

## Wisconsin Scholastic Chess Federation Awards First-Ever Scholarships to Top Area Players



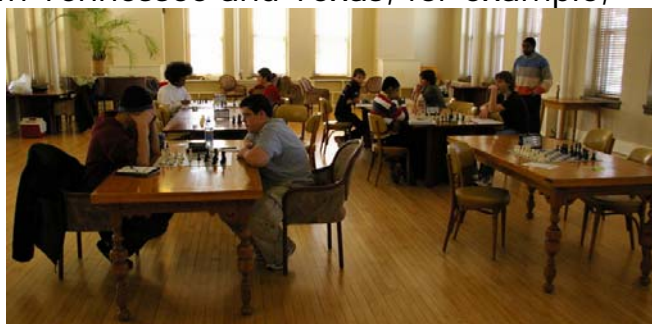
Chris Brown, a senior at Nicolet High School, is the winner of a \$500 scholarship from the Wisconsin Scholastic Chess Federation. Brown, of Fox Point, earned the award by finishing first in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade division of WSCF's Grade Level Championship Tournament, held this year in St. Francis. A total of 275 students participated in the event.

"It was pretty exciting to win a scholarship for playing chess," said Brown, who will attend the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay in September.

Brown, 18, is a member of the Nicolet High School Chess Team. He began playing chess in sixth grade at Hales Corners Lutheran School. His USCF rating is about 1720. The reason he likes chess so much: "I love how difficult it is to sit at a board for hours in a tough position and figure out how to win against another person."

Brown's scholarship is one of ten awards totaling more than \$3,000 given out this spring by WSCF to top area chess players. According to Bob Patterson-Sumwalt, WSCF president, this is the first year the group has awarded scholarships. "I think it's a great way to encourage more kids to come to our tournaments," Patterson-Sumwalt said. "It's also great to be able to reward someone who excels in chess in the same way other students are rewarded for their academic or athletic ability."

There is precedent nationwide for chess scholarships. According to Jerry Nash, scholastic director for the U.S. Chess Federation, the practice has been around for a number of years. In Tennessee and Texas, for example, winners of major scholastic tournaments earn scholarships to Tennessee Tech and the University of Texas—Dallas. "The scholarships are quite an incentive to entering the tournaments and doing well," Nash said.



Brown agreed, adding that he was "surprised and excited" when he realized WSCF was offering the scholarship.

The arrangement is also good for colleges and universities. "It helps them attract the kind of students they want," Nash said. "If students are playing at that level they've developed discipline, and time management and critical thinking skills—exactly the things universities are looking for, particularly in freshmen."

Patterson-Sumwalt said WSCF hopes to award \$10,000 in scholarships next year, some of which will be earmarked for strong chess players from low-income families. He said all scholarship funds would be held by WSCF until needed by the winners. At that time, the money will be forwarded to their respective colleges or universities. He said WSCF donors may request that their contributions be earmarked for the group's scholarship fund.

Other students winning WSCF awards this year are: John Veech, a sixth-grader from Magellan Day School, who won for placing first in WSCF's 1st Annual K-8 State Championship at the Kalahari Waterpark Resort & Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells; Andrew Gorectke, an eighth-grader from New Berlin West Middle School; and Raimonds Lauzums, a sixth-grader from Whitefish Bay Middle School. Gorectke and Lauzums won for finishing in second and third places, respectively, in the tournament.



Veech also earned a scholarship for winning the K-8 division of WSCF's March of Champions Tournament held in Milwaukee. Gregory Azbel, a student at Nicolet High School, and Gregory Reese, a fourth-grader from Mill Valley Elementary, won scholarships for finishing in first place in the tournament's K-12 and K-5 divisions, respectively.

Awarded U.S. Savings Bonds for winning their divisions in the 3rd Annual Wisconsin All-Girl Championships, held at University School of Milwaukee, were: Alena and Joanna Juang, from Glen Park Elementary School in New Berlin; and Elizabeth Emory, from Wilson Elementary School in Mequon. The Juangs, who are sisters, also won in their divisions in last year's All-Girl Championships.

