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MANY CHANGES

This issue of the *ICCA Journal* is unable to record properly all the changes the computer-chess world faced in the summer months of 1999. Of course, we did our utmost, and so we are able to offer our readers a long list of changes adequately reported in the pages to follow. Below we briefly deal with them in an order which gives priority to human beings above scientific findings.

First, the Editors would like to congratulate Stefan Meyer-Kahlen on winning the title World Champion among computer-chess programs for the period 1999 – 2002. His program SHREDDER achieved a deserved first place at the WCCC'99 in Paderborn, after an exciting play-off against FERRET (Bruce Moreland). SHREDDER took over the title from FRITZ (Frans Morsch, Cock de Gorter, and Mathias Feist).

Second, after thirteen years of services our President Tony Marsland has stepped down. The overview of the activities and tournaments under his Presidentship is impressive. We thank him for his enthusiasm, his scientific contributions, and his guidance. Much wisdom was necessary to keep the ICCA going on the right track.

Third, the conference *Advances in Computer Chess 9* was an overwhelming success. This series of conferences has attracted the attention of game-playing researchers from all over the world. The result is that those researchers submitted papers on many games different from chess. As a consequence the idea of changing the name from *Advances in Computer Chess* to *Advances in Computer Games* has been almost generally welcomed.

Fourth, the developments mentioned above had not escaped the attention of the new ICCA Board. Therefore, they suggested in the Triennial Meeting to broaden the scope of the *ICCA Journal* officially by encouraging the Editor to solicit contributions which are not chess-specific, but games-oriented. The result of this change in policy has already been incorporated in this issue. (See also below.)

Fifth, the ChessBase organisation has expressed the willingness to cooperate more closely with the ICCA. In addition to their articles (see the article by Frederic Friedel and also the Correspondence section), they have contributed a CD ROM for our readership containing opinions bridging the gap between human Grandmasters and top programs.

Sixth, the ChessBase organisation has offered to continue the Mephisto/Novag Award. For 1999 we will again have an Award, of course now called the ChessBase Best-Publication Award, which enables the ICCA to distinguish a researcher or a group of researchers for their excellence.

Seventh, the ICCA Board has been enlarged by the position of an "active programmers' representative". This position is now filled by Martin Zentner. The ICCA expects many ideas and activities from him, which will be communicated to our readers in the Journal.

Eighth, the subscription fee has been settled for international use as US $ 40 (as was) and Euro 40. (See the minutes of the Triennial Meeting.)

Ninth, the ICCA Board has decided (September 11, 1999) to combine ideas of the uniform-platform tournament and the annual World Microcomputer Chess Championship (WMCC), by organising a World PC Computer-Chess Championship 2000 in London on a uniform platform. For details, see the Presidential address.

Tenth, the Editorial Board is proud to have been able to report since 1983 a scientific breakthrough in each issue; sometimes a small one, at other times a larger one. The last two years we were fortunate to publish many outstanding contributions by Ernst Heinz. Again, his *Adaptive Null-Move Pruning* enhances our understanding of the intricacies of game-tree search. No change in his series, but an increase in our knowledge.

After the many changes mentioned above, your Editor feels he is still running to keep up with the many changes in the computer-games field. Let us hope that the 21st century will continue the current slope.

Jaap van den Herik

Following the decision taken at the recent Triennial Meeting in Paderborn, to broaden the content of the *ICCA Journal* to include other intelligent games, the Board of the ICCA is proposing to create a new organisation, to be called the International Computer Games Association (ICGA). The ICGA will be controlled by the ICCA and it will have bylaws broadly similar to the ICCA, substituting "other intelligent games" for Chess where appropriate. Our aim is to foster greater co-operation and learning between those working on programming different intelligent games.

The Board of the ICCA intends, at the next Triennial Meeting, to propose that the ICCA and ICGA merge, under the name ICGA, and that the name of the *ICCA Journal* be changed to the *ICGA Journal*. The reason for this approach is that a change of name from the ICCA would require a vote at a Triennial Meeting and we do not want to delay this important new initiative.

Comments and suggestions are welcomed from ICCA members and non-members alike.

The Board of ICCA

After more than eleven years of service our Production Assistant Sabine Vanhouwe has chosen to leave the Department of Computer Science. We are very, very grateful for the dedication she has shown towards the typesetting. We wish her much pleasure in her new job. We are sure that our readers are also grateful for her long-standing service.

Jaap van den Herik