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Different Worlds

DW THE MAGAZINE FOR ADVENTURE ROLE-PLAYERS

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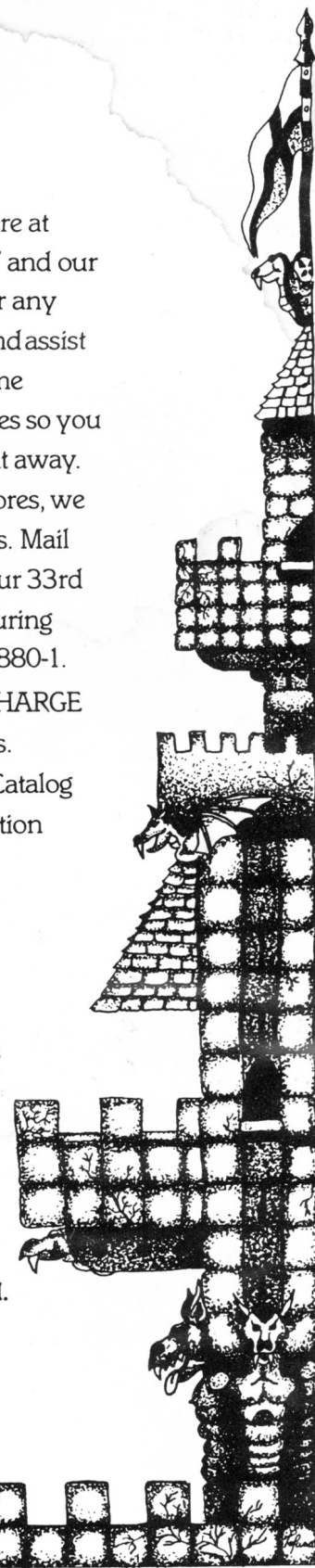
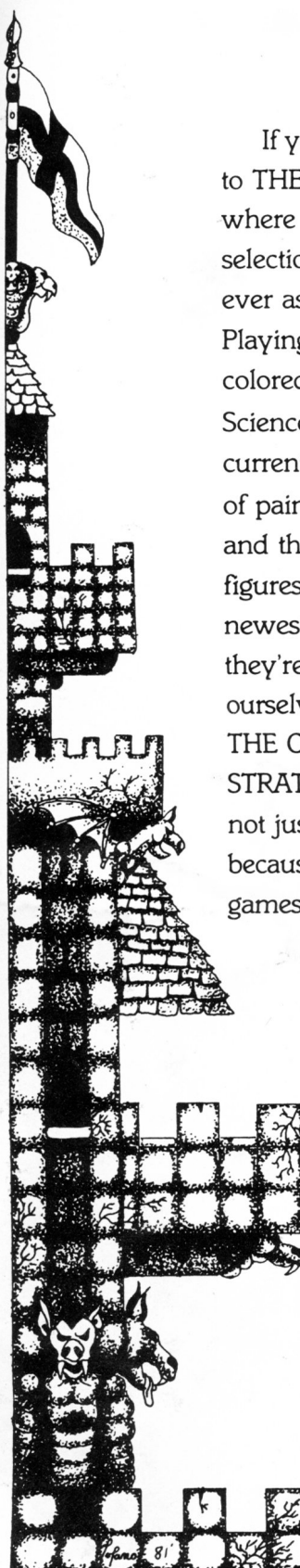
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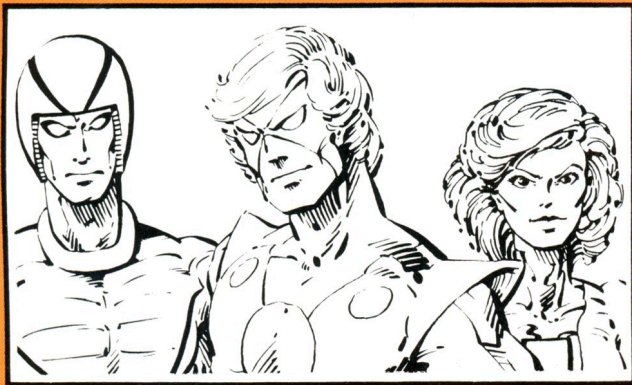
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Different Worlds



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Features

8 SUPERHERO SURVEY

By Steve Perrin

This article is a comprehensive survey, and history, of the field of superhero role-playing games.

9 SUPERHERO 2044

By Donald Saxman

The author advises the reader in the use of the above rules for one night play. A series of notes are also enclosed as a supplement to the *Superhero 2044* rules.

11 HENDREX ISLAND

By Donald Saxman

In this *Superhero 2044* scenario the player-characters (provided if needed) take on the nefarious Dr Ruby in his Hendrex Island stronghold.

14 VILLAINS AND VIGILANTES

By Jeff Dee

The designer discusses the changes that have taken place between the first and second edition *V and V* rules.



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By Jay and Aimee Hartlove

Besides discussing the evolution of this game, the authors provide *Supergame* statistics for a number of well-known superheroes.

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By Steve Peterson

Champions rules have been revised for the new boxed format. Read all about the changes and the reasons behind them.

22 ROLE-PLAYING THE X-MEN

By Glenn Thain

Now you can play the X-Men in your next *Champions* game. The six most current X-Men are given full *Champions* statistics, with abilities and disabilities.

Editorial

This special superhero issue is a survey of all the superhero role-playing games published to date. Each game is represented by either an article or a review. By cooperating with

Gamescience (*Superhero 2044*), Fantasy Games Unlimited (*Villains and Vigilantes*), Jon and Aimee Hartlove (*Supergame*), Hero Games (*Champions*), and Chaosium (*Super-*

world) we are able to present you with designers' notes for all five of the ground-breakers in the superhero field. Most of the above companies also provided us with sce-

narios or adaptations of well-known comic book superheroes, and the villains to fight them. We would like to thank everyone concerned.

To make a thorough superhero presentation,

and maintain previous space commitments, we expanded this issue by eight pages. The added articles and new columns should make it worth the extra 25¢.

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28 TERRAFORMING PART II

By Doug Houseman

In the future, it is very likely that man will sometimes create favorable environments for himself on previously uninhabitable worlds. Written for the SF RPG *Traveller*, this is part two describing the earth forming process.

34 SUPERWORLD DESIGNER'S NOTES

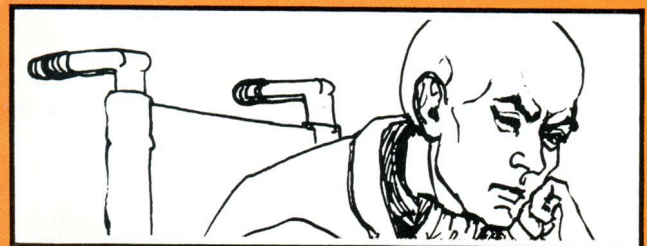
By Steve Perrin

This article talks about the creation of *Superworld* and the changes that the author has made since the rules have been published as part of *Worlds of Wonder*. A full errata with the changes is provided.

37 THE X-MEN CHARACTER CREATION

By Steve Perrin and Karl Maurer

Wouldn't you rather play Wolverine or Storm when you next face Doctor Dread? Well, Doctor Dread may call on Magneto himself when he meets you next. Seven current X-Men, along with Magneto, are provided with full *Superworld* statistics for your use.



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Artists

FRONT COVER: By William Thomas Willingham, the cover depicts the current X-Men on their way to work. The X-Men, one of the most popular superhero teams in comics, are copyright © 1982 Marvel Comics Group.

INTERIORS: Jeff Dee page 14; Aimee Hartlove pages 16, 17, 18, 19; Paul Jaquays page 41; Alfred Klosterman pages 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33; Luise Perenne pages 9, 12, 34, 36, 37, 38; Mark Williams pages 20, 25, 26.

Two new columns are being introduced this issue. "Adventure By Design," authored by Paul Jaquays, will discuss designing scenarios, producing adventure packs for publi-

cation and refereeing. "Books & Role-Playing" will review interesting fantasy, science fiction, and non-fiction books from a role-playing perspective. The reviewers will look at the books

with an eye for material usable in the readers' campaigns.

Four new movies are also reviewed to accompany "The Sword of Hollywood" column introduced last issue.

In exchange for the new columns, we have decided to discontinue the Notice-Recruiting Board.

We have a special dwarf issue for you next month. The feature article will be the *RuneQuest* Mostali.

stamped self-addressed envelope for all submissions. Remuneration for articles is one cent per word of published matter, and artwork is paid at \$20 per printed page rate (i.e., ¼ page is paid \$5). Color covers are paid \$75.

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STAFF

Tadashi Ehara editor-in-chief, Yurek Chodak managing editor. Lynn Willis, Sandy Petersen, Steve Perrin, Greg Stafford, and John T. Sapienza, Jr., associate editors. Charlie Krank, Gigi D'Arn, contributing editors.

I beg to differ. . .

John Nubbin's cynical review of *Conan* in issue 22 was an example of an unthinking, and non-objective type of writing that should not pollute the pages of *Different Worlds*. Since ... Nubbin has no regards for the facts in the vacuum of his skull, I will present them for the other readers who still have a mind.

The film cost 23 million, not 40 million as wrongly reported.

The film is an original origin story of the making of Conan and how he became who he was. (Something Robert E. Howard and others did not and have not provided).

This is the first in a series of planned films about the life of the Cimmerian. The first film in the series is about the forging of a hero (Conan). Conan must become the essence of the blade. To become a sword, steel is pounded, forged and tortured by fire. I quote the director John Millius: "Man must live this way to understand the riddle of steel. The answer to the riddle is man himself. Conan embodies the concept of creating or forging oneself by confronting resistance."

The film is overflowing with images from Conan stories. Specifically: *Queen of the Black Coast*, *The Thing in the Crypt*, *The Tower of the Elephant*, *A Witch Shall be Born*, *The People of the Black Circle*, and *The Hour of the Dragon*.

The production design was excellent. Great stunts & action. Beautiful and heroic music. A moving and emotional story. An overall fine piece of filmmaking.

It is sad that ... Nubbin is so unfamiliar with good filmmaking, Robert E. Howard, or Conan. The fact is John Nubbin is a product of the Modern Age not the Hyborian.

Scott Burton
San Diego, California

Article Correction

The table of results in my *Clerics vs. Undead* article in *DW* 21 contained several proofreading errors. Although these can be spotted by the alert reader, for the record the correct entry for an L5 cleric vs. an L2 undead is "3/9", and the last four entries on the bottom line should be "3/9 5/11 7/- 9/-".

I liked Mike Romesburg's concept for the illustration that went with my

article, since it gives a good feeling for the creepy menace that a mob of skeletons can be to a lone adventurer. But I take strong exception to the virtual nakedness of the female adventurer in the drawing. Come on, people, would one of your characters run around in a string bikini in a graveyard? A warrior is going to wear the best armor she can afford, and even a thief will dress modestly so as not to draw attention to herself in a crowd. Why is it that artists don't stop to think through the subject matter they are illustrating?

John T. Sapienza, Jr.
Washington, DC

WOW costs \$16 not \$20

In your review section in *DW* 22, you listed *Worlds of Wonder* as being \$20. It actually retails for only \$16.

Tadashi Ehara
Vice President, Chaosium Inc.

Sorry for the unforgivable error. Yurek's position in this company is being re-evaluated.

Tadashi

Trashcan Reply

At first, I was amused by Chris Warack's letter about my *Deities and Demigods* review in *DW* issue 21, then angry. Here are my replies to his points, one by one:

First, "It never pretended to outline religions for *D&D*, only their deities." Now come on, Mr. Warack! Since when do deities exist except to be the objects of worship? Even *DDG* admits this simple fact: otherwise it would be a volume of super-monsters even more blatantly than it already is.

Any GM can retain control over his world while adding bits of culture from our world, but he sacrifices the right to total creativity when he uses those bits from our world. Having a god of ice pre-supposes a culture existing in an area that receives an icy winter; names like "Odin" and "Zeus" pre-suppose certain lingual and cultural patterns. The religions of the pantheons of *DDG* are not "pre-fab", my dear Mr. Warack! They have been around for many centuries and represent accumulations of beliefs, poetry and knowledge almost impossible to simulate in a fantastic world (Tolkien came very close).

Agreed about the alignment system, but does not *DDG* make up an essential part of *D&D*?

Player/deity interaction governed by rules or myths in a controlled or poetic way is fine, but no rules other than multiple warnings not to use the gods listed therein occur in *DDG*. A novice throwing Odin and Zeus at the first player who comes along will find out his mistake soon enough? ... How many "experienced Dungeon Masters" have I met in my life who have not, in their five years experience, slavered at the thought of new "monsters" to throw at the characters in their "dungeon"? The idea that people automatically grow out of bad GMing is a complete myth. ...

"The people at TSR" will never publish a treatise on religion in role-playing; one in *D&D*, perhaps, but not role-playing. *DDG* is restrictively bound to cumbersome *D&D* rules, for good or bad, ...

I do not see why such a volume would be "an enormous work." All that would be necessary in a reasonable volume would be codification of key beliefs, customs, and methods of religion. In the case of (e.g.) the Norse gods, such information is so scanty anyway that fleshing-out might even be necessary. Of course, the reader would be directed elsewhere to read the myths themselves; they *would* take up a disproportionate amount of space.

Mr. Warack's last paragraph is the most disturbing part of his letter. He implies that the gods and heroes of tradition are mere toys which one can "mix'n'match" to one's content. No, Mr. Warack, this is not the case. These deities are inextricably bound to sets of recognized culture-patterns and societies, and loss of these patterns will inevitably result in a shallow campaign.

Patrick Amory
Brookline, Massachusetts

Othergates No. 3

I would like to obtain *Othergates* No. 3 that you reviewed in issue 20.

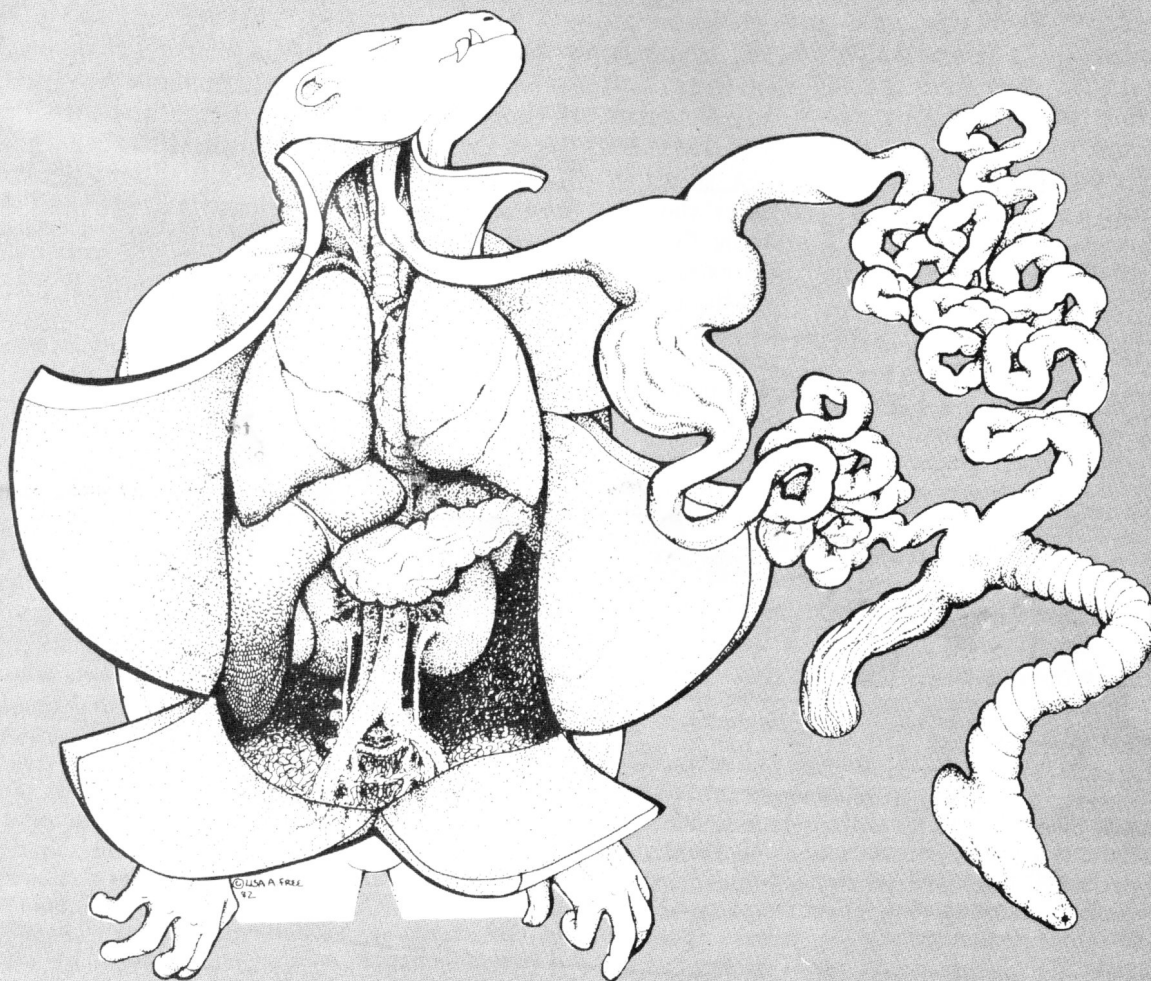
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Superhero Role-playing Games

by Steve Perrin

Comic book superhero role-playing games are with us to stay. The article below is a survey, and short history, of the available super-games.

First, there was *Superhero 2044*. This game was initially published in 1977 by its author, Donald Saxman. He claims that the game was inspired by a very variant *Dungeons & Dragons* campaign, and indeed, it has little to do with *D&D* in its mechanics.

This game and its second edition, published by Gamescience, was strong in its campaign aspects. The book provided an entire culture for the island of Inguria in the year 2044 and gave game specifics for establishing patrols, insurance for heroes, and a past history to relate a campaign to. What it lacked was power descriptions and an immediately comprehensible game system. Players were asked to construct characters and name their powers, relating them if possible to the extensive technology provided, but otherwise simply naming the power and describing its effects under an all-purpose label such as "transformation."

Many potential players picked up the game, perused it eagerly, and, when they found they could not immediately relate it to the comic books they devoured daily, decided it was too much trouble and put it away for a future campaign they never got to.

The second entry into the field was *Villains and Vigilantes*, from Fantasy Games Unlimited. Jeff Dee and Jack Herman took an entirely different stance, one which was somewhat closer to the *D&D* model. One had various attacks, and one compared them to the multitude of defenses on a chart and rolled a percentage to see if one hit. One of the charms of the system is the opportunity for the player to roll himself up as a super-

hero. Unfortunately, one of the disadvantages is that, once one is a superhero, the player has no choice about what type of superhero he can be.

A simple roll of the dice tells a player who really wants to be a super-strong flying bullet-bouncer that he has extra proficiency with a weapon and the ability to pick up police radio broadcasts. This is something of a comedown, and one which the authors have picked up on, as shown in the newly released second edition of the game.

Next, Aimee Karklyn and Jon Hartlove finished putting together their own entry into the superhero game market. Like *Superhero 2044*, this new game, aptly entitled *Supergame*, was independently published. Unlike *2044*, it had abominable distribution, and only seems to have been common in the Los Angeles area.

Supergame took the *Superhero 2044* concept of assigning characteristics and applied them to powers as well. Several of the most common powers found in superhero comic books were described and each given a point value. Characters were given an absolute total point value and the powers and characteristics had to match that total or less. It was an excellent concept, but the poor distribution and lack of clarity in the rules left *Supergame* as an amateur effort, with no real recognition.

In 1981, however, Hero Games, another independent operation, set Origins 81 on its ear with the debut of *Champions*. This game built on many others, including all the games previously mentioned, but expanded on this foundation with *Fantasy Trip* style combat systems and a unique system of second-by-second melee somewhat resembling that in the *Starfleet Battles* system. This allowed a player to follow his character in a panel-by-

panel battle, as if he were watching a comic book unfold. This, and the character construction system, which is similar to *Supergame's*, but with a better breakdown of powers and descriptions thereof, made *Champions* the leader in superhero games, and the mark all others will have to match.

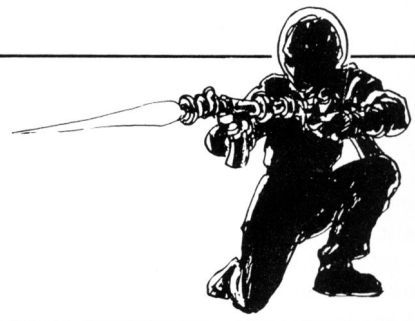
One such effort has been Chaosium's *Superworld*, one of the worlds offered in *Worlds of Wonder*. *Superworld* offers a similar character construction system, but combat is based on the *Basic Role-Playing* simplification of *RuneQuest*. The game is necessarily less complete than some of its predecessors, due to size constraints, but within its parameters offers a complete system for superhero role-playing.

The *Champions* challenge is being met by other publishers as well. FGU is reissuing *Villains & Vigilantes* with drastic revisions. Gamescience has asked Gamelord Kerry Lloyd (of *Thieves Guild* fame) to revise the *Superhero 2044* rules for a second Gamescience edition. *Supergame* is coming out soon in a cleaned up version from a book publisher. Even *Champions* itself is meeting the challenge of success with extensive clarifications and revisions of some powers for its new boxed edition.

Rumors of other publishers jumping on the superhero bandwagon are rife. TSR and Yaquinto are making superhero noises, and Task Force Games recently released *Supervillain*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Independent Brian Phillips has also debuted the grandiloquently titled *The Official Superhero Adventure Game*. Everyone is counting on a large carryover between the extensive comic collecting hobby and the role-playing game hobby. The sales figures for the plethora of superhero role-playing games this time next year will tell the full story. □

SUPERHERO 2044

PART-TIME SUPERHERO



by Donald Saxman

illustrated by Luise Perenne

Superhero 2044 was originally designed as a campaign game. The emphasis is on patrol, long term finance, and character development. Unfortunately, this has led to criticism that it is impossible to use the rules unless you are willing to spend weeks, or even months, slowly developing scenarios.

Lack of time or long term player interest need not be a problem, however. This article will attempt to show that *Superhero 2044* can be adapted to being played in one-night sessions.

Anyone who has even a passing interest in gaming should be familiar with the basic format of a one-night battle. First, a background situation familiar to all players is agreed upon. The gamers are assigned forces that have pre-arranged abilities, movement rates, and equipment. Play is conducted on a battleground (the field) and movement outside this field is restricted. Players are motivated by victory conditions — that is, certain goals that determine the winner. To set up a one-night battle, each of these features — situation, field, forces, and victory conditions must be dealt with.

The first step is deciding the general situation. It is important to remember that superheroes will always have basically altruistic motives. Although they can engage in military style battles and enter dungeon-like installations, their one goal in life is to fight crime.

With this in mind, the best setting for a superhero battle is a rescue mission. This can take many forms. Evacuating passengers from a sinking ship, rescuing captured fellow-superheroes, or freeing hostages, all lend themselves equally well, but I will use the last as an example.

Assume a bad guy captures a large number of civilians. He may do this for any number of reasons. Perhaps they are witnesses, have valuable skills, or are merely shields. The superhero's duty is clear — free them and bring the villain to justice. Since there are many independently operating superheroes in Inguria, they may find themselves competing for fame and reward.

The villain is played by the referee. The reasons for this are many and varied, but in the end come down to one argument. An intelligently played adversary is always harder to beat than an unintelligently played adversary, and the good guys should always defeat the bad guys in the end.

Of course, the bad guy referee can still 'win.' You could easily set up a scenario where as soon as the heroes land, they are racked by fatal explosions and laser fire, but what's the point? For this reason, you need to limit the resources of your bad guy. Decide how many assistants and soldiers he has on hand and arm them with non-lethal weapons. Determine his escape routes and decide when he will use them. Although as the all-knowing referee you will have a good idea of the best time to attack or retreat, a real supervillain will be operating with incomplete information and may be insanely brave or timid.

Set up automatic reactions. These are a pre-arranged list of things that will happen when certain conditions are met. Ideally, they should allow the bad guys very little initiative. They can be specific (when the superhero enters the control room, the guard will spray the door with a submachinegun and everyone else will dive for cover) or vague (if captured, a guard will wait until he can do the maximum amount of damage, then set off a concealed gas grenade). The important thing to remember is that they cannot be changed.

Automatic reactions need not be complex for an enjoyable game. I would recommend dividing them into four categories: area, time, circumstance, and random. An area automatic reaction occurs when a certain area is reached, a time automatic reaction occurs at a pre-set time, a circumstance when a specific situation happens, and a random automatic reaction occurs at random. Examples of these automatic reactions are 1) (area) as soon as the superheroes enter the bad guy's installation, technicians begin to fuel the escape rocket, 2) (time) 100 turns after fueling commences, the rocket may be launched, 3) (circumstance) when superheroes have captured 50% of the bad guy's troops, or secured 50% of the rooms, the supervillain will attempt to escape in the rocket, 4) (random) there is a 25% chance that the escape rocket will misfire.

Naturally, when determining automatic reactions, you must consider the battlefield itself. There are two ways to go. First, you can have an artificial environment — a building, tunnel, or even a large vehicle where the scale is a normal 1 turn = 10 seconds, and 1" equals 2 meters, and combat takes place at short range.

Second is a natural environment with terrain where long-range fire can prevent closing and the use of vehicles and jet belts is possible. A good scale for this is 40 game meters = 1 mapping unit. (For instance, if the map of the island stronghold is done on hex paper, 1 hex = 40 meters.) This means that one mapping unit = 20 inches using the normal scale. This rather arbitrary sounding figure is taken because it represents the distance a person using a jet belt can travel in one turn. To convert weapon ranges to this scale, take the range in inches and divide by 20. To fire at short range, switch back to the normal scale.

It is recommended that you combine both types. For example, the Hendrex Island scenario begins as a landing operation that spreads into underground tunnels and control rooms towards the end. Obviously, a large scale and a small scale map are needed. In general, uniques are more effective at close range and armed toolmasters at long range, with ubermensch adaptable to both.

A primary consideration before you start mapping the field is a way to keep it at a manageable size. Although action will naturally tend to gravitate to the area controlled by the bad guys, it can spread in all directions unless care is taken, especially if superheroes begin to fight among themselves.

Now that the stage is set, let's talk about the most important part — the superheroes themselves. If you are just starting out, it may be a good idea for the referee to design the heroes himself. Not only will this give him control over the good guy vs. bad guy balance, but it will nip the possibility of arguments over just what actions are possible.

On the other hand, if a campaign is already under way, by all means use familiar superheroes. You may also want to add paramilitary personnel or assistants, especially in the case of large-scale assaults. The Science Police can be of help here. They can provide transport, information, military grade weapons, and helpers. You can recruit a player to handle S.P. duties, or give each superhero an S.P. operative or technician to control.

There is no reason for a player not to control more than one superhero in this kind of action as long as the victory conditions reflect this team-up.

Designing superheroes for one-night battles is not very different from creating campaign heroes. Special care must be given to the ranges of powers and the ability to attack concealed opponents, but everything else mentioned in the rules stands.

Equipping your superhero for a single battle deserves special consideration, but is not difficult. The end notes mention some types of paramilitary equipment.

Once the situation, field, and players are determined, work out the victory conditions. As far as the players are concerned, this is the most important part, so be sure that each hero's chance to win is equal. Take each hero in turn and consider his background and style. Has he any vendettas with the villain or other heroes? Would he rather do a good job or make headlines? Is personal survival more important than the lives of his teammates? Perhaps a friend is among the hostages. Obviously, points should be given for each prisoner freed or bad guy captured. On the other hand, killing bad guys might be worth a lot of points (to a revenge-crazed toolmaster), no points (to a diffident unique), or even negative points (to a noble ubermensch with a code against taking life).

Consideration can be given to the relative power of each hero. A very powerful unique might get points only for very difficult maneuvers while a comparatively weak ubermensch might be able to pick up points for a variety of minor feats. Victory conditions can even reflect abstract ideals. For example, one superhero who kept trying to promote the cooperation between superheroes got one point for every five points his fellow superheroes received, and lost five points for every superhero killed or disabled. Points need not necessarily be taken off for personal death or injury. This can lead to heroic suicide attacks, especially in one-night actions not connected with a campaign. A dead superhero can even win.

By controlling the order in which the heroes arrive, differences in abilities can be minimized. Of course, fighting style must be taken into account. One hero might complain because by the time he landed, all the obvious bad guys were captured or killed, while a different hero claims he was forced to do all the softening up.

As perceptive readers have noticed, the superheroes are competing with one another for victory condition points. This can lead to a strategy of denial. In other words, a hero might say, "There are two ways for me to win. First, I can get as many points as possible. Second, I can make sure the other superheroes get as few points as possible."

The methods of denying other players points can range from harmless rivalry to duels. Duels to the death are legal if both parties agree before witnesses. Otherwise, killing fellow superheroes is murder.

There is nothing wrong with dueling per se, but it can be minimized by removing victory points for duelers if the referee wishes.

Hopefully, these guidelines can give you a start towards successful one-night superheroing. The Hendrix Island scenario would provide a good example. I have also included some end notes that contain optional rules that are particularly valuable to the one-nighter.

Any questions will be answered if you send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Donald Saxman, 5002-C, 4750 South Mann Road, Indianapolis, Indiana 46241. □

Endnotes

There are two kinds of cover in *Superhero 2044*: camouflage, and shielding. Camouflage makes it hard to spot the target and shielding protects the target. An unmoving camouflaged target is impossible to see at a given arbitrary range without sensors or superpowers. Once a camouflaged target moves or fires, it is spotted and may be fired upon. Shielding is the kind of cover referred to in the rules. Large rocks, doorways, furniture and trees all provide shielding. You may snap-fire with a +2 projectile modifier while shielded.

Ground fog limits unaugmented vision to 100 meters. It does not affect sensors. Lasers may fire only at close range through ground fog.

Smoke screens limit unaugmented vision to less than one meter. They do not affect sensors, but may not be fired through by lasers. All other projectile attacks are as though blind. Although smoke grenades create but a four meter, 100 second cube of smoke, large smoke pots can create prolonged smoke screens, a favorable supervillain escape trick.

Forests cut movement rates in half, and prohibit landings or use of jet belts. Both kinds of cover (as above) are always available.

Jumbles are unconsolidated volcanic ejecta, with scattered boulders ranging from basketball to house size. All movement is cut to ¼ normal rate. Both kinds of cover are available, and it is impossible to fire and remain unseen. It is easier to spot a person hiding in jumbles from the air.

Furniture provides at least partial cover. Most rooms will contain consoles, closets, tables, etc.

Science Police mobile field hospitals fit into a medium-sized helicopter or hovercraft and require a specialist to operate. Like a first aid kit, it cures 20 endurance points damage in D6 minutes. It will also cure 20 vigor points in the above manner. It may be used on a given wound once, but may be used on each multiple wound.

A sensor detects the presence of humans who are camouflaged. It encumbers one man. It has a range of 200 meters in the open, 50 meters in forest, and 100 meters in jumbles. It does not work underwater or in buildings. It indicates the vector distance and direction to all targets within range. When firing on the basis of sensor data alone, use a +4 projectile modifier.

Jet belts are always a favorite means of transportation in paramilitary assaults. They come in four models.

- *Domestic* Unarmored. User may not fire while flying. Carries one man and minimal equipment.
- *Search & Rescue* Unarmored. Can remain stationary at a given altitude. Carries one man and equipment at normal speeds, or one man and a person from the ground while hovering. User may not fire.
- *Military* Acts as a bulletproof vest. User may fire at +2 modifier, or drop grenades with no modifier. Carries one man and full equipment.
- *Autopower Jetbelt* Operates like domestic jet belt, but has an auto pilot that will fly a prearranged course, even if the flyer is unconscious. The flyer may fire when the auto pilot is on.

When firing at a flyer using a jet belt, use hit locations below. In the case of a body hit, roll a six-sided die. 1 means no damage, belt deflects projectile; 2,3 means the belt is damaged and must land immediately; 4,5 means a normal vigor and endurance damage; 6 means the belt is ruined and immediately crashes.

Jet belts take one turn to launch or land to tree-top level, and five turns to remove or put on. A grounded flyer may walk away at a rate of one inch. A jet belt crash from tree top level does 40 vigor

points and 40 endurance points damage. A crash from higher up is usually fatal to normal men. An uncontrolled jet belt crashes automatically.

You may want to alter the damage acquisition for superheroes so they will not be incapacitated by a single hit. The following optional system does this without resorting to drastic changes in the rules. Divide the body into six areas: head, torso, left leg, right leg, left arm, and right arm. Give the torso and head each 200% of the total vigor points and the limbs each 100% of the total vigor points. Double the endurance points and remove endurance points from any wound from this figure. Movement and action penalties for wounds are accrued as usual. Keep track of bleeding. Any open wound - bullet, blade, or explosion (but not laser) bleeds. Remove one vigor and one endurance point every 10 second turn of bleeding. First Aid immediately stops from bleeding, but the normal six sided dice of minutes is necessary to stabilize the wound. Unless the wound is stabilized, it will start bleeding again. □

Hendrex Island

by Donald Saxman

This is the refined product of several one-night *Superhero 2044* sessions I've conducted at various wargame cons. It has been simplified somewhat to allow adaptation to individual referee's tastes, but can serve as the basis for a one-night battle as is. I recommend that only referees read this, not players.

GENERAL SITUATION

Doctor Ruby, the mad renegade geologist, supposedly died years ago when he caused Mount Inguri to erupt. Lately, however, a wave of geologically based crimes have hit the island. Suspicions that Ruby somehow survived have caused many superheroes to attempt to track down his whereabouts. Finally, the Inguria University graduating geology class of 2045 was kidnapped en masse during a field trip. Luckily, a Science Police agent was among the students and he was able to infiltrate Ruby's technical corps. Acting on information supplied by this agent, the Science Police decided to mount a large-scale assault on the Doctor's underground Hendrex Island headquarters. Somehow Ruby found out about these plans and broadcast an ultimatum. If more than six people set foot on the island, he would use his lava activator to cause Mount Inguri to erupt again, destroying the vital summit power convection wand. It was obviously a trap, but the S. P. gathered six volunteers who were willing to see justice done.

THE SUPERHEROES

(These may be replaced with your own.)

Sunburst - Vigor/20, Stamina/20, Endurance/25, Mentality/15, Charisma/30, Ego/15, Dexterity/35. Unique, described on the back page of the second edition. Equipment - domestic jet belt, ten monofilament hand cuffs, first aid kit, Science Police radio. Victory Conditions +5 for killing or capturing Ruby, +1 per hostage freed, +3 for capturing Ruby's lava activator, +1 for destroying Ruby's lava activator, -3 if secret identity revealed, -3 if disabled or killed at end of game.

Multiplex – Vigor/25 (15)(35), Stamina/25 (50)(15), Endurance/25 (50)(15), Mentality/20, Charisma/30, Ego/10, Dexterity/25. Unique, described on back page of second edition. Equipment – four first aid kits, four Science Police radios, ten monofilament hand cuffs. Victory Conditions – +5 for killing or capturing Ruby, +1 per hostage freed, +1 per soldier or hostage captured, -3 if disabled or dead at end of game.

The Charmer – Vigor/15, Stamina/5, Endurance/20, Mentality/30, Charisma/50, Ego/30, Dexterity/10. Unique, described on page 12 of second edition. Equipment – assault rifle with mercy bullets, ten monofilament hand cuffs, autopower jet belt, three smoke, three gas, three tangle, three flash grenades, Science Police radio. Victory Conditions – +5 for capturing Ruby, +2 per hostage freed, +1 per soldier or technician captured, -2 for every person she kills.

Apollyon – Vigor/20, Stamina/30, Endurance/30, Mentality/30, Charisma/41, Ego/15, Dexterity/34. Ubermensch, described on page 11 of second edition. Equipment – two hand guns, one magnum, one mercy, sub-machinegun with steel bullets, bulletproof vest, military style jet belt, first aid kit, Science Police radio. Victory Conditions – +5 for killing Ruby, +2 per soldier or technician killed, +3 for destroying or capturing Ruby's lava activator.

Gladiator – Male human toolmaster. Horribly disfigured ex-GI in modernistic Roman Retarius garb. Vigor/20, Endurance/20, Stamina/20, Mentality/50, Charisma/10, Ego/20, Dexterity/20. Equipment – Science Police radio, ten monofilament hand cuffs, two-man helicopter with autopilot and search and rescue winch. Helmet with gasmask, night vision intensifier, laser armor & bulletproof vest, vibro sword (a hit means -20 endurance points), tangle net (a hit is like a tangle web grenade hit, but can be turned off at Gladiator's will). Trident with three uses; laser cutter (not weapon), sonic stunner (10 meter range, hit reduces endurance to 1, attacks with ego attack and base ego of 20), shotgun with single incendiary shell. Victory Conditions – +5 for capturing or killing Ruby, +2 per hostage freed, +4 for capturing lava activator.

Science Police Officer Borden – Male ubermensch. Vigor/25, Endurance/25, Stamina/25 (martial artist), Mentality/20, Charisma/20, Ego/20, Dexterity/30. Equipment – Borden can have whatever equipment he wants, but may not loan it out (remember that you cannot have both power armor and a jet belt). In addition, he has an agent who has infiltrated Ruby's ranks. This agent can be contacted by radio as often as Borden wants, but on a roll of 6 on a D6, the transmission is intercepted and the agent's cover is blown. The agent is for information purposes only. He is cowardly, and is disguised as an unarmed technician. Victory Conditions – +2 if anyone captures or kills Ruby, +2 per hostage freed, +3 if Borden captures lava activator, +3 if anyone destroys lava activator, -3 if anyone but Borden captures lava activator, +1 for seeing Sunburst use his powers, +2 for finding out Sunburst's secret identity.

The players may enter the board simultaneously, on or above any coastal position. A hero may elect to hold back a given number of turns. Multiplex is riding in Gladiator's helicopter, and Borden may or may not give rides to other superheroes as he sees fit. Note that all heroes have radios and can communicate if they want.

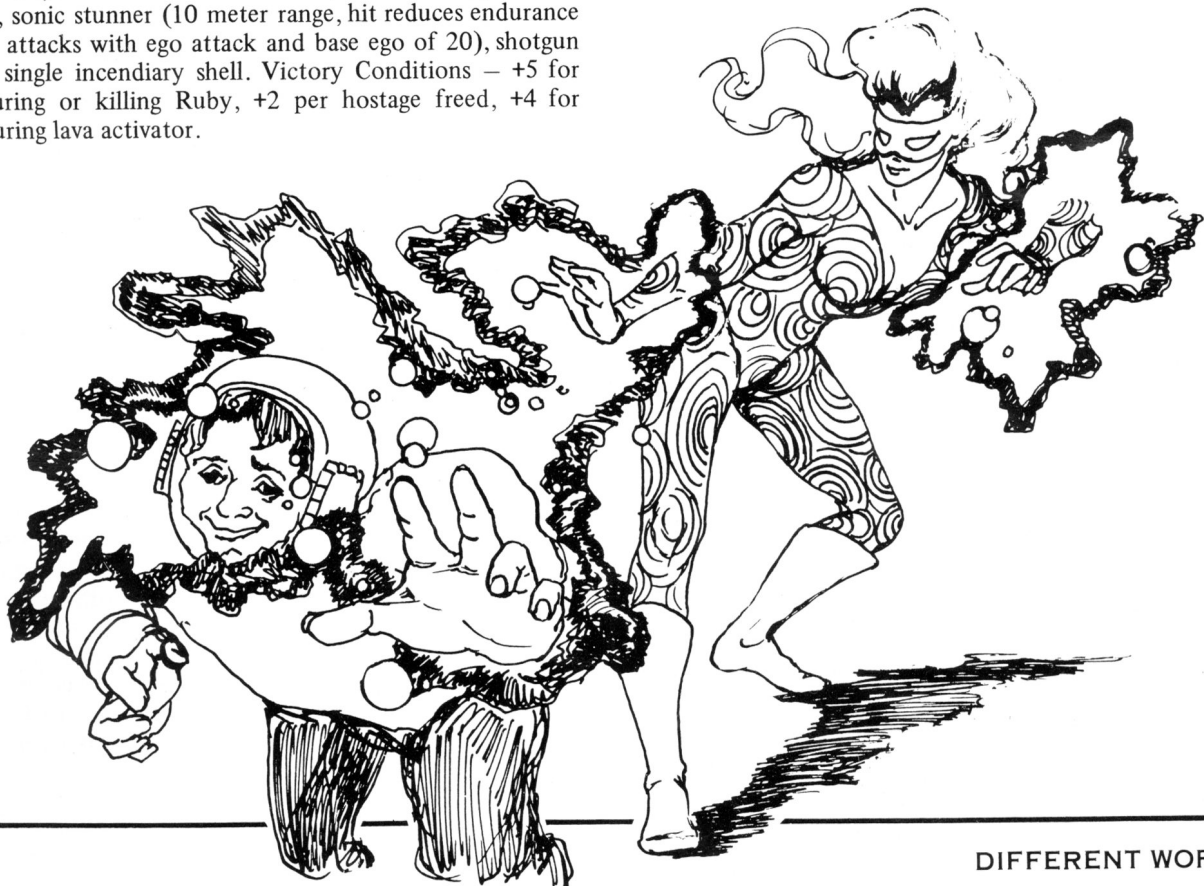
THE FIELD

The battle will be conducted on and below Hendrex Island, a small volcanic peak to the southwest of Bloomburg. Refer to the aboveground and belowground map.

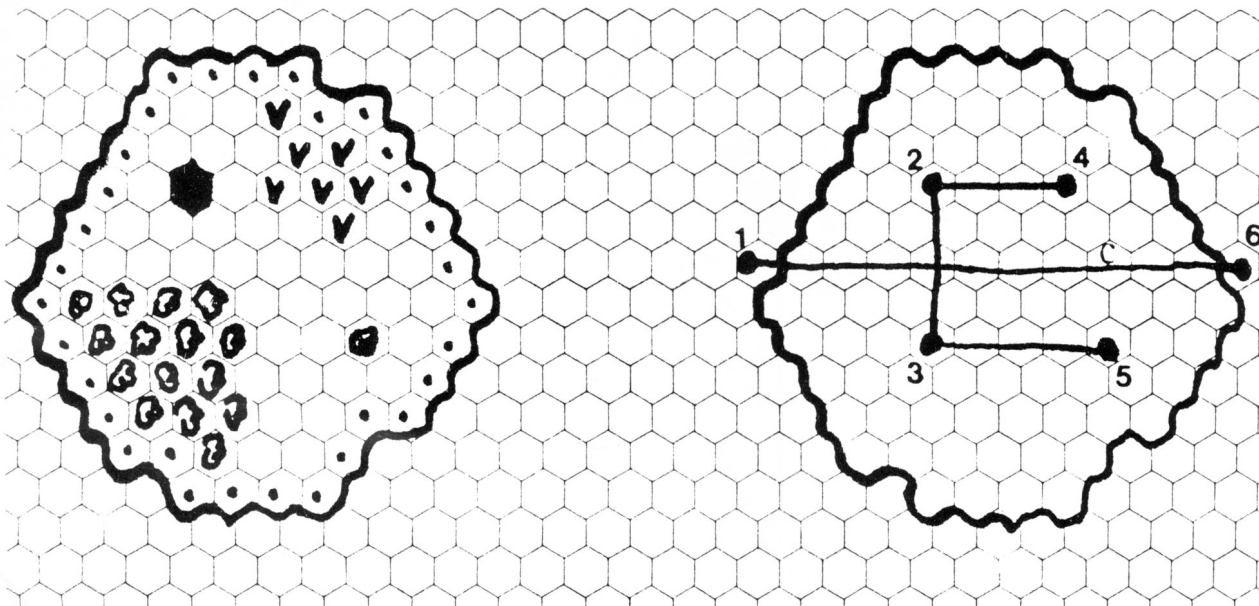
The tunnels are semicircular in cross-section with a diameter of 3m. The control room is a 25-meter diameter hemisphere just north of the tunnel. There is no door. It contains the lava activator (encumbers one man) and the communications center. There is always shielding available.

DOCTOR RUBY'S FORCES

Ruby – Vigor/25, Endurance/25, Stamina/10, Mentality/75, Charisma/10, Ego/50



HENDREX I.



Hendrex Island
 scale - one hex = 40 meters
 • = sandy beach
 🌲 = forest
 V = jumble

🗼 = watch tower
 ○ = clear hex or ocean
 — = tunnel & tunnel opening
 🏠 = underground control room

Underground Tunnels
 1) submarine pen
 2) watch tower opening
 3) forest opening
 4) jumbles opening
 5) copse opening
 6) underwater plane pen

Three fire teams each consisting of a leader and two soldiers armed with tangleweb shotguns and gas grenades. Each leader has a hand laser.

Five technicians, each with Vigor/20, Endurance/20, Stamina/10, Mentality/40, Charisma/20, Ego/25.

Ten hostages in "bondage coffins." These are sealed units that hold one hostage each in a state of suspended animation. They may be dragged at a rate of 1/2 inch per turn or carried by two people at a rate of 1 inch per turn. They may be opened only by medical personnel.

Three lava bore operators. These are soldiers in lava suits that are laser- and heat-proof. They each drive a lava bore, a tank-like vehicle resembling an APC with a heavy-duty laser in front. Lava bores may not turn around in a tunnel except at the tunnel opening or control room. They nearly fill the tunnel, move 3 inches/turn, and may not enter sand, jumble, or forest. Assume they have an inherent vigor of 75 for each tread and a vigor of 25 on the laser itself.

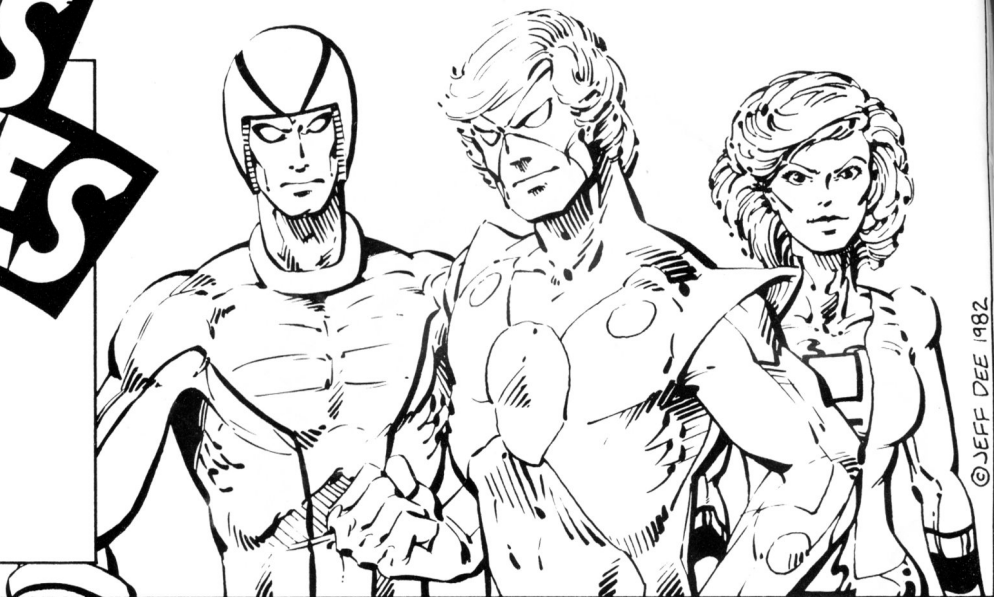
Automatic Reactions

Three hostages are in the submarine at the submarine pen. Three are on the seaplane in the underwater hangar, and four are in the control room. The Science Police agent and the other technicians are in the control room. Fire team one is on surface in the copse, fire team two is in the watchtower, and fire team three is at the intersection. Lava bore one is at the copse opening, lava bore two is facing north in tunnel north of intersection, lava bore 3 is on surface, north of watchtower, but camouflaged.

When the heroes get within range, the leader in the watchtower will open fire with his laser. All soldiers anywhere will fire when heroes get within medium range. No soldiers or leaders will ever surrender. Ruby will never surrender. Lava bores one and three will open fire when heroes get within close range, or when they are fired upon. Once their position is discovered, they will chase down heroes until destroyed. Lava bore two will stop heroes from passing. When a superhero enters the tunnel, he can be tracked by Ruby's geophones. At that time, the five technicians will ready the lava activator. This will take five minutes (30 turns). When heroes enter the east-west tunnel, Ruby will activate smoke pots above the underwater plane hangar and move towards the hangar alone. When he gets to the hangar, he will load the hostages onto the plane and surface (taking 3 minutes or 18 turns). His plane moves as fast as a jet belt, so unless someone is in position to intercept, he will escape. Should he get to the submarine pen, he may immediately escape with the hostages. Meanwhile, in the abandoned control room, the technicians will activate the lava activator and blow explosive bolts creating a tunnel to the surface - this last will be visible to anyone watching. They will then each drag up a hostage and surrender to the first heroes on the scene. The lava activator will begin to fill up the tunnel system with hot lava, moving at a rate of 4 inches per turn. When a tunnel opening is reached (except the control room tunnel) it will spread from that opening in a circle at a rate of 2 inches per turn. If the lava activator is activated, no one can get points for it, even though it will be destroyed when the lava flow starts. □

VILLAINS AND VIGILANTES

Designer's Notes



by Jeff Dee

Back in 1979 when *Villains and Vigilantes* was first released, Jack Herman and I were pleased to discover that we were the youngest published RPG designers in the land ... at least as far as anyone knew.

Trouble was, it showed in our work.

V and V was playable if you worked at it, but it still contained a number of really stupid assumptions which players were forced to deal with, and there were sections which were so restrictive or complex that I suspect most referees chose to 'wing it' rather than try to follow the rules. That's what we did, anyway; the problems with *V and V* had become blatantly obvious to us within a few months after publication. So therein lies the origin of the revised edition. One might ask why we didn't playtest more thoroughly and correct these problems in advance. The answer is simple enough. We just didn't realize there was anything wrong until it was too late.

Original *V and V* contained a sort of pseudo-historical introductory section, which attempted to rationalize the process whereby superheroes came into existence. The new version discusses instead how to create your own history, and how to locate your campaign in another place or time. Not all superheroes live on modern day Earth, you know.

The first edition had really awful Basic Characteristic tables (covering Strength, Intelligence, etc.) which made super-high characteristic scores almost meaningless. In fact, the only way one could achieve most of the Strength and Constitution levels given was to have the power Size Change Larger. Now all the tables go up to 90 (still on a scale of 3-18 for normal men) in three-point steps, so each Heightened characteristic actually means something. Size Change no longer modifies one's Strength or Endurance scores, though there is an Agility bonus for light characters and an Agility minus for heavy ones. By the way, we renamed Constitution and Dexterity — they're now Endurance and

Agility respectively, for aesthetic reasons. Anyway, Strength and Endurance are proportional to one's weight now. A fifty-foot man with a Strength of 10 is a lot more powerful than a six-inch man with the same score. It's all relative, and the new rules reflect this.

Characters no longer roll dice to obtain hit points. Each character now has 'Basic Hits' equal to his weight in pounds divided by fifty, rounded up. Then, each Basic Characteristic except Charisma yields a factor which, when multiplied together times the character's Basic Hits, determines the character's Hit Points. No more silly dice rolls or experience level bonuses, you get what you deserve. Of course, each Basic Characteristic can be increased, so one's Hit Point total can increase as well.

Now we come to Origin Types. Once upon a time folks had to roll dice to find out how they got their powers, and then roll up their powers on the list for that origin type. There were, on occasion, poor fools consigned to life as a 'Charismatic' character, whose sole purpose in life was to be useless in combat and get captured a lot. This is no longer the way it's done. We've regrouped the powers into five tables: Powers, Devices, Magic/Psionic Items, Skills, and Magic/Psionics. Everyone rolls 1D6+2 for the number of powers they may roll up, on whatever list(s) they choose. Thus, characters can have all Powers, or all Devices, or all Magic, or all Skills, or any combination thereof. The choice is up to the individual. Everyone still has to drop one power that doesn't fit, and everyone rolls once on a list of Weaknesses as well. Characters can get rid of their Weakness by dropping a second superpower. All this results in greater player involvement in character generation and far more interesting characters in general. A character's 'origin' is now simply the story of how he got his powers, which is how it should be.

Incidentally, it's now okay to keep multiple doses of the same power if they're rolled up on the power tables. This allows increased ability in that particular area.

It would take too long to describe all the modifications we made in the powers themselves. We did add a few; Devitalization Ray does damage to the victim's Power score only, Telepathy is a power with rules for stuff like mental scanning and mind probes, and characters can have Wings. We tried to build in as much variety as we could and duplicate common things we'd seen in the comics. Flame Power now allows a character the option of choosing either flame attacks only which cost less to use or full 'flame on!' ability including flight and flame defense. Ice Powers now include detailed instructions on creating ice objects. Energy Absorption and Power Copying have been combined into a single power called simply Absorption, with guidelines on absorbing anything, either while attacking or defending, from living to inanimate subjects. Characters choose what they want to absorb and how, then use the guidelines to define their own particular ability. Animal/Plant Powers now include tables of abilities for 11 common animal types and plants, on which characters may roll to determine the exact powers received. Armor and Invulnerability now do what they're supposed to do, which is absorb damage before it gets to the character's body. Chemical Power (formerly Chemical Control) now gives a character the abilities of one chemical element, compound, or mixture of his choice. We've added the power of Cosmic Awareness. Time Travel plays hell with continuity in any campaign, so we took it out in favor of Dimensional Travel.

Old *V and V* required months of game-time for players to increase their Basic Characteristics through training. It was an okay system, but it required too much paperwork and resulted in occasional confusion as to how much time had really gone by. Now training is built into experience progression; for each level a character achieves, he may add a point onto one of his Basic Characteristics. There are also rules for training in combat skill and other areas, also by experience progression.

The combat system required redesigning the most. In original *V and V* combat was resolved by rolling percentile dice after a long, complex calculation to determine the chances of hitting. At the time we thought it was really clever. The system took into account up to five separate defense types (more than any character is likely to have). There were two major problems with it; first, it took far too long to figure out, and second, it resulted in even the best defenses yielding only a -20% from the chances to hit. So it wasn't that clever after all. The new *V and V* combat system is very simple and streamlined; find the best defense the target has against the type of attack being used and roll against it on 1D20. There are still modifiers, but it helps to be working with smaller numbers. Attacker and defender experience modifications have been put onto a table together to save time, and the mundane weapons list has been expanded to also include automatic weapons, boomerangs, and so on plus bludgeons of any weight (desks, cars, buildings, or whatever).

Revised *V and V* bases a character's hand-to-hand damage dice on his Carrying Capacity, rather than always using 1D4 modified by whatever. Carrying Capacity is a new thing, by the way. Old *V and V* didn't have it at all. Brawling weapons yield a bonus to hit and add an extra die of damage to the character's hand-to-hand damage score.

There is also a new initiative system. Characters involved in combat roll 1D10 plus Agility just like in the old game.

The GM then counts down from the highest total scored, with characters going in order of initiative and earning additional actions in the same turn every 15 phases until phase zero. Characters are allowed to delay taking their actions until any later point in the same turn in order to 'get the jump' on an opponent; saved actions always go first in a phase and can even interrupt other actions in the middle.

Some other things we've added to new *V and V* include rules on multiple attacks (one attacker can shoot at more than one target at once or at the same target more than once) and special attacks; that is, specific shots at a target's legs, head, etc., plus things like shooting guns out of people's hands. We also have rules on falling, structural points for inanimate objects, ways of determining how far a character can jump or throw things, rules for attacked victims being thrown back by the impact of the attack, and data on some common animal types, vehicles, and other equipment.

There are places where our adherence to strict comic-book adaptation has resulted in some grumbling from *V and V* players and GMs. Some people just can't take the total lack of realism in comics and worry too much about how come Johnny can't get killed by having a 16 ton weight dropped on top of him. People don't die too often in comics, and that is what *V and V* is designed to reflect. A 16-ton weight does 4D10 of damage in new *V and V*, which will simply not kill an average pedestrian, who has a total of 46 Hit and Power points. This admittedly contradicts all realism but that's what comics are all about. In the comics, characters die to add drama to the story, and that's the only point to a character's death in *V and V* as well.

A lot of you I'm sure have campaigns going on that you don't want to end, though you may want to switch over to the new rules. Though the two systems are very different, a switchover can be done. We suggest simply re-calculating each character's Basic Characteristics according to the new rules while leaving their super powers the same as they were. Use the new combat system, of course, but don't take away a character's power just because it doesn't exist in the new rules, and don't give an old character additional abilities that are added to a power he has in the new descriptions. If you do want to change a character's powers completely over to the new rules, just come up with an excuse to do so; he shouldn't simply wake up one morning with new powers for no reason.

The problem with adapting comic books to role-playing is that comics are very inconsistent. Things work differently from comic to comic, even with the same characters. There are just too many writers working on the same things for there to be any sort of standardization. Our solution was to leave as many things open-ended as possible, and to discuss many optional ways of doing things. The GM and his players had better be prepared to make up things on occasion in *V and V* ... it's the price you pay to avoid working with a restrictive, finite system which might adapt part of comics at best. I've yet to closely examine the other superhero games on the market, but I suspect that they either took this same route or are rather limited in scope.

Those of you who didn't like old *V and V* should check out the new one. Those of you who did like old *V and V* will love the new one. Despite all its problems, the first edition wasn't totally bad - some of it we didn't even change. But the new edition is better by one thousand percent. □

SUPERGAME

DESIGNER'S NOTES

by Jay and Aimee Hartlove

Originally we decided to write *Supergame* because we felt that there was something lacking in the approach to fantasy role-playing that other writers had used in their games. Most games are written with the notion that the game systems are to be unified and limited down to the nature of the universe being portrayed by the game. This is a very pragmatic concept that indeed helps to create more easily read and understood games. The problem is that, all too often, when you start out writing a game with limitations and simplifications in mind it is too easy to go too far. You end up with games where a particular ability is specified so completely that all characters that have a certain quality have exactly the same ability.

Now, simplification is by no means a bad thing. On the contrary, there are games in which no attempt to simplify has only led to unfathomable quagmires.

If FRP is supposed to duplicate life only under imaginary conditions, then you can't limit those aspects of a game that make it more like real life.

One of the most abused systems is that of quantifying damage and damage protection. Some of the most popular FRP games have only one type of damage and one kind of armor that protects against it. Then there are games, most typically the medieval fantasy games, where there are several types of damage, but armor only protects against one of them. A suit of armor only protects against impacting attacks. The insulating qualities of such a suit are ignored for simplicity's sake when a character is hit by something like a lightning bolt.

This sort of thinking is fine if the world in which the game takes place is also sufficiently simple. In medieval fantasy, 99% of the damage encountered is impact damage. But, if you wish to play in a world where there are literally no limitations as to the variety of abilities, attacks, and situations, then you must approach the subject in a different manner. If you cannot limit your world, then the system must be all-encompassing and open-ended. You must catalogue, categorize, and quan-

tify the phenomena of your world as a scientist does with the real world.

The choice of the world of the comicbook superhero for FRP is an excellent one. It is simultaneously a world where anything is possible and where there are abundant precedents to establish limits of reasonability. It is also a complete world with nearly all the difficult decisions already made as to the society and the role that the heroes play in it.

Supergame attempts to quantify and describe this world in a manner that allows for anything that the player wishes while only limiting the overall effectiveness of a beginning character. Characters are constructed by spending a set number of construction points (250 for beginning characters) on everything the character can do. This includes the Prime characteristics (Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, etc.), bodily attributes, supernatural powers, armor (not necessarily worn, as bodily toughness is quantified as armor), and devices (including weapons). This system allows a player to construct his/her character from the ground up with any combination of abilities he/she wants, restricting only overall effectiveness. We devised this system in reaction to dissatisfaction with the unfairness of random characteristic generation systems. We feel that a character sheet should be a list of exactly what a character can and



CHARACTER NAME: The Incredible Hulk (©Marvel Comics Group)

STRENGTH	20 (100)	Hand Damage Max.	4 (100)
DEXTERITY	20	Phys. Actions/Turn	2
INTELLIGENCE	40 (0)	Mental Actions/Turn	2 (1)
EGO	0	Mental Defense	20 (0)
PSYCHIC POWER	0	Mental Attack	0
CHARISMA	0	Base (ground) Speed	6 (12)
PHYSICAL	15	Jump Number	6 (35) feet
AGONY	15	Aerial Prop. Value	0
Marksmanship	0	Shooting Dex.	0
Martial Arts	0	Hand Weapon Add:	
Misc. Trainings:		Att: 0 Def: 0	

Martial Arts Total:
Att: 20 Def: 20

Items from Lists:

Armor: Bodily/Shields

Self Transformation (triggered by Agony damage)

Change Intelligence (40) into Class I armor (80)

Boost Strength to 100 for 5 turns

Special Power: cannot be knocked out with Strength normal

Curse: cannot take Physical damage with Strength boosted

Illustrated by Aimee Hartlove

cannot do out on the field of combat. Those qualities that are the realm of writer's license, such as personality quirks, personal histories, and non-combat related handicaps don't play a big enough role in the use of the combat systems and rules of a game to warrant their inclusion on a character sheet. These are things that any good gamer gives his/her characters anyway.

If you don't buy a particular ability for your character with the allotted construction points, then your character doesn't have that power. There are no freebies and you don't automatically get anything just because you purchased such and such a power. Whenever possible, we have classified powers together in our construction lists into major categories of abilities for ease of character construction and ability cost comparison. The more effective an ability is in a variety of situations, the more it costs. You're not always limited to merely 50 points either. *Supergame* has a complete set of criteria for rewarding experience points. These points add directly back to the character sheet as construction points for the character's growth. Since the player designed the character in the first place, then the player can make it grow as he/she sees appropriate.

Damage and armor are systematized in terms of a mix-and-match as you like accounting by the physics of how much damage is actually taken by the victim.

One last note about rules in games. Since all the characters in a game live

and breathe in the same world with the same measurements of time and space, the same physics of damage and resiliency, and the same potentials for growth, why shouldn't all the characters use the same rules? The combat and movement systems of a game should be used identically by all characters regardless of their specific powers.

When a martial artist strikes an opponent, the same formulae and dice should be used as when a magician who almost never uses his hands as weapons throws a punch. Granted, the numbers in each case are quite different, but the combat system should be the same for both characters. This is not true of all FRP. In some games, particularly the more military types, training completely alters the parameters of combat. In medieval fantasy games, often different types of dice are used, thus altering probabilities, when different types of characters do the same thing. We don't feel that this is right if the characters' numbers are appropriate for their abilities. Therefore, in *Supergame*, the five combat systems and the movement and sequence systems, which are all directly dependent on the Prime Statistics, apply to all characters. You build your character as you wish, and the game systems determine how the characters interact.

Only two types of dice are used in our game: six-sided cubical dice, and 20-sided polyhedral dice for generating percentages. The six-sided dice are used in those systems where large factors contribute to the likelihood of a desired outcome. These systems in-

clude the weapons firing and magic casting rules. Actual percentages are determined and the 20-sided dice are used for the more precise determinations required when characters directly interact. These systems would be the hand-to-hand combat, psychic combat, and charismatic convincing rules.

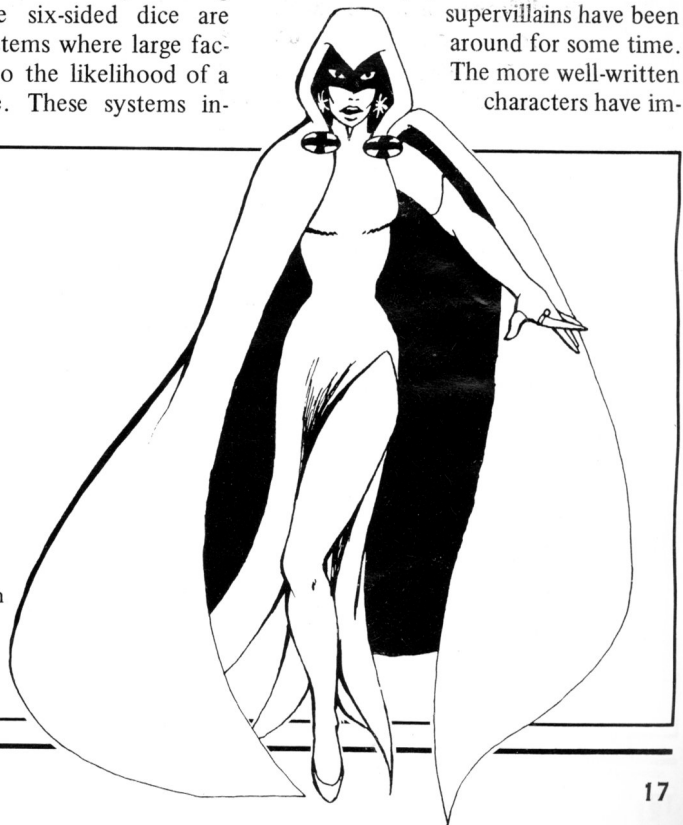
All of these concepts and notions for writing an FRP game are things that we always wanted to see in a game, but were constantly disappointed in. *Supergame* is the culmination of four years of playtesting and rewriting.

The game was originally released in early 1980 under great mercantile pressure. It was looseleaf with only sketches for artwork and an embarrassing lack of explanation in several important places. Well, that has all changed. We are re-releasing *Supergame*. Aimee, who is due to release her own comicbook this fall, has whipped up a whole new batch of artwork. Our publisher, Eric Gerds, has promised us a first rate, center-stapled, full-color cover reproduction. And, of course, all the explanations are now complete. It will be available around July for about seven dollars.

And now, to take advantage of the miracle of magazine copyright disclaimers, we will join our competitors on the bandwagon and show you how some of your favorite supertypes look when written up in our game. Most of the more popular superheroes and supervillains have been around for some time. The more well-written characters have im-

CHARACTER NAME: Raven (©DC Comics)

STRENGTH	10	Hand Damage Max.	1
DEXTERITY	20 (10)	Phys. Actions/Turn	2 (1)
INTELLIGENCE	20 (0)	Mental Actions/Turn	2 (1)
EGO	0	Mental Defense	15 (0)
PSYCHIC POWER	40	Mental Attack	40
CHARISMA	0	Base (ground) Speed	4
PHYSICAL	10	Jump Number	1
AGONY	10	Aerial Prop. Value	0 (20)
Marksmanship	0	Shooting Dex.	0
Martial Arts	0	Hand Weapon Add:	
Misc. Trainings:		Att: 0 Def: 0	
Mental Arts I		Martial Arts Total:	
(when whole)		Att: 20 Def: 20	
Items from Lists:		Armor: Bodily/Shields	
Dimension door magical spell at -1			
Shapeshift - 1)hypnosis, telepathy, heal at 10 Physical per turn			
2) Ethereal (self trans. density), fly, one turn instant stun			





proved their abilities and matured since they were initially introduced. In *Supergame* a beginning character is just that, 250 points in the character construction system will get you a hero comparable to one recently introduced with a minimal assigned history. There may be rough edges and there won't be all the little extras a player might want to have to 'round out' a character. This notion of incompleteness at the outset is most commonly seen in the comics with new characters working in superhero groups. They don't need to be complete, because if one has a particular weakness, then chances are that another character in the group will have a strength in that area. By working together, the group covers all bases and gets things done. Since playing in FRP is a group activity, and the heroes that the players run usually end up working as a team, we have adopted this format of limited overall effectiveness for the beginning character.

The following character sheet examples are mostly of characters that had humble and/or group related beginnings in comics. These samples are of what these heroes and heroines may have written up as when they were just starting out. In a couple of cases we have included expanded sheets which show, by comparison, how these characters have grown. A typical growth rate in our game through the experience system is 10 additional construction points for each 3 game sessions. Do-everything godlike characters like D.C. Comics' *Superman* or Marvel's *Thor* really don't write up well in our game even if you use an exorbitant number of points to build them. The very fact that they don't work well in groups means they don't play well in an FRP game. Therefore, we are not too disappointed that this type of character doesn't work well in *Supergame*. □

CHARACTER NAME: Captain America (©Marvel Comics Group)

STRENGTH	50	Hand Damage Max.	36
DEXTERITY	60	Phys. Actions/Turn	4 (5*)
INTELLIGENCE	0	Mental Actions/Turn	1
EGO	0	Mental Defense	0
PSYCHIC POWER	0	Mental Attack	0
CHARISMA	5	Base (ground) Speed	48
PHYSICAL	20	Jump Number	19 feet
AGONY	20	Aerial Prop. Value	0
Marksmanship	0	Shooting Dex.	40
Martial Arts	2	Hand Weapon Add:	
Misc. Trainings:		Att: 10 Def: 10	
Shields		Martial Arts Total:	
		Att: 90 Def: 90	
Items from Lists:		Armor: Bodily/Shields	
Weapon (shield) damage (5)		Class II	90
paid for as attached (shield returns)		Class III	90
		Class IV	90

* 5 in hand-to-hand

CHARACTER NAME: Captain America (this time at 300 points)

STRENGTH	50	Hand Damage Max.	39
DEXTERITY	80	Phys. Actions/Turn	5 (6*)
INTELLIGENCE	0	Mental Actions/Turn	1
EGO	0	Mental Defense	0
PSYCHIC POWER	0	Mental Attack	0
CHARISMA	5	Base (ground) Speed	72
PHYSICAL	20	Jump Number	19 feet
AGONY	20	Aerial Prop. Value	0
Marksmanship	0	Shooting Dex.	60
Martial Arts	3	Hand Weapon Add:	
Misc. Trainings:		Att: 10 Def: 10	
Shields		Martial Arts Total:	
Long jump		Att: 120 Def: 120	
Items from Lists:		Armor: Bodily/Shields	
Weapon (shield) damage (5)		Class II	90
paid for as attached (shield returns)		Class III	90
		Class IV	90

* 6 in hand-to-hand



CHARACTER NAME: Wonder Woman (©DC Comics)

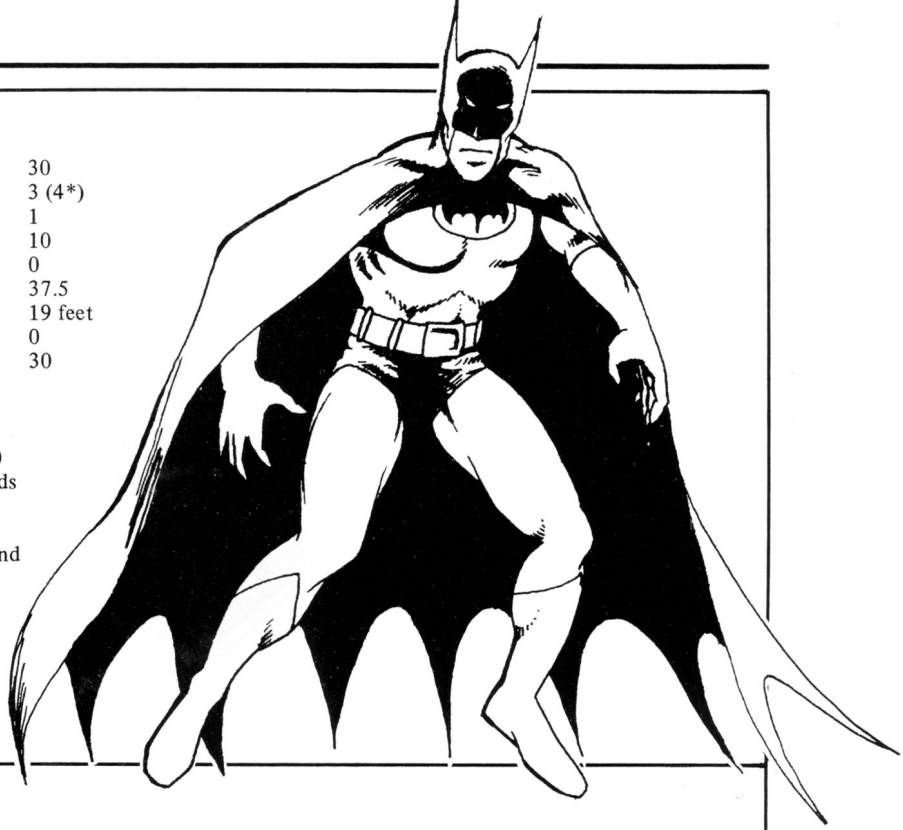
STRENGTH	55	Hand Damage Max.	33
DEXTERITY	40	Phys. Actions/Turn	3
INTELLIGENCE	0	Mental Actions/Turn	1
EGO	0	Mental Defense	0
PSYCHIC POWER	0	Mental Attack	0
CHARISMA	0	Base (ground) Speed	28
PHYSICAL	20	Jump Number	18.5 feet
AGONY	20	Aerial Prop. Value	0
Marksmanship	0	Shooting Dex.	20
Martial Arts	1	Hand Weapon Add:	
Misc. Trainings:		Att: 0 Def: 0	
Shields		Martial Arts Total:	
		Att: 50 Def: 50	
Items from Lists:		Armor: Bodily/Shields	
Rope as -		Class I	20
snare		Class II	20
magic attack at -0 to hypnotize		Class III	60
		Class IV	60

CHARACTER NAME: Batman (©DC Comics)

STRENGTH	50	Hand Damage Max.	30
DEXTERITY	50	Phys. Actions/Turn	3 (4*)
INTELLIGENCE	20	Mental Actions/Turn	1
EGO	0	Mental Defense	10
PSYCHIC POWER	0	Mental Attack	0
CHARISMA	5	Base (ground) Speed	37.5
PHYSICAL	20	Jump Number	19 feet
AGONY	15	Aerial Prop. Value	0
Marksmanship	0	Shooting Dex.	30
Martial Arts	2	Hand Weapon Add:	
Misc. Trainings:		Att: 0 Def: 0	
Lockpick		Martial Arts Total:	
		Att: 70 Def: 70	

Items from Lists:

- Heightened Detail Perception Class II 20
- Rope and grapple as:
 - snare * 4 in hand-to-hand
 - climb on walls



CHARACTER NAME: Spider Woman (©Marvel Comics Group)

STRENGTH	50	Hand Damage Max.	27.5
DEXTERITY	40	Phys. Actions/Turn	3
INTELLIGENCE	0	Mental Actions/Turn	1
EGO	0	Mental Defense	0
PSYCHIC POWER	0	Mental Attack	0
CHARISMA	0	Base (ground) Speed	28
PHYSICAL	15	Jump Number	16 feet
AGONY	15	Aerial Prop. Value	0
Marksmanship	0	Shooting Dex.	20
Martial Arts	1	Hand Weapon Add:	
Misc. Trainings:		Att: 0 Def: 0	
		Martial Arts Total:	
		Att: 50 Def: 50	

Items from Lists:

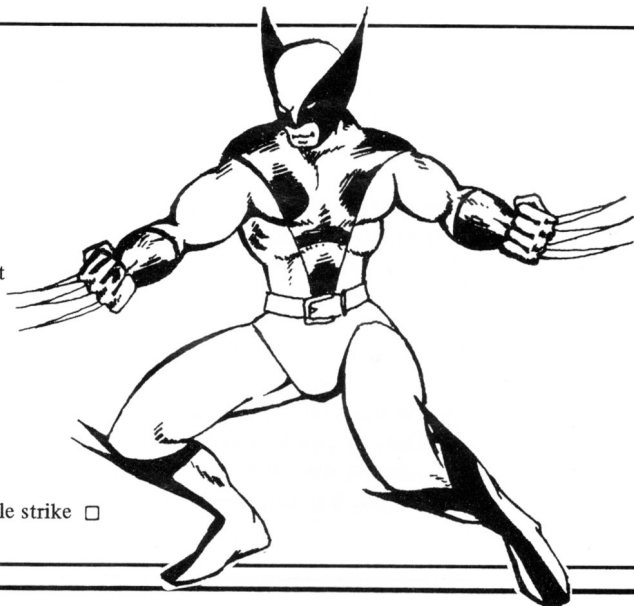
- Glider wings (no falling damage)
- Class III beam from hands at 20
- Self-transformation – change Strength into extra Class I damage for beam weapon (Strength returns as Agony recovers)

CHARACTER NAME: Wolverine (©Marvel Comics Group)

STRENGTH	40	Hand Damage Max.	73*
DEXTERITY	40	Phys. Actions/Turn	3
INTELLIGENCE	0	Mental Actions/Turn	1
EGO	5	Mental Defense	5
PSYCHIC POWER	0	Mental Attack	0
CHARISMA	0	Base (ground) Speed	24
PHYSICAL	20	Jump Number	12 feet
AGONY	20	Aerial Prop. Number	0
Marksmanship	0	Shooting Dexterity	20
Martial Arts	1	Hand Weapon Add:	
Misc. Trainings:		Att: 10 each Def: 5 each	
		Martial Arts Total:	
		Att: 70* Def: 60	

Items from Lists:

- Heightened smell
- Sword-claws, each doing 25 Class II damage, attached * using both claws in a single strike ☐



CHAMPIONS

REVISIONS

by Steve Peterson



illustrated by Mark Williams

Those of you who read the other *Champions* article in this issue may become a bit confused by references to “revised *Champions* rules.” “Revised *Champions* rules? What revisions?” (If the question you asked was, “What’s *Champions*?”, you may be reading the wrong article.) Many of you may not be aware that *Champions* has been reissued in a boxed set, and some rules have been revised. This article presents the major changes in the rules.

The most apparent change is a physical one; the rules have been rewritten, expanded, and reformatted for maximum clarity. The rules booklet is now 80 pages instead of 64, and new artwork has been added (as well as some of the old artwork being replaced). The combat rules are essentially unchanged, though there have been some minor additions. The major changes are in the description of Powers and Skills.

Multipower: The change is quite simple, but it’s probably the most important change in the rules. The amount of active points in a Multipower slot may never exceed the amount of points in the point reserve. Any Power Limitation applied to the entire Multipower decreases the cost of the point reserve and the cost of each slot (Focus Limitation, for example). If a Power Limitation applies only to a particular slot (such as Limited Uses), then the cost of the affected slot is reduced. Thus, if one slot in your 60 point Multipower only works once a day, the cost of the slot would be reduced to 4 points, but the power of the slot could not be increased.

Also, Multipowers and Elemental Controls don’t stack. In other words, a Multipower may not be placed inside a Multipower, or inside an Elemental Control. An Elemental Control may not be placed inside an Elemental Control or inside a Multipower. This relieves eyestrain from trying to read such complicated powers, and also removes most of a balance problem with the rules.

Elemental Control: This has been modified slightly. When you set up an Elemental Control, the first power is bought at normal cost. Each subsequent power in the Elemental Control has the same amount of points in it as the first power, but the cost is halved. Increased individual powers in the Elemental Control may be bought at the normal extra cost, but a slot may never have less points than the first power. The powers in an Elemental Control must be linked by a good rationale; something like Elemental Control Defenses (with Flash Defense, Ego Defense, and Lack of Weakness) is not acceptable unless the player can come up with a brilliant explanation of how those powers connect together with his origin and other powers.

Killing Attack: This change was for those *Champions* players who build *Wolverine* clones. The cost is still the same as before, but now each fifteen points of STR gives you 1D6 extra points damage, with the following proviso: the amount of dice added for extra STR cannot exceed the number of dice in Killing Attack (a variant of Gansmiller’s Law: “The modifier to a die roll may never exceed the number rolled on the die itself.”) The Killing Attack now costs END to use, in addition to the END used for STR. So,

if your character with a 40 STR puts 15 points into Killing Attack, he can do a 1D6 Killing Attack using a 10 STR (END cost - 5 points), or a 2D6 Killing Attack using a 25 STR (END cost - 8 points). You would have to push your Killing Attack to do more damage, even though you have a 40 STR. Your claws are only so long. If you want to do more damage, buy more Killing Attack. Note: 5 points more than needed for 1D6 of Killing Attack is +1 to the attack. Ten points more than needed for 1D6 adds $\frac{1}{2}$ D6 to the attack.

Breaking Things: The section on "Breaking Things" has been revised to conform to the system used in *Escape from Stronghold*. Objects are now given a Defense (which acts as resistant PD and ED) and a BODY value. This leads to several changes in the powers. First, the Tunneling description was altered. Now, every 5 points in Tunneling gives you 1" of movement through materials with a Defense of 1. Thus, 40 points in Tunneling would give you 8" of movement through materials with a Defense of up to 8. The Defense able to be Tunneled through could be increased by +1 for 3 points of Tunneling with no increase in inches of movement. Tunneling only works on inanimate objects; if you want to Tunnel through a person, buy Killing Attack.

Entangle: Entangle was changed not only to conform to the new "Breaking Things", but to make the power more useful. For every 10 points in Entangle, the character gets 1D6 of Entangle (count the BODY) and 1 point of Defense for the Entangle. The END cost is only paid when the Entangle is thrown, not each phase the Entangle is up. The Entangle will last until broken, unless you define the special effects differently. (For instance, *Spiderman's* webbing dissolves in about an hour.) If you want a different type of Entangle, use Force Wall.

Force Wall: The definition has been expanded to make it more useful. Force Wall now gives you 2 points of resistant defense for 5 points in an area of 1/2 hex (3 of the 6 sides). The Force Wall prevents people from passing through, acting like an Entangle with no BODY; merely exceed the particular defense, and the whole Force Wall collapses. Force Wall in this fashion can now be used to block openings, bridge small gaps, etc. This makes the power much more interesting, and much more like the examples in the comics (see *Sue Storm* or *Iceman*).

Characteristic Drain and Transfer: These have been generalized to include powers. They are now called Power Drain and Power Transfer. When you buy Power Drain, you may specify a power that you can drain (such as Energy Blast) or a characteristic (as before). The cost for draining is the same. Power Transfer now means that you can drain one characteristic or power and transfer the points to one of your characteristics or powers. The thing you are draining from and the thing you are transferring to need not be the same. Transferring someone's STR to your END would be acceptable. The power points gained through Power Transfer are lost at the rate of 1 power point per segment. The power points lost through Power Drain and Power Transfer are regained by the target at the same rate. Power Drain and Transfer are more useful in these new forms, and it is now easier to duplicate many comic book characters.

Missile Deflection: This has become a power instead of a skill. The major reason for this change was to differentiate

between those characters that had Missile Deflection with a focus (bracers, billy club, etc.) and those characters that seemed to be able to evade missiles (such as *Spiderman*). We also took the opportunity to split Missile Deflection into three parts. For 10 points, you can deflect thrown objects; for 15 points, you can deflect bullets and thrown objects; and for 20 points you can deflect energy beams, bullets, and thrown objects. Levels in Missile Deflection are now standard 3 point Skill Levels.

Hardened Defenses: The Power Advantage of Armor Piercing had no defensive power, so we have included Hardened Defenses, a $\frac{1}{4}$ Power Advantage. This Advantage must be applied to each different type of defense separately (Armor, Force Field, your PD, your ED, etc.). Armor Piercing will not halve a hardened defense. I suppose you could buy Armor Piercing twice, so you would need doubly hardened defenses to stop it, if you were crazy. You'd be crazy, because Armor Piercing isn't really cost-effective unless the target has really high defenses.

Spreading Energy Attacks: This is one of the sections that was lost when *Magneto* attacked our diskettes prior to publication. We devised the rules to help correct the imbalance between STR and Energy Blast. The problem lies in the fact that everyone starts with a STR of 10, which gives them a free 2D6 of attack, which is 2D6 of headstart on Energy Blast. Also, each 5 points of STR gives you some figured characteristics as well. Energy Blast is therefore rather inefficient unless given some compensating advantage.

The advantage in this case is the ability to spread the Energy Blast to increase your chance to hit. Each 1D6 that you pay END for, but do not use as damage gives you a +1 OCV. Thus, you could do 10D6 instead of 12D6 (paying the END as if you were doing 12D6), and get +2 to your OCV for that shot. The other ability you have with Energy Blast is spreading your attack for a minor Area Effect. Each 1D6 you pay END for but don't use for damage allows you to fill one hex. A separate Attack Roll is made on each target in the hex. The attack must be in connecting hexes, and can only be 1 hex deep. This is useful for taking out agents (who usually fall into convenient formations). If you have three agents in adjacent hexes, you can spread your Energy Blast by three dice and roll an Attack Roll versus each of them. The Attack Rolls are made just as if you were attacking them normally with your Energy Blast, though the damage will be lessened by 3D6. This technique will remove those pesky agents in no time.

The Character Disadvantages have remained mostly the same. Berserk has been modified only slightly, so that "in combat" is not a part of every Berserk. Susceptibility has been changed to include STUN-only susceptibilities, so that you need not take BODY from your Susceptibility. The Competent Dependent NPC may now be built up on 50 points instead of only 20. These changes will not result in a significant difference in the point totals of the characters, but they will mean that the disadvantages will better reflect circumstances in the comics.

These rules changes are of course explained in more detail in the revised Champions rulebook. Our forthcoming supplement, Champions II, will contain elaborations of certain rules, new powers and skills, vehicle rules, encounter charts, and a lot more. □

Role-Playing The X-Men

illustrated by Mark Williams

by Glenn Thain

One of the most popular comic books on the market in recent years has been the *X-Men*, Marvel Publishing's third "superhero" group. Unlike the previous two (*Fantastic Four* and the *Avengers*), the group was composed of teenagers who through no fault of their own had acquired powers beyond the ordinary human ken. Led by the charismatic Professor Charles Xavier, these five teenagers (Cyclops, Angel, Beast, Iceman, and Marvel Girl) blasted their way into adventure after adventure. They were born with their powers rather than being the product of a freak accident, the invention of a mad scientist, the product of revenge, or of being bitten by a were-black raspberry jello.

When I set out to convert the heroes/villains of today's comics to the *Champions* rules system, I was beset with minor problems. Certain characteristics are fairly easy to translate over (Strength, Body pips, Presence) while others need a certain amount of value judgment (Intelligence, Ego, and even Dexterity). Powers are a little easier, and with a bit of creative character building, one can duplicate the powers found on the pages of today's comics. In most cases, research is needed to properly construct the hero/villain in question, and in minor instances, the Gamemaster must be consulted to properly preserve the flavor of the character.

Surprisingly enough, the material needed to do the proper research is also the largest source of inconsistency. The comics have the annoying habit of frequently changing writers on a book, and with every change, characters undergo metamorphosis: they gain or lose powers, stats change, etc. Since this is a common problem, I was forced to re-read and re-work as I went along.

I had my work cut out for me to try and "stat out" the current version of the *X-Men*. The comic is now in its 161st issue as of this writing. Furthermore, countless articles and interviews with the creative teams have been done. Where to start? I felt that many *Champions* players would only be interested in the current "X-persons." I read everything on the new team, then did basic workups. I took the workups in their unfinished form and discussed them with friends, comic collectors, and X-fans.

I selected the following to write up: Storm, Colossus, Nightcrawler, Wolverine, Sprite, and Cyclops. I omitted

the Avenging Angel (one of my favorites) to add Sprite. I retained Cyclops (who, after the death of Phoenix, quit the team in issue 138 to rejoin in issue 150) while leaving Banshee on the sidelines. Due to space requirements, Professor X, along with the "Old Team" (and dare I say it? Phoenix) will have to wait for another time.

I threw out those powers that were used only once, as I saw those as artistic license and not as a part of the character as a whole (examples: Banshee's sonic scream against Moses Magnum, issue 119, Storm's control of Shaman's storm, issue 121, etc.). These versions of the characters are a composite; they should be somewhere in the realm of the "average" as far as *Champions* characters are concerned. If they do not fit in to your particular campaign format, re-work them to suit your needs.

The following paragraphs are a synopsis of how some of the more obscure conclusions were reached. Some of the material explains different ways of reaching the same goal, some are nothing more than the author's sounding off. Remember, this is just one way to do it. If it doesn't feel right, change and modify it. And now ... *The X-Men!*

THE GOOD GUYS

Note

It was determined that to reflect the amount of experience and combat training the team seems to have, a bonus of 100 points was necessary, making the grand total 200 points + disadvantages. The base 100 point start was too low to properly reflect the characters as they appear in their comic, and a larger bonus proved to be a little much when compared with existing *Champions* characters.

Sprite

At first glance, Sprite appears to be worthless, and, as far as combat goes, she is. But even without the formalized X-training (martial arts, boosted ego, ego defense), she has played an important part in the new team. Her ability to "phase" (similar, yet refreshingly different from the *Vision*)

Name: SPRITE

VAL	CHA	Cost	Cost	Powers	END
6	STR	4	150	Desolidification 15 BODY, fully invisible power.	3
18	DEX	24			
13	CON	6	37	1/4 END cost - Desolidification	
8	BODY	4			
25	INT	15	50	SD6 No Normal Defense, defense is <i>not</i> having energy fields	0
10	EGO	0			
10	PRE	0	50	0 END Cost - No Normal Defense attack	
14	COM	2			
6	PD	5	11	Computer Programming 17 or less	
8	ED	5			
3	SPD	2	200+	<i>Disadvantages</i>	
6	REC	4	15	1 1/2 x STUN from Physical Attacks	
30	END	2	10	1 1/2 x STUN from Electrical Attacks	
20	STUN	0	10	Novice Superhero	
			10	In love with COLOSSUS	
	OCV	= 6	35	Hunted by SENTINELS 11 or less	
	DCV	= 6	35	Hunted by Hellfire Club 11 or less	
	ECV	= 3	15	Hunted by Brotherhood of Evil	
	PHA	= 4, 8, 12		Mutants 8 or less	
			10	Dependent NPC: family (normal) 8 or less	
	CHA Cost	= 57			
	Power Cost	= 298	15	Secret Identity: Kitty Pride	
	Disadvantages	= 155			
	Total		= 355		

is an excellent scouting ability. Furthermore, she cannot be seen through when phasing, appearing to be a solid rather than a ghostly form. One of the more interesting features of Sprite is her ability to disrupt the electromagnetic fields of things (the No Normal Defense attack). She is a bright individual — she and Reed Richards (at the back of the *King Sized Annual 5*) carry on a conversation which leaves the Thing mystified. She may not have many powers now, but she's only 13, and major developments are awaited.

Storm

Storm represented a challenge in character building. Trying to quantify one who wields the forces of nature is a mindboggling task. I attempted to cover all bases, gradually coming to the conclusion that all weather is a form of special effects. Thus, Storm's Energy Blast can be hail, lightning (the most common), a monsoon, nearly any weather effect. Her Flight is called gliding.

Name: STORM					
VAL	CHA	Cost	Cost	Powers	END
10	STR	0		Elemental Control —	
24	DEX	42		Weather Powers	
25	CON	30	75	1) 12D6 Energy Blast	6
10	BODY	0	37	2) 4D6 Ranged Killing Attack	6
15	INT	5	37	3) 5D6 No Normal Defense	2
13	EGO	6		attack, defense is Life Support	
20	PRE	10		(15) or Weather Powers	
30	M	10	37	4) 30 STR Telekinesis area	15
8	PD	6		effect 12 hexes (+1/2 cost,	
16	ED	11		double area)	
5	SPD	16	37	5) 25" Flight	1
8	REC	2	37	6) Darkness 10" radius	2
50	END	0	15	Security Systems 17 or less	
30	STUN	2	5	Ego Defense 8 points	
			10	Instant Change	
			10	1 Overall Level	
			10	2 levels with Elemental Control	
				OCV = 8	
				DCV = 8	
				ECV = 4	
				PHA = 3, 5, 8,	
				10, 12	
				200+ Disadvantages	
				10 Berserk 8 or less when really annoyed	
				recover on 11 or less	
				5 1D6 Unluck	
				5 CHA Cost = 140	
				30 2x STUN from all Killing Attacks	
				30 2x STUN from Physical Attacks	
				20 Disadvantages = 250	
				20 Claustrophobia	
				20 Code Against Killing	
				10 Hesitant	
				35 Hunted by SENTINELS 11 or less	
				35 Hunted by Hellfire Club 11 or less	
				15 Hunted by MAGNETO 8 or less	
				15 Hunted by Brotherhood of Evil	
				15 Mutants 8 or less	
				10 Dependent NPC: Kitty Pride (gross)	
				(fellow superheroine) 14 or less	
				15 Secret Identity: Ororo Munroe	

but after careful research, a value judgment was made that it was simply called gliding. In every instance, Storm climbed much too swiftly to even consider it as mere gliding. Storm also employs a No Normal Defense Attack, used primarily against Magneto (issue 113 where Magneto complains of the humidity). Some careful considerations were given to Storm's disadvantages. The Berserk might seem out of character, but she reaches a point of no return, trusting to the Code Against Killing disadvantage before someone is seriously hurt (issues 112, 120, 147, 150). She, like Sprite, doesn't have the X-Training that the others have. Rather, she developed her "strength of will" (Ego and Ego Defense) during her years in Africa.

Colossus

If one of the X-Men could be considered a perfect *Champions* character as far as systems purity is concerned, it would be Colossus. He is a textbook example of the classic brick: high Defenses, high Strength. He is the first example of an X-Trained person (see Sprite). The split scores in the

Name: COLOSSUS					
VAL	CHA	Cost	Cost	Powers	END
20/70*	STR	46	13	Martial Arts (20 points, no Mar-	
21	DEX	33		tial Kick)	
15/28*	CON	23	24*	Full Damage Resistance	
15/16*	BODY	10	8*	Lack of Weakness 10 pts	
10	INT	0	12*	15 pts Life Support	
10	EGO	0	10*	Hardened Defenses	
15	PRE	5	5*	CHA Defense 6 pts	
16	COM	3	5*	Flash Defense 6 pts	
10/20*	PD	12	5	Ego Defense 7 pts	
8/24*	ED	13	8*	Density Increase	0
5	SPD	19	8*	0 END Cost — Density Increase	
9/20*	REC	4	10	2D6 Luck	
44/60*	END	7	5	Instant Change	
33/65*	STUN	5	27*	1/4 END Cost — STR	
			15	3 Levels in Hand-to-Hand combat	
			10	1 Overall Level	
				* Only in armored form	
				OCV = 7	
				DCV = 7	
				ECV = 3	
				PHA = 3, 5, 8,	
				10, 12	
				200+ Disadvantages	
				10 Loyalty to the team	
				5 Unsure of position with X-Men	
				35 CHA Cost = 180	
				35 Hunted by SENTINELS 11 or less	
				35 Power Cost = 165	
				35 Hunted by Hellfire Club 11 or less	
				15 Disadvantages = 145	
				15 Hunted by Brotherhood of Evil	
				15 Total = 345	
				15 Mutants 8 or less	
				15 Hunted by MAGNETO 8 or less	
				15 Dependent NPC: sister (incompetent)	
				8 or less	
				15 Secret Identity: Peter Rasputin	

characteristic column reflect that even while not in armored form, Colossus is still formidable. The Density Increase was added as an afterthought, figuring that Colossus is a little heavier than normal (issue 128).

Nightcrawler

Nightcrawler is a prime example of creative character building. In the *Marvel Comics Index Part 9A — The X-Men*, under Nightcrawler's synopsis, it was stated that he could teleport "about ten kilometers being the maximum." (Page 13, paragraph 9.) Unfortunately, they neglected to state just how long this took. He could also teleport with others taking small amounts of damage. This represented a small problem if one was to just buy Teleport, both in amount of points spent and Endurance. When I re-read the comics, I found that he didn't do all of these things at the same time. The Multipower allows for his long distance, his combat 'port, and his memorized locations (if you calculate the second slot in the Multipower out, yes, Virginia, he goes ten kilometers+). Furthermore, this was the only way to present the massive Endurance cost when teleporting over long distances. The rest of Nightcrawler is straight interpretation from the material presented, with the exception of the Susceptibility. He takes the 6D6 Stun with the x2 multiple, and the 3D6 Body and Stun with the x4 multiple.

Name: NIGHTCRAWLER

VAL	CHA	Cost	Cost	Powers	END
15	STR	5	90	Multipower	
27	DEX	51	9	Ultra - 25" Combat Teleport	1
23	CON	26	2	Ultra - 30" Teleport, x64 distance (x4 END Cost)	24
10	BODY	0			
13	INT	3	9	Ultra - 30" Teleport to memorized locations	1
10	EGO	0			
15	PRE	5	1	Ultra - 25" Teleport, 4x normal mass, (x5 END Cost), to memorized locations	25
12	COM	1			
10	PD	7			
10	ED	5	23	Martial Arts, +1/2 multiple	
6	SPD	23	10	6" Superleap	3
10	REC	4	10	Ultraviolet Vision	
46	END	0	16	Acrobatics 17 or less	
30	STUN	1	18	Invisibility (+1 only works in darkness)	0
	OCV = 9		10	Extra Limb - Tail	
	DCV = 9		5	Stealth 14 or less	
	ECV = 3		10	Clinging - 20 STR	
	PHA = 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12		6	3" Running	
			10	2D6 Luck	
			5	Ego Defense 7 pts	
	CHA Cost = 131		20	2 Overall Levels	
	Power Cost = 254				
	Disadvantages = 185	200+		<i>Disadvantages</i>	
	Total = 385		10	2 x STUN from Sonic Attacks	
			35	6D6 STUN when teleporting with others. 3D6 STUN when 4x mass	
			20	Swashbuckler	
			35	Hunted by SENTINELS 11 or less	
			35	Hunted by Hellfire Club 11 or less	
			15	Hunted by MAGNETO 8 or less	
			15	Hunted by Brotherhood of Evil Mutants	
			5	Dependent NPC: Amanda Sefton (competent) 8 or less	
			15	Unusual Looks	

Name: CYCLOPS

VAL	CHA	Cost	Cost	Powers	END
15	STR	5	90*	Multipower 135 pts	
23	DEX	39	9*	Ultra - 18D6 Optic Blast (Physical Attack, 32 x END battery)	18
23	CON	26			
11	BODY	2	9*	Ultra - 7D6 Ranged Killing Attack (Physical Attack)	21
20	INT	10			
18	EGO	16	15	Martial Arts	
25	PRE	15	7	Acrobatics 14 or less (+1/2 costs END)	2
18	COM	4			
10	PD	7	11	Ego Defense 15 pts	
15	ED	10	9	Flash Defense 9 pts	
5	SPD	17	5	Computer Programming 13 or less	
10	REC	4	15	5 Levels with Optic Blast	
46	END	0	30	3 Overall Levels	
30	STUN	0		* +1/2 bonus, must burn 1 END per 3 spent in battery, must fire at full power if visor is removed, or be blind (576 pt. battery)	
	OCV = 8				
	DCV = 8				
	ECV = 6				
	PHA = 3, 5, 8, 10, 12		5	Berserk 8 or less when teammates hurt, recover 11 or less	
			5	1D6 Unluck	
	CHA Cost = 155		20	Code Against Killing	
	Power Cost = 200		10	Won't use full power against people (max of 12D6) unless Ego roll made (+2D6 per -1 to roll)	
	Disadvantages = 155		35	Hunted by SENTINELS 11 or less	
	Total = 355		35	Hunted by Hellfire Club 11 or less	
			15	Hunted by Brotherhood of Evil Mutants 8 or less	
			15	Hunted by MAGNETO 8 or less	
			15	Secret Identity: Scott Summers	

Cyclops

One of two for this article that I had to go back to *X-Men 1* to do the character justice. I originally toyed with an Elemental for the optic blast, but the Multipower was a lot cheaper. I tried him on his own Endurance, but he tended to burn out too quickly, and the Endurance battery was not an accurate representation. So, I decided that it was a combination of both, with a disadvantage thrown in. The levels are in question, but once again, play balance with the rest of the team was necessary, and Cyke doesn't use them all the time. He does have Acrobatics, but again, not used very often, hence the Endurance cost. Since issue one, he's been worried about killing someone with the eyebeams, and won't use them at full power against a living target (even Magneto, when he knows Magneto's shields are down). He typifies the classic *Champions* energy projector.

Wolverine

By far the most popular of the new X-Men, Wolverine was one of the easiest/hardest to stat out. Easy, in terms of what actual Powers (as opposed to Skills) he has, and hard as the information presented about him is somewhat

Name: WOLVERINE

VAL	CHA	Cost	Cost	Powers	END
28	STR	18	60*	3D6 Hand-to-hand Killing	2
26	DEX	48		Armor Piercing Attack (4D6 with STR adds)	
30	CON	40			
15	BODY	10	19	Martial Arts (+1/2 no Martial Kick) 8D6 Punch	
14	INT	4			
13	EGO	6	10*	Missile Deflection 14 or less (bullets)	
20	PRE	10			
12	COM	1	6	+3" Running	3
22	PD	16	18	6 Levels with Perception Rolls	
15	ED	9	15	Tracking 12 or less	
5	SPD	14	10	Ultrasonic Hearing	2
15	REC	6	3	Discriminatory Smell	
60	END	0	3	Discriminatory Taste	2
45	STUN	1	11	Stealth 17 or less	
			10	Acrobatics 14 or less	
			5	Lack of Weakness -5	1
	OCV = 9		20	Regeneration 2 BODY	
	DCV = 9		7	1/2 END Cost - STR	
	ECV = 4		20	2 Overall Levels	
	PHA = 3, 5, 8, 10, 12			* Obvious Inaccessible Focus - Claws	
			200+	<i>Disadvantages</i>	
	CHA Cost = 183		20	Berserk 11 or less when friends are hurt, recover 11 or less	
	Power Cost = 217		20	Likes to Kill	
	Disadvantages = 200		20	Animal Emotions	
	Total = 400		10	Vengeful (x1/2)	
			35	Hunted by Hellfire Club 11 or less	
			35	Hunted by SENTINELS 11 or less	
			15	Hunted by Brotherhood of Evil Mutants 8 or less	
			15	Hunted by MAGNETO 8 or less	
			15	Dependent NPC: Mariko Yashida (incompetent) 8 or less	
			15	Secret Identity: Logan	

vague. The major attack was easy. Adamantium claws in the Marvel universe have been described as cutting vanadium steel like "a hot knife through butter" (the armor piercing). I consulted the rules in the case of the adamantium skeleton. The description under the *Champions* rules for an inobvious inaccessible focus (see Focus) did not apply, as the only way to remove or disable the skele-



ton would mean the death of Wolverine. (Of course, one could wake Ultron with the molecular rearranger, but ...). Since I elected not to use the "skeleton focus" I boosted his Constitution, gave him a few more Body pips, and boosted defenses. However, since the claws could be removed, I did consider them a focus.

The following is presented to help you convert Marvel or DC characters to your own campaigns.

Research: Look for trends in the character, and steer away from the artistic embellishment that comic writers use to hype the story. Remember, you and the others in the run will add the flavor of the story, with the Gamesmaster moderating. Sort of a writer/editor relationship.

Discuss: Many times I went to friends to try to pound out a quirk about a character, and was glad that I did, as they saw things I had missed, or gave me new thought lines to follow.

Experiment: Build and re-build the characters until they feel comfortable to you. Look to balancing the character according to the others in the campaign, so when a few experience points are gained, you have somewhere to go.

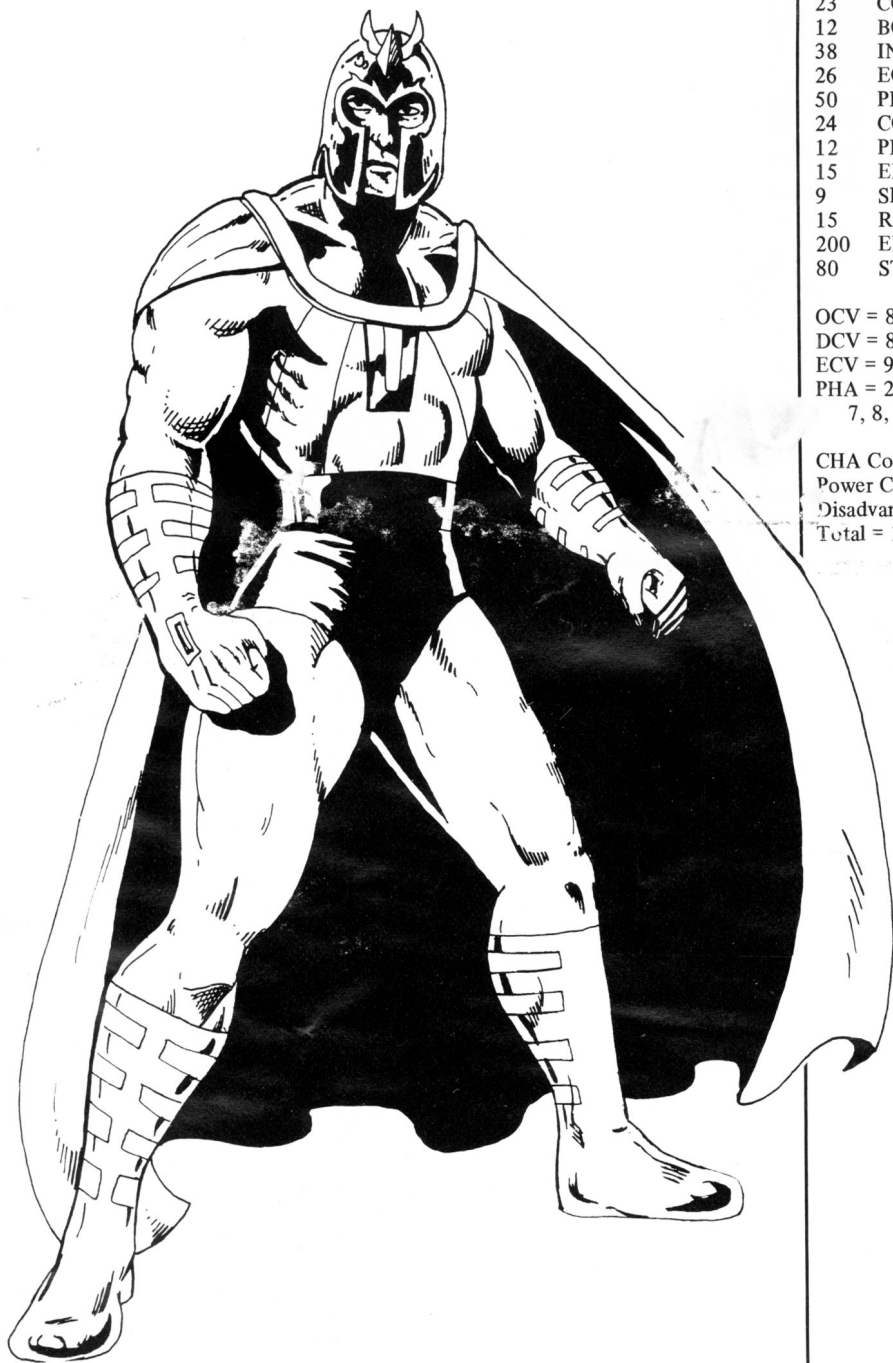
THE BAD GUY

Magneto

Where to begin? The point total says it all. I wouldn't be surprised if both the X-Men and the Teen Titans (to be published in a future issue) got trashed fighting him. However, a few notes. The hunted is just that, *everyone* on a 14 or less. Since Magneto is Speed 9, if he isn't careful, he runs out of Endurance faster than you can shake a stick at. His Psych Disadvantages should be played to the hilt. He is massively overconfident (issue 150 as example) and supremely arrogant, much more than 20 points can convey. As to the double stun Disadvantages, they are never shown, but the heroes need all the edge they can get. The 200

points in "bases" includes all or any base he has in the world, or any neat gizmos to "deathtrap" the heroes. In all instances where the New X-Men ran into him, only minor quirks saved them. He could have killed them all. If you feel that the bonus is a little high, read issue 104. Eric the Red boosted Magneto to the peak of his powers. Think about it.

A Final Note: With teamwork, the X-Men can defeat Magneto. He usually has a grand plan for world domination which ties him up somewhat. If Magneto trashes the X-Men, they might not be working as a team. Develop the playstyle of the team better and try again. □



Name: MAGNETO

VAL	CHA	Cost	Cost	Powers	END
15	STR	5		Elemental Control –	
25	DEX	45		Magnetics	
23	CON	26	175	1) 50" Flight	1
12	BODY	4	87	2) 20D6 Energy Blast	3
38	INT	28	87	3) 10D6 Entangle, 10 Defense	3
26	EGO	32	50*	4) 100 STR Telekinesis vs. mag-	3
50	PRE	40		netic metals, 50 STR vs non-	
24	COM	7		magnetic metals, 25 STR vs	
12	PD	9		anything	
15	ED	10	87	5) 10D6 No Normal Defenses	3
9	SPD	55		attack, defense is high mag-	
15	REC	14		netic fields or metal	
200	END	77	33*	6) 6D6 Ranged Killing Attack	3
80	STUN	49		(inanimate objects only)	
			75	Multipower	
	OCV = 8		15	m +25 PD, +12 ED Force	6
	DCV = 8			Field (hardened), 1/2 END,	
	ECV = 9		15	m +12 PD, +12 ED Force	6
	PHA = 2, 3, 4, 6			12 hexes, 1/2 END	
	7, 8, 10, 11, 12		13	20 pts Life Support only while	
				Force Field or Force Wall is up	
	CHA Cost = 411		50	30 pts Life Support, area effect	
	Power Cost = 1089			3" radius, usable on others, only	
	Disadvantages = 210			while Force Field or Force Wall	
	Total = 1500			is up	
				Elemental Control –	
				Enhancement	
			30	1) Energy Absorption – Elec-	
				trical attacks, 60 point threshold,	
				goes to END	
			15	2) Energy Absorption – Cold at-	
				tacks, 60 pt threshold, goes to	
				No Normal Defense attack	
			10	3) 1D6 Power Drain – PD, 1 at 1	
				range, 1/2 END, only while en-	
				tangled	
			22	30 pts Ego Defense	
			45	Radar Sense, only for locating	
				electric/magnetic disturbances,	
				x32 range	
			10	Instant Change	
			15	Computer Programming 22 or less	
			40	4 overall levels	
			15	3D6 Luck	
			200	Installations, bases	
				* (+3/4 usable only vs. magnetic metal)	
			200+	Disadvantages	
			20	2 x STUN from wood attacks	
			20	2 x BODY from wood attacks	
			10	2 x STUN from all plastic attacks	
			20	Arrogant	
			20	Overconfident	
			5	Dependent NPC: wife Magda 8 or less	
			40	Hunted by X-Men 14 or less	
			40	Hunted by AVENGERS 14 or less	
			20	Hunted by U.S. Govt 14 or less	
			15	Secret Identity	
			1090	Villain Bonus	

THE HOTTEST GAME OF '82

CHAMPIONS

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StarMaster

Air screams around your ships as they enter the atmosphere. Missile-launchers fire dealeningly to port and starboard while atmosphere-fighters drop in shrieking dives from their hangers below. Warriors, tightly clenching their weapons, check their pressure suits one last time and climb in grim silence into their landing shuttles. In the distance five more heavy cruisers of your empire are firing and unloading their cargo, their hulls gleaming crimson in the light of the red sun above.

This is not a drill. Already laser and missile fire from the mile-wide guardian fortresses below have turned the sky into an exploding nightmare of smoke, fire, and fragmented metal. Planes and shuttles twist and dodge down towards a landscape rapidly becoming an inferno of flame and radiation.

This is no mere raid. For years your people had explored nearby systems without violence, trading technology to the primitive civilizations there in exchange for raw materials. Some species had even thought you gods.

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StarMaster is a correspondence game of galactic exploration, diplomacy, and conquest allowing for interaction not only between each player and the worlds of the galaxy, but between the players themselves.

New players begin further out from the Galactic Center than established players allowing them to develop themselves among equals. You may lead a powerful reptilian race, carving out a vast empire of colony and subject worlds; or perhaps an insectoid species, engaged in a holy crusade to convert the galaxy to the worship of their many-legged god.

As the chosen ruler of your people, you must decide what diplomatic and military policies will be followed in order to lead your kind to dominance among the sentient beings of the galaxy.

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Nor is the StarMaster environment limited in terms of playing area. There are multiple galaxies allowing for extra-galactic invasions across the voids. There are both natural and constructed gateways to (and from!) other dimensions and parallel universes.

StarMaster is limitless in possibilities, bounded only by imagination! It is a game where, literally, anything is possible.

StarMaster offers these features:

- Design your species as if you could have directed evolution to this moment.
- Design your homeworld in terms of temperature, atmosphere, and mass.
- Choose your government and social order.
- You decide the production for all worlds of your empire, building colonizing ships, merchantmen, warships, warriors, and fortresses.
- Technology increases steadily, permitting faster, larger ships, deadlier weapons, and scientific breakthroughs.

The galaxies are dotted with the ruins of Elder civilizations lacking the strength to master the stars. Can you lead your world to greatness where so many others fell short?

StarMaster may be entered for \$12.00 which includes the first two turns, set up turn, a rule book and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, turns are \$3.50 each. A rule book may be purchased separately for \$3.50.

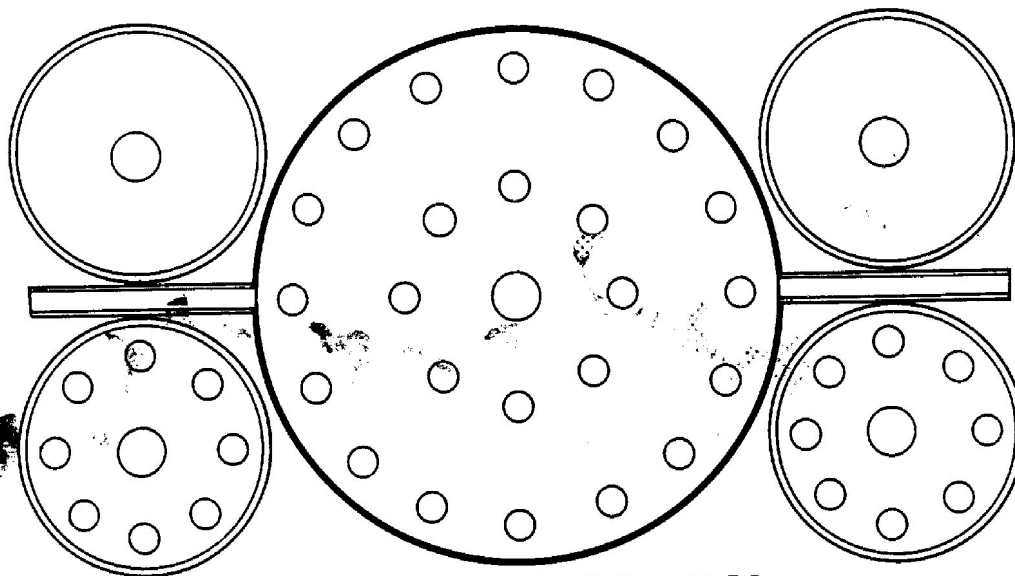


Traveller Source Article

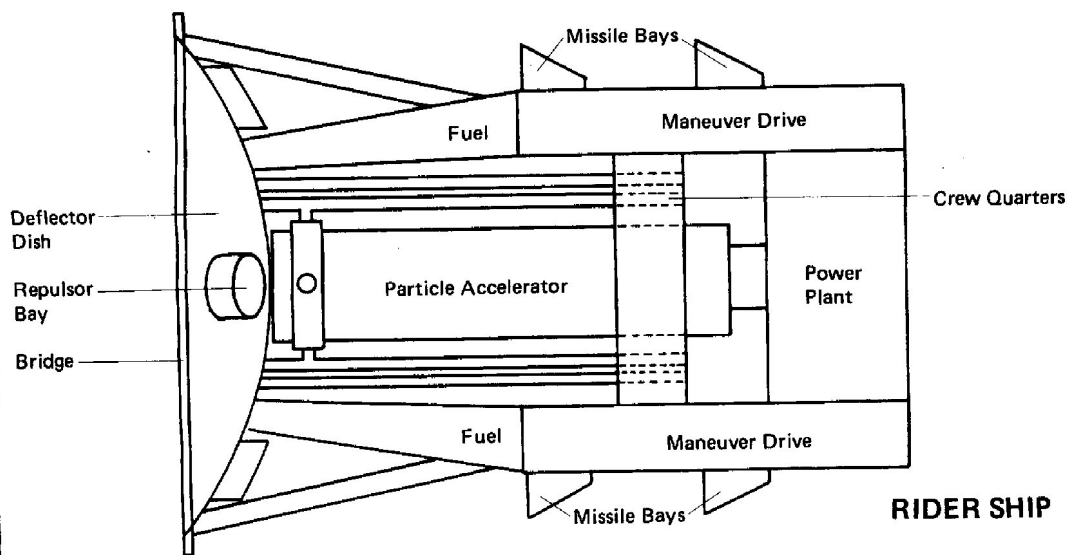
part two

TERRAFORMING

In the future, it is very likely that man will find favorable environments for himself on previous (and hopefully uninhabited) planets. This series describes this process for the Traveller role-playing game.



MASTER SHIP WITH FOUR RIDERS

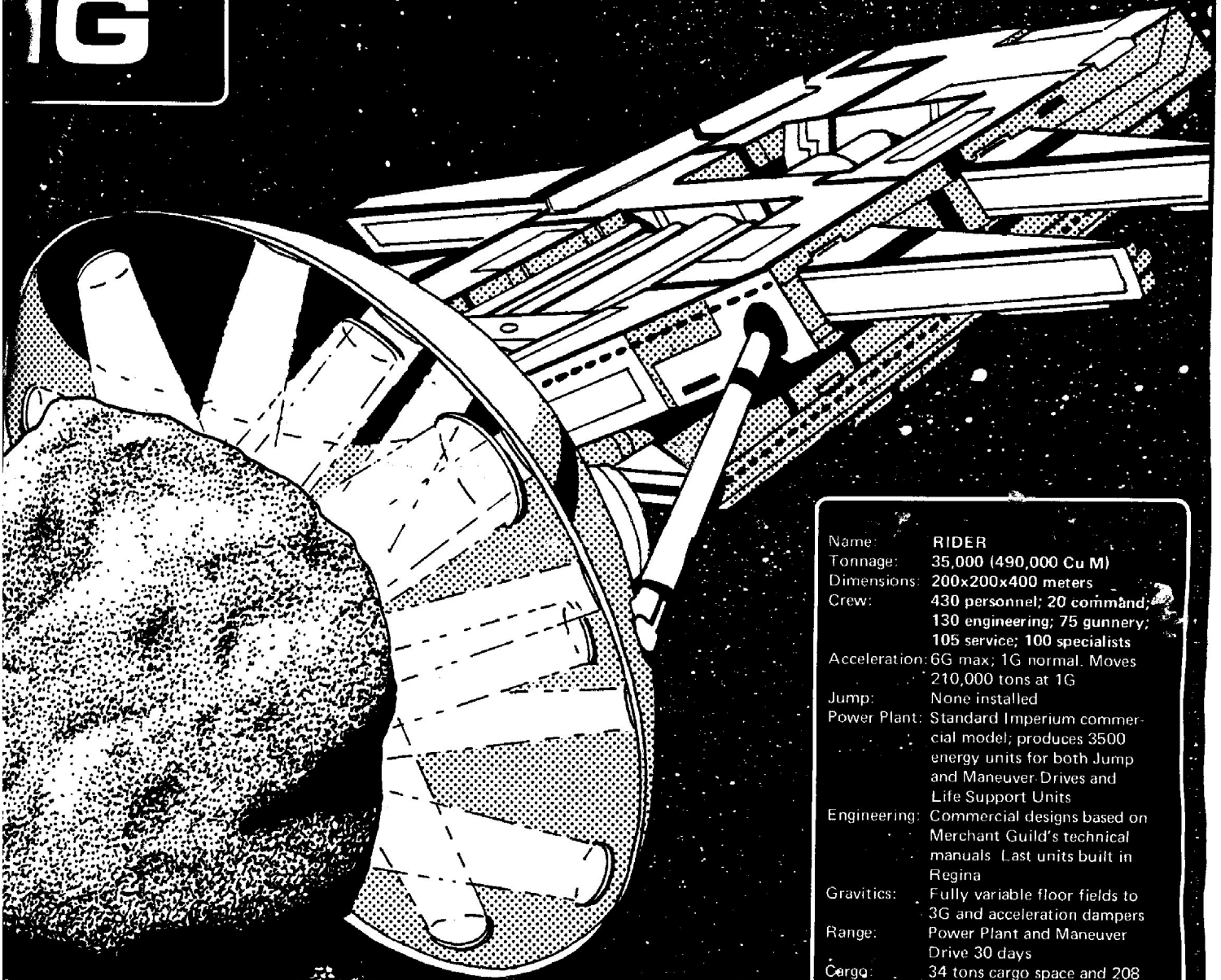


RIDER SHIP

illustrated by Alfred Klosterman

sometimes create
uninhabitable
articles details.

1G



Name: RIDER
Tonnage: 35,000 (490,000 Cu M)
Dimensions: 200x200x400 meters
Crew: 430 personnel; 20 command;
130 engineering; 75 gunnery;
105 service; 100 specialists
Acceleration: 6G max; 1G normal. Moves
210,000 tons at 1G
Jump: None installed
Power Plant: Standard Imperium commer-
cial model; produces 3500
energy units for both Jump
and Maneuver Drives and
Life Support Units
Engineering: Commercial designs based on
Merchant Guild's technical
manuals. Last units built in
Regina
Gravitics: Fully variable floor fields to
3G and acceleration dampers
Range: Power Plant and Maneuver
Drive 30 days
Cargo: 34 tons cargo space and 208
tons of vehicle bay
Armament: Type 'S' Particle Accelerator
and 20-100 ton Bays with
Repulsors mounted. Model '6'
Nuclear Dampers and 6th gen-
eration Meson Screens
Electronics: Model 8 Computer with Fiber-
Optic back-up; entertainment
consoles and Fire Control
Ship's Boats: 4 Runners and 4 Messengers
High Guard LH-M406AH3-F06608-00S00-8
Statistics: 20
10

Part one of this article detailed the preparations leading up to the earth-forming process. It also included the history of Terrax Terraforming Inc., as well as the stats for the Long Range Scout and the Lab Ship. See issue 22 for part one.

By Doug Houseman

After the completion of the initial survey the buyer's conference is held. At the conference, the Terrax engineers and the buyer meet and discuss the various ways the planet may be formed to meet the buyer's specifications. The possibilities are limited by the form of the planet's substructure. The Terrax scientists use their computers to simulate each of the various possibilities that they consider suitable for the owner's purpose. The average owner will have very fixed ideas of what he wants in terms of weather and terrain. Normally, this corresponds directly to the world upon which the owner was raised. If this view is quite unsuitable, Terrax salesmen can often change the buyer's mind.

Once the buyer is persuaded to look at various possibilities, the computer simulations are broken down into several broad categories for review. Each area is discussed separately, and the most desirable options filed for a later and more detailed review. The categories of discussion are: least expensive, best weather, usable land area, transportation ease, purpose of the planet. No single factor is considered alone, but always in conjunction with other factors. The overriding factor is always the purpose for the planet. Several of these purposes and their effects are discussed below:

Purpose for Planet

Agriculture. Usually this type of terraforming is intended to produce one or two rare crops or special seeds. The planet needs to have many large river basins, so the land has good drainage. The oceans must be large, especially in the tropical zones, for much evaporation. Mountain ranges are gently sloped, and valleys are spaced to allow rain to fall evenly around the land surface. The continents are no more than 1000-2000 kilometers wide to reduce possible arid regions. Agricultural planets have little need for city space, and few islands. Farming planets from space often look like a bi-colored beach ball with many stripes. A typical agricultural world has 12 continents.

Mining. Mining planets are the easiest to create. They have a minimal biosphere, and very rough terrain. The land is blasted loose in huge chunks during the earth-forming phase to allow miners direct access to desired minerals. Mining planets are rough places to live on. Surface water is confined to large lakes for smelting and refining operations. Mining worlds are usually sucked dry of minerals and abandoned in less than a century. The people that remain behind may be dangerous to deal with. Sometimes the prison populations of several civilized worlds are dumped on old mining worlds forming a sort of vast, dreary prison.

Playgrounds. Rich man's plaything world-wide amusement parks — playground planets are the most fun to design. Almost every type of terrain and weather are mixed into the world forming scheme. The idea is to provide the largest possible number of different environments to house various desired adventures. The normal method for doing this is to set up large mountain ranges with deep, separated valleys. Each valley acts as a microcosm. Animal and plant life from as many as 50 different worlds are brought in to stock the areas. Giant spaceports and cities are designed for pleasure and leisure. From diving to big-game hunting, the playground world has it all.

Trade. Trade planets are designed to be the focus of several space lanes. The most remarkable feature of the typical trade planet is the gigantic space port, covering 10-15% of the planet's surface. Above- and underground highways are built with high plateaus for warehouses and trade cities. Trade planets have reputations for being Terrax accountants' favorite contracts. Trade planets are infrequently built, but are created from time to time as trade patterns shift.

Industry. Industrial planets are much like the fabled homeworld of the human race. Industrial planets are the hardest to define, ranging from mining wastes to gently sloping farm lands. They must be able to house billions of inhabitants and provide them with the necessities of life.

These five types of planets do not exhaust the possibilities, but are the most common contracts. It is rumored that Terrax also builds (or has built) military training planets for space marines, an ice world for a large drug company, a water world for seafood, an all-mountain and volcano world

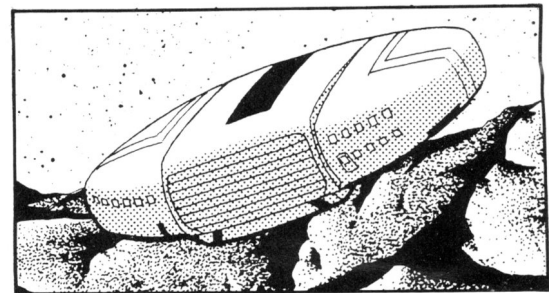
for creation of precious gems and semi-precious stones.

The Design Category

The Cheapest. The design that takes the least amount of time and tricky impacts. The atmosphere will not vary much no matter how the terrain is laid out, so the earthforming part of the project is the most critical step in determining the cheapest method of working a world. Availability of various types of mass in the system helps to determine the method actually used.

Weather. This is the hardest part of the design. The weather pattern of a world is determined by numerous factors — terrain, oceans, satellites, axis tilt, orbital ellipse, and, of course, various unknowns.

Usable Land. The amount of usable land available to the buyer is defined in different ways depending upon the planet's purpose. Terrax can design a world with up to a hundred different land patterns. This is one of the most flexible factors that the planetary engineer has to work with. He is limited only by the underlying rock structure and plate faults. Land patterns will significantly affect other factors, such as weather and transportation.



Name:	HEAVY LANDER
Tonnage:	500 tons (7000 cubic meters)
Dimensions:	7 meters x 22 meters diameter
Crew:	4 (pilot, load master, engineer, communicator)
Acceleration:	3G maximum; 1G cruise
Jump:	None
Power Plant:	30 tons installed equipment: 15 energy units
Engineering:	Ling-Standard Mercant Guild Standard designs. Heavy duty rough field landing legs
Gravitics:	1G floor field; inertia compensators
Range:	30 days standard
Cargo:	300 tons of drive-through space
Armament:	5 triple missile turrets
Electronics:	Model 4 computer with fiber optic back-up
Ship's Boats:	None
High Guard	
Statistics:	
USP:	WY-53033D1-000000-00003-0
	5
	5

Transportation. The ease of transportation depends upon both the technical level that the planet is forced to function at and the planet's purpose. Transportation systems studied by Terrax run the gamut from horses to anti-grav and intercontinental subways. All types of transportation have their own difficulties and solutions. For example, anti-grav vehicles need calm air and subways need stable rock structures.

After discussion of survey data and possibilities, a picture of the new planet-to-be is formed in the computer banks. After about two weeks of design work during the buyer's conference, the world design is settled on.

Now the work begins. The master ship and her rider move into the system to begin their work.

Earth Forming

Earth forming is done in three ways, each with its own purpose and place. The first is Impact forming, using large masses shot at the world from space at high velocity to punch or plow the world into the desired structure. The second method is cutting the planet surface by spaceships or bulldozer-like tanks. The third is to erupt the planet's surface with drill tanks and linear fusion generators.

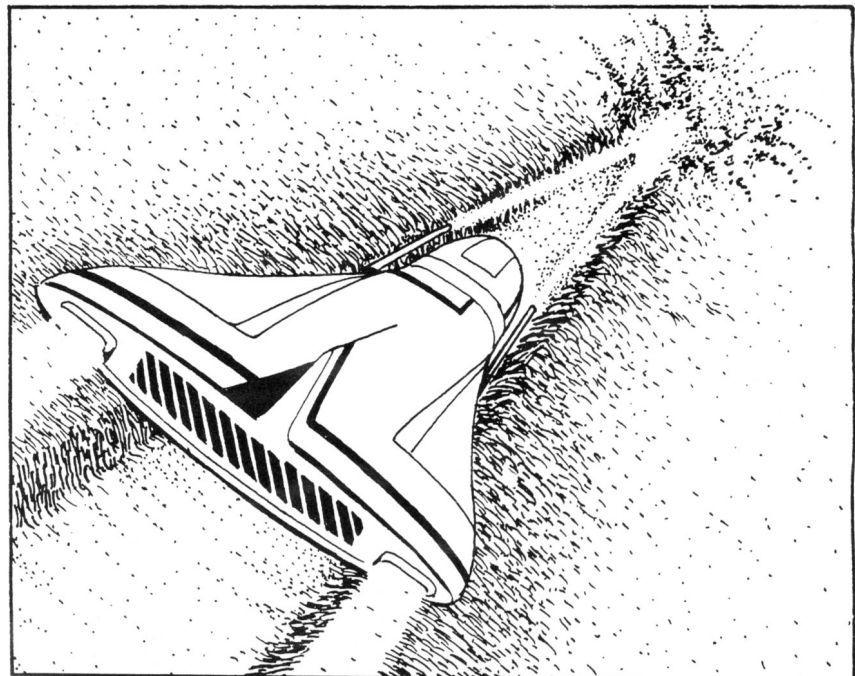
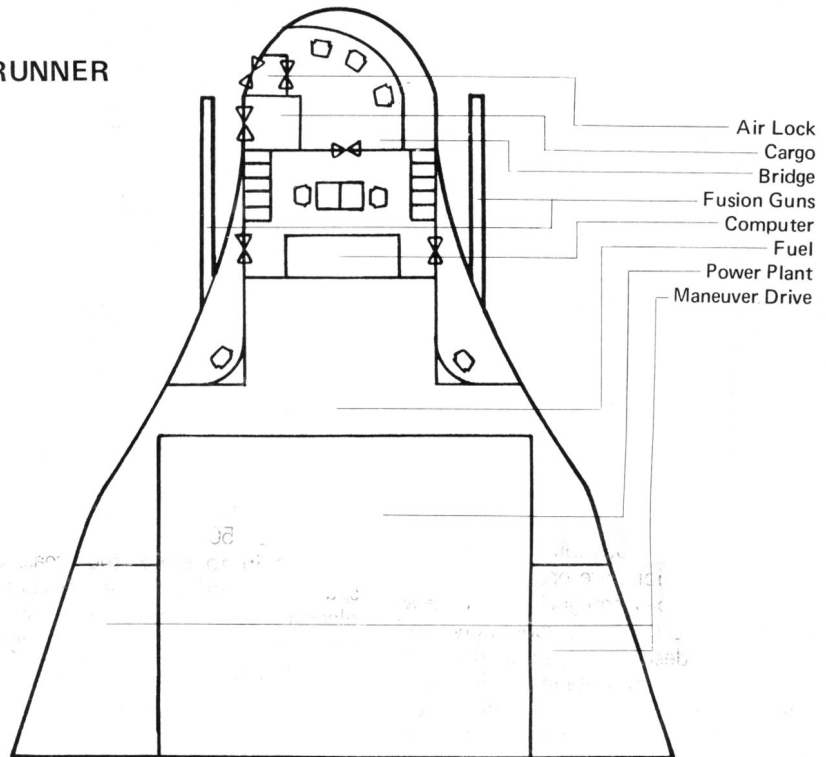
Earth forming times vary widely from job to job depending on the number of shots needed and the complexity of each shot. After each series

of shots, the effects are measured for deviation and the deviation compensated for. A typical team going into a planetary job includes a master ship and all its associated riders.

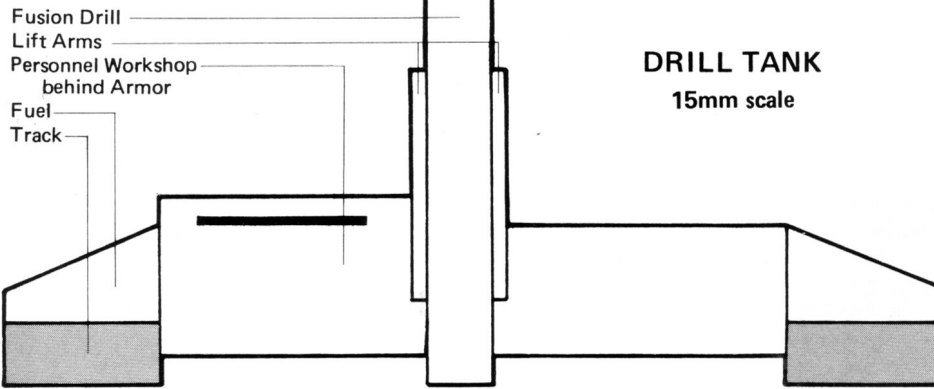
Only the master ship and two jump couriers have the ability to jump from star system to star system. The jump couriers are to bring personnel and

supplies to the squadron as needed and in emergencies. A 15,000 ton supply ship brings regular supplies and mail quarterly. The master ship can push a 6 million ton mass into the planet's surface in order to reshape it. Each rider can push 350 thousand tons of mass. For extremely big jobs, two or more master ships are used.

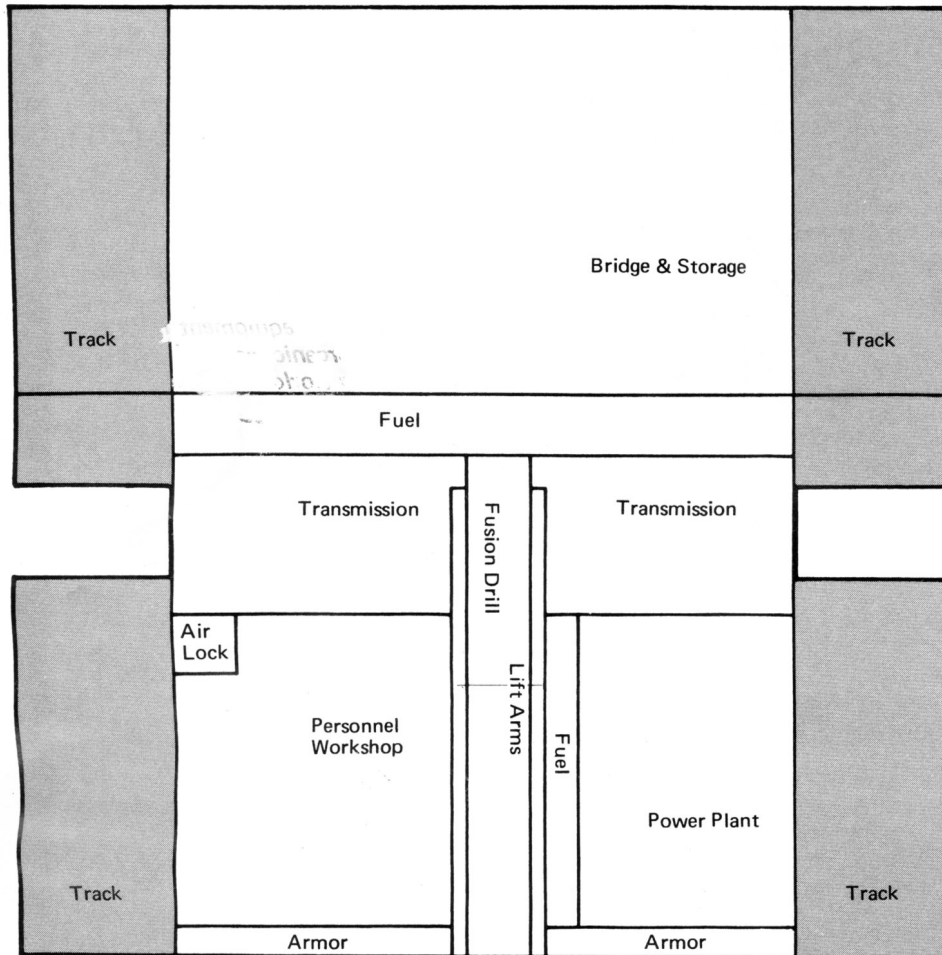
RUNNER



Name: RUNNER
Owned by: Terrax Terraforming Inc.
Designed by: Terrax Terraforming Inc.
 (Tech level 14)
Tonnage: 40 tons (560 Cubic meters)
Dimensions: 30 x 25 x 3 meters
Crew: Pilot, co-pilot, and gunner
Acceleration: 6G max; 1G normal atmospheric cruising
Jump: None installed
Power Plant: 16 tons of equipment installed producing 8 energy units, powering drive, computer, fusion guns, and life support
Engineering: Ling-Standard fusion rapid pulse plant and an MK-6 drive
Gravitics: Partial floor field and inertia dampers in the forward area
Range: 30 days powerplant fuel and dehydrated rations
Cargo: 600 kg of explosive charges
Armament: 2 "Brush-Blaster" Ling Fusion guns, modified for extra long barrel design
Electronics: Centronics Cyber-3 computer
Ship's Boats: None
Armor: 5 layer hardened ceramic
High Guard
Statistics:
 USP: PF-0106L31-500000-05000-0
 2
 2



Front View showing Fusion Drill in Working Position



Front Top View showing Fusion Drill in Stored Position

The Master Ship

The master ship is as large as a front-line battle star — 1,000,000 tons of push. The ships are designed from the keel up as ultimate mass movers, and can move a 6,000,000 ton mass at a constant 1g acceleration. The master ships have a large particle accelerator which can carve masses into suitable shapes for more favorable

results. Master ships can generally complete a shot in 20 hours. Normally, the master ship's shot will initiate a series of shots from the lesser rider ships. A million square kilometer ocean takes about 3,000 shots.

Most of Terrax's master ships are several centuries old. A new class of master ships weighing in excess of 5,000,000 tons is rumored to be plan-

FUSION DRILL TANK (Striker rules)

TL15 Fusion Drill 3.5MCR

Input: 500 Megawatts

Output: 200 Megawatts

Direct Fire Control Only TL15

Range and Penetration

Effective	Long	Extreme
21km(8m)	42km(3m)	85km(40cm)

TL15 Vehicle 11.58MCR

The vehicle has three 3-man crews and a commander. It has the fusion gun in a forward-facing, depressible mount. No small arms are mounted. The after half of the vehicle is devoted to 30 x 15 meter bridge plate 10cm thick. L:15m W:15m H:3m; open top (partial)

Movement: Max 211k/hr, cruise 140k/hr

Armor: Chassis front, radial slope
100cm, all other surfaces flat
.25cm of bonded superdense

Equipment: Workshop, bridge, sealed environment, battle field computer, stabilization, 1000 pow radio, 1000 power target acquisition radar

Power: 540 mw fusion power plant consuming 810 liters/hour, 96 hours of fuel carried

The vehicle is tracked and has a 40 mw transmission guiding it at a pow-to-weight ratio of 171:1 and a ground pressure of 10

Total Volume: 530 cubic meters (45 tons)

Total Weight: 757 tons (actual)

ned. This would reduce the number of shots needed by 20% or more.

Master ships have been attacked in wartime on more than one occasion, and are capable of acquitting themselves honorably. The master ship carries no strictly offensive armament, but the particle accelerator can be a potent weapon.

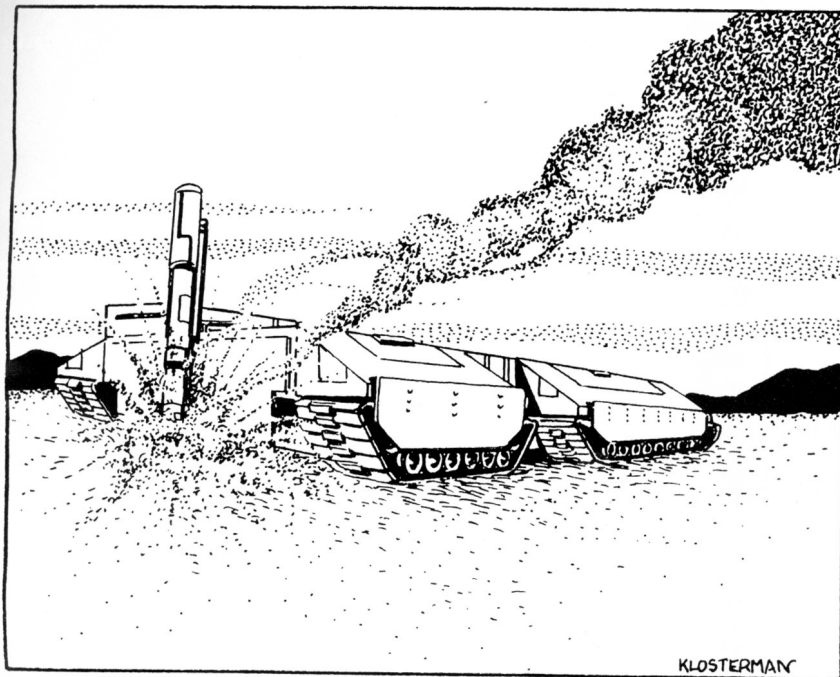
Riders

Riders weigh 35,000 tons and have 1g maneuver drives of a much larger ship. They are designed for the same purpose as the master ships — to move and carve rocks. Terrax still manufactures rider ships. Six of these nestle into a master ship for trips through jump space. Riders carry large particle accelerators and many repulsor bays. Each carries four runner craft, and can effectively serve as battlecraft in wartime — when Terrax's ships are often targets.

The master and six riders do the bulk of the earth forming process while the squadron is on station. The smaller craft are also kept busy, in their hazardous jobs.

The Ammunition

Asteroids form the bulk of the working mass for the job. About 10 tril-



lion tons are needed for most reforming jobs. The rocks are shaped prior to use as shots. One important shape is the ball. Many rocks already come more-or-less in this shape, which will make deep craters, and excavate large amounts of material. Balls are dangerous to use near active fault lines, for fear of earthquakes. A second shape is the "pancake," a flattened mass 100 meters in thickness and a kilometer across. Pancakes require much cooperative effort by several ships to land properly on the planet beneath. They are forced onto the surface in a horizontal fashion and can fuse and smooth rock. The last common shape is a long plug of rock called a "plow." They are formed to be 100x100x8400 meters long, and are designed to gouge furrows 300 meters deep and kilometers long.

The material of the rocks differs with the shapes used. Stony asteroids and carbonaceous chondrites are used for balls and pancakes, or for forming dust screens to bar sunlight from a world's surface. Nickel-iron asteroids are formed into plows.

Plows are used to do large surface gouging and gross excavation. Balls are used to create deep wells and small mountain ranges, and pancakes are used for making coastal plains and to flatten out peaks. If insufficient mass exists in a particular system, Terrax engineers will cut up a lifeless planetoid or moon. The master ship and riders do this with their particle accelerators. If a shot needs to be especially precise, runner craft scrub off

excess mass from the raw material with their fusion guns. The transformation process with rocks normally takes ten more years or so. Final work and fine-tuning fills two years.

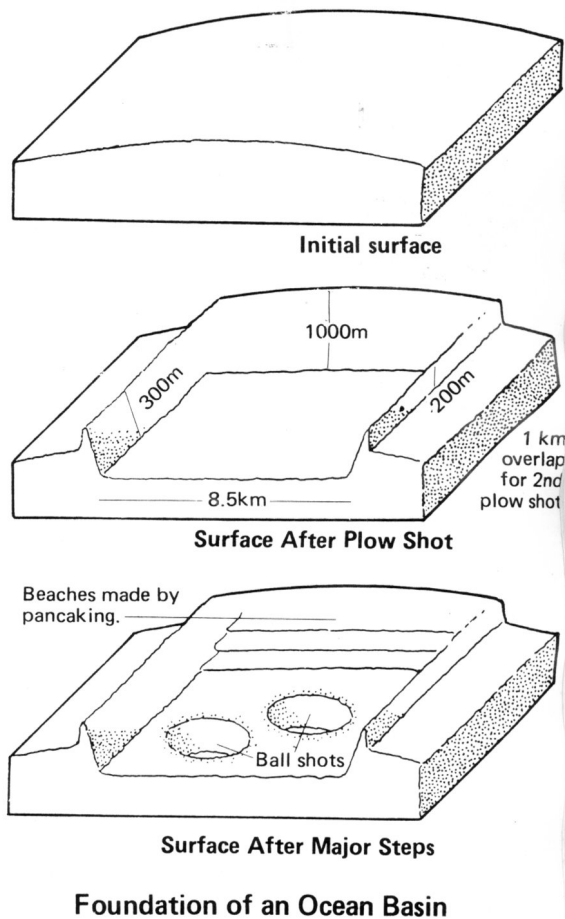
Surface Crews

The surface crews consist of two groups — the runners and drill tanks, each with their appropriate support personnel. The runners have a less hazardous job, as they are based on the larger ships. They have speed normally associated only with fighter craft and mount two heavy duty fusion guns in forward-fixed mounts. They blast river beds, passes, channels, plateaus, and canyons from the surface. They do lesser jobs that cannot be done from orbit by the heavy craft. They also serve as forward observers for the large ships and refine locations and numbers of shots needed. The runners are heavily instrumented and carry excellent computers. They are armored to protect them from their own fusion gun backwash, and the heat of the shot impacts as they follow them in. Runner pilots are highly skilled and are paid 2 or 3 times what a normal pilot is paid.

The drill tank teams have the most dangerous job. The drill tanks are fast, but this is not always enough. On almost every terraforming, a drill tank or two is lost. The drill tanks have a large fusion gun and heavy frontal armor. They are capable of boring holes (with the aid of lava pumps and edge stabilizers) down through the crust in four to seven

days, starting volcanoes. Five hundred ton cargo lifters land drill tanks as closely as possible to their sites, and leave them to do their work. The drill tank ambles over to the site, lays down bed plates of heavy-duty armor, and raises the fusion gun into position. Adjustments to the gun position take a half-day or so. The drill is stopped and disconnected from the fusion generator every four hours for clearing the hole and for checking the position. When the hole is within 300 meters of the Moho, the drill tank withdraws, and an expendable hexaped with a focused fusion device is landed to complete the job. A typical volcano will flow for two to four weeks. Additional tunnels must be drilled in the same location after one volcano has been started. This is dangerous, for pools of hot lava may have escaped into pockets near the surface, and the drill may strike hot magma only a few hundred meters beneath the surface, killing all those on the team. Drill tank crews have a grueling job, and draw double pay.

The next segment of this article will deal with generation of a livable atmosphere and the resources needed to form the orange soup that will produce a living world. □



designer's notes for SUPERWORLD

By Steve Perrin

My ideas for a game like *Superworld* were sitting on a back burner for years, ever since I had dived into a copy of *Superhero 2044* (first edition) and came out terribly confused and bewildered. I have a large file full of contradictory notes on a superhero game.

Some of the notes became obsolete after I co-authored the *RuneQuest*® rules and realized that we had the potential for a universal set of RPG rules. The basics of the system could be applied to anything. However, at that point in my enthusiasm, Greg Stafford looked at the recently released *Villains and Vigilantes* (FGU) and decided that the world did not need more than two superhero RPG's.

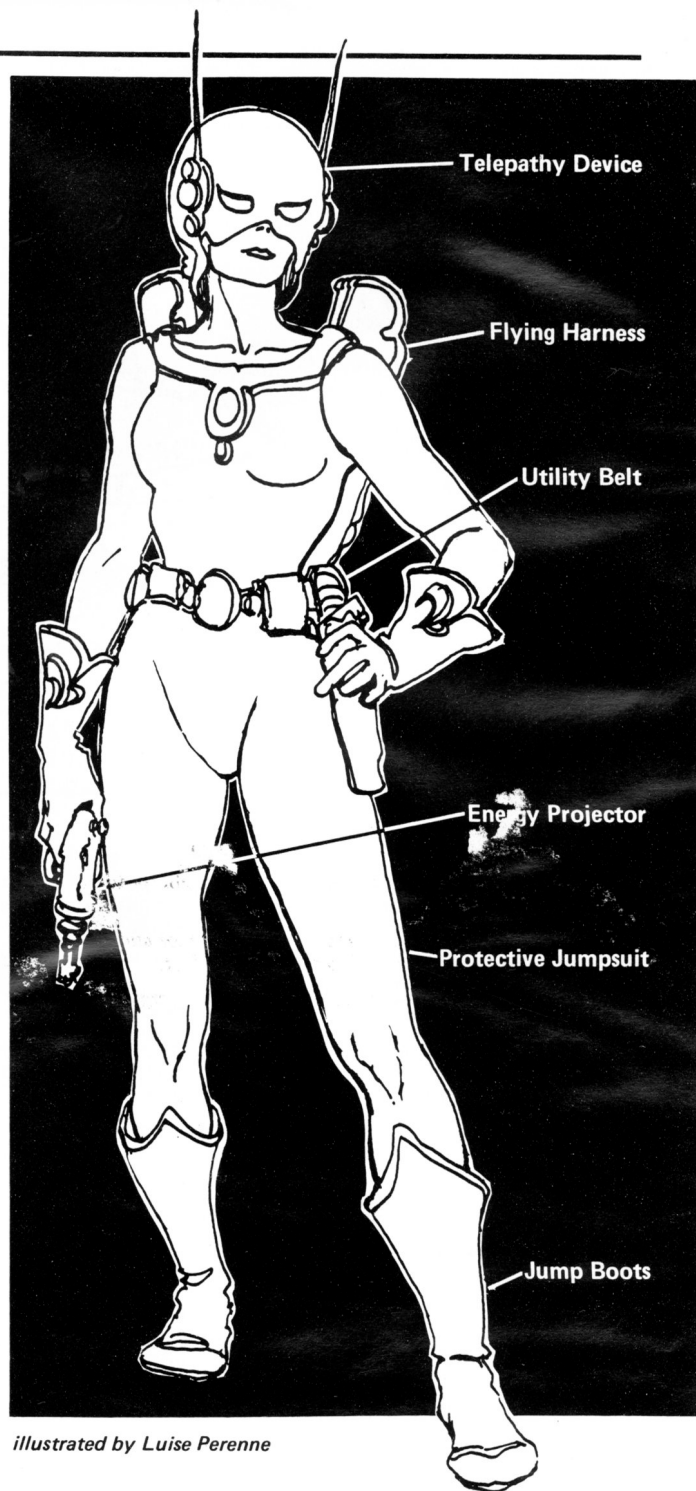
A year later, when Greg said that he needed backup for *Basic Role-Playing*, I volunteered at least help with the creation of several mini-games which would spin off from *BRP* to complete it in the direction of one type of game or another. I was already working on my *D&D*-flavored *RQ* campaign set on the North Shore of an unnamed continent, so a *Magic World* game based on the concept of separate classes of magicians and fighters and other types came easily.

The question of what the other books would cover was up in the air for months. Science fiction? Historical? Age of Sail? Superheroes? Vikings? Wait a minute, let's go back to that superhero idea...

The end result was a go-ahead for the superhero game I had wanted to do for years. By this time, I was working full-time for the Chaosium, so, paradoxically, my time was not as available as it might have been. There was still a lot to do with the other projects coming down the track, like *Thieves' World*, *Stormbringer*, and *Call of Cthulhu*. Still, I managed to keep a *Magic World* campaign going for several months, and toyed with *Future*World* (waiting for Gordon Monson to come up with the central concepts I later wrote into the game) and *Superworld*.

The Source of the Powers

Initially, the idea had been to have three sorts of character. Supertypes had natural powers, and would have as many as their POW points would allow. Gadgeteers were superheroes who depended on inventions, and got the number of their powers from the number of INT points they had. Acrobats depended on great skill use, and their points came from their DEX. It rapidly became clear that this would not work. No hero in comic books today is so single-track



illustrated by Luise Perenne

in his superpowers. Batman is an Acrobat, but he has gadgets. Spiderman is a "natural" powered type, but has gadgets. Iron Man is a gadgeteer with skills. It was obvious, once again, that "character classes" were not going to work for showing "reality".

I switched the rules so that POW alone bought powers, and rapidly discovered through a few games and character-building sessions that no one's Power would give enough points to buy the variety of powers possessed by most comic book heroes, no matter how I costed them out. Something else was needed.

Hero Points, based on the total characteristic points of the rolled character, had two benefits. First, it was a mechanic already being used in another fashion in *Magic*

*World and Future*World*. Second, it gave enough points with which to create interesting heroes.

From there it was simply a matter of costing things out and trying to balance the powers. Changes took place right up to the last type set, and still other things could have been done. Game design is always a matter of tearing the manuscript out of the hands of the tearful writer, who is bitterly protesting, "If I could keep it just two more weeks, it will be perfect ..." It will never be perfect.

Still, I appreciate the chance to do this article and present some after-the-last-minute changes that further play has brought out. For those people who have wondered why Martial Arts is such a useless power, or why anyone would use Armor when Absorption is available, or why there were rules for Smash attacks when they did no real damage, or why anyone would want great strength when he could do the same damage with a "kinetic blast" at 1/3 the cost ... The following corrections, additions, and errata are for you.

ERRATA

All corrections and changes are shown in italics.

ABSORPTION – Page 4 *Cost to Buy – 2 Hero Points/Level*
Energy Cost – None

Each level of Absorption gives the character the ability to absorb (as per the original description).

Special Notes: ADD *If a character has both Armor and Absorption for the same type of energy, Absorption works first.*

Types of Energy: CORRECTION *The types of energy are the same as given for Armor.*

Modifiers: ADD *To simulate the abilities of various well-known heroes, the player may want to modify this power with the 'does not have normal attribute' modifier, giving extra hero points for the character's powers. One example is to have Kinetic Absorption not absorb any kinetic damage but fire.*

CHARACTERISTICS – Page 5 *Cost to Buy – 1 Hero Point each 3*
points of STR or SIZ.

Limit: ADD *No more Hero Points may be spent on a characteristic than the original value of the characteristic. Thus, a character with an INT of 10 cannot increase it past 13, a character with a STR of 10 cannot increase it past 40, and a character with a CON of 10 cannot increase it past 20.*

DENSITY – Page 5

CORRECTION: Each level of increase adds *one-half* the character's SIZ and STR to those characteristics again. Each level also slows the character's normal movement by two meters and gives him one point of armor against each of the three types of energy.

ENERGY PROJECTION – Page 5

CLARIFICATION: The basic chance to hit with an Energy Projection is equal to the character's Throw ability.

FLIGHT – Page 5 *Cost to Buy – 1 Hero Point per Level*
Energy Cost – 1 point per melee round

Each level of Flight moves 1 SIZ point at *100 meters per melee round when maneuvering, or 500 meters per melee round in straight flight. Maneuvering implies doing anything except going from point A to point B in a straight line. If the character is looking for a target, intending to land and punch someone, etc., he may only travel 100 meters that round, or 25 if he intends to do something else in the same round.*

It is also possible to go slower or even hover. To fly at all, a character must have one level of Flight for each of his SIZ points. If he wishes to carry anything, he must have additional levels of Flight equal to the SIZ of the carried item and the STR to carry the item.

For each level of flight over that necessary to carry the SIZ flying, the character may go *an extra 20 meters per melee round in maneuvering flight, or 100 meters per melee round in straight speed flight, or an additional 5 meters and perform another action.*

If the power is used in conjunction with Speed, the character may make a full flying movement and then perform an action, perform two flying movements, or perform an action and then make a full flying movement.

GRAVITY PROJECTION – Page 7 *Cost to Buy – 1 Hero Point per*
Level
Energy Cost – 1 Energy Point per Level

Each level of this radiation power will alter the weight of *one SIZ point* of an object within 15 meters of the user. It will either double or halve the object's weight. Each additional level will either affect a further *SIZ point*, increase the range by 15 meters, double the current weight of that *SIZ point* again, or halve the current weight of the *SIZ point* again.

A character involuntarily under double or half weight conditions affecting *his entire body* has only half his normal chance with melee and Throw maneuvers because of his unfamiliarity with his current weight. *His movement is slowed by 1/2 if his weight is doubled, decreased to 1/4 normal if quadrupled, etc.*

INSUBSTANTIALLY – Page 7 *Cost to Buy 20 Hero Points per level*
Energy Cost – 1 per point of SIZ per level per melee round

ADD *However, one insubstantial character may use kinetic force on another insubstantial character.*

LEAP – Page 7 *Energy Cost – 1 per level used*

MARTIAL ARTS – Page 7

Each level of this power allows the user to:

- 1) Add *ID6* of damage to any successful fist, kick, or grapple attack.
- 2) Avoid *1/4* of damage from any one melee, missile, or projection attack *in a melee round* if a parry is made. The *ID6* points are also subtracted from the damage for determining a knockback.

NEW POWER: RECHARGE – Page 8 *Cost to Buy – 1 Hero Point*
per level
Energy Cost – None

This power has the sole use of replenishing energy at a rate of one point per level used. This replenishment is not automatic. It is an action and the character must spend a full melee round performing the action without using any other powers or moving more than 6 meters. Speed cannot be used in the same melee round with this power.

SPEED – Page 8

REVISION – 2nd paragraph

Each level of Speed used in a melee round also reduces an attacker's chance to hit with missile, projection, or melee *by 10%*. Thus, if the Mighty Mauler with an attack chance of 60% is trying to hit the Yellow Streak, who has a Speed of 3, *three levels of Speed reduce Mauler's attack to 30%*.

When a character is performing an action under Speed, he does it at his usual DEX, just as he would normally. However, his Speed still gives him the reduction of others' chances to hit him. *These reductions are taken before reduction for partial cover, using acrobatics, and being airborne, but the usual movement reduction does not apply in this case.*

SNARE PROJECTION – Page 8 *Energy Cost – 3 energy points per*
level

TELEPORT – Page 9

ADD – He must teleport to an area he *can see* or is very familiar with.

ADD – *A teleporter may move 1/4 his normal movement, 50 meters, and still perform another action such as an attack in one melee round. A teleporter with the Speed power can only teleport once during a melee round, and that counts as an action, not as a movement, unless coupled with another action as above.*

WIND PROJECTION – Page 9 *Energy Cost – 3 Energy Points*
per level

NEW RULES – Optional

Power Advantages

It is possible to gain advantages for a power by paying a higher price for it.

NO ENERGY USE ADVANTAGE

A character may buy any power but a projection so that it will use no energy. The cost is twice the normal cost of the power. Thus, Insubstantiality, normally 20 points, can be bought as using no energy for 40 points per level.

PROJECTION ENERGY REDUCTION

A character may buy a projection power so that it will cost only one point of energy per level used, instead of three, by paying twice the normal price of the power. Thus, a character with a 5D6 projection can use the power for 5 energy points, instead of 15, by paying 30 Hero Points for it initially.

RADIUS EFFECT

A character can buy a radius effect for a projection power at twice the cost of the power for a 2m radius volume. A level of the power can be used to increase the radius by one meter, as well as the usual increase of range or damage. Using a radius effect on a target cancels the defensive value of Dodging, Acrobatics, Martial Arts, maneuvering in flight, or Speed, though Flight and partial cover still have their normal effect. A power bought with radius effect can still be used against a single target normally.

COMBINED ADVANTAGES

If a character wishes to buy both energy reduction and radius effect for a projection, he must first purchase the power at 6 points a level for the radius effect, then pay a further 6 points a level for the energy reduction.

SMASH ATTACK –Page 12-13

REVISION – Starting ability with a Smash attack is 10%, and it can be increased either in creation of the character or through experience like any other skill. Roll 1D6 for every 5% SIZ point of the

attacker or fraction thereof to determine the damage to the target. Characters with a SIZ of 1 or less do not get this damage. Roll 1D6 damage for every 10 SIZ points of the attacker for damage to the attacker. In addition, a character using flight may add 1D6 for every 3 levels of Flight he has over the minimum necessary for flying; a character using Speed may add 1D6 for every level of Speed he has. In both cases, this damage applies both to attacker and target.

Unlike all other forms of attack, a character may make a full move and then strike with a smash. A character must move at least 4m in a straight line for every 1D6 of damage done in a smash.

FIGHTING AT A DISADVANTAGE – Page 14

ADDITION

5. EVADING TARGETS – A character using the special abilities of Martial Arts and/or Speed subtract their reductions *before* the attacker's chance is cut in half for flying target, partial cover, or anything else. □



Power	POWERS	
	Hero Point Cost Per Level	Energy Point Cost Per Level
Absorption	2 per energy type	None
Adaptability	1 (affects 1 SIZ point)	1 per SIZ point per activation
Armor	1 per energy type	None unless for force field
Characteristics	1 per 3 STR or SIZ	None
	1 per CON or DEX	None
	3 per INT, POW, or CHA	None
Darkness	3 (affects 2 meter radius)	1 per activation
Density	1 per hero's SIZ point	3 per melee round
Energy Projection	3 per 1D6 damage	3 per activation
Energy Supply	1 per 10 points of energy	None
Flight	1 (affects 1 SIZ point)	1 per melee round
Gas Projection	3 per 1D6 potency	3 per activation
Gravity Projection	1	1 per level
Insubstantiality	20	1 per SIZ point per melee round
Invisibility	1 (affects 1 SIZ point)	1 per CON point per melee round
Leap	1 (adds 2 meters horizontal)	1 per level
Martial Arts	20	None
Mindblock	1	1 per melee round
Perception	1 per hero's POW point	3 per melee round
Recharge	1	None
Regeneration	1 per hero's CON point	1 per melee round
Shape Change	1 per hero's CON point	1 per activation
Silence	3 (affects 2 meter radius)	1 per activation
Size Change	1 per hero's SIZ point	1 per SIZ point per activation
Snare Projection	3 per 1D6 points of SIZ	3 per level of snare
Speed	20	1 per melee round
Stretching	3 (adds 1 meter stretch)	None
Supersenses	3	None
Telekinesis	1 (affects 1 SIZ point)	1 per melee round
Telepathy	1 (affects 1 POW point)	1 per point of target's POW
Teleport	1 (affects 1 SIZ point)	1 per SIZ point teleported
Wall Walking	1 (affects 1 SIZ point)	None
Wind Projection	3 per 1D6 damage	3 per level of projection
X-Ray Vision	3 per 5cm penetration	1 per melee round

the X-Men

character creation

by Steve Perrin and Karl Maurer

When confronted with a character-building set of rules like *Superworld*, *Champions*, or *Supergame*, the player is left with the thought, "these powers look neat and all, but none of them seem to do exactly what I saw (fill-in-the-blank) do in issue 147 of *Superguy* magazine. How come?"

The answer is that the power usually can be duplicated, but it takes an act of imagination to do the job. The important thing is not to look at the name of the power, but the effect of the power. Do you want Bubbleman to send out bubbles that do 5D6 damage to anyone they hit? Don't look for Superbubbles on the powers list. Take Energy Projection, and on the Description Line of the character form write, "bubbles of kinetic energy." If the character has claws, don't look for claws on the weapons list. Instead, give the character 2D6 of kinetic damage and use it the modifier as only usable in hand-to-hand attacks. How about a transmutation attack, where the character can change a substance to another? If he just uses it to get things like walls out of the way, it can be a simple energy projector. If he converts the substance to glassy hands with which to imprison somebody, call it snare projection. If he uses it to lift people off their feet, call it Telekinesis. If all of the above are involved, then buy all the powers for the character described above. In short, if a power is not described in the rules, it is probably because you are thinking of a collection of effects as a single power, rather than breaking it down into its component parts. When any power has been reduced to basics, its effects will be found in the power descriptions.

To demonstrate what can be done with creative use of the rules, one of my ardent playtesters, Karl Maurer, has built Marvel's *X-Men* and their statistics are presented below along with his and my comments on how they were built using the *Superworld* rules.

The following descriptions are given in the same format as found in the original *Superworld* rules. Players will find some of the power costs strange, as they were done under the new revisions found elsewhere in this issue.

Two assumptions have been made in figuring out all these characters. The first assumption is that all the powers are bought with the initial Hero Points and Disability Bonus Points available. The other is that the skills of the characters have increased greatly over the years through the usual *Basic Role-Playing* experience increase system. The X-Men shown are as in the current *X-Men*, with all their experience available to enhance their skills.

In describing the X-Men, certain assumptions had to be made about their powers. Several of them are shown as having armor, which is actually their costumes. In most cases this armor is very slight, but allows them to avoid some damage.

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illustrated by Luise Perenne

THE ANGEL (Warren Worthington III) is one of the original X-Men. Karl chose to describe him here because he has worked with his former teammates frequently of late, particularly during the Dark Phoenix sequence and the Hidden Land adventure described in the first few issues of *Marvel Fanfare*.

To give him some protection in *Superworld* terms, we have assumed that he has some protection as armor. Also, he has recovered from some awesome wounds in his time, and Karl has assumed that his mutant vigor gives him the regenerate power. His adaptability to temperature is mostly acquired during his many high-flying jaunts in the cold outer atmosphere.

STR 22 CON 17 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 15 DEX 24 CHA 15

Original Hero Points - 110 Total Hero Points - 143

MOVE - 24/460 meters

HIT POINTS - 17

ARMOR - Kinetic 6; Electromagnetic 2, Radiation 2

ABSORPTION - None

ENERGY POINTS - Personal 170

WEAPON	Range in meters	Attack	Damage	Parry
Fist	0	80%	1D3+1D6	80%

POWERS (cost in Hero Points) - Characteristics (10); Armor (10); Adaptation versus temperature only (15); Flight (33); Speed 2 (40); Regenerate 1/turn (15); Energy (17)

SKILLS - Acrobatics in Air 90%, Grapple 50%, Listen 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Throw 60%

DISABILITIES (bonus points) - Mutant (5); Reckless (5); Code vs Killing (5); Adaptability versus temperature only (8); Hot-tempered (5); Wings limit but do not make normal life impossible (5)

STORM (Ororo Munroe) is the highest point character, and yet one of the easiest to do. She has displayed other abilities than those shown upon occasion, but they can still be interpreted as slight variations on those shown.

STR 15 CON 18 SIZ 14 INT 19 POW 20 DEX 18 CHA 20

Original Hero Points - 126 Total Hero Points - 151

MOVE - 24/160

HIT POINTS - 15

ARMOR - Electromagnetic 5; Radiation 2

ABSORPTION - Kinetic 3; Electromagnetic 8; Radiation 3

ENERGY POINTS - Personal 200

WEAPON	Range in meters	Attack	Damage	Parry
Lightning Proj.	15m	80%	9D6	-
Wind Proj.	15m	80%	9D6	-
Fist	0	50%	1D3+1D6	-

POWERS (cost in Hero Points) - Armor (7); Absorption (28); Recharge (10); Energy (20); Flight (20); Lightning Projection (27); Wind Projection (27); Assorted Skills (12)

SKILLS - Acrobatics 25%; Fine Manipulation 90%; First Aid 50%; Grapple 70%; Listen 70%; Move Quietly 70%; Spot Hidden 60%

DISABILITIES (Bonus Points) - Mutant (5); Moral Code vs. Killing (5); Claustrophobia (5); Kinetic Absorption only works on non-material projections (5); Radiation Absorption only works when concentrating on it (5)



PROFESSOR X (Professor Charles Xavier) is the leader of the X-Men and their reason for being. He brought together the original X-Men into Professor Xavier's School for Gifted Children, and formed them into the super-team they have become. He is supposedly the ultimate authority in the X-Men, though members like Wolverine are willing to contest the point. His mentalist powers were easy to develop under *Superworld*. Note that his Telekinesis can be used as kinetic armor, if need be.

STR 8 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 22 POW 22 DEX 13 CHA 13

Original Hero Points - 107 Total Hero Points - 132

MOVE - 12

HIT POINTS - 16

ARMOR - None (Telekinesis can act as Kinetic 20)

ABSORPTION - None

ENERGY POINTS - Personal 200

WEAPON	Range in meters	Attack	Damage	Parry
Telepathy	15+ meters	POWvsPOW	Special	-
Telekinesis	15+ meters	80%	Per Thrown Auto Object	-

POWERS (cost in Hero Points) - Telepathy (40); Telekinesis (20); Mindblock (10); Recharge (18)

SKILLS - First Aid 80%

DISABILITIES (Bonus Points) - Mutant (5); Paraplegic, - cannot walk, tied to wheelchair (10); Code vs. Killing (5); Recurrent Nightmares (5)

SPECIAL - Mentor of the X-Men

SPRITE (Kitty Pride) the irrepressible teenybopper of the group, presented some problems in being done for *Superworld*. While Insubstantiality accounts for her ability to walk through walls, we were stumped on how to account for her Vision-like ability to "Solidify" within someone's body. Finally, we decided that it was effectively an Electromagnetic attack in that it attacked the electrical system of the nerves. This allows her to remain insubstantial and still use her attack, which she could not do if she were using a physical attack.

You will note that Kitty is the only team member to have a Fly Plane skill. This is not because she is the only one who can, but because, unlike the others (who have a universal 70% skill), she is untrained in this art and only has a 05% skill.

STR 12 CON 15 SIZ 10 INT 20 POW 15 DEX 17 CHA 15

Original Hero Points - 99 Total Hero Points - 114

MOVE - 24

HIT POINTS - 15

ARMOR - Kinetic 3; Electromagnetic 10; Radiation 3

ABSORPTION - None

ENERGY POINTS - Personal 100

WEAPON	Range in meters	Attack	Damage	Parry
Disrupt Touch	0	50%	7D6	-

POWERS (cost in Hero Points) - Characteristics (5); Insubstantiality (20); Disrupt Touch (EM Projection) (21); Speed 1 (20); Armor (16); Assorted Skills (21)

SKILLS - Acrobatics 30%; Computer Programming 90%; Fly Plane 05%; Speak & Write Russian 80%; Speak & Write German 80%

DISABILITIES (Bonus Points) - Mutant (5); Code vs Killing (5); Disrupt Touch only works when insubstantial and at touch (5)

WOLVERINE (Logan) is the classic case of a character doing an incredible amount of damage with a merely decent strength. This is due both to his claws and to his martial arts. Again, here we bought kinetic projection with no range to give the claw effect. Wolverine is another high point character, mostly because of the large range of senses he has. You will note that he does not have the Code vs Killing that the rest of the group does. Usually he will not use his claws to their full, but if he berserks they come all the way out and he goes for a kill.

STR 18 CON 28 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 16 DEX 18 CHA 15

Original Hero Points - 112 Total Hero Points - 144

MOVE - 24

HIT POINTS - 28

ARMOR - Kinetic 9; Electromagnetic 4; Radiation 4

ABSORPTION - None

ENERGY POINTS - Personal 50

WEAPON	Range in meters	Attack	Damage	Parry
Claws	0	80%	4D6+2D6	80%
Fist	0	85%	1D3+2D6	85%

POWERS (cost in Hero Points) - Characteristics (13); Armor (17); Energy (5); Recharge (10); Kinetic Projection - Claws (12); Adaptability to Temperature (13); Martial Arts 1 (20); Regeneration 1 (13); Speed 1 (20); Hearing 1 (3); Smell 1 (3); Taste 1 (3); Touch 1 (3); Vision 1 (3); Ultrasonic Hear 1 (3); Infravision (3)

SKILLS - Acrobatics 90%; Climb 70%; First Aid 50%; Fist 80%; Grapple 50%; Hide 70%; Jump 70%; Listen 90%; Move Quietly 70%; Spot Hidden 80%; Speak & Write Japanese 75%, Russian 60%, German 50%, French 85%

DISABILITIES (Bonus Points) - Mutant (5); Reckless (5); Loner (5); Berserks if teammate hurt or humiliated unless he makes an INTx2 roll (5); Claws have no range (5); Adaptability is only vs. Temperature (7)

NIGHTCRAWLER (Kurt Wagner) is one of the most visually appealing/horrifying of the X-Men. His powers are easy to simulate with *Superworld*, so simple that we did not even take some disadvantages we could have (such as Invisibility only working in shadows) because we did not need the points. The stretching with the tail is there to account for his acrobatics using the tail. In effect, it justifies the prehensile ability of the tail, and allows him to grab objects with it for swinging while holding onto some poor civilian.

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 10 INT 16 POW 18 DEX 20 CHA 10
Original Hero Points - 104 Total Hero Points - 124

MOVE - 24/500

HIT POINTS - 15

ARMOR - Kinetic 3; Electromagnetic 3; Radiation 5

ABSORPTION - None

ENERGY POINTS - Personal 300

WEAPON	Range in meters	Attack	Damage	Parry
Fist	0	75%	1D3+1D6	75%

POWERS (cost in Hero Points) - Invisibility in shadows at no energy cost (20); Teleport 30 SIZ points (30); Stretching 1m with Tail (3); Wall Walking (11); +15m Vision (3); Armor (11); Skills (1); Characteristics (5); Energy (30)

SKILLS: Acrobatics 90%; Climb 70%; Fine Manipulation 20%; First Aid 60%; Grapple 80%; Hide 80%; Jump 60%; Listen 60%; Move Quietly 60%; Spot Hidden 60%; Throw 60%; Speak German 80%, English 70%, Russian 50%

DISABILITIES (Bonus Points) - Mutant (5); Appearance is full-time, denying normal life (10); Code vs. Killing (5)

SPECIAL - Skills have been increased through experience, not bought with Hero Points.

CYCLOPS (Scott Summers) was the leader of the X-Men for their first incarnation, and through most of the career of the current X-Men until the death of Jean Grey (Phoenix). As of this writing, he has rejoined his teammates, but the current leadership is still officially in the hands of Storm. Since Cyclops cannot help but give orders, he was given the psychological disadvantage of "Must be leader."

The trickiest power in Cyclops' repertoire was his oft-used ability to parry attacks with his eye-beam. We ended up buying armor usable with a parry and also costing Energy. He has also been known to use the eyebeam as a flying device, but this was so far-fetched that we left it out. Note that the lesser power eyebeams use very little energy, but a full blast bolt will suck out his energy and leave him helpless in very little time.

STR 15 CON 20 SIZ 15 INT 18 POW 18 DEX 15 CHA 18
Original Hero Points - 113 Total Hero Points - 145

MOVE - 24

HIT POINTS - 20

ARMOR - Kinetic 3 (21); Electromagnetic 3 (21); Radiation 3 (21)

ABSORPTION - None

ENERGY POINTS - Personal 180

WEAPON	Range in meters	Attack	Damage	Parry
Eye Beam (kinetic energy)	15m	80%	9D6	80%

WEAPON	Range in meters	Attack	Damage	Parry
Fist	0	75%	1D3+1D6	75%

POWERS (cost in Hero Points) - Characteristics (6); Armor (9); Parry Armor - Eye Beam (21); Energy (18); Recharge (10); Martial Arts (20); Kinetic Projection - Eye Beam (42)*; Assorted Skills (19)

SKILLS - Acrobatics 60%; Climb 55%; First Aid 50%; Grapple 50%; Hide 55%; Jump 60%; Listen 50%; Throw 80%; Spot Hidden 40%; Speak & Write Russian 60%; Speak & Write German 40%

DISABILITIES - Mutant (5); Must be Leader (5); Code vs Killing (5); Power always ON, can be destructive (10); Parry Armor uses 7 points of Energy for a 21-pt armor (7)

SPECIAL - * First 5D6 of eyebeams are bought at twice the price for Energy expenditure of 1 per D6. Other 4D6 cost 3 per D6 as usual.

COLOSSUS (Peter Rasputin) is the Russian member of the now international X-Men, and is a basic muscle man. All of his powers come from his changeover into his armored form, so we chose to give him all his STR and SIZ increases from the Density and Growth powers, rather than tacking on extra STR to the basic character. Colossus actually comes out as one of the higher point characters, even though his powers seem quite basic and simple.

STR 67 CON 15 SIZ 44 INT 15 POW 15 DEX 14 CHA 12
Normal form - STR 27; SIZ 17

Original Hero Points - 106 Total Hero Points - 150

MOVE - 24

HIT POINTS - 15

ARMOR - Kinetic 18; Electromagnetic 8, Radiation 8

ABSORPTION - None

ENERGY POINTS - Personal 70

WEAPON	Range in meters	Attack	Damage	Parry
Fist	0	80%	1D3+6D6	80

POWERS (cost in Hero Points) - Armor (28); Characteristics (3) Energy (7); Growth 1 (17); Density 2 (68); Recharge (10); Adaptability (17)

SKILLS - Climb 70%; First Aid 50%; Grapple 60%; Jump 60%; Move Quietly 15%; Throw 70%

DISABILITIES - Mutant (5); Moral Code vs Killing (5); Waits for orders unless INTx2 rolled (5); Overprotective of Sprite (5); Armor costs energy to activate (14); Recharge only works when in normal form (5); -10% Move Quietly (2); -15% to Hide (3)

SPECIAL - Armor and Characteristics show effects of Density and Growth.

MAGNETO proved very hard to build under *Superworld* rules, purely for the number and quality of powers he must have to truly rank someone capable of dealing with all the X-Men at once. The only way to create him in all his power and glory was to take the information that he was operating in postwar Palestine and assume he has had much experience using his powers since then, allowing for many characteristic increase rolls from sheer statistical necessity. He has had many years as a criminal and refugee - years of constant fighting to maintain his freedom. He has had chances for lots of characteristic rolls, and the characteristics have increased commensurately. It is a measure of his luck that his INT and POW have both increased (due to good characteristic increase rolls - page 3) to beyond the normal limit of 25 in each characteristic. This is what leads to his phenomenal initial Hero Points of 165

STR 20 CON 30 SIZ 14 INT 27 POW 27 DEX 30 CHA 23
Original Hero Points - 165 Total Hero Points - 259

MOVE - 24/500

HIT POINTS - 30

ARMOR (forcefield) - Kinetic 16; Radiation 16

ABSORPTION - Electromagnetic 20

ENERGY POINTS - Personal 180

WEAPON	Range in meters	Attack	Damage	Parry
Magnetic Proj.	15m	90%	9D6	-
Snare Proj.	15m	90%	6D6	-
Fist	0	75%	1D3+1D6	70%

POWERS (cost in Hero Points) - Characteristics (6); Absorption (40); Armor (16); Energy (18); Energy Projection 9 (27); Flight (14); Mindblock 10 (10); Recharge 10 (10); Regeneration 1 (30); Snare Projection 6 (18); Speed 1 (20); Telekinesis 40 (40)

SKILLS: General Knowledge 85%; Physics 65%; Disguise 55%; Fine Manipulation 55%; First Aid 55%; Jump 95%; Climb 95%; Hide 80%; Spot Hidden 95%; Move Quietly 75%; Speak Russian 95%, Hebrew 90%, German 95%, English 85%

DISABILITIES (Bonus Points) - Forcefield costs 16 per melee round (8); Energy dissipates at 5 per melee round (10); Recharge only works on ground (5); TK is at 1/2 Strength for non-magnetic materials (5); Snare is at 1/2 Strength for non-magnetic materials (5); Villain (10); Disdains Normals (5); Hates Arabs (5); Hates Nazis (5); Hates Communists (5); Megalomaniac (5); Paranoid (5); Must Gloat over Victims (5); Must manipulate others (5); Revenge motivated (5); Reckless (5) □

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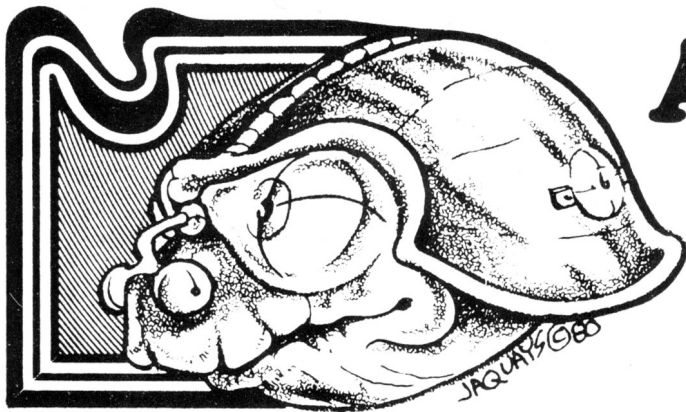
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Adventure by Design

by Paul Jaquays

This is the first installment of a regular column devoted to tips for better game mastering and adventure design. Author of many FRP scenarios for numerous publishers, Paul's artistic skills are equally well known — he most recently sculpted some *RuneQuest* figures for *Martian Metals*. Currently he supervises game development at Coleco Industries.

The beginning game master's first attempts at original adventure design are likely to contain all the classic role-playing design mistakes: unoriginal character names, random monster distribution, mis-proportioned matching of monster to room size, obvious treasure, hallways with conveniently large widths, characters whose professions are clearly apparent, and a significant lack of role-playing. With a few exceptions, most new game masters include these features in their initial attempts at original adventure creations. This trash-for-cash style of adventure design is a hallmark of an adventure designer in the infancy of his or her craft.

Which brings me to the point of this column; showing the methods and techniques of designing fun, playable, role-playing adventures. These design guidelines are based on my experience as a game designer, and can be applied both to personal campaigns and to material destined for eventual publication. One might consider *Adventure by Design* a column of generic designer's notes, containing information usable in all role-playing games.

To know how to create a good adventure, the designer must first have a working knowledge of the basic building blocks of role-playing games. Once these are well in hand, the adventure will grow out of them organically.

The Elements of Adventure Design

Essentially, adventure design is a generic skill. Even though each indi-

vidual role-playing game has different rules that define the parameters of play, the general concepts of what makes a good adventure and what is fun applies to all game systems. When laid bare of gloss and detail, all role-playing games are comprised of essentially the same three elements: characters, conflict, reward.

Characters are the most important aspect of role-playing gaming. Every role-playing game has player-controlled characters (protagonists) who interact with other characters (antagonists) in situations created by or controlled by a game master.

Conflict is the central theme of most role-playing games. Conflict is not necessarily combat, but it is any situation in which man takes on nature (monsters, weather, the elements, etc.).

Reward is what the characters in a game normally strive for. The victor of a conflict usually receives a reward for accomplishments. The reward is often, but not always measured in monetary terms and allows the player to improve the status of his or her character.

In essence, all role-playing game rules are expansions and commentary on these three elements. Taken by themselves alone, they result in the trash-for-cash-monster-hotel style of gaming. Many game adventures, both personal and commercial, go no further than this level of gaming. This style of game design is easily accomplished with random generation tables and rolling dice. The step up requires work.

What does distinguish a good adventure from an adequate one? Examine two of my recent commercially produced adventures (and excuse the use of my own work as examples), *Griffin Mountain* published by Chaosium and *The Enchanted Wood* published by SPI. These adventures read like stories. It is no accident

that good game adventure writing holds much in common with fiction writing. Theme, character development and plot, the three features that make for a well-designed adventure role-playing scenario, are taken directly from the craft of the fiction writer.

Theme is the unifying concept of the adventure. Ideally, all aspects, details and characters in an adventure contribute to and support the theme.

Character development gives believability to the personalities encountered during the course of an adventure, even though their natures may be larger than life. Without character development the characters encountered are nothing more than numerical statistics. The adventure designer must flesh them out and make them real personalities by giving them histories and motivations, loves and hates, homes and families. The more complete these characters are, the more enjoyable they are to deal with during play. Remember that even monsters have mothers.

The plot makes an adventure move. It develops out of the motivations of the non-player-characters in the game and their interactions with the players' characters. These characters have created the scenarios that involve the player-characters. Better adventures contain subplots that develop as the player-characters become deeply involved in their world.

In concept and design there is very little difference between creating a game adventure and writing a piece of fiction. The mechanics of execution are different (such as remembering trivial details like leaving out the main characters in a game adventure), but both forms of writing must follow the same logical lines of development to their conclusions.

Next issue: *Getting ideas and developing theme.* □

REVIEWS

SUPERVILLAINS □ OFFICIAL SUPERHERO GAME □ DEATH DUEL WITH THE DESTROYERS YSGARTH SYSTEM □ VALLEY OF THE MISTS BROADSWORD □ RESCUE ON GALATHEA

SUPERVILLAINS

By Rick Register and R. Vance Buck
Task Force Games
\$9.95
Reviewed by Steve Perrin

A new entry into the burgeoning field of superhero role-playing games, in this game the players are supposed to be playing supervillains, instead of the usual superheroes. It is supposedly slanted for the role-player who wants to portray a super-powered individual out to make his pile over the beaten bodies of the general populace, thumbing his nose at superheroes and Dagger agents alike.

It tries to accomplish this purpose, but in the long run it fails.

For one thing, it is a boardgame. The beginning and intermediate versions take place on a board which is supposed to represent part of New York and Central Park. The players are given cardboard counters the same size as one would use for *Starfire*, or *Swordquest*, and move them around on the board as shown in the scenarios. An excellent referee could use these elements with great facility, but an excellent referee will have access to better games.

Also, most of the scenarios within the beginner and intermediate sections are for superheroes, not villains.

Only the advanced game gives any provision for role-playing. The players make up supervillains and attempt to take over the boroughs of New York through either intimidating the street gangs or bribing the police. This turns the game into a sort of supervillain *Diplomacy*.

This concept changes the board game into a campaign game, but the opportunity for role-playing is still on the level of diplomacy. One is playing a power block, not a character, and the player is essentially playing himself.

The initial character generation is entirely random, with the player rolling a series of D10's and D6's (provided with the game) to determine Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, body shape, race, and experience background. The players are expected

to provide a vivid imagination to explain how all these characteristics fit together. The possibility of supercharacters who achieve the low chance option of no super powers at all, and a sub-normal strength and dexterity is not explained. The odds of generating an exactly average character are even better, and probably 25% of the superheroes are no better than the Dagger agents who harass them.

The player is stuck with his rolls. He could of course keep rolling until he got what he wanted, but then he might as well have built his character from scratch.

The powers are an interesting array of special abilities, including most of those found in the comics on the stands today. Some of the powers are obscure; I have yet to figure out a reason for the Conversion power, which I have never, to my knowledge, seen in any comic book.

Unless he rolls 95-00, a character has only one power. In addition he may also enhance strength dexterity and intellect. If the power is Enhanced Vision, and he rolls normal strength and dexterity, he will not be much use in a fight. He probably won't even make an effective spy.

Most of the powers are written up to provide characters like those in the *Legion of Superheroes*. All of them have one ability, which might have several facets. Thus, a character with Cold Control can create ice fields, build up armor, put out the flame of Heat Control characters, freeze things solid, etc.

Typos, weak english usage, and incompleteness are somewhat apparent. Many small items are left up to the imagination of the referee. For example I had to assume:

Every ten feet of height equals one story in a building (very short for an office building), so a character climbing one story has reached an equal height with one who has flown ten feet higher.

When generating a super character, the super ability is rolled as step 6. (The rules ignore this but the example has it.)

There is a distinct difference between Strength of Character and Attack Strength. Don't get them confused.

In general, I think that *Supervillains* might prove to be an entertaining diversion for one to two players, as the tactical ele-

ments of the game could provide enough variety for several play sessions. It also gives some ideas for a supervillain-point-of-view campaign, and a nice, if undetailed map of the boroughs of New York. However, don't expect to find a complete role-playing game. □

THE OFFICIAL SUPERHERO ADVENTURE GAME

By Brian Phillips
PO Box 222, Dayton, OH 45409
\$10.00
Reviewed by Steve Perrin

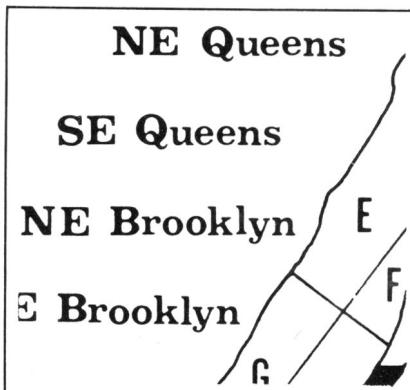
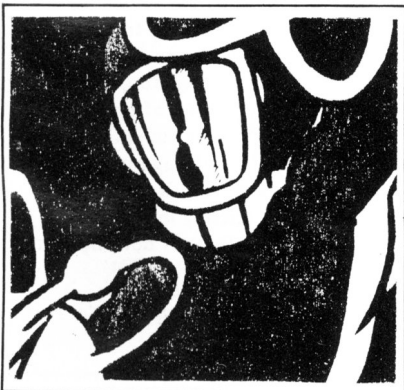
First of all, this is not an official game in any real meaning of the word. The title is a piece of hype that has no business on a professional publication, and is rather too close to Gamescience's *Superhero 2044*.

Given that aesthetic caveat, I am actually impressed with this package. It seems to be a very nice set of one-on-one skirmish rules for combat with superhero miniatures. It is not really a role-playing game in the accepted meaning of the term, nor does it claim to be.

The package comes in a close-fitting zip-lock bag and contains a 50-page rulesbook (typewritten and unreduced, not typeset), profusely illustrated by David Ruhe. Accompanying the rules are character cards for over 50 heroes and villains, and two pullout sheets for use with combat and determining the effects of magic, cosmic powers, or use of the Infinite Way.

What the game does not have are rules for creating new heroes and villains, using this system. A gamesmaster might be able to come up with some, using the characteristics provided, but it would not be worth the trouble.

The rules provide a basic game with two scenarios to demonstrate how the basic rules for melee and firepower work first in a one-on-one situation, then for a group-versus-group situation. The rest of the eleven scenarios, which form a loosely-knit campaign in their entirety, really call for the Advanced Rules, which provide the special effects



powers, changes in the movement sequence, teleport rules, range modification for fire-power, concussion effects (known as knock-back in other systems), holding, and other fripperies which attempt to give the proper feel for the comic book role-playing milieu. Like most other superhero role-playing games, it is virtually impossible to be killed in this game. Only the optional rules allow for this, and only on a 1/36 chance, even after the character has been knocked out of the fight.

No dice or figures are provided, but only D6 dice are needed, and figures for most of the characters can be taken from various superhero figures and cardboard flats currently available.

The rules do provide a "role-playing game," but that section simply gives hints for role-playing the characters provided, also providing a somewhat looser scenario plan with another plot and more options for the referee. In fact, this is the only scenario that needs a gamesmaster. The previous ones can be played by two players, each taking a side to manipulate.

One interesting aspect of the last chapter is the experience point system. Rather than giving points to the character, the points are given to the player, both for his playing ability and his role-playing. Thus the characters remain the same, but the experience points given the players are used to help determine who gets first choice of characters for the next scenario. A beginning player can start the campaign with Warpath and wind up with Atomic Man.

All in all, you get quite a bit for your money, even without the ability to make up your own characters. The characters provided are interesting in themselves, and the scenarios make for a good reproduction of a DC saga, if not a Marvel epic. For character and scenario ideas alone, superhero referees might do well to pick up this game, if they can find it. Write to the author if your local store doesn't carry it. □

DEATH DUEL WITH THE DESTROYERS

Villains and Vigilantes Adventure

By Bill Willingham

Fantasy Games Unlimited

\$5.00

Reviewed by Steve Perrin

This is a superheroic adventure meant to be used with FGU's superhero role-playing game, *Villains and Vigilantes*. *V & V* came out in 1979 and seemed to immediately disappear, except among some hardcore players. Part of the reason was lack of support material for the game, a lack that FGU now seems determined to correct. This is the first of two or more scenarios connected together to provide an ongoing campaign for the *V&V*, or "new *V&V*" player.

New *V&V*, you ask? Yes, the scenario introduction makes clear that the old rules are being revamped and will soon be re-issued. They will probably be on the store shelves by the time you read this review. Author/artist Bill Willingham and his ed-

itor Jeff Dee carefully wrote the scenario so it would be compatible with both variations, a good touch.

The plot of the adventure is similar to many overdone comic book plots. The menace is virtually earthshaking, with storms wreaking havoc across the Eastern United States and gigantic holograms of the perpetrator standing over the struggling masses and laughing. It makes the reader wonder why every superhero in the country isn't involved, rather than the four to six player-characters who show up to play the scenario.

Given that only the player-characters are alerted to the next step of the master plot, they are confronted with a very ingenious gigantic robot which is going to prove the power of its master by trashing Times Square. The robot battle machine is itself a well-designed concept.

If the player-characters beat the robot, they go on to the Death Duel of the title. They next stumble onto one of the occasional logic lapses. If the heroes immediately head for the Destroyers, it is reasonable to find the bad guys still in their lair. However, the scenario specifically allows the heroes to take several days to recover before assaulting the Destroyers. I refuse to believe they would still be there to assault, particularly when their big gun, the robot, has been liquidated by the superheroes.

The lair and the actual Destroyers are very well done, showing a certain ingenuity in the mix of powers and the plan of the hideout. The scenario gives old and new statistics for the villains, and provides rules for breaking down doors and walls from the new rules — lacking in the old ones.

The hints of new rules throughout the book are tantalizing, and this reviewer is looking forward to seeing how FGU has met the challenge of the current leader of the superhero RPG's, *Champions*.

For *Champions* and *Superworld* players, this adventure adapts very well to those systems. It took me very little time to modify it into a scenario that I'm sure played out just as it would have under *V&V* rules.

The text is illustrated with individual panels and entire pages of comic art by Willingham, whose work many of you will remember from the *AD&D* books and *The Dragon*. His style suits the somewhat cartoony comics style of *V&V* very well, and many readers will want to see the entire assault drawn up sometime. Mostly, we are given a number of pages showing such heroes as Microgirl, Magnetic Man, Morningstar and Raven being clobbered by the

Destroyers. That's what they get for splitting up.

All in all, this is a very good scenario for *V&V* players, and I think that *Champions*, *Superworld*, and even *Superhero 2044* players will find this book useful. □

THE YSGARTH RULE SYSTEM

By David F. Nalle

Ragnarok Enterprises

\$9.95

Reviewed by C. D. Martin

You get a lot for your money when you buy Dave Nalle's *The Ysgarth Rule System*. *Ysgarth* consists of five rule books and an introductory scenario. The rules are composed of over 100,000 words, set in reduced type. The production is semi-professional: also my copy of Book 2 was missing four pages. (The publisher mailed them to me on request.) The artwork is fair — about the same quality as *Thieves Guild*.

Like *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, *Ysgarth* is a game of detail. Fortunately, *Ysgarth* is quite logical. Otherwise, the game would collapse beneath the weight of rules.

Book 1, *The Fantasy Character*, contains five races: men, elves, dwarfs, Chitare (insectoid) and Trozards (reptilian). Players use a system of adds and rolls to get twelve characteristics. Strength, constitution, agility and dexterity form the physical group. The mental group has talent (magical), intelligence, willpower and judgement. Zeal, appearance, charisma and social standing make up the social group. Characteristics range from zero to twenty-four points. Each characteristic has a saving roll.

A player must then roll age, height and weight. He now has fifteen numbers which he uses to produce thirteen more numbers which describe his character, eg. hit points. A much needed two-page character sheet is found in Book 1.

Ysgarth uses character classes and experience points. The three main character classes are fighters, mages and holy men. Each class has many subclasses. Players may have multi-class characters. A player might want to be an assassin, experience class 2 (EC 2), and a bard (EC 2). His character would be EC 4. There is a bonus if your multi-class character is drawn from a single class or subclass.



Beginning characters are given native and learned skill points. Learned skill points buy the skills of the character classes. Native skill points buy mundane skills. Characters gain skill points as they go up in levels.

The AD&D alignment system is used in *Ysgarth*. Nalle makes alignment worse by creating a new level of record-keeping. The gamesmaster has to keep track of true alignment by a system of Karma and Obedience points.

Book 2, *Battlecraft*, covers combat and five subclasses of fighter: warrior, berserker, martial artist, assassin and thief. The same-class bonus means a multi-class assassin(EC 2) — warrior(EC 2) is EC 3.

In combat, you roll a D20 to hit. Hit location is rolled on D1000! Each piece of armor has a deflection value and an absorption value against club weapons, edge weapons and point weapons. Combat time and movement are covered in four sentences.

The *Ysgarth* combat system is unbalanced. Great detail in combat resolution does not mean realism. *Bushido* and *RuneQuest* remain the best combat systems because they blend moderately complex combat with superb movement rules.

There are three major groups of magic users in Book 3, *The Arcane Arts*: low, elemental and high. Multi-class characters gain a bonus only if they draw on one group. Thus a wizard(EC 4) — necromancer(EC 4) is EC 5. A wizard-alchemist(EC 2) is EC 6. Each of the fifteen schools of magic has about twenty spells. Casting spells costs both fatigue points and mana points. Mana points return very slowly, so you shouldn't use mages as heavy weapons systems.

Priests, mystics and members of six holy orders are described in Book 4, *Holy Orders*. Holy men may be more cost-effective than mages. A priest(EC 2) — mystic(EC 2) and an elemental mage are both EC 3 but the holy man's spells are more numerous and more useful in a general sense.

Nalle lists the 155 gods of *Ysgarth*. All are major gods but only one god is worshiped by more than two percent of the population. Nalle may be adept at rummaging through human mythologies but I'm not convinced that more is better.

World creation is covered in Book 5, *The Fantasy World*. Nalle does an adequate job here. He also throws in a lot of detail about the lands and peoples of the *Ysgarth* campaign. Non-player-characters, treasure, magic items and experience are covered in less than two pages. Certainly NPCs need more coverage. The trend in role-playing

games is towards NPCs with real personalities. To achieve this, designers have to reduce the rules burden on the gamesmaster. *Ysgarth* increases the rule burden, making the GM's task much harder.

The Last Song of Hergest is a pleasant introductory scenario about a lordling who seeks the final resting place of an ancestor. There are good descriptions of eleven NPCs. Nalle's notes on each make up for the lack of general rules on NPCs. Unfortunately, each is also described by race, deity, and seventeen numbers, none of which are characteristics. Once again, the gamesmaster is overloaded with detail.

The scenario also describes monsters and treasures. I was amused by the mortar toads that belch flaming balls of methane at enemies. I was saddened by a magic sword that only works against women, children and the elderly. *Ysgarth* could repeat the escalation of monsters and magic that has spoiled other role-playing games.

Ysgarth could have been better edited. Spelling is poor. Even worse, I found reference to an "EYE" spotting modifier but I couldn't find it described anywhere. Nor was there space for it on the character sheet.

From *RuneQuest* through *DragonQuest* to *Worlds of Wonder*, the trend has been towards simplicity. Publishers have to produce simple games if they are going to lure players away from established RPGs. People don't want to spend hours learning a new game. *Ysgarth* defies this trend. If you prefer immersing yourself in a long, detailed game to playing many games, *Ysgarth* may indeed be a good buy. At least, the price is right. □

VALLEY OF THE MISTS

By Bob Charrette

Fantasy Games Unlimited

\$5.00

Reviewed by Anders Swenson

Valley of the Mists is a role-playing adventure intended to be used with the *Bushido* role-playing rules recently re-released by the same publisher. The adventure comes as an 8½"x11" booklet 32 pages long.

Hida province is a small administrative area in the central mountains of Nippon. It is based on the real province of that name in modern Japan. The ruling family of the province is the Washima clan; their capital is the main city, Takayama.

The first adventure comes from a rich merchant who wants a party of adventurers to go and recover a chest which was stolen from him by a bandit gang. The recovery is a straightforward fight against a gang of human and non-human scum who live in a mountain base, with an oriental twist at the end.

The second adventure brings the PC's before the exalted company of the Daimyo himself. This personage, it seems, is subject to attacks of illness which are beyond the capacity of the court staff to comprehend or cure. The players and characters will all have a workout to get to the bottom of the matter to save the Daimyo.

The non-player-characters for the adventures are all described in alphabetical order and contain game-related statistics, skills, and levels, as well as personal information crucial to the adventure. Where the NPCs are members of a clan or family, the GM will do well to remember the Japanese custom of stating the surname before the given name.

The appendix contains information developed for this scenario which also extends the current edition boxed *Bushido* rules. The first part gives several new monsters; there is a new type of Bakemono, as well as a couple of giant spider variants. Next, the author discusses development of magical potions which are in the form of herb mixes to be brewed as tea and served in a Tea Ceremony opening the door for use of magic by a non-Shegundo character.

I liked this adventure booklet, but there were a few problems. It is never mentioned that the text refers to the new *Bushido* rules which are considerably changed and expanded from the old Tyr Wargames/Phoenix Press editions.

For GMs who are used to sequential text organization, who may be confused by having all of the main plotline first and the detail work at the end of the chapter, the conclusion to both of the adventures is explained halfway through the two chapters.

The positive characteristics far outweigh the negative. This adventure contains well organized, imaginatively conceived material aimed at the GM who probably doesn't know much more about medieval Japan beyond what appeared in the movie *Shogun*. The game mechanics of the scenario are set up to educate the GM in running an adventure in Nippon.

Valley of the Mists is an excellent companion to *Bushido*. With work, it can be converted to other systems, but why bother?



Bushido is the closest yet to an enjoyable adventure gaming system for the Oriental fan, and *Valley of the Mists* is a good scenario to begin a campaign. □

RESCUE ON GALATEA

By Mark Lawrence

FASA

\$6.00

Reviewed by Tony Watson

This adventure for *Traveller* is another in FASA's rapidly expanding line of play aids for GDW's SF role-playing game. The designer of this particular adventure is new to me, but I hope this is not the last we hear of Mr. Lawrence.

Rescue on Galatea is an imaginative scenario filled with interesting ideas and concepts. The library data offers some good examples of this; there is The Church of Future Man, a radical religious organization which practices the ritual of translation, in which the seeker of the faith is placed in a stasis field to gain a feeling of euphoria; the Church also has research and development programs and an extensive commercial fleet. Despite the cynicism apparent in the discussion of the Church's activities, the adventure is one of the first attempts to address the question of religion in the *Traveller* universe. This aspect of interstellar society has long been ignored in *Traveller* supplements and adventures.

The library data also offers such fascinating tidbits as Shadownsand, super-heavy planetesimals formed around a collapsed supernova black hole, and TIP, the total integration process between fluid-printed circuits and organic material, the resulting graft increasing memory, logic and self-awareness of the recipient. Mr. Lawrence's imagination is fertile indeed.

The adventure is set up for mercenary types with strong military backgrounds. The situation involves a kidnapped merchant prince, Damethon Cohaine; his absence at an important conference between powerful conglomerates could lead to war.

The Church of the Future Man has been contacted regarding a rescue attempt; the player group forms the bulk of the team and is led by two NPCs, who have been fully fleshed out.

The planet on which the prince is being held is Galatea, a heavy gravity water world. Its thick atmosphere hosts a number of large, strong flying creatures and the ocean is the realm of the Satha, or Galatean whale.

More important to the course of the adventure, however, are the Jessa, the planet's lizardish intelligent inhabitants.

In an interesting and unusual touch, the Jessa, because of the hellish storms of Galatea (rules for rolling up storms and their effects are included) have taken to air transport rather than risk the violent seas. They fly around in biplanes and giant, airborne carriers.

Once they are on Galatea, the players will have to work with one of the Jessa leaders. His aid will be essential in getting to the island where the prince is being held, as well as fighting their way through hostile Jessa and climactic conditions. Much more about the adventure cannot be said without tipping the ending, but suffice it to say that the scenario is carefully explained and outlined and supported with lots of background material.

There are the traditional animal/event encounter tables, as well as specialized rules for fighting between biplanes, a system similar to the abstract one used in *Mercenary*. All of the important NPCs are provided with useful biographies. The 17"x11" double-sided map and Mitch O'Connell's excellent illustrations provide the necessary visual aids.

Rescue on Galatea should appeal to those players who like adventure in its broadest and most sweeping varieties. All the elements for an adventure of near epic proportions are present.

My only suggestion is that FASA convince the designer to do another adventure based on some of the ideas, loose ends and characters introduced in *Rescue on Galatea*. The Church of the Future Man, its security force commander Omnipax, and the soldier Eidolon Chantree are too interesting to allow to fade into nothingness. □

BROADSWORD

By Loren Wiseman, with Marc Miller

Game Designer's Workshop

\$4.98

Reviewed by Tony Watson

On the planet Garda-Vilis, in the Vilis sub-sector, a rebellion is brewing. The Tanoose Freedom League (TFL), a revolutionary organization, has gained considerable support among the world's populace. Garda-Vilis' position is important; it is astride a main x-boat route and located in an osten-

sibly demilitarized zone between the Imperium, Zhodani Consulate and Sword Worlds Confederation. The Imperium's enemies are eager to sway the world into their sphere of influence. The ruling council of the planet has decided that it is absolutely essential to crush the rebellion before the Zhodani/Sword Worlds influence and aid grow too large. To this end they have employed the warship *Broadsword* and its mercenary complement to control the TFL until other forces can be brought in.

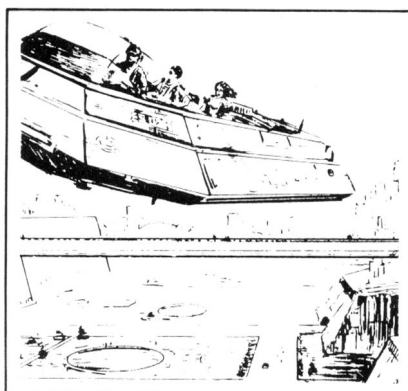
This is the basic situation in *Broadsword*, GDW's new *Traveller* adventure. As the introductory paragraph indicates, the scenario in the playaid centers around military activities and is suitable for player-characters of Army and Marine backgrounds. Navy vets get to participate in the scenario containing starship to starship combat.

The overall adventure is broken down into four short scenarios. The first is a raid into a village to capture prisoners and gain information about the TFL's activities. The second is an ambush and the third a clash between the *Broadsword* and two of the system's defense boats and a Zhodani strike cruiser, as the mercenary ship attempts to escort two incoming troop transports. The fourth and final scenario entails an attack by dreaded Zhodani psionic commandos.

Each of the scenarios is fully explained, with suggestions to help the referee in administering the events. A substantial part of the booklet is devoted to detailing the organization and weapons employed by the various participants. The combat actions can be resolved by either *Snapshot* or *Azhanti High Lightning* rules where appropriate, and *Mercenary* or *Striker* rules for the larger, outdoor situation. Statistics can be handled using the new *Striker* rules.

About a third of the book is taken up by a full description of the *Broadsword*, complete with deckplans. This material is a reprint of an article appearing in *The Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society*, issue eight. In light of the nature of the adventure, reprinting the information on the 800 ton mercenary cruiser seems entirely appropriate.

This adventure should certainly appeal to those players who wish to be interstellar mercenaries. The action on Garda-Vilis is interesting in and of itself and provides a good example of how such mercenary tickets can be set up. The large amount of background material included can allow the referee to use this as a springboard for further adventures involving mercenaries aboard the *Broadsword*. ■



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QUICK PLUGS

Every issue of *Different Worlds* presents capsule descriptions of new products. Publishers are encouraged to send samples of their new products for announcement here.

TRAVELLER

RESCUE ON GALATEA — Designed by Mark Lawrence, this is a 44-page rescue adventure. Comes with 11"x17" two-sided map, the adventure involves a team of mercenaries on an alien world attempting to rescue an abandoned diplomat. The planet, made up of thousands of islands, is described in detail. Price is \$6.

THE TRAIL OF THE SKY RAIDERS

Playable by itself, this is a sequel to *Legend of the Sky Raiders*. Designed by J Andrew Keith, this adventure involves a band of adventurers in search of an ancient culture of plunderers who vanished without a trace centuries ago. The book is 56 pages long and comes with an 11"x17" two-sided map. Price is \$6. Both are available from FASA, PO Box 6930, Chicago IL 60680-6930. Mail orders add \$1.50 for postage and handling.

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INCEDUS III — Designed by Kenneth C Campbell, this 24-page book describes an espionage mission to find out the reason for planet Abrice's secretive ways. The detailed description of the planet includes agent briefing, Interstellar survey, Bureau of Intelligence evaluation, time line, wildlife, religion, playing an Abrician NPC, an evening on the town, as well as all sorts of secretive goings on. It sells for \$5.

STAR SECTOR ATLAS II — Designed by Phil Mc Gregor, this 48-page book describes 40 planets in the Confederate Systems Alliance. Also provided are a history of the sector, animal encounters, starlines, military organizations, and warbots. It sells for \$6. Both are available from Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc., PO Box 182 Roslyn, NY 1157.

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THE BLACK VIAL — This 40-page booklet is a primer of toxins and antitoxins for role-playing. It details 63 toxins, 13 antidotes, and five useful potions. There are four types of toxins: ingested, blade, contact, and inhaled. Instructions for making and use are also provided. Designed by Loel H Schoonover, it is available from Infinity Limited, 1425 S 320 E, Orem UT 84057.

CITYBOOK I — This 128-page book contains descriptions of 25 city-based establishments and 75 non-player characters. Also provided are numerous scenario suggestions. There are taverns, museums, temples, armorers, bakers, guilds, jails, etc. Each establishment has a map and a detailed description, personalities, and scenario suggestions. Edited by Larry DiTillio, this is the first product in the Catalyst Series. Available for \$14.95 from Flying Buffalo Inc., PO Box 1467, Scottsdale AZ 85252, add \$1 for postage and handling.

TRAITOR — For use with *Thieves' World*, this is a 60-page book designed by Bill Fawcett. The referee plays the part of Jubal, the local underground chief. The players play the part of his henchmen; one of whom is a traitor who stole a valuable document. The players must weed out the traitor within them and return the document in three days or Jubal will punish them all. Available from FASA.

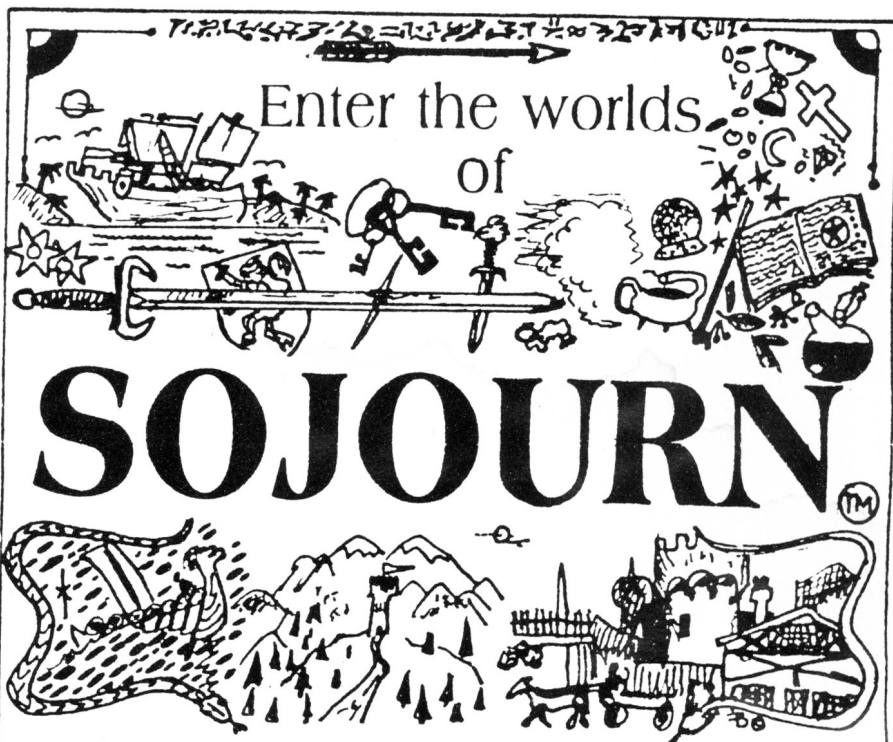
SOURCEBOOK

THE PALLADIUM BOOK OF WEAPONS AND ARMOUR — This 48-page booklet claims to be the most comprehensive playing aid available. It describes 35 types

of armor and 600 weapons, all illustrated with annotations. Designed by Matthew Balent, it is available postpaid for \$4.95 from Palladium Books, 5669 Casper Ave, Detroit MI 48210.

NEW MAGAZINE

NEXUS 1 — The premier issue contains 40 pages and is a special *Star Fleet Battles* issue. It also includes articles on role-playing systems by Eric Goldberg, strategies for *Swordquest*, reviews of *Barbarian Prince*, *Intruder*, etc. Single copy price is \$2.50, subs are \$10 for six issues. Available from Task Force Games, 1110 N Fillmore, Amarillo TX 79107. □



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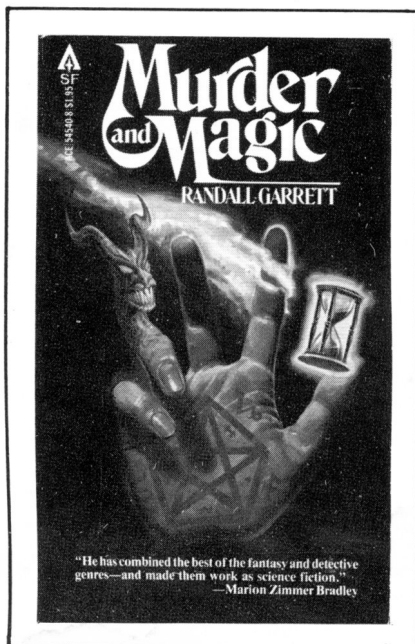


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Books & Role-Playing

This column is the first of a series of book reviews appearing in *Different Worlds*. Most gamers are avid readers. They probably select their reading material based on reviews read elsewhere. This is as it should be: *Different Worlds* is devoted to gaming, not fiction. There are numerous works of fiction which are rich mines of ideas for gaming, however. This column will emphasize this, rather than the literary aspect of the work reviewed.



Too Many Magicians, Ace 1966;
Murder and Magic, Ace 1979; *Lord Darcy Investigates*, Ace 1981; *The Best of Randall Garrett*, Pocket 1982, all written by Randall Garrett.

Reviewed by David R. Dunham

Most role-playing campaigns are set either in the distant future or the past. This review's stories are set in the present — the 1970s of an alternate universe where King Richard the Lion-Hearted was *not* killed in 1199, but survived a crossbow bolt to found an empire that still prospers. The most significant deviation from our history, was the formulation of the Laws of Magic in the late Thirteenth Century. Richard's survival provides the political background of the stories (his descendants still reign); magic's discovery provides the socio-economic background.

The hero of the stories is Lord Darcy, Chief Investigator for the Duke of Normandy. Aided by Master Sorcerer Sean O Lochlainn, Darcy is called on to solve murder cases. This job is made difficult because, in addition to the standard problems of locked rooms and moving trains, magic complicates things. But, as do most fictional detectives, Darcy always succeeds.

Characterization isn't the strong point of these stories. The settings are at least as

important as the people (not terribly surprising in locked-room mysteries), and much of the success of the Darcy stories comes from the intriguing monarchist, magic-dominated background that Garrett weaves. Add the imagination needed to devise and solve the mysteries, and you have a winning combination. Few stories are ever perfect, however. Darcy is definitely an aristocrat, and moves in very high circles. The courtly manners and "m'lords" got to me after a while. Many of the stories are a bit short on action, and occasionally the scene-setting drags on too long.

I recommend all four books. *Too Many Magicians* is a novel, and best develops the alternate universe. The other books are collections. *Murder and Magic* and *Lord Darcy Investigates* contain four stories each, and in each case, three are good and one is fair. *Best of* only has two Darcy stories, one of which is also contained in *Murder and Magic*, but I found the other one, "The Spell of War," to be especially interesting since it applies magic to the battlefield. The non-Darcy stories in *Best of* are good, too.

The spells and magic items could find a place in most fantasy campaigns. The preservation spell (usually used to prevent the evidence from decomposing) would be useful in any campaign where the bodies of the fallen are brought back for resurrection. The spell arrests decay, and would eliminate bad effects of delayed revivification.

Invisibility works as an aversion spell: you can't look directly at the "invisible" object. You can still see it in a mirror. An interesting application of the spell is to use it on a sword. Imagine how difficult it would be to parry something you can't look at.

Since there are clairvoyants around, most buildings have privacy spells cast on them. No one wants a psychic peeping tom. In addition, there are sigils which can be worn as protection against being seen magically.

One useful spell slams the lid of a chest on a hand reaching inside.

Some of the other spells may not have as common an application, as they are used in the work of criminal investigation to reconstruct things as they were — reknitting a rope used in a hanging, bringing a bullet back into the gun that fired it, even viewing the last image a dead man saw.

Several interesting magic items are mentioned. One, which requires a magician to operate, projects a ray which has the effect of reducing dexterity to the minimum, with the side effect of shortening the victim's temper. Another, which anyone can use, emits an area of darkness, in which only the user can see.

What the Lord Darcy stories really offer, though, are not isolated ideas, but an example of how magic can be successfully integrated into a campaign. For example, in a lot of campaigns destructive magic tends to get out of hand. The tactical nuclear mage of some campaigns, armed to the hilt with Fireballs, Magic Missiles, etc., easily overshadows the sword-toting warrior. Not

so in Garrett's world. Destructive (black) magic is harmful to the caster in the long run, and not as effective as white magic. Many of the spells that would change society radically don't exist. Teleportation, for example, would offer a new way to travel (and easy alibis), but no such spell has been discovered. Garrett is trying not to introduce too many complicating factors, because he takes into account the effects of each one. Magic is used for practical purposes, like keeping property secure, rather than aiding impetuous adventurers who risk life and limb for a little treasure. The common folk represent a much larger market and since becoming a magician takes years of study, why would a sensible magician risk that investment doing something as dangerous as adventuring? Finally, Garrett limits the overuse of magic by limiting the number of magicians. Although anyone can learn the rules of magic, not everybody is born with the Talent to use them. In fact, talent is rare.

An example of how Garrett follows through on his changes is the discredit of the Theory of Materialism. The laws of magic, not science, are important in this world. As a result, technology is at least 100 years behind our own 1970s. There are trains, but the horse is still the most common form of transportation. Electricity hasn't been discovered, so gas lamps are used for illumination. The use of moldy bread (penicillin) in treating patients is considered quackery, since the Church provides healers.

Like most professionals of our day, magicians have joined together in a guild, which holds conventions, disciplines members, publishes journals, but more importantly decides who will be accepted. The decision isn't theirs alone, because the Church has great power, and must certify each magician as practicing only white magic.

Most spells take from several minutes to many hours to cast, and require both props and preparation. This would make it very difficult for a magician to use her art to defend herself, except for the fortunate fact that a magician can channel the energy of an attacker back on himself, with a spell which takes but seconds.

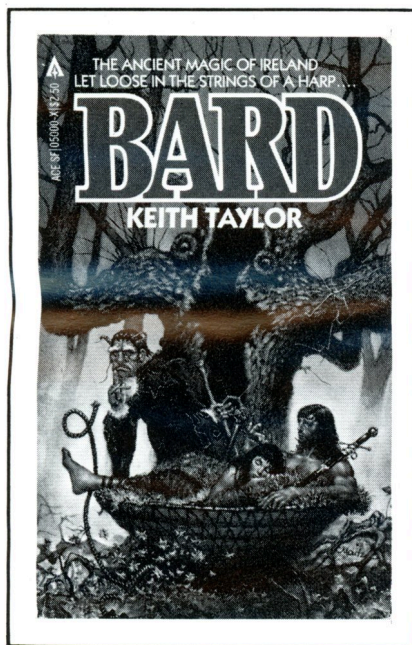
Garrett's alternate universe is an illustration of how to design a campaign world, but it can itself be the setting of a campaign. Since learning to be a magician takes so long, and since training in other skills isn't part of the stories, I suggest using a game system like *Traveller* or *Call of Cthulhu*, where characters start the game after completing their education or training. The campaign can either be set in Europe, where Poland is the Empire's main threat, or in the Americas, where the colonies provide much of the Empire's wealth.

The rules of *Traveller* or *Call of Cthulhu* serve for swords, firearms, and other physical skills, but neither game will handle the magic that sorcerers like Sean O Lochlainn use (of course, fictional magic seldom bears much resemblance to game magic). There are certain common spells, but many of the

spells involve applications of the Laws of Magic. Some of the laws mentioned are the Law of Contagion, the Law of Similarity, the Principle of Relevance, the Law of Metonymy, the Law of Synecdoche. The player will have to come up with the spell effect she wants and justify it with the Laws of Magic. The referee will then decide what is the chance for the spell to work. This makes both the player and the referee work harder, but spells aren't cast very often in the stories, so this approach shouldn't be too unwieldy. It should simulate the fact that spells require some preparation, and allow spells to be designed to fit the problem at hand.

If you choose to run a campaign in Europe, player-characters will probably be nobility, magicians, or clergy. Most others would have no opportunity for adventure (unless in the military), since everybody in society has his proper place. For most people, not much education is required, certainly not weapons training. Scenarios might involve Poland and its secret service; both constantly look for advantages over the Empire. Characters could be asked to help recover a stolen experimental magic item, or deliver a message. They could even engage in espionage against the Poles.

A North American campaign might be more desirable because it would be more familiar, and it offers the frontier as a place for adventure. The natives can use magic too, even if they aren't as well trained in its use, and there is a lot of unexplored area. Characters could explore or prospect, be called on by settlers to resolve problems, negotiate with great chieftains, extend the colonies westward, or be commissioned to learn one of the secret spells of a medicine man. □



Bard, by Keith Taylor. Ace Books 05000-X, 293pp, \$2.50.

Reviewed by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

Several games have rules for playing bards, but there is little literature gamers

can use as source material for their role-playing. *Bard* is not only that, but it is also an entertaining and sometimes suspenseful novel. Although it is constructed from a series of novelets that originally appeared in *Fantastic Stories* magazine, it is no more episodic than most fantasy novels.

One of the most interesting aspects of the novel is that the main character, a bard of Erin, under whose law it was as serious a crime to kill a bard as to kill a king, finds himself a fugitive in England. This teaches a useful lesson on the weaknesses and strengths of a class that combines limited skill in melee and limited skill with specialized magic. Felimid mac Fal finds he must live by his wits, rather than relying on brute force, which is good gaming advice.

Most of the time, Felimid gets by with fast talking his way out of trouble. Only occasionally does he rely on the magic of his harp, whose powers are obviously derived from the study of the powers of Dagda, a Gaelic god of the Earth and the logical patron god of Celtic bards. The three powers the Dagda's harp could play are found in Felimid's: to project great joy upon the listener, to project great sorrow upon the listener, or to put the listener into a deep sleep. From this tradition, it might be suggested that the powers of the bard's musical magic by extension should be

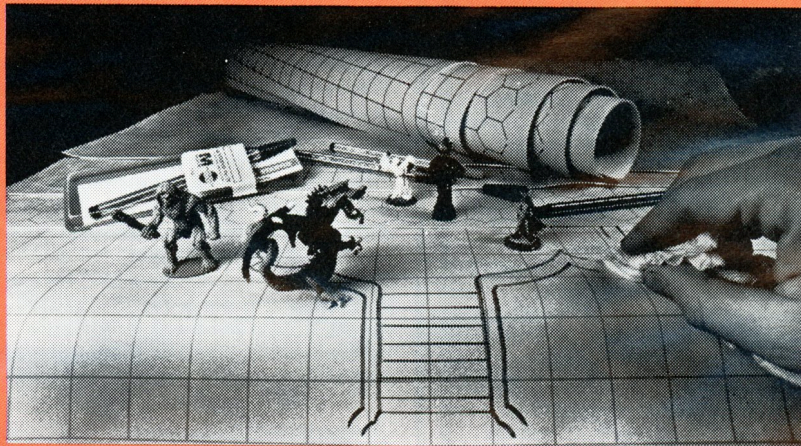
affecting the emotions of the audience, rather than giving bards traditional magic spells. But it is difficult to make practical use of any of these powers in the usual sort of dungeoning game.

The novel reflects familiarity with English and Irish history and Celtic myth. Felimid finds himself plagued by a werewolf enemy, who shows up periodically throughout the novel as Felimid tries to find a place of safety. He encounters a forest magician who proves, of course, to be other than what he seems. (The mage's basket-spell will be familiar to *AD&D* players.) Another's mare is not what she seems, either, which should spark ideas for use in gaming. A witch's vengeance intrudes on another episode, which plunges Felimid among horse-stealing tribesmen (a traditional Celtic custom), as he searches for his stolen sword, an ancient treasure of the Tuatha de Danaan with a curse upon it. The novel, set in the post-Roman age of King Arthur but in the lands of the wild Celtish kings, ends with a treasure hunt in the ruin of a Roman villa, and a final clash with the werewolf.

Bard is an exciting adventure novel of ancient times. It is also a tale of magics of many different kinds and sources, and full of ideas to enliven and enrich your role-gaming.

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Fantasy & Science Fiction Films

A number of fantasy and science fiction films has appeared this summer that you may be interested in, both as entertainment and as sources of role-playing ideas. This week our film reviewer, John Nubbin, looks at the two new Steven Spielberg productions, *E.T.* and *Poltergeist*. Also reviewed are *The Thing*, a John Carpenter direction, and *Blade Runner*, directed by Ridley Scott and starring Harrison Ford.

E.T.

Producer Steven Spielberg
 Director Steven Spielberg
 Screenplay Melissa Mathison
 Photography Allen Daviau
 Music John Williams

CAST

Mary Dee Wallace
 Elliott Henry Thomas
 Keys Peter Coyote

Reviewed by John Nubbin

E.T. stills were unavailable at press time.

Certain things give away Spielberg films; roiling black clouds, blinding shafts of hot, white light, suburban families as single entities, but above all, attention to detail. When directing his own stories, Spielberg can often times grow sloppy, allowing glaring errors in continuity to make it to the screen for the sake of his personal vision. But, when directing other folks' tales, much of his pretension drops away, and he does what he does best, direct with heart.

E.T. is the story of a young boy's (and eventually his entire family's) meeting of an extra-terrestrial being. Elliott, convinced he has seen something moving out behind the house, searches the weeds, checks the shed, and eventually sleeps in a lawn chair, hoping to again spot the gremlin, or troll, or whatever it was. He does, tells people, and is, of course, laughed at. Determined to prove he is right, his hunt continues, complete with M&M lures set out in the surrounding woods. Eventually, he is successful, and the whatever is discovered and brought home.

The 'whatever' is an alien, accidentally stranded on our planet, left behind when his ship was forced to take off without him. Dubbed 'E.T.' by his rescuers, the alien lives in their playroom, hiding from the government, drinking Coors, and trying to discover a way to get back home, all the while growing more and more attached to his earthly 'family.'

It is a story which, in less competent hands, would have been silly and uninteresting. Handled by Spielberg, however, it is a masterpiece, possibly the best science fiction picture in the past ten years. It owes its roots to *Star Wars*, as does *Alien*, *Superman*, and every major fantasy film since

George Lukas broke the anti-hero mold and brought simple fun back to the theaters, but, unlike so many of the science fiction and fantasy films we have seen lately, it is not bound to the genre. More in the vein of the Spielberg/Lukas hit of last season, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *E.T.* is less a science fiction film, and more of a mainstream event.

Nothing in *E.T.* is really explained. The science is haphazard, random, and mostly non-existent. It doesn't matter; Spielberg was not out to make a science fiction film. His purpose seems to have been (besides making an unbelievable amount of money) to entertain everyone. Mom, dad, jaded businessmen, your kid sister, policemen, teachers, the moral majority, and everyone else you can name should like this film. It contains no violence, sex, blood or terror, and yet, it is the most enjoyable picture to be produced in this country in years. The main reason for this is its believability. The story centers around Elliott and his brother (both of whom, along with their friends are all playing *D&D* when we first see them), and sister. Everything they do and say throughout the film is real. They react, talk, think, and basically do everything like normal children. They are presented as intelligent, not television-sophisticated. They have feelings, and emotional responses that most people can relate to. The posters in their rooms, the toys they own, the games they play and the television shows they are interested in are not what adults think they own, play or watch, they are what they own, play and watch, and that makes the difference.

The script as a whole is top notch. There is not an unbelievable moment in the movie. If you can accept the premise that alien beings exist, you won't have any trouble with everything else presented.

Besides all of these things, though, there is *E.T.* himself. The models, robots, puppets and costumed people used to create the persona of the alien are flawless. *E.T.* does not look like just another rubber suit. He is a personality who will be regarded as highly as R2-D2, Robbie the Robot, or any other collection of inanimate objects which have been used to portray a thinking being. In

truth, there may be no previous creation of a living being that can come close to the reality levels attained by *E.T.* (After all, no matter how well Kermit moves, even six year olds know he's a puppet); Giger's *Alien* is only evil, *E.T.* is a totally rounded character.

E.T. is a totally enjoyable film. The detail lavished on the movie makes it an exquisite viewing experience well above the crowd of the summer releases. □

Poltergeist

Producers Steven Spielberg and Frank Marshall
 Director Tobe Hooper
 Screenplay Steven Spielberg, Michael Grais and Mark Victor
 Music Jerry Goldsmith

CAST

Steve Freeling . . . Craig T. Nelson
 Diane Freeling . . . Jobeth Williams
 Dr. Lesh Beatrice Straight

Reviewed by John Nubbin

Poltergeist is set in a typical Spielberg setting; the same as *E.T.*, the surroundings are completely suburban. The central protagonist is the Freeling family, dad, mom, older sister, middle son, younger sister. It is a world of football games, large back yards, swimming pools and station wagons. Unlike the rich families in most horror films, the Freelings are staunchly middle class. Dad actually works for a living; an ex-athlete turned real-estate salesman, Steve Freeling works hard, plays games in bed with his still girlish, all-American wife, and in most ways doesn't seem to deserve what we know is coming.

And that is the problem with most horror pictures today; the audience indeed does know what is coming. Posters, T.V. ads, reviews and theater trailers give away so much, that by the time we see any ghost story, we generally already know who the central characters are, who (or what) the



Poltergeist © 1982 Metro Goldwyn Mayer Film Co.

killer (or whatever) is, who is going to die, and who isn't. Thus, the *Halloweens*, *Friday the 13ths*, and *Howlings* rarely hold any treats for their audiences. Knowing the chances of scaring, or actually terrifying an audience are slim, filmmakers these days have settled for grossing out their fans. Spielberg, luckily, doesn't work this way.

Little blood makes its way to the screen. The two scenes with any at all are minimal. There are no faceless slashers, or berserkers, but rather, true, nameless terror. Spielberg has taken the simplest of household items, chairs, records, lightbulbs, televisions, and children's toys, and turned them into instruments of horror. A dead, backyard tree becomes a menace of Lovecraftian stature. Carefully blending true occurrences with the wildest of imaginings, he has created a vision as obscure as any ever before witnessed on the screen.

And, despite the credits, it is Spielberg's film. There is too much in the technique, in the flow of the picture, that harkens back to *CE3K*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and even *Jaws* to allow anyone the thought that it was totally produced by the director of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Tobe Hooper is not yet director enough to have made this film. The direction is Spielberg's, which is all to the better.

Unlike Hooper, Spielberg is not one to splash the scene with gore. "There are no knifings, no murders, and no decapitated heads," says Spielberg. "We do have one scene which appears to be instantly violent and gory, but it turns out to be a quick hallucination." The producer is willing to admit taking a chance with *Poltergeist*. "It is an uphill battle," he continues, "Especially these days when competing with films that generate good box-office through bloodletting and spectacular violence. Having joined a similar genre, we don't have to offer blood or violence as a means of explaining *Poltergeist*. Some of the scariest things in our film happen in broad daylight."

Some of the scariest things of any film happen in *Poltergeist*. The reasons for this terror are simple. Unlike the characters in *The Exorcist*, or *The Fury*, those in *Poltergeist* seem very real to us. They are normal people; they are our family, and our friends. Simple people, they react in ordinary ways to the extraordinary things which begin to happen to them. In the same way characters

like Rocky Balboa or Indiana Jones become real to audiences through comprehension of their personalities, so too does the Freeling family receive our undivided sympathies. We want to see them escape the macabre presence which is toying with them, because we can see too much of ourselves reflected in them. In the same way we felt our feet wanting to move when Richard Dreyfuss went forward toward the mother ship in *CE3K*, so again do we feel them moving beneath us as we silently urge the Freelings to run from their home before it destroys them.

Poltergeist is the best thriller that has been made in a lot of years. Between it and *E.T.*, what appears to be an endless summer of hits is being ushered in nicely. □

The Thing

Director John Carpenter
Producers David Foster and
Lawrence Turman
Screenplay Bill Lancaster
Music Ennio Morricone
Photography Dean Cundey

CAST

MacReady Kurt Russel
Blair A. Wilford Brimley
Reviewed by John Nubbin

No one who has seen it is likely to forget the 1951 Christian Nyby/Howard Hawks/Charles Lederer movie version of John W. Campbell Jr.'s classic short story, *Who Goes There*. It was a chilling tale with little in the way of special effects, making up for this deficit with good characterization, and a solid (if somewhat silly at times) storyline which kept audiences rooted to their seats until the end.

Reversing the above somewhat is this year's remake of this film, directed by horror film maker John Carpenter. Heavily doused with special effects, and much closer to the original story, *The Thing* has become a horrific nightmare, short on identity, but long on numbing scares.

The tale is simple; sometime in man's distant past, an alien space craft crash-landed on Earth in the Antarctic. It's pilot,

thrown clear of the crash, waited frozed in the ice over the centuries for rescue by a Norwegian scientific expedition. With the ability to infect the very cells of its victims, the alien destroys the party by entering each person's body, taking over their cells, bursting out of their bodies, and then finally becoming a copy of the creature it has destroyed. Chased in the form of a sled dog, into the hands of an American research team, the alien is given a new flock of sheep, one it goes through with equal gusto.

The problem with *The Thing* does not lie in the look of the film. The alien is one of the best screen creatures we have seen yet, more confusing in appearance than Ridley Scott's *Alien*, more horrible and convincing in its transformation than the beasts in either *The Howling* or *An American Werewolf in London*. There are over a dozen transformation and attack sequences in the movie, all of them both terrifying and flawless in their authenticity.

The problem instead, lies with the people who populate the film. This version of *The Thing* lacks subtlety and the broad bits of personality development found in its predecessor. Like so many other modern horror movies, the beast is all. After a while, we lose interest in who will survive and who won't. None of the people in the base have been made real enough for us to care about.

The majority of Carpenter's appeal here is how the alien will attack next, and how horrible it will be. This is not altogether bad; the film is still an enjoyable watch, especially for those moviegoers who look

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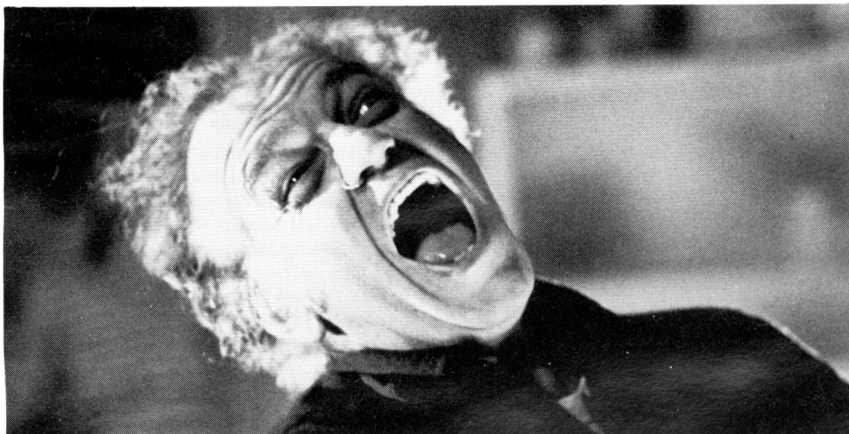
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forward to this kind of picture. But, for those who want something a bit more solid, *The Thing* is lacking. Carpenter had the right idea in *Halloween*. We cared about Jamie Lee's frightened young girl. No one wanted to see her hurt, and thus we were terrorized just as effectively by a man in a cheap, white plastic mask. In *The Thing*, we don't care about the cast; nothing has been presented to us to make us care about them. It takes the state-of-the-art in macabre special effects to elicit the same feeling of horror within us.

But unlike *Halloween*, when it is all over, we are not left with a feeling of relief. We neither know for sure what happens at the end, nor do we care.

At its best, this film is scary. At its worst it lacks the power to involve us within its confines, making it just another horror film in the end. □

Blade Runner

Director Ridley Scott
 Producer Michael Deeley
 Screenplay Hampton Fancher and
 David Peoples
 Music Vangelis
 Photography Jordan Cronenweth

CAST

Deckard Harrison Ford
 Batty Rutger Hauer
 Rachael Sean Young
 Gaff Edward James Olmos

Reviewed by John Nubbin

In 2019, the world as we know it has multiplied all of its ills. The buildings are taller and uglier, the smog is worse, the decay is everywhere. Biologically fit human beings are encouraged to migrate to Earth's star colonies, and the rest of humanity is left behind to sort things out as best they can.

One of the problems facing those who remain behind is the threat of escaped android slaves, replicants, who return to Earth from space in the hopes of living out normal lives. These hopes rarely meet with success, because most cities keep a task force of Blade Runners, modern bounty



hunters, around to 'retire' any rouge androids they can find.

In *Blade Runner*, Harrison Ford plays Rick Deckard, ex-bounty hunter pressed into service when five desperate Nexus 6 replicants come to Los Angeles, hoping to track down their creator and extend their minimal four-year life spans. The Nexus 6 model is supposedly superior to human beings, faster, stronger, smarter. Tracking them down in the decay of the Los Angeles of the future is not an easy task.

It does make for a powerful film, however, as Ridley Scott's newest science fiction epic splashes across the screen, unravelling its mystery in the tradition of the best '40s film noir classics. *Blade Runner*

is an incredibly intricate film, one which takes the world around us and extrapolates it into a future no one would desire, and yet, everyone would be forced to admit might possibly come to pass. In a sociological sense, it is a startling view of our own times gone, not mad, but merely further.

The film's editing is swift and imaginative, intercut with its provocative soundtrack (composed, arranged, performed and produced by last year's Oscar winner, Vangelis) in a way which makes it more than a simple summer movie. *Blade Runner* is a film of great texture, one which can only be unraveled, not torn apart. There are no gaps in it. Scott has taken great care to make his picture of the future, and the characters that move through it, total in all respects. We understand why and how his Los Angeles works; we know his people, although usually not quite well enough to predict their movements. The suspense set up in the film is as gripping as that in *Casablanca*; here too, we do not know what will happen. Who will live and who will die, who will get the girl, what will happen seems more in the hands of fate than it does a scriptwriter's.

All in all, however, *Blade Runner* may very well prove to be the summer movie of '82. Despite the major crowds jamming the theaters to see *E.T.*, it is a superior film, much more serious, and, although more exotic in its choice of subject matter, much more believable as well. It is a hard hitting adventure, as well as a complicated study of people and what the pressures of a world gone just a little crazier can do to them. ■



Cinema News & Reviews



By Larry DiTillio

Well, film fans, it's been some summer for our favorite fare, hasn't it? *E.T.*, *Poltergeist*, *Tron*, *Conan*, *Road Warrior*, *MegaForce*, *Star Trek - The Wrath of Khan*, *Blade Runner*, *The Thing*, *The Sword and the Sorcerer* have all hit the screens to attempt to grab our thrill-seeking bucks. Some have succeeded beyond our wildest dreams, others? well, you can't win 'em all.

August will see a few more additions to this fantasy/adventure/horror summer cycle. Number one on the list has got to be *Creepshow*, a group of horror tales penned by Stephen King and directed by George Romero (*Dawn of the Dead*). If you haven't perused one of King's fine horror masterpieces, you're missing out on something. The man can give you chills during a heat wave in hell. *Creepshow* is his first written directly for the screen effort and thanks to one of my Lost Angels contacts, Terrible Tom Keefer, I got a hold of the script. It's one beautiful piece of writing and should scare the bejabbers out of you. I won't let you in on any of the surprises (that'd ruin it for you) but I will recommend it. Highly.

Two 3-D epics will soon be racing across your screen as well. The first is *Friday the 13th - Part III*. Since I had no use for parts One and Two, I'll give Three a pass as well until Advertising assures me I won't be watching another hack-up-the-ladies bomb. Let me reiterate a stand I took way back in *DW 12*, in this very column: Films that depict gross murders committed by sexual psychopaths are not *horror*, they are merely horrible. They are cheap, sick and made only to rake in money. Don't buy garbage and you won't be flooded with it. Stay away and the message will be clear. Now to end this raving, 3-D flick number two is called *Rottweiler* and deals with killer dogs. I leave its fate up to you.

Martial arts fans will see yet another Chuck Norris flick heading their way in August, this one called *Forced Vengeance*.

TINY TUBE: Following the fantasy/adventure trend, television is planning a number of series designed to appeal to fans like you and me. I must admit I have a rather low opinion of television's capacity for quality in this area, but I'll try to be as objective as possible. First of all, we have *The Powers of Matthew Star*, a series starring Peter Barton as a high school student who is really an alien, possessed of super powers. I figure to beat the critics out by immediately dubbing this *Teen-ager From Outer Space* and predicting a quick and merciful demise, but you never know. Next up is *Voyagers*, which concerns a boy who travels through time with a *Time cop* whose job it is to set the course of his-

tory straight. Sound something like *Time Bandits*? If you think so, you have the makings of a t.v. executive. Rip-offs aside, I am something of a sucker for time travel concepts and I will be anxious to see how they attempt to pull this one off. Final silliness in this venture is *Knight Rider*. This has nothing to do with George Romero's motorcycle film of virtually the same title *Knight Riders* but concerns an ex-cop who continues to fight crime using a super-car whose advanced technology includes a talking, thinking computer. Oh, the heck with objectivity, this one sounds like a tin-plated turkey. *Matthew Star* is slated for Friday nights, *Voyagers* for Sunday and *Knight Rider* for Friday. They are all on NBC, so if you're interested, check in.

TWILIGHT ZONE RETURNS! Good news for all you Zoners. Universal Studios is in the process of doing a *Twilight Zone* movie. It will be composed of four stories written by Mr. Richard Matheson, who wrote a potful of stories for the old series. Directing various segments will be Joe Dante, Tobe Hooper, and Steven Spielberg! Sounds tasty, and just maybe a successful movie will return *Twilight Zone* to the ole Tube.

AND THE MONSTER RISES AGAIN! You can't keep a classic monster down and what walking horror is more classic than the monster of Frankenstein. *Frankenstein, The True Story* (second time around for the title) is being produced by Bert Gordon for the big screen. It's set to start filming in Salem, Massachusetts. Dr. Frankenstein will be played by Dean Butler (one of the stars of *Little House on the Prairie*.) The monster itself has not been cast as yet.

I WANT TO SUCK YOUR BLOOD AGAIN! Hot on the heels of Frankenstein, comes a sequel to yet another "classic?", *Love at First Bite*. *Love at Second Bite* will again star George Hamilton as the hungry Count. The first picture in my estimation had some funny moments, had some unfortunate racist moments and as a whole was fair. Perhaps Mr. Hamilton will show a little more... *Taste?*

FRAZETTA ON FILM: *Fire and Ice*, an animated feature built around the fabulous fantasy paintings of Frank Frazetta is in production. The last time I reported on this delicious idea was about a year and a half ago and at that time it was still tentative. But now it is really happening! Ralph Bakshi is producing.

AMITYVILLE REVISITED: Sequels are the rage now. Everytime a picture rakes in bucks, the game masters of Tinseltown are sure to repeat the scenario. In some instances this is good (We all want more *Star Wars*, *Raiders*, *Superman*, *Star Trek* and

though it sounds amazing I would like to see a better *Conan* movie). In some cases this trend is ridiculous (How many times can Sylvester Stallone take a beating?). Anyway, in the sequel trend comes *Amityville: The Possession*, a sequel to *The Amityville Horror*. It's produced by Dino De Laurentiis, who I consider the kiss of death for most pictures. Nevertheless, if you're an Amityville fan, I guess you'll want to see it.

MUPPETS GO SERIOUS: Filming now is *Dark Crystal*, a Muppet movie in a serious fantasy vein. Apparently the techniques which were used to create Yoda will be applied to a full-length feature film designed to make us ooh and ahh, rather than sing along to jellybean music. I have always thought the Muppets could do better and am really anxious for this feature from Muppet head-honcho Jim Henson. I'll try to keep you informed on the progress of *Dark Crystal* as the months roll by. Christmas release is likely.

FROM THE PAST: Okay game nuts, here's two recommendations from the ole sword on past flicks you should see for game ideas. The first is *Gunga Din*. This classic British-vs-the-Thuggee movie is somewhat dated, but nevertheless a fun adventure flick. Of particular interest to gamers is the Cult of Kali depicted in the film. Some of the information is erroneous (for instance, a Thug is shown using a pickaxe as a weapon, the Thugs carry pickaxes but they were considered sacred and used *only* to dig graves, never as fighting implements) but on the whole the cult as presented in *Gunga Din* makes a good model for any game involving such carryings-on. Eduardo Cianelli as the leader of the cult is especially intriguing, since his goal is to use the cult to conquer India and the world, a plan one might not expect from a *primitive* cult leader. Listen to his speech, check out his followers and you might get some good ideas about broadening cults in games such as *Call of Cthulhu*.

Blast from the past Number Two is *Masque of the Red Death*, a Roger Corman picture written by Charles Beaumont (another frequent contributor to the old *Twilight Zone*). *Masque* combines a number of Poe stories into a moody, atmospheric fantasy piece that should set all gamers to salivating. The costumes and sets alone should give you lots of visual delight and there are all kinds of tricky plot elements that can be incorporated into games.

Well, let's sheathe the old sword until next time, when you will get a special treat, an interview with John Milius, writer-director of *Conan*. See you at the cinema. □

Dear Tadashi,

Is this democracy? For the last three years some critics have viewed the Game Designers' Guild Select Awards (ugly name) with suspicion. Each year 75% of the awards went to GDW, and some hinted at ballot stuffing. This year they will likely say the same thing about Chaosium. The winners are: SANDY PETERSEN (*Call of Cthulhu*, Chaosium), FRANK CHADWICK (*House Divided*, GDW), JOHN PRADOS and LENNY GLYNN (*Spies*, SPI), KEN ST. ANDRE and STEVE PERRIN (*Stormbringer*, Chaosium), and just about everyone, seventeen in all, for *Thieves' World*, Chaosium. Well done.

Since you ask me (remember, I get paid for this) it is not curious that Chaosium got all the role-playing awards this year, nor was it curious that GDW did before. Quality shows among the GDG crowd (it must, they won't let me join). What is curious is that Avalon Hill and TSR both struck out again. Haven't any of their designers joined the guild? If they did, and contributed to the balloting, then the selections might become more balanced. And then they could get the newsletter too. I hear it advertises for game designers. (Maybe that's why TSR & Avalon Hill won't support it.)

Here are the nominations and winners of this year's ORIGINS awards: for role-playing rules *Call of Cthulhu* beat out *Universe*, *Champions*, *Stormbringer*, and *Aftermath*; for best role-playing adventure *Thieves' World* beat out *Griffin Mountain*, *Ordeal by Eshaar*, *Grimtooth's Traps*, and *Legend of the Sky Raiders*; for role-playing magazine *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society* again beat out *Different Worlds*, *Dragon*, *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, and *The Space Gamer*. The winner of the Hall of Fame Award this year is MARC MILLER. Congratulations, one and all.

GDW announces the successful settlement of their suit against Edu-Ware Services. The suit alleged that Edu-Ware's *Space* and *Space II* computer software games infringed on the *Traveller* copyright. Edu-Ware admitted the infringement and made a cash settlement, as well as turning over to GDW all existing copies of the games and assigning their copyrights for the two games.

Game Designers' Workshop has concluded a deal with Prentice-Hall to distribute MARC MILLER's already released *The Traveller Book*. It is composed of the *Traveller Adventure*, *The Traveller Alien*, *The Traveller Encyclopedia*, *The Traveller Starfleet*, and *The Traveller Soldier*. GDW also plans a line of *Traveller* software for personal computers. But no *Traveller* handbags yet.

Production problems plague every industry, and naturally enough, the adventure game hobby is no exception, since it is human to err. However, I have to wonder about divine forgiveness for this blunder. Gamelords and Metagaming have a cooperative venture wherein the former is supposed to design two *TFT* modules, and each company is supposed to publish and distribute one. To save money, both covers were printed together. Imagine Gamelord's surprise to find they had not been credited as publishers of their own product! Now



Metagaming has to put stickers on the whole print run.

But they aren't the only ones! I wonder whose head will roll in Lake Geneva for this one! The entire first print run of playing boards (90,000!) for TSR's new children's game, *Fantasy Forest*, was misfolded and will not fit into its box.

As if life wasn't difficult enough, TSR seems to be having cash flow problems. For instance, rumor has it that they want to buy Grenadier, but cannot afford it right now. Many retail sales outlets report a dropoff of *D&D* sales. TSR's acquisition fever may also be accountable. Their purchase of SPI may be recorded as the biggest boondoggle in the industry. Nearly the entire staff of the New York company quit. TSR wants to reprint about 40 of the old titles. However, the printers in New York will not release the printing plates until they are paid off for SPI's debts. The remaining finished stock is also locked up by SPI's other creditors.

And yet more tales of woe from Lake Geneva, though this is somewhat on the comical side; TSR strove for civic responsibility and spent a bundle to recover a historical boat which sank in the lake. The donation would have been a good healthy tax write-off. All they got was some rotten wood which the city refused to accept. Now it is sitting in the Dungeon Hobby Shop basement awaiting executive decision. They could integrate the pieces into their convention castle display.

I have noticed that many cons are banning the play of *Killer*. Fortune cookie says, sanity and good judgements prevail; consulting lawyer friends can avert disaster.

From an informed source I hear that Judges Guild has dropped the number of employees from over 40 to less than 10. Belt tightening in the Midwest continues.

More words from TSR on their SPI purchase: they claim they bought SPI assets and not their liabilities. A good deal, yes? This means TSR does not consider itself legally obliged to fulfill present royalty contracts and lifetime subs. All royalty contract holders are being asked to sign new TSR contracts for less percentage — but better distribution — before TSR will decide to keep the game in print. *Ares* may continue publication, *S&T* has an

outside chance, very doubtful for *Moves*. TSR feels they must honor lifetime subs of a magazine to keep the goodwill if they decide to continue publication. *Dragon-Quest* and *Universe* will continue in print as E. GARY GYGAX feels they are complementary games to their line, not competitive. REDMOND SIMONSEN has left and BRAD HESSEL has been fired.

My guess is that the SPI purchase price was \$750,000. Anyone have a better figure?

The official TSR line is that Victory Games people could have gotten anything they wanted if they had simply asked for it rather than leaving with such sour grapes. As for Victory Games, they may have gotten the money from TSR but apparently they felt they would not have gotten the total design freedom Avalon Hill offered.

I heard that the two Malvinas-Falklands games were selling so well that a small east coast company was planning to design games, and then spend money to foment revolutions rather than pay for advertising.

Congratulations to *RuneQuest* for its movie sales! Rights have been sold to use *RuneQuest* in a major motion picture. Contracts have been signed, checks have cleared. Now all we need is the movie! (Where is my cut for using my Hollywood contacts for you, Tadashi? Those buffets by the pool cost money.)

What is not happening department: Haven't seen M.A.R. BARKER's new edition of *EPT* yet . . . Avalon Hill is still waiting for ERIC GOLDBERG's FRP game . . . DAVE ARNESON keeps repeating his "These things take time" line . . . RUDY KRAFT now has PAUL REICHE, a TSR purgee, helping him with *Ringworld* . . . and I thought summer was here.

Some misguided Texans have started a rumor that you are dead, Tadashi. It's not true, is it?

Love,

Gigi

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If we said this, you probably wouldn't believe it!

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