

# Candidate Statements



May 19, 2010

## Gary L. Walters

At the heart of the USCF is a great game. Nothing I or you do off the chessboard—and that includes participating in governance of the USCF—is going to change that. Put simply, the organization has a superb product, one that I spend a peculiar amount of time thinking about (according to some dear to me), especially since I'm not a professional and I derive none of my income from chess. Most of my time is spent thinking about such things as whether Black is busted in the Poisoned Pawn variation of the Najdorf and similar problems. I play a lot chess. Since early 2007, I've completed approximately 225 correspondence games in the USCF and ICCF, and I've played in OTB tournaments in Ohio, California, Florida, Connecticut, and New York. I am the 2009 Absolute co-champion. Beyond playing the game, I would like to help present the Federation in the best possible light to others who play the game, who might play the game, or who simply see the game as deserving of support. My goal is simple—get more people to play and enjoy chess under the best possible circumstances.

Governance of the USCF is critical to this goal. At present we govern and operate the USCF with an Executive Director, a professional staff, seven Executive Board members, more than 100 delegates, and countless volunteers. As is obvious, I'm running for one of the seven seats on the Executive Board. It is a volunteer position. My qualifications are straightforward. I've run large organizations in the Army as an officer, including in combat; I am a lawyer engaged in complex civil litigation every day on large cases, including representing Not For Profit organizations that you would recognize; I manage large budgets on cases where annual expenses substantially exceed the annual revenues of the USCF; and I believe in the game.

One of the central features of governance of the Federation at present is the concept of "one member, one vote" (OMOV). What that means is that USCF members (over sixteen) elect the seven Executive Board members. I support OMOV. Members have a voice in running the Federation because of OMOV. If you're reading this, you've likely received a ballot. Please inform yourself and vote.

Regarding service on the Executive Board, my only interest is in advancing the game. My only affiliation with any other members of the USCF, or any of its present or past leaders, is in connection with the play of the game or with specific ideas and positions with which I agree. The best ideas and policy positions must be measured purely against what's good for chess and what's good for those members of the Federation who play, teach, learn, organize, and direct chess. In the end, we have to put aside any differences we may have and go forward maintaining and growing a healthy organization whose members enjoy the game. I'm not suggesting that's always easy.

Please see my blog for more at <http://graysonbc.blogspot.com/>.

## Sam Sloan

I am the only candidate who is telling the voters what I plan to do if elected. I have specific plans on how to promote chess and how to bring more players into our game, plus more money into our Federation so we can do more to promote chess. My plans for the USCF involve big promotions of scholastic chess. I will restore *Chess Life* to **ALL** adult members and *Chess Life for Kids* to **ALL** scholastic members. I will guarantee that all **Life Members** receive a printed copy of *Chess Life* magazine for the rest of their lives, and not the Internet online *Chess Life* that life members are told the only "benefit" they may be receiving soon.

Regular members who joined or renewed in the last two years may be wondering why they have not received **Chess Life** in the mail. The shocking answer is the board voted to stop sending *Chess Life* to regular members and to stop sending *Chess Life for Kids* to regular scholastic members. They claim that this is OK because members can read the online *Chess Life*. However, readership of the online edition of *Chess Life* is virtually zero. Nobody reads it.

The board has stated that life members may no longer be receiving *Chess Life* soon. The current board claims that it is "saving money" by not sending *Chess Life* to regular members. What they overlook is that once the regular members realize that they are no longer entitled to receive *Chess Life*, they will not renew. This is happening. Every month membership is dropping. Membership is the lowest it has been in about forty years. The magazine has gotten terrible. Look at the covers. Awful. When was the last time there was a chess related cover on the cover of *Chess Life*?

I served one year on the board. I kept every campaign promise I made. How many did exactly the opposite of what they said they were going to do? The board makes excuses as to why we are losing money this year. This does not explain why we have lost money every year since 1996, with the exception of the year that I was on the board.

I will insist on cutting expenses to the bone. I will restore the printed *Chess Life* to its former size of around 98 pages. I will institute honest accounting and eliminate accounting tricks that have been hiding the horrific financial losses of the last few years. I will restore the Federation to profitability and a financial surplus.

The year I was on the board was the only year since 1995 that the USCF did not show a loss in real money. That was the only year since 1996 that there has been an increase in membership. This proves that it can be done, but only if we restore the services that USCF members have traditionally received. We can do better. We will do better if I am re-elected to the board.

## Mike Nietman

Finances continue to be a problem that we all need to be greatly concerned about. Due to the various lawsuits USCF has had to defend itself against in the last couple of years, we've spent over \$700,000 on lawyers and legal fees. Imagine for a moment if we had elected to spend that money on other or new projects, what that could have meant.

For example, to reward the top players for their hard work, based on the current year's prize fund, we could have funded the prizes for the next four U.S. Championships.

Thinking of memberships? We could have donated 16,000 premium adult memberships or 43,000 regular scholastic memberships to deserving people to boost our membership ranks and get them to our tournaments.

Outreach? We could have made countless media buys to promote the game and the Federation in ways we haven't before. For example, to promote our game we should be attending national and regional teacher conventions and AARP conventions and do outreach mailings to members of other organizations.

Promotion? We could have showcased our exciting, new, young talent that has exploded on the scene in the last few years.

Investment? We could have paid down the mortgage on our new headquarters.

Staffing? We could have retained several employees, not furloughed staff members last summer, with the overall goal of increased services to members.

Even saving most of the funds would have been to our advantage. While I'm sure you can think of many other worthwhile projects that we could have invested this money in, the fact remains that with the exception of paying down the mortgage thanks to a generous bequest, we weren't able to do any of them. Furthermore, think of the dividends these projects could have paid back to us down the road. Corporations would be looking more favorably on us and sponsorships would be flowing in.

Yes, these could have been exciting times. Instead we're in survival mode.

To conclude my series of articles I want to reiterate my experience having attended 18 delegate meetings, served on numerous USCF committees and been Scholastic Council Co-Chair for the last six years working with the Executive Board on numerous scholastic chess issues. I've attended numerous Executive Board meetings at U.S. Opens and elsewhere.

In addition, having served on the Wisconsin Chess Association Board of Directors since 1982 and as their President since 1987, I've led the board that has included dozens of different people with varying views but we've always had common goals and worked together harmoniously. I believe I can do the same for the Executive Board.

It has been an honor to run for the USCF Executive Board no matter the result. I do encourage each and every eligible voter to cast their ballot. Your vote is important to the future of the USCF! I would greatly appreciate your support. Thank you!

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