

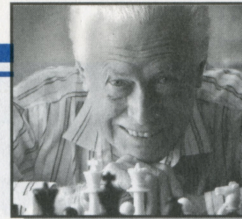
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T H E L O C K H E E D

# STAR

## Retirement Can't Checkmate Jim Hurt, Chess Buff For More Than 60 Years



**Jim Hurt**

Retiree Jim Hurt is 78, a 28-year veteran of LMSC plant engineering, and organizer and director of the annual LERA Chess Club Class Championship, which drew 129 players to Lockheed Aug. 21 and 22.

Hurt has been playing chess since 1929, and has played in tournaments almost that long. Even in retirement at Lake Tahoe he continues to organize tournaments at LERA, four per year, more than 100 in the last 30 years.

"I'd always had an appreciation that someone had gone to the trouble of setting up tables and chairs and organized the whole thing," he said. "I wanted to give

some of that back."

Chess is staging a bit of a comeback, due in part to the release of the movie "Searching for Bobby Fischer," the story of a boy with an aptitude for the game and how his family supports him. But for most people, chess remains the game of intellectuals and social misfits like the real Bobby Fischer who won the world championship in 1972, only to forfeit it and withdraw into seclusion for 20 years.

Hurt began playing chess while in high school after checking out a book from the library on chess rules. He remembers playing 30 to 40 games in a Saturday afternoon.

His family moved to San Francisco in 1933, where he discovered the Mechanics Institute, reputed to be the home of the oldest active chess club in the United States

"The city bought the Mechanics Institute's (old) building and used the land to build the City Hall," he said. "This gave the Mechanics Institute enough money to build a new building. The second floor was a library, the fourth floor was for chess and the rest was office space. I lived down there for two summers playing until late at night."

It was about the same time that he became interested in tournament play. He still remembers losing his

first tournament game.

"Some guy old enough to be my grandfather came up to me and said 'You look like you lost your first game. Let me tell you something, half the people here did,'" he said.

Hunt worked as a kitchen helper in a salmon cannery in Alaska to earn his way through the University of Washington in Seattle. While there, he won the Washington State Chess Championship in 1935, 1937 and 1938.

"I kind of fell out of chess for a while," he said. "My theory is that everyone has a leveling area. They play and then level off."

Hurt joined Lockheed in 1958 and joined the LERA chess club shortly afterward. He began organizing and directing LERA tournaments in 1962. He retired to Lake Tahoe in 1980, but has continued the pace of four tournaments a year. Each of his tournaments draws from 120 to more than 200 players, and Hurt has a reputation for sponsoring some of the best run tournaments in the state.

Lockheed's chess club meets Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. in LERA's Bldg 160. The next LERA tournament will be held Thanksgiving weekend Nov. 27-29 in Bldg. 160. For information on the LERA chess club contact Pat Jackson at Ext. 6-0257.