

Ontario Chess Association

Secretary's Report

2008-2009

I am sincerely regretful that I am unable to attend this meeting in person. As a member of the outgoing executive, I would like to be able to hear the criticisms and critiques the governorship have for us in regards to this past year, and proposed plans for moving forward.

As everyone is aware, the term previous was less than desirable, with the replacement of Barry Thorvardson and his slate by a group of new recruits. It was a terrible end to his many years of service to the Ontario chess community, and to his development of the Ontario Chess Association. When it became clear that his removal was necessary, Chris Mallon offered to step into the role of Provincial President, after first seeking out other potential candidates and finding none that were interested. That said, I feel that an established leader willing to fill the role this year would be a welcomed change. Having thusfar served a transitional role, I am certain that Chris would be thrilled to have some one express an interest in carrying the organization forward.

The Ontario Chess Association is constantly struggling for relevance, which can only be achieved through full cooperation between the 4 leagues that comprise it. As a League President, I can appreciate that the timing and reliability of membership rebates can be improved; however, I feel that some have allowed money issues to serve as a road block to provincial revitalization. In my mind, an Ontario Junior Championship, an Ontario Women's Championship, and an Ontario Closed Championship are musts – regularly occurring, servicing all of the leagues, and attracting fields representative of the playing strength within our province. Otherwise, the OCA will continue to remain irrelevant, and the Leagues will continue to operate as autonomous entities, interested only in serving their own interests. This is not fair to us, and this is not fair to our players.

As a final thought, I feel the OCA website needs to be recognized as the official avenue for communication between the organization and its members. As Provincial Secretary, I do not feel that official communications should be made on message boards, but on our website itself. Of course, I myself have fallen into the trap of undervaluing the website, entirely neglecting to make an announcement of the OCA AGM on our website. Also, in response to those that feel the site is moribund, with no excuses, I apologize for having let the site lie dormant. Ideally, the site might have weekly updates, even if it is simply a puzzle of the week. The site does receive traffic ; however, those getting in contact with us are those wishing to have a link to their chess site added, or those starting a Grassroots' Campaign to have the format of the site changed. In addition, we received one enquiry regarding chess camps – I believe centralizing information on camps, instructors, and more, on the OCA site, is something to consider.

On my own behalf, I can say that youth and inexperience can serve as great hindrances at times, but I hope there are no hard feelings. We need to start communicating, as opposed to harbouring grudges and trudging on half-heartedly.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael von Keitz
Secretary, Ontario Chess Association

Monday, May 18, 2009