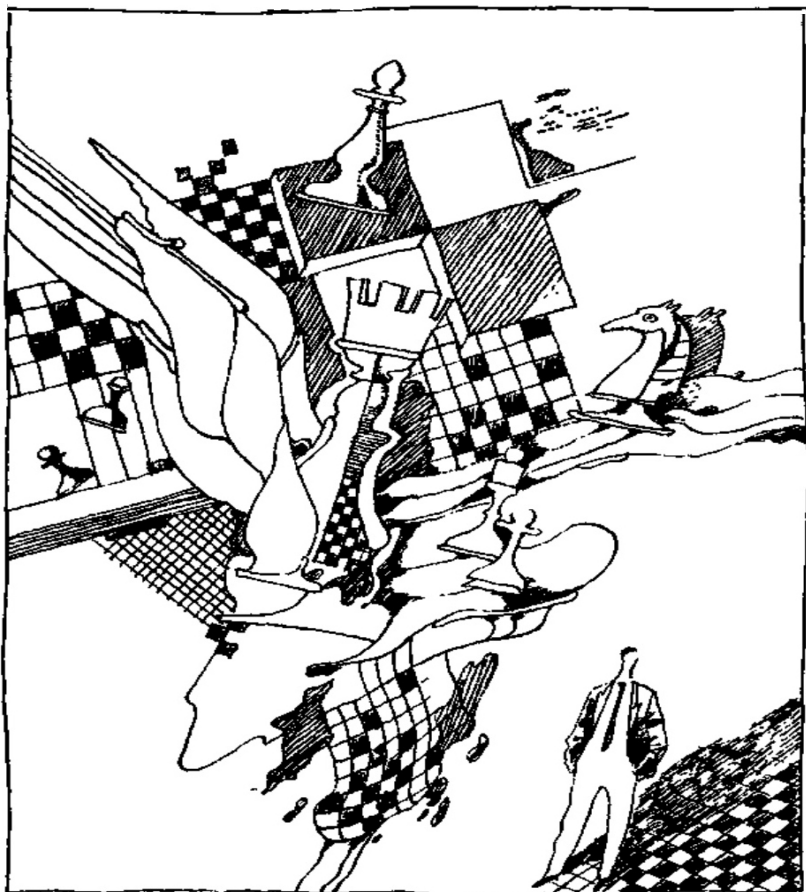


VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

The bimonthly publication of the
Virginia Chess Federation

2020 - #6



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Virginia Chess is published six times per year by the Virginia Chess Federation. Membership benefits 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 \$15/yr. Junior memberships (under age 18 at expiration) are \$8/yr. President: Anand Dommalapati, PO Box 223582, Chantilly,

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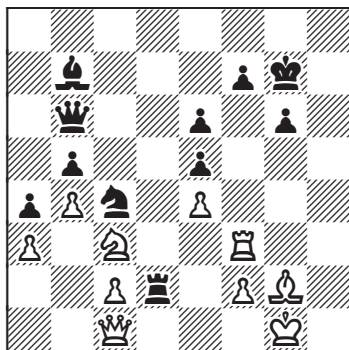


Northern Virginia Open

The 2020 Northern Virginia Open was played Nov 14-15 in Dulles, Va. Maryland expert Muskee Books combined winning all of his played games with a third round ½-pt bye to score 4½-½ and take clear 1st place. Issac Chiu, Stewart Bradley Taylor, Tyson Brady and Susheel Vishwa each followed at 4-0, with Vishwa claiming two "Top Upset" prizes along the way! A half point further back, Aasa Dommalapati claimed the Top Expert prize, Alperen Kanli & Adithya Pillai shared Top Class A, and Kent Slate won Top B. Joshua Haven's 3-2 score was good for Top C. Koko Budo won the D prize. Jay Chaudhary was the top Unrated player.

Robert Fischer - Muskee Books Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6
5 Nc3 Qc7 6 g3 a6 7 Bg2 Nf6 8 O-O
Be7 9 Bf4 d6 10 Nb3 O-O 11 Qe2 Ne5
12 Bxe5 dxe5 13 Rad1 b5 14 a3 Bb7
15 Rd3 Rac8 16 Rfd1 Bc6 17 g4 Rfd8
18 g5 Rxd3 19 Rxd3 Nd7 20 h4 a5 21
Qd2 a4 22 Nc1 Nb6 23 N1e2 Nc4 24
Qc1 Bc5 25 h5 g6 26 hxg6 hxg6 27
Nd1 Kg7 28 b4 Be7 29 Rg3 Rd8 30
Ne3 Bb7 31 Ng4 Rd2 32 Nf6 Bxf6 33
gxf6+ Kxf6 34 Nc3 Qb6 35 Rf3+ Kg7



36 Nb1 Rd4 37 Rh3 Kf6 38 Rf3+ Ke7
39 Qg5+ Ke8 40 Qf6 Nd6 41 Nc3
Bxe4 42 Nxe4 Rxe4 43 Rh3 Rf4 44
Qxe5 Qxf2+ 45 Kh1 Rg4 46 Bc6+
Ke7 47 Rd3 Qg1mate 0-1

Susheel Vishwa - Daniel Miller Petroff

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 a3
Bxc3 5 dxc3 O-O 6 Bd3 d5 7 Nd2 c6
8 O-O Be6 9 f3 Nbd7 10 c4 dxe4 11
Nxe4 Nxe4 12 fxe4 Nf6 13 Kh1 Ng4
14 Qe1 Kh8 15 Qg3 h5 16 h3 h4 17
Qf3 Nh6 [17...Nf6 18 Bg5] 18 Qh5 f6
[18...Kh7 19 Qxe5] 19 Bxh6 gxh6 20
Qxh6+ Kg8 21 Rf3 Rc8 22 Raf1 Rc7
23 Rxf6 Rxf6 24 Rxf6 Rh7 25 Rg6+
[25 Qg5+ Δ Qxe5] 25...Kh8 26 Qg5
Qxg5 27 Rxg5 Rh6 28 c5 b6 29 cxb6
axb6 30 Kg1 c5 31 b3 Bf7 32 Rxe5
Kg7 33 Rf5 Rd6 34 Rf4 Bxb3 35 e5
Rd8 36 Rg4+ Kf8 37 Rxh4 Bg8 38
Kf2 Ra8 39 Rh6 c4 40 Be4 Rxa3 41
Rxb6 Ra5 42 Rf6+ Ke7 43 Rg6 Bf7
44 Rg5 Ra1 45 h4 Rh1 46 g4 Rxh4
47 Ke3 Rh2 48 Kd4 Re2 49 Bf5 Rd2+
50 Kc3 Re2 51 e6 Bxe6 52 Bxe6 Kxe6
53 Rc5 Re3+ 54 Kb4 Rg3 55 Rxc4
Kd5 56 c3 Rg1 57 Rd4+ Ke5 58 Kc5
Ra1 59 Rd2 Ra8 60 Re2+ Kf4 61 c4
Rc8+ 62 Kb5 Rb8+ 63 Ka6 Rc8 64
Rc2 Ke5 65 Kb7 Rg8 66 c5 Rxg4 67
c6 Rb4+ 68 Kc8 Ke6 69 Rd2 Ke7 70
c7 Ke8 71 Re2+ Kf7 72 Kd7 Rd4+ 73
Kc6 Rc4+ 74 Kd6 Rc1 75 Re5 Rd1+
76 Kc6 Kf6 77 Rc5 1-0





US Class Championships

The US Class Championships is a major USCF annual event. When the VCF won the right to host the event for 2020, it promised to be a chess bonanza for local players. Alas, that was the Before Times. The tournament was indeed played Oct 30 thru Nov 1 at the Washington Dulles Airport Marriott, but in reduced form and under strict pandemic-imposed protocols. Entries were capped to allow boards to be properly spaced, all equipment was provided and sanitized, spectators excluded, player movement limited, masked required, random temperature checks administered, and hand sanitizer flowed freely.

As the name implies, the Class Championships divides the field into seven different sections based on rating. In the top “Master” group for players over 2200, IM Hans Niemann, of Connecticut, and FM Eugene Yanayt, from California, tied for 1st place with 4 points (out of 5). GM Andrey Stukopin (Texas) & FM Joshua Posthuma (Michigan) followed one half a point back. Behind them came IM Justin Sarkar, Aaron Kahn, Vincent Tsay, Isaac Chui, Mike Zalozny & the host state’s top performer, 2015 Virginia state champion Jennifer Yu.

Guy Cardwell swept the Expert (2000-2200) Section 5-0. Larry Larkins was runner up, with Alperen Kanli finishing 3rd. A large group shared the remaining prizes: Sal Rosario, Sean Senft, Jack Barrow, Ethan Modi, Douglas Ulrich, Siddhant Nair, Tyson Brady, Kevin Su & Derin Goktepe.

The Class A section also saw a clear winner, Andrew Bledsoe with 4½ points. John Farrell & Evan Huang tied for 2nd. Leonard Chipkin, Andrew Colwell & Luca Tessiere rounded out the prize circle.

The Class B score table was topped by another clean sweep as Samuel He scored 5-0. Kent Slate & Joshua Havens tied for 2nd and William Wang finished 3rd.

There was a tie for 1st in the C group between Anantha Kumar & Siddharth Kurup, each 4-1. Cayden Jackson trailed by just half a point. Nicholas Liotta & Shirish Chitnis followed.



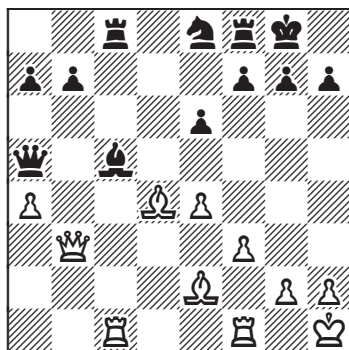
Class D champion Cole Frankenhoff steamrolled the D section 5-0. Zion Utsey lost a game to Frankenhoff but won all his others to claim 2nd place. Jagadeeshwa Yehamandram Sridhar, Tariq Yue, Luc acciatore & Laurent Lafosse all came a point further back.



Finally, victory in the Class E section was shared between Ethan Shaffer & Daks Dudipala. Jonathan Ngo was runner-up.

That the event came off well under challenging conditions is credit to the efforts of Chief tournament director Rudy Abate and his staff, which included Rob Getty, Mike Hoffpauir, GP Sinha, Andy Rea & Cheryl Havens.

Eugene Yanayt - Isaac Chiu Slav



1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Nf3 c6 4 e3 Be6 5 a4 Nf6 6 Na3 Bd5 7 Nxc4 e6 8 Be2 c5 9 O-O Be7 10 b3 cxd4 11 Nxd4 O-O 12 Bb2 Nc6 13 Rc1 Rc8 14 Kh1 Ne4 15 f3 Nxd4 16 Bxd4 Nd6 17 e4 Bxc4 18 bxc4 Qa5 19 c5 Ne8 20 Qb3 Bxc5

21 Bb5! Qb6 22 Rxc5 Rxc5 23 Qb4 Rxb5 24 axb5 Qd8 25 Bc5 Nc7 26 Bxf8 Qxf8 27 Qc4 Na8 28 Rd1 h6 29 Qd4 a6 30 bxa6 bxa6 31 Qd8 Nb6 32 Qxb6 Qa3 33 Qb8+ Kh7 34 Qe5 Qb3 35 Ra1 Qe3 36 h3 Qe2 37 Qa5 1-0



2020 Charlottesville Open

Rescheduled to **January 30-31, 2021**

A VCF Cup Event

Comfort Inn, Monticello, 2097 Inn Dr, Charlottesville, VA 22911

5-SS, rd 1 Game/75 + 10-sec increment, rds 2-5 Game/90 + 10-sec increment. In 2 sections: \$2,000 b/50 paid entries. *Open*: \$500, \$300, \$200, U2000 \$150, U1800 \$140; *U1600*: \$300, \$200, \$150, U1300 \$140, U1000 & Unrated \$130. Unrated Player winning any place prize is limited to \$200. *Both*: Rds 10-1:30-6, 10-2:30. EF \$65 by 1/24/21, \$80 thereafter. On-sight reg 5-9pm Friday 1/29th, 8:00 - 9:15 am Saturday morning. Players not registered and paid by 9:15 risk not being paired for rd 1. Credit Cards, Cash or Check accepted on-site. \$5 retained for any withdrawals before the tournament starts. Re-entry \$30 w 1/2pt bye for rd 1. One 1/2pt bye is available, requests must be finalized 30 minutes before the start of rd 2. USCF memb req'd. VCF memb req'd for all Virginia residents. Hotel: chess rate \$84/night + taxes, <https://www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/GB58C1>. **Friday Night Blitz**: 4 rounds, EF advance \$25, \$30 on-site. Registration for Blitz closes at 6:30 pm. First round 7pm.

COVID-19 Precautions: Sets & Clocks will be provided for all players. You will not be allowed to use your own set, but you can bring and use your own clock. Clocks and sets will be sanitized by the Tournament Staff between each round. NO SPECTATORS allowed inside playing hall—NONE, so don't ask. ALL PLAYERS MUST WEAR FACE MASKS. Bring one and a couple of extras for yourself! NO FOOD allowed in the Playing Room. Bottled drinks with caps, including personal water bottles, will be allowed, but no drinks in cups even if the cup has a lid. ALL PLAYERS will have their forehead temperature checked at the start of each round and will be asked a set of Screening Questions at the start of both days of the tournament. Forehead temperature over 99.5 ... means you will not be allowed to play. If you don't agree with this policy and procedures, then don't show up.

Info: Mike Hoffpauir, National Tournament Director. mhoffpauir@aol.com 757-846-4805. No registrations taken by phone or email



From Virginia Closed to Exile in Spain

by Aleksey Bashtavenko

“Human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, life obliges them over and over again to give birth to themselves.” —Gabriel Garcia Marquez

WHEN I SHOWED UP at the 2014 Virginia “Closed” State Championship with a rating of 741, I was destined for a baptism of fire. In my first tournament as an adult, I barely held my own. I offered draws in the first two rounds despite holding a winning position in each case. Over the next couple years I would advance through several rating classes and play on a Northern Virginia League team that finished in second place. Yet, I had turned my back on it all: I had grown tired of the weekly routine of tournaments and constant practice. I was ready for a new chapter in my life. Instead of dreaming of reinventing myself elsewhere, I finally made it happen. I left the United States, at last.

On a warm September afternoon in Mexico City, I stared out the window of Torre LatinoAmericana, one of the tallest buildings in the Spanish-speaking world. I marveled at the sheer size of the nation’s capital. I also noticed the impenetrable smog covering the skyline. As I waited on my meal, I could scarcely have anticipated the debacle that ensued shortly thereafter.



Mauricio Rodriguez - Aleksey Bashtavenko Mexico Copa Independencia 2019

King’s Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 O-O 6 Be2 e5 7 O-O Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Nd7 10 Be3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 Bf2 g5 13 Nd3 a5 14 Rc1 b6 15 b3 h5 16 a3 Nf6 17 b4 axb4 18 axb4 Ng6 19 c5 bxc5 20 bxc5 g4 21 Nb5 Bd7 22 c6 Bc8 23 Ra1 Rxa1 24 Qxa1 h4 25 Qa7 g3 26 Be1 h3 27 Qxc7 Qxc7? [The opportunity is missed: 27...hxg2 28 Kxg2 Nxd5! If 29 Qxd8 White’s king has been lured within range of the knight—29...Ne3+. So White must take the knight, 29 exd5, but now the way is open for 29...Qh4] 28 Nxc7 gxh2+ 29 Kxh2 Nh5 30 gxh3 1-0

Losing in my favorite opening, the Mar Del Plata variation of the King’s Indian Defense, gave me four wins and three losses at the end of the penultimate day of the event. I could barely sleep that night, as my illness exacerbated by the minute.



Clearly, it was more than a mere cold. The next morning I showed up at the tournament hall over 45 minutes late, coughing and sneezing profusely. The game was yet another disaster and I resigned before move 20, falling prey to an elementary fork. In the final round, my coughing had been so profuse that the tournament director brought a facemask for me to wear.

Aleksey Bashtavenko - Alvaro Samiento Mexico Copa De Independencia 2019 Ragozin

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2 d5 5 Nf3
O-O 6 a3 Bxc3+ 7 Qxc3 dxc4 8 Qxc4 b6 9 Bg5
Ba6 10 Qa2 Nbd7 11 Rc1 c5 12 g3 h6 13 Bxf6
Qxf6 14 b4 cxd4 15 Bg2 d3 16 exd3 Bxd3 17 Qd2 Ba6 18 Qd4 Rac8 19 Qh4?
Rxc1+ 20 Kd2 Qc3 *mate* 0-1



What went wrong? Up until the penultimate day I won all of my evening rounds. But I showed up late each morning, having overslept. Quite uncharacteristically, I lost three of my four White games, but won three out of four from the Black of side. Prior to leaving Virginia, about one in four of my games ended in draws and I seldom had an event where I lost multiple games with White.

Never mind excuses for a poor performance, the important thing was that my mindset had shifted: I no longer had any interest in a draw. Was the change a mere coincidence or had the local ambiance begun to take effect?

THE GENRE OF MAGICAL REALISM was developed in Latin America and it is not a fluke that Mexico was Gabriel Garcia Marquez's favorite country. Magical realism is an inordinately foreign concept to North Americans and Western Europeans, and any definition one can give for such an abstruse concept would be incomplete. However, the short version is that it is a literary genre that portrays ordinary human experience with elements of fantasy interspersed into the mundane reality. In one of Marquez's novels, a dictator governed a country for so long that nobody there remembered what life was like before his reign of terror began. In another, the patriarch died and flowers began falling out of the sky, as if Mother Nature herself mourned his passing. Marquez's most famous work *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is set in a village so remote that only a few itinerant gypsies were able to enter or leave the community.

"Welcome to Mexico, my friend—the land of magic," explained my well-intentioned acquaintance as he proceeded to regale me with stories that seemed



far too bizarre to be taken at face value. With a twinkle in his eye, he carried on, “We are so far from God, but so close to the United States,” flashing a mischievous grin. “We believe in magic, we don’t believe in education!” He grew visibly weary of my relentless questions. Needless to say, I walked away from the exchange even more perplexed than I was before it started.

While no one’s death has been followed by a storm of flowers, fiction and reality do live side by side in much of Latin America. Magic is the fusion of the banal and the surreal. “*Pasale, pasale! Tacos de perro!*” exclaimed one entrepreneur as he ushered in unsuspecting customers who assumed that he was kidding. It turned out that the joke was on the consumers, so they sued him. To their dismay, the judge ruled in favor of the businessman because he had stated truthfully what was served at the *taqueria*. As I continued to grasp for straws that might explain my dismal performance just weeks earlier, I recalled a taco stand by the subway station in Mexico City where five tacos cost just 15 pesos. Clearly, dog meat was far from the worst thing that I might have eaten there...

Returning home to Puerto Vallarta, I stumbled into the doctor’s office complaining that “*mi garganta está roja como la bandera de China!*” The physician was hardly surprised to learn I’d recently visited Mexico City. He quickly diagnosed me with strep throat, prescribing antibiotics and recommending some over-the-counter medication. Remarkably, his fee was just 70 pesos—less than one tenth of what I spent on similar medication months ago when I spoke no Spanish.





WITHIN A FORNIGHT of my wretched performance in Mexico City, I continued to roam the famous *malecon*, relishing the sunset over the Pacific Ocean while admiring the vibrant nightlife. Seemingly, all was well again. Yet something was missing. I could not be satisfied playing with an exhibitionist on the beach who was posing as a sandman. Nor with playing against the street "artist" who wanted 20 pesos for his bus ticket and a diet coke. For certain, I did not have the heart to return to Mexico City, nor was I willing to travel to Guadalajara, which was becoming more dangerous with each passing month.

I reflected upon the moment I returned to my hotel room on the ill-fated penultimate evening of the tournament and turned on the TV to behold the celebration of Mexico's Independence Day. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador appeared in Plaza de Zocalo just blocks away from my tournament. The adoring crowd cheered "*no estas solo!*" as he promised to fight poverty and corruption, along with a laundry list of other tall orders that he could not fulfill.

Though AMLO's supporters were trained in the art of expecting the unexpected, even a lifetime's immersion in magical realism could not have prepared them for the precarious future that loomed over the horizon. Less than two months thereafter, the head of state exclaimed "*abrazos, no balazos!*" in the aftermath of a botched attempt to arrest a prominent cartel leader. At best, the president mirrored the naivete of the Old Major from *Animal Farm*, and his approval ratings deservedly suffered.

In mid-November of 2019, the *Federales* detained the son of El Chapo, Ovidio Guzman. Shortly after the criminal was placed under house arrest in his Culiacan home, the Sinaloa Cartel launched a massive rescue operation, burning busses, destroying buildings and holding numerous civilians hostage. At the behest of the president, Guzman was released and his competitors certainly took notice. In the ensuing weeks, Mexico was beleaguered by an incessant onslaught of violent crime that was orchestrated by various cartels challenging the government's claim of monopoly on violence.

Upon my arrival in Mexico, I learned that 2018 was the nation's deadliest year on record, and 2019 had already surpassed that tally by late November. My sojourn in Mexico had to end; perhaps I should have come to this realization already when my landlord admonished me never to put the trash bin on the street because "it will be stolen immediately!"

But I had scarcely a clue how to move forward. With a mixture of curiosity and desperation, I reached out to an Argentine friend who ran a popular survivalist channel on YouTube. "*What!? You've read my book and you moved to Mexico!?*" he chided me. He lived in Spain now, and I needed little encouragement to join him there. Warm weather, low costs of living and a remarkably safe environment made it an attractive destination.

My journey to Spain took me through New York City and the Marshall Chess Club. There I played with a renewed determination to win, seeking the sharpest line I could find in every game.



Aleksey Bashtavenko - Brian Pang Marshall Chess Club 2019

Grünfeld

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Nf3 c5 8 Rb1 O-O 9 Be2 Qa5 10 O-O Qxa2 11 Bg5 Qe6 12 e5 f6 13 Bf4 fxe5 14 Bxe5 Nd7 15 Ng5 Qf5 16 Bc4+ Kh8 17 Bxg7+ Kxg7 18 Ne6+ Kh8 19 Nxf8 Nxf8 20 dxc5 Qxc5 21 Qd4+ Qxd4 22 cxd4 a6 23 Rfe1 e6 24 Rb6 Kg7 25 d5 exd5 26 Re7+ Kh6 27 Bxd5 Nd7 28 Rb4 Kg5 29 h4+ Kh6 30 Be6 Nc5 31 Bg8 g5 32 Rb6+ Kh5 33 Rxh7+ Kg4 34 Rb4+ Kf5 35 Rh5 Nd3 36 Bh7+ Ke5 37 Bxd3 Kf6 38 Rb6+ Kg7 39 Rh7+ Kg8 40 Rbh6 b5 41 Be4 Rb8 42 Bd5+ Kf8 43 Rf7+ 1-0

I reached Malaga in mid January and joined the local chess club. Little did I know that I had only a few weeks to enjoy what it had to offer—within two months the World Health Organization would declare a global pandemic.

Diego Bartolomeo Ruiz Gaspar - Aleksey Bashtavenko Malaga 2020

Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 b4 cxb4 3 a3 b3 4 cxb3 d6 5 Bb2 Nf6 6 Nc3 g6 7 d4 Bg7 8 d5 O-O 9 Nf3 Nxe4 10 Rc1 Nxc3 11 Bxc3 Bh6 12 Rc2 Bf5 13 Qd4 f6 14 Bd3 Bxd3 15 Qxd3 Nd7 16 b4 Ne5 17 Nxe5 fxe5 18 O-O Qd7 19 Bd2 Bg7 20 f4 Rac8 21 Rxc8 Rxc8 22 f5 gxf5 23 Rxf5 Qa4 24 h3 Qc2 25 Qxc2 Rxc2 26 Bg5 Bf8 27 Be3 Rc3 28 Bxa7 Rxa3 29 Rg5+ Bg7 30 Bb6 Kf7 31 Rg4 Bf6 32 Rc4 0-1 32...Rd3 will follow, eg 33 Rc7 Rxd5 34 Rxb7 Rb5

Aleksey Bashtavenko - Enrique Perez Malaga 2020

Blackmar Diemer

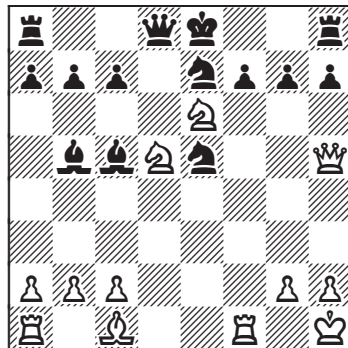
1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 Nc3 Bf5 4 f3 exf3 5 Nxf3 Nc6 6 Bb5 Bd7 7 O-O e6 8 d5 exd5 9 Nxd5 Bc5+ 10 Kh1 Nge7

11 Ng5 Ne5 12 Qh5 Bxb5

(diagram)

13 Ne6! g6 14 Nf6mate 1-0

Play commenced at 21:30, presumably to accommodate the traditional Spanish siesta. Games finished just in time for me to catch the last train home at 11:30pm. At last I had found a welcome reprieve from the bitter polemics that I was engulfed in as captain of two teams in the DC Chess League. Here, it



seemed, no one had the time or inclination to write a 27-page diatribe haranguing the tournament director about a decision made months prior.



But as I gradually came to appreciate the slow pace of life in my adopted country, I also realized that I only had room for cautious optimism, if that.

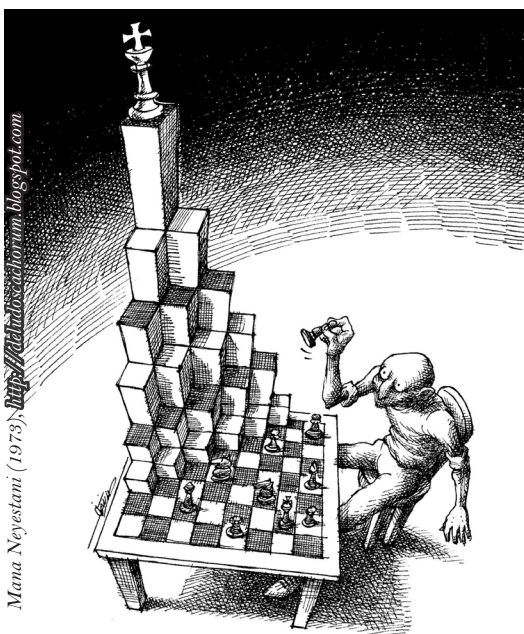
“Por el bien del ajedrez, que es lo único que debería ocuparnos, debemos decirle a quien corresponda, supongo que a los dos protagonistas, que ya está bien de rencillas, insultos y denuncias.”

Some feud erupted between the clubs of Sevilla and Malaga. For now at least it cannot be resolved because of COVID restrictions. Perhaps some things never change and acrimonious disputes constitute an integral part of the chess culture. Should we expect anything else? By its nature chess is an activity of constant conflict that tends to attract contentious people. Reflecting on why chess players make mountains of molehills, I remember how a wise man once observed, “A man can change his face, his home, his family, even his God. But one thing he cannot change is his passion!”

What about me, and my passion? Surely it would be foolhardy to say that chess is my passion. I have not achieved nearly enough in chess to justify such an assertion. Yet a passage from Ernest Hemmingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* resonates with me. *“You’re an expatriate. You’ve lost touch with the soil. You get precious. Fake European standards have ruined you.”*

Reading that, I know returning to America simply isn’t an option. Never mind that all direct flights have been canceled, I wouldn’t return even given the

opportunity. I have gotten accustomed to this pace of life, the absence of conflict. I scarcely miss the intensely competitive atmosphere of an American chess club. If fake European standards have ruined me, so be it.



Mana Neyestani (1973), <http://adriaticsalonum.blogspot.com>



Personal & General...

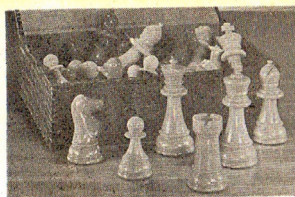
from the Editor

J'ADOUBE!

Our previous issue's report on the Virginia Commonwealth Games & Online Closed contained a colossal editing blunder. I completely omitted the name of **Enqi Wang**, who scored $5\frac{1}{2}$ points (out of 6) to take clear 1st place in the Under 1800 section. Here are two of Enqi's games from the event:

Avnith Vijayram - Enqi Wang Slav

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 Bf5 5 Nc3 e6 6 Be2 h6 7 O-O Be7 8 b3 O-O 9 Bb2 Nbd7 10 Rc1 Rc8 11 h3 Bh7 12 Bd3 Bxd3 13 Qxd3 Re8 14 e4 dxe4 15 Nxe4 Nxe4 16 Qxe4 Nf6 17 Qe2 Qc7 18 Rfd1 Rcd8 19 Qc2 Rd7 20 Rd3 Rdd8 21 Rcd1 a6 22 Qd2 Ne4 23 Qe3 Nf6 24 Qe5 Qxe5 25 dxe5 Ne4 26 Rxd8 Rxd8 27 Rxd8+ Bxd8 28 b4 Ng5 29 Nd2 Nh7 30 f4 Nf8 31 Ne4 b6 [The ending is better for White, who has a space advantage, but not decisively so.] 32 c5 [It's not yet clear what The Plan is going to be and there was a flexible, general purpose course at hand. Simply 32 Kf2 should have been played.] 32...Nd7 33 Bc3 bxc5 34 bxc5 f5 35 exf6 Bxf6 [It may have seemed that 36 Bxf6 was impossible as after 36...gxf6 White cannot prevent ...f5 driving off the knight and then ...Nxc5. In fact, it would all amount to just a trade of pawns, eg 37 g4 f5 38 gxf5 exf5 39 Nd6 Nxc5 40 Nxf5 Nd3 41 Nxb6+ Kg7 42 Nf5+ Kf6 43 Nd4 Nxf4 44 Nxc6 Nxb3+] 36 Nxf6+ gxf6 37 Bd4 e5 38 fxe5 fxe5 39 Be3 h5 40 Kf2 Kg7 41 Kf3 Kf7 42 g4 hxg4+ 43 hxg4 Ke6 44 g5? [Ceding f5 puts White in danger. It was time to just wait, eg 44 Bg1 and if 44...Kd5 then 45 g5! holds the balance easily and on 45...Nxc5? (correct 45...Nf8) White even wins, 46 Bxc5 Kxc5 47 g6] 44...Kf5 45 a3? [This second mistake probably costs the game. It was necessary to get the king ready to defend the g-pawn, 45 Kg3 and if 45...e4 46 g6! Kxg6 47 Kf4 etc] 45...Nf8! [Inevitably Black will either win the g-pawn while retaining his e-pawn or penetrate with his king through e4 to support the e-pawn's advance.] 46 Kg3 Ng6 47 Kf3 Ne7 48 Ke2 Nd5 49 Bd2 Nc7 50 Be3 Ne6 51 Kd3 Nxc5 52 Kc4 Ne6 53 Kb4 Ke4 54 Bg1 Kd5 55 a4 e4 56 Ka5 Nxc5 57 Bxc5 Kxc5 58 Kxa6 e3 59 a5 e2 60 Kb7 e1Q 61 a6 Qb1+ 62 Ka8 Qa1 63 a7 Kb6 64 Kb8 Qxa7+ 65 Kc8 Qc7mate 0-1



Windsor Castle Chessmen

Solid plastic. Authentic Staunton design. King height about 4". Felts converted permanently with plastic glues. Loaded sets have big lead weights moulded into bases. Unloaded sets much heavier than "weightless" chessmen made with plastic shells. Used at leading clubs.

No. 27 (Black & Ivory) or No. 28 (Red & Ivory): Felted but unloaded set in leatherette-covered case, as illustrated, **\$10.50**
Special bargain! \$15.00 less 30% to USCF members. (In dozen lots, without cases, \$7.95 per set)

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Enqi Wang - Bill Keogh Scandinavian

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Be2 a6 6 d3 Nc6 7 O-O Bf5 8 Be3 e5 9 h3 h6 10 a3 Be7 11 Rb1 Nd4 12 Re1 O-O 13 Bxd4 exd4 14 Ne4 Qd7 [14...Nxe4 15 dxe4 Bxe4 16 Nxd4 (16 Qxd4 Bxc2) might have seemed too tame but in fact Black's bishops exert real pressure, eg 16...Bf6 17 Nf3 Qxd1 18 Bxd1 Rae8] 15 Nxf6+ Bxf6 16 Nd2 Rae8 17 Rf1 Bd8 18 Bf3 c6 19 Re1 Bc7 20 Rxe8 Rxe8 21 Bg4 Bxg4 22 hxg4 Qd6 23 g3 Qe6 24 Kg2 Qe5 25 Ne4 Re6 26 Qf3 g6 27 Nd2 Qe2 28 Qxe2 Rxe2 29 Rd1 f5 30 gxf5 gxf5 31 Kf1 Re7 32 Kg2 Kf7 33 Nf3 c5 34 Re1 Rxe1 35 Nxe1 Ba5 36 Nf3 b5 37 Kh3 Ke6 [37... Bc7 38 Kh4 Kg6 = would have been simpler] 38 Kh4 Bd8+? [Now 38...Kf6 39 Kh5 Kg7 was necessary. White cannot advantageously activate the knight, eg 40 Ne5 Be1] 39 Kh5 a5 40 Kxh6 Kf6 41 Kh5 Bb6 [Practically speaking, setting up the "quart grip" (Kmoch) offered greater potential for some tactical breakthrough swindle 41...a4] 42 g4 fxg4 43 Kxg4 c4 44 b3 cxd3 45 cxd3 Ke6 46 Kf4 Kd5 47 Nd2 Bc5 48 a4 bxa4 49 bxa4 Bb4 50 Nb3 Be1 51 f3 Bb4 52 Kf5 Bc3 53 f4 Kd6 54 Ke4 Ke6 55 Nxd4+ Kf7 56 Nb5 Bb4 57 d4 1-0

WINDSOR CASTLE

My reminiscing about the old Richmond Chess Club elicited an amazing number of responses. Apparently the club is gone but not forgotten in the hearts and minds of others like me. The Virginia Home, on Hampton Street near Byrd Park, is locked down now due to COVID restrictions, but that did not stop some readers from probing the site for more information. Mark Warriner reports that Volunteer Manager Anne Kennedy was unaware of the Home's history as a venue for the club, but she notes that several residents there do play chess. An outreach from the VCF or some other Richmond chess group may be in order once normalcy is restored.

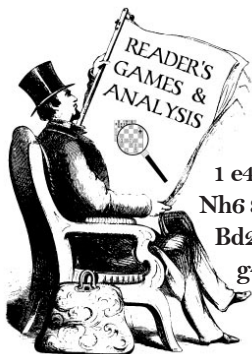
Several notes informed about the particular style of chess pieces I mentioned. They were called Windsor Castle sets, and here on the facing page is an advertisement from a 1955 issue of *Chess Life* magazine. Apparently these sets were ubiquitous at chess clubs nationwide in the 1950s-1960s. Strangely, they have nearly all disappeared without a trace and a good quality one is a valued collector's item nowadays. House of Staunton even makes a reproduction model. (www.houseofstaunton.com/the-windsor-castle-series-chess-pieces-4-king.html) Given the evident reader interest, let me invite others to send me your reminiscences of the old Richmond Chess Club. If enough interesting material comes in, I will collect into a feature article. We remain hopeful that more information will turn up regarding the fate of the club's equipment cache.



Virginia Scholastic and College Chess Championships for Schoology 2020-21

Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under normal conditions this is an annual over-the-board tournament held in early March. The COVID-19 pandemic, and its impacts on schools across the Commonwealth, makes this format impractical in the current schoology year. To crown state champions the VA Chess Federation (VCF) will organize the events as described below. See (and download) details and the full set of rules at www.vachess.org
--- Players in Grades Pre-K through High School ---	
Virginia Grade School Championship Series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The championship series has 3 Grade School Qualification Tournaments (GSQTs) and a State Scholastic Invitational Tournament (SSIT). The GSQTs are "open" events, the SSIT is an "invitational" tournament. The GSQTs will be held online in January, February and March of 2021. The SSIT will be held online in April or May. The VCF reserves the right to organize the SSIT as an over-the-board event should conditions allow that to occur. A decision will be made by the end of February.
Tell me about the GSQTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players compete in up to 3 GSQTs to qualify for a position in the State Scholastic Invitational Tournament (SSIT) and to earn team points for their schools. Players can play in 1, 2, or all 3 GSQTs. <i>The GSQT Dates</i> (all in early 2021) are: <i>January 9-10, February 27-28, and March 20-21.</i> Each GSQT will have 4 sections—K3, K5, K8 and K12. Play is 5 rounds scheduled over 2 days. Each GSQT will qualify up to 10 players per Section for the SSIT. Players already qualified for the SSIT do not "block" other players from qualifying. The GSQTs will use a chess service such as Chess.com, ICC, LiChess, etc. Players need to be familiar with how to use a computer or tablet for online play. Registration will be online at www.vachess.org
Who can Play in the GSQTs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players in grades pre-K through High School who are enrolled in school in Virginia Virginia residents who are attending grade school in an adjacent state or Washington, DC Only Virginia-based schools may earn team points
Tell me about the State Invitational Tournament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SSIT is the "state championships." It will be a 2-day, 5-round invitational online or over-the-board tournament <i>in April or May</i>. It is not an "open" tournament, you must qualify to play. Play will be in 4 sections—K3, K5, K8 and K12, with up to 40 players in each of the 4 sections. The VCF will identify those 40 players as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Up to 30 players qualify per section for the SSIT based on their performances in the GSQTs. Each GSQT can qualify up to 10 players per section (see "Tell me about the GSQTs"). ✓ The VCF will invite up to 10 players per Section based on the Top 10 player ratings by Section in the December 2020 US Chess Rating Supplement. "Invited" players are not required to play in the GSQTs, but the only way to earn Team Points for their schools is by playing in the GSQTs.
Why Should I Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To earn Team Points for your school To try and qualify for the State Scholastic Invitational Tournament
Individual and Team Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each GSQTs will award individual place trophies based on the number players in each Section. After the 3 GSQTs are done, the VCF will award Team Trophies to schools based on the 4 players from each school who scored the most Grand Prix Points in each GSQT. Only a school's top 4-scoring players' points can count toward that school's Team Points. Maximize your school's points by playing in all 3 GSQTs!!
--- College Players ---	
What Events will there be for College Players?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VCF will hold a College Championship online on Saturday, March 6, 2021. It will be a 4-round event. The VCF would also like to organize a 1-day, 4-round College Tournament between the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters in the window December 19th to January 10th—the "Battle Between the Semesters." Registration for both tournaments will be online at www.vachess.org Both events will use a chess service such as Chess.com, ICC, LiChess, etc. Players need to be familiar with how to use a computer or tablet for online play.
Who Can Play?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any student attending college full-time in Virginia. A Virginia resident attending college out-of-state. Only Virginia-based schools are eligible for the Team Awards.
Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash and individual trophies, team trophies. No team trophies at the "between-the-semesters" event.
<p><i>The VCF will employ vigorous Fair Play methods to detect cheating ...</i> <i>Anyone who cheats should expect the VCF to file a claim with the US Chess Federation.</i></p>	





Bill Simmons - Geoff McKenna DC Chess League online 2020 French

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 Qb6 5 Nf3 Bd7 6 Na3 cxd4 7 cxd4
Nh6 8 Be2 Nc6 9 Nc2 Be7 10 O-O Nf5 11 a3 Na5 12 Rb1 Rc8 13
Bd2 Ba4 14 Bc3 O-O 15 Bd3 Bb5 16 h3 Bxd3 17 Qxd3 Nc4 18
g4 Nh4 19 Nxh4 Bxh4 20 Bb4 Rfe8 21 b3 Na5 22 Bc5 Rxc5
23 dxc5 Qxc5 24 b4 Qc4 25 Rfd1 Qxd3 26 Rxd3 Nc6 27
f4 g5 28 b5 Na5 29 Rf1 Nc4 30 Ne3 Nxe3 31 Rxe3 gxf4 32
Ref3 f6 33 exf6 e5 34 Rc1 Bxf6 35 Rc7 e4 36 Rxf4 Be5 37
Rff7 Bxc7 38 Rxc7 d4 39 Rd7 d3 40 Kf2 e3+ 41 Ke1 d2+ 42 Ke2 h6

(diagram) 43 Rxb7?

Hastens the end, although White is lost in any case because he will run out of moves. The king cannot move lest the e-pawn barrel though, the rook cannot leave the d-file as shown in the game, pawn moves are limited, and if the rook leaves the 7th rank then Black's king advances. The "main line" is a matter of taste, but here is a plausible finish that illustrates the dilemma: 43 h4 creates as solid a barrier against Black's king as possible

43 ... Kf8 44 Rd6 (44 g5 hxg5 45 hxg5 now Black can win simply enough by just 45 ... Re7) 44 ... Kf7 45 Rd4 Kf6 46 a4 b6 zugzwang 47 Rd5 Re4 48 Rd7 Ke6 49 Rd8 Ke5 50 g5 (50 Re8+ Kf4 51 Rxe4+ Kxe4 52 g5 hxg5 53 h5 Kf5 doesn't work either) 50 ... hxg5 51 hxg5 Kf5 52 Rd5+ Kg6 zugzwang again

43...Rd8 0-1

NN – Macon Shibus Blitz 2020 King's Indian



So this is what it has come to—publishing anonymous online blitz games. Oh well, strange times... 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 d6 3 Nc3 g6 4 e4 Bg7 5 f3 a6 6 Be3 Nc6 7 Nge2 Rb8 8 g4 b5 9 Ng3 bxc4 10 Bxc4 e5 11 d5 Nd4 12 b3 O-O 13 h3 Nd7 14 O-O Qh4 15 Kg2 f5 16 exf5 gxf5 17 Bxd4? [...f4 was a threat and Black's knight was indeed a beast but with literally every White pawn having abandoned the dark squares, trading off the dark square bishop as well is not recommended.] 17...exd4 18 Nce2 Ne5 19 Nxd4 fxe4 20 fxe4 Bxe4 21 hxg4 Nxe4 22 Rh1 [After 22 Rxf8+ Rxf8 23 Ndf5 Qh2+ 24 Kf3 finding the knockout might have been annoying in blitz. The most direct way is 24...Qh3 defending the knight and threatening ...Rxf5, eg 25 Bd3 Bxa1 26 Qxa1 Ne5+ 27 Ke3 Rxf5 28 Bxf5 Qxg3+ etc] 22...Ne3+ 0-1

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