

Minutes of the ACA Board Meeting
Acting Secretary: John Quiring
Saturday September 6, 2003 at G. H. Dawe Centre, Red Deer.

In attendance:

Ron Hinds, Ford Wong, Juraj Pivovarov, Bob Davies, Alex Kazakevich, Micah Hughey,
Bill Taylor

Non-board members present:

SP, MP, Jeff Parker, Bruce Thomas, Brian McDonald, John Quiring

1. Call to Order

ACA President Ron Hinds called the meeting to order at 13:12.
He asked John Quiring to serve as secretary pro tem.

2. Review and acceptance of the January 2003 minutes

Bill Taylor objected to the poor wording and grammatical errors in the recording of his Medicine Hat Chess Club project report.

The second paragraph under agenda item 5 was amended to read as follows:

A Medicine Hat Chess Club project report was given by Bill Taylor. 27 schools were sent a letter and 8 units were delivered. As of now, 11 of 20 units have been distributed to schools. The schools that did not respond were sent a new letter. Bill would like to teach the teachers how to play chess so they could assist in running the school chess clubs. Bill thanks the ACA for their support. Bill also appreciated receiving the Alberta Chess Reports and will distribute them to the schools. (1 unit is: 1 demonstration board, 17 chess sets and 1 chess clock). Bill was thanked for all the work he has done to promote chess in Medicine Hat.

Moved (Wong/Taylor) to accept the minutes as amended.

Carried.

3. President's report

Ron Hinds reported that the Public Library initiative was successful, with very positive responses from libraries.

He noted the success of Alberta juniors, particularly Anastasia Kazakevich and Cornelia Dinca, who would be representing Canada at the World Championships.

Ron also drew the board's attention (and congratulations) to Micah Hughey, who had drawn GM Arthur Bisguier at the recent Abe Yanofsky Memorial tournament in Winnipeg.

4. Treasurer's report

Ron Hinds (acting Treasurer) reported that the books were up to date. Cheques for travel allowances for recent junior events had been issued. He was working on a submission to ASRPWF that was due soon. Also, a document of about 250 pages had been submitted to the AGLC. He also reported the purchase of new equipment.

The ACA's cash position is a net worth of about \$180,000.00 consisting of about \$13,000 (operating), \$9,600 (operating account GICs), \$90,000 (casino), \$69,000 (casino GICs), and \$431 (Alberta Youth Chess Council).

Ron said the ACA finances are now on-line, with read-only access on the internet. Ford Wong reported that the casino held in April 2003 raised \$61,365. He noted that all casino proceeds within a city are now pooled and shared equally. The next casino will be at Yellowhead in Edmonton, March 26-27, 2005 (Saturday/Sunday).

5. Secretary's report.

No report was presented.

6. Conduct Committee

Ford Wong (chair) reported on his inquiry into complaints raised by the P. family regarding incidents at the Alberta Youth Chess Championships. His conclusions were:

- Jim Daniluk (TD) acted correctly in the dispute regarding the game SP - Matthew Stojan
- Vonnie Eng was in a conflict of interest. She should not have been given a position of authority in a tournament where her child was playing, and she should not have accepted such authority.

- When a lot of volunteers are required to run a children's tournament, they can't all be experienced, qualified TDs. From a practical standpoint, it is sufficient that there be a few qualified TDs present to handle disputes.

- Juraj Pivovarov exercised poor judgement in giving Vonnie Eng official authority to organize/TD this event. No disciplinary action was recommended.

Micah Hughey said that we should punish misconduct, not errors in judgement.

Ron Hinds said he wished Juraj had been more open to suggestions, as both he and Ford had spoken with Juraj before the AYCC about Vonnie's role in the tournament.

Juraj said that the tournament was well organized, well directed, and ran smoothly and didn't understand why his judgement was being questioned.

Bill Taylor asked for details about Vonnie Eng's probationary period which was to run to the end of 2003.

Ron Hinds said that the ACA passed a motion that TDs had to be ACA members with CFC ratings, and Vonnie did not qualify.

Micah said that there were a lot of parents and children who were boycotting events where Vonnie was involved, because of her previous actions at chess tournaments.

Alex Kazakevich commented that a lot of parents and ACA board members had asked that Vonnie not play a role in the AYCC, but they were all ignored.

Micah asked Juraj if he would involve Vonnie in the AYCC again, if he had it to do over again, and he said he would. Ron Hinds repeated that a motion of the ACA was being ignored.

Ford said that with all the controversy surrounding Vonnie, she shouldn't have been involved in the AYCC. Micah said that even if a motion of the ACA was violated, he didn't want any sanctions against Juraj. There are people without CFC ratings who can be competent TDs. The problem was that parents have no confidence or trust in Vonnie and are boycotting events where she is involved.

Juraj agreed that Vonnie shouldn't be running tournaments, if she isn't qualified according to ACA rules.

Ford indicated he was considering a motion to ban Vonnie from organizing and running ACA events, but wondered if problems would disappear sooner if they

were simply ignored. John Quiring said that since the ACA selects organizers and directors for its events during the November board meeting, a motion would be redundant.

Ron Hinds said the ACA should decide whether to act or not. He suggested a summary ruling by the chair of the Conduct Committee was one way to resolve problems, as it was final and beyond appeal. Ford said that action by the Conduct Committee was complicated and unwieldy.

Micah suggested that the anticipated formation of a Junior Coordinating Committee might solve these problems, as they would only involve Vonnie in events if she regained their trust and confidence. Ron Hinds noted that Vonnie was the organizer of some year-end CFC events, and the ACA could ask the Junior Committee to take over the tournament. Jeff Parker stated that those tournaments had been granted to the Calgary Junior Chess Club, not to Vonnie.

On another conduct matter, Ford Wong reported Andrew Boik's allegation that he (and others) had been required to post \$20 deposits for the Chess Challenge provincials, and hadn't received them back. Micah Hughey stated that he had heard from several sources that numerous people were owed money, and that 2 people recently received \$80 from Vonnie. Bruce Thomas said that a number of people were owed almost \$120 each and were getting their money after threatening legal action. He added that he had been asking since June for payments and financial statements relating to the Calgary regional qualifier, and the provincial championships. Vonnie's reply had been to send emails full of personal attacks. He estimated about \$3300 unaccounted for.

Bruce Thomas distributed a letter (see Appendix A below).

Bob Davies asked if ACA money was involved; Ron Hinds replied that ACA obligations had all been satisfied. Bruce Thomas said these were Chess & Math events. Ron said that we can't extract money from people after the fact, we have to prevent their involvement from the start. Alex Kazakevich said that Vonnie often attacked people when issues about her were raised.

Moved (Taylor/Wong) that Vonnie Eng be banned as a chess official, including organizing and directing ACA sanctioned events.

Alex Kazakevich noted that Vonnie's actions were destructive to the chess environment in Alberta. Bob Davies agreed that these conflicts were hurting chess. Juraj thought that this motion would exacerbate the conflicts. He added that Vonnie had done a lot for chess, and preferred more subtle solutions to the problems.

Carried 4-1 (Ron Hinds abstaining).

On another conduct issue, Ford Wong reported that David Johansen had approached him, asking whether the ACA would reinstate him. He had a child that was interested in playing chess. Ford said that David had run the ACA and ECC about 15 years ago, and allegations of improprieties had eventually led to a lifetime ban. John Quiring noted that he had been entirely unaware of the allegations at the time they were made, but that he had heard from numerous people that David had been handling the money at the ECC and ACA, and left without supplying any financial statements. The allegation was that many thousands of dollars were unaccounted for, and David was banned until such time as he would produce financial statements. Ford noted that he had mentioned this to David, and David had denied financial improprieties, and stated that any

records he might have had were long gone, as the 7-year window for keeping records was over.

Bill Taylor noted that the sanctions were against David, not his children. He asked if David had written a formal request, and Ford said it came through a casual conversation. Ron Hinds took a straw vote and found no support for David's request.

7. Junior Chess

Ron Hinds ceded the Chair to Ford Wong.

Bruce Thomas informed the Board that he had been appointed as Alberta Coordinator for the Chess'n Math Association by Larry Bevand. He distributed a letter (Appendix B), listing his plans for increased cooperation between the ACA and C&M.

Bruce Thomas delivered a proposal to create an Alberta Chess Association Junior Chess Coordinating Committee (see Appendix C).

Bill Taylor asked if there was a conflict between the ACA and Chess & Math in junior chess. Bruce replied that C & M's role in Chess Challenge tournaments in Alberta was minimal, it was the ACA that was supplying most of the funding. He thought there was a large opportunity for co-operation between the two groups.

Moved (Taylor/Davies) that the ACA approve the establishment of the Alberta Chess Association's Junior Coordinating Committee, with the mandate of recommending to the ACA, policies and guidelines governing junior chess tournaments and other junior events and activities which fall under the jurisdiction of the ACA. The Committee shall advise and make recommendations to the ACA regarding ACA budgeting for junior chess.

Juraj asked if this committee would also concern themselves with Chess & Math events.

Bruce replied that the committee would consider only ACA sanctioned events initially, and look to integrate other events in the future.

Motion carried.

Moved (Taylor/Davies) that the ACA appoint the following people as the ACA Junior Coordinating Committee members:

Bruce Thomas, Edmonton

Nikola Culjaga, Edmonton

Jeff Parker, Calgary

Richard Kaminski, Calgary

Elroy Diemert, Grande Prairie

Brian McDonald, Whitecourt

Alex Kazakevich, Edmonton.

Motion carried.

Moved (Taylor/Kazakevich) that the ACA Junior Coordinating Committee be empowered to run the Alberta Junior Championship qualifiers for 2003.

Motion carried.

Ford ceded the Chair to Ron Hinds.

8. Up and coming tournaments

Medicine Hat Open (Sept 13-14): Bill Taylor said everything is in order.

Alberta Open (Oct 11-13): Ford Wong said the site will be the City Centre Suite Inn, in downtown Edmonton. He said additional clocks were needed.

Southern Alberta Open (Nov 15-16): not sure who is running this.

Two Weekends Before Christmas (Dec 13-14): Ford Wong is running this.

Junior Qualifiers and Alberta junior: now the responsibility of the ACA JCC.

Canadian Junior (Jan 2-6 2004) and Pan Am Youth Chess Championship Qualifier (Dec 30 2003 - Jan 1 2004): Juraj said the organizer had informed him that additional funding was requested, totalling \$450 for the Can Jr. and \$600 for the Pan Am Qualifier. He also mentioned that the organizer had paid for site rentals, and requested reimbursement.

Ron Hinds asked for the relevant paperwork (receipts).

9. Hosting opportunities

Canadian Open 2005: Ford Wong indicated there was still paperwork to do for the AGLC. He said the logistics were awkward because we can't hold the tournament unless we get money, and we can't apply for the money until the tournament is awarded to us. He added that there are several sources for funding, but that time was already short as some committees decide over a year in advance what events they will support.

Canadian Closed: Ron Hinds said that GM Spraggett was encouraging Alberta to host a Closed.

Olympiad: Ron Hinds said he had heard the Sid Belzberg was working towards hosting a chess Olympiad in Canada, possibly in Banff.

GM parade across Canada: Ron Hinds reported that if the Yanofsky Memorial brings a number of GMs to Winnipeg again next year, they would be available to play in a series of tournaments across Canada, which could lead opportunities in Alberta.

10. Funding: updates on incoming and outgoing

AGLC: Ron Hinds said a 250 page report had been sent to the AGLC.

ASRPWF: Ron Hinds is working on documents for the ASRPWF for the upcoming meeting.

Jr. chess funding: Ron Hinds said we needed better financial accountability of money spent on junior programs.

Web site: Juraj Pivovarov said Cyberwave is now hosting our website, for \$150 per year, which is an excellent rate. He had created forms which could be downloaded by anyone, and had set up the web page so that it could be updated without the assistance of a webmaster.

11. Public Library Initiative

Ron Hinds indicated the \$1500 of chess books that were distributed to libraries had been very well received. The books included notes of recognition and appreciation to the ACA.

12. Governor's Letter #1

Three CFC Governors were present, Hinds, Thomas and Quiring.

John Quiring had attended the CFC's AGM and reported on the selection of Kapuskasing as the host for next year's Open and CYCC. He also informed/reminded everyone that the rating fees had increased to \$3 per person, and CFC membership had increased by \$3 per year (regular membership), \$2 for juniors, and \$1 for participating members.

13. New business

Micah Hughey asked about Archie Robertson's approach to the Edmonton Journal regarding a chess column; no one had information.

Bill Taylor made a number of suggestions:

Minutes of meetings should be issued in advance of the meeting so Board members could review them, instead of spending time reading at the meeting.

Funding requests by "special interest" groups should be made in advance of the January budget meeting, say by December 31. This will make the treasurer's job easier and allow for easier and more timely dissemination of information to Board members.

The January budget meeting should start no earlier than 11:00, as he has the longest travel time.

Paper copies of budget information should be issued prior to the budget meeting, comparing 2002 "budget" vs. "actual". Expenses should be grouped by category (e.g. all travel expenses together), and on-going expenses should be separated from one-time expenses. Note: the practice has been that on-going expenses are subjected to a budget ceiling, usually set at the November Board meeting. One-time expenses are funded based on their merit, combined with the health of the ACA's finances.

As a general recommendation, groups requesting money should provide helpful background information, such as number of individuals served, current funding sources, a budget, and how much they can reasonably raise.

We should consider the ethics of denying reasonable funding requests for chess related activities when we have the money. Also consider the accountability of groups receiving funds to report to us. How do we set limits?

It would be a nice touch if Board members received binders with the ACA logo, for their ACA related correspondence.

The list of "Active Policies" should be updated.

The Board should review the bylaws and update them, with updated copies given to Board members for inclusion in their binders.

Ron Hinds informed the Board that he is sending new documents to Alberta Registry. They have a copy of our Constitution from the 1980's. Juraj Pivovarov suggested such documents should be on our web page.

Juraj Pivovarov submitted his resignation from the ACA Board of Directors, citing poor leadership from the president, and a desire to pursue other activities.

Bruce Thomas, speaking as co-editor of the ACR, said there is a need for a more timely submission of articles. He wants the ACR to be used for promotion, distributed to libraries and schools, which is beyond the current scope of the ACR, so he needed Board approval. He also said there may be postage subsidies available.

Ron Hinds informed the Board that ASRPWF funding was increased by \$1400 in 2003, and the Foundation wanted to know where the money would be spent.

Moved (Wong/Davies) that the additional \$1400 from the ASRPWF be used to support the Canadian Junior and Pan Am Youth Chess Championship in Calgary, Dec 30, 2003 through Jan 6, 2004.

Motion carried.

Ron Hinds indicated that a Board position was available and wondered if anyone was interested in holding it until the AGM in October. John Quiring, Bruce Thomas and Brian McDonald all declined.

Ford Wong thanked John Quiring for taking the minutes of the meeting.

Adjourned at 17:27.

APPENDIX A

To: Alberta Chess Association

Attention: Ford Wong, ACA Conduct Chairman

It is with regret that I find myself in the position of having to ask the ACA to bar from any future chess activities under its jurisdiction Vonnie Eng who has done some positive things for chess, but whose behaviour and conduct has been so offensive and inexcusable that she no longer deserves the privilege of having anything to do with organizing or directing any tournament, particularly junior chess events.

I would like all to know that I have had to take this stand after trying to work with, advise and consult with Ms. Eng on many occasions since first meeting her in February 2002. I have been involved with Ms. Eng in two Chess Challenges and have been indirectly involved in some of her other activities and been made aware by many people of things that Ms. Eng has done to upset many people in the chess community.

When Ms. Eng became the subject of complaints arising out of the 2002 Alberta Youth Chess Championships, I spent many hours trying to mediate in hopes that the dispute would not have lingering effects on junior chess. I thought the incident bringing forth the complaints was a one-time indiscretion on Ms. Eng's part and that she, like all others who were dragged into the affair, would accept sanctions and all would be well. That obviously was not to be the case and I was to discover that Ms. Eng's indiscretions and poor behaviour would only grow worse.

My understanding is that Ms. Eng is on probation with the ACA in regards to the 2002 AYCC, but while on probation she has continued to be involved in controversies. I have listened to Ms. Eng try to give reasons and excuses for some of her actions, but I find few, if any, of her justifications acceptable.

My main complaints about Ms. Eng include the following:

- 1. She has harassed myself, my wife and others with phone calls, usually made late at night and, in my opinion upon listening to her sometimes slurred speech, under the influence of alcohol or drugs.**
- 2. During some of these phone calls, she has made derogatory and offensive remarks about members of the chess community in what I perceive to be attempts to cover up or justify her own mistakes and improper behaviour.**
- 3. There is no doubt in my mind that Ms. Eng is very manipulative and as long as she believes she has influence over a person that person is okay in her books, but the slightest disagreement will provoke her to attack that person. This has led in some cases to people being involved as officials in her tournaments when they did not even know basic chess rules, but were involved because Ms. Eng knew she could control them.**
- 4. Ms. Eng tried to use junior players in an attempt to quickly gain a CFC rating for herself. The method she used was such that had not the CFC rejected her attempt, it would have set a dangerous precedent that could affect national chess rating systems. I had cautioned Ms. Eng several times in 2002 about using junior chess players in her disputes and arguments, and was really shocked when she tried to use the Alberta Junior Chess Champ and then her own sons in what she indirectly admitted to me on several occasions was her way to get around a**

rule - a good rule in my opinion - set by the Alberta Chess Association about having to have an established rating to direct an ACA tournament.

5. In regards to the two Alberta Chess Challenges, while Ms. Eng did oversee them without major problems, I observed or was involved in situations which caused me to question her behavior and her abilities as a tournament organizer and/or director. I have witnessed and been told of other happenings that have added to my questioning of her competence as a leader within the junior chess community.

6. Ms. Eng insisted that all Alberta team members going to the National Chess Challenge in Montreal in May pay a \$20 appearance deposit. That deposit was not refunded at the event and still has not been refunded to certain players. In addition, the proceeds from the provincial and Calgary regional challenges to be divided among the team members was not paid within a reasonable amount of time - the first cheque including the deposit was not received until August 15, in some cases, threats of legal action had to be made before a cheque was issued earlier this month, and, to my knowledge, some team members still have not received their monies. Repeated requests by me over the summer for Ms. Eng to produce financial statements were answered only by personal attacks against me. Excluding her own sons as team members, Ms. Eng unfairly was withholding over \$1,100.00 from 10 junior chess players and their families for up to three months or more and still refuses to show financial statements which would indicate whether the amount some players have been paid is a fair amount arising out of an estimated \$2,300 collected in entry fees at the provincial challenge and an estimated \$1,050 at the Calgary regional. One Alberta Team member has formally asked the ACA to investigate this financial matter since the ACA is the largest financial supporter of the Alberta Chess Challenge.

7. Ms. Eng as organizer of the upcoming National Juniors initially posted on the ACA website that entry cheques of \$150 per player were to be paid to her personally. Concerns were expressed about this arrangement and the CFC is now collecting all entry fees.

8. Ms. Eng over the past year has told me of her actions and plans to undermine the Alberta Chess Association, take it over by proxy, and get control of its finances. I am also aware of her pressuring the ACA regarding its contributions to junior chess and she told me she has made repeated phone calls to the Alberta Gaming Commission regarding ACA casino funding. I question her motives for these actions.

While more details of the eight above points could be provided, I think many ACA directors have personal knowledge about some of these items as well as other complaints from other people about Ms. Eng.

The simple conclusion to be reached is that Ms. Eng has an overwhelming history of causing controversy in the chess community. It is no longer a matter of having to conduct inquiries, hear evidence or have drawn-out hearings over Ms. Eng. To my knowledge, no other person has generated so many complaints and problems in such a short time span in the history of the ACA. For the good of the organization and the good of chess, particularly junior chess, in Alberta, Ms. Eng should be banned by the ACA in any involvement in chess activities under its jurisdiction.

I might add that Ms. Eng has been removed from her position as Alberta Co-ordinator for the Chess'n Math Association. Many ACA directors are quite aware that the Chess'n Math Association received many written and verbal complaints about Ms. Eng. Chess'n Math has taken what I feel is the appropriate

step in removing Ms. Eng. I feel that the ACA has just cause to ban Ms. Eng from its own activities, and, if necessary, revoke her membership.

I would ask that the Conduct Chairman judge that Ms. Eng's actions and behaviour during her probationary period constitute cause for her to be banned from chess activities under the jurisdiction of the ACA and that the ACA board take the appropriate action.

Bruce Thomas

CFC Governor for Life

Alberta Co-ordinator for Chess' n Math Association