

CORRESPONDENCE

'Twixt Cup and lip ...'

From *C. Chabris and D. Edelman*¹.

To the Editor,

On p. 165 of *ICCA Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 3, ICCA President Tony Marsland reported on "An informal meeting of ICCA members" held on 27 June, 1994 in Cape May, NJ. After listing several European computer-chess events, he wrote: "The President found that similar events did not occur in America quite as frequently, though there is the Harvard Cup (a poor cousin of AEGON and perhaps trying too hard to ensure some good results against "tired" humans) ..."

Of all the events mentioned in the relevant paragraph, the Harvard Cup is the only one singled out for comparison and innuendo in a "finding" by the ICCA President. Why is this? As the founders and organizers of the Harvard Cup series, we appreciate our tournament being mentioned in the company of other fine events such as AEGON, but we object to its characterization as a "poor cousin" and we deny the insinuation that it is organized explicitly or implicitly to favour the computer participants. The Harvard Cup was inaugurated in 1989 by Garry Kasparov and has just completed a successful fifth edition (see the report elsewhere this issue), and since its inception has been the only regular tournament in the world pitting exclusively human grandmasters against chess-playing computers. More importantly, though, the ICCA President offers no justification whatsoever for his grave accusation regarding the ethics of the Harvard Cup. We respectfully request a retraction and apology.

We strongly believe that the ICCA (through its officers and publications) should not publicly defame events such as the Harvard Cup that clearly benefit the international computer-chess community. After all, in the same article (p. 166) the author urges the ICCA "to seek more opportunities for computers and humans to match wits". Do unsupported criticisms and allegations about a respected event of just this sort help the cause?

... Cape May be a slip

From *T.A. Marsland*², ICCA President.

Dear Mr. Chabris and Mr. Edelman,

Thank you for your recent letter concerning my ICCA Information-Meeting report from Cape May. Upon re-reading that report I can see why you are aggrieved, since it does indeed look as though I actually made the remarks that you find offensive. At this time, I would like to assure you that this was not the case, rather the words reflect my way of summarizing input received from participants at the meeting.

In my presentation I lamented that there were relatively fewer computer-chess competitions in North America than in Europe, citing the Harvard Cup as one of the few alternatives. This led to some general discussion which I summarized in those few unfortunate words. It certainly was not clear that I was not speaking from first-hand experience. [Indeed I have had neither the time nor the money to attend either an AEGON or a Harvard Cup event.] However, there were others present who *could* speak with authority, perhaps even as participants!

¹ HCC Associates, P.O. Box 2967, Harvard Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02238 USA. Email: cfc@isr.harvard.edu

² Visiting Professor, Hong Kong University, Computer Science Department, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong. Email: marsland@csd.hku.hk.