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THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

STRIKER

Featured Review

**CREATURE THAT ATE SHEBOYGAN VARIANT
THE NEWCOMERS: ADVENTURE FOR TRAVELLER
A SUPER NAMED JOHN
MORE COMPUTER AS FAMILIAR
METAL: NEW FEATURE
AND 6 PAGES OF REVIEWS**



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THE SPACE GAMER

NUMBER 53 - JULY, 1982

IN THIS ISSUE

We couldn't manage to repeat our 48-page effort of last month, but this issue is still packed as full as our crowbars will allow. You'll notice two new items in the contents lineup: The first installment of "Metal," our column on the whys and wherefores of the miniatures industry; and "Scanner," which readers will recognize as the son of our venerable News & Plugs.

This issue also boasts an entertaining piece of superhero fiction, the wrapup to our Marischal Adventures scenarios for *Traveller*, a featured review of GDW's *Striker*, new options for the humans in *The Creature That Ate Sheboygan*, and much more. Happy hunting.

-Aaron Allston

ART IN THIS ISSUE

Cover: K.C. Ellis

Steve Crompton: 2, 24, 28. Nequi Dharsee: 32. J. Andrew Keith: 19, 21. Alf Klosterman: 34. Denis Loubet: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14. Richard Mather: 15, 16, 40. Pat Mueller: mailer cartoon. George Webber: 25, 26.



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ARTICLES

Equipment We'll Never See * Steve Jackson

SF&F items we won't let near our campaigns 4

Four Supers * David Myers

The characters of "A Super Named John" for three superhero RPGs. 10

Giving the Humans an Even Break * William A. Barton

Boosting the humans' odds in *Creature That Ate Sheboygan* 14

ADVENTURE GAME SUPPLEMENT

The Newcomers * J. Andrew Keith

The finale of the Scotian Huntress series for *Traveller* 19

FICTION

A Super Named John * David Myers

Superhero adventure in New Orleans 6

REVIEWS

Striker * William A. Barton 24

Capsule Reviews 28

GAMES: Asteroid Pirates, Grand Master of the Martial Arts, Highway 2000, Wizard's Realm. SUPPLEMENTS: The Dungeon of King Lout, The Illhiedrin Book, Merchant Prince, Murder of Irliss, Tegel Manor, Trading Team. ARCADE GAMES: Demon Attack, Pac-Man, Stampede. PUBLICATIONS: Best of the JTAS, Volume 2.

COLUMNS

Where We're Going * Steve Jackson 2

Metal * John Rankin 12

Deus Ex Machina * Bruce Webster 17

DEPARTMENTS

Game Master 3

Contest 4

Letters 36

Calendar 38

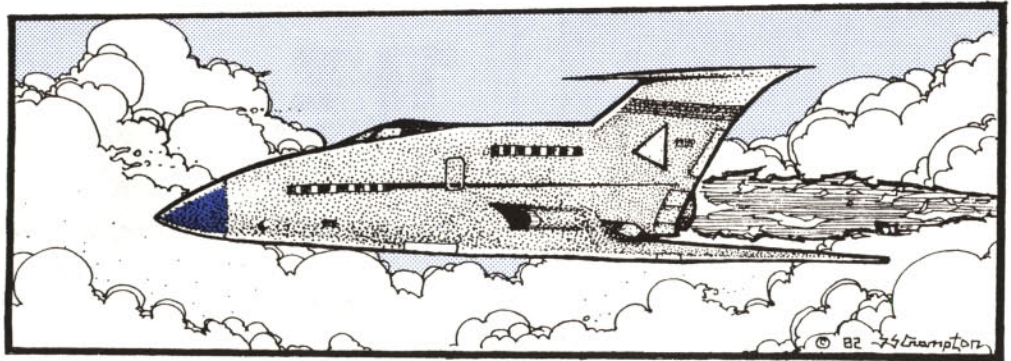
Scanner 38

PBM Update 39

Index to Advertisers 40

Murphy's Rules 40

Where We're Going



It's Origins Award time again. The final ballot for the game industry's "Oscars" has been prepared; the nominees are listed on page 39. Every year when award time comes around we hear accusations that the system is "stacked" toward the big companies (or the little ones, or the old ones, or the historical ones . . .). So I did a little analysis of the nominations. I've compared the number of nominations each company received with that company's total number of 1981 releases. (For data on releases, I'm indebted to Dana Lombardy, who graciously gave permission for me to reprint information he tabulated and presented in Issue 9 of the Proceedings of the Awards Committee, Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design.)

Company	R	GN	%
SPI	25	7	28
Judges Guild	19	0	0
TSR	16	0	0
GDW	16	4	25
Metagaming	15	1	7
Yaquinto	13	1	8
Paranoia Press	13	0	0
FASA	12	2	17
Heritage	11	1	9
FGU	10	1	10
Chaosium	9	7	78
Mayfair	9	6	67
Flying Buffalo	8	1	13
Task Force	8	1	13
Group One	8	0	0
Avalon Hill	7	0	0
Simulations Canada	7	0	0
Reilly Associates	6	0	0
Eon	5	0	0
Gamelords	5	0	0
Games Workshop	4	0	0
Simulation Games	4	0	0
Swedish Game Prod.	4	0	0

SJ Games	3	3	100
Hero Games	3	1	34
Midkemia	3	0	0
Dimension Six	3	0	0
Iron Crown	3	1	34

(The following companies had one nomination each, from unknown, but presumably very small, numbers of 1981 releases: Empire Games, Adventure Games, and Quarterdeck Games.)

"R" is that company's total 1981 releases, as tabulated by Dana Lombardy. "GN" is new game nominations; I did not count "All-Time Best" nominations because these are not limited to 1981 releases. (I also did not count magazine nominations, since this would give an unfair advantage to the companies that have magazines. But note that TSR and Avalon Hill both get "on the board" if All-Time Best and magazine nominations are counted.) Computer games were also not included. "%" is the ratio of nominations to total releases.

These results were very interesting indeed. There is no strong correlation between size of company and number of nominations; SPI (a giant, at least in 1981) and Chaosium (medium-sized) are tied for greatest number of new game nominations. But the companies with the best *percentage* of nominations are SJ Games, Chaosium, and Mayfair — all medium to small operations. Furthermore, some of the biggest companies didn't make it at all with their 1981 releases. TSR had 16 swings and no hits. Judges Guild was 0 for 19! Even Avalon Hill went 0 for 7 this year. And other large operations only made it by the skin of their teeth; Yaquinto went 1 for 13, Metagaming 1 for 15. Most of the other "name" companies

picked up one nomination each, with GDW getting four and FASA two.

Conclusion number one: The nomination process is pretty fair. Since it's open to the public, and nomination ballots are run in most gaming magazines, everybody who wants to has a chance to vote, and nominations are likely to fall, as they should, to the more popular new games. (It's always possible to stuff the ballot box — and companies have blatantly done so in past years — but it's hard to do this *without* being obvious about it.)

Conclusion number two: If the nomination process is fair, then it presents a good picture of what gamers like — and *that* tells us something about the effectiveness of the game companies. It seems to me to be saying "smaller is better." Most of the big companies cranked out lots and lots of games . . . and earned very few if any nominations! Of course, many of the little companies had equally bad batting averages — but the ones that did well, did *very* well. A game mill can't match the output of a design team that *cares*.

Recommendation: Let's find out how to have the best of both worlds. Imagine a game company with the resources and production of TSR . . . and the consistent quality of Chaosium. Wouldn't that be something?

Nominations

The Space Gamer has once again been nominated for Best Magazine Covering Role-Playing Games. We'd sure like to turn that nomination into an award this time; cross your fingers for us. Our sister magazine, *Fire & Movement*, picked up a nomination for Best Magazine Covering Boardgaming — an award it's won for the last three years in a row.

On the game award front, we seem to have done pretty well; SJ Games released three new games in 1981, and got three nominations. *Car Wars* has been nominated for two awards: Best Miniatures Rules and Best Science Fiction Board Game. *Undead* was nominated as Best

NEXT ISSUE

In August's TSG you're likely to find:

*Strategy and tactics for STAR FLEET BATTLES;
"Unnight," adventure scenario for SPACE OPERA;
Helpful creature information for WIZARD'S REALM;
An overview of Heritage USA; and
Several succubi.*