

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

The bimonthly publication of the
Virginia Chess Federation

2016 - #2



VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

2016 - Issue #2

Editor:

Macon Shibut
8234 Citadel Place
Vienna VA 22180
vcfeditor@cox.net

Circulation:

Ernie Schlich
1370 South Braden Crescent
Norfolk VA 23502
membership@vachess.org



Virginia Chess is published six times per year by the Virginia Chess Federation. Membership benefits (dues: \$10/yr adult; \$5/yr junior under 18) include a subscription to *Virginia Chess*. Send material for publication to the editor. Send dues, address changes, etc to Circulation.

The **Virginia Chess Federation (VCF)** is



a non-profit organization for the use of its members. Dues for regular adult membership are \$10/yr. Junior memberships are \$5/yr. President: Adam Chrisney, PO Box 151122, Alexandria, VA 22315

chrisney2@gmail.com Membership Secretary: Ernie Schlich, 1370 South Braden Crescent, Norfolk VA 23502, membership@vachess.org Treasurer Mike Hoffpauir, 405 Hounds Chase, Yorktown VA 23693, mhoffpauir@aol.com Scholastics Coordinator: Mike Callaham, 8712 Cherokee Road, Richmond VA 23235, waterman2010kir@aol.com Virginia/Maryland/DC Tournament Clearinghouse: Mike Atkins, matkins2@comcast.net VCF Inc Directors: Mike Hoffpauir, Ernie Schlich, Michael Callaham, Andrew Rea, Adam Chrisney.





My Icelandic Pilgrimage to Bobby Fischer's Grave

by Bobby Fischer

MY NAME is Robert J Fischer and I play chess. These words are not written from the grave. I was born 17 years after the famous American grandmaster. My name and the fact that I play chess and have the same name as a famous grandmaster is strictly a coincidence. However, because of my name, my life has been inextricable linked to the former world champion in a profound way that I have only recently come to understand.

I was eleven years old when Bobby played his famous match with Boris Spassky in Reykjavik, Iceland in 1972. Growing up in a small town in Kentucky, no one I knew had ever been to Iceland or knew anything about it. It seemed almost like a mythical place. At the time, a small chess club had been started in my grade school and I had begun playing regularly. I watched the news leading up to the match with keen interest. Having learned chess notation, I was able to play through the games in the newspaper, although they were richly incomprehensible to me at the time.

By winning the world championship, the other Bobby Fischer created a huge boom in chess activity in the United States. There was a massive increase in the number of tournaments. Stores began to carry many more books on chess. My father bought me my very first chess book, Irving Chernev's *How to See Three Moves Ahead*. My mother learned of a small scholastic tournament that would give me the opportunity to get a United States Chess Federation rating. I played in the tournament, winning my first three games and losing only in the last round to another 6th grader. I still remember filling out the entry form and the director asking my parents if my name really was Robert J Fischer.

After that first tournament, I was hooked. I began playing in tournaments on a regular basis and started to collect and study chess books. Although I never became a grandmaster, I did have some meaningful success in chess. I twice won the Kentucky high school chess championship—a tournament that wasn't even held before Bobby Fischer became world champion. I was ranked in the top 50 'under 16' players in the county, and I eventually earned a national master rating. I have continued to play at least 50 tournaments games a year, with few exceptions, ever year since I started playing chess.

I have played many roles in my life. I have been a son, brother, father, husband, lover and a friend. At times I have been a boss and a subordinate, a leader and a soldier, but always I have been a chess player. It is part of my identity. And largely because of the 'Fischer Boom' that Bobby unleashed in the early seventies, chess has made my life richer and happier.



Of course I studied Bobby's games, and in 1975 I was heartbroken when he was stripped of his title. I hoped he would play in the candidates cycle for the 1978 match, but again was disappointed. For years, like many chess players, I waited for his return, wanting him to come back and crush all those damn Russians.

When Bobby did finally come back, I had to admit he was only a shadow of his former self. While still clearly one of the best players in the world, he could no longer dominate world's best based on the 1992 rematch with Spassky.



Upcoming Tournaments

26th Charlottesville Open

July 16-17, Comfort Inn Monticello near Charlottesville, Va.

Open & Under 1700 sections with 1st-3rd place \$\$ guaranteed in the Open Section.

All rounds are Game/90 with 5-sec time delay.

2016 Virginia Commonwealth Games

July 23, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va.

Two Scholastic Sections (K-6 and K-12) and one Open Section.

Play for 2 x Gold, 2 x Silver and 2 x Bronze medals in each section.

80th Virginia Closed State Championship

September 3-5, Hilton Garden Inn, Glen Allen, Va.

Open and Under 1800 Sections, three-day and two-day schedules.

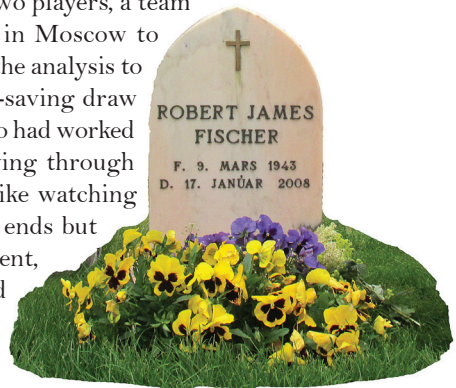


As is well known, this rematch made Bobby a 'fugitive from justice' because of the embargo against economic activity in Yugoslavia. When he finally ended up in Iceland, I thought about going to see him. Of course traveling thousands of miles to try and find someone who does not want to be found, with the possibility that he might not talk to you if you did find him, seemed like a fool's errand. Still, when he died, I regretted that I had not tried. I always wondered if he knew about me. I knew he read *Chess Life* and I had had a couple of my games published there. One game in particular I won on his birthday, against Al Chow in the US Masters. The article presented the game as a kind of birthday present for Bobby. I also had my picture in the magazine when playing for West Point when the cadets took on the Collins Kids, a group of talented young players coached by Bobby's friend Jack Collins.

When considering playing in the 2016 Reykjavik Open, I realized this would give me the opportunity to visit Bobby's grave. I found myself curiously drawn to do this although I did not understand why. I had never played in an international tournament, although I had dreamed of this as a small boy. As I have passed the half-century mark, I decided it was time to go.

The organizers arranged a tour for after the third round. A chess bus would take us to see Icelandic geysers, waterfalls, and the great divide where the European and North American tectonic plates are coming apart. We would end by stopping at Bobby's grave and the nearby Bobby Fischer Center. Many of the players on the bus were not even alive when Bobby played his last match. I wasn't sure what to expect when arriving at Bobby's grave, but what happened took me totally by surprise.

As I stepped off the bus my eyes suddenly filled with tears and my heart was in my throat. For many of the players it was more of an oddity, but for me it was like visiting a dear friend's grave. I thought about Bobby's life. Strangely, my first thoughts were about his historic draw with Botvinnik at the Varna Olympiad in 1962. I thought about how he had adjourned a favorable rook ending and, in a game designed to be played between two players, a team of Russian grandmasters assembled in Moscow to study the adjourned position, sending the analysis to help the World Champion gain a face-saving draw against the teenager from Brooklyn who had worked on the adjourned position alone. Playing through this game for me even today is a lot like watching "Romeo and Juliet". You know how it ends but you still want to it somehow to be different, for the moves on the page to change and for Bobby to win.





I thought about how the United States government had prevented him from going to Havana for the Capablanca Memorial because they were afraid he was a Russian spy. I thought about how FIDE had stripped him of his title, about his years in exile, and about how he missed his own mother's funeral because he couldn't come back to the United States for risk of going to jail.

Suddenly I realized I had not brought anything to leave at the gravesite. I searched my pockets for something of me that I could leave. I even considered ripping a page out of my passport to leave a note on the grave. Sadly I had nothing that seemed fitting.

Visiting Bobby's grave unleashed deeply felt emotions that had been repressed for a long time. I plan to go back, but next time it won't be on a tour bus. I plan to rent a car, and to leave behind something appropriate at the site—to say a proper good bye to the friend I never met.

I have to say something about Bobby's "crime." Because of the United Nations embargo against all economic activity in Yugoslavia in 1992, the State Department advised him that playing the match would be considered in violation and could be deemed a criminal act. You really have to stretch the definition a great deal to consider playing a board game as "economic activity", even if you get paid to do it. Our county does a lot of stupid things. We have an epidemic of obesity and childhood diabetes, yet we subsidize companies that sell sugary soda that makes kids fat and sick. We are awash in cheap oil, yet we force people to put corn in their gas tanks. And we incarcerate a higher percentage of our citizens than any country in the world. Putting an elderly, mentally ill man on trial for playing chess would have been one of the stupidest things our county ever did. Most likely he would have died in prison, the only person ever to go to jail for playing chess. Fortunately, some people in Iceland saved Bobby and the United States from an expensive and pointless trial. I am glad my friend got to live his final years in peace.



PLAYING in a tournament abroad can be a much different experience than playing in the United States. Sure there are plenty of strong tournaments that are closer, but the Reykjavik Open is a great event and Virginia chess players might want to consider putting the 2017 Reykjavik Open on their calendar.

The tournament was played in the Harpa Opera House, the most expensive and beautiful building in Iceland. The Opera House sits on the seashore and each day as I walked to the tournament hall I enjoyed an amazing view of both snow-capped mountains and the ocean. As you enter the tournament room you pass a



huge collage depicting famous players who have competed in Iceland. Past greats like Tal, Smyslov, Spassky and of course Fischer are included, as well as current players like Aronian, Mamedyarov and many others.

Chess is a really big deal in Iceland. At the opening ceremony a band played and the Mayor of Reykjavik spoke. He said that chess was unique in that it combined art, science, logic and sport in one activity, and told us that it was important to play chess. When we sat down to play, the pieces and clocks were already set for us. Next to each board was a little plaque with each player's name, rating and national flag on it. There were no pairing sheets to mark your results like in American tournaments. As soon as you finished your game, an arbiter would appear at the board to collect the signed score sheets.

In this tournament, most of the prize money went where it should—to the top players. There were no large prizes based on rating, and this had an interesting effect. The players seemed more relaxed compared to, for example, at the World Open. Also, there were virtually no withdrawals. Many of the European players seemed to treat chess like people treat bowling in this country. They tried their best during the game, but afterwards they just wanted to go drink beer with their friends and didn't take their standing in the tournament too seriously.

Even though there were a higher percentage of grandmasters than at any tournament I ever played, there were also lots of people rated below 2000. I was paired up five times and paired down five times, and finished with $4\frac{1}{2}$ points out of 10, slightly worse than my rating would have predicted. I say to make the

BRING CHESS TO YOUR SCHOOL!!!

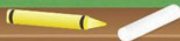
Why Chess?

Through chess, students will develop critical thinking skills: identifying problems, creating an analysis, and developing an assessment.



LEGACY CHESS ACADEMY

Contact Corey Hancock:
legacychess@gmail.com
 (443) 823-5530





point that players of all strength should consider this tournament. There are no sections, just one big open tournament, and after just a few rounds everyone's results will have them getting paired against opponents who are relatively close to their strength. Also, if you are rated below 2100, you will get a crack at somebody really good in the first round. This year a 1400 drew with a player rated 2400, and a 1900 rated player got the thrill of a lifetime when he held grandmaster and former Soviet champion Alexander Beliavsky to a draw.

Playing one game a day is a relaxed pace that leaves plenty of time for sight seeing. I took three tours while I was there. Besides the Bobby Fischer Center and Bobby's grave, I saw the Northern Lights, geysers and waterfalls. I also went to the amazing Blue Lagoon where we swam in thermal waters that were heated at the earth's core while lifeguards wore stocking caps and overcoats to keep warm.

I would recommend that you go a few days early and plan to spend a whole day at the Blue Lagoon. It is listed as one of National Geographic's top 25 destinations. You should book your reservation before you leave the states as sometimes the Blue Lagoon reaches capacity.

By the way, this really is an affordable tournament and it's not that difficult to get there. The flight to Iceland from Boston Logan airport is actually shorter than flying to Los Angeles. My total expenses were about twice what it costs to play in the World Open. There are many nice guesthouses within walking distances from the tournament, and most offer a kitchen and refrigerator in case you don't want to eat all your meals in restaurants.

At the closing ceremony, which was held at City Hall, we were treated to more music, wine and cheese. All of the top players were there and gladly posed for pictures. It was a great experience.





George Washington ♙ Open

Text based on tournament report by David Hater at

<http://chessevents.com/georgewashingtonopen/>

Game analyses exclusive to VIRGINIA CHESS

GM Aleksandr Lenderman won the George Washington Open, finishing with a score of 4½ out of 5. His only draw was against IM Igor Khmelnitsky, which put him ½ point behind GM Sergey Erenburg going into their penultimate round game. Alex coming out on top set up an interesting last round pairing against reigning Virginia state champion Jennifer Yu, who was coming off a 4th round win over GM Akshayraj Kore. In the end Jennifer could not upset two GMs in a row.

Second place in the Open section was shared by Erenburg & Aravind Kumar, each with 4 points. There was a 6-way tie for 4th-9th with Khmelnitsky, Shelby Getz & Maggie Feng taking the place prizes while Yu, Daniel Lowinger & Srdjan Damanovic split the Under 2300 money.

Jones Murphy won the Under 2100 section with a 5-0 score. He also partnered with Stephanie Ballom to win the first mixed doubles prize. Stephanie herself won the Under 1900 prize. The Under 1800 section was also won with a 5-0 score, Mark Hyland achieving the feat while being paired up five straight times! The Under 1500 section also saw a 5-0 winner emerge from the bottom half of the wallchart in the person of Jason Zipfel. Aashray Manchanda started with a ½ pt bye and then won all remaining games en route to a first place tie with Cameron Voss in the Under 1200 section. The blitz tournament was won by Richard Brown with a score of 7½-½.

This marked a resurrection of the George Washington Open. The VCF ran the event intermittently in the past, most recently in 2009. Now the Continental Chess Association has taken it up. David Hater directed for Continental Chess Association, assisted by Brian Yang & Andrew Rea.

Jennifer Yu - Akshayraj Kor English

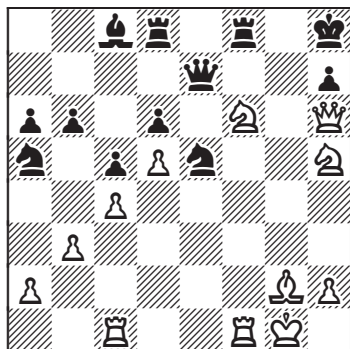
Notes by Andy Rea

1 c4 b6 [Of course this is not a supreme test of 1 c4, but as GM Kore has committed to a ½ pt bye in final round, he is making no bones about striving for immediate imbalance. Perhaps he also has the idea that the result could be similar to what happened to FM John Michael Burke at the 2015 Eastern Open, where he faced non-standard openings vs GMs Shabalov and A Ivanov and lost both—this is, to be fair, speculative conjecture on my part!] **2 Nc3 Bb7 3 e4 e6 4 g3 g6?!** [Okay, Black is not getting in ...d5 easily, but donating additional time is difficult to recommend.



There is a reason that defenses with both ...e6 and ...g6 are not common, aside from the Benoni—and how often do we see ...b6/Bb7 in the Benoni? **5 Bg2 Bg7 6 Nge2 Ne7 7 O-O O-O 8 d4 d6 9 Be3 a6 10 f4 c5 11 Qd2 Qc7 12 Rac1 Nbc6 13 d5 Na5** [It is not getting better for Black, who is loathe to admit that the 8th rank was a better station. How can it be objectively expected for Na5 to have serious influence? Does Black really expect to get something with ...Bc8 and ...Nb7?] **14 b3 Rad8 15 g4!** [White has not been under duress and is aware that a strong attack can be built just about for free—some exposure for Kg1 but how will any of the Black pieces get there?] **15...Bc8 16 f5!** [White has more than adequate compensation for this pawn as she now blasts kingside dark squares with Be3] **16...exf5 17 gxf5 gxf5 18 Bh6!** [Think Benkoesque sacrifice, only here White

gains massive initiative kingside rather than queenside...] **18...fxe4 19 Nxe4 f6 20 N2g3 Ng6 21 Bxg7 Qxg7 22 Nh5** [White regains that pawn after all, while retaining full advantages in space, king safety, and time!] **22...Qe7 23 Nxf6+ Kh8 24 Qh6 Ne5**



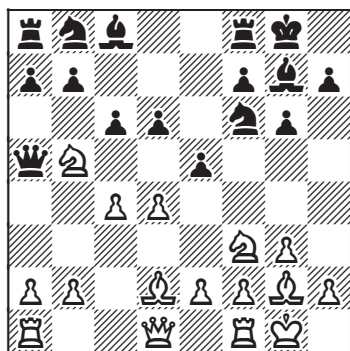
25 Nxh7 [Right, the Black queen cannot defend everything!] **25...Rxf1+ 26 Rxf1 Ng4 27 Nf8+ Nxh6 28 Ng6+ Kh7 29 Nxe7 Bg4 30 Be4+ Kh8 31 Rf6 1-0**

Justin Paul-Macon Shibut

King's Indian

Notes by Macon Shibut

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 d6 3 d4 g6 4 g3 Bg7 5 Bg2 O-O 6 O-O c6 7 Nc3 Qa5 8 Bd2 e5 [I was aware 'theory' recommends 8...Qh5 and indeed I have played that before. However, I am not so sure about the "attacking chances" with ...Bh3 etc, and meanwhile Black's queen could get boxed in over there. So I decided to just play a "normal move" after a cursory check of possible discoveries against my queen.] **9 Nb5?!** (diagram)





I expected 9 d5 because then the normal reaction 9...cxd5 is bad because of 10 Nxd5, so I would have played 9...c5 with a full Benoni game. My initial reaction to 9 Nb5 was that my opponent had simply overlooked Black's 10th move, but in fact he had seen farther ahead while my calculations were too cursory indeed. By sheer luck it turns out 8...e5 was not a mistake, however.

9...Qd8 10 Nxd6 e4! [two White pieces *en prise*] **11 Nxc8** [I expected 11 Nxf7 Rxf7 12 Ng5 but hoped to demonstrate the superiority of the extra piece after, eg, 12...Re7 13 Bb4 Re8] **11...exf3** [again two White pieces hanging] **12 Bh3** [The truth is that I completely forgot about this possibility. I wasn't worried when he played it however, as his knight is trapped so I still stand to win material. The real damage of my oversight came in what happened

next, and it is a quite common effect: missing one thing unsettles your thought process and leads to a further mistake.] **12...Na6?** [With ...Rxc8 next, which is fine for Black but no great advantage. The way to justify my preceding play—or maybe I should say, the way to refute 9 Nb5—was 12...Nbd7! and Black wins a full piece either by Rxc8 next or after 13 Nd6 Qe7! threatening both 14...Qxd6 *and* 14...fxe2!—which was the point I missed, of course.] **13 exf3 Rxc8 14 Bxc8 Qxc8 15 Re1 Rd8 16 Bc3 Nc7 17 Qa4 a6** [Hoping to win the d5 square for my knights by ...b5! Next but White was alert.] **18 Qa5 Nfe8** [Now if 18...b5 19 b3 of course. So my plan was N-d6-f5 with pressure on d4.] **19 Rad1 Nd6 20 Re7** [Not a good move as the rook gets surrounded inside my position, but it did create some tactical problems.] **20...**



CONTACT US TODAY TO
START YOUR LESSONS!

COREY HANCOCK
(443) 823-5530

EMAIL: COREY@LEGACYCHESS.ORG
WEBSITE: LEGACYCHESS.ORG

WANT TO BE A CHESS MASTER?

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN HOW TO PLAY
CHESS - THE MOST POPULAR GAME IN THE
WORLD! IF YOU ARE TOTALLY NEW TO THE
GAME OR EVEN WANT TO SHARPEN YOUR
SKILLS THEN WE CAN HELP YOU!

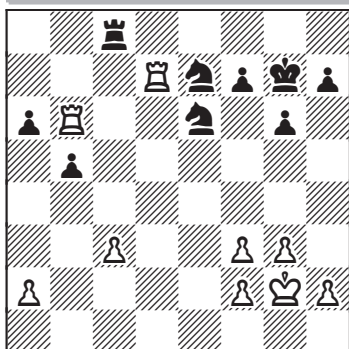




Ne6 21 d5 [Forced, else White just loses more material. But the d-pawn isn't actually threatening anything due to the pin against Rd1] **21...Bxc3?! [It would have been better to go 21...Nxc4 straightaway. I had not yet worked out the variation in the note after my 22nd turn.] 22 bxc3 [necessary! if 22 Qxc3 Nf5 is good for Black. Now however 22...Nf5 would lead to 23 Rxf7 Kxf7 24 dxe6+ and with White's queen still at a5, my rook is attacked forcing the retreat 24...Ke8. I would be a piece up but for the moment at least White has two pawns, plus my king feels insecure and the advanced passed pawn could turn venomous at any moment. I tried to push the analysis forward a few more moves: 25 Re1 Rd6 (25...c5) 26 Qe5... I couldn't find convincing, forcing variations for either side, but this just felt too uncomfortable to me, especially since I had a decent alternative available...] 22...Nxc4 23 Qb4 b5! (better, I think, than allowing 23...cxd5 24 Rxb7] 24 Ra7 [24 d6 didn't**

scare me: 24...c5 and then ...Nxd6] **24...cxd5** [I considered pursuing the rook further by 24...c5 25 Qb1 Nc7 but abandoned the idea after I saw the variation 26 Qe4 Qb8 27 Qe7 Rc8 28 d6 Nxd6 29 Rxd6 Qxa7 30 Rd7] **25 Qe7 Rf8** [And here I considered 25...Ne5 26 f4 Re8 eg 27 Qb7 Qxb7 28 Rxb7 Nc5 29 Rc7 Ned3. I might have chosen this except I overlooked another tactic after White's other possibility, 27 Qf6 (after 25...Ne5 26 f4 Re8) Qc5! 28 Rb7 Qxf2+!] **26 Rxd5 Qc6 27 Qd7** [27 Rdd7? Ne5] **27...Qxd7 28 Rdx d7 Ne5 29 Rd5 Nc6** [Again a missed tactic! I rejected 29...Nxf3+ 30 Kg2 out of hand, but then 30...Nh4+!] **30 Rb7** [not 30 Rxa6? Nc7 etc] **30...Rc8 31 Kg2** [if 31 Rdd7 Ne5] **31...Kg7** [I wanted to play 31...Na5 32 Ra7 Rxc3 but then 33 Rxa6 and my fork 33...Nc7 doesn't work now because of 34 Rd8+ Thus the text move.] **32 Rb6 Ne7** [Defending my rook so that if now 33 Rxa6 Nc7 works again (ie, it doesn't fail to 34 Rc5) and also setting a trap.] **33 Rd7**





I knew he would play this. It looks strong because my knight is attacked and can't move due to the pin along the 7th rank (33...Nf5? 34 Rxe6); and also if 33...Kf6 34 Rxa6 I don't have 34...Nc5 because that knight is pinned.

33...Kf8!

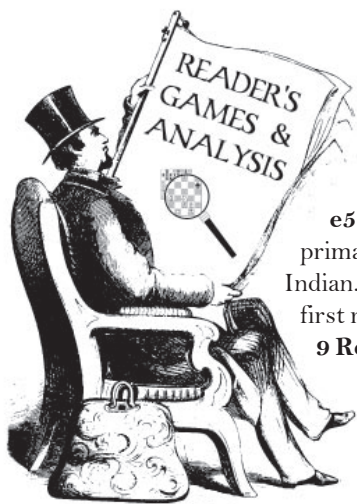
But this fantastic resource sets everything aright. Now I'm ready to take over the initiative, threatening Rxc3 for starters. He can't take a7 because of the usual Nc5 trick. If he tries 34

Rbb7 I can force a winning endgame by 34...Nc5 eg 35 Rxe7 Nxb7 36 Rxb7 Rxc3 37 Rd7 Rc2. Best of all...

34 Ra7 Nc5!

...in this line the a7 rook is unexpected trapped! There is no defense now against Nc6 (if 35 Rf6 Kg7)

35 Rxa6 Nxa6 36 Rxa6 Rxc3 37 Ra5 b4 38 Rb5 Nc6 39 Rb6 Ke7 40 Kf1 Kd6 41 f4 Ra3 42 Rb7 Ra7 43 Rxa7 Nxa7 44 Ke2 Nb5 45 Kd3 Kd5 46 g4 Nc3 47 a3 bxa3 48 Kxc3 Ke4 49 f5 gxf5 50 gxf5 Kxf5 51 Kb3 Kf4 52 Kxa3 Kf3 53 Kb4 Kxf2 54 Kc4 f5 55 Kd4 f4 56 Ke5 f3 57 Kf6 Kg2 58 h4 f2 59 Kg7 h5 60 Kh7 Kg3 61 Kg7 f1 Q 62 Kh8 Kxh4 63 Kh7 Kg5 64 Kg7 Qf6+ 65 Kg8 Qe7 0-1

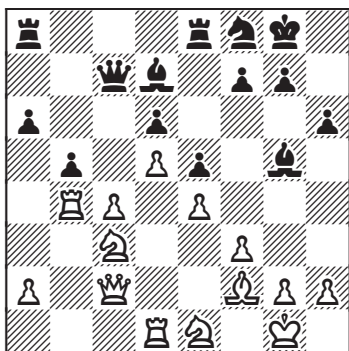


Igor Sorkin – Macon Shibut
2016 Liberty Bell Open, Philadelphia, Pa
Old Indian

Notes by Macon Shibut

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 d6 3 Nc3 Nbd7 4 Nf3 c6 5 e4
e5 6 Be2 Be7 [Although the King's Indian is my
primary defense I have a certain affection for the Old
Indian. For one thing, this was the opening of my very
first rated tournament game!] 7 O-O O-O 8 Qc2 a6
9 Rd1 Qc7 10 Bg5 h6 11 Be3 Re8 12 Rac1 Nf8 13
d5 c5 14 Ne1 Ng4 15 Bxg4 Bxg4 16 f3 Bd7
17 Rb1 b5 18 b4 Bg5 19 Bf2 cxb4 20 Rxb4

(diagram, next page)



20...Rab8

Unfortunately, 20...a5? doesn't work due to 21 Nxb5. As for 20...bxc4, I expected the reply to be 21 Bb6 when I noted the possible queen sacrifice 21...Qxb6+ 22 Rxb6 Be3+ and after 23 Kh1(?) Bxb6 I liked my position—two good bishops against a pair of rather unstable knights, plus an extra passed pawn. Alas, instead of falling in with this White would return the queen by 23 Qf2! Bxf2+ 24 Kxf2 with advantage as the d6 pawn will fall. So the idea of the move

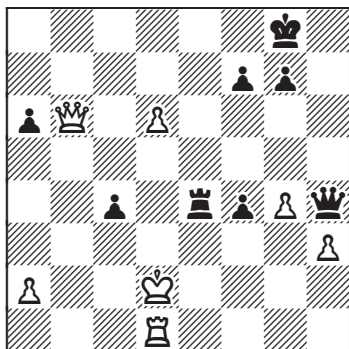
I played was to prepare 21...bxc4 since now (after ...Rab8) something like 21 Rdb1 bxc4 22 Bb6? simply loses to 22...Rxb6 23 Rxb6 Be3+ I wasn't sure what he could do, since if 21 cxb5 Rec8 creates real problems for White on the c-file.

21 h4?! [Necessity is the mother of invention, and White comes up with a rather amazing idea that I thought at the time might have been a simple blunder. Not that simple, however...] **21...Bxh4** [of course not 22 Bxh4? Qc5+ and take the rook] **22 Rdb1 Bxf2+ 23 Qxf2 bxc4 24 Qb2** [So I have captured two pawns but White dominates the b-file. Simplification (*"when ahead material, trade pieces"*) would not have produced the desired result in the variation 24...Qc5+ 25 Kf1 Rxb4 26 Qxb4 Qxb4? 27 Rxb4 and again my d-pawn will be a goner after Rb6. White stands to recover both pawns and reach a good ending with a protected passed pawn. I could have tried 24...Rbc8 here but I did not trust such passivity. After I discovered a resource that in fact appeared in the board at moves 27-28 (granted, I saw the idea without predicting the exact position) I resolved to leave my queenside to its fate and go for his king.] **24...Qc5+ 25 Kf1 Rxb4 26 Qxb4 Qe3!** [Committing to the attack; since he can't take d6 because of the hanging c3 knight, I considered mainly 27 Ne2 as I recall, which I intended to meet by 27...f5. Otherwise...] **27 Rd1 h5!** [...there was this move, with two points. First of course the pawn threatens to continue down the board, exposing White's king if it's captured (imagine gxh3 Bxh3mate) or threatening to promote. And second...] **28 Nc2 Qh6** [...this square becomes available, from which my queen defends d6 while supporting the pawn's further advance.] **29 Kf2** [a good move plugging weak dark squares and clearing the back rank for Rh1 in some instances] **29...h4 30 Ne3 Qg5** [I didn't see a way to press the attack after 30...h3 31 g3. The text plans to immobilize the g2 pawn by Qg3+ and then ...h3. Of course, it also puts d6 back on the sacrificial altar.] **31 Ne2 Ng6** [no way back] **32 Qxd6 Rd8** [defending my bishop and threatening 33...Ba4; I did not play 32...Ba4 straightaway because, short of winning big material, I must retain the bishop on the a3-c8 diagonal to contest his knights settling on g4 or f5] **33 Qb6**



[Where to move the queen was a tough choice, but this square certainly makes sense. From here the queen maintains contact with Rd8, which limits what my queen can do, and there may be lines in which the White will be glad to have the defensive resource of retreating his queen to e3 or f2] **33...Nf4 34 Nxf4 exf4 35 Ng4 Bxg4** [35...Rc8 might have been good too but I was all in with trying to hack through to his king.] **36 fxg4 h3! 37 gxh3 Qh4+ 38 Ke2 Re8!** [Attacking e4 and freeing my queen to take h3 or penetrate to g3. White's situation is critical. Not seeing any move that reliably secures the king, he decided just to create his own threat and hope for the best.] **39 d6 Rxe4+ 40 Kd2**

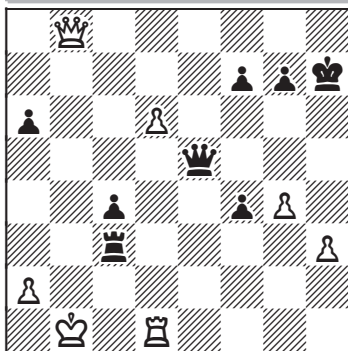
Actually there had been a miscalculation. As Sorkin explained after the game, he originally intended 40 Kf3? Re3+ 41 Kxf4 anticipating 41...Qh6+? 42 g5 "and White wins" but overlooking 41...Qg3+ which forces mate. In fact, even the faulty line does not actually win for him because we can continue 42...Rf3+! 43 Kxf3 Qh5+ 44 Ke4 Qxd1



So now the notorious last move of time control. It was not a crisis situation where I had to move instantly, but there was some pressure. I recall I had maybe a minute-and-a-half to complete my turn. Even if I had more time to reflect, I doubt I would have found the winning move because I really believed that what I played was sufficiently crushing.

40...Re3? [Preparing a devastating looking ...Qf2+ but surprisingly White can defend. Meanwhile, there was a win to be had by 40...Qh6!! pinning the d-pawn along the rank while still prosecuting the attack by means of the threat ...f3+. There is no adequate defense.] **41 Qb8+ Kh7 42 Kc1 Qf2?**

After this it's a draw, and I suppose a lucky one at that from Black's standpoint. There was still a possible win, but in a much more complicated setting, if I had played 42...Rc3+! I'm sure I considered this and rejected it immediately as blunder because after 43 Kb2 my rook is attacked and there are no useful checks. But wonder of wonders, 43...Qf6! sort of echoes the previously missed win. Presumably White plays 44 Kb1 and then the strong, impossible-to-foresee quiet move 44...Qe5!



Recalibrating.—44...Qe5! (analysis)

recalibrates the queen. Again the d-pawn is pinned and the attack is irresistible if you believe the computer, which you should in this sort of position. However, the demonstration is replete with inhuman finesse such as 45 Qb4 a5! 46 Qa4 Qe2 47 d7 Rb3+! 48 axb3 c3! and mate follows by force.

43 Qb2 Qxb2+?! [Adequate thanks to a study-like draw in the rook ending, but there was really no need to cut it that close. The move I'd long intended was 43...Re2 but now I saw that 44 Qc3 defends quite well, and I figured I'd be losing

due to his d-pawn. What I failed to appreciate was that after the “depressing” 44... Re8 45 d7 Rd8 46 Qxc4 Black is actually not in any great danger and can continue simply 46...f3, the point being that if White attacks the rook with his queen, he's not really threatening anything. I can just let him take the rook since once the queen is tucked away down at d8 there will be no escaping perpetual check by my queen. For instance, 47 Qe4+ g6 48 Qe7 Qxa2 49 Qxd8 Qc4+ = Otherwise I drive ahead with the f-pawn, forcing him to divert a piece to take it and leave the d-pawn undefended for me to capture in turn.] **44 Kxb2 Re8 45 Kc3 [The final drama begins. White must rush his king up to support the d-pawn before my f-pawn can divert his rook from its defense.] f3 46 Kxc4 f2 47 Rf1 [47 d7 Rd8 48 Kc5 f1Q etc.] 47...Re2! 48 Kc5 Rxa2 49 d7 Rd2 50 Kc6 Rc2+ [Whenever his king is defending the pawn he is threatening Rxf2 so I must check.] 51 Kd6 Rd2+ 52 Ke7 Re2+ 53 Kxf7 Rd2 54 Ke8 Re2+ 55 Kd8 a5 56 Kc7 Rc2+ 57 Kd8 a4 58 Rd1 [last try] a3 59 Rf1 [White realized that 59 Ke7? Re2+ 60 Kf7 would actually fail catastrophically to 60...Re1 (or 60...Rd2!)] 59...a2 60 Ke7 ½-½**

Andrew Miller - Jonathan Maxwell

WCC Ladder 2016

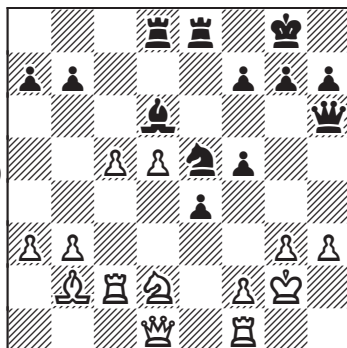
Zukertort

Notes by Jonathan Maxwell

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 d4 d5 3 e3 c5 4 b3?! [I personally find this move suspect. Why choose an opening that enters a clearly awkward structure?] 4...cxd4 5 exd4 Nc6 6 Bb2 Bg4 7 Be2 e6 8 h3 Bf5 [8...Bxf3?! 9 Bxf3] 9 a3?! [violating classic opening principles] 9...Be7 ♣ 10 Nbd2 O-O 11 O-O Rc8 12 Rc1 Qc7 [The queen eyes f4 and also b8, preparing a thematic ...b5] 13 Nh4 Rfe8!? [a strategy reminiscent of Botvinnik] 14 Nxf5 exf5 15 Bd3?! [rather useless] 15...Ne4 16 c4 Qf4 [16...Bg5 was best, eg, 17 Bxe4 dxe4 18 d5 Ne5 19 Bd4 Qd6 20 Rc3 Nc6 21 Nb1 Nxd4 22 Qxd4 Bf6 ♣] 17 Bxe4 dxe4 18 d5 Rcd8!? [Not only is the rook suddenly relevant, but it also prepares to lift to g6. 18...Ne5! Was also good, eg 19 g3 Qxd2 20 Bxe5



(20 Qxd2? Nf3+ 21 Kg2 Nxd2 Black wins) 20... Qxd1 21 Rcx d1 Bxa3 22 Bf4 f6 ♣ 19 R**c2** B**d6**! 20 g**3** Q**h6** 21 K**g2** [If 21 c5 e3 22 cxd6 e2 23 Qc1 exf1Q+ 24 Nxf1 Qxc1 25 Rxc1 Ne5 ♣; White's lack of coordination is exposed after 21 dxc6 Qxh3 22 Qe2 Bc5] 21...Ne5 22 c**5** (diagram)



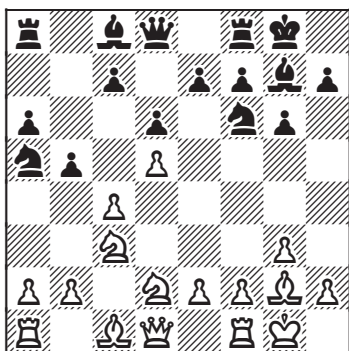
22...Bxc5! [Black leaves it to White to determine whether this will be a tactical or positional sacrifice.] 23 Rxc5 [The positional route. 23 Bxe5 Rxe5 would be the tactical, to Black's advantage after 24 Rxc5 Rxd5 25 Nxe4 Rxd1 26 Rxd1 Rf8] 23...Nd3 24 R**c2** R**xd5** [Although down material, Black's

clear initiative, control of the center, and resoundingly more active pieces give wise reason for him to feel confident. For the moment he threatens Nxb2 and Red8] 25 Q**e2** b**5** [Calm and confident, Black simply deprives the White knight of its only good square.] 26 B**c1** Q**d6** [applying pressure to various points, not least f4] 27 b**4** h**5** 28 h**4**?! Q**g6** [At this point White only had a few minutes remaining on his clock.] 29 Q**e3**?? f**4** 30 Q**xa7** e**3** 31 R**h1** N**xf2** and as Black is threatening no less than four decisive moves... 0-1

Isaac Chiu - Nick Fallon RCI Scholastics 2016 King's Indian

Notes by Mike Callaham

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 d4 g6 3 g3 Bg7 4 Bg2 O-O 5 O-O d6 6 c4 Nc6 7 Nc3 a6 8 d5 Na5 9 Nd2 [My Fritz shows Panno, Bronstein, Spasski, Petrosian, Keen, Nunn, Unzicker, Vladimirov, Ivanov, Shirov, and Schmidt coming to this position on



both sides of the board. Nick is the first one to play the next move!] 9...b5!?! [9...c5 is the usual move] (diagram)

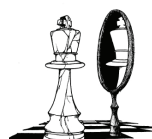
This must have surprise value! The move is a true sacrifice of a pawn. Can White switch gears? Nick knew the lines, the risks, and the benefits! I think it's disruptive enough to be 100% playable. The variation Nick played is original and can stand on its own without comparison; in my mind this will always be the Fallon Variation!

10 cxb5 axb5 11 Nxb5 Ba6 [I don't trust 11...Bb7?! but it does dictate White's moves: 12 e4 Qd7 13 a4 Ba6 14 Re1! Bxb5 15 axb5 Qxb5 16 Re3! Nd7 17 Bf1



Qc5 18 Rea3 Nb6 etc] **12 Nc3 Qd7 13 Re1?! [13 b4! is the move to put Black's gambit to the test. A sample continuation: 13...Ng4 14 Qc2 Qf5 15 Nde4 Nc4 16 a4 Bd4 17 b5 Bb7 18 Qb3 Nge5] 13...Rfb8 14 h3 Rb7 [14...c6 =] 15 Qc2 Rab8 16 e4 Ne8 17 f4 Bd4+ 18 Kh2 c6? [18...c5] 19 dxc6? [19 Qa4! Bxc3 20 bxc3 Qc7 21 Nb3 Nxb3 22 axb3 Bb5 23 Qa5] 19...Nxc6 20 Nb3 Nb4 21 Qd2 Bxc3 22 bxc3 Nd3 23 Re3 Qa4 24 Nd4?! [24 Rb1] 24...Nxc1 25 Qxc1 Rb2 26 e5 Rxa2? [26...Rf2] 27 Rxa2 Qxa2 28 Qg1 Rb1 29 Re1 Rb2 30 Kh1 Bc4 [30...dxe5] 31 Nf3? [31 Nc6; 31 exd6] 31...Bd5 32 Nh4 Bxg2+ 33 Nxg2 Ng7 [Nick told me that by the time they got this far he was getting into time trouble. 33...dxe5 34 Rxe5 e6 35 Re1 Nf6 36 Rd1 Qc4 37 Rd8+ Kg7 should win] 34 exd6 exd6 35 Ra1 Qe6 36 g4 h5 37 Qe3 Qd5 38 Rg1 Rd2 39 c4 Qd3 40 Qxd3 Rxd3 41 Kh2 hxg4 42 hxg4 Rd4 43 Rc1 Ne6 44 f5 Nf4 45 Nxf4 Rxf4 46 Kg3 Rd4 47 c5 dxc5 48 Rxc5 Kg7 49 fxg6 Kxg6 50 Kh4 Rf4 ½-½ Well deserved draw. Congrats on your novel weapon!**

Reflections Reflections



Looking Back on an Amateur Chess "Career"

by Mark Warriner

WEIRD THINGS OPPONENTS SAY

I've had more than one opponent say some strange or funny things to me, especially at the start of games. You wonder: "Why in the world did they say that?" Here are three of those stories.

One of my fondest chess memories was being invited by Bill Mason, a master and Virginia state champion, to join him, master Michael Feinstein, and expert Seth Rothman to form a team for the 1991 US Amateur Team Championship. It was an especial treat as my teammates had won the tournament the year before with the same lineup except a different 4th board of course. They were all attending UVA's Darden School after earning undergraduate degrees at Duke—talk about feeling like a fish out of water in that company! I think I "earned" my way onto the team by my correspondence play. I was in the process on winning (tying for first) the Virginia Correspondence Championship, and I had beaten several masters and experts including multi-time state champion Dr Ed Kitces. Anyway, my job was to anchor the bottom board and not embarrass us while keeping the team's

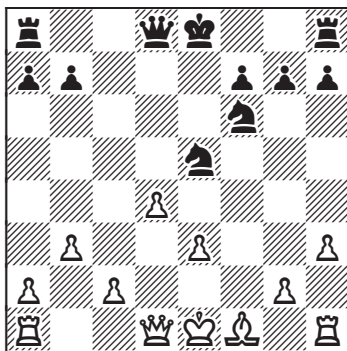


average rating below 2200. In the end we did not manage to repeat the previous year's success, but at 4-2 I didn't shame them, and to the best of my recollection neither of my two losses cost us a match.

My last game of that tournament was against an opponent from Orange, NY named Sal Stazzone. I'll remember his name and that game until the day I die. As the round began, I pressed his clock to start the game and he reached out his hand to shake, and with a big smile he said "*Good luck, Scum!*" I could tell he was just being playful, and while it startled me a bit, I couldn't help but smile. And then I ripped his head off. "He who laughs last..."

Sal Stazzone - Mark Warriner 1991 US Amateur Team Bird

1 f4 d5 2 b3 Bg4 3 Bb2 Nd7 4 Nf3 Ngf6 5 e3 c5 6 d3 e6 7 Nbd2 Bd6 [We were already eliminated from prize contention (though Bill did go 6-0 and win the clock prize for doing so) and I just wanted to make a plus score (a draw or win would do) and get to the long drive home, dropping folks off everywhere from Delaware to DC before finally getting home in the wee hours of the morning.] **8 h3** [an okay move, but be very careful of the recapture...] **8...Bxf3 9 Nxf3** [Oops. White should have played 9 Qxf3] **9...d4** [Now White had to play 10 g3 and live with the situation. Instead, he decided to get 'creative'—good for my cause, not so great for his.] **10 Nxd4 cxd4 11 Bxd4** [I think this was a typical amateur decision. Optically, White has eliminated all Black pieces from anywhere near his side of the board. But a piece is a piece, and moreover in this particular situation there is a tactical problem.] **11...e5 12 fxe5** [Apparently I chose wisely up until this point. Our Metal Friend indicates that I should have played 12....Ne5, though what I played wasn't bad.] **12...Bxe5 13 Bxe5** [Here the tactically-eyed engines say I should play 13....Qa5+ 14 Qd2 Qe5, instead of...] **13...Nxe5 14 d4**





14...Qa5+ [In the postgame analysis session, Bill asked me why I didn't play 14...Ne4, which is indeed best. I don't know. I sure thought hard about it, but I didn't want to face 15 Bb5+ Nd7 16 O-O O-O 17 Bd3 Ndf6] **15 Qd2 Qxd2+ 16 Kxd2 Ne4+ 17 Ke1 Nd7** [Okay, so not terrible, but not as good as what I'd "feared" at move 14.] **18 Bb5 a6 19 Bxd7+ Kxd7 20 Rf1 f6** [Dare I say it, from here on it's "a matter of technique." Ugh. I hate that but there it is. Of course being an amateur, my technique is weaker than that of good players, so forgive the hash I made of things.] **21 Rf4 Rhe8 22 h4 Nd6** [not necessary; either 22...b5 or 22...Re7 instead] **23 Kd2 Re4** [Either 23...f5 or 23...h5 to stop White from trying a g4 break might have been better.] **24 Raf1 Rae8 25 Rxe4** [White should be seeking to avoid trades.] **25...Rxe4 26 g3 Rg4 27 Rf3 Rxg3** [This works, though 27...Nd4+ 28 Kd3 28 Ng3 may have been technically superior.] **28 Rxg3 Ne4+ 29 Ke2 Nxg3+ 30 Kf3 Nf5 31 h5 g6 32 Kf4 Nd6 33 c4 b6** [33...g5+ was better] **34 c5 bxc5 35 dxc5 Nb5 36 hxg6 hxg6 37 e4 Nc3** [37...a5 or 37...Kc6 would have limited White's options.] **38 a3 Nb5** [again, 38...Kc6 or 38...Nb1 were more restrictive] **39 a4 Nc3 40 Ke3 g5 41 Kd2 Nxe4+ 0-1**

One of my last OTB tournament games was against a young girl. I don't like playing children, as I subscribe to former world champion Boris Spassky's dictum, *"I only fear two things; children and computers."* I keep getting my head handed to me by young children, this game being the lone exception. What's with that?! Fiona Lam was very nice and polite, couldn't have been a better sport. Before the game, just before starting the clocks, for no particular reason that I can remember, she announced "I've never lost a game on time before." I think she didn't like my old analog clock. Everybody these days, and even most back then, uses a digital clock with delays or increments, and I was still dragging out my old BHB Club Special. Anyway, bless her heart she proceeded to lose on time despite playing very well. I still feel a little embarrassed at winning that way—but only a little. It did stop my string of losses to young folk!

Fiona Lam - Mark Warriner 2006 Charlottesville Open French

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 [Due to my opponent's relative inexperience, I thought it best to start messing with the move order or play slightly unusual moves. That got me exactly nowhere. Spassky was right!] **4 Nxe4 Nd7 5 Nf3 Ngf6 6 Nc3** [Wow, she flips the script and surprises me with an usual move order. I can hear the older versions of the Fritz echo in my head: *"And now, we're on our own."* Happily for me, this has tended to score quite well for Black, though you'd never know it from the way I played.] **6...Be7 7 Be3 O-O 8 Be2** [One of the really frustrating facets of this game was that while she played a series of "simple" or "beginner" looking moves, they were still mostly good or at least acceptable. I felt like an idiot, but in retrospect



it was mostly just chess...] **8...b6 9 O-O Bb7 10 Re1 c5 11 Qd2 cxd4 12 Bxd4 Bc5** [A bit aimless perhaps. There was no need to look to exchange material at this point. Better to have simply tried to improve the position with something like 12...Qc7 or 12...Qb8, eyeballing the b8–h2 diagonal.] **13 Rad1 Qe7 14 h3 Rfd8 15 Qc1 Rac8 16 Be3** [Cool as a cucumber. I was getting very frustrated that she was making no obvious mistakes.] **16...Bb4 17 Bd2** [So now what? Black has the initiative, but no clear plan. Even engines founder about with things like ...a6 and ...h6 and then the Bishop back to c5. White's position looks 'amateurish' but it's far from bad.] **17...Qc5** [Don't ask, I have no idea why I did this, now or probably then either. I just couldn't think of a plan.] **18 a3** [Maybe a tiny misstep. White could have tried swapping one of her inactive bishops for one of Black's more active counterparts with something like either 18 Na4 or 18 Ng5 h6 19 Bf3] **18...Bxc3 19 Bxc3 Nd5 20 Rd3** [One of the interesting things about even amateur games is that often times weaker players put together a sequence of good or best moves. Chess can be very difficult to understand, but evidently there really is such a thing as "human intuition." Valeri Beim wrote of book about this, *The Enigma of Chess Intuition* (ISBN 978-90-5691-379-3, 2012, New in Chess). Mine fails me here, or at least engines aren't a fan of my continuation, but I can't for the life of me figure out why they want to play what they suggest.] **20...N7f6** [Engines don't think this is terrible, but instead they prefer 20...Nf8 21 Bd1 f6 22 Bd2 Ba6 23 Be3 Qc7 24 Rd2 e5 25 c3 Ne6 26 Bc2 Okay, it looks nice, but huh?!] **21 Bxf6 Nxf6 22 Rc3 Qe7 23 Rxc8 Rxc8 24 Rd1 Qc7 25 Qd2 Kf8 26 c3 h6 27 Nd4 a6 28 Qd3 Ke7 29 Bf3 b5 30 Bxb7 Qxb7 31 Re1 Kf8** [In retrospect, the king sortie was a waste of time if all I was going to do was retreat later.] **32 Qg3 Qb8 33 Qxb8 Rxb8 34 Re5 Nd7 35 Re3** [Either 35 Re2 or 35 Re1 might have been better squares as the rook on e3 can be harassed by Black's knight.] **35...Rc8 36 Kf1 Nb6 37 Ke2** [The first big misstep by either player. There was a time control coming up. I can't remember what it was, but I think the first control was at either 45 or 50 moves. 37 Ke1 or 37 Re2 were better.] **37...Nc4** [And I promptly gave a less-than-best reply. I certainly thought about 37...Na4 but I have no idea why I rejected it. It's important to be precise, as imprecision lays traps and diversions. Which I fall into.] **38 Rf3 Ke8** [38...e5 leads to the most favorable continuation, but allowing 39 Ne6+ wasn't something this amateur had in mind.] **39 Rg3** [Again, not best and giving Black an advantage. It's not that easy to figure out under time pressure, but 39 b3 or even b4 were better.] **39...g6** [Unfortunately miscalculating and giving White back much of my advantage. Instead, 39...Nxb2 40 Rxg7 Rxc3 41 Rg8+ Ke7] **40 b3 Ne5** [Big ouch! Why not grab the a3 pawn? To the best of my recollection I was worried about the knight becoming trapped somehow. Now the position is just even.] **41 Kd2 Nc6 42 Re3** While playing this last move in an equal position, Fiona unfortunately flagged, the very thing she indicated had *never happened* to her before. Strange! **0-1**



My final story happened in the 1984 Virginia Closed, the first state championship I played in, and the same one about which I wrote in an earlier article concerning my game with Ruth Donnelly. To set the stage properly, this next game took place in the last round when I was sitting on 1-4 score. I was in my provisional rating period, so don't expect wondrous quality moves here. I spent most of the game on my heels, holding on for dear life, as I had no idea what I was doing and my opponent at least had experience on his side. I was determined to get the point however, which I managed to do, but in large part due to a great deal of luck, a funny circumstance, and of course something weird my opponent said. I think I distracted him, but a full explanation follows in the game score. Perhaps what he said wasn't as weird as what happened after his reply to my draw offer. It was, as Robin Williams opined in the movie "Good Will Hunting", "Ironical." But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Mark Warriner – John Nuckols Jr. 1984 Virginia Closed Catalan

1 d4 d5 2 c4 Nf6 [The classic book *500 Master Games of Chess* by Dr S Tartakower and J du Mont (ISBN 978-0486232089, Dover, 1975) refers to this as the "American Defense." If you don't have that book, go get it. Anyway, the naming is most unfortunate for US citizens as the move is just not good. Too my great chagrin, I allowed a transposition to a much more favorable defense, whereas I could have obtained a very favorable game by 3 cd Nd5 4 e4, etc.] **3 g3** [In 1984 my head was full of Kasparov Catalans, Queen's Indians, etc, so I was trying angle for something there. Typical unguided amateur thinking, getting way ahead of my learning when I should have been more focused on the basics.] **3...e6 4 Bg2 Be7 5 Nf3 a6** [Sneaky, sneaky. And being the dutiful amateur, I walk right into that one.] **6 O-O dxc4 7 Qa4+ b5** [clunk and ouch] **8 Qc2 Bb7 9 Rd1 h5** [A little too aggressive. Just 9...Nbd7 or 9...c5 or 9...O-O or even 9...Be4 are fine.] **10 a4** [Trying to mix it up, but I should have been thinking about developing pieces and uncramping the queenside with 10 Bg5; maybe 10 b3 would not have been too bad either.] **10...Nc6** [Sporty. 10...Be4 11. Qd2 b4 gets White pretty boxed in.] **11 b3** [Cliff diving. Again Bg5] **11...Nb4 12 Qc3 Ne4 13 Qb2** [I really like Black's position and not just because it's better. The symmetry of the bishop pair on b7 and e7 and the knight pair on b4 and e4 is aesthetically pleasing. Black is primed for attack and something like 13...h4 would be nice to see, although engines want 13...cb 14. Qb3 Bd5 15. Qb2 ba] **13...Qd5** [This naked aggression, on the other hand, helps White's cause. Black clearly wants the g2 mate but it's not to be had. Now 14 Ne5 would put White on the path to recovery. But I was stuck in 'bunker mentality'. You have to exercise situational awareness after *every single move* of your opponent, be prepared to re-evaluate the position afresh.] **14**



Nfd2 f5 [This really helps White, and had I played 15 ab cb 16 ba Ra6 17 Ra6 Na6 18 Nc3 my position would be quite healthy.] **15 Nxe4 fxe4 16 Nc3 Qf5 17 axb5 axb5 18 Rxa8+ Bxa8 19 Be3** [9 Bf4 was better but I was worried about protecting f2] **19...h4 20 Rf1** [20 Ra1 or even 21 bc bc 22 Na2 Na2 23 Qa2 diffuses some of Black's advantage. The text could have made things worse after 20...h3 21 Bh1 O-O] **20...hxc3** [letting me off the hook and even giving me the f-file] **21 fxg3 Qh7 22 h3 Qg6 23 Qa1** [maybe not terrible, but why help the Black's bishop to c6 where it's protected? Just 23 Nxb5 or 23 g4] **23...Kd7 24 g4?** [This was horrible and should have just lost.] **24...Nc2 25 Qc1 cxb3 26 Nxb5 Nxe3?** [Yowsers! This awful move offers White a road to a miraculous victory: 27 Qc7+ Ke8 28 Qb8+ Bd8 29 Nd6+ Ke7 30 Nd8+ Kd7 31 Qa8] **27 Qxe3?** [Oh my word. Just trying to give the game away. The exchange of blunders over several moves is remarkable. I can't recall any time trouble, but that would be a more acceptable explanation than that we both just missed obvious moves.] **27...Bg5?** [27...Rb8 28 Nc3 b2 and you get the idea.] **28 Qxb3 Bd5 29 Qg3 Bd8** [So at length we're back to some equality in the position. Having survived a total mess, I thought we'd both had enough and my opponent would be happy to draw and end the miserable tournament we were both suffering. He might indeed have accepted a draw offer after 30 Rc1 to keep up the pressure. Instead, I played a much weaker move—and got a victory that the stronger move might not have chieved. Funny

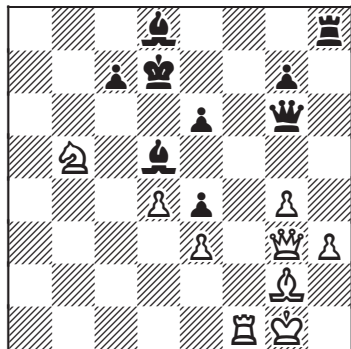
how things work sometimes.] **30 e3**

(diagram)

I offered my opponent a draw. Black probably should refuse and continue to apply pressure with, eg, 30...Bc4 31 Rb1 Bd3 etc. Instead my opponent replied...

30...c6??

...coupled with the remark, "Let's play on a bit longer. I'd like to see what happens." Wow—and ouch!



31 Qd6+ Ke8 32 Nc7+ Bxc7 33 Qxc7 Rf8? [It was over anyway, but this allows a mate in 5: 34 Qc8+ Ke7 35 Rf8 e5 36 de c5 37 Qd8+ Ke6 38 Qd6mate] **34 Rb1** Still a forced mate, although several moves longer. It was good enough however to force resignation. **1-0**

Evidently my opponent felt he could outplay me as I had only a provisional rating based on less than 10 games at the time. OK, perhaps this isn't weird so much as classically unfortunate. But it sure is weird how he made the losing mistake just seconds after his response. I remember his rueful observation after the game of how he could have had a draw. Be careful of saying weird things during your games!

In This Issue:

Icelandic Pilgrimage (Fischer)	1
George Washington Open	7
Readers' Games	11
Mark warriner Reflections	16
Upcoming Events	2
VCF Info	<i>inside front cover</i>



Virginia Chess
1370 South Braden Crescent
Norfolk, VA 23502

Presorted Standard
US Postage PAID
Orange, VA
Permit No. 97