NEWS, INFORMATION, TOURNAMENTS AND REPORTS

TRIBUTES TO TONY SCHERZER

by Ken Thompson[1]

Sadly, I report that Tony Scherzer died Wednesday January 18. He suffered a heart attack while at his work near Chicago. The passing of Tony Scherzer is a great loss to his wife, Linda, the BEBE team and the computer-chess community.

If you follow computer chess, you will recognize his progeny, BEBE. If you knew Tony you won't know whether to call BEBE his program, his machine or his alter ego. The team of Tony, his wife Linda, Dean Tjaden and BEBE were the most enthusiastic computer-chess competitors in the decade of the 80's. They competed in every world championship, every North American championship, and numerous side events. The team tied for first in the Cologne world computer-chess championships, for second in New York and finished a clear second in Edmonton. In 1991, they deservedly won the Mephisto Prize for the best contribution to computer chess in the previous year.

This much is part of the record, but the person was much more. I first met Tony at the ACM tournament in Washington D.C. in 1978. Tony walked in with a home-brew computer and asked to be a standby in the tournament. He eagerly engaged everyone in conversation, trying to learn everything he could about the workings of the other chess programs. Between rounds, he played his computer against all the people/computers that he could. If you saw him there you would understand his complete outlook on life - hard, fast, fun, learn and do.

As he gained experience in computer chess, he was as eager to share what he knew as he was to learn when he was the novice. He would spend most of his time at tournaments describing at any level of detail his new gadgets and algorithms.

We will all miss him. My sympathy especially goes out to Linda. It is hard to believe that he won't be at the next tournament, inviting me over to talk computers and sip wine.

by Jonathan Schaeffer[2]

Many in the computer-chess community knew and respected Tony Scherzer. I knew him as a friendly, outgoing person; fond of talking and drinking wine; opinionated but knowledgeable; self-motivated and accomplished. It is easy for me to say nice things about Tony because of the respect I had for him. I'm sure that Tony's close friends can do a better job describing the man than I can. However, I would like to relate one story that typifies Tony and Linda as I knew them.

In 1987, as ICCA treasurer, I painted a stark portrait of the ICCA and its financial difficulties. The organization's expenses exceeded its income, and in less than two years the ICCA would be bankrupt. Fortunately, events transpired that reversed this trend. However, shortly after my 1987 report, I received a letter from Tony and Linda Scherzer. In it they donated a large sum of money to the ICCA with the

[1] Bell Laboratories, Room 2C519, 600 Mountain Avenue, Murray Hill, NJ 07974, USA. Email: ken@plan9.research.aat.com.

[2] University of Alberta, Department of Computing Science, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2H1 Canada. Email: jonathan@cs.ualberta.ca.

comment (paraphrased) that the ICCA had been good to them and now it was time to reciprocate. I was taken aback by their letter, and as the years have passed, I have never forgotten that unselfish act of generosity. To me, that incident tells more about the man than anything else I could write at this sad time.

In Tony, the computer-chess community has lost one of its best.

Photo by Jos Uiterwijk

IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY
Tony Scherzer (standing), his wife Linda, and among the others, Ken Thompson, photographed in Edmonton, Alberta, 1989.

THE 1994 ICCA BEST-ANNOTATION AWARD

David Levy[1]

London, England

The year 1995 is the second year for which the ICCA has made an award available for the program that provides the best annotations to a chess game. In fact, there was only one entry for the award, so all the ICCA had to do was to verify that the program in question did indeed provide annotations to the test game which we submitted to it. The program was entered by Jeff Mallett of Sherrills Ford, North Carolina, and since it met the requirements, it gained the 1994 ICCA Best-Annotation Award.

The following critique will, I hope, provide some useful ideas for programmers who enter the competition in 1995 and subsequent years. (The deadline for this year's entries is 31st December, 1995, see also the announcement on the 1995 ICCA Best-Annotation Award on p. 44 of this Journal.) It is important to remember that the ICCA is looking for the best annotations, which is not always the same thing as the most accurate analysis of variations or the most accurate assessment of positions. But it is clear that it will be difficult to produce good annotations which include accurate analysis if the playing code at the core of the annotating program is not at least of a reasonable calibre.

The game chosen as this year's test was the 20th game of the 1990 World Championship match between

---

[1] 89, Constantine Road, London NW3 2LP, England. Email: DavidL@intrsrch.demon.co.uk.