



# FREELANCE TRAVELLER

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Theme Issue:  
*Psionics*

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## A Note About Production

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

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

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## Editor

Jeff Zeitlin

## Contributors

Jeff Zeitlin, Timothy Collinson, Ken Pick, Dave Bryant, Andrea Vallance, Michael Brown.

## Artwork

Cover: Jeff Zeitlin, from uncredited images marked reusable-modifiable in Google Images.

From the Editor: Jeff Zeitlin

Critics' Corner: Mongoose Publishing, from the PDF of the reviewed product; Gypsy

Knights Games, from their website.

Active Measures: Michael Brown.

Up Close and Personal: Timothy Collinson

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# From the Editor



This issue represents a first—though a long-desired one—for *Freelance Traveller*: It's a "Theme Issue", where most of the articles included all have a connection with the stated theme—for this issue, *Psionics*.

So, what's the difference between an ordinary issue and a Theme Issue? The fact that a majority of the articles touch on a subject is one difference, but it's really not enough, in Your Humble Editor's opinion. The key to making a Theme Issue lies in some way *connecting* the themed articles, or at least a significant portion of them—in this issue, for example, Timothy Collinson has connected his Up Close and Personal on Shtiz Bralzastebr with two adventures, and Jeff Zeitlin—same person, different *persona* from Your Humble Editor—has created a Tavrchedl' career with an adventure seed that ties back to Timothy's articles. That kind of thing is what, to me, makes a Theme Issue, and I hope to be able to repeat that kind of linkage in each Theme Issue.

It would be great if every issue could be a Theme Issue; it would make *Freelance Traveller* stand out among fanzines of all stripes. I think, however, that it would constrain authors too much, which would lead to a falloff in material produced and therefore printed. Instead, I'll simply occasionally note planned Themes, or discuss a particular Theme and my concept of it, and encourage people to write for those Themes. When there's enough material for a theme, perhaps with a small number of reprints of old articles that fit the theme, I'll put out the Theme Issue. Hopefully, I'll get one or two per year that way. I'll give an overview of the current list in my half-page next issue.

If you have ideas for themes, by all means send me email suggesting them. Don't worry about whether it's on the list already; more mail means more interest, and if one theme appears to be of more interest than another, I'll start 'pushing' for people to write for that theme.



### Mongoose Traveller—Book 4: Psion

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Book 4: *Psion*. Lawrence Whittaker

Mongoose Publishing <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>

96pp, softcover

UK£16.99/US\$24.99

*This review was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 2009, and has had the publication data above corrected and the cover image added for this reprint.*

Psion, for Mongoose Publishing's *Traveller* line, focusses on an aspect of previous versions of *Traveller* that was given short shrift: the character with "mind powers".

#### On the Shelf

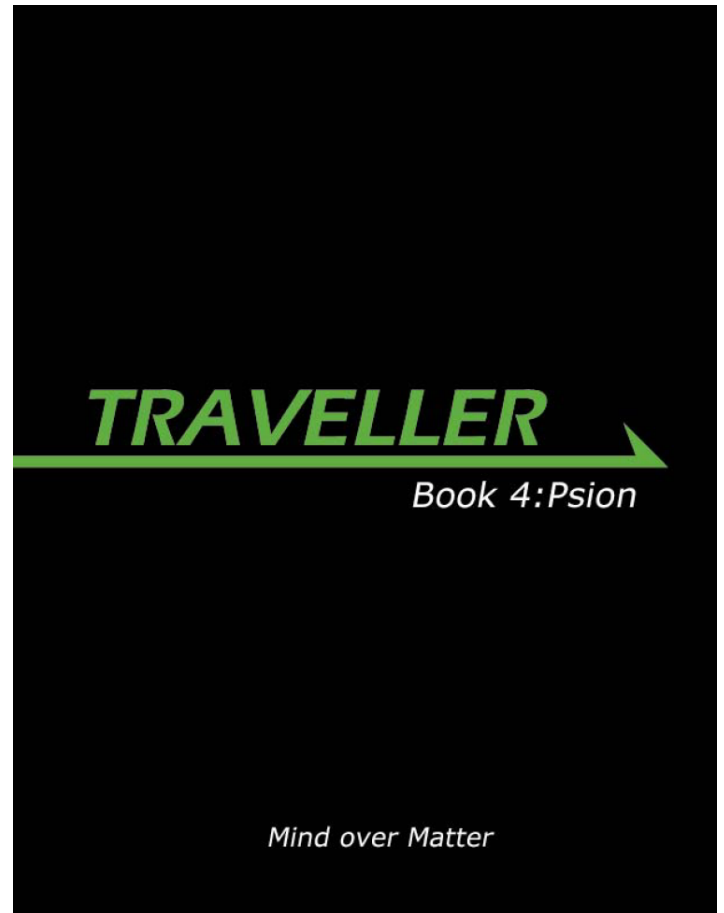
As usual, the *Traveller* logo is prominently displayed in the center of the black cover. Psion is classed as a rules expansion; thus, the *Traveller* logo is in green. The tag line for this book is the entirely predictable "Mind over Matter".

#### Initial Impressions

Psion is consistent with the appearance of other Mongoose *Traveller* releases, both in basic organization and in production quality. Text and tables are clear and readable, and material is well-organized. The 'photographic' artwork is a bit dark, but not obscured.

#### On Closer Inspection

The short Introduction is followed by four pages defining psionics and six pages describing how to determine what a character's psionic talents are, what sort of training the character may go through, and what the cost of having those powers might be. These sections are followed by an extensive character generation section, covering thirty-nine possible career tracks in thirteen careers. Many of the careers are 'psionic' versions of standard careers, such as scout, agent, drifter, rogue, navy, and so on. Most of these are very similar to their non-psionic counterparts, but the large overlap does ultimately simplify character generation by not requiring nearly constant back-and-forth reference to both this book and



the core rules. There are also psion-specific careers, such as the Dedicated Psion Agency (identifying, recruiting, developing, and policing other psions), Temporal Agency (psionic time-travel), and Interdimensional Agency (psionic universe-hopping). In addition to the Basic psionic Talents outlined in the six-page talent section, there are a small number of new Skills, most (but not all) of which are aimed at the psion-specific careers.

A detailed section on psionic powers follows, giving more detail on the Talents, and describing specializations of each (e.g., Life Detection as a specialization of Telepathy, Psionically-Enhanced Strength as a specialization of Awareness, and so on). Each specialization presents information on its capabilities and limitations, and at least one appropriate task entry for using each. This section goes beyond the Basic Talents described in the core rulebook and the beginning of this book, and presents a set of Advanced Talents, such as Machine Symbiosis

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## Critics' Corner

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or Energy Kinesis. These, too, are expanded into specializations with descriptions and tasks.

Following powers, a section on psionic traumas describes some of the disadvantages of having powers, what might cause such traumas, what the effects of psionic trauma cover (including information on playing a traumatized character), and how it may be treated. This includes a four-page list of phobias, two columns on each page, with one-line definitions of each. Given that the book recommends that if a phobia is imposed on a character, it should be related to the psionic activity or the environment that triggered it, inclusion of many of these phobias would seem useless, and your reviewer suspects that there are some that were included simply for humor value or "geek points".

The Psionic Equipment section contains descriptions of drugs, tools, and weapons that can be used by psions, against psions or their powers, or to duplicate psionic powers for the use of non-psions. Not all powers can be affected or duplicated by the equipment listed.

Separate from the rest of the psionic equipment is the "mind ship"—a ship requiring some level of psionic talent to operate. The various psionics-related components are described, with costs and limitations.

Notable by its absence from this volume is a sample psionic character generated using the rules

or careers here; also omitted is what would have been an extremely useful section on missions for psions, providing examples of how a psion could be used in a mission, examples of missions that would absolutely require psionics, and how psions and non-psions might react to each other under various circumstances.

### Summary

Although Mongoose Publishing is maintaining their reputation for quality in the *Traveller* line with this book, it would be hard to say that it stands as high in this reviewer's estimation as previous numbers in this line, because of the omitted sections. Nevertheless, it cannot be classed as other than a worthwhile acquisition for the referee wishing to include psionics in a campaign.

More than previous rules supplements, *Psion* shows that Mongoose Publishing views *Traveller* as a system for role-playing, separate from any settings that they or their customers may already be familiar with. To some extent, this is also indicated by the support for settings other than the Third Imperium (such as *Babylon 5*, *Hammer's Slammers*, and *Judge Dredd*), but the *Traveller* fan who bypasses the non-Third Imperium setting books will really first have this driven home with this volume. It is important that such a purchaser recognize this view of *Traveller*, and not bypass this book in disgust simply because of its inclusion of such ideas as time travel or interdimensional travel. ❁

## Doing It My Way

### Psionic Abilities

by Timothy Collinson

The abilities included in the Core Rulebook offer some opportunity for using psionics in adventures, but there's plenty of room for a creative referee to come up with others. These are some abilities that resulted from some brainstorming sessions.

### Telepathy Abilities

#### Talent Lift

Talent Lift, also called "Borrow", allows a psion to use another psion's Talent as though his/her own for the length of the task. For example, if Sharik "borrows" Alex's Teleportation talent, Sharik will be able to teleport, using the standard teleportation tasks, with DMs based on Alex's Teleportation level

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## Doing It My Way

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and her own Psionic Strength, and paying the cost out of her own Psionic Strength.

*Telepathy, Psionic Strength, 1-6 minutes, Very Difficult (-4).*

*Cost: 6+Range*

### Dream Reading

Dream Reading allows a psion to perceive a person's dreams up to three hours after they've awoken even if the subject is unable to recall the dream. Roll 1D6: 1-3, one dream is detected; 4-6, two dreams are detected; 6, three dreams are detected. The Effect of the check determines the clarity of perception although it should be noted that being able to *read* the dream doesn't necessarily give any ability to *interpret* it. This is of particular use in psychological healing although it can also be misused.

*Telepathy, Psionic Strength, 10-60 seconds, Simple (+6).*

*Cost: 1+(½ Range) (round fractions up)*

### Dream Planting

This is a much more subtle form of Send Thoughts in which the subject is convinced on waking that the images or ideas have come to them in dream form. The Effect determines how clearly the dream is apparently remembered.

*Telepathy, Psionic Strength, 10-60 seconds, Average (+0).*

*Cost: 1+(½ Range) (round fractions up)*

### Shield Drain

If a psion encounters someone using psionic Shield to protect themselves, the PC will need to overcome this shield in order to use Telepathic powers against the individual. This ability is intended for use when Psionic Assault is inappropriate.

*Telepathy, Psionic Strength, 1-6 seconds, Average (0).*

*Cost: 3+Range*

The target should be allowed an Opposed Check to defend (see Core Rulebook:50). Success reduces the target's psionic strength by the Effect.

### Clairvoyance Abilities

#### Animal Mind

This is the ability to use the senses of an animal as if they were your own, even at a distance. It is

similar to Clairsentience in that it allows the psion to perceive events at a remote location, but with different time limits and lower cost. It differs in that where Clairsentience allows the character to observe as if he was there in person, Animal Mind only presents the animal's sensory data to the psion. These may be limited (for example reduced color perception) or enhanced (for example the eyesight or hearing of a raptor). It's also possible the character will receive sensory data that can't be interpreted (such as a hunting feline keeping head and eyes very still so that only movement of prey is visible; a vision mode that doesn't exist in humans who see shape and detail because our eyes are constantly in motion), or for which there is no human equivalent (such as a migratory avian's magnetic sense). At the Referee's discretion it is possible that the psion may be injured by 'brain-burn' if overloaded with sensory input, or presented with input that can't be interpreted. The Referee may also wish to limit what animals can be used in this way to, say, "only animals over ½ kg" or "no insects". Also called CritterSense.

*Clairvoyance, Psionic Strength, 1-6 hours, Routine (+2).*

*Cost: 0+Range*

As presented, the psion cannot direct the animal's attention. Alternatively, the Referee may choose to link this ability with Telepathy, allowing the psion to direct the animal's attention. If Telepathy is used, the task becomes more difficult and requires a greater expenditure of Psionic Strength. This model of the ability may also be called Familiar.

*Telepathy, Psionic Strength, 1-6 hours, Difficult (-2).*

*Cost: 2+Range*

#### Precognition

The ability to sense at a distance in time rather than space. The precognitive character can get a feeling of how future events will unfold in the space they are occupying, or in their own vicinity if they move, or both at the Referee's discretion. The 'time range' must be stated and the Referee should give a description of events as vague or specific as appropriate (this can be guided by Effect). Future actions of PCs may of course be quite opaque and the Refer-

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## Doing It My Way

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ee may well want to limit the power such that the precog cannot see future events they would be immediately involved with but only events they cannot influence. For example, the precog might foretell an earthquake, but not that she, or companions, will be able to rescue the heir of the local autarch trapped in a building collapse in that 'quake.

*Clairvoyance, Psionic Strength, 10-60 seconds, Difficult (-2).*

*Cost: 4+Time Range*

The referee may optionally decide that Precognition is a separate talent, not an ability tied to Clairvoyance. If so, when testing for this Talent according to the Core Rulebook, the learning DM for Precognition is 0.

*Precognition, Psionic Strength, 10-60 seconds, Difficult (-2).*

*Cost: 4+Time Range*

Regardless of which model is used, the following costs for time range are used.

| Time                    | Cost |
|-------------------------|------|
| Less than 30 seconds    | 0    |
| 30 seconds to 5 minutes | 1    |
| 5 to 30 minutes         | 2    |
| 30 minutes to 1 hour    | 3    |
| 1 to 2 hours            | 4    |
| 2 to 10 hours           | 5    |
| 10 hours to 1 day       | 6    |

[This talent previously appeared in 13Mann's adventure, "Three Blind Mice", by the author of this article, and is used here with the permission of the publisher.]

### Telekinesis Abilities

#### Caress

Perhaps the polar opposite of Telekinetic Punch, this is the ability to touch and stroke a subject in stimulating ways without necessarily being in physical contact. Also called "Touch", it requires finesse to use rather than the mere force or power of Punch.

*Telekinesis, Psionic Strength, 1-6 seconds, Easy (+4).*

*Cost: 0+Range*

### Weather Control

The character can affect the atmosphere in the immediate vicinity (Long range or closer) and generate wind, precipitation, or other weather effects. The changes will last for 10 minutes + (Effect × 10 minutes). If the psion is acting to oppose the natural weather progression (e.g., trying to cause rain while it's sunny, or vice-versa), the task is Formidable (-6) as shown. If the psion is acting to "enhance" the current weather progression (e.g., make it rain harder, or increase existing winds to clear clouds), the task is merely Very Difficult (-4)

*Telekinesis, Psionic Strength, 1-6 minutes, Formidable (-6).*

*Cost: 4+Range*

### Awareness Abilities

#### Metatherm

The character can exercise conscious control over his body temperature. Note that this can be extremely dangerous, however it can be used in conjunction with Teleportation involving changes in altitude to negate the effects of potential energy changes. It may also be useful to some extent in case of fever, potential hypothermia, or inhospitable climes.

*Awareness, Psionic Strength, 10-60 minutes, Difficult (-2).*

*Cost: 3 per degree up or down*

#### SlowThink

This is essentially a non-pharmaceutical version of Metabolic Accelerator (or 'Slow Drug'), which boosts the psion's reaction times. It has the same effects as the drug (see page 94 of the Core Rulebook) except it begins its effect at the end of the task duration, and the costs are against psionic strength rather than in credits. This may be combined as a power with FastThink (or Suspended Animation) and called Metabolic Control such that the psion can perform either activity.

*Awareness, Psionic Strength, 1-6 minutes, Difficult (-2).*

*Cost: 3*

#### FastThink

An alternative name in some places for Suspended Animation – see Core Rulebook:155. This may be

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## Doing It My Way

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combined as an ability with SlowThink and called Metabolic Control such that the psion can perform either activity. Metabolic Control uses the SlowThink task above.

### Computer Empathy

The character can sense the flow of data within a computer or network making Computers tasks easi-

er. The character must be in physical contact with some part of the computer to use the power. Add the Effect to the Computers task to a maximum of +3. This differs from other Machine Symbiosis powers (Book 4: Psion) in that no psionic interface is required in the computer.

*Machine Symbiosis, Psionic Strength, 10-60 secs, Average (0).  
Costs 2*

*[This ability was inspired by the ability of the same name in Traveller: The New Era.]* 



## Active Measures

### Planet of Storms

by Michael Brown

The PCs face the secrets of a mysterious structure on a planet with a violent atmosphere.

“Planet of Storms” is designed for 4-6 Classic Traveller characters of varied career backgrounds. The group may or may not have worked together before the adventure. The adventure may start on any Imperial world, but the main action takes place on a world size 5+ with atmosphere 6+, referred to in the text as “Nimbus.” The planet may be interdicted. The referee may of course replace this world with a similar one of his or her choice. Pilot skill is essential for the adventure, as is Vacc Suit if the referee decides the atmosphere is unbreathable. The PCs will need access to a starship.

#### I: The Calm Before

Ivaru Scientific Horizons is a prestigious scientific research foundation based on the subsector capital. An ISH representative asks to meet with the PCs while they are in port; they need a team with a specialized skillset for possible rescue work. Several months ago, an ISH-funded expedition set out for Nimbus, a world in the subsector known for its turbulent atmosphere and mega-scale storms. Their mission was to study the dynamics of the planet’s atmosphere, getting as close as they dared in order to get the most accurate readings. ISH has since lost contact with the scientific party. They offer to pay

the PCs Cr300,000 in order to determine the party’s fate and rescue any survivors.

The foundation turns over what information it has on the planet to the adventurers. The Scouts conducted a cursory examination of the planet long ago, but deemed it of little value due to its hyperactive weather and lack of mineral resources. No serious attempts have been made to settle or mine the planet since. Even research missions to the world have been sporadic and conducted by unmanned probes.

#### II: Lightnings Flash From Pole To Pole

From orbit, Nimbus appears to deserve its dangerous reputation. The ship’s sensors detect extremely high atmospheric turbulence; wild temperature variances; hurricane-force winds in both northern and southern hemispheres; funnel clouds as common as forests; deadly and unpredictable wind-shear; particularly-dangerous lightning; torrential rains with raindrops in areas that hit with the force of a body pistol bullet; and a faint radio signal on an Imperial frequency. Densitometers detect a mass of metal suggestive of a spacegoing craft.

As the PCs descend to investigate the source of the radio signal, a massive lightning bolt strikes their ship, knocking the power offline. While the power plant itself may not be damaged beyond repair (use the Starship Damage rules in *Book 2: Starships* to determine this), the huge electrical surge has overloaded power connections all over the ship. Of immediate concern, however, is that without power,

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## Active Measures

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the flight control surfaces can't operate, and the ship plummets like a rock!

The adventurers have a chance to avoid being dashed all over the surface of the planet. The referee should find the altitude at which the lightning struck the ship: 3D×300 meters. Divide by 240; this gives the number of combat rounds until they crash. While falling, they can try to restore power:

*To bring the ship's power back online:*

DIFFICULT; Electronics, Engineering, Mechanical, EDU; 1 second

Meanwhile, the pilot is assumed to be taking whatever steps necessary to avoid a crash:

*To successfully pilot the ship without power:*

DIFFICULT; \*, EDU; 1 second

REFEREE: Use the higher of Ship's Boat or Pilot. Success keeps the ship flying for 1D more seconds.

Restoring the power restores the vessel's control surfaces. It can then make a rough but survivable landing. Impose 1D-2 throws on the starship Hit Locations table in Book 2; this is in addition to any damage to the ship's Power Plant. If repairs are made with five or fewer seconds until the crash, the landing is even rougher; impose 1D+1 throws on the table instead. In both cases, if a Critical Hit is called for, ignore results of Explode.

### III: The Crystal Urns Of Heaven

Upon landing and taking stock of their situation, the team notes two items of interest through their stormy surroundings: the first is that the ISH craft – a Type A Free Trader – is a half-kilometer away. A kilometer beyond that, however, is what gets their attention: a spire, about 5 kilometers high. The structure, which sports a smooth, pearlescent surface and is studded with short spikes, looks to have been grown rather than built, and curiously, seems not to exist to any of the ship's sensors.

Anytime the PCs are outside, the referee should throw 2D-2; the result represents several factors:

- A rough indicator of the current storm's intensity. A result of zero doesn't mean calm conditions – it's never calm on Nimbus. It simply means the storms are at their least powerful.
- Multiplied by 12, the wind speed in kph. Again, a roll of zero doesn't mean that there's no wind, just that it's less than 12kph.
- A negative DM to visibility and overland movement.
- Multiplied by 10, the percent chance that flying debris will injure one or more characters. Use the Automatic Fire rules in *Book 1: Characters and Combat* to determine this. Damage is as a Foil. Armor protects, of course.

The group may decide to wait in the ship until a break in the storms; in this case, 1D hours must pass for this to happen and subtract 1D from the previous Intensity for the intensity of the break. 8D minutes later, the next storm front moves in. Each new storm front requires a new Intensity throw.

Hurricane-force winds (7+ on the intensity throw) require the team to throw vs. DEX at a cumulative -2 DM per point above 7. Failure imposes 1D falling damage, mitigated by armor.

As the adventurers approach the ISH ship, one glance tells them that it is in bad shape. Its landing was apparently far harder than the PCs'. Anyone with Engineering skill can immediately tell that the vessel will never fly again. However, it may be cannibalized for parts.

The ship is unoccupied, but the power plant is intact and the craft has power. Both the maneuver and jump drives have been completely destroyed. The hull has been breached, and one-quarter of the items in the hold (mostly provisions and scientific equipment) have been destroyed. The computer is intact and functioning; the team may be able to pull a copy of the ship's log from it:

*To retrieve the ship's log from the computer:*

ROUTINE; Computer, EDU; 15 seconds

The log confirms the PCs' observations. The crash resulted in several injuries among the crew of

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## Active Measures

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fourteen. Since the hull was breached, the scientists sent a scouting party to the spire in hopes of finding shelter from the storms, leaving the distress beacon operating. There is no sign whether or not they were successful. If the PCs try to raise the ISH team on the radio, there will be no response on any channel.

The obvious next move is to make it to the structure. They face the same dangers doing so as they did getting to the ISH vessel. Once there, they run into trouble: an opening is not immediately apparent. They can look for one, taking as long as they like, but nothing in the way of ingress can be found. Unknown to the group, the doorway is psionically attuned. To the average person, the wall simply appears featureless, but a psi can “see” the outline of the doorway in his or her mind. Opening it is another matter; the operating mechanism is activated by the emotion of anger. Sufficient anger may be generated by the frustration of their circumstances; anyone failing an INT throw will lose it sufficiently to make the door open as a section of wall physically dilates to admit the heroes.

Inside, a long corridor greets the crew. The walls and ceiling are all curves, composed of the same material as the exterior of the spire. The walls also seem to produce their own uniform lighting by some method not immediately obvious to the adventurers. Telepathic PCs will discover that the lights are controlled psionically; they can manipulate the light levels from a soft glow to blinding intensity. The lights cannot be turned off, however.

The entry corridor proceeds in a straight line for 227 meters, then makes an abrupt right turn. The referee should refer to the map of the spire interior:

1. The spire’s entry/exit point.
2. This room shows the party is on the right track, as there are objects and equipment of Human manufacture scattered around.
3. The remaining ISH scientists have made this room their redoubt. In addition to the room abil-

ities described below under The Spire, foodstuffs are also available, delivered through a dilating cubbyhole in the far wall.

4. Standing in the center of this room activates a fully immersive holographic interface. The data (in an unfamiliar language, of course) swirls about the user; experimentation shows that the holograms can be manipulated like any other controls. The referee should determine the effects of playing with them.
5. The major feature of this room is a large holographic representation of Nimbus, with weather systems and data displayed in real time. The location of the spire is also marked as a pulsating red dot. A nearby permanently-extruded pedestal controls various features of the globe such as rotational speed, historical weather patterns, future projected weather patterns, and a zoom function with resolution down to 50:1. Informational graphics can also be switched on or off. As with the room above, experimentation reveals the functions of the globe. Even without manipulation, the team should be able to make accurate weather predictions using the observed information. The group’s pilot can also use information from the globe to plot a relatively safe course through the storms (+2 to Pilot skill).
6. The objects this room extrudes are much different than the others, consisting of simple geometric forms with handles, large rings, etc. The gravity in this room is also variable, controllable from weightlessness up to 2g.
7. The opening to this room does not automatically dilate as the others. A telepath may enter if he or she has a Psi Strength of 6+ and spends one minute in concentration on the door. The room’s computer may still refuse admittance on a subsequent throw of 8+. Inside, the room has an overpowering odor designed to affect the limbic system of sapient beings and impart a feeling of great danger. The walls and ceiling are covered with short spikes, all of which point toward the

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## Active Measures

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- center of the room. Depending on when the group enters during a two-hour cycle (see below), the room may be empty, might house a steadily-growing ball of protoplasm, or cause them to throw for surprise as they are immediately attacked upon entry.
8. This room is similar to the others except for a holographic viewer at one end of the room.
  9. A small area with shelves and cabinets permanently extruded from the walls and floor; obviously a storage area. The referee should determine if any useful items are within.
  10. Permanently extruded shelves hold hundreds of small (2.5 centimeter diameter) crystal spheres. Any PC with Telepathy who concentrates on a sphere can access recorded information. Of course, the language is unintelligible, even with Telepathy. The spheres will not function outside of the room.
  11. Concentrating on a section of wall causes a small alcove to form. Stepping inside creates a mist that engulfs the hero with a tingling sensation. 1D minutes later, any dirt, stains, or other superficial defects have been removed. A further mental command extrudes a raised cylindrical seat with a soft pulsating glow in the bottom. Anything contacting the glowing area is disintegrated with a puff of vaporized matter.
  12. Hovering in the middle of this room is a mass of plant material. The vegetation is alive, although in a strange state of static equilibrium – it does not grow unless at least 10% of its material is harvested, then it grows at a rate of 1 cm per combat round until it reaches its former size. The plants are edible (if strangely-flavored) and quite nutritious.
  13. This room is empty and apparently non-functional. 12 piles of grayish ash are scattered about the room.
  14. This room cannot extrude objects. Patches of what appear to be fog hover in the air at a height of one meter above the floor. Each patch roughly measures 1 by 1.5 meters. The fog feels solid to the touch. The patches can be moved (with one combat round's worth of concentration) anywhere in the room as desired, although they cannot be taken out of the room. The walls can form small cubbyholes measuring 30 centimeters square, although such spaces only form near an existing fog-patch.
  15. This area is actually a large shaft with power flowing through it. The edge of the shaft appears to lack a barrier, but as the heroes approach, a bar of light appears around the hole, glowing dull red at first, and growing brighter the nearer the adventurers come to it. The light is harmless and solid to the touch. The shaft disappears into darkness both above and below the heroes to an indeterminate distance. Narrow ledges can be seen at regular intervals on the walls of the shaft, but no ladders or other climbing aids are in evidence. It is possible for someone wearing a grav belt to easily fly to one of the ledges, but they would have to stay close to the walls; the power beam deals 18D damage to anyone attempting to cross it.
- While the adventurers are exploring the complex, the referee should throw every half hour of game time for 10+. If successful, the group is attacked by the "guardian" of the place, a biological construct designed to stalk and kill intruders. Resembling a large cat, the creature has the psionic ability to disrupt the brain's visual cortex, making it appear to observers to be displaced from its true location. The result is a -3 DM on any attempt to hit it in combat. The creature attacks until it or its opponents are killed, although its death triggers the complex's computer to begin construction of another beast. Only one "cat" can exist at a time. Upon death, the animal dissolves into a puddle of putrid goo that slowly evaporates. The "cats" are built in Room 7 above, taking two hours for building and programming, and are then released. The team will

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## Active Measures

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have to destroy the room in order to stop the manufacture of the beasts. Otherwise, they will be built and sent after the party for the entire time they are within the base. The creature (or one like it) has already accounted for five of the ISH party.

### IV: Flesh Endures the Storms

During their exploration of the complex, the group may stumble upon the room responsible for manufacturing the “cats” that have cost the ISH scientists several members and which are now trying to destroy them.

Given the computer’s ability to build an infinite number of animals, the team will have to destroy it to stop the “cats” once and for all. Explosives will suffice, but the team will need to totally obliterate the room to ensure the manufacturing process is stopped. Any explosion must deal 120 points of damage all at once to succeed. Adventurers with Demolition skill may be able to determine the proper amount of explosive:

*To determine the proper explosive charge:*

ROUTINE; Demolitions, EDU; 1 minute.

REFEREE: When the explosion occurs, throw for Mishap on a failed attempt as usual. The result is the percentage of the adjacent rooms that the explosion damages as well. If the team is in one of those rooms, they take the stated damage.

Alternately, the computer controlling the “cats” construction can be shut down psionically if a Telepathic PC wins a duel against the machine (per Book 3; treat the computer as having Psi Strength 10 for this purpose).

In addition to exploring the complex and the danger posed by the “cats”, the group still has to repair one of the ships sufficiently to get off-planet:

*To make repairs to the starship:*

FORMIDABLE: Engineering, Mechanical, EDU; 24 hours

REFEREE: The task assumes that all dam-

aged components are being worked on equally. The heroes may make one task throw per component if they wish.

### V: These Trees Are Now Silent

If the team can successfully repair the ship while fending off the “cats”, they can once again brave the storms and leave Nimbus. Upon their return to civilized space, there is the question of what to do about the spire. One option is to duly report it to Imperial authorities; the empire pays handsomely for news of new precursor sites. Some groups, however, might decide to keep the secret of the spire, even earmarking it for plunder. Of course, returning to Nimbus can be a dangerous, even deadly proposition.

Subsequent events are up to the referee.

### NPCs

#### levaru Scientific Horizons Personnel

There are six of the original fourteen expedition members left; three of the group died from injuries sustained in the crash. The others were attacked and killed by an alien creature. The animal hasn't attacked them in their holdout, but anyone leaving the room is subject to attack. The expedition’s leader and medic are detailed below; the referee may create the others using whatever manner (s)he sees fit.

#### Humberto al-Qair, ISH Team Leader

Scientist; 38588A; Age 42; 6 Terms Cr40,000

Computer-1, Admin-1, Leader-2, Electronics-1

#### Dajeong Harper, Medic

Doctor; 645656; Age 26; 2 terms Cr20,000

Medic-3

#### The “Cat”

|  | Mass | Hits | Armor | Wounds & Weapons | Action |
|--|------|------|-------|------------------|--------|
|--|------|------|-------|------------------|--------|

|   |        |       |       |      |                       |        |
|---|--------|-------|-------|------|-----------------------|--------|
| 1 | Killer | 100kg | 20/12 | none | claws +1 and teeth +1 | A5F7S1 |
|---|--------|-------|-------|------|-----------------------|--------|

Psionic Ability: Special (Displacement, see text)

#### The Spire

Constructed of some material that absorbs electromagnetic radiation, the gigantic spire rises as a free-standing structure some 5 kilometers into the

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## Active Measures

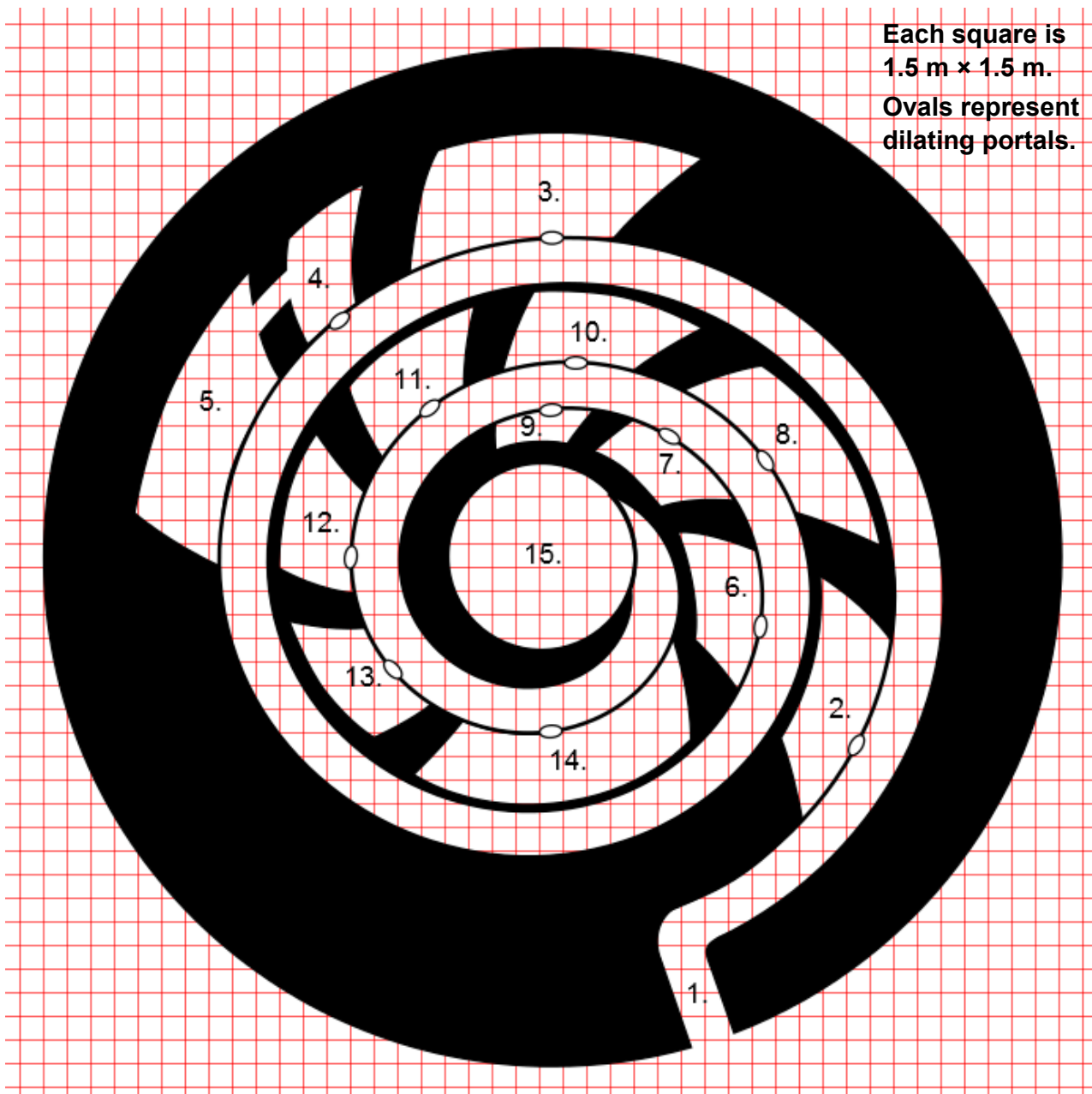
(Continued from page 10)

sky of Nimbus with a diameter at its base of nearly 500 meters, not counting several flying buttresses. Originally intended as a weather-monitoring station, at some point the decision was made to terraform the planet and the weather station was converted into a weather-conversion role. With the disappearance of its builders, the artifact has uncontrollably ramped up Nimbus' weather over thousands of years into a series of ever more powerful storms.

Inside, most of the rooms respond to the users' thoughts; they have the capability to create objects

by extrusion, or "growing" them in place. Once extruded, items cannot be moved, but can be deconstructed and extruded in another part of the room. The time it takes to extrude an object is one combat round. A user doesn't have to be psionic to control this feature. In addition to the ability to extrude objects, the rooms can also create spaces of varying sizes by simply voiding areas.

For maximum flexibility, it is not detailed here who built the spire. The default assumption is the inscrutable Ancients (Droyne), but as always, the referee can substitute any precursor race desired. 🌀







### The Mortician General

by Andrea Vallance

*This story was originally posted to the pre-magazine Freelance Traveller website in 1997.*

I gripped the arm of my acceleration couch again and remembered exactly why I hated spaceflight. I joined the Office of Calendar Compliance rather than the Scouts exactly to avoid spaceflight, so just what was I doing in a clapped-out free trader plunging groundwards way too fast for (my) comfort? Sure, the crew called it “landing”; this was *not* my idea of “landing”, which was a nice gentle descent under contragrav at a controlled, preferably glacial, rate, not a headlong unpowered dive in what was basically a round-cornered brick. I imagined Councilor Guulik sitting in the empty couch across the room and quietly chanted “I’m going to kill you, Guulik,” over and over. The mantra helped. I tried to think about my new posting to occupy my mind. I must have read the briefing papers at least a hundred times, well there wasn’t a lot else to do on a hundred-and-twenty-year-old free trader in jump-space. Amadam A was hardly anybody’s idea of a plum posting, a primitive backwater that applied for integration a year and a half ago. Home to three million farmers and other assorted rustics. Main export, Beric Corn Starch. Cultural background, Vilani with a strong Solomani influence. Average temperature, nine degrees Celsius, the briefing papers droned on with more mind-numbing details. No, Amadam A was definitely not a plum posting and here I was heading for Amadan A downport, a D-class starport inside the crater of an extinct volcano. Who the hell builds a starport inside a volcano? Sure, they say it’s extinct, but that just means nobody’s seen it go bang. Maybe thinking about the posting wasn’t such a bright idea after all.

I tried to just let my mind slip away. I thought of Sharik back on Khuir; it would be dozens of weeks, minimum, before I’d see her again. I missed her so much. I remembered the quiet evenings we spent reading Siduni together, the walks under the light of

Geriiir’s watchful eye, the dinner at Aldaran’s. I should have proposed then but her father turned up and I chickened out. The braking rockets fired and I cursed whoever had designed my harness. Even with all the padding and straps it felt like slamming into a plascrete wall backwards. I tried to picture Guulik tied to the ship’s landing gear and gripped the couch’s arm even tighter. I felt the spine-crushing jolt as we touched down and the secondary braking rockets cut in. It requires at least one and a half kilometers for a *Lone Wanderer*-class to come to a complete halt and the crater runway was a little under two kilometers long. It appeared that the crew was well aware of this fact. I tried to come up with the most diplomatic way to inform Guulik that travel on ships built during the Long Night might not be in her staff’s best interests.

Little by little the ship slowed and eventually came to a halt. The astrogator came by to help me out of my harness. I tried to get out of the couch and my legs promptly gave way under me, much to the astrogator’s apparent amusement. “Amadan A is a fairly heavy landing at the best of times; you might want to wait a minute or two for your legs to catch you up.” His slender Suerrat form disappeared from the lounge, leaving me to my own devices. I again attempted to stand, and again fell unceremoniously on my behind. I decided to heed the astrogator’s advice. I waited until the feeling had returned to my legs and tried again, this time succeeding. I walked gingerly to my stateroom to gather my belongings. Fortunately, the cases had remained in the restraints this time, and not spread their contents across the room as they had on Guud. I picked up my cases, paused briefly to check my make up in the mirror—I looked a mess—and made my way to the airlock.

Amadan A downport truly deserved its D-class rating. It was little more than a long hard dirt runway, a couple of blast bays, a fuel pumping station and a few buildings; I wondered why they pumped the water all the way out here? Why not just build the starport by the water? Curious; still, I’d leave

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that for the faceless functionaries who were bound to follow me to figure out; it'd keep them happy for quite a while, I guess. I could see three other starships docked in the blast bays. Busy, it must be the harvest time. They were exactly the same type of tramps I'd seen at all the other backwater starports out here in the Gashda; crewed by an odd assortment of misfits and eccentrics, their paint stained by the fires of countless reentries, held together by a mixture of good luck and skilled engineers.

There was a reception committee waiting for me: two men dressed in long yellow robes with tall black cylindrical hats. This, according to the Scout service briefing papers, was the local formal dress.

"Welcomed, be I Gamil Ranson, Mortician General of Amadan A and be this Second Mortician Formadilik. Your stay brings health and wiseness for us." I'd read the papers on Amadan A's language, a fusion of Stellar Slavic and High Vilani; I'd been studying it for the last three months. I'd been chosen for this post mainly because of my skill in linguistics, apparently the OCC didn't have too many speakers of Stellar Slavic on staff.

The language was obviously formal, I paused a moment to frame my reply correctly. "Greetings, Gamil Ranson, Mortician General of Amadan A, be I Kyal La Manga, Liaison to Amadan A for the Office of Calendar Compliance. It brings great gladness being here." They looked puzzled for a few seconds, obviously I hadn't got it quite right. Gamil spoke again. "Care you to come this way, Kyal La Manga, Liaison to Amadan A for the Office of Calendar Compliance. We have ready maked quarters for you in Gora."

We walked the short distance from the blast bays to what passed for the starport arrival terminal. I'd charitably describe it as 'unimposing'; a simple wooden-walled building with a customs post, a handful of food and souvenir stands; and a rather bored-looking local enforcer. The only sign that I

was outside the Imperium was the lack of the ubiquitous office of the Bureau of Starship Safety, Health and Transit Standards. Still, if all went well it would not be long before they arrived along with the Starport Authority to set up the inevitable extraterritoriality boundary fence. Funny, I felt a strange pang of regret at that thought, the death of Amadan A's blissful ignorance. The price of progress, I suppose.

On the other side of the terminal was a platform with a very crude train waiting. Formadilik gestured towards the train "Please embarking be Kyal La Manga, Liaison to Amadan A for the Office of Calendar Compliance; the train of ours to move to Gora soon. Your other from ship belongings to be brought after." Strange, he was still using the formal dialect; a most unusual variation in the language; maybe they regarded my arrival as a bigger thing than I'd imagined; who could tell? Finding out was not my job; I was just there to get their weights and measures into line, or as the OCC manual put it, 'assist in the establishment of programs to facilitate the adoption of Imperial standards in regards to units of measure and record'. Yep, these poor saps didn't know what was about to hit them. Guulik would have made some smart comment about my romantic Solomani notions, but somehow, sometimes, I just wondered about the value of all this; oh for the sense of certainty of a Vilani.

The train had just one carriage and we were the only passengers; it was beginning to look a lot like they *did* see me as more important than I saw myself. There was a meal waiting in the carriage, I wasn't too sure about the wisdom of eating so soon after the landing but I knew enough about Vilani culture to know that failing to do so would be an insult. So I sat and ate and felt sick in secret.

At first we said little; my hosts seemed a little unsure of how to relate to me. I decided to take a chance and drop into the informal dialect. "So Gamil Ranson, why be you Mortician General?"

"Why, because the Talent I have." He obviously was more than a little taken aback by my question, I wondered if I had overstepped the mark with it.

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## Raconteurs' Rest

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I tried to cover any faux pas. "I mean no offense; on my world we have not a Mortician General."

"But how then you ensure the departed have indeed passed for eternity?" Formadilik seemed most agitated at this revelation. "Calm yourself, Formadilik, will find you many different ways of ensuring that when you travel beyond our World. Remember you well that." There was more in Gamil's voice than that of a superior, an edge of concern.

I wondered at the precise nature of the relationship between Gamil and Formadilik. I decided to inquire as to the nature of the position of Mortician General. "So, I may be assuming that your primary job be with those who have died?"

"That be the duty first, but many others have been added. During the Time of Tears, the Morticians came to deal with the Other Worlds. Now my time is most spent in the mundane of dealing with of Other Worlds Material."

I paused a moment to think. "So, responsible be you for off-world contact?"

"Yes, all Other Worlds our responsibility be." For the first time I noticed the very slight inflection on the word *world*. We weren't quite talking about the same thing—almost, but not quite.

I pondered the possible significance of that; it probably wasn't too important, but it was interesting. "What be the Other Worlds you deal with?" I adopted his inflection on the word.

Gamil actually looked quite pleased at this question. "Formadilik, care you to answer this?" He replied with a strange glint in his eye. It was far more a command than a request.

Formadilik paused and cleared his throat. "It be the duty of the Morticians to deal with all Worlds Other from ours, both Material and Immaterial. Since the Time of Tears have us but little dealings with Worlds Material until now; but have us great dealings with Worlds Immaterial."

I was intrigued; there seemed a lot more to these concepts than the simple words revealed. "Please be

telling more of these Worlds Immaterial, they be not a concept I be familiar with."

"They be not Worlds that the untried can reach, but they be the worlds that lie within us all. They be the places most deep within us, those places that makes us ourselves. That there are many Worlds Immaterial was revealed to us by the Prime Mortician Eneri during the Time of Tears. Showed he us that sometimes one reached these Worlds without passing over to them eternally. Our duty first be to ensure that those passed are dead by attempting to enter their Worlds Immaterial. If they be dead, their Worlds Immaterial will have passed with them."

This was most certainly interesting; I seemed to have stumbled upon something which all the previous surveys had missed—how *had* they missed this? They had mentioned that the culture seemed obsessed with death, but not *this*. This was not an obsession with death; it appeared to be something quite different. I had to know more about this. "Be this a skill of great training and discipline of thoughts?"

"But yes. Entering the Worlds Immaterial of a person be needing the most disciplined of thoughts and the highest of moral character."

"Why the highest of moral character?"

Formadilik looked a little puzzled. "The Worlds Immaterial be where the most intimate thoughts dwell; they are what makes each themselves be."

My, how the Scouts *had* missed a gem; a few heads might roll over this. Perhaps the Scouts should include a few more linguists in their contact teams. "Please to tell me Formadilik, can you enter the Worlds Immaterial of those who do not appeared to be passed?"

I really did not need to look to gauge both Gamil's and Formadilik's reaction. I'd guessed I would be overstepping the bounds of decorum. But I *had* to know. Gamil and Formadilik sat stunned for what seemed like an eon; hanging between outrage and sheer disbelief. I just hoped that outrage would lose. Finally Gamil stirred to a reply. "Possible it would

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## Raconteurs' Rest

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be, but exceptional reasons of the most high order would have to be also. Why being you ask this?"

"We know this skill, but name it otherwise and it be most rare still. It be named *telepathy* in the Imperium." I sat back, Gamil and Formadilik appeared to be content with just letting the conversation die. Well maybe *content* wasn't the right word. From the looks I was getting, I was glad neither was armed.

I'd have to report this, of course; the world would have to be resurveyed, integration would be de-

layed; yes, heads would probably roll over this. Countless bureaucrats would spend months crawling in and out and over and under Amadan A's culture to see if anything else had been missed. Apparently, the Imperium would fall apart if those gray men and women didn't have absolutely everything about each and every member world on file somewhere. I smiled at the thought of Guulik under that mass of paperwork; problem is, she'd probably enjoy it. Oh well, it meant Amadan A would be spared progress for a while longer; perhaps there was some good in that at least. ❁

## Up Close and Personal

### Shtiz Bralzastebr

profiled by Timothy Collinson

**Shtiz Bralzastebr**, 86497C, 46 years old

2 terms Navy: Crew (Rank 1: Watch Officer)

3 terms Government: Diplomat (Rank 1: 2nd Sec'y)

1 term Merchant: Free Trader (Rank 1: Sr Deckhand)

STR 8 (0), DEX 6 (0), END 4 (-1), INT 9 (+1), EDU 7 (0), SOC C (+2), PSI 7 (0)

**Homeworld:** Viraliniep (Ziafrplians 1538, C435433-B Ni)

**Skills:** Diplomat 3, Language (Trokh) 2, Telepathy 2, Clairvoyance 2, Physical Science (electronics) 1, Admin 1, Leadership 1, Mechanic 1, Melee (blade) 1, Telekinesis 1, Trade (hydroponics) 1, Carouse 0, Comms 0, Drive (wheeled) 0, Persuade 0, Zero-G 0, Gun Combat (energy pistol) 0, Gunner (turrets) 0, Pilot (spacecraft) 0, Space Science (xenology) 0, Vacc Suit 0

**Equipment:** *Nenjchinzhe'driante*, Cr50,000, 5 ship shares (towards a *Yetsasl*-class courier), 2 ship shares to any vessel

**Allies:** *Iaetl Iazhstatlas* – wealthy noble merchant (see below), rather short for a Zhodani

*Edr Tleqo* – an uncle who is a fairly skilled sculptor

Some Imperial offspring like to rebel against their parents and some like to follow in the footsteps of a father or mother they particularly admire. In the



Zhodani Consulate the drive to honour one's parents and fulfil your duty is debatably stronger, but even so, Shtiz Bralzastebr unusually managed to follow in not one but both his parents' paths. His mother was a Zhodani naval commander and his father a Consulate diplomat of some standing and Shtiz was born in 1059 when his mother was posted to Vi-

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## Up Close and Personal

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raliniep. He lived his first year on this backwater world in Ziafrplians, but spent much of his subsequent formative years in the wardrooms of various ships and bases. His father seemed a distant figure; sometimes physically, but emotionally as well. However, the two got on well enough together on those occasions when the boy would spend time with his father on some of his far-off postings.

While both his parents were adept psions, Shtiz was only ever average in his mental abilities, though bright otherwise. Dutiful at home, he rarely gave his parents any trouble. He found it easy enough to make friends, which was useful as he rarely spent more than an olympiad in any one location and most school reports described him as settling in quickly but “could try harder” academically. For a Zhodani, particularly noble born, this was almost a rebuke and the one source of friction with both of his parents. With the threat of re-education Shtiz used the counselling he received as part of his upbringing to learn better methods of studying and eventually emerged from school with a satisfactory education. He still struggles with some mathematical concepts, however, and is always in awe of astrologers and their abilities to ‘see’ solutions.

At the age of 18 it perhaps wasn't surprising that Bralzastebr would join the Consular Navy and as befitting his nobility was immediately commissioned. After basic training and time spent aboard a *Zhdits*-class Escort, he was transferred to serve aboard the *Iantdelbr*, a *Dazhia*-class Council Cruiser on a diplomatic mission to the Aslan which was generally regarded as a success. Bralzastebr's telepathic ability was stretched to the limit in his efforts to seek out the nuances of alien thought patterns, but though not highly skilled, he was able to contribute to the mission and earned the plaudits of his commander.

Bralzastebr's second term started out much less auspiciously as the *Shivva*-class vessel he was serving on, *Itlplontseent*, went into refit in Stiatlchepr sec-

tor. He was expected to join the refit crew at a large orbital station and was involved in the installation of state-of-the-art sensor gear. When news of the Fourth Frontier War eventually arrived, the *Itlplontseent* refit was close enough to completion for the ship to be called up. However, the action was over by the time the ship finished its 70 parsec journey to Tloql (the Spinward Marches) and Bralzastebr's main contribution was in subsequent diplomatic overtures to consolidate the peace. Again, his telepathic abilities were put to good use despite the considerable suspicions of those on the Imperium's side and the widespread use of psi-shields amongst the military commanders and government officials they had to deal with. Navy protocol however, didn't deem him ready for a promotion and he began to question his future and consider a change.

His experiences in the Navy along with ongoing counsel suggested that he might better serve the Consulate in their diplomatic corps and in 1085 he made the switch. This proved to be more his *métier*, and Bralzastebr eventually spent nearly 12 years in various embassies and missions both in the Consulate and in neighbouring polities. He struggled to make his mark, but served honourably with only one blot on his record early on. He was part of a small team involved in trade negotiations with a Vargr group. These fell apart rather acrimoniously when a situation that Bralzastebr was viewing remotely was completely misinterpreted. Strictly, the negotiating team's leader was responsible but somehow blame was laid at the feet of Bralzastebr.

However, an olympiad later, leading his own small team, Bralzastebr joined forces with Iael Iazhstatlas, a charismatic and wealthy noble merchant. Iazhstatlas both gave him some pointers about leadership and assisted in negotiating a very profitable trade deal with the same Vargr group he'd previously encountered. Some four years later Bralzastebr was insulted by an Imperial ambassador who failed to hide his amusement at the rather feeble telekinesis ability that the Zhodani was demon-

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## Up Close and Personal

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strating. Perhaps stung by his so-so skills, perhaps driven by wanting to show the real benefits of psionic talents, or perhaps just driven to the edge by someone who was, after all, a rather irritating Imperial for all his ambassadorial credentials, Bralzastebr snapped and a minor diplomatic incident ensued which resulted in his having to undergo four years of re-education. The Imperium has not been a favourite subject for Bralzastebr ever since.

Another subject he doesn't discuss much is his failure to find a wife and continue his family's name. Probably due to his constant moving around, certainly not for lack of his outgoing friendliness, he's not formed any permanent attachment despite hoping to do so. He's sublimated much of this with counselling but there are those who know him well who think in private that perhaps his re-education was as much to work on those issues as the ostensi-

ble reason for it. Such friends would never discuss this, however, whatever its validity.

Following his re-education, Bralzastebr was unable to re-join the diplomatic corps and put his old Navy skills to good use – as well as his connection with Iazhstatlas – and at age 42 joined the *Chiemchto*, a *Zdebr*-class trade ship, where he's worked well for the last four years, developing skills and even a smattering of Trokh beyond the little he learned in his Navy days. The rank of Senior Deckhand seems a bit of a comedown for someone of his status and experience but his award of the *Nenjchinzhe'driante* (the Consular Legion of Merit) has, at least in his own eyes, been recognition of the service he's given. When looking to impress those he's dealing with, or on formal occasions, he'll wear the distinctive gold sash. If asked he'll make light of it but say that it honours both of his parents. He feels he's done his best to make them proud, but fears that he's been rather a disappointment. ❁

## News About Traveller

### Recent Traveller News and Findings

June and July 2014

- **Moon Toad Publishing** has released *Ship Design Sheets* and *Mongoose Traveller Character Sheet*.
- **Christian Hollnbuchner** has released *River Boat*, *Destroyer Escort*, *Sylph Class Grav Corvette*, *Naiad Class Grav Destroyer Escort*, *Starships Book II0000: Stinger Class Fighter*, *Starships Book II000I: Lightning Class Fast Courier*, *Starships Book II00IO: Flounder Class Frigate*, and *Starships Book II00II: Packmule Class Freighter*.
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *21 Plots: Samaritan*, *21 More Organizations*, and *Ships of Clement Sector 1-3: Hub Federation Warships* (Print edition).
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *American Vehicles of World War II*, *British Vehicles of World War II*, and *2300AD: Libreville - Corruption in the Core Worlds*.
- **Jon Brazer Enterprises** has released *d66 Personal Spacecraft Names 2*, *d66 Reasons Why Your Ally Can't Help Right Now*, and *d66 Generational/Sleeper Ship Names*.
- **BITS** has (re)released *Power Projection: Fleet*.
- **Spica Publishing** has released *Outer Veil: The Wreck of the Tereshkova*.
- **Game Designers' Workshop/FarFuture Enterprises** has (re)released *Traveller: The New Era* (core rulebook) (Print and PDF editions).
- **Trooper X** has released *The Starfarer's Kit 2.0: Character Folio*.
- **Nienhaus Games** has released *Aquemna-class 10,000 ton Fuel Tanker*. ❁



# Two Patron Encounters: Shtiz Bralzastebr

by Timothy Collinson

Shtiz Bralzastebr is profiled in this issue, “Up Close and Personal: Shtiz Bralzastebr” on page 15.

### For PCs as Zhodani:

**Requirements:** *Zdebr*-class crew: pilot, astrogrator, engineer, medic and steward.

**Rewards:** Standard crew salary for the duration of the voyage, Cr20,000 per person for successful completion of the mission in setting up a trade deal.

Shtiz Bralzastebr is a 46-year-old Zhodani noble who has served in the Consular Navy and in the diplomatic corps. His credentials are good although a detailed examination of his curriculum vitae will reveal a life of not quite fulfilled potential. He’s now attached to the *Chiemchto*, a 400-ton *Zdebr*-class merchant. (See pp96-97 of *Alien Module 4: Zhodani* for details of the *Zdebr*-class.)

Bralzastebr wants to put together a trade mission—backed by wealthy noble Iaetl Iazhstatlas—to Aslan controlled worlds and wants a crew to travel with him to Idrflanta (Trojan Reach Sector) to set up links and hopefully a profitable venture for all concerned. He has contacts in the region and isn’t particularly concerned whether any of the crew have psionic abilities or not. The journey from Iakr (Foreven) is expected to take a little less than a *chten*.

**Referee’s Information:** Throughout the trip, Bralzastebr will integrate well with the crew—though if they are proles, he will maintain a typical noble aloofness. He will conduct trade wherever he sees an opportunity, and ensure that the crew are suitably cross-trained as he doesn’t expect to hire other crew members once they’ve left the Consulate. He’ll also ensure that they train under his supervision on the two turrets to operate them efficiently. He’s not expecting trouble, but believes it’s worth being prepared.

### Possible directions to take this scenario:

1. All is as presented.
2. All is as presented but Bralzastebr’s Aslan contact has died since he knew her some three and half *atlthequzdij* ago (nigh on quarter of a century). This will make it much harder to negotiate a deal.
3. All is as presented but the contact is now vociferously opposed to any dealing with the Zhodani after a bad experience with a renegade from the Consulate. She’ll not only make it virtually impossible to deal with any other Aslan in the area, but if the crew of the *Chiemchto* persist, may hire mercenaries to deal with them.
4. The trade mission is really a cover for Bralzastebr’s aim to take revenge on an Imperial ambassador who insulted him and who is now assigned to the particular Aslan world in question. Perhaps re-education isn’t as effective as claimed; or perhaps Bralzastebr needs another four years of it. Certainly, his Zhodani crew mates would be appalled to find their leader is behaving in this way.
5. As 4, but Bralzastebr will become increasingly unstable as the voyage goes on.
6. As 4, but the *Tavrchedl’* are on the trail of Bralzastebr as they’ve been told his re-education is unravelling for reasons the mental health experts who carried it out have only just discovered.

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## Active Measures

### For PCs as Imperials:

**Requirements:** Merchant crew of any suitable vessel located on the very Coreward edge of the Spinward Marches or possibly in Gvurrdon Sector or Foreven.

**Rewards:** Knowing Imperial antipathy to Zhodani, Bralzastebr will pay 10% above standard High Passage fees for transport to a world several Jumps into Imperial space.

Shtiz Bralzastebr is a 46-year-old Zhodani noble who has served in the Consular Navy and in the diplomatic corps. His credentials are good although a detailed examination of his *curriculum vitae* will reveal a life of not quite fulfilled potential. If asked about his somewhat unusual journey he'll go into some detail about *Tavrziansh* and try to explain 'morality's path' to the PCs, explaining that long ago he had dealings with an Imperial Naval commander he feels he has a duty to thank more fully than he could express at the time for the subsequent fortune that this brought him in his career.

**Referee's Information:** Of course, those who know anything about *Tavrziansh* in detail would know that this is hardly the root of its philosophy, which is merely being used by Bralzastebr to spin a good yarn. He is also exaggerating his career in both the Navy and as a diplomat to strengthen his story. However, he will be a model passenger – perhaps to the surprise of the Imperials – who may or may not need to keep him out of sight depending on their other passengers and their attitudes. Bralzastebr will be very open about psionics of course and miss no opportunity to persuade crew and passengers, if given the chance, of their value, safety and the wisdom of the Consulate. In an effort to ingratiate himself with the crew and ensure he gets to his destination with as little trouble as possible, the PCs may find themselves the unwitting beneficiaries of some of his powers should he be given half a chance to use them. Perhaps improving a trade deal here, or smoothing a customs inspection there.

*Possible directions to take this scenario:*

1. All is as presented and Bralzastebr genuinely wants to seek out someone he met during his earlier career to whom he thinks he owes a very small debt of gratitude. The fact that the naval commander is a very attractive woman may be neither here nor there. His use of *Tavrziansh* in his story is simply a patronising attitude that Imperials couldn't possibly understand his idea of duty.

2. As 1, but Bralzastebr has the added aim of trying to seek out as much information about the Imperium and Imperial attitudes as he can in an effort to ingratiate himself with the diplomats of the Consulate he felt he failed.

3. As 2, but he will additionally attempt to subvert the crew into more active support for this unstated mission. If given any opportunity, he'll use his telepathy and perhaps clairvoyance to further this aim.

4. In fact, the entire trip is really aimed at seeking out a now-retired Imperial ambassador that insulted him and caused his re-education. Although the latter holds no stigma in the Consulate, Bralzastebr feels it keenly enough that he now wants revenge—a truly un-Zhodani feeling!

5. As 4, but Bralzastebr's growing instability as the journey goes on will become increasingly evident.

6. As 5, but the *Tavrchedl'* are on his trail knowing about his instability and attempting to both catch up with him for further re-education but also carrying out damage limitation should his behaviour or words have reflected badly on the Consulate at any point. They could have their work cut out for them. (A further variation would be for the PCs to be this *Tavrchedl'* team on the trail of their wayward 'son'.)



# The Psiren: A New Psionic Talent for Traveller

by Jeff Zeitlin

*This article originally appeared in the November 2010 issue.*

*Author's note: This talent is based on the psionic 'howler' that appeared in James H. Schmitz's story "Glory Day", which appeared in the collection T'n'T—Telzey and Trigger Together from Baen Books.*

In incarnations of *Traveller* to date, the focus of psionics has been giving PCs active talents – talents that they can use voluntarily to accomplish certain aims. This overlooks an entire class of talents: passive talents, which the PC cannot voluntarily invoke, and which generally act to thwart the ability of active psions to use their talents in some way. This article covers one such, which I've chosen to call the "psiren".

## General Description

The psiren's 'ability' is completely involuntary, being invoked automatically whenever the 'fight-or-flight' reflex or the 'startle' reflex is activated. It causes the psionic talents of all other psions in the vicinity to go haywire, turning them back on their possessors. The effects are both random and predictable; that is, the exact results cannot be predicted, but what generally will happen to a particular psion can be predicted reliably. In all cases, the psiren is (psionically) unaffected. The psiren's effect lasts until the psiren character has had time to evaluate the situation consciously, usually no more than thirty seconds – but in those thirty seconds, quite a lot can happen to nearby psions.

## Psiren Effects

The specifics of the psiren's effect is dependent not only on the 'targeted' psion's talent(s), but on the psionic strength of both the psiren and the target. In all cases, use the greater of the two strengths to determine the magnitude of effect. Specific effects should be determined by the referee; in general, the idea is that any psionic talent in the vicinity – except

other psirens – is turned against its possessor. In all cases (except for the psiren and any psirens in the vicinity, who are not affected (but who may be triggered by the unexplained and unexpected events happening to other psions in the vicinity)), the application of the effect also causes expending of all available psionic strength points, with the normal requirements for regeneration. Some examples:

A teleport will suddenly find himself teleported away in a random direction, to the maximum possible range given the greater of his own psionic strength or the psiren's. Any talent-related protections against materializing in solid objects, or requirements that the teleport know his destination, are not in effect.

Psionic shields will, instead of deflecting psionic energy, draw it to the psion, effectively resulting in a psionic assault.

Pyrokinetics will find themselves set on fire by their own talent.

Telepaths and clairvoyants (including clairaudients and danger-sensors) will suffer the psionic equivalent to sensory overload. If there is enough psionic strength involved, the overload could result in permanent damage to the psion.

## Discovering the Psiren

In any situation where a participant may have their startle reflex or fight-or-flight reflex triggered, and where there are known psions, roll 4- on 4D6. If this roll succeeds, someone whose startle/fight-or-flight reflex has been triggered is a psiren, and the referee should apply effects on each psion in the area as outlined above. If there are no known psions in the vicinity, secretly roll 4- on 4D; if this roll succeeds, arbitrarily select one character – PC or NPC; it doesn't matter – and designate him a latent psion. Then roll 4- on 4D again, and apply an effect of a psiren being "set off" to the character. If the effect is recognized as a psiren being triggered, the psiren may be identified by any psion with the ability to detect psionic potential in a person.

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## Doing It My Way

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If a PC seeks to learn whether he has psionic potential (or knows he does and is seeking training), he may be a psiren. To determine this, roll psionic testing normally. If the test succeeds, the PC has the talent, as normal. If the test fails (the player does not have the talent tested for), note the difference between the roll required for success for the player, and the actual roll (this is called the “failure margin”, or “FM”). The referee should then roll the same task as the player, with an additional negative DM of the player’s FM. If the referee’s roll succeeds, the player is not triggered, and the player should proceed to the next test (after which, the referee rolls for triggering again, if the player fails). If any referee triggering roll fails (the PC is triggered, and thus is a psiren), no further psionic testing is carried out; the player is told that he is a psiren and untrainable. If the player succeeds (and the PC therefore has a ‘normal’ psionic talent), the referee does not roll any further triggering tests; the PC is not a psiren.

### Examples

These examples use the Mongoose *Traveller* Core Rules. June and Bill wish to have their characters tested for psionics. Both have served two terms in the Scouts; thus, their Psionic Strengths are determined by 2D6-2.

Bill’s PSI is 8. He elects to test first for Telepathy. This requires that he roll 8+ on 2D6, with no characteristic DM, and a learning DM of +4. He rolls 3;  $3+4=7$ , so he does not have Telepathy. He missed the roll of 8+ by 1; his Failure Margin (FM) is 1. The referee now rolls 2D6 for 8+, with a DM of +4 (the same as Bill rolled), plus an additional DM of -1 (Bill’s FM). The referee rolls 6;  $(6+4)-1=9$ , so Bill is not triggered, and may roll for his next talent test. He elects to roll for Teleportation. His DMs are zero for his Characteristic DM, zero for the learning DM, and -1 for having tested for one talent previously. Bill rolls 6;  $6-1=5$ , so he does not have Teleportation. He

missed the roll of 8+ by 3; his FM is 3. The referee now rolls 2D6 for 8+, with DMs of -1 (Bill’s DMs for the test) and -3 (Bill’s FM). The referee rolls 9;  $(9-1)-3=5$ , so Bill is triggered, causing much panic and consternation among the testing staff, as the Telepaths on the staff all seem to have experienced psionic Assaults, the Teleports have all disappeared, and every Clairvoyant is complaining about a major headache, except for the three that were knocked unconscious. Bill is hustled out the door, told he’s a psiren, and not to come back; there is nothing that anyone can do with him, psionically.

June’s PSI is 10. Her Characteristic Modifier for PSI is +1. She elects to test first for Teleportation. This requires that she roll 8+ on 2D6, with DM +1 for her PSI Characteristic DM, and zero for the learning DM for Teleportation. She rolls 4;  $4+1=5$ , so she does not have Teleportation. She missed the roll of 8+ by 3, so her FM is 3. The referee now rolls 2D6 for 8+, with DMs +1 (the same as June’s) and -3 (June’s FM). The referee rolls 10;  $(10+1)-3=8$ , so June is not triggered, and may roll for her next talent test. She elects to roll for Telepathy. Her DMs are +1 for her PSI Characteristic DM, +4 for the learning DM for Telepathy, and -1 for having tested for one talent previously. She rolls 6;  $((6+1)+4)-1=10$ , so June has successfully tested for Telepathy, and cannot be a psiren. The referee makes no further tests for June being a psiren; complete psionic testing normally. 🌀

## TravellerCON/USA

TravellerCON/USA 2014 will be taking place October 10–12, at the Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center in Lancaster, PA. Registration is open; the full weekend is \$30 for referees or participants (age 12+ only); \$60 for vendors. (Vendors *must* register before September 19.) There is a discounted room rate at the Resort; mention TravellerCON when making your reservation. More information can be found at the Con website, <http://www.travellercon-usa.com> 🌀



### The Cascadia Adventures

reviewed by Timothy Collinson

*The Cascadia Adventures*. John Watts.

Gypsy Knights Games <http://www.gypsyknightsgames.com/>

92pp, softcover

US\$19.99/UK£11.81

*The Cascadia Adventures* is a printed compilation of three Gypsy Knights Games adventures previously published in electronic form. Indeed, there is as yet no electronic version of this single volume. *Save our Ship* was concerned with looking for a wealthy gambler; *The Lost Girl* saw the PCs tracking down a missing daughter, and *Fled* was about a casino employee on the run. The similar nature of these three 'pursuits' is perhaps more obvious when put together like this, but on the other hand with the PCs as the crew of the MV *Dust Runner* specifically charged with this kind of mission, there's variety in the reasons for the hunts and all three scenarios are nicely connected within the publishers' alternate universe. Having said that, there's little here that couldn't be transplanted to other worlds in *Traveller* settings that aren't too different, The Third Imperium included. Having said *that*, to get the most from this it's probably as well as to have *Clement Sector* and *Sub-sector Sourcebook 1: Cascadia* to hand. The former gives setting-specific notes that are useful and the latter gives further details on the worlds that the adventures visit. Mongoose rules are used throughout, though it wouldn't take a huge amount of work to convert to other rule sets.

This is a typical print-on-demand volume from Gypsy Knights Games, with good quality production, good layout and a pleasant, easy to read style. Three pages are devoted to the ship (description, deck plans and stats), nine pages are devoted to the crew including illustrations of each (which are new), and four pages are devoted to the Razz Casino on the planet Chance which forms the linking thread between the three adventures and the characters involved and which is where each of the adventures



begins. This section includes notes and tasks for playing blackjack, baccarat and poker within an adventure as well as casino shows and betting on gladiatorial matches. Naturally, these rules can be used elsewhere very easily although it would have been good to see perhaps one or two 'future' card games included. The remainder of the books is split between the three adventures weighing in at 20, 23, and 30 pages respectively.

The adventures themselves are designed to be played by anything up to nine PCs and pre-generated characters are offered but not required. These can also be used as NPCs should the referee need to fill out the crew of the vessel. The ship used throughout is a 300-ton *Rucker*-class merchant vessel which has a reputation as an odd-job kind of ship. Additionally, deck plans and stats are provided for another ship of the same class, the *Royal Flush*, which has been modified to be used as a mobile casino. This is the ship that the PCs are hired to track down in *Save our Ship*. The owner of the casino, Car-

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rie O'Malley – detailed in the adventure – wants to know what's happened.

In *The Lost Girl*, a father hasn't heard from his daughter for almost a year and despite several attempts has been unable to contact her. As a former employee of the casino he finally approaches O'Malley who then hires the PCs to hunt for the young woman. The final adventure of the trio, *Fled*, deals with a security specialist at the casino who has stolen MCr50 and left the system. O'Malley is sending several teams to worlds he might have fled to, and the PCs form one of those teams.

This is a great book. The Steve Attwood deck plans are a joy to behold. Clear, well presented, well labelled (*Cirque* take note!). The rest of the book has good clear print, colour throughout which is attractive and the volume is well laid out. Some tweaks to the original PDFs have been made (for example UPP digits of 'A' being changed to '10' but not in every case, or the subtitle 'The End' of the adventures being changed to 'Resolution', or bullet points being tidied up from the original unattractive '>' symbols) but these are minor. One loss is the Roskilde News Service page about elections for the 'Enlightend One' from *Save our Ship*. This is replaced in the print version with a trio of advertisement illustrations for the elections with text in Danish ('One World, One Spirit, One Light – choose The Enlightened One') but which isn't clearly explained. The repetition of the

*Dust Runner* deck plans and crew at the start of each adventure as well as descriptions of O'Malley or casino games have been removed, of course, and illustrations have been added throughout, which is welcome. The artwork is very typical of Gypsy Knights Games productions and is generally well executed although some of the portraits of individuals perhaps don't work as well as others. Victims of the uncanny valley perhaps. Some of the 'scenes' which are illustrated work well and are very atmospheric however, and the illustrations with ships – and in one case a city (used as the cover of *Fled* in the PDF version – work exceptionally well.

If you're using the publishers' alternate universe of Clement Sector then these adventures are a no-brainer for their use of that setting and additional background for it. For players who'd enjoy these kind of hunt-them-down-and-big-final-denouement scenarios it's definitely worth looking at for a handsome and imaginative volume. For referees looking to transplant these to their own settings little work is going to be necessary although the differences between Jump drive and the Gypsy Knights Games Zimm drive will need to be taken account of. Although Gypsy Knight Games are moving away from the somewhat generic *Traveller* of their earlier work such as the *21 Plots* books and their *Quick Worlds* and moving more into their own homebrew setting, if this standard is anything to go by, lots more is to be welcomed. High quality, lots of fun, and definitely worth a look. 🌟



### Psionically-Active Equipment and Drugs

by Ken Pick and Dave Bryant

This article was originally posted to the pre-magazine *Freelance Traveller* website no later than 2002.

Most local *Traveller* and *Megatraveller* campaigns had a higher availability and use of psionics than the Third Imperium; their list of specialized psionic

drugs and equipment was much more extensive. Even in a stock GDW-style campaign, these drugs and equipment would almost certainly be known to the Psionic Institutes and in actual use by the Zhodani.

[Editor's note: It's not too difficult to envision even an "orthodox" *Traveller* campaign where these or similar items would be known to the Imperial government]

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### Psi-inhibitors

As psionics can be enhanced by certain drugs (as in stock *Traveller* or *Megatraveller*), so it can be suppressed by other drugs. Psi-inhibitor drugs are generally used to restrain captured psi users, and prevent them from using their talents. In cultures where psionics is available, these drugs will also be available to military, intelligence, police, and medical personnel; they will also be used by the underworld and found on the street—anywhere someone might need to nullify a psi-user. All psi-inhibitor drugs have an additional depressant side effect.

#### Merasha

A basic psi-inhibitor drug; available at TL8, merasha acts as an antidote to Booster. If no Booster has been taken, decrease Psionic strength points by -3 if at full strength, -2 if at reduced strength. Further doses have no effect, and a dose wears off after 1 hour. Cr500/dose.

#### Merasha-double

A stronger mix of merasha, available at TL10; acts as an antidote to Double. If Booster has been taken, reduces Psionic strength points as basic merasha; if no psi drug has been taken, decrease Psionic strength points by -6 if at full strength, -4 if at reduced strength. Further doses have no effect, and a dose wears off after 1 hour. Cr2,000/dose.

#### Merasha-special

A still-stronger psi-inhibitor, available at TL12; acts as an antidote to Special. If Booster has been taken, reduces Psionic strength points as merasha-double; if Double has been taken, reduces Psionic strength points as basic merasha; if no psi drug has been taken, decrease psionic strength points to zero at the rate of one/hour. The dose lasts another six hours, after which psi points recover normally. Merasha-special has the same risks of overdose and synergy as does Special; in addition, functions as a moderately-strong depressant. Cr5,000/dose.

#### Merasha-max

Rarest and strongest of all psi-inhibitors, available at TL14. Immediately drops psionic strength to zero for eight hours, after which psi points recover normally. Has the same risks of overdose and synergy as does Special, with a DM of +2; in addition, has extreme psychodepressant side effects which normally turn the person dosed into a drooling zombie. Cr10,000/dose.

#### Psi Crystals

Some rare forms of natural crystals can resonate from psionic energy; so far, these “psychic silicon chips” have been impossible to duplicate artificially.

#### Shiral Crystal

A psi-detector crystal, usually of quartz or amber, shiral crystals glow in the presence of psionics. A crystal’s range is sharply limited, and depends on its quality. Roll 1D for its range in meters; the crystal will glow if any psi activity originates within this range. Average mass is 10-100g; cost is Cr 10 × range (in meters) × mass (in grams). Shiral crystals are a useful aid in concentration exercises, as the glow is proportional to the amount of psionic intensity. They are often used as a physical focus for “Special” psi talents, as a security measure to detect psionic intrusion, and are also worn as luminescent jewelry in psionics-using cultures.

#### Jerraman Crystal

A psionic battery, these crystals tend to be denser and richer-colored than shirals. A jerraman can store psionic strength points for later use; roll 2D for the maximum capacity of the crystal. a psionic-user of Level Five or above may charge the crystal by expending his psi points into it, and later use the crystal’s charge instead of his own psi points; in either case, the user must be in direct physical contact with (touching) the crystal. Average mass is 100-500g; average cost is Cr 10 × capacity (in psi points) × mass (in grams).

Only a psionicist trained to at least Level Five may store or draw energy from a jerraman crystal; if the user’s level is less than five or the user’s maxi-

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## Doing It My Way

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mum psi rating is less than the number of points stored in the crystal, the crystal will release all of its stored energy explosively into the user (treat as a telepathic assault of strength equal to the number of points stored in the crystal).

### Psi Tuner

A psi tuner is a briefcase-sized piece of equipment incorporating several shiral crystals tuned into a resonance pattern, used to focus the psi energy for greater range. Psi tuners are rated in "Marks"; the

Mark number denotes how many points may be subtracted from normal range costs. (A Mk.III psi tuner allows the user to subtract 3 points from range costs.) Minimum range cost allowed is zero. A teleport must teleport with the tuner to gain its range advantage; this effectively restricts its use by teleports to those of level 9+. Mass: 10kg. Cost: Cr10,000 + 5,000 per mark over 1. TL: 10 + 1 per mark over 1.

*Authors' Acknowledgement: Merasha, Shiral crystals, and Jerraman crystals are based on those from the Deryni Chronicles series of novels by Katherine Kurtz; the psi tuner is from the novel The Yngling, by John Dalmas.*



## Raconteurs' Rest

### Playing With Matches

by Andrea Vallance

#### Part 1

#### 181st of 2029 (007-98): Verasaryn

*Raledenet* had arrived in system yesterday. We had been directed to proceed to Verasaryn for debriefing. Intelligence picked up Sakuya as soon as we landed; he looked so miserable. He'd had a picture of his family; Isabella had convinced him to give to her for 'safe keeping'. He'd been reluctant, but she'd been very insistent. We were heading to debriefing; nobody was looking forwards to that, explaining just what went wrong. We spent the trip in silence, very different from our last journey to meet Kirsov. I hated visiting Verasaryn, the very air was thick and oppressive. We touched down outside the Guard's headquarters<sup>1</sup>, an ugly squat complex of buildings designed hundreds of years ago. Ariaryn and I struggled to catch our breath, even the others were having difficulties<sup>2</sup>; how did people breath this soup? Isabella produced two respirators and insisted that both Ariaryn and I put them on. "You've both just been shot, so put the bloody things on."

I was glad of the excuse not to breathe the air but Ariaryn was reluctant "I trained here, all Guards do, I'm used to it." I could see him tottering, though.

"You got shot through the lung, you idiot, so put it on." She thrust the respirator towards him, he grumbled again but put it on.

We approached the main entrance; no airlock. It seemed the Guards take their acclimatisation seriously. The young *Serganet* at the checkpoint looked twice at Ariaryn but said nothing. Kirsov's office was on the second floor; no lifts either. I'm sure Ariaryn was smiling at our distress forcing our reluctant limbs up the stairs, one point three Gs is no fun on the legs. Kirsov's trusty *Seror* was waiting for us; she smiled as we entered. "He's expecting you." The office was as plain and unremarkable as the one on Daramm. He was sitting reviewing our reports.

"Ah, good to see you." He looked at Ariaryn and suppressed a chuckle. "*Dokhtor's* orders, I assume, *Serganet*?"

Ariaryn looked embarrassed "Yes, sir." There it was again, *sir*, it sounded just plain odd.

He grinned sympathetically. "Listen to her, *Serganet*; better to recover and be ready, remember. No shame in it; I've spent my time on breathing gear too." Ariaryn relaxed a little at this. He indicated we should sit. "So, what went wrong?"

Siish answered "It's in the report, *Geenor*."

"Yes, but I'd like to hear your take on it."

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Siish looked him straight in the eyes "If I had put the blame anywhere, I'd go with just dumb luck. I'd guess Trace's bodyguard stumbled on the case by accident; we were just lucky she didn't inform the authorities."

Kirsov nodded, "My take, too, but we'll know more once Trace is interrogated properly." He noticed me shudder at this. "You have something to add, *Komant*?"

"He's just a civilian, *Geenor*, I just don't think he knows anything."

"He knows enough for the Imperium to want him back, I'd expect. And that bug he made," he pulled up Siish's report, "hardly nothing." I knew when to shut up so stared at the floor and said nothing but I could feel Kirsov looking at me for a moment. "Anyway, I'm satisfied it was an unavoidable mess and you handled yourselves well in it. If you're interested, I may have other work for you." He took a datachip from a draw and placed it on the desk "If you're interested, let me know."

Siish picked up the chip. "*Raledenet* is due for its annual maintenance; we'll need to arrange that."

Kirsov rocked back. "Well, funny you should mention that. I think you'll find a booking already made at Daramm Up<sup>3</sup> for you, quite untraceable and unofficial, you understand. Call it extra recompense. Oh, and on that," he passed over a credit chip, "That should cover what you've done so far."

Siish looked at the credit chip. Nobody had actually considered that they'd get paid. "We'll get back to you, *Geenor*, but I think a break is in order." He picked up the chip.

Kirsov grinned, "Naturally, Siish, enjoy yourselves; you've earned it."

---

Jane was the first to bring up the credit chip once we left "So, dear *Kaptan*, how rich are we?"

He sniggered, "I hardly thought of you as the mercenary type, Jane. But reasonably. With what we

made on the trip, we have about twelve million *keed-its* in the kitty."

Ariaryn whistled. "That's a lot of money, more than I've ever seen in one place."

I looked at him. "Ariaryn, dear, there were *fifty* million in that case we just gave back to them."

### 183rd of 2029 (009-98): Touchdown on Daramm

Daramm and Verasaryn were reasonably well placed, less than two days between them at one G. I missed the speed and agility of my raider. I'd found myself thinking of Shadt and Sarah a lot lately. They'd been planning a life together. I missed my crew, hell, I missed them all, Midori, Greg, Petra, the list just went on. I'd resolved to go see Ora and Oloku while we were on Daramm; Siish had said they'd got a nice safe posting. Ora had made *Komanda*; she had a position in some hush-hush communications centre on Mrai<sup>4</sup> and Oloku lectured on martial arts at the academy. I had to laugh at that, a *Yoshet* now, teaching wet-behind-the-ears *Kadts* how to defend themselves. There were a lot of people I had to catch up with, in truth. But I wasn't looking forwards to it, I'd been through it all after repatriation. Everyone being so careful and nice, treating me like I was made of glass. The more they struggled to treat me like I was normal, the more obvious it became that I wasn't, any more.

---

Everyone was splitting up after we docked; they all had people to see. Jane, her family and Greg's; Ariaryn, his in Yarnar; Siish was expected at the Manish estates. Naturally we'd see each other while we were here; there was the *Rurur Garintylil*<sup>5</sup> ceremonies, we'd have to attend those. I thought of the battle. Hard to imagine, it had only been five years ago, seemed like so much longer. I gently nudged *Raledenet* into the docking bay and powered her down. Two weeks, my first vacation in four years.

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I saw Isabella again as we were disembarking "So, where are you staying?"

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## Raconteurs' Rest

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"Well, I've got an apartment in Antiavash<sup>6</sup>; I was planning on staying there. I have to call in on the Manish's, but other than that I'm pretty much a woman of leisure." Her laugh was sad, she didn't have many friends outside of us. "I imagine you'll be staying with your family."

I forced a smile. "Probably, at least awhile. Thought I might try to get away, though. Maybe some time in the Lants<sup>7</sup>; get back to nature, you know."

She looked at me knowingly and grinned. "Tell you what, why not come join me in Antiavash, after you've seen your family. Keep me company. Two women on our own, could even have some fun."

I agreed, as much for myself as her.

## Notes

1. The Protector's Guards had their headquarters on Verasaryn. Its lower population density and smaller hydrosphere provided much greater scope for training grounds than Daramm.
2. The atmosphere of Verasaryn is over 50% denser than that of Daramm; most Luriani find it hard to breathe near sea level.
3. Daramm Upport. The orbital portion of the main starport.
4. Daramm's inner moon.
5. Literally Rurur Memorial Day. Falls on the 188th of each year.
6. The vast majority of Daramm's population live in huge city tower complexes anchored in Daramm's many shallow seas. Antiavash arcolony was home to almost two million people at the time.
7. A remote nature reserve famed for its rugged beauty.
8. Bawa, a compound of ba (smaller) and wa (woman) usually translated as Miss. The male equivalent is Balul. Originally honorifics referring to unmatched adults, such usage had been obsolete since pre-contact times. The words are only retained now as terms of endearment.



## Doing It My Way

## Character Generation Rules

### The Tavrchedl': A Zhodani Classic Traveller Career

By Jeff Zeitlin

The rules presented here require that the player has both a set of basic rules for Classic Traveller (*Traveller Basic Set*, *Traveller: Starter Edition*, *Deluxe Traveller*, or *The Traveller Book*) and the Classic Traveller Alien Module 4: *Zhodani*. All of the required material is also available on the *Classic Traveller Canon on CD-ROM* available from Far Future Enterprises.

*Alien Module 4: Zhodani* presents slightly less than a page of information on the role of the Tavrchedl' in Zhodani society. That information allows for both the unfavorable Imperial interpretation of the 'Thought Police' engaging in 'brainwashing', and a more favorable Zhodani interpretation of guardians protecting the stability and mental health of their society. This career is designed for Zhodani characters, and is generally supportive of the Zhodani view.

### Creating a Tavrchedl' Character

Create a Zhodani character as outlined in *Alien Module 4: Zhodani*, including testing for Psionic talents. Resolve a career as per the *Alien Module 4: Zhodani* rules, but use the tables below. There is one special rule, regarding assignment to the Civilian Branch or the Military Branch.

#### Civilian Branch or Military Branch?

Most Tavrchedl' members are in the civilian branch, in a role that is almost entirely that of a social service or medical service. There is, however, an arm of the Tavrchedl' associated with the military, under the control of the Consular Guard, and responsible for operating within the military, or outside the Consulate. Characters always start in the Civilian Branch, and may be moved between branches later on during the career. On successful reenlistment, roll 2D for 10+ for transfer. If this roll succeeds, the character is transferred to the other branch. On the first transfer to the Military Branch, award the Guard service skills to the character

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(Blade Cbt-1, and +1 Psi for Nobles). Subsequent transfers to the Military Branch do not award any additional skills. A character's Guard rank is one lower than their civilian rank; the roll for position and promotion directly adjusts the civilian rank, not the Guard rank, even if the character is assigned to the Military Branch when promoted. Character that are currently assigned to the Military Branch may roll skills on either the Tavrchedl' skill tables below, or on the Guard tables in *Alien Module 4: Zhodani*. All other aspects of career resolution continue to use the Tavrchedl' tables following.

### **Proles in the Tavrchedl'**

Although the enlistment requirements are biased toward encouraging Nobles and Intendants to join, it is possible for Proles to join. Proles are never transferred to the Military Branch; those roles are handled by low-ranking Guard members. Advancement is limited to a maximum rank of Counselor for Proles, and then only if the Prole has at least either Psychology-1 or Non-Verbal Communication-1.

### **Adventuring With Tavrchedl' Characters**

#### **On Active Duty**

Occasionally, it may be necessary for the Tavrchedl' to search for and capture a Zhodani in need of reeducation. This can be a source of adventure. Naturally, the target is considered insane, even if the reason for reeducation is not the commission of an Insane Crime—after all, what sane Zhodani would try to avoid being helped? Characters on such missions within Consulate space will have expenses paid by the Tavrchedl'; if the mission takes them out of the Consulate, the character will get advance cash for expenses, and, when needed, may get expenses for the mission reimbursed at any Zhodani diplomatic facility.

#### **Retired Tavrchedl' Characters**

As with any retired character, a retired Tavrchedl' character may undertake any adventurous

activities he desires. However, the Tavrchedl' will 'keep tabs' on him, so as to be able to request assistance in cases where the character has a special 'knack' for dealing with the problem. This is especially true if the character has a Special psionic talent. If a retired character engages in what the Zhodani call Incited Crime or Insane Crime, an approach by active-duty Tavrchedl' personnel will quickly be made, and the character will be expected to cooperate. An uncooperative character will be judged insane, and a concerted effort to capture the character for reeducation will be made.

#### **Adventure Seed: Shtiz Bralzastebr**

Shtiz Bralzastebr is profiled in this issue, "Up Close and Personal: Shtiz Bralzastebr" on page 15.

As a subject of reeducation in the past, Shtiz Bralzastebr is kept on a list of 'persons of interest' to the Tavrchedl'. Since his reeducation, Bralzastebr has been an upstanding citizen. However, recently, his shields have been seen to have slipped, briefly revealing emotional states that are potentially worrisome. He is also seen to be spending much time reexamining records of his naval and government careers, and data concerning the Imperium in Tloql (Spinward Marches) and Idrflanta (Trojan Reach) sectors. As a noble, his claims of an interest in opening trade missions with the Imperium and the Aslan are accepted when a Tavrchedl' Therapist interviews him (without using Telepathy); his professing to have taken up approved therapeutic meditative exercises also acts to assuage their concerns.

Some time after Bralzastebr has successfully found financing for the trade mission, and departed for Idrflanta, the reeducation division reports that certain processes used in reeducation can, under very specific circumstances, lead to a breakdown and failure of reeducation many years later. Bralzastebr is identified as being at particular risk. He must be examined, and if he is beginning to break down, reeducation using newer and more advanced techniques must be carried out. A ship is chartered, and a Tavrchedl' team sent after Bralzastebr.

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# Doing It My Way

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| Tavrchedl' Career Resolution Sequence |            |          |          |            |              |                          |
|---------------------------------------|------------|----------|----------|------------|--------------|--------------------------|
|                                       | Enlistment | Survival | Position | Promotion* | Reenlistment | Transfer (except Proles) |
| Basic Roll                            | 10+        | 7+       | 10+      | 10+        | 7+           | 10+                      |
| DM +1 if                              | INT 8+     | -        | SOC B+   | PSI A+     | -            | -                        |
| DM +2 if                              | SOC A+     | EDU 9+   | -        | -          | -            | -                        |
| DM +3 if                              | PSI 9+     | -        | PSI A+   | -          | -            | -                        |

\* Proles limited to rank 2 if Non-Verbal Communication 1+ or Psychology 1+; rank 1 otherwise

| Tavrchedl' Acquired Skills Table |                      |                |                          |   |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
|                                  | Personal Development | Service Skills | Education                | Noble and Intendant Education (characters with SOC A+ only) |
| 1                                | +1 STR               | Vehicle        | Medical                  | Talent  |
| 2                                | +1 DEX               | Admin          | Psychology               | Telepathy   |
| 3                                | +1 END               | Gun Cbt        | Non-Verbal Communication | Awareness   |
| 4                                | +1 INT               | Liaison        | Liaison                  | +1 PSI  |
| 5                                | +1 EDU               | Brawling       | Computer                 | Non-Verbal Communication                                    |
| 6                                | +1 EDU               | Jack-o-T       | Admin                    | Psychology  |

| Rank Titles and Service Skills |                  |                            |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Rank                           | Title            | Skill                      |
| 0                              | Aide             |                            |
| 1                              | Supervising Aide |                            |
| 2                              | Counselor        | Non-Verbal Communication-1 |
| 3                              | Therapist        |                            |
| 4                              | Manager          | +1 Admin                   |
| 5                              | Senior Manager   |                            |
| 6                              | Director         |                            |


| Mustering Out Tables |                   |        |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                      | Material Benefits | Cash   |
| 1                    | +1 SOC            | 2,000  |
| 2                    | +1 INT            | 5,000  |
| 3                    | +2 EDU            | 5,000  |
| 4                    | Legion of Merit   | 10,000 |
| 5                    | High Passage      | 20,000 |
| 6                    | Weapon            | 25,000 |
| 7                    | +2 SOC            | 30,000 |

DM +1 for Material Benefits if Rank 5+ or SOC B+  
DM +1 for Cash if Retired (4+ terms). Nobles receive double cash.

## Possible Directions to Take This Adventure

1. Bralzastebr is fine. His interest in the area, and his prior career, was to find potential contacts.
2. Bralzastebr's reeducation is beginning to show signs of breakdown. When this is explained, he will immediately cooperate in returning for corrective reeducation.
3. Bralzastebr is beginning to be erratic. His crew has noticed, but don't seem concerned. He will resist reeducation to the point of causing an embarrassing scene, after which he will abruptly reverse himself and ask for Tavrchedl' help.
4. Bralzastebr is definitely erratic. He will refuse to submit to an interview with the Tavrchedl'. If

5. Bralzastebr is showing signs of a breakdown. His crew is concerned, and ready to mutiny to get him to help when the Tavrchedl' arrived.
6. The PCs encounter Bralzastebr's ship on its way back to the Consulate. Bralzastebr is restrained, and ranting about a mutiny. Clearly, he has had a breakdown, and desperately needs help, to the point that his crew has mutinied to get him to it.

The referee should determine the future direction of this adventure. 

## 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

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

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

# Submission Guidelines

## What is *Freelance Traveller* looking for?

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

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

## What about ...

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

## ...Hyperlite?

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

## ... Diaspora, or Starblazer Adventures?

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

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

## How should I submit my article?

### What needs to be in the submission?

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

### What format should I submit it in?

That depends on what you're submitting. Generally:

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

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

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

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

## How do I get it to you?

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



