

Chess invades Pumpkin Festival!

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Demonstrations and Simuls were part of the action

Over 100 games of chess were played in the Coastside Academic Chess Lot at the Half Moon Bay Pumpkin festival. Chess Master Eric Schiller gave several simuls and lectures, and visitors were able to play chess informally at chess tables arranged by John DiNapoli and the Farralone View Elementary Chess Club, organized by 2nd grader Dante DiNapoli. You can learn about the organization at CoastsideChess.org. Don't confuse this with the Coastside Chess Club site www.coastsidechess.us, which has information about the rated and non-rated competitions on the Coastside, including Sunday's (Oct. 30) special Halloween Chess Meet! The chess lot was so popular that the festival organizers asked us to return next year, and we'll be included in the pre-event publicity! We'll have a set of formal blitz tournaments in 2006. This year, the goal was especially to encourage kids visiting the festival, many of whom were overheard asking their parents about chess and if they could learn it! This kind of outreach is necessary if we are to move beyond the base of USCF members and get more attention for chess in the Bay Area. The Coastside Academic Chess program is arranging chess clubs in all of the local schools, which often have GATE chess programs taught by Dr. Schiller.

The organization of the clubs is relying on the students themselves, rather than parents, to get things going. It encourages leadership and teaches the kids that they can make a difference by getting involved. The group is seeking sponsors to establish a nice trophy for the Coastside Shield which will go to the best club on the Coastside, and will lobby for chess tables to be included in the new Half Moon Bay Park. Thanks to the Coastside Chess Club, almost all the coffee shops on the Coastside have regulation chess sets and boards for use by their patrons. So it isn't hard to get a game if you are visiting the Half Moon Bay area.



A good place to sit down for a bit and play chess



An afternoon simul