

~ *En Passant* ~

Newsletter of the North Penn Chess Club, Lansdale, PA Joe Mucerino's Trip to the World Chess Hall of Fame, Part 1

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This issue features Joe Mucerino's trip to the World Chess Hall of Fame, St. Louis, MO, as authored by Joe.

Ever since it opened its doors in 2008, and began holding super tournaments in 2009, the Saint Louis Chess Club has become a Mecca for chess players around the country and even the world. The World Chess Hall of Fame moved across the street from the club in 2011. Currently on exhibit there is "1972 Fischer/Spassky: The Match, Its Origin, and Influence". It runs through April 30, 2023.

For many years, I wanted to visit both sites. Last year, I seriously thought about going, but when I realized that there would almost certainly be an exhibit for the 50th Anniversary of Fischer-Spassky, I decided to wait. Also, the Saint Louis Chess Club was also being renovated. I thought those renovations might be completed by now, but they are not. With not too much chess of interest going on over the weekend of October 22-23, and not wanting to go during winter time, or waiting until next year when Pennsylvania Turnpike tolls will be raised yet again (by 5%), I took three days off from work and made the trip.

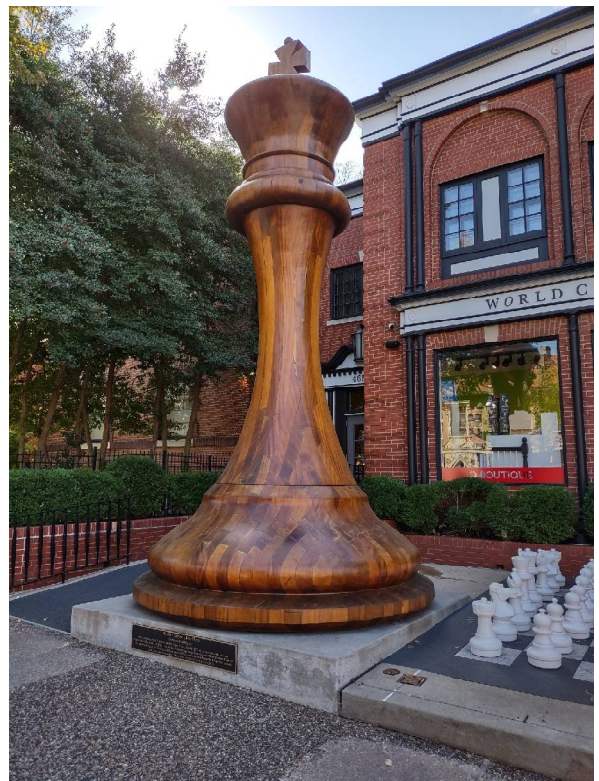
After losing in the second round of the Main Line Chess Club Championship (Dr. John Bayley Memorial) in Ardmore, I immediately began my trek to St. Louis at 10:00 PM. (Prior to the game, I had slept for about an hour in the Bryn Mawr Library). This would be the farthest away from home I have ever gone for chess, or for any reason for that matter.

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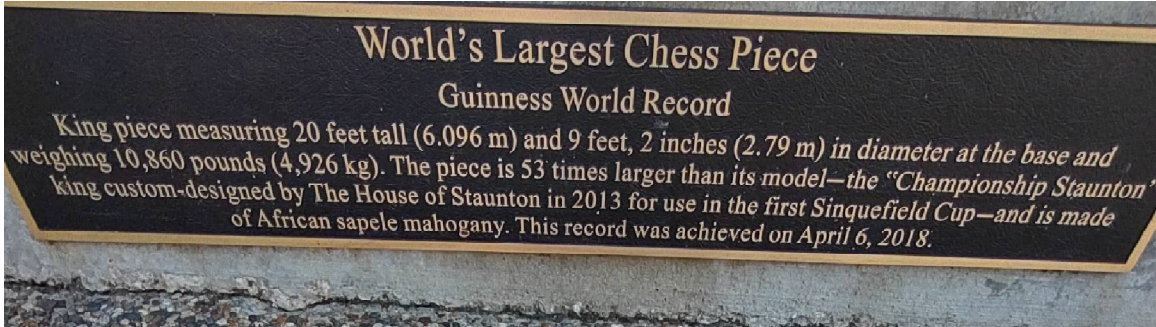
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Indianapolis used to hold that distinction. After about a 900 mile drive and three rest breaks, and with the Gateway Arch in the distance, I arrived in St. Louis at 4:30 PM CST on October 19, gaining an hour when I changed time zones. I arrived just in time to see the Phillies blow a lead in game 2 of the National League Championship series to the San Diego Padres. It was finally time to go to bed after that.

After doing some shopping in the morning, I went to the World Chess Hall of Fame. I was blown away to say the least. I must beg the reader for forgiveness. Flash photography was not allowed, so in some photographs I took you will see some shadows or glare. Admission was free, although there was a donation box when you exited.



The largest chess piece in the world.



And the plaque at the bottom.



A sign outside advertises the exhibit.



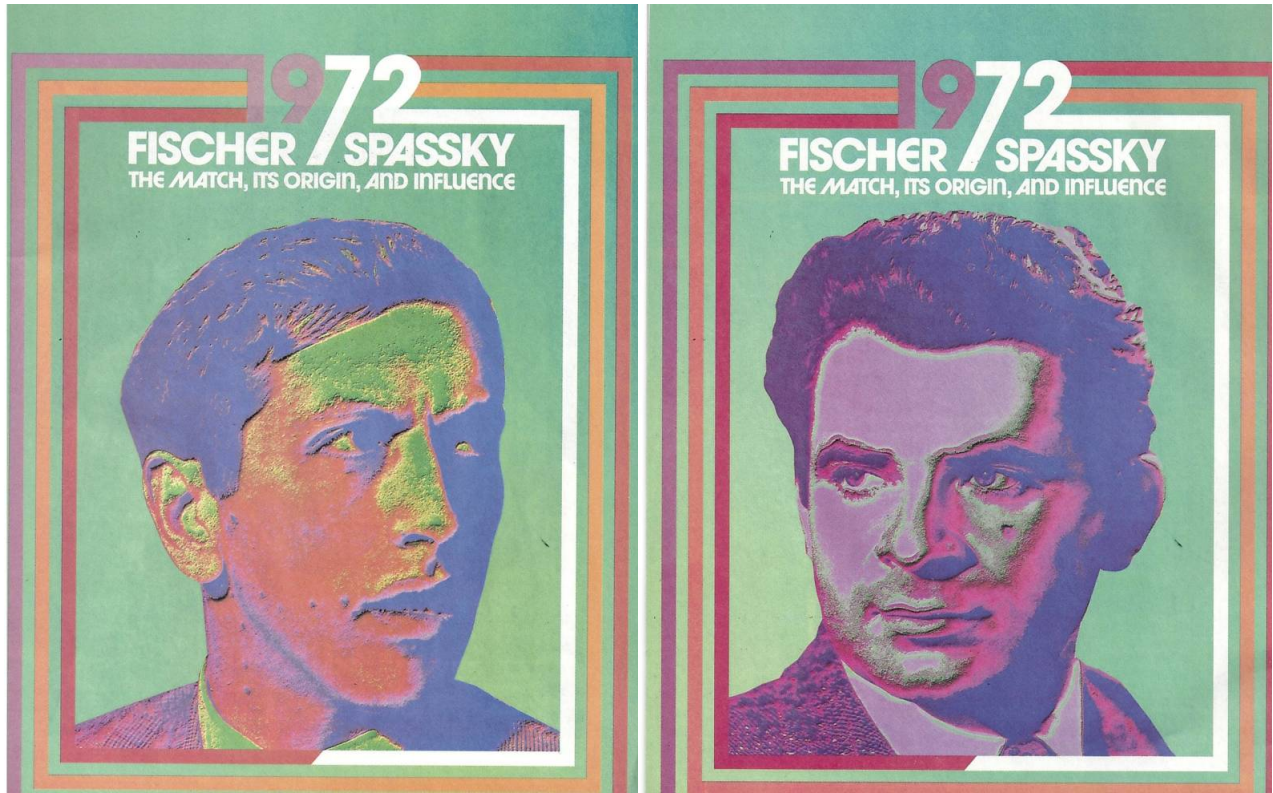
The Caissa Club honors those who made large donations to the World Chess Hall of Fame.



Hours of operation.



Right inside the front door of the World Chess Hall of Fame.



The front and back cover the booklet everyone received at the Hall of Fame.

The building the World Chess Hall of Fame is in is three stories tall. The Fischer-Spassky exhibit was spread out over all three stories in chronological order, with the events leading up to the match on the ground floor, the match on the second floor, and the after-math on the top floor.



The three doors, one on each story, that entered into the exhibit.



One of the walls on the ground floor.



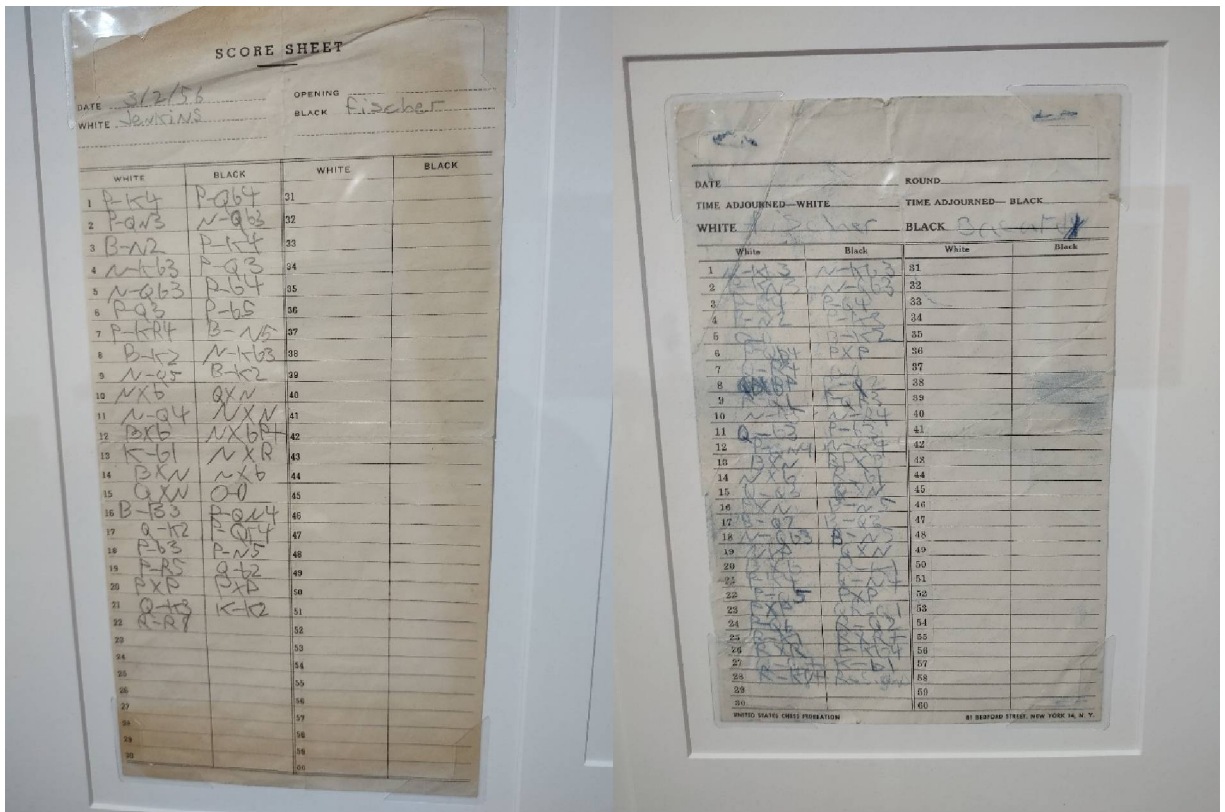
Fischer and Spassky as young men.

Claude Arnault	202 - Riverside Drive c/o Don Smith.
C. N. Nigro	78 South Elliott Pl B'klyn 17, N.Y.
B. Fischer	560 Lincoln Pl. B'klyn 38, N.Y.
S. Baron	8685 Ave 16 St. B'klyn 14 N.Y.
Steve Friedman	120 E. 31 st St. N.Y. 10, N.Y.
Alex Berastein	895 West End Ave N.Y. 25, N.Y.
Robert H. Cohen	333 W. End Ave. N.Y. 22, N.Y.

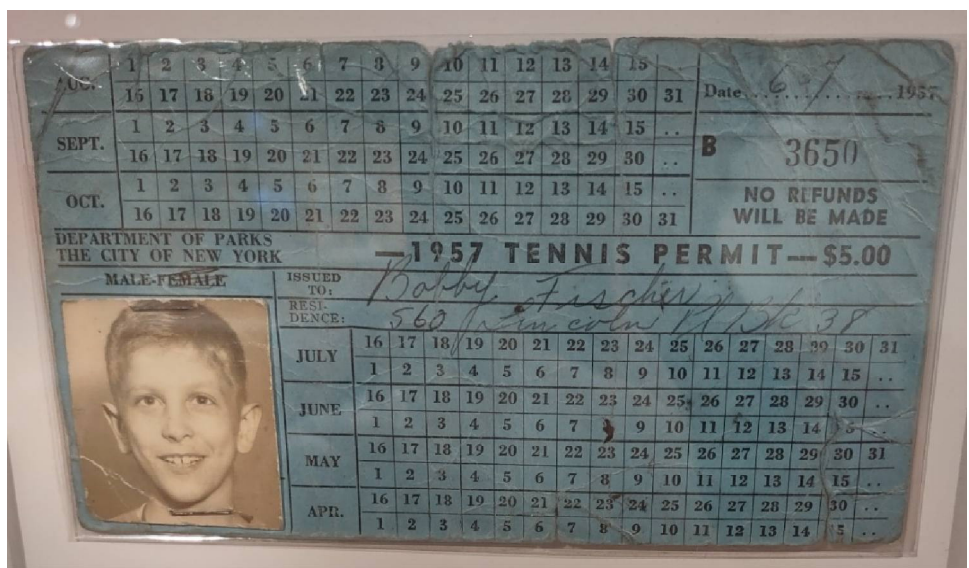
A sign in sheet from the Manhattan Chess Club, circa 1955. Above Fischer's name is Carmine Nigro, the only person Fischer said was his chess teacher.



In Fischer's early years, he was a member of the Hawthorne Chess Club, which met at Jack Collins's home. This is some of the furniture Jack Collins owned during that time.



Two of Fischer's scoresheets from 1956, against Albert Jenkins (left) and J.F. Bacardi. Fischer won both games.



One oddball item was Bobby Fischer's tennis permit from 1957. There was also video of Boris Spassky playing tennis as an adult. I don't know if the two ever faced each other on the tennis court.



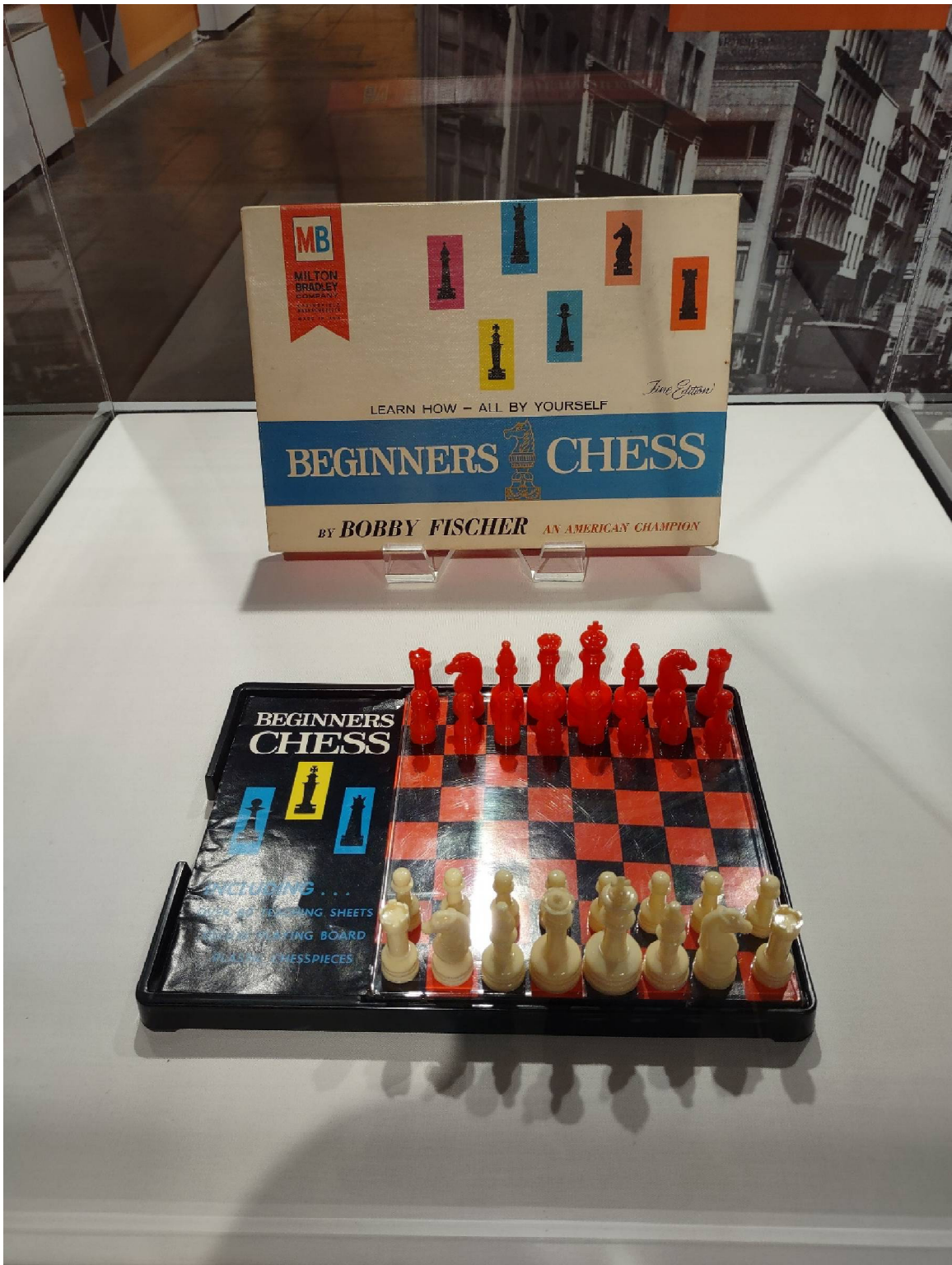
There were several video screens that showed various clips from throughout Fischer's life. Here he is on the game show, *I've Got a Secret*, hosted by Garry Moore. Fischer's secret was that he was the U.S. Champion.

Editor's note: Garry Moore is giving Bobby an airline ticket to travel to Moscow to participate in an International Tournament. Show was televised March 26, 1958.



U. S. CHAMPION SHOWS WINNING MOVES TO POLIO PATIENTS
Bobby Fischer (right) of Brooklyn, New York and now at fifteen twice U. S. Chess Champion, thrilled less fortunate at the March of Dimes-supported Goldwater Memorial Hospital's respiratory center on Welfare Island, New York, when he played several games with polio-disabled patients. Here he takes on 22 year old Roger Duell of Astoria, New York, while Bruce Campbell, 17, of Manhattan, watches in the mirror of his iron lung. Bobby made the moves for both Roger and Bruce and won, as was expected, but made a big hit with the excited patients. The latter are being rehabilitated as part of the National Foundation's expanded program to furnish patient care not only to polio paralytics but to victims of arthritis and birth defects as well. Bobby is an Erasmus Hall High School student who has astonished the international chess world with his wizardry of play against all comers—photo and news release from the Public Relations Dept. of the National Foundation, 800 Second Avenue, New York 17, New York.

One wonderful story that I learned was that in 1960, Fischer played several games against polio patients.



1964 Milton Bradley chess set that was endorsed by Fischer. Of course, Fischer rarely endorsed anything. I had heard of the item, but never saw one before.



The Piatigorsky Cup. The major international event was held twice, in 1963 and 1966. Engraved in the lower left are the winners, Tigran Petrosian and Paul Keres (who tied in 1963), and Spassky (1966).

More highlights of Joe's trip in Part-2