

## BCCF E-MAIL BULLETIN #363

Your editor welcomes any and all submissions – news of upcoming events, tournament reports, and anything else that might be of interest to BC players. Thanks to all who contributed to this issue. To subscribe, send me an e-mail ([swright2@telus.net](mailto:swright2@telus.net)); if you no longer wish to receive this Bulletin, just let me know.

Stephen Wright

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### HERE AND THERE

#### **International Chess Day** (July 20) by Konstantin Pyryaev

[International chess day occurs on July 20, the day FIDE was founded in 1924]

Five years ago we played chess on the giant board to celebrate International Chess Day. We did it every year and this Friday the Chigorin Chess Club invites everyone to join us here:



Ontario & 18th, Vancouver, BC.

If you want to play at any other location, i.e., Morgan Crossing (South Surrey), Pacific Centre (Downtown) or any other location - it's great! My favourite format is five minute blitz two vs two. Gens una sumus!

#### **World Open** (July 3-8)

The forty-sixth edition of the World Open took place at the Marriott Downtown in Philadelphia, the same site as and immediately following the Philadelphia International. Among the Canadians participating were a dozen from this province, including Stephanie Gu, Patrick Huang, Winston Huang, Eric Jiang, Ethan Low, Kevin Low, Tanraj Sohal, Brian Yang, Ryan Yang, Nathan Wu, Nicholas Wu, and Dezheng Kong. Presumably there would have been more, except this year the World Open was scheduled at the same time as the CYCC and Canadian Open, meaning players (especially the juniors) had to choose which event(s) to play in. (Whether by design or accident, Eric Jiang began play in the U10 Open Section of the CYCC, then after three rounds switched to the World Open.)

It is becoming a bit of a tradition that a BC player wins one of the section prizes at the World Open. In 2016 it was James Li, last year it was Daniel Wang, and this year Stephanie Gu took clear first in the U1600 Section with an undefeated 8.0/9 score, worth \$10,000 USD. She also tied for the third Mixed Doubles prize with American Libardo Rueda. There were a number of other BC prizewinners: Kevin Low tied for the U2100 prize in the U2200 Section, Dezheng Kong tied for third U2200 in the Open Section, Ryan Yang and Winston Huang tied for fourth in the U1400 and U900 Sections respectively, and Eric Jiang and Brian Yang were tied for ninth and tenth respectively in the U1600 and U1800 Sections. The overall winner was Illia Nyzhnyk with 7.5 points, a half-point ahead of Lazaro Bruzon Batista on clear second; best Canadians were Anton Kovalyev and Razvan Preotu with 6.0 points, just outside the prizes. [Tournament website](#) [USCF crosstables](#)

### **Cooke, Eric – Sohal, Tanraj [D61] World op 46th Philadelphia (4), 06.07.2018**

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 Nbd7 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 0–0 7.Bd3 a6 8.cxd5 exd5 9.0–0 c6 10.Qc2 Re8 11.Rad1 g6 12.Rfe1 Nf8 13.h3 Ne6 14.Bh6 Ng7 15.Qb3 Ra7 16.a3 Nf5 17.Bf4 Be6 18.Ng5 Bc8 19.Nf3 Nd6 20.Bb1 Nh5 21.Bh2 Ng7 22.Ne5 Be6 23.Nd3 Ne4 24.Nf4 Nxc3 25.Nxe6 Ne2+ 26.Rxe2 Nxe6 27.e4 dxe4 28.Rxe4 Bd6 29.Bxd6 Qxd6 30.Ba2 Raa8 31.Qe3 Ng7 32.f3 Rad8 33.Qb3 Qd7 34.Qc4 Nf5 35.Qd3 Rxe4 36.Qxe4 Nxd4 37.Kh1 c5 38.b4 b6 39.bxc5 bxc5 40.Bc4 Qa4 41.Rc1 Qxa3 42.Rb1 Rf8 43.Kh2 Qc3 44.Bxa6 Qa5 45.Bc4 Qc7+ 46.Kg1 Rb8 47.Re1 Qd6 48.f4 Nf5 49.Kh2 Kg7 50.Ra1 Rc8 51.Ra7 Rc7 52.Rxc7 Qxc7 53.g4 Nd4 54.Kg1 h6 55.Kf2 g5 56.fxg5 Qh2+ 57.Ke1 hxg5 58.Bd3 Qg3+ 59.Kd2 Ne6 60.Qe3 Qf4 61.Qxf4 Nxf4 62.Bf1 Kf6 63.Ke3 Ke5 64.Kf3 f6 65.Kg3 Ng6 66.Bd3 Nh4 67.Kf2 Kd4 68.Ke2 0–1

### **Kretchetov, Alexandre – Kong, Dezheng [A47] World op 46th Philadelphia (5), 06.07.2018**

1.d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 e6 3.e3 Be7 4.Bd3 b6 5.Nd2 Bb7 6.Ngf3 c5 7.c3 d6 8.h3 Nbd7 9.Qe2 0–0 10.Bf4 Re8 11.Bh2 Rc8 12.e4 cxd4 13.cxd4 e5 14.d5 Nh5 15.g3 f5 16.0–0 fxe4 17.Nxe4 Nhf6 18.Nfg5 Bxd5 19.Ba6 Nxe4 20.Nxe4 Rc7 21.Rfd1 Qa8 22.f3 Nf6 23.Re1 Nxe4 24.fxe4 Be6 25.g4 Bf6 26.Rad1 Rd8 27.a3 Qc6 28.Bg3 Bc4 29.Bxc4+ Qxc4 30.Rd3 Rdc8 31.Red1 Be7 32.Be1 Qa2 33.R3d2 Rc1 34.Kg2 Rxd1 35.Rxd1 Qc4 36.Qxc4+ Rxc4 37.Kf3 Kf7 38.Bc3 Ke6 39.Rd5 Rc8 40.Ke2 Rc5 41.Rd1 a5 42.Rf1 h6 43.Rf5 Bf6 44.Rf1 Rc4 45.Kd3 d5 46.exd5+ Kxd5 47.Rf5 Rf4 48.Rh5 Bg5 49.h4 g6 50.hxg5 gxh5 51.gxh6 hxg4 52.h7 Rf3+ 0–1

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**CYCC** (July 2-5) by Eric Gu, photos by Victoria Jung-Doknjas

This year's CYCC in Quebec City attracted forty-six BC players: William Jiang, Matthew Kofmansky, Boyong Guo, Aiden Lu, Codrin Pompas, Haoze Wang, Jayden Qu, Erwin Mok in U8 Open (8); Anglina Vozian in U8 Girl (1); Eric Jiang, Eric Shan, Joshua Gao, Joey Xu, Derrick Su, Zhiheng Luo, Winston Huang, Matthew Imoo in U10 Open (8); Gillian Mok, Joyce Zhang in U10 Girl (2); Chuyang Gu, Joshua Imoo, David Jiang, Liyuan (George) Liu, David Eirew in U12 Open (5); Kate (Yuhua) Jiang, Jessica Qian, Elaine Fan, Emilia Vozian, Mengbai Li in U12 Girl (5); Andrew Hemstapat, Neil Doknjas, Rowan James, Leo Chung, Andy Zhang, William Landstrom, Benjamin Zhu in U14 Open (7); Anna Van, Lyvia Shan in U14 Girl (2); Joshua Doknjas, Kai Richardson, Callum Lehingrat, Milo Eirew in U16 Open (4); Andrea Botez in U16 Girl (1); Brandon Zhu and William Bremner in U18 Open (2); Pepi Eirew in U18 Girl (1).

The record-breaking long list is probably because of the tournament location: Quebec City, which "holds both European charm and sophistication alongside its unmistakable French Canadian character."



BC junior players collected two golds and three silvers this year!

U8 Open: William Jiang eleventh

U10 Girl: Gillian Mok fourth, Joyce Zhang eighth

U12 Girl: Jessica Qian won the first place, Kate Jiang took fourth

U14 Open: Andrew Hemstapat finished sixth

U14 Girl: Anna Van finished seventh

U16 Open: Joshua Doknjas won second place

U18: Brandon Zhu won first place and William Bremner second place, well done!

U18 Girl: Pepi Eirew won second place

The way for Jessica and Brandon towards their national championships was wonderful. Jessica Qian got the first gold for BC players. She lost to her close friend, Kate, in round two; this early loss didn't change anything for Jessica's target planned before CYCC, after reviewing with her coach, she won both games in the second day; the third day was critical, Jessica won both games with confidence, especially as black against WCM Julia Tsukerman. Jessica has studied chess for about two years; she loves chess and well organizes her learning. Before the tournament, Jessica prepared opening for her opponents systematically all by herself.

Brandon was the last gold winner for the whole tournament. After he drew in a winning position due to time trouble in the fifth round, Brandon was very upset as it was already his third draw; however, Brandon recovered totally and defeated his opponent in the critical sixth round. After seven rounds, Brandon got 5.5 points together with William Bremner and Andrew Colvin; in playoff, Brandon got 1.5 points and along with national championship U18! Brandon is deserving of his title as he's known to be one of the most diligent chess players in BC in the past three years.



Just after last round of CYCC, the National Bughouse Championship was run with these winners:

- Champion Team: Neil Doknjas and FM Nicholas Vettese
- Second Place Team: CM Joshua Doknjas and WIM Maili-Jade Ouellet

This year John Jiang and Eric Gu established a chatting group for those chess players/parents who are interested to exchange information each other during the tournament. [Tournament website](#).  
[Results and standings](#)

### **Zhu, Brandon – Colvin, Andrew [D27] CYCC U18 Quebec City (3.2), 03.07.2018**

1.Nf3 d5 2.e3 Nf6 3.c4 dxc4 4.Bxc4 e6 5.0–0 c5 6.Qe2 Nc6 7.Rd1 a6 8.d4 cxd4 9.exd4 Be7  
10.Nc3 b5 11.Bb3 Na5 12.Bc2 Bb7 13.a3 0–0 14.Bg5 Nc4 15.b3 Nb6 16.Qd3 g6 17.Bh6 Re8  
18.Ne5 Nbd5 19.Ne2 Rc8 20.Bb1 Bf8 21.Bxf8 Rxf8 22.b4 Qe7 23.Ra2 Rc7 24.Rc2 Rfc8 25.Rxc7  
Qxc7 26.Rd2 Nf4 27.Nxf4 Qc1+ 28.Rd1 Qxf4 29.Qf1 Ng4 30.Nxg4 Qxg4 31.f3 Qf4 32.Qd3 Rc1  
33.Rxc1 Qxc1+ 34.Kf2 Bd5 35.h4 Qh1 36.Kg3 Qe1+ 37.Kh3 Qh1+ 38.Kg3 Qe1+ 39.Kh3 Qh1+  
½–½

### **Eirew, Pepi – Zhou, Lily [D03] CYCC U16/U18G Quebec City (6.4), 04.07.2018**

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Bf4 e6 4.e3 Bd6 5.Bg5 0–0 6.Bd3 Nbd7 7.Nbd2 Be7 8.c3 c5 9.Bxf6 Nxf6 10.h3  
b6 11.g4 Bb7 12.g5 Nd7 13.h4 g6 14.Qc2 Kg7 15.0–0–0 a5 16.Rdg1 Ba6 17.h5 Bxd3 18.Qxd3  
cxd4 19.Qxd4+ Kg8 20.hxg6 fxg6 21.Rxh7 Kxh7 22.Rh1+ Kg8 23.Qh8+ Kf7 24.Qh7+ Ke8  
25.Qxg6+ Rf7 26.Rh7 Nf8 27.Qxf7+ Kd7 28.Rh6 Kd6 29.Qf4+ Kc6 30.g6 Nxg6 31.Rxg6 Bd6  
32.Rxe6 Kc7 33.Qf7+ Kc6 34.Nd4+ Kc5 35.b4+ axb4 36.cxb4+ Kxb4 37.Nc6+ Kc3 38.Nxd8 Rxa2  
39.Qf6+ Kd3 40.Qd4+ Ke2 41.Qg4+ Kd3 42.Rxd6 Kc3 43.Qd4# 1–0

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## **54<sup>th</sup> CANADIAN OPEN (July 7-14)**

Coupled as usual with the youth championships, the Canadian Open was held immediately after the CYCC in Quebec City. The Canadian Open has been held in Montreal five times, including the inaugural event in 1958, and in 1981 the tournament was situated in Beauport, a borough of Quebec City. This was the first time the Canadian Open has been held in the centre of the provincial capital. The turnout of one hundred and fifty-three players was less than the organizers had hoped for; many CYCC participants did not stay on for the Canadian Open (Quebec City does not have the same junior base as other cities) and the tournament lost several marquee players at the last minute (Razvan Preotu chose the World Open instead, and Cuban GMs Nogueiras and Vera were refused Canadian visas, despite having played here many times before). The players from this province included William Bremner, Gilles Bruneau, John, Joshua, and Neil Doknjas, Rowan James, David Jiang, Callum Lehingrat, Jessica Qian, Kai Richardson, and Brandon Zhu.

There were three grandmasters present, Bator Sambuev, John Fedorowicz, and Alexander Cherniaev, but it was only Sambuev who managed to challenge for the top places. Indeed, Sambuev was the sole leader after rounds four and five but overpressed in round six (spurning a triple repetition) and lost to Alberta Champion Bitan Banerjee. He battled back, defeating Cherniaev in round eight to share the lead with Banerjee going into the last round. Banerjee survived a tense game with FM Rodrigue-Lemieux, but Sambuev fell to a player who is no stranger to BC chess, IM Raymond Kaufman, leaving Banerjee and Kaufman sharing first place with 7.0 points each. Raymond had lost in rounds three and five but capped his comeback with wins against former and current Canadian champions Hébert and Sambuev in the last two rounds.



Bitan Banerjee and Raymond Kaufman (photo by Victoria Jung-Doknjas)

Banerjee took the Canadian Open title on tiebreak and pushed his FIDE rating over 2400 so will soon be Canada's newest IM (he had four norms already).

This Canadian Open was divided into sections (U2000, U1800, U1600, U1400) rather than everyone playing together, and two of the sections were won by BC CYCC prizewinners. In the U2000 Section William Bremner, who placed second in the U18 CYCC, gave up just two draws in claiming first prize with 8.0/9, while new Canadian U12G champion Jessica Qian beat everyone she played to come first in the U1400 Section. It should also be noted that back in the Open Section FM John Doknjas had the distinction of playing all three grandmasters and drew with two of them. [Tournament website](#) [standings at chess-results](#)



(photos by Victoria Jung-Doknjas)

### **Sambuev, Bator – Banerjee, Bitan [D12] CAN-op Quebec CAN (6.1), 11.07.2018**

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Bf5 5.Nc3 e6 6.Nh4 Be4 7.Qb3 Qc7 8.f3 Bg6 9.Bd2 Nbd7 10.Rc1 Rc8 11.cxd5 exd5 12.Kf2 Qb8 13.g3 Be7 14.Bh3 0–0 15.Nf5 Bd8 16.Ne2 Re8 17.Bb4 Bxf5 18.Bxf5 a5 19.Bd2 g6 20.Bh3 Qa7 21.a4 Bb6 22.Rhe1 Re7 23.Nf4 g5 24.Nd3 g4 25.Bxg4 Nxg4+ 26.fxg4 Nf6 27.Kg2 Rce8 28.Qd1 Ne4 29.Nf4 Bc7 30.Nh5 Qb6 31.Bc3 Re6 32.Qf3 f6 33.h4 Bd8 34.Kh3 Qc7 35.Re2 Qd7 36.b3 Bc7 37.Bb2 Qe7 38.Rce1 Bd6 39.Bc1 Qd7 40.Qf5 Qc7 41.Rg2 Bb4 42.Rf1 Qe7 43.Rf3 Rf8 44.Rg1 Qe8 45.Rgf1 Bd6 46.Nf4 Re7 47.Nd3 Re6 48.Nf2 Ng5+ 49.hxg5 fxg5

50.Qxg5+ Rg6 51.Rxf8+ Qxf8 52.Qf5 Rf6 53.Qg5+ Rg6 54.Qf5 Rf6 55.e4 Rxf5 56.gxf5 Qf7 57.Kh4 Be7+ 58.Kg4 Qg7+ 59.Kh3 Qxd4 60.exd5 Qxd5 61.Ng4 h5 62.Ne3 Qxb3 63.Ng2 Qc4 64.Ne3 Qe4 65.f6 Bxf6 66.g4 Bg5 0-1

### Kaufman, Raymond – Hébert, Jean [A34] CAN-op Quebec CAN (8.3), 13.07.2018

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.Nc3 Nc7 7.0-0 e5 8.d3 Be7 9.Nd2 Bd7 10.Nc4 f6 11.f4 exf4 12.Bxf4 Be6 13.Qb3 Qc8 14.Qa4 Qd7 15.Bxc7 Qxc7 16.Nb5 Qb8 17.Na5 Bd7 18.Nxc6 bxc6 19.Nc3 Qb6 20.Kh1 Rd8 21.Rac1 Qxb2 22.Bxc6 Qb4 23.Bxd7+ Rxd7 24.Qc6 Qb6 25.Qa8+ Rd8 26.Qe4 Rd4 27.Qf3 0-0 28.Rb1 Qe6 29.Rb7 a6 30.Rfb1 Rfd8 31.R1b6 R4d6 32.Rxd6 Qxd6 33.Ra7 Qe5 34.Qe4 Qxe4+ 35.Nxe4 Bf8 36.Kg2 c4 37.dxc4 Rd4 38.Kf3 Rxc4 39.Rxa6 f5 40.Ng5 h6 41.Ne6 Be7 42.h4 g5 43.hxg5 hxg5 44.e3 Kf7 45.Nd4 Rc5 46.a4 Bf6 47.Ra7+ Ke8 48.Ne6 Rc6 49.Ng7+ Bxg7 50.Rxg7 f4 51.Rxg5 fxg3 52.Kxg3 Rc3 53.Kf3 Ke7 54.a5 Ra3 55.Kf4 Ra4+ 56.e4 Kf6 57.Rb5 Ra1 58.Rb6+ Ke7 59.a6 Ra5 60.Rb7+ Ke6 61.Rh7 Ra1 62.Rh6+ Kf7 63.Kf5 Rf1+ 64.Ke5 Ra1 65.Rh7+ Kg6 66.Ra7 Rb1 67.Rb7 1-0

### Kaufman, Raymond – Sambuev, Bator [E39] CAN-op Quebec CAN (9.1), 14.07.2018

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 c5 5.dxc5 0-0 6.a3 Bxc5 7.Nf3 b6 8.Bf4 Bb7 9.Rd1 a6 10.e4 h6 11.Be2 Nh5 12.Bc1 Qc7 13.e5 f5 14.0-0 g5 15.Nxg5 hxg5 16.Bxh5 Qxe5 17.Bxg5 Qg7 18.h4 Be7 19.Rd3 f4 20.Bf3 Bxf3 21.Rxf3 Bxg5 22.hxg5 Qxg5 23.Rd1 Rf7 24.Qe4 Ra7 25.Ne2 Qf5 26.Qxf5 Rxf5 27.Rxf4 Rxf4 28.Nxf4 Rc7 29.Nxe6 Rxc4 30.Nd4 Kf7 31.g3 Kf6 32.f4 d6 33.Kf2 Nd7 34.Ke3 Rc8 35.g4 Rh8 36.Nf5 Rh3+ 37.Kf2 Nc5 38.Rxd6+ Kf7 39.Rxb6 Nd3+ 40.Kg1 Nxf4 41.g5 Rf3 42.Rf6+ Kg8 43.g6 Ne2+ 44.Kg2 Rb3 45.Ne7+ Kg7 46.Rf7+ Kh6 47.Rh7+ Kg5 48.g7 Nf4+ 49.Kh1 1-0

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## BRUCE HARPER ANNOTATES

### Opponent – Harper, Bruce [A42] ICC 3 0 Internet Chess Club

This game is one of those big, blocked positions that I was raised on by Grandmaster Duncan Suttles. If you're not familiar with the ideas, it is easy to fall into a bad position for either side.



**1.d4** [3:00] **g6** [3:00] **2.c4** [2:59] **Bg7** [3:00] **3.Nc3** [2:57] **d6** [2:59] **4.e4** [2:56] **Nc6** [2:58] **5.Be3** [2:53] **e5** [2:57] **6.d5** [2:50] **Nce7** [2:56]

[diagram]

**7.Qd2?!** [2:48] A very common choice for White on ICC, but there are a number of better options. **7...f5** [2:55] **8.f3** [2:47] **Nf6** [2:54] **9.Bd3** [2:43] **0-0** [2:53] **10.Nge2** [2:39] **c5** [2:52] The engine is not impressed by this move, which aims to slow down White's queenside play. Since Black effectively has a King's Indian Defence with an extra tempo or two, there are viable alternatives for Black, including **10...fxe4**. **11.h3?!** [2:33]



This move is worth a comment. 11.h3 threatens 12.g4, blocking the kingside, and allows White to open the h-file if Black launches a kingside pawn attack with ...f5-f4 and ...g6-g5-g4. However, it also gives Black a target on the kingside. **11...f4!** [2:49] **12.Bf2** [2:31] **g5** [2:48] **13.a3** [2:29] White starts his own advance on the queenside. The engine, which fears nothing except power outages, gives White a small edge in this position, and with accurate play it might be right. But this is a 3-minute game, and Black's position is easier to play (in my opinion, at least). **13...Ng6** [2:47] **14.b4** [2:27] **b6** [2:46] **15.bxc5** [2:22] **bx5** [2:45] **16.Qb2?!** [2:16] This seems unnatural. **16...h5** [2:42] **17.Rb1** [2:14] **g4** [2:36] **18.hxg4** [2:12] **hxg4** [2:35]



**19.Nb5?!** [2:08] This is a blank shot which just loses time. **19...g3!?** [2:32] The right way to handle the position for Black. 19...g3!? transfers the base of White's pawn chain to g2, which is not easy to attack, but is even harder to defend. And should Black succeed in destroying White's pawn chain, his kingside pawns will become dangerous. **20.Bg1** [2:05] **Nh7** [2:31] **21.Qb3** [1:56] **Bf6** [2:27] **22.Qa4** [1:55] **Rf7** [2:23] **23.Kd2?** [1:49] **Nh4** [2:20]



Oops! White can't defend his g2-pawn, and so is forced to give up the exchange. On the bright side, in a blocked position like this, rooks are less valuable than normal. But they are still rooks. **24.Rxh4** [1:42] **Bxh4** [2:20] **25.Nbc3** [1:37] **Be7** [2:12] **26.Nb5** [1:25] **Bf8** [2:03] **27.Nbc3** [1:22] **Ng5** [2:01] **28.Rb2** [1:14] **Rb7!** The exclamation mark is for finally making this move, which Black could have made earlier on several occasions. Exchanging rooks makes perfect sense, because Black has two rooks and White only has one. [1:56] **29.Rxb7** [1:10] **Bxb7** [1:56] **30.Nc1** [1:07] **Bc8** [1:31] **31.Qc6** [1:04]



**31...Bd7** [1:28] Black could have played the more vigorous **31...Bh3!**, but I was lazy and was playing "by position." Kasparov is always criticizing this approach, and he's right. **32.Qa6** [1:03] **Qb6** [1:26] **33.Qxb6** [0:56] **axb6** [1:26] **34.Nb1** [0:49]



While Black has been cautious, eliminating even a hint of White play on the queenside, he hasn't ruined anything, as his next move demonstrates. **34...Bh3!** [1:20] Attacking the foundation of White's position. **35.gxh3** is met by **35...Nxf3+** and **36...Nxb1**, but White's actual reply is no better. **35.Bf1** [0:45] **Nxf3+** [1:19] **36.gxf3** [0:41] **Bxf1** [1:19] **37.Kc3** [0:38] **Bg2** [1:14]



"A strategic triumph," they might have said. It's more accurate to say that things worked out the way Black hoped... White resigns. **0-1**



## CHESS AND LIBRARIES

Chess and libraries (and their predecessors – reading rooms, literary institutes, Mechanics' Institutes) have had a long history in this province which continues to this day – [Chess2Inspire](#) offers beginner's classes at the Richmond Brighthouse Public Library, while the [Victoria Chess Club](#) meets at the Central Branch of the Victoria Public Library.

The first libraries in the province were those set up by fur-trading companies (North-West Company and Hudson's Bay Company) for the benefit of their employees. After gold was discovered on the Fraser River in 1858 the first large-scale settlement of the Vancouver Island and British Columbia colonies began, and various reading rooms, literary institutes, and commercial libraries, often part of stationary or dry goods stores, followed. These operated on a subscription basis and made books, magazines, and newspapers available. Soon after the gold rush began a reading room “in conjunction with a saloon” opened in Victoria; this was followed by one operated by the Young Men's Christian Association, and soon a fully-fledged Victoria Literary Institute was formed. Another organization, popular in England, was the Mechanics' Institute. Originally designed to provide technical instruction for those workers moving from agrarian to factory employment during the industrial revolution, they had evolved into social institutes with book collections, readings, and cultural and scientific lectures; the Victoria branch which opened in 1864 also included debating and chess clubs. One of the founding board members in Victoria was [Lieutenant Edmund Verney](#), known as a chessplayer from other sources, although to what degree he was involved with the chess club is unknown.



Verney

While perhaps not directly promoted, chess was certainly accepted in light of the Victorian ethos of 'rational recreation,' by which workers were encouraged to seek leisure activities which led to self-improvement and a better society. This philosophy was “promoted by business and religious leaders who wanted men to spend their free time doing something other than drinking alcohol. The owners of mines and mills apparently believed that having little libraries would increase the chances of their employees showing up for work on time – and sober as well.” On this continent there was the example of the [Mechanics' Institute](#) in San Francisco, which opened in 1854 to meet the vocational needs of out-of-work miners after the 1848 California gold rush. The chess club the building houses is the oldest continually-operating US chess club.

Closer to home, a Mechanics' Institute was founded in the northshore community of Moodyville in 1869. A combined community hall/library/reading room/masonic lodge, the monthly meeting minutes of 1 March 1869 record the donation of a chess board:

Moved by Mr. P.W. Swett, seconded by Mr. Cunningham  
Received that the thanks of the Institute are due to Mr. J.T. Scott of New Westminster for the handsome present of chess and checker board and that the secretary be instructed to inform Mr. Scott by letter of the passage of this resolution. Carried

This same sequence of reading rooms leading to literary/Mechanics' institutes occurred in many communities as they grew and developed, and eventually these organizations evolved into the first free public libraries. This culminated at the beginning of the twentieth century in the awarding of three Carnegie libraries to BC, in Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster (opened 1903, 1905,

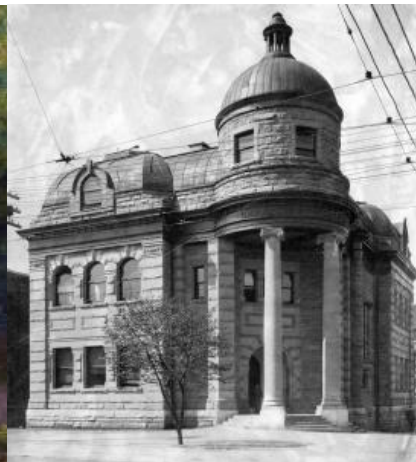
and 1905 respectively). We have the following entry in the Vancouver Library Board monthly minutes of 11 February 1904:

A letter from the City Clerk was read enclosing a communication addressed to the Mayor and Council signed by several citizens on behalf of the Young Men's Club of the Princess Street Methodist Church of the restriction by the late Library Board in preventing the playing of chess and checkers in the new Carnegie Library – after some discussion a resolution was moved and carried unanimously withdrawing the restriction and the librarian was instructed to place the chess tables in the vacant room on the first floor of the library and give access to players, and also to provide additional chessmen and checkers if needed.

One wonders why chess was banned in the first place, but that information has apparently not survived.

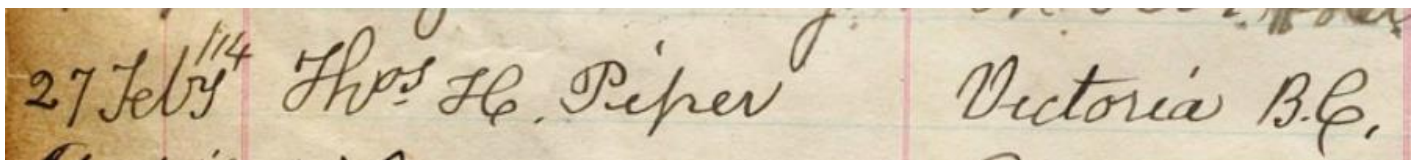


Moodyville Mechanics' Institute



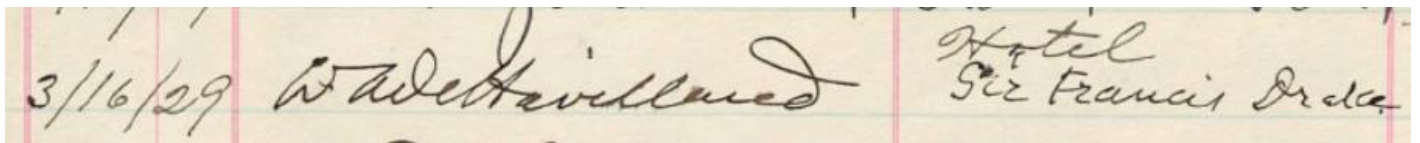
Vancouver's Carnegie Library

Postscript: the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute recently made its [visitor's register](#) available online. Here are the signatures of visitors with BC connections:



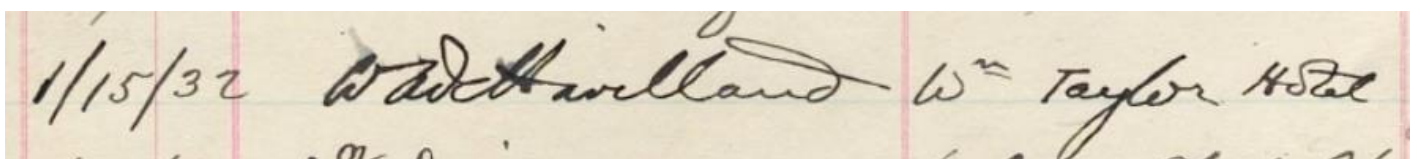
27 Feb 11/4 Thos H. Piper Victoria B.C.

[Thomas H. Piper](#)



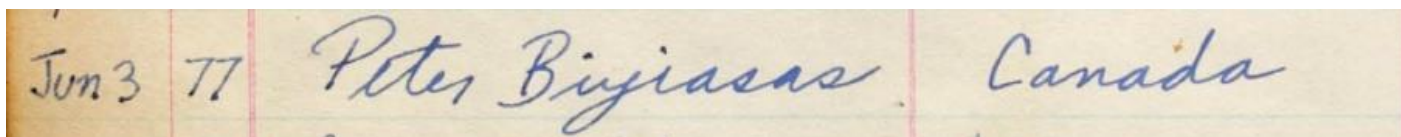
3/16/29 W de Havilland Hotel St Francis Dr da

[Walter de Havilland](#) (1929)

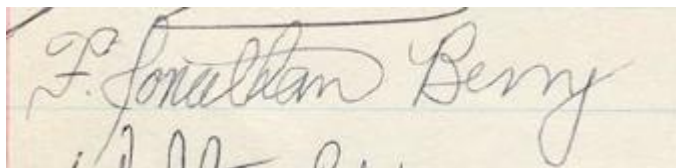


1/15/32 W de Havilland W Taylor Hotel

Walter de Havilland (1932)



Peter Biyiasas



Jonathan Berry (1999)

Incidentally there seems to have been lots of blank space left over the years which was subsequently filled out of order – a half dozen entries above Biyiasas' signature one finds Alexander Alekhine (poetic since Biyiasas' hero was Capablanca).

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Vancouver Active**

July 21, Vancouver Bridge Centre

[Details](#)

### **Cowichan Rapid Open Championship**

July 28, Duncan

[Details](#)

### **Semiahmoo Open**

August 4-6, White Rock

[Details](#)

### **Bowser Builders Open**

August 12, Bowser

[Details](#)

### **Langley Open**

September 1-3

[Details](#)