

HARRY G. SHAW  
1227 MINNESOTA AVE.  
SAN JOSE 25, CALIF.

March 30th 1952

Dear Mary Bain;

Thanks for your letter of March 24th, the air mailed photo, and the short ( and modest) biography.

Please accept my appologies for having misspelled your name and trying to make a Scotchwoman out of you. The name MacBain, is an old and well known family name hereabouts, we even having a street so named and I just couldn't visualize that name without the MAC. I know better now.

We are working on our plans for your appearance in San Jose and already building up interest. We have had the pleasure of presenting several men chess players ( George Koltanowski, Olaf Ulvestead, Weaver Adams, Newell Banks) but never have had the pleasure of a lady chess player and we think we can build up a lot of public interest in a simultaneous exhibition. There is considerable amazement to non chess players when they see or learn that one player can take on and defeat 30 opponents, not knowing or realizing that actually, it is merely a contest between a good player and one of lesser ability. And the sight of a lady opposing 25 or 30 men and winning the majority of the games, should be even more amazing to the non chess player.

At the moment, I am trying to get the local Woman's Club in on the exhibition. They have about ten groups, the literary group, the bridge and canasta etc.etc. and I'm sure they have a lot of members, who would greatly enjoy the sight of a woman meeting ( and defeating) a bunch of men. Besides, they have an "in" with the local papers for much free publicity.... and also a nice hall to stage an exhibition. Much better, cleaner and less odorous than our customary meeting place at the "Y". I must confess, I haven't made a great deal of progress along thism line.

I'm also trying to get our best hotel interested in the idea and find them more receptive.

In regard to a date for your appearance, I ask for a few more days before definately setting the exact day. We seem to think now that an evening engagement might be preferable because the weather will be nice in May... and we have had so darn many recent bad days on Sundays and Saturdays.... that a lot of people will be out taking a ride about that time. Also, we have selected a tentative date of May 27th. Actually, I want to find out just if the Woman's Club want to come in with us and if so... what night can we have the place.

Can we hold this date more or less reserved for San Jose but allowing us the previlige of changing it, provided it can fit in with your itinerary and schedule and giving you/ reasonable notice. I understand that you are now giving exhibitions around New York and will leave soon for your tour. Will you have a forwarding address or will you keep in touch with your home.

HARRY G SHAW  
1717 WISCONSOTA AVE  
SAN JOSE 25 CALIF

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We would also like to know, if you put a limit on the number of boards that will be played for your regular fee and if so, how many. I don't expect any exhibition player to offer to play an unlimited number of boards but we have set the number of boards at 30 for our better or average players.

There is considerable interest in two of the local schools, it so happens that each school have a young chess enthusiast on the teaching staff and they have organized chess clubs and play interschool matches. These teachers have asked me to reserve some boards in the exhibition and I have promised them each one board which they will award to their best school player. I do know that the school players would like more boards but we will have the problem of being required to take care of our own local club members plus some local celebrities who only put in an appearance to get their name in the papers. There is also a question of finances with school kids. They don't have any school funds and they can't raise the exhibition's players fee via board fees.

Maybe you might be willing to do something for them for the good of chess. They are all elementary pupils and the calibre of their chess, with one or two exceptions, is small.

We are also planning a dinner for you before the exhibition (if we hold it at the hotel) and expect to have our local club officers and their wives present.

In California, we hold a North vs South Match at Atascadero on May 30th-31st. and it's the big event in Calif with about 50 players on each side. As you will be in California about this time, I'm sure you might like to be present for this event. This match was another reason why we shied away from the date of May 24th which would have taken the men folks away from their homes on two successive Sundays. Some of the little women would probably put up an objection.

I liked the picture you sent but if by any chance you do have a picture of you playing chess (an action shot) it is always easier to interest any editor, when one is trying to get a picture in any paper. "Mug shots" they call portraits and unless the subject is about 18 or 20 and preferably wearing a bathing suit or a TV gown... they don't show much enthusiasm over them. You probably know all this, as well as I do. I'll get your picture in our local paper and I'll also see that you get the photo back, unless the paper wants it in their file.

Sorry to have made you read a full two page letter and taken up so much of your time and hope that you don't think I'm some kind of an woman and a fussy one at that. It's just that I like to have things understood before hand and that I like to have anything that I'm connected with run off smoothly and be a success for both of us...and nothing is ever a success unless some advance planning is done.

Sincerely yours,

*Harry Shaw*