British Endgame Study News

Contents of this issue

by Paul Michelet
White to play and win

This issue. A very sad item to start with: Ken Whyld died on July 11. He was 77, but neither looked nor acted it. The chorus of tribute has been remarkable, and I have added my mite inside. There are two more obituaries on the back page, which might have received greater prominence at a more ordinary time.

Ken was a historian of the present day; our job is to provide material for the historians of the future. I am sure they will regard the advent of "Wilhelm" as having been a significant step forward (see pages 244-5), and they may also be interested in our special number, which gives some compositions by one of the most skilful exponents of the contemporary "romantic" endgame study. And Paul Michelet adds an interesting tailpiece to the "Saavedra" saga (see March 2002). I published the position above in the July *BCM*; try it before looking inside.

Printing of special number 32. I am now using a different printing service, and I have had special number 32 reprinted (the original pages 3/6 were badly on the slant). Readers will find the reprint enclosed. My apologies to those who have already had their copies bound.

Spotlight. Alain Villeneuve points out that Richard Guy's study **1** in special number 35 was a development of a 1922 study by Kubbel (**1** in Timothy Whitworth's collection). Everything on the left-hand side of the board was Kubbel's; Richard added the h-pawns, thereby presenting the solver with a couple of amusing little technical problems (assuming that he hasn't read Volume 2 of Alain's *Les finales*).

From Jarl Henning Ulrichsen, about study **12** in the same number: "You wonder if R. Hutton is British. No, he is - or rather was - not. If you have got Caputto´s «El Arte del Estudio de Ajedrez; vol. 2 Argentina», you will find a presentation on page 171. His full name was Ricardo Ramón Gil Hutton. He was born in 1930 and died in 1984. The study that you reprint seems to be the only study that Hutton ever published, but Caputto also includes two unpublished studies in his presentation." So the study was indeed a stowaway, but I do not begrudge it its place.

Ken Whyld

Oh dear. To quote Brian Stephenson, he was so young at heart and enthusiastic. There is an extensive tribute in the August *BCM*, and more can be found on its web site (www.bcmchess.co.uk); rarely have I seen such an immediate chorus of praise. As regards our own field, Ken was not an endgame specialist in the way that David Hooper was and I don't think he composed a study himself, but he took a sensitive interest in delicate endgame play and I first met him when he came to one of John Roycroft's quarterly meetings. He was a true chess all-rounder, someone to whom the game offered far more than an answer to the arid question of whether *A* was better than *B*, and he regarded the endgame study as just one more of its myriad delights.

"Knowledgeable", "generous", and "helpful" are the words which obituarists seem to be using most, and I wholeheartily endorse them. Sometimes it was a response to an enquiry, prompt and often going far beyond a mere answer to the question put; sometimes an unsolicited package out of the blue, either something on which he had been working or a trifle which he had spotted and thought would be of interest. I tried to return his kindness by keeping my eyes open and sending him things whenever I could, but he did far more for me than I could ever hope to do for him.

He leaves a vast gap. I find myself wanting to ask him something, and I can't. I finish writing an article with historical overtones and flatter myself that he will enjoy reading it, and he won't. Our deepest sympathy to Pat, and to his family.

Recently published British originals
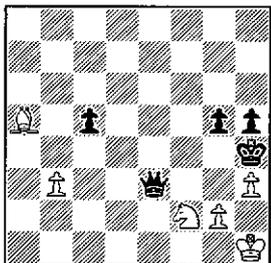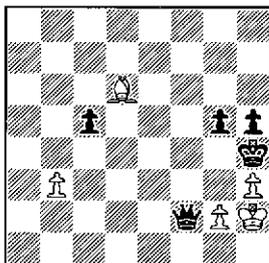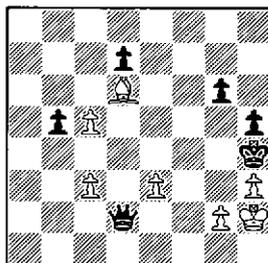
1 - win   1a - after 3 Bd6   2 - win

Well, how did you get on with Paul Michelet's front-page study? It was inspired by **1**, the Cordes study which played a key role in John Roycroft's exposure of Porterfield Rynd's "Saavedra" plagiarism (see March 2002, pp 193 and 196-7). **1 Bc7 Qe1+ 2 Kh2 Qxf2 3 Bd6** gives **1a**, and now we have **3...Qe2 4 Bg3 mate**, or **3...Qe1 4 g3 mate**, or **3...Qf4+ 4 g3+!** (4 Bxf4 only draws) **Qxg3+ 5 Bxg3 mate**.

In Paul's position **2**, the bishop is already on d6, but the necessary start **1 Be7+ g5** takes it away; how can we get it back? An immediate 2 Bd6 allows 2...Qxd6+! 3 cxd6 g4, after which Black's king will get at White's d/e pawns and he will draw.
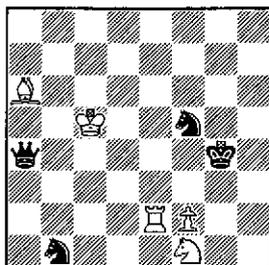
Correct is **2 Bd8!** aiming for c7. Black has nothing better than **2...Qxe3** (if instead 2...d6 then 3 Bc7 Qxe3 4 Bxd6 g4 5 g3+ Kg5 6 Bf4+ etc), and **3 Bc7 Qf2 4 Bd6** gets us where we want to be: **4...Qf4+ 5 g3+** (this time Bxf4 actually loses) **Qxg3+ 6 Bxg3 mate**. It's a delightful little roundabout, typical of its composer.
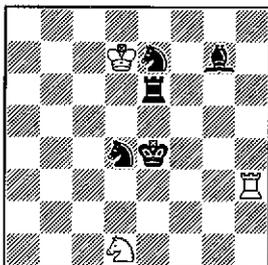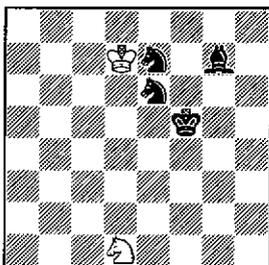

3 - draw   3a - after 2...Nxe6   4 - draw

Paul apart, it has again been left to Mike Bent to fly our flag, and here are three typical stalemates from *diagrammes*. **3**, from the January-June 2001 double number, was missed in my earlier trawls. **1 Re3+ Kf5** (1...Kd5 2 Nc3+ etc) **2 Rxe6 Nxe6** gives **3a**, and 3 Kxe7 seems to draw offhand - no, 3...Bd4! and Black has a B+N v N win (4 Kd6 Nf4 5 Kc6 Ke4 6 Kb5 Kd3 7 Kb4 Kc2 8 Kc4 Ne2). Correct is **3 Ne3+ Kf6** (now Kxe7 would indeed draw) **4 Ng4+ Kf7 5 Ne5+**, and Black can avoid repetition or loss of a knight only by **5...Bxe5** giving stalemate.

4 (October-December 2001) starts easily enough, **1 Re4+ Qxe4 2 f3+**, but after **2...Kxf3** the knight on b1 stops a fork; have we made progress? Yes, we have: **3 Nd2+ Nxd2 4 Bb7!** (see **4a**) and **4...Qxb7** is stalemate (if 4...Nb3+ then 5 Kb6).
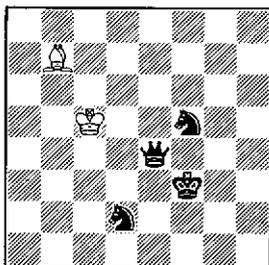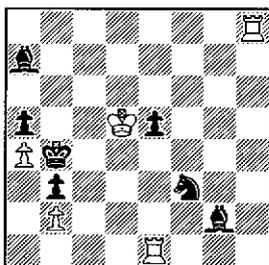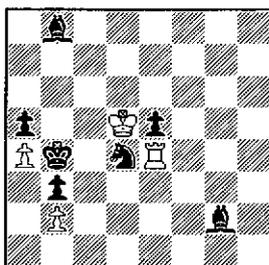
4a - after 4 Bb7   5 - draw   5a - 2...Nd4 stalemate!

In **5** (July-September 2002), White has no fewer than 29 legal moves; how quickly can we deprive him of them all? Very quickly indeed: **1 Rb8+ Bxb8 2 Re4+ Nd4!** (see **5a**). This is the sort of study whose very *brevity* seems to be a merit.

I trawl the obvious sources for this column, but I do not see everything that appears in print, and I am always grateful when composers and their friends bring relevant material to my attention. - JDB

Wilhelm: database mining made easier

The February issue of *Československý šach* carried the latest in a series of endgame database articles by Emil Vlasák. In it, he drew attention to the database interrogation facilities offered by Rafael Andrist's chess program Wilhelm.

It was realised while the first endgame databases were being produced that they could be mined for interesting positions, and Ken Thompson facilitated this by putting access routines written in the computer programming language "C" on his five-man CD-ROMs. I am told that equivalent routines are available for the Nalimov tablebases, though I do not personally possess them. But such routines are of use only to people willing to write their own programs, and the facilities available to the non-program-writing public have normally been limited to statements of the longest wins, lists of reciprocal zugzwangs, and a position-by-position enquiry service.

Wilhelm offers rather more. It allows the user to search a Nalimov tablebase for positions of various kinds, including those in which there is only one winning move, and to restrict this winning move in various ways.

For a first trial, I asked it to search the tablebase for B+N v N for positions in which the only winning move was Bg2-h1. I excluded captures and also moves in which the bishop was retreating from attack, and to reduce duplicates I specified that the White king was to be on or below the long diagonal. It gave me 14 positions, but examination showed that these included five pairs of duplicates with the White king on the long diagonal and the remaining men reflected about it. Removal of one position from each pair brought the total down to 9.
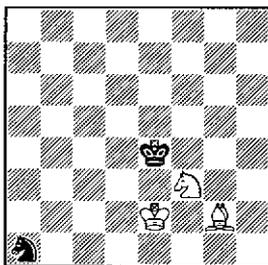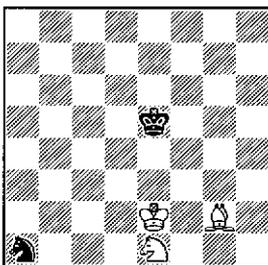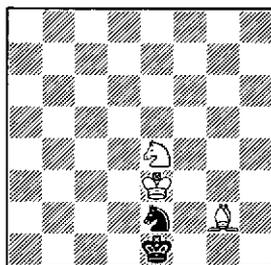

1   1a   2

1 is straightforward. White plays **1 Bh1** waiting, and the knight soon falls: **1...Kf4** (1...Kd5 2 Kd3 etc) **2 Nd4 Ke5** (2...Kg3 3 Kd3 Kh2 delays the eventual capture by one move but does nothing to prevent it) **3 Kd3 Kd6 4 Kc3 Kc5 5 Ne2** and **6-7 Kxa1**. **1a** provides a simple context: **1 Nf3+** (I thought 1 Kd3 Nb3 2 Kc4 would cook, since 2...Nd4 can be met by 3 Nd3+, but 2...Nd2+/Nc1 hold the draw) **Ke4** (1...Kd5 2 Kd3, 1...Kd6 2 Nd4 Kc5 3 Kd3 Kb4 4 Bd5) **2 Bh1!**
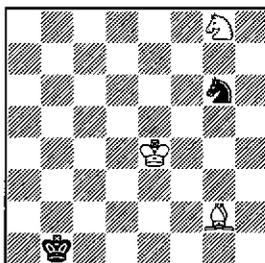
In **2**, **1 Bh1** and the knight falls at move 33. This is merely routine (well, routine to a computer), but why do Bf3/Bh3 not work at least as well? Because they let the knight out: 1 Bf3 Ng3! and 2 Nxg3 is stalemate, 1 Bh3 Nc3! similarly.
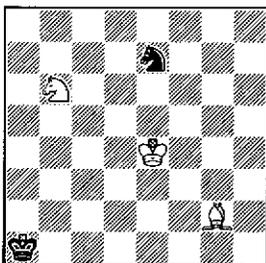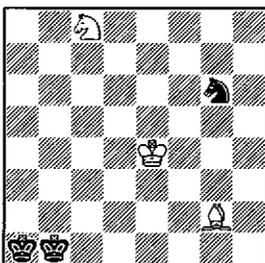
3	4/5	6

In **3**, **1 Bh1** and the knight falls at move 52. If you understand this, you are a better man than I am, but the optimal line starts **1...Nc6 2 Kd3 Nb4+ 3 Kc3 Na2+ 4 Kb3 Nc1+ 5 Ka3** and if White plays 1 Bf3 Black can meet 1...Nc6 2 Kd3 by 2...Ne5+.
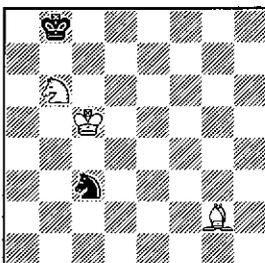
In **4/5/6/7**, **1 Bh1** and the knight falls at move 21/31/22/13 respectively. In these positions, it is perhaps easier to accept that the bishop should stay on the long diagonal and that White can reasonably invest a move in getting it out of range of Black's knight.
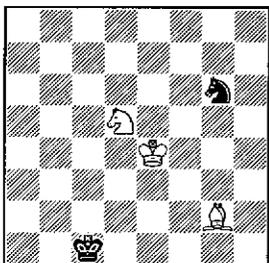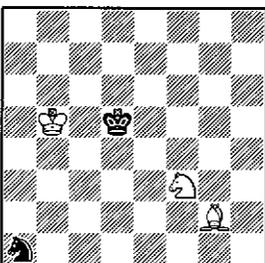

7	8	9

8 is even simpler than **1**, because there is no spite delaying attack on the bishop: **1 Bh1** and the knight falls at move 7. This, like **1**, might perhaps be made the climax of a study - or do you prefer just to admire it as a position in its own right?

But the star of the show has to be **9**, where the long diagonal is completely empty. **1 Bh1** kills the knight at move 31, but why not play the apparently more natural move 1 Bc6? The refutation is 1...Ne2 2 Nd5 Kc8, and if Black tries this after 1 Bh1 White can play 3 Bf3. All right, why not 1 Bf3, which seems stronger still? The answer is 1...Kc7, which is reciprocal zugzwang; if White plays 1 Bh1, he can meet 1...Kc7 by 2 Bf3 and win.

I suspect that this is only a taste of the beauties that await discovery using Wilhelm. It can be downloaded free of charge from http://www.geocities.com/rba_schach2000/, and Emil's bilingual news file http://web.quick.cz/EVCOMP/evcnews.htm will no doubt continue to report developments. In particular, it appears that Wilhelm also operates on 6-man tablebases, so we shall be able to mine these in the same way as they become available.
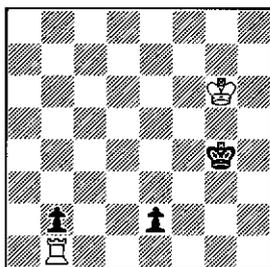
From the world at large

David Gurgenidze recently sent me a copy of his 2002 book *Etyud i teoreticheskiy endshpil* ("The study and theoretical endgame play"), and I am finding it fascinating reading. We think of David as a composer of "artistic" studies, which he undoubtedly is, but he shares his late compatriot Iosif Krikheli's interest in endgame theory and in the ability of studies to probe and embellish unexpected corners thereof.
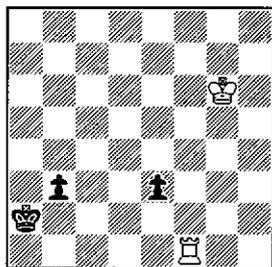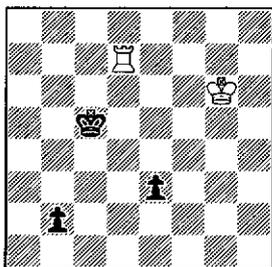

|		
1 - draw	**1a** - 1 Rf7, after 5 Kc5	**1b** - main line, 9...Kg4

1 is a version of a study commended in the 1994 Serov centenary tourney (1 am relying on Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database 2000" for source details). 1 Kf5 is met by 1...b2 2 Ke4 e2, so we must check from the top, and the rook must go all the way to f8: 1 Rf7 b2 2 Ra7+ Kb3 3 Rb7+ Kc3 4 Rc7+ Kd4 5 Rd7+ Kc5! (see **1a**) 6 Rd1 (6 Rc7+ Kd6) e2 7 Rb1 Kd4 8 Kf5 Kd3 9 Kf4 Kc2 and Black wins. Hence **1 Rf8**, and if Black still goes for the rook he will get back one move too late. So he hides on the g-file: **1...b2 2 Ra8+ Kb3 3 Rb8+ Kc3 4 Rc8+ Kd3 5 Rd8+ Ke4 6 Re8+ Kf3 7 Rf8+**, and **7...Kg3** is marginally best (7...Kg4 makes things easier since ...Kg4 is not available at move 9, and 7...Kg2 allows 8 Rb8 e2 9 Rxb2 and the pawn is pinned). There follows **8 Rf1 e2 9 Rb1 Kg4**, and we have **1b**.
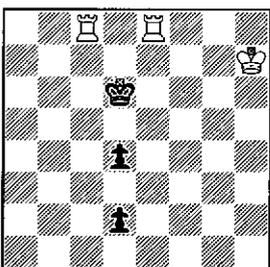
Now comes the climax of the study: **10 Kh6!!** Not 10 Kf6, when play continues 10...Kf4 11 Kg6 Ke4 12 Kg5 Kd3 13 Kf4 Kc2 and again the White king is one move too late. But after 10 Kh6 White can meet **10...Kf4** with **11 Kh5** instead of Kg6, and his king is one rank closer to the e-pawn: **11...Ke3 12 Kg4 Kd3 13 Kf3** and draws.
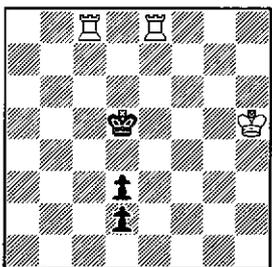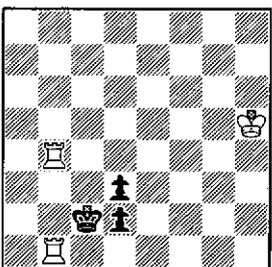

|		
2 - win	**2a** - 1...Rcd8+, after 6 Reb4	**3** - win

- 246 -

2-5 are in a chapter "The paradox of doubled pawns". In **2** (4 Pr Réti Memorial 1979), try 1 Rcd8+ Kc4 2 Re4+ Kc3 3 Rc8+ Kb3 (3...Kb2 4 Rb4+ etc) 4 Rb8+ Kc3 5 Rb1 Kc2 6 Reb4 (see **2a**): no, 6...d1Q+ is check. So it's the other rook: **1 Red8+ Ke4 2 Rc4+ Ke3 3 Re8+ Kf3 4 Rf8+ Ke3 5 Rf1 Ke2 6 Rcf4 d1Q 7 R4f2+** etc.

The correct choice in **3** (1 HM Mongolian Theme Ty 1980) is harder to find. Try 1 Red8+ Ke5 2 Rc5+ Ke4 3 Rc7 (going for mate) d1Q 4 Re7+ Kf5 (4...Kd3? 5 Rxd4+ and 6 Rd8+) 5 Rf8+ Kg5 6 Rg7+ Kh5 (see **3a**) 7 Rh8 intending 8 Kg8+: no, 7...Qb3 holds the draw. But the c-rook offers another option: **1 Rcd8+ Kc5 2 Re5+ Kc4 3 Rc8+! Kd3** (3...Kb4 4 Re7 and 5 Rb7+) **4 Rd5! Ke4** (4...d1Q 5 Rxd4+) **5 Rd7!** (now the rooks can clamber across on the light squares) **d1Q 6 Re8+ Kf5 7 Rf7+ Kg5 8 Rg8+ Kh5**. This gives **3a** with the rooks on f7/g8, and **9 Kh8** is unanswerable.
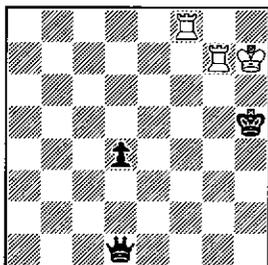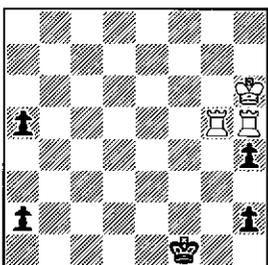

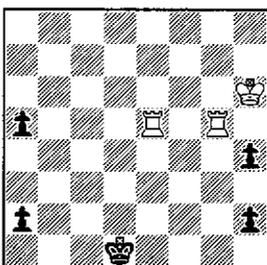**3a** - 1 Red8+, after 6...Kh5
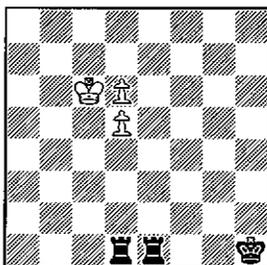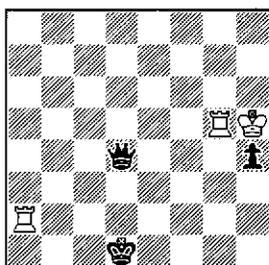

4 - draw
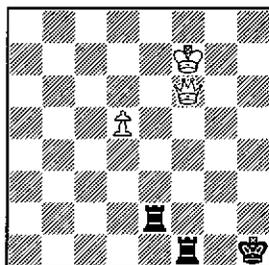
4a - 1...Rc1+, after 6 Qf6

In **4** (3 HM Fritz Jubilee 1983) the queen can do better: **1 d7 Rc1+ 2 Kd6 Red1 3 Ke6!** (3 Ke5 Rc2! 4 d8Q Re2+ 5 Kf4 Rf1+ 6 Kg3 Rg2+ 7 Kh3 Rf7) **Rc2 4 d8Q Re2+ 5 Kf7! Rf1+ 6 Qf6!** (see **4a**), or **1...Re2 2 d8Q Rc2+ 3 Kb7 Rb1+ 4 Qb6**.

5 -

5a - after 12...Kd1

5b - after 17...Qd4

5 (with V. Kalandadze, 1 Pr *Tidskrift för Schack* 1975) is artificial, but instructive. **1 Rf5+ Ke1/2 2 Re5+ Kd1/2** (2...Kf1/2 3 Rhf5+ etc) and across to **4 Rc5+ Kb1/2 5 Rb5+ Kc1/2**, then **6 Rgc5+ Kd1** (6...Kd2 7 Rb2+) **7 Rd5+** and back to **10 Rg5+ Kf1**, then **11 Rbf5+ Ke1 12 Re5+ Kd1** (see **5a**). *Now* (!!) we can play **13 Rxa5**. There follows **13...h1Q 14 Rxa2 Qc6+ 15 Rg6 Qc1+ 16 Kh5 Qc5+ 17 Rg5 Qd4** (see **5b**) **18 Rg1+ Qxg1 19 Ra1+**, but not 16 Kh7 when 19...Kf2 20 Rh1 Kg3 will draw.

As David says, are doubled pawns a strength or a weakness?

News and notices

Meetings. The next *EG* readers' meeting will be at 17 New Way Road, London NW9 6PL, on **Friday October 3** at 6.00 pm; non-subscribers welcome, but please bring £5 towards the buffet (except on a first visit). Bring the latest *EG* with you!

Obituaries (see also page 242). The eminent psychologist **P. C. Wason** died in April. He was a general chess enthusiast rather than a composer, but he produced several studies in the 1950s and 1960s. One was quoted in our special number 32.

It's not a British item, but I must also mention the passing of the massively talented **Milan Vukcevich**. We all have our heroes, and he was one of mine; I was very struck by two compositions in *The Problemist* in the early 1970s (a richly elegant three-mover using unorthodox pieces and an endgame study), and I have looked out for his name ever since. Few composers have had so wide a range. I was just about to quote the study when I realised that Adam Sobey had done so in special number 26.

50-move endgame tables. Guy Haworth tells me that "courtesy of code by Marc Bourzutschky, evolving Eugene Nalimov's code", John Tamplin ("99.9%") and he ("0.01%") have created complete sets of five-man endgame tables using DTC (depth to capture or promotion), DTZ (depth to capture or pawn move), and DTZ50 (ditto assuming a 50-move draw rule). He cites a web site http://chess.jaet.org/cgi-bin/dtx, but I have yet to investigate it. I also recently came into possession of two sets of the original **Roycroft-Thompson Q+P v Q booklets**. It might seem that these have been completely superseded by the Thompson and Nalimov CD-ROMs, but they count moves to pawn advance, and readers interested in the detail may wish to compare their optimal moves with those of the now customary "depth to mate" databases. They may be had from me on request.

Tourneys. My announcement of forthcoming tourneys is unashamedly patchy (I assume that readers who are serious tourney competitors will also subscribe to *EG* and will see the announcements in the accompanying *Infoblatt*), but we have a little space in hand and I can give notice of a tourney to celebrate the 50th birthday of Amatzia Avni. No set theme; first prize of US $300, and four additional book prizes; "solutions should be detailed, with sidelines and preferably an explanatory text" (which every composer will applaud who has had an entry discarded or downgraded because the judge did not see the point, but I wonder how the neutralizer will cope with translation and standardization of textual style). Judge Amatzia Avni; send entries to Gady Costeff, 178 Andover Street, San Francisco, CA 94110, U.S.A., costeff@yahoo.com, to arrive by **31 August 2004**.

Anybody wishing to give notice in BESN of any event, product, or service should contact the Editor. There is no charge and no account is taken of whether the activity is being pursued for commercial profit, but notices are printed only if they seem likely to be of particular interest to study enthusiasts. Readers are asked to note that the Editor relies wholly on the representations of the notice giver (except where he makes a personal endorsement) and that no personal liability is accepted either by him or by any other person involved in the production and distribution of this magazine.