

My Congress Diary
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PART 3

September 25, 2001

AGENDA – DAY 4

03:00 pm Excursion to San Marino

At 03:00 pm the tour bus is ready to drive us to San Marino. Everyone is pretty excited to see the World's oldest Republic, including a few delegates who prefer to skip the afternoon Congress session. Mr. Guido Besadrola (ITA) couldn't come with us, but his wife does and makes sure all of us get a little note with Guido's phone number and name written on it (just in case we get lost). Paying attention to little details (such this one) has always been a trademark for quality; certainly our Italian friends prove once again the high quality of their organization!

The road to San Marino (approximately 23 Km from Rimini) is a winding one. A special attraction on the way there we didn't know about is Ferrari Museum. We make plans to drop by for a visit after the Congress, as the bus does not stop. We continue our short journey to San Marino. It feels short for us because in Vancouver a commute to work where you need to drive only 20 something Km is extremely favourable! We start to go uphill, climbing Mount Titano. It does not look like much of a mountain when you compare it with The Rocky Mountains; nevertheless it dominates the area.

San Marino shows us its city walls with pride, leaving no doubt in anyone's mind

about its glorious past. You have to go back in time all the way to the year 301 A.D. birth year of the World's oldest Republic. The founder of the city/ Republic is a Christian stonemason called Marinus the Dalmation who found Mount Titano to be a dominant hiding place from the anti-Christian Roman Emperor Diocletian. It has been more or less independent ever since and counts today approximately 26,000 citizens living on a land mass of 61 km² The official language is Italian and the currency has the same name as the Italian one "Lira", but it is harder to get; we will see a bit later the reason why.

San Marino is a full member of the United Nations and has September 3rd as the official day of the Republic. Their celebrations include – among other things – a crossbow competition and a nation-wide bingo game. San Marino Grand Prix is not held in the country itself; the rights have been farmed out to a neighbour town.

We reach our final destination: a special designated parking area and we make plans to meet back in the same spot at 06:00 pm. In order to reach the old main gate we walk up on a built in stone stairway. The majestic gate and surrounding city walls are staring at us from right across the street. There's no problem to cross it, as a policeman (woman) from the traffic booth stops the traffic as soon as we approach the pedestrians crossing.



San Marinese policeman

The gate is called “Porta del Loco” or “Porta San Francesco” and it looks like a small medieval tower with a dark passage thru it and 2 thick wooden doors right up front. The heraldic emblem of the Republic is attached to the balcony situated right on top of it.



Porta del Loco/ Porta San Francesco the entrance in the old city

Once you enter the old city your entire perspective changes. Streets are incredibly narrow; everything is flashy, joyful looking and very much tourist oriented. It looks like very few local residents are still living here; they have mostly abandoned it to the tourists. Before you have time to adjust, immediately after the gate and on your right hand side a red scary sign announces the first museum: “Museo della Tortura”.



“Musseo della Tortura” Yes, I’ve been there! Watch out my future cc opponents...

For us – Felicia and I – this is completely new and we decide to visit it. However, it proves not to be a very good idea from an emotional point of view. We come out 45 minutes later with chills down our spine. Humanity has used a great deal of imagination to invent some diabolical instruments of torture and capital punishment and used them against their own specie. I am just going to mention that all items in the museum are part of a private collection and a lot of them are originals! The family who owns it is a member of the “Amnesty International” organization and decided to collect these items for posterity. Humanity needs to remember our past to properly build the future! We leave the museum and hope to cheer up and forget what we just saw...

Claudia and Angela Harding (IRL) bring back smiles on our faces. I am very much interested to get a San Marino visitor visa stamped in my passport – all friends are going to envy me back home – and the Harding sisters know about a lot of places already, so we head for the tourist office where I get my desired visa in exchange for 2,000 Lira! These Italian money are really funny: you can have millions in your wallet without being able to buy much... Right beside the tourist office we take a picture of the beautiful “Piazza della Liberta” and “Palazzo Publico”



Piazza della Liberta and Palazzo Publico



The local theatre in “Piazzale Domus Plebis”

Going anywhere in the old city means following extremely narrow streets, squeezed between houses and tourist shops. Felicia had a couple of unsuccessful attempts to get San Marinense Lira as change for her shopping; the only solution was to buy San Marinense denomination, most of them nicely presented in collector’s folios or together with first day’s cover envelopes! This reminds us right away about an old Romanian joke: “How can we improve the struggling Romanian economy? Sell our currency 1 Leu for 2 Lei, or drill a hole thru the center of our 1 Leu and sell it as a shirt

button for 2 Lei” The difference is San Marino has no trouble finding buyers for their Lira...



Street “Contrada della Pieve”



Main Street “Salita alla Rocca”

A defensive wall interrupted here and there by towers guards the edge of the old city. The architecture of these towers is incredible and dominant.



One of the downhill towers and the panoramic view behind it



The upper wall and towers rising from the natural rocks guard, looking down surprised to the parking lot underneath.

“Museum of Torture” is not the only one in town. The most famous ones are located in the forts. Two of those forts house museums, one exhibiting an impressive collection of ancient weapons including a plethora of crossbows. We didn’t get to see any other ones. There was already too late and we needed to do some souvenir hunting beside the visa for myself. However you don’t need to go into many museums to see unforgettable things. On top of Mount Titano everything around you looks great! You can see around in any direction you

wish for miles and miles. The Adriatic Sea meets majestically the horizon toward the East; on a clear day even Croatia is visible!

I urge anyone visiting Italy to drop by in San Marino even for a few hours. The World's oldest Republic is such an incredible place that you have to see it with your own eyes. I will end this short presentation with a few amazing political curiosities. Citizens are very much interested and involved in their politics. Domestic voter turn out is near 99%. Political structures are amazingly inclusive and self-monitoring. For example, the official Heads of State are two Co-Regents chosen from among the 60 members of the popularly elected Great and General Council. The Regents are from opposing political parties and they are elected together to keep an eye on each other. If that wasn't enough, they only serve six months terms, so they won't be tempted to build up a personal power base. Once the term is over, there are three days of hearings in which any citizen can come forward with complaints about the conduct of the Regent while in office. If the complaints warrant it, all out judicial proceedings are launched. It is enough to make you seriously jealous. The result is a Republic with citizens deeply involved in its good running. They know that it is worthwhile to get involved because their input will always be taken seriously.

San Marino has one of the most vibrant political and social cultures in Europe. And if that isn't worth protecting with an armament of crossbows, what is?

September 26, 2001

AGENDA – DAY 5

09:30 am Congress

10:45 am Coffee break

01:00 pm Lunch

02:30 pm Congress

05:00 pm Simultaneous with FIDE GM Igor Efimov

23. Internet and technology matters

24. Marketing matters

25. ICCF Jubilee Book

26. ICCF Archives

27. Other General Secretary proposals

28. Internal matters

29. External matters

30. Future meetings

31. Any other matters

This final day of discussions is sandwiched between that fabulous San Marino trip and tomorrow's full day trip to Urbino. On top of it there is a simultaneous scheduled for 05:00 pm when interested delegates will face FIDE GM Igor Efimov. The Harding girls tried several times yesterday to persuade me into playing and probably will not stop doing so today. However I had my share of beatings by GMs in the past and I am not very interested to get an extra one. I think playing in the blitz tournament tomorrow would be more fun and intend to play.

Soren Peschardt (DEN) our Webmaster takes the microphone and presents the situation in his area of expertise. The number of tables published has steadily increased to about 1000, but the number of volunteers to help Soren with them has decreased dramatically. On top of this Soren has family commitments and school projects. This situation has forced him to resign from his position for the time being. Fortunately there are replacements ready to fill the void: Mrs. Evelyn Radosztics (OST) will become the new Webmaster. She will get a helping hand in maintaining those tables and future new ones by the strong Italian duo of Luz Marina Tinjaca and Marco Caressa. Everyone is excited by this nice arrangement and the vote in favour is

just a formality. Soren receives warm congratulations for his 3 years of work and improvement at our site.

Ragnar Wikman (FIN) goes into technology matters. He observes the trend in the past few years when transmittal of moves has changed from approximately 99% postal 7 years ago, to an increased majority of email transmission of moves. Pietro Cimmino (ITA) has done pioneer work in improving the service offered by ICCF, but unfortunately his work became obsolete as a result of the fast development in internet technology. He is congratulated by the Congress for everything he has done! Now it seems that a need for a server able to service all ICCF tournaments has become a priority. His proposal to start the project to build one is passed, as well as the appointment of Eckhard Lueers (GER) as project leader. Eckhard gives everybody present a little description of how the server will look like: the server will keep track of all games played in ICCF; it will announce you by email if a move has been made in any of your games; once you log on, you will be able to make your moves and add to them greetings, or comments as needed; there will be no more problems with reflection time calculations, or illegal moves as the server will be able to do all that for you automatically.

Eckhard believes a server of this sort can be setup in approximately 4-5 months and will definitely be available for experimental use at the next Congress in Portugal. New tables will be published progressively and most probably will be regularly updated by those appointed TDs.

Marketing matters are next on the agenda and Pedro Hegoburu (ARG) brings the Congress up to speed with the latest news. The ICCF Press Office position is vacant

since Franklin Campbell (USA) had to resign this year. The Congress sends Franklin congratulations in absence for his wonderful work last year in Florida. Unfortunately there are no new nominations for this position so far and as a result it will remain vacant.

Promoting ICCF needs to become more active in a lot of areas: future articles at Chessbase about ICCF as the only recognized CC organization; Telechess articles by Mr. Morgado (ARG) and Alvarez (ARG) should promote ICCF more and not in conjunction with IECG and IECC articles. It is observed that Correspondence Chess News (CCN) the internet based CC magazine releases news faster than the ICCF web site, which sometimes puts the Webmaster in a delicate position. There is hope that a better coordination between TDs, zonal directors and Webmaster will improve this situation.

Alan Borwell (SCO) raises the point of seeking sponsorship for ICCF. For this purpose he proposes the idea of getting profiles of top CC players and officials, arrange them in a portofolio and later present it to potential sponsors. This idea is approved in principle, but needs to be targeted and finalized within a period of 6 months.

After the coffee break Pedro continues with the Jubilee book project. The release of the book is delayed again to May 2002 and everybody's input is required to fill up some of the existing empty space. The communication between Pedro and some member federations has to improve in order to complete the project successfully. Roald Berthelsen (NOR) proposes that logos of each federation can be added. Alan Borwell (SCO) would collect photographs of VIPs (Very Important Persons) from those

interested to contribute; these VIPs do not necessarily have to be well known on the international stage, but nevertheless important CC figures in their respective countries. The book will be published in Hungary and receive an ISBN number; most probably its name will be changed to a more appropriate one (example “50 years of Correspondence Chess”) because of the delay. Pedro offers to those present a chance to see 4 proposed versions of the cover, nicely printed on glossy paper.

On the subject of the ICCF Archives we hear about the ongoing effort to secure a location for a future memorabilia “Bertl von Massow” Centre in Germany. Fritz Baumbach (GER) has done intensive work, being able to report so far that a private room has been secured in Dresden (GER). The profile of this centre is not clarified yet, however collectibles are already gathered together in several places. Further work has to be done, with the main focus on securing a public location instead of a private one and a preference for Hamburg (GER) as the host city.

Bits and pieces: Italy is nominated this year to receive the “Friend of ICCF” Award for their wonderful web site. The Congress approves the nomination unanimously. Also it is voted that next year a delegate from Kenya will be sponsored to attend the Congress in Portugal; approved unanimously as well.

The Code of Conduct guidelines is established in principle and divided in 8 categories. These categories remain to be further developed.

Carlos Flores Gutiérrez (ESP) the ICCF Treasurer mentions that some measures to deal with creditor federations have to be taken in such a manner that their overdue

amounts do not affect the other federations. He presents a document containing these measures; it is approved with amendments about limit dates for these measures to come into effect.

Right before the lunch break everyone present in the room has the honour and pleasure to meet Mr. Alvise Zichichi (ITA) President of the Italian Chess Federation who welcomes us to Italy and hopes that our visit will contribute to an even better relationship between CC and OTB (over the board) chess.

The afternoon session begins with two issues from Josef Mrkvička (CZE):

Tournaments rules of play will be modified at the next Congress in Portugal; A calendar for ICCF tournaments is needed, preferable covering a period of 1-2 years in advance.

Alan Borwell (SCO) informs the Congress that proposals for a change in the structure of ICCF will be prepared for next year’s Congress.

One last important issue raised at the Congress is the so-called “Argentinean situation”. Last year in Florida the Congress decided that one member federation is accepted per each affiliated country. CAPA and LADAC – Argentinean CC federations – signed a document to work together toward unification starting with the beginning of the year 2001, however nothing has been finalised so far. At one moment LADAC (member federation in ICCF) would not apply to ICCF for titles on behalf of other Argentinean non-member players unless they would pay fees to them; later one LADAC changed its position. CAPA and GM Juan Morgado have resumed their friendly relationship with ICCF and there is hope that GM J Morgado’s

involvement in ICCF will increase in future. ICCF advises CAPA of the delay in payment of their fees toward ICCF. Tournament prizes in events organized by CAPA should be approved by ICCF and because some prize winners had to wait for a long time to receive their prizes, a better work is needed from CAPA to remedy and eliminate these situations. Alan Borwell (SCO) presents to the Congress a proposed document, which basically says that unless an arrangement toward unification between LADAC and CAPA is not finalized by June 2002, LADAC will be suspended. Also there will be no teams accepted to participate for Argentina in team tournaments. This proposed document is based on the fact that LADAC cancelled unilaterally the original agreement from Buenos Aires 1997.

A few delegates speak to the Congress on this subject.

Abraham Raúl Ramirez (ARG) who was awarded ICCF Honorary Membership this year (translation from Pedro Hegoburu) mentions that delegates at the Congress should look at the situation with care and attention for the Argentinean players who should not pay for the mistakes of some Argentinean officers.

Carlos Cranbourne (ARG) – ICCF Zonal Director (Latin America) would like to see this situation resolved. He is willing to resign if his decision would improve the standout situation in his country, but would not like to elaborate more.

GM Toro Solis (CHI) mentions that Argentina had internal problems for a long time and they are the only South American country not able to cooperate with Carlos.

Prof. Warner Bruce Kover (BRS) reiterates that Carlos has helped Brazil a lot and it

would be unjust from their point of view to see Carlos gone.

Ing. Pablo Salcedo Mederos (CUB) gives Carlos full support as well, even if their knowledge of the Argentinean situation is extremely vague. He is urging his Argentinean friends to solve their problems and move ahead.

H.J. Samtani (IND) believes that all Argentinean players should join together and work like a family to solve their problems.

Prof. Max Zavanelli (USA) reminds everyone present that suspension as a penalty has worked a few years back in the USA case, so there is hope it will work again to generate in the end an improved situation.

Finally the Congress gives Carlos Cranbourne (ARG) a strong vote of confidence and hopes the Argentinean situation will be resolved before the suspension.

In the end it is confirmed that next year's Congress will take place on Oct (5-12), 2002 in Seixtal, Portugal, with transportation for delegates from Lisbon to Seixtal provided by the host Portuguese federation. Unfortunately there is no Portuguese delegate present in Rimini to give further details. The 2003 Congress will take place in Czech Republic, organized by the Czech federation only. The location will be Karvina situated near the city of Ostrava – a beautiful, coloured and very professional brochure is handed to anyone interested in more details. This 2003 Congress already announces to be at least at the same level with Rimini 2001. The 2004 Congress is scheduled to take place in Brazil, but there is still a lot of work needed to secure

sponsorship. H.J. Samtani (IND) proposes to explore the possibility for India to be an alternate host in case Brazil cannot solve the sponsorship and host the Congress.

The final session of the Congress ends here. Some people get ready to face FIDE GM Igor Efimov, others to assist and the rest to prepare for tomorrow's full day excursion to Urbino. Our good friends: the 3 Harding girls do not succeed in their efforts to convince me to play. I prefer to watch... At 5:00 pm 22 boards are prepared for the battle in the following order:



Boards 1-6

Board 1: Massimo De Blasio (ITA) – result ½
Board 2: Angelo Carrettoni (ITA) – result 0
Board 3: Rubens Battistini (ITA) – result 0
Board 4 : Dr. Renato Incelli (ITA) – result 0
Board 5: Duncan Chambers (ENG) – result 0
Board 6: George D. Pyrich (SCO) – result 0



Boards 3-9

Board 7: Dr. Ted Bullockus (USA) – result ½

Board 8: Artis Gaujens (LAT) – result 0
Board 9: Gerhard Radosztics (OST) – result 0



Boards 9-16

Board 10: Chris Lüers (GER) – result 0
Board 11: Eckhard Lüers (GER) – result ½
Board 12: Maurizio Sampieri (ITA) – result 0
Board 13: Olavi Halme (FIN) – result ½
Board 14: Pietro Cimmino (ITA) – result 0
Board 15: Dr. Jaromír Canibal (CZE) – result ½
Board 16: Ing. Josef Mrkvička (CZE) – result ½



Boards 15-22

Board 17: George Walker (SWZ) – result 0
Board 18: Dr. Guido Bresadola (ITA) – result 0
Board 19: Ing. Pablo Salcedo Mederos (CUB) – result 0
Board 20: Carlos Cranbourne (ARG) – result ½
Board 21: H.J. Samtani (IND) – result 0
Board 22: Guillermo F. Toro Solis de Ovando (CHI) – result ½

Final result for FIDE GM Igor Efimov: +14
= 8 – 0 for a total score of 18-4.

TO BE CONTINUED