

Prizewinners explained

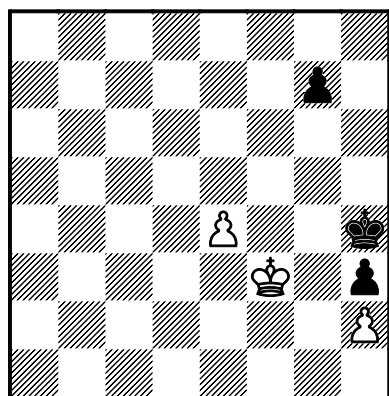
STILL MARCHING ON

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For decades it seemed that the Russian grand maestro of the pawn endings, **N.D. Grigoryev**, had showed us all about pawn endings. I have regularly used many of his fine creations to explain the basics and more complex motives to my chess pupils and they appreciated them for their clarity and purity. We had to wait quite a long time until the Ukrainian wizard **Mikhail Zinar** opened our eyes to new horizons in an endless series of shining masterpieces. And then, all of a sudden, Zinar's poetry ceased too and even the personal fate of this legendary composer remained mysterious and worrisome for some years. The pawn ending seemed to have sunk into a long and lasting sleep again. However, good and old genres never die and in recent years more and more composers have shown an increasing interest in discovering new ideas and combining old ones with and without the help of legitimate computer utilities. I have witnessed this positive trend in the steady stream of pawn endings which I receive for publication in my column in *The Problemist*. One of the persons to thank for this revival is the Frenchman **Alain Pallier**. Here is one of his more surprising recent discoveries:

A.1 A. Pallier

4th prize Husak MT 2006



f3h4 0000.22 3/3 Win

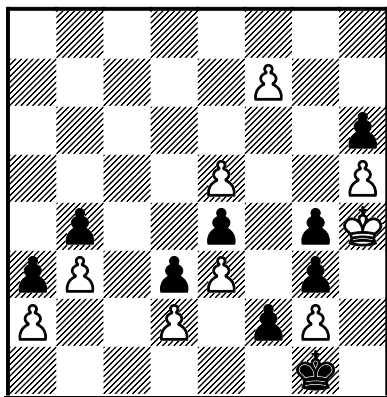
In this simple looking position of material equality, white still has the edge thanks to his passed pawn and space advantage. First he should block his opponent's route to the center.

1.Kf4 g6! (Typical pawn strategy: No rush! Try to avoid running out of **spare** moves as demonstrated by the alternative: 1...g5+ 2.Kf5 g4 3.Kf4 Kh5 4.e5 Kg6 5.Kxg4 wins) **2.Ke5!!** (The sting! If 2.e5? g5+ 3.Kf5 g4 4.Kf4 Kh5 we have reached the key position of reciprocal zugzwang with White to play (and consequently a draw), while following 4.e6 g3 5.e7 gxh2 6.e8Q h1Q 7.Qe7+ Kg3 8.Qd6+ Kg2 it is draw again) **2...g5** (2...Kg4 3.Kf6 Kf3 4.e5 Kg2 5.e6 Kxh2 6.e7 Kg2 7.e8Q h2 8.Qe4+ wins) **3.Kf5!! g4 4.Kf4** (An exemplary triangulation manoeuvre has cleverly lost a tempo and passed the move to the other player so after 4...Kh5 5.e5 it is again the same reciprocal zugzwang key position yet this time it is Black to play!) **g3 5.hxg3+ Kh5 6.Kf3 Kg5 7.Kf2! Kg4 8.Kg1! wins.**

Mikhail Zinar was happily rediscovered last year and his memorable life story was masterfully told here by his countrymen Sergey Tkachenko and Sergiy Didukh (EG 173) He hasn't yet made a full comeback as a composer but acted as the judge of a theme tourney which was organized by the highly attractive magazine *The Ukrainian Problemist* and dedicated to ... you guessed correctly, pawn endings. The event proved considerably successful with 109 entries of 32 composers from 15 countries. Especially successful was Ukraine's mega-star **Sergiy Didukh** with 2 prizes and an honourable mention. He managed to meet the judge's special affection for pawn endings that display various or consecutive underpromotions and the more the better!

A.2 S. Didukh

1st-2nd prize *The Ukrainian Problemist*, 2008



White wins

The diagrammed position is already special with all 16 pawns wisely used. The composer extended a known position and created a multiphase study that synthesizes, on one chess board, three different underpromotions, starting from the kingside and ending up on the queenside. The solution however needs not too many comments:

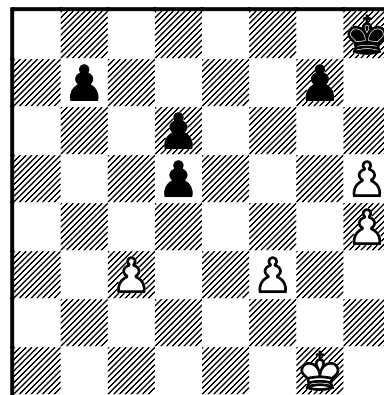
1.f8R! (1.f8Q? Kh2! and next 2...f1Q! 3.Qxf1 stalemate!) **1...f1Q 2.Rxf1+ Kxf1 3.Kxg3 Ke2 4.e6 Kxd2 5.e7 Kxe3 6.e8R!** (6.e8Q? d2 7.Qd7 d1Q! 8.Qxd1 and another stalemate!) **6...d2 7.Rd8 Ke2 8.Kxg4 d1Q 9.Rxd1 Kxd1 10.Kf4 Kc2 11.Kxe4 Kb2 12.Kd3 Kxa2 13.Kc2 Ka1 14.g4 Ka2 15.g5 hxc5 16.h6 g4 17.h7 g3 18.h8B!** (18.h8Q? g2 19.Qg7 g1Q 20.Qxg1 and a third stalemate) **18...g2 19.Bd4** wins.

Didukh also shared the third prize with the Russian **Nikolay Ryabinin** who managed to insert in a pawn ending his most favourite logical contents: selecting a correct plan based on a slight detail which makes the only yet the

whole difference between the long thematic try and the actual equally lengthy solution.

A.3 N. Ryabinin

3rd-4th prize *The Ukrainian Problemist*, 2008



Draw

The thematic try is the most natural and direct attempt: 1.Kf2? seems to work perfectly following 1...Kh7 2.Ke3 Kh6 3.Kd4 Kxh5 4.Kxd5 Kxh4 5.Kxd6 Kg3 6.Kc7 Kxf3 7.Kxb7 Ke4 8.Kc6!! (not 8.c4 Kd4 9.Kc6 Kxc4 wins) 8...g5 9.c4 g4 10.c5 g3 11.Kb7 g2 12.c6 g1Q 13.c7 with the desired draw, however black has a much more forceful continuation at his disposal: 1...d4! 2.c4 Kh7 3.Ke2 Kh6 4.Kd3 Kxh5 5.Kxd4 Kxh4 6.Kd5 Kg3 7.Kxd6 Kxf3 8.Kc7 Ke4 9.Kxb7 Kd4 10. Kc6 Kxc4 11.Kd6 Kd4 12.Ke6 Ke4 and wins. This final position should give the crucial clue to the right way. **1.h6!!** What is the difference? If you haven't found yet go patiently along the very same route: **1...g6 2.Kf2 d4! 3.c4! Kh7 4.Ke2 Kxh6 5.Kd3 Kh5 6.Kxd4 Kxh4 7.Kd5 Kg3 8.Kxd6 Kxf3 9.Kc7 Ke4 10.Kxb7 Kd4 11.Kc6 Kxc4 12.Kd6 Kd4 13.Ke6 Ke4** here it is! **14.Kf6 Draw!** Vive la petite difference!