngsters often drift away from chess after high school?
2. Should anything be done? Is it fair to try to encourage kids to devote serious time to chess when, at least at present, it is virtually impossible to make a decent living from chess?
3. What suggestions might you offer to encourage greater corporate or government involvement in the financial support of chess in K-12 schools and colleges/universities? Should there be any government involvement?
4. Imagine that the USCF is financially healthy and free from the infighting and turf battles that have raged for years. Also imagine that a five-year \$10,000,000 grant (\$2,000,000 per year) has been provided for the support of scholastic and college chess. How might you allocate such funds and what type of five-year plan might you offer?

As I noted last month, the list of people I spoke with is not all-inclusive – many others with valuable opinions could have been included as well. *Additional opinions and suggestions are welcomed and encouraged.*

Let's see what our panel had to say about the final two questions.

Question 3: What suggestions might you offer to encourage greater corporate or government involvement in the financial support of chess in K-12 schools and colleges/universities? Should there be any government involvement?

WFM Elizabeth Vicary, chess teacher and coach of the high-achieving I.S. 318 in New York:

Parents lobbying school boards. In Brownsville, the parents essentially convinced the school board to integrate chess into the district curriculum.

Professional chess teachers who can make presentations to school boards to explain how chess can be taught and what benefits it brings. David MacEnulty and Bruce Pandolfini made such a presentation to the NYC Board of Education in the late '80s and it resulted in the partnership between Chess in the Schools and the Board of Education (i.e. access was available to every New York City school during the school day)

IM Alex Lenderman, student at Brooklyn College, formerly of Edward R. Murrow High School:

Chess in the Schools already started chess in the schools, meaning make chess a mandatory subject. Chess is a real competitive sport and has all it needs to be a sport except for being physical. It should be in schools as an after-school activity or club in as many places as possible. Same with colleges. I think they're doing a good job with it though, and I quite frankly feel that the kids are getting better and indeed are being motivated. Unfortunately Fischer was such a terrible person and made a bad name for chess.

All the young chess phenoms end up becoming cocky unfortunately and with chess having that kind of reputation, no one is going to go anywhere. My plan when I get older and have more money is start doing some charities when it comes to chess and really try to make a good name for it. But I really do think that something like the Samford Scholarship should be awarded to more than one person a year. Nakamura in chess for example is like Alex Rodriguez in baseball, so basically even though he shouldn't make \$30 million a year, he should be at a position to somehow earn a million a year somewhere from chess.

NM Dan Heisman, popular chess author and full-time chess tutor:

This is a growing field, and even more studies are being done. The clearer the benefit, the more public money is used (or at least asked to be used). At one point Intel sponsored big-time chess but Kasparov got into a spat with them. Then IBM was involved and Garry accused them of cheating. Obviously that was not the right way to encourage corporations. Can't see why the government has to be involved except that local government runs schools.

WFM Abby Marshall, prominent high school chess player:

Yes, government should be involved, why not? Schools need the money for programs and to hire coaches and to have money to send kids to nationals or world youths or world championships. Chess makes you smart, more kids play chess than all other sports combined (which means it's fun, right?), and for me it's given me the chance to go to Turkey and China expanding my worldview, something I would never get to do otherwise. Chess teaches you the value of hard work and can keep you out of trouble.

Dr. Jeff Seiken, parent of Abby Marshall:

Obviously, anything to promote the development of talented chess teens will take money. It would be great if local, state, or national scholastic events could secure corporate support that would translate into the winners receiving prize money to be used for chess study or travel. I know of some parents who on their own have reached out to corporations to underwrite the travel of their kids to specific national or international events. But I have no experience in this area myself. It would be nice, though, if there was a forum where parents could share fundraising experiences and tips. I feel there is some expertise out there, and it would be great if there was a way to pool this knowledge so all could benefit. Government involvement? Why not? I don't see any particular downside to this, but then again I don't have the foggiest idea of how the USCF could go about securing government funding. Earmarks anyone?

Dan DeLeon, chess organizer in south Texas, where chess is wildly popular:

The marketing of scholastic chess has been anything but good! We are still using the old "It builds your critical thinking" line and "Helps with your problem solving." The main thing I have found is that scholastic chess players are more developed socially and that makes them better equipped to handle the day to day problems we all encounter in life!

The government should not be involved since this is a volunteer activity and we already have one organization barely able to handle the situation now! It would be embarrassing to have political oversight; we have enough problems as it is now!

From “Anonymous,” a prominent chess administrator with many years of experience on both a local and national level:

Government involvement? No. Government money? Yes. Unfortunately, the two go hand in hand. Leroy Dubeck is a better person to ask. For many years he was in charge of writing up grant proposals. He gave up after running into the same brick wall. Some functionary, somewhere in the bowels of the Department of Education, decided that chess has no benefits as far as transferring critical thinking skills (no direct correlation). And every time Leroy made a grant proposal, this moldy ruling was pulled out of someone’s cabinet drawer.

Many studies have been made since the 1960s. Perhaps it is time to try and convince the Department of Education to change its mind. That has to be the first step in securing government support, which would also lead to corporate support on a greater scale.

In 1992 New Jersey passed legislation recommending that chess be taught as part of all second grade instruction. No money – that’s why it passed. Roz Katz recently spoke at the Chess-in-Education workshop in Dallas and presented an outline for other states to follow if they wanted the same sort of bill enacted.

Maybe USCF and state organizations should work around the Department of Education and contact the politicians directly by inviting them – local, state and national – to attend any and all of our national championships. Nothing is so moving as a room full of kids – not moving! And quiet! Perhaps this should be a requirement for anyone putting in a bid for a national or state scholastic event. Make sure they visit team rooms and talk to the coaches (our best salesmen) and make sure the politicians leave with a suitcase full of documented studies/research.

IM Ray Robson, perhaps the most promising young junior player in the U.S.:

Is that the only way to get money for chess? Sure, it’d be great if the government could help. I don’t think though that we’re ever going to get government support unless there’s somebody in the government who cares a great deal about chess.

Dr. Gary Robson, professor and parent of Ray Robson:

I could come up with a number of ideas, but I think that the truth of the matter is that type of support will only become available when our national values change (and I think this is unlikely to happen). Chess would have to be valued in the same way that athletics and musical ability are valued in order to generate the kind of financial support that you are after. Chess involves deep thought, careful reflection of alternatives, great patience, and sustained focus; in my opinion, this does not describe our national character. Perhaps there’s hope for the blitz players.

FM Aviv Friedman, coach of many U.S. national scholastic teams at international tournaments:

There is a lot of it in other countries – both governmental and corporate support, but chess and chess culture are more developed in those countries. Here I can think of ‘pumping’ studies that claim how chess has a positive effect on other scholastic subjects, and the development of kids who pick it up. From a patriotic point of view, our kids already hold their own in world events and with help could do a lot better representing their country.

IM Sal Bercys, on the powerful University of Texas at Dallas chess team, previously on the Edward R. Murrow High School team:

First of all, K-12 schools have to first accept chess as part of their curriculum. In Spain for example, chess is one of the required courses and therefore no one looks down on it as much. Of course there will be criticism, but some people pass on chess without even trying. It is not so easy for college, since no one wants to waste time as much. College is expensive as it is, and in my opinion, it is too late to start at college. Elementary school should begin the chess careers.

WIM Dr. Alexey Root, chess author and teacher at the University of Texas at Dallas:

I think it is appropriate to fund curricula and teacher education that benefits K-12 students academically and socially. Like other grant applicants, those writing grants for chess programs need to convince funding agencies of the efficacy of their proposals.

Jim Stallings, Director of Chess Program, University of Texas at Dallas, and Chair, USCF College Chess Committee:

Scholastic parents have far more power than they realize. As I have publicly stated at workshops in the past, scholastic parents, as alumni, need to write to their universities and request that scholarships be offered for superior chess ability/academic ability. It is not a question of whether colleges are going to offer scholarships, they all do. However, scholarships are provided for all matter of things. Might I suggest that until people request scholarships for chess, there will be no move to provide them?

If you know of some way to get more government support, I will be interested in hearing about it. From time to time, I receive emails of such revolutionary ideas as "Have you ever thought of corporate sponsorship of IBM or Dell for your chess team? It would help get their name out there." Hmm. That is the tail wagging the dog there. Massively large, multinational corporations are not looking to "get their names out there" vis-à-vis the chess team.

Eliot Weiss, teacher and chess coach at New York's Edward R. Murrow High School, winner of multiple city, state and national championships:

Chess does not command the same respect as other sports, because it is thought of as simply a game. To understand the value of chess in a growing youngster, one needs to know more than just moving the pieces. Most people do not see the depth of the game, what it does to one's thought process and how it improves the way a person thinks in general. We are talking about a very small percentage of the population to encourage financial support to the masses, who don't understand the game of chess. Governmental involvement helped put the former USSR on the chess map. But that is a matter of philosophy and the argument of more government vs. less, and there would be a big outcry of "why chess?" It is like affirmative action for the less fortunate sports. Have the government argue and dictate what the government thinks people should do with their spare time? I don't know if I want my tax money to fund activities that I deem not on the same page as chess.

Jerry Nash, USCF Scholastic Director:

Helping local schools find grants that are offered only to schools for innovative programs. The work involved requires understanding what the foundations are looking for and then being able to relate chess to their goals and objectives. Many grants are only given to local schools or school districts and the foundations only take proposals from those

entities.

Title I and some NCLB funding sources already recognize chess but again the proposals must come from the school.

We are in need of one or more long-term university studies, which formally address the relationship of chess to academic success. The education community looks to these kinds of studies in formulating their goals and objectives. The longer we remain outside the mainstream educational community, the longer we maintain the risk of losing any given scholastic chess program due to the loss of one key person. *Most of our programs are one person away from extinction.* The longer we count solely on the “outside-in” model of chess programming (and this model can exist even when the person on the “outside” is a classroom teacher!), the more we risk losing in the years ahead the status we currently have.

GM Susan Polgar, former Women’s World Champion and founder of multiple Polgar tournaments and the SPICE program at Texas Tech University:

Offer a clear vision and reason why they should support chess! Relying on charity does not work. Within a year in Texas, I raised approximately \$3 million for various chess events and programs and I expect a lot more in the future. If you can offer a win-win situation to corporations or sponsors, you will have a much better chance to succeed. Government should encourage and promote the importance of chess, but not run it. Chess education does not need more bureaucracy and politics.

WFM Alisa Melekhina, prominent high school chess player who recently earned her first IM norm:

Since not many people (in the U.S. at least) follow chess, it is difficult to persuade major corporations to sponsor chess events. It should be easier, though, to obtain sponsorship for scholastic tournaments if they were publicized. After all, if spelling bees get major coverage, why not chess? It probably has to do with the marketing. As the government doesn’t have oversight over other sports leagues, I don’t see the urgency for chess to have government involvement. They can, however, indirectly contribute in the grade school setting at least, by funding chess after-school programs or establishing some sort of scholarship fund.

Question 4: Imagine that the USCF is financially healthy and free from the infighting and turf battles that have raged for years. Also imagine that a five-year \$10,000,000 grant (\$2,000,000 per year) has been provided for the support of scholastic and college chess. How might you allocate such funds and what type of five-year plan might you offer?

IM Greg Shahade: I believe that in order to have even the slightest chance of success at keeping young players in the game, it’s a serious mistake to aim to spend money on young players. It’s much more important to build up the professional side of the game, and if I could use ten million dollars, I would set it aside for professional level events if I could, and not scholastic events. Scholastic chess is a booming business in itself with coaches making huge amounts of money to train players, and colleges looking at chess favorably on resumes. The only way to get players to keep playing is to build up the professional chess scene in this country.

Also I believe that having one or two giant tournaments in a year is completely insufficient. What an aspiring professional needs is the promise of multiple tournaments on a regular basis. If I was allowed, and this is based on a very small amount of thought, I’d divide the ten million into ten one million dollar increments. I’d use one million per year for ten years. I would pretty much pay a sliding salary to the top twenty players in the nation. Perhaps number one would receive 100k, number ten would

receive 40-50k etc....hopefully I'd also have enough left over to have one or two major tournaments.

The other idea is to take this one million and hold ten elite tournaments with 100k prize funds and make them interesting to the public. But in any case pouring all this money into the scholastic chess scene is pretty much a waste of good money in my opinion, at least if your goal is to promote strong young chessplayers in this country and expect them to play professionally. Once scholastic chess is over, and kids have to make a living, they will see there is nothing out there and many of them will stop playing and move on. We need to focus on what happens after scholastic chess, as what happens during this stage is doing pretty well.

Alex Lenderman: There are some major scholastic tournaments in the USA. I would give \$500,000 for all of them. The three nationals, Cadets, Juniors, Denker, Polgar. Those are the seven biggest scholastic tournaments.

The biggest of all is Juniors, let's have the \$100,000 fund there, twenty top juniors, \$10,000 top prize. People like Nakamura, Hess and me will play. Best conditions, clear invitationals, and there will be people wanting to get better more eagerly. Cadets: \$30,000 fund. First place \$5,000 and 10 people. Denker: fifty people. \$50,000 total prize fund. \$5,000 first place, and all the way to the end. Last place gets \$100. Polgar: \$20,000 total prize fund. Last place gets \$50, and first place \$2,000. The other \$300,000 let's give to the Nationals. High School \$100,000 prize fund total, Middle School \$75,000 and Elementary \$50,000 and there are a lot of sections, so prizes appropriate for all of them.

Finally, the rest of the money should go to people who get in tournaments like World Youth Championship by rating. All the scholastic tournaments should be free for entry, and also the tournaments like city and state championships should have little prizes as well, at least \$100 for first place everywhere. Nationals should be at least \$1000 first place. The other 1.5 million can be given to charities to poor people who can't afford to study or play chess tournaments and help them. Also, for improvement of chess in the schools, give most schools an opportunity to create a chess program. Finally, there should be more scholarships for college in chess, even though those prizes can be the same. But some people don't want to go to college. So, they should give out real money and quit with the thoughts that giving money to juniors is illegal and that they will use it illegally. This is nonsense in my opinion.

Dan Heisman: This is a big question. We would need a retreat with all the big players involved: USCF, US Chess Trust, AF4C, UTD, UMBC, big online players like ICC, active GMs, CCA. First question: goals? Is it to develop GMs, or just have a great infrastructure?

Abby Marshall: This would be great. First year should be devoted entirely to chess in middle school and high school; forget college for now. Develop programs for teachers to teach chess, get tournaments organized in major areas to attract more kids to competitive chess, and make sure to hire coaches and get money for kids to go to nationals, etc. It's really a numbers thing I think. If more people play chess, the more it will be considered sweet in our society and the more chances for sponsorship/money. Next year is the same except expand chess more into the colleges, though focus on colleges with strong teams mostly. But really what is important is middle and high school students so most of the money should be devoted there, and maybe a million (lol) to special grants like the Samford should be awarded to a small group of promising high school/college kids to keep them playing.

To go back to the main point of keeping kids in the game, encouragement and support of their peers is key. When I said that I was going to Turkey, my classmates and teachers went crazy even though the thought of chess books etc. was the strangest thing to them. It really motivated me to do

well because I sort of felt I was representing my school. There are so many wonderful benefits gained from playing chess, and the more kids we have playing, there will be more kids enjoying those benefits, making it possible for chess to make progress in the United States.

Jeff Seiken: I suppose if this kind of money was available, I would like to see a large portion of it distributed to worthy juniors in the form of chess “grants” or “scholarships” that could be used to pay for training and books and software and for travel to chess tournaments. Players would apply for these awards just like it was a normal grant, submitting applications with letters of recommendation, etc. Some of these awards could even be need-based, meaning that family finances would be taken into account. The idea here would be to make it possible for promising players from all walks of life to obtain the kind of training and tournament exposure they need to take their game to the elite level. Right now, I suspect many young players with the talent to become IMs or GMs never achieve their chess potential because their families lack the financial resources to bankroll their child’s chess career.

Dan DeLeon: If this were a reality the grant should go to the top senior scholastic chess player in the country that does not already have a scholarship. This will allow the money being sent to the USCF to be used as the members see fit, not the USCF Board or President.

Anonymous: First, I’d fix USCF’s infrastructure/image. At one time, clubs and schools wanted to be affiliated with USCF. Now, I’m afraid, too many coaches look upon USCF as a necessary evil. We have to create a new and meaningful way to create an affinity. And I can’t believe it is all financial. The areas that need repair are too numerous to go into here.

Once that affinity is created with the movers and shakers, it will transfer to the 99% of the kids we want to reach – many of whom do not even know there might be a local chess club – some place to play outside of school. Except for the one percent who will seek out and find other venues on their own, I don’t see much activity/cooperation between scholastic programs and local activity. Notable exceptions are the Dalton School and Hunter College, both quite successful on the national scene.

As for \$10,000,000? I’d glom onto it and never let go. Establish a trust for scholarships. A four percent return is not unreasonable. At the end of five years, we would have \$400,000 a year to award to our chessplayer scholars – forever.

Ray Robson: Promote scholastic chess and make more tournaments so more people will be aware of tournaments. Promote it in schools; give some money to help train or give stipends for top junior players.

Gary Robson: I think that the plan could mirror what we do for our country’s elite athletes; however, it would extend well beyond five years. We could introduce chess to young persons across the country, identify those who have superior ability, provide regular, expert training for that group, weed out the lazy ones from the hard workers, support the talented workers until they reach their peak, and then eventually have those chess players take over the responsibility of developing the next generation – their own replacements. It’s those top performers (NBA stars, etc.) who inspire myriads of young people to take up various activities.

Sal Bercys: Everything begins with coaches. I had a coach, every top-ten player had a coach. We should start an intensive chess camp program where best coaches would be present. I had a best coach back in Lithuania who taught me basics in the correct order. And even if those students don’t become great players, they will learn how to teach from beginning to the end, just like I did from my coach, and maybe become coaches themselves. Remember, you do not have to be a great player to be a great coach. A lot of the money should also go about organizing more strong GM tournaments like the World Open open section with big prizes to

attract foreigners. Trade has been a benefactor throughout history and chess is no different. By importing foreign GMs, the US chess culture should grow.

Eliot Weiss: With money, the USCF could do a lot. Put it into public and private elementary schools to put chess in the daily curriculum with math and reading nationwide. That is where the USCF would be most helpful.

Jim Stallings: I operate off the old acronym of SMART for goal setting. That is, they must be S=be specific; M=be measurable; A=be achievable; R=be realizable; and T=be time-framed. Who dispenses these funds would, of course, be very important. It seems that, in general, one would wish to work with those that have been most active in the area of scholastic chess, such as the USCF Scholastic Council. They would direct the use of the bulk of funds. The College Chess Committee could recommend the use of the smaller amount.

Jerry Nash: While that may sound like a lot of money – and it is \$10,000,000 more than we currently have – when you think of trying to develop a nation-wide program, it does not go very far. But if I had the money I would probably establish an initiative that included some or all of the following:

- Additional scholarships for high school students
- Incentive matching scholarships for universities
- Development of materials to increase outreach to students, teachers, and universities

I would also look for additional funding to increase the productivity of the grant!

Susan Polgar: With the current structure and makeup of the USCF, it will not work. Unfortunately, too many people care more about their personal and political interests than the interest of chess or the future of scholastic/college chess.

In my opinion, the most important thing to change the future of scholastic chess is training of teachers; not chess teachers, but school teachers. We need to educate the teachers and educators in the importance of chess in education. Then we need to provide them the tools and knowledge to do the job.

That is where I would start. This is what I have done through the Susan Polgar Foundation and SPICE. In the past two years alone, we have sent out over 65,000 free SPF/SPICE Curriculum Training Guides to teachers, parents, chess organizations and clubs in over ninety-five countries. This is what my foundation and institute will continue to do. My curriculum can be downloaded [here](#).

Alisa Melekhina: I am sure many scholastic players would immediately agree that invitations to play in major scholastic tournaments should always be accompanied with complete travel accommodations and entry fees for the top players. It goes without saying that the Junior Closed Championship would have been more successful if this were the case. Also, the prize fund should be significantly increased (no trophies, please!). Not being aware of the USCF “departments” or where such funds could be allocated and to whom, it would naturally make sense to contribute them directly to the players. Also, more general scholarships such as the Samford would be extremely helpful, and more media exposure (outside of chess publications) is a must.

Closing Thoughts

These eighteen scholastic chess experts provided a wide variety of considered opinions, for which I am thankful. I would summarize the main points as follows:

While it is not at all clear where significant funding sources will come from, many on our panel stressed the beneficial influence that *better financial incentives* would have on the development of U.S. players. These incentives might take the following forms:

- Increased prize money, endorsements, salaries for professional players with the goal of providing an attractive income for the top echelon.
- Additional college scholarships, at a wide array of universities, to amply reward young players for the intensive effort required to reach high levels of chess success. Jim Stallings of UTD stressed that universities make many scholarships available, but chess scholarships are unlikely to happen without those in the chess community pushing for them and making a strong case for their implementation.
- Increased funding for middle and high school players, to cover the costly expense of tournament travel and high-level training.

Greater numbers of *dedicated volunteers* can make a big difference. Many great projects begin with a single devoted individual willing to invest the time and effort to make things happen. Conversely, as USCF Scholastic Director Jerry Nash stated, “Most of our programs are one person away from extinction.” These volunteers are sorely needed at every level – scholastic, college, club, professional chess, etc.

One long-time veteran on the national scene stressed the importance of maintaining a *database of entering college freshmen*, to assist in strengthening existing college chess clubs and teams, or to form new clubs from the ground up. There may be dozens of talented chess players at a given university, but if there is not an organized format for them to get together, an important opportunity will be lost for them to continue their chess careers. The USCF would seem to be an ideal clearinghouse for such a database. Graduating high school seniors who wish to do so could submit their contact information, including their college plans; a USCF college chess coordinator team could then work with these students, current college players and college faculty and staff to ensure a strong university chess environment for all who desire it.

On the elementary, middle school and high school level, *parental involvement* is crucial. Elizabeth Vicary noted the incredible results that occurred when David MacEnulty and Bruce Pandolfini lobbied the New York City Board of Education in the 1980s, and when local families convinced the Brownsville, Texas school system to incorporate chess into the school curriculum.

In St. Louis and elsewhere, *strong academic peer-reviewed research* is ongoing in an effort to truly demonstrate the beneficial effects of chess. The old studies are not sufficient if cash-strapped school districts are to be convinced of the academic benefits of incorporating chess into the school day.

And finally, my own humble opinion:

Fundamentally, I think it’s important to ask if chess should be considered an end in itself, or a means to an end.

There are those who will insist that chess has its own pure, intrinsic value all its own. And I would suggest that this opinion is at least partially responsible for the downfall of such chess greats as Paul Morphy, Akiva Rubinstein, Savielly Tartakower, Bobby Fischer and others.

Instead, I would suggest that chess, for all its beauty, is valuable for what it brings us. If it provides us with a sense of fulfillment or intellectual pleasure, or if it serves to improve one’s critical thinking skills, we’re benefiting from chess. If it helps to make a person more well-rounded,

improves social skills, or helps with college admissions or job applications, then chess has served a valuable function.

Some chess players, including some very talented chess players, will inevitably drift off into other interests. As Dr. Timothy Redman stated in last month's column, "I am delighted when any student who comes to college through chess moves on to a more productive, stable, and beneficial profession."

But for those young men and women who wish to continue their involvement in chess, and to introduce our magnificent game to those who might otherwise never know the beauty of a shocking Tal move or a Kasparov combination, we must ensure the future of a strong scholastic chess environment.

We've identified some of the problems and suggested some possible solutions. Many people have devoted many years of their lives to implementing these and other solutions. How about you and I?

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