

# CHES FOR PEACE

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Contact:

Mikhail Korenman 785-227-2224

Wes Fisk 785-227-4121

## **Gorbachev Presides Over Chess for Peace**

Chess historians will cite the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2005 as being one of the great days of chess. Chess players and those interested in world events crowded into Presser Hall in the small Kansas town of Lindsborg to see former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev make the first move in the match between seven-time World Chess Champion Anatoly Karpov and five-time Women's World Chess Champion Susan Polgar. Gorbachev, a chess player himself, apparently decided to play with Karpov's mind by deliberately making the astonishing opening move of G4. With a big smile, he then admonished Karpov not to try and take the move back. Gorbachev stood over them as Polgar took advantage of the poor opening move, but the advantage wasn't to last long. Gorbachev played host to Karpov and Polgar by opening a bottle of water and pouring some into their glasses. Afterward, Polgar laughed. "When the president got the water and poured it for us, I completely lost my concentration," said Polgar. Gorbachev stood and watched the entire first game between the two champions. The match ended in a 3-3 tie.

The six-game match was preceded that morning with the Chess for Peace parade down the main street of Lindsborg. The parade made its way to City Hall where Gorbachev, Karpov, Polgar, and organizer Mikhail Korenman addressed other dignitaries and the assembled crowd, including 165 student players who came to participate in the scholastic tournament, march in the parade, and see the Karpov-Polgar match.

Later in the evening, nearly 2,000 people watched as Gorbachev and Alan Murray, assistant managing editor of the Wall Street Journal, played chess and discussed world affairs on the stage of Presser Hall at Bethany College. Both Murray and Gorbachev drew analogies to chess and politics throughout their hour-long exchange. As Gorbachev and Murray neared the end of their conversation, Karpov and Polgar walked onto the stage to adjudicate the game a draw.

USCF officials, VPs Don Schultz and Joel Channing, along with Executive Director Bill Hall and Scholastic Director Jerry Nash participated in the events. Barbara DeMaro, Managing Director of the U.S. Chess Trust also accompanied the USCF team.

The Chess for Peace events of October 29 was preceded two weeks earlier when Alexander Bah, executive director of the Russian Chess Federation, accompanied nine students from Karpov's chess school in Poikovsky, Siberia to Lindsborg. Bill Hall, executive director of the USCF spent a couple of days with Bah discussing matters of mutual interest. The Siberian students, who stayed with host families in Lindsborg, sampled the American lifestyle, played chess and interacted with students throughout Kansas. "This is what Chess for Peace is all about," said Mikhail Korenman, director of the initiative. "It's all about students from different cultures developing friendships through chess."

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106 South Main, Lindsborg, Kansas 67456 - 785-227-2224  
Contact:  
Mikhail Korenman 785-227-2224 or Wes Fisk 785-227-4121