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#12 "Best Issue Ever"



WRITTEN BY: NEIL HENDRICK

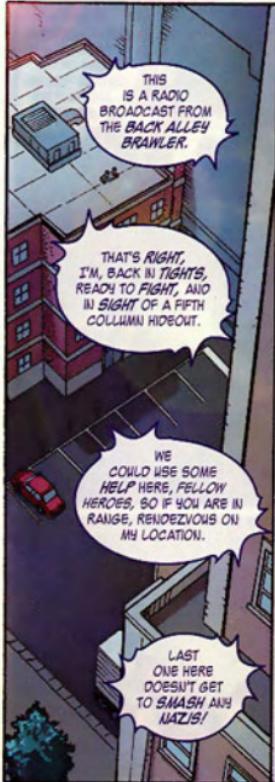
**ART BY:
BRANDON
MCKINNEY**

**COLORS BY:
AUSTIN
MCKINLEY**











...NO.
I DON'T THINK
YOU DO UNDERSTAND
WHAT IS AT STAKE
HERE.

THERE
IS AT LEAST ONE
KHELDIAN HUNTER ALIVE
ON THIS PLANET, IN
THIS CITY.

OUR VERY SCOURGE,
OUR REBELLIOUS SLAVES.
DIRTY, YELLOW, SQUIDY
KHELDIANS. HERE!

I MUST SAY, FROM A STRICTLY
SCIENTIFIC VIEW, I CANNOT IMAGINE
WHY WE SHOULD CARE ABOUT
YOUR GRUDGE.

YEAH.

THE
KHELDIAN
IS NOT IN FULL
POSSESSION OF ITS
ABILITIES. NOT FULLY
IN CONTROL OF
IT'S HOST.

I WILL
ENSLAVE THE KHELDIAN,
PROPERLY BROKEN AND TRAINED.
IT WOULD BE A TOOL WITH WHICH
THIS CITY COULD BE CRUSHED
IN A FORTNIGHT.

AFTER
THAT, I WILL
TAKE MY PRIZE, AND
YOU MAY DO WHAT
YOU LIKE WITH
PARAGON CITY.

JUST STAY
OUT OF MY...

WAAAAY!!!

SOMEBODY
ORDER A
PIZZA...

WITH
EXTRA
PAIN?







I'M GLAD YOU BROUGHT THE WITCH AND HER SIDEKICK.

ONCE I BREAK YOU I'LL MAKE YOU EAT WHAT'S LEFT OF THEM.

DID YOU, A FILTHY YELLOW, SQUIDY KHELDIAN THINK THAT YOU COULD COME HERE AND DEFEAT YOUR MASTER?

WE DIDN'T COME HERE TO DEFEAT YOU, WE CAME HERE TO KILL YOU.



MISS YOUR MOMMY, DO YOU?

A PRIMITIVE BEING, ABLE TO MANIFEST PSYCHIALLY LIKE A KHELDIAN OR A NICTUS! IMAGINE MY SURPRISE.

YOUR COVEN WASN'T FIT TO SERVE AS MY SLAVES, THOUGH THEY SERVED WELL ENOUGH...

AS

CHARCOAL!

YOUR PETTY PARLOUR TRICKS...



ARE NOTHING LIKE A NICTUS' POWER.

I'M GONNA OPEN YOU LIKE A CAN OF BEANS.

GURK!

EVEN THAT SHADOW OF A KHELDIAN, THAT SAD HOLLOW GHOST OF A MAN YOU CALL "HORUS", SO MUCH MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU, IS NOTHING IN MY GRIP

ON YOUR KNEES.

HORACE.

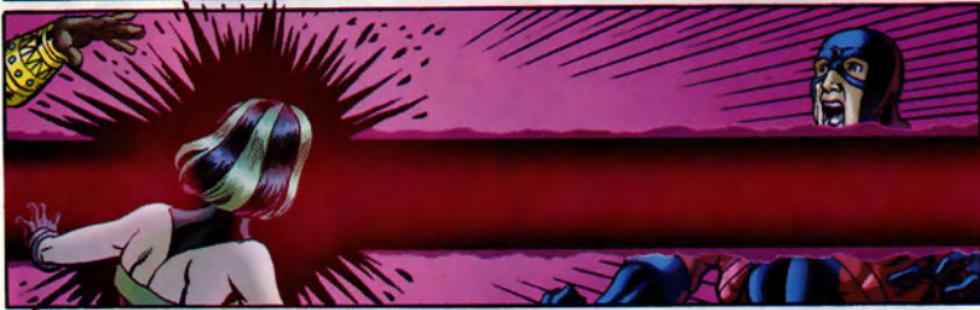
YOU WERE MY SLAVE BEFORE THE KHELDIAN REBELLION. YOU MIGHT NOT RECALL VERY CLEARLY...

SO, LET ME REFRESH YOUR MEMORY

I LIKE MY BREAKFAST PROMPTLY AT SUNRISE. AND A HEARTY ONE, IT IS, AFTER ALL, THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY.

HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR EGGS...

FRIED!



THAT BLADE OF
YOURS ACTUALLY
HURTS!

I TELL YOU THIS,
WITCH...

YOU
CANNOT
LIVE.

NO PSYCHICS,
NO WEAPONS,
NO MUTATIONS.
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS,
ARE YOU?

GET
AWAY FROM HER,
YOU MONSTER!









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**CITY
OF
HEROES™**



I'LL
COOK YOU IN THAT
HUMAN SHELL AND EAT
YOU LIKE KHELDIAN
ESCARGO!



YOU...
FILTHY...
YELLOW...

SQUIDY...



KEEEEEINGGGAAAHAAA!!!





PLEASE,
PLEASE, PLEASE
DO SOME MAGIC
NOW.

APEX...

OH, THANK GOD,
I WAS AFRAID
YOU WEREN'T
GOING TO
MAKE IT.

OH,
I MADE IT.
I MADE IT ALL
THE WAY.



HEY!

HERMANO,
I'M THE CHOSEN
WARRIOR, AND THIS IS
WHAT I WAS CHOSEN
FOR.

I'M NOT COMING
BACK.

MY
COVEN IS DEAD,
MY POWERS DRAINED,
EVEN MY FIERY SWORD HAS
TURNED TO IRON.

IT'S
MY TIME.

NO, NO. WE'LL GET YOU
TO A HOSPITAL. I'LL CARRY
YOU...IF WE CAN WAKE UP
HORUS HE CAN FLY US
THERE.

I DON'T THINK
THEIR'S ANYTHING
LEFT OF HORUS.

LOOK...

THE
NICTUS IS
DEAD; I CAN SEE
SO MUCH FARTHER
NOW. THERE ARE OTHER
KHEDIONS ON THE
HORIZON. SOME ARE
SLEEPING, AS I DID
IN HORUS. SOME ARE
AWAKENING AS I
HAVE DONE WITH
YOUR HELP.

I AM
AWAKE NOW.





SOME TIME LATER,
PARAGON CITY.



FROM ALL OF US AT BLUE KING STUDIOS TO ALL OF YOU IN PARAGON CITY, PEACE OUT, CHEVATOS. VISIT US ON THE WEB SITE AT [HTTP://BLUEKINGSTUDIOS.COM](http://BLUEKINGSTUDIOS.COM), YOU CAN GET ALL YOUR CITY OF HEROES BACK-ISSUES THERE INCLUDING SIGNED AND ORIGINAL ART. UNTIL NEXT TIME, DON'T TAKE ANY WOODEN INFLUENCE POINTS!

THE END.



♦ The Paragon Times ♦



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THE GIRLS OF TOKYO HIGH

Sweeping away crime in a wave of bubble gum, lip gloss, and shojo manga

By "Snaps" McKenzie
Times Staff

PARAGON CITY - Paragon City needs help. Super-powered villains lurk on every corner, powerful criminal organizations weave a tapestry of misdeeds and greed, and creatures out of nightmares wait in the shadows eager for a taste of blood.

And in its hour of need, Paragon City turns to ... a bunch of teenage girls.

See GIRLS page 3

The Hero Chronicles: Fan fiction

Child in Hiding

By Maud Eireann
(Virtue: Evolution)

Special page 4



Heroic Visions: Fan Art

Fantastic fan art from the City of Heroes Community.

Page 6

HELP WANTED!
The Paragon Times need you!
see page 8

www.cityofheroes.com

COLOSSAL HELP AT COLOSSEUM



A powerful helping hand from Optical, Blue Stryker, ElectricSpider, Aluminio, and Shadow Fey (l to r)

Super Group Performs Super Construction

By F. Hector
Times Staff

PARAGON CITY - With Colosseums being built in three sections of Paragon City, you'd think construction schedules would fall far behind. "No way!" is the cry of one hero faction.

See COLOSSAL page 2

The Paragon Funny Pages
Featuring the art of
Tim Buckley



Page 7

COLOSSAL

Continued from page 1

Stepping up to the plate in true heroic fashion, the heroes of the well-known Incandescent Cell are helping our dedicated workforce by assisting in the construction of the colossal and impressive additions to the city's skyline. With structures designed to withstand the incredible forces of physical, magical, and other tangible energies, the Paragon Colosseum Project has required the help of architects, designers, and engineers from all over the world – as well as off-world.

"To see what the city has done is incredible," said Incandescent Cell leader Aluminio. "We call ourselves heroes, but it is really the people in this city who are the heroes in taking on this endeavor. We are honored by their support."

The construction project had some initial snags since nothing of this magnitude had ever been built before – much less in three locations at once. Additionally, the nature of the building materials and the overall design of the structures necessitated the use of specialized equipment that is hard to procure.

Labor unions at each site have been happy to receive the Cell's assistance. "It's a big job, and sharing it with the super-powered really makes it go faster," said union spokesperson Antoine Frasier. "They put their lives on the line to keep this city and world safe - I think these facilities will give them a way to have some fun and give the citizens a way to share in it."

Villainous Support?

There is no shortage of "power" in the Incandescent Cell's mighty roster, nor is there a lack of civic responsibility. As part of their construction assistance program, the team that promises to "deliver combusting justice" is also providing opportunities to the city's felons to become useful citizens again.

"There are some bad guys who really aren't so bad," said Nitrogeno, second-in-command of the Cell and public relations director for the group. "We're

working with the city to rehabilitate them and hope to see some progress soon."

Supervised by public and hero officials, the effort is starting to get some traction. At the Galaxy City construction site alone, more than a dozen incarcerated foes (many of which Incandescent Cell members have fought personally) receive training in various construction-related jobs and are finding new satisfaction in their lives.

"I used to snatch purses all over this neighborhood," said one former Hellion who asked not to be identified. "I'm so sorry – now I just want my mom and dad to know I'm going to try and get myself cleaned up. No more power trips for me."



Wrongdoers doing right – work on the Colosseum.

"It's important that they wear the clothes and costumes of their former villain group," said Nitrogeno – pictured here with various felons. "It helps them make a bridge to a new life and helps the community realize they are no longer a threat.]

Upcoming Schedule

City officials have stated that tickets for upcoming shows will be made available shortly. Construction goals are being met and other Super Groups are lending their talents to help accelerate the project.

Tourism is expected to increase dramatically over the next few weeks, and local vendors and hotels are gearing up for it. While the cost of the project is enormous, the revenue gains are expected to help defray expenses and even show a profit for the city in less than a year.



Knowledge Is Power

by Paula Taylor

If there's one thing that's true of all the heroes in Paragon City, it's that each and every one is a unique individual. Now, in recognition of heroic diversity, heroes can reach for the stars by electing the difficulty of the missions they're assigned.

Hero Corps has begun offering a service to any hero with enough influence to persuade those who assign missions that they are up for a greater

challenge. Field Analysts have taken up positions throughout the city, ready to help heroes to set their bar higher. If heroes later decide that they would like to ease back on the challenges they face, Hero Corps will again help them spread the word about their desired missions.

You already help secure the destiny of all Paragon citizens. Take control of your own destiny, and speak with a Hero Corps representative today.

This has been a Heroic Service Announcement by SERVE: Support, Education and Resources for Vigilante Excellence

GIRLS

Continued from page 1

The Girls of Tokyo High (GoTH) are a super-powered fighting force in knee socks and miniskirts. Students at a mysterious private academy on Talos Island, the team has been sweeping away crime in a wave of bubble gum, lip gloss, and shoujo manga.

"Tokyo High is a school for students with unusual talents or abilities," says Shiuko, an upperclassman who keeps her katana close at hand. "Most of us have parents who work in America, so the school opened a satellite campus in Paragon City."

Led by Shoko, a tomboyish martial artist who is also president of the student council, GoTH has been making its mark and turning heads everywhere from Atlas Park to Peregrine Island.

"You should see the crowds that gather when we go somewhere," Shoko says. "You'd think these people had never seen a school uniform before!"

And it's not just Paragon City citizens who are going gaga over GoTH -- the city's heroes are fans of the team, too. "Yeah, I've teamed with them," says the Atomic Roach. "They're cute and they're tough and they're schoolgirls ... they're a pleasure to work with."

However, GoTH's appearance in Paragon City has not been without its controversy. The idea of teenagers taking on opponents such as the Clockwork King and the Freakshow has led some to call for age limitations for hero licenses.



"The state won't let someone drive until they are sixteen years old, but the city will ask a high school freshman to walk into an abandoned warehouse crawling with Tsos," says Clint Halgarth, director of People for the Ethical Treatment of the Super-powered (PETS). "Even genetically advanced humans should be protected by child labor laws."

But the Girls of Tokyo High say they're happy being heroes.

"It's way fun being a hero!" says Mina-ko, with a giggle and a flip of her blonde ponytail. "We get to bust bad boys, and when we've got big stuff to do, like that time Synapse needed our help, we get out of doing homework!"

"Mina may simplify things a bit," adds Shoko, "but we're happy to do our part in Paragon City. If anyone needs protection, it's the criminals -- protection from us."

Child in Hiding

by Maud Eireann (*Virtue: Evolution*)

I don't remember when I first realized my Gran was different from other women. She collected things. I knew that. But I thought it was just junk.

SCRAP-METAL. CIRCUIT BOARDS. OLD TELEVISION SETS WITH GIGANTIC OLD KNOBS.

Once, she explained something to me about auras, electric smells, and the non-verbal thoughts that come directly from sensory stimuli, but I was too little to remember.

"Maud, girlie," she'd say. "You've got to know when something's lost and then find it."

I didn't understand that, either.

My great-uncle **PERRY** would buy junk from her sometimes. He was a strange man, tiny little eyes under gigantic gray-brown eyebrows. He always smelled the way tinfoil tastes: **UGLY AND INVASIVE AND WRONG**.

He wore clothes that looked like they were made from **ANIMAL FEED BAGS**.

One night, Gran was rummaging through a box from someone's garage sale or antiques rejects or something and she found a pair of broken spectacle frames. I wasn't there when she found them but I saw her with them the next day, poring over them, smelling them, even tasting them with the tip of her tongue. I thought it was strange. But when you grow up in The Gish, everything is strange. You just take things as they come.

"This," she told me, "is how you find your place."

She's in one of her crazy phases, I thought.

She took me out of school when I turned twelve. "You're not like the others," she told me.

I knew I could feel things *too strongly*, but I thought it was just being sensitive. I didn't want to leave.

"No," she told me. "I had it too. You feel it inward now. Soon, you'll feel it outward."

More crazy talk.

I hated home-schooling.

She started teaching me things I could barely understand. Fundamentals of physics, psychology, metaphysics, history of ancient social policy, philosophy of communication. **LIFE SUCKS** when you've got a genius grandmother in the first stages of Alzheimer's who's decided to home-school you.

I felt like everything I learned was already **TEN PERCENT FORGOTTEN**.

It was only after the fire, after the attack on our apartment, after she lifted me and flew me, yes, **flew me**, out the window with nothing but my stuffed rabbit clutched in my arms and a pair of broken glasses frames clutched in her bony hand,

and I saw my uncle **PERRY** below at the head of a street gang storming our building that I began to realize . . .

It was being found. BY THE LOST.

"It's not always the bad that comes of it," she told me. "**THE PAKIHS**. They think they own you because of what's **IN YOUR BLOOD**. You were born Lost, dear. But there's something more. When you put the right thing with the right thing, **you can make magic**. When you put the right thought with the right thought, you can make power. Psi, Maud girlie. The Lost have it. We have it. But we use it differently." She pronounced it like "Sigh." It was on my vocabulary list the next week. And the next. She made sure I knew what it meant. I looked it up in several dictionaries. Psi. Psionic. Psionics. Parapsionic. All this had something to do with me. Not that I understood it.

Sigh.

We moved to Atlas Park then. It was different back then—cleaner, brighter. I would have liked it except that we were sleeping on **COTS IN A FRIEND'S GARAGE** and I had to wait my turn in line to use the bathroom. They had two little boys, and they always needed to go **RIGHT BEFORE I DID**. It was like they could read my mind. Maybe they could. Or maybe I was projecting it.

She sent me to school again.

After two years at home, it was like being in a **FOREIGN COUNTRY**. She got a job in city hall, as a janitor. She took me to work with her once. I was embarrassed. She wouldn't just empty wastepaper baskets. She'd rummage. I'd look around to see if anyone was watching.

"My time is coming," she told me. "I'm going to need to move into the seniors' apartments next to your aunt Shanna. But there's *something I need to do first*."

She came home terrified one day.

"They see it in the glass ball." She was shaking. "But they don't know what it means. **MINDS**. From the other place. Coming here. I tried to tell them but they just shut the door. **And I haven't found it yet.**"

"**MINDS**," Grandma?

"You aren't old enough to have the dreams yet. They know what we know. They touch what we touch. The Psi, the power to know something hardly possible and make it happen. They're using it to make a bridge, to travel faster than they should, make rough bodies for themselves. And I haven't found it yet. I can't finish **your glasses**."

"I see fine, Gran."

"Not that kind of glasses."

I stayed late at school the next day. I got in trouble on purpose so they'd put me in detention. I was a little afraid of going home. I loved my Gran more than anything. Anything. But she was scaring me a little with how she was changing as

she grew older.

When I finally got back, she showed me a broken glass jar she'd taken out of the trash at work. There was a big smile on her face.

"I found it."

"A broken bottle?"

Substance. A well-balanced substance." It took her about two hours to cut it and solder the old glasses together. Her tools were **ANCIENT** and covered with **RUST** and I've never seen their like since. The glass was wavy and gross, sort of off-color with scratches and bubbles, bad workmanship by whoever made the bottle.

I hated my glasses the first time I saw them.

They were junk. They looked like something even my great-uncle **PERRY** would have passed over as rubbish.

"I don't want those. Everyone will make fun of me if they see me holding these. And you want me to **wear them?**"

She looked truly disappointed then. "But they're perfect," she said. "I found something perfect and made it. I finally did. **I put them together.**"

I humored her at last and took them, even put them on.

I could barely see through them.

They were at strange angles to one another. It was an **INSTANT HEADACHE**. But she slept easier, so I guess it was okay. I made sure nobody ever saw them, though.

The next week, I was out by the dumpsters looking for a box to make into a bookshelf when

I saw a little kid get dragged into the alley by a big pale guy with a **SPLINTERED BASEBALL BAT**. They were in the shadows, but I saw him grab the boy's wallet, his keys, and his school ID card. I heard him **LAUGHING** but I couldn't hear what he was saying.

I don't know what came over me. The kid was helpless. The big guy was going to beat him up, maybe give him broken bones and scars and maybe even hurt him in a permanent way, and **FOR WHAT?**

For his skin color, or his clean shirt, or what? **I COULDN'T STAND IT.**

"Cut it out!" I said, rushing in on them.

"Who's this? Your *girlfriend*?" the guy with the baseball bat **SNEERED**.

"Uh . . . no! . . ." the boy said, as if the question were serious—he was scared out of his mind.

"You know what I like?" the big guy asked. "When **SHORT PEOPLE FALL DOWN**. It makes me feel taller."

I reached out with my thoughts then and made him *feel something*. For once it wasn't me feeling what other people were feeling or giving away my own secrets with my mind; it was *a force*; it was a force of discomfort. But I barely touched him.

"What the . . ." the guy started, blinking. But then he **GRITTED HIS TEETH** and took up the

bat in both hands, looming over me.

*I fell back on one hand, shivering.
My head felt so tired.*

"That's more like it. Whatever trick that was, **DON'T DO IT AGAIN**. I don't like it."

"Yes, sir." I thought about my backpack over my shoulders. Where were those glasses?

My glasses.

But they were in my hand. I have no idea how they got there. I put them on, pulled the loops over my ears.

And everything became clear.

I was seeing, but not through the glasses—*around them, in front of them, behind them, inside myself, inside the boy, the baseball bat, the boxes and pipes stacked up by the dumpster.*

"It's . . . perfect," I whispered.

"Come again, missy?" the guy asked, counting the money from the boy's wallet.

"We're leaving now," I told him.

"LIKE HELL, PRETTY PRINCESS. You're staying right there and showing me what's in your backpack."

"You're so slow you couldn't catch us if we walked."

"You'll regret saay . . . liing . . . thaaaat . . ." he said, rising so slowly it would have been funny in **ANY OTHER SITUATION**.

"Run!" I told the boy, touching his arm. His ribs were sprained. I felt it.

But then I knew they weren't.

And, somehow, because I knew it, they weren't. **His hurt was gone.** His eyes grew large.

"Go! Toward the statue in the park. Run!"

The man rose slowly and lifted his bat.

"**You're slow,**" I said. "**You're slower than anything you can imagine. You hurt. You're failing.**" And he was.

The bat fell out of his hand. I reached and grabbed the boy's things, and ran.

I caught up with the boy.

"You got my things back!" he said. "Hey, you got all my money! That's great! How did . . ."

He was smiling. I didn't even care how I looked with the glasses.

I knew I looked okay to him.

"Never wander around in this part of town again," I told him.

"**WE** weren't lost," he said. "**WE** were just exploring."

"**WE?**" I asked.

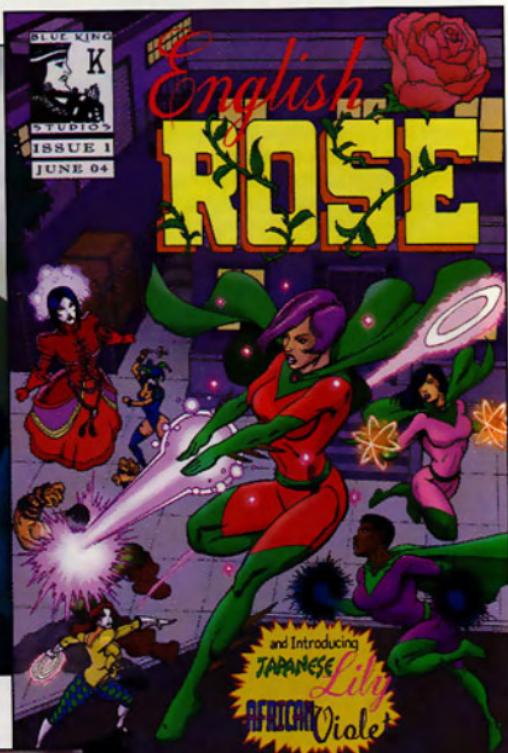
He opened his fist. **A ROCK** an inch tall with two arms and two legs hopped up and down and waved at me.

"Okay," I told him, putting my hand on his shoulder, "we need to work on this."

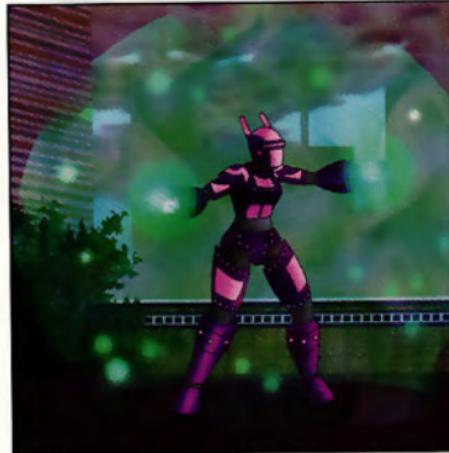
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BY TIM BUCKLEY AND BRIAN CLEVINGER

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The Paragon Times Needs You!

Fan Art & Fiction Submission Guidelines

The Paragon Times Submission News Article Guidelines

News items should be short, no more than 200-250 words in length, with appropriate screenshots (no more than 3) if available (highly recommended though). Interviews, features and general articles should be no longer than 500 words. NPC interviews or op-eds should be between 100 and 150 words. Photo-essays should include no more than 4 screenshots in jpg or tiff formats with appropriate captions. The deadline for any specific issue is the 15th of each month.

Selected work may appear under your real name or an appropriate "journalistic" pseudonym. Written submissions will be accepted only in .doc/.txt formats. All submissions, questions and queries should be emailed to cohsubmissions@plaync.com. Please put "Community News Article" in the subject line.

Good luck! We're looking forward to seeing your contributions!

Heroic Scribes Wanted!

Time to dust off your trusty word processor and spin a heroic tale of fan fiction for possible posting or publication in a future community project (including web and comic book). What we want to see is a story that chronicles your hero's or team's (in-game or original characters) villain-busting adventures. Be as creative as you want, but keep it at least PG-rated. Doc or .txt format preferred. 1500 words max, please! Sending screenshots and/or original art for your fiction is recommended. Please send all submissions to cohsubmissions@plaync.com with the subject heading "Fan Fiction Submission." The by-line can be your real name or a character name (or both).

Heroes of Art!

We aren't leaving you artists out of the fun either, so here's the deal. Send us your best City of Heroes-inspired artwork. Any original medium is acceptable (pen & ink, digital, oils, etc.) as long as you keep it on a family-friendly level. Do not send us nudity or other objectionable images. Let us know if you want credit under your real name or a character name. Selected artwork will appear in a future City of Heroes community project (including site gallery or comic book). Images should be in JPG format. The full image should be between 100 x 100 and 2000 x 2000 pixels and be less than 380KB in size. We may also ask for a higher resolution (300dpi) image in .tiff format – so make sure you save a high-resolution version of your submission! Please send submissions to cohsubmissions@plaync.com with the subject heading "Fan Art Submission."

If you have any questions regarding these submissions, please drop a note to cohsubmissions@plaync.com. We are looking forward to seeing your stories and art!

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