Hey everybody! It's been a bit longer than intended, but we are BACK and ready to resume the process of the BIONICLE G1 Canon Contests! I hope you all had a good break and that your 2021 has been off to a positive start so far. The purpose of this topic is to outline our short-term plans for the next contest, and also be honest with you guys about some challenges we've come up against when trying to figure out how best to handle it. I'd like for you all to read this (probably way too big) post and give some feedback about the potential solutions and compromises I'm about to propose, the things you like, the things you don't, the things you'd prefer, etc. To put it simply, we have a bunch of ideas and don't know the best route to take, so we want to have a talk with you guys and let you bounce around some of this stuff yourself. Maybe through talking it out, we can figure out the best course of action going forward.

Before we get into the subject matter at hand, I ask that you all be respectful in your critique and discussion in this topic. Not only towards us, but to each other as well. I know there's a lot of people with vastly different priorities and personal interests in these contests, and there's a variety of strong opinions (both positive and negative) on how the last few have gone, but please refrain from being snide, antagonistic, or overly hostile in your discussion. Feel free to criticize us and debate others who don't agree with you all you want, but do so respectfully and in accordance with board guidelines. If the topic gets too heated or people can't conduct themselves properly, we'll unfortunately have to take administrative action. Work with us and work with *each other* to hash out all these problems ahead of time, and we should be in for a very rewarding set of contests!

Now, please permit me a brief bit to catch people up to speed who may have forgotten where we left off or are joining this process for the first time.

## Previously on…

To any BIONICLE fans checking this out for the first time, welcome! Our goal with these contests is to provide a framework to establish canon visual representations of notable BIONICLE characters from G1 that never received a set or comic illustration to show what they actually look like. To do this, we typically host a MoC contest to determine the overall design of the character, and then a follow-up artwork contest serves to find the best artistic representation of the winning MoC, coupled with a uniquely designed Kanohi mask. The winning entries are then shown to BIONICLE author Greg Farshtey for approval, and are then featured on the BioSector01 wiki as the canon representations of the characters in question. To date, we have held contests for Toa Helryx and Artakha, with many more in the pipeline.

The contests have produced some of the most spectacular MoCs and artwork that I have seen come out of this community. The sheer wealth of creativity that has been put on display is too vast for me to even try to summarize in this tiny paragraph, so just go check out the backlog of submissions if you don't believe me. I want to extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone that ever submitted an entry for Helryx and/or Artakha. No matter whether you ended up winning or not,

your creativity and passion is the fuel for the BIONICLE community engine that we're all a part of. The whole reason Eljay and I were interested in taking on the responsibility of running these was to give the community something constructive to work towards, and the turnout has vastly exceeded our expectations. That wouldn't be possible without all of you, so thank you.

That being said, they did not go perfectly. The Helryx contest was plagued with drama and a lot of early issues with the ruleset, and the Artakha contest, though MUCH better than Helryx, had a few significant hurdles of its own as well. By incorporating the feedback of hundreds upon hundreds of community members, we significantly improved the flow of the contests and how they were handled throughout 2020, but before jumping headfirst into another round of them, we want to touch base with you and all and spend a significant amount of time discussing where we're going and how to best address some substantial challenges. That being the case, let's jump right in.

## And now, your feature presentation…

Next up on the docket, we have the **Toa Hagah!** Specifically, Toa Gaaki, Toa Bomonga, Toa Pouks, and Toa Kualus, as Norik and Iruini already received a release back during 2005 as special edition canister sets.

https://brickshelf.com/gallery/BionicleLegends/Bionicle-Database/2005/Toa-Hagah/z-Group-pictures/imgp4502.jpg

This particular stage of the contest is unique to the previous phases for several important reasons. For starters, there are **four** characters without appearances that all belong to the same group. Prior and future contests will typically only feature one character at a time, which makes for simpler submission and voting periods. However, because the Hagah are all part of the same unit, we feel it would be redundant to hold 4 different contests for them spread out over a period of time. As such, we'll be dealing with them as a group.

Second, and perhaps most challenging, is the fact that these characters are canonically **Metru builds.** To elaborate on this, Greg Farshtey has stated officially that the Hagah look like their counterparts, Norik and Iruini; i.e., they share the same basic design template and proportions, henceforth to be referred to as a "Metru build."  As such, we plan to adhere to this line of thinking for these contests, and our rules will be built around that philosophy.

Many people have expressed a desire to not enforce a Metru build requirement for the Hagah, with the logic being that allowing for design freedom will lead to better MoCs and more restrictions will lead to worse MoCs. Unfortunately, while I'm never a super big fan of stifling creativity, Greg's word on the matter is pretty clear. At the end of the day, while I love seeing the outpouring of fantastic creations people make and want to do everything to support creative expression where possible (look at how hard we fought for 3D printed masks, for instance)... at

the end of the day, these are canon contests first, and MoC/art contests second. If we create a rule system that produces something that flagrantly disregards canon, we'd be defeating the whole point of this system and just wasting your time and ours. We hope that logic is sufficient enough for most people, and I'm sorry if anybody feels like the restrictions inhibit creativity or anything like that. Personally, I think about it much less as a hard set of rules to restrict creative expression and more as the "theme" for this contest. The theme is "Metru builds," and I've seen plenty of awesome and unique things done using the Metru build template, so I'm confident that you guys will be able to make some fantastic things.

Another set in stone rule is that **the polls will be divided up by character**. In other words, you're free to enter all four Hagah or just a singular one, but there must be separate entry pictures for each one because the polls will be broken up specifically by each Hagah, i.e. "Bomonga preliminaries, Kualus semifinals, etc."

# At a crossroads…

With all that being said… We'd love some feedback on the Hagah contest and the best path forward for them. Over the course of the last few months debating internally and reading already existing community feedback, we realize that we're moving quickly towards three distinct scenarios that, for a lot of people, will be considered "bad options." In other words, there are multiple paths forward, but each one of them has some kind of negative problem that will foul things up, and in trying to solve that problem, another one is created, etc. So what I'm going to do next is present these three paths to you, outline the reasoning for each one, and then let you guys give your thoughts.

# Option 1: The Standard Path

We keep everything the exact same. MoC contest first, art contest second to determine masks, etc. Exact same thing we've been doing, with the caveat of the Metru build requirement. The problem with this path, as mentioned before, is that many people have expressed they're not a fan of the Metru build limitation because they feel it stifles creativity. This is made worse by the fact that what *exactly* a Metru build **IS** is up for debate in the community, and many people over the last several months have weighed in with completely different takes.

- Some suggest that the Metru build simply has to maintain equal proportion with Norik and Iruini so they don't look out of place next to them, but could theoretically be built out of any number of different pieces so long as it doesn't affect the silhouette

- Some people think mandating the upper Metru torso is enough to qualify it

- Some people (us included) think that "Metru build" means using both the upper and lower Metru torso piece combined together to create a torso build just like Norik or Iruini. The limbs could theoretically be whatever, but that torso design should pretty much be a constant.

- In addition to all of that, because these characters are part of an already established team with an already established aesthetic, there should probably be a rule of sorts mandating that their appearance can't deviate too far in aesthetic from Iruini and Norik (no 100% CCBS limbs or overly greebly, ornate armor for instance that looks out of place with G1)

The issue with the Metru build stipulation is that it's ambiguous. Different people have different interpretations of what it means, and people already have tried to find loopholes around it that would theoretically follow the "letter of the law" while violating the spirit of it. To catch all these different scenarios, we would have to impose pretty detailed requirements of what would and would not qualify as a Metru build. While I'm fine with this because of the aforementioned "themed build" perspective, I acknowledge many won't be because they feel like they'll be limited by these guidelines. I'd love some feedback on this, because while I acknowledge that while the standard path might be the easiest, for many, it won't be the best, and a lot of MoCists might potentially dislike this path.

## Option 2: Artwork Only

That's right, I'm jumping right from one scenario that **might** make MoCists unhappy to one that **definitely** would, but alas… it is what it is. Trust me, I don't really want this option AT ALL because one of the biggest reasons I even wanted to do this in the first place was to include as many people from the community as possible in the process. Even if the MoC just serves as a concept springboard for the artwork, the MoC contest provides talented builders from all across the community an avenue to showcase their talent and building skill. I don't want to take that away, even for just one contest.

...but. While trying to put myself in the shoes of you guys and imagine the feedback, I keep coming back to the question of "If you're going to restrict MoCs so much, why even bother?" This isn't a viewpoint I agree with, mind you, but I get why some people would feel this way. Would MoCists really prefer competing with such a restrictive ruleset? Would it not be simpler, since these characters share a relative "template build" and are part of the same team, to skip the MoCing step entirely (**ONLY** for these characters) and focus on giving them style and personality in artwork form? It would mean MoCists would take a backseat for this contest, but it would also make it go faster, remove some complexity, stop some potential disagreements, and generally make for a streamlined situation.

That being said, is eliminating the MoCing portion a good solution? I don't personally think so. I really want to hear your thoughts on this one, but personally, I've seen enough really good and

creative builds using a Metru template to give me faith that there's some cool and unique spins that we can see. That being said, this isn't my preferred option, but I'm willing to consider it if MoCists would really be unhappy with a Metru build theme and the G1 aesthetic restrictions.

## Option 3: The Free-for-All

So, we've established the Hagah are a special case. There's a lot of pre-established baggage, a lot of canon requirements to get them to look good as a cohesive unit, and a lot of necessary restrictions to ensure the look doesn't deviate too much from G1. Like I said earlier, these guys are waaaay more about a "canon contest" than a MoC or art contest. Finding the best representation of them as characters is what's important, not necessarily the best designed MoC or well drawn artwork. So what if we combined them?

A knock-down, drag-out, free-for-all. Art vs. MoC, MoC vs. art, In lieu of trying to find the best creation in the respective categories, which gives the idea to people that the best designed MoC HAS to win vs. the one that fits the character the most, we would instead have MoCs and art compete against each other. The goal? To find the best creation that could best represent the character out of ALL possible mediums.

The problem with this, obviously, is the question: how are voters supposed to judge between a MoC or an art piece? They're not immediately comparable, and I imagine a lot of MoCists might feel bad about being matched up against art pieces of high quality. I've seen many MoCs that could compete with artwork, so I don't personally think it would be too much of an issue, especially if everything is constrained to the Metru build aesthetic.

Another potential issue with this path is that because of the prior agreements with BS01, if a MoC won the free-for-all, it would still need a painting after the fact, which would require an additional contest to pick the illustration. As such, many might feel this option is redundant as it would ultimately result in the same outcome, but to us, the benefits stem from a change in perspective.

Shifting the focus to this free-for-all setup would enable us to effectively drive home the point that this is a CANON contest, not a MoC or art-based contest. The two mediums being judged against each other to determine the best **overall representation** seems like a more honest vision of what our goals actually are for this particular contest, and might make for a better overall result, with people prioritizing canon accuracy and preference over any given MoC or artwork style. Too often, we feel like people don't put enough emphasis on "canon" and put too much on "contest." However, we acknowledge that the aforementioned redundancy with needing a secondary art contest if a MoC wins creates another problem, which could be solved with…

## Option 3.5: Group Art Contest

So the main problem that stems from the free-for-all is the fact that because of BS01's stipulations on allowing 3D printed parts on the character pages as a featured image, we couldn't guarantee that a MoC would be featured if it won its character poll. To avoid the redundancy of needing a secondary art contest per character if a MoC wins, we propose the following:

Regardless of whether an art piece or a MoC wins its character bracket in the free-for-all, once that concludes, an art contest would begin to draw all four Hagah in a group shot, based off their winning designs. This would sidestep the issue while also allowing for each Hagah to have its final canon depiction be represented in the same art style, making for way better group cohesion, while the free-for-all period would serve to decide their overall design.

**Personally, this is the option *I* am leaning towards the most right now. A MoC vs. art free for all to decide the design of the character, with a group art contest to represent them all in the same style for BS01's official pages.**

## In Closing…

We'd like some feedback on these options, as well as the contests in general, where you think they could be improved, addressing rules from prior contests, etc. This is basically gonna be just one giant feedback session that will last an indeterminate amount of time. There isn't going to be a deadline on this poll because I can't promise exactly when it ends; the discussion will stop when all the concerns have been addressed, more or less. We want these to run as smoothly as possible and to address any issues that may potentially arise BEFORE they happen, rather than during the contest itself. That's the goal, anyway!

I know there's a bunch of people in the community who don't use our boards (obviously), but for the sake of keeping everything consolidated, this topic will be the only place we're really going to engage in discussion. If we're addressing things or replying to questions on a billion different discord servers, reddit threads, or other topics like we've done in the past, it will get too hard to follow. By keeping everything in this topic, it'll serve as the one-stop-shop for Hagah-related questions and brainstorming. As such, if you know anybody who's particularly passionate or outspoken about these and wants to weigh in, please direct them to this topic!

Thanks everybody for reading this gargantuan post, and keep on being awesome.

-Mesonak