AAB Proceedings

31 October, 1997 Issue 35

The newsletter of the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG).
Produced and distributed by Clayton R. Bush.

Alpha Centauri - The Overlooked System

--C.R. Bush

Most of this issue describes the nearest system to the Terran home world it exists in the TRAVELLER universe. The development is set before or at the start of the First Interstellar War.

System Overview

Astronomy states that Alpha Centauri has two main sequence stars in "close" orbit with a dim red star (Proxima Centauri) in a centuries-long orbit around them. Proxima can be ignored as uninhabitable.

TRAVELLER Sources

The Solomani Rim sector listing only lists one component world, Prometheus. A search of other TRAVELLER sources found no write-up for the system. Historic references to the Terran period refer to a hasty colonization of the *unsettled system* after contact with the Vilani.

There are only two TRAVELLER sources to be consistent with. First, the board game IMPERIUM has two habitable planet boxes for the primary Alpha Centauri system, and a hostile environment planet box for Proxima Centauri. Second, an article in JTAS on adding ground combat to IMPERIUM had two rough world maps for the Alpha Centauri system. (Unfortunately, all the maps in that article fail to match published UWPs: not enough surface water hexes.)

General Theme

Other SF games set in near-space have had to describe Alpha Centauri. The general pattern is to assume many national settlements during initial colonization. **2300AD** stated 50 national settlements, including a (small) U.S. enclave.

Although generally described as an urban center comparable to Terra, little further detail is given. (In **2300AD**, only Terra and Alpha Centauri are "core worlds.") Alpha Centauri is usually subsumed into the "inner worlds" bloc near Terra, and not detailed at all.

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Referendum

Attached to this newsletter is a referendum on where HIWG and AABP should go. Please return it to me promptly.

I have tried to make answering it as simple as possible; I will read essay answers, but such commentaries cannot be tabulated.

Subj: GenCon Seminar Report

(During the seminar, Marc Miller asked, "Why is Clay writing everything down?" Later he remarked, "Be careful guys. Since Clay's writing down what we we say, we'll have to do it." And so, when I came back from the restroom, people asked if I had had to wire in a report to the APB.)

Announcement: Alien races book will cover the Aslan, Vargr, and Graytch. They want any race detailed to be one adventurers are likely to encounter. If a race stays on its homeworld, just cover it in adventure or library data. Graytch will have the smarts and dexterity to be widely sought-after as engineers for ships and stations.

They want alien races to reflect some aspect of society. Otherwise, there's no point of contact for people trying to play them. Aslan: division of the sexes. Vargr: individualistic and opportunistic. Graytch: loners and pacifist.

Announcement: They are discussing among themselves doing a race book on humans.

Announcement: Steve Jackson Games wants to do *GURPS: Traveller*, and everything is okay except that no contract has been written or signed yet.

Setting: Dulinor shoots Strephon, the Empress, the Grand Princess, and the Aslan Ambassador. Then, Strephon (or his double) wakes up and says, "What a terrible dream!" 1116, without the Rebellion.

Announcement: Another project taking shape is *First Contact*. It will detail Terrans just before a ship travels to Barnard and contacts the Vilani. It would carry us up **to** the contact. It will have the necessary systems and detail to play, but not ship or world design rules.

Announcement: *MILIEU 200* will be about the Aslan-Border Wars. The Vargr Campaigns are too far separated from those to get any coverage in this product.

> Only detail races players are likely to encounter. Alien races should reflect some aspect of society.

Other milieu products will advance the timeline about 200 years every calendar year. The next two would be the Civil War and the era of social upheaval that included the Psionic Suppressions.

Key Idea: The idea is to have "multiple entry points" to the game universe. A group can start in 0, 98, 200, or -2215. They feel other companies have been successful with multiple entry points, and that it fits well with 1100 years of Third Imperium history being known.

There are no plans or intention for a Milieu 1200 (but GURPS will carry on its alternate setting). IG has much to do with the other 1100 years of the Imperium's universe. My emphasis: *IG does not have a Regency or RC book planned.*

Key idea: Miller and IG believe that describing organizations is important in setting flavor: TAS and the megacorporations color the Imperial setting. They will continue describing organizations. (Note the AAB coverage in *Mileau 0.*)

TRAVELLER 4.1

It will be out later this year. target date is November. The default date for campaigns under it will be the year 98.

Character generation will include a birthdate, then you back to a birth year by subtracting the character's starting age.

Experience: During character generation, characters gain an average of 1.25 skills per year. During play, record the skill most effectively used (GM decides). On your birthday, see which skill was used effectively most often, and it rises by one. For that .25, after age 33, you get an additional skill bump when you make your aging throw.

Starports will be better defined. A chapter is titled "Every Adventure Begins and Ends in a Starport." (IG will also push that as a rule when running adventures.) The local Starport Authority will run each starport according to the purpose of the starport. On a trade world, sleds carry you through customs to an import/export exchange. On an isolated, xenophobic world, you step off a ship to see rows of customs desks, entry form checkers, and quarantine and infection control officials.

To resolve a long-recurring issue, the game will assume a "NAPA" approach to starship parts distribution. Any class-A starport will have a "NAPA" franchise carrying jump drive parts, etc., up to TL-12. Parts above TL12 will require custom orders or going to worlds with those tech levels. TL12 will be the common level.

Space combat will be divided into two steps: detection and hitting for damage. You cross-reference weapons against defenses, and the tables will cover some meson guns and particle accelerators.

Most combat will be assumed to occur between the jump point and the main world. You establish an SOP for when you leave jump space, and the referee can then run anyone watching for arrivals.

Ship design will be intelligible and steps will flow reasonably. You

will not need a spreadsheet to design them. Design and combat will be entirely different chapters, and you will not have to refer to both chapters when you use one.

There will be a ship card form for recording ship stats. One part will be a 2d6 damage table. You can put things in the (safer) 2 and 12 slots, but there is a cost for that. (They discussed leaving 6, 7, and 8 blank as a design strategy. I suggested leaving important things there on merchants to save money, and planning to surrender if fired on. "Look! We carry food supplies, and our hold is full of papayas. You can have all you want, Mr. Pirate.")

Other Products

Computer products: They do not have skills in this area. They will listen to proposals, but have no plans to do anything with aids themselves.

No new STRIKER: IG aims to avoid military products. It's been done in Traveller's history.

Comment: GDW made a fortune on World War III .... until 1989, when the wall came down. Sales pattern for TNE products was steadily declining, which might relate to the military emphasis.

Miniatures: Nothing is set.

Enhancements: I asked about bionic enhancements and such, common to other SF games. IG feels most will be invisible, such as Jean-Luc Picard's artificial heart. They would be used in recovery, but would not provide bionic powers. They feel many other games are driven by some artists' conceptions, and that a shotgun hand is impractical for scratching your nose.

DGP pushed robotics, and it did not catch on. They would like to see more robotics, but it has been low profile.

No discussion of powered suits occurred, but the mods for battle dress, etc., are already in print. They don't show any interest in going that way.

CITIZENS OF THE IMPERIUM

Management has told IG to set a higher priority on supporting this player organziation. They have product out the door, now support promises of a fan organization. (This may be why people have only recently seen their credit cards charged, when they sent in the info months ago or even last GenCon. Since it wasn't active, IG didn't take the money.)

They feel it's a no brainer to create a database for goodies or find resources to run it. They want to reward players. Land grants, papers to a starship, heroism - rewards, whatever: *Things that would not sell in a hobby store.*

Traveller contributors have received signed Imperial Warrants in the past, etc. They need to set plans, however. What exactly does one do to get noble title or a land grant? Or other prize?

CITIZENS' NEWSLETTER

What is desired in a CITIZENS' newsletter? Participants suggested:

o Adventure tickets. Referees need idea to flesh out, and can design to suit their own group.

o Rumors, like those in the *Milieu 0* book.

o TAS news items. ("But TAS wasn't there at the start." "Marc, when did TAS start?" He looked at ceiling for a little bit. "235.")

AAB Proceedings

AAB Proceedings is distributed to all active HIWG members. All others may acquire copies at $2.00 per issue (or $12 at a time).

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.

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.

Date: _____

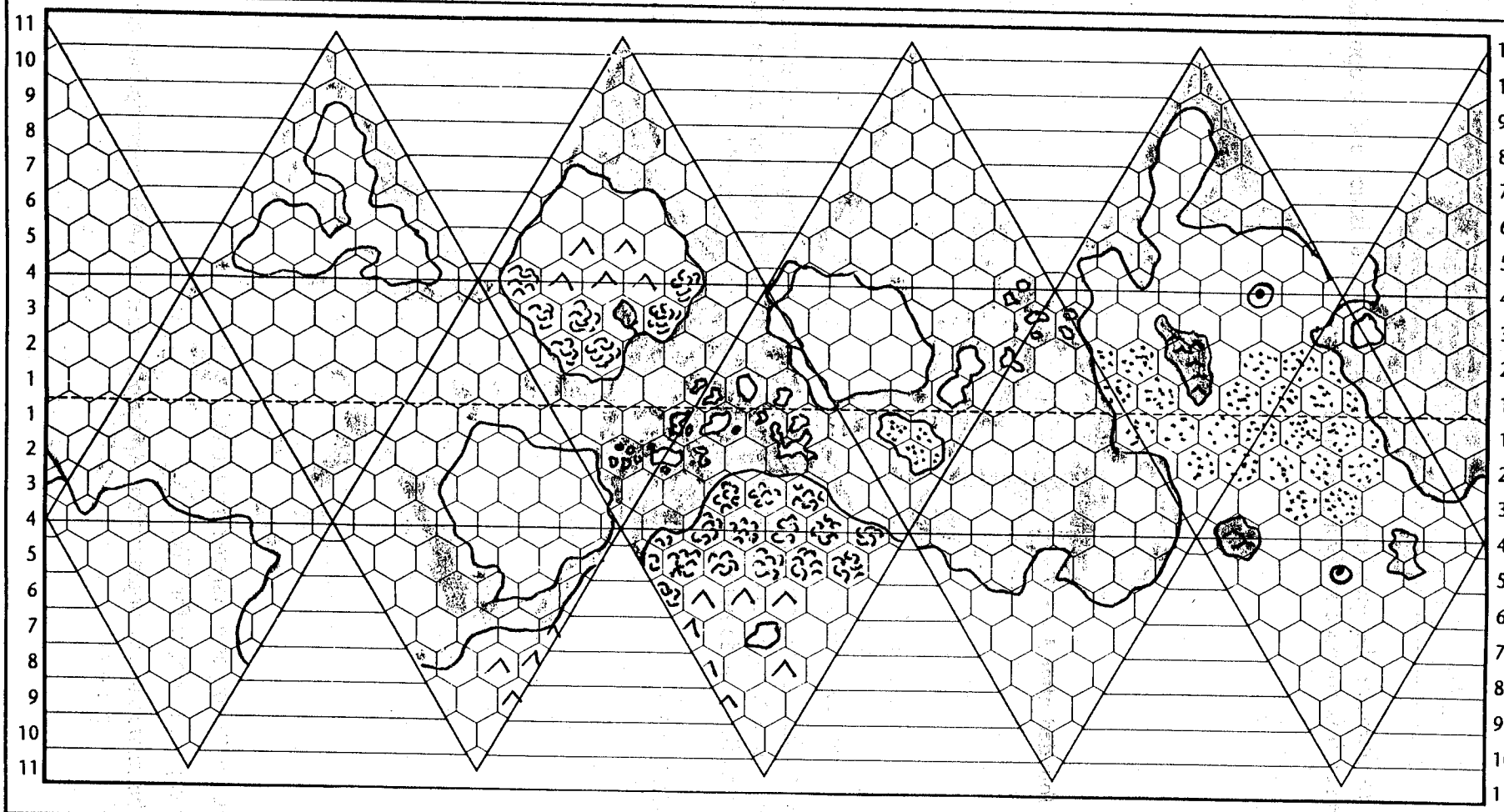
World Name Prometheus

UPP 7 8 5 _ _ _ _ - _

Hexagon Scale in Kilometers 1,000km

Subsector and Sector Location of World Prometheus / Solomani Rim

GLOBAL DATA VIEW



Urban	Rough					
Starport	Mountain					
Jungle	Water					

Prometheus Development

--Clay Bush

Prometheus was quickly settled after the Terrans contacted the Vilani at Barnard. It was unsettled before their arrival. A UN body continued the practice of naming worlds for mythological figures.

CLIMATE

Use of the temperature formulae from *Scouts* (repeated elsewhere) reveals that Prometheus has a burning equator. The heat helped win approval for naming the world after the discoverer of fire.

The sub-polar areas have a useful growing season, but frigid winters. This area is subject to long days and nights. Local animals adapted by hibernating during the long, frigid nights.

EARLY SETTLEMENT

The Prometheus map in JTAS 5, like all the maps in that article, woefully understates the surface area covered by water. Two settlements, one in each sub-polar region, makes a great deal of sense. It coincided with the UN's interest in establishing settlements to support territorial claims.

Initial settlements were located to become self-sufficient in food. Once crops were found or adapted to the growing conditions, serious mining of major metal deposits could begin. The mines could not be assumed to be self-supporting, as they had to be where the mineral deposits were.

NATIONAL RIGHTS

UN treaty law specified that national sovereignty applied to all settlements off Terra. Corporate settlements were under the laws of the nation in which the corporation was chartered. And the nation in question was responsible ('liable') for a corporations' actions. *Both settlements were multinational, with settlers from all over Terra.*

Poorer nations were over-represented. Since Prometheus is the closest system to Terra and had a breathable atmosphere, a nation trying to meet an emigration goal found Prometheus the cheapest place to send and support a colonist. Poor nations were also least able to enforce order in their 'national' territories.

Multi-nationals generally were chartered in nations strong enough to enforce the corporation's property rights. Less scrupulous operators would charter a company in a poor nation on Terra, exploit less skilled immigrants on Prometheus, and count on connections and payoffs to avert law enforcement in 'their' enclave on Prometheus.

POPULATION ISSUES

Prometheus attracted less-skilled colonists by default. Settlements on inhospitable worlds simply required those with space skills. The UN pushed colonization, how- ever hasty, so the flow of people off Terra increased. Those unqualified to live on harsh inhospitable worlds went to Prometheus.

The settlements became polyglot communities. The broad mix of languages and religions caused local dialects to develop in both settlements. Then the colonists intermarried. This mix encouraged a sense of individuality, and also a reaction to lose self in a sect or corporation.

Housing was a serious issue, because the long, frigid winters mandated shelter. Most shelter was community-constructed "apartment" buildings. Covered walkways (a la tube connections between space modules) cropped up early. This housing fostered a need to fit in to a community.

The competing threads pointed to a mix of conforming to the community and strict privacy around individuality.

Perceived corporate abuses led to labor movements that favored Promethean independence. Some business leaders opposed independance, because of legal issues, and others favored it, to escape subservience to Terran head offices. This led to interesting intra-corporate, labor, and party politics, with much shifting of alliances and positions by all concerned.

Temperature Chart

Hex Row	Base Temp	Max Temp	Min Temp
1	57.0	59.0	54.5
2	51.0	53.0	48.5
3	45.0	47.0	42.5
4	39.0	41.0	36.5
5	33.0	38.0	25.5
6	27.0	35.0	14.5
7	21.0	32.0	3.5
8	15.0	29.0	-7.5
9	9.0	23.0	-13.5
10	3.0	17.0	-19.5
11	-3	11.0	-25.5

World Data

Gravity: .9G
Orbit: 372.73 days
Rotation: 10.0 hours
Horizon: 4.7 km

The planet has a hot, desert equator, but cool polar zones. Plant and animal life evolved before human colonization. The dense jungles between the equator have small animals, and most polar animals hibernate.

Date: _____

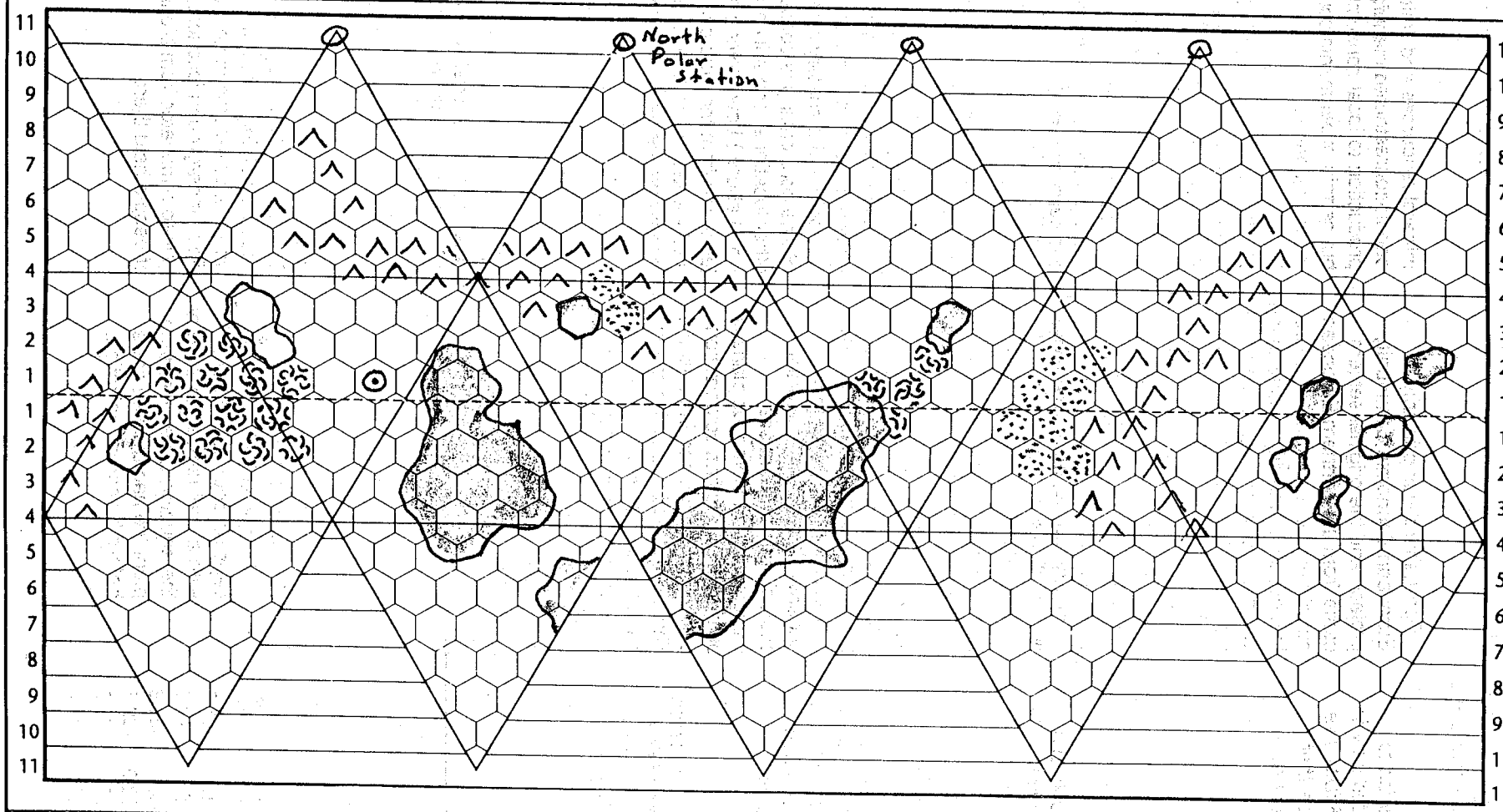
World Name Betevia

UPP 5 5 4 _ _ _ _ - _

Hexagon Scale in Kilometers 720km

Subsector and Sector Location of World Prom / Solomani Rim

GLOBAL DATA VIEW



Urbun

Rough

Starport

Mountain

Jungle

Betevia Development

- Clay Bush

The habitable companion to Alpha Centauri B is noted only in the board game IMPERIUM. I've not found any SF source that developed a second habitable world in that system.

WORLD DATA

The world was settled during the rush outward from Terra; there was no previous Vilani presence. This world had less desirable real estate than Prometheus, but UNESCA policy was to settle any habitable world nearby. The two habitable worlds in the Alpha Centauri system were the only worlds with breathable atmospheres initially available.

The world was referred to by various terms until it was officially named. The name originated as a heavy handed attempt at a pun merging 'Beta' with 'Batavia'.

PORT LAHURE

The initial settlement was named for the astronomer who had first identified a planet orbiting Alpha Centauri B. The site was chosen for its geologic stability, on a large granite bloc, and by the equator, which is advantageous for transiting to equatorial orbits.

Port Lahure was primarily a European Economic Community project, and the original settlers came from the northern European countries and Scandinavia. It was laid out as a 'ring city' similar to the German Ruhr, with greenspace and farming between communities.

Farming efforts suffered from the shorter growing season and cool temperatures. The main export crop came to be berries from perennial plants.

Primary development focus was quickly diverted to establishing a fishing industry. Harvesting the earth's oceans was strictly regulated by the time humanity travelled between stars. Betevia's seas were largely unpopulated. After study of salinity levels and temperatures, earth species were introduced. Efforts were soon underway to establish different ecologies in different seas. Implementation of various plans is on hold pending firm colonization efforts around the sea in question. The owning national organization will decide what is done.

Corporations took a leading role in establishing communities. Some were established to get around Terran laws by locating outside the home system. The lack of handy mineral resources and limited populationrestricted manufacturing production to local consumption, but certain experiments could be made discreetly...

NORTH POLAR STATION

The Terrans quickly listed this station in Vilani records as an observatory. It compares its observations with observatories at Proxima Centauri and Terra in a "long base array" with a baseline two parsecs wide!

This research had a military side, as most surveying was of Vilani space. It tried to identify system locations beyond the frontier areas the Terrans could reach, and planets in those systems.

A secondary effort conducts core drilling of Betevia's mantle for geologic and planetary sciences. (Some core drilling is conducted at other locations, primarily around Port Lahure.) Low orbiting satellites launched from the pole can more easily enter 'polar orbits', useful for measuring the entire planet.

UNDERGROUND

During the early years after first contact, North Polar Station had a hidden mission. Catacombs carved beneath the station were designated as headquarters for Terran guerilla resistance should the Vilani capture earth, or just cut the colonies off from earth.

The site remained undocumented for decades. Sections, known by such charming names as "the Bunker" and "the Lubyanka", were used for holding captives, trainees, workers, or records in an unidentified, underground location. It gained fame later from biographies of people held there.

Temperature Chart

Hex Row	Base Temp	Max Temp	Min Temp
1	21.7	23.5	8.2
2	15.7	18.5	3.2
3	10.7	13.5	1.8
4	5.7	8.5	-6.8
5	0.7	3.5	-11.8
6	-4.3	-1.5	-16.8
7	-9.3	-5.0	-24.3
8	-14.3	-8.5	-31.8
9	-19.3	-12.0	-39.3
10	-24.3	-15.5	-46.8
11	-29.3	-20.5	-51.8

World Data

Gravity: .6G
Orbit: 251.5 days
Rotation: 8.0 hours
Horizon: 4.0 km

The planet had large ice caps on both hemispheres, with a cool temperate zone at the equator. Little more than plant life had evolved there before human colonization.

SJ Games Announces GURPS Traveller

September 4, 1997

Steve Jackson Games is proud to announce that it has acquired the rights to create a GURPS version of **Traveller**.

"This is something we and our fans have wanted for a long, long time," Steve Jackson said. "I'm very happy to finally be able to do it, especially since we'll be working with the same people who made Traveller great in the first place."

Long-time Traveller editor and writer Loren Wiseman will serve as Line Editor for the GURPS Traveller series of books and will write the first release. "Loren and (Traveller original author) Marc Miller are the real deal," Managing Editor Scott Haring said. "With their help, we're going to do books that the die-hard Traveller fans will love."

The license sets **GURPS Traveller** in an 'alternate timeline.' "In our timeline, Emperor Strephon doesn't get assassinated, and the 'virus' that was the entire basis for **Traveller: The New Era** did not devastate the Imperium. Our timeline is a continuation of the original **Traveller**, though with Wiseman and Miller's help we'll be taking it in some interesting directions."

The first GURPS Traveller volume will include a description of the basic Traveller universe, GURPS rules for characters, equipment and spacecraft of the Traveller universe, and conversion rules between the two systems. "We want players to be able to convert any Traveller material -- and there's a lot of it out there -- to GURPS right off the bat, and we want Traveller players to be able to play in our alternate timeline," Haring said.

The first GURPS Traveller release is tentatively scheduled for an early 1998 release. Scheduling for subsequent books in the series is yet to be determined.

For more information, contact Steve Jackson at (512) 447-7866.

Jump Travel Test Cases

--C.R. Bush

I propose the following three as test cases for ship travel rules. Note that I have files started developing them as Amber Zone mini-adventures to submit to JTAS.

1. To Be The Queen

The fastest steamship on the Mississippi got the title of the Mississippi Queen. There were annual races up and down the Mississippi for the title. the following is based on this practice. It is very useful for moving players somewhere else when you want to change the campaign's setting.

A line is entering one of its ships in an race for the ? Queen title. This title, signifying the fastest ship, is useful because it permits charging a substantial premium on transit rates.

All ships depart <Capital> in the first week of the year. The first ship to arrive at <Vland> becomes the <Vland Queen> for the next three years or until defeated by a newly built ship. The ship which holds the title is permitted to charge double the normal rate for high passage. There are two ways to involve players.

Passengers: There are people who will pay the premium to arrive faster over a long distance. Anyone facing a <year-long> trip to a distant posting will pay extra to shave <a third or less off> the (unproductive) trip time. The defining factor is passengers who want to go a long way quickly.

Crew: Astrogation and Engineering skills are especially in demand. Crew members receive substantial bonuses if their ship wins.

2. Rescue Mission & Salvage

A ship is overdue. Ships in port are sent to look for it. Someone will find it. (Alternately, a navy wants to salvage a battle-damaged ship, or a derelict scout vessel has been found.)

o Relief agencies and/or insurers will pay for lives saved. The obvious answer to limited life support is to install emergency life-support in searching vessels.

o The salvage value of 10% of the ship's list value goes to whoever can get it back to a shipyard. Can the players repair it in place? Will they have to charter a much bigger ship to carry the derelict back as cargo?

3. Privateer Raid

A pirate base has been located in another system. The commander of a privateer squadron wants to give pirate ships as little window for running as possible. The jump is plotted to have as many ships arrive together as early as possible, as close to the base as possible.

This is the opposite coin of the pirate raid, where the pirate ships want to catch as many merchant ships as possible.

REFERENDUM

This referendum is to measure the membership's interest in various issues and proposals. Since various issues interrelate, it is not necessarily a final vote.

Return to:

Clayton R. Bush

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Limon, CO 80828

Brief history:

HIWG: HIWG was founded after *MegaTraveller* came out, to detail the Imperium which the game had expanded to. It started as a letter organization.

Newsletter: AABP was one newsletter in the group. It took over as the newsletter for the entire club when TIFFANY STAR went into hiatus.

Officers: HIWG started with a *Chairsophont*, as the central person for letter and document exchange. When Ed Edwards became three months behind in answering mail, we established *Quadrant Editors* to spread out the work. Each editor was to recruit developers for a designated region of the Imperium.

Internet Presence: With the growth of the Internet, HIWGers started meeting on the DELPHI boards, then on GEnie. When GEnie 'reorganized', a HIWG internet mailing list was started. The advantage is that members of the mailing list do not need to subscribe to any specific provider.

HIWG Continuation

Choose one:

__HIWG should dissolve, period. It was created to develop sectors, and that purpose is over.

__A *Travellers Writers' Group* should be started for those interested in writing for <u>any</u> version or period in Traveller. Some criteria as HIWG initially: people wanting to <u>contribute</u> to Traveller by publishing stuff.

__HIWG should continue, supporting any version or period in *Traveller*.

__HIWG should continue, supporting the <u>current</u> version of *Traveller*, whatever it is at the time.

AABP

__This should continue as the paper newsletter for HIWG.

__This should be the paper newsletter for TWG.

__AABP should not be related to any organization. Apply paid dues to AABP subscription, and make HIWG and/or TWG free internet-only organizations.

Officers

__ No officers at all

__Continue with a Chairsophont as an executive officer

__ Selected by long-term members who have contributed to organization

__ Elected by paid membership

__ Required to have an internet connection for quicker communication

__Continue with subordinate Editor positions for recognized projects

INTERNET

__Continue HIWG-List

__ with membership tied to payment for AABP.

__ with free membership

__ with no limitations on statements or membership of any kind

__ with the proposed NETIQUETTE rules

__ for support of the current version of Traveller only

__ for free discussions of any version of Traveller

__Start TWG as a free internet list. We use the proposed NETIQUETTE rules from the start.

Other Questions

What set of Traveller rules do you currently use? _____

When is your campaign or events set? _____

Where is your campaign or events set? _____

Are you working on something to submit to JTAS or another outlet?

Signature

For fairness, this referendum is limited to paid-up members of HIWG.

Signature: _____