

Historical WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER recaps by Russell Miller April 1953

(Once upon a time I did a column in a number of issues of NORTHWEST CHESS about what was reported 20-15-10-5 years ago. Seems like time to do some of that again but I plan to only do the 50 years ago part for now. I have a complete set of WASHINGTON CHESS LETTERS [WCL], NORTHWEST CHESS LETTERS [NCL] and NORTHWEST CHESS [NWC] Magazines starting in 1947!)

As is very common for many, many issues of WCL April 1953 issue finds Dan Wade of Seattle as Editor of an 18 page issue. Assistant Editors are John Nourse of Port Blakely, F.W. Weaver, O.W. Manney, E. Zemglais and Ken Mulford all of Seattle. Washington Chess Federation President was O.W. Manney. There is a full page announcement for 1953 Tourney for Women to be held May 17, 1953, \$1.00 entry fee. All entries fees will go the winner. Tournament was to be held at site of Seattle Chess Club, 616 Madison St, Seattle, the basement of Knickerbocker Hotel in knockout style.

Jim Schmitt reports from Portland of the plans for an OREGON CHESS BULLETIN. (I don't know if it ever got off the ground.) An announcement for US Junior to be held August 10-15 at Kansas City YMCA was printed. Entry fee was \$5.00 for a 10 round Swiss. There was an appeal for funds to send Elmars Zemgalis to the 1953 US Open in Milwaukee, WI. They had raised \$30.00 so far. In the GAMES SECTION are a draw between Arthur Dake and Elmars Zemgalis, a win by J.L. Sheets over E.G. Short (notes by the winner), James Schmitt defeated Charles Ballatine, D. Meador beat Dan Wade, These games were from an Oregon-Washington Match held in Centralia, Washington. F.W. Weaver did a column of information taken from CHESS LIFE The column reports about a 50 board simultaneous done by GM Samuel Reshevsky in Cleveland Ohio. One player beat Reshevsky in the simul and also beat him in the blindfold game. (I once got to play the GM in a simul and the blindfold game part of the exhibition but of course I lost them both) The column also reports on Dr. A. A. Murray scoring 2-0 for San Antonio, TX in match with Houston TX. Dr. Murray still plays at Seattle CC today!

O.W. Manney did a 4 position problem section. The Yakima CC reports will be holding a double round robin tournament over five weeks at regular club meetings. Ollie LaFreniere did the notes to three games from the recent Washington Jr. Ollie beat Jim McCormick and Richard Odlin and lost to Ted Warner.

Postal Chess Director R.R. Merk column appeared as usual. There were 48 players on the postal rating list, with only last names for most of the players. Mr. Greene was the top rated player.

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No change in editor from the April 1953 issue but Mrs. Wade was added to the Assistant Editors list as was O. LaFreniere of Yakima and J.L. Sheets of Seattle for game annotations. Dan Wade was now also President of Washington Chess Federation. \$49.00 now for Zemgalis US Open fund and \$55 in pledges.

Don Kendall who I now believe lives in Omak won the two-player Pierce County Jr. He was then a Lincoln High School of Tacoma student. Charles Ballantine won the U of Washington title 4-0. Small announcement for 1953 Oregon Open to be held June 13th at Portland CC. No woman appeared for the 1953 Washington Women's Tourney so the 4 men players present played a double round robin with Dan Wade winning 6-0.

Sixteen delegates and directors named as attending the Annual meeting of the board of directors of Washington Chess Federation plus 8 unnamed others per the vote for Publicity Director of 14-10. Dan Wade was elected the new President by vote of 11-10 over O.W. Manney. O.W. Manney became V-P., Peter Husby - Secretary, W.H. Raleigh - Treasurer, Ken Mulford - Publicity Director, O.W. Manney - Tournament Director. Dan Wade was awarded the "Oscar" for the year.

Weaver did his usual From CHESS LIFE column. GM Svetorar Gligoric of Yugoslavia won the Mar del Plata International Tournament 16-3. CHESS LIFE reprinted the Sheets-Zemgalis game from Washington State Championship as had been printed in WCL.

More Oregon -Washington Match games appeared, this time Ivars Dalbergs beating O.W. Manney on board 4 with notes by Zemgalis, Carl Burnham beat Russell Vellias in a long game with notes done by the loser, No notes to Charles Joachim win over S. Eikrem and a few noted by Wade for the John Nourse loss to F. Aiken. From Washington State Open event, a game between Ivars Dahlberg (sic) and L. Sheets won by Sheets and played Sept 27, 1952 was given, no notes.

Dan Wade did a two page column FROM THE RECORD about the history of organized chess in Washington State dating back to 1936. This whole column probably so be reprinted sometime.

O.W. Manney did his usual problem page with 4 puzzles. One is a mate in seven where White has a Queen at b1,c1,d1 and Black has a King a8. There is no White King. The Queens are not to leave the first rank. 51 players in the Postal Chess Rating list done by R.R. Merk. Postal Sections were \$.50 each!

Historical WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER recaps by Russell Miller June 1953

No change in the editor or helpers from May issue.

V.W. Bever is reported as the winner of Bellevue Chess Club winter tournament 10-1 over 6 other players. One of the major chess events of each year use to be Chess International, a match between Washington and British Columbia. This issue announces the 10th in the series to be held July 26 under the Peace Arch near Blaine, Washington.

Arthur Dake is winner of Oregon Open held June 13-14, 1953 at Portland Chess Club. Nineteen players under direction of Deane Moore took part. Dake went 5-0, beating O.W. Manney, Ted Warner, Siverdt Poulsen, Ivars Dahlberg (sic) and Joe Cerretelli. Tied at 4-1 were Dan Wade and Dahlberg (sic). Dake got \$30 for his win. Guess they did not split cash prizes in those days for Wade got \$15 and Dahlberg (sic) got \$8.00. Players came from Portland (6), Seattle (5), Yakima, Olympia, Centralia, Fort Lewis, Fresno CA, Forest Grove, OR, Cottage Grove (2). One had the travel to play chess in those days.

O.W. Manney of Seattle while on a business trip to Boise Idaho picked up on tie-break the Idaho Open title over Laverl Kimpton of Filyer, Idaho. He could not play the Friday rounds so a friend played the first two games winning one and losing one, then Manney took over to score 6.5-1.5.

Article on chess ratings work done by E. G. Shoit of Portland was printed. He rated both international and Northwest Players. Botvinnik was the top rated international player in his listings at 1533 with Geller second at 1504. Top USA players were Reshevksy 1439, Fine 1384, Evans 1332.

The Tournament Director's Report gave summary information on the years past events in somewhat humorous manner, i.e., "The Puget Sound Open Tournament was won by Portland's Jim Schmitt. These continuous Portland victories are giving out experts a fit!" Part II of FROM THE RECORD by Dan Wade appeared covering Washington Chess History after World War II up to 1946, i.e., October 1946 saw the first round of the first season of Puget Sound League with teams from Queen Anne, U of W, Tacoma CC, Seattle CC, Skagit County, Bainbridge Island and Everett plus Bremerton. In the late 40's and early 50's team matches was one of the main chess activities in Puget Sound area. Something that is not done much these days. In the FROM CHESS LIFE column by Weaver it was reported the Dake-Zemgalis game from Washington-Oregon team match held in Centralia was reprinted in CHESS LIFE. The notes were by Dake. USCF was doing ratings twice yearly then and NW players listed were Elmars Zemgalis 2626 (one of the top ratings on the list), Arthur Dake 2475, Jim Schmitt 2148, Joachim 1964, Manney 1988, Sheets 1959, as Class B: Allen, DeWitt, Martin, Vellias, and Weaver as Class C: Collins, LaFreniere and Dickey.

There was full page ad for Seattle Seafair Open to be held at Seattle CC on August 1-2, 1953. Entry fee was \$3.00 for the six round two section Swiss.

A SPOKANE SPEAKS column by Dr. Griffith H. Parker appeared this month. He talks about starting an organized Spokane Chess Club in Nov 1950. There was some play at the YM before this but none of those people showed up for the 1st meeting Dr. Parker had

called and gotten written up about in the newspaper. The Spokane CC rented in room in University Club for \$2.50 a night and dues were \$1.00 for three months. There were about 33 members and 12-20 showing up each week. The U Club moved which almost caused Spokane CC to die but the chess club was able to find space at the Spokane Hotel. Spokane paper did a “poorly written” feature story on the Club in fall of 1952 which was a help to find new members. There have been some team matches with Pasco and Yakima teams.

As often happens the editor was forced to print his own games, a loss to Ted Warner, a win over S. Poulsen and loss with notes to Duane Meador.

Greene still tops the Postal Chess Rating List.

Historical WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER recaps by Russell Miller July 1953

A 20 page issue had Daniel Wade as Editor as usual. The Assistant Editors were John Nourse, W.H. Weaver, O. Manney, Ollie LaFreniere, J. Sheets, Mrs. Wade and W. Couturs plus R.R. Merk for circulation and Postal Director. Mr. Greene was a top the postal rating list of 49 players. I believe the only players on this list still alive today and Ken Mulford and Don Kendall. Editor Wade reports: "Chess paraded up 4th Ave. in Seattle, Friday eve. July 31st! The occasion was the annual Seattle Seafair. Our game was represented by three decorated cars with signs advertising the Chess Letter, Seafair Tourney and Seattle Chess Club." Seems like an idea that all chess clubs should be trying to do today. They had a couple of young ladies riding on the front of one car.

Elmars Zemgalis won a 4 player RR training tournament 6-0. Manney, Sheets and Ballantine all scored 2-4.

You could join Washington Chess Federation and get WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER for \$2.00 a year back in 1953. The Washington Open in 1953 was to be held over Labor Day weekend with a \$3.00 entry fee.

Funds were being collect to help Elmars Zemgalis attend the US Open. They had \$170.00 as of July 29th. Guess that means the July issue of WCL came out in late July.

On July 26th the Washington - BC match was held at Peace Arch near Blaine, Washington. Washington won 18-12 in the A division but BC was tops in the B section 9-8. O.W. Manney the WCF tournament director played board one for Washington and drew with Jack Taylor of BC. Players who I believe are still alive today from the event are Ken Mulford, Jim McCormick, Terry Nelson all playing for Washington.

Zemgalis won Annual Seattle Seafair tournament and more details were to be reported in the August issue.

Seattle CC was located at 616 Madison St and between 16 and 30 players were turning out on Friday evenings. Members of the Tacoma CC got a thank you letter from the Red Cross for their coming to Madigan Hospital to play chess with hospitalized servicemen.

Ollie LaFreniere reports in from Yakima that William Hoge won the Yakima County Championship 17-1-1. Hoge also won Eastern Washington District open 7-0. Hoge was 33 years old in 1953 and born in Yakima and active from the start of the Yakima CC which took place in 1947. Pasco CC defeated a Yakima group 12.5-7.5.

From the "FROM CHESS LIFE by WEAVER" pages we learn that Sam Reshevsky won a match in Bueos Aires against Miguel Najdorf in 1953. Arthur Dake of Portland was scheduled to play in US Team match against Russia but it was canceled. A survey of chess publication was reported on. It listed 31 in USA and 4 in Canada. 52 newspapers and magazines had chess columns. USCF was doing ratings and only California and New York had more events rated than the 8 Washington events. Report says Mechanics Institute Chess Club of San Francisco adopted "Minute Chess", 30 moves in 30 minutes for its club championship.

Dan Wade published a page of information about the first year of Puget Sound League play which took place in 1946 and 1947 which he got from the PUGET SOUND CHESS NEWS publication (your writer has copies of this publication). The Tacoma CC won that first year of PSL play.

Fred Howard won a West Seattle CC event 16-4. The club met at High Point Recreation Center on 2nd and 4th Fridays. Pasco CC beat a team from Spokane 14.5-5.5.

Historical WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER recaps by Russell Miller August 1953

The 20 page August 1953 issue of WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER must have come out late in the month as Editor Dan Wade was still doing content on August 26 per a notice on page 2 of this issue.

There was a 3.5 page report on the 13 round US Open held in Milwaukee, WI. 182 players took part including defending champion Larry Evans 8.5-4.5 (No 1 on the starting crosstable), Max Pavey 10-3, Norman Whitaker, Nicholas Rossolimo 9.5-3.5, Curt Brasket 9-4, Edgar McCormick, Karl Burger 9-4, Vladimar Pafnutieff, Jim Sherwin 9.5-3.5, Al Horowitz 9.5-3.5 Arthur Bisguier 8.5-4.5, William Lombardy 8.5-4.5 Elliot Hearst 9.5-3.5, James Cross 9.5-3.5 Frank Anderson 9.5-3.5, Hans Berliner 8.5-4.5, Herman Steiner, George Krauss 8.5-4.5 and the winner Donald Byrne, 10.5-2.5, good for \$1,500 and a spot in the US Championship. The Northwest players who took part were Arthur Dake of Portland 8.5-4.5, Elmars Zemgalis (No 2 on the starting crosstable) 7-6 and Eugene Warner of Seattle 8-5 (No. 169 on the starting crosstable). Those of you reading this who know much about US Chess History can see that most of the top players of the day took part in this event back then players would travel to play chess there were not that many events to take part in.

Part 4 of FROM THE RECORD appears in this issue including some team results of Puget Sound League 1946-47 to 1952-53. Tacoma CC was the champion 4 times, Seattle CC twice and UofW once.

A full report of 1953 Seattle Seafair Open was given for this \$3.00 entry fee event. Elmars Zemgalis won the 6 player Open section 4.5-.5 while Dave Erickson won the 10 player B Section. The C Section was topped by W.A. Perey.

Tacoma CC took on the inmates of McNeil Island and lost 2.5-7.5. Greene and Mulford are on top the postal chess rating list this issue.

Historical WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER recaps by Russell Miller September 1953

Dan Wade's helpers for this issue, Circulation: R. R. Merk, Assistant Editors: J.N. Nourse (Nourse AdNauseam), F. H Weaver (From Chess Life), O.W. Mannery (Diagram Page, etc.), K.M. Mulford (Art-Cartoons), O. LaFreniere (East Wash. News), E. Zemgalis (Game Annotations), J.L. Sheets (Game Annotations) Mrs. D.E. Wade (Whimsical Side), William Couture (Problems, etc).

Full page given to schedule of 1953-54 Puget Sound League, West Seattle, Seattle Y.M.C.A., U of W, Seattle CC, Olympia, Kitsap County, Tacoma CC and McNeil Island Prison. Page and half story on 24-player Washington Open won by Jim Schmidt of Portland 7-0. Don Turner of Portland was second on tie-break with 5-2 score. Dean Moore then of Portland now of Finland (I think) is the only player still alive who played in the tournament. First place was worth \$34.00. Best game prize chosen by Zemgalis went to O.W. Manney of Seattle for his win over M. Paterson of Portland. The game with notes by Zemgalis appeared in this issue.

There was a report on the 24-player 10-round Swiss National Junior Championship held in Kansas City. Saul Yarmak of Passaic NJ won with 8.5-1.5. John Penquite of Des Moines (not sure if this is Iowa or WA) tied for second. He was the only player to beat the winner. I believe this John was for a long time the top rated postal player of our NW Postal Chess Group. Other players who readers today might know: 4th place Karl Burger of Brooklyn, Larry Remlinger age 11 of Long Beach CA was 8th. A newspaper article from Long Beach newspaper was reprinted about Remlinger who had at that point only been playing 14 months. Jim McCormick of Renton WA was 17 then and took part in the event, winning 4 losing 4 and drawing 2.

Four of Ted Warner's wins from US Open were printed plus his loss to N. Rossolimo. Editor Wade did a full page of predicting who would win Puget Sound League, writing a little about each team and came up with Seattle Y.M.C.A. as the team that would win. Greene and Mulford were still the top postal players on the rating list.

Historical WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER recaps by Russell Miller October 1953

Dan Wade's helpers for this issue, Circulation: R. R. Merk, Assistant Editors: J.N. Nourse (Nourse Ad Nauseam), F. H Weaver (From Chess Life), O. LaFreniere (East Wash. News), E. Zemgalis (Game Annotations), Faulk, Mulford.

Greene and Mulford were still the top postal players on the rating list.

Victor Pupols makes his first appearance in WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER. It was reported he downed Vernon Holmes in a match 7-5. He played for the Tacoma CC team in Puget Sound League match against Seattle Y. He and Russ Vellias on board one drew two games. Pupols USCF rating was listed as 1947 and he last lived in Lincoln Nebraska.

With Jim McCormick as reporter, the about 35 member Renton High School Club activities were reported.

The 1954 Washington Championship will be held Nov 14-15. The invited players were: J. Sheets, O.W. Manney, Dan Wade, Charles Joachim, Russell Vellias, V.W. Bever, John DeWitt, Dick Greenwood, Ted Warner, plus Tacoma CC Champion either Victor Pupols or Vernon Holmes. Also invited was defending champion Elmars Zemgalis. Also G.S.G. Patterson might play. The entry fee for the event was \$3.50.

The Pasco CC held a picnic for Eastern Washington players in Sacajawea State Park that was well attended. Pasco also won the Eastern Washington League with match score of 5-3 over Yakima, Walla Walla Prison, Heppner, OR and Spokane.

Russell Blackler wrote an article about Dr. Max Baumwell who was born in Vienna Austria in 1896 and now plays for Pasco CC. He was a medical doctor with a specialty in chest diseases. He won a Swiss gold pocket watch for winning first place in a 1927 Vienna Open Swiss Tournament. He came to USA in 1938 and played no chess until 1953. In 1946 he took up a post at V.A. Hospital in Walla-Walla. Herb Tedro, president of Pasco CC can take credit for getting the doctor to playing chess again. "The doctor considers his game very much on the decline, and says that chess is a young man's game – and an old man's pastime."

The Nourse Ad Nauseam column this month was about chess play of Napoleon Bonaparte and gave three games he played, two wins and a loss.

The rest of Ted Warner's games from US Open were printed.

The tournament report from around USA reported James Schroeder who in 2003 lives in Vancouver WA as placing 3rd in a 47 player Ohio tournament. James was a long time Cleveland Ohio resident.

Puget Sound League results were Olympia 6.5-3.5 for Seattle, Tacoma 5-5, Seattle Y., West Seattle 5-5, McNeil Island, Kitsap 5-4, U of W (with a game yet to be finished).

Historical WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER recaps by Russell Miller November 1953

16 page issue from Editor Dan Wade this month. Lead story is Puget Sound League results. Kitsap lead by Elmars Zemgalis downed Olympia 9-1. Tacoma Y team headed by Vernon Holmes topped Seattle 7-3. Viktors Pupols on board 2 for Tacoma won both his games over Dr. Shepard. Seattle YMCA team could only draw 4-4 with McNeil Island team. U of Wash. team downed West Seattle 8-2. Later matches found Kitsap downing Tacoma 6-4, Seattle YMCA over Seattle 9-1, Olympia 6 to West Seattle 4 and U of W drawing McNeil Island 5-5. C. Roseburg of U of W team is 6-0 as is Zemgalis in PSL play this season. 50 players have taken part so far in matches.

In other team play it was reported that Bellevue CC defeated Jefferson Club chess team 6.5-4.5.

Ten players took part in the Washington Woodpusher event which was won by James McCormick 4-0. The story of the event calls him a “future master” which proved to correct. Further is said “This just a beginning, fellows, watch out for McCormick!”

Joke in the issue: Book Salesman, “Buy these books on chess and you will know how to play chess twice as well as you do now.” Customer, “Heck, man, I already know how to play chess twice as well as I do.”

The nine-player crosstable for the 1954 Washington State Championship appears with J.L. Sheets on top with a 7 wins and 1 draw score. Viktors Pupols was 2nd with 6 wins and two losses. First prize was a trophy and 2nd was \$10.00. This was Pupols first of many appearances in the State Championship event. Sheets first won the State title in 1930. Other titles in 1931, 32, 33, 36, 40 and 1942. He stayed away for several years but was 2nd in 1953.

Arthur Dake of Portland took on Cottage Grove Oregon in simultaneous play. Dake got a \$40.00 fee for the 20 wins and 1 draw event. The single blindfold game part of the exhibition was drawn.

Historical WASHINGTON CHESS LETTER recaps by Russell Miller December 1953

18 pages in this Dan Wade Editor issue. It was reported that CHESS LIFE said “a group of chess players in Albany, Oregon are going to put out a printed chess magazine to take care of the Northwest”. Wonder if this ever happened.

Puget Sound League play report was Seattle YMCA team bounced the Kitsap group 7.5-2.5. Russell Vellias won 1 (game with notes by winner was printed in this issue) and lost 1 to Elmars Zemgalis on board 1. U of W beat Olympia 5.5-4.5. Tacoma YMCA (Viktors Pupols played board 1 for Tacoma) beat West Seattle by the same score. Seattle CC downed McNeil 6-4. Now the top scores in league of the 55 players are: Charles Rosburg of U of W 8-0., Alan Clark of U of W 7-0-1, and Zemgalis of Kitsap 7-1.

WCL reports USCF ratings of Elmars Zemgalis 2282, Eugene Warner 2150, O.W. Manney 1993, J.L. Sheets 1939, Viktors Pupols 1935, Russell Vellias 1860, Charles Joachim 1806. Editor Wade says most of these ratings are lower than they should be. Very few events in Washington were USCF rated at the time. The top ranking US players at the time were: Samuel Reshevsky, Robert Byrne, George Kramer, Donald Byrne, Arnold Denker.