

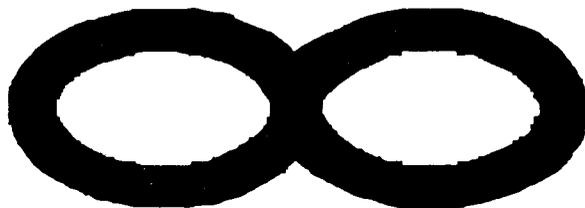
# RACK & RUNE

## RACK & RUNE #10: All Heads Turn as the Hunt Goes By

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9/92

**W**ell! The Wild Hunt has reached issue #175, and congratulations are in order to all concerned — our estimable Editor especially, of course. I notice that there are no 'zines with issues numbering in the 100s. Why is this? Did people just get sick of their old titles, or is there an inevitable drop-off factor? Just how many current contributors were here from the beginning, anyway?



I can imagine that there must have been some notable personalities present in the past 17 (or 16, or is it 18?) years. No doubt there were some...notable incidents (did someone say flame wars?). Has anyone ever written down a brief history of the Hunt? I'm sure we newcomers, both readers and contributors, would like to hear about the days of yore.

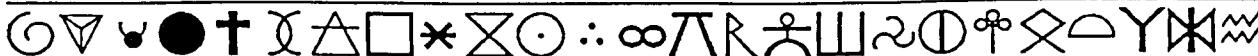


### FROM THE CLOSED SHELVES:

Sam & Max, Freelance Police Color Reprint, written and drawn by Steve Purcell (published by Marvel, the only good thing they ever produced)

I hadn't planned on writing about Sam & Max this early, but circumstances have conspired against me in the form of the recent release of the Sam & Max, Freelance Police Color Reprint. Some copies should still be available in comic stores now, but they'll probably be gone before much longer.

It's a little hard to describe Sam & Max! Almost anything I say will seem...silly. They're fluffy. They're loveable. They're stuffed animals. They're a six-foot walking dog dressed like Sam Spade and a three-foot naked (except for fur) white rabbit with an enormous head and teeth. They carry big



guns, though nobody knows where Max (the lagomorph) keeps his — after all, he doesn't have any pockets. They fight Evil in any form: potato(e)-like volcano gods, angry Cthuloid emanations in supermarkets, cheezy-looking aliens threatening the ancient Egyptians, vendors of substandard corndogs...**ANYTHING!** If you have a sense of humor, you'll bust a gut. It's all incredibly detailed, too — keep an eye on the background. Things happen.

Sam & Max's creator Steve Purcell only puts out about one issue per year — and these have usually been from different companies. There have also been a few short features appearing now and again, one of them being a backup story in the late lamented Grimjack — which is how I got into Sam & Max in the first place. A lot of this stuff is incredibly rare, so it's fortunate that Marvel has reissued so many of the rarest Sam & Max stuff in the Color Reprint now.

All that's missing is Sam & Max's Road Trip, and Sam & Max Go to the Moon — the latter was very recently released, but was stupidly packaged in a plastic bag with the premiere issue of Dirt magazine and some stupid tape cassette single. The pinhead executives of the world strike again!

Empire of the East, by Fred Saberhagen

This is one of Saberhagen's earlier and more obscure series, but it has one of the most interesting precepts I've run across — and it's well written, too. I've yet to use the basic idea in a game yet, but it's only a matter of time. It's set in the future of Earth — it could be 500 years, or many thousands. There have been many changes, the most notable being the presence of magic as a strong force in the world. At some time in our near future, both the US & the Soviets developed the means to temporarily alter certain basic laws of physics — the effect being to make explosions, both nuclear and otherwise, impossible.

However, neither side was aware that the other possessed this technology, and when war began and the devices were used, each reinforced the other's effect, making the Change permanent. As the wave of Change spread around the world, it encountered numerous small explosions — and as it passed over them, they were transformed into

demons. Other high-tech objects were altered, too, into many strange forms. Most notable, however, was the effect of the Change on the one nuclear explosion it crossed...

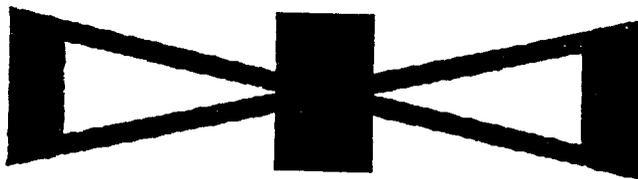
The Incredible Umbrella, by Mar-



vin Kaye

One of the rarest types of literature is light fantasy. This may be in part because it's so hard to carry off well, as Piers Anthony so often demonstrates. Even when they are successful artistically, they're almost certain to be slow sellers, and go out of print quickly. This is why I haunt used bookstores! 8^>}

The Incredible Umbrella, and its sequel The Amorous Umbrella are two such works. A middle-aged professor of English literature picks up a large and colorful bumbershoot in an antique shop — and before long discovers that it can take him to very strange places indeed. It seems to take him to whatever sort of place he's thinking about — and given his background, he ends up travelling to many literary worlds. Unfortunately, the Umbrella has a slight quirk; it will only reactive once he has finished a logical plot "scene" in whatever world he's currently in. That's no problem in the Gilbert and Sullivan world, but when an errant thought carries him to the world of Dracula and Frankenstein, things become rather tense...



There's a lot of Gilbert and Sullivan material (the Umbrella turns out to have been made by John Wellington Wells), as well as some Sherlock Holmes, Shakespeare, the aforementioned Dracula and Frankenstein, and many others. In

the second book, the professor searches for love...and the worlds he travels to are even funnier than the first book. These books are a light, enjoyable, and literary read.

## A SMOOTH AND FLUID MASK

I find that often I come to some realization about gaming philosophy (and other things) that seems brilliant, or at least interesting — only to find that it's old news, and I'm making an issue out of nothing. That may be the case here. If so, I'm sure someone will let me know!

My most recent insight is on systemic fluidity. It came to me when I was considering the differences between RuneQuest 2 and RuneQuest 3 skill bonuses — for those who aren't familiar with RQ, in RQ2 skill bonuses in various categories were determined on a table. For Manipulation, for example, a Dexterity of 1-4 subtracted 10% from your bonus. 5-8 yielded -5%, 9-12 had no effect, 13-16 gave a +5%, and 17-20 gave +10%. All of this was laid out in a table which had to be consulted. Other skills and characteristics worked similarly. In RQ3, on the other hand, each point of DEX above 10 added one point to the character's Manipulation bonus, and each point below subtracted one. This makes characters much more unique and individual, and makes it worthwhile to increase statistics by any amount — as opposed to the old system, where increasing DEX from 13 to 14 (or even to 16) had no real benefit except as

a way station to the next quantum jump.

The worst offender in this regard is AD&D, of course. Unless a characteristic is outstandingly high or low, it is meaningless — and it's entirely possible to have many characters with widely different characteristics that nonetheless lack *any* difference in game abilities.

The more fluid a system is, the more closely it can approximate reality — a desirable goal, in my view. The challenge is to

find a way to increase fluidity without increasing complexity — for example, the RQ3 designers could have made a table which would have included every possible single characteristic score. Instead, they came up with a simple and elegant concept, which actually *simplifies* skill bonus calculation.

This sort of thing should be done more often. I wonder why it isn't. Is it not practical to create a game system around a flexible core of simple mechanics, with no exceptions or special cases? It seems that it should be... Perhaps others who have devoted more time and experience to this idea than I have can make some suggestions? Not that I'm planning on writing my own game system — given the vast number of systems already on the market (the vast majority of which fail), I'd just be

wasting my time.

## RUNEQUEST REVIVING

The RuneQuest train seems to be picking up speed at last. Playtest copies of RuneQuest 4 have been making the rounds, and the word is out that RuneQuest 5 (!) is in the works. This concerns me. Why issue an interim game only to replace it 18 months later? Frankly, it seems to me that many people have been

complaining about the weakness of the RuneQuest 3 system unnecessarily. For example, take so-called "weapons cad-dying", in which a character uses one weapon after another in a combat, in order to receive skill checks for all of them. Similar to this is the "problem" of PCs casting spells on enemies in less-than-critical situations (after the enemy is already down and incapacitated, for example) in order to receive a Power gain roll. The answer is simple: the GM decides when a character has legitimately used a skill and has earned a skill increase roll, or POW gain roll. Mechanics designed to fix the "problem" can only succeed in removing a vital element of freedom and realism from the system. After all, if a GM is untrustworthy or incompetent, no rule will stop them from screwing up a game; and if the players are bound and deter-

**Q: How many Storm Bull Berserks does it take to change a light-bulb?**



**A: KILL CHAOS!!!**

mined to view the game from a greedy and mechanistic angle, no one can force them to do otherwise. The only antidote to this sort of approach is education — and if that sounds pretentious or hifalutin, so be it. A vast number of gamers are never exposed to the concepts of good gaming, and eventually grow disgusted and quit. I'd venture to guess that those who contribute to or read the Hunt are of the small minority of gamers who were exposed to the idea of gaming as drama and characterization.

### **Damage Bonus**

In line with my remarks on fluidity, I've designed a Damage Bonus system for RuneQuest which I feel is more rounded and responsive than the current one. Unfortunately I have not yet worked out a formula to express this, and it may in fact be impossible to do so; I've attempted to stick with available dice types, which throws off the curve somewhat.

#### **Combined Strength and Size:**

1-22 = 0

23-24 = 1

25-26 = D2

27-28 = D3

29-30 = D4

31-32 = D6

33-34 = D8

35-36 = D10

37-38 = 2D6

+1D6 per further 16.

This gives very strong creatures an additional D6 of damage, which is an acceptable change IMHO. It also

removes the negative damage bonus for very weak/small creatures. My view is that if a creature has sufficient Strength to wield a weapon at all, it is sufficient to do basic damage!

Several years ago I noticed a gap in the RQ system — a lack of skills to express knowledge of magic. The following skills are designed to remedy that lack. Each is culture-specific — members of that culture start with a 5% chance in the skill. All the skills are Knowledge based.

All skills allow the user to identify spells of the appropriate sort by observation of spell effects; there is a +40% bonus if the spell is known by the user, a +20% bonus if the spell has been previously witnessed, a +20% bonus if the user has some means of seeing magic, -40% if the spell has no effect obvious to the user (such as Damage Resistance, for example), and -20% if the caster of the spell is not in view.

### **Spirit Lore**

This skill may be learned by Shamans and those who primarily use Spirit magic. Apprentice Shamans receive 3% in this skill per year of previous experience; Shamans receive 5% (since they can see the spirits directly).

Normal success in this skill enables the user to know what type of spirit they encounter, as long as the spirit is visible; if the spirit is not visible, they may learn what general *type* of spirit (i.e. passion spirit, ghost, POW/INT spirit, etc.) it is by its effects, at the GM's option.

Special success will allow the user to determine the spirit's basic intentions — hostile, friendly, or neutral. Special success will also allow a Shaman on the Spirit Plane to identify the magic type of a Spell or Magic Spirit: Sorcery, Spirit, or Divine.

On a critical success, the user may alter the spirit's reaction by one category on the standard reaction table — or by two categories if the user also makes a successful Spirit Speech roll. A critical success will also allow a Shaman to identify the general Runic associations a Spell spirit's spell.

A fumble will cause the spirit to flee or attack, at the GM's choice.

### Rune Lore

This skill may be learned by Initiates, Priests, and those who worship Gods who are not Invisible. Training is available only for those of Initiate status or higher. Initiates receive 3% in this skill per year of previous experience; Priests/Rune Lords/Acolytes receive 5%.

This skill allows the user to identify the proper rituals to be used in any religious situation. Of course, these are often obvious, in which case no roll need be made; this skill is of use in

obscure situations, such as when a Priest is encountered of a rarely-met cult. It is also of use when researching religious matters.

A simple success allows use of proper rituals of associated cults, as well as identification of the regalia and symbols of cults existing in the region. The user may also learn the general cult-type of viewed individuals (i.e. Lightbringers, Earth Gods, Storm Gods, etc., unless this is specifically being hidden.

Special success allows recognition of the regalia and symbols of cults of the continent, as well as ancient and expired cults. It enables the user to identify the cult affiliation of individuals, as well as their general status (Lay Member, or a higher status), unless such affiliation and rank are being deliberately disguised.

On a Critical success, the user will be able to guess accurately the cult affiliation of individuals, as well as the exact status (Lay Member, Initiate, or Rune Level), unless such affiliation and rank are being deliberately disguised. Cult symbols from anywhere in

Glorantha may be identified, including detailed information on differing sect



beliefs and practices. Further information may be divined at the GMs option.

### Magic Lore

This skill is used by those who live in areas where Sorcery is predominantly practiced. It may be learned by Sorcerers and Apprentice Sorcerers. Apprentices receive 3% in this skill per year of previous experience; Adepts receive 5%.

This skill is used to craft new Sorcery spells. As such, it takes months or years to use this skill.

Note from the Minor Egoboost Department: the Draconic Effects Table which first appeared in Rack & Rune #2 has been included in the latest issue of The RuneQuest Digest (volume 8, #3).

## STNG: THE NEWCOMER CONNECTION

During a recent rebroadcast of the Star Trek: The Next Generation episode "The Metamorph", it was realized that the make-up of the alien bride was startlingly familiar. She had brown speckles around her hairline, and in a narrowing stripe down her back. In fact, barring the hair (which could have been a wig), she was *identical* to a Newcomer from Alien Nation! I wonder if the STNG people had permission to use that — or if they even noticed the resemblance?

Speaking of STNG, one thing they desperately need to do is work up an explanation of why there are so many humanoids in the universe — and why so many of them have little blobs of silly

putty on their faces. I seem to recall that there was some mention in the old show of an ancient race that seeded the Galaxy with humaniforms...further detail on this would be a good idea, as the whole issue is getting ridiculous.

## ARISIA '93 AND ME

Arisia '93 draws ever closer, and I'm looking forward to a really great Con. Perhaps we can persuade some of our more far-flung members to make an appearance? Hmmm. Here's a silly idea: A Wild Hunt panel. Arisia is pretty open to that sort of thing, and it might be interesting to do a short panel on The Wild Hunt and APAs in general — we could even make up a condensed "hand-out" version of TWH, containing the best material from recent issues, to give to the audience. What do you think? Am I nuts? Probably. 8`>}



Once again I'll probably be putting in an entry in the Arisia Amateur Video Contest — let's hope it's like last year, and not the two contests previous to that! Though there are several possible subjects to be covered, there's one that I'm going to shoot first: a video version of the "GM Hall of Shame" from Rack & Rune #2. I'm not sure how to film it, though. My technical facilities are very limited — they consist of a video camera and a couple of VCRs. I've used VCR-to-VCR editing before, and it's not pretty. Titles can be done on cards held before the camera — a fade-in and fade-out should work. My real point of uncertainty is how to stage the whole

thing. Should I play the parts of all the GMs myself? After all, I knew them all, and am pretty good at berserk impersonations. I could change my clothes for different GMs...perhaps not, though. I'm not sure I could get nine other good actors, but I could get at least four...and some of the roles are not challenging. The Drunk, for example, only needs to know how to fall face forward onto the table while dry-heaving. In the meantime, each GM type could be introduced by a card; maybe an announcer saying the type, good points, and bad points would be better. The GM itself could do the quote. I'm also wondering about players — would reaction shots improve the video? What sort of reactions should players have? It's these sort of questions that make shooting a video...sheer hell. But after it's all over, it'll be worth it, right? Right? Anyway, if anybody has any ideas, send 'em over to me somehow. If I use it, I'll include you in the credits.

Oh, I've worked up for a replacement for #1 — the Die-Hard (TSR Freak). Not too many people found it amusing, and non-gamers might find it confusing. The replacement idea is pretty good, and well suited to a visual medium — I'll include it in the GM Hall of Shame, volume 2.

By the way, the video can only be ten minutes long, so I can't include any long "destruction of the Death Star (tm)" scenes; nor can I include any complex special effects, unless someone in the Boston area were to kindly offer use of video equipment and expertise...8^>} 

## A NEW RUNEQUEST GLORANTHA CAMPAIGN

Once again I've given in to the urge to run a RuneQuest Glorantha campaign. Though I started several weeks ago, we've only managed to get in a couple of sessions; it seems that one or another person can't make it to the session, and I won't run it without everyone there (at least to start). So far, things have been amusing. The characters are:

A Newtling, once a Dragonewt slave, whose tail was cut off; he was later freed, and is now an alcoholic.

A Dark Troll female, daughter of a Priestess of Kygor Lytor, who is somewhat lazy and unambitious, but very hungry.

A male human Tavern-keeper.

A human female worshiper of Babeester Gor.

These four all woke up on the day after the Sacred Time in unfamiliar surroundings. Each was in the body of a large and muscular human male, naked save for a loincloth. They were lying in a narrow canyon with a small stream running down the middle, two on each side of the canyons; each was chained at the wrists, the chains long enough so that they could reach the water but not each other. The heavy bronze chains seemed to meld smoothly into the rock, as if the canyon wall had been turned temporarily soft and then re-hardened. A very large tarp was fastened above them about twenty feet up the canyon wall, shading

them from the sun. Their sole possessions were their loincloths, the light bedrolls they were sleeping on, and the large slave collars around their necks. They could cast no spells in any case, since none of them had their foci. The slave collars prevented Divine Intervention.

Taking stock, they realized that they were in trouble. They managed to work out a common language between them, and were unable to figure out why any of this had happened — none of them had powerful enemies. All rocks larger than a pebble had been cleared out of their area, and placed just beyond their reach. After a while, they heard footsteps coming toward them from downstream. Soon a figure came around the bend of the canyon, totally hidden in a voluminous cloak. At about the same time, a large hawk flew overhead; a gold symbol of some sort could be seen at its breast. Putting down the sack it was carrying, the figure withdrew large sausages and dried bread. As it threw the food to the PCs (staying well out of reach), one of them managed to catch a glimpse of the mysterious stranger's face — the pale face of a beautiful girl with gol-

den hair. Once the PCs had been fed, the strange girl withdrew, having never uttered a word in answer to their questions.

When she was gone, the PCs got to work. They dug about in the stony soil of the ground they could reach, eventually turning up a few rocks of small but throwable size. They also started trying to abrade their chains against the metal of their slave collars, being careful not to damage the collars (since doing so would probably kill them). A couple of days passed thus.

Once again footsteps came from downstream. Hiding their rocks in their bedrolls, they waited for the stranger. With her came the great hawk, flying back and forth along the canyon. Suddenly one of the PCs was stricken by a spell — he stopped moving, seemingly stupefied or Befuddled. One after the others, the PCs were stunned. When the

tavern keeper came to, he saw the girl and the hawk bent over the chains of one of the others — they were seemingly inspecting the damage that had been done to it. “Who are you?” he asked, “Why are you doing this?” The girl hastily dropped the chain and

**Q: How many Paranoia characters does it take to change a light bulb?**

**A: HAH! The old Light Bulb Trick, eh?! You didn't think I'd fall for that, DID YOU? COMPUTER! HE TRIED TO DAMAGE YOUR PROPERTY!**

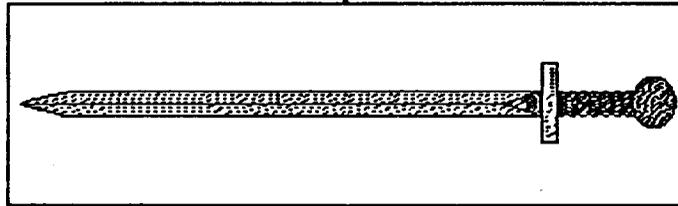
began to run downstream, passing near the tavernkeeper as she ran. The hawk took to the air. Quickly the tavernkeeper threw one of his hoarded rocks, striking the girl in the leg. She stumbled, but kept running. He threw a second rock at long distance, and criticaled her in the head — she dropped like a ton of bricks, bleeding profusely. The hawk flew down and picked up her body in its claws, half-dragging her around the bend of the canyon. Though the party threw rocks at it, those that hit seemed to bounce off it without causing damage.

Wisely, the PCs suspected that they didn't have much time before someone a little more authoritative came to check on them. They redoubled their work on the chains. While doing so, the tavernkeeper discovered that the girl must have dropped something as she ran: a small amulet, with spell foci carved into it. But of course it was useless to him...

They worked desperately, late into the night. As they were resting, something strange floated downstream; one of them managed to catch it, barely. It was the body of a small trollkin, naked and dead from a deep slash. It didn't take the PCs long to remember that though small, trollkin have the same eating habits as their larger cousins...that is, they can eat virtually anything, even metal. Before long they managed to work the trollkin's

small fangs out of its jaw, and were scraping away with renewed efficiency at their chains. Just as some of them were finishing, there came the sounds of heavy footsteps up from downstream. The PCs quickly hid the evidence of their labors.

Moments later, a large and fierce Tusk Rider came around the bend, his huge Tusker following behind. He wore heavy



Cuirbouilli armor, and carried a broadsword and composite bow. With a contemptuous snort, the Tusk Rider unsheathed his word and advanced on the nearest PC. And then things went crazy. The two PCs who were free jumped him, hammering him with fists and feet. Moments later, the other two managed to free themselves as well, and joined the fray. Surprised by their freedom and ferocity, the Tusk Rider quickly lay dead. Seconds later, someone criticaled the charging Tusker in the head, killing it instantly. Off in the distance, a hawk could be seen flying away high in the sky.

The PCs were free. But where were they? And why were they trapped in these strange bodies? 

## COMMENTS 174

**Swanson:** I knew some gamers in college who had a similar problem dealing with the outside world. A couple

of players in a local campaign, either Stormbringer or Call of Cthulhu, met at the local college Grille:

This was on college property, but was run by a woman known as Birdie — who was a priestess or some such of a small but fanatic Fundamentalist sect, of the snake-handling school (the worshipers would handle poisonous snakes — if you had faith, it wouldn't hurt you. I've often thought that the 700 Club would be vastly improved by adopting this practice...8^>}). The players were discussing demon summoning. Furious, she called the campus police, who escorted the players away. Though they'd explained that it was only a game, she banned them from the Grille — relenting only when it was pointed out that she didn't own the property. Strangely enough, she also did the same thing with a couple of student who were discussing their Marxism class. A nasty and small-minded woman.

The campus police were of the same ilk. I'd founded and was president of the local game club: ARPA, the Allegheny College Roleplaying Association. We never got funding, but we did get offices in the Campus Center. Unfortunately, the Center closed at 1:00 PM — right in the middle of Late Night with David Letterman. Though most of the campus police were cool about people staying late, there was one big and mean guy who liked to throw students out on the dot (he was also known to enjoy breaking into places to find couples *en flagrante*).



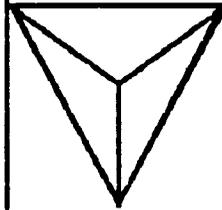
One day I facetiously said I might as well hide in the ARPA offices until Security made it's sweep, and then come out and finish watching Letterman. Apparently, the big mean guy was hiding behind a pillar, listening. The next day I was called down to the office of the

Head of Security. He nastily told me that I'd been heard threatening to stay behind at the Center. Where I to do so, I would be A) arrested, B) taken downtown

and put into the city jail, C) charged with felony trespassing or some such, D) expelled, E) prosecuted by the school to the fullest extent of the law, F) convicted and sent to jail, G) have my name registered with the FBI as a felon, and H) never be able to get a job for the rest of my life. Mind you, we're not talking Bob Jones University here! It was strictly nondenominational — Allegheny College is considered a fair to good school. Nor did I have any offenses of any sort on my record at the time (apart from academic ones, that is). 8^>}

I don't think they'd have been quite so nasty if I'd been president of the football club. Needless to say, I haven't made any donations.

When I talk to non-gamers about gaming these days, I try to stress the literary and social aspects of it, and make an extra effort to seem sane. People tend to be polite, at the least. But you're not likely to find many fundamentalists here in Massachusetts!



**Derryberry:** "Who's to say which style is 'good' and which is bad"? Me. I called Dibs. 8^>} Seriously, I have to suspect that some things are just plain BAD. There's a limit to cultural relativity, and art (including games) almost certainly has SOME sort of dividing line. I've seen some games that aren't good for *anyone*...anyone human, anyway.

Lots of interesting stuff this ish, wish I had more time to write comments...

Regarding dreaming, interesting points. As a child, I once dreamed a highly realistic dream in which my mother drove me to the doctor, where I was examined. Afterword, he asked me to leave the room, and spoke to my mother. Listening at the door, I heard him say "Leukemia. He has six weeks to live." I went home and lay in bed, trying to decide what to do. When I woke up (for real), I still thought I had leukemia. The greatest experience of my life was realizing that it had all been a dream. But for at least half an hour, I **knew** I was going to die.

So what? Well, it certainly affected

my GMing style. Dreams are a part of most of the games I run. I haven't pushed the border that divides 'reality' and 'fantasy' for the gamers, but maybe someday...

REABN(Time For)C: everything else. William Burroughs and Cyberpunk/Greentech especially.

**Dunham:** So, you want Cybereyes? Geeze. Personally, I *like* my glasses. 8^>}

**Q:** How many Space Opera characters does it take to screw in a light bulb?

**A:** That depends on the gravitational attraction of the bulb, the molecular density of the character's birth planet, the electromagnetic spectrum covered by the surrounding ionosphere, the amount of radioactive isotopes present in the crust of every planet in the system...

I'm not sure I agree that in Cyberpunk settings all wealth is accessible to everyone. The genre seems to take modern trends and exaggerate them; and it would be hard to argue that every American citizen has access to wealth. As for class, well, the Cpunk books I've read seem to suggest that wealth is the basis for class; that unless you're born to it, the highest reaches of wealth and power are unattainable. Also, space exploration/exploitation was not noticeably extant in most of the (admittedly few) CyberPunk books I've read — the well-written *Nightside City* by Lawrence Watt-Evans being a notable exception.

Your example of nanotech gone awry

(‘grey ooze’) was startling and fascinating — I’d never really thought out the concept before. Did you come up with that yourself?

**Erlandsen:** I’d be hard-pressed to list all the CyberPunk I’ve read — Count Zero and Neuromancer, at the least. Also the aforementioned Nightside City, which was the only Cpunk book I ever liked — probably due to the fact that I like the author very much.

I didn’t mean that the “getting to know each other” campaign was for the players; it’s for the characters. I usually interview players before the game begins. I agree that it’s hard to reject players — and even harder to be rejected!

Re Comments: Oh, Dana. You had to do it. You’ve let the Genie out of the bottle! 8^>}

I agree with most of your comments about...comments. To my mind, the rudest thing a contributor can do is ignore someone else’s ‘zine. I mean, a bloody RAEBNC is the least you can do, in terms of minimal politeness; to eliminate that is to effectively say that as far as you’re concerned, the ‘zine and contributor don’t exist. It’s a slap in the face. After all, comments are what we write for! For purists, if you *didn’t* actually R or E, **LIE!** We all lie every day in little ways, just to keep the fabric of society together...if your standard of ethics is as holy and pure as all that, go live on the Moon.

Personally, I do try to write *some-*

*thing* about every ‘zine (with a few mistakes; I think I’ve accidentally missed a couple). So far, I’ve been lucky — I’ve always found something of interest to comment on.

None of the above applies to those who have to catch up on more than a couple of ‘zines. I certainly understand the difficulties involved! But a big general RAEBNC would be nice...

**Harlen:** So sorry to hear of your electronic troubles! As the Dean of Computer Unfortunates, I offer you my official condolences. 8^>} Are you going to work on restoring the lost part of the story?

Just looking at your PBM writeup makes me cringe — at the thought of all the work you must have done. How do you find time to eat and sleep, much less work? A friend of mine was planning to do something similar, by the way; he planned to run a PBM ‘campaign’ of Starfire for all his old college buddies, keeping us all in touch. It never got off the ground, of course.

I like the idea of using a Earth geography with a fantasy setting — I did the same thing in the second deep-roleplaying campaign I ran, Fantasy America. It certainly makes mapping easier, doesn’t it? Unfortunately, I couldn’t leave well enough alone — I had to add the lost continent of Atlantis in the middle of the Atlantic. Naturally the campaign ended up taking place there...but the use of modern geographical names certainly added a peculiar

fillip to the game.

**Jorenby:** My roommate is slightly into *anime*, as a result, I couldn't help but see a show now and then. Geeze, that stuff is weird! Some of it looked like the Transformers, some resembled mild soft-core (strange how they draw the women — detailed [and impossible] bodies, crude faces), and some was just WEIRD! But extremely funny. It's certainly not the sort of stuff you could see on American TV...which is a pity. Maybe. Imagine what the creators of Ren & Stimpy could do with the same sort of budget and freedom from censorship.

When I was a kid I loved Gigantor (the Giant Robot, and his friend Johnny Seiko), and Speed Racer. Does that count? 8^>}

Mainstreaming RPGs may be impossible for you and me. But is it beyond the power of the entire industry? I doubt it. Gaming is the only social pastime I know that encourages imagination and thought in an enjoyable social setting. If things had been handled right, it could have been the pastime of choice for millions, perhaps...but we may never find out if that's true. Those idiots at T&R still have a lockhold on the industry, at least in terms of public perception and clout. And they're seemingly dedicated to screwing things up and taking everyone down with them. Odds are we'll be old men (and women)

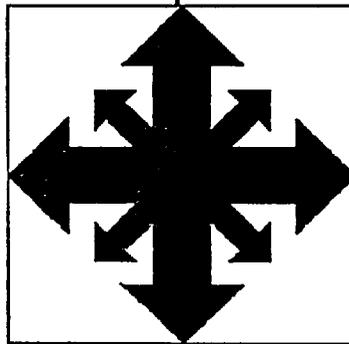
with an obscure and meaningless hobby. It makes me wonder what other hobbies/arts have suffered the same fates over the years.

**Marsh:** Glad to see yet another detailed RuneQuest work. A daunting body of work, indeed. Given the size of the typeface, an **extremely** daunting work. 8^>} I enjoyed reading it, but will probably stick to running HeroQuests out of my raw (well, slightly cooked) brain. How does one obtain the Shattered Norns disk? And to what extent is your work influenced by Joseph Campbell?

**Phillies:** Ah, Pickering. Still moving along nicely. Please keep it up! Say, you're not in any games these days!? Why not? Burnout?

**Sapienza:** Guess I'm not a peacemaker. When the flames start cooking, I just lean back and laugh. Of course, so far I've only witnessed 'fair' flaming — situations where both parties are adults, well able to fend for themselves. And I haven't been the target of a flamejihad myself, except in the Politics SIG of the Argus local BBS — which I simply ignored, don't even read the SIG anymore. I suppose if that changed I'd do something. But I have more than a little of Loki in my soul. 8^>}

I'd like to move off RQ mechanics and into Gloranthan background, but I never have the time...



 A friend has told me that the InterNet is hooking up 2,000 new computers per day. At that rate, it won't be long before everyone is hooked into the Universal Switchboard...and we'll **really** need to work out effective info filters. It'll be a social problem. 8^>}

So, are you playing in or running a RQ campaign these days? Got anything in the works for Mr. Rolston?

**Willner:** \$8,000 a year...sounds very nice indeed. But even so, I have to wonder if you can make enough to live on writing games alone. It's amazing how little game companies pay!

I agree that a high POW should hamper Stealth abilities...just not so much. I think they're doing that for RQ4, incidentally.

In truth, I don't even use a build system for RQ, myself. I either have the players roll and then give them a balanced number of points to add, or just have them make up the characters and design the numbers for them. They then get points to spend on skills. But RuneQuest really needs an advanced character design system — one that includes the scope of differences present in GURPS, and includes personality factors. That doesn't have to be the only method of character creation — in fact, it definitely *shouldn't* be. I favor layers of optional rules for RQ. But an advanced system is needed to reclaim the 'cutting edge' status of RuneQuest!

By the way, I work at a major downtown Boston law firm. Ask me

about it sometime — I could tell you stories you wouldn't believe. The Paper Chase ain't got nothing on me... 

**Butler:** Hi, Son! Seems like Father's Day passed without a card! Heh. Didn't think I'd forget, did you?  8^>}

Gorgeous 'zine, by the way. But **please**, don't go to full-color — I'm feeling inadequate enough as it is.

I didn't think Niven's idea of the Greenhouse Effect forestalling the next Ice Age was silly; what's silly is the idea that EcoNewAgeFemiNazis could take over the government. First, I don't think there are that many around; the great majority of feminists and environmental activists are intelligent and concerned people (I won't say anything about the New Agers, except that they may be the harbingers of a new Dark Age...). Second, I just can't buy the idea that it would happen! Power in this country is in the hands of industry and the wealthy for good, I suspect. 

**Blacow:** Ah, another NESFA reference. You know, I recently read on the Net that the NESFA 'zine was restarting. You were connected with that originally, right? Perhaps you could write up a history of NESFA sometime for us newcomers (and I'm not talking Alien Nation)? About NERO, I suspect you're quite right.

It's strange how vampires exercise such an attraction to so many people. I wonder why that is?

**Demeanor:** 8^>} Seriously, you might want to add your name somewhere on the first page — it gets confusing otherwise.

If you didn't like the Political Correctness warning in Heroes Now!, how did you feel about the Republican National Convention? The only thing that made that watchable for me was the coverage on Comedy Central. Al Franken did a great job.

I do practice economic revenge — I was once insulted terribly by Sam Goodie employees, and have never gone back. The same goes for a good local restaurant. In fact, my whole life is one long revenge saga! The problem is, I don't think any of them would care. Still, you're probably right. I should write Flying Buffalo and let them know...or maybe they receive TWH. I'll have to check on that.

A fine job on the cover — I liked it very much! Say, the wings on her helmet don't hide BUNNY EARS, do they? 8^>}

**George (no last name):**

Do you know if anyone ever made money publishing and selling their own game? I have to wonder. In any case, thanks for the info — though I have to wonder how you obtained it! There's a story there, I think... 

**Woodson:** Again, a very nice cover. People remarked on it (positively).

**NEXTISH**

No idea -- but I hope to finally get more Nereyon on paper...

-->PM

**COLLOPHON:**

**Rack & Rune #10: All Heads Turn as the Hunt Goes By** was generated in ASCII form using PC-Write 2.5. It was formatted for desk top publishing with Publish-It 2.0. It includes clip art generated with the Windows 3.0 Paintbrush utility, as well as clip art downloaded from several BBSes. It was printed on an Epson LQ-570 dot matrix printer.

If you've read this far, you need a new hobby. 8^>}

