

The Chess Wheel Revisited

There has been little attention given to the invention of a "Chess Wheel" intended for use as a "tutorial device for teaching opening moves in the game of chess" first fully developed for the English Opening. Published with "patent pending" in 1973, US Patent, US3848345A, was granted to "Ter-Gevorkian, deceased" on Nov. 19, 1974.

<https://patents.google.com/patent/US3848345A>

United States Patent [19]

Ter-Gevorkian, deceased

[11] **3,848,345**

[45] **Nov. 19, 1974**

[54] **CHESS WHEEL**

[76] Inventor: **Vrej Ter-Gevorkian, deceased**, late of 4313 Green Pond Rd., Bethlehem, Pa. 18017 Aram Sarhadian, administrator

[22] Filed: **May 29, 1973**

[21] Appl. No.: **364,879**

[52] U.S. Cl. **35/8 R**

[51] Int. Cl. **G09b 19/22**

[58] Field of Search **35/8 R, 9 R, 74**

[56] **References Cited**

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Primary Examiner—Wm. H. Grieb
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—George A. Heitzman

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A tutorial device for teaching opening moves in the game of chess. The device comprises at least two flat members, each of which contains portions of an opening move sequence. The members are rotatably joined at their centers, and at least one member has a slot cut therein whereby information on another member is selectively exposed as the members are rotated.

10 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures

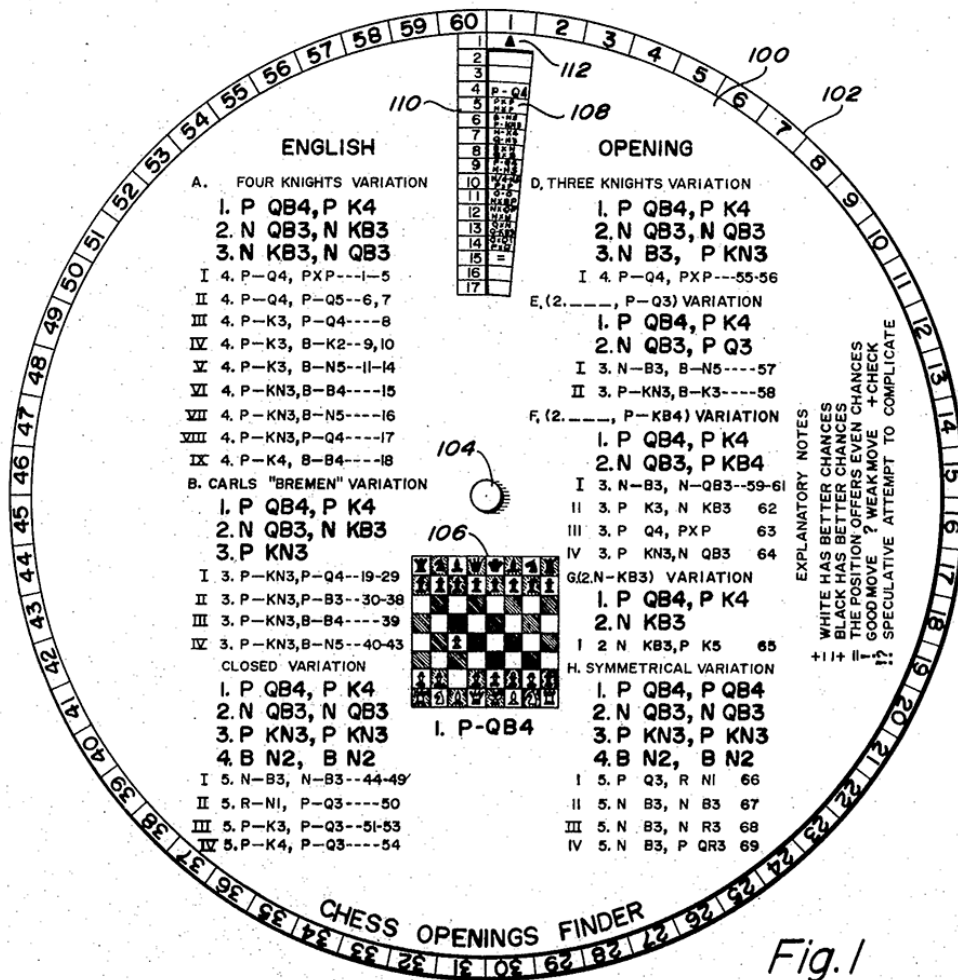
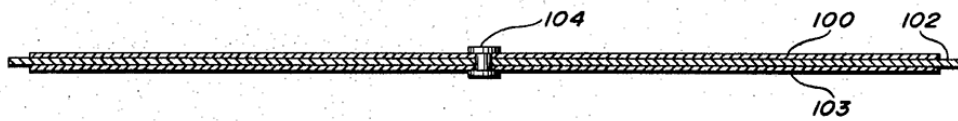


Fig. 1



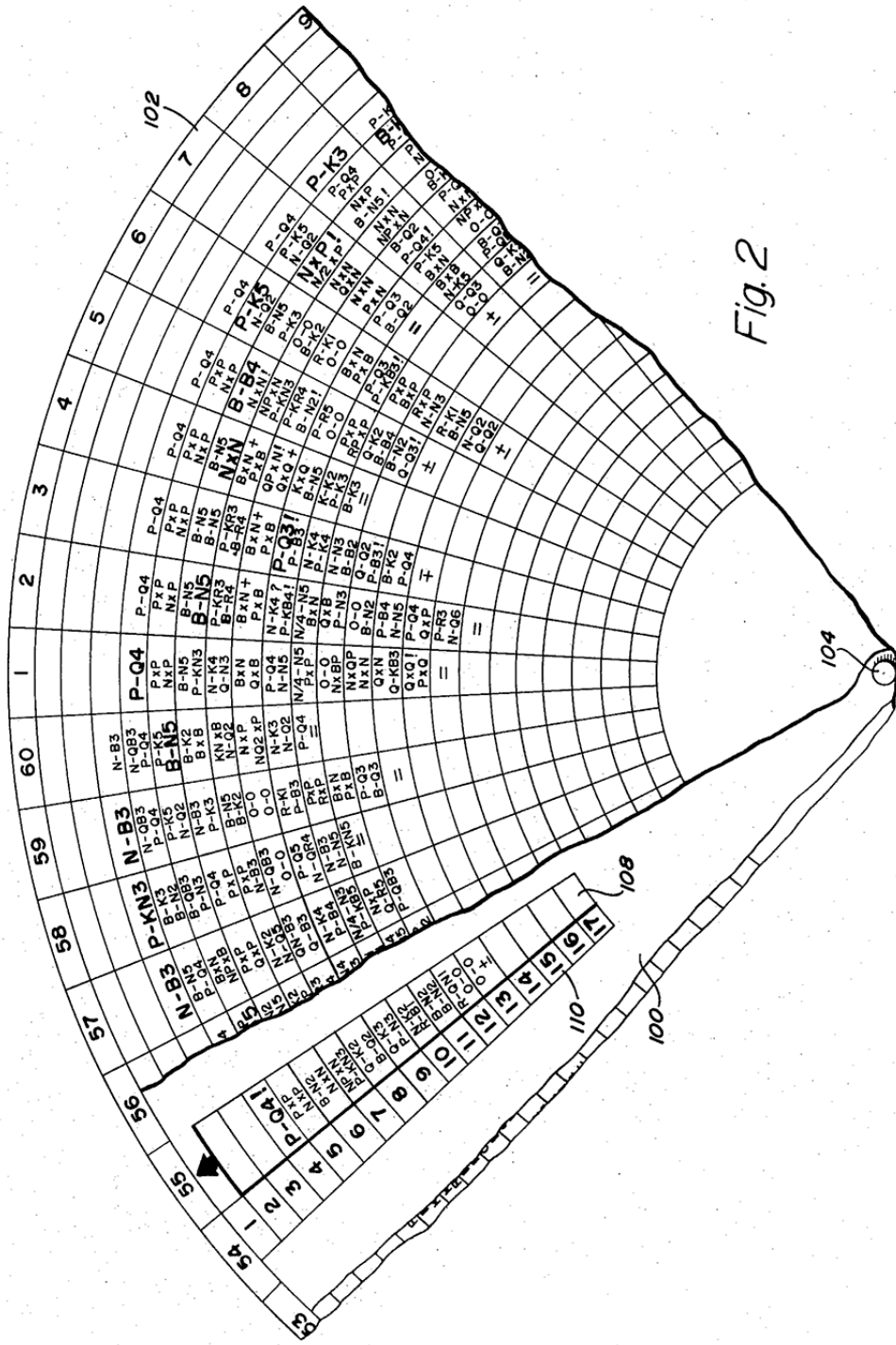


Fig. 2

A brief description of the *The Chess Wheel* from a book catalogue prepared by Dale Brandreth is cited in C.N. 472 in "Chess Jottings." The description shows perhaps more wit by the author than understanding. In the 40 years since this citation, no correspondents have provided additional information. Recently, a copy of *The Chess Wheel* was recovered by one of the inventor's former students that provides a better understanding of the nature of the device.

A 2019 article, "An unknown side to Salo Landau", by Bob van de Velde for the *Chess History & Literature Society* website references *The Chess Wheel* after giving details of Landau's "Chess Key" designed in the 1930s.

Several years ago, Reuben Fine and Salo Landau's *Schaaksleutel* (= Chess Key) was presented in the *Nieuwsbrief* (Newsletter) of the Max Euwe Centre (no. 76, April 2011) as an exceptional object 'from bygone days'. It is a kind of disc made of thin cardboard, the size of an LP. When this disc is turned inside a frame, which is also made of cardboard, it shows a multitude of chess opening variations, 116 in number. As far as I know, this was the first time that someone attempted to present chess opening theory in such an easy-to-use, systematic way.

The author in showing the only similar device known describes *The Chess Wheel* accurately and suggests that its design might have been derived from Landau's. The question was left open of why nothing else had been heard of the inventor nor additional openings published.

Considering the boom in the communication technology of the past half-century, it is no wonder that such creativity, with the use of cardboard, did not cause any great stir later... I have found only one example where this idea was imitated, and this comprises thus its entire 'Nachleben' [legacy] at this stage. In 1973, at least according to the copyright indication, *The Chess Wheel; Chess openings finder*, 'compiled and designed by V. Armen a.k.a. Vrej ter-Gevorkian', appeared on the market. This edition included recommendations by Paul Schmidt, to whom a biography was recently devoted, but unfortunately this book does not shed any light on Schmidt's relation to the author of *The Chess Wheel*. V. Armen, of Armenian descent, worked in the United States as a linguist and a chess teacher since 1966. In his *Chess Wheel*, he presents the theory of the English Opening, of course still in descriptive notation. This wheel also has the size of a longplay record, and it works in a similar way as Landau's keys. Other *Chess Wheels* are not known; probably, despite recommendations by renowned chess players, no new wheel was ever made. I have never heard anything more from Armen himself either and there is no mention of him in Jeremy Gaige's *Chess Personalia* (1987). The additional documentation doesn't mention where V. Armen, a.k.a. Vrej ter-Gevorkian, got his wheel idea from. Could it, perhaps thanks to Reuben Fine, have been Salo Landau's chess key?

<https://www.kwabc.org/en/newsitem/an-unknown-side-to-salo-landau.html>

The recovered wheel is dedicated to a student at Moravian Academy in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania where Ter-Gevorkian taught French and organized a Chess Club.

*To Prof. Calhoun,
Avec mes meilleurs souhaits — [With my best wishes]
23 Oct. 73 V. Armen*

Chess Club

Moravian Academy '74



Transient, 1974 Moravian Academy yearbook, p. 53.

The outer envelope of *The Chess Wheel* includes significant endorsements from the chess community.

"I am quite familiar with the "wheel-finder" concept as used in other fields of endeavor and am chagrined not to have thought myself of applying it to the study of chess openings. In my opinion, The Chess Wheel should become a popular—indeed invaluable—reference and study guide."

E. B. Edmondson, Executive Director, USCF

"The Chess Wheel designed by V. Armen is a handy and novel approach to place the opening theory at the finger-tips of the user without the need of thumbing through a textbook. Just turn the wheel to the reference number indicated, and the desired information appears in the window."

Dr. Paul F. Schmidt, International Master, U.S.A.

"I have seen many different methods for studying chess openings, but none of them is so attractive and interesting as The Chess Wheel. It is fast, easy and enjoyable to work with."

Bruno Parma, Grandmaster, Yugoslavia

"The Chess Wheel is a compact, fast and reliable addition to any chess player's library. I think it is the most valuable development in the study of chess openings since Ruy Lopez."

Peter Biyiasas, International Master, Canadian Champion

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME
A HANDY AID FOR THE CHESS NOVICE OR VETERAN

The Chess Wheel

A new approach to the study of chess openings, Armen's Chess Wheel is perfect for novices or for chess instructors.

The Chess Wheel enables the chess player to find proper responses to numerous variations of a given opening quickly and easily.

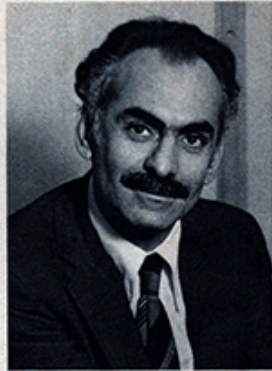
For years the wheel-finder has been widely used in business, education and science. Now, for the first time it is applied to the study of chess.

This wheel demonstrates the English Opening, which has become widely popular in recent tournaments. Fifteen key positions with 130 variations and subvariations are presented, based on games actually played by Grandmasters and International Masters.

The Chess Wheel is sophisticated, but simple; complex, but uncomplicated. It is a perfect (and easily portable) tool for either the beginner or the experienced player.

A separate wheel is being developed for each major chess opening. Now ready for publication are the French, Sicilian, Caro-Kann and King's Indian Defenses. Eventually, all chess openings will be available and will be alphabetically sequenced so that ready reference can be made to any chess opening.

V. Armen (Vrej Ter-Gevorkian) began playing chess as a schoolboy in his native Republic of Soviet Armenia, a country famed for its chess players, including former World Champion TIGRAN PETROSIAN. After taking degrees in General Linguistics at the University of Yerevan, Armen worked at the Academy of Sciences, (Institute



of Oriental Studies, also in Yerevan), and won recognition as a theoretician in the field of chess.

Since coming to the United States in 1966, Mr. Armen has taught French and Russian (at present he is a member of the Moravian Academy faculty) and has continued his work as a teacher and student of chess theory. He is instructor for the Bethlehem (Pa.) Chess Club, which he founded in 1972. At present he is a doctoral candidate in General Linguistics at the University of Pittsburgh, Pa.

Development of the Chess Wheel is Mr. Armen's unique contribution to the game of Kings.

Grandmaster, International Masters, Officials of the U.S. Chess Federation say:

"I am quite familiar with the "wheel-finder" concept as used in other fields of endeavor and am chagrined not to have thought myself of applying it to the study of chess openings. In my opinion, *The Chess Wheel* should become a popular—indeed invaluable—reference and study guide."

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Peter Bilyasas
International Master,
Canadian Champion

The Chess Wheel V. ARMEN — Post Office Box 3156, Bethlehem, Pa. 18017

To Prof. Calloway,
Three nice medals sent!
25 Oct. 73
V. Armen

ENGLISH

OPENING



ENGLISH

OPENING

SECTION 1 (1.P-004, P-K4)
KEY POSITION
 1. N-C3, N-K3
 2. N-G3, N-G3
 3. P-Q4, P-K4
 4. P-Q4, P-Q4
 5. P-Q4, P-Q4
 6. P-Q4, P-Q4
 7. P-Q4, P-Q4
 8. P-Q4, P-Q4
 9. P-Q4, P-Q4
 10. P-Q4, P-Q4
 11. P-Q4, P-Q4
 12. P-Q4, P-Q4
 13. P-Q4, P-Q4
 14. P-Q4, P-Q4
 15. P-Q4, P-Q4
 16. P-Q4, P-Q4
 17. P-Q4, P-Q4

INTRODUCTION
 The English Opening, formerly known as "The Game," is a variation of the d4-d5 system. It is a hybrid between the Queen's Gambit and the King's Indian Defense. It is characterized by an early knight move to c3 and a pawn move to f4. This system is well-suited for players who like a flexible and dynamic game. It is particularly popular among club players and is also favored by some grandmasters. The English Opening is a very popular and a highly rated system in the world of chess. It is a system that can be played by both sides and is a very practical system. It is a system that can be played by both sides and is a very practical system. It is a system that can be played by both sides and is a very practical system.

B. CARLS "DREHMAN" SYSTEM
KEY POSITION
 1. P-Q4, P-K4
 2. N-C3, N-K3
 3. P-Q4, P-Q4
 4. P-Q4, P-Q4
 5. P-Q4, P-Q4
 6. P-Q4, P-Q4
 7. P-Q4, P-Q4
 8. P-Q4, P-Q4
 9. P-Q4, P-Q4
 10. P-Q4, P-Q4
 11. P-Q4, P-Q4
 12. P-Q4, P-Q4
 13. P-Q4, P-Q4
 14. P-Q4, P-Q4
 15. P-Q4, P-Q4
 16. P-Q4, P-Q4
 17. P-Q4, P-Q4

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE WHEEL
 1. Select the desired main variation as indicated by A, B, C, etc.
 2. After selecting the desired variation, a chessboard will appear with the position in a standard position for each variation. Some of the variations are marked with a red dot, indicating they are new or noteworthy.
 3. After choosing the variation or subvariation, the top line of the wheel will show the position of the wheel. The desired move number of the variation chosen will be indicated on the wheel. The wheel will show the desired move number and the corresponding move. The wheel will show the desired move number and the corresponding move. The wheel will show the desired move number and the corresponding move.

SYMBOL REFERENCE
 White has the upper hand.
 Black has the upper hand.
 The game is even.
 The position is unclear.
 A very good move.
 An excellent move.
 A great move.
 A brilliant move.
 A move deserving attention.
 Check.
 Draw.

V. Armen
The Chess Wheel
CHess OPENINGS FINDER
 Compiled and Designed by
 V. ARMEN (Vrej Ter-Gevorkian)

PATENT PENDING FOR ALL CHESS OPENINGS AND DEFENSES ON WHEEL SYSTEM AND COPYRIGHT 1973 BY V. ARMEN A.K.A. VREJ TER-GEVORKIAN. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



ENGLISH

OPENING

ENGLISH

ENGLISH

SECTION II (1. P-OB4, P-OB4)
 H. SYMMETRICAL VARIATION I
 KEY POSITION
 1. P-OB4, N-OB4
 2. N-OB3, N-OB3
 3. P-OB3, P-OB3
 4. P-OB2, P-OB2
 5. P-OB1, P-OB1
 6. P-OB0, P-OB0
 7. P-OB0, P-OB0
 8. P-OB0, P-OB0
 9. P-OB0, P-OB0
 10. P-OB0, P-OB0
 11. P-OB0, P-OB0
 12. P-OB0, P-OB0
 13. P-OB0, P-OB0
 14. P-OB0, P-OB0
 15. P-OB0, P-OB0
 16. P-OB0, P-OB0
 17. P-OB0, P-OB0

SECTION III (1. P-OB4, N-OB3)
 I. SYMMETRICAL VARIATION II
 KEY POSITION
 1. P-OB4, P-OB4
 2. N-OB3, N-OB3
 3. P-OB3, P-OB3
 4. P-OB2, P-OB2
 5. P-OB1, P-OB1
 6. P-OB0, P-OB0
 7. P-OB0, P-OB0
 8. P-OB0, P-OB0
 9. P-OB0, P-OB0
 10. P-OB0, P-OB0
 11. P-OB0, P-OB0
 12. P-OB0, P-OB0
 13. P-OB0, P-OB0
 14. P-OB0, P-OB0
 15. P-OB0, P-OB0
 16. P-OB0, P-OB0
 17. P-OB0, P-OB0

SECTION IV (1. P-OB4, N-OB3)
 J. SYMMETRICAL VARIATION III
 KEY POSITION
 1. P-OB4, P-OB4
 2. N-OB3, N-OB3
 3. P-OB3, P-OB3
 4. P-OB2, P-OB2
 5. P-OB1, P-OB1
 6. P-OB0, P-OB0
 7. P-OB0, P-OB0
 8. P-OB0, P-OB0
 9. P-OB0, P-OB0
 10. P-OB0, P-OB0
 11. P-OB0, P-OB0
 12. P-OB0, P-OB0
 13. P-OB0, P-OB0
 14. P-OB0, P-OB0
 15. P-OB0, P-OB0
 16. P-OB0, P-OB0
 17. P-OB0, P-OB0

SECTION V (1. P-OB4, N-OB3)
 K. SYMMETRICAL VARIATION IV
 KEY POSITION
 1. P-OB4, P-OB4
 2. N-OB3, N-OB3
 3. P-OB3, P-OB3
 4. P-OB2, P-OB2
 5. P-OB1, P-OB1
 6. P-OB0, P-OB0
 7. P-OB0, P-OB0
 8. P-OB0, P-OB0
 9. P-OB0, P-OB0
 10. P-OB0, P-OB0
 11. P-OB0, P-OB0
 12. P-OB0, P-OB0
 13. P-OB0, P-OB0
 14. P-OB0, P-OB0
 15. P-OB0, P-OB0
 16. P-OB0, P-OB0
 17. P-OB0, P-OB0

SECTION VI (1. P-OB4, N-OB3)
 L. RUBINSTEIN'S SYSTEM
 KEY POSITION
 1. P-OB4, P-OB4
 2. N-OB3, N-OB3
 3. P-OB3, P-OB3
 4. P-OB2, P-OB2
 5. P-OB1, P-OB1
 6. P-OB0, P-OB0
 7. P-OB0, P-OB0
 8. P-OB0, P-OB0
 9. P-OB0, P-OB0
 10. P-OB0, P-OB0
 11. P-OB0, P-OB0
 12. P-OB0, P-OB0
 13. P-OB0, P-OB0
 14. P-OB0, P-OB0
 15. P-OB0, P-OB0
 16. P-OB0, P-OB0
 17. P-OB0, P-OB0

SECTION VII (1. P-OB4, N-OB3)
 M. EXCHANGE VARIATION OR
 CHUMFIELD'S SYSTEM
 KEY POSITION
 1. P-OB4, P-OB4
 2. N-OB3, N-OB3
 3. P-OB3, P-OB3
 4. P-OB2, P-OB2
 5. P-OB1, P-OB1
 6. P-OB0, P-OB0
 7. P-OB0, P-OB0
 8. P-OB0, P-OB0
 9. P-OB0, P-OB0
 10. P-OB0, P-OB0
 11. P-OB0, P-OB0
 12. P-OB0, P-OB0
 13. P-OB0, P-OB0
 14. P-OB0, P-OB0
 15. P-OB0, P-OB0
 16. P-OB0, P-OB0
 17. P-OB0, P-OB0

SECTION VIII (1. P-OB4, N-OB3)
 N. NIMZO-ENGLISH SYSTEM
 KEY POSITION
 1. P-OB4, P-OB4
 2. N-OB3, N-OB3
 3. P-OB3, P-OB3
 4. P-OB2, P-OB2
 5. P-OB1, P-OB1
 6. P-OB0, P-OB0
 7. P-OB0, P-OB0
 8. P-OB0, P-OB0
 9. P-OB0, P-OB0
 10. P-OB0, P-OB0
 11. P-OB0, P-OB0
 12. P-OB0, P-OB0
 13. P-OB0, P-OB0
 14. P-OB0, P-OB0
 15. P-OB0, P-OB0
 16. P-OB0, P-OB0
 17. P-OB0, P-OB0

SECTION IX (1. P-OB4, N-OB3)
 O. "MURKIN'S" SYSTEM
 KEY POSITION
 1. P-OB4, P-OB4
 2. N-OB3, N-OB3
 3. P-OB3, P-OB3
 4. P-OB2, P-OB2
 5. P-OB1, P-OB1
 6. P-OB0, P-OB0
 7. P-OB0, P-OB0
 8. P-OB0, P-OB0
 9. P-OB0, P-OB0
 10. P-OB0, P-OB0
 11. P-OB0, P-OB0
 12. P-OB0, P-OB0
 13. P-OB0, P-OB0
 14. P-OB0, P-OB0
 15. P-OB0, P-OB0
 16. P-OB0, P-OB0
 17. P-OB0, P-OB0

SECTION X (1. P-OB4, N-OB3)
 P. SYMMETRICAL VARIATION V
 KEY POSITION
 1. P-OB4, P-OB4
 2. N-OB3, N-OB3
 3. P-OB3, P-OB3
 4. P-OB2, P-OB2
 5. P-OB1, P-OB1
 6. P-OB0, P-OB0
 7. P-OB0, P-OB0
 8. P-OB0, P-OB0
 9. P-OB0, P-OB0
 10. P-OB0, P-OB0
 11. P-OB0, P-OB0
 12. P-OB0, P-OB0
 13. P-OB0, P-OB0
 14. P-OB0, P-OB0
 15. P-OB0, P-OB0
 16. P-OB0, P-OB0
 17. P-OB0, P-OB0

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE WHEEL
 1. Select the desired chess variation on the wheel.
 2. After you have selected the variation, turn the wheel until the desired variation is printed in black.
 3. After choosing the variation or subvariation, turn the top disc so that the printed number of the variation, subvariation or subvariation is printed in black.
 4. The desired chess variation, subvariation or subvariation is printed in black.
 NOTE: On the central square the reference number of the chess variation, subvariation or subvariation is printed in black. The reference numbers of the chess variations, subvariations or subvariations are printed in black. The chess variations, subvariations or subvariations are printed in black.

THE CHESS WHEEL
CHESS OPENINGS FINDER
 Compiled and Designed by
 V. ARMEN (Vrej Ter-Gevorkian)

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Ter-Gevorkian died in 1974 and the wheel was not developed further. An article of the same year, "Broken Wheel?", by Edwin Albaugh in the Washington Star-News, provides biographical details and also suggests that "Unless an openings authority willing to carry on the work materializes, his chess legacy will be limited to the prototype of a useful and potentially lucrative idea."

Partially answering the question of where the idea for *The Chess Wheel* originated, the description on the outer envelope relates that "for years the wheel-finder has been widely used in business, education and science. Now, for the first time it is applied to the study of chess." Albaugh adds that the inventor, "said he got the idea while trying to answer a postal game move and simultaneously study verb endings in French on a wheel-finder." This suggests that he was unaware of Landau's Chess Key.

Broken Wheel?

By Edwin Albaugh

Star-News Staff Writer

Several months ago I received a circular extolling the virtues of an invention called "The Chess Wheel." It was endorsed by Ed Edmondson, executive director of the U.S. Chess Foundation, grandmaster Bruno Parma and international masters Peter Biyiasis and Paul Schmidt.

The wheel, as Schmidt put it, represented "a handy and novel approach to place opening theory at the fingertips of the user without the need of thumbing through a textbook — you just turn the wheel to the reference number indicated and the desired information appears in the window."

BIYIASIS said, "I think it is the most valuable development in the study of chess openings since Ruy Lopez."

The wheel-finder has been used in other fields — I remember one that helped me compile batting averages and won-lost percentage for my dice baseball league as a youth — but apparently as a chess tool it is unique.

The inventor, one V. Armen, said he got the idea while trying to answer a postal game move and simultaneously study verb endings in French on a wheel-finder.

All that was ready at the time the circular was mailed was the English Opening (for \$2.98), but Armen promised that the French, Sicilian, Caro-Kann and King's Indian Defenses would be forthcoming soon. So I postponed mention of the wheel in this column until a larger inventory became available.

Last week, intending to check on his progress, I

learned that Armen, a pseudonym for Vrej Ter-Gevorkian, had died recently of a heart attack at the age of 50 and that his one-man enterprise may have expired with him.

TER-GEVORKIAN was an Armenian (thus, Armen, which presented less of a struggle for American tongues). According to a relative, he came to the West in 1965 with a group of Soviet tourists, sought asylum in Italy and was granted it.

A year later he came to the United States and lived for a time in New York and Pittsburgh. For the past three years he had been teaching French and Russian at the Moravian Academy in Bethlehem, Pa.

Besides being a linguist, he was a skilled musician, occasional painter and chess devotee. (He founded the Bethlehem Chess Club in 1972.) Ter-Gevorkian was described by the Atlantic Chess News as being strong in chess theory and a successful postal player. His last USCF rating placed him at 1640, or Class B.

What happens now to the Chess Wheel, for which a patent is pending? Nothing for the foreseeable future.

THE SAME relative, who is executor of the estate, expressed interest in continuing the project, but he is unqualified to do it himself. Ter-Gevorkian's grand design encompassed some 40 wheels, but so far as is known only one was completed.

Unless an openings authority willing to carry on the work materializes, his chess legacy will be limited to the prototype of a useful and potentially lucrative idea.

Washington Star-News, Washington, D.C., April 7, 1974.

The Chess Wheel was promoted with personal appearances and a flyer found with the wheel.



Meet V. Armen, Member Of Bethlehem's Moravian Academy Faculty And Inventor Of The Exciting New "CHESS WHEEL"

Come to Hess's for this exciting Saturday event! Vrej Ter-Gevorgian, better known now, as V. Armen since his invention of "The Chess Wheel", will be making his first public appearance Saturday in Hess's Hamilton Mall store.

He will demonstrate the simplicity of his invention, show you how the Chess Wheel can be a handy aid for the chess novice or the chess veteran. At the same time, Mr. Armen will take on chess players in challenge matches . . . show you the fifteen key positions with 130 variations and subvariations based on games actually played by Grandmasters and International Masters. If you're interested in chess or have always wanted to know how to play the game, come in and meet Mr. Armen. Let him show you how easy it is to learn how to use the Chess Wheel.

On Sale For The Very First Time At Hess's, Only . . . 2.98

GAMES AND TOYS—6th FLOOR HAMILTON MALL STORE

HESS'S HAMILTON MALL STORE HOURS: DAILY, 10 A.M. TO 5:30 P.M. EXCEPT MON. AND THURS., 10 A.M. TO 9 AT NIGHT!

The Morning Call, Allentown, Pennsylvania • Sat, Oct 6, 1973 p. 12

Comments on The Chess Wheel

"I am quite familiar with the "wheel-finder" concept as used in other fields of endeavor and am chagrined not to have thought myself of applying it to the study of chess openings. In my opinion, The Chess Wheel should become a popular—indeed invaluable—reference and study guide."

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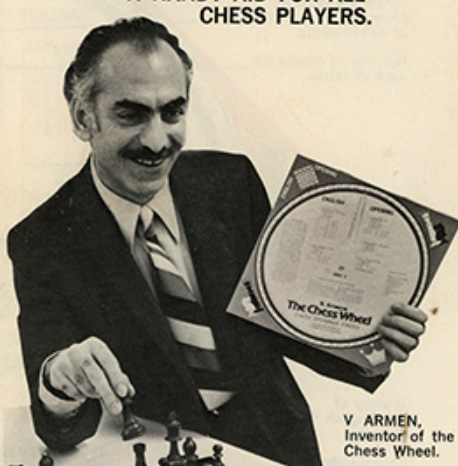
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Canadian Champion


THE CHESS WHEEL
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The amazing Chess Wheel

**NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME
A HANDY AID FOR ALL
CHESS PLAYERS.**



V. ARMEN,
Inventor of the
Chess Wheel.



BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BETHLEHEM, PA.
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ENGLISH OPENING

First move P-QB4. Characteristic of the English Opening.

Reference Window showing the moves of all variations.

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Symbol Reference.

History of the English Opening.

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