

## NEWS, INFORMATION, TOURNAMENTS AND REPORTS

### THE ICCA MUST LIVE!

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Jonathan Schaeffer's article in the March issue of the ICCA Journal makes it clear that the present administration has inherited a serious financial problem. A solution must be found quickly, both for the accumulated deficit of the past and to keep the ICCA on a secure financial footing in the future. We can try to find this solution by drastically reducing expenditure, increasing revenue, or by a combination of both.

Various ideas have been put forward for reducing expenditure, but I think you will agree that they will result in a deterioration of the quality (and size) of our Journal. The ICCA should be thinking of how to grow and to improve its services to the computer-chess community, so any thoughts of retrenching are extremely distasteful.

Let us now think positively. How can we bring in more money, and quite a lot more? Increasing membership fees would displease the members, and anyway cannot be achieved until 1989 at the earliest. So where else can we look to for financial support? It would be very nice if some kind sponsor were found, who could donate a few thousand dollars to the ICCA each year, and this would be the ideal solution. But failing this, we must create the money ourselves, and I have two ideas of how this can be done.

Firstly, increased revenue from the ICCA's auspices being extended to major computer-chess events will make some contribution to our funds. But the amount will not be enormous and it cannot be relied upon to do any more than make a dent in the deficit.

The next idea is based on something which Kevin O'Connell and I started for FIDE in 1980. FIDE offered the various manufacturers of chess computers and chess software an opportunity to tender for FIDE's endorsement of their products. The FIDE budget benefitted substantially from this idea, so why not the ICCA? I realise that some of you will argue that the ICCA should not get involved in the commercial world, but we already are involved. Commercially-available chess computers are responsible for much of the effort currently being devoted to chess-programming techniques, so why should the ICCA not take advantage of the millions of dollars being made by the industry?

I propose to offer for tender the ICCA's endorsement in two distinct categories: (a) Stand-alone chess computers, (b) Chess software written for home computers and personal computers, with the publishers of this type of software being able to tender for the ICCA's endorsement.

Because of my own involvement in the world of commercially-available chess programs, I shall keep out of the administration of the tender process, having set the conditions for the tender which have been approved by the ICCA Board. The tenders will be opened in public view at this year's North American Computer-Chess Championship in Dallas.

If anyone can think of a better and quicker method of raising money for the ICCA, please contact me at once. One kind member in California recently sent in a US \$ 50 donation, but such gifts are few.

One major advantage of the endorsement scheme is that, in addition to solving the ICCA's ongoing financial problems, it should also generate surplus funds which can be used to help computer chess in other ways. Some of the ideas expressed in my article in the March 1987 issue of the Journal, such as awards for the best high-school program or for the best paper on computer chess, could benefit from such funds. If we are fortunate enough to have a worthwhile surplus, a funding committee will be set up - chaired by the Secretary/Treasurer - to determine how this surplus should be used.