



# FREELANCE TRAVELLER

*The Electronic Fan-Supported Traveller® Magazine and Resource*



Featured Article

## Festival

Richard Morey

Issue 027  
March 2012



The Traveller game in all forms is owned by Far Future Enterprises. Copyright 1977 - 2011 Far Future Enterprises. Traveller is a registered trademark of Far Future Enterprises. Far Future permits web sites and fanzines for this game, provided it contains this notice, that Far Future is notified, and subject to a withdrawal of permission on 90 days notice. The contents of this site are for personal, non-commercial use only. Any use of Far Future Enterprises's copyrighted material or trademarks anywhere on this web site and its files should not be viewed as a challenge to those copyrights or trademarks. In addition, any program/articles/file on this site cannot be republished or distributed without the consent of the author who contributed it.

---

All articles in Freelance Traveller, whether in the magazine or on the web site, are copyright by their respective authors, and may not be reproduced elsewhere without the express permission of Freelance Traveller (which will generally be granted) **and** the author of the article. Freelance Traveller will not give out contact information for our authors without their specific permission on a case-by-case basis, but will where possible pass on requests for initial contact.

## Contents

Freelance Traveller #027: March 2012

### Editor

Jeff Zeitlin

### Contributors

Jeff Zeitlin, Shannon Appelcline, “kafka”,  
Ken Murphy, Mike Cross, Sam Swindell,  
Harry Bryan, Richard Morey, Ewan  
Quibell, Timothy Collinson

### Artwork

Cover: *Emel Akiah*, from *Terra/Sol’s*  
*Shipbook Mirador*, with permission from  
*Terra/Sol Games*  
From the Editor: *Jeff Zeitlin*  
Critics’ Corner: *Mongoose Publishing*,  
*Terra/Sol Games*  
In A Store Near You: *Jeff Zeitlin*, modi-  
fied from an anonymous image via  
*Google Images*  
Active Measures: *Jeff Zeitlin*, modified  
from a plan found on *eplans.com*

Freelance Traveller is published monthly  
in PDF form by the editor. The current  
issue is available from the Freelance  
Traveller web site,  
<http://www.freelancetraveller.com>.

### From the Editor

*Jeff Zeitlin* ..... 1

### Critics’ Corner

Starfarers’ Gazette #1 reviewed by “kafka” ..... 2

Mongoose Traveller: The Third Imperium: Reft Sector

reviewed by *Harry Bryan* ..... 7

Off the Table: Voyage of the Planetslayer

reviewed by *Shannon Appelcline* ..... 17

Off the Table: The Complete Hammer’s Slammers, Volume 1

reviewed by *Shannon Appelcline* ..... 21

### In A Store Near You

The Showroom: *Wayfarer-class Double-Deck Bus* by *Timothy Collinson* .. 4

The Showroom: *Penny-Farthing Bicycle* by *Ewan Quibell* ..... 23

### Up Close and Personal

Bam Ashish profiled by *Sam Swindell* ..... 5

### Active Measures

Festival by *Richard Morey* ..... 8

### Kurishdam

At Home, We Do It Like This: Slice of Life: Living Space in the 30<sup>th</sup> Century  
by *Mike Cross* ..... 14

### Raconteurs’ Rest

Drop Out by *Ken Murphy* ..... 19

## From the Editor



Last month, we asked people to look at the list of *Traveller* vendors that we’d found mentioned, and provide us with pointers to product lists or contact information. In reviewing the list—not even considering any information that we may have collected—your editor was struck by the number of companies that have put out at least one product for *Traveller* in this current era of Mongoose Publishing as the primary licensee. Even if some of these companies turn out to be “one hit wonders”, it still speaks volumes to the perception of *Traveller* as a viable property, even after thirty-plus years.

At the same time, we’re seeing very high levels of activity in the fan community—fanzines, fans writing for *JTAS* and *Signs and Portents*, posts of adventures, characters, house rules, and so on to the forums at Mongoose, SJGames, and *Citizens of the Imperium*—which tends to reinforce the perception of *Traveller* as not only a viable property, but an actively-supported one.

*Traveller* has undergone many changes characterized as ‘fundamental’ over the years, through at least six official versions, but it is (in the opinion of the Editor)

only with *GURPS Traveller* and *Mongoose Traveller* that we have seen changes that actually realized the potential that the *Traveller* community has said they’ve seen for most of the thirty-plus years that there has been a *Traveller*: Bringing *Traveller* to *GURPS* made it truly possible and easy to move out of the “crunchy space opera” genre that previously defined *Traveller*, into mixed-genre SF gaming, and *Mongoose Traveller* has taken the next step, and converted several well-known SF properties to their version of the *Traveller* system, with others to come.

All that, as well, speaks to the viability of *Traveller*. But that’s just the *fact* of the viability. None of that explains the *reason* for *Traveller*’s enduring popularity. Your editor has his own theories. Perhaps next month, or the month after, he’ll use this little pulpit to expound on them. But for now... no. Instead, we’ll pose a question: Why do *you*, the *Freelance Traveller* reader, think that *Traveller* has remained popular? We’d like you to write to us (use the main editorial address or the feedback address) and tell us your thoughts. We’ll print those that we feel are the clearest at expressing the thoughts behind them. ☀

### Starfarer's Gazette #1

Reviewed by "kafka"

*Starfarer's Gazette* #1. Martin J. Dougherty.  
Terra/Sol Games, LLC <http://terrasolgames.com>  
72pp, softcover  
US\$7.99

Allow me, first, to thank the publisher (Michael J. Cross of Terra-Sol Games LLC) for gifting a copy of this hardcopy volume for the purposes of this review. I had purchased the PDF but I do like paper more than PDF. Thank you very much.

The *Traveller* RPG has long had a history of small endeavours creating vast empires, even the founding company prided itself on calling itself a workshop rather than corporation. Or the Keith brothers who single-handedly transformed FASA and Gamelords into a mighty vision or Digest Group Publication started by two friends. So it is always interesting to follow what is happening at the margins of this great game – for often this is where innovation and creativity has flourished. True, there have been disappointments and major disappointments that even bore the famous *Traveller* licence, “Approved Use for *Traveller*” or in its more recent incarnation, the OGL. Fortunately, Mongoose Publishing has produced a wealth of *Traveller* material that is dynamic and innovative (even as the grognards grumble, as grognards tend to do)...Mongoose has brought new audiences to *Traveller* and in some cases brought them back. So, if you are interested in *Traveller* – check out the Mongoose rules.

The above lauding notwithstanding, this is a review only marginally about Mongoose *Traveller*; it is rather about a company and a product at the margins that is making an impact on how we view the Grand Old Game of *Traveller*. It is a very much in the margins because it is not part of what is called the Original/Official *Traveller* Universe (OTU) but rather an Alternate *Traveller* Universe (ATU); but this in no way means that it could not be reconnected back to the OTU in the ways that I have modestly suggested in another review.

One of the principal ways that could be done is through *Starfarer's Gazette*, a commercial “fanzine” that can readily be obtained through



DriveThruRPG or hopefully, as I lucked out, a small batch through Terra/Sol Games LLC. It is not my intention to discuss each of the articles' individual merits; I always find in reviewing magazines that it is a matter of individual preference, and more importantly, if some of my players happen to read this review...they do not learn the secrets of my inspiration. But, as it should be evident, I found both Style and Substance to be in the 3 or 4 ranges, and some of the pieces climbing up to 5.

What makes *Starfarer's Gazette* interesting that is largely the work of one *Traveller* writer: Martin J. Dougherty, who has produced a great deal of interesting things for the OTU and is now turning his hand to this ATU. It retains all the trademark style of a Martin J. Dougherty product: the dry sense of humour, ironic and emphasis upon lively adventure (which does involving some rolling of dice and blowing stuff up or occasionally lots of guns). Each

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

article is carefully crafted to maximize mood rather than producing more Tables & Charts (T&C) with the emphasis upon encountering something new – as one would expect from a game called *Traveller*. For this reason, Martin J. Dougherty's writing is some of the best *Traveller* stuff currently out there. His style emphasizes fun; that is not to say that there are no Tables & Charts but the emphasis is certainly more upon narrative and atmosphere. This is why this pairing of MJD and *Starfarer's Gazette* makes a perfect fit for Terra/Sol Games – Twilight Sector, where an entire new ATU is waiting to be explored. Similarly, for the principal authors of the Twilight Sector, they have peeled away another layer of the proverbial onion and shown their ATU in greater detail and colour than what has previously been on offer. And while this ATU does have quite a few faults/quirks, they are really no more or less than what the OTU has or has had had in its long canon.

Does this product have drawbacks? For the price, very few. It does require that one purchase the main campaign setting sourcebook, or you only get half the picture. It *can* stand alone but will require some serious thought. It very much is a workshop where ideas of this interesting ATU are being flushed out. So, if you don't want to work and/or invest in the sourcebook, then don't buy this book – it might give you ideas for your Mongoose *Traveller* game, it might not.

The art is not terribly good. I am whining about art once again mainly because of the high standards set by the previous Twilight Sector offerings. So, there are good pieces in there but also a lot that has been recycled or is just simply bad. But, if your fanzine does not showcase the best, then you might have a harder time selling the primary product. Also, I know, that fanzines appear and disappear like mushrooms on a hot summer's day – but there is no subscription or information when we might see *Starfarer's Gazette* #2 (something that I am really looking forward to). [At the time of publication of this review, SG#2 is a recent TSG release – ed.] So, if this was a one-shot, they certainly hit the target but the other ship is still sailing even if it is

listing. It is a great effort from a small company and I want more. Finally, the most obvious drawback (for me): it still remains largely PDF. Maybe I am just being an old grognard, but when it comes to gaming magazines in particular, I like deadtree.

In conclusion, this is a great product when combined with the other excellent offerings of Terra Sol Games LLC. I think this a company worth watching, if you play *Traveller* RPG or any other generic SFRPG. I would place the caveat that it is necessary to remind oneself that this is a workshop product not a final mass produced – so it is naturally rough around the edges. But, it is well beyond a labour of love or an angry testament, it enhances the *Traveller* Universe and future *Starfarer's Gazettes* will determine – the different directions that the Grand Old Game can take. Overall, this product does truly deserve its 4 out of 5 for substance...I know, you are wondering why not 5 out of 5, simply because it does still require work – even simple things such as the PDF version was missing a cover, small things like this annoy me – rightly or wrongly. Or as I said when the art does meet the expectations already created by other great products... Or that, this product it still largely the voice of one person (rather unfair, as that is what all start-ups are) but the voice is rather preachy and haughty – and this might turn away first-time buyer. This will hopefully be remedied as more people take note of the Grand Old Game. The product will continue to map out this ATU and continue to inspire my game set in the OTU. 🌟

## The Freelance Traveller Forums

We're continuing to have problems with connectivity at the intended server site, but we think we have almost everything we need on the software side to get the Forums back up and running. We hope to have something set up for limited testing soon, and are seeking volunteers for testing and discussion of various features. Interested people should contact us at [tech@freelancetraveller.com](mailto:tech@freelancetraveller.com). We apologize for the continued delay in restoring this service.



## Wayfarer-class Double-Deck Bus (TL6)

by Timothy Collinson

In particularly dense urban areas, before grav technology is developed or can be imported, citizens need to get around. One form of transport in common use and either publicly or privately owned is the double-deck bus with cramped seating but the ability to carry large numbers in a small space. The open platform at the rear instead of doors allows speedy ingress and egress of passengers and indeed in slow moving traffic it may not even be necessary to wait for the bus to actually stop. The *Wayfarer* has 32 small double seats which can carry up to 64 seated but cramped passengers with 36 on the top deck and 28 on the lower deck. There is insufficient headroom to stand easily except on the rear platform. The upper deck is accessed by a narrow quarter spiral staircase which may not be suitable for some patrons.

The driver sits in a cab behind and above the engine, completely separate from the passenger space such that there is no access without exiting the bus completely. Tickets are sold and checked by a conductor who also communicates via a bell system when all passengers have alighted or



boarded so that the driver knows it is safe to move off. The same bell system can be utilized by the passengers to indicate that the bus should stop at the next bus stop – although in city centres particularly the bus may well be stopping at every stop in any case. There is very limited luggage space beneath the staircase at the rear and standing in this location is discouraged because of the open platform and the safety risk, but also because this is where the conductor naturally takes up position when not dealing with tickets. There is limited

*(Continued on page 5)*

Double-Deck Bus (TL6)		Volume (m <sup>3</sup> )	Mass (kg)	Cost (Cr)
Hull	90 m <sup>3</sup> (base 75 m <sup>3</sup> ) Box configuration, Light Alloys	-	6,000.00	15,000
	Hull: 20 Structure: 21	-	-	-
Drive system	Ground, Wheels	7.50	750.00	7,500
Power Plant	Internal Combustion-6 Power output: 192 Fuel Consumption: 22/hour	11.00	825.00	13,200
Fuel	220 liters (10 hours operation)	0.22	220.00	-
Armour	Light Alloys 2	-	-	-
Sensors	Minimal (0.25, 0 DM)	0.25	0.50	100
Communications	N/A	-	-	-
Crew	2 (1 driver, 1 conductor)	-	-	-
Operating stations	1	1.25	125.00	-
Passengers	64	32.00	3,200.00	-
Cargo	0.21 Td	2.78	278.00	-
Agility	0	-	-	-
Speed	Cruise: 57 km/h Top: 76 km/h	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>55.00</b>	<b>11,399.00</b>	<b>35,800</b>
Ground Pressure	1.51			


## In A Store Near You

heating carried through to vents from the engine, but frequently more warmth is obtained from the press of bodies in the cramped seats.

Route indicators are situated on the front, rear and sides of the bus facilitating identifying vehicles from any angle. Typically these do not need to be changed often as a set of buses will service one route relatively exclusively.

Bus stops may be in use depending on culture, tradition or legal stipulations, but these buses are often in slow moving traffic or stopped at traffic

signals and can be caught at any such point on a route. Again, depending on world or city, children may be carried free or have to purchase a (usually, reduced price) ticket. There are worlds which run such buses free to any passengers. Clustering of buses, say three arriving at a given point all at once, is a common sight in any city at this tech level and a couple beyond.

Typical dimensions: 8.4m x 2.4m x 4.4m (overall). 

## Up Close and Personal

### Bam Ashish

*profiled by Sam Swindell*

Bam Ashish 3B9B63 Age 34 (Other, Ex-scout) 6 terms

Human Female

Air/Raft-2, Vacc Suit-2, Body Pistol-2, Jack'o'T-1, Pilot-1, Electronic-1

Body Pistol, Small ceramic dagger (as dagger-1), Military Standard Vacc Suit, Extensive wardrobe packable in 3 1m<sup>3</sup> "small cubes", Cr. 50,000

Bam does not like people. She is 149 cm tall and 41 kg, making the truly petite look large in comparison. She has lithe movements, and a strange disregard for personal space, which is especially disturbing to many coming from one of apparently pure Vilani stock. Her hair is dyed jet black today, but she may be a strawberry blonde tomorrow. She has a rather extensive wardrobe, which she approaches as tournament fisherman does his tackle box. She wears her body pistol and a small ceramic blade everywhere, in a very discrete rig inside her thigh. She has no interest in flirting *per se*, and will never encourage any. She will set herself up to look vulnerable and enticing, and wait for someone to get that look and cross the line. Groups are, of course, more fun. The numerous hopefuls who take "no" to mean "no," however, are as safe as they can hope to be, and Bam even has a soft spot for those who grovel; not soft enough to ever acquiesce, of course, but enough to inspire something almost like kindness in letting them down easily.

Aboard ship she will wear her military standard vacc suit with an IISS coverall, (insignia roughly removed) on top. Ship is not a place for play, but Bam's intensity will wane after a few weeks.

Bam doesn't like people. She will tolerate them to get what she wants, and easily slides into a disposition, sweet, sultry, or aloof, as fits her circumstances. She doesn't like people because they are stupid, or the IISS, (the Imperial Intellectually Stunted Service) because, well, they're stupid and they almost killed her a few times. She didn't like her ex-shipmate, because he was stupid and missed too much. Then he died. Of course, that was the best day of her life, the day *it* all started.

She did like the pirates, though, because they came so close before they died. One was even cute, in a puppyish sort of way. They blew in the inner airlock door, and barged in, losing two and killing the stupid Stan by the inner airlock door in that ham-fisted fire-fight. They burst in the stateroom then, felt her terror, slowed, and got that look in their eyes.

When they got that look they suddenly got stupid, while Bam's terror crystallized and the world slowed to a glacial crawl. They got more stupid, and Bam's body pistol made no sound as it slowly fired. The impact of the round, though, made a two part sound: the thump of the impact muffled by the eye socket, and the discernibly later crack of the exit. Eye-skull, then a pregnant silence as the pistol started its gradual recoil, pushing slowly back, as the orange flower bloomed, as Bam scanned to the second pirate's eye, hazel and stupid with that look, as the pistol slowly

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Up Close and Personal

(Continued from page 5)

rose, as her arm moved like cooling lava so slightly towards the left.

In crystal clarity, Bam could see it: pistol rising, trigger slacking, pistol stopping, trigger tensing, pistol settling, hammer falling, all in time to catch that hazel eye. Three stupid pirates, three stupid eyes, with that look, now shifted so slightly as six knees softened, and Bam shifted, twisting, diving under the hazel-eyed pirate before he fell. He was the biggest, and his bulk knocked the breath out of Bam when he fell on her. She knew there would be more, and hazel-eye provided blessed cover and a bit of camouflage as he lay on top of her. For the next three, she did not even need hazel-eye's bulk, so stupid were they. After eons, though, struggling for breath under hazel-eye, she saw the next two approach, announced by the lazy arc of their calling card, a flash-bang, sailing through the wrecked stateroom door. Stupid! They would not come in until it detonated, but then they would dash in immediately.

The fear returned, buoyed by a joy like she'd never known. Bam closed her eyes, rolled her head slowly behind hazel-eye's melon-sized cranium, and raised the pistol. It was pointed straight at the door by the time the flash-bang's report started to quicken the passing of time. The impacts of the shotgun on hazel-eyes played a harmony with his continuing death throes. Bam did not feel the impact of the bullets on her leg, but she could see that the second shooter's head and torso were screened from her by his partner's already dead form, which he blindly but not ineffectively shot around. The waiting, beneath hazel-eyes' twitching, for the seventh pirate to fall was sheer ecstatic terror. By the time the fall came, the heaving of Bam's petite torso was raising hazel-eye's bulk like it were her bunk sheet.

She had never lived like that day, those few long seconds after stupid Stan had died. Purging the eight heads from the ventral air lock had been fun, but it was markedly anticlimactic in comparison with those few, terrifying seconds in the stateroom with hazel-eye and company. The IISS took their time finding her, and she almost lost her leg. It was a long, cold

wait for a rescue that should have taken 18 days, but stretched to 43. They did not cashier her out, because they called her a hero. Then after a while it changed, that stupid song of theirs. She had gone looking for that place again, and they said she had a death wish. Stupid Scouts! She had not even lost a ship. She had no death wish: If she died then she couldn't feel *it* anymore. She knew, though, that she could not cause *it*, create *it*, or control *it*. All she could do is to go to dangerous places and let *it* find her.

Bam has spent four years looking for *it*. She has worked as a grav-cab driver, in the seediest parts of sprawling startowns. These jobs provided her some occasions to find *it*, though the scenes left behind were usually enough to raise suspicions. She would move on after the inquiries. She was always cleared, but the authorities suspected all was not being told. She was willing to work as a reserve pilot, bodyguard, and even shipboard security. These jobs were emotional deserts for her, though. Every time she would sign on, she was looking forward to when she could leave. She dreams of transforming her macabre hobby into a professional endeavor, but has no idea how this could come to pass.

Bam does seek some variety, though, in how she looks for that fix of terror and violence. She has taken hunting trips for dangerous game when she could afford them, but has burned her bridges with some by ignoring the guide, laying down the laser carbine, and drawing the body pistol from no one knew where at the most inopportune moment. She has done vacc suit reentries outside of all applicable safety protocols, and occasionally swims with dangerous carnivores. All of these have proven teasing disappointments; she could feel *it* approaching, but never arrive. She felt a need to return to the familiar. The body pistol gets slippery in her hand some nights with only 34 notches.

Bam is driving a ground car taxi, with a sign indicating that passengers are hereby notified, according to local ordinance, that the surveillance camera and radio are not functioning. The plastic divider has a large panel missing, and she is dressed as a caricature of a school girl. She catches your eye in the rear view mirror, and you feel a brief piercing, as if you have been read, then she scans the traffic ahead again. 🌟



### Mongoose Traveller: The Third Imperium: Reft Sector

Reviewed by Harry Bryan

Mongoose Traveller: *The Third Imperium: Reft Sector*.

Martin J. Dougherty.

Mongoose Publishing <http://mongoosepublishing.com>

132pp, softcover

US\$24.99/UK£16.99

Tired of the Spinward Marches, but don't want to leave the Imperium? How would you like a sector around the Imperium where a *Kinunir* is heavy metal? A sector where your players can be movers and shakers? Had a hankering to try out "Early Stellar" star-travel? Martin J. Dougherty turned his eye toward the Reft Sector and has delivered a nifty "small ship" sector within a "big ship" Imperium.

#### On the Shelf

The cover is the standard design for Third Imperium: The Third Imperium logo on the top, artwork in the middle (good artwork this time.), and the *Traveller* logo on the bottom third.

#### On Closer Inspection

The book is divided into 5 chapters and we will take a quick spin through all of them.

**1. Introduction** – Rather than an introduction to the Reft Sector, this is an introduction to the Official *Traveller* Universe. In eleven pages it covers core concepts such as the OTU, Charted Space and Directions, Communications, and the Major Races. It is a great way to introduce new players to the OTU.

**2. Reft Sector** – This chapter is the introduction and peculiarities of the Reft sector.

*a. Languages in the Islands* - gives a breakdown of what languages are spoken in Islands subsector.

*b. The Great Rift and the Trans-Islands Run* - tankers and deep-space fueling stations make it possible for a Jump-4 ship to cross the rift, albeit at great cost, along with a brief description of shipping within the Islands.

*c. Naval Terminology and Ship Designations* – This is a "small ship" area, so what constitutes a



"major combat unit" is different from the rest of the Imperium.

*d. A History of the Reft Sector* – Just over five pages of history from yet another briefing on the Ancients, Droyne and Chirper settlements in the Reft Sector, the colony missions and their settlements within the Islands subsector and subsequent interaction with the Imperium.

*e. A timeline of the Reft Sector.*

**3. Powers In The Reft Sector** – Movers and shakers in the Reft Sector are detailed. Each polity is given a brief introduction that covers the size of the polity and location within the sector. In addition, the referee is provided sections on the social and political situation, as well as the economic and industrial strengths or weaknesses. Each polity ends with a brief description of both naval and ground forces.

The second section covers the Islandbridge Trading Corporation (ITC) and The Universal Siblinghood of Disunity (USD). These organizations have the same breakouts as the polities, however, ITC is a transnational corporation and the USD is a political/religion/social movement.

(Continued from page 7)

The last section covers the Imperium and Imperial megacorporations, “above the claw”, “beneath the claw” and within the Islands (which are not members of the Imperium.).

**4. Worlds Of The Reft Sector** – If you have been playing *Traveller* for a while, you may have *The Travellers' Digest* #20, which gave an overview of the sector. No need to throw it out, Martin skillfully built on top of it.

**5. Adventures In The Reft Sector** – This is my favorite part of the book. Mr. Dougherty starts by giving the referee a guided tour on how to gradually slide the Islands Cluster from peace to war. The process he provides, going from a cold war state to total war and beyond isn't just limited to the Islands. The referee can use the same process to develop the conditions on any scale, from a planetary tussle between two competing nation-states to setting the stage for either the Fifth Frontier War or the Solomani Rim War.

But, that's not all! He also provides three pages of ideas for adventures in the Islands, from standard Trade or Military adventures to Diplomatic or Espionage adventures.

## Pros and Cons

### Pros

- a. Is consistent with prior versions of *Traveller*.
- b. It is well thought out, and second and third order effects are detailed.
- c. Information for more than just military adventures are provided .
- d. Pages 126 through 131 are worth the price of the book.

### Cons

- a. Just enough typos to be annoying.
- b. The real problem from my perspective is the maps. There is no sector map in the book, and the subsectors are not labeled (A – P). Thank goodness for [www.travellermapping.com](http://www.travellermapping.com).
- c. The interior artwork is still crap. Other than the cover, it is at Group One level. It isn't 1978 anymore.

## Conclusion

Reft Sector is the best sourcebook for *Traveller* I have seen from Mongoose Publishing. It is head and shoulders above not only what they have published, but it is also the best product Martin J. Dougherty has published for *Traveller*. 🌟

## Active Measures

### Festival

by Richard Morey

### Background

Rethe (E230AA8-8), is a world rich in people and poor in resources. This is a dangerous pairing and, in combination with the Very Thin atmosphere means everyone has to live in artificial environments. Rethe teeters on the brink of ecological (artificial) and social disaster. In fact, fifty years ago that is exactly what happened, with several of the domed habitats exceeding their capacity, resulting in system failures and mass deaths.

Out of the ensuing chaos arose a new leader, known simply as “The Protector.” He restored order and instituted a number of measures meant to assure that population does not again exceed the capacity of the constructed environment to support it. The mem-

## Featured Article

ory of the earlier disaster makes Rethe's population willing to put up with the extensive restrictions placed on everyday life and The Protector enjoys popular support despite his draconian rule. How long such support will last once the last of those who remember the earlier horror have died remains to be seen.

The Protector's popularity does not mean that there is no opposition. Though small in size in comparison to Rethe's 30 billion population, there are two groups that would replace The Protector with their own government.

The Absolutists reject The Protector's philosophy of trying to live within the constraints of Rethe's environment, manmade and natural; believing that man's destiny is to rule the universe, not the other way around. This attitude has taken on religious significance for them, the Absolutists being organized into small communities called “Flocks.” Each Flock is led

(Continued on page 9)



## Active Measures

by a “Shepherd,” who takes his instructions from “The Great Shepherd.” The Absolutists problem in gaining followers is that their leadership is even more controlling than The Protector, to the point of dictating members’ spouses, occupations, and family sizes. The fact that the Absolutists would eliminate Festival, Retheans’ only release from their otherwise Spartan and limited existence, doesn’t help their cause any.

The Anarchists hold the opposite view, believing that the uncontrolled freedom of Festival should be in effect year round. While they may gain some traction at the beginning of Festival, by the third day most Retheans recognize the need for order and control imposed by The Protector. Also, the Anarchists’ use of terror tactics does little to endear them to the typical citizen of Rethe.

While neither the Absolutists nor the Anarchists are very powerful, should they ever combine forces they could present a creditable threat to the established social order. Fortunately, their diametrically opposed views of the utopian state render any alliance unlikely.

### Festival

To serve as a safety valve on the rigid social controls, The Protector occasionally announces a Festival, a three day period of unrestrained freedom and debauchery. Originally an annual event, mounting pressures now lead to more frequent festivals. There is a Bureau within the government charged with monitoring “social pressure” and recommending when it needs to be released.

Festivals are announced in advance, with local merchants encouraged by tax incentives to prepare food and drink sufficient to last the three days as no one works during Festival. The prepared food and drink is free for the taking once Festival begins; the people of Rethe show remarkable restraint in not consuming any beforehand. But, by the third day much of the prepared sustenance is gone, leading to an increase in violence as people fight over the remaining scraps. This helps renew their desire to have The Protector re-impose order. Entertainment is free as this period of no law is the only time artists are able to perform without fear of censorship. As mentioned, Festival is a time of no rules, no laws, and no work-

ing. There are some excesses, though most people find the fear of mob rule and vigilante justice sufficient to keep them from committing truly egregious acts. For those who don’t, the authorities come calling after Festival. The Protector’s personal guard is comprised of off-world mercenaries who do not participate in Festival, and are the only people on Rethe who work during the event.

Should the PCs find themselves on Rethe during Festival they have several choices. Obviously they can remain in their ship and avoid the whole three days. Should they decide to venture out and participate, they may...

### ...Enjoy the Street Scene

The character simply wishes to take in the party scene and atmosphere without actively becoming involved. For every 1D6 hours spent doing so, roll the task chain of Streetwise EDU 8+ followed by Carouse INT 8+. If the character fails the Carouse roll, roll another 1D6. A result of 1–3 means they have lost either all of their on-person cash to a pickpocket, or portable item of value. On a 4 they have somehow inadvertently offended someone and suffer an unprovoked attack by a total stranger. On a 5 the unfortunate character finds himself caught up in a local riot. A result of 6 means they have caught the attention of a Rethean looking to establish a temporary liaison. If the PC accepts the offer, roll on Table 1 under the Temporary Liaison activity below.

### ...Schmooze

More than simply taking in the street scene, the character wants to ‘do as the Romans,’ and party hearty. For every 1D6 hours spent partying roll Carouse INT 8+. An effect of 6+ yields a new Ally as well as a +1 DM on subsequent social interactions during Festival. An effect of +2 to +5 yields a new Contact and +1 DM to subsequent social interaction rolls during Festival. An effect of +1 to -1 means the character has a good time, but nothing more. An effect of -2 to -5 produces a Rival and a -1 DM on subsequent social interaction rolls during Festival. An effect of -6 or worse yields a -1 DM to subsequent social interaction rolls during Festival, as well as acquiring an Enemy who immediately attacks.

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Active Measures

### ...Engage in a Temporary Liaison

If the character wishes to find some temporary companionship to share in celebrating Festival roll either Carouse SOC 8+ or Persuade INT 8+ to find an interested partner. The effort takes 1D6×10 minutes. If successful, the PC has found such a friend. Roll on Table 1 below, spending another 1D6 hours with the new friend. If unsuccessful, the character's intentions have been 'misinterpreted.' Roll on Table 2 below.

**Table 1: Local Liaison Results**

1D	Result
1	The new friend wants a permanent relationship and wishes to leave Rethe with the PC when Festival is over. The PC has DM +1 on subsequent social interaction rolls during Festival while in the company of the new friend. The friend's former partner becomes the PC's Enemy, possibly lying in wait to attack at the conclusion of the current engagement.
2	As 1, but the PC's new friend is unattached.
3	As 2, except that rather than wishing to leave with the PC, the new friend wants to "stay in touch", becoming a Contact.
4 or 5	The PC and the local have their fun and go their
6	Something happens that will have consequences later. The exact nature of the event and the eventual consequences should be worked out between the player and the referee.

**Table 2: Misinterpretation Results**

1D	Result
1	The PC acquires a reputation as a "Don Juan" and suffers DM -2 on all subsequent social interaction rolls while on Rethe, even after Festival is over.
2	As 1, but the DM -2 applies only for the duration of Festival.
3	The intended friend takes exception to the PC's interest and becomes an Enemy.
4	As 3, except that rather than becoming an Enemy, the intended friend only attacks on this occasion.
5 or 6	The intended friend's current partner or "significant other" takes exception to the PC's interest and attacks.

### ...Get Caught in a Riot

A fight or some other altercation has sparked a local riot. Roll Streetwise INT 8+ or Tactics (Ground) 6+ to avoid taking 1D6 damage (ignore armor). Unscrupulous characters may opt to take advantage of the mayhem and join in the looting, gaining Cr (1D6×100) in easily carried off consumer goods. If the character does so, roll Stealth INT 8+. On a failure they are identified and will receive a visit from the authorities once Festival is over. A riot lasts 1D6×10 minutes.

### ...Participate in a Drinking Contest

The character wishes to engage in a contest to see who can best hold their drink. Roll Carouse SOC 4+ or Streetwise EDU 6+ to locate a drinking contest. To compete roll Carouse END 8+. If successful the character gains DM +1 on subsequent social interaction rolls during Festival. Failure means the character wakes up 1D6 hours later with a terrible hangover (-1 to STR, DEX, and INT for 1D6 Hours) and has been stripped of everything except their clothes. A drinking contest lasts 1D6 hours.

If several PCs are competing in the same contest, or there is a contest between a PC and key NPC, then have each specific character engage in a series of Carouse END 8+ rolls until all but one fail. Each such roll takes 1D6×10 minutes and a cumulative DM -1 is applied to each successive roll. Anyone lasting more than 2 Carouse checks gains DM +1 for social interactions. If those who pass out have conscious friends present, then they do not lose their possessions.

### ...Participate in High Stakes Gambling

The character wishes to get in on a high stakes game of chance. Roll Streetwise SOC to find a game. The target number for the Streetwise roll is based upon the entry fee: 6+ for Cr 100, 8+ for Cr 1,000, and 10+ for Cr 10,000. If the character has the necessary entry fee then roll Gambling INT 8+. If successful, the character wins Cr (effect of Gambling roll×entry fee). If the character loses they lose Cr (effect of Gambling roll×entry fee). If unable to pay their debt the other gamblers and supportive onlookers beat the character up; inflicting 2D6 damage (ignore armor) and taking all of the character's on-

*(Continued on page 11)*



## Active Measures

(Continued from page 10)

person cash and possessions except clothing. A high Stakes Game takes 1D6×4 hours.

If several PCs are competing in the same game, or there is a contest between a PC and key NPC, then have each specific character engage in a series of Gambling INT 8+ rolls. Whoever succeeds by the greatest effect wins the hand, gaining Cr (entry pot). All others lose Cr (entry pot/10). Assume there are enough other NPCs rotating through the game to assure a large enough pool to pay the winnings. If any of the individual characters is unable to pay their loses for any round, suffer consequences as above. (If associated PCs/NPCs wish to come to the aid of their friend then resolve the fight normally rather than using the abstract 2D6 damage.) Each Gambling roll takes 1D6 hours and a character may drop out at any time.

### ...Get Into Fights

Some activities may lead to fights. Any fight that lasts more than 1D6 rounds, or where others join in, will automatically spark a riot.

### After Festival

Once Festival is over, things return to normal, more or less. People return to work and their tightly controlled way of life. Any PCs who were involved in situations that led to death, or who were identified as looters, will receive a call from the authorities. Depending upon what and how they did, the PCs may have new Allies, Contacts, Rivals, and Enemies.

### Adventure: Bridal Party

The PCs are on Rethe during Festival. They are approached by a middle-aged couple who ask for their help. Ren and Deena's (Retheans do not have surnames, instead using their individual ID numbers) eighteen-year old daughter, Leetta, has been kidnapped by an Absolutist Flock whose Shepherd wants her for his wife. Since this is Festival the local authorities, like everyone else, are taking part in the revelry and unavailable to help. Therefore, Ren and Deena are turning to off-worlders to rescue Leetta before she is forced into marriage.

Ren and Deena don't know where the Absolutists are located, only that they are somewhere within the domed city. They will tell the PCs that every Rethean

has a microchip implanted at birth so that the government can track them. (Absolutists and Anarchists have theirs removed. The government doesn't pursue this infraction as, without the chip, the individuals cannot prove citizenship or claim any rights against the government.) If the PCs can gain entry to the local police headquarters they may use the computer there to locate Leetta. Otherwise, they will have to canvas the streets.

There are two ways to gain entry to the Police HQ, the building is empty as the police are all partaking in Festival. The first way is to pick the lock. This requires an Engineering (Electronic) EDU 10+ roll, and takes 1D6×10 Seconds. Any result other than success by 6+ trips an alarm. While the locals will ignore such things during Festival, a squad of The Protector's hired mercs will arrive in 1D6×10 minutes. The Protector won't risk police weapons and files falling into the wrong hands.

The alternative to picking the lock, and possibly tripping the alarm, is to obtain the Police Chief's pass key. This will require finding the Police Chief (taking 1D6 hours and requiring a roll to avoid trouble as per *Enjoy the Street Scene* above). Once located, the PCs may attempt to pick the Chief's pocket (Deception DEX 6+ due to the distraction), or somehow separate the Chief from his clothes (either drink him under the table in a Drinking contest or, if the PC is female, successfully recruit him for a temporary liaison). Using the Chief's pass key avoids alerting The Protector's mercs.

Once inside, it will take the PCs 1D6 minutes to locate the computer. A successful Computer INT 10+ roll, DM +2 if possessing the Chief's pass key, (taking 1D6 minutes) will let the PCs hack into the computer and locate Leetta. If the mercs have not arrived by then, the PCs may leave unimpeded.

If forced to canvas the streets for Leetta's whereabouts, each PC may do so separately. It will take 1D6 hours (roll once for the effort no matter how many individual groups are searching). Each individual search party may roll either Streetwise INT 8+ or Carouse INT 8+ to find someone who saw Leetta being taken and knows where she is now. PCs must roll as per *Enjoy the Street Scene* above for each period spent canvassing the streets to avoid getting caught up

(Continued on page 12)

## Active Measures

(Continued from page 11)

in other matters. Once Leetta has been located it takes 1D6×10 minutes to travel to where she is being held.

Leetta is being held in a standard residential module. The module consists of an entryway/foyer, leading into a common room. There are doors off the common room into a kitchen, fresher, and two bedrooms. There is a door between the kitchen and the outside. Other than the two doors, there are no other entry points (being in an already enclosed artificial environment, no need was seen to install windows). Leetta and two Absolutists are in one of the bedrooms. There are a total number of Absolutists equal to the PCs, but at a minimum the two with Leetta. The Absolutists are armed with melee weapons (If the PCs have firearms, the referee may wish to equip the Absolutists similarly) and, being fanatics, will all fight until subdued. Once rescued, the PCs may return a thankful Leetta to her grateful parents who, unable to offer any reward, will become Contacts.

*Alternate Situation 1:* Leetta was not kidnapped but went freely with the Absolutists, a point her parents 'omitted.' She will join the Absolutists in fighting the PCs, picking up a weapon dropped by a fallen comrade. If 'rescued,' Leetta will file kidnapping charges against the PCs once Festival is over.

*Alternate Situation 2:* The situation is a setup by the Anarchists as part of a plan to forge an alliance between their two groups. Partway through the PCs' fight with the Absolutists the Anarchists arrive to help. But, they are not there to help the PCs, opposing them instead. The Anarchists' hope is show solidarity with the Absolutists and win their cooperation in fighting The Protector. There will be a number of Anarchists such that they and the remaining Absolutists will number the same as the PCs, but a minimum of two Anarchists arrive. In this scenario, Leetta is an Anarchist plant, as are her parents. She will join the fight against the PCs, though if the PCs win, she will not subsequently file charges. Unlike their Absolutist counterparts, the Anarchists are more pragmatic than fanatic and will attempt to flee once half their number have fallen. If the PCs win and subsequently search the residence, they will find a loose microchip (Used to register Leetta's location on the police computer). Being an Anarchist, Leetta does not have an implant.

Regardless of the scenario chosen, if the PCs kill anyone, the authorities will come calling. In the original situation, Ren, Deena, and Leetta will explain the situation, going so far as to hire legal counsel. While they will be held for a few days, eventually the PCs will be released with no charges filed unless they do something foolish in the interim, or ran afoul of The Protector's mercs. If playing *Alternate 1*, Leetta will press charges, getting the PCs into legal trouble as they will have killed someone while committing a felony, kidnapping. In *Alternate 2*, no one will come forward to either accuse or defend the PCs.

### NPCs

#### The Protector's Guard (Mercenaries)

Operate in 4-man fire teams consisting of a Team leader, Grenadier, and 2 Riflemen. They are professionals more interested in maintaining order than killing people. However, if faced with serious opposition, their Rules of Engagement do allow them to respond to deadly force in kind. All are equipped with Flak Jacket (TL8), Blade, and Comm, plus other equipment noted in [square brackets].

**Rifleman** 989777, Guns (Slug Rifle) 2, Melee (Blade) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Medic 0; [Assault Rifle w/2 extra magazines]

**Team Leader** 989777, Guns (Slug Rifle) 2, Melee (Blade) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Medic 0, Tactics (Ground) 1, Leader 0; [Assault Rifle w/2 extra magazines]

**Grenadier** 989777, Guns (Slug Pistol) 1, Melee (Blade) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Medic 0, Heavy Weapons (Grenade Launcher) 1; [Autopistol, RAM w/6 Stun and 6 Frag]

#### Rethean Citizens

Use the Typical Citizen when faced with a local opponent on the street during Festival, others as relevant.

**Typical Citizen** 777766, Streetwise 0, Survival 0, Vacc Suit 0, Melee 0; equipped with Comm

**Police Chief** 777988, Streetwise 1, Survival 0, Vacc Suit 0, Melee (Unarmed) 1, Guns (Slug Pistol) 1, Computer 0, Investigate 2, Leader 1, Carouse 1. Equipped with Cloth (TL 7), Auto Pistol, Comm, Pass Key



## Active Measures

(Continued from page 12)

**Leetta** 677976, Streetwise 0, Survival 0. If using Leetta as an Anarchist agent add Deception 1, Melee (Unarmed) 1

### Absolutists

These are all low level members of the Flock, and are fanatics who will fight to the last man.

**Flock Member** 979766, Streetwise 0, Survival 0, Vacc Suit 0, Melee (Unarmed, Bludgeon or Blade) 1. Equipped with Mesh, Blade, Club or Improvised Weapon, Comm

If the PCs are armed with firearms, lower Melee to 0 and add Guns 0. Add Revolver to equipment list.

### Anarchists

These will all be Low level members with one junior lieutenant. They are pragmatists, and will withdraw if the situation appears lost. All are equipped with Cloth (TL7), Autopistol, and Comm.

**Anarchist** 777796, Streetwise 0, Survival 0, Vacc Suit 0, Melee 0, Guns (Slug Pistol) 1,

**Anarchist Lieutenant** 777796, Streetwise 0, Survival 0, Vacc Suit 0, Melee 0, Guns (Slug Pistol) 1, Leader 1, Persuade 1

## Residential Unit Plan

Referees are encouraged to come up with their own layouts for the Rethean residential unit. The plan

below, however, can be used if desired. The main entrance to the unit is at bottom center of the plan. 🌀



## Slice of Life: Living Spaces in the 30<sup>th</sup> Century

by Mike Cross

*This article was originally posted to the Terra/Sol Games blog at <http://terrasolgames.com> on January 13, 2012, and is reprinted in Freelance Traveller with the author's permission.*

### Introduction

In this installment of 'Slice of Life' we're going to look at your living space in the Twilight Sector Campaign Setting. Where do you live? What does it look like? What major appliances do you own?

First, let's give this all some context. We're going to take a look at what the typical 'Coffin Apartment', Standard Apartment, Condominium and free standing domicile looks like on Terra/Sol in the Twilight Sector. We'll look at size, standard fittings and locations. But first, let's talk about some of the 30<sup>th</sup> century tech you can use to dress up the old living space.

Most living spaces in the 30<sup>th</sup> century do have a few key technologies in common. Most are smart places run by computer technology running a household expert program. The residence responds to the occupants, turning on lights when you enter a room responding to verbal commands like "make me a cup of coffee", et cetera. Your digital butler can tell you how much butter or cleaning solution you have on hand and with your permission order up additional supplies as needed. It can create a personalized diet for every member of the household and relay that information to your food synthesizer. In short, it does most of the domestic thinking for you.

### Home Tech and Appliances

One of the most ubiquitous home technologies is memory plastic. Blocks of this remarkable material can be shaped into any number of preprogrammed configurations, everything from a vase to a couch. This material can be condensed and stored recessed into the floor or wall thus taking up no valuable floor space until it is needed. So, when, for example, it's meal time, a command can be

given that activates the plastic to become a table and chairs. When dinner is done, simply give the command for the couch, and *voilà*, the material morphs back into the floor and returns as your living room couch.

Wireless access to the internet is a part of your living space and because we know what comes in can go out, in some places like the Orion Confederation that has become a personal privacy issue. In others like the Archenar Peoples' Republic it's just another tool the state uses to keep its population in line. Monitoring for fire, pathogens or medical emergencies can be a public safety issue and provides an excuse for the state to have some access to your home for at least the performance of these functions.

One of the most common kitchen home appliances in the 30<sup>th</sup> century is the flash freezer. It provides ice or instant freezing for your leftovers as long as they fit in its admittedly small dimensions. The average model is only 12"×12"×6" (about 30cm×30cm×15cm). It can provide a couple of cups of ice in approximately 3 to 8 seconds (depending on the quality of the model you own) and can just as quickly freeze food for later use. Actual refrigerators are now somewhat rare and if present are usually quite small since the storage of raw foodstuffs isn't really necessary with the advent of Gloop and our next common home appliance, the Food Synthesizer. This ubiquitous device is present in most homes or apartment complexes. They range from the fancy with almost an unlimited range of foods that can be provided to much more limited versions for which you have to switch programming every so often so you don't get bored with what the machine is spitting out.

For housekeeping, cleaner bots are quite common. These are usually 12" (30cm) diameter flat circular bots, which are 4" (10cm) tall and equipped with anti-grav. They roll around the floor cleaning but can also levitate to surfaces to clean those up and with a retractable arm clean up dishes and such. A single bot can clean 800 square feet (about 74.5m<sup>2</sup>) in 4 hours.

For the bedroom, memory plastic beds or in lower end dwellings old fashioned Murphy pull

*(Continued on page 15)*

*(Continued from page 14)*

down beds are the norm. A high tech option that is gaining popularity is the zero-g sleeping field. These are of course powered by grav plates and because they aren't really zero-g but low gravity they are surprisingly not that expensive. Since they don't have to handle as high of load capacities as they might when installed on a skid tractor or in a starship they are very reasonably priced.

Entertainment comes from a number of sources. Net-based VR can be accessed through home Sensoriums, basketball sized devices that can interpret complicated net programs designed to make you feel like you are in the action. Other, far more expensive, options like Holographic and Immersive Tech display areas might be available in higher end homes. For a lower tech option when you just want to veg out, wall sized Tri-D displays can play your favorite shows. These can also be used to give your home a different feel depending on your mood. A wall sized display of a tropical reef might provide some needed relief from an Antarctic winter in Defiance City.

## Coffin Apartments

To start our tour of the various living abodes lets discuss the proverbial Coffin Apartment, the smallest and most standardized type of living space. Typically a coffin apartment is a space 10 feet wide  $\times$  20 feet deep (about 3m $\times$ 6m) and so contains 200 square feet (about 18m<sup>2</sup>) of living space. That's not a lot of space! But it could be worse; the Archenar equivalent only comes in at 128 square feet (about 11m<sup>2</sup>), only 8 feet  $\times$  16 feet (about 2.4 m $\times$ 4.9m). Because of the size issues the technology for these apartments is specialized to save space. Fold down Murphy beds, Murphy couches or Murphy tables (assuming you don't use memory plastic described previously), toilets that lower into the floor when you want to take a shower, kitchen cabinets flush with the wall, taking advantage of what would be dead utility space in most dwellings. In short the idea is to make these apartments highly configurable based on what the needs are of the occupant at a particular time. So for example when it's bedtime you configure the

space as a bedroom, at dinner time a dining room and for leisure a living room.

Depending on the apartment building you might not have a kitchen at all but access to the communal gloop machine, with the cost of your meals being part of your rent or dole benefit.

Residents of these types of apartments range from singles to dolee families. Though some are surprisingly affluent, they might simply be single and only need a small living space. In a large 30<sup>th</sup> century urban environment there are plenty of common areas both indoor and outdoor where people can spend their time so that small living spaces will not make them feel claustrophobic.

Average Rent: 250 to 400 cr., but that usually includes a meal plan. The price variation is accounted for by location, location, location!

## Standard Apartments

The next step up in living accommodations is the standard apartment. Like the coffin apartment, they're still somewhat cookie cutter in shape and accouterments but they are a definite step up. They typically range from 600 to 1,000 square feet (about 56m<sup>2</sup> to 93m<sup>2</sup>) in size.

Most come with their own food synthesizers, no more waiting in line at the gloop machine like so many coffin dwellers. Individual spaces (i.e. rooms) can offer multiple occupants some privacy and some status objects like the odd piece of real furniture.

The main upgrade the standard apartment offers is space—the thing most at a premium in densely populated cities like those on Terra/Sol.

Average Rent: 500 to 900 cr.

## Condominiums

The next step up is a condominium. The name implies ownership but that is not always the case; some are simply luxury apartments, but in the common parlance, whether the domicile is owned or rented these types of living spaces are called condominiums.

Average space in a condominium has a rather wide range of 1,200 to 3,600 square feet (about 112m<sup>2</sup> to 336m<sup>2</sup>). This of course leads to a wide range of rent or mortgage payments as well. Price goes up with size and location of course.



(Continued from page 15)

Condominiums usually have purpose-driven rooms, bedrooms, kitchens, dining rooms, et cetera, instead of the multipurpose spaces common in lower end accommodations. Owners or renters are also more likely to have the income to afford some status items like handmade furniture, and to be able to afford real food items (hence the need for kitchens). However, they would likely still be equipped with a high quality food synthesizer for those meals on the run. The use of wall screens becomes commonplace with an average of two or more in each room so the owners can catch up on the latest entertainment programming or set their surroundings to anything from mountain vistas to the latest rave club.

Memory plastic is still used but it's usually pulled out for spare chairs and such when required to accommodate company or those pesky relatives who stop by to get a look at your place, prompting comments like "Can you believe it Harold? They have a room just for the toilet! It's nice and all but it just feels a little too ostentatious for my tastes."

Average mortgage or rent: 1,200 to 4,000 cr.

## Free-standing Domiciles

The final step in living places is a free standing domicile. These can range from the truly outrageous prices charged for a house in the middle of a city to the more affordable suburban homes. But any 'house' in a major city is an expensive item that it takes a substantial income to be able to purchase.

In the distant past many futurists believed that as the ease of transportation increased and technology advanced to the point that you didn't need to physically go into the office that humanity would spread out. Everyone would have their own plot of land and their own house.

What the future was yet to reveal was that while transportation became faster with ever greater numbers of humans ease did not follow. The sheer volume of traffic absorbed the gain in speed.

Technology did indeed advance to the point that you could work from anywhere and you could

even dial in virtually to sit in on meetings. However two factors combined to save the office and cities for that matter. Productivity did not increase for virtual workers in fact it declined. Much of the population were not self starters, they needed the proximity of other workers and supervisors to inspire them to productivity. Even beyond that and maybe far more importantly, Man is a social creature and even those who lived far from the city center found themselves coming into the city for entertainment and interaction. Societal Engineers coined the term 'Human Gravity' to describe the effect. They found that society creates its own gravity, the more humans that were present the more they are drawn to each other much the same way as the matter in a solar system accretes to form ever-larger objects with their own gravity.


These social realities of course affected houses. Although they are extremely popular with those who can afford them, owners still want to be close to the center of the human gravity. This fact is just another factor that plays into the old real estate axiom, 'Location is everything'.

As for the houses themselves they boast the entire range of technology. They are usually run by a powerful computer that takes care of everything from stocking the pantry to sensing when the roof needs repaired and then even hiring the roofer.

Status symbols abound, full kitchens, natural foods, dedicated rooms, custom made handcrafted furniture, virtual reality sensoriums and holographic rooms. The range of amenities and the size of houses is enormous and cannot be easily described.

Average mortgage: 1,500 to 100,000 cr.

*Editor's note: As received from Mr Cross, the article did not have the clear section titles; these were inserted as part of our editing process. Also, the metric measurements were not supplied, but added in by our editor; see the Author's note following.*

*Author's note: A note on metrics, for this article I have used U.S. Customary units of measurement most notably feet and square feet. This is because that is the way I can visualize the size of the areas I'm describing. If you'd rather have the information in metric units the conversion factor for feet to meters is 0.305 and the conversion for square feet to square meters is 0.093. You do the math.* 

## Voyage of the Planetslayer

reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

*Voyage of the Planetslayer*. Jefferson P. Swycaffer

Original Publication: 1988

Current Availability: Uncertain

*Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in January of 2010, and is reprinted here with the author's permission.*

*Author's Note: I think that one of the best ways to prepare yourself to run a game is to immerse yourself in its fiction, and thus get a real sense of its milieu. Thus, this series of reviews, which looks at some of the fiction that influenced Traveller, was influenced by Traveller, or is actually set in the Traveller universe.*

The most long-lived series of *Traveller* fiction is that of Jefferson P. Swycaffer, who envisioned a *Traveller* universe, but one not set in Charted Space.

This seventeenth review covers the sixth of the Concordat books, and the second one published by New Infinities Productions (best known as the publisher of *Cyborg Commando* and the later *Gord the Rogue* books).

### About the Story

*Voyage of the Planetslayer* continues the story of Traviella-i-Tel and the crew of the *Coinroader*, but this time they're in a new adventure—enlisted by the Concordat to crew the *Planetslayer*, whose mandate is to terraform the planet Kythe-Correy. Sadly, that terraforming must begin with the utter destruction of the (non-sentient) life currently extant on the planet.

Swycaffer juggles a set of four story threads in the book, built up like the plot of just about every science-fiction TV show ever.

The “A” plot concerns the *Planetslayer*'s trip out to Kythe-Correy, the moral dilemmas surrounding whether the planet should actually be destroyed, and ultimately some conflict over that. The “B” plot centers around Stasileus, the slavish alien introduced in the previous book, who is now trying to understand what makes humans work—and what they really want. The “C” plot takes place back on a nearby world, where a court case is trying to judge the legality of destroying a planet (a bit too late, it would appear at first). All of these plots neatly (perhaps too neatly) dovetail together by the end of the book. The “D” plot is a largely off-screen romance between one

of the crew members and one of the scientists who is overseeing the planetary destruction.

Put that all together and you have a book-length plot—though in my opinion, a pretty thin one.

### Genre & Style

Like its immediate predecessor, *Voyage of the Planetslayer* is gaming fiction. As I said in my previous review, I think Swycaffer's writing is much better suited to this subgenre than to the more literary work that he was trying to do for Avon, and as a result I enjoyed this book more than any of their earlier Avon books (despite that aforementioned thin plot).

The biggest problem with *Voyage of the Planetslayer* is that it takes forever to get going—and that's somewhat understandable, because by the time it does get going, there are only a couple of major events that occur before the book heads quickly toward its conclusion. I also found the plot threads a little too scattered at first. Not knowing that they were coming together, it felt like the book was really being padded out (though I was relatively happy when they did come together, other than the fact that I thought that Stasileus' understanding of human nature came much too fast).

When I wrote about *The Empire's Legacy*, I said that I found it largely revelatory for how much it detailed about Swycaffer's Concordat *Traveller* setting. This one is nowhere near as deep, but it does successfully build upon the setting elements from the previous book—particularly the Empire, its genetic engineering, and Stasileus' race—such that I felt like I'd seen yet more hints of a rich setting.

Overall *Voyage of the Planetslayer* was every bit as enjoyable of a read as its predecessor, it was just over a bit too quick with not a lot happening. I've thus given it a Style of “4” and a Substance of “3”.

### Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

*Voyage of the Planetslayer* seems like it was probably an adventure that Jefferson Swycaffer ran for his players. It's got a bit of moral dilemma and a cute little mystery that together could form the basis of a couple of hours of play. Though some plot elements are drawn directly from Swycaffer's unique Concordat universe, I think you could pretty easily

*(Continued on page 18)*

## Critics' Corner

(Continued from page 17)

adapt the story for use in a Third Imperium *Traveller* game. I'd even suggest doing so, as I think it's likely to be a unique adventure, quite different from what you might otherwise run.

## Conclusion

*Voyage of the Planetlayer* is another successful (though not outstanding) novel from Swycaffer & New Infinities. It's fun to read, and though the actual plot is pretty shallow, it could still make for a couple of hours of enjoyable *Traveller* play. So, go read it and consider adapting the plot into your own *Traveller* game. 🌟

### The Concordat Books

1. Not in Our Stars
2. Become the Hunted
3. The Universal Prey

4. The Praesidium of Archive
5. The Empire's Legacy
6. Voyage of the Planetlayer
7. Revolt and Rebirth

*Editor's Note: At present, we have been unable to find any evidence that the books of this series are still in print.*

## News About Traveller

### Recent Traveller News and Findings

February 2012

- **Mongoose Publishing** has released the reprinted *Secrets of the Ancients*, the combined *Supplement 5-6: Vehicle Handbook*, and *Supplement 9: Campaign Handbook*.
- **Jon Brazer Enterprises** has released two more "d66" lists: *Pirate Ship Names 2* and *Pirate Bases*.
- **F.M. Games Lore** has released *Modular Base "Commodus"*.

- **DSL Ironworks** has released *Technical Manual 1: Reprieve-class Escape Pod*. This was announced in last month's issue, since that issue was delayed slightly, but as a February release, we felt it appropriate to include it in this month's announcements as well.
- **Freestar Games** has re-released *The Starfarer's Kit*.
- **Avalon Games** has released *Vendetta Ship Book I*.
- **Terra/Sol Games** has release *Ancient Trails: Witness to History* and *Starfarer's Gazette #2*.
- **Spica Publishing** has released *Career Book 3*. 🌟

## Theme Issue Call For Submissions

We've already decided on what our first few Theme Issues should be, and we'd like you to think about generating content aimed at them. While not all types of article will be relevant to all themes, we won't rule out any specific kind of article for any particular theme (our imagination may overlook something that you spot).

As indicated in January's "From the Editor", we'll accumulate material and hold it until we have enough to make the theme issue, then announce it and print it. The usual policies regarding rights and credit apply.

These are our currently planned themes:

**Psionics:** Don't feel that you have to focus on the Zhodani for this one; there's lots of room beyond them. But you don't have to avoid them, either...

**The Cruise:** What's it like? What's the ship, the destination, the activities, the adventures (expected and unexpected), the stories... ? Tell us!

**2300A.D.:** Ideally, to emphasize that *Freelance Traveller* will support this setting alongside all of the other *Traveller* out there, we'd have liked to have enough to run this theme issue the same month that the 2300A.D. core book is released. It appears at this time, however, that it's just too close to being released to be able to reasonably expect to do this. So, we'll run it as soon as possible.

**Traveller: Prime Directive:** This is also intended to signal support for a new setting. If we get material for this one early, though, we have a chance of being able to put this issue together so that we can print it for the same month that the sourcebook is released. 🌟



### Drop Out

by Ken Murphy

#### Part 14

After dinner the Roosters packed all the checked baggage onto *Waffles'* beat up, old Chilton Grav Sled, and as the passengers left the ship via the large cargo bay doors with any carry-on bags, the Sled followed slowly as they moved toward the small Terminal building.

Once all of the luggage was claimed, the Chilton turned about and headed back with the prisoners' unclaimed kit. Thom looked at the odd collection in the rearview, wondering what they held.

Back at the ship again, the Roosters packed both pallets of the cargo due Nordic Prime on the Chilton in quick order. When they were done, the old sled could barely get off the ground, but it could still get off the ground. Thom maneuvered the ill-mannered pig down several narrow streets, and finally, to the loading dock; the whole time the mountain of crates leaning this way and that.

Thom sat in the Chilton's cab, listening to a Micro of Atomic Era Greats, Creedence Clearwater Revival bluesin' their way through "Long As I Can See the Light", as he watched his local counterparts with envy as they loaded their cargo onto a battered but working Pallet Master.

With the last couple of large crates being loaded, one of the local stevedores rapped on the door panel of the Chilton.

"Say pal," he said to Thom, "that last crate there!" he nodded toward the crate that the rail gun's composite round had smash into. "Its damaged. I can't take it."

"Well, we're certainly not paying for it." Thom said, getting out of the truck.

"This here is what'cha call an Act of fucking God, brother." Thom stepped up to the wrecked crate and dug around inside for a minute before pulling the magnetic slug from the box and tossing it to the stevedore. "Pirates hit us on the way in." he said,

"You can add it to your pile or not, but we're sure not eatin' the cost of this one!" Thom said, finding himself becoming more and more agitated.

"There's no need to get you hackles raised, little Rooster." The stevedore said. Looking Thom over and deciding the little guy looked ready to stomp somebody's guts out, he said "'Ere. Lemme sign that paperwork for you."; taking the comp pad and scrawling his name in the proper spot at the bottom; the electronic authorization funneling KCr24 into the *Waffles'* account.

With that bit of business taken care of, Thom returned to the *Waffles*, wrecked container in tow. Freeing up the old Chilton for other use, Thom hefted the heavy crate to the cargo deck; the act much easier without the constraints a vacc suit would impose.

Stepping into the Terminal with Ilsa Frielander, Captain Fyyg found the Port Director's Office after a not too involved search. Stepping into the cramped office, the Captain introduced himself and his Second to the older man who sat behind the desk. The man must have been in his 60s, but knew his way around handling cargo in his youth; his once muscular frame thickening now.

"Hobson." the man said, half rising to shake Fyyg's hand. Then standing to take Ilsa's hand, he kissed it and smiled; the office lights glinting off his gold teeth, "But you can call me Walter, my dear. Everyone does." he said, rubbing his shaved head with a handkerchief.

"My, a gentleman with manners." Ilsa said, pushing her Spacer's crush cap back on her head as she smiled at the Port Director and sat on the corner of his desk, innocently crossing and uncrossing her long, well-turned legs and readjusting her skirt several times as she and Walter exchanged in small talk; Captain Fyyg smiling affably as the pair talked.

At some point, as the subject of food came up, Ilsa readjusted her skirt in such a way as to rub her left knee against the Port Director's hand. Walter told the pair that if they wished to avoid the Terminal building with its vending machine fare or Galaxy Pizza, their best bet was the small Wu's House of Larb near the landing pad.

While Wu's sign normally sported a cowboy riding a bucking dragon bareback, the sign here

*(Continued on page 20)*

## Raconteurs' Rest

(Continued from page 19)

had suffered some sort of damage, to where it looked as if a headless body with a massive red phallus was jumping up and down.

Walter had offered to pay for their dinner, and as they approached and saw the sign, Ilsa shrieked “Blimey! Look at the size of that fella’s dong, would you? Just what sort of place is this?”

The Captain couldn’t maintain his composure any longer and began laughing; the others joining in until they were all laughing like idiots.

“No, really, its fabulous.” Walter told them, reassuringly, “Trust me.”

Fyyg had thought from the sign outside the place’d be a dump, but he’d been to the Wu’s on Olde Earth.

Opening the door, the place was decorated in dark woods, potted plants, and deep green walls. Beautifully carved wood, and cast-metal statuary was everywhere. A weather-worn carving of the Buddha’s face the size of a door was mounted on the wall opposite them. The little place seemed to have the same ambience as the one on Olde Earth, just in a smaller building.

Once seated, the Captain ordered a round of Olde Republics for the table. Sipping the heady brews, the trio debated on what to order off the menu. Captain Fyyg had had chicken Satay before—he particularly liked the cucumber salad that was included, and thought he’d play it safe and order it again. Second Officer Frielander hadn’t a clue. All she knew was she wanted an appetizer, which left the Port Director to order for the table.

When the bowl of spicy, fried grasshoppers arrived, Captain Fyyg decided it was time for another round.

The rest of the fare; the Thom Kha Gai , the Satay, and Larb Nuea were all delicious, if less exotic.

Later, back at the Port Director’s Office, Captain Fyyg kept a respectable distance and focused on an ashtray nearby as Ilsa gave Walter a hug and an alcohol-fueled mother-of-all kisses kiss. Breaking away from him and straightening her skirt, Ilsa said “I had a real nice time, Walter Lets get together next time I’m in town, why don’t we?”

At his respectable distance, Captain Fyyg rolled his eyes and smiled slightly.

Walking back to the *Waffles*, the Captain asked “And what purpose did that little exercise tonight serve, Number Two?”

“Well, Nordell, I’ll tell you. I single-handedly managed to accomplish the most unlikely and the most exciting things to happen to a girl here on Nordic Prime.”

“And that would be?” wondered the Captain.

“Having the Port Director buy me dinner out of his own pocket!”

“And?”

“Eating fried, very spicy grasshoppers.”

“My dear Ilsa.” Captain Fyyg said, putting an arm around Frielander’s dark shoulder “You are decidedly a shameless flirt!” he laughed.

“Me, a flirt? she asked, astonished. “And who was it in that discotheque on Driscoll’s World, bought the Port Director beers all night? AND danced with him?”

“Well I suppose that may have been me.” The Captain admitted, laughing.

“AND you’re straight!” the woman yelled.

“But you’ll remember,” he continued, laughing “He called the next day with a load of cargo for us.”

“And,” said Ilsa, laughing as well, “Walter will call tomorrow with a load of cargo for us.” ❁

## About Last Month’s Images

The images we inquired about last month have been identified, several times over, as being by long-time *Traveller* artist Jesse DeGraff. Thanks to all who wrote in with confirmation and pointers.

## 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.

## The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume 1

reviewed by Shannon Appelcline

*The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume 1.*

David Drake.

Original Publication: 2009

Current Availability: Print (trade paper) and eBook

*Editor's Note: This review originally appeared on RPG.Net in February of 2010, and is reprinted here with the author's permission. At the time it appeared in Freelance Traveller, two more volumes of The Complete Hammer's Slammers had been published, also in trade paper and eBook, by Baen Books.*

*Author's Note: I think that one of the best ways to prepare yourself to run a game is to immerse yourself in its fiction, and thus get a real sense of its milieu. Thus, this series of reviews, which looks at some of the fiction that influenced Traveller, was influenced by Traveller, or is actually set in the Traveller universe..*

When I began this series I covered several science-fiction works from the 1970s or earlier which might have influenced the *Traveller* game. At the time, I purposefully skipped two notable pre-*Traveller* works because new anthologies were just on the horizon. This review discusses one of them.

This eighteenth review covers *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume 1*, which became available in late 2009 in a cheap, trade-paperback edition.

The influence of the Hammer's Slammers books on *Traveller* is perhaps a bit more questionable than some of the other books I've covered in this series. I've never seen it listed by Marc Miller as an influence. However, I've more than once seen it discussed as a possible influence on *Traveller Book 4: Mercenary*. Three of the short stories that made up the original Hammer's Slammers collection—"Under the Hammer", "The Butcher's Bill", and "But Loyal to His Own", all of which appear in this new collection as well—certainly predated the original publication of *Mercenary*. Given that, and the fact that there's now a Hammer's Slammers setting book for *Traveller*, I decided that it was worthwhile to review a Hammer's Slammers collection as part of this *Traveller* fiction review series.

### About the Stories

*The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume 1* is a huge anthology, collecting all of the short fiction ever

written by David Drake about the Slammers. It contains the complete contents of the initial 1979 collection, Hammer's Slammers, as well as a variety of stories written since. There are a total of 15 different stories in *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume 1*, running the gamut from short story to novella. Although I'm not going to talk about them all individually, I can speak some to the commonalities among them.

These stories are broadly about people—real human beings—who happen to be at war. They're not stories of clever military maneuvers and tactical geniuses, but instead about how war affects those soldiers who participate in it. Among the stories, we see what might cause one woman to join a mercenary unit and the terrible experiences that another recruit has on his first day. We see the excesses of some soldiers and how some civilians are changed by their interactions with them.

Broadly, the stories of this volume cover a mercenary company called Hammer's Slammers. However, the connectivity between them is very sparse. The first 200 or so pages of this 500 page anthology—the stories that made up that original Hammer's Slammer collection—have a weak through-line, as the new recruits and veterans alike that we meet over the course of the first several stories come together in "Hangman", one of the final stories of that set.

Among the 15 stories in this "Complete" volume, you can also see a bit of the tale of the mercenaries as a whole. "But Loyal to His Own" tells how Hammer's Slammers came to be and "Standing Down" recounts their last mission. "A Death in Peacetime", a story written new for this anthology, reveals the fate of some of the Slammers afterward.

That trio of stories centers on the big names of the Slammers—notably Hammer himself and his right-hand man, the cruel Joachim Steuben—however they're very much the exception in this anthology. Most stories instead tell the small stories of individual tanks, cars, and their crew. Three of the stories don't even center on the Slammers, but instead use them as backdrop.

Via the latter means "Liberty Port" tells the story of a port that offers pleasures to mercs, among them "fully-functional" robots, while "The Immovable Ob-

*(Continued on page 22)*



(Continued from page 21)

ject” and “The Irresistable Force” tell of a man who steals a Hammer tank, and what becomes of him. Because of their wider focus, I think these three stories end up being three of the best in the anthology, but in talking about quality, I’m starting to sneak over into my next section, on how well the stories read.

Before I close out a discussion of the actual contents of this book, though, I should note that there are also about a half-dozen short background pieces on the Hammer’s Slammers universe. None is more than about two pages long, but they all manage to be pretty insightful as to how the mercenary system and the Slammers’ weaponry works.

### Genre & Style

*The Complete Hammer’s Slammers, Volume 1* is, without a doubt, a book of military science-fiction. Drake presents military warfare in a very detached and clinical manner, but his stories nonetheless manage to come across as tense and exciting. They’re also very personal, since—as already noted—the stories tend to be about people, not wars.

The result leaves you making your own decisions about what war’s any good for. However, with the real costs that you see, both to those killed and to the survivors, it’s pretty likely that your conclusions will be similar to those of author and Vietnam vet, David Drake. Though I find the first three-quarters of most of these stories pretty dry, by the end—as Drake has revealed those self-same costs—they tend to reach an emotional crescendo that feels true and real.

I like some of the ways that these individual stories are told, but I’m less impressed with how *The Complete Hammer’s Slammers, Volume 1* hangs together as a whole. Many of the stories feel to me like mere vignettes—20 or 25 pages of text written with the sole goal of getting you to a meaningful conclusion. Also, all too often the Slammers exists largely as a MacGuffin to highlight a single idea or interaction that Drake wanted to show off. The few times where a character or plotline was continued from one story to another felt like they were far too few.

Perhaps I was served ill by reading these stories all together, rather than over the 30 years that David Drake had written them. However, I can only rate

these stories as they’re now offered, in a single anthology. Beyond that, in reading them, I did follow the advice of noted short-story author Gene Wolfe, who in his *Book of Days* wrote, “I urge you not to read one after another, the way I eat potato chips. The simple act of closing this book and putting it away for another day will do a great deal for the story you have just read and even more for the next.” I read *The Complete Hammer’s Slammers, Volume 1* over the course of at least two months, and never read two stories in a day.

Overall, I generally think that the Hammer stories are truthful and touching, and thus I’ve given them a Style of “4”. However I think that the anthology hangs together pretty poorly as a set of stories all about one thing, and it left me hungry for more, thus I give it a Substance of “3”.

### Applicability to Mongoose Traveller

So, did Hammer’s Slammers influence *Traveller* or not? It’s hard for me to say. I certainly don’t see as direct of influences as I did in *Dorsai!*—another pivotal work of military science-fiction. Nonetheless, Hammer’s Slammers could have influenced the game, and there’s of course no doubt that it’s influenced Mongoose’s *Traveller* through the Hammer’s Slammers setting book.

The more important question, however, is whether *Hammer’s Slammers Volume 1* is a good reference for a military-oriented science-fiction campaign. Here I feel more comfortably saying, absolutely, yes. *Dorsai!* gave some great background on how mercenary tickets might work, but it was big picture enough that it didn’t provide a lot of insight into what life might be like for the average merc. *The Complete Hammer’s Slammers, Volume 1* does, with individual stories being practically a checklist of topics you could address in a mercenary campaign.

When talking about how well *Hammer’s Slammers Volume 1* coheres as a work of fiction, I said that I thought it fell down because so many of the stories felt like they were vignettes, each addressing a single idea. It’s that same thing that makes them strong as potential adventure hooks.

“Under the Hammer” shows the brutality of war and what a new recruit might experience. “The

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 22)

Butcher's Bill" covers mercs' relations with citizens. "But Loyal to His Own" addresses the question of how badly things can go wrong when relations break down between a mercenary unit and its employer. "Caught in the Crossfire" suggests more reasons that people might become mercs. "Cultural Conflict" is about misunderstandings leading to war. "The Tank Lords" shows how high-tech mercenaries might be seen on a low-tech world, a contrast that's very true to the heart of *Traveller*. "Liberty Port" portrays what mercs do while at play, and "The Immovable Object" and "The Irresistible Force" together show what might happen to a planet after the mercs leave.

So, ironically, while I don't think *The Complete Hammer's Slammers Volume 1* offers a very coherent whole when presenting its own stories, I think it offers a huge number of adventure hooks that could be used by *Traveller* GMs to present their own coherent Mercenary campaigns. Each story in the book could easily

be used to form the basis of a *Traveller* adventure—whether you're playing in the Slammers universe or not.

### Conclusion

*The Complete Hammer's Slammers Volume 1* was a book that I really went back and forth on. Though I was intrigued by a lot of the individual stories, they were hard to read as a whole. However, when I finished the last story—another one of the better ones in the book—I decided that I wanted to read Volume 2, with the hope that its longer stories will be more to my liking—and provide a more coherent vision of both the Slammers universe and the unit itself.

However, looking at this existing volume from the viewpoint of a *Mercenary Traveller* GM, *The Complete Hammer's Slammers, Volume 1* is perfect iridium-plated gold, practically a checklist of the things that could go wrong for a Mercenary unit. 🌀

## In A Store Near You

## The Showroom

### Penny-Farthing Bicycle

by Ewan Quibell

```
CraftID: Penny Farthing Bicycle, TL4, Cr 320
Hull: 1/1, Disp=0.074, Conf=0USL Open, Armor=1I,
      Unloaded=0.0443 tons, Loaded=0.0443 tons*
Power: External=0.0002 Mw
Loco: 1/2, Wheels x2, Suspension=integral,
      P/W=4.5, Road=30 kph,
      Offroad=4.5 kph
Comm: -
Sensors: -
      Off: Hardpoints=1
      Def: +2 DM
Control: Direct
Accom: Crew=1 (Operator), Seat=None
Other: Cargo=0 k1, ObjSize=Small, EmLevel=None
Comment: Price in quantity=Cr 256
```

This TL4 Iron, sophont-powered, bicycle is a passenger vehicle that can be found on almost any low tech planet. The frame is iron and the seat is covered in cloth or hides to offer some protection for the operator's bottom while springs between the seat and the frame offer some amount of ride comfort.

The operator uses direct controls, handlebars, and puts its feet on pedals that turn the front wheel directly. In order for the bicycle to sustain any amount of speed the front wheel is 1.22 meters in diameter and the sophont operates the vehicle in a position above this wheel. The second wheel is 0.46 meters in diameter and allows the bicycle stability on the road. There is no brake. There is no luggage compartment and anything carried must be on the operator's back, but the vehicle is not intended to take much load.

The bicycle is powered by the operator, who is assumed to have two legs. In the above case the external power source was calculated using a standard human producing 200 watts. The speed of the vehicle varies considerably depending on the road conditions and load (\*the weight of the sophont and what they are carrying), and while theoretically can be driven up to 30kph, roads of the quality needed for these speeds are almost nonexistent on low tech worlds. 🌀

## 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](mailto: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

Avalon Game Company  
Avenger Enterprises  
D.B. Design Bureau

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



## 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](mailto: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 to [editor@freelancetraveller.com](mailto:editor@freelancetraveller.com) 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 *2300A.D.* and *Traveller Prime Directive*.

...**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 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 pixelated.

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](mailto: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”.

