

From the President

How we got to where we are and why you haven't heard a whole lot from us.

Shortly after returning to the club in September of '94, I found myself being asked to step in as president.

I returned to the club after a ten year absence, and after a few months I found myself being asked to step in as President. The night I was elected was our first night at the Callahan Senior Center in Framingham. The club had to move from the Legion hall as the rent increase continually drained our Treasury and we found ourselves rushing toward bankruptcy. The Senior Center was found after a lot of searching and the price was right, No Rent. While the price was right, there were some drawbacks. The main room was too small, the skittles room was filled with junk and oversized desks that barely accommodated three boards. The bathrooms were not being maintained, there were no vending machines or water fountains, we couldn't always get in the front door, and one Tuesday each month we had to shift into another area of the building that already had a group who were very unpleasant about us impinging on them in any way. Things improved as we began purchasing things for the center in lieu of paying rent. We started by moving more and more of the junk out of the skittles room each week and waiting for it to disappear from the hallway before moving more out. Then we purchased eight foot tables, put up bulletin boards, put in large trash barrels and bought fans. The skittles room proved to be a better main room, so we ended up playing there all the time and went without skittles once a month. The room turned out so well that the Center started using it as a general meeting room and held karate lessons in there as well. At this point we were only left with two central problems: a) we couldn't depend on the center being open each week (they wouldn't give us a key), and b) sometimes half the chairs would be in another building.

When I was first elected to be president, I had a number plans to promote the club and increase membership. We picked up a good number of new members, many of whom joined the USCF for the first time. But with the conditions that we found ourselves in at the center, I had a real problem with the idea of having even more people show up. I often arrived just in time to beg someone to let me in so I could block open the door. And how many times would it take to not be able to get in and send everybody home or to not have enough chairs for everyone to sit and play, before people would give up on the club? I figured once would be one time too many. With all this going on, the number of people who could make it to the club and serve as TD for events dwindled down at times to one. We also couldn't find enough volunteers to help with other tasks such as sending out flyers or doing the newsletter. We found a new location in May, the Kennedy Senior Center in downtown Natick. While I regret the need to move from the town of our namesake, the site is a wonderful location in which to play chess. Here is a quick summary of the characteristics of the new site:

- We're the only people there on Tuesday nights.
- We have our own set of keys to gain access to the facility.
- There's plenty of free parking.
- It's a clean and well maintained building.
- The entire facility is non-smoking.
- There is a soda and a candy vending machine.
- There is a full kitchen with coffee machine adjoining the main room. (A quarter a cup!)
- The main room is large enough to accommodate about 30 boards.
- There are two skittles rooms that can handle approximately 10 boards each.

The only down side is that some of our long time members may have difficulty getting transportation to Natick. I will get information out in the near future so that we can work together to help all our members get to and from the new club location. I think we can really settle in now and make the Framingham Chess Club once again one of the strongest chess clubs in New England. For those of you who have been resting up for the last year or two, now it's time to come out and play. If you're rusty, don't worry, there are plenty of fish in our little pond, it's just a question of how long you'll be one of them. Stop by the club, the sharks are hungry.

Directions from Rt. 9 - Take Rt. 27 South to Natick Center, Left at lights onto Rt. 135, After the first set of lights on 135, you will pass on your right, a small bank, "Nicks" drive up ice-cream stand, and an armory that looks like a Castle. The Senior Center is one house beyond the armory on your right. A court house is at the front of the building. Bear to the right around the building and you will see a large sign for the Kennedy Senior Center.