



—Examiner photos by Teresa Zabala

**NOVICE** player Joanne Grady has developed a master's technique at chess board concentration.

## Women Moving Into Chess

By Mildred Hamilton

Move over, Bobby, Bobbi could replace you at the chess board. Women's Lib has swept away the "men only" aura of the game and from this move forward, it is strictly unisex.

"Any excuse a woman makes that she can't be a chess player is null and void today," said San Francisco's international chess master George Koltanowski, who has been meeting all challengers this week at Macy's chess center.

"Twenty per cent of them have been women. Their interest is growing. In the past the men's chess club idea may have discouraged them. Today the women's movement has created an independent spirit, and the game of chess is an independent one. When you play it, it is your game."

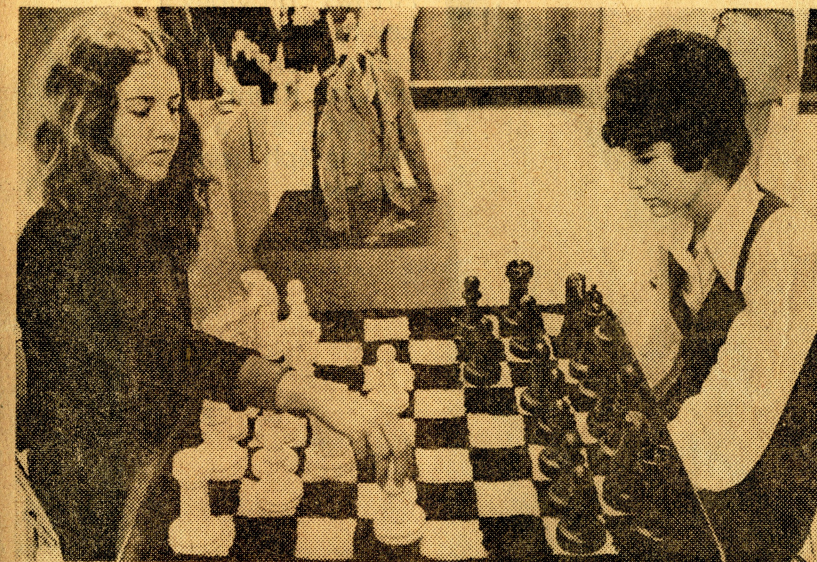
The international chess master, who leaves Sunday to preside over the U.S. Open Chess Tournament in Atlantic City, said, "Women from all over the country will be there to play. There will be a chess Olympics in September in Skopje, Yugoslavia, and for the first time a separate one will be held for the women. At the moment, they are separate but equal."

Koltanowski disagreed with statements made by some prominent American women chess players, quoted by the Associated Press today.

Marilyn Braun of Milwaukee, Wis., cowlinner of the 1972 U.S. Women's National Championship, said, "The fact is that women are definitely not as good at chess as men."

"Women have always been in a minority and they've never done as well," said Pearle Mann, a regional vice-president of the U.S. Chess Federation.

"It's ridiculous to say women can not play chess," was the reaction of the San Francisco expert. "They have the brains. They can play



**NEW** look to an old game—Joanne Grady, left, Nancy Barton compete.

if they want to, and they can enjoy it. They should learn. It is a very good game to know so you can play as you grow older."

His advice is "investigate. Get some one who plays to show you the pieces and explain the moves and the basics. Then go to the library and get this book, 'Invitation to Chess' by Kenneth Harkness and Irving Chernev.

"If you like the game, you'll play it. If not, you'll know something about it for possible later use and you will also have lost your fear of it."

The fear—or some other inhibiting factor—keeps the chess room at San Francisco's Mechanics Institute a mostly all-male center. "Women are welcome," said Norman Green, chief librarian "but not many play. Or if they come in, it is just for a game or two while the men may play all day. I think it is the time required and women don't seem to

want to devote that much to the demanding game."

Col. E. B. Edmondson, president of the American Chess Federation who was contacted by The Associated Press, has the same feeling.

"I don't think there's a difference in native ability. Women just don't want to spend that much time."

He said he would encourage more women to take up the game. "I would like to see some young gal with the talent and drive come along. She could make a fortune," Edmondson added, discussing the possibility of a Fischer-type female champion as he followed the world championship match in Reykjavik, Iceland, between Boris Spassky and Bobby Fischer.

But in San Francisco, Koltanowski had this question: "Who wants to be a Bobby Fischer? You should play a game to enjoy it."