

SCOUTS-L

CHESS

Date: Mon, 08 Jul 1996 09:46:42 -0400 (EDT)
From: CLAFF <CLAFF@api.org>
Subject: Chess in Scouting
To: mfbowman@capaccess.org

Michael -

I am writing for two reasons. First, congratulations on being awarded the Silver Beaver! In my view, the honor is richly deserved. I only know of you through the internet; yet time and again, the information you have generously provided me and other fellow scouters through the internet forums and home pages is invaluable. When I need information and advice, yours is a name I explicitly search for. I am well aware of the time and energy it takes to extend such assistance, and I want you to realize that your efforts are greatly appreciated.

The second reason I am writing, naturally, is to ask your advice! As perhaps you are aware, I am attempting to convince BSA-National to create a cub scout beltloop/pin and a boy scout merit badge for chess. In this effort, I have the enthusiastic support of Rachel Lieberman, the Secretary of the United States Chess Federation (USCF), the governing body of chess in the U.S. I have placed her in contact with Burts Kennedy at BSA-National, and phone calls and letters have been exchanged. USCF promised to work with BSA to develop the program and materials, and Burts Kennedy promised to bring forward the idea to a committee sometime in June or July.

Meanwhile, Pack 1570 set up a chessplaying table at our booth at Scouting on the Mall; and the table was busy all day long! For solving chess problems, we gave away our official Chess-in-Scouting tie slides, bearing our CIS logo! I also started a petition at Scouting on the Mall. The idea of the petition is merely to demonstrate some of the latent interest; I don't have the time and resources to launch a significant drive.

Locally, I have (of course) started a Pack 1570 chess club, and this month, will host a workshop to teach chess to other pack leaders in my district (Patawomeck). We're hoping these leaders will start clubs and arouse interest in their packs. Eventually, we'd like to get some district-wide competitions going.

Chess has much to offer scouts. It teaches scouts sportsmanship; accountability; perserverance; and the value of foresight, planning, and

cultivating quality ideas. We feel that if BSA can offer a marbles beltloop, or a reptile and amphibian studies merit badge, there is room for chess.

My current question is how best to keep the issue before the eyes of BSA-National. I have been told that chess idea has been raised in the past; but that the issue was dropped, and the local leaders supporting the idea were not informed as to the reasons. It's now July, and not having heard from Burts Kennedy makes me wonder if our initiative will suffer the same fate.

Any thoughts? Is the idea a good one? Am I going about it the right way? Naturally, I'll contact Burts Kennedy in August, but should anything further be done before then?

As always, I'd value your advice!

Thanks!

Yours in Scouting,

**Roger Claff
Den Leader Coach
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Herndon, VA**