CHALLENGERS STOP SKYJACKING
AND SAVE GOTHAM CITY

By James Dalemore

GOTHAM CITY - Two potentially deadly crises were averted last week by Darian’s own heroes, the Challengers. The Challengers rose to the occasion and were able to squelch an airline skyjacking and prevent a devastating earthquake from ravaging Gotham City.

The Challengers prevented the skyjacking of a passenger airliner by forces loyal to Husan Amusatu, the suspected mastermind behind this years’ anthrax scare. Amusatu was being transported in secret aboard the passenger airliner bound for Gotham City when the loyalists attempted to skyjack the plane. The skyjackers were promptly defeated, but not before the pilot of the plane was taken out. Degree, the Challengers newest member, stepped in to provide a shaky, yet safe, landing.

Through an unknown series of circumstances, the Challengers then confronted the villain Harbinger in Gotham City. Harbinger is credited with the capture of the Challengers by the Bay and the destructive earthquake that shook San Francisco two weeks ago. Apparently aided by other supernatural forces, the Challengers were able to rescue the Challengers by the Bay, defeat the Harbinger, and prevent Gotham City from being the victim of another massive earthquake.

The Challengers also saved two Gotham City University students during the battle with the Harbinger. One of the students, Amy Douglas, later said, “It was fantastic! All these heroes running around … fighting … jumping … it was amazing! There was this one hero in black who was jumping around like some crazy Tigger.” It is unclear at this time whether the young woman interviewed was describing Father Joseph as a “Tigger” or a “Chigger”. “Tigger” being the popular bouncy Winnie-the-Pooh character, and a “chigger” being a small tropical flea that sucks the blood of vertebrates and is known for it’s amazing leaping ability, also sometimes referred to as Tiggers.

The Challengers by the Bay have returned to San Francisco to help with the earthquake relief effort.

Artist rendition of the earthquake-causing Harbinger
QUARTERBACK DIES UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

By Andrew Holden

The NFL Darian Destroyer’s Quarterback, Lewis “Lightning” Unger, died Sunday during a particularly brutal QB sack. Unger was the victim of a late hit that seemed to have all the force of a locomotive behind it. When Philadelphia Eagles tackle, Glen Tyson, made contact with Unger, a number of disturbing things seemed to happen at once.

The first item of note was the late hit itself. Tyson plowed into Unger at an astonishing speed after the completion of the play. Unger received the blow head-on and was immediately thrown off his feet. The second item of note was that when Unger hit the Astroturf, he immediately began to suffer from a seizure. The seizure continued for 10 seconds, eventually leading to an unbelievable, and quite literal, meltdown. Apparently, Lewis “Lightning” Unger’s seizure was so severe that he generated enough internal heat to melt his body. While doctors say this is impossible, it’s clearly evident that within 10 seconds of the seizure starting, Unger completely melted into a peanut-butter-like paste.

Psion-Inc., owners of the Darian Destroyers, have agreed to investigate this incident to the fullest of their abilities. While Unger’s family was unavailable for comment, Psion-Inc. assured this reporter that their own counselors are consoling the family.

Psion-Inc. signed the previously unknown Lewis “Lightning” Unger to the team at the beginning of the season. He immediately became the teams star Runningback. Still early in the season, the change was made to move Unger to Quarterback. Unger had an amazing year and was on track to leading the Destroyers to a winning season.

Lewis “Lightning” Unger during a recent practice

TRIDENT MANAGER DIES

By James Dalemore

DARIAN – Otis Wembley died this week at the age of 91. Otis served as the manager for the historic Trident Theatre for over 30 years. The Trident opened in the late 1800’s and was in operation until it finally closed its doors eight years ago. After closing, Otis maintained the condition of the theatre for another three years, until failing health prohibited him from leaving his home.

Though his tenure as manager is not regarded as the theatres proudest, it’s high quality reputation still remains to this today. When the Trident first opened in downtown Darian, it was the only venue for plays, concerts and operas. The theatre has certainly seen its share of entertainers, including such memorable performers as the Great Houdini and the rock-and-roll band, The Doors.

Otis Wembley will be missed, as will his devotion to this abandoned and once-pround theatre.

HOMELESS RETURN

DARIAN - The Nelson Homeless Mission, in the Nelson Bayside district of Darian, reports that several of their missing regulars have begun to return. Several weeks ago the Mission announced that an unusual amount of regulars had gone missing. Police had dismissed this claim based upon the very nature of transients, however, the volunteers of the Mission insisted that this was unusual behavior.

Unfortunately, concern is still high due to the circumstances surrounding these individuals return. Most of the returning homeless claim to be unsure of where they’ve been; they appear to have gaps in their memory. Two returning homeless made claims of being taken aboard a space vessel crewed by a species of intelligent cats. While we’ve seen evidence of extraterrestrial life numerous times, these claims are proving difficult to validate.

If you have any excess foods or goods, the Mission graciously accepts any donations.

KILLER IN DARIAN

DARIAN - The infamous super villain, Killer Frost, was recently transferred to the downtown Darian Psion-Inc. research facility. Psion-Inc. hopes to study her condition and possibly determine how to strip her of her powers, thereby making her less of a danger to the public at large.

Superman and Firestorm captured killer Frost recently in Metropolis after a fierce battle against her ice creation powers.
Challengers Are Hoppin’ Mad

Crescent City – This week marked the return of Darian’s most infamous and, oddly enough, most beloved criminals - the Tortoise and the Hare. The Tortoise and the Hare battled Challengers members Alley Cat, the Jester, and Father Joseph to a literal stand still.

While making their getaway after robbing the First National Bank of Crescent City, the Tortoise and the Hare landed afoul of the visiting Challengers. After trading an initial round of volleys, the gentlemanly Tortoise used his signature power of slowing time around himself. This brought everything and everyone within a 30-foot radius of him to a halt. Meanwhile, the beautiful Hare’s supernatural running speed allowed her to move freely within the time-stopped zone. She scooped up her partner and together they escaped the temporal freeze area. The slow-time region remained in place for another five minutes while the criminals made their escape.

This marks the first time these criminals have been seen in our area for over a year. The Tortoise and the Hare moved to the Darian area about four years ago. Prior to that, they were known to operate in Central City, battling the second Flash on an infrequent basis. After the second Flash perished in the Great Crisis, the Tortoise and the Hare relocated to Darian apparently looking for adventure. While active, these lawbreakers battled such heroes as Tradewind, Southern Belle & Kid Dixie, Damascus Steele, and the Purple Talon. Does this robbery signal the regular return of Darian’s favorite delinquents?

Though committing crimes and breaking laws, these two remain very popular with the common citizen. Their history shows they only rob banks and companies bursting with profits, never private citizens.

In many cases, after a robbery the Tortoise and the Hare will donate a large portion of their ill-gotten gain to a local charity. Another factor adding to their popularity is their kind personalities. Neither of them has ever been known to be rude or abusive with their victims. In fact, the Tortoise will usually go to great lengths to demonstrate chivalrous behavior, from opening doors for ladies to helping them across the street. Meanwhile, the Hare regularly shares a wink or blows a Kiss to the boys, melting their hearts and creating quite a fan following.

Just over a year ago, Darian Police apprehended the Tortoise and the Hare during a robbery. Shortly after arrest, Charlie Peters freed the lawbreakers from imprisonment. Peters is the self-proclaimed President of the Hare Fan Club. Peters served a short probation sentence and the Tortoise and the Hare went into seclusion. Whether the Tortoise and the Hare are back for good will remain to be seen.
BEST OF DARIAN AWARDS 2002

It’s time again for The Best of Darian! Last week we distributed thousands of multiple-choice ballots to allow you, the citizens of Darian, a chance to vote on your favorite things about this fine city. With great honor, the Darian Daily now presents The Best of Darian!!!

Best Restaurant: The Golden Waterfall – International Flavor Cuisine, in the Halcyon district

Best Night Club: Omega Peril in the Nelson Bayside district

Best High School: Darian Heights High School, home of the Highlanders football team

Best Local Band: Pink Wetsuit, a punk-rock band playing frequently in the Valentine district

Best Coffee Shop: The Bedazzled Brew, tastefully located in Downtown Darian

Most Handsome Man: Benjamin Maxwell, President and CEO of DariaNet

Most Beautiful Woman: This year the winner of “Most Beautiful Woman” actually goes to one of the write-in candidates. More votes were received for this write-in candidate than any of the women listed on the multiple-choice ballot. The Darian Daily proudly proclaims Darian’s favorite delinquent “The Hare” as the most beautiful woman in Darian!

VIRTUALLY IMPENETRABLE

DARIAN - Virtual Living, the state-of-the-art technology company, has recently installed an upgrade to their headquarters security systems. This upgrade was precipitated by an attempted break-in a few weeks ago. The attempted invaders fled after failing to gain entry to the more secure areas of the building. The only evidence left behind by the trespassers was an makeshift arrow, a chitinous magic wand, impact craters in the shape of a ball and a “jack” (similar in shape to the child’s toy), and paw prints from multiple cats. Based upon these clues, the police have admitted they are stumped and currently have no leads.

News Briefs:

• The U.S. Olympic archery team has chosen to train in Darian in preparation for the next games. Coach Mick Klivian, a former Olympic silver medallist himself, is hoping to lead these youngsters to victory.

• Where is Mr. Improbable? Thirteen-year-old Billy McKenzie, Secretary for the Challengers Fan Club, would like to ask the citizens of Darian for any information on the whereabouts of Mr. Improbable. Billy is attempting to arrange for several appearances by the Challengers at local comic book stores in the area. If possible, Billy would like an opportunity to speak with Mr. Improbable about the chance of such a visit. If you have any information, please contact Billy McKenzie at 555-6871 before 9pm on weekdays or 10pm on weekends.

• Retraction: In the last issue of the Darian Daily, we erroneously stated the time frame surrounding the murder of Ariel Grey. The reporter was actually murdered just over a year ago, rather than a few months ago. Also, the convicted murderer, Kyle Jones, escaped custody four months ago.