

Sam Sloan is a Candidate for the USCF Executive Board

I am a candidate for the USCF Executive Board. People ask me why I keep running. This is a legitimate question and I have a good answer. There are basically two parts to the answer.

1. The USCF has been spiraling downward. Almost every year is worse than the previous year. The current year is the worst ever in the history of the USCF. It will again lose six figures this year, as it did last year. The very existence of this organization is threatened. I have been a member since 1956 and I would like to be able to stay a member longer.

I have promised that, if elected (and assuming that three other board members agree with me) I will cut expenses to the bone, getting rid of sacred cows, chopping heads if necessary. I will absolutely not allow the USCF to lose money, and I mean it. The USCF has revenues of \$3.2 million per year. That is a lot of money. Much of it is wasted. Expenses can easily be cut with no loss of services to the members.



2. I have big plans for the expansion of the USCF. Chess is becoming more popular around the world and we need to exploit this. I envision an organization with a million members. This is not pie-in the sky. I believe that it can be done and I have specific plans on how to do it. The current board, instead, is moving towards downsizing the organization, with such measures as stopping the publication of **Chess Life** as a print magazine. They have already stopped the sale of life memberships.

Regarding my plans to have a million members, which some might dismiss as ridiculous, consider the following:

Myspace, primarily a kids website, has 110 million members.

Grand Theft Auto, a kids video game (which teaches the kids how to steal a car) has sold 70 million units. Most stores are selling it for \$39.99.

The Girl Scouts of America has 2.7 million members.

Little League Baseball has 2.3 million players.

Compared to these numbers, the **USCF Membership** totals are pathetic. The reason is we make no effort to bring in new members. We have 30,000 scholastic members. We did not recruit them. They came to us. I do not know how they found us, but they did. Yet, the current board wants to cut the only benefit that these kids receive, which is **Chess Life for Kids** magazine.

During my one year on the board, I repeatedly advanced my ideas on how to promote chess and bring in new members. All of my ideas were rejected without giving any reason. Here are some of my ideas:

1. Internationalizing the Rating System which could be done at insignificant additional cost and bring many foreign players into our system, giving them incentive to join the USCF.

2. Making videos especially of scholastic events and broadcasting them on youtube. Our website content provider, independently of me, and without even knowing of my proposal, offered to make these videos at no additional cost. Her idea and my idea were rejected. I cannot imagine what the reason was, other than the fact that it was not their idea and therefore they rejected it.

3. Selling blocks of **USCF** memberships to school systems. Our current president actually claimed that I had “stolen” this idea, every time I brought it up. I plead guilty. I stole the idea. Woe is me. The question is not who had the idea, but who is doing it. There is no indication that the **USCF** is doing it. Indeed, it does not seem that the **USCF** under the current board is doing anything at all, except spending their time fighting each other.

Someone asked a board member yesterday regarding the six-figure losses again so far this year the following questions:

What has USCF done about this? Has it reduced payroll? No, I don't believe it has. In fact, an employee was just added. Has it decided to do anything else to generate new revenue streams? No, I don't believe it has. Has it cut expenses elsewhere? I haven't heard of any.

The current year is the worst ever. The current plans (although they deny it) are to stop the publication of **Chess Life** as a paper print magazine. Already, the magazine is no longer being sent to regular members after they renew. The board has advised the **Life Members** that they may have to pay a subscription fee to receive the magazine after 2010. Also, **Life Memberships** are no longer being sold.

Regular members who joined or renewed after September 24, 2008 may be wondering why they have not received **Chess Life** magazine in the mail. The shocking answer is the current board voted unanimously to stop sending **Chess Life** in the mail to regular members and to stop sending **Chess Life for Kids** in the mail to regular scholastic members. They have also notified the **Life Members** that they provide no guarantee that they will receive a paper **Chess Life** after 2010.

If elected, I will do everything in my power to reverse these decisions. I am committed to restoring to regular members the right to receive a paper **Chess Life** magazine, to scholastic members the right to receive a paper **Chess Life for Kids** magazine, and to Life Members the right to receive **Chess Life** magazine for the rest of their lives. We should also start selling Life Memberships again.

My one year on the board, which was **2006-2007**, was the only year in recent memory where the **USCF** did not lose six figures, but instead reported a surplus and an increase in membership. I am not taking credit for this profit (which was minimal but nevertheless a profit) but my riding herd on the office, even threatening them that their heads would roll if they did not produce a profit, probably encouraged them to report a (fake) surplus.

When I was on the board for one year, I discovered many, many questionable payments, some under the table. If the **USCF** would stop giving money away, that would certainly help. I can tell you that if I am elected and three other board members agree with me, staff will be cut and certain people will no longer be on the payroll.

There are now seven lawsuit pending involving the **USCF**. In spite of wide spread discussion of the issue, most **USCF** members seem unaware that **Susan Polgar** has filed a **\$25 million dollar lawsuit** against the **USCF** in Federal court in **Lubbock Texas**. Her lawsuit contains no specific grounds and no concrete allegations as to what she is complaining about. Susan is also running three candidates in the current election. It is obvious that her plan is that if her three candidates are elected she will have control of the board and she will be able to ask the courts on behalf of the **USCF** to rule in her favor.

On April 22, 2004, when **Beatriz Marinello** was **USCF** President, she posted the following:

“We need to drive away the people who has been milking the **USCF** for many years.”

<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/fide-chess/message/10601>

I was severely critical of **Beatriz** for making this statement, but when I got on the board two years later I discovered how true this statement was and how many people were milking the **USCF**. If I am elected, this milking will STOP (but will the **USCF** get mastitis?)

Sam Sloan