

INVITATION FOR
CHESS COLLECTORS INTERNATIONAL
19th BIENNIAL CONGRESS
Saint Louis, Missouri, USA
September 2 – 6, 2020

(NOTE: This document contains a few updates from the version printed in latest issue of The Chess Collector. Needless to say, this is a rapidly evolving situation. The information below is current as of July 4, 2020. Further updates will come to you via e-mail, assuming we have your current e-mail address.)

It may seem amazing in this COVID-19 world we're living in, but CCI is going ahead with our (postponed) Biennial meeting, assuming no widespread lockdowns return to the city of St. Louis before early September.

This will be a historic meeting, but unfortunately much smaller than we had planned. Originally, we were hoping for some 60 to 80 members to attend the meeting in May. We now realize we'll be doing very well indeed to welcome even 15 or 20 of you in September. Virtually all of our European members will simply be unable to attend, due to ongoing bans on international travel. One or two very determined Europeans may find a way to slip through the bureaucratic barbed wire, but we're not counting on it. And quite a few USA members have flatly stated they have no intention of traveling at all, so soon after the pandemic.

Oh, well. Historically speaking, CCI's smallest meetings have often been among its most intimate and convivial. As Shakespeare's *Henry V* was overheard to say, "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers ..."

This will be a safe and physically-distanced meeting. As safe as we can possibly make it, at any rate. And physical distancing will be made much easier by our reduced numbers. There will be masks (a chess-themed mask is being created especially for our meeting), hand sanitizer, occasional temperature-taking, a few plexiglass barriers, disinfecting wipes, and even, at times, disposable gloves for you to wear. These measures are strongly recommended, but will not be forced on anyone. That said however, you will find that masks and other measures will most likely be mandatory for admittance at certain venues, such as the World Chess Hall of Fame, or the tram ride at the Gateway Arch, for example.

If attending, we respectfully ask that you take personal responsibility for your presence at this purely voluntary event. We will not be asking you to sign a liability waiver, as some have suggested. However, CCI will accept no liability for anyone who might get sick at this event. This would be a difficult case to prove, both causally and in terms of the damages assessed, even more so in light of all the precautions we will be taking. Besides, any potential liability we might face would be no different from that potentially faced by any restaurant or other business that is currently reopening.

We ask that all attendees willingly cooperate with our mutual goal of holding this meeting without anyone becoming sick as a result. We plan to take any and all reasonable measures to protect the health and safety of our attendees. Some of you have said you would drive rather than fly, to reduce your exposure while traveling, and we think that's a good idea. We will be driving in from Denver.

A few notes about how the meeting is shaping up:

HOTEL: The Chase Park Plaza understands that our meeting is likely to be much smaller than originally planned. We will still be able to have our gala dinner there, with physical distancing measures in place. **NOTE:** If you previously made a hotel reservation for the May meeting, it has NOT been cancelled, unless YOU cancelled it. All such reservations have simply been moved to the September dates. The hotel is expecting you. If you have NOT yet made your reservation, please contact Kelly Toal at ChiChi Travel, at telephone 314-678-0500, or e-mail at ktoal@chichillc.com. ChiChi Travel is our exclusive booking agent for the Chase Park Plaza, our official conference hotel. Only they can ensure that you receive our special Chess rate of \$159 per night, which applies whether you wish to sleep 1, 2, 3 or even 4 people to a room.

AUCTION: Link Auction Galleries is continuing to hold auctions this summer as scheduled. They are still planning to hold our chess auction on Saturday, September 5th, at 10:00 am. Our attendees will have exclusive access to bid in person, on-site at Link. Normally, though previewing can be done in person, all bidding is now done via the internet only, but Link is making an exception to this for our group. That said however, you will be competing against online bidders as well as those of us in the room, and Link is planning to add a second online bidding platform for maximum internet exposure. CCI members who don't attend the meeting will still be able to participate in the auction, at least, from the comfort of their own homes. Link is currently holding roughly 300 lots of chess sets and other chess items, primarily from the Sarisohn collection, with additions from the Raphaelli and Gallegos collections. They are still taking consignments if any of you wish to consign items, but don't wait until the last minute to do so! Contact Link as soon as possible at (314) 454-6525, ext. 101. Ask to speak to Susan Kime. She is the head of Link Auction Galleries, and is handling our auction personally. E-mail: susan@linkauctiongalleries.com.

WORLD CHESS HALL OF FAME: Happily, the WCHOF has reopened to the public as of June 22nd. Our museum exhibition, "Dare to Know: Chess in the Age of Reason" is likewise open to the public, even though we are still awaiting the installation of many world-class sets from the incomparable Dean collection which were held up due to the pandemic. With any luck, they should arrive in plenty of time for our meeting.

GATEWAY ARCH MUSEUM: This has been reopening in phases, and our excursion there should not be impacted in any way.

WHITHERWARD CONCERT: This was not held on May 27th, as all events at the WCHOF were cancelled. We doubt this will be rescheduled for our Labor Day weekend meeting, but we will let you know if it (or a similar event) is.

RIVERBOAT CRUISE: The Gateway Arch riverboat cruises are slowly beginning to reopen. As soon as possible, we will contact them to review our private charter reservation.

CHESS MARKET: Unfortunately, the chess market has been cancelled. There will simply be too few attendees to make it worthwhile for dealers to travel with inventory. If several of you want to disagree with this, and plan to bring items to sell, we are open to reconsidering.

SIMUL: We are still hoping to hold a simul, but it has not yet been arranged. It would be a much smaller group of players; both they and the grandmaster would need to be masked, and probably gloved as well (or using hand sanitizer before and after the event).

SPEAKERS: Several of our scheduled speakers have had to drop out, and we are currently in the process of scheduling replacements. There should still be a full slate of talks (probably to be delivered from behind a sheet of plexiglass), but they will be on a somewhat different group of topics. If you agreed to give a talk and still plan to attend, we still want you on the schedule.

One of the talks we are now planning will be entitled, "How to Checkmate a Virus: Lessons from the Enlightenment."

Hope to see you all in St. Louis, or as many of you as possible!

Best Wishes,
Tom Gallegos &
Luann Woneis, Organizers

P.S.: Please fill out and return the attached (revised) registration form by July 31st. And have a great summer!

REGISTRATION FORM
CCI's 19th Biennial Congress, St. Louis, Missouri, USA
September 2 - 6, 2020

Please complete the form below and mail it along with your check for US \$385.00 per person for members and their guests (\$435 for non-members), by no later than July 31, 2020. (Please print clearly and legibly):

Your Name

Name(s) of your guests or additional attendees

Check here if you are a vegetarian or vegan: _____ (Circle one)

Your email address for confirmation and subsequent information regarding the conference: _____

Please make your check payable to **Chess Collectors International**. Mail the check and your completed form to:

Tom Gallegos
6352 Utica Street
Arvada, Colorado 80003-1470
USA

If you previously registered for the May meeting, and did not request a refund, we still have your money! You do not need to register again, or pay again, obviously.

Our non-USA members have the option of paying the registration fee in cash during check-in at the meeting, if they choose. (Our CCI conference check-in desk will be open from 1:00 – 5:00 pm on Wednesday, September 2nd.) We unfortunately have no way to accept PayPal, credit cards, or bank wire transfers at this time.

PLEASE REGISTER EARLY!

PROVISIONAL PROGRAM
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Wednesday, September 2nd:

- 1:00 – 5:00 Registration in the Chase Park Plaza (our conference hotel)
- 5:30 – 7:00 Reception at the WCHOF or substitute venue
- 7:00 Informal dinner (not included in conference fee)

Thursday, September 3rd:

- 9:00 – 12:00 Morning lectures at Link Auction Gallery (and auction viewing)
- 12:00 – 2:00 Box Lunch (included with the conference fee)
- 2:00 – 5:00 Exhibition at WCHOF: *Dare to Know: Chess in the Age of Reason*
- 5:30 Bus departs from hotel for the riverboat
- 6:00 – 9:00 Dinner cruise aboard the *Tom Sawyer* or substitute (included)

Friday, September 4th:

- 9:00 – 12:00 Morning lectures at Link Auction Gallery (and auction viewing)
- 12:00 – 1:30 Lunch (included with the conference fee)
- 2:30 Bus departs from hotel for Gateway Arch Museum – explores St. Louis' role in westward expansion (free), and/or a chance to ride the tram to the top of the Gateway Arch on your own. (Tram tickets are \$16 adults, \$12 children, not included.)
- 7:00 Dinner (included)

Saturday, September 5th:

- 9:00 – 10:00 Final auction preview
- 10:00 – 1:00 Chess Auction at Link Auction Galleries
- 1:00 Lunch on your own (not included)
- 3:30 – 6:00 Potential Simul at the Kingside Diner or substitute venue
- 7:00 – 10:00 Enlightenment Gala Dinner at Chase Park Plaza (included)

Sunday, September 6th:

- 9:00 Informal farewell breakfast at hotel (not included)

Opportunity to visit (on your own) local attractions such as the St. Louis Cathedral, the National Blues Museum, St. Louis Art Museum, History Museum, Cahokia Mounds Historic Site, the Botanical Gardens, Trolley Tours, the St. Louis Zoo, the Mercantile Library, other Lewis & Clark sites such as the Lewis & Clark Historic Site in nearby Illinois, the Lewis & Clark Boathouse & Museum in St. Charles, etc.

CHANGES POSSIBLE!