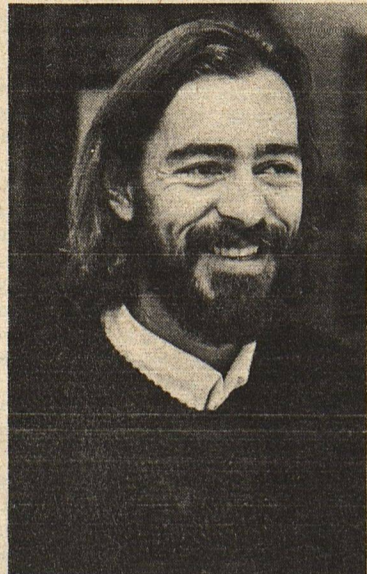


The Sleepy Hollow Chess Parlor opens its doors

CLAY GEERDES

"Facts don't matter in this game, only psychology."
 "You want to form an alliance?"
 "He's the stronger player. Let's gang up on him."
 "Go eat a bagle."
 "— I also know Latin and French."
 "You knock off the strongest."
 "— not a potential threat yet except for the loss of this pawn."
 "I'm going to put you in double check."
 "I was in check. You have to get out of check first."



ANDREW CHRISTIE

"Now we still have to ally against him."
 "We're supposed to be partners. Don't work against me."
 "You broadcast your intentions, then your intentions are worthless."
 "Gimme a break."
 "I'll break your arm."
 I'm in the ante-room of the Sleepy Hollow Chess Parlor at 1825 Union Street in San Francisco, one of the more interesting reactions to the Fischer-Spassky Match. This upstairs Victorian Parlor was opened by Alan and Charles B. Peterson as a gift shop and boutique in September of 1970. Alan, a Merchant Seaman at the time, was travelling in South America, and C. B. was working in sales at IBM. The brothers planned to go into the import-export business and Sleepy Hollow was to be their showroom.



SLEEPY HOLLOW CHESS PARLOR

Located on newly redeveloped Union Street, the latest notch on the Gray Line Tour, it was logical that the Petersons would be hustled by the numerous freelance designers, seamstresses, artists, and artisans who live in the Bay Area. Some of these people sell their wares themselves, setting up on a street corner like Haste and Telegraph in Berkeley or Beach and Hyde in San Francisco, but many prefer to consign their clothing and leathercraft to small boutiques like Things on Clement or Thousand Fingers on Fillmore. This frees them to work and leaves the selling process to others.

Those artisans in the Street Artists' Guild are generally opposed to consignment, because they feel craftsmen should deal directly with those people who are going to use their handiwork. It's a matter of personal contact vs. middlemen. At the present writing, the Bay Area has an enormous surplus of people in the arts and crafts and more are arriving daily to prepare their displays for the Christmas shopping orgy coming up.

Sleepy Hollow didn't make it as a boutique. The Peterson's had a conference with Andrew Christie, a young man they met at the Alameda Penny Market (a reconverted drive-in cum flea market which is mobbed every weekend by itinerant salesmen), and the trio discussed opening a Chess Parlor. Alan and C. B. were longtime chess players and the idea was not new. As Alan said, "We had to wait until the general public was receptive." Public reaction to the Fischer-Spassky Match convinced them that the time was ripe. Not only were people playing chess and mobbing the free sessions offered by Macy's, but every bookstore in the Bay Area was sold out of paperbacks related to chess. By mid-August of 1972, all of the unsold consignment items had been removed from Sleepy Hollow and the upstairs rooms were filled with chess sets and games-in-progress. Alan and C. B. managed the Parlor, while Andrew arranged for chess boards, games and other sale items.

The range of chess materials is extensive and one may expect it to expand now that an American holds the top spot. Classic Games Company of Deer Park, New York, for example, produces Collectors' Series sets. The First Edition is based upon Ancient Rome. All of the pieces have historical backgrounds. The King is Emperor Augustus Caesar; the Queen Livia Dursilla; the Bishop Cicero; and the Knight is a Roman cavalrman. The Rook is a column erected on the Forum in honor of Admiral Duillius, and the Pawns are Roman foot soldiers. In Edition II, the King and Queen are Napoleon and Josephine and the Bishop is Tallyrand. Edition V is called The Educator, because it enables the novice to minor his moves and plan. This set has the Movement Pattern of a piece imprinted on the base of that piece. The Classic sets run from eight to a hundred dollars depending upon the materials used. The hundred dollar set is hand-painted and the pieces are distinguished by intricate detail.

Staunton makes sets in styles from Florentine to Gothic and Kontrell Industries has a Peter Max set which sells for \$10. Many craftsmen prefer to do their own unique games

have been the sets, because they would have been copyrighted by the firms that produced them.

Sleepy Hollow Chess Parlor opened in August and from the beginning it attracted a wide range of people, not so much the pros (experts and Masters) who play in the Chess Room at the Mechanics Library on Post Street or at the Berkeley Chess Club, but ordinary people who had had their initial interest in chess revived by the excitement of the recent match. Sleepy Hollow offered lessons to those who wanted to learn or improve their game and a playing room for those who loved the game and had trouble finding other players.

One of those who came to teach at the Parlor was an ex-post office worker and Top Dog fry cook named Don Dean, a "chess bum" as he referred to himself when I interviewed him in mid-September. He was born in Portland and grew up along the California Coast. He got into chess in junior high school in the Fifties, did some time in the Math Department at UC Berkeley in 1962, and was getting his first tournament experience in Germany by 1965.



HEX: THREE-WAY CHESS GAME

While he was in Europe, the movie *Exodus* turned him on and he hitchhiked around Israel, stopping in Monaco to see Bobby Fischer finish one-half point ahead of Smyslov in the 1967 tournament. Since 1967, Dean has been dropping in and out of school. He joined the U.S. Chess Federation in 1961 and is now a life member. I asked him the advantage of belonging to U.S.C.F. and he said one received a rating, magazine, and access to official tournaments.

When Dean meets a student for the first time, he plays him/her a few games, noting the moves down on a white note pad. He evaluates the strength of the student on the basis of his organization, how he develops his game and gets his pieces into play. Terminology is discussed as it comes up.

For the novice, Dean recommends the books of Reuben Fine: *Chess the Easy Way* (Cronerstone, \$1.25 in paperback), *Ideas Behind the Chess Openings*, *The Middle-Game in Chess*, and *Basic Chess Endings*. Finished with a preliminary session which usually runs about an hour and a half, Don explains chess notation and urges his student to record all games played between lessons.

At this writing, Sleepy Hollow has three teachers: Don Dean, Joe Lynch, and Phil Topping. All three are kept busy handling the beginning and intermediate students whose occupations range from computer analyst to elementary teacher. The routine at the Parlor is simple and relaxed. People drop in to find someone who wants a game. Players are charged a board fee of fifty cents an hour or a dollar for as long as they wish to stay. So far week nights seem most popular.

Shortly after the Parlor opened, Andrew S. Braden and a couple of his friends arrived with a large demonstration model of an hexagonal chess game, HEX. Braden invented the game which is essentially chess designed for three instead of two players. demonstration games are now being played each Thursday night at seven o'clock.

While women are rare visitors to most chess clubs, the opposite

seems true of Sleepy Hollow where many of the players are young women in their mid-twenties. I asked Dean why fewer women than men played the game and he suggested it had to do with the "image of the sport as a man's game."

One young man, an enthusiast of "speed chess," argued that chess was an aggressive game. Into the psychology of his opponents, he said, "the object of the game is to demoralize your opponent and beat him. That's what Fischer did to Spassky." A French woman disagreed with him when he proposed a sexual basis for the game. For her it was an exercise of the intellect.

The Berkeley student came to Sleepy Hollow often in the days before classes began and he always challenged everyone to play him a fast game. "Speed Chess" or Rapid Transit Chess is played by the clock. A chess clock has two faces or is two clocks in one. Both are set for five minutes and the play begins. As each player moves he strikes the plunger on top of his clock. This stops his side of the clock and starts that of his opponent. While slow

come to the Parlor. Blacks, Asians, Chicanos, of both sexes drop in for an afternoon or evening game. It's a relaxed coffeehouse atmosphere.

If you recognized the opening dialogue, you're already a HEX player.

Check. Mate.

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