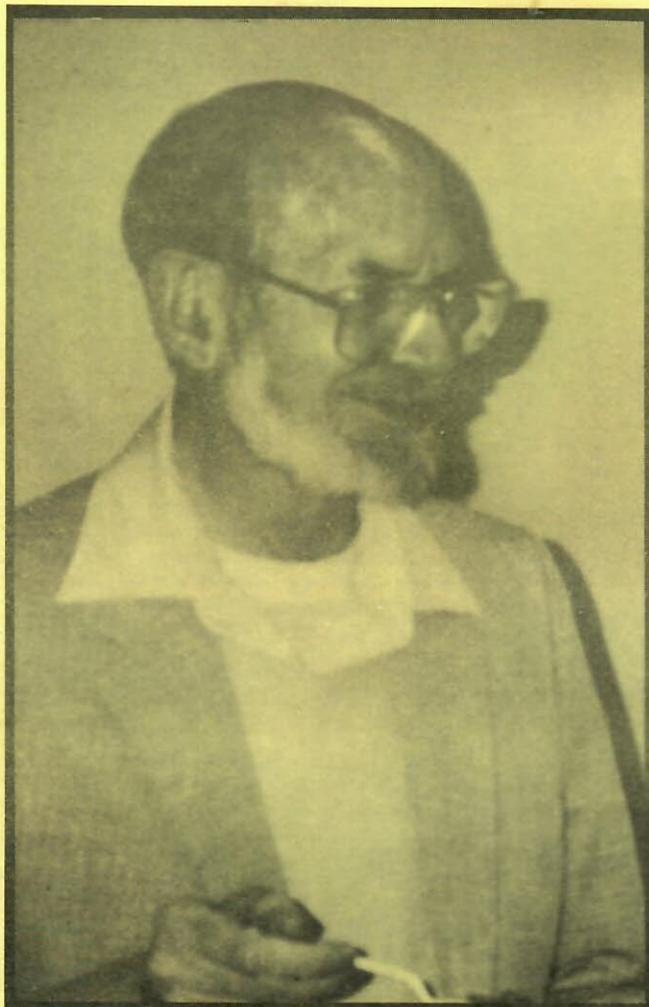


# Colorado Chess Informant

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**DON THOMPSON**  
1927 – 1990

IN MEMORIAM: DON C. THOMPSON

by Vance Aandahl

Colorado chess suffered a sad loss when Don C. Thompson died on December 15 after a two-year battle with melanoma. Don was one of the most active players on the Colorado Chess Tour, and many of you will remember him not only for his personal qualities, his shy friendliness, his politeness and modesty, and the genuine respect he always felt for his opponents, but also for his qualities as a player, his love for the esthetics of chess, his sense of awe at her complexities, his fighting spirit and will to win, his focused concentration, and the patience and tenacity he always displayed when confronted with a difficult position.

What many of you may not know is that Don was also a talented journalist, fiction writer, essayist, and teacher who earned an international reputation for his scholarly knowledge of science fiction and his lifelong devotion to the recognition of SF as a respectable and important branch of literature. Don grew up reading SF in the 1930's and 1940's, wrote and sold stories to the top SF magazines during the 1950's, then dedicated himself to promoting SF during the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's. One highlight of Don's career came in 1981, when he served as the chief organizer of the World Science Fiction Convention. During his last six months Don attended and participated in three SF conventions, continued to write his SF book review column for the Denver Post, continued to serve as an officer in the Denver Area Science Fiction Association, and continued to write for, edit, and publish his personal magazines Rim Runner and Don-o-Saur, the last issues of which feature candid, insightful essays on the subject of his impending death -- a prospect Don didn't like but nonetheless accepted with nary a trace of resentment or remorse.

Don remained active in chess too during his last few months. At the Al Wallace Memorial held on November 3 and 4, he scored 2 - 2 even though three of his opponents were significantly higher rated, thus giving his own rating a nice boost in his final USCF tournament. When his son Bruce visited him for Thanksgiving, they spent much of their time together hunched over a chessboard. And as the daylight hours diminished, Don and I found ourselves immersed in middlegame complications in a pair of postal games; I received his last set of moves on December 7, just eight days before he died.

Those two games must remain forever unfinished, but during the two decades we worked together in the Metropolitan State College English Department, Don and I completed many others, some during lunch, some by phone, some by campus mail. Here is one of Don's victories in a game played quickly and concluded with an exciting combination:

Thompson-Aandahl, KING'S INDIAN: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7  
 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 d5 Nbd7 8 0-0 a5 9 Qd3 Nc5 10 Qc2  
 h6 11 Be3 Ne8 12 a3 f5 13 Bc5 dc 14 Rfe1 Nd6 15 Bd3 Qe8 16 Nb5  
 Nb5 17 cb b6 18 Bc4 Kh8 19 Rad1 fe 20 Qe4 Bf5 21 Qe2 Bg4 22 Rd3  
 e4 23 Qe4 Qe4 24 Re4 Bf5 25 Re6 Bd3 26 Bd3 Rad8 27 Nh4 Rd5  
 28 Ng6+ Kg8 29 Bc4 Rdl+ 30 Rel+ Kh7 31 Nf8+ 1-0.