

Note = As you may have noticed, there is a gap in time between this issue and the last issue. I have been a very busy camper at work and I did not have time to get this out.

Note = How would you guys feel about product reviews of old Hero products? How about other products (ie. playing aids, battlemats, comic books)? Let me know what you think...

Article = Ip's Tale (Continued) = (A Fantasy Hero Background from Jim Schaff, Edited by John Taber. It is too bad that this character died; there is a lot of potential here.)

His energy blast is a mystery to Ip. It has happened once in his life, so far. He was trapped in an alley by three brigands. When they moved in for the kill Ip suddenly froze as one of the brigands was awash in blue flames. The other two flood. Ip believed that there must have been a mage in the area who was acting as his "guardian angel". (The blast is 10d6 EB vrs. ED with no knockback. The power is GM controlled and activates when Ip or a "friend" is in danger.)

Ip worships Halea. He is intrigued by the wealth and treasure of the order. He also loves the masses, but isn't allowed to participate in the orgy.

Product Grade = Below the Earth = Grade: B+ = Below the Earth is another one of those surprisingly good Hero Games Products. I really enjoyed the module. The supervillains were the best part of the module. The villains were detailed and well conceived. Many of the villains were also very original. My favorite villain was one called Cornerstone! (Is this a great name or what?!) The interior artwork is very well done. The villain pictures are great! The only two drawbacks are the cover art and the plot. The cover art is weak. One of the black and white interior pictures would have been better cover. The story was not original. It was the typical alien invasion story.

Quote = Rudy to Steve about his Fantasy Hero character = "Ill-conceived!"

Last Game = There has not been a game in a while... I think the last game was Rudy's Call of Cthulhu. In this game the group went to Scotland to reek havoc on the "bad guys". In Scotland the group ran across a house where one of the "good guys" was killed. The furnishings included a dead body behind a panel, a piece of a magical disk, and a ghost! The ghost ended up scaring Arnold Nickerson (my character) to death. Who will chronicle the events of the group now?

Upcoming Events = Another installment in the time travel game, "old" product reviews, and more, more, MORE!

Soapbox = AD+D versus Champions = There are two different reasons why gamers play Champions or AD+D. Both are role-playing games, but each has its own "attitude".

The attitude in Champions involves saving the innocent. Being the protector of all that is good in the world. (Even Wolverine protects the good in the world.) To many people Champions is a way to escape the worries of a deadly campaign. To others Champions is a serious game that can function well as a campaign setting. Each view has its place in the gaming world.

In AD+D survival and death are more prevalent. This causes a more serious and deadly attitude. AD+D involves characters fighting for treasure; not always are they fighting for a "cause". It is played more intensely because the characters can die. Campaigns are more common in AD+D.

Article = Survivor's Origin = (This is a very old tale with a very well thought out storyline. Classic is just the first compliment that comes to mind... Written by Donald Taber.) Keith Watson was a lawyer in New York. One night while he was taking a walk, he saw a person being murdered. He followed the murderer in his car and was led to a Terror base. The car he was following pulled inside a garage and Keith saw a blond headed Terror agent get out. The blond agent went inside and Keith continued to follow him to find out his name. He went inside, and was knocked out by a gas trap set just inside the door. When he woke up, he was strapped down to a table, and a green ray was hitting him in the face. The ray began to grow stronger and Keith started to hear screaming...

Last Game = The last game we played was AD+D. We ventured to Hayward to play AD+D with Debbie G., Tod Kessler, and John Turner. The adventure was entitled "A Matter of Gravity". The adventure began with the party entering a strange cube found near a small village. Inside the cube we were to obtain a piece of chaos so that a master mage could use it to make a suit of chaos armor. During the adventure Bangag (my PC), and Glubnig (Tod's PC) died. This caused the party to be at a loss for healing and combat power. The module was designed so that a different map was used for each wall of the dungeon. Talk about tough mapping! The adventure was fun and some treasure was gained (most of it came from our dead PCs). Tedious is the right word for this dungeon.

Upcoming Events = There are several upcoming events worth mentioning. The last AD+D game with the "gross" characters will soon be run. Also I have another Time Travel game designed! Next week will be the conclusion of the Survivor Origin, a Harn Product Review, information on Fantasy Hero, and information on Pacificon!

Note = Fantasy Hero 4th Ed. has finally been released. It is a massive 250 pages! Please note that the book is dedicated to all of us who have been waiting for so long. (There will be a product review as soon as I get done reading it.)

Article = Survivor's Origin = (Continued) =

He could see a control window, and through it was the blond headed man in a lab suit with a lot of machines around. The machines started to spark and smoke and they started to catch on fire. The blond headed man ran out and Keith knew that he had to get away from the ray and out of the building. He noticed a large suit of leather in the room and had to get it over himself to stop the ray. He struggled and could not break the bands holding him. The ray hitting him seemed to bounce off of him onto the suit. The suit started to raise and come toward him. It landed on him and the ray stopped hitting him. As the machine blew up, the suit and Keith somehow survived the explosion., but everything else in the room, including his clothes, were destroyed.

Product Review = Harnworld = Grade: B+ = Harnworld has some good things going for it. Another gaming critic wrote that Harn was dry, but full of background. This is the perfect description of the intent behind Harn. Harn is designed as a backdrop for any fantasy campaign. Harn is made so that the GM can expand on it. He can add his own NPCs and style to spice up this world. One of the reasons why the product gets a B+ is the art. The art is fair, but is drawn by only one artist. The maps are excellent.

Last Game = The last game I ran was my time travel D.I. game. This adventure was based on the Robot Warriors era. The group appeared on a barren mountain with an American mech pointing a huge blaster cannon at them! Soon the scene erupted in flames. The next thing the party knows they are captured by a group of Russian mech pilots. The adventure included escaping from the Russian base and moving across 30 miles of frozen waste to reach an American base. Cold and giant mechanical bears were just a few of the things that the group encountered on the trek to the American base. The adventure ended with the party wiping out the Russian base.

Jim also started his Cyberpunk D.I. campaign. The first adventure grouped the party against a gang known as the "Golds". An NPC known as Rita was also there to add a little spice to the scenario. The adventure ended with a firefight at pier 22. (Thanks again for running a D.I. game; I love getting to play instead of just GMing. Keep it up Jim!)

Upcoming Events = The big upcoming event is Pacificon! The room(s) has been reserved and the registration has been returned. I still need to know who wants to be included on the food. More Survivor background!

Note = Don will be going off to school soon. I think that a couple of new players can add some excitement to our games. There are several ways we can get new players. We can get players from a game store (Planet 10, Game Keeper), use "old" players (Debbie, Tod, Dan, Robin), or we can get players from another source. San Jose State's gaming club would be a place to get some new gamers. (Jim will look into this.)

Note = New Fantasy Hero Rules and John's Campaign = For the time being only a few of the Fantasy Hero 4th Ed. rules will be used. Some of the rules that I will use include the weapons charts, and the skill changes. I will brief you on this as new rules are incorporated.

Article = Rules Watch = (These will be articles dealing with rule clarifications or 4th Ed changes.)

Delay Action and Recovery = You can't delay your phase then later on declare that you are going to recover. This is a fairly intuitive rule.

Article = Survivor's Origin = (Continued) =

Knowing that he had to get out of the base before men started coming, he put on the suit and continued out the door. Outside were five Terror agents who were running toward the door. He knew that he would have to get past them and away from the building. As he ran, a beam shot from his head and threw a Terror agent to the side. This gave him a hole to run through. He ran through the hole but was shot by a Terror agent. The shot from the gun was absorbed on his skin. He was only a little hurt and was not knocked out. He was shot again, and was hurt even less. He ran to his car, being pursued by the Terror agents...

Last Game = The last game was at Pacificon. Pacificon was filled with many great games. Some of the games we played included: Champions ("Five Little Scientists"), Call of Cthulu ("Gate to Ryleh"), Star Wars (Rudy's game), AD+D (my last game for the high level characters), AD+D (Tod's cloud castle game), Fantasy Hero (my campaign), Cyberpunk (Jim's game), Twilight 2000 (John Turner's friend Chris ran this, thanks guys!), and others. Some memorable events included the flea market, the dealer's room, and broken furniture. Several of the "boys" and myself felt that the con was a resounding success. The next con is Dundracon in February.

Upcoming Events = I have been working on Fantasy Hero lately. The next game will be the start of the long quest scenario. Some other games that have not been finished include Rudy's Star Wars, Jim's Cyberpunk, and Rudy's Aliens/D.I. run.



Note = This issue is late again...I've been a busy camper.

Article = Survivor's Origin = (Continued) =

He started his car and drove it around the corner to get away from the Terror agents. While driving from the base to his house, the blond headed man sat up from the back seat and put a gun to his head. He told Keith to turn around and go back to the base. He was stopped at a stoplight when he stepped on the gas. He turned to grab the gun and the beam shot from his head and the gun flew to his hand. He got the man out of the car and took him to go call the police. He was on the phone with the police when the agent picked up a metal bar and hid it behind his back. He stepped out of the phone booth and the agent hit the arm he was holding the gun in. It flew to the side and the agent was coming after him with the bar. He looked over at the gun and hoped that the beam would shoot out and help him again. The beam came out and the gun came to his hand. The agent jumped at Keith, but he fired the gun and the agent fell to the ground. When the police arrived, Keith was arrested and put on trial. During the trial he promised that he would never kill again. He was found innocent because of self defense and was released. His story was put in the paper and soon everyone knew about the weird beam. Kids would ask for autographs and reporters never stopped asking questions. He went into the mountains where he learned to control the beam. He decided to help good defeat the evil of Terror. He knew that if all other good died, he would be the one good "Survivor".

Last Game = The last games we ran were on the weekend of the 8th of September. Rudy ran a C of C game and I ran a Fantasy Hero game. The C of C game involved the retrieving of another portion of the magical Ryleh disk. The adventure went from a Scottish countryside into a dungeon chocked full of nasty beasts! The Fantasy Hero games was the continuation of the quest for the sword run. In this installment the group fought a large band of Pagellan natives. The party also met Durm, the wise old wanderer, and Grunda, the nasty innkeep at Oselbridge. After talking with Durm the group found that their destiny lies in the Ilme Marsh and that the a piece of the sword lies with the Ilme king! Will the mere-dragon king give up the magical sword? Wait till next game!

Upcoming Events = Fantasy Hero is an obvious upcoming event. The next adventure has been completed and I am ready to run it. This Sunday would be good... Comic reviews will begin next issue! The will feature new comics and new gaming items that are hitting the comic and fandom scene. (If any of you think of a good name for the column, let me know!)

Product Review = Fantasy Hero 4th Ed. = Grade: A = Yes, this is the first product I have given a solid "A" grade. The new Fantasy Hero book is probably the best book ever published by Hero Games! The rules are detailed, but playable. There is plenty of background and an interesting party of NPCs. The new magic system is fluid and creative. The art is fantastic. The cover by Larry Elmore is awesome! The interior art is well rendered by several well known artists. This book is a must for any fantasy gamer.

Cake's Critique = This week I am recommending two DC comics. The comics are Batman and Superman. The recent issue of Batman introduced a new Robin uniform. The new costume has a flare of the modern. The new Superman (Issue 50) featured the marriage of Louis Lane and Clark Kent! Major events are taking place in the DC universe.

Rules Watch = Fantasy Hero Spells = The 4th Ed. Fantasy Hero book has an interesting way of dealing with creating spells. In the old Fantasy Hero book spells were designed with certain limitations built into the spell. For example, every spell had a magic roll. In the new system there must be a minimum of +1 worth of limitations taken from a certain group. The limitations in this group are: Incantations, Gestures, Side Effects, and Magic Roll. The +1 limitation still effects the cost of the spell. There is a lot of flexibility to this method of spell creation. The 4th Ed. rules also allow the GM to easily set his own campaign magic style. For example if every mage has to use incantations then the GM just says that one of the limitations in the +1 group must be Incantations.

Last Game = There were three games that were run within the last couple weeks. These games included Debbie's AD+D, Rudy's Cthulu, and Rudy's Champions games. Deb's AD+D involved the group trying to regain their stolen items. Cthulu has led the party to an Arizona Indian site for the Arc of Lactos. The site is the home of invisible Cthulu beasts! The Champions game pitted three new heroes against the forces of Cobra. Boa escaped with the goods.

Upcoming Events = This weekend is AD+D time again! It should be another installment in the saga of Enderon (or whatever his name is). Rudy has a Call of Cthulu game. The Call game will be the conclusion of the game started on Halloween. Boy that third piece of the disk will be tough to get hold of! Rudy has also started a Champions, but I don't think he intends on finishing the scenario. (I'll see what I can do to change his mind...) I'm also nearly finished designing another Fantasy Hero game! The game will continue the quest for the second piece of the Sword of Calsten.

Origin = The John Charles Darling File = (This is for all of the "old" D.I. players. As Rudy would say...You get a cookie if you can remember which campaign John is from?)

Description: John Darling is 26, with red crue cut hair.

Weapons: Blued .357 Colt Python and Swiss Army Knife

Psychological Profile: John is the consummate thrillseeker.

Some of John's hobbies include mountain climbing, parachuting, motocross, race car driving, helicopter piloting, skiing, bareback riding, and gambling.

Background: John's father was James Charles Darling. His father was a very harsh Vietnam vet. James told John that he was weak and good for nothing. James died when John was 18. From this point on, John has fought against his fathers vision of him. John respected his father for being proud and even carries his fathers middle name and silver lighter. (The lighter is a silver zipo with the initials "JCD" engraved on the side.) James' sudden death caused John's thrillseeking tendencies. John's cousin, a Mr. Hank Sweet, suggested that John become a detective. John took to the daring profession with a passion. He was promoted to detective in two years. (This is a department record.)

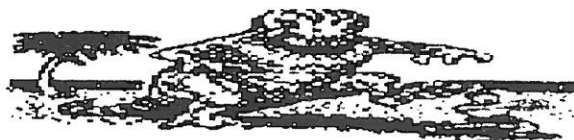
Cake's Critique = There are several new products that have been released from Hero Games. The new products are Champions 3-D and Demons Rules (formerly Demons Rule the Streets). Both of these products are supplements for Champions 4th Ed. Champions 3-D is about running Champions games in alternate dimensions. Demons Rule is an adventure supplement. The adventure involves a hard rock band known as the Demons.

On the comic scene, only the Faferd and the Grey Mouser comic is worthy of note. The stories are as graphic as the originals by Fritz Leiber. Mignola does a bang-up art job.

Last Game = The last game we played was Debbie's AD+D. The party seems to be getting nearer to their equipment. Only time will tell... The previous game was held one week earlier. We played Fantasy Hero during the Thanksgiving Day holiday. The game began with the group again searching for Durm the old storyteller. During the search the group learns that the recent war has become known as the "Widow's War" for Lady Thilissa. The war is raging and Qualdris, except for the keep, has been taken. The Earl now plans to take Hutop. The party found Durm and received the last piece of the Sword of Calsten. Durm requested that the party use the sword to help a nearby group of barbarians kill a monster that is killing their people. The monster was invisible and threw nasty killing attacks! Next game will be the Widow's War up close. Expect a hell of a battle!

Upcoming Events = See the above for the events on the next Fantasy Hero game.

# Rival-Con



"We Crush the Competition!"

Note = This is an all Rival-Con issue. Issue 29 will act as the convention program.

## Friday:

7:00 PM "100 Bushels of Rye" (Conclusion) = John Taber. The Fantasy Hero adventure "100 Bushels of Rye," which was started previously, will be completed.

New characters are welcome. Use 4th Ed. Fantasy Hero rules and 125 pts. starting.

9:00 PM "Arkon V" = John Taber. This game is from the Time Travel campaign. The adventure takes place on Arkon V, a mining colony which has been taken over by Daleks! Why are they here? What is the master plan? New characters should be 125 pts. on 4th Ed. rules. (New players will have to get the background from the GM at the start of the game.)

## Saturday:

11:00 AM Miniature Golf Tournament = The top three players win big. The prizes include Golfland gift certificates, D&J Hobbies gift certificates, and FREE paintball entry fee! If there is a tie the contestants will play one more sudden death hole.

ABC will be providing TV coverage of the event.

7:00 PM Paintball Game = We have reserved TAPS paintball game for two hours. Please bring a light and dark colored T-shirt for this event. Any extra money from the pre-registration fees will be applied to extra ammunition. Let the games begin! Splat! Splat!

11:00 PM "Chalice Chase" = Deryl Clark. A task lies before you; can you meet the challenge? Look for a Golden Chalice, but beware for there are others who have the same quest. Only you and your comrades can save the kingdom. Characters should be based on 125 pts.

## Sunday:

11:00 AM Video Games = The convention will head to the local video game place for a couple of hours of electronic fun. Compete on all of the newest video games.



1:00 PM Quest for Games = The convention will now make a trek to D&J Hobbies to check out the latest games. The tournament winner will be able to spend the prize money.

Monday:

10:00 AM Pinochle Game = To close the convention the group can join into a rousing game of Pinochle. Most of the "old" SAGA rules will be followed. This will be a time to talk and relax.

Several games will be run that are not mentioned on this program. Some of the "rumored games" include AD+D, a group of kids in a haunted house, and a mystery tournament.

New Products = There are a couple of new products worth mentioning. There is a new Champions book called Alien Enemies and a soon to be released campaign book called Western Hero. Alien Enemies book is a collection of alien villains and NPCs. Western Hero will be a Ninja Hero type book for the sixgun era. Famous gunslingers are rumored to be included in the documentation!

Cake's Critique = Cyberpunk 2020 = Grade: A-. The new Cyberpunk book is top class. The art is pure liquid steel. The book reads more like one of the stories. More games should be written like the new edition of Cyberpunk. The rules have been clarified and new cybernetics have been added to the new edition. The expanded Friday Night Firefight rules are a welcome sight. Put on your mirror shades and jump into the genre of the 90's...Cyberpunk!

Last Game = There were three games that have been played as of late. These games include Fantasy Hero, AD+D, and Cthulhu.

The Fantasy Hero game was a decision to battle the "god" monster that is terrorizing a local village. I thought it was the most thought provoking game that I have ever run! Does the group aid the village, aid the natives, or aid the monster! The adventure is based on the very well written module "100 Bushels of Rye" from the Harn universe.

Deb's AD+D was played on the weekend of February 3rd. The game was well received although little treasure was actually gained! The party fought bravely and defeated several monsters. The last set of monsters was a group of gnolls. How can a 10 foot tall gnome be such a wimp!

Last weekend Rudy ran a new Cthulhu adventure. As usual the characters were thrown into a very dangerous situation with only bravery at their backs. The game saw the loss of Steve's moonshiner to a little girl's bite. Only in Cthulhu...

The Kid's Comic Review = Sandman = (DC Comics, Written by Neil Gaiman, Pencilled by Mike Dringenberg/Sam Keith/Malcom Jones III, Inked by Rob Busch/Malcom Jones III, and Covers by Dave McKean. Thanks for the material.)

This review features a comic that is near and dear to my heart. It first appeared at the time that I began collecting comics and so far I've followed it faithfully. By the way, I must say, I owe this particular obsession to one John Turner. Thanks John, I think.

You Cthulhu players should check this out. The Sandman is a great example of the horror comic genre.

The Sandman is written by Neil Gaiman. Credit for the character is given to the original creative team of Gaiman, Keith, and Dringenberg. Neil Gaiman has become quite popular and has written such books as Arkham Asylum Graphic Novel (Editors comment: This is a lie! Arkham was written by Morrison. Do I get a "no-prize".) and the Legend of the Dark Knight. He also quest wrote one of the best Hellblazer yet, "Hold Me", Issue 27. I prefer the original artistic team of Keith and Dringenberg. Their interpretation of the book is slightly whimsical that makes a good counterpoint to the tone of the book. All of the artists have been good so far. Malcom Jones III is currently pencilling the book. He worked as inker on earlier issues. You may remember Malcom as the artist on later issues of the Question. By the way, the Question writer Dennis O'Neil is writing the current storyline of the Legends of the Dark Knight. Dave McKean was the cover artist for the last few issues of the Sandman. He has since moved on to bigger and better things, but his sinister cover art identified the Sandman as a horror comic and did as much to define the tone of the book as the other artists. The reader never quite shakes the dark and ominous feeling one gets from the cover as he reads through the story. Judging from his work with Neil Gaiman as the artist for issue 27 of Hellblazer, I hope he returns as the artist for future issues of the Sandman. Also aiding Gaiman and McKean on Hellblazer 27 as colorist was Dan Vozzo who just signed on as colorist for the Sandman. (More next issue!!)

Quote = Kim Fuentez = ...After reading Cyberpunk 2020... =  
"This game needs laminated character sheets!"

Last Game = There were several last games! Some of the games that I can remember are Debbie's AD+D, Rudy's Cthulhu, Deryl's Fantasy Hero, Tod's Space Hero, Jeff's Space Badguys, Turner's Haunted House, and my Champions. This just names some of the things that have been going on lately!

Everyone will have to agree that Rival-Con was a success! Thanks for coming. (Hope to see everyone for Slam-Con II in May.) Some Rival-Con moments included Jim winning the first annual Rival-Con Classic, a fantastic game of paintball (even Dave showed up!), and cheese flavored popcorn.