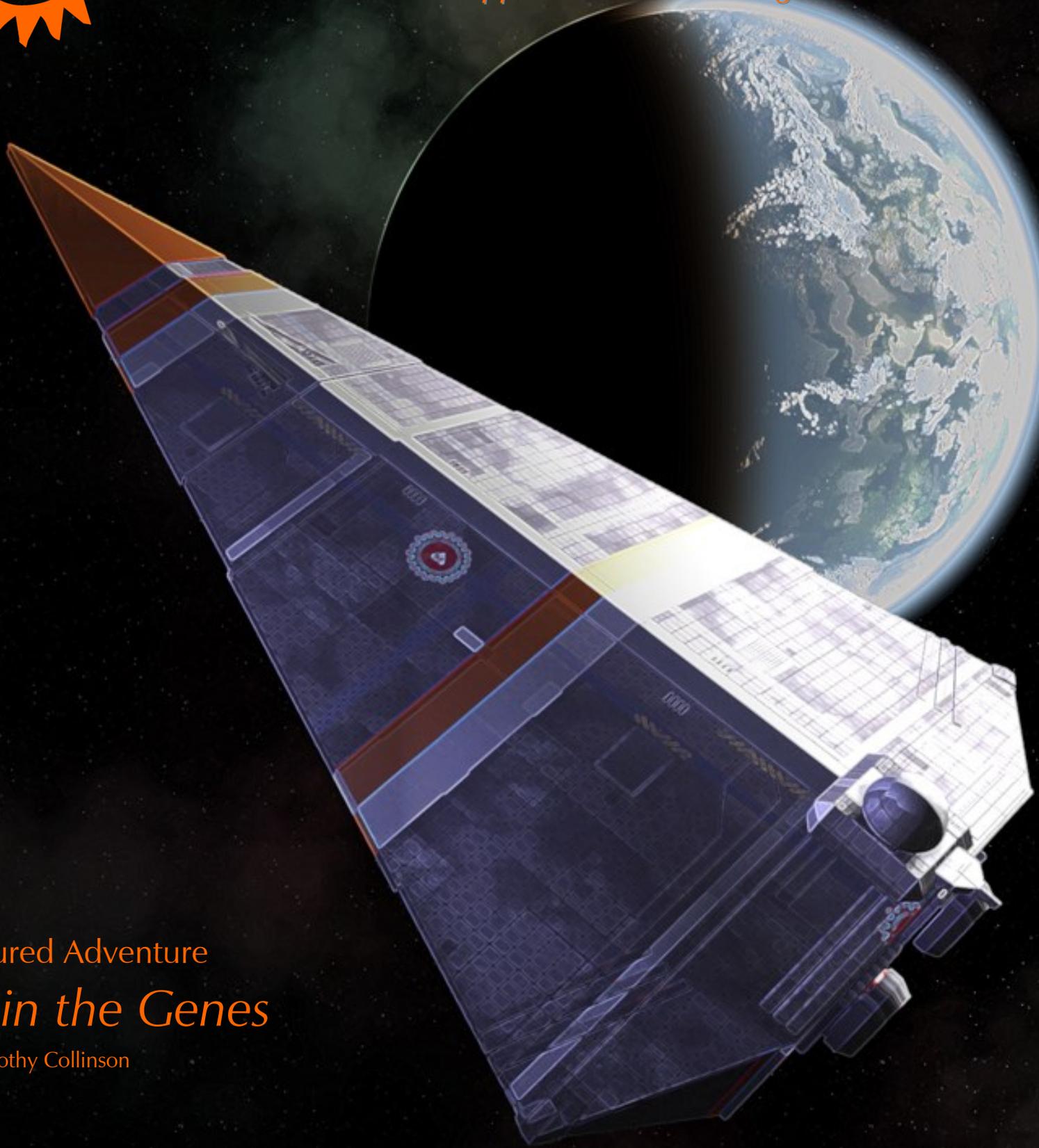




FREELANCE TRAVELLER

The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource



Featured Adventure
All in the Genes

by Timothy Collinson

Issue 047
November 2013

A Note About Production

Freelance Traveller is prepared using Microsoft Office Publisher 2010 running on a Windows 7 Ultimate x64 system. The program is reasonably easy to use, and produces good results with moderate effort; it also supports advanced typographic features such as typographic quotes and apostrophes, small caps, ligatures, swashes, and stylistic alternatives (if the advanced features are implemented in the font). Generation of the PDF files is built in to this version of Microsoft Office; no additional products are needed.

The title and heading typeface is ZapfHumanist BT, a Bitstream adaptation of Hermann Zapf's digital redesign of his 'hot lead' typeface Optima, chosen as a 'tie-back' to the title typeface of the original edition of *Traveller*. The black-and-orange of the section headings is also a tie-back to *Traveller's* origins, though we felt that the 'correct' red was too dark. The heading sizes vary from 12 to 16 points. Body text is set in Palatino Linotype, also designed by Hermann Zapf, and is set at 11 points for most body text, giving approximately the same text spacing as Times New Roman at 12 point (which was the original *Freelance Traveller* body text), but a lighter 'color'. Palatino Linotype also 'balances' better as a body text typeface to Optima as a titling typeface.

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Contents

Freelance Traveller #047: November 2013

Editor

Jeff Zeitlin

Contributors

Jeff Zeitlin, "kafka", Timothy Collinson, Michael Brown, Derek Wildstar, Andrea Vallance, Sam Swindell

Artwork

Cover: .Mark Lucas

From the Editor: Jeff Zeitlin

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From the Editor

Jeff Zeitlin 1

Critics' Corner

Netherell reviewed by "kafka" 2

Cirque reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin 12

Patron Encounters reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin 14

21 Starport Places reviewed by "kafka" 26

Kurishdam

Lecture Hall and Library: Timekeeping in the Third Imperium by Derek Wildstar 4

Lecture Hall and Library: Common Languages of the Regency by Jeff Zeitlin 20

Active Measures

All in the Genes by Timothy Collinson 6

Confessions of a Newbie Referee: A Column by Timothy Collinson

#5: Nervous Excitement 11

Doing It My Way

Character Generation Rules: Investigator: A Basic Career for CT by Michael Brown 13

Character Generation Rules: Surgisilena by Michael Brown 22

Raconteurs' Rest

Funny Fish: Choices by Andrea Vallance 14

Up Close and Personal

Nooni Hendricksonne by Sam Swindell 27

From the Editor



Last month, I started to describe how the changes of New Wave SF opened the field to the kind of stories that play to the strengths of *Traveller* and other RPGs.

The key change was that the focus on "ordinary people" made it easier for the reader to get emotionally involved with the character—to empathize with the character, and to place himself/herself in the character's position, and understand the reactions, and react with the character. That, in turn, led to the fan-fiction phenomenon of the "Mary-Sue", usually used derisively, but it has come to represent any 'self-insertion' by the author.

The role-playing character is, in a sense, the ultimate "Mary-Sue". Regardless of where you feel your campaign stands on the GNS spectrum (and that's a whole 'nother topic for future blathers), a campaign or a game session *is* a narrative, where the

character's actions and reactions are, ultimately, yours, and the characters are generally 'a cut above' the average Joe of the universe. Just like the "Mary-Sue"—but it's not a bad thing in role-playing.

But *Traveller's* strengths? Again, without getting into GNS discussions, *Traveller*, more than most of its contemporaries, tended to promote situations which, despite any SF-isms, were "plausibly realistic", and in which "real people" would react to "real situations" and experience "real consequences" which just might not be what you wanted. It meant that player-characters were less likely to just go in, guns blazing, with only the most superficial of objectives; instead, you'd plan, or try to find alternatives, and in general *act* like real people in real situations. You'd also be less compelled to play archetypical characters, and you'd have the leeway to play a character with a prior career more to your tastes and inclinations. (*more next month*)





Netherell

reviewed by "kafka"

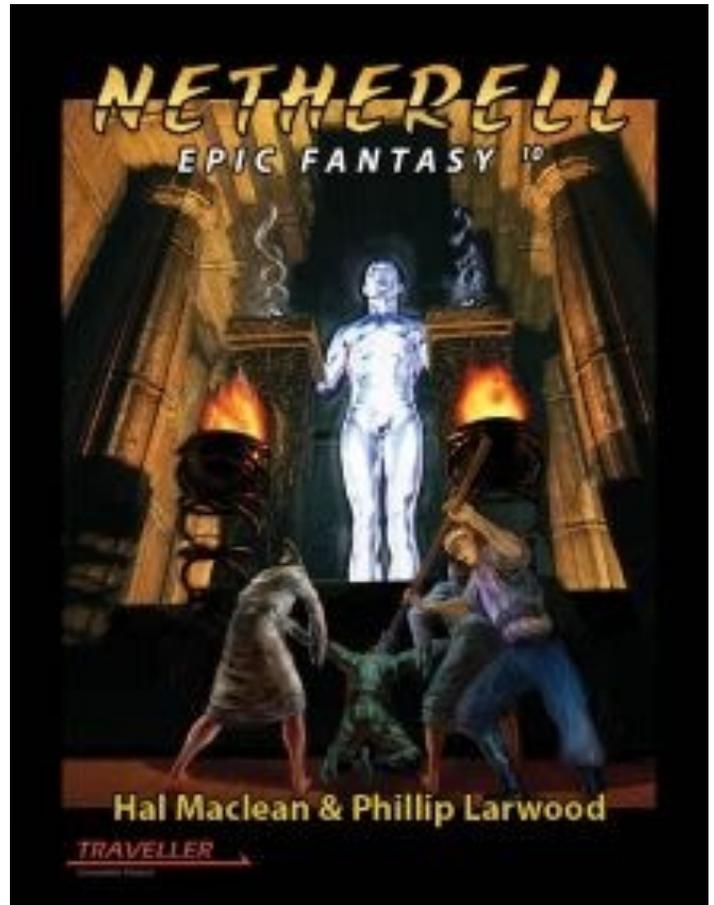
Netherell. Hal Maclean and Phillip Larwood
Terra/Sol Games <http://www.terrasolgames.com>
150pp., PDF
US\$14.99/UK£16.99

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Every once and a while there comes a product that surprises you and *Netherell* is one such product. Essentially, it is science fantasy supplement for *Traveller*. *Traveller* has long played with notions of Clarke's law (any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic") and in this case the science even confounds the Galactic civilization that surrounds this world of magic.

Of course, psionics lies at the root of the explanation, just not the run-of-the-mill psionics found in most *Traveller* games—this is psionics taken to a much higher magnitude, for the inhabitants of this world are pawns in a much larger power structure/struggle, which is what makes this supplement so interesting. For it does allow for two distinct levels of play: a traditional fantasy game, albeit powered by *Traveller* rules, or nefarious galactic factions hell-bent on discovering the secrets of "magic" in the struggle for galactic supremacy. The world itself is richly detailed and while it does contain a standard set of fantasy tropes they are nicely woven together in a tapestry that you could hardly call generic.

The narrative for galactics (those people from the stars) reads very much like those *Star Trek* episodes where the crew encounters a "primitive" world only to be overwhelmed by some sort antediluvian artifact that the natives have worshiped/pacified. The fact the world lies in the hands of the Terra/Sol bad-dies (the APR) makes it all the more interesting, lots of room for classic space opera in the vein of *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers* to take place on this world. Naturally, here the artifact is "magic". At the same time as one can play Sword, Spaceship and Sorcery games – the flora and fauna of this world also makes



an interesting destination for many galactics. There is also whole genre of literature of spacemen landing on planet of "magic" to happily exploit/plagiarize for your adventures. And, then there is the other size, the *Expedition to Barrier Peaks* or *Blackmoor*, the interaction of essentially fantasy characters interacting with a high tech world. Both work equally well and are seamless and smoothly handled in *Netherell*.

Now onto the meat and potatoes of the product itself...it largely parallels and makes good use of the main Mongoose rulebook (so to answer your question – yes, you do need the Mongoose rules) for the essence of the chargen. It makes significant alternations; rather than home world, you have a home nation bequeathing advantages and disadvantages. There is a little aside to Ogres (not who you think they are). Then following *Traveller* there is a set of Careers which range from Aristocrat to Scum; first time readers will be advised that the Magical Careers are handled in the section on Magic. Then there is a brief discussion on Skills and how the native-

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born or galactic gone native would have their skills modified, including a useful trick that gives you the penalties for Netherell natives using high tech.

Naturally, you need to be equipped and if the *Traveller* rules for Sword cannot really distinguish between a long sword and two-handed sword, there is a nice equipment list. Also the rules on how to shoot a crossbow and hit the rope... So this expanded equipment section also has the effects of galactic weapons on Netherell armour. Along with gear and "vehicles" appropriate for the TL and fantastical nature of the milieu.

The next chapter deals with one of the great mysteries of Netherell – Magic – from the player's perspective. Which as stated earlier deals with the career path of magician and vessel (something akin to system found in *In Flames* which has its origins in Voudoun or so I have been told), followed next with a discussion of the different Houses. Before concluding with a discussion on Knacks – a collection of magical abilities. With the next section delving into how Magical Items work, I found this section the most amusing and indeed well thought through.

Then we move to Book 2 – the Referee's section which answers most of the question left standing from the player's section – so Referees beware... unless TSG plans to release these as two separate digest books... Essentially, here we have a gazetteer of the known and world that lies beyond. As noted each of the nations are immensely bona fide fantasy tropes albeit with a nice twist. Added in the Referee's section are the factions that make up Netherell, for those who want to metagame and concluding with perils of Netherell (including a mini Monster Manual). As I don't want to give away too many Referee secrets, needless to say, this section is juicy with detail and intrigue with the element of danger and adventure in every section. Even if one takes away the *Traveller* overlay, this world would make an excellent fantasy world (speaking as a veteran of

AD&D's (1e) *Greyhawk*) and could easily substitute should I want to go the route of FRPGs again.

What was nice when there are expectations or just what you think, this supplement turns it around and gives you something new to think about. For instance, too many *Traveller* games have tried to map out the physiology of the Dragon – but what if these only existed inside people's heads and were products of deep rooted pathologies – not saying that is what Dragons are in Netherell – but certainly puts a twist on things traditionally not covered in *Traveller*.

All throughout an appreciation of sandbox play is conveyed. In no way did I feel this hemmed in my horizons for *Traveller*, it was all about broadening them. This product opened up Mongoose *Traveller* to magic much in the same way that *Thieves World* (Chaosium) opened up Classic *Traveller*. And *Mega-Traveller* had that nice *Challenge* article one Halloween or something (or was it TNE?)...anyhow magic in *Traveller* must follow Clarke's Law – and Terra/Sol Games has done an excellent job in presenting it in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

Littered throughout is truly excellent artwork that is starting to be the hallmark of Terra/Sol Games, as whoever illustrated this work has done a truly magnificent and fabulous job. The writing is clear and to the point and whomever made the decision to split the book into two – Players & Referees section was brilliantly thinking ahead when the most common way of getting this book will be PDF, allowing a Referee to doll out multiple Player's Handbooks unless TSG plans to split them and add more content on DTRPG for a fraction of the original cost. Editing and style errors were few and far between, great care was put into thinking of the presentation of this volume. Some things were hard to read on the printout but clear on the screen. So, if you can have a device that reads PDFs, you should have no problems but I cannot wait until this appears in dead tree/hard copy.

So in conclusion, I wholeheartedly recommend this product for anyone who needs to inject some

(Continued on page 4)

Science Fantasy into their *Traveller* game. It is not recommended for those who wish to inject realistic (i.e. historical sword & scandal) games in the Ancient or Medieval world – this is all about injecting Fantasy into *Traveller*. I used to believe that Fantasy and Science Fiction shared a common lineage in the folly days of my youth. Then I grew up believing that one was oil and the other water – they can be mixed but will by laws of chemistry separate. Now, in my old age, I find myself once again dreaming of dragons and spaceships without going the route of D&D in Space – which this product is not. It is rather about *Traveller* in a fantasy setting. And, if that is your cup of tea (not sure, if it is mine), then you can do no better than to pick up this book. However, if

you are of the Hard SF bent, then you will still find things in this book to appreciate and I think that is why I liked it so much, it treats both genres with respect and does not side too far in either direction. Sure, you are going to object that psionics is not Hard SF, but, many things that are Hard SF are only Hard for the moment that they have been written in...many things viewed as Hard become soft over time. Furthermore, the Terra/Sol milieu is a Space Opera universe... if you have mixed feelings about Space Opera then this product is not likely to persuade you anyhow... but if you are like many of us who joined this hobby because of that big elephant in the room, well, this helps you play with that elephant whilst still playing *Traveller* à la Terra/Sol. ☼



Timekeeping in the Third Imperium

by Derek Wildstar

When we speak of time and timekeeping in the *Traveller* universe of the Third Imperium, we are really speaking about three different things, because there are three different ways that time can be measured:

1. Measuring specific amounts of absolute time,
2. Synchronizing events that happen on multiple worlds, and
3. Synchronizing events with a specific planet's rotation and orbit.

We'll consider each of these in turn, and how they are handled in the *Traveller* context by the Third Imperium.

Measuring Elapsed Time

Many scientific and engineering processes require precisely measuring elapsed time, and communicating those measurements accurately to any reader, regardless of what world that they are on. For example, cupcakes take 20 minutes to bake, whether on a ship in deep space or on any planet with a standard atmosphere, regardless of the planet's rotation or orbit. Since many life-critical

processes depend on these measurements, this is a safety issue: regardless of who is speaking or who is listening and on whatever world they are on, "20 minutes" or "3.2953 seconds" must mean exactly the same thing, with no conversion required.

So, the Imperium defines the base unit of time as a "second" with an easily-repeatable physical experiment that defines its duration. For example, it might match the current Earth definition of "9,192,631,770 periods of the radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of the caesium-133 atom". This sort of definition is easily repeatable on nearly any TL-6+ world and yields consistent and accurate results. From this, the Imperium can then define minutes (60 seconds), hours (60 minutes), days (24 hours), weeks (7 days) and years (52 weeks plus 1 Holiday day) as larger units of time.

Time on Multiple Worlds

Any interstellar government requires a way to communicate specific times without referencing any particular world. For example, an admiral may need to write orders to direct ships that might be in multiple star systems to rendezvous at a particular time. There needs to be a consistent way to refer to time in

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

that order - and one that isn't open to different interpretations based on what star system the author or recipient happens to occupy.

With the framework of time units from seconds to years already established, all the Third Imperium really needs to do is set a starting point, and count time from there. Year Zero is the starting point, and the Imperial Office of Calendar Compliance is responsible for enforcing both the definitions and the starting point across all of Imperial space. This is Imperial Standard Time; all Imperial ships and facilities, and most civilian starships and deep-space facilities use it exclusively.

There is even a standard nomenclature for dates and times: dates are typically written as a three digit day number and a four digit year number, separated by a dash. IMTU, either the 039-1107 or 1107-039 format is acceptable; for some applications the latter is preferable, since it can easily be sorted into date order and can be prefixed with a negative for events that predate the Third Imperium. Time is written as colon-separated hour and minute, with optional seconds and decimal seconds (e.g., 00:16 or 00:16:32.40).

Local Timekeeping

The need for local timekeeping varies considerably with the conditions on each world. Worlds like Aramis or Glisten, where all of the inhabitants live in man-made habitat areas, will probably just keep Imperial Standard Time. However, worlds where the inhabitants spend a lot of time in natural environments, and particularly worlds where the planet's rotation is close enough to the standard day for humans to synchronize with its cycle, will need some way of keeping local time.

Most worlds use a system based on the planet's rotation and orbit to keep track of local time. Terms like "hour", "day", and "year" aren't used, to prevent confusion with Imperial Standard Time, so terms like "rotation", "sol", or "bright" are in common use for the local day, while "orbit", "trop", "anno", or "cycle" are often used for the local year.

Additionally, local terms in local languages may be used, such as *drandir* on Vland.

For most ordinary purposes, time resolution (that is, how finely time intervals are divided) on the order of a minute are adequate, so it's not uncommon for local timekeeping to simply divide the local rotation period into 1,000 parts (yielding intervals generally in the one-to-two-standard-minute range), and count them from the local customary starting point. This is especially common where Vilani culture is strong, but it is considered unremarkable essentially anywhere. Regardless of what the intervals are called, times using this scheme are conventionally written as "@" followed by the number of intervals since the start of the rotation (e.g., @500 is half of a rotation, @750 is three-quarters, and so on). Time zones, where used, can be indicated by a positive or negative offset following the time. Progress through the orbit is measured in terms of local rotation, and the conventional notation described above can be extended to include the number of rotations since the beginning of the current orbital cycle. So, for example, slightly before the halfway point during the 243rd rotation of the orbit might be @243.479.

Longer periods of time can be represented by the number of orbits from a defined reference such as a key historic event (e.g. 1972@243.479). Although orbits may not be an integral number of rotations, local dating typically treats them as such, and adds intercalary rotations at intervals to resynchronize.

Because of this uniformity of timekeeping structure, it is easy to manufacture timepieces that can be customized for a particular world by inputting the orbital period, planetary rotation, and reference point in Imperial Standard units, and such timepieces are routinely available on worlds of TL7+. Many are dual-display, and show both the current Imperial Standard Time and local time. Lower costs may be achieved by omitting the ability to reprogram; many non-travellers take this option. At the other end of the spectrum, wealthy travellers may have watches that can automatically reset and reprogram from starport data broadcasts. 🌟



All In The Genes

by Timothy Collinson

This adventure is designed for a group of 4-6 PCs travelling between worlds in their own ship. It could take place on any world with a minimum of tech level 8, population 7 and law level 6, but ideally would be nearer: tech level A, population A and law level A or more. The adventure uses the *Traveller's Core Rules (T5)* but could be easily adapted to other rule sets. It is laid out in the EPIC style of *T5* p.640.

Synopsis: On a world with the technological ability and the political will to genetically profile the entire population, the PCs encounter various aspects of the society and meet a young couple desperate to save their newborn from the genepolice.

ACT 1

1. Arrival

The PCs arrive in a system they've not visited before and go through the usual system control sequences, customs declarations and possible searches, but more unusually are also required to submit genetic identification. This is a requirement to clear customs and to be able to land on the world. Customs officers will board along with at least two officials in the dark green uniforms of the respected but also feared genepolice to ID all crew and passengers if this information isn't already available to transmit. They may board in any case if the PCs show any hesitance over the issue. Library data on the world should have forewarned them, however, and such data also includes the snippet that whilst on world, all registered sophonts are entitled to a daily free meal in any of the many bustling cafeterias that can be found throughout the cities of the world and major towns. The customs official will also make a point of mentioning this as a benefit of visiting her world and will recommend a particular 'teria as being good quality and not far from the main starport. (It is good quality, but is also run by her sister.) This scene can take place as the PCs' ship approaches the world, or after landing, depending

on the starport classification and operation as well as the Referee's conception of the planet (see *T5* p.310).

Library Data

Cafeteria: A large part of the social environment of the world, are its many and varied large cafeterias (or 'terias) which serve cheap and satisfying food at all times of the day. Virtually none of the population of cities or larger towns eat at home or in restaurants, but will make use of these public amenities near either home or workplace. They are clean, friendly and used as meeting places and social areas as well as eating establishments. Food and drink choices are usually standardized but there is a wide selection. Successive governments have also maintained the tradition of a state funded 'one free meal a day' which is managed logistically by allowing one's genetic ID to be taken in return for the meal. Note that the term 'café' or 'caff' is never used as it means an unlicensed (and therefore illegal) establishment where drink and drugs are available.

Genepolice: An arm of law enforcement who monitor and regulate genetic identity, statutes and, where appropriate, terminations. Almost always highly trained medical personnel.

2. Landing

The PCs will be given standard berthing and landing information and be free to conduct trade and tourism as they see fit. Typically they'll be at a large modern starport with all the usual facilities, including a couple of examples of the cafeterias that they will soon find out are quite a social feature of the world. They can begin to check out the cargo markets or the local sights as they see fit. Merchants and brokers may well choose to do business over a meal or beverages in a cafeteria. If they choose to take advantage of their free meals in one of the cafeterias, then eventually the PCs will overhear a conversation at a nearby table. If they do not frequent the 'terias, they'll overhear the conversation while in another public space. (See Act 2, scene 1, below.)

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

3. Skefflig's Syndrome

At some point on day two or three after landing, the Port Authority—more specifically a Port Authority medical officer—will get in touch with the PCs' ship and ask to speak to one of the characters. The Referee can select the PC randomly or according to the needs/interests of any on-going campaign. The manner of the officer, and the PCs may well note that it is an officer and not a lowly medic or orderly, will hint that the matter is serious. Indeed, they may be requesting a face-to-face meeting in private rather than over the comms. There will be something of a rambling preamble which the officer, Jek Marnadi, will handle professionally but clearly finding making eye contact difficult. He'll explain that the standard tests they run on incoming geneIDs has revealed something rather unfortunate. The PC has a 30% chance of developing Skefflig's Syndrome within the next five years. "I'm afraid that even with our best genetic treatment this is one of the few things which is still incurable. I'm sorry." He'll go on to explain that its symptoms are a numbness of feeling and a dimming of sight which will eventually lead to blindness. The half dozen or so people on the world who suffer from it, have had to have cybernetic implants or organic replacements eventually, but even then the numbness remains. Depending on the tech level of the world, they may have had to go offworld for this treatment.

Referee's Note: What Marnadi will not know is that another effect of the syndrome is that psionic potential is increased. Instead of a roll of 2D+3-Life Stage (*T5* p.528), allow a roll of simply 2D+3 if Psi has not already been generated, otherwise use Psi+5. If the Referee wishes, have the SPA medical record note of Skefflig's Syndrome trigger a secret notification to a local psionics institute. The Institute knows about the effect and is covertly looking out for it. Of course, in a one off game, rather than on-going campaign, this Syndrome has no direct bearing on the

adventure at hand, but the Referee should encourage the PC to react appropriately and of course can use the scene to further emphasise the importance to this world of genetic information.

ACT 2

1. The Couple

During the course of their activities, while in a public gathering place (possibly a 'teria), the PCs will slowly become aware of an animated conversation going on at a table nearby. One of those under-the-breath arguments married couples are so good at in public. The area will be a large space and although fairly busy, there won't happen to be anyone else close by.

If the PCs choose to listen in at this point and succeed at the following task:

To Overhear Couple

Easy (1D) <= 4

they will get some additional background information of names and a ship—an independent Free Trader *Chancer's Freedom*—currently in port. After a moment or two however, the debate between the man and the woman—both in their late 20s—will begin to become audible and appear to become even more heated. No roll is required to hear what's said. The gist of it will be along the lines of the woman expressing concerned that "they don't seem to be coming" but "that we've got to do something" and "we can't just give up", the man that "we've waited long enough for them", "we're going to have to try and sort something out later". The woman in particular seems very agitated, the man equally so but trying to rein it in. In the middle of this, they may glance at the PCs as though they're searching their faces for some recognition but when they don't see what they're looking for, go back to their discussion. If it becomes obvious the PCs are watching and they realize their voices are carrying, they'll both redden, reduce the volume levels and soon after depart. Should the PCs ask if they can help in any way before this happens, the couple will look very wary and uncertain and after a hasty, whispered conver-

Active Measures

(Continued from page 7)

sation that again looks like one wants to leave and the other wants to accept the offer, will talk to the PCs along the lines of the next scene which will become redundant as a separate incident.

T5-001 **Alfed Orexi**

2 terms, Citizen

male, born 1078

UPP: A56A97 Genetic UPP: 5326XX

Skills: Vacc Suit-5, Bureaucrat-2, Streetwise-2, Animals-1, Broker-1, Flyer-1, Liaison-1, Trade (Mechanic)-1

Equipment: Cr30,000

Alfed Orexi is—or at least was, until sudden redundancy at the end of last year, some two months back—a Vacc Suit maintenance man for an orbital construction company. He's a big, but quiet man, who considers matters carefully before speaking. He's devoted to his wife Ardy and delighted at the birth of their first daughter just three months ago. However, the strain of his current situation is beginning to tell and a bubbling frustration is not far from the surface.

T5-001 **Ortana R. D. Orexi**

2 terms, Citizen

female, born 1079

UPP: A55A56 Genetic UPP: 5215XX

Skills: Polymers-4, Admin-3, Biologics-1, Advocate-1, Animals-1, Bureaucrat-1, Chemistry-1, Computer-1, Flyer-1, JoT-1, Navigation-1

Equipment: Cr20,000

Ortana Orexi, sometimes known as "Ardy", was an adhesives specialist in a research company, until she and Alfed decided to start a family. She's bright and efficient although she can be over concerned about things in her life being "just so". She will do absolutely anything to protect her daughter and trusts Alfed to back her up.

Referee's Note: To keep the location as generic as possible, neither of the above characters has been

given a homeworld. Once one is selected, appropriate skills may be added as per T5 p.81 if desired.

2. Delivery

At some point soon after, the Orexis will seek out the PCs at their berth gate, or catch up with them in the starport concourse having followed them from the gate. They'll approach and check that they're the crew of the right ship. They may even look puzzled for a moment at the characters' faces as though they think they recognize them. (If the cafeteria incident was very recent, they may actually remember them.) Presumably they've been looking the PCs up and know they have a ship and are independent. They'll explain that they are looking to ship some cargo over to a hamlet a couple of thousand kilometres from the starport but need to load and leave as quickly as possible. They'll go on to explain that they've been asked by an aunt to get some gear out to her homestead, as well as some other cargo for the hamlet, and they want to accompany it to get to their sick child. The cargo will consist of some chelates and instruments for the aunt who has a bio lab and is working on android digestive system research, some prefab construction materials the hamlet requires, and a large (4m) statue of an early settler that's been commissioned for their hamlet's central meeting point. The commissioned artist also wants to travel with his 'installation' as he'll insist on calling it because he wants to ensure that it's positioned appropriately and erected securely.

All this is above board and will be straightforward should the PCs agree to make the shipment. The Orexis may appear to be somewhat anxious, but this can be put down to their desire to get to their sick daughter. They're offering Cr8,000 of the hamlet's money for the delivery, but can be bargained up to Cr10,000 which is all they've been given.

3. Desperate Duo

The trip out to the hamlet should be easy money. Flight plans and manifests will have to be lodged with the Port Authority, the artist will be as painful

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

a passenger as the Referee cares to make him, and the only problem may be getting the statue loaded into the cargo hold. It's an awkward size and shape and doesn't fit in a standard shipping crate. The Orexis will spend what time they can being friendly with the crew to size them up and determine whether to tell them what's really on their mind.

What the couple have not explained is the nature of their daughter's sickness. She's been born with a genetic deficiency that should have been picked up in pre-natal tests when she would have been automatically aborted. However, Alfred's brother happened to be the medic who ran the tests, saw the problem and was persuaded by the Orexis to falsify the records. He was persuaded that the Orexis would leave the planet before the child was born. Various circumstances have prevented that happening, however, and the infant is now due a standard check-up that will reveal the issue. The genepolice, being what they are, will schedule the girl for termination which the law requires in the first year after birth and the parents (and probably Alfred's brother, too) will face gaol terms. In an effort to delay matters while they can arrange for off-world transport, the Orexis have hidden the child with Ortana's aunt.

The couple had already arranged for a crew to take them and daughter off planet, but the crew of the *Chancer's Freedom* have let them down at the last minute. The Orexis don't know why. They're hoping that while they're travelling out to the aunt's hamlet, they can size up the PCs and perhaps persuade them to take on the job. However, they'd already paid the first crew half the money they had up front and funds are now running very short of cash. They can offer Cr50,000 but speed is of the essence. If the Referee feels it is appropriate, this scene could take place after the delivery to the hamlet, before the PCs take their leave of the Orexis.

4. The Hamlet

Unloading at the hamlet and the aunt's dwelling should be straightforward too, although the statue may cause problems again—the upraised left arm seems to catch on everything—and the artist will be extremely fussy about its exact siting in a central open space. However, he has experience of such installations and will be able to help get it set up and firmly fixed before the PCs move on to the aunt's place.

Aunt Kalen and her husband Teth Yath, will be glad to see their niece and of course a family reunion with little Sil will be heartwarming and heartbreaking (particularly if the PCs are aware of the nature of the situation) as Ortana weeps over her daughter.

Once the PCs are familiar with what's required, some of the underlying conflict in the Yath home will become apparent with Uncle and Aunt at loggerheads over situation; he wants to call in the genepolice to get a medical solution here onworld and doesn't believe that they would euthanize the child—the law is murky in this area and hasn't been tested for a long time. The Aunt is convinced—as are the Orexis—that the only cure is going to be found on a higher TL world not far away and of course they would escape the penalty for having hidden the issue in the first place. All this will be going on in the background of the PCs unloading the chelates and the instruments. The construction materials need to be dropped off another half a kilometre away on the edge of the settlement.

ACT 3

1. Departure

The PCs will need to decide whether they want to get any further involved. The Orexis will offer all their remaining funds, some Cr50,000, for transport off world for the three of them. The Yaths can chip another Cr20,000 if it comes to it and the PCs are wavering—although Uncle Teth will be protesting loudly over his wife's offer.

If they decide to take on the job, they could lift straight to orbit and then the 100D limit but they'll

Active Measures

(Continued from page 9)

need to get permission to bypass the standard flight paths and to come up with a convincing excuse for the change in flight plan and unusual behavior—i.e., it will be obvious to anyone looking at their details that they've not got an outbound cargo. This could of course, almost invite a more detailed scrutiny from the authorities. Alternatively, they could return to the starport and obtain a regular cargo but will need to keep the family out of sight for the duration of their remaining stay, which should be straightforward enough.

2. Deception

However, the PCs will need to come up with a plan to pass any cursory outbound customs check as they will not be able to declare the emigration of the Oraxi family without inviting more questions than anyone will want to answer. This may consist of delving into how bribable officials might be (difficult), constructing a hideaway on their ship that would pass even a fairly thorough search, or even using psionic Mentation (*T5* p.532) to control the official's mind. The construction materials delivered to the hamlet may help here, and Aunt Kalen may be able to set up something from her lab to spoof any neural activity sensors or other detectors the customs officials might be using.

To bribe the customs inspectors

Formidable (4D) < Streetwise + Soc

(Admin or Liaison may be used at skill level-1 in place of Streetwise).

To construct a three-person hideaway in a starship

Formidable (4D) < Mechanic

Cooperative (3 Mechanic).

The Referee may allow Engineer or Craftsman in place of Mechanic depending on the nature of the hideaway.

[Author's Note: the Core Rules use 'Conceal' as a skill example on p.135 although Conceal is not listed as a skill. It would be appropriate in this situation, however, if allowed.]

In addition, the PCs may or may not have bargained on why exactly the *Chancer's Freedom* bailed out of the deal. Did they simply get cold feet? Did they get a better offer? Or have they decided to go the genepolice and in fact the Orexis have been under surveillance all this time? The Referee will need to decide what suits the capabilities of the players most and have events unfold accordingly.

3. Denouement

The Referee will need to carefully balance matters so that departure is not too easy, but that there is some chance of success. Of course, a nerve tingling moment or three as their ship is searched should be par for the course. Alternatively, the tasks above may be so difficult that the crew and the family are bound to be caught and the Referee can determine the outcome of all that with the authorities and whether Sil is allowed to live despite the harsh law.

If the vessel can either evade the authorities or withstand any scrutiny they get on leaving and go on to achieve Jumpspace, the Orexis will be effusively thankful. Whether the PCs are welcome back in that system subsequently will depend on the nature of their departure and interactions with customs or other law enforcement. 🌟

The Freelance Traveller Forums

Because of continuing connectivity issues, we have once again suspended the return of the Freelance Traveller forums. We are looking for alternatives that will support all of the capabilities we are seeking in a forum, or, alternatively, hosting at an acceptable cost which will allow us to set up our preferred configuration. We apologize for the continued delay in restoring this service.

About The Burrowwolf

At the time this issue of *Freelance Traveller* "went to press", no new chapter of *The Burrowwolf* was ready for inclusion due to other pressures. We are assured that the comic will resume as soon as possible.

#5: Nervous Excitement

by Timothy Collinson

Just one week to go until TravCon13. The sheer terror of last year isn't so present, but there's definitely a nervousness and excitement that's an interesting mixture and hard to describe. I must remember that this is still only the second game I've written or run. Skill level 0, let's say, rather than the -3 penalty. I don't expect lightning to strike twice and to receive the same warm reception as last year, but I still have absolutely no idea how this adventure is going to go. It's very different—in fact almost the complete opposite of last year. Instead of ragbag Scouts exploring a new world at the edge of empire, this one is about smart noble dilettantes on a core world with too much time and money on their hands. There's a bit of me that wonders if it's even *Traveller*: it could probably be set in 17th century Europe without too much difficulty.

Last year I prepared some 30,000 words or more in just the month before the Convention (having not done anything for 11 months after a single day splurge of plot writing the day after the previous Con) and I knew I didn't want that pressure again. Daughter providing another 10,000 words of handwritten diary just three days before really didn't help stress levels either! So this year, I thought I

would start earlier and have basically spent the entire year putting some 45,000 words together. It's interesting how it's come out at about the same length (100 pages vs. 103 pages this year). This year, however, I have rather more handouts. In fact, I suspect there's too many—32 depending on how you count them. We'll see.

On the upside, however, it is looking good—or at least as good as I can make it—and I think I'm about as ready to go as I can be. "The Handout"—the equivalent of the diary from last year—is finished and is with the printshop for glossy paper and a smart finish. The other handouts still need printing in some cases—although the large (A1 size) yacht deckplan has been up in the University map library storage units for some time now. Andy Lilly, organising the convention, has sent out a draft schedule and included me twice, so I need to get last year's game together if I'm going to run that as well. But I'm not sure I want to do the new adventure only once after all this effort. Still, we can see when we get there; it's not fixed in stone yet.

But if I'm to do this another year, I need another plan. All in one month is too much, but so is spreading it across a year. I feel as if I've done nothing else and really need both a physical and a mental break from this story and these characters. ☼

News About Traveller

Recent Traveller News and Findings

October 2013

- **Northern Edge Publishing** has released *Grav Vehicles*.
- **Christian Hollnbuchner** has released *Hover Bus*, *Starships Book IIIII: Colony Ship*, *Starships Book I00000: T-C-300 Freighter*, and *Airship Racer*.
- **Scrying Eye Games** has released *Type S Corporate Courier HMIS Porcelain Doll*.
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *21 Plots: Misbehave*.
- **BITS** has released *101 Starcrews*.
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *Supplement 13: Starport Encounters*.
- **Far Future Enterprises/GDW** has released *Guide Checklist to GDW RPG Titles*.
- Stygian Fox has released *Colonial Times #1*, and *Colonial Times #2*. ☼



Cirque

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Cirque. Gregory P. Lee
Greylock Publishing Lines <http://greylockpublishing.com>
167pp., PDF (review copy)
Price not yet announced

The reviewer would like to extend his thanks to Mr Lee for the review copy of the product. Mr Lee provided this on his own initiative, completely unexpectedly.

The file is labeled as being Preview 1, suggesting that there will be other previews later, and that *Cirque* is a work-in-progress.

The first page sets out the condition under which backers (for the purpose of the license, reviewers are considered backers, and are thus bound by the license) receive a copy of the product. The next two pages are a list of backers, and the actual content starts on page 4.

That content starts with an in-character narrative, perhaps a diary entry, by the "Chief Documentary Producer and Traveller News Service stringer", expressing excitement at having gotten 'the job'. Throughout the entry, it's never quite clear what the subject of the documentaries (and presumably TNS reports) actually is, but the personal excitement of the diarist remains. The description contains lots of "[Cut here....]", skipping descriptions of a personal tour, of a 'platoon lander', and of 'BT1'. It's not until page 5 that *Cirque* is even mentioned by name, and you're still not sure what it is (I'm not assuming you're familiar with the premise of the product). The narrator discusses the 'Old Station' a bit, and at the bottom of the left column of page 6, we find out that *Cirque* is (of course) a circus. And that there seems to be some Zhodani interest in it.

Finally, on page 7, we get a real introduction. This is very much an OTU campaign, set in the Spinward Marches after the Fifth Frontier War. Mr Lee points the user to the Classic *Traveller* CD-ROM and to TravellerMap.com for familiarization material, but notes that it's not essential. You get a brief overview of the War and a political overview of the im-

mediate postwar period against which *Cirque* is set. The referee is urged to become familiar through other canonical sources with several aliens, presumably because of the possibility of encountering them, and finally, a list of recommended sources, covering Classic *Traveller*, *Mongoose Traveller*, *Traveller*⁵, and *GURPS Traveller*, is included.

Two "meta-bios" follow, for Andii Houke and Aramais P. Lee. These aren't the usual *Traveller* character profiles, but you get a feel for the type of character they are, and some insight into their origins (i.e., why Greg Lee created them the way he did). Some acknowledgements and credits follow.

The adventure itself follows *Cirque des Sirkas* from Rhylanor to Fosey (presumably, future work on this volume will complete the trip to Regina), with each world being one or more (in the case of Tureded) Episodes. Each Episode starts with a scene-setting Excerpt, in the form of diary entries and/or dialogues. These are followed by general information that is made available to the PCs, and may include maps, deckplans, résumés of "spear-chuckers", animal encounter tables, and so on. Following the PC information is a similar section of Referee information, which is only revealed to the players as necessary during the course of play. Then follows a set of Acts, each Act in the form of a checklist that outlines the expected events of the Episode.

Following the Episodes are Program Notes, structured generally the same way as Episodes, except that the information isn't segregated into PC and Referee sections, and there are no Acts. This is where ship spec sheets, character profiles and generation details, and other generally-useful information.

Artwork in this preview is limited, but of reasonable quality. It is very distinctly hand-drawn for the most part, but done with an eye toward making the campaign "come to life", regardless of whether a particular piece is color or monochrome.

Overall, this preview is very promising, and if the final product lives up to that promise, it will be well worth adding to your collection. ☼

Investigator: A Basic Career for Classic Traveller

by Michael Brown

In politics at all levels, there are individuals (such as the PCs) who go about committing deeds of various levels of legality and secrecy. Those who perpetrate nefarious acts naturally try to cover their tracks. And events occur that have causes that must be examined and brought to light. Both instances create work for those dedicated to exposing schemes, looking into unusual circumstances and making sure things are set right: the investigators.

Investigators specialize in methodically and systematically examining events in order to determine a cause. In the case of law enforcement, they also do so with the purpose of determining motive and capturing the perpetrator. There are many types of investigators; the best known are detectives and

private investigators. Such individuals as spies and journalists are also essentially investigators. However, insurance companies, aviation and spaceflight organizations, attorneys, and even accountants (among others) all employ investigators at some point. While PCs may also be investigators, the difference is that career investigators *specialize*.

This character generation career has been boiled down to its bare functions in order to make it as generic as possible. It is up to the referee and the players to determine just what kind of investigator has been generated by examining the result. For example, an investigator with primarily Gun Combat skill and Brawling might be the archetypical private eye, while one with primarily Computer skill might be a forensic computer expert, trained in finding and retrieving electronic files and reconstructing digital traces. All rules for skill acquisition, aging, and mustering out are per *Book 1: Characters and Combat*.

Term Process		Table of Ranks	
Enlistment	7+	1	Investigating Agent
	DM +1 if DEX 8+	2	Senior Investigator
	DM +2 if INT 8+	3	Team Leader
Survival	5+	4	Section Leader
	DM +2 if INT 9+	5	Administrator
Position	7+	6	Director
	DM +2 if EDU 8+	Automatic Skills	
Promotion	8+	Investigator	Recon-1
	DM +1 if INT 8+	Team Leader	Leader-1
Re-Enlist	5+	Administrator	Admin-1

Mustering-Out Benefits		
	Material	Cash
1	Low Psg	5000
2	Mid Psg	7000
3	Mid Psg	10000
4	Gun	20000
5	Gun	30000
6	High Psg	50000
7	TAS	70000

Skills				
	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education	Advanced Education (EDU 8+ only)
1	+1 STR	Jack-o-T	Gambling	Medical
2	+1 DEX	Streetwise	Jack-o-T	Bribery
3	+1 INT	Recon	Interrogation	Liaison
4	+1 EDU	Gun Cbt	Computer	Leader
5	Brawling	Electronics	Mechanical	Tactics
6	Carousing	Vehicle	Demolitions	Admin

Sample Characters

Private Investigator B58889; 4 terms; Age 34; Rank 1
Gun Cbt-1, Interrogation-2, J-o-T-1, Recon-2, Streetwise-1
Cr105,000; High Psg, Mid Psg

SPA Inspector B78299; 1 term; Age 22; Rank 2
Jack-O-T-2, Recon-1
Cr17,000

Amateur Sleuth 479A9B; 6 terms; Age 42
Computer-1, Electronics-1, Leader-1, Liaison-2, Recon-1
Cr30,000; High Psg; Mid Psg; Gun

Planetary Government Operative 58A888; 3 terms; Age 30
Brawling-2, Gun Cbt-1, Jack-O-T-1, Recon-1
Cr50,000; High Psg



Patron Encounters

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Patron Encounters. Martin J. Dougherty.

Avenger Enterprises

<http://www.martinjdougherty.com/avenger-enterprises.html>
27pp., PDF (listed under Mongoose at DTRPG)
US\$3.59/UK£2.24

Experienced *Traveller* referees, or those who read *Freelance Traveller*, who purchase this volume so many years after its release will feel like they've found an old friend. For little more than a dime each (a bit over 6p each if you insist on British money), you get thirty-four adventure seeds in the familiar format.

Most of the seeds have both Player Information and Referee Information, but in a few cases, everything is on the table and the "Referee Information" is no more than the list of the possible "roll 1D (1d6)" outcomes. There is a wide range of possibilities in the jobs, including three where the PCs are 'victims' (in the sense that they have no control over whether to get involved).

The seeds are presented in a two-column format, easy to read. On any given page, there's never more than one seed per column, but many are of odd lengths (leaving unused white space in both columns), and some have left 'The referee should determine the subsequent events' line dangling at the top of a column or the first sentence on a page

Comstar Games/Avenger Presents

Patron Encounters



Approved for use with Traveller

(effectively wasting the column). A bit more time and effort (and, admittedly, money) devoted to editing and layout might have allowed a few more seeds to make it into this volume at no increase in page count.

Nevertheless, you do get good value for the price; Martin and his "recruiting agents" have come up with a good set of seeds with interesting twists.☺



Raconteurs' Rest

Choices

by Andrea Vallance

Part 1

115th of 2029 (306-97):

A Presentation on Daramm

War hero, that's what they called me, now; I was one of the Thirty-Seven. I was 'Special'. There'd been a big ceremony when we got back. Stirring music, fresh uniforms, long speeches. I wanted to disap-

pear, to hide, to run away. Singled out forever for the damage done. Eternally broken, to be pitied, that was how I was 'Special'. There'd been *dokhtors*, of course, offers of treatment, therapy, cosmetic surgery, they could make me 'better'. I said no; how could they make it better? They couldn't burn the memories out of my head, nothing could ever take those away. There was no way to give me back what they took, only cover up the marks they left. Everyone already knew I was 'Special', trying to hide it was pointless. And now, I had to meet with Lord

(Continued from page 14)

Protector McCloud himself. A special medal, *Perma y Irdarvula*, Heart of the Greatest Courage, just for the 'Thirty-Seven'.

I took a deep breath. It wasn't just me; there'd be thirty-six others up there with me. It was easy, I could do it. Jane was here helping me, Siish and my family in the audience, it would be fine. I fiddled with my uniform. Full review dress, silver, black and purple, skirt neatly pressed, asymmetric hem running right to left, jacket fasteners smartly arranged off-centre. Jane was already dressed, she turned, "You're crooked, deary." I tried to straighten the fasteners.

Jane looked over. "Slowly, deary." She was doing her make-up already¹. Right, I'd got them straight. I think.

She laughed, "Almost, deary, it's fine, just get the gong and sit. Listen to some more boring speeches then done. Here," she reached over and fixed my last fastener, "perfect." She handed me a make-up pouch and turned back to finish hers.

I stared at it. A deep breath. A stick, a red one I think. I turned. I stood, unable to move, my face, my once pretty face². I felt a hand take my wrist. Jane turned me around. She smiled, she'd finished. She held me and stroked my hair "It's okay, it's okay, would you like me to do it for you deary?"

117th of 2029 (308-97): Daramm Downport

I woke, the bed soaked in sweat. "Lights," I swung my legs over the edge of my bunk and tipped myself out of bed. I landed, stumbled and yelped with pain as my knees hit Jane's trunk. A quiet giggle came from the heap of linen on the lower bunk. "So much for that famed Luriani grace and agility, then, deary."

This did not help my mood. "Well, Jane sweetie, you can just go play with a *Mmaryn*." The pile spoke again, "Now, now, deary, don't be like that."

But I was not in the mood. I crossed to the basin. "Damn, how do they expect people to live in this

space?" The stateroom was undeniably cramped but I was just not used to being on a starship any more and it would take time to change that.

I crossed over to the basin, a curtain above it, I smiled. I set the tap to fill, cold. I waited for it to fill and plunged my face into the ice cold water and tried to forget. I heard Jane's voice behind me "You know, you can't actually drown yourself, deary, and I would like to use it too." Damn, she'd surprised me, I'd have to get used to that. I pulled my head out and turned to look at her. Hair a mess, shirt crumpled and twisted, and she was still beautiful. I envied her. "Shower, now." It was an order.

"Yes, Mother." I squeezed past her to the shower in the corner. Two person occupancy, yeah, right. I climbed in, undressed, and threw my clothes out. "Warm." The jets hit me from all sides, too cold "Temperature up." Warmer now, "Set."

Jane's voice "Must be good to be with civilised people who use water rather than trying to shake the dirt off³." I snorted; it was. I let the warm water run over my face as I tried to wash away the night.

A rap on the door, "Luriani, remember, can't drown yourself."

"We can actually, it's just harder." I finished quickly. "Off. Where's the towel?"

"On the hook by the door, where it's always been." I reached out, fumbled for a moment and pulled the towel inside, wrapping it tightly round me when I was dry.

She was waiting, she hugged me "They're really not that bad, deary." I'd known her too long not to hear when she was lying.

Jane showered while I picked out clothes, she got out dripping wet and looked at what I'd picked, she picked something else "Here, this one's better." It was... daring.

"I thought I was to be the pilot, not the ship's wanton."

She gave a wicked smile, "No, deary, that's my job." She'd changed, a lot. I put on the one I'd chosen. "That looks like a sack, deary."

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

117th of 2029 (308-97): Breakfast with Mother

Sish broke a roll and selected the correct knife to spread butter on it. "So, Siishubuu, how is your life in... independent commerce progressing?" Madam⁴ Manish's dislike of her son's new life was undisguised.

"I have not joined the *Wurlana*⁵ quite yet, Mother; try to think of it as a belated grand tour⁶."

She simply raised her eyebrows to indicate her continued disapproval. "If you wished to wander, your sister Gamaagin is always in need of good *kaptans*⁷."

"I find I prefer a little less structure in my travels, Mother."

His mother sighed, there was so much of his father in Siish. "Well, have you called on Gubashiidi *Wa* since your return? Her father informed me she greatly enjoyed your dinner together."

"Sadly, the needs of the repatriation have prevented it, Mother, and *Raledenet* is scheduled to leave this evening."

"Siishubuu, Gubashiidi *Wa* will not remain unmatched forever."

"I am sure you are correct, Mother." In truth, he very much hoped so. His dinner with Sharik had been very pleasant, but she was just not for him.

She sipped her tea and considered her son's path, along with the disturbing information she had recently received.

"So Siishubuu, you are departing 'on the evening tide,' as it were. One presumes you have a destination and purpose in mind?"

"Stalwart Mother, I have heard Sherin *Femral* was asking after me."

"Mmmm," Madam Manish slowly buttered a roll with great deliberation. Kamees Sherin was a dangerous man. A war hero with political ambitions. She had heard he wished to 'utilize' her son to further those ambitions. Her son was clearly set on his course, but perhaps he could be directed on a

less perilous path. "You know, Siishubuu, I do believe you may wish to call upon Kirsov *Geenal-Majkor* before you leave, he was a close friend of your father's."

Siish knew his mother well enough to know this would not be a simple social call "Mother, what are you up to?"

"Siishubuu?" she replied innocently.

"Kirsov *Geenor* is well known as the Council's 'fix-it' man, and he is currently on Verasaryn⁸."

"He mentioned to me recently he may have some 'employment' for you, and I believe he is arriving on Daramm tomorrow." Madam Manish intended to call Kirsov as soon as her son left to ensure both statements were correct.

Siish pondered this awhile; his mother was definitely up to something, but employment by Kirsov *Geenor* would be... interesting. And it was probably better to know what she was up to than not.

"But of course it would mean delaying my departure a day."

"It would? I had not considered that, Siishubuu."

Siish thought if he had a *keedit*⁹ for each time she did that he'd own the Protectorate. He said heavily, "I will call Sharik when I get back to *Raledenet*."

Madam Manish considered, first name, that was somewhat promising at least. "Oh, don't be silly, Siishubuu, I'm sure you'll be far too busy, organising your ship and such like. I'll have Blandii bring a communicator."

Madam Manish waited for her son to depart, extracting her usual kiss as he left. She called Blandii to clear the dishes as she placed a call. A young naval *Vebant* appeared on the screen. "Verasaryn Naval Base, how may I help you?"

"Could you be so kind as to place me through to Kirsov *Geenal-Majkor*."

"I'm afraid he's unavailable at the moment; may I take a message?"

"Could you please inform him Lady Councillor Manish called?"

(Continued on page 17)

The young *Vebant* sat up smartly. "One moment My Lady, I'll put you through." The screen flashed to a hold pattern, and then Kirsov *Geenor* appeared. He was still a striking man despite the scars and eye-patch that betrayed the adventures of his youth. Madam Manish was lost in thought for a moment; if not for the needs of politics, her life could have been very different.

"Ah, Colin, so good to see you again."

"And you, Nashu, as beautiful as ever. To what do I owe the pleasure?" Madam Manish flushed just ever so slightly.

"Siishubuu."

"Siish?"

"Yes; I need a favour, Colin. I have heard that Sherin is sniffing round him, seeking to bring him into his orbit."

Kirsov looked grave "That, Nashu, would not be good. A decorated war hero, youngest *Vebmral* in the Fleet, the Manish name, heir to your seat on the Council, not good at all."

"I tend to agree; Sherin is far too ambitious, his recklessness and aggression has already brought us to the brink of destruction once, it would not be wise to give him a second chance."

Kirsov nodded, "No. So, what do you want from me?"

"Siishubuu appears to have developed a certain... wanderlust. I was hoping you might be able to channel it in a useful direction."

"He is his father's son, Nashu. You need to get the boy matched, give him some stability."

There was a look of exasperation on her face. "I am trying, but there are complications in that respect, now."

Kirsov's mouth formed a wry smile. "As you well know, such things can be overcome, or at least... accommodated. However, I think I can find something for him."

"Nothing too dangerous, I hope."

"Everything I do is 'dangerous,' Nashu, you know that. But I will try to keep it minimal."

"Thank you Colin; I've arranged for him to call on you at Command tomorrow."

Kirsov let out a laugh, "And you'd like me to be there."

"That might be helpful, Colin." She paused, and then added, "And you may call on me while you're here. It has been far too long." Kirsov just smiled.

I'd spent most of the morning prepping *Raledenet* for launch. I'd skipped breakfast and gone directly to the bridge to run pre-flight checks and plan a jump course. Jane wanted me to meet the rest of the crew, there was a *dohktor* and a steward as well as Jane, Siish and I. I'd mumbled something about needing to find my feet in the pilot's chair again and only being half an hour. I'd managed to stretch that three hours. Jane had come up after one, furious and told me to quit putting it off and come down. That and I needed to eat. But she'd left me alone after that. I knew she was right, I couldn't put it off forever, but what could a few hours hurt? Around eleven Siish appeared.

"Jane tells me you've been hiding out here for hours, *dinkir*."

"Getting her ready for flight."

"For three hours?"

I looked at the deck, "Just being thorough."

He sighed, "Just get your butt down to the lounge now."

"I'll just..."

"Now! Or I'll physically drag you down." I knew I couldn't put it off any longer.

Somebody was cooking and it smelt good. I suddenly realised I was hungry. I paused for a moment outside to draw breath then entered. I saw someone in the galley, he was young. Jane was chatting to him. Siish was setting up for a game of *Zamki*¹⁰ with someone on the table. She was tall, short dark hair with just a wisp of white. She stood as I entered.

"So you must be the fabled pilot." She spoke Luriani, but the accent was strange. I noticed a slight limp as she walked over and gave a small stiff bow. I managed a curtsy back, "And you are?"

"Doctor Isabella Sanchez y Montoya, late of his Imperial Majesty's Navy, but most people just call me Isabella." That would explain the accent.

I was very curious. "So, *dokhtor*, how'd you end up here?"

"I was on the *Apuludukii*¹¹ at Rurur, one of the lucky ones I guess." The *Apuludukii*, very lucky. "Four years as an honoured guest of the Lord Protector. I was paroled to the Khaadii's six months in and when the war ended, I stayed behind¹². Then Siish wanted a doctor. He can be very persuasive, you know."

I nodded, "Yes, very." I looked over at the young man cooking, early twenties. He had a boyish innocence about him, his grin disarming. I half expected to see one of his mothers looking out for him. But the Guardsman's jacket beside him told a slightly different story. A lot of battle ribbons, two Protector's Medals for Gallantry, a Silver Cross and a Star for Valour. Rather impressive, all in all.

Jane bent over, "And this, deary, is Ariaryn Eadaasa, our steward, though I think he's barely out of *Yasa*¹³. *Serganet* of the Lord Protector's Guards and a genius in the kitchen." She tousled Ariaryn's straggly red hair. He gently knocked her hand away looking embarrassed. She then rounded on Siish, "So, beloved *Kaptan*, how did breakfast with mommy go?"

"As well as might be expected." His voice sounded more frustrated than anything else. "She has arranged an appointment with Kirsov *Geenor* for us."

Jane was wide-eyed, "'Fix-it' Kirsov?"

Siish nodded "'Fix-it' Kirsov."

"But he's on Verasaryn."

"Apparently he arrives on Daramm tonight."

Isabella looked puzzled, "Who's Kirsov and what does he fix?"

Jane explained "Kirsov *Geenor* is the man the Council goes to when they've got something they want done but can't be seen to be doing. They tell him to fix things for them."

I chimed in, "So I guess that means we're not leaving tonight."

Siish sighed "No, tonight I have a dinner date with Sharik Gubashiidi."

The Grav Carrier was skimming low over the waves. The Protectorate Central Command Complex loomed in the distance, its five spires anchored to the sea floor hundreds of metres below the surface, warships patrolling the waters around. Siish had got back late from his dinner last night and Jane was teasing him mercilessly about it. "So you decided to sleep alone, then?"

Siish was used to this. "It was dinner, nothing more. Sharik is charming, but no fire, there."

"Ohhh, Sharik now, and charming, we'll be seeing practice invites, next."

He took a deep breath "Gubashiidi *Wa* is a lovely woman, but not for me, Jane."

Jane had said he had eyes for somebody and in truth I'd been dying to find out who for weeks, "So who is for you Siish?"

He chuckled, "*Dinkir*, if I ever decide to go beyond dinner with someone, I'll make sure you're the first to know." Sometimes the man could be so frustratingly evasive. Jane was rolling her eyes at him.

Siish looked relieved when Ariaryn broke the conversation. "Command has taken us on auto; we should be landing in a minute."

Siish nodded, "Good."

"So what's this all about? Why does Kirsov want to see us?" I asked.

"Our beloved *kaptan*'s mother's scheming will end up getting us killed, no doubt, deary." Jane as bright and cheery as ever. We heard the whine of the turbines as the carrier began to slow.

"We'll know soon enough, Jane, so sit back enjoy the ride."

The carrier set down neatly in a bay on the tenth level. The security station was manned by a rather bored looking Guardsman, his uniform embroidered by a string of ribbons marking medals, battles and

(Continued from page 18)

campaigns. "Can I help you?" I could feel his eyes on me, my broken face.

Siish spoke "We have an appointment with Kirsov *Geenor* at ten."

He tapped on his screen and brought up the details, looked up and saluted. "Manish *Vebmral*. I didn't realise." Jane sniggered and whispered, "Told you, you should have worn your uniform."

"Level nineteen, room four-A. If you could just look into the scanner." Siish went first, retinal pattern and DNA, a security pass spat out. Jane, then Isabella. Ariaryn last, now my turn. I placed my face to the eye piece and my hand on the pad. A bright flash and a prick. The green light of a confirm. I watched as my pass printed out, the picture was dated, from before. I stared at my face on the card. I ran my hand down my cheek and felt nothing, but I could close my eyes and the burning blinding pain was there.

"I'm sorry, *Komant*, we'll have to update the records."

I mumbled my reply, said sorry and just kept looking at the picture. Siish gently took it from my hands and pinned it to my blouse. He smiled and stroked my hair¹⁴ "You're still as beautiful as the first day I met you." Beautiful? Siish never called me beautiful.

Level nineteen, room four-A was a nondescript room in a nondescript corridor. The plaque on the door simply said 'Kirsov *Geenal-Majkor*'. Siish knocked and waited. The door was opened by a middle aged *Seror*, her hair neatly plaited and uniform clean. "*Vebmral*, the *Geenor* is expecting you. Please come in." Kirsov's office was a plain room; two desks, a filing cabinet and a large star chart adorning one wall.

"Renal, could you be a treasure and get some more chairs?" The *Seror* smiled and set off on her errand.

"So, Siish, you brought the whole crew." He sounded amused.

"Seemed like the proper thing to do."

"Well it's a pleasure to meet you all, and an especial honour to meet you, *Komant*." He singled me out. I looked at the floor.

"So, *Geenor*, to what do we owe the pleasure?" Siish took the lead as he usually does.

Renal *Seror* had returned with the extra chairs. "Sit, please sit." Kirsov was pulling papers from a drawer as we sat. "Well, I suppose you know what I do."

Ariaryn, this time. "You fix things, sir." Sir? What kind of *Luriani* calls somebody sir?¹⁵

"Ah, direct as ever, Eadaasa *serganet*. Yes, I 'fix' things." Obviously, Kirsov and Ariaryn were acquainted.

Ariaryn formed a knowing smile. "And you want us to fix something for you."

"Indeed, occasionally the Council requires an indirect approach. There is a package that needs to be delivered to an Imperial world, and it would be better if it were not delivered officially."

Siish again. "And you would like us to deliver it?"

"That is the general idea."

"The nature of this package?"

"Nothing illegal, gems and valuables, but it would be better if it were not traceable to the Protectorate."

Siish chuckled. "Funding for dissidents, I thought we weren't allowed to do that any more."

Kirsov nodded "We do not however, forget our friends¹⁶."

Siish looked at us all; we nodded. "Then, I suppose we're in the small package trade¹⁷."

Notes

1. *Luriani* and *Verasti Dtareen* of both genders make extensive use of facial make-up and body paints for formal situations.

2. *Sishgukhidtar* is a transliteration of the *Vilani* word *sashgukhidhar*, the best translation of which is 'Once pretty face.' It refers to the most obvious visible signs.

3. A difference between the *Imperium* who used ultrasonic showers and the *Protectorate* who used water.

(Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)

4. The customary title used for the senior female member (matriarch) of an upper class Protectorate extended family (house), responsible for arranging matches in the family. The role is one of the more unusual in Protectorate society. Not only is there no male equivalent but also despite the title's Anglic name and the fact that it prefixes the name, the roles roots actually lay with the Luriani themselves. The role originated in during the First Protectorate amongst high born Verasti Dtareen families when they adopted the traditional Luriani role of Giwa (senior female responsible for arranging matches, the male equivalent Gilul being responsible for arranging employment). Curiously as the Verasti Dtareen adopted the role of Giwa in the form of matriarch, the positions of Giwa and Gilul fell out of use by the Luriani themselves (with the exception of the Wurlana) due to their exposure to Terran culture. Over time, this role of matriarch spread first to upper class Mmarislusant clans and then back to the Luriani themselves.

5. The fourth branch of Luriani culture, also known by their Anglic name of Wanderers. Descendants of the great raft ship that roamed Daramm's ocean in pre-contact times. They spend most of their lives in space, travelling in trading caravans, wandering between worlds.

6. A custom amongst the upper classes to take an extended tour of space before settling down to a career.

7. The Khaadii clan owned one of the largest shipping concerns in the Protectorate. As the eldest child, Gam Manish had taken over running the company after her father's death in 2017.

8. Verasaryn is the second habitable planet in the Daramm system. Its population is heavily weighted toward Verasti Dtareen and Mmarislusant as most Luriani find its dense atmosphere oppressive.

9. Unit of currency in the Protectorate, equal to one tenth of an Imperial Credit.

10. A two player abstract strategy game dating from the Ziru Sirka.

11. A Sylea-class battleship destroyed early in the battle. Out of its over 800 crew there were only 14 survivors.

12. Luriani rules of hospitality dictate that prisoners of war must be treated as honoured guests. The standard procedure was to parole POWs to the custody of a suitable family within the Protectorate as soon as their good behaviour could reasonably be guaranteed. After the war, a number of Imperial POWs had established ties with those families and elected to remain behind. Regarded as traitors by most in the Imperium and enemies by many in the Protectorate, they faced considerable challenges in making new lives.

13. Full formal Luriani and Verasti Dtareen names consist of a personal name, biological parent's personal names (mother first for females, father first for males), birth family name, current family name and occupation or title. Yasa is used by children in place of the occupation. However in most circumstances, a shorter, less formal name is used. The precise composition of these shorter names is dependent on circumstances.

14. Such public displays of affection are common in Luriani culture; even within military organisations they are unremarkable.

15. Racial Luriani have a strong preference for informal lines of authority, a tendency that had spread to the entire Protectorate. It was very uncommon to hear a subordinate refer to their superior as sir. Normally they would use the rank title as a mark of respect, though use of the first name was common as well. This informality was one of the major reasons for the Imperium's fatal underestimation of Protectorate forces before the war.

16. The Treaty of Ghou that ended the Luriani War specifically prohibited either side from supporting dissent within the other, a provision neither the Imperium nor Protectorate fully respected.

17. A euphemism for smuggling.



Common Languages of the Regency

by Jeff Zeitlin

This article was originally posted to Freelance Traveller's website in 2002.

There are a wide variety of languages in Charted Space. Most of them are known on only one planet, or in a small polity. A few are spread widely by the political and cultural influences of their speakers. The languages of this second group become widely known not as primary languages for a large number

of planets, but as second languages for an entire region of space. The languages known as Trade Vilani, Galanglic, and Basic Sylean are languages that have served and do serve this purpose in Regency space.

Trade Vilani has its origins in the language now known as High Vilani. When the First Imperium was governing Imperial Space, the Vilani rulers, in an attempt to impose cultural homogeneity and stability on their empire, mandated the use of their language in all governmental and commercial communication. Since enforcement of this mandate was

(Continued from page 20)

difficult at any level where the local populace was not dealing directly with Vilani, many people did not use Vilani in their day-to-day activities, and when they did need to use it, it was generally in a grammatically incorrect form that was nevertheless sufficient to transmit the intended meaning. In linguistics, these languages are called “pidgins”.

It was economically impossible for the Vilani to maintain their absolute monopoly on the operation of starships once the size of the Imperium grew beyond the equivalent of six subsectors or so. This was still sufficient to ensure that some form of Vilani was in use on all of the planets as a “common” language. When planetary concerns and governments were permitted to operate their own starships, it was natural that they should use their ungrammatical Vilani to communicate with each other. There are examples from many planets demonstrating that communication has a leveling effect on dialectal differences; the First Imperium was proof that this same principle operated on an interstellar level as well. The result was “Trade Vilani”.

The Rule of Man had a similar effect. Here, the mandated language was Terran Anglic, a language that was itself a pidgin (based on English) resulting from a commercial and technological advantage possessed by North America at the time that global communication and commerce became practical for the majority of the population, instead of for just a few large corporations. Changes in political and economic dominance allowed Spanish and Chinese to influence the language, and at the time that the Rule of Man was proclaimed, Terran Anglic would have been incomprehensible to an American or Englishman of Terran Year CE2000.

Most planets in the First Imperium had been using Trade Vilani in interstellar commerce; it was to be expected that it would continue to be used to fill in gaps in the speaker’s knowledge of Terran Anglic, despite being officially “banned” from official use. The short duration of the Rule of Man, only 400

years, was sufficient to expose most planets to some use of Terran Anglic (which was now being called Galactic Anglic, or Imperial Anglic). Small communities of ethnic Terrans (or of people who considered themselves ethnic Terrans, despite having never been on Terra) were to be found on most of the important worlds of the Empire, including Sylean and Vland, as resident administrators. These communities survived into the Long Night, preserving the use of Imperial Anglic on those worlds, and on many nearby worlds within their economic influence.

During the Dawn, when the Zhunatsu family and their companies created the Sylean Federation, they took the pragmatic view of the question of language. Instead of mandating that Sylean be used exclusively, they gave it and Imperial Anglic equal status. *De jure* equality does not mean *de facto* equality, and it was quickly noticed that the use of Sylean offered subtle political and economic benefits when dealing with Syleans. Nevertheless, Imperial Anglic was firmly entrenched, and remained widely used, absorbing terms from Sylean as it had from Trade Vilani centuries earlier.

The Sylean Federation offered a high degree of autonomy to its member planets. In doing so, it relinquished its ability to influence linguistic development to the degree possible for the Rule of Man or the Vilani Imperium before it. As a result of this lesser influence, and the early decision to recognize the use of Imperial Anglic in government and commerce, the Sylean language never achieved the level of importance that Imperial Anglic and Trade Vilani achieved.

The creation of Basic Sylean was an effort to remedy this problem. Developed by a team of Sylean linguists, it offered a simpler grammatical structure, paralleling that of Imperial Anglic (although the more complex Sylean grammar could be used), and a reduced vocabulary. Inflections were for the most part eliminated, as were irregular verbs. Basic Sylean enjoyed a period of popularity,

(Continued from page 21)

but it was not able to completely displace Imperial Anglic anywhere.

By the time Cleon I declared the Third Imperium, Imperial Anglic had been heavily influenced by Basic Sylean, and would have been incomprehensible to Admiral Estigarriba (Emperor Hiroshi I of the Rule of Man), or to any Terran/Solomani of the period immediately prior to the Rule of Man. Basic Sylean and Trade Vilani were still used in areas where recent influence from their respective planets of origin was strong, but Imperial Anglic, now universally called Galactic Anglic, or Galanglic, was *de facto* the primary common language of the Third Imperium throughout its expansion, and into the Rebellion period.

In spite of this, Trade Vilani, Terran/Imperial Anglic, and Basic Sylean can all be found in the Regency, due both to patterns of settlement and to the Imperial policy of local autonomy. Galanglic, as the official language of the Regency government, is used and understood almost everywhere in the Spinward States. It provides a common language that binds us together in a single interstellar community, and it is also the primary language for inter-ship and ship-to-shore communications.

A dialect of Terran Anglic or Imperial Anglic is used for local communications in the former Sword Worlds, and in the few remaining independent worlds operating under that name. An even older

dialect, heavily influenced by teZhlodh (the original Daryen native language) has the status not of a pidgin, but of a creole, in the Daryen Confederation.

Many parts of Deneb sector use Trade Vilani; these worlds were heavily influenced by the Vilani in the early days of colonization, as prior to the sector gaining Administered Sector status, it was governed from Corridor or Vland sector. Trade Vilani and Basic Sylean are used fairly heavily near the Aslan worlds in Trojan Reach sector; this is due to historical reasons in connection with contact with the Aslan: The original contact between the Imperium and the Aslan was in Daibei Sector, which was colonized by the Vilani during the First Imperium, and which maintained its Vilani-derived culture right through the Rule of Man and the founding of the Third Imperium and into First Contact with the Aslan. A dialect of Trade Vilani, heavily influenced by Trokh (and called by the Aslan *trokh fiyalr*) was thereby established as a trade language between the Aslan and the Imperium. When the Aslan were encountered on the other side of the Rift, the Sylean expedition that made contact was unable to communicate in *trokh fiyalr*, but since the commander of the Aslan fleet that made contact was the second son of a former Aslan ambassador to the Imperium, there was enough knowledge of Trade Vilani and Basic Sylean to establish communication. These languages became established for use in communicating with trans-Rift Aslan, as *trokh fiyalr* had in the rimward areas of the Imperium. ☪

Doing It My Way

Character Generation Rules

Surgisilena

by Michael Brown

Editor's note: This article will be broken on the web into "Doing It My Way" and "Kurishdam/Club Room".

The Surgisilena ("pleasant company", in the language of their world of origin) is a philosophical organization devoted to providing pleasure. They are best known by the many Harmonies, or meeting

places, they have established. They are often dismissed as prostitutes, but that perception is wildly inaccurate and the result of miscommunication and negative agendas. The Surgisilena boast a rich tradition of culture and service dating back well over a thousand years.

Overview

The Surgisilena is a part spiritual, part social organization that continues to operate in much the

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 22)

same manner it has for centuries. They are devoted to a body of philosophical beliefs based on providing pleasure and companionship. They are also often called upon as hosts, performance artists, confidantes, ceremonial performers, cultural aides, and other such actions that bring pleasure. The misconception is that "pleasure" also includes physical intimacy. While adherents are not averse to such dealings, they are quick to point out that it runs counter to their central concept.

A close historical analogue is the *geisha* of ancient Terra. While geisha were also sometimes mistaken for prostitutes (mostly due to cultural and linguistic differences), they filled a similar role as purveyors of refinement and camaraderie.

History

The Surgisilena traces its origins to early 'grief counseling' in a religious context. An offshoot of the dominant religion formed to specialize in helping families through the grief of losing a loved one, especially when little or no information concerning the circumstances was available. These individuals were revered for their ability to assess a grieving family's psychological state and provide proper emotional and psychological healing. These individuals were even more needed during the earliest stellar explorations, as unexplained disappearances were inevitable.

As the comforters' roles expanded, so too did their philosophical outlook and social goals. The overt religious trappings and strict hierarchy of the original sect gradually gave way to a looser, more secular ideology that also provided for comfort and pleasure. The organization eventually made formal the separation from their religious origins, and took the Surgisilena name.

Political and societal changes on the homeworld eventually led the Surgisilena to move their headquarters off-world, and the new headquarters world quickly became the stereotypical pleasure planet,

with lavish resorts and every imaginable diversion. Guests from all over spent time there, making the Surgisilena quite wealthy. In turn, the companions reinvested their gains into promoting their mission throughout the homeworld's area of influence, and they once more became an accepted part of society, with a great deal of influence.

Interstellar warfare, from civil wars and contact with aliens, brought profound change. The suffering they created stretched the Surgisilenas' ability to cope. Many Harmonies were destroyed; others, overwhelmed by war casualties, shut down. By the time a lasting peace was attained, the Surgisilena were in full decline, left with about a third of its former influence.

Societal reaction to the wars led to greater prudery and asceticism in society. Surviving Harmonies found themselves the focus of an official pogrom. Basically, the organization was viewed as a giant prostitution ring and outlawed. The social changes, and the resulting political changes, led to a long hiatus in interstellar commerce, and this proved to be the salvation of the Surgisilena. Although isolated from one another, each Harmony was accustomed to operating independently; many Harmonies were able to subtly influence their worlds to a more open attitude. Their isolation proved to be a blessing.

With the resumption of interstellar commerce, the Surgisilena underwent a renaissance of sorts, which continues to this day. While no longer considered a vital part of society, neither does it suffer official discrimination. In general, policy toward the group falls under the scope of religious freedom, subject to individual planetary law.

Ideology

Throughout its history, the basic mission of the Surgisilena has remained the same: to create an atmosphere of comfort and pleasure that promotes emotional and psychological health. It also seeks to educate nonmembers in its beliefs; unite all beings spiritually, foster a community of common hedonistic ideals; and even to change outmoded views on pleasure and intimacy.

(Continued from page 23)

Adherents believe that there is a strong link between enjoyment and spiritual awakening, and that this link runs through all living things. In a sense Surgisilena consider everything sensual: a fiery sunset, a moving operetta, a good meal, even a willing partner. Through intense enjoyable experiences, they believe they achieve spiritual union with all life. To reject or taint such pleasure is to damage oneself and others.

The association is open to all, regardless of gender. The membership skews very heavily Human, although a few Harmonies near alien polities have admitted a few aliens into their ranks.

Harmony Locations

Harmonies are usually found on worlds with Population 7+ and Law Level 5-. There are a few unusual cases where Harmonies operate successfully despite intrusive governments, and there is one world where the Surgisilena *are* the government.

Becoming a Surgisilena

Devotees train for years for their roles. The process begins with a complete background check and psychological screening; rejects include those with untreatable mental problems or criminal records. If the applicants pass the screenings (which are very thorough), the prospect begins three phases of training. The first phase features instruction on shedding self-destructive behaviors and barriers to personal and interpersonal happiness, fostering good interpersonal relationships, and encouraging further study in any innate talents useful to the organization that the aspirant possesses. Successful completion of this phase ushers in phase two, where he or she studies the philosophy of the group, learns its principles and practices exercises similar to yoga for fitness and ritual purification. Phase three involves a period of serving as a Harmony novice under the close supervision of the Harmony leader. When the novice is deemed ready, he or she is formally inducted in a ceremony that includes the selection of a

name the new Surgisilena will be known by. He or she is then considered a full-fledged member. Surgisilena are permissible as a prior career; the career generation tables appear below.

Duties

Surgisilena are expected to participate in all Harmony ceremonies and rituals, entertain guests to the best of their abilities without prejudice, and stay physically fit and practice good hygiene. Their study of philosophy continues after their induction into a Harmony. Finally, they must be prepared to seize any opportunity to enlighten others on the beliefs and true role of the organization.

Surgisilena wear no distinctive clothing, uniforms or accessories but always appear well dressed and present a pleasing appearance. Dress standards are often much looser within the Harmony premises.

Harmony Operations

Some Harmonies are large and wealthy enough to be lavish resorts in their own right. Visits to such places are typically expensive affairs, but offer creature comforts and services unheard of on even the most posh starliners. Most Harmonies, however, are small, occupying a single dwelling and having a staff of no more than two dozen.

Harmonies typically support themselves through admissions fees, special services (such as souvenirs or spiritual counseling), and dues assessed individual Surgisilena. The Harmony also gets a percentage of fees the Surgisilena charge to act as social and cultural companions. Permissive planetary governments may confer tax breaks, or even issue periodic grants or stipends.

Visitors will find diversions to fit whatever tastes they have, within local law. Some can be illicit or explicit, depending on the local Law Level, but many Surgisilena are also highly trained and versatile entertainers. Visitors undergo a brief purification ritual upon entry, which include promises of proper conduct during the visit.

(Continued on page 25)

Doing It My Way

(Continued from page 24)

Leaders are typically drawn from the most senior members of the Harmony. On rare occasion, there is more than one suitable candidate; in such cases, the Harmony holds a vote to select the new head.

Surgisilena and Society

Official tolerance has not totally erased the misperception of the Surgisilena. Many people, especially in frontier areas, still hold backward views of the organization, and no extraordinary protections are granted to the group on an interstellar scale. Unfortunately, this only helps perpetuate the notion of Surgisilena as nothing but exotic playthings.

Surgisilena in the Campaign

Any given world may host a Harmony on a throw of Law Level or better. There is a DM of +1 if the world in question is in a frontier area or associat-

ed with an area of unexplained disappearances. Of course, the referee may place a Harmony anywhere (s)he sees fit. An evening at a Harmony may spark a new adventure, or be an adventure in itself, with intrigue swirling about the heroes as they try to relax and have fun.

Surgisilena are encouraged to travel, and many do. They can be found aboard ships or at starports as passengers, hired entertainers, or recruiters. They can and often do sign on for varying lengths of time aboard private vessels. When and if they return to a Harmony, their shared experiences bring a rich variety that keeps the entire organization fresh and vital.

Surgisilena signing on permanently with a PC crew can bring a unique perspective to solutions. They are not necessarily pacifists, and do not necessarily eschew violence—many Surgisilena take up self-defense or weapon training—but they do not view such as a means to an end. Their training makes them adept at conceiving nonviolent solutions that others may miss.

Term Process		Mustering-Out Benefits	
Enlistment	5+	Materiak	Cash
	DM +1 if DEX 9+	1 Low Psg	1000
	DM +2 if EDU 9+	2 Mid Psg	5000
Survival	4+	3 +1 EDU	10000
Re-Enlist	4+	4 Weapon	20000
<i>Surgisilena have no ranks or promotions</i>		5 +1 INT	30000
Automatic Skills		6 High Psg	40000
All Surgisilena receive Liaison-1 on enlistment.		7	50000

All skills are as described in *Book 1: Characters and Combat* except **Instruction** and **Recruiting** are as described in *Book 4: Mercenary*, and **Carousing**, **Communications**, and **Liaison** are as described in *Book 5: High Guard*.

*The following skill is unique to Surgisilena:

Body: The individual is skilled at using leverage and esoteric physical techniques to temporarily transcend physical limitations and perform seemingly amazing feats. This skill operates in similar

Skills				
	Personal Development	Service Skills	Advanced Education	Advanced Education (EDU 8+ only)
1	+1 STR	Blade Cbt	Mechanical	Electronics
2	+1 DEX	Jack-o-T	Computer	Bribery
3	+1 END	Liaison	Streetwise	Admin
4	+1 EDU	Carousing	Recruiting	Medical
5	Brawling	Vehicle	Instruction	Forgery
6	Body*	Gun Cbt	Gambling	Leader

fashion to the psionic talent of Awareness, except that Body covers DEX as well as STR and END. It is not psionic ability, although a casual observer may mistake it for such. By concentrating for 15 seconds, the character is able to increase one of the above scores by the number of levels of Body skill. This increase lasts only 15 seconds, and can only be performed as many times in 24 hours as the individual has END points. 🎲

21 Starport Places

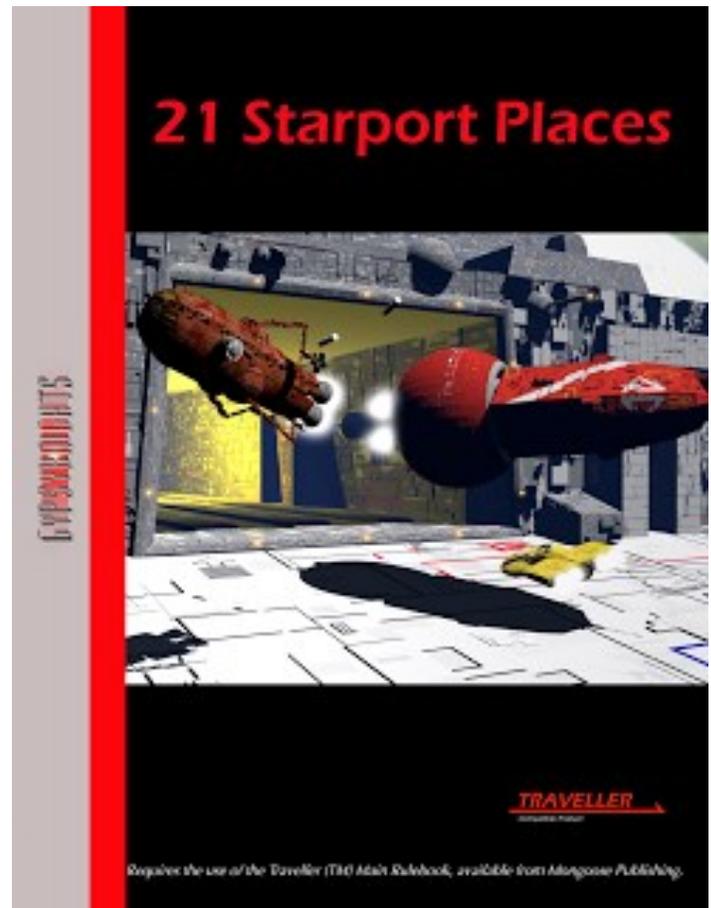
reviewed by "kafka"

21 *Starport Places*. John Watts and Tony Hicks.
Gypsy Knights Games <http://www.gypsyknightsgames.com>
96pp., Softcover and/or PDF
US\$16.99/UK£10.67 Softcover or both; US\$8.99/UK£5.65 PDF

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There now have been quite a few supplements created for Starports in Traveller, ranging from Car-gonaut's CT *Starport Planetfall* which builds upon Gamelords' *Startown Liberty* to MgT's *Starports* (which builds upon MJD's independent work), but, they have remained a conundrum for most Referees, as a silent debate in the Traveller community was waged: are they akin to airports or seaports? When one thinks about it, it does become important to embellish different worlds with unique and memorable places, and this exactly what Gypsy Knights Games has done here with *21 Starport Places*. Although the product is tied into their Clement Sector ATU, the locations are easily usable in any campaign. The typical starport encounter usually revolves meeting in the recognizable Starport/Startown bar when the proverbial old man and farm boy sit down beside you to ask for passage or some such thing. There is no reason why this should be the norm, and this product proves it by not following that tired old trope.

Along with copious nicely drawn floor plans of the 21 locales, major NPCs for each, and detailed description that include plenty of adventure seeds, this product comes with excellent art and mood. My favorite places include the boxing hall and Short Stay Capsule Hotel. Some of these are very American, perhaps tongue in cheek to those of us who rebel against *Traveller* as being classed as "Yanks in Space," or, perhaps, the author's own group preferences – for who says there will not be biscuit places in the far future, given SJG's infatuation with burger joints. As the title implies, there are 21 locales and that is both a boon and a curse.



Though these are 21 locales that I may not have thought of, I would have liked to see some of the more traditional darker locales covered: lounges, bars, holo-brothels, warehouse districts and hangars—parts of a Starport that good Referees, as usual, can wing it (but knowing Gypsy Knight Games there is probably a 21 More Starport Places in offing). It is these darker and seedier places that will push the OGL that *Traveller* sorely lacks. As *Traveller* is best when it neither too light nor too dark, reflecting that life is always a shade of grey – where good guys/gals sometimes are compelled to do bad things in the name of the greater good. Another problem, which there is no way around it, is that the book is dominated by floor plans and while many in *Traveller* community (including, myself) have yearned for floor/deck plans for years, Mongoose *Traveller* products are taking this to such an extreme that I am starting get fatigue by books overburdened with endless floor plans. I do not criticize Gypsy Knight Games for their inclusion, and, indeed there is no

other way but they do take up a significant amount of space over, say, art which is something that I would like to see more of. However, art is expensive and very hard to get right

In conclusion, Gypsy Knight Games' resolution of the debate (what is a Starport?) is that it is a small

urban conglomeration growing up around the landing areas, akin to a seaport littered throughout with useful services for players as well as traditional hives of scum and villainy. This product is highly recommended to round out descriptions of Starports for *Traveller* or any SFRPG. ☼



Up Close and Personal

Nooni Hendricksonne

profiled by Sam Swindell

Nooni Hendricksonne 38488B Age 46 Cr108,000
7 terms ex-Scout

Skills: Air/Raft-2, Jack-o-T-2, Mechanical-1, Engineering-1, Medical-1, Navigation-1, Pilot-1, Laser Carbine-1, Vacc Suit-1, Dagger-1

Equipment: Dagger, MilStd Vacc Suit, Cloth (IISS coveralls), Medical Kit, Mechanical Tool Kit

Nooni is a tall, slim, striking woman of obvious Vilani heritage. She wears her dagger like she wears her clothes: close to her skin. Anytime she is aboard, she wears the skin-tight military standard vacc suit, usually under crew coveralls of some incongruous pastel. She wears her platinum-blond hair cropped close, and eschews other adornment, with the very occasional exception of body paint.

Her family runs a large merchant line in the Core, but she has made a point of remaining aloof from all this. Coming as far as she has in the IISS, she has lost a lot of friends. She has adapted by studying the Stoics, and also by embracing her faith. She truly believes that she will die as the crew of a starship, and that the only thing left for her is determining whether she will die well. She is at peace with this, and seems the perpetual optimist. While prudent in her dealings, she seems quite fearless.

Nooni is looking for a spot on the right crew which needs her. She prefers to avoid ships with high passengers, but will Steward if necessary. She is probably most comfortable on the black gang of any ship, and is happy to double as a medic. She will take a working passage if it makes sense, but

she would rather wait a few weeks or even months than to ship out with the wrong crew. When she's interviewing for a position, she's really asking herself, "Would I *die* for this person without hesitation?" The answer is *yes* surprisingly often, but this has little to do with considerations of money or prestige; usually it is a combination of character and factors that Nooni herself does not fully understand. She once shipped with a Captain because she had eyes for the gunner. Like so many things in her life, it did not work out quite as she planned, but she is still deciding whether it was worth it—probably not, for the chief engineer whose butch visage was unimproved by the 6cm scar on her jawbone. Nooni likes men; not to unhealthy excess, but certainly enough that women tend to be a distraction that she tries to avoid among a small crew. Women tend to see her as a rival, or occasionally as a prize. Both are predictable, tolerable, and to be avoided if possible as Nooni sees it.

Her laser carbine is only for use *in extremis*, because of its weight, and her limited strength. Her cloth armor is sewn in a set of IISS coveralls, which she will don either when expecting trouble or for EVA. If a boarding action impends, Nooni will try to go EVA if the crew is uncomfortable putting the ship into zero-G; she figures she has the best chance of remaining unencumbered in zero-G, and the laser carbine can even the odds in the fight. Also, while essentially unafraid of death, she realizes that is not the worst fate that can befall one facing some of the pirates, and so she would prefer to fight in the harsher environment of zero-G vacuum, looking for a flank angle or an opportunity to counterattack. ☼

Feedback

Please tell us ...

- what you think of both magazine and website
- what you think of the articles we publish
- how we can make our magazine better
- how we can make our website better
- what kind of articles you do or don't want to see
- what you think of our look
- how we can make it better

Please, give us your opinion! We've provided several ways you can do so:

- e-mail: feedback@freelancetraveller.com.

- feedback form at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/feedback/ftfbf.html>.
- Forums:
Traveller Fanzine section of SFRPG: <http://www.sfrpg-discussion.net/phpBB3/viewforum.php?f=36>
Lone Star at Citizens of the Imperium: <http://www.travellerrpg.com/CotI/Discuss/forumdisplay.php?f=13>

Note: you must be registered with the forums to be able to use this method.

Traveller on the Internet

IRC: The #Traveller and #LoneStar channels

Freelance Traveller sponsors channels for *Traveller* fans on the Undernet and Otherworlders IRC networks, and the two channels are "bridged" so that if you're visiting either, you can see what's going on in the other, and talk to people there. For more information about both channels, see our informational pages at <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travnet.html#IRC> and <http://www.freelancetraveller.com/infocenter/travchat/index.html>. Come talk "live" with other *Traveller* fans about anything at all, *Traveller* or not, and make both channels "jumping" places to hang out!

You can also run "play-by-IRC" game sessions in either channel; please stop in and ask one of the channel operators (FreeTrav or EMT_Hawk) to schedule it, so we can ensure that the 'bridge' and the 'bartender' are set into a nondisruptive mode.

Please watch the Traveller Mailing List, the Mongoose Traveller forum, and the Lone Star section of the Citizens of the Imperium forum for announcements of Topical Talks!

Information Center: Request for Information

Here is a list of all of those publishers that we are aware of that are currently putting out material for *Traveller* (any version) or *Traveller*-compatible material not specifically for *Traveller* (this list is based on products that the editor owns, and notifications from "follow your favorites" from DriveThruRPG). If you know of others, or if any of those on this list are not in fact currently operating/publishing, please write and let us know. We'd also appreciate either lists or pointers to lists of all of the *Traveller* and *Traveller*-compatible material put out by any of these companies, or any companies that we may have omitted from the list. If you have contact information, we'd appreciate that as well.

List of Traveller/compatible Publishers

3Hombres Games
Avalon Game Company
Avenger Enterprises
Christian Hollnbuchner
D.B. Design Bureau
DSL Ironworks
Expeditious Retreat Press

FarFuture Enterprises
Forever People
Game Designers' Workshop(!)
Gorgon Press
Gypsy Knights Games
Jon Brazer Enterprises
K-Studio
Loren Wiseman Enterprises
Mongoose Publishing
Postmortem Studios
QuikLink Interactive
Samardan Press
Sceaptune Games
Scrying Eye Games
Spellbook Software and Games
Spica Publishing
Steve Jackson Games
Terra/Sol Games
Toxic Bag Productions
Zozar Games

Submission Guidelines

What is *Freelance Traveller* looking for?

We're looking for anything and everything to do with *Traveller* – reviews of products, house rules, alternate settings, NPC profiles, world write-ups, adventures, equipment, starships, fiction, “color” articles... If you see it in *Freelance Traveller*, or on our website, we're interested in it. Even if you don't see it in the magazine or on the website, we might be interested; write to editor@freelancetraveller.com and ask.

Some things that we want that you might not think of as “*Traveller*” would include reviews of non-*Traveller* products that easily lend themselves to being ‘mined’ for ideas for use in *Traveller*, or reviews of fiction (in any medium) that “feels” like *Traveller* in some way. In these cases, your article should focus on the *Traveller*-esque aspects of the item. There may be other things, as well; if you're not sure, write and ask.

What about ...

The rule of thumb is “If it's a *Traveller* ruleset, or a setting that has been published for use with a *Traveller* ruleset, go for it!”. That includes the non-Official *Traveller* Universe settings that have been published for use with any version of the *Traveller* ruleset, including (but not limited to) *Judge Dredd*, *Strontium Dog*, *Babylon 5*, *Reign of Diaspora*, *Twilight Sector*, the two GURPS variants on the Official *Traveller* Universe, Avenger Enterprises' *Far Avalon*, and the forthcoming *Traveller Prime Directive*, and any others we may have forgotten.

...Hyperlite?

We've made the decision to support *Hyperlite* as though it were an alternate *Traveller* setting, much like *Twilight Sector* or *Reign of Diaspora*. The changes that Sceptune Games has made to *Traveller* to get *Hyperlite* aren't really much more than the differences between Classic *Traveller*, *MegaTraveller*, *Marc Miller's Traveller*, and *Mongoose Traveller*, and converting between any of those systems and *Hyperlite*, in either direction, should be ‘trivial’.

... Diaspora, or Starblazer Adventures?

If your article is about “crossing over” between these products and any of the “standard” or supported *Traveller* rulesets or settings, by all means, submit it! If it's support for those systems beyond *Traveller*, we'll accept and hold

the submission, but will not print it unless/until we've had a reasonable level of expression of interest in such support from our readers.

How should I submit my article?

What needs to be in the submission?

At the very minimum, we need the submission itself, your name (for credit), and a valid email address to contact you at if we need to.

What format should I submit it in?

That depends on what you're submitting. Generally:

Text should be submitted in Microsoft Rich Text Format (RTF), Microsoft Word 2003 (DOC) or 2007/2010 (DOCX), OpenOffice Writer (ODT), or plain text (TXT). Most word processors will support one of those; if yours seems not to, please write to us for assistance. Avoid PDF if at all possible; it is difficult to reformat PDFs for our magazine or website.

Graphics should be submitted in the format that's best for the type of graphic. Most of the time, that will be GIF, PNG, or JPG/JPEG. Submitting in higher resolutions is better; we have tools to resample a picture to make it smaller if we need to – but it's not possible to make a picture larger without it becoming pixellated.

If you're submitting a graphic that you'd like to see us use for a cover of an issue, please make sure that it will fit nicely on both US Letter and ISO A4 pages—we'll crop the picture to fit, to avoid distorting shapes, so please leave reasonable “margins”; don't run “critical” imagery right to the edge where it will look bad if we crop it. A good resolution is 100 dpi or more.

Plans (deck plans, building plans, maps, etc.) may be better submitted in a vector-based format such as CorelDRAW! format (CDR) or any format that can be imported into CorelDRAW! X4. Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG), Windows Metafile (WMF), Enhanced Metafile (EMF), Encapsulated PostScript (EPS), or Microsoft Visio (VSD) are some common vector formats that can be imported.

How do I get it to you?

Email it to us at our submissions address, submissions@freelancetraveller.com. Your subject line should specify the type of article that it is, and what section you think it should be put in, e.g., “Combat Rules for Doing It My Way”.

