

AAB PROCEEDINGS

30 September, 1995

Issue 29

The newsletter of the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG), a Traveller club using the official Traveller universe. Produced and distributed by Clayton R. Bush.

Getting Caught Up II

There was no June issue due to a new computer and a heavy workload at work. The new computer required reinstalling both hardware and software, which took three weeks to fully resolve.

The first half of this issue deals with regular column-type stuff. The last part deals with a "Where is HIWG Going" discussion from the HIWG mailing list.

The list is working; its address is HIWG-LIST@FWE.COM.

GenCon

Once again Harold Hale and I represented Traveller players at GenCon. I ran nine events:

T:2000 - Return to Jurassic Park

T:2000 - Private Charter

T:2000 - Where Reydiviki (Rangers) Dare

TNE - Artifact

TNE - T is for Meson

TNE - Joyeuse

DarkCon - Mars One

DarkCon - Stargate II

I also played in two events. The memorable one was Goose Green, where I led the British to an adjudicated defeat. While I maneuvered my subcommanders against where the Argies had stood historically, the Argie players hid their troops at the far end of the board. Frank Chadwick ruled they had enough undamaged troops to fend off my shelled and strafed troops.

My reaction: "If you set your sights low enough, you'll never lose...but you never win."

Their reaction: "We consider simply surviving a victory."

Bah, humbug.

With my schedule, I managed to attend the Traveller seminar but not the Twilight seminar. It was titled "Future Wars", so I probably missed a discussion of the new **Armor 21** project.

A report on the Traveller seminar is on page 2.

Next Year

The Origins convention will be at Columbus, Ohio next year. (It moves around a lot.) Harold plans to be there; it's only a few hours drive from his home. I will probably fly out there this time.

I definitely plan to go to GenCon again next year. I hope to see some more of you there. (GenCon is always in Milwaukee.)

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GenCon Report 1995

—Clay Bush

Once again, I report on Traveller happenings at GenCon. (Odd that no one reports what happens at Origins. Hint, hint.)

PRODUCTS

There was one new Traveller product at GenCon, the novel *Dream of Chaos*.

RAFM dropped half the personal miniature sets for **Traveller: New Era** from their catalog. They have added more starship miniatures, so they do not appear to be abandoning the license.

Harold Hale, Steve Fellows, and I circled the dealer area searching for the Traveller mapping program. We found six programs for generating maps for role-playing, but four we ruled out for si-fi mapping. The fifth was designed for si-fi! But it mandated 3-D star maps, used its own symbol set exclusively, and also had seven (rather than eight) hexes per side of hexagon on the mercator world

map form. The sixth, **Mapbuilder**, is cumbersome and doesn't support a mercator map.

No endorsements yet.

TRAVELLER SEMINAR

Only Frank Chadwick represented GDW at the seminar. Dave Nielson and Loren Wiseman were not there, because they were in Bloomington working on product.

Reformation Coalition: Empire of Sylee is supposed to be between a mountain and a speed bump. However, at the **BattleRider** event, Sylee inflicted a major rout on the RC invasion force. GDW will consider the write-ups before deciding about including the results in the official timeline.

Regency and Reformation Coalition will eventually meet about half-way. Neither will be immensely larger than the other.

Product Plans: Frank feels they have enough equipment, rules, and worlds out there to establish the setting. New products need to tell

story.

Epic Adventures:

1. In most role-playing, players are not at the center of events. If their actions don't influence events, their actions become essentially *trivial*, personal stories.

For example, the three musketeers were at the center of the European balance of power. Recovering diamond studs was personally important to the French queen, but there were also political repercussions whether they succeeded or failed.

If role-played event are not central, the campaign is static. It awaits the next supplement before proceeding, and becomes increasingly focused on personal gain and advancement.

2. In epic adventures, players will be doing something *important*. It may not change world, but it will have impact.

To deal with choosing the *wrong* course, GDW aims for adventures where preponderance of facts leads to one broad outcome. Players are a catalyst, and actions resolve situation.

GDW plans three three-part epic adventures. Each part will be a 48-page adventure released within two months of other parts.

1. Vampire Redux — leads to a Vampire defeat

2. A Regency epic

3. "Belly of the Beast" — Hiver space and issues

Important: Frank started the seminar early. Before I arrived, he was finishing a thread about Vargr being in control of organized crime in the Regency. Hale was there a little bit earlier, and heard something about Zhodani refugees in Regency space. No one I've talked to heard what was said. **

Rules for Good Writing

1. Think. Plan a beginning, middle, and end.
2. Write about people first, then things and facts.
3. Write as you talk.
4. Quote what was said and what was written.
5. Put yourself in the reader's place.
6. Use active verbs. While scenery is, have NPCs do.
7. Make the paragraph the unit of composition. One theme per paragraph, with related sentences in a paragraph.
8. Keep paragraphs short.
9. Keep sentences short.
10. Use a single idea per sentence.
11. Be specific. Use illustrations, cases, examples.
12. Use statistics for support, not for illumination.
13. "A picture is worth a thousand words." For a role-playing adventure, a map is the very best picture. Pictures of important NPCs come second. Pictures of new weapons and gadgets lag far behind.

"With a little practice, writing can be an intimidating and impenetrable fog!" — Calvin

Traveller Chronicle Submissions

—Kevin Knight:

We are **always** looking for quality submissions for the Traveller Chronicle!

TRAVELLER CHRONICLE SUBMISSIONS

Content: Sword of the Knight is interested in articles, adventures, artwork, or fiction from any era of the Traveller universe as published by Game Designers' Workshop. However, any rules related information should use the New Era rules system.

Length is not a concern; if it's too long, we'll run it over several issues. Accepted articles will be subject to editing.

Unsolicited manuscripts become the property of Sword of the Knight Publications and cannot be returned unless accompanied by a large SASE. Sword of the Knight is not responsible for articles lost in the mail. Never send your only copy of an article. You will normally be notified within 30 days of your articles acceptance, rejection, or need for a rewrite. If you have not heard from us within two months, please inquire.

Format: Sword of the Knight cannot consider hand written manuscripts. All manuscripts must be double spaced on standard-sized white or off-white paper. The first page must contain the author's name and address and the title of the article. Each page must be numbered and contain the

author's name. If submitting more than one manuscript at a time, please include the title on each page.

Articles and artwork may be submitted on floppy disk, but must be accompanied by a hard copy of the above format. Sword of the Knight can accept any IBM format (5 1/4" [360K, 1.2M] or 3 1/2" [720k, 1.44M, 2.88 M, 21M] disks). Articles must come in either ASCII, Windows Write, or text files readable by IBM PC compatible machines. Submissions by modem are possible at this time (please contact Sword of the Knight about this option.) or via the net. Disks cannot be returned unless accompanied by an SASE.

Always include clear, precise sketches of maps, diagrams, or pieces of equipment for artist reference. If you send photocopies for artist reference, always indicate the original source of publication. If your article includes tables, send a printout of each table the way it should appear to help our typesetters set it up correctly.

Payment: At this time Sword of the Knight cannot offer more than a token payment for any submissions which are accepted. The specific amount is dependent on content and quality. The author/artist retains the copyright after publication.

Products: Now buys, sells, and trades gaming products. Good supply of out-of-print Traveller products.

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AAB Proceedings

AAB Proceedings is distributed to all active HIWG members. All others may acquire copies at \$2.00 per issue.

To submit material, please send it to: Clayton R. Bush, PO Box 895, Limon, CO 80828. All materials are copyrighted by AUTHOR, and printed for discussion by permission (N.B. Copyright law protects words, not ideas.)

Acknowledgements

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HIWG Connection

HIWG ("History of the Imperium Working Group") is a fan organization for the Traveller role-playing game. For membership information, write to:

Membership Secretary: Clay Bush, P.O. Box 895, Limon, CO 80828

HIWG-Australia: David Schneider, 5 East Avenue, Allenby Gardens, SA 5009, Australia.

HIWG-UK: C.N. Walker, Bankside, Reddister Road, Marsden, Huddersfield HD7 6NF.

HIWG-NZ: Martin Rart, P.O. Box 27-025, Wellington, NZ.

Computers

IBM PC: Brian Borich, 3890 50th Street, San Diego, CA 92105-3005.

Macintosh: Rob Prior, 67 Greenbelt Road, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada L4C 5S1.

MARC MILLER Q&A

—Roger Sanger

A few weeks ago, I offered to pass along your questions to Marc Miller.

Like most of you, for the past few years I've had some nagging questions in the back of my mind about the history of Traveller, the situation at GDW, and the whereabouts & activities of Traveller's author, Marc Miller.

Here's what I've learned from my other sources:

Mr. Miller authored Traveller, and participated in the design/production of MegaTraveller. He had no part in the creation of TNE.

Many fans assume that Marc Miller called the shots at GDW, but in fact, Frank Chadwick has been the President of GDW from the start.

Many fans assume that Marc Miller had total creative control over Traveller & MegaTraveller. Actually, GDW, Inc., the publisher, owned (and still owns) the rights to the publications it produced for those two games.

MEETING

Well, I met the man, and he is one cool dude. He was very personable and more than happy to address any question I put to him. My impression is that he has his heart in the right place — he truly empathizes with gamers.

Though our meeting lasted only 2 hours, we talked about many subjects, including your questions, Traveller, RPG'ing in general, the game industry itself, and Marc Miller's current role in that field.

Here's what I learned from the man himself:

Marc no longer works at GDW. As his reason, he stated: "I found that the activity wasn't supporting the lifestyle I had grown accustomed to."

GDW's move to "Traveller: The New Era" took place after his departure.

MARC MILLER

Marc's main line of work nowadays is in insurance sales. "On the side", Marc currently owns and operates a card game company called Card Sharks.

Marc's wife owns and operates a publishing firm called Heartland Publishing, which brokers print jobs, and provides other services such as publishing-related project management and consulting. Marc "helps out" in his spare time, working side-by-side with his beloved, up to several hours per day. Their specialty

of course is the production of games/game publications, and their largest customer is Wizards of the Coast.

BTW, Marc's daughter and son-in-law work at White Wolf. Jeesh, his whole family (well, almost) is into gaming!

Marc is involved with lining up video games which shall appear on Microsoft's upcoming online service, including at least one based on Traveller.

Marc likes to roleplay, and he still plays Traveller (CT/MT), refereeing a game from time to time.

"There were gaping holes in the rules, but the focus was story lines set against the backdrop of charted space."

QUESTIONS

Mr. Miller's answers to your questions are presented below. We had enough time to cover about 1/3 of the questions you guys sent in, and I've sent the remainder of your questions to Marc so that he may answer them in his spare time, if he has any. Without further ado, here are your questions, and Marc Miller's responses to them. Enjoy...

Hale: What does Marc think about the state of "pencil and paper" RPGs in the 1990s? Will they go the way of the dinosaur, or will they evolve into something that is still relevant in the 21st century?

Miller: Live roleplaying with a referee will always be relevant. I've seen games that have made a radical departure from those that came before them, and they are still played with pencil and paper.

Hale: Are collectible card games like "Magic: The Gathering" slowly killing the RPG industry, or are they instead bringing in new blood that otherwise would be planted in front of a Nintendo or Sega game?

Miller: Many new gamers, mistakenly or not, view those card games and roleplaying games as one and the same thing, and thus the card games give them greater accessibility to other role-playing games. Some will never go further than the cards, but many will.

Hale: What does he do these days when he has a spare evening and invites over a few friends?

Miller: I like to ref with non-gamers. Those new to gaming. They have no preconceptions, bring no rule books with them, just themselves. We simply sit down and start discussing the story line. I make no requirements on how they should play their characters, and let them be themselves. No matter what type of characters they choose, or what stats they might have, their personalities always shine through.

Glenn F. Gorsuch: To what does he attribute the remarkable and lasting success of the Classic Traveller rules? I (for example) *still* use the little books of the original set.

Miller: The popularity of Traveller stems from the richness of the environment. There were gaping holes in the rules, but the focus was story lines set against the backdrop of chartered space, and the referee could easily fill in for any faults in the rules and keep the story line going.

David Johnson: How on earth did you get away with copying H. Beam Piper's *Sword Worlds*?

Miller: I used the name, and that was about it. I knew of the general concept. I looked up sword names independently of H. Beam Piper's work, and based Traveller's *Sword Worlds* on a different structure of political organization entirely.

Eberhard Schulz: There's *Coke Classic*; will there be (Mega-) Traveller Classic for all those (like me) disgruntled with the so-called New Era (which is **not**, **NOT** the proclaimed return of old Traveller)?

Miller: Only the future will tell.

COMPUTERS

Curtiss Cicco: What was your involvement with the development of the ms-dos computer versions of *MegaTraveller I & II*?

Miller: I wrote up the data and guidelines. Paragon did the rest.

Russ Dodson: In the video game *MegaTraveller 2 - Quest for the Ancients*, is it possible to meet Grandfather?

Miller: I don't think so.

Kathy J Bacigalupo: Will GDW or an affiliate produce a graphics, strategy - oriented battle simulator where one can control worlds and budget, etc. to produce ships and carry out scenarios like *Trillion Credit Squadron* and the like?

Miller: Maybe. I'm literally working on something like this.

PBEM DM: Will there be an official World Wide Web site for the Traveller Universe?

Miller: Not soon.

BOW WEAPONS

-Clay Bush

TL	Description	Mass	Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	STR	Rng	Price
0	Wood, 0.5m	0.30	1	1	Nil	3	2	20	50
0	Wood, 0.7m	0.42	1	2	Nil	4	2	20	70
0	Wood, 1.5m	0.90	1	2	Nil	10	5	30	150
0	Wood, 1.8m	1.08	1	2	Nil	11	6	30	180
0	Horn, 1.5m	0.75	1	2	Nil	10	6	30	225
0	Horn, 1.8m	0.90	1	3	Nil	11	7	30	270
2	Composite, 0.5m	0.35	1	2	Nil	3	2	20	100
2	Composite, 0.7m	0.50	1	2	Nil	4	3	20	140
2	Composite, 1.4m	1.00	1	3	Nil	9	7	30	280
7	Comp steel, 0.5m	0.50	1	3	Nil	3	3	30	150
7	Comp steel, 0.7m	0.70	1	3	Nil	4	5	40	210
7	Comp steel, 1.0m	1.00	1	4	Nil	6	7	40	300
7	Comp steel, 1.5m	1.50	1	4	Nil	10	10	50	450

CROSSBOWS

TL	Description	Mass	Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	STR	Rng	Price
1	Composite, 0.5m	2.35	3	2	Nil	3	1	20	175
1	Composite, 1.0m	2.70	3	2	Nil	6	2	30	275
2	Steel, 0.5m	3.00	3	2	Nil	3	3	30	175
2	Steel, 0.7m	3.40	3	3	Nil	4	4	30	215
2	Steel, 1.3m	4.60	3	4	Nil	8	7	40	335
7	Comp steel, 0.5m	2.50	3	3	Nil	3	3	30	225
7	Comp steel, 1.0m	3.00	3	4	Nil	6	7	40	375

Newsletters and Fanzines

I discuss all newsletters alphabetically.

Melbourne Times 5

The newsletter of the Earth Colonies campaign continues with another issue. This issue has news items and feature articles focused on Prometheus/Pollux. Earth Colonies is a generic SF setting outside the standard Imperial universe of MT and TNE.

David Johnson seeks adventures of 2,000-3,000 words, preferably highlighting the Earth Colonies background.

Signal GK 10

The U.K. magazine continues with another 44-page issue, plus inserts. Articles detail the world of Nukaush, with essays on local androids, a hostel write-up and map; a follow-up adventure to the one in Signal GK #9; an article on five hold-out weapons; news items; and a character write-up.

Campbell and Piper granted me distribution rights in the U.S. I sent out sample issues and asked for statements of interest in subscribing. I needed an estimated readership count to work out per issue costs. The response so far has been too low for me to produce copies at an affordable cost.

If you want copies in the U.S., then write to me! I will make copies on a per-request basis at \$0.10/page until I have enough regulars to make offering a subscription service viable.

Starburst 28

The last issue was Issue 28, in April, 1995. Main reasons are Schneider's economic hardship and a lack of submissions from other than Grant Sinclair and David Schneider. Articles are on Yiklerdzanzh, Mercantile activities in the New Era, Gurvin word generator, and another take on the economic discussion.

(The economic discussion: Using the sector data, the population of the entire Third Imperium was X, and, using certain assumptions, it could support Y fleets of 100 capital ships and Z ground divisions.)

Newsletter Exchange

Initiated by Jeff Freeman, this service is meant to provide an exchange service for RPG/wargame clubs. Mail him a copy of your newsletter, or just copies of the portion you want to share, and receive back copies of many. He proposes two benefits for your participation:

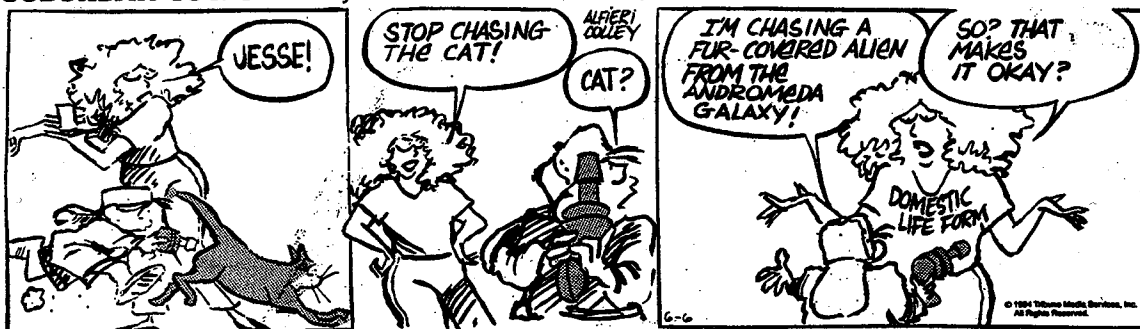
1. You'll be able to use many of the articles you see in other newsletters just by crediting the source.
 2. Your contributors will get their work published in numerous publications just by getting you to print it.
- You send him money, and he applies it to his postage cost.

Jeff Freeman
1903 Sunridge Road
Carrollton, TX 75006

Earth Colony Campaign

David Johnson; Rockville, Maryland
Melbourne Times and the Earth Colonies Campaign
Internet: david@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu
Earth Colonies Web Site: <http://gwis2.circ.gwu.edu/~david/Melbourne>

SUBURBAN COWGIRLS by Janet Alfieri and Ed Colley



NEW HIWG DOCUMENTS

Gvurrdon Sector

GVUR_05.RTF Library Data
By Roger Myhre.

Meshan Sector

MESH_02 Arena Subsector
Subsector F of Meshan.

MESH_03 Arena Subsector
Campaign
Fully expanded Arena systems for
a New Era campaign.

MESH_04 Tokho Subsector
Subsector K of Meshan.

MESH_05 Khakong
Develops the world at 1922 in
Tokho subsector

MESH_06 Gossice
Develops the world at 2230 in
Craties subsector.

MESH_07 Runners
A minor race suitable for use in a
campaign as slaves. A plot device
whether refereeing libertarians or
capitalists.

MESH_08 Serkur
Develops a Vargr world for the
New Era.

245.01 Meshan Scenario
Concepts
By Martin Rait.

Spartan Hegemony

181.19 SPARTMP1
UPP's of surrounding areas in
1115

181.20 SPARTMP2
UPP's of surrounding areas in
1201

181.21 SPARTSYS
UPP's of Sparta system 1201

181.22 WBHSPART
WBH statistics for Sparta in 1201

181.23 HISTORY
History of Spartan Hegemony and
the Lycurges family tree

181.24 GOVMNT
Government of the Spartan
Hegemony

181.25 FUTURE
Future expansion and plans of

the Hegemony
181.26 MILITARY
Armed Forces of the Spartan
Hegemony

181.27 PEOPLE
Key personalities of the Spartan
Hegemony

181.28 SPARTMP3
Map of the Spartan Empire in
1215

181.29 OUTPRECO
Pre Collapse UPP's for new
regions in 181.28

181.30 CHARAC
Details of Character Generation
Within the Spartan Hegemony
(XXXX) ADVENT

Adventure Ideas within the
Spartan Hegemony
181.31 DATA
1201 General Subsector data and
limited Library Data 181.32

WEAPONS
Personal and Support Weapons
(Man-Portable)

181.33 MOREWEAP
Ship Mounted Weapons

181.34 NOTES
Information on unusual terminol-
ogy, bibliography and the Spartan
alphabet (also examples of Spartan
names)

181.35 VEHICLES
Spartan Military Vehicles and

Heavy weapons
181.36 SHIPS
Spartan Military Starships and
Spaceships

181.37 SECTOR
Data for Delphi Sector in 1201
181.38 INTRO

Short introduction for players to
the Spartan Hegemony
181.39 ORGANISE

Military Organisations for
Traveller (century level) and for
Striker II (cohort and above).
Includes standard troop loadouts
and estimated size and composi-
tion of Royal Marines and Spartan
Army.

VIRUS

VIRUS.01 Discussion of Virus
by Martin Rait and Richard Fields
VIRUS.02 God Virus
by Martin Rait and Richard Fields
Develops a society operating
under a God-strain Virus for use in
a campaign.

231.01 Virus Ecology
By Martin Rait.

PERSONAL DOCUMENTS
142.13 Laser Turrets
By Roger Myhre.

Laser turrets designed with *Fire*,
Fusion, and *Steel*.

Traveller Play-by-Mail Game

Eclipse Entertainment is
advertising a play-by-mail Traveller
game. Rules and set-up are free,
with initial turns costing \$8.95 per
turn. (The fee can rise up to \$12.95
for larger turns "at the end of the
game.") I am still waiting for a new
game to start, but I'm on the list.

The game is strategic, not
personal. Each player starts and
forms their own pocket empire in
the New Era setting. Players can
choose a starting government type,

which affects their abilities, but
everybody starts with the same
force mix.

Players get to run space and
ground units, search ruins for relics
or develop technology, explore
systems, and trade with other
players.

Eclipse Entertainment
PO Box 28397
Tempe, AZ 85285

Should HIWG Continue?

At the end of August, Harold Hale posted an electronic message (to HIWG-LIST@FWE.COM) asking: "Should HIWG Continue?" The discussion lasted through September; what follows is a digest of key points.

Why Discontinue?

1. GDW is less open to contributor's input.
2. Communication has dropped substantially.

MEMBERSHIP

Clay Bush: HIWG-UK and HIWG-Australia are not producing. There's still members, but no group. STARBURST is deceased. SIGNAL GK is produced, but it's not a HIWG publication.

HIWG-US is down to about forty paid members.

On the other hand!, my notice has worked its way back into the CHALLENGE classifieds, and I've gotten a few inquiries lately.

SHOULD HIWG CONTINUE?

Clay Bush: It should continue as a fan group. Even if most things we do don't get into the TNE setting, members still benefit from exchanging ideas.

Key ideas are that 1) we develop things and 2) we exchange them. My idea is that we will be *supplementing* GDW's work. We would not be trying to lead their efforts...because we won't.

Mike Mikesh commented that most HIWGs wanted to influence the course of the 'grand campaign' (as I call it). Influence is a broad term. Too broad. I think 'control' has never been more than a dream, while 'contributing' is all we ever could—and still can!!—aim for.

Any dream of controlling where

the grand campaign will go is dead. DIGEST and the Rebellion are history; their detailing saw the highest degree of HIWG influence in defining the Traveller universe. GDW *never* bought into letting contributors decide the course of the grand campaign.

I never expected to decide the course of the grand campaign; I only hoped to contribute some adventures to CHALLENGE and DIGEST. I cannot say that is enough for anyone else.

I can say that anyone insisting on control of the grand campaign before contributing must needs apply to GDW for employment. I point no one out, I think that contributors to a discussion of HIWG's future need to accept that our work will be supplemental.

Geo: I maintain that HIWG should continue, even if it were to become nothing more than a fan organization for Traveller. I know that as long as I am around I will still play Traveller, and will still be a member of HIWG.

Harold: We agree completely on this point, Geo. The questions are: what does this organization consist of today, what do we want it to consist of five years from now, and what can we do to improve communications among members? The answers to these questions are as simple or as complex as the members of this organization want to make them, assuming that they even care if they are answered at all.

Mike: Good questions, Harold. Do you have any thoughts on this?

Alvin Plummer: In my limited understanding of HIWG, the Group was to work as a kind of "information central", where non-GDW developers of the Traveller universe would get together to

co-ordinate their activities with themselves and with GDW, so everyone's in the same universe. Should this be ended?

Mike Mikesh: Make HIWG more of an advocacy group. Take polls of our membership [...] How about a first poll of the members being of the following two questions:

1. What do you *currently* get out of being a member of HIWG?
2. What would you like to get out of being a member of HIWG in the future?

Alvin: 1. Basically, my main benefit was a set of sector files that HIWG very kindly mailed to me. 2. For the New Era, it would be nice if we could get GDW to listen a good bit more to our concerns. True, it is their universe, but they're awfully high-handed about it.

Talking pre-TNE, I feel that GDW never developed the Imperium in any extent. They establish a gorgeous concept and smashed it into very small pieces. I'd *still* like to develop the Imperium some more.

Harold: I see the main benefit as the ability to network with other Traveller players, referees and writers. Sector data I can get from the Internet without ever being a member. Another benefit *used to be* getting the inside scoop on what was going on with Traveller, and to a certain extent we still get advance word on most upcoming projects.

Richard Fields: I'm not a BBS subscriber and my problems of communication to / from it are greater than most of you. Yet the same walls I run up against are (apparently) common to you also. These include the non communication from Game Companies, Fan Clubs & Distributors. I have once taken my problems of communication to be a symptom of PAX

HIWG is a TRAVELLER, not a GDW, Group

AMERICANA, this impression now appears to be incorrect.

I have tried to develop pieces for game systems over the years and must now concede that this is mostly for my amusement. As I perceive it the problems in producing acceptable input is either over development (a common statement re MT Spinward Marches) or company directed agenda (a common statement about the transition from MT to TNE). In both cases I've run into "non information zones" and by doing something independent I've either conflicted with some common knowledge that I've never heard of e.g. the "What do Zho' Prole's use all that brawling skill for?" question and am promptly slapped down and ignored or fall into a data void e.g. the TNE period "virus highway" allowances for planning a subsector, prior to the issue of Vampire Fleets.

With the pre-release scuttlebutt on the Regency Sourcebook, I was torn between making these places vibrant playable homesites or a pop up target range.

I will proceed to develop these projects, using Traveller 1.5 (Classic, plus Merc/High Guard etc) and then cross hack into MT & TNE. I have also accepted that by this approach I'm likely to be ignored or my work used as a naval exercise zone.

If HIWG is to "jump ship" I will ask for updates on which way we with our COLLECTIVE strength and experience will proceed. I do agree that GDW appear to have retrenched and have gone closed shop. In my opinion cutting off input from us (the players / consumers) is a retrograde step.

Above all if Traveller folds, like most of you, I will mourn its loss.

WORKING WITH GDW

Q: What is the special point of working with GDW?

Clay: Most/many HIWGs are interested in getting their work/creations into the "official" setting. Publication by DGP or GDW was the goal.

Harold: Working on the inside with GDW is a hell of a lot easier than working on the outside as a rebel in the electronic wilderness. Perhaps less romantic, but easier.

Geo Gelinis: HIWG was never conceived as simply a writing mill for GDW. Yes, there was some initial intent toward creating history for the rebellion. However, the Rebellion passed and we remained. As I have pointed out in at least one chairsophont letter, we have become more than what we started with.

Harold Hale: Occasionally we have been used as a sounding board, but that role has pretty much ended since GDW doesn't particularly care what we think anymore. After all, if the customer doesn't recognize good sci-fi writing when they see it, then it's their own fault. Wasn't that what we were told about *Hivers & Ithklurs*?

We remain because we are a Traveller fan club. What makes us different from other fan clubs is that we have members that contribute bits and pieces to the game itself (though those pieces get smaller as time goes on).

If this organization is more than when it started, it is because many of us had interests other than just developing background material for the Rebellion (i.e. ship design). It was only natural that we would branch out into these other areas, and up I must say our other mutual interests kept the members of this organization networked with each

other. Lately, however, I have noticed the networks breaking down and people losing touch. Perhaps it is the lack of a common objective. I hope that it is not because of a lack of leadership on my part, or the part of others. I started this discussion to try and figure why things are breaking down and what can or cannot be done to fix things before we have all drifted so far apart there is no putting things back together.

Alvin Plummer: Re: "GDW has effectively stopped taking submissions for items that remotely involve serious plot development." Well, they have their own goals for the "Traveller story."

Leroy Guatney: GDW has effectively killed my interest in TNE or supporting TNE. I remain available to support Traveller (even MT if I have to). But, I have not been silent or remiss in talking about this before.

Mike Mikesh: The situation reminds me very much about some of the things Joe Fugate told me. He enjoys writing, creating, and getting the recognition for his work. It seemed to him that the ideal situation would be for him to become a publisher in the gaming industry. While it is true that more of his material saw print, the amount of work involve was staggering while other people (like me) were using him as a vehicle to get their ideas in print.

There is an awful lot of work and hardship involved in keeping GDW going. I can't fault the staff for reserving the really fun and rewarding stuff for themselves. They deserve it.

Dave and Michelle have been quite reasonable [in the latitude allowed for freelancers].

TRAVELLER CHRONICLE and PUBLICATION

Clay: Previous discussions I've been involved in agreed that HIWG is a TRAVELLER group, not a GDW group. Members contributed heavily to DIGEST as well as CHALLENGE. By all means is CHRONICLE a viable outlet.

My previous comment was on one specific point. Some members wanted their work in the official universe as it developed, and GDW is now heavily controlling what goes into the official setting. Even publication in CHALLENGE doesn't mean the item is in the official timeline. (With good reason; Annic Nova has long been outside the Traveller mainstream.)

BUYING CT/MT

(David Johnson asked if there was interest in HIWG setting up as an independent entity, and buying rights to do more classic and mega-traveller products.)

David Johnson: I hate to sound like a broken record but I was asking this question on this list over a year ago. What I suggested then was that HIWG seek to acquire the Classic Traveller and/or MegaTraveller rights from GDW or take advantage of its considerable creative capital and strike out on its own. It would seem to me a good plan would be shared copyrights with GDW allowed the right of first refusal on any HIWG produced items. In other words, they would get the option to first publish any HIWG items themselves, but could not block any HIWG produced items they declined to publish.

Clay Bush: On buying rights to classic Traveller or MT:

1. No company gives away assets if it costs them. Even if they are gaining nothing from them now,

they still are not supporting another game that would cannibalize TNE sales.

2. I don't have thousands of dollars to spare, and I don't think others do either.

3. We aren't organized as a company. If individuals want to start one, whoever puts into the company gets to run things.

4. Customers: the biggie. How many are there, and how do we find out what they will buy? Will distributors and stores carry our products when it will be competing with the other games they're already selling?

No one problem is insurmountable. Their solution requires, however, someone willing to start a new Digest Group. If such a person appears, more power to him.

Alvin Plummer: I may have missed something, but what can we do as an independent entity that we can't do now?

Harold: It also occurs to me that you are convinced that an updated, new and improved Classic/Mega Traveller would out sell TNE. Referencing my previous comments, what makes you think that if GDW thought there was the slightest possibility that you were right, that they would willing let us market a game that could do seriously damage theirs?

The problem with the whole migration concept is that it depends upon the majority of this organization being so fed up GDW and the direction of Traveller that they would rather play some other game. The problems with that are: a) your assumption that we could all agree on a game to migrate; b) this is a Traveller "fan club"—if individuals around here lose interest in Traveller, they quit the organization — if enough eventually quit, the club passes from

existence — you don't, for example, see the Billy Ray Cyrus Fan Club becoming the Garth Brooks fan club; c) disenchanting fans have generally not taken up another game—they simply continue to play an old version and ignore anything that comes after it.

If this organization decides to go ahead with some sort of business plan, then the delegation that represents us should be made up of individuals who have previous experience in business. This is **not** a job for amateurs.

We are already an independent entity. Most members feel no obligation *whatsoever* to take every single word out of Dave, Loren or Frank's mouth as gospel, and several individuals have developed their own settings independent of anything GDW has published.

If you mean that we should support other games, that is something that probably more than one of us does already. (Clay, for example, runs Twilight: 2000, and Dark Conspiracy games.) Making support of other games official HIWG policy is something that should be put to a vote of the membership—because it will fundamentally change the nature of what this organization is all about.

David Johnson: Being "independent" would be to put the considerable creative talent of HIWG to use on a non-Traveller project/product that would be beyond any ownership claim by GDW.

Martin Rait: Recently many people's messages have concentrated on the publication of material developed by HIWG members. In the past it appears that people have been satisfied with using fanzines & Challenge for such purposes. However, like the hyperzine project and GDW's refusal, people will split from

Traveller and put their views into another system.

When GDW announced TNE and the end of MT I trashed most of my gaming material in disgust and went away and wrote SF short stories which involved many of my gaming concepts. After six months, I got bored and wrote a set of rules to use with the universe developed in my stories. Since 1991 this system has expanded to encompass six virtually finished books. Release is planned in 1996 as soon as I have enough capital.

My point is telling this is simple. If you are unsatisfied with Traveller (or another system), then it is possible to strike out on your own. If you have the vision, the tools and the dedication it is possible to publish your ideas. A book of rules and details on a universe are all that are required.

Many Traveller fanatics like CT rules because of the simplicity. What stops you from coming up with a simple, easy set of rules?

HIWG certainly has the talent to develop a universe. Given the rule or design system variations members have proposed for TNE I don't see what the problem is. If GDW won't let you publish for their systems, or your ideas don't fit the New Era, then HIWG as a collective should analyze the idea for publication by HIWG itself (or by another gaming company).

Fan input and the reward from publication is what the RPG publishing world is all about these days. Given corporate attitudes, it explains why there are many small RPG systems out there, and why over RPGs from other companies have hit the big time.

That's my second ten cents worth. I invite comment.

Martin Rait, HIWG NZ
(What's left of it)

David Johnson: Maybe a little focus on what the *advantages* are would be a little more useful. "Do nothing" *already* seems to be the default course of action ...

It sometimes seems that "crying/whining/complaining" is a major focus of CT/MT fans. I've certainly done enough of it myself, especially in the days of the "old" (pre-MPGN) TML. I'd like to move beyond thatf.

Harold: Have you really? Is that why you've come up with this plan to bring CT/MT back from the dead? While that is more constructive than what some of the "old" TMLers were doing (like making statements that almost got them in court to answer to a libel suit), I'm not so sure what you propose qualifies as progress.

I support a plan which would consider incorporating other sci-fi RPGs under the HIWG banner and

attempt to establish a better relationship with GDW. I further believe that certain organizational changes will help improve participation. Does that end your confusion?

I think that it is time we do two things. First, put together a document I call the "HIWG Referendum", which will go to all members of HIWG and ask them to respond to some important questions about the organization and direction of HIWG. Second, compose a group letter to Frank Chadwick (and Dave Nilsen) asking where he believes our organization stands in relationship to GDW.

If there is support for these two initiatives, let's get some feedback going as soon as possible, and set a date by which these things should be completed. If not, then tell me to shut up and I'll stop wasting people's time and disk

HIWG Leadership

Harold Hale: Did more than half of you know that Geo Gelinas resigned as Chairsophont?

Geo: Although I tendered my resignation as Chair of HIWG, I still consider myself one of HIWG's leaders, although it does not seem to require much leadership. During my tenure as Chair, I was called on to make a "major" decision only once. We tend to run by committee. HIWG has continued for about a year since I have stepped down, and I believe it shall continue on.

Harold: I asked the question because that information *should* have appeared on this mailing list. Any organization requires some leadership, even if just by example.

David Johnson: Who makes up the "existing leadership of HIWG" and how are they chosen? I'm a dues paying member and have no

idea who these folks are or how they're selected.

Harold: Good question. Current HIWG leadership consists of:

Chairsophont - <vacant>
(formerly Geo Gelinas)

Vice Chairsophont - Mike Mikes
Membership Secretary and Newsletter Editor - Clay Bush
Quadrant Editors - Harold Hale, Leroy Guatney, Clay, and Mike.

There are also some other long time members which are considered influential that do not have an official title. You hear Clay or Geo or Mike mention their names on occasion.

How are they chosen? Well they volunteer to do a certain job, and the senior members give them the go ahead. In some cases they were around when the organization was founded, and have had the job ever since.

HIWG Communications

LESS COMMUNICATION

—Clay Bush

Mailing list: The HIWG Mailing List still works? I thought it didn't, so I stopped posting to it.

Regular mail: My incoming mail has dropped substantially.

AABP: I've missed an issue (June), and this one should have been out in September. I've had some problems, but they're fixed.

Other newsletters: There are no Quadrant newsletters. AABP started that way; there were other regular mailings by quadrant editors. I've not heard of any group mailings lately.

HIWG-LIST@FWE.COM

Clay: Since HIWG Mailing List is working, (I thought it wasn't), I'll post here more often. Exchange of news and views by *any* media is a benefit of membership ... currently less valuable because of decreased communication.

Geo: This board is not the only means of communication between HIWG members.

Mike Mikesh: There was a point where I could not keep up. My assumption is that the discussions have simply migrated to a mailing list I do not monitor. However, since the I don't monitor the others, I don't really know how active are our constituents.

Harold: But this list should be the primary arena to try out new ideas, share bits of gossip and speculation about the direction of Traveller, vent our frustrations with GDW, ask Traveller-related questions, and generally keep in touch with other HIWG members that we normally don't correspond with because we aren't working on projects together, don't share enough interests, or whatever. I just don't see that happening nearly often enough.

Mike: If you have a new initiative to launch, yes, it could be an invaluable tool. Sometimes, though, you have to do a bit of pump priming. I mean contact some people explicitly to draw them into involvement. Some of the newer members might be particularly good to aim for — new blood, new ideas, and all that.

Roger Myhre: So why don't HIWG members communicate any more when the TML is overflowing with messages? And many participants there are or have been HIWG members.

Harold: Because at some point people decided to use TML *instead* of this mailing list. I think it has a lot to do with the response that you get on TML: post almost anything and somebody feels compelled to respond. Here I've seen ideas and materials posted and only response was the echo as the message hit ground in an empty hall.

We need to find a way to change that. I'd give away free beer, but it's difficult to pour beer from a virtual tap.

Roger Sanger: The TML generates more feedback on postings because it has a lot more members. Perhaps you should open up the HIWG list to the public? That would probably be more effective than giving away free beer.

AAB PROCEEDINGS

Clay: AABP was originally designed as a newsletter, not a fanzine. I discussed what people were doing in Quadrant I, and I included people's letters to the general group.

I'm considering better ways to produce and to make it more useful. Useful, to me, depends on what people want rather than what I want.

Referendum: So HIWG Can Move Forward

HIWG's Purpose

1. What do you currently get out of HIWG?
2. What do you want to get out of HIWG?
3. How do you feel about expanding HIWG's scope to exchange materials on other games besides Traveller?

Interests

4. Which version of Traveller do you use now? Classic Traveller (CT), MegaTraveller (MT), or Traveller: New Era (TNE).
5. Would you buy new CT/MT products if someone published them?
6. Would you support developing another setting?
7. Would you support developing another SF game?

AAB Proceedings

8. What do you currently get out of AABP?
9. What do you want to get from AABP?
News? What others are doing or what companies are doing?
Equipment? Starships? Adventures? Developed subsectors?
Product reviews? Answers to questions?