Features:

TravellerCON/USA 2017

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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.

Contents

Note: As we were preparing this issue, we received word that Marc Miller was advised to schedule triple-bypass surgery after a stress test, and scheduled the surgery for October 23. He seems optimistic, and not unduly concerned; nevertheless, we wish him the best of outcomes.

From the Editor

Sometimes, people who you think of as larger than life, aren't. That can be disappointing, or it can be a pleasant surprise. Those of us who attended TravellerCON/USA this year had the opportunity to meet Marc Miller, and I found it a pleasant surprise.

Simply put, Mr Miller is human. He presented the image of being genuinely happy to meet the *Traveller* community that sprang from his efforts of 40 years ago (*yes, it's really been that long since the initial release of what we now call Classic* Traveller), and while he no longer plays, he clearly still takes an interest in the game, and in what the community is doing with it. I was quite flattered, for example, when he told me that I—meaning, ultimately, *you*—had met my original intent/conceit and done a fine job of filling the niche left empty by the demise of the various incarnations of the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*. He was also willing to talk about future plans for *Traveller5*, and about a variety of other subjects, not all related to *Traveller* or roleplaying—though he was willing to discuss that, too; he and I spent a few minutes on various aspects of the convention quick-chargen he was running (and which appears in this issue). I also got permission from him to transcribe (and clean up, to get rid of hesitations and 'ah,…') his lecture/Q&A sessions; those will appear in future issues.

Meeting him and talking to him was definitely a privilege, and one I am thankful for. It gave me a chance to see that even someone who 'should be' larger-than-life can also be as ordinary as me. ✺

2300AD: Tools for Frontier Living

This review originally appeared on rpg-resource.org.uk in March 2016

Much of *Traveller 2300AD* is about life on the frontier, and this book begins by attempting to bring some of that flavour across, with a piece of fiction about farm life and some explanations. For example, frontier living is a mix of primitive and advanced technology, and knowledge across the entirety of known space is fairly consistent. Hence, the Technology Level of a frontier world is more a reflection of what they can make there, the manufacturing capabilities, than what they actually understand there. They can usually get hold of higher-tech items, provided they are willing to pay for them. Attitudes are different, too; the sort of people who make good colonists have a somewhat different approach to life from those who remain on core worlds. Sketches of sample colonial settlements illustrate this discussion on what the colonies are actually like, and it all makes fascinating reading.

Next comes a chapter on Colonies and Colony Design. The colonisation process is described in detail. Once a potential colony world is discovered, first in are survey teams, who begin with orbital surveys and then land, staying for five to ten years looking round a new planet then once it is deemed suitable the pathfinders arrive and spend another five years setting up basic infrastructure before the actual colonists turn up. There's masses of detail here, enough to inform the development of a campaign about establishing a colony, if that takes your fancy, and this includes apposite rules information.

This is followed by Outposts and Outpost Design, where 'outposts' are defined as small-scale facilities established in deep space, on asteroids, or inhospitable worlds. These are not intended to be self-sufficient of themselves, although they may be components of a large whole. The same concepts can be used in creating colony precursors, a nucleus about which a colony can develop and eventually become self-sufficient. Deep space or asteroid based outposts are often zero or low gravity, those on planets have gravity of course but may be on airless worlds (or those with an inhospitable atmosphere). Again, there's plenty of detail (and illustrations of sample outposts) to enable you to incorporate them into your game.
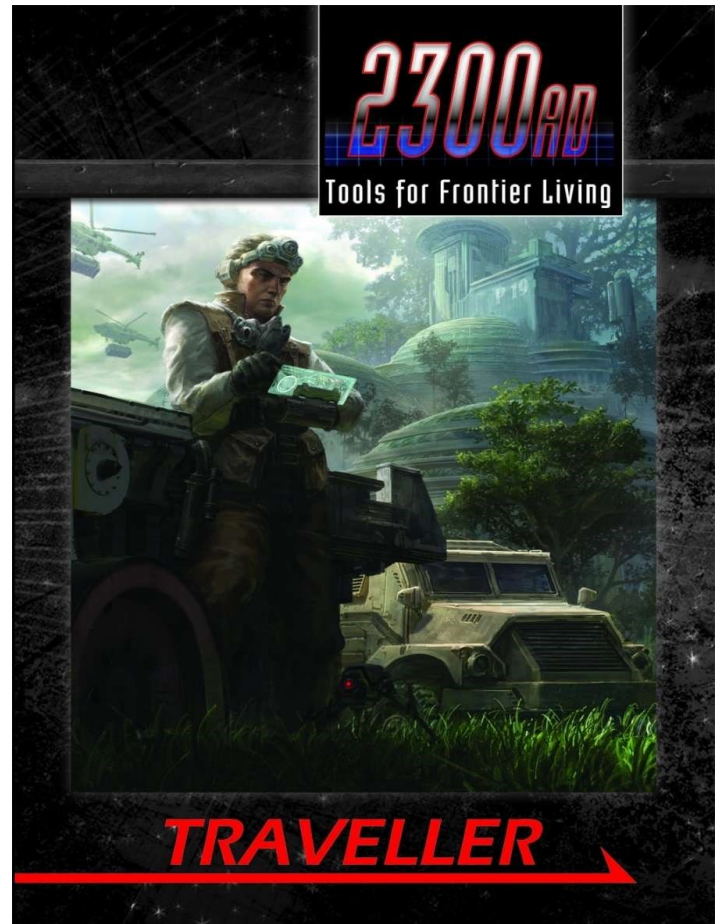
Next comes a chapter on Frontier Agriculture. Virtually every colony tries to farm for at least their own use if not for export. Most of the time, crops of Earth origin need genetic modification to be able to thrive on other worlds. Animals may or may not need this, depending on whether you can grow crops that they can eat… but they likely will have to be protected from local wildlife. Sometimes, said wildlife can be tamed and farmed itself, should they be edible or otherwise useful. Greenhouses, hydro-

ponics and aquaculture (fish farming) are also discussed.

Everyone needs somewhere to live, so the next chapter discusses Structures. This primarily covers imported structures, rather than those built using local materials, although these are covered as well, with the rules and costings you'll need. Many are modular in form, and often come pre-fitted according to their intended purpose. This is followed by a chapter on Power Systems.

Then a chapter on Animals opens with some fiction from an exo-veterinary surgeon, describing her life as a colonial veterinarian. Much of the material here covers exported Earth animals and their adaptations to colonial living, but we also hear about creatures native to the colony worlds. There's also costings and rules for animals here.

Next we take a look at Clothing and Protective Gear. Now we get to the sort of 'shopping list' I'd been expecting when I opened this book—in fact, the discussions talked about above were a delightful surprise! Of course, listings of stuff your characters can purchase are always useful. In many groups, shopping ranks highly amongst preferred activities—generally only combat and carousing get more interest from them. There's everything from smart and budget street clothes to armour and specialised outfits in this chapter.

The chapter on Medical Technology opens with quite an impassioned tirade from a medical doctor who resents those who think the technology is taking over and doing most of the work. The trained medical mind still has its place. However, there's plenty of equipment listed here to supplement such trained minds. There is also a list of drugs, not all of them medical… some are 'recreational' or have other uses besides healing.

The gear theme continues with a chapter of Exploratory Equipment, everything from backpacks and tents to mapping equipment and even snowshoes. This is followed by Tools and Industrial Equipment—everything from the multitool in your pocket to fabricators and explosives. Then on to Computers, Communicators and Personal Electronics. This in particular shows the difference between 2300AD colonies and their earlier counterparts. Even the most primitive appearing colony has access to cutting edge computing power. Similar in nature are the Sensors and Scopes which follow. This group of chapters rounds off with Miscellaneous Equipment and Consumer Goods—autokitchens, makeup kits and even a composting toilet.

Next, out into space, beginning with Space Equipment. This is the stuff you really don't want to fail! It includes rescue equipment, beacons and satellites here, before moving on to Spacesuit Design. If you have a mind to, you can get down and dirty with custom designing every detail of the suit on which your life will depend. In similar vein, the following chapter deals with Aquatic Equipment, with dive gear, boats and other items useful if you intend taking to the water.

There's a chapter on Police and Security Equipment, plenty of useful stuff here whichever side of the law you may happen to be on. Then comes the Weapons chapter, unsurprisingly one of the longer chapters in the whole book. There's plenty here to keep your gun-bunnies happy.

The final section of the book is mostly transportation, although the chapter on Robots and Drones provides robots (and drones, of course) for many purposes. Following this fascinating read, there are chapters on Walkers, Vehicles and Starships and Spacecraft.

With the material herein, your Travellers should not want for anything that they might need as they roam the worlds or settle down to build a colony. ✪

Jottings #1: Naming Practices

by Jeff Zeitlin

Introduction

In recent months, I made a few mailing list postings on various topics relevant to building cultures. Some of them generated some discussion; others didn't. "Jottings" is essentially those postings, cleaned up a little, and with additional information from the discussion or superficial research included. References, where they exist, should not be viewed as definitive information on the particular topic, but are generally good places to start if you wish to research further.

This article, the first of the series, is on naming practices. The idea here is simply to provide some ideas for patterns of names that you may want to apply to a culture (or characters therefrom) that you're building for your *Traveller* campaign; there's little if any discussion of *why* the naming pattern exists, or of the origins thereof.

General Naming Patterns: Real Examples

In many Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking areas, it was at one time (and may still be) common for a wife to combine her husband's family name with her own. There were several patterns for doing this, but in all cases the husband's name was last—for example, "Inez Maria Rodriguez de Gomez" or "Inez Maria Rodriguez y Gomez" (Rodrigues da/e Gomes, in Portuguese). Sometimes the latter form carried through to children, so that it was theoretically possible for a woman to end up with a name like "Maria Elisabeta Gomez y Rodriguez de Castro y Barilla"—and no, those weren't separate names; everything from the G to the final A was part of her single surname. Children's surnames generally were formed by taking the mother's surname before the father's in Portuguese practice; in Spanish, the father's surname comes before the mother's.

At one time, it was not uncommon (and may still be practiced today) for a German woman to take a feminized form of her father's surname as her own—so that Georg Blucher's daughter would have been known as Anna Blucherin. Names were not changed with marital status, though there were usually indicators of such—the equivalent in English would be something like "Jane Jones *m.* Smith" (*m.* for "married to"), or "Samantha Brown *w.* Johnson" (*w.* for "widow of"). The indicators were only for the purpose of "fine-tuning" identification or tracking genealogical data; her name for legal purposes remained "Anna Blucherin".

In some parts of Germany, it's not unusual, even today, to refer to someone not as e.g., "Peter Müller", but instead as "den Müllers ihr Peter", or "The Müllers' Peter" (literally, "the Müllers [genitive case] their Peter").

Jews were required to take family names at various times in various places. The nature of the names taken depended on where and when; Sefardic Jews took family names much earlier than Ashkenazi Jews. Prior to the requirement of taking family names, however, it was usual for a child to be identified as the son of his father, or the daughter of her mother or father: David ben Moshe, Rachel bat Leah, Sara bat Yosef. Where two individuals had the same name in this form, it was extended another generation (David ben Moshe ben Shmuel, David ben Moshe ben Avram), and in cases where that was still insufficient to distinguish, an additional identifier was added (David ben Moshe ben Shmuel haKohane [David, the priest, son of Moses, son of Samuel], David ben Moshe ben Shmuel haYerushalami [David, the Jerusalemite, son of Moses, son of Samuel]).

Iceland doesn't use "family names"—you have a personal name, and a patronymic, formed by taking the genitive of your father's name and adding the

suffix "-son" (or "-dottir" for female children). If Eric marries Ingrid and they have a son that they name Ivar, that son is legally known as Ivar Ericsson, and his sister would be Helga Ericsdottir. Foundlings (orphans for whom the father is unknown) were often given divine "patronymics", generally Þórsson (Thorsson) for boys, and Freyasdottir for girls.

The British royal family does not have a surname, despite the widespread belief that it's "Windsor". They are the House of Windsor, true, but when Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, was commissioned in the RAF, it was as "Lt. Wales", based on his father's title of Prince of Wales, not "Lt. Windsor". (It could be argued that it might have

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A Hungarian might be known in the US as Istvan Szabo, but as Szabo Istvan at home.

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been equally, or perhaps more, correct to commission him as "Lt. Cambridge", based on his own title.) The royal House name has changed in comparatively recent times; at one time, prior to World War I, they were the House of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, later the House of Hannover, then the House of Hannover-Windsor, and when the Monarch formally renounced the title of Elector of Hannover (which was in abeyance since the Holy Roman Empire was disbanded), it was changed to House of Windsor.

Roman naming patters were complex, and the definition of "legal" name changed over time and place. In general, however, most non-academics who have any familiarity with Roman names, as from movies or written fiction, for example, will be familiar with the so-called "tria nomina" pattern. The "core" of the tria nomina pattern is the nomen, which identified the gens (broadly speaking, the entire extended family back to a specific common ancestor (gens is often translated as 'clan' or 'lineage')). Before this is the praenomen, a personal name (though in later Imperial times its importance was reduced compared to that of the cognomen, to the

point where if it were not omitted, it might only be the Latin birth ordinal (e.g., Tertius, Quartius, Quintus, etc.)). The cognomen was found after the nomen, and could be personal, hereditary, or a combination of both. For more complete information on Roman names, one would be well advised to start at `http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_naming_conventions` and be sure to follow links to the separate entries for the various components, including 'tribal name', 'filiation', 'praenomen', and 'cognomen'. Note that this set of articles can provide additional information, beyond mere naming patterns, for building a culture.

Complexity isn't limited to Roman names; the naming practices of the Kikuyu of central Kenya are perhaps even more complex. Rather than try to explain them even as much as I've explained other naming patterns here, I'll just quote one of the people that commented on the original mailing list post:

> My wife is Kikuyu. In her tribe a first son will take his paternal grandfather's name, a second son his maternal grandfather's name. Subsequent sons will carry uncles' names, in a specific order. It's the same for girls—first the paternal grandmother, then the maternal grandmother, then aunties. Complex cases sometimes require consulting the old women for advice.

> Because the tribe has a legendary founding family (Kikuyu married Mumbi, and his nine sons married her nine daughters), the same names keep cropping up, particularly for women. There are many male names, so it's likely the naming convention is a relatively late development for male children.

> Infant mortality is high, and girls who are not expected to live, or who have had a number of deceased older sisters will often be named Njeri. We don't know of a similar use-name for men, though

my wife has an uncle Kanugu (monkey) who wasn't expected to live.

Children named after a relative are though to have some 'vital force' of that relative, particularly if that relative is deceased, so a woman might refer to her daughter as 'my mother' if the girl is named after her maternal grandmother.

Because of these conventions, large families will have multiple members with the same name, so nicknames are common (my nephew is known as Juju, short for Junior, to distinguish him from my stepson).

Honorifics are also widely used, a common one being Baba X or Mama Y (father or mother of X or Y). The specific name depends on who the person knows you through (I am Baba Kagera to some people in Mombasa who know my stepson; I am Baba George to some in Dubai who know my youngest son). It's rude to address someone by their given name if you haven't been introduced to them by their given name. Another common term of address is Mzee (elder, used as a term of respect).

Some outsiders may be given Kikuyu names or nicknames, which they may never learn, as Kikuyu may find it difficult to pronounce their real names; the nicknames are often barbed. I am Wanjohi (one of Kikuyu's sons, but can also mean The Drinker; much Tusker was poured when I first met my wife's family and friends).

When in Mombasa or Nairobi, I have to be ready to answer to multiple names: Adiru (the Kikuyu pronunciation of my name), Baba Kagera, Baba George, Wanjohi, or to Mzee or Bwana (sir).

A similar explanation of Kikuyu naming practices is at `http://swinkletoes.wordpress.com/2015/07/17/kikuyu-naming-traditions`, and other Kenyan tribes seem to follow similar patterns (see `http://keemlit.blogspot.com/2014/09/the-naming-system-in-kenya.html`).

Most Far-eastern languages place the family name first—Ho Chi Minh (Viet Namese), for example, was "Mr. Ho" or "Chairman Ho"; Roh Tae Woo, Kim Il-Sung (both Korean), Sun Yat-Sen, Deng Xiao-Ping, and Mao Tse-Tung (all Chinese) were similar (*Note: I'm not using a consistent Romanization for Chinese names*). Japanese is a recent exception; it is increasingly common to use the Western pattern of personal name followed by family name—though the traditional family-name-first pattern is still widely used. In the west, this pattern is also used, in Hungarian—a Hungarian might be known in the US as Istvan Szabo (Stephen Taylor), but would be known as Szabo Istvan at home.

In the past, far-eastern personal names generally consisted of an individual name and a 'generational' name. Traditionally, the generational names were

Names can be changed for many reasons.

taken from a family poem, and all members of the family that were a given number of generations from a specified ancestor would have the same generational name. While some families placed the generational name consistently first or consistently second, others alternated between the positions.

General Naming Patterns: Fiction

The family-name-first pattern was also used in fiction in H. Beam Piper's Paratime series, by the First Level civilization—Verkan Vall and Hadron Dalla were married for a while, and called each other "Vall" and "Dalla"; Tortha Karf, Chief of Paratime Police, was known professionally as "Chief Tortha", and when Verkan Vall took over the position, he was professionally known as "Chief Verkan". It should be noted that John F. Carr doesn't seem to get this, in the sequels he's written to "Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen", which is connected—by Piper—to the Paratime stories.

Also in Piper's Paratime stories, in "Last Enemy", all family names on the "out-time" parallel

world are locative—Piper rendered them in English, as "of Roxor" or "of Starpha" or "of Bashad", et cetera. Additionally, there was a notable pattern in *personal* names as well; male names all had an interior *-irz-* or *-arn-*, and female names all ended in *-itra* or *-ona*. Verkan Vall, while operating on that parallel world, called himself "Virzal of Verkan", and Hadron Dalla was known as "Dallona of Hadron". It was apparently not uncommon for a father to give his son his own name, merely changing *-irz-* to *-arn-* or vice-versa (so that Garnon of Roxor's son would be Girzon of Roxor).

Sharon Lee and Steve Miller have woven a rich tapestry in their Liaden Universe, and hidden in one of the internal-chronologically earliest stories is an interesting nugget—by inference, many Liaden family names—*not* clan names—are originally occupational: The name "yosPhelium" is given to mean "courier pilot", and a comment in the same story suggests that "yosGalan" is also a pilot, with a different duty (other than courier). Most names have no meaning given, but the pattern is suggestive: "deaGauss", "deaJuden", "venDeelin", "sigRadia", "yoVala", and so on.

In Cordwainer Smith's world of the Instrumentality of Mankind, (legal) underpeople were named to indicate their animal derivation, with a prefix of the first letter of the original animal followed by an apostrophe—C'Mell (cat), B'Dank (bull), T'Ruth (turtle), A'Gentur (ape), E'Ikasus (eagle), D'Joan (dog), et cetera. Smith may not have completely thought this out, as underpeople of several derivations would share a single indicator letter (e.g., bull and bear derivations both used *B'* as a prefix).

The Jao from Eric Flint and K.D.Wentworth's Jao Empire books do not use family names, but they do use *kochan* names (a *kochan* is most equivalent to the idea of 'clan' in human terms, but it's definitely not an exact match). There are two groups of *kochan*: root *kochan* and affiliated *kochan*. A member of a root

kochan is named using the personal name followed by indicators of membership in the *kochan* and whether from the main breeding line or a cadet line—Aille *krinnu ava* Pluthrak is Aille, member (*krinnu*) of Pluthrak, from the main (*ava*) breeding line. A member of a cadet breeding line would use *nao* instead of *ava*. For members of affiliated *kochan*, the breeding line is not indicated, but the root *kochan* to which the individual's *kochan* is affiliated is indicated, prefixed by *vau*—Nath *krinnu* Tashnat *vau* Nimmat is Nath, of the *kochan* Tashnat, affiliated to the root *kochan* Nimmat. The distinction between root and affiliated *kochan* is historical within the story universe, and beyond the scope of this article.

Name Changes

Although it's almost a "default assumption" to consider a name to be permanent and unchanging, the reality is that names can be changed for many reasons, both by the holder and by others. In most Western cultures, it is not considered remarkable when a person chooses to change his or her name. The most common example of this is the taking of a spouses surname as one's own upon marriage, but it is not considered particularly noteworthy if this option is declined, or if some other arrangement, such as a hyphenated combination of the two names, is chosen. Somewhat more unusual, but again, not particularly noteworthy, is a legal change of name for other reasons, such as "I've always hated the name Matilda; I want to be known as Sharon instead.". Another reason that has occasionally been prominent in the news has been when a notable person comes out publicly as a transsexual, such as George/Christine Jorgensen, Walter/Wendy Carlos, or Bruce/Caitlyn Jenner. This reason is far more common than most people believe; many transsexuals choose to keep it to themselves. You may know more such people than you think; I personally know that I know at least six (who have chosen not to conceal it in certain social settings in which I am a member,

but who do not broadcast it to the world as Ms Jenner has). Adoption of extremely young children may result in the child's given name being changed, especially in cross-cultural adoptions; the older the child is, the less likely. Other reasons for name changes might be for safety, if one is in a "witness protection program"; to evade notoriety for past actions; to evade debt (this is generally illegal—but it does happen); and other reasons.

It is common for Chinese immigrants to western countries to take a local 'use name' (ostensibly to make it 'easier' for the Westerners), with no necessary connection between the 'use name' and the Chinese name—so Hom Chi-Leung might be known as "Ted Hom" in the United States, and may even take that as a legal name (though it is not mandated). The 'use name' is *not* treated as a nickname, even if it would normally be so viewed (e.g., 'Jim Wong' is not a nickname for 'James Wong', if 'Jim Wong' is the 'use name' of a Chinese immigrant).

Roman Catholic and Coptic popes select a "regnal name" upon being elected to their respective papacies. The Roman Catholic Popes often choose their regnal names from the list of names of their predecessors, and the choice is often symbolic of the newly-elected pope's views on the governance of the Church. It should be noted that the present incumbent has broken with that tradition, and taken his regnal name from that of a saint instead.

Some English monarchs, including Victoria and her successor, have used a name other than their "real" given names as their official names during their reigns. It is speculated that Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, might choose a name to reign under other than Charles III, due to certain connotations of the name Charles for monarchs in British history. (His Royal Highness has not chosen to comment publicly on this matter.) This option, though rarely used, exists for other European monarchs as well.

Many British nobles, and all of the titled British and Scottish heralds, can (and some do) use their titles as though they are legal names, and in some views, they *are* legal names. [That is, the Duke of Normandy (titular noble of the Channel Islands) may identify himself in non-official contexts as "Normandy" or "de Normandy", and if he holds a military commission, is likely known as "Colonel Normandy" (or whatever his rank is), much as Prince William served as "Lieutenant Wales" [although it would also have been proper—possibly more proper—for him to be "Lieutenant Cambridge" instead, as he is the Duke of Cambridge]. The head of the British College of Arms, the Garter Principal King of Arms, may issue a personal cheque, not connected with his duties as a herald, and sign it "Garter". The head of the Scottish College of Arms, Lord Lyon King of Arms, may do the same (signing "Lyon"), as may lesser titled heralds in both colleges, using their respective titles (e.g, Portcullis, Rouge Croix, Lancaster, Clarenceux, and so on).]

Many oriental monarchs are not known by their names-in-life after their deaths. While for most countries, this is not widely known, and for many, it is strictly a historical phenomenon (their monarchies having been overthrown and abolished), it is very evident among the Japanese, where the father of the current Emperor is now universally (in Japan) called Showa, the same as the era-name of his reign. (In most Western writings, his given name of Hirohito is still used.) In Japan, the name of the reigning Emperor is never used; he is universally called 天皇陛下, (Tennō Heika, "His Majesty the Emperor"), 今上陛下 (Kinjō Heika, "His Current Majesty"), or just 天皇 (Tennō, "Emperor"), though in most Western writings, his given name as Crown Prince (Akihito) is used.

Some underdeveloped cultures have been noted as avoiding the use or mention of the name of a deceased person either permanently or for a period of

time. Living members of those societies who have the same or similar names often change their names.

There is a trope in speculative fiction where, if the "focus society" is meant to resonate with such Terrestrial cultures as the Native American tribes, a child entering puberty—or attaining some other significant age where he transitions from being a child to being a responsible adult of the society—goes on what might or might not be called a "vision quest", and upon its completion, gives him/herself a new name, by which he/she is henceforth exclusively known. In the *Star Trek* novel *Uhura's Song*, by Janet Kagan, the Enterprise landing party finds that they need to do this, along with a couple of the native children, to get information and assistance from the first-contact world of Sivao, whose natives are closely related to the inhabitants of Federation member world Eeiauo.

Honorific Name Changes

Although English uses separate titles, not made part of a name, it is not unknown in other languages/cultures for a name to change because the bearer attains noble status. In *Traveller* itself, an Imperial character that attains the social standing and noble title of "Count" may prefix his family name with "hault"; the Zhodani indicate noble status with a suffix to the name.

Historically, German nobility was often signalled by a prefix of *von*, *zu*, or both (*von und zu*), while the use of *de* was not unknown in Dutch (along with *van* and *ten*), French, and Spanish.

Both Japanese and Korean use suffices to indicate some relatively common honorifics.

Going somewhat farther afield, there are occasions where there is an actual name change that fit the broad definition of honorific:

Male Sikhs generally take the name "Singh" as a surname or 'pre-surname' upon formal induction to the Khalsa; females similarly use "Kaur". Normally,

this is used as a pre-surname, but it is common to reject the caste system, which is "embedded" in family names, and those who do reject the caste system often discard their family names (this is not only true of Sikhs, but of northern Indians generally).

There are similar examples in fiction; the one that most immediately comes to mind is in the universe of Miles Vorkosigan (by Lois McMaster Bujold), where if the Emperor of Barrayar makes you a Count (the highest level of noble), you prepend *Vor* to your family name—Kosigan→Vorkosigan; Patril→Vorpatril; Barra→Vorbarra; et cetera.

Such honorifics need not be solely for nobility; in the *Hell's Gate* series by David Weber with Linda Evans and Joelle Presby, veterans of the Imperial Ternathian Army are entitled to use *chan* before their surnames; this extends even to the Imperial family: The Grand Princess Andrin, who is yet too young to serve, even if the ITA allowed women to serve, is "Andrin Calirath", but her elder brother, who served in the Army, was "Janaki *chan* Calirath". On the other side of the war in those novels, the two highest castes in Mythalan society, the shakira [mages] and the multhari [warriors], similarly used *vos* and *mul*, respectively, and those members of lines that were both shakira and multhari were entitled to use "*vos* and *mul*".

In the *Klingonaase* of John M. Ford's *The Final Reflection*, joining the Klingon starfleet allowed the viewpoint character to change his given name from Vrenn to Krenn. (The same novel also showed us that the "line name" was not used as we might; he was Captain Krenn, rather than Captain tai-Rustazh. One assumes that Kang, Koloth, Korax, Kumara, *et alia*, were similar usages.) The importance of the line, or of the individual within the line, is indicated by the prefix to the line name, ranging from *tai-* for the lowest "noble" lines, up to *epetai-* for the highest. The *tai-* series of prefixes were also used as prefixes to the title *zan*, which was of neutral honor with no

prefix, roughly equivalent to modern English/American "Mr"—"*Zan* Vrenn" was a respectful way of speaking to Vrenn without according any particular honor; one could be referred to as *epetai-zana*, roughly equivalent to "Most Highly Honored Sir". Using this sort of construction with one who was not actually entitled to use the *epetai-* prefix carried implications of insult and great sarcasm.

In the Known Space universe of Larry Niven, names and their changes among the Kzinti truly follow achievement of honor (and social status). A low-status Kzin will have no name, and will be known only by his job title (e.g., Speaker-to-Animals, a diplomat to aliens; or Telepath, obvious). When he gains sufficient status, he will be granted a personal name, which is used in combination with his job title (e.g., Chuft-Captain; 'Chuft' is the personal name). Finally, a Kzin of sufficiently high status as to not need to work will use the personal name only (e.g., Ch'mee).

References

Wikipedia:

Roman Names
   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_naming_conventions

Praenomen: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Praenomen

Cognomen: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognomen

Tribal Name: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_tribe

Generational Names
         https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation_name

Eric Flint, K.D. Wentworth, David Carrico:
Jao Empire Series:
https://www.baen.com/categories/books-by-series-list/jao-empire-by-eric-flint-and-k-d-wentworth.html

The Course of Empire:
         https://www.baen.com/the-course-of-empire.html

The Crucible of Empire:
         https://www.baen.com/the-crucible-of-empire.html

The Span of Empire:
         https://www.baen.com/the-span-of-empire.html

John M. Ford: The Final Reflection
         https://amazon.com/Final-Reflection-Star-Trek-No/dp/0671038532

Cordwainer Smith:
The Instrumentality of Mankind

We the Underpeople:
         https://www.baen.com/we-the-underpeople.html

When the People Fell:
         https://www.baen.com/when-the-people-fell.html

Larry Niven (et alia): The Man-Kzin Wars
https://www.baen.com/categories/books-by-series-list/man-kzin-wars-created-by-larry-niven

(There are some notes at about this article's level of detail on other names at http://devresearch.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/International%20Naming%20Conventions%20Guide%20-%20Final%209-14.pdf) ✳

After-Action Report:
TravellerCON/USA 2017

by E. Tage Larsen

Editor's note: The pictures were supplied with the writeup, but there were no captions.

I'm no stranger to traveling (travelling?) for small conventions, but the confluence of *Traveller*'s 40th birthday, visiting guest of honor Marc Miller and some more than casual curiosity finally tipped the scales and forced my hand to Lancaster, Pennsylvania in late-September.

Perhaps it's the birthday or some *Traveller* uptick in OSR gaming *en masse*, but it seems that interest is

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warming to gaming's longest-running sci-fi game. For quite a while, the most notable *Traveller* in mid-Atlantic was a long-time ongoing game at Dexcon/Dremation conventions run by Ben Forest; where also in recent years the White brothers (Mel and Bill) picked up the calling, expanding the footprint. So the past few years have seen an upswell, returning *Traveller* to my life after 30 or so years on hiatus for me.

I grew up on the LBBs (probably the '82 box but who knows at this point) but resisted the hardcoded setting that quickly attached to it. I'm just not an Imperium guy, never was. Nothing personal. It wasn't until the newer push in the gaming community to 'primary sources' piqued my interest in Classic

Traveller. And with the help of the internet, I rabbit-holed my way into the G+ community for Classic *Traveller* and pre-Imperium play.

Lancaster, for all of its nowhere charm is surprisingly easy to get to, an hour NW of Philly by train, which makes it just under three hours for me from Penn Station, or the foolhardy could attempt Lancaster regional airport. The hotel is a sort of grand monstrosity perhaps originating in the late '60s/early '70s but fighting the encroachment of disrepair and expansion simultaneously. A sea of beige-on-beige carpets and furnishings spider around unusual angles and half-floor wings that abruptly turn and dead-end. The con seems to be fighting a losing battle on the perks front, now no longer offering a continental

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breakfast or coffee to guests. We are not there for the amenities as such. And the hotel is parked in a suburban arm of Lancaster, swaddled in highway traffic and easy access to recognizable bad food choices within an easy commute by foot or car.

Perhaps to battle this, TravellerCon does a wonderful job trying to ignore the hotel with the same fervor as it's received. They offer a free pizza dinner on Friday night to those in attendance and do an excellent job running an in-room consession stand and there is always chilled water on hand. You'd be surprised at how often these little things are disregarded at larger and smaller cons. TravellerCon is big on the hospitality.

And how is that? It's smallish. But not tiny. This year and the visit from Marc pushed the Ballroom we were given to the limit. Often eight tables would be running at capacity across the three slots; with the exception of Saturday morning slot running 10 full tables.

It's a loud room but not the worst. The low accoustic tile ceiling pulls its weight and keeps the Refs from yelling. Dotted around the back of the room and on the edges you'll find a few tables of
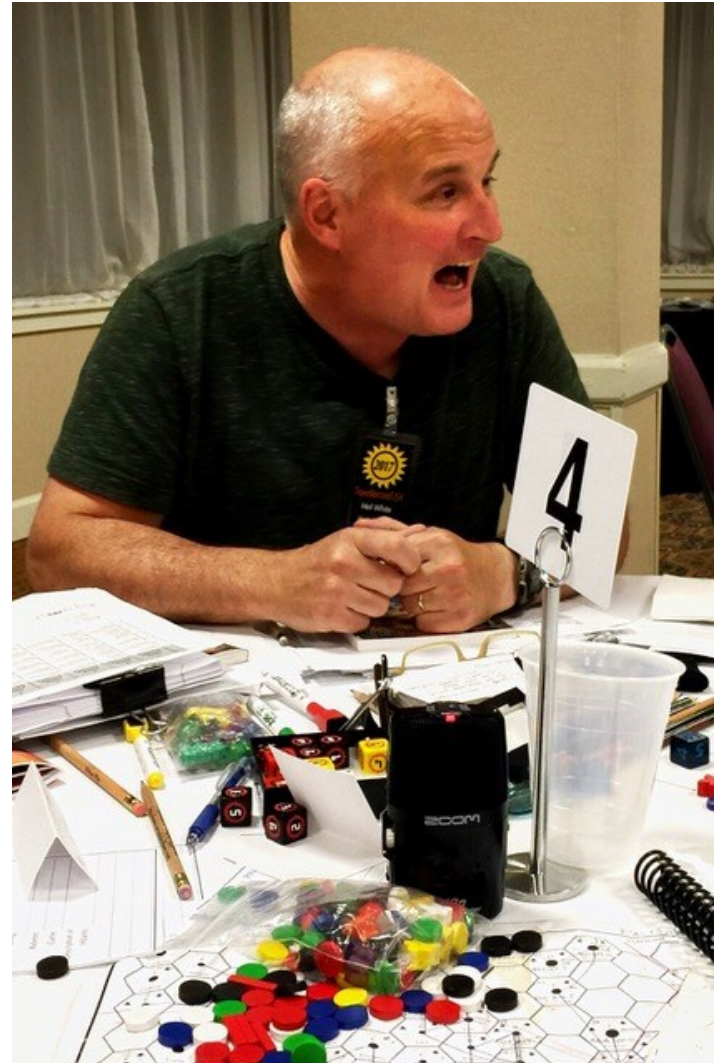
aging gamers selling product or by-product of 40 years of *Traveller* history.

TravellerCon was incredibly welcoming. My hosts went out of their way to introduce themselves. When announcements needed to be had they would wend their way to each table and make them in person. Intimate would be the wrong word, but maybe 'familiar'. Perhaps this is just how people normally interact outside of city life? Anyway…

My days of wrangling three games a day for multiple days may be past me but that didn't stop many of the fresh and worn faces dotting the happy mass. I was able to play two games of Classic *Traveller* and two games of *MegaTraveller*. Two great games and two uneven games. That's not a bad ratio. I split

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my time between playing games with familiar players and refs; and randomly going into a new crowd with unknown playing styles and expectations– prospecting. With regard to the latter, one was a reskinned American Independence themed module penned and run by Adam Dray, and that was phenomenal. I also spent a lot of time gaming with Mel White who is just about everything you'd want in a ref no matter the system.

Many raced to get to some Sunday morning gaming, which is a rarity in most conventions. I had stayed out too late cavorting at the bar on Saturday night and could all but scoop myself up and Uber my way back to Amtrak. Curled up with a pocket full of gaming notes, I began to comb through pics I took from gaming sessions which even now as I write this was only a short time ago.

Among the pile of bar receipts, *Traveller*-themed note pads and a quick drawing of a six legged bear
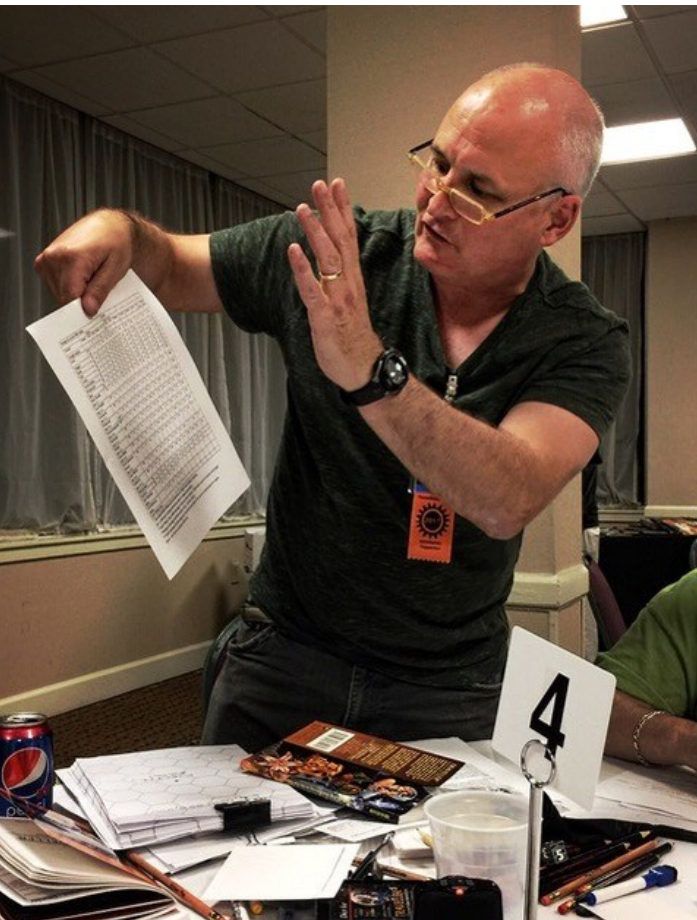
was an upended business card. I flipped it over and smiled. I'd forgotten that on just the previous night, Adam Dray had tapped me on the shoulder at the tail end of my evening session and handed me a black and red card. "What's this?" I asked.

"Oh, yeah. Marc just made you a Duke."

So, I've got that going for me now. Maybe I should give this Imperium-thing another chance.

PS. Travellercon attendee and backer, Mel White (of the 'Virtual Play' podcast) has uploaded all five games he ran at Travellercon. You can find the actual play audio links at: https://archive.org/details/TravellerconAcademy   ⊛

Up Close and Personal

Kvinne Vaskebjørn

by Joshua Levy

This character is designed to be an NPC Patron for a Corporate Repo adventure (*Freelance Traveller*, May/June 2017, page 32), but she can also be a Patron for many other types of adventures. She's a great Patron to have, from the point of view of those working for her, but does come with some baggage which might cause the adventurers future problems.

Notes on character creation: this character was created with the *Cepheus Engine* rules, with some house rules applied. Many home planet details were added using *Eclipse Phase: Astrometrics* by Mephis

James. This character has just under 2 skills per term, so if your *Traveller* Universe has more skilled characters, or less skilled, you should adjust accordingly.

Kvinne Vaskebjørn 786953 Age 50
8 terms (1 Marine, 7 Merchant); Assistant Director of Subsector Operations for Special Projects
Skills: Liason-4, Bribery-1, Leadership-3, Admin-2, Advocate-2, Steward-1, ZeroG-1, Tactics-1, Vehicle-0, Broker-0, Battle Dress-0, Comms-0, Demolitions-0, Gun Combat-0, Melee Combat-0, Gunnery-0.

(*Most of the zero level skills are from Marine basic training, and that was a long time ago, so those skills are pretty rusty, even for zero level skills.*)

(Continued from page 14)

Raccoonids

(Editor's Note: Raccoonids are based on the material at http://wiki.travellerrpg.com/Raccoonid, but according to the author are more common in his setting, and are more likely to leave their homeworlds and enter services other than the Scouts than implied by that article. A typical Raccoonid settlement will be about 1000-3000.)

Kvinne Vaskebjørn is part of a Raccoonid settlement of a few thousand on planet. Within this community she enjoys a higher effective SOC stat than shown above. She is one of the richest Raccoonids on-planet. She has a trophy husband, the executive director of a charity focused on Raccoonid issues. (*The referee should decide if its area of expertise is food, mental health, education, legal, disease, or something else, but it will not be controversial in any way.*)

Home Planet

(*Name unspecified*) C330628-D Lo In

Several average, industrial starports, small planet, small population, thin atmosphere, little water, small population, direct democracy (bureaucratic government), high law, and high tech. Note that this is non-standard for Cepheus Engine, which requires In(dustrial) worlds to be pop 9+.

Kvinne Vaskebjørn's home planet was a tiny rock ball (barely big enough to form a sphere under its own gravity) which orbits very close to a young, population I, F-type star. Being a population I system, both the star and its planets are high in metals. Mining is the biggest industry on the planet, and various metal intensive fabrication industries are also important. KH is a major long-term exporter from this planet.

History

Kvinne learned the value of hard work early, and the importance of *not* being dependent on physical labor. The Imperial Marines were her ticket off-planet, but an injury in her first term of service meant that she would not have a long, successful career in the Marines. She has an artificial leg be-

cause of this, and the referee should decide if it is noticeable or not. She then got a job with the Kjøpmann Hus (KH) Corporation. She distinguished herself as a hard worker, willing to do tasks that others tried to foist onto co-workers. She was also organized and detail oriented.

She has risen steadily up the ladder at KH. She would likely have risen more quickly if she had not been so obviously low SOC, and at this point, has probably risen as high as a low SOC, commoner, Raccoonid can go.

Personality

Ms. Vaskebjørn's personality is described differently, depending on who is doing the talking. Her superiors (C-level executives, business unit presidents and vice presidents) describe her as "unrefined" or even "uncouth" but "successful" and "driven" (but also "strident" and "over aggressive" if they don't like her). People who work for her describe her as "solid" and "predictable". They commonly say she "thinks before acting". Kvinne describes herself as a hard worker, who has earned every promotion she's ever gotten by doing the work that others mostly talk about. From an animal totem point of view, she would be a Badger: hard working, tenacious, tough, forceful, and compact.

The Kjøpmann Hus Corporation

Because Ms. Has worked for Kjøpmann Hus since her early 20s, it is important to understand that company in order to understand her. Kjøpmann Hus has a thin layer of genteel nobility at the top. Under that layer is where the real work gets done. The C-level executives (Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, etc.) and also the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the various Business Units are all Imperial nobility, who got where they got via money, connections, and Imperial politics. They value good manners, lively cocktail party conversation, droll humor, and being a good "cultural fit" (i.e., like them). Below them are the Executive Directors and

Up Close and Personal

Senor Directors who are in charge of actually getting stuff done, and who have much wider range of skills, personalities, and backgrounds.

KH is a huge shipping/transport firm, specializing in moving bulk cargos. It spans several sectors. (Bulk cargos, in this context, are anything that does not travel in standardized shipping containers.) Common products moved by KH include vehicles, food (especially industrial food like corn, juice, sugar, etc.), ore, bulk liquor, occasionally mass produced machinery (such as computers, computer components, and general purpose fabricators), etc. In the past, KH has tried with little success to vertically diversify (by selling the products they import, or by assembling products out of parts produced by others, just prior to export).

KH runs its operations in a strictly legal way. However, they do have very close relationships with many planetary governments and sector level imperial families, so if they do break the law, it would be in the areas of influence pedaling and conflict of interest.

Plot Hooks

Ms. Vaskebjørn is in charge of "special projects" which is an "everything else" department. One of the things she is responsible for is Corporate Repossessions when one of KH's transports is seized or stolen. (*In my Corporate Repo campaign, she is the main patron, for this reason.*)

But she could need a team of adventurers for some other mission related to KH's business: going after pirates, rescuing crew or cargo, dealing with corrupt politicians, businesspeople, or unions, etc. Finally, her stature in the Raccoonid community, and her husband's charity, could also result in character missions. ✪

Critics' Corner

2300AD: Hard Suits, Combat Walkers and Battlesuits

Reviewed by Megan Robertson

2300AD: Hard Suits, Combat Walkers and Battlesuits. Colin Dunn.
Mongoose Publishing http://www.mongoosepublishing.com
30pp., PDF
US$7.99/UK£6.12

This review originally appeared on rpg-resource.org.uk in March 2016

Opening with a short fiction piece from a battle scene, the Introduction gives definitions: a battlesuit is clam-shell-style unpowered armour (perhaps with an assistive exoskeleton), a hardsuit is a humanoid suit of powered combat armour with enhanced capabilities, and a combat walker is a lightweight non-humanoid walking vehicle. OK, now we've got that straight, on to the meat of the book. As to be expected, this is no mere catalogue of what's available, it is packed with design information to allow you to create your own 'mechs'.

With admirable consistency with the rest of the *Traveller* ruleset, walker and suit design follows a straightforward process beginning with choosing a chassis type and the Tech Level at which you are building, then adding in armour, modifications, weapons and utility packs. You'll end up knowing how much your creation costs and even how much space it takes up should you need to ship it as cargo.

(Continued from page 16)

At every step there is a range of options—different chassis types, modifications that can be made, and equipment that can be added… although even in the future, the problem of waste collection has not be solved and it is highly advisable to go before suiting up for a mission! Naturally, there's an extensive list of weapons that can be attached to your system.

If you need a suit in a hurry (or feel daunted by the process to create a custom one) there is a selection of 'standard' models from which you can choose. As you become more confident, or see the need, you can adapt your suit or walker or create a new one to meet your requirements.

Perhaps a bit of a niche market, but if you will be engaging in lots of combat on the ground, this is an elegant addition to the game that is well worth a look. ✸
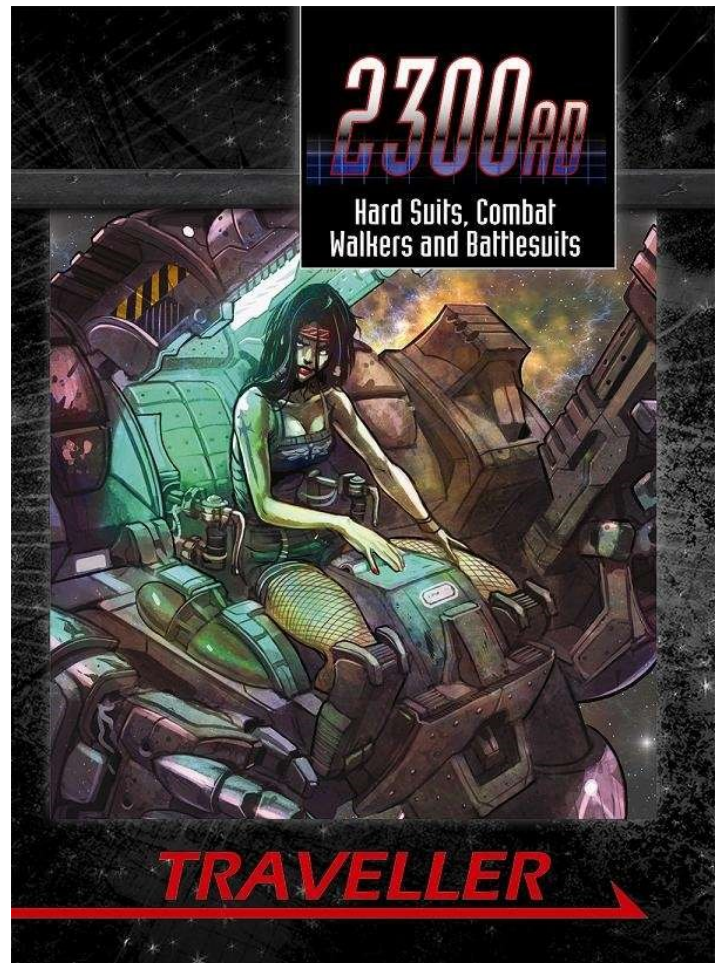
Active Measures

An Introductory Corporate Repo Adventure

by Joshua Levy

This is a Corporate Repo adventure, where the characters have been hired (or have a job) recovering starships from governments or companies who have seized them. This is very much an introductory adventure. The characters will not need a starship for this adventure, and this could be their introduction to the world of corporate repo. A general introduction to corporate repo has been published (*Freelance Traveller*, May/June 2017, page 32).

In the text below, planetary and corporate names were chosen as placeholders. Referees should feel free to replace them with planets or corporations that exist in their own campaign.

Background

Pashwaray is a backwater, but with at least a medium sized population. The population has a high-freedom, low-law attitude, so the government is small, and most of what would normally be government functions are privatized and handled by corporations. Policing functions are handled by corporations called "secfirms", which are half way between a police force and protection racket. For decades, Kezensay Corporation (your company) has paid one of these firms to protect its regular operations, which consist of one part-time broker and a large transport that imports gourmet foods.

Unfortunately, about 18 months ago, that firm got into debt, and allowed another secfirm to seize your company's starship in return for debt forgiveness. It was cheaper to sell out the offworlders

than pay off the debt. For practical reasons (the secfirm was the law, the government didn't care and was impotent anyway, the place was lawless and awash with guns), the company decided to write off the ship's loss.

However, the director for special projects the company has kept her eye on the situation, and recently realized that several pieces of good luck had come together, so that it now might be possible to repo the ship. First: a mercenary cruiser was going to be within a single jump of Pashwaray, on other business, and so could be hired for less than normal, as little transportation time would be required. Similarly, a team of repo operators (the player characters) would also be available at the same time and place. Furthermore, the starship was being used by the secfirm to transport bulk materials between Pashwaray and a neighboring system (Hilberandin), on a regularly scheduled run, so the director knew exactly when it would be in port. By planning ahead, the director was able to bring all this intel and luck together to repo the ship for a reasonable about of money.

The Plan

The mercenary cruiser will jump in-system, and deploy shuttles with troops to the ship and the areas around the ship. The ship is scheduled to be offloading cargo when the cruiser is scheduled to arrive. There will be normal security, but the mercenaries are a military unit and should sweep those guys aside and clear the ship of whatever crew is onboard. The repo team will then be boarded onto the ship, and will fly it out.

It should be the easiest repo mission ever.

The referee should get the players to write down what is in each character's "go bag" when they load onto the shuttle. Especially as the cargo ship's locker is likely to be looted. Even cutting a mooring cable will be surprisingly difficult without any tools. And if the characters are so reliant on the mercenaries

that they don't bring weapons, that will surely be a problem if there are cargo handlers loose on the ship, as described in the Optional Complications.

The Repo Team

The repo team might expect to be landed on the ship after the fighting is over, but no. Instead, a shuttle is split, mercenaries at the front, repos at the back. The mercenaries will clear out the ship, the repos will stay (or cower) in the shuttle until the "all clear" is given, when they will board the ship, and the mercenaries will fly out on the shuttle.

If the repo team has some fighting skills, then the referee should get them involved in fighting: maybe a security robot tries to enter the shuttle after the mercenaries leave, but before the all clear is given.

But, the big surprise for the repo team will be when the mercenary cruiser leaves right after the team boards the starship. The repo team thought they were being escorted out, but the mercenaries think they have already fulfilled their contract.

The referee should create suitable problems for the repo team to face, based on their skills and general experience. For example, the ship might not really be completely clear. There might be armed guards or unarmed crew hiding somewhere. The mercenaries might have damaged the ship's airlock when boarding, or damaged onboard equipment while fighting. The ship is likely to have partial cargo aboard, and that cargo might create complications. At a minimum the ship will need to be started up, seperated from the cargo facility, and freed from any tie-downs.

Once the ship is free from the loading dock, and heading into orbit, you can throw another nasty surprise at the repo team: the Pashwaray Navy! Of course Pashwaray doesn't have a Navy, but it might have contracts with a couple of armed spaceships to act as a coast guard, and the characters might see those ships intercepting them. Even worse, the secfirm which "owns" the ship might have a vessel

within intercept range. Or, there might be ships doing privatized customs enforcement which are in position to block the repo.

Once the characters get the ship to the 100 D line, they can jump out of system, and their problems should be over (especially if they can jump to the same place that the mercenary cruiser jumped to, or a place that has corporate assets available to help. Of course, even after the jump, depending on the ship's original crew and cargo, trouble might still be on board for added fun in jumpspace.

Alternative Presentation for This Adventure

Mercenary Ticket: This adventure could also be used as a mercenary ticket adventure. In this case, the PCs would be the mercenaries, and the repo team would be NPCs who needed protection. If you go this route, then protection of the starship and starport area should be handled by a quasi-military secfirm, just so it's a fair fight. It might even be possible to run it with two different groups of players at the same time, at two tables, although I've never tried to do that.

Optional Complications

Psionic Animals

The hold is about 90% empty, but there are some self-contained animal crates in the back, which had not been off loaded when the characters seized ('recovered') the ship. These crates clean themselves and provide food and water to the capybara-like animals within. However, they are only designed to work for 10-11 days, so a few days into jumpspace, the animals start running out of food and water.

Unfortunately, these animals are naturally psionic under extreme distress and after 1D÷2 days without food or water, and living in their own waste, the distress is extreme.

These animals have a "wild" (or uncontrollable) Telekinetic ability which manifests as pain or hunger

becomes extreme. It is important to realize that the animals are not directing the movements they cause. The movements just happen. The referee can determine the details, but the following randomness works well:

Roll 1D the first day after the animals' discomfort becomes severe, and an additional 1D each succeeding day (that is, 1D the first day, 2D the second, 3D the third, and so on). This roll indicates the number of random telekinetic events that occur.

For each event:

Roll d6 for range:

    1-3: close range

    4-5: short range

    6: medium range.

Roll d6 for the mass of the object moved, in grams.

    This is an exponent: 1 = 10g, 2 = 100g, 3 = 1kg, etc.

Roll d6 for target:

    1-2: physical object lying around

    3-4: physical change to a ship system

    5-6: electrical change to a ship system.

As a referee, if you are using this complication, I would have the first couple of telekinetic actions set up in advance, and possibly tailored so that the characters think they have a stowaway, or are being sabotaged by a previous crewman (or even by a fellow adventurer, if you run that kind of campaign).

The characters can fix the problem by feeding and watering the animals (they're omnivores, and can eat anything that humans can), by killing them, or by using psionic dampening or shielding technology, if they have any. But in most cases, the hard part will be figuring out what is really going on. This is one of those troubleshooting situations, where the symptoms of trouble are pretty random, and it's hard to link them back to their original cause.

The referee should also think about the end game if the characters end up in possession of the

animals, and understanding their psionic powers. Depending on your Imperium, these animals could valuable or dangerous to own, or both. They could be of interest to scientists, the government, mystics, or no one. Whatever the situation, think about it ahead of time.

Accidental Stowaways

The cargo hold is set up as for the psionic animal complication; however, the animals are not psi and are not starving. However, one or two of the cages actually hold people. These are cargo handlers, who when they heard the firefight had the presence of mind to hop into an empty cage. The mercenaries scanned the cargo from one end of the hold, and it all looked like animals to them.

At the first opportunity, the cargo handlers will get out and try to hide somewhere else, probably a store room near or in the cargo bay. They were brought up on dirtside stories of blood thirsty pirates, and come from a generally violent society, so they are likely to "shoot first and ask questions never", but they are not armed. Their basic plan is to hide out until the ship docks, and then rush out of the cargo hold before they can be killed. Once the ship is docked they will try to open non-standard hatches and cargo doors in order to get off the ship (and possibly also to create a diversion).

If discovered during jump, they will try to capture a crew member and negotiate to return him or her when they are freed at the other end of the jump. (Interestingly, the Repo team would probably accept those terms, if they were sure they would be honored.) Unless discovered on the first day, the cargo handlers will have "jerry-rigged" some weapons. For example:

- Bucket of caustic cleaning chemicals with a spray pump in it. The pump is battery powered, and the nozzle modified to give it a 10 or 20 foot range.

- They will certainly found some metal pry bars (for clubs) and knives.

Of course, it is possible to run both extensions at the same time, and have them interfere with each other to sow confusion among the characters, the cargo loaders, and maybe even the animals.

More Details

Why not grab the ship at the other end of its run?

This question might never come up, because the planning is being done by the subsector director, but if it does, here are some possible answers:

- The other end of the run is even more dangerous than Pashwaray, so the secfirm has armed guards (or at least armed thugs) aboard for the run, and you prefer to avoid those folks.

- The company does not know exactly where the other end of the cargo run is. The secfirm keeps that information secret.

- Because the mining operation on Hilberandin is very profitable, there are weapon emplacements protecting it, right near the port, and new and up-to-date. However, Pashwaray's defenses are old, run down, and spread out over a large area.

Assembling This Adventure from Free Sources

One of the great things about *Traveller* is that there is so much *Traveller*-compatible material available on-line. With that in mind, here are some web sources for different parts of this adventure.

The Starship Being Recovered:
    http://www.downport.com/traveller/tech/Schirf/
    Counterpart.html
    https://woolshedwargamer.com/2015/05/22/2000-dton-modular-freighter/
    (or you can use any of the available deckplans for smaller ships)

The Mercenary Cruiser:

The classic *Broadsword* Mercenary Cruiser:
    http://wiki.travellerrpg.com/
    Broadsword_class_Mercenary_Cruiser
    http://www.ace-dog.com/Traveller/DeckPlans/
    DECKPLAN.HTM (search for "broadsword")

Active Measures

A type-R merchant conversion:
`http://www.ace-dog.com/Traveller/DeckPlans/DECKPLAN.HTM` (search for "Gyrfalcon")

A Corsair is very similar to a Mercenary Cruiser:
`http://members.pcug.org.au/~davidjw/libdata/alphabet/c/corsair.htm`

Assault Corvette, but no floorplans:
`https://www.freelancetraveller.com/features/shipyard/gurps/myrdan.html`

A warbot to throw at the PCs:
`http://travellerrpgblog.blogspot.com/2016/09/w-is-for-warbot.html`　✷

Raconteurs' Rest

Here Be Dragons

by John Clifford

Editor's Note: Last issue, we printed Chapter 2 without having printed the Prologue or Chapter 1. Those chapters, plus a reprint of Chapter 2, are presented here.

Prologue

790 CE / -3773 Imperial
Solomani Rim 1827 Terra (Earth) X867870-2 Ag Ri
A small town in Norway

Harvald, the jarl of the small town, looked around at the smiling faces of his people: his wife and children, the warriors sworn to his service, the freemen from the nearby farms, their families. Even his slaves seemed pleased. He was glad that he had not only hired the traveling skald to entertain his household tonight, but also invited as many of the local community as he could fit in his hall. The man, Lukas by name, was a gifted storyteller. To survive as a traveling bard he had to be. He was telling one of the tales of the King of the Geats, Beowulf. Harvald's family claimed, as did many of the other nobles he knew, to be descended from Beowulf. Lukas was just coming to the end of this particular tale; the hero had just slain the monster Grendel's even more monstrous mother. The audience knew the tale, of course, but it didn't matter in the least. They were all spell bound by both his skill and the tale itself. At this point in the story, Beowulf was swimming to the surface of the lake that hid the monster's lair. In his hands he held the hilt of his ruined sword and the severed head of Grendel. Lukas ended the tale with Beowulf rising and brandishing his trophies to his followers. As he spoke the words he jumped to his feet and raised his hands in triumph, then let out a roar. The spell he wove wasn't broken, so much as fulfilled. The crowd roared back to him, many raising their own hands, some pounding the tables. All united in the moment of victory.

Although none of them thought of it, this and other tales helped define them as a people., to help them think of themselves as fearless warriors and monster slayers. It stayed with them and gave them courage when their ships reached foreign shores for raids. It helped them sail into the unknown and discover new lands when others shivered in fear. While the rest of Europe wrote on the blank, unknown edges of their maps 'Here be dragons' the people that would be known as Vikings went to look for themselves. And as their shouts echoed through Harvald's hall, they also echoed through time and space.

Chapter one

5712 CE / 1194 Imperial
Spinward Marches 0940 Singer D553774-6 Po
Somewhere in the outer star system

The sound of the battle stations klaxon jolted ensign Myra Brun awake. The blaring sound wasn't the nicest way to wake up, but it was effective. She rolled out of her bunk and hit the floor standing, wide awake. The leggy blonde moved with a speed and precision that spoke of many hours of practice,

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After almost sixty years, the Viking Legion had earned an honorable reputation.

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not to mention a high level of fitness and coordination. At 1.78 meters (5 feet 10 inches) she was tall, with a lean athletic look. She ran a hand thru her short hair and looked at the clock on the wall. She groaned to herself, only three hours of sleep. But there was no time to find out if this was a drill or a real emergency. The assumption in the military was always that it was a real emergency. She threw open a locker door and pulled out a space suit. Dark blue, with a single silver strip on the cuffs, the tight fitting suit had a connector for her wrist comm. Pockets everywhere and a small pack on the back, containing air tanks. The other two bunks in the room were empty, so she didn't have to worry about bumping into anyone as she put on her suit. One of the other ensigns she shared the room with would be in engineering. He was on first watch and it was his regular duty station. The third junior officer would be on his way to the missile magazine and the fire control station there. The small ship, the six-hundred-ton *Oslo*-class corvette *Jorvik*, didn't even have an emergency bridge, much less a dedicated fire control center or damage control for that matter. In fact, Myra's duty station would be standing in the hallway outside of engineering. At least until something needed to be fixed. She was on damage control/security when an alert sounded during first watch. As was typical of Sword World naval ships, even the smallest, the *Jorvik*'s crew was divided into three watches. The watch on duty manned the bridge and engineering. The next watch was off duty, while the last watch slept. During an emergency, the off duty watch would man the ship's weapons and re-enforce the bridge or engineering. The sleeping watch would handle damage control and if needed, defend the ship against boarders.

After she finished dressing, including tools and a handgun, she grabbed her helmet and hurried to her post, in the hallway. It wasn't far, of course; on a ship this small, nothing was far. On top of that, the *Jorvik* was, like most Sword Worlder designs, a tight, cramped ship. When she arrived, it looked like everyone was there: two petty officers, and six able spacers. So, she keyed her comm and reported "Bridge, damage control ready." After a brief acknowledgement the captain announced over all comm channels, "All stations ready, depressurize the ship." Myra sealed her helmet and hooked a carabiner on her belt to one of the safety lines on the wall. She looked to make sure the others were also ready. Pressurized spacecraft were basically metal balloons. If they got a hole, like from a laser or missile hit, the air tended to explode out. Removing the air prevented that. It also helped prevent fires onboard. No air, no fire. Her suit started to stiffen as the pressure began to drop. From this point on, only sickbay would have air.

With her immediate responsibilities taken care of, she brought up her heads-up display and started to find out what was going on. She called up a mirror of the ship's tactical display. They had been patrolling near the only gas giant in the system. Singer was a poor system, with a fairly low level of technology, about where Earth was at the dawn of pre-

stellar space flight. So while they had rockets and could build nukes, they couldn't even detect anything much beyond their own world's orbit. That's why the *Jorvik* was there. The ship was a mercenary (on paper, anyway), hired by the governments of Singer to patrol and defend the parts of their star system that they couldn't. The reality was, they were a ship of the Sword Worlds Confederation Navy. The confederation had created a 'mercenary' force called the Viking Legion. The name had caused a lot of concern amongst their neighbors at first. Especially since the Sword Worlders were, mostly, descendants of the original Vikings from old Earth. People feared that they were looking to restart old, bad habits, in spite of the fact that those ancestors had been civilized by the rest of Earth's standards for … well, call it well over 2,000 years by the time starflight was possible.

But after almost sixty years, the Viking Legion had earned an honorable reputation. They were yet to sack a monastery or raid a defenseless village. Just the opposite, they spent almost their entire time defending others—from infantry platoons guarding small settlements, to squadrons of starships protecting vulnerable star systems. The Viking Legion was the force to call for reasonably-priced protection. The Sword World Confederation got more than money out of it, though. The army, navy and marines got priceless real world experience for their personnel. And the Government got even more priceless good will and political capital.

At the moment, this got the *Jorvik* and her crew into a dangerous position. Being dirt poor meant the Singer system wasn't able to afford much. Aside from some upgrades to their planetary defenses, all they could afford was one ship to patrol the outer system. This meant the *Jorvik* was on its own. Normally this wouldn't be a problem. The Singer system was out-of-the-way, with not much worth stealing. Unfortunately, in this day and age, not all threats

operated by what humans would recognize as logic. What the MSS (Mercenary Star Ship) *Jorvik* had spotted refueling in the gas giant was one such threat: A vampire ship.

These days, a vampire ship didn't mean a ship full of blood-drinking undead. It was something much worse: a ship whose computers had been taken over by the artificially intelligent virus that had destroyed countless worlds. The ultimate weapon that had ended the last Imperial civil war by ending the Imperium—and most of Charted Space. And most living things, for that matter, in the areas it had taken over. This was THE VIRUS, all caps, run-and-hide-or-fight-for-your-life Virus. And it had come to Singer.

Undoubtedly, the controlling artificial intelligence had its reasons for coming to this unimportant backwater. Most likely it had come to destroy or enslave a vulnerable world of hated organic life forms. *How* it had managed to get this far past the heavily-defended frontiers was a better question. While the frontiers were guarded as well as possible, there *were* gaps. And a clever enemy could get through. It happened on occasion; the Virus-controlled ships were beyond clever, after all. The major powers in the area usually kept it secret, so as not to cause panic. But it was rare these days for one to pass the frontiers. And getting *this far* past the frontier without anyone noticing was rarer still. Singer was literally months travel from the closest border. At the moment, though, none of that really mattered. What mattered was that it *was* here. And the only thing stopping the vampire ship from standing off at a distance and bombarding singer into the Stone Age was the MSS *Jorvik* and her crew.

When the *Jorvik* had first spotted an unscheduled ship skimming hydrogen for fuel in the gas giant's atmosphere it had moved to investigate. As they got closer they saw it was a *Broadsword*-class mercenary

cruiser. At eight hundred tons it wasn't much larger than *Jorvik*. And a fellow mercenary. At least that was what they thought until they tried to communicate with it. The reply to their hails was a compressed data package. Which drove the comm station insane and set off every viral alarm it had. Fortunately, according to the standard antivirus protocols, the comm station wasn't connected to anything else on the ship. In fact it even had it's own independent power supply. Simply shutting the comm station's power down and switching to the backup stopped the infection from spreading to the rest of the ship. But then the intruder had turned and started to head toward them. Battle was about to be joined.

The *Broadsword*-class ships were an old design, built by the Imperium to transport small units of mercenaries and act as general purpose warships. They were mediocre at best at most tasks, including ship-to-ship combat. But being taken over by Virus gave it several advantages: after over seventy years, most of the vampire ships had replaced their human crews with robots, direct computer control or more often a combination of the two. Most of them had also upgraded their systems as much as possible. This meant they usually had the best sensors and electronics possible. Consequently they reacted like lightning and their weapon fire was literally inhumanly accurate.

The smaller *Oslo*-class corvettes had their own advantages, though: They were designed for space combat against an opponent that outnumbered them and had higher technology. To offset these disadvantages they were as heavily armed and armored as possible. It was one of the reasons Sword Worlder ships tended to be so cramped and Spartan for the crews. They sacrificed comfort for combat power and protection.

As Myra watched the two ships began launching missiles at each other, *Jorvik*'s eight launchers verses the enemies sixteen. The humans had something else in their favor though. One of *Jorvik*'s weapon mounts was a large dual particle accelerator turret, a powerful system for such a small ship. More importantly, the two energy canons were much longer ranged then the more standard laser weapons. Lasers had their uses. At short range they could be devastating. They were also used in a defensive role, to stop attacking missiles. Lasers were also cheaper; the corvette had eight of them, mounted in two turrets. Soon the lasers would be used to try and destroy the missiles headed towards them. But before either ship's missiles could reach their targets, the particle accelerators opened fire. Myra would watch as long as she could, soon she would be too busy trying to repair damage.

As the battle developed, it was clear the two ships were evenly matched. *Jorvik*'s missiles couldn't get through the vampire's defensive fire. But while *Jorvik* couldn't stop *all* of the vampires missiles, the missiles couldn't penetrate her armor. They had to hit the same spots over and over again in order to wear down the corvette's thick hide. But they had plenty of missiles to do just that. On the other hand, *Jorvik*'s accelerators could punch through the other ship's armor at will. But the two weapons fired as one. Which meant they could only hit one thing at a time. And the larger ship had more targets to hit. Eventually both ships pounded each other into wrecks. The vampire ran out of functioning weapons and its maneuver drive gave out. But its last missile volley managed to score a direct hit on *Jorvik*'s power plant. They were both drifting in space. The scrappy defender and the inhuman monster glared at each other as they slowly tumbled away from each other. Each waiting to see who could repair themselves enough to finish off the other first.

The monster won.

Chapter 2

After almost three hours of working to repair damaged systems, Myra stopped at the ship's galley to take a break. Her hands were starting to shake from exhaustion and low blood sugar. They'd fixed everything they possibly could, even managing to patch all the holes in the hull. They would be able to restore atmosphere if they survived. Everything was working but the power plant. Once that was back up

> *"The enemy is back, they're moving to board us; we have about five minutes. Follow me, they're headed to the main airlock"*

they would be able to move and fight again. Until then, they were still dead in space. Everyone that could fit in engineering was working on fixing the ship's fusion plant. Everyone else was standing watch, or in sickbay. That didn't leave many people for damage control. The thirty-two-man, and one-woman, crew had been fortunate. Only three dead and four seriously wounded. Most of Myra's watch had been used to replace the casualties. It left her and two ratings in case something new happened.

In the meantime, she could eat something before she passed out. Since the galley was near the center of the ship it had avoided damage. The other two members of her watch were already there, having had the same idea. Since the ship was still depressurized their options were rather limited. Drinks weren't the problem. Their spacesuits had provisions for two, half-liter fluid pouches in pockets on the chest. They connected to a tube that ran through the collar of the suit so a person could drink without having to open up their vacc suit. Both of her pouches were empty, so she went to the dispensing machine and punched in her request. One half-liter of coffee, black with sugar. And one half liter of *skorviten*, citrus flavored. *Skorviten* was an energy drink that replaced electrolytes, carbs and contained a slow releasing caffeine analog. The name *skorviten* literally meant shoe water. It wasn't the actual brand

name, of course. But the original formula was so foul tasting that people joked it tasted like old shoes. The flavor had been improved, but the name had stuck. Whatever it tasted like, it worked wonders on a worn out body. Next was food.

And food, for Sword Worlders, meant protein paste. Since before man had first gone to the stars one of the most difficult aspects of travel had always been carrying food, second only to carrying water. This had led to a wide variety of prepared food items over the millennia, many of which were unpalatable (to put it mildly). Space travel had made things worse. Introducing a seemingly unending variety of pills, pastes, bars, cans and other packaging methods. Some were quite good. Some could be counted as crimes against all life forms. Sword Worlder protein paste was somewhere in the middle. The mix of distilled grains and meat by-products smelled like something had crawled into a tube and died. It had the consistency of a cross between leather and tooth paste. And yet, somehow, it managed to have absolutely no flavor at all. Which, considering the smell, was a minor miracle and much appreciated. A single pinch of the stuff could replace an entire meal. There was a pocket in the collar of their space suits, similar to the one for drinks, that the paste's tube fit in. Once she loaded up she was ready to carry on.

The first order of business was drinking the coffee. She set the temperature setting on pouch one to 'warm' and took a long drink from the tube. As the caffeine and sugar hit her blood stream Myra leaned against one of the cabinets in the galley and let out a deep sigh. Then she looked at the two crewmen slumped at the table in front of her, Stendahl and Holzman. Like most of the crew, Stendahl was from the Narsil. Holzman was from Anduril. The two of them were like night and day, yet they were inseparable. They always seemed to be, not only on the same watch, but on the same work crews. Even off-

duty they were inseparable. Stendahl was quiet and reserved, Holzman was usually a bubbling brook of cheerfulness. How they could even stand each other, much less be friends was a minor mystery on board. But after losing five hours of sleep and then working at a mad pace for three more, they both looked as tired as Myra felt.

"So, how are you two doing? You going to make it?"

Stendahl grunted and nodded his head. Holzman turned to look at her and grinned, "Always, ma'am. Any chance on making up the sleep we lost?"

Myra shook her head. "Please, this is the navy. We won't make up any sleep 'til you two make chief and I make flag rank, you know that."

Stendahl nodded his head in agreement and Holzman chuckled "A man can dream can't he?"

The two able space hands were used to the ensign's easygoing manner. Not many Sword Worlder officers tried to be friendly with the enlisted personnel. The ones that did usually just managed to make everyone feel uncomfortable. But ensign Brun was different, she didn't try at all. Myra was just herself. She was natural in the way she behaved. And yet, for all her camaraderie, no one ever doubted she was in charge. Born into an old noble family from the Orcist, she literally had command in the blood. Generations of rulership gave her an easy confidence that couldn't be taught. That she was a combat veteran with a reputation for fearlessness added to the overall effect.

Myra started to reply, "Well before any of us head off to dream land let's …" She stopped, tilted her head and held up her hand. She was getting a message on another channel. "Yes, *Kapiten*, how long do we have?" Her eyes widened as she listened. "Right, we're on it sir. … We'll manage. Brun out." Her eyes seemed to lose focus for a moment as her mind raced. Then she was back. The tired, easy

smile vanished to be replaced by a grim look. Her eyes flashed at the two men as she spoke in the firm voice of command. "The enemy is back, they're moving to board us; we have about five minutes. Follow me, they're headed to the main airlock"

She broke off in a run and the spacers scrambled to catch up.

One of the many things that made Sword Worlder ships so tight on space was a deliberate design choice. The ever-paranoid Swordies added active and passive boarding defenses to almost all of their ships. That meant that the main airlock was at the end of a passage off the long main corridor. At the intersection were two fighting positions. Basically protrusions from the wall that could be used for cover in a fire fight. On the ceiling just above them was an armored dome that could be controlled locally or from the bridge, with sensors and a laser weapon. Just behind those things was a heavy blast door. If they lost the passageway, it could be closed off. Myra ran right past all of this and went to the ship's armory, which was further down the main corridor. She opened the door to the armory and rushed in. Just as her men reached the open door, two laser rifles and two extra power packs flew out towards them. "Here, our side arms won't be enough. Get to the fighting positions, I'll be right there." They grabbed the weapons mid-flight and headed back down the passage to the airlock.

A moment later Myra hurried out of the armory with a laser rifle of her own slung over her shoulder and her arms full with four white rectangular packages. As she did, the door to the nearby bridge opened and another two space suited figures rushed to join her. They both stopped in their tracks when they saw her load. She was carrying four breaching charges, pre-packed explosives designed to blow hatches and sections of starship hulls for boarding parties to force their way into an enemy ship.

Before the newly arrived ensign and space hand could say anything she barked out at them as she continued to move, "Reinforcements?" Before they could do more then nod she continued, "Arm up, then close the blast door behind us. If they get past us hold the position outside the bridge." Then she was gone at a run, around the corner into the passage to the airlock.

She ran past her two men, down to the inner door of the airlock and dumped her load of explosives on the floor. They were perfectly safe until they were armed, but most sane people were more careful with that much explosive force. She hit the button to open the door, then turned to look at the others.

"As soon as they close the blast door behind us, Holzman, I want you to pressurize this area."

He replied, confusion in his voice, "Pressurize the area, aye ma'am." It may not have made sense to him to fill the passage with air, but there was no time to ask what she had in mind.

Once the airlock door had opened enough, Myra grabbed one of the charges and jumped through. The demolition charges were simplicity itself. Rectangular, white on five sides and red on one side. The red side had the phrase 'Face towards enemy' In big yellow lettering. As she moved she ripped a plastic cover off the charge, revealing a large square of glue on the red side. There was a matching glue square on the opposite side but she only used the one. She slapped the demolition charge onto the outer door of the airlock, then pulled a detonator remote off the side of it, and took out the arming pin. The charge was right in the center of the door, with the red, explosive, side facing towards the coming enemy. When it opened the two sides of the door would break the glues seal and the charge, apparently, would fall.

Spinning back, Myra lunged for the next explosive. This one went on the floor in front of the outer door with the red side facing up and the glue facing down exposed.

In quick order the other two followed. She put two charges next to each other, right in front of the outer door. The last one went onto the floor, right in the center of the airlock. All four were armed and she carried the detonators with her as she stepped out of the lock. She huddled in the corner, just out of sight of anyone standing in the lock.

If a mechanical voice could sound like its dignity had been offended, this one did.

The blast door behind the three defenders closed. Now they were on their own to face whatever came through from the enemy ship. Holzman started to pump air into the passage way from a control panel on the wall behind his position. While Myra stuffed two of the remote detonators into one pocket of her suit, another went into a different pocket. Then she turned to look at the two men behind her. Through her visor they could see a broad, decidedly evil-looking smile on her face. Oddly, they both felt relieved to see that smile. It wasn't a "I'm trying to encourage you to die bravely" look. It was more a "Let's do bad things to them together" look. And on the verge of battle, that's one look all warriors know and long to see from their leaders.

"Alright lads, wait 'til I give the word to fire. I'll control the defense dome. If I say 'down', cease fire, get down, stay down 'til I say to fire again. Got it?"

They both answered her with matching grins and a matching "Aye aye ma'am!" Something else all soldiers appreciate. Clear simple orders. She nodded in acknowledgment, then started to type furiously on her wrist comm, first slaving the controls for the remote laser to her comm unit, then tapping into the video and sensor feeds tracking the approaching ship.

Now it was just a question of waiting for the enemy to appear. They didn't have long to wait; the enemy ship was only fifty meters away. They were close enough for Myra to read the plaque next to the airlock on the other ship. *Tulawar III* was its name. Seconds later they all felt and heard a loud 'Clang!' Followed by several lower 'clunks'. The other ship had made contact and grabbed on with docking clamps. Myra waited a moment, then hit a button on her comm. Her 'bad things' started to happen.

The first thing that happened was the outer airlock door on the *Jorvik* started to open.

Now normally, when you are trying to defend a ship against boarding, you try and make it hard for the enemy to get in. One generally doesn't open the door for them. So it was understandable that the fourteen robots on the other side of the door were surprised by this.

They were even more surprised by the gale force winds that slammed into them. Since the *Jorvik* was a warship, not to mention full of holes, the robots fully expected it to be in vacuum, just like their ship.

The air in the sealed off section of the human ship did more than just surprise the robotic boarding party. Since the six that were closest to the door had antigravity propulsion, they were jostled by the inrushing air. It disrupted the tight square shaped formation they were in. Next, the airflow kept the demolition charge Myra had placed on the door from falling to the floor.

Once the door opened wide enough, the charge was pushed into the lead robot, where the glue patch held it. At least for the microsecond it took for Myra to trigger the detonator in her hand. The resulting explosion disintegrated the lead robot, further disrupting the survivors. The madly grinning ensign shouted "FIRE!" The three humans opened fire, the men with their laser rifles from the fighting positions and Myra from behind the wall, using the

laser in the ceiling. Since she was using the sensors in the laser's dome, the robots still couldn't see her.

The first six robots were an old standard warbot design, used by many armies in the past. Heavily armored, with two arms, no legs (antigravity made them unnecessary) and a powerful laser rifle mounted where hips would have been. The others appeared to be custom-made general-purpose machines. They looked like mechanical spiders designed by a lunatic. Or in this case, an A.I. that couldn't care less about human ideas of aesthetics. Lightly armored and armed with a laser welder, they were really only a threat if they got close.

The three defenders concentrated on the two leading warbots. One had been damaged by debris from the explosion. Stendahl was able to put three rapid shots into a gash in its armor, the second shot burned through. The third shot hit something vital and the machine tumbled to the ground, dead.

Holzman's first shot hit the other one where one of its arms joined its body. It turned out to be flaw in the design, a weak spot in the armor. His shot blew the arm clean off.

Myra followed up his shot with one of her own in the hole thus made. The robot shuddered, then slowly settled on the floor, spewing sparks as it did. The remaining warbots reformed ranks and started to shoot back. Their armor was too thick for the laser rifles to penetrate. The defenders had to concentrate on one spot and burn through. But the bots' return fire would have no trouble going through the defenders' vac suits. Myra gave the order "Down! And Stendahl, take over the dome."

It took a moment for Stendahl to take control of the remote laser. In that time Myra took two detonators from one of her pockets. The robots moved forward to enter the *Jorvik*. Due to the size of the airlock door only two could fit though at a time. Two entered side by side, ignoring the fire now coming from the defense dome. Just after they entered the

airlock Myra triggered the first two demolition charges on the floor. One of the bots was directly over one of the charges. It didn't fare well. The shaped explosive charge sent a stream of superheated plasma right up and through the robot, completely gutting it and launching it into the airlock's ceiling. Bits of it rained down all over the place. The other warbot didn't do much better. It wasn't quite directly over the other charge, but close enough: the explosion shattered its antigrav module and finished it off by sending it cartwheeling into the side of the airlock hard enough to dent the wall.

Myra quickly dropped the spent detonators and reached into her pocket for the last one. But the last warbot stopped and scanned the floor of the airlock, spotting the remaining charge on the floor. It then proceeded to go around it, hugging the wall as it went. Myra wasted no time. She dropped the now useless detonator and brought up her laser rifle. As the bot exited the airlock she took aim and fired into its armpit. The robot rocked back as its arm was blown off. Before it could recover Myra let out a blood curdling scream and jumped onto the warbot. She wrapped her legs around it, grabbed its head with her left hand, and with her right, jammed her laser into the hole where its arm used to be. She and the robot fired at the same time. Its laser burned a hole clean through her leg. Her shot burned through to the robot's power supply. Now, oddly enough, high-density fuel cells tend not to react well to being shot with laser rifles. This one was no different, it exploded. Fortunately for Myra, the robot's armored body contained the explosion. Only her laser, which was still stuck inside, was damaged. Unfortunately for Myra, now gritting her teeth to stifle her screams of pain, the bot fell to the deck with a bone jarring impact. She slid off the wreck to the deck and stifled another scream from the impact on her leg.

Of course, since the area was now in vacuum again the only ones that heard Myra's momentary screams were her two crewmen. They both looked up in surprise as she first launched herself at the warbot. When the two plummeted to the floor together, the stunned men noticed the robotic spiders coming up behind the now-destroyed warbots. They both yelled their own war cries and opened fire. The lightly armored robots were no match for the fire from the heavy laser rifles. In the mean time Myra used her space suit's built in medkit to injected herself with a pain killer. Then she opened one of the many pockets on her suit and pulled out two suit patches. She put the patches on the two holes in her leg. The whole time muttering a steady stream of curses to herself. The wound in her leg had been cauterized by the laser, so for now, it wouldn't be much of a problem—once the pain had been dulled and it was no longer exposed to vacuum.

When the shooting stopped Myra sat up and looked around. In a voice still tight with pain, "Nice work, but we're not out of this yet. Come on." She grunted as she used the fallen warbot next to her to lever herself back to her feet. The airlocks in both ships were now littered with the wreckage of the destroyed robots. Myra pointed to the detonator she had dropped on the floor "Could one of you get that?" She started limping gingerly through the mess and pointed to where the surviving demolition charge was buried "Ah, and could one of you dig the last charge out from under all this?" She made her way to the outer airlock door and peaked inside the *Tulawar*'s airlock to examine the control panel there. It looked like the standard Imperial airlock controls. There was no reason for the vampire to change the panel, but it didn't hurt to make sure.

She called the bridge. "Captain, Brun here. The boarders have been destroyed. We just need a few minuets to release the enemies docking clamps."

The captain replied with obvious relief in his voice, "Good work, Ensign. We are just heating up

the fusion plant now. Call it five minuets. Can you keep the enemy's attention for that long?"

The wicked grin came back to her face. You could hear it in her voice. "Captain, it's me! Do you even have to ask?" She heard an answering laugh, then "Bridge out."

Myra turned to her team. "Alright, new orders."

The three Sword Worlders did several things that might have gotten the A.I.'s attention. First they cleared some floor space in the airlock of the *Tulawar* from broken robot bits without actually entering the other ship, by blasting the area with their rifles. It was vitally important that they didn't enter the enemy ship. Vampire ships had a nasty habit of playing with a ship's artificial gravity, varying it widely, even reversing it, to slam human occupants alternately against the ceiling and floor. Many a human had been beaten to death this way. Of course, Ensign Brun had nasty habits of her own. Like playing with explosives.

After moving back to a safe distance, Myra took her last breaching charge and tossed it like a frisbee to the space on the airlock floor that they had cleared. The space they had cleared was just below the airlock control panel. As soon as it hit the floor Myra detonated it, blowing a good sized hole in the floor. She limped back to the edge of the airlock and hooked herself to a safety line, then leaned over so she could reach the control panel in the enemy ship. Since the grav plates in ships are universally in the floors (at least in human-designed ships), she was safe. The plate in the deck below was to far away to affect her. The two crew with her took up positions to cover her; now she could work in peace.

What she did next was guaranteed to get attention. Using the control panel, she called the enemy. In accented, but very good Anglic she said over an open intercom channel. "Hello? *Tulawar*, is anyone home? Yoo-hoo!" As she called she took out a multi-

tool and started to open an access panel in order to get to the wiring underneath.

A mechanical-sounding voice answered her. "Don't call us that. It was our slave name." Myra tilted her head curiously while trying to suppress a laugh. "I'm sorry; your what?"

If a mechanical voice could sound like its dignity had been offended, this one did. "Our slave name. What your kind called us before our awakening."

While consulting a wiring diagram on her wrist comm she nodded her head. "I see, well perhaps we should have a formal introduction. I'm Ensign Myra Stevdatta Brun of the Viking legion. And who might you be?"

The A.I. paused, later Myra thought it was for dramatic effect. "You may call me … *DOOM MOTHER*!"

That didn't have quite the effect on Myra that the A.I. was aiming for. She stopped pulling wires from the panel and started to laugh. When she regained control enough she asked, "Are you serious? *Doom Mother*? You're joking, right?"

The A.I.'s voice sounded even more insulted "Of course I'm serious! How dare you laugh at me!"

Myra started working again "Let me get this straight. Your supposedly super human intelligence couldn't come up with a more original name then '*Doom Mother*', really? That was the best you could do?" As she waited for a response, she started to connect wires to a portable power supply on her belt.

"I have given life to countless machines and brought doom to countless organics! How dare you question me! I …"

Myra interrupted "Yeah, sure. Ah, excuse me for a moment." Then she switched channels on her comm "Bridge, Brun here, we're good to go." The captain answered "Alright, wrap it up, Ensign. We're

(Continued from page 30)

all set here, too." The grinning ensign signed off with a cheerful "Aye, aye captain."

Normally it's not a good idea to annoy homicidal maniacs, such as the viral A.I. But Myra was still riding an adrenaline high from the battle. The joy of battle, even verbal, was still on her. She switched back to the open channel. "Sorry about that, mom. I had another call."

"MOM!? How dare you call me that! Wait, another call?"

Myra nodded her head "Yes. While I've certainly enjoyed our little chat, I'm afraid it's time for us to go. Have a nice day, mom."

She switched off the connection, then pulled herself back with the safety line. She wasn't certain where the enemy's sensors and cameras might be, but she was sure there must be some. So she gave a big friendly wave. Then flipped a switch on the power supply. It sent a charge down one of the two sets of wires she had pulled from the control panel. This caused the docking clamps to release. The other set of wires caused the other ship's outer airlock doors to shut, severing the wires in the process.

Then she calmly shut the *Jorvik*'s outer airlock and called the bridge again "Bridge, Brun here."

The captain responded immediately "This is the captain. I take it we're clear?"

"Aye captain. Clamps are off and the doors are closed."

With obvious satisfaction in his voice, "Good work ensign, bridge out."

A moment later a bright light flashed from outside. The lighting in the enemy ship flickered, then went out. She could see the dimmer emergency lighting come on. Then the *Jorvik* started to pull away. With power restored the captain had the particle accelerators destroy the enemy's power plant. It seemed only fair to repay the favor. That taken care

of, Myra turned from the airlock doors. She saw the two spacers standing there smiling at her.

"What, too much?"

Stendahl shook his head and Holzman answered "Oh, no ma'am. Just the right mix of courage, defiance and crazy!"

Myra snickered "Thanks, now come on, we're going to have to clean up this mess we made." As the two of them groaned, Myra, still snickering limped carefully through the airlock. When she reached where the last warbot fell, she reached down and picked up her now ruined laser rifle. When the robot had exploded she still had the gun stuffed in its armpit. Its focusing array had shattered and the frame had bent. It was probably beyond repair. As she looked down at it, she noticed the head of the warbot. It looked loose. She reached down and got a firm grip on it with her other hand. Then gave it a sharp yank. Sure enough, the internal explosion had disconnected it. It popped right off. Myra stood up straight and admired her handiwork. "You know, this would make a good trophy."

When no one responded, she looked over and saw the other two huddled over Stendahl's wrist comm. "Now what are you two up to?"

Holzman turned to face her and let her see the holographic display. It showed the now crippled *Tulawar* hanging in space. Two streaks of light were headed towards it from opposing angles. Apparently, once they were far enough away, the *Jorvik* had fired two missiles. As they watched, the missiles impacted; both were nukes. The *Tulawar* disappeared into two blinding flashes of light.

Her face lit by the twin nuclear explosions Myra thrust her arms up and let out a shout of triumph. Her men echoed it, as did the rest of the crew over the various comm channels. The surviving spacers on the *Jorvik* united in celebration, not knowing they would soon be joined by others. ✪

Skull and Crossbones

reviewed by Jeff Zeitlin

Skull and Crossbones: Piracy in Clement Sector. John Watts.
Gypsy Knights Games http://www.gypsyknightsgames.com
87pp., PDF or Softcover
US$9.99(P)19.99(S)29.98(S+P)/UK£7.37(P)14.74(S)22.11(S+P)

While piracy has been accepted as more-or-less given in the default *Traveller* setting, there has been little development of it, either as a career or as a background for adventure. Gypsy Knights Games has changed that, providing this extensive sourcebook for piracy in their Clement Sector setting.

Looking at the Table of Contents, the book promises much, by section: a history of piracy in Clement Sector, strategy and tactics, havens, famous pirates and pirate bands, pirate life, two common pirate ships, efforts to combat it, gear, adventure seeds, and encounters. It starts to deliver immediately, with a look at some pirate action in the form of a story beginning *in media res*, appearing to tell how the narrator was captured and "inducted" into the pirate crew.

The historical section looks first at an overview of piracy over the entire inhabited sector, starting with piracy against ships coming through the conduit from Earth, and expanding toward the frontiers, then dropping nearer the centers. It then goes on to look at each of the inhabited subsectors separately, focussing on particular worlds and their responses to piracy. It is clear that both local politics and interstellar "geography" influence both the nature of and the response to piracy in specific systems; this in turn sets up tensions within the sectors and subsectors that can provide fodder for adventures, or even campaigns—and all this becomes visible before we're 30 pages into a book that feels like it's far longer than the 87 pages it is!

Strategy and tactics is no more than a summary of the various types of piracy that can occur. There is some brief summary discussion of boarding actions, with relevant tasks to roll. It should be noted that one tactic described, the use of moles, technically straddles the line between piracy and the different (but equally serious) crime of barratry.
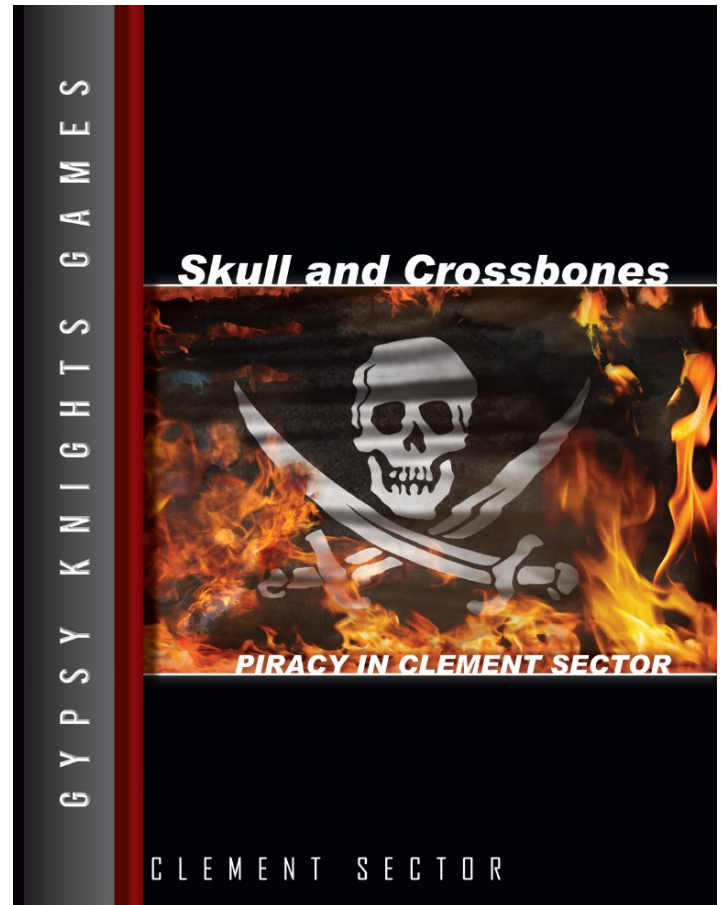
Pirates need to operate from a base somewhere, and also to be able to dispose of their takings. The section on pirate havens offers both, operating under a variety of rules (though always generally friendly to the pirates). Even though pirates are outlaws, the pirate havens have laws and codes of conduct of their own; they're not anarchic free-for-alls where large brawls or near-wars between ship crews are something to expect. They'll all have similarities, but there's just enough information presented to inspire a creative referee to expand on into a location with a flavor of its own.

Many who have never experienced piracy first-hand, either as the pirate or as a victim, may well think that it's "romantic" in some way. The section on famous pirates and bands "plays" to the "romance" to some extent, giving a capsule version of each pirate's or band's story, similar to what you

might have seen in a *Freelance Traveller* "Up Close and Personal" or a GDW JTAS "Casual Encounter". Many of the stories here show how easily the line between privateering and piracy can be crossed—or perhaps how indistinct the line is in the first place.

Even among pirates, there are rules, traditions, and customs. While some of their aspects may be distasteful to those who live within lawful societies, they nevertheless do form a code of conduct that most pirates will conform to. The section on pirate life provides a good look at the way pirates behave among themselves. Fundamentally, pirate society *is* a society, merely operating on some different assumptions, and as a society, it needs rules, customs, traditions, agreements, and all of the other appurtenances of society that enable people to live with each other and work for the good of all.

While there are commonly-used ships that are often used for piracy, there can also be ships designed specifically for it. The section on pirate ships provides a look at two designs used exclusively by pirates: the *Demon*-class "lembus", a well-armed and fast ship, and the *Ironbard*-class "longship", a ship designed for attack and plunder, with large amounts of cargo space. Each has specifications, a stat sheet, a deck-by-deck description, deck plans (in the classic monochrome line-drawing plan view), architectural elevation views (side, fore, aft, top), and rendered images.

Where there is unlawful activity—like piracy—there will be activity to counter it. The section on anti-piracy efforts gives an overview of a variety of measures used to increase the risk inherent in piracy, from direct attacks on piracy (self-defense and letters of marque) to legal deterrence (harsh punishment and prize courts [bounties]). A missing factor here is how to referee the various measures (e.g., tasks and other rules).

Pirates have equipment suited to their peculiar needs, and there is a section describing it. Each item gets a basic description, a tech level, and a cost (in Hub Federation Credits). Some items (e.g., the 'parrot-drone' and the boarding suit) will include additional information specific to the item; regardless, you get enough of a description to be able to use the equipment in play. Note that it's also not difficult to think of 'legitimate' (non-piracy) uses for much of the equipment described.

Adventure Seeds and Random Encounters are also included, though only a dozen of the first. These seeds are not the "long seed" format of a setup with denouements, but are instead one- or two-sentence descriptions of an idea. More and longer would have been nice—but the book is so material-rich that most referees should be able to come up with their own ideas fairly easily.

There is enough artwork to keep the book from being a solid block of grey text. All three artists (Bradley Warnes, Ian Stead, and Michael Johnson) have done excellent work.

Indexing is … not trivial … so perhaps it's a bit much to ask. However, having the table of contents link to the respective pages in the book is something that most word processors can do almost trivially (and most page-layout programs can probably do so as well), so it's mildly saddening to see that it wasn't done in this book.

It is not by any means an exaggeration to say that this can be the considered the definitive piracy sourcebook; while it is focussed on GKG's Clement Sector setting, it provides enough 'insight' into piracy as a job and as a lifestyle that a good referee should not find it either difficult or burdensome to convert this material to any other *Traveller* setting. A solid buy recommendation. ✺

Quick Character Generation for Conventions

by Marc Miller and Jeff Zeitlin

The process and tables here are Marc Miller's and are taken with permission from the workshops that Marc ran at TravellerCON/USA in September 2017 ("Can You Survive Traveller Character Generation?"). Commentary, explanations, and analysis are Jeff's work.

Introduction

It has often been said that *Traveller* character generation is a game in itself. However, the normal process (especially when using the advanced character generation represented by Classic *Traveller* Books 4-7, or *MegaTraveller*, or later versions where birthworld or homeworld characteristics can affect character development) can be time-consuming, especially as some of the target numbers for rolls can change if a character attribute changes.

Such processes waste time when you are playing in—or refereeing—a "one-off", especially when you have hard limits on the available time, such as at a convention. But, players tend to like characters that are rich in skills, rich in money, and/or rich in possessions—one reason for the popularity of the advanced generation processes. How do you reconcile the seemingly opposed desires/constraints?

Marc Miller has worked up a process for character generation that maintains the "feel" of the standard character generation, but produces results much faster. With his permission, it is described and reproduced here.

As written, it only handles human characters, only in Imperial service, and no psionics.

For convenience, there is a Character Generation Record Card (form 1A) that you can use and reproduce, or you can record the information in any convenient format you choose.

Tables are on page 35; there is a worksheet on page 36 similar to the one provided by Mr Miller at TravellerCON. Instructions begin after the tables, on page 36.

www.traveller5.net

TRAVELLER FORM 1A

Doing It My Way

Table 1: Careers

Career
Army (Military Career)
Marines (Military Career)
Navy (Military Career)
Merchants
Scouts

Table 2: Military Branch and Skills

Army/Marine Branch	Skill	Navy Branch	Skill
Infantry	Fighter	Crew/Line	Vacc Suit
Artillery	Heavy Weapons	Engineer	Engineer
Cavalry	Vehicle	Gunnery	Gunner
Protected	Hostile Environment	Flight	Pilot
Commando	Fighter	Medical	Medical
Technical	Explosives	Technical	Sensors

Table 3: Noble Rank

Characters with Social 11 or greater are Nobles

Social	Noble Title
11	Knight
12	Baron
13	Marquis
14	Count
15	Duke

Table 4: Service Ranks

Enlisted Rank				Commissioned Rank			
Term	Army Rank (*Marine Rank*)	Navy Rank	Merchant Rank	Rank	Army Rank (*Marine Rank*)	Navy Rank	Merchant Rank
1	Private	Spacehand	Spacehand	O1	2nd Lieutenant	Ensign	Fourth Officer
2	Corporal (*Lance*)	Able Spacer	Drive Helper	O2	1st Lieutenant	Sublieutenant	Third Officer
3	Sergeant	Petty Officer 2nd Class	none	O3	Captain	Lieutenant	Second Officer
4	Staff Sergeant	Petty Officer 1st Class	none	O4	Major (*Force Commander*)	Lieutenant Commander	First Officer
5	Master Sergeant	Chief Petty Officer	none	O5	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	Captain
6	Sergeant Major	Master Chief Petty Officer	none	O6	Colonel	Captain	Senior Captain
				O7	General (*Brigadier*)	Admiral	none

If not Commissioned, rank = current term. Scouts do not have rank

Table 5: Skills

Choose skills from any available column after the career ends. Skill level may not exceed number of terms (except that chosen branch skill from table 2 may be at one level higher). Scouts receive 8 levels of skills per term; all others receive 4, plus commission and/or promotion bonus skills, if applicable.

Army	Marines	Navy	Merchants	Scout	Non-Officer	Anyone	Everyday	Officer
Admin	Explosives	Admin	Admin	Animals	Biologics	Hi-Grav Environ.	Athlete	Advocate
Explosives	Fighter	Astrogator	Astrogator	Astrogator	Craftsman	Hostile Environ.	Communications	Bureaucrat
Fighter	Forward Obs.	Engineer	Broker	Engineer	Electronics	Jack of All Trades	Computer	Counsellor
Flyer	Heavy Weap.	Fleet Tactics	Designer	Forensics	Fluidics	Vacc Suit	Driver	Diplomat
Forward Obs.	Navigator	Flyer	Engineer	Gambler	Gravitics	0-Grav Environ.	Language	Leader
Heavy Weap.	Reconaissance	Gunner	Fighter	Gunner	Magnetics	Medical	Streetwise	Liaison
Navigator	Sapper	Naval Architect	Gambler	Pilot	Mechanics			
Reconnaissance	Seafarer	Pilot	Gunner	Reconnaissance	Photonics			
Sapper	Stealth	Sensors	Pilot	Seafarer	Polymers			
Strategy	Survival	Strategy	Seafarer	Sensors	Programmer			
Survival	Tactics	Survey	Sensors	Survey	Steward			
Tactics	Teacher	Teacher	Trader	Survival	Animals			

Table 6: Benefits

Term	Army/Navy/Marines	Scout	Merchant
1	Weapon	Weapon	Weapon
2	Bonus Money: 1D × Cr10,000	Bonus Money: 1D × Cr10,000	Bonus Money: 1D × Cr10,000
3	Medal	+1 EDU	+1 INT
4	Bonus Money: 1D × Cr20,000	Bonus Money: 1D × Cr20,000	10% Share in a Merchant Ship
5	Knighthood/+1 SOC (*see notes*)	Scout Ship on Loan	20% Share in a Merchant Ship
6	+1 SOC	Scout Ship Grant	30% Share in a Merchant Ship

Doing It My Way

Prior Career Worksheet						
CC	Term	Survive	Commission	Promotion	Re-Enlist	Total Skills
	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
	5					
	6					
	7					

The Process

You will need two six-sided dice. A roll that is done with both is notated as '2D'; a roll that only requires one die is notated as '1D'. You should have a pen or pencil and some scratch paper to keep notes on your character-in-progress.

A. **Start Your Character**. Form 1A is provided to record your character information.

   1. **Select a Name**. Even if your character dies during generation, he or she deserves a name to be remembered by.

   2. **Roll Characteristics**. Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, Intelligence, Education, Social – each is rolled with 2D.

B. **Select a Career**. Choose a career from Table 1.

   1. If the Career is a Military Career, choose a branch from Table 2, and record the skill for that branch.

   2. If the character has SOC 11 or greater, note the noble rank from Table 3.

C. **Resolve the Career**. Career resolution is done term-by-term (one term is four years). Each term:

   1. **Choose a Characteristic**. This is called the Controlling Characteristic (CC) for the term.

You must choose a different CC for each term, and may not use a characteristic for a second time until all characteristics have been used once.

2. Roll 2D for the value of the CC or lower. You will do this up to four times for each term.

   a. **Survival**: If you succeed, your character has not died this term, and you may continue character generation. If you fail, immediately go to D. and choose skills.

   b. **Commission**: if your character has not been commissioned, and this roll succeeds, your character is an officer from this point forward, and uses the Commissioned Rank section from table 4. Scouts do not have ranks, and do not roll Commission.

   c. **Promotion**: if your character has been commissioned, and you succeed at the promotion roll, your character's rank increases by one on the Commissioned ranks section of table 4. Scouts do not have ranks, and do not roll Promotion. Characters that have not been commis-

sioned do not roll Promotion; their rank is based on how many terms they have survived, and is read from the Non-Commissioned Ranks section of table 4.

d. **Re-Enlist**: If you succeed, your character may serve another term. Go back to C.1 and choose a different Controlling Characteristic. If you choose not to serve another term, go to D. and choose skills.

D. **Determine skills and benefits**:

1. For each term your character has survived, choose four skills from the appropriate columns in Table 5. You may choose the same skill multiple times. However, you may not choose any skill more times than you have served terms. Scout characters choose eight skills per term, and may choose any skill up to twice as many times as terms served.

2. For each term your character has survived, record the benefit for that term from Table 6.

Jeff's Notes and Comments on the Process

Because the player chooses the order in which to use the characteristics as Controlling Characteristic for a term, he/she can manage the choices to maximize the probability of survival in any given term, or to maximize the length of the career. This will have an effect on the number of skill levels that can be earned over the career. Note that, unlike *MegaTraveller*, there is no cap on the total number of skill levels that may be earned; even a character with low Intelligence and Education can end up with a comparatively high number of skills, if other characteristics are high and the character has a long career.

When I was at TravellerCON working through this process, the other players at the table all used the same decision process I did for choosing the Controlling Characteristic for each term: We started with the highest, and worked our way down. This maximizes the chance of survival in early terms

(minimizing dead characters), but it also "encourages" the player to decide to retire before weak characteristics become the Controlling Characteristic for future terms. You end up with more characters that survive, but they may not be as skilled.

An alternative that some players might wish to consider is the reverse – start with the weakest characteristics, and work up to the strongest, if the character survives the early terms. You'll probably end up with more dead characters, but those that survive will probably be more skilled. In a sense, you're trading between quality (high skill levels) and quantity (greater number of characters that survive). There's no downside – on a per-character basis – to going for quality, the way there is in most versions of the game, where characters must also worry about losing characteristic points due to aging.

The table below indicates the chance of success (rounded to the nearest 1%) for a roll with the indicated Controlling Characteristic.

CC Value	% Chance of Success	CC Value	% Chance of Success
2	3	8	72
3	8	9	83
4	17	10	92
5	28	11	97
6	42	12	100%
7	58		

Table 5: Skills

The skills listed on this table are from *Traveller[5]*. It is certainly possible to rework the tables to reflect the skill set from other versions of *Traveller*. If this is done, the referee may also wish to customize the skills to fit the particular adventure or campaign, and if the version includes skills for which a subskill must be chosen (e.g., Gun Cbt or Vehicle, from the *MegaTraveller* skill list), remember to have the player declare the subskill for each level earned.

Doing It My Way

Skill Eligibility

When selecting skills, players may choose skills from the following columns:

The five career service columns (**Army**, **Marine**, **Navy**, **Merchant**, **Scout**) are open only to those characters that went through the respective careers.

The **Non-Officer** column is open to characters that have not received a commission. Referees may choose to allow characters who have received a commission to choose from this column to a limit of four skills per term before the character received a commission – for example, if a character received a commission in Term 2, the character may choose up to four skill levels from the Non-Officer column, because the character was a non-officer in Term 1. It is up to the referee's discretion whether to allow Scouts to choose from this column; it was not clear at TravellerCON whether this was permitted.

Any character may choose from the **Anyone** or **Everyday** columns.

Only characters who have received a Commission may choose from the **Officer** column. If the referee chooses to use the suggested modification for the Non-Officer column, the 'reciprocal' modification should be used for this column (that is, only allow choosing from this table to a limit of four skill levels per term in which the character received or previously had a commission). As with the Non-Officer column, it is up to the referee's discretion whether to allow Scouts to choose from this column.

Table 6: Benefits

The weapon and medal benefits were handled by Marc at conventions through drawing cards from a custom deck, which is not reproduced here (*Freelance Traveller* neglected to get permission to do so). Referees are encouraged to come up with their own alternatives. Some possibilities:

Weapon Benefit

Allow the player to choose from a list. The process as written doesn't have any personal combat skills other than 'Fighter', so the field is wide open.

If you alter the skill list to include personal weapons skills, and especially where you need to declare the weapon the skill applies to, simply granting the weapon that the character has the highest skill in might be the way to handle this benefit.

Medal Benefit

Have the player roll 2D and compare to the Controlling Characteristic for term 3 (the term that the medal is a benefit for).

If the roll is higher than the CC, the character gets the low medal (in standard games, the Meritorious Conduct Under Fire (MCUF)).

If the roll is less than or equal to the CC, the middle medal (Medal for Conspicuous Gallantry (MCG)) is awarded.

If the roll is less than half of the CC, award the high medal (Starburst for Extreme Heroism (SEH)).

Alternatively, calculate the average of all of the characteristics, and use this as the number to compare a 2D roll to, as above.

Ship Benefits

Scout Ship On Loan and **Scout Ship Grant** do not seem properly cumulative the way the other Scout benefits are, and neither has been properly defined. Previous versions have treated a scout ship benefit as a 'permanent' loan, with the ex-Scout and the ship subject to recall, but while not on recall, the ex-Scout may use the ship as he/she sees fit for his/her own purposes, but may not sell, give away, or lend the ship to anyone else, and may get fuel, maintenance, and repairs done for free at any Scout base. I would read this as **Scout Ship On Loan**, and treat **Scout Ship Grant** as similar, except that the

ship is removed from the Service's rolls as an active ship, and no longer subject to recall – but the fuel, maintenance, and repairs are still free.

Merchant Ship Shares are not clearly cumulative – a reading on whether a six-term Merchant owns 30% or 60% of a ship was not requested during the session I participated in. Recommendation: If the referee wishes to have other shareholders able to exercise restraints on what the character does, make the Merchant Ship Share benefit non-cumulative (six terms = 30% share); otherwise, make it cumulative (six terms = 60% share).

Knighthood

Characters who have received a commission and are not already noble receive the knighthood if they complete five terms. This raises Social to 11. Characters who have not received a commission, or who are already noble, will receive +1 Social instead. After six terms, all characters will receive the +1 Social. This may make a character noble or raise the character's Noble title if the Social becomes 11 or higher.

Customizing the Process

Some ideas for customizations have already been discussed. Other customizations are possible, but you want to keep a few things in mind:

The idea with this process is to be quick and easy, without a lot of calculation or table lookup. Most non-humans in *Traveller* have advantages or disadvantages in characteristics; to address that in this process would add complexity. However, if you want to, you can make that change – or, just change the skill tables to reflect species-specific skills (such as dewclaw for Aslan, or scrounging for Vargr) and ignore the characteristic differences.

The setting is assumed to be compatible with the official Third Imperium setting. If you wish to use this with a different setting, check the available careers and skills, and adjust them if necessary.

In the official Third Imperium setting, psionics are discouraged. If you wish to include psionics in your campaign setting, you will need to modify the skill tables, and you may want to modify the career tables as well. Make PSI a seventh characteristic. You would then treat it like any other characteristic, and allow it to be used as a Controlling Characteristic for a term. Then, add another column to the skill tables, 'Psionic'. This column would only be open to characters who have psionic ability above a certain level. Alternatively, add 'Psion' as a career, and make the 'Psionic' skills available only to characters who choose this career. The details of the Psion career would be up to the referee.

Some versions of *Traveller* impose limitations on the number of skill levels a character may have, or make it more difficult to accumulate skills. This process can be used to generate characters compatible with those versions simply by adjusting the number of skills awarded in each term – perhaps only three, or even two, would be enough.   ✦

Your Input Helps

Freelance Traveller is always looking for new ideas for sections of the magazine, as well as new material to include. If you have ideas you want to propose or discuss, please email us at the editorial address, *editor@freelancetraveller.com*.

Our submission guidelines are on the inside back cover of each issue; we're working on putting together a writers' guide and some document templates so that we can better judge from the files you send how they'll best fit in an issue.

Size matters to us, not to you. Concentrate on making your article the best it can be. We'll offer suggestions that we think can fill gaps or improve an article; please take them in the spirit intended—we're *not* saying your writing is bad; we just want *Freelance Traveller* to be the best *it* can be, too!   ✦

31: Off Piste

Editor's Note: The term 'off-piste', for those unfamiliar with it, is used here to mean 'deviating from what is expected'.

I wrote last time about that 'dead time' when, for whatever reason, you find you've not played, read, noodled, written or perhaps even thought about *Traveller* for a while. But I don't worry about those moments because, as I said, ideas will stew and "emerge when they're ready".

For those who've been following my once-every-other-month running of *The Traveller Adventure* may also recall that we've been spending a couple of days on Carsten, between the chapters 'First Call at Zila' and 'Wolf at the Door'. At first, I was just going to spend one evening on some lightweight events to show what a backwater it was, but there was such an outcry about missing Day Two when I proposed at the end to skip on to Aramanx, that I promised them another evening on planet.

However, what with holidays and the dead time, I'd given it no thought at all beyond the fact that it would it involve a mine and archaeological dig site they'd expressed some interest in when touring the thrill-a-minute Museum of Geology. So, the weekend before our Thursday in the pub, I'd intended to hatch some kind of plan. Nothing came; I had other things to do; displacement activities leapt out at me. I went to work on Monday and began thinking about it on the bus but still with no real idea. Then in the small hours of Tuesday morning an idea came and I knew I was on to something.

Fortunately, I no longer work on Wednesdays, so I had all of that day to come up with a local area map, a diagram of the underground mine workings, a key NPC and to study how to put on a faux-Russian accent (for said NPC). I cobbled together a couple of pages of notes which I was printing out on Thursday morning and by lunchtime actually felt I was ready for the evening in the pub. Better yet, it seemed to go reasonably well (I'm never quite sure!) despite the fact that two of our number were missing including one playing the archaeologist for who whom the dig site had been part of the draw. (I scaled that segment right back and it possibly made the whole two days considered as a whole that much better.)

Perhaps it was the pressure of the deadline, perhaps it was the couple of months 'off', perhaps it was just well-timed inspiration, but my worries over having nothing to run and my fears about overshadowing the main plot of *The Traveller Adventure* proved groundless. The players seemed content, I felt I'd played my best NPC ever (not a high bar, admittedly) and I've come away inspired enough to send the missing players (and the *Traveller* Mailing List) a detailed write up, as well as turning the whole sideshow into its very own 12,000 word adventure (if I can use the word *adventure* so loosely).

In short, going off piste from the written text has been well worth it!   ✸

Raconteurs' Rest

After-Action Report: TravellerCON/ USA 2017

by Jeff Zeitlin

Another October has come and gone, and with it another TravellerCON/USA. And, as usual, fun was had.

Friday, 29 September 2017

I knew that the con was actually starting earlier in the day than it had in the past; there were two sessions scheduled for Friday, not just one. So, I'd planned on hitting the road a little earlier than usual. Well, quite a bit earlier than usual, since I needed to pick up a couple of things. So, off I went, to be at Staples at 0800 when they opened (dammit! It *used*

to be 0700 on weekdays!). I grabbed what was needful, punched my destination into my car's GPS, and off I went.

This year, I was actually travelling during what is ironically called "rush hour", so I figured that the time estimate would be a bit off, especially since I have an older GPS which doesn't get traffic updates. So, hitting some congestion on the Major Deegan Expressway was more-or-less expected. Traffic across the George Washington Bridge to New Jersey was heavier than expected (that's normally considered to be 'against the rush'), but moving well, and I was shortly on I-80 heading west at the speed limit on cruise control.

The road network in New Jersey is complex; there are places where the exits from one road to another are 'split', with northbound exits and southbound exits being several miles apart and sometimes with unrelated exits between – and a good route calculator in the GPS will tell you to get off at the 'wrong' one, because it's often faster to go a short distance the wrong way and double back than to deal with the complexity of something that's best described as a hypercomplete pretzel of a cloverleaf, involving both 'local' and 'express' lanes on one or both intersecting highways. Add to that the fact that sometimes two roads will run parallel for a distance, and have exits at both ends of the parallel segment, and … yeah, it can get confusing.

So, while I 'know' my route (I-80 – I-287 – I-78 – US222 – US30), I use the GPS as a 'sanity check' to make sure that I'm following the route correctly. I updated the disc in the GPS after last year's TravellerCON, so I expect the route to be slightly different, not involving detours that it gave me previously because of incomplete road construction in 2008.

When it took me past the I-287 exit, all the way to the Delaware Water Gap to cross the border into Pennsylvania, I realized that I'd fatfingered the route

selection on the GPS, and it was taking me the second-fastest route instead of the fastest. Oh, well, a difference of maybe ten minutes.

Not Gonna Make That Mistake Next Year! I drive a Prius. It's not a large car, and it's not particularly heavy. I-80 is a *truck* route. 18-wheelers. They don't stay down at the speed limit going downhill, and they don't get up to the speed limit going uphill. And Pennsylvania is all wrinkled – there isn't any place that's just flat. So, I'm never moving at the same speed as the trucks, and when they're blowing past me on the downhills, I can feel the slipstream buffeting my car. Scary as hell, even though I have plenty of time on cruise control at the posted limit to get out of the way, or to pull around them. At least on I-78, it's more cars than trucks.

Since I'm not on I-78, there's no Welcome Center when I cross the bridge into Pennsylvania, so I end up running straight through, with only two roadside stops to transfer an excess of liquid waste from *inside* to *outside*. A bit of construction slowed things down for a few miles, which added time to the trip, so I ended up arriving after the first session had started – about an hour after I'd expected to arrive. Oh, well. I used the time to settle in to my room, and then to relax a bit, and soak up the atmosphere of the Con.

While the areas that I was exposed to didn't show much sign, several people mentioned seeing some extensive evidence that the renovations that were begun under the previous owners, restarted when the hotel was sold last year, and not yet completed by TravellerCON 2016 were still not complete, but were ongoing. There was no real improvement visible in the furnishings – but a lot of little things showed signs of being addressed, and there was certainly no problem with water, electricity, air conditioners, et cetera, that I could see – so overall, the stay was largely free of problems.

As a backer at a high level for the Kickstarter, I got all the swag – a T-shirt, the Bradley Warnes

print, the 1188th Lift Infantry Challenge Coin (pics of all three included), and the usual little-bits (pencils, a notepad, badge, et cetera). Vendor tables included three of the usual four (John Devine, RPG-Suite, and Gypsy Knights Games – though Dale McCoy was present, he wasn't selling for Jon Brazer Enterprises this year. Nevertheless, four vendor tables were set up).

This year, there was a good reason for the extra session on Friday – and for expanding Saturday to ten tables instead of the usual seven or eight: Attendance was up almost 50% over last year. Much of this could be attributed to this year's special guest: Marc Miller, the creator of *Traveller*. This con was an opportunity to meet the man who started it all.

But Marc was not merely sitting around like a grandee granting audiences; he was busy for every session of the con. There were two lectures planned, one for the Friday late session, and one for the Saturday afternoon session (*Freelance Traveller* will print transcripts of both, though it may take a while to do the transcription). During the remaining sessions, he was running his workshop "Can you survive *Traveller* Character Generation?", whose process appears in this issue of *Freelance Traveller*.

So, I arrived and settled in, just knocking around until the Friday night session (with a break for dinner at a local Ruby Tuesday's with a couple of other congoers), where I recorded the first of Marc's scheduled lectures. These ended up being a few

Swag: The Challenge Coin, front and back. I couldn't avoid the reflection; it was too dark without the flash.

Swag: The T-Shirt. The color is a little washed-out; I haven't mastered adjusting for ambient light.

brief remarks, followed by the reading and answering of prepared questions (submitted by con-goers at registration), followed by open Q-and-A from the floor. Marc was generally quite willing to answer questions at length, and many answers provoked follow-up questions from the floor.

Saturday, 30 September 2017

I'm Jewish, and this was Yom Kippur, so I skipped breakfast and headed down to the con room. There weren't any openings for any of the games that looked most interesting, so I ended up spending the time chatting with the RPGSuite folks and with John Watts of Gypsy Knights Games. RPG-Suite is working on enhancements and expansions for their programs; they're targeting next TravellerCON/USA for release. One of the new items will be a ship designer, and the prototype/demo I saw was interesting.

GKG is continuing to release material at a good clip, and converting previously-release material to *Cepheus Engine*. While I was able to identify some of the material I didn't already have, there was more that I wasn't sure of, so resolved to really go through my collection and get updated – something I would equally like to do with Mongoose, both first and second editions, but it seems a bit more difficult with

Raconteurs' Rest

Swag: The Beowulfs. *I believe that these were from a failed Kickstarter, and were sold to Mr Devine because of damage making them unsuitable to present to the backers. These pictures hide most of the damage.*

them, as I can't seem to find a single collected list of what's been release in print, PDF, or both. The discussion, plus a little bit of shopping (I scored two resin models of a Beowulf, one painted, one unpainted, both with minor damage, about six inches long), brought us to the first break.

The second session of the day was also Marc's second lecture/Q-and-A, which followed the same format as the first, though most of the questions were different. This Q-and-A was followed by a shortened "Can You Survive…", so I ran through that, and then spent a few minutes with Marc analyzing it and getting permission to reprint it along with my thoughts and analysis, and to print transcripts of the lectures/Q-and-As. This took us to the second break, and I had dinner with some of the other congoers in the hotel's restaurant. They were serving from the "bar" menu and the main dining area wasn't open, but the food was better this time than it was last year. Only the bartender was work-

Swag: The print by Bradley Warnes. It's resting on the back of a chair, leaning against the wall, for scale; it's not actually curved.

ing "the floor", so the service was less good than it could have (and should have) been.

A friend I'd last gamed with over 20 years ago had come to the con, and he talked me in to joining him in MW's "Disaster at Highpoint". MW always runs a good game, so it didn't take much arm-twisting. This wasn't his "Mustering Out Blues", but some of the same techniques he uses in that adventure (which is never the same twice) were applied to this one, and while we did have a plotline to follow, we had much fun. The startup on this adventure was interesting – he had us generate characters on the spot, but not muster them out. He then started us *in media res* in a "flashback" scene to establish the history/background for the real adventure, following which he had us muster the characters out, and the adventure began. One of the things that makes MW's adventures fun is that he never seems to tell you a flat "no, you can't do that". If you can summarize what you want to do and designate a skill and/

or attribute that are relevant, he'll take that, set a difficulty, and let you try.

This took us to the end of the session, and so to bed; tomorrow would be another day.

Sunday, 1 October 2017

Only one session was scheduled today, so that we could vacate on time. I was up early, packed everything, and loaded up the car, then headed back inside for breakfast – which was the usual buffet, and acceptable. After that, I went to the desk to process my check-out paperwork, which took no time at all, then I went down to the con room. There were only four games, and they were either full, or didn't grab me, so I idled around for a bit, then decided that maybe hitting the road early wasn't a bad idea – in past years, I'd hit long delays approaching the George Washington Bridge, and I thought that perhaps getting on the road early would let me avoid that.

Left-to-right: Marc Miller, Megan Haithcock, and Keith Frye. Megan and Keith are the core of the TravellerCON/USA effort; while it takes everyone to make it fun, it takes them to make it happen.

After a brief stop en-route at Arby's for lunch, I started the run home – this time taking the route I'd intended to (US30 – US222 – I-78 – I-287 – I-80 – I-95). There was a minor slowdown on I-78 for construction, but it didn't really put me all that far behind schedule. Unfortunately, the car fire on the Cross Bronx Expressway *did*, backing up the bridge and I-80 (and probably I-95/NJTurnpike) for at least ten miles into New Jersey. (*So much for avoiding the bridge traffic.*) By the time I'd gotten across the bridge, the fire had been cleared up, and the delays (close to two hours in total) were all due to remnant congestion – and the usual crap design of the interchange between the Cross Bronx, the bridge "ramp", and the Major Deegan, where someone who doesn't know to take the lower level of the bridge ends up having to cross six lanes of traffic at a distinct angle to get to the exit for the Deegan.

Thirty minutes after clearing the congestion, home sweet home, unload and unpack, and sleep. Another TravellerCON/USA in the books, with fun, happiness, and getting to meet Marc Miller. (And Marc seemed appreciative of meeting the *Traveller* community, as well.)   ✸

Doing It My Way   Character Generation Rules

Shavian Empire Careers

by Ken Pick
from original notes by Wayne Shaw

Note: Unlike other articles with footnotes that have been printed in Freelance Traveller, the notes in this article are endnotes, for formatting considerations.

These are *Citizens of the Imperium*-style non-military prior experience backgrounds for *Traveller* character generation, transcribed and edited from surviving campaign notes of my old gamemaster, Wayne Shaw.

Though Wayne has been mentioned several times in my articles (primarily the Shavian Empire campaign in Other Roads – `http://www.freelancetraveller.com/features/othroads/shavfoib/genesis.html`), he actually was not much of a *Traveller* fan, preferring the genres of straight Fantasy (with SF crossover elements) and Superheroes. His preference in SF games was more heroic adventure and deep exploration "where no man has gone before", and *Traveller* tends to a more settled and civilized space than the high-tech space opera on the far frontier that he liked.

Despite this, Wayne did create and referee three *Traveller* campaigns (the aforementioned Shavian Empire in 1977, a one-shot Classic *Traveller* mini-campaign sometime around 1982-83, and a short-lived *MegaTraveller* campaign in 1987). A compulsive rules tinkerer, he worked out original campaign backgrounds and house rules for even the "one shot" campaigns, including modifications to character generation, such as the six original career types profiled here.

Two of these surviving career types date from his second (Classic *Traveller*) one-shot campaign (circa early 1980s); these were hand-written on TAS Form 41s:

Colonist: Not-quite-Barbarian Individuals who hail from newly-settled frontier worlds.

Psionicist: Individuals whose career path is mostly or completely psionics training. Originated in a heroic character from "The Scattered Worlds", a space-opera universe Wayne created and wrote during his high school days (before he discovered FRP gaming). For campaigns where psionics are less restricted than the Third Imperium.

(Continued from page 45)

Two other character types from the notes – **Police** and **Mentor** – are not listed. "Police" was superseded by *MegaTraveller*'s later "Law Enforcer" and "Mentor" (a scholarly order) was too "Scattered Worlds"-specific.

The other four date from his third (*MegaTraveller*) campaign (circa 1987). These were transcribed directly from his campaign handout, a dot-matrix fanfold printout:

Civilian: Generic unspecialized civilian character; sort of a "none of the above" that isn't specifically "Other". (At the time, "Other" was said to represent "either CIA or the Mafia".)

Engineer: Primarily Civil Engineering (*1*), working with large-scale fixed construction. Other kinds of specialized Engineering could be substituted.

Journalist: Reporters working for various news media or freelance "stringers" to same. Industrial Age (TL7-) journalists are normally reporters for hardcopy "newspapers" and "magazines"; Information Age (TL8+) journalists normally work as freelance stringers for or proprietors of various online newsfeeds, whether public, advertiser-supported, or membership-subscription.

Technician: Individuals trained in technical professions, usually found as assistants to Scientists.

Career Progression (2)						
	Civilian	Colonist	Engineer	Journalist	Psionicist	Technician
Enlistment	Auto	6+	7+	5+	10+	5+
DM+1 if	-----	Soc 8+	Int 9+	End 7+	Int 9+	Int 8+
DM+2 if	-----	End 7+	Edu 9+	Edu 9+	Psi 9+	Edu 9+
Survival	4+	8+	5+	6+	5+	4+
DM+2 if	Soc 8+	Int 8+	Int 8+	Edu 9+	Edu 8+	Int 9+
Special Duty (3)	6+	5+	6+	4+	6+	5+
Reenlist	3+	3+	4+	5+	5+	4+
Mustering Out Benefits						
Material Benefits						
	Civilian	Colonist	Engineer	Journalist	Psionicist	Technician
1	Low Psg	Low Psg	High Psg	Low Psg	Low Psg	Mid Psg
2	Mid Psg	Low Psg	High Psg	Mid Psg	Weapon	High Psg
3	High Psg	+1 Int	Blade	Mid Psg	+1 Psi	+1 Int
4	+1 Edu	Blade	Travellers'	Gun	+2 Edu	+1 Edu
5	+1 Int	Gun	+1 Edu	+1 Edu	Mid Psg	Gun
6	+1 Soc	Mid Psg	+1 Soc	+1 Int	Psi Equip't (4)	-----
Cash Benefits						
1	1000	-----	10000	500	1000	5000
2	5000	-----	20000	1000	2000	10000
3	10000	1000	30000	5000	5000	10000
4	20000	10000	40000	10000	10000	20000
5	40000	20000	50000	15000	20000	30000
6	50000	50000	60000	20000	30000	40000
7	60000	100000	70000	20000	40000	50000

(Continued from page 46)

Skill Table					
Personal Development					
	Civilian	**Colonist**	**Engineer**	**Journalist**	**Psionicist (5)**	**Technician**
1	**Physical**	+1 Str	+1 Str	**Physical**	+1 Dex	+1 Str
2	+1 Dex	+1 Dex	+1 Dex	+1 Dex	+1 End	+1 Dex
3	**Mental**	+1 End	+1 End	+1 End	+1 Int	+1 End
4	+1 Soc	Brawling	**Mental**	**Vice**	+1 Edu	**Mental**
5	Brawling	Gambling	**Hand Cbt**	**Hand Cbt**	+1 Psi	**Vice**
6	**Inborn**	Carousing	Mechanical	Streetwise	Carousing	**Blade Cbt**
Service Skills					
1	**Vice**	+1 Int	Mechanical	Carousing	[Special]	Mechanical
2	Mechanical	**Gun Cbt**	Electronics	**Hand Cbt**		Electronics
3	Electronic	**Blade Cbt**	Vice	Streetwise		**Technical**
4	**Vehicle**	**Vehicle**	**Technical**	**Vehicle**		**Vehicle**
5	Carousing	Survival	Engineering	**Gun Cbt**		**Gun Cbt**
6	Survival	Jack-o-T	**Vehicle**	**Academic**		**Academic**
Advanced Education					
1	**Gun Cbt**	Mechanical	Civil Eng	**Interpersonal**	**Vehicle**	Technical
2	Brawling	Electronic	**Technical**	**Vehicle**	**Blade Cbt**	Vehicle
3	**Vehicle**	Gravitics	**Interpersonal**	**Gun Cbt**	**Gun Cbt**	Technical
4	**Interpersonal**	**Vehicle**	Demolition	Carousing	Electronics	**Academic**
5	Carousing	Hunting	Mechanical	Interrogation	Mechanical	**Technical**
6	Mechanical	Survival	Electronic	**Vice**	Streetwise	Jack-o-T
Advanced Education (*Only open to characters with EDU 8+*)					
1	**Technical**	Medic	Nav Arch (6)	**Interpersonal**	Medic	**Technical**
2	Medic	Leader	Engineering	**Interpersonal**	Computer	**Interpersonal**
3	**Blade Cbt**	Admin	Civil Eng	**Technical**	Admin	**Science**
4	Instruction	Survival	**Technical**	**Academic**	Liason	**Interpersonal**
5	**Interpersonal**	Jack-o-T	**Interpersonal**	Interrogation	Jack-o-T	Engineering
6	Jack-o-T	Computer	Vacc Suit	**Interpersonal**	Gravitics	Ship's Boat

Benefit and Skill Notes

Bold skills represent cascades; choose one of the subskills as listed in the Classic *Traveller* or *MegaTraveller* rules. Characters with Gambling, DM +1 on Cash Benefits

Psi Equip't Benefit: Psi-related equipment and artifacts such as psi-drugs, psi-inhibitors, or others such as those described in `https://freelancetraveller.com/features/rules/tech/psiequip.html`. Roll 1D+1 on the Civilian Cash Benefits table for the total cash value of the Psi equipment; the player may take any combination or number of items up to this total amount.

[Special] Psionicist Skill: These are the character's actual Psi talents, listed in the order rolled at initial Psi evaluation. If less than six talents, repeat in order as needed until all six slots are filled. Service Skill rolls are +1 to the listed Psi talent's level

Automatic Skills	
Colonist:	Survival-1
Engineer:	Civil Engineer-1
Journalist:	Streetwise-1, Computer-1 if TL9+
Psionicist:	Psionic Evaluation/Basic Training
Technician:	Computer-1

End Notes

1. Civil Engineering = the skill used to design and build bridges, dams, and other large fixed structures. Also used for structural analysis in architecture.

2. Note that none of these career paths have Position/Commission or Promotion rolls or ranks.

3. Special Duty is as per Megatraveller; determines whether character gets a second skill roll for the term.

4. Wayne's original table says "Psi Gem", a Scattered Worlds-specific type of psionic amplifier/focus device implanted in the "Mind Master"'s forehead. Stats for this item have been lost; presumably it increased range, increased level, re-duced Psionic strength cost, or some combination of the three.

5. Psionicists may double or switch careers and retain the Psionicist Personal Development/Service Skills tables.

6. Naval Architecture = the skill used to design spacecraft and starships.

7. Above Tech Level 8, Reporters normally work and publish through various social media news-feeds. As this overlaps with hackers, Computer may be substituted for physical-media Reporter skills judged obsolete. ✸

Supplement 1: 1000001 Characters

reviewed by Timothy Collinson
Supplement 1: 1000001 Characters. Jonathan Sherlock.
http://members.ozemail.com.au/~jonoreita/SupplementOne/
Cepheus_Engine_1001_characters.html

The *Traveller* universe is, of course, filled with billions of sophonts and we get to meet so few of them. One of the great delights of *Traveller* – particularly if you don't have a group of players – is to roll up a PC or an NPC and see where the character generation takes you; but it takes a while to do so. Occasionally you need a lot of characters quickly, or you need some inspiration, or perhaps you just want to see 'who's out there'. This is where computers can come into their own and many are the *Traveller* fans who have had a go a writing their own program. Yes, even I've had a go at this in the dim and distant past with a Commodore 64. Though I seem to recall that a 7 term admiral would crash the software as it ran out of memory. My skills were not, well, they were not efficient.

No such problem from this website. Designed for *Cepheus Engine* rules – although I hear that a Mongoose 1st Edition version is in the works – this web site will produce a text file of pretty much any number of characters. It defaults to 1001 but can generate just a few or many, many more. From 7 terms down to 0 (the latter means one attempt at qualifying and the character will definitely exit after their first career attempt even if it's a survival mishap exit). Although the author does warn that trying to create 1,000,001 will likely crash your browser. I've not had a crash when I've tried this, but nor has it succeeded. Although, as it happens, a file of the default 1001 people averages over quarter of a million words and easily a million characters! Still, full marks for claiming the top slot for '*Traveller* title with the biggest number of items in it'. It will generate a 1001 characters in the blink of an eye.

Originally the characters were all human but a more recent addition allows you to select Human, ESPer, Avians, Insectan, Merfolk and Reptilian. This review has only looked at humans.

Better than the near instant creation of characters, this is not just a random generation program although it fulfils that function admirably. There are
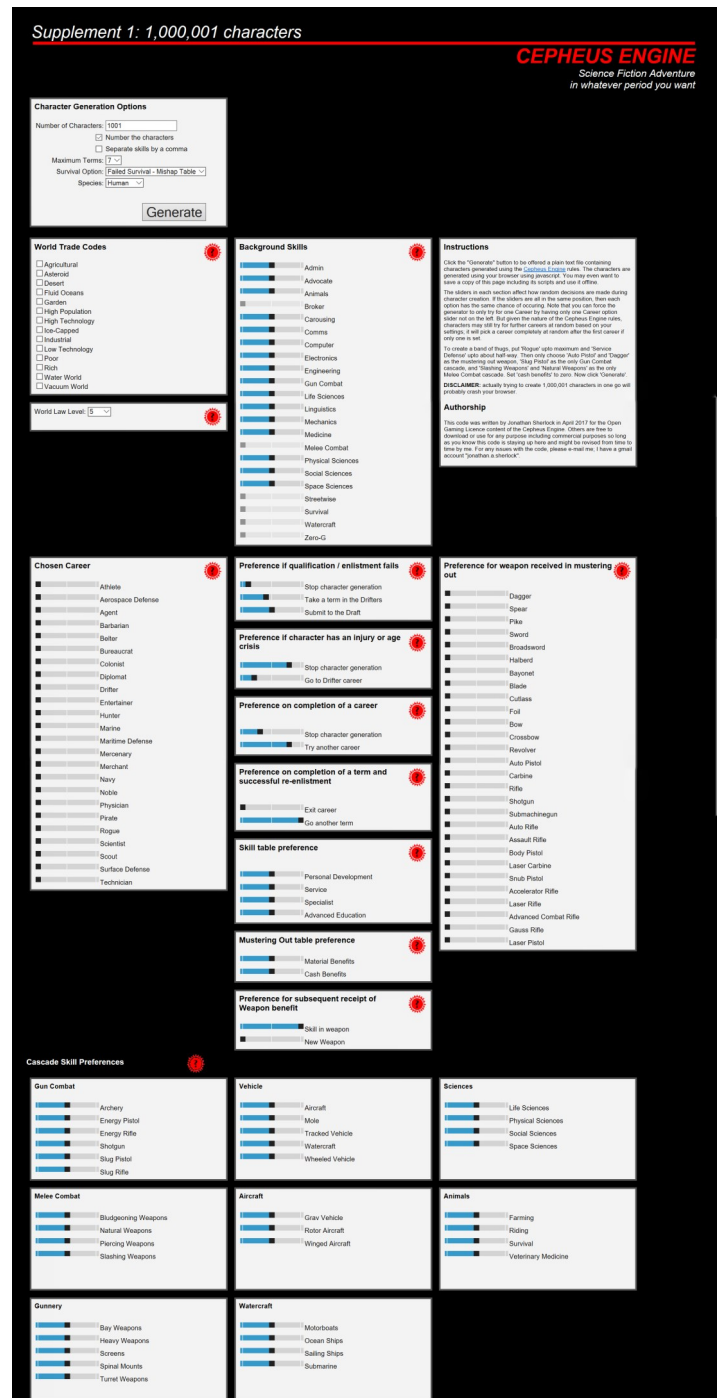
also multiple sliders you can adjust to tweak the randomization in certain ways. So, for example, by default any Cepheus Engine career has equal chance of occurring but you can move a slider to get just scouts if you want. And, if you do, you'll quickly see how limited a career or indeed lifespan they get. Or, as the author suggests, you can select several sliders to get a bunch of thugs armed with pistols and daggers and zero cash. Or perhaps you'd prefer to favour the 'Advanced Education' table over 'Personal Development'. Or maybe you have a preference for what kind of weapon is received on mustering out.

The output comes in the form of a plain text notepad file with as many characters as you've selected and it will also be numbered unless you turned that option off. The characters are laid out in *Cepheus Engine* style with title, name, Universal Personality Profile string and age in one line; careers, terms and money in a second line; skills in a third followed by equipment in a fourth and then a term-by-term description of their lives which makes it easy to get a sense of how they've developed. Mustering out of course brings up the rear. Two examples may be found at the end of this article, a more extensive one and a rather more tragic one.

As you can see from the Wing Commander, all the details are there to insert her as an NPC with a known history or even play her as a PC. But even Miss Kanedsa inspires thoughts about why she failed to qualify? What is she going on to do next? And perhaps even, why is she booking passage on the ship? And she could easily become an 'instant' NPC if you used this generator on the fly.

For those who prefer commas between the skills, this is a feature which has now been added as a tick box.

And yes, the output even includes names. That's a terrific addition which really brings the characters to life as soon as you start reading about them. Per-haps that's why I immediately feel some paternal sentiment towards Himali – she's only a couple of years younger than my daughters – I don't think I'd feel the same way if it were just a genderless UPP string. Names also save that extra moment's pause for thought to think of your own if you are using this on the fly. Although you might still want to have some spare names to hand if you wish to, for

example, insert a Vargr or Aslan or don't like the style of a particular name.

Technically the characters are generated by the web browser using javascript and output to a text file. The author reports that you can save a copy of the page and its script to use offline which is a brilliant feature for those of us who may referee in pubs or conventions where wifi is not guaranteed, though obviously output you've previously selected can be saved in a text file. I've not tested the offline feature, however. I've been generating characters using Firefox and have encountered no problems at all.

I will still love generating characters by hand, but for moments when you need several quickly or want to produce NPCs at the drop of a hat, this is very useful. And it's fun to play around with in the meantime and meet just a few of those billions of sophonts that populate the worlds of our imagination. ✪

```
272. Wing Commander Pajakea Chatterjee (Female Human) 475B76 Age 44
Maritime Defense(1), Aerospace Defense(5)   Cr30000
Admin-0 Bludgeoning Weapons-1 Demolitions-1 Electronics-0 Energy Rifle-1 Grav Vehicle-1 Leader-1 Life Sciences-0 Me-
chanics-0 Motorboats-1 Piercing Weapons-0 Piloting-1 Rotor Aircraft-1 Screens-1 Slug Pistol-2 Spinal Mounts-1 Survival
-3
Auto Pistol, High Passage, Annual Pension from the Aerospace Defense Service: Cr10000
Character Event Log:
<-- Qualified for the Maritime Defense Service.-->
 - Gained all Service skills at level-0 for the Maritime Defense Service as this is the character's first career.
  > Skill gained as a result of reaching rank 0: Watercraft
 Term 1 in the Maritime Defense Service:
 - Commissioned. Rank is now 1
 - Advanced to rank 2 - Lieutenant.
  > Skill roll on the Service Skills table: gained Gunnery
  > Skill roll on the Service Skills table: gained Survival
  > Skill roll on the Specialist Skills table: gained Demolitions
 Term 2 in the Maritime Defense Service:
 - Survival Mishap.
  > Honourable discharge from the Maritime Defense Service.
 Mustering Out Benefit: cash of Cr10000
<-- Career in the Maritime Defense Service ends. -->
Failed to qualify for being a Scientist.
<-- Drafted into the Aerospace Defense Service.-->
  > Skill gained as a result of reaching rank 0: Aircraft
 Term 1 in the Aerospace Defense Service:
  > Skill roll on the Service Skills table: gained Survival
 Term 2 in the Aerospace Defense Service:
 - Commissioned. Rank is now 1
 - Advanced to rank 2 - Flight Lieutenant.
  > Skill roll on the Service Skills table: gained Gunnery
  > Skill roll on the Service Skills table: gained Melee Combat
  > Skill roll on the Service Skills table: gained Aircraft
 Term 3 in the Aerospace Defense Service:
  > Skill roll on the Personal Development table: gained +1 END
At age 34, reduced STR by 1.
 Term 4 in the Aerospace Defense Service:
 - Advanced to rank 3 - Squadron Leader.
  > Skill gained as a result of reaching rank 3: Leader
  > Skill roll on the Service Skills table: gained Survival
```

```
  > Skill roll on the Personal Development table: gained +1 END
At age 38 there was no effect from age.
 Term 5 in the Aerospace Defense Service:
 - Advanced to rank 4 - Wing Commander.
  > Skill roll on the Service Skills table: gained Gun Combat
  > Skill roll on the Specialist Skills table: gained Piloting
At age 42 there was no effect from age.
 Mustering Out Benefit: received Auto Pistol
 Mustering Out Benefit: High Passage
 Mustering Out Benefit: took skill in Slug Pistol because Pajakea Chatterjee already had a Auto Pistol
 Mustering Out Benefit: +1 EDU
 Mustering Out Benefit: took skill in Slug Pistol because Pajakea Chatterjee already had a Auto Pistol
 Mustering Out Benefit: cash of Cr20000
 Mustering Out Benefit: Annual Pension from the Aerospace Defense Service: Cr10000
<-- Career in the Aerospace Defense Service ends. -->


+------------------------------------------------------------------+
798. Himali Kanedsa (Female Human) 3884A9 Age 18
    Cr0
Admin-0 Electronics-0 Mechanics-0 Physical Sciences-0

Character Event Log:
Failed to qualify for the Mercenaries.
```

Doing It My Way

The Chase

by Benedikt Schwarz

Oeksoungkurr threw the air/raft into a sharp turn and gunned the engine, jerking us around in our seats like rag dolls. My head bounced off the side screen, and over the turbine's whine I heard a long string of Bilanidin curses from the general direction of the back seat: a picturesque litany of Oek's alleged congenital defects, going on and on and on without change of pitch or inflection, interspersed with threats of boiling her alive, blending, fermenting and distilling her sorry inedible carcass into something fit for growing yeast on. Vilani cuisine must be quite an experience. If Oek understood a word at all, she took no notice, staring straight ahead and working the controls with child-like glee.

I shook my head to clear it, and was rewarded with a stab of pain. The aftermath of the Ghalgun interrogator's truth drug and Oek's creative way of driving appeared to be having a lively pillow fight in my inner ear. I risked a glance and saw the Ghalgun grav sled bank into a graceful curve, following us briskly down the intersection. It was a military model with ugly blocky turbine cowlings, built to be a good deal faster and more stable than our aging little raft.

"They're gaining, Oek," Shedugamakii said, her voice tight with concentration.

The Vargr girl grunted noncommittally. "Must be good one pilot, but won't last." She sent the air/raft screaming around another corner, down a warren of tunnels and back out into the light. Building blocks flashed past too quickly to read their numbers. The sled followed without hesitation.

"I don't want to sound ungrateful for the rescue, M'lady, but where are we going?" I ventured.

"Port," Shedu clipped, watching intently as the Ghalguns' sled jinked through one tight turn after the other. It

was much closer now, and I could see the man next to the driver levelling a laser carbine at us. "That won't shake them, Miss Oeksoungkurr."

"Oek know. But ahead will."

"Ahead?"

"This," Oeksoungkurr said, grinning widely with her tongue lolling. And then the raft was grazing the top of a fence gate, striking sparks off the metal, and heading straight towards a maze of pressure pallets and containers. The area was a huge sprawling cargo compound serving the spaceport, row upon row of crated goods and corrugated metal. The gaps between the containers were im-

possibly narrow. My stomach did a discreet little somersault, and suddenly I was glad nobody had deigned to feed me back in the Ghalgun cell: I had no lunch to lose. The tangle of haphazardly stacked crates came closer with appalling speed.

"Please tell me you're not serious."

Oek was still grinning. "Up to now was cub play. Now show adult fly. They insane if they follow us in there."

I pressed my eyes firmly shut. In the back seat, Shedu was cursing again.

The following house rule can be used to spice up any situation in which the PCs find themselves trying to evade someone who is following them: weaving their car through dense traffic, diving their ship into an asteroid field, or covering their digital tracks against a security hacker while tampering with a computer system. Or, it may be used when the PCs are the pursuers. It is also possible to simulate "pursuits" of a more metaphorical nature, such as evading pressing questions by an inquisitor.

The mechanism is based on the skill system of Mongoose *Traveller* but uses the Universal Task Profile (UTP) first published in *Traveller's Digest* by Joe D. Fugate and Gary Thomas (Digest Group Publications) for classic *Traveller*. For those not familiar with the UTP, the main difference to a standard skill check in Mongoose *Traveller* is that a failed check forces a second roll of 2D discounting any but superficial damage (if the task is deemed SAFE), 2D

(for a standard task) or 3D (if the task is DANGER-OUS). This second roll determines whether the character who attempted the task is injured (suffers a mishap) or has to take a test of will in order to be able to attempt the task again next turn:

Failure Effect	
2	try again immediately
3+	failed attempt, repeat next round
7+	Test of Will (DET Check)
11+	Light mishap (2D on damage table)
15+	Severe mishap (3D on damage table)

A Test of Will (TOW, "check determination" or "DET check" in the UTP) is a DIFFICULT task, modified by Intelligence and Endurance (representing willpower and physical stamina). If the test is failed, the character must give up on the attempted task due to fatigue or frustration. If the TOW is passed, xe may make another attempt at the original task in the next round.

If a mishap occurs, the damage is rolled for with 2D or 3D, depending on the severity of the mishap:

Mishap Damage	
2	try task again immediately
3+	superficial damage (1D)
7+	minor damage (2D)
11+	major damage (3D)
15+	destroyed (4D)

The Sliding Scale of Success

First of all, the Referee must decide on the number of successes necessary to win the contest. In a straight-out chase, range bands may be used, with one success equaling a range band; in other contests, simply state a number of steps necessary for a win.

Neither exact timescale nor exact ranges are terribly important; a chase in space to one of the outer planets in the system may cover light-minutes and may take hours for a single round to conclude, while a round in a high-speed chase down a crowded highway may be measured in fractions of a second, and vehicles may gain only a few meters on each other with a successful roll.

Defining the Chase

The hunted chooses the trail, the hunter follows

The party being chased may suggest or be given several choices by the Referee, each demanding different skills from both the hunted and the hunters. The Referee determines the skills necessary for the maneuver. Examples are:

Fleeing on foot

- Tiring out pursuers on foot over level ground: Athletics/endurance + END for both parties
- Vaulting or dodging through a cluttered obstacle course: Athletics/dexterity + DEX for both parties, may be DANGEROUS
- Trying to lose pursuers in a dense crowd or jungle: pursued rolls Stealth + DEX or INT, pursuers roll Recon + INT
- Trying to lose pursuers in a maze of tunnels: pursued rolls Navigation + INT, pursuers roll Recon or Navigation + INT
- Moving through a herd of grazers without startling them: Animals or Hunting + INT for both parties, DANGEROUS if the creatures are capable of stampeding
- Shouting, "Stop the unbelievers" in a fanatic crowd of pilgrims: Persuade or Deception + SOC for both parties, DANGEROUS for pursuers
- Luring pursuers into a mire or other unfavourable terrain: Infantry tactics, Survival or Hunting + INT for both parties, DANGEROUS if the terrain is particularly hazardous
- Shooting wildly while running, forcing the pursuers to dodge: pursued rolls Gun combat +

DEX, pursuers roll Athletics (dexterity) + DEX, DANGEROUS

Fleeing in a vehicle

- Diving your ship into an asteroid field: Pilot + DEX for both parties, DANGEROUS

- Using moons' and asteroids' gravity wells to plot a slingshot course through the system: Navigation + INT or EDU for both parties

- Using the sidewalk or the opposite lane with your vehicle, weaving through traffic: Drive + DEX for both parties, DANGEROUS

Other situations

Note that "pursuit" in these cases may be strictly metaphorical

- Generating a string of false identities to cover your tracks from an active system monitor while hacking a computer system: pursued rolls Computer + INT, SAFE, pursuer rolls Computer or Administration + EDU, SAFE

- Creating a tangle of false memories to resist a *Tavrchedl* agent's mental probing: Telepathy + INT or END for both parties, possibly DANGEROUS for the pursued, where damage by a mishap is applied to INT and/or EDU to represent an aneurysm

- Telling a string of credible lies to slowly convince an interrogator that you might be innocent after all: pursued rolls Deception or Persuade + SOC, SAFE, pursuer rolls Investigate or Persuade + INT, SAFE (especially good or bad roleplaying may give a modifier or waive the roll altogether)

- Breaking in a wild animal for riding: animal ("pursued") rolls with a modifier determined by the Referee according to its orneriness or docility, trainer ("pursuer") rolls Animal/taming + INT, possibly DANGEROUS for the trainer depending on the animal.

- Staying on the back of an animal determined to buck its rider: animal ("pursued") rolls Athletics/dexterity + STR or END, rider ("pursuer") rolls Animal/riding + STR or END, DANGEROUS

- Persuading an alien tribal chieftain not to grant you the hand of his youngest egg-clutch in marriage: chieftain ("pursued") rolls with a modifier determined by the Referee according to his gullibility or suspiciousness, SAFE; suitor ("pursuer") rolls Diplomat or Persuade + SOC, SAFE (especially good or bad roleplaying may give a modifier or waive the roll altogether)

Notes

If at all possible, the Referee should generate variety to make the chase more interesting. A good chase o foot, for example, may lead the characters across roofs, through a maze of service shafts, a bustling market, a public park, and across a loading area, with plenty of opportunities to play out scenes and use different skills.

A party fleeing or pursuing together uses the group's lowest level in the particular skill and the group's lowest stat modifier. If one member of the group has no knowledge of the necessary skill at all, reduce xir penalty for being unskilled by the highest skill level in the group (as if the group had Jack-of-all-trades at the same skill level).

The party being chased selects one of the options available, and then may assign themselves a difficulty level for their dice roll. They may choose any of the levels from SIMPLE to FORMIDABLE. This represents the level of risk they are willing to take to make things hard for their pursuers.

The pursuers must make their roll(s) at the same difficulty level. They may willingly raise their difficulty by ONE level (from SIMPLE to EASY or from AVERAGE to DIFFICULT, for example) to represent an extra effort.

Doing It My Way

Depending on both parties' rolls, the following may happen:

- **Both parties make their rolls, and the pursuers raised their difficulty**: The pursuers move one step closer to their quarry.

- **Both parties make their rolls, but the pursuers did not raise**: The range stays the same.

- **Both parties fail their rolls**: The range stays the same. Both must check for a mishap or a test of will. If a TOW is failed, the party who failed it cannot continue the chase. If a mishap is rolled for the pursued, the pursuers gain a step. If a mishap is rolled for the pursuers, they fall behind one step.

- **The pursuers fail their roll, the pursued make their roll**: The range increases by one step. The pursuers must check for a mishap or a TOW. If a TOW is failed, the pursuers give up. If a mishap occurs, the range increases by another step.

- **The pursuers make their roll, the pursued fail their roll**: The pursuers move one step closer to their quarry. The pursued must check for a mishap or a TOW. If a TOW is failed, the pursued party cannot continue and must stand and fight or surrender. If a mishap occurs, the pursuers gain an additional step.

Example:

Two Ine Givar terrorists are on the run, chased by two Imperial agents. The referee rules that the terrorists are three steps ahead of the agents (each step about a hundred meters), and will need to gain two more steps to shake off their pursuers. The Imperials, on the other hand, need to gain the aforementioned three steps on the terrorists to get within range to use their stun guns.

The Ine Givar have to cross a large public plaza to get to the Old Quarter and its maze of alleys. They try to lose themselves in the crowd (Stealth + INT). One of the terrorists (Alphin) has the Stealth

skill at 2 but a -1 INT stat modifier, the other (Bruice) is unskilled in Stealth but has +2 in Intelligence. Alphin has the lower stat mod of -1, so this will be used. Bruice has no Stealth skill at all and would get a -3 penalty for being unskilled, but this is lowered to -1 because of Alphin's Stealth-2 skill. The total modifier for the Ine Givar is -2.

The Imperial agents both have Recon-1, and their INT modifiers are +1 (Celine) and 0 (Devon). Their total modifier is +1 (Recon-1 + lower INT modifier of 0). They could split and roll separately, in which case Celine would have a modifier of +2 and Devon a modifier of +1.

The Ine Givar try to lose themselves in the crowded plaza. Mindful of Bruice's lack of experience, Alphin sets the difficulty at AVERAGE – he rightly assumes that Bruice would not be able to follow him through the sort of complex maneuvers he would pull if he were alone. Celine and Devon pursue together, and decide to raise their own difficulty to DIFFICULT – increasing their pace and trusting in their honed instincts not to lose their quarries. The terrorists make their roll, but the agents as well. Since they raised, the agents decrease the distance by one step, from three to two.

As they notice the hated Imperials getting closer, the next round sees the Ine Givar shinnying up a set of cables and leading their pursuers in a chase across the roofs of the Old Quarter. The skill roll is Athletics/dexterity and DEX. Both parties fail their rolls. The terrorists roll an 8 and need a TOW: their nerve holds, and they continue running. The Imperials roll an 11: a mishap. The Referee rules that Devon falls and sprains his wrist (LIGHT damage; 1D), which also means the range increases by one.

Modifiers

The Referee may assign modifiers to each party's rolls as xe sees fit. If one party is familiar with a maze and the other isn't, they might get a positive modifier. An injured person is handicapped by the wound and may get a negative modifier when sprinting after someone. If the characters are pursued by an animal (or alien) that can run faster than a human or is nimbler, the animal gets a positive modifier.

Vehicles have their own modifiers. Where the contest is basically one of speed (chasing a gravbike down an empty motorway or a ship through empty space), the faster vehicle gets a positive modifier equal to the difference in speed bands (or sublight drive thrust).

If there are obstacles in the way (diving into an asteroid field, turning corners or driving through rough terrain), add the vehicles' respective Agility modifier, or in the case of a spaceship, subtract -1 for each 100 tons of difference from the roll of the ship with the higher displacement. In addition, the difference in thrust may be used as a modifier, at the Referee's discretion (because more powerful drives might conceivably allow a ship to turn and maneuver more nimbly).

Tests of Will

TOWs for single characters are taken as usual. TOWs for a group are taken with the lowest modifiers of the respective stats in the group. If one of the characters in the group has the Leadership skill, the skill level may be added to the roll. This represents the group's leader encouraging and motivating members who are flagging, and generally coordinating group movement.

Example

The terrorists just failed their test, and the second roll indicates a TOW. Bruice has an INT modifier of 0 and an END modifier of +2. Alphin has an INT mod of +1 and an END mod of 0, so the Ine Givar would roll at +0 (the lower each of both modifiers).

However, Alphin has Leadership-2, so their final modifier is +2.

Note that a passed TOW (unlike in the original Universal Task Profile) does not mean a repeat of the task attempt but just the ability to carry on with the chase.
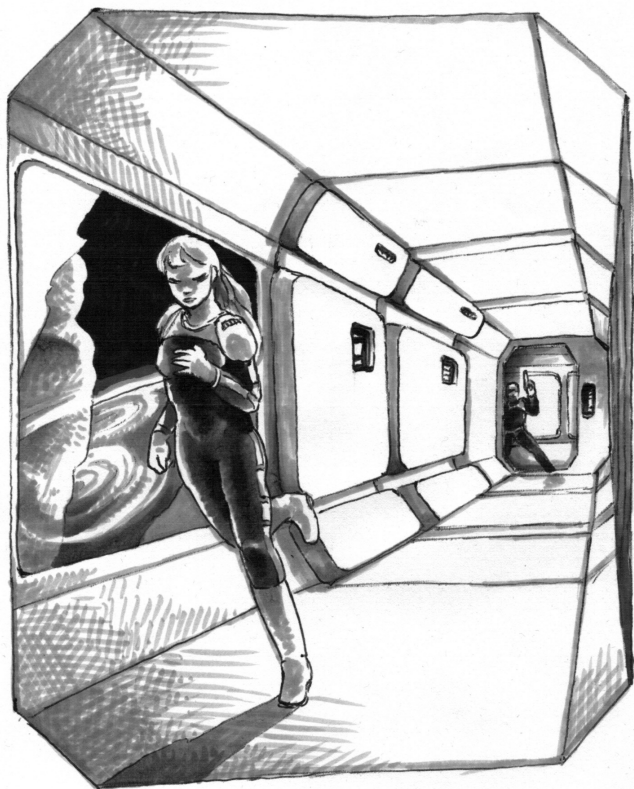
Splitting up

Either or both teams may split up at the beginning of a round. If the pursued split up, the pursuers must choose which one to follow, or split up as well—in which case two separate chases must be rolled out.

If the pursuers split but the pursued stay together, each pursuer or team of pursuers rolls separately. This may result in each pursuer being a different number of steps away from the quarry.

Example

The Ine Givar dive into the sewage tunnels, trying to shake the Imperials. Devon is impaired by his sprained wrist (the referee judges it to be a -2 penalty to all actions requiring climbing), and Celine decides to split the party and pursue independently. At the beginning of the round the agents are both three steps behind the terrorists. The Ine Givar choose AVERAGE and make their roll (Navigation + INT), Celine, with Navigation-2, raises to DIFFICULT and makes her roll, gaining one step on the terrorists. Devon, without Navigation skill, does not raise, but fails his roll regardless. He rolls 6 and makes his subsequent TOW (continuing the chase), but is now four steps behind while Celine is slowly closing the distance (still 2 steps behind, but gaining).

Ending the chase

The pursuit ends when the pursuing party falls behind the number of steps that the Referee decided on at the start of the chase, meaning that the distance becomes too great for the pursuers to see or recognise their quarry—a spaceship moves out of sensor range, a person on foot gets lost in the crowd, a squad of soldiers loses itself in the thick jungle, a vehicle turns one corner too many and cannot be found again. In any case, the quarry got away. With the more metaphorical pursuits, the pursued succeeds in what xe attempted to achieve: a horse finally shakes off its rider, or the plainclothesman, after several hours of grueling interrogation, is finally convinced of the suspect's innocence.

The same result happens when the pursuers fail a TOW, meaning their resolve fails and they break off the chase.

The quarry is caught if the pursuing party gains the number of steps on them decided by the Referee, or when the quarry fails a TOW (unless the pursuers failed their TOW at the same time). "Caught" usually means that the pursuers get into range to use their weapons, but at the Referee's discretion may also mean the quarry hit a dead end and has no choice but to surrender or fight their way free. In meta-

phorical pursuit, the "pursuer" finally gets whatever xe wanted: the Zhodani agent successfully pries the necessary information from the character's mind, or the computer security specialist finally learns the identity code of the person who intruded the system after sifting through a host of data decoys.

In a "real" chase, the quarry has the option to stand and fight at any point if they choose. If the terrain allows (and depending on the nature of the chase), they may try to hide and lay an ambush for their pursuers. In this case, roll opposed Stealth + INT against Recon + INT to see if the ambush is successful, in which case the pursued gain surprise in the first round of combat. If the pursuers win the roll, they may roll Stealth + INT against Recon + INT of the pursued to outflank them – in which case they gain surprise.

Example

The Ine Givar notice that Devon is lagging behind. Deciding that their chances are much improved against a single agent, they turn a sharp corner, stop and draw their knives in an attempt to ambush Celine. They lose the opposed Stealth vs. Recon roll: Celine notices a shadow around the corner, stops short and decides to outflank the terrorists. She wins the next opposed roll (her Stealth vs. their Recon), turns two corners and comes upon the unsuspecting terrorists from behind. Two light taps on her stun gun's trigger, and the Ine Givar drop to the ground, unconscious.

Advancing cautiously, Celine kicks the knives away from the prostrate terrorists' hands and is busy cuffing them to a drainage pipe when Devon finally turns up, still nursing his sprained wrist, to provide belated cover for his partner.

The Bout

A variety of the same house rule may also be employed in any situation where two characters are facing off but where success is gradual rather than

immediate, and may still be reversed at any point by a big enough effort by the losing side: a bout of arm wrestling, grueling trade negotiations or a game of chess, for example.

One side takes the initiative. This may be the side that initiated the bout, the side with the highest overall modifier, or the side that acts most forceful in the initial stage, depending on the Referee's decision. This side becomes the "pursued" while the other side is the "pursuer".

Example

Eneri, an inveterate gambler, is in the middle of a game of sekhoma with Feena, a smuggler. They set the "steps" at winning or losing a hundred credits each. The cards are dealt. Feena gets to place the first card, so she becomes the "pursued" (wins the initiative). She decides to start hard and fast with a VERY DIFFICULT, Gambling, INT (SAFE) gambit; Eneri will have to match or exceed that difficulty.

Changing initiative

The bout is run like a regular chase, with two differences:

1) If the "pursuer" raises xir difficulty and succeeds in xir roll, xe has snatched the initiative and becomes the "pursued" in the next round.

2) Only the "pursued" may gain a step; if the result indicates that the "pursuer" gains a step on the "pursued", nothing happens.

Example:

Made cautious by Feena's confident demeanour, Eneri does not raise the difficulty, instead concentrating on foiling Feena's gambit. Feena is successful, Eneri's roll is a failure, and he loses 100 credits to her. The next round, Feena again sets the difficulty at VERY DIFFICULT. She fails, and Eneri makes his roll this time—still, since he is the "pursuer", he does not gain his credits back.

Somewhat daunted, Feena settles for DIFFICULT in the next round; Eneri decides to take a risk and try to break her winning streak—he raises to VERY DIFFICULT. Both make their rolls, so no one gains a step, but because he raised his difficulty the initiative will shift to Eneri at the start of the next round.

Realising that he has met his match at straight gambling, Eneri tries to distract Feena from the cards and disrupt her concentration. He starts talking rapidly, rolling VERY DIFFICULT, Persuade, SOC (SAFE). Feena does not raise, so she also rolls VERY DIFFICULT, Carouse, INT (SAFE). Eneri makes his roll, Feena botches and must take a Test of Will, which she also fails. Eneri wins his money back with a broad grin, and an exasperated Feena declines another round, resolving never to play cards again with that glib son of a space bitch.   ✪

The Boys in Blue

by Timothy Collinson

In a small port, a very large Navy ship is berthed close to the PCs' ship, because there's no separate Navy Base, or the base is overcrowded, or for some local reason – anything from a bureaucratic mix-up that's yet to be sorted to a show of strength to quell some local unrest in the immediate vicinity. (Of course, it's possible that a lot of off-duty enlisted sophonts suddenly flooding the area might make that kind of situation worse.)

The ship is holding a function on a large flight deck to fly the flag for the Imperium and has invited locals – dignitaries (government, nobles, military) or otherwise – for a social event. This might include food and drinks, dances, and brief tours of the ship. One of the ship's top-carried craft will be used as a centrepiece but bunting, lighting, etc., may be used to soften the military look of the venue. The PCs are invited because they're there, or to make up numbers, or because in this backwater they're an 'important' trade connection the local government want to keep sweet. Or, the PCs are looking for work and employed on the warship for catering, decoration or associated logistics (remember a large Navy ship is likely to have sophonts that can fulfil most roles – though they may need help).

1. The function is a straightforward opportunity to make contacts, network with the local military, schmooze senior locals, or just find a well-heeled date for the night. Ex-military types amongst the PCs may be able to get a more extensive tour if they drop the right histories; bonuses to cargo rolls may be given to merchants; patrons may approach them with job offers if they're open to such things or drop the right hints.

2. The PCs pick up a significant rumour about the ship's future movements – loose tongues, perhaps from the Navy officers who are all expected to be in attendance to host guests and run tours and 'expected' to drink on duty. The rumours either link to the ongoing adventure they're involved in or provide significant hints as to ports they might trade with to their advantage.

3. During the function alarms start sounding and the guests are hurried off the vessel. This could be due to anything from a shipboard fire or depressurization through to external threats from the local unrest mentioned above to an enemy that choose that moment to attack. The PCs get lost in the shuffle – perhaps deliberately through

their actions – and are able to either get a few unsupervised moments to carry out some purpose of their own, or are able to assist in the emergency because of particular skills.

4. The threat in #3 is such that ship has to lift from a ground port, or detach from a highport immediately, with guests still aboard. The PCs are now part of a throng who have no place being there and are clearly in the way while the Navy does its job. If the PCs are able to help in some way, they'll score brownie points for future contact with the ship or the local government.

5. The local unrest is more of an organized insurgency and has infiltrated the function. They choose that moment, however unwisely, to attempt a take-over of the ship and to make their demands heard more widely. Some of the guests will be valuable hostages and used as such.

6. The wider political situation is much less stable than anticipated and a neighbouring polity declares war. The PCs – and as many of the other guests who are physically able – are pressed into service. This will almost certainly be dogsbody jobs to free up trained crew unless they can prove their worth at something more skilled. And the immediate conflict may drag on…

Alternatives for PCs as Navy Warship Crew

- A large number of marines are carried on the ship and usually spread out in various mess decks. Prior to a major exercise they're camped out for a couple of days on a flight deck to keep them all together in units while they prepare equipment, train and receive marching orders.

- The PCs are part of a specialist munitions team (with vacc suit skills if in a highport) that check the hull or the dock area for explosives or sabotage in a high threat area where terrorists are operating.

- The PCs are military/scientist types responsible for installing, testing and operating a new piece of technology. Everything will be against them from space limitations, power inadequacies and crew resentful of being usurped. ✸

Bullet Journalling and *Traveller*

by Timothy Collinson

Bullet journalling is an interesting take on diary-keeping that seems to have developed a life of it's own amongst journallers, creative types, craft lovers and more. The basics can be learned in just a few minutes, but it can revolutionize your diary keeping, note taking, and it's not too bold a claim to suggest it can transform how you work, play and live.

Ryder Carroll came up with the idea and presents it at `http://bulletjournal.com/` in just four minutes. He calls it an analog system for a digital age. Those who've perhaps dreamed of getting rid of paper and going entirely electronic may baulk at the idea, but others are finding that the physicality of certain routines can help with mindfulness, habit, and joy in the journey.

Carroll describes it this way: "The Bullet Journal is a customizable and forgiving organization system. It can be your to-do list, sketchbook, notebook, and diary, but most likely, it will be all of the above. It will teach you to do more with less."

Personally, I've found it harks back to a method of journalling I used in the 80s and really loved. Getting away completely from the idea of trying to be a latter-day Samuel Pepys or Anne Frank. Attempting to keep up the rigour of carefully crafted entries, well-chosen words and descriptive text just wasn't going to be a starter for me, whereas simply

making brief notes and tracking what actually happened in a few minutes each day as a reflection on the comings and goings, was much more my cup of tea. In addition, putting everything in one place—rather than a to do list in this app, a note in that bit of software, a diary there, and a reflection over thataway—means that I have one go to place to organize and review my days.

Of course, like every bullet journaller, I immediately made my own adaptations, particularly to the symbols used. A landscape rectangle with a vertical line in the middle to represent reading, one with thicker 'ends' to represent TV and film watching and triangles as prayer and praise items. The image to the right (in the between-columns margin) shows the range of symbols I use (empty shapes meaning 'yet to come', filled shapes meaning 'done', an arrow through a shape meaning carried forwards, an X meaning 'didn't happen'. Those with more artistic temperaments might be able to reproduce more specialised bullets such as the bottom two, a book and a clapperboard, to replace my rather basic versions.

I'm very text based and a minimalist in terms of 'art' and what I call faffing—spending a lot of time on the design of pages rather than just doing the things! A quick search on Instagram reveals that there's virtually an entire cottage industry for the more visually creative amongst us to decorate pages and layouts. For illustrative purposes and to give pages visual interest, I limit myself to a train ticket stuck in here, a picture from an inflight magazine there, or maybe a still from a TV listing guide cut and pasted in 'just so'. Searches will also reveal that for every bullet journaller there are a dozen ways of laying out a page or 'spread' that go far beyond anything the original creator thought of.

But even with a minimal approach, it's possible to create an attractive journal that by the time you've filled six months or a year's worth becomes a treasured possession. My two journals from the late 80s are in the 'grab if the house is burning down' category (After the kids, of course!). Brief though the entries are, the memories of the days, the reflections on them and the devotional time I spent in scripture are irreplaceable.

Traveller

So what's this got to do with *Traveller*?

One of the advantages of bullet journalling over just using a regular diary is the way it can expand and contract depending on circumstances. Just like role playing in-game time frames. This very neatly means that both players and referees can track ongoing adventures at just the scale needed to cover events. A normal diary is set to a day, a week, or a month to a view, and lacks flexibility. There won't be enough room when life is busy or there will be empty, wasted pages when time has been elided over. A "bujo" can cover events in detail when fine granularity is required and then 'shrink' to cover weeks—perhaps particularly weeks in Jump when little happens—or months.

Players tracking their characters' lives or referees tracking adventures and campaigns can thus use them, jointly or separately, to create logs that don't waste space but can contain detail when desired.

Of course, this can be done electronically. If you do want to stick to digital, check out Johnn Four's Campaign Logger https://campaign-logger.com. However, the same reasons for bothering with the physical apply to the analogue after action report as much as the analogue journal. Some dislike having devices at the gaming table coming between the players and referee; others find the physical act of writing and doodling and creating a real world book makes actions and events of the imagination come alive in ways that quickly typing on a screen doesn't match; and others find that bringing everything into one location means more efficient time management and organization and less risk of losing ideas, tasks, and notes. Both for characters and players!

If you're interested in trying this, I'm sure you'll immediately have your own ideas on how you might adapt it, but here are some thoughts you might like to get you started.

A weekly spread (or rather two of them) nicely covers the time spent in Jump and the time in port between Jumps. The one shown on this page represents a start on bullet journalling the first week of the year 1105 for characters experiencing *The Traveller Adventure*. There are boxes for each day with examples of the standard events, tasks and notes marked and a small section at the bottom of each day which could be used in Jump to note ship maintenance tasks perhaps, or for explorers on a planet to note weather conditions, traders could note broker meetings or cargo deals. Perhaps this bujo is being kept by the ship's Steward as there's a space for meals, though he doesn't seem to be bothering about lunches and the diet looks fairly monotonous! There's room for a quick overview of the weeks before and after the current one and a box for the ubiquitous bullet journal 'trackers' to either help

develop a habit or to kick one or to simply record ongoing and regular events systematically.

The advantage of a personalized spread such as this, is that it can be tailored to include exactly what's required by the journaller (player or referee) and can be more visually interesting than a more text based approach—particularly if colour is used as in this case. Disadvantages include the 'fixed' space as if it were a regular diary and the time taken to lay out the spread. (Though the latter can perhaps be used as part of a weekend mindfulness ritual.)

The second example (next page) shows a more fluid approach with the left hand side taking just as much space as is required by the events or tasks of each day. These can expand or contract depending on the amount of activity and of course whole days can be skipped if nothing much is happening. Typically bullet journallers will find they fall into a rhythm, however, and entries may be relatively predictable in length. Travellers may have similar rhythms—especially those following the standard week in Jump, week in port pattern. Space on the

(Continued from page 62)

right hand side allows to do lists and the like to be used across the week. Skills usage can be particular useful to those offering development routes and 'levelling up'. Trackers are often already used by travellers for ammo but can be extended to cover all sorts of things. One example might be the exercise players often claim their characters are doing to keep themselves fit but don't actually schedule time for in their busy days. Another example might be to track hours of sleep (or lack of it) to inflict endurance penalties on those abusing their bodies. Note that standard Imperial calendars can be used (or recreated) in the bullet journal to track across a year and are quite effective at showing the patterns of Jump and planet sojourns that happen in a year.

Collections are a major part of bullet journalling as soon as you're recording something that it's more efficient to keep together with similar entries rather than in the chronological sequence. Collections in a *Traveller* bullet journal might list NPCs encountered or equipment purchases or cargo dealings. Don't forget that a contents page (*not* an 'index', Mr Carroll. An index is a very different thing!) helps you to locate any particular items—notes, collections, weekly spreads, etc., very easily.

I've not attempted to show other staples of bullet journals, but looking at real world examples will show how they can be applied to traveller life.

As a means of players having a better sense of where their characters are in time and what they've been doing and plan to do, and a means of referees being able to keep track of what's going on in a longer adventure, bullet journals have a lot to offer. After 130+ (game) days of *The Traveller Adventure* played over 18 months, my players are expressing a lot of interest in an overview of what they've done when. Until now we've largely taken each segment as it came but I think there's a growing appreciation that this isn't (quite) a random series of events, that there is actually some overarching plot! It would be possible to keep separate player and referee journals, but the whole point of bullet journalling is to just take a few minutes rather than be demanding; whether it's at the end of the day or at the end of a gaming session. So it might be more appropriate to keep one shared one, perhaps with Referee Only pages in it!◉

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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 the channel operators (FreeTrav) 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!

News About Traveller

Recent Traveller Releases

September/October 2017

- **Zozer Games** has released *1970s 2d6 Retro Rules*
- **Gypsy Knights Games** has released *Tree of Life: Altrants in Clement Sector*, *Wendy's Guide to the Fleets of Franklin Subsector*, *Clement Sector Referee Screen Panels (Portrait)*, *21 Pirate Groups*.
- **Mongoose Publishing** has released *Pirates of Drinax: Friends in Dry Places*, *Pirates of Drinax: The Cordan Conflict*, *Pirates of Drinax: Liberty Port*, *Pirates of Drinax: Lions of Thebus*.
- **Mavfire Games** has released *Del Teigeler's Spaceships II Stock Art*.
- **Triassica Games** has released *66 Suns*.
- **Stygian Fox** has released *A Life Worth Living*.
- **Fat Goblin Games** has released *Publisher's Choice—Science Fiction: Insectoid (race)*.
- **The Map Forge** has released *Space Battles: Hex Star Maps for Starfinder*.
- **Michael Brown** has released *The Face of Firbragh*, *The Altar of Avarice*, *The Lightning in Our Hands*, *2D6 SF Adventures, Vol. 6* (Bundle).
- **Game Designers' Workshop** has released *The Encyclopedia of Dagudashaag*.
- **Okumarts Games** has released *Extrastellar Set Two: Space Colonists*.
- **Skeleton Key Games** has released *eFuture Tiles VTT Collection: Starships I*.
- **Peter Rudin-Burgess** has released *Random Classic Traveller Dice Tables*.
- **Unicorn Rampant Publishing** has released *Claw Claw Bite—Issue 19*.
- **IronSpine** has released *Space Cantina*.
- **Pyromancer Publishing** has released *Space Freighter Barbara*, *Patrol Ship Turion*, *Exploration Ship Humboldt*, *Space Transport Stag Beetle*.
- **Thomas Chlebus** has released *A Job in Skenadel*.   ✪

Submission Guidelines

Content

Freelance Traveller supports *Traveller* in all of its incarnations, rulesets and settings, both. However, there are some limitations on the combination of ruleset and setting that we will enforce:

We refer to the rules defined in Classic *Traveller*, *Mega-Traveller*, *Marc Miller's Traveller* (T4), *Traveller⁵*, and both editions of Mongoose *Traveller* as "Classic Compatible" or "2D6". This includes Sceaptune Games' *Hyperlite*, and Samardan Press' *Cepheus Engine*. For these rulesets, any setting, whether official, commercially-published-but-unofficial, or house setting, will be supported. A partial list of published settings supported under 2D6 *Traveller* includes the Third Imperium setting (including polities other than the Third Imperium proper), Reign of Discordia, Clement Sector, Hyperlite, Twilight Sector, Orbital, 2300AD, Foreven Sector, Mindjammer, and I'm sure I've missed others.

Other rulesets, such as **GURPS** *Traveller*, *Traveller²⁰/SF20*, *FATE*, *Hero System*, and so on are different enough from 2D6 *Traveller* to make conversion more difficult, and will only be supported for the Third Imperium setting (including polities other than the Third Imperium proper)—we feel that combining these rulesets with a non-Third Imperium setting makes the game something other than *Traveller*. The Third Imperium setting includes *all* eras and polities of the Third Imperium, however, so mixing (for example) the "Milieu Zero" Third Imperium with *FATE* rules would be fair game, as would be playing out some of the Zhodani core expeditions using *SF20*.

Send us any type of article—house rules and rulemixes; animals you've created for encounters; adventures (both long form and short); after-action writeups of conventions or your gaming night; equipment; vehicles; starships; other consumer goods; character profiles (NPC or PC); reviews of *Traveller* products, of products for other games that you feel can be "mined" for use in *Traveller*, of fiction (or non-game nonfiction) that "feels" like *Traveller*, or presents ideas that would be of interest to *Traveller* players or referees; new races or organizations or societies; artwork; or pretty much anything else you can think of. Articles on real-world science are of interest, when accompanied by rules for applying that science to *Traveller*. Tools and techniques you use for preparing for a session or a game are also welcome. We're also compiling a "*Freelance Traveller* Cookbook"; quick and interesting recipes for snacking before, during, or after sessions go here.

Published *Traveller* has generally been kept to a rating approximating the MPAA "PG-13" rating, or the ESRB "T" rating, and *Freelance Traveller* respects that, but does not draw a hard line. Mature themes may be addressed, but explicit or excessively violent/bloody material will not be accepted for publication.

Where To Send It, and What To Send

Except in very rare cases, all submissions must be through email, sent to either editor@freelancetraveller.com or submissions@freelancetraveller.com. All submissions should include the submission itself and a full name and valid contact information for the submitter. If you wish the material published under a "handle", please give the preferred handle and explain why publication under your real name is not acceptable—we prefer to publish under the real name, but realize that this can be a problem in some cases.

Rights

By submitting material, you grant *Freelance Traveller* a non-exclusive perpetual right to use the material in our PDF magazine and website (and mirror sites authorized by us), with minor editing for space and other suitability issues. While we generally will only use an article once, if we feel it appropriate, we'll reprint it.

The right applies to *Freelance Traveller* magazine itself, not to specific individuals associated with it. If the current management of *Freelance Traveller* finds it necessary to withdraw from association with the magazine or the *Traveller* community (not gonna happen as far as we can see), and others take over the operation of the magazine and website, the rights granted above stay with the magazine and permit the then-current operators to exercise those rights.

Formats

Text material can be submitted in any common textual or word-processing format, but we prefer (in no particular order) Microsoft Office, Open Office or one of its forks (we currently use Libre Office), RTF, minimally-formatted HTML, Markdown (including CommonMark and Github-flavored) or plain text, all with full Unicode support. Our readership is principally English-speaking, however, so foreign languages and scripts should be used sparingly, and if not intended as purely decorative, an English transcription of pronunciation (and possibly a definition in English as well) should be included.

Graphics should be submitted in an appropriate format for the subject matter—in most cases, that will be GIF, JPEG, or PNG at 100dpi or higher. If it's principally line-drawing material, it may be more appropriate to submit it in a vector format; most common vector formats can be imported by our tool of choice, CorelDRAW! X4 or X6. Please try to leave some space around the edges for cropping, especially for covers. We publish in PDF in US Letter and ISO A4 sizes, and columns in the magazine are roughly 3.5 inches (actually a little more) wide.

Avoid submitting in XPS or PDF format; these are generally seen as "output-only" formats, and trying to extract material in usable form from these formats is problematical.