

Note = Villain Backgrounds = In two weeks I will begin a series of articles dealing with villain backgrounds. The articles will be presented in a different format for each villain. If any of you have a story to tell, write it up and I will print it in the Gazette. In two weeks the story of...(drum roll)...Mad Merc!

Note = Newsletter #12 = Next issue will be an all SLAM-CON issue. If you are interested in running a game it will be printed in the newsletter. The Gazette will act like a convention catalog. I need the following information: Game Title, Game System, Power Level, Max Number of Players, and a Brief Description.

Ninja Hero Changes = Heroic Powers (pg. 36) = "Heroic Powers" are Champions powers that Heroic level characters are allowed to purchase. To mimic the martial art movies powers are needed.

- 1) Aid - Ch'i = This power allows the user to call up their "inner power" to aid themselves. Aid can be purchased on Str, Con, Ego, Pre, Rec, End, and Stun. None of the other characteristics (or powers) can be aided. The maximum is 3d6, the power must be totally invisible (+1), it can only work on yourself (-1/2), it cannot be moved down the time chart, and it can't be put into a power framework (Multipower). Other limitations can (and should) be put on the power.
- 2) Damage Resistance - Only versus unarmed attacks (-2)
- 3) End Reserve - The maximum is 50 End for 5 pts. (Less may be purchased.) A limitation of only if the character can normally recover (-1/4) must be taken on the recovery. This is a great way to mimic the ability to control your body functions (ie. last underwater for great lengths of time).

New Product Grades = Ninja Hero = Grade: A- = Ninja Hero is a great project. There are many pages of great information. All of the information can be used in any Hero Product campaign. The martial styles and martial design aids are wonderful. Information on Ninja Hero campaigns is also included. The scenarios and the art are a little weak. This is the only thing preventing Ninja Hero from getting a solid "A" grade.

Seth's Rules of Dungeoneering = Rule #5 =
Rule #5 = Common Sense = As most of you have already noticed, Seth's Rules are mostly common sense. Storylines use a lot of common sense. Most AD+D modules use a fairly basic plot with only minor variations. If you see a trend, it was probably meant to be seen. Look at the surface don't over analyze anything. Even bizarre events will have logical stories behind them.

Last Game = The last game was the heroes exposure to Suderham, the Slaver's Island City. The party tracked the slavers to the sewers. In the sewers they were attacked by a flesh statue, a minotaur with a big crossbow, and a shambling mound. The adventure ended with the party staring at the Slavelords themselves! Next adventure should be tons of fun...He...He...

Upcoming Events = All SLAM-CON Issue!

SLAM-CON

Note = This issue is an all SLAM-CON issue. The Gazette will detail games and scheduled events.

Schedule = (Movies will be run at random times during SLAM-CON.)

Friday

7:30 PM Soft Targets: Champions. (John Taber) San Francisco Campaign (200-250 pts.). Emphasis on Problem Solving. 5% kill ratio (much higher for normals in this adventure). Some terrorists have grabbed an orphanage and are holding it hostage! Lots of normals; watch your step!

Saturday

11:00 AM Family Business Tournament: Any number of players, first and second place prizes will be awarded!

2:00 PM First Annual Romp' to the Game Stores: Planet 10 (for comic and Hero Games people), and D & J Hobby.

5:00 PM The Rockets Red Glare...: Danger International. (Rudy Fuentez) 125 pts.+. Emphasis on Role-playing and Combat. The G.M. likes people to role-play (even when changing magazines). 60-70% kill ratio. G.A.U.N.T.L.E.T., after being on the defense against R.E.A.P.E.R. finally gets its first break. G.A.U.N.T.L.E.T. has located a R.E.A.P.E.R. base in the South Pacific. The plans have been drawn, G.A.U.N.T.L.E.T. forces are on the move, but is this base an introduction to a plot far more diabolical than R.E.A.P.E.R. has staged before..

Sunday

11:00 AM Burnin' Like A Heatwave!: Champions. (Rudy Fuentez) 225 pts. +. Emphasis on Role-playing. 20% kill ratio. Summer is here in L.A. and the mercury is pushing 100 degrees, but the streets are guaranteed to explode when a city wide gang war breaks out! Three major criminal organizations are behind it, can a group of heroes intercede or is L.A. in for a "heatwave"?

Monday

10:00 AM First Annual "Last but not Least" Talisman Game: During the game there will be a discussion about future events and changes to next years SLAM-CON II.

Mad Merc's Gaming Gazette (Continued)

Note = The above schedule is not "set in stone". Games could be run at anytime during the weekend.

Last Game = There were two games last weekend. One game was AD+D and the other was Champions.

The AD+D group finished the Slave Lords adventure. They managed to defeat all of the Slave lords in combat. Several of the characters died, but were saved by "the wind of life". After the battle, the party freed Dame Gold and the other slaves. They then retreated with the other folk of Sunderham.

The Champions game was a continuation of the San Francisco campaign. Baron Red was attempting to kill all of the villains in Stronghold by turning off the power. To do this he gained the aid of Gauntlet (Jim's old PC), Thunderbolt (who played a crucial role in his plan), Shadow Master (formerly Green Dragon), and Utility (who came along because he loved the Baron's "Master Plan"). The heroes stopped the villains, reconnected the Stronghold power by routing it through Gauntlet's sword, and returned to Stronghold to stop the breakout. Baron Red was not captured and Black Paladin was not found (how did he get out??).

Upcoming Events = Post SLAM-CON Last Game, Mad Merc's Background, and the Beginning of a New Set of Articles!

Late Submission = Talons of the Night: AD+D. Level 25-30. Characters provided. 75% kill ratio. You are an emissary from your keep to a peace conference of nations. You will join forces with other lords to find an artifact so that the peace conference will succeed.

Notes = Soapbox Column = This is a new set of articles that I plan to introduce. The Soapbox Column will be an open forum for gaming issues. It could be on game mechanics, player hints, GM story telling, etc. This column will express opinions of the author. The first column will be next week.

Ninja Hero Changes = Mini-Index = This is a small Ninja Hero table of contents. Entries are based on usage and importance.

<u>Page</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Article</u>
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Article = The Mad Merc Story or One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

The story of Mad Merc begins with the story of Matt Gargon. Matt Gargon had a very rough childhood. Matt grew up in the streets of New York with his alcoholic father, Tom Gargon. Matt both respected and hated his father. Matt admired his father because he was a proud and decorated Marine. Matt hated his father for killing his mother! In a drunken rage Tom Gargon threw a kitchen knife at his wife. Tom was sentenced for 25 years. After one week in prison Tom Gargon killed himself.

During this period Matt was reaching puberty. What Matt did not know was that his father was exposed to a chemical compound while in Vietnam. The combination of the chemicals and his violent emotional state caused Matt to change. Matt could now control his reflexes to superhuman levels. With this ability Matt would join the Marines and be like his father. When Matt tried to join the Marines they would not let him join because of his emotional condition. Matt decided that he would become a mercenary. He did tours of work in Iran, Nicaragua, and South Africa. During these years he gained the name Mad Merc.

Last Game = SLAM-CON I Review = I felt that the first SLAM-CON was a great success! Many great games took place.

Friday I ran the adventure Soft Targets from Challenges for Champions. The heroes did very well for not having Lunatic's aid. Good job boys! After the game the players "imbibed" and confiscated a piece of Branham Lane.

On Saturday we conducted the Family Business Tournament. Rudy won the tournament ("Why did you let him win?!") and Tod came in second. Next was D+J Hobbies and Planet 10 Comics. After going to the stores we split into two groups and played D.I. (The Rockets Red Glare) and AD+D (S4).

Sunday we continued the S4 module and played D.I. (post-holocaust) in the afternoon. In the evening we played high level AD+D (25-30 level).

On Monday we continued the AD+D high level and played Talisman. During the Talisman game we tried to decide on changes and additions for next year.

Upcoming News = Soapbox, Mad Merc Story, and Polycon Details!

Notes = Polycon VIII Information =

Held the weekend of June 22, 23, and 24. Tournaments, sponsored games, figure painting contest, auction, and seminars are some of the events. I will be running a Champions game and one of the first rounds of the Champions Tournament. Michael Stackpole (co-creator of AD+D Revision 2) will also be attending the con. He will be signing books and giving a seminar.

I have collected registration money from Rudy, Don, Jim, and Scott. The room is \$35.00 a night (2 x \$35.00 = \$70.00). The cost will be split between those that use the room. We will be leaving at 6:00 PM on Friday afternoon from the Slammer. I will try to borrow my mother's car so that we do not have to take two of our cars to San Luis Obispo.

Article = The Mad Merc Story (Continued)

It was not until he decided to come back to the "States" that Mad Merc met Spade. Before meeting Spade, Matt did not have anyone in his life. Mad Merc considers Spade as almost a father figure. Spade is very much like Tom Gargon. (Spade is very proud and very cold.) If anything should happen to Spade it might drive Matt into a fatal emotional condition.

Soapbox = The Three F's of Gaming = About two years ago, I devised a set of GM "rules". I think about these rules when I run games. The three rules can be remembered by the letter F that they each begin with: FAIR, FIRM, and FUN.

FAIR = Be fair in any decision. Rules decisions during a game aggravate most players (and GM's). A GM must also be fair to each player. Each player must be treated equally and with respect. After all, the players are telling the GM's story.

FIRM = A GM must be firm in their rulings. After a rule is set it must be followed until (at least) the end of the game.

FUN = People are playing a role-playing game to have fun. If the players (and GM) are not having fun then the GM may not be doing his job. This is the most important rule.

Just remember the three F's and you can't go wrong.

Last Game = The weekend of June 2 we played two games. We played my time traveler D.I. game and Rudy's Star Wars game.

The D.I. game was a murder mystery based in 19th century England. The story (actually a retake from my old P.I. campaign) involved an actress getting murdered during the rehearsal of a play called the Pirate Renegade. It is a fairly tough mystery where there are actually two murderers. The group did a good job. Three new characters joined the group and two left. Deryl's character and Rudy's character left. Steve, Jeff, and Rudy started new characters.

The Star Wars game was played after the D.I. game. The game began with the heroes being chased by Stormtroopers! The chase scene involved climbing up and down vines, going down broken turbolifts, and running through a dangerous generator room.

Upcoming Events = The Spade Story, Day of Dr. Destroyer Product Review, and much muCH MORE!

New Product Information = I have some information on new Hero Games products. (Taken from Adventurer's Club #15.) These may or may not come out, and they are not in order of release.

- 1) Fantasy Hero = Campaign Book for fantasy settings.
- 2) Kingdom of Champions = Superheroes in the U.K. Includes New Knights of the Round Table, the London Watch, and the Shark Squad superhero teams. Exotic locales are also detailed.
- 3) Heroes from the Rising Sun = Superheroes in Japan.
- 4) Heroes from Down Under = Superheroes in Australia.
- 5) Champions in 3-D = Other dimensions for Champions. Written by several famous authors. Will be released at GenCon 1990.
- 6) Big Guns, Fast Cars = THE hardware book for Hero System. Hundreds of guns, weapons, and vehicles. Optional vehicle rules.
- 7) George MacDonald's Guardians = Sourcebook with information on the original Champions hero group. New villains included.

Article = The Spade File =

(Written by Rudy Fuentes, Edited by John Taber.)

U.N.T.I.L. File 6892S-XX

(Page 1)

Name: Spade (Formerly: The Ace of Spades)

Real Name: Frances Hightower

Place of Birth: Queens, New York

Age: 32 Height: 6'2" Weight: 220 lbs. Eyes: Brown

Hair: Brown Race: Negro

Occupation: Professional criminal/assassin

Legal Status: Citizen of the U.S. with a criminal record, dishonorable discharge from the U.S. Army

Abilities: The Spades practical reaction time is about five times that of a normal human. Through his military training, Spade has an extensive background in hand-to-hand combat. He can pilot helicopters and multi-engine aircraft. The Spade is an expert in the arts of concealment, stealth, gymnastics, security devices, and escape artistry.

Weapons: The Spade possesses molybdenum steel card ejectors in each glove. He uses the ejectors to hurl razor sharp cards at lightning speeds. In the Spades hands these cards are capable of penetrating light tank armor.

New Products Grade = Day of the Destroyer = Grade: B- = The module Day of the Destroyer was only fair. The art was marginal. The only thing that saves the module from a lower grade is a "plot twist" at the end of the storyline. Another drawback was the adventures setting. Again the Dr.'s base is on an island! An exotic locale could have added a great deal to this adventure.

Last Game = On Sunday, June 10th, I began the AD+D module entitled the Search for Al'Akbar. In the module the heroes must find the cup and talisman of Al'Akbar and return it to the people of the land so that they may cure a dangerous disease. In the first game the group fought a gibbering mouther, a gorgamera, and a lurker beside (?). The party bypassed many traps and managed to find the talisman. But where is the cup...

Upcoming Events = More of the Spade File, and New Product Info!

New Product Information (Continued) =

- 8) Golden Age of Champions = Redone, and right. Heroes in the 1940's. Battle Hitler and the Nazi movement.
- 9) Best of Rogues Gallery = Villains from Champions fanzines.
- 10) Enemies from Beyond = Space villains.
- 11) Enemies of the Old Country = European villains.
- 12) Mastermind Enemies = Supervillains that lead organizations.
- 13) Beneath the Earth = Invasion from underground.
- 14) Vikings = Fantasy Hero "Campaign Classic" supplement.
- 15) Pirates = Swashbuckler "Campaign Classic" sourcebook.

Also look for some "snazzy" covers by top notch comic artists. Those contacted include George Perez, Jackson Guice, Bill Willingham, Adam Hughes, Todd McFarlane, and Arthur Adams!

Article = The Spade File (Continued) =

(Written by Rudy Fuentes, Edited by John Taber.)

U.N.T.I.L. File 6892S-XX

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Known History: Little is known about the childhood of the Spade except that he was probably an orphan. At the age of 16 he entered the U.S. Army. In the U.S. Army he served 4 tours in Vietnam where he earned four purple hearts, two bronze stars, and two silver stars for heroism in the line of duty. At one time the Spade was subjected to a number of military tests which concerned the production of adrenalin in the human body. Of the ten men involved in the test only Frances Hightower and Dexter Killgrave survived. The result of the experiment was an increase in natural agility and an increase in reaction time.

Soapbox = The Psychologically Well Rounded Team = After reading an article in Adventurer's Club #15 I wanted to write about it. The article discussed how different characters attitudes are important to a superhero team. The article divided the psychological profiles into several categories. The idea is to have a character from each category in your team.

- 1) The Grim Leader = The serious and dedicated team leader. This character usually has a strong belief in some ideal (ie. "Seeks Justice"). Reed Richards is a good example of a Grim Leader.
- 2) The Sociopath = The anti-social member of the team. Something happened in his life to make him bitter. Distinctive Looks is common for these characters. Wolverine is a Sociopath.
- 3) The Swashbuckler = The happy hero who fights for the fun of it. Flashy powers and flashy costumes are a must. Nightcrawler or the Human Torch are good examples of Swashbuckler personas.

Last Game = The last game that we did was the conclusion of the search for the artifacts of Al'Akbar. The search led the party to the streets of Kaiber. After some investigation in Kaiber the group decided to attack the palace of Al'Farzik. Inside the palace the party discovered the Cup in the harems bathing pool. (Trammel gained a henchman named Sadam during the adventure.)

Upcoming Events = The Conclusion of the Spade File, More Soapbox Profiles, Special Polycon Last Game Article, and Background for My New Fantasy Hero Campaign!

Notes = Fantasy Hero Background = It is almost time for the Fantasy Hero game to start. I wanted to go over some character design considerations and some background on the island of Harn.

Characters should be built on 130 pts. or less with 4th Ed. Hero Games rules. There is no maximum on disadvantages in any one category. Spells have no limit on active points, but I must approve of the spell. Most spells should be purchased with the limitation "Must make a skill roll" but this is not required.

Next issue I will go over some Harn history and background.

Article = The Spade File (Continued) =

(Written by Rudy Fuentes, Edited by John Taber.)

U.N.T.I.L. File 6892S-XX

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Known History (Continued): The Spade was later discharged from the Army for assaulting a Lieutenant at a mission briefing. After the Army he went to work as a hitman. He gained the name the Ace of Spades because he always left an ace of spades card at each hit. He spent most of his time in San Francisco, where he somehow acquired his gloves. The Spade has aligned himself with one Mad Merc (see File 6346S-X). He has seen much success with this alliance. The Spade has been arrested many times, but has eventually escaped. His current whereabouts are unknown.

Comments: In my opinion the Spade is one of the most lethal people on file. My recommendation is the death penalty.

Soapbox = The Psychologically Well Rounded Team =

4) The Loaded Gun = The character who has a massive power with some huge limitation (ie. No Conscious Control). Cyclops of the X-Men is a good example of a loaded gun..

5) The Fanatic = The Fanatic is driven by a single Psychological Disadvantage. For example, Reed Richards of the Fantastic Four has a deep Devotion to Life (even Galactus).

6) The Strong Jawed Hero = Handsome and noble. A good example of a strong jawed hero is Colossus.

7) The Love Interest = Associated with the grim leader. Starfire of the Teen Titans was in love with Nightwing.

8) The Innocent = This hero is often an alien or is unfamiliar with the culture of the world. They will commit social mistakes on occasion. Again Starfire is a good example of the innocent.

Polycon Special Last Game = Polycon VIII was fun for all! Some of the games that we played included Rudy's Call of Cthulhu, Deryl's AD+D, two Champions adventures, the AD+D Tournament, and the Champions Tournament. One of the high moments of Polycon was Rudy winning and Jim placing third in the AD+D tournament. Good going guys! Something that I haven't told you guys was that several SAGA members commented on how it must be great to run my games with so many great players. I am really proud of everyone! The next gaming convention is Pacificon. Pacificon 1990 is an anniversary year and many special events are planned. I will get information regarding Pacificon to you as soon as I get it.

Upcoming Events = Fantasy Hero Info, and a Hero Background!

Notes = As you can see the printing on this newsletter is slightly different than usual. I am using Professional Write now instead of Wordstar.

Notes = Fantasy Hero Background = At this point I have run two Fantasy Hero games. All of you seem to have the main facts of Harn. (See below under Last Game for more info.)

Article = Lunatic Fringe = (This is a superhero background from Steve Brickman. It is a great character and a wonderful background. I hope you like it; I sure did!)

Johnny's Story

Johnny and mommy and daddy were goin ta disney land where Mickey was at dinner after driving in the car for a long time (dad wouldn't let me drive again, but i can drive, i know how, i seen it on tv) some people came to the table and started sayin stuff to mom dad got real upset he got up an started yellin' boy i hate to see him yell like that caus he's usually yellin at me like that. One of the guys started punchin my dad like on Starsky and Hutch. mom started screaming and the guys grabbed her i went under the table and crawled over to another booth and hid behind my jacket where they wouldn't see me. Dad was layin in a corner bleeding an they were holdin down mom and standing over her rockin back n forth she was screaming real loud, she sounded scared. Then i realized that if i were Popeye i could stop the bad men from hurtin mom. since mom always told me i could be what i wanna be i became popeye and beat some of the guys up but only after i had my spinich. i was real strong. i beat up three of them. the last bad man did something to mom and she is quiet now he looked at me and i saw he was afraid of spiders so i told all the spiders of the world to eat him up and they did he started screaming just like mom was... (More of the story next week.)

Last Game = There are several last games to report on. On the weekend we played Cthulhu. In this game the group met a killer tree and an axe wielding zombie farmer named Levi. On the third of the July we played Deryl's AD+D game and another game of Rudy's Call of Cthulhu. In Deryl's game everyone but two characters died in the first encounter! (Am I glad I was too tired and took a nap.) In the Cthulhu game the group uncovered a worldwide cult of evil Cthulhu worshippers. Things are sure getting tough in Arkham. On the fourth of July I ran Fantasy Hero. The adventure led the party to a search for the missing Earl of Qualdris. Two party members were killed by Ivanshu gargoyles along the way.

Upcoming Events = An upcoming game that I am going to run is S4 - The Caverns of Tsojcanth. The reason I am running the game is to get time to work on Fantasy Hero and the time travel D.I. game. More of Johnny's Story next week.

Soapbox = A G.M.'s Player Mentality = Here are some things that I look for in a good player. A good player plays his character and does not try to G.M. This sounds easy, but everyone knows players who asks the G.M. adventure oriented questions. For example, "Player: Come on would Joe Blow NPC really hack my character to bits? G.M.: Yes." Another thing that I look for in good players is the ability to roleplay in character. This is especially important in Hero Games where disadvantages and innate character flaws are part of the game system. A good player should never be reminded to, "play your disadvantages". I also look for common sense. You don't have to be smart to play roleplaying games, you just have to think "simply". The last thing that I look for in a good player is sportsmanship. We each play these silly games for our own personal reasons. Maybe to relieve stress, or to meet people...but in the end we all play roleplaying games for the same reason...to have fun.

Article = Lunatic Fringe (Continued) =

I was with some people who made fun of me they are no fun they were mean, not like the tables and papers, they were nice, i am nice. one day the whole class started laughing at me cause billy the bully was said somethin about my friend the paper, why were they laughing? billy is pointing at me an sayin somethin they are laughing harder. something started bubbling in me, i felt like i was turning into the hulk (from tv) or something. i told billy to stop but he didn't. i turned into the hulk and pushed him like he use to push the chairs around when the teacher wasn't around. he fell over, i was scared so i ran away.

now i am with some nice people, in a nice white place where all the furniture is happy and there are a lot of tvs i like to make noises for everyone to hear, they tell the people with the clipboards who tell them that there is no noise its fun sometimes a voice tells me that i should go out and play so i cover myself up with a blanket so no one can see me and i run away from the nice place and play with the bad people, they scream just like mom did. i like playing on swings and talking to birds

Last Game = The last game I ran was AD+D on Sunday. We began the module S4. The party traveled the mountains for a short time. There they met a strange hermit. The hermit told them of the caverns. The group entered the caverns and found strange monsters. These monsters included famorian giants, cave morrays, stirges, and cocktrice. The group ended the adventure fighting a group of four dao (djinn from the elemental plane of earth.) Tougher monsters next game!

Upcoming Events = More of the Module S4, Product Review for Below the Earth, a Fantasy Hero background, and more...

Note = This issue is a bit on the "R" rating for language.

Article = Ip's Tale = (A Fantasy Hero Background from Jim Schaff, Edited by John Taber.)

Ip has been used mainly as a lookout due to his age. Recently he has been going out on his own jobs. Ip does not have much experience, but his quickly growing skills were apparent to the guild.

Ip has even surveyed and completed a few jobs without the guilds knowledge or permission. He does this to avoid paying the guild a bigger "cut".

The "feather foot" was caught on one of his solo jobs when he caused a guild sanctioned robbery to go awry. The penalty for this is usually death but for some reason Ip was only whipped. Ip disliked the punishment, but he is happy to have avoided the death penalty.

The reason Ip was not found in the gutter or in an ally with his throat cut, is that the guildmaster of the Lia-Kavair is his father. Ip doesn't know this; nobody but his parents know this. His mother is the high priestess of the Order of the Eight Demons. She turned him over to his father because Ip was not female and was destined to death if he remained with her.

Ip's ability to walk "without trace" comes from both his father and mother. His father taught him to refine his skills and walk without actually treading on the walking surface. This ability is unknown to the guild. Ip actually achieves this with some innate magical ability from his mother, though neither parent understands how. (This ability can be temporarily dispelled.

Quotes = Here are some great quotes from some of our recent games. One of the quotes is old and well used. The other two quotes are from Call of Cthulhu.

Quote = Scott: "Fucking Game! Fucking Dice! Fucking Sucks!"

Quote = Bruce Badson (Don) to Asenith (Rudy): "We'd stay for dinner, but we like our meat cooked."

Quote = John to Rudy: "Which guys are wearing the black hats?"

Last Game = The last game I ran was a continuation of S4. The group began the game in the lesser caverns. There they killed an Alu-Demon and found a riddle to Iggwill's treasure. After descending to the greater caverns the group met a Umber Hulk, four strange ape-like demons, a giant lizard, margoyles, and an "upset" trapper. Things should get real tough next game!

Upcoming Events = Below the Earth Product Review, More of Ip's Tale, and fun, fuN, FUN!